



# YOUTH PASS for all!

Recognition of learning, focusing  
on inclusion groups



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## **SALTO-YOUTH STANDS FOR...**

...‘Support and Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities within the Youth in Action programme’. The European Commission has created a network of eight SALTO-YOUTH Resource Centres to enhance the implementation of the European Youth in Action programme which provides young people with valuable non-formal learning experiences.

SALTO’s aim is to **support European Youth in Action projects** in priority areas such as European Citizenship, Cultural Diversity, Participation and Inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities, in regions such as EuroMed, South-East Europe or Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, with Training and Cooperation activities and with Information tools for National Agencies.

In these European priority areas, SALTO-YOUTH provides **resources, information and training** for National Agencies and European youth workers. Several resources in the above areas are available on [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net). Find online the European Training Calendar, the Toolbox for Training and Youth Work, Trainers Online for Youth, links to online resources and much more... SALTO-YOUTH actively **co-operates** with other actors in European youth work such as the National Agencies of the Youth in Action programme, the Council of Europe, the European Youth Forum, European youth workers and trainers and training organisers.

**The SALTO-YOUTH Inclusion Resource Centre: [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/)**  
**The SALTO-YOUTH Training and Cooperation Resource Centre:**  
**[www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/TrainingAndCooperation/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/TrainingAndCooperation/)**

The SALTO Inclusion Resource Centre (in Belgium-Flanders) and the SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre (in Germany) work together with the European Commission to **include young people with fewer opportunities** in the Youth in Action programme.

SALTO-Inclusion and SALTO-Training and Cooperation also support the National Agencies and youth workers in their inclusion work and training by providing the following resources:

- training courses on specific topics and for specific target groups
- training and youth work methods and tools to support international projects
- practical and inspirational publications for international projects
- up-to-date information about inclusion issues and opportunities via the Inclusion Newsletter
- handy commented links to resources on line
- an overview of trainers and resource persons in the field of youth
- bringing together stakeholders to make the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities more effective and easier

👉 For more information and resources have a look at the SALTO-YOUTH pages at:  
[www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/) & [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/TrainingAndCooperation/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/TrainingAndCooperation/)

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# Foreword

Several qualitative analyses carried out in the recent past suggest that a Youth in Action project is an enriching learning experience for those taking part in it; with lasting effects. To take but one example, volunteering abroad during several months thanks to European Voluntary Service clearly changes a person's life! It is well worth describing such an experience in a Curriculum Vitae, as well as it is worth that the recipients and assessors of curricula are aware of the value of this experience. Hence the idea to build a tool for the recognition of the participation in a project and the identification of the learning outcomes acquired. This recognition of non-formal learning is one of the key features of the Youth in Action Programme (2007-2013). Every person participating in a Youth in Action activity (e.g. Youth Exchange, Youth Initiative, European Voluntary Service) is entitled to receive a Youthpass certificate, which describes and validates the non-formal and informal learning experience acquired during the project.

The Programme also puts a strong accent on the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities. An Inclusion Strategy has been defined based on two converging aims: to stimulate the use of the Programme as a tool to contribute to social inclusion at large, but also to make it easier for young people with fewer opportunities to participate to the Programme.

Building a solid bridge between inclusion and recognition can help achieve these two essential objectives. A seminar was organised in May 2009, for participants and experts from 15 European countries to work on linking these two important issues. Connecting on already existing examples in different actions of the Programme, the participants developed ideas and inspirations retrieved in this booklet, which provides background material and first collected practice with Youthpass targeting young people with fewer opportunities and gives inspiration for further engagement.

I would like to thank the participants and experts for their commitment towards the objectives of the Programme and for their contribution to this booklet and I wish you an inspiring reading.

*Pascal Lejeune*  
*Head of Unit European Commission, Directorate General*  
*Education and Culture Youth in Action Programme*



# INTRODUCTION

Youth Exchanges, European Voluntary Service, Youth Initiatives, Training Courses... each year thousands of young people take advantage of opportunities to participate in European youth activities. Anyone who has ever been involved in such projects – whether as a participant, mentor, group leader or organiser – knows that they are not only a means to go abroad or a way to have fun. These activities also offer a wide range of unique and powerful learning experiences which can help young people to develop the practical and social skills they need to prepare them for life in the adult world.

The European Commission has been organising European-level youth activities for over twenty years but until 2007 there has been no common approach and no common tools available to look specifically at an individual's learning in such projects. This changed with the launch of the **Youth in Action** programme (2007-2013) and the introduction of **Youthpass**.

**Youthpass** offers young people, youth workers and youth leaders an exciting way to recognise, understand, document and demonstrate the **learning that takes place within European youth activities**.

**!** A thorough introduction to Youthpass can be found in **The Youthpass Guide**

(<http://www.Youthpass.eu/en/Youthpass/guide/>).

The Guide explains the evolution of Youthpass as well as its place within the larger context of non-formal learning. The Guide also includes an in-depth explanation of the eight Key Competences and how these relate to specific Youth in Action activities.

The first years of experience with Youthpass have shown that while this tool offers tremendous potential, it is not always easy to implement. Some young people, and particularly those from fewer-opportunity backgrounds, may not have the experience, maturity or cognitive skills needed to recognise or understand their own learning processes. These young people need extra support in the Youthpass process... but how, specifically, can this be done?



*From the Seminar*

*“Let’s Youthpass it on for All!”*

**“Youthpass for All”** provides some answers. This booklet is intended to serve as a companion to **The Youthpass Guide** and is aimed specifically at youth workers and/or youth leaders who use European youth activities as part of their work with fewer-opportunity young people.



**“Youthpass for All”** starts off by looking at “learning” in the context of Youth in Action activities and goes on to explore how Youthpass **can best be implemented with the fewer-opportunity target group**. It presents advice, tips and methods from youth workers who have used Youthpass “in the field”. The booklet then examines how the process of looking at learning outcomes can be expanded beyond Youthpass into a more comprehensive competence-based approach to youth work.

Understanding a young person’s learning is not easy, even for professionals. Youthpass offers a way to **maximise the learning that takes place within European youth activities** but there is still a lot of undiscovered and untested potential around this tool. **“Youthpass for All”** is by no means the final word on Youthpass or on non-formal learning in general but we hope that you will find answers to some, if not all, of your questions here. Most importantly, we hope that this booklet will give you the foundation you need to **start implementing Youthpass** and the confidence to **start focusing more actively on “learning” throughout your own youth work activities**.

The editorial team  
Kathy, Rita and Ann



*From Rückenwind*

*We are grateful to all the participants and guest speakers of the “Let’s Youthpass it On for All!” seminar (Marly-le-Roi, France, May 2009) for their input, suggestions and many questions which provided much of the content for this booklet.*

*Similarly we would like to say a big thank you to the **National Agencies of France, Estonia and Ireland** for their contributions for the seminar and this booklet.*



# WHAT DO WE MEAN BY

## “young people with fewer opportunities”?

As a worker in the youth field, you have probably noticed that **inequalities** exist between different profiles of young people. Some young people are easier to reach than others. Some are more motivated to take part in your activities than others. Some face **more serious challenges and/or obstacles in their lives than others**. Certain young people are excluded from taking part in (or being part of) so-called “regular” society. Young people who **do not enjoy the same chances and privileges as their peers** are sometimes referred to as “young people with fewer opportunities”.



“Young people with fewer opportunities” is a term which includes youngsters from many different backgrounds who, for a variety of reasons, face some form of exclusion in their lives. In certain contexts, situations or specific obstacles can **prevent such young people from having access to education, to mobility, to participation, to political representation, to active citizenship, to empowerment and to inclusion in society at large.**

For example, some young people may live in isolated regions or in economically disadvantaged areas where they have limited access to education. Young people with a physical or mental disability may have specific needs which cannot always be provided for. Youngsters from minority ethnic or religious backgrounds may face racism and discrimination which blocks their access to facilities, institutions or programmes. Others, like early school leavers or those with emotional or social problems, may not have the maturity or social skills necessary to cope with living on their own or holding a steady job.

In order to stimulate the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities, the **European Commission** developed in 2007 **an Inclusion Strategy** for the Youth in Action programme, of which EVS is an important part:

#### **INCLUSION IN THE YOUTH IN ACTION PROGRAMME**

One of the priorities in the European Commission’s new Youth in Action programme (2007-2013) is the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities. **An Inclusion Strategy** has been designed as the common framework to support the efforts and Actions which the Commission, Member States, National and Executive Agencies and other organisations undertake to make inclusion a priority in their work.

This “Inclusion Strategy” is based on two converging aims:

- 1** To Ensure the accessibility of the Youth in Action programme for young people with fewer opportunities (both those organised in youth organisations, youth councils, etc, as well as those not formally organised);
- 2** To stimulate the use of the Youth in Action programme as a tool to enhance the **social inclusion, active citizenship and employability** of young people with fewer opportunities and to contribute to social cohesion at large.



Specifically, the Inclusion Strategy aims to:

- Ensure a common vision and commitment among the different actors of the programme in defining the target group and implementing the strategy;
- Make it easier for youth workers working with young people with fewer opportunities to develop and implement inclusion projects with the Youth in Action programme;
- Support the quality and quantity of the projects involving young people with fewer opportunities and to maximise their impact;
- Promote the use of the Youth in Action programme as an opportunity for self-development and learning for young people with fewer opportunities and as a possible stepping stone in their personal pathway;
- To diversity and to counter mechanisms of exclusion and discrimination.

👉 You can find the complete strategy on [www.salto-youth.net/InclusionStrategy/](http://www.salto-youth.net/InclusionStrategy/)

European-level activities like Youth Exchanges or EVS have proven to be highly beneficial inclusion tools for young people from this target group. The strongest impact seems to be made when the activities are used to respond directly to an individual's specific learning needs. Youthpass can be a way to enrich this process.

👉 Find more information on the Youth in Action programme here: [http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/doc247\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/doc247_en.htm)

By definition, Youthpass is designed to make learning more visible and by doing so to maximise the impact of the European-level activities. This can benefit young people of all profiles but it is particularly relevant to young people from fewer-opportunity backgrounds. If these youngsters can more clearly see their learning and development through a Youth Exchange or EVS project, this can go a long way to raising their self confidence and improving their self esteem. It can also help them to become more aware of their strengths and weaknesses and to identify areas where they need further improvement.

👉 Interested to know more about Youthpass: [www.Youthpass.eu](http://www.Youthpass.eu)



*From Rückenwind*

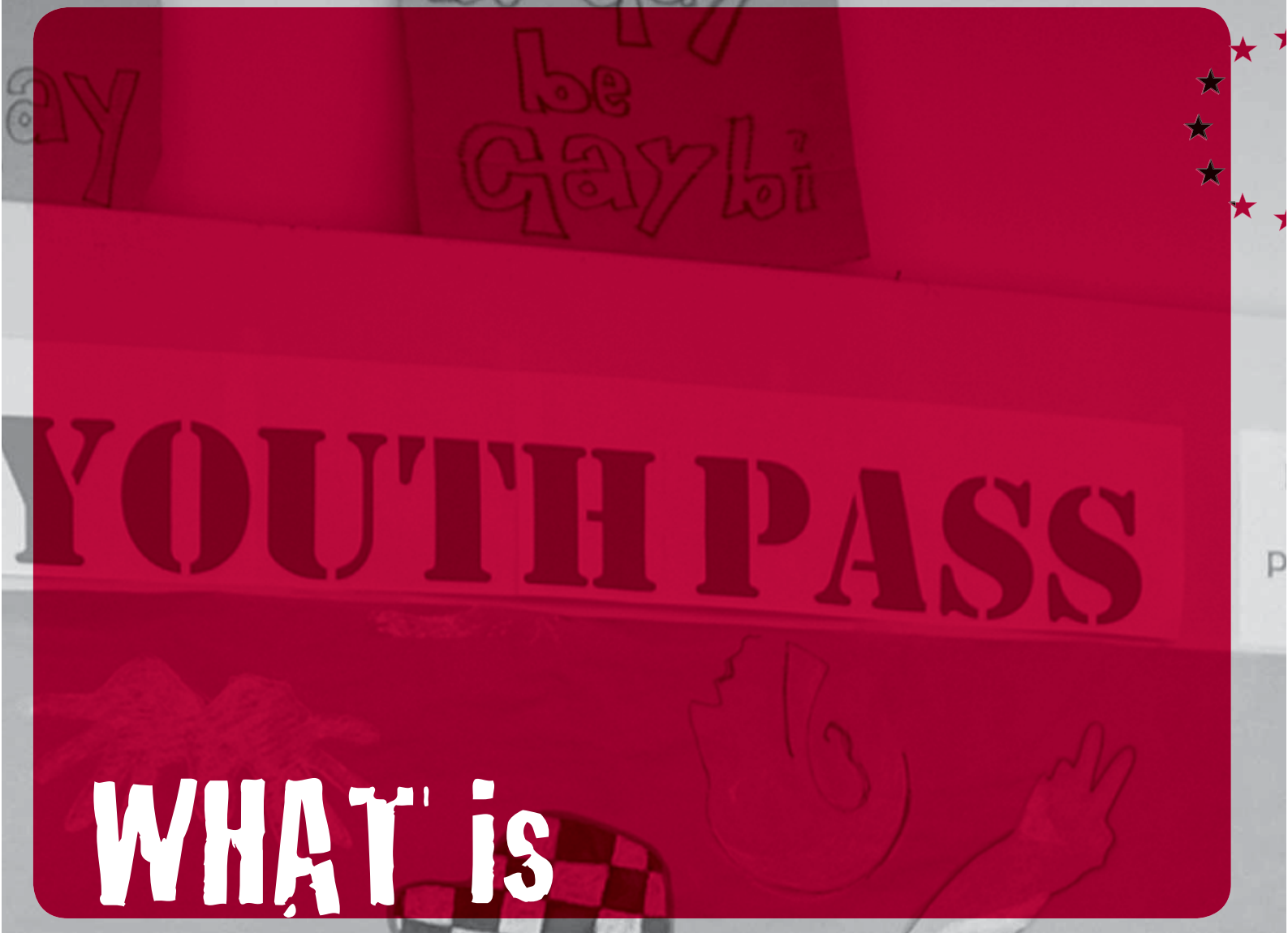
Most youth workers and youth leaders working with this target group can see the potential offered by Youthpass but when they first try to implement it, they quickly discover that certain profiles of fewer-opportunity young people need extra assistance. A self-assessment is not easy for anyone, in any circumstance, but specific profiles may face specific challenges in completing Youthpass. For instance:

- Young people from immigrant backgrounds may **lack sufficient language skills**
- Young people with learning disabilities or who are illiterate may **lack sufficient reading or writing skills**
- Early school leavers or mentally disabled young people may **lack sufficient cognitive skills**
- Young people with physical disabilities (like the deaf or the blind) **may require specially adapted methodologies and/or equipment**
- Etc.

Just because an individual comes from a fewer-opportunity background does not mean that they are not able to reflect on their own learning (in fact the opposite is true) but some individuals will definitely need extra guidance.

There are no standard procedures and no “one-size-fits-all” answers to Youthpass, certainly not when it comes to the fewer-opportunity target group. Several different examples of methods are presented throughout this booklet but ultimately it will be up to youth workers and youth leaders to experiment and determine which tools are most suitable to help young people with fewer opportunities enjoy their right to Youthpass.

👉 Download the **Youthpass Guide** from  
<http://www.Youthpass.eu/en/Youthpass/guide/>



# WHAT is Youthpass?

Before reading this booklet, you may have heard a lot of talk about Youthpass – some of it inspiring and some of it confusing. This section explains what Youthpass is, how it is structured and why such a tool is needed. It describes how Youthpass can be of benefit to the fewer-opportunity target group, how young people can use it and also highlights some common obstacles which can get in the way.

**Youthpass** is the recognition instrument for the Youth in Action programme. It is designed to support:

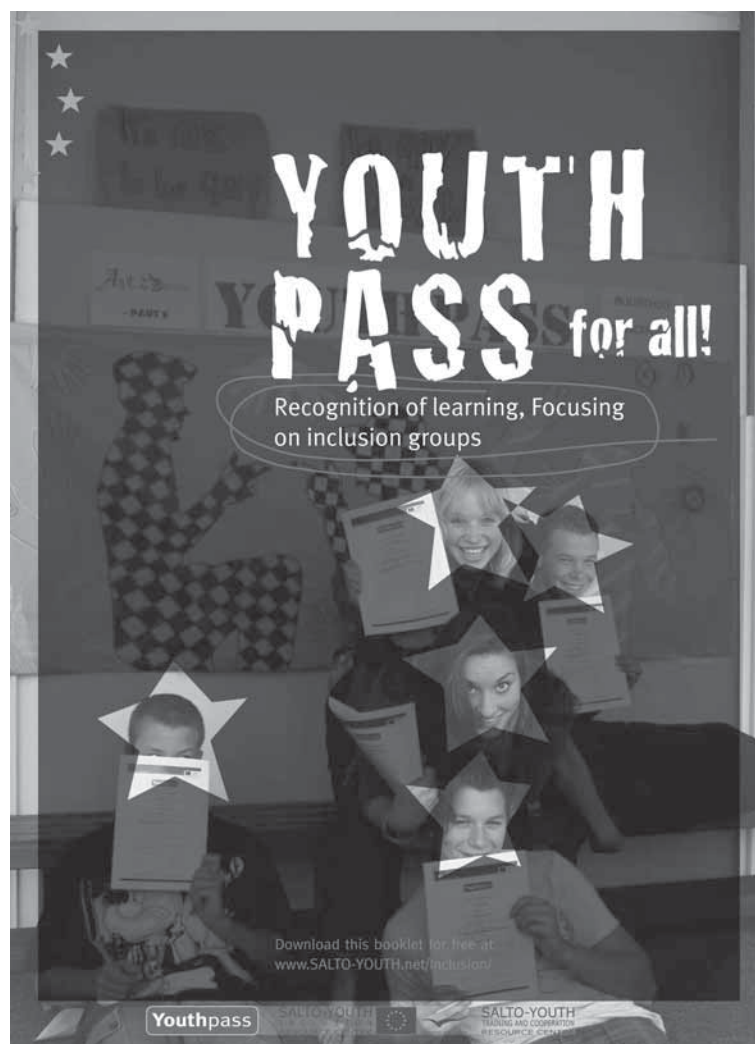
- the reflection on the individual learning process
- the social recognition of youth work
- the employability of young people, and
- the active participation of young people in society



Every young person, youth leader and youth worker who has participated in a Youth in Action activity has the right to a Youthpass.

If your organisation has received a Youth in Action grant under one of these activities, you are responsible for informing all participants involved in the project that they are entitled to receive a Youthpass certificate and also for issuing such certificates to all participants who request one.

Each of the Youth in Action activities listed above has its own specificities in terms of structure, duration, preparation and implementation. Because of this, the approach to issuing Youthpass will be slightly different depending on the activity you are involved in. To date, most of the experience with Youthpass for young people with fewer opportunities has been gained through Youth Exchanges or EVS therefore the “Youthpass for All” booklet focuses specifically on these two activities.





## **BUT WHAT IS YOUTHPASS, CONCRETELY?**

- In its most basic form, Youthpass is a **physical document** which confirms the participation of an individual in a Youth in Action activity and provides a description of their specific project.
- At the same time, Youthpass is a **tool** which can be used by a young person together with a mentor or youth worker to identify, understand and document what they learned during their Youth in Action activity.
- In addition, Youthpass is a **support** which can help youth leaders and youth workers to maximise the impact, the outcomes and the learning processes within Youth in Action activities.

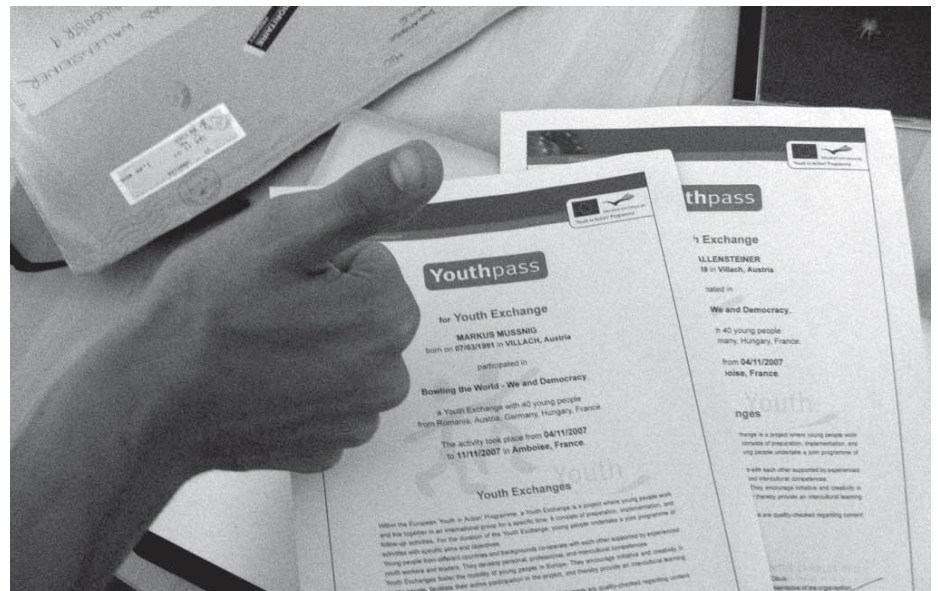
Youthpass can be somewhat confusing because at first glance it is not clear whether it is intended to serve as a **product or a process**. In fact, it is a little bit of both...

- **Youthpass is a product** in the sense that it is something concrete, tangible and visible. When an individual receives a Youthpass a physical document recognised by the European Commission is put in their hand. The individual can see it, touch it, and show it to others. The physical document is tangible evidence of what they have achieved. As a product, Youthpass is powerful and has a high value, particularly for young people from the fewer-opportunity target group. It would be a mistake, however, to think of the product Youthpass as “just a piece of paper” because it is also much more.
- **Youthpass is also a process** because to create the full product (the physical document), young people should go through different steps in order to reflect on what specifically they have done during their Youth in Action activity and consider what this might mean in terms of their own learning and personal development. They do this through a dialogue with their mentor. They should then find a way to express these outcomes, ideally in such a way that others (outside Youth in Action) can also understand and give value to their learning.

It is the **combination of product and process** that give Youthpass its strength and is also what sets it **apart from other types of recognition documents**.

Nowadays young people can get diplomas, certificates or a confirmation of participation for all sorts of learning activities... for everything from swimming lessons to cooking classes to post-doctorate university courses. These documents are almost always awarded by an outside body; someone else decides whether a young person's learning is sufficient enough to be recognised and rewarded.

Youthpass turns this process upside down. With Youthpass it is the young person (together with the mentor) who looks to see what has been learned. It is the young person who determines the learning that they want to be recognised and in the end it is the young person who decides what to reward themselves for. This process of self-determination is powerful and it gives the product a new level of meaning for the individual holder.



From Flickr

**This combination of product and process has an important extra added value for young people from fewer-opportunity backgrounds.** Young people from this target group often face rejection in many forms – they are told that they are not smart, that they can't learn, that they can't do anything right, that they are not important, that they can't succeed. The opportunity to obtain a Youthpass may be the first chance these young people have had to get a certificate or diploma in their entire lives. **Having the power to assess and reward their own learning, rather than once again being judged and rejected by outsiders, can be a strong motivation and a powerful boost to an individual's self-esteem.**

## How is the Youthpass certificate structured?

### A YOUTHPASS CERTIFICATE CONSISTS OF THREE DIFFERENT PARTS:

- The first part is a **confirmation of participation and a general description of the activity**. This section confirms, in the name of the participating organisations and the European Commission, that an individual took part in a specific Youth in Action activity. It includes the name of the participant with the date and town/country of their birth. It also includes the basic details of the activity such as the title of the project, the location of the activity and the dates when it took place.
- The second part is a **general description of the activity** the young person took part in. For example, if the individual took part in a Youth Exchange, this section describes what a Youth Exchange is. If they took part in an EVS project, this section describes EVS, and so on. This description is intended to help people who are not familiar with Youth in Action to better understand what this type of activity is all about (the description can be taken directly from the Youth in Action Programme Guide). In this section it is also possible to include a short description of specific activities or responsibilities undertaken by each participant before or during the project.
- The third part is a **description of the individual's learning outcomes** which are described using the eight Key Competences. This part is made up of an optional number of pages; depending on how deeply they wish to go in the reflection process, the young person and their youth worker/mentor can write as much or as little as they choose in this section.

The **first and second** parts of Youthpass contain mostly technical information and as such they are relatively easy to complete. The **third part** on “learning outcomes” is more complex. To complete this section, the young person and their youth worker/mentor will need to work together to reflect on what happened during the activity and on what kind of learning took place as a result.

In principle, a complete Youthpass certificate consists of all three of these parts. However, individuals can choose whether they wish to receive just the first part or if they wish to add the second and/or third parts as well. This choice will depend partially on what a young person wants to use their Youthpass for.

**!** *Section B.2 of “The Youthpass Guide” presents a detailed overview of the three parts of the Youthpass certificate in the contexts of both Youth Exchanges as well as in EVS.*

## **What are the Key Competences?**

The eight Key Competences (as presented in Part 3 of Youthpass) are the result of a long-term European-level consultative process. In recent years, the Member States of the European Union have been acting to modernise their education systems. Part of this process has involved a **shift away from seeing education as a transfer of knowledge towards a new vision of seeing education as a way to develop transferable competences that equip young people for adult life and further learning.**

In November 2005 the European Commission put forward a recommendation which provided, for the first time, a European reference tool on **Key Competences** that outlined the different types of competences young people need for their further learning and which promote their active participation in society.

That framework sets out eight Key Competences, including:

- 1** Communication in the mother tongue
- 2** Communication in foreign languages
- 3** Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology
- 4** Digital competence
- 5** Learning to learn
- 6** Social and civic competences
- 7** Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship
- 8** Cultural awareness and expression

**!** *A detailed description of each of the eight Key Competences can be found in section A.4 of “The Youthpass Guide”.*



# Mathematics, science and technology

You have 4 apples. If a friend gives you 2 more, how many do you have? What if they take away 2?

If you have the total number of apples (6), how many do you have if you and your friend eat all of them?



From Apple


In accordance with international studies, a **'competence'** is defined here as a **combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes** appropriate to a particular situation. 'Key Competences' are those that support our personal fulfilment, social inclusion, active citizenship and employment.

The eight Key Competences are not listed in any particular order. Each one is as important as the others. There can be some overlap between them but together they are seen as the basis needed for a young person to lead a satisfying life. Youthpass observes this same framework and uses the eight Key Competences as a way to express an individual's learning outcomes in Part III of the certificate.

For many youth workers, the Key Competences are the most difficult aspect of using Youthpass. This may be because we ourselves are not completely comfortable or because we do not fully understand exactly what is meant by the different headings. In fact, the Key Competences are just **categories**. On one hand they provide a **way to structure a young person's learning outcomes** so that they are clearer and easier to understand. On the other, they **provide an individual with more insight into the areas where their specific competences are developing**.

As a youth worker or youth leader, you may be tempted to steer your young people towards what seems like the “easy solution” of just printing out the first and/or second parts of Youthpass (thereby ignoring learning outcomes and the Key Competences). This option may look like a good way a way to save a lot of time and work. Be aware, however, that if you (or your young people) decide not to complete the section on learning outcomes, you weaken the overall impact of Youthpass and take away part of its value because you are separating the product from the process.

Imagine, for example, that one of your participants asks you for a Youthpass but they only want the first part of the certificate. They are within their rights to ask for this but what is the consequence? That young person will receive a one-page Youthpass certificate which confirms their participation in Youth in Action. Even a one-page Youthpass has a high value - the young person can proudly show it off to family and friends, they can attach it to their CV, etc. However, the physical document (the product) on its own does little to help this individual recognise how they have changed and grown as a result of taking part in Youth in Action. In this way, the Youthpass loses some of its potential because **Youthpass is strongest when the product is combined with the process** of the reflection on learning outcomes.

 *We recommend that youth leaders and youth workers try to maximise the potential of Youthpass by taking the time needed to go through this process and to help their young people look at their own learning on whatever level is most appropriate. We will explore this process and what it can look like in more detail in the next sections.*

## Why do we need something like Youthpass?

**“Youthpass is not the question... it’s the answer!”**

*Gilles Baccala, TCP Officer, INJEP (French National Agency)*

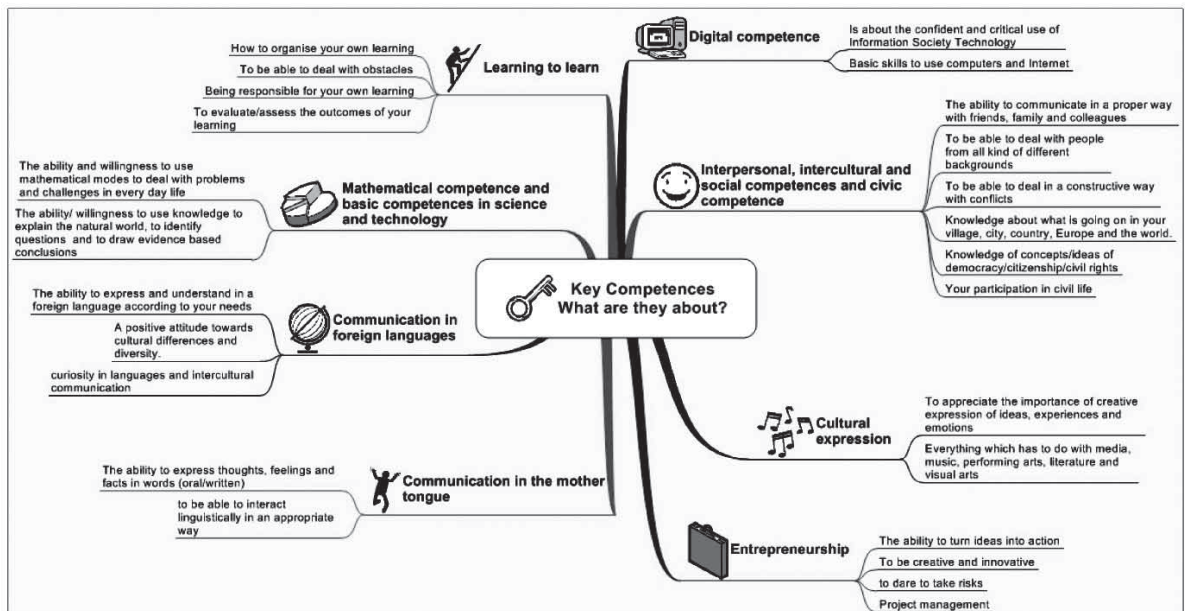
Youthpass is a big step in a new direction in terms of European-level youth activities but it is particularly exciting because it responds directly to many of the issues which have plagued European youth activities for years. For instance:

- Although individual youth workers may be convinced of the benefits of a Youth Exchange or an EVS project for fewer-opportunity young people, they may find it difficult to convince the young people, their parents, colleagues or the board of directors of the real value in sending an individual abroad. **Youth workers and youth leaders need evidence of the specific skills and knowledge young people can gain from participating in European-level youth activities. Youthpass is ideal** for this because it outlines specifically *what* an individual has learned and *which* Key Competences these relate to. Once this learning has been identified, it can then be applied to many different areas of a young person’s life (like education, work, personal relationships, etc.).
- A Youth Exchange or an EVS project (when organised in the spirit of the Youth in Action programme) requires a lot of work and commitment from the participants in the preparation as well as in the project phase. **Young people want their efforts to be recognised and appreciated. Youthpass does this** by acknowledging not just a young person’s participation but also their specific tasks, responsibilities and learning within the project. With Youthpass, the recognition of that learning comes not just from the sending or hosting organisation but from the European Commission itself.
- Organisations invest considerable time and effort to ensure that European-level activities are not just fun excursions abroad but are actually **qualitative learning experiences** with clear educational aims. When the time comes to evaluate, however, organisations often find it difficult to get beyond the basic level of “we had such a great time!” and to go deeper into discovering what participants really gained from their experience.

Organisations need a method to help them determine if their European-level activities are reaching the global pedagogical aims they intend to. Youthpass serves this function because the learning outcomes identified by individual participants are strong indicators whether the project managed to achieve its aims or not.

Naturally, Youthpass on its own is not a “one-stop-solution” to any of these challenges but it is an important piece of the puzzle.

# Key competences



From Rückenwind

Yet despite all of this, newcomers to Youthpass may still be sceptical. Many youth workers involved with fewer-opportunity young people fear that Youthpass is just a lot of extra bureaucracy. Is this true – or can Youthpass really benefit fewer-opportunity young people?



## The benefits of Youthpass

If we see Youthpass only as source of extra work, we do this tool a disservice. Youthpass offers youth workers and youth leaders a way to enrich the work with young people... the work that they are already doing anyways!

Fewer-opportunity youngsters face many difficulties in their lives – some are due to external factors and some are due to the choices an individual makes. These difficulties serve to block the youngsters from many aspects of “regular” everyday life (like education, employment, good health, positive relationships, and so on). Broadly speaking, a large part of the work done with these young people involves **stimulating their personal development** – that is to say, helping the young people to overcome their difficulties by learning the skills they lack and by changing their behaviour for the better. It therefore stands to reason that youth workers should be extremely interested to know whether the work they do and the methods they use, successfully create opportunities to gain new skills and new behaviours... or not.

This should especially be the case when it comes to Youth Exchanges or EVS projects. Youth workers do not send their fewer-opportunity young people abroad just for fun (and certainly not if the young people face extreme difficulties or are considered to be “high risk”). They send them because a Youth Exchange or an EVS **can intensify the learning of skills and can give young people new reasons and new impetus to change their behaviour**. It takes a tremendous amount of work to prepare and carry out European-level activities so in theory youth workers should be **even more** interested to know about these learning outcomes.

However, we know from experience that even if looking at learning is a priority in theory, the daily demands of working with this target group leave little time or space for youth workers/youth leaders to monitor an individual’s learning as they might wish to.

Youthpass is a way to solve this problem. Youthpass is not “extra work” but is rather a way to help youth workers and youth leaders **to do what they are already** doing – helping young people to learn - and to do it better!

Youthpass can directly benefit youth workers and youth leaders by providing them with:

- a reason to set aside time to look at an **individual's learning within European-level activities**
- a tool to support young people to **understand and express their learning**
- an opportunity to introduce **new methods** for looking at learning in both the preparation and the project phase (and by doing so to improve the overall quality of the activities).
- a means to gauge the extent to which their activities are **successful** and to which extent **learning is (or is not) taking place**, and
- a way that they **themselves** can begin to learn how to recognise learning potential in different situations.

Obviously, Youthpass does not just benefit youth workers. It can also directly benefit young people from fewer-opportunity backgrounds by:

- providing them with an **official form of recognition and appreciation** (possibly the first they ever had)
- helping them **to recognise their own progress** through seeing their own learning outlined point by point
- making them aware of the **global learning processes** they are going through
- increasing their **self confidence** and improving their **self esteem**
- demonstrating that learning is a **lifelong process** which is present in many aspects of daily life - not just in school - and which can help them to reach different aims and goals in their lives.

If we accept the idea that “looking at learning” is a fundamental aspect of youth work, we cannot see Youthpass as “just more bureaucracy”. Youthpass can help us to **re-focus our attention on learning** and by doing so it serves to **improve the overall quality** of our work with the fewer-opportunity target group.

## Obstacles to Youthpass

Despite these benefits, it can still be a challenge for youth workers and youth leaders to try to implement this tool. There are many obstacles which can get in the way of Youthpass and stop the self-assessment process before it begins.

For instance, just because a youth worker is convinced of the benefits of Youthpass does not mean that their young people are convinced as well. **Young people from the fewer-opportunity target group** can be initially resistant to using Youthpass for a whole variety of reasons, including:

- **Youthpass seems like school.** Youthpass involves looking at learning but for a young person from the fewer-opportunity target group, “learning” sounds like “education” and “education” sounds suspiciously similar to “school”. Terms like these can have many negative connotations for this target group, especially for early-school leavers, or those with learning or mental disabilities. These youngsters may think “I wasn’t good in school. I don’t have an education. I can’t learn, therefore Youthpass is not for me”.
- **Young people can’t see a value in either the process or the product.** Individuals in this target group may never have received a certificate of any kind in their entire life. As a result, they may not be able to imagine how such a certificate can help them or how they could benefit from it. This in turn makes it extremely difficult for the young people to see what purpose might be served by going through the process of looking at learning.
- **Young people can’t see the relevance.** Many of the wordings and concepts presented in Youthpass (like “non-formal learning”, “Key Competences”, etc.) are incomprehensible to young people in this target group. They may also carry specific negative connotations. For instance, young people may not understand what is meant by “mathematical competence” but they do know that they failed mathematics in school. They know they don’t want to work on maths so they conclude that Youthpass is not interesting for them.

- **Young people find it hard to recognise or record their achievements.** Questions like “what are you good at?”, “what are your talents?” or “what did you learn?” are not easy for fewer-opportunity young people to answer. Recording or documenting their achievements can also be extremely difficult if, for example, the young people cannot read, cannot write, if they speak another language, if they do not know how to use a computer, etc.
- **Young people don’t see how or where they can use Youthpass.** Youthpass recognizes learning but the certificate it is not a replacement for formal qualifications or experience. Those who are not familiar with Youth in Action activities (like potential employers, landlords, schools, social institutions, etc.) may not necessarily see the value of Youthpass. If the young people cannot see clearly how or where they can use it, they may conclude that Youthpass has nothing to offer them.

Of course it is much too simplistic to think that all obstacles to Youthpass can be traced to young people. The situation of **youth workers and youth leaders** can also throw up barriers to this tool. For example:

- **Youth workers are not necessarily educators.** Young people who are not used to carrying out a self-assessment need a lot of guidance and support. However, youth workers and youth leaders are not necessarily trained to do this. They may not know how a learning process works, how to measure a young person’s competences, etc.
- **Youth workers can feel intimidated.** It is not just the young people - youth workers and youth leaders can also find it quite difficult to understand some of the abstract concepts and formal wording within Youthpass. They may also feel somewhat overwhelmed by the “officialness” of this European document. They may worry that they will make mistakes, fill in incorrect information, and so on.

- **Youth workers do not know how to implement Youthpass with certain profiles.** Even for those youth workers who are absolutely convinced of the benefits of Youthpass, it is not easy to imagine how to use this tool with, for example, a young person with an IQ of only 60, or one who has an extreme attention deficit disorder, or one who is illiterate, etc. Youthpass may appear to be too complex or too “high-level” for many profiles of fewer-opportunity youngsters.

The points above can be considerable barriers to Youthpass and they certainly pose a challenge to youth workers and youth leaders. Part of the solution lies in making Youthpass more user-friendly for this target group. This involves choosing the right starting point and making the tool both relevant and understandable for the young people. We will look in more detail at how this can be done in the section “Working with Youthpass”.

## **How can this target group use Youthpass?**

The one question that comes up time and again is “how can young people use Youthpass?” Youthpass is not a formal accreditation and it does not replace any formal qualifications... so what can it actually be used for? Does it have any real practical applications for fewer-opportunity young people?

Youthpass is still so new that we are just beginning to discover all the different ways in which it can be used. In very broad terms, Youthpass can be used in any situation where it is useful for a young person to demonstrate what they have learned - it is up to the individual’s own imagination to decide where, when and how to make use of it.

“Using” Youthpass can sometimes be as simple as a young person showing off their certificate to family and friends or displaying it in a frame on their wall. This is a good way to use the product but how can young people also use the process? Presented below are two real-life examples that might provide some clues.





### **EXAMPLE 1 –“MARTA”**

Marta was a young woman from a broken home. Both her mother and her brother were alcoholics. One night in the middle of a family conflict, Marta was kicked out of the house. Marta had no place to go so she became homeless and started to run up bad debts. She also experimented with drugs.

Marta’s youth organisation offered her the chance to go abroad on an EVS project as a step towards getting her life back on track. Marta was very interested in getting a Youthpass so during her project she met with her mentor every other day. Together they looked at her learning objectives and monitored many different aspects of her learning.

When Marta returned home, she heard about a traineeship (a paid entry-level job) with social services. She applied for the job by submitting her CV with a copy of her Youthpass attached. During her interview, the employer was very curious about the Youthpass and the fact that Marta had been a volunteer abroad. The interview went so well that Marta was offered the traineeship and naturally she accepted!

Although she does not know for sure, Marta feels very strongly that it was her EVS experiences expressed through Youthpass that got her the job – the fact that she could show her certificate to the employer but even more importantly that she was able to sell herself. Thanks to all the time invested with her EVS mentor, Marta was able to talk about not just what she had done but how she had done it and what she had learned as a result.



## EXAMPLE 2 – “LEXI”

Lexi was a single young mother with a newborn baby. She struggled with a range of social and behaviour problems, one of which was that she could not bring herself to talk or communicate with her baby. For Lexi, a baby was just a “thing” - if it doesn’t talk to you, why should you talk to it?

Because of this and a range of other problems, Lexi was under close observation by the social services who were considering taking her baby into care. Before this could happen, Lexi was given the chance to do a short-term EVS project where they baby was also welcome.

Lexi did her EVS in a country where she could not speak a word of the language and where only a few people in the Host Organisation could speak hers. At first she wasn’t able to make contact with other people but bit by bit she discovered that she could communicate non-verbally – she could “talk” to others and they could also “talk” back to her by using signs, gestures, sounds, etc. One unexpected side effect of this was that Lexi started to use her new non-verbal communication skills with her baby. When it came time to do Youthpass, Lexi named this out as one of her most important learning outcomes.

As soon as Lexi returned home, the social services immediately resumed their observation but they were astounded at the change they saw. Lexi was now much more comfortable with the baby and was actually communicating with her! The social workers asked Lexi what had happened. She very proudly showed them her Youthpass and explained at length all about her project abroad, what she had done and how this had helped to make her a better mother to the baby.

The social workers were duly impressed - since then they have asked many more questions about Youthpass and how it could be used to help other young people. Lexi has kept on improving her parenting skills and will now likely be able to keep her baby.



*From the Seminar  
"Let's Youthpass it on for All!"*





# WORKING with Youthpass

Rome wasn't built in a day – and neither is a Youthpass! The process of self-assessing learning does not happen in one hour... or in one day... or even in one week. It takes time and it definitely does not happen on its own. Young people need a lot of **support** in this process and youth workers must think carefully about the approach they are going to use.

When it comes to implementing Youthpass, there are several main challenges that youth workers must face:

- How can we best introduce Youthpass?
- How can we best introduce the Key Competences?
- How can we best monitor a young person's learning *during* an activity?
- How can we best help a young person to express their learning *at the end* of an activity?



Obviously it is not enough to give a 10-minute introduction to Youthpass during a preparation meeting and then presume that the young people have fully understood it. Similarly, it is not enough to wait until the last day of an activity to present the Key Competences and then expect young people to know what to do with them. There are no quick solutions to dealing with these challenges so what options exist and what is the best way to proceed?

Different profiles of fewer-opportunity young people have different needs therefore the approach to Youthpass has to be custom-designed to suit the profile in question. Experience has shown, however, that the most effective methods for working with Youthpass involve finding a way to **“unpack” this tool for young people**. “Unpacking” Youthpass involves taking the overall concept and **breaking it down into smaller more manageable pieces** which the young people can more easily understand.



*From the Seminar  
“Let’s Youthpass it on for All!”*




Youthpass involves many complex ideas and young people need time to digest them. Youth workers need to think **strategically as well as creatively** and plan out the steps they are going to use to get their young people acquainted and comfortable with this tool.

There is no pre-set recipe for these steps, what they should look like or in what order they should happen but there are some general **framework questions** youth workers can ask themselves which can help define an initial structure for how and when they will approach Youthpass with their specific target group.

## Framework Questions

As with everything, the earlier you start to plan, the better. By the time you submit the application for your Youth Exchange or your EVS project, you should already have spent some time thinking about the overall timeframe and structure of your activity. This is also the right moment to start planning how and when you will implement Youthpass.





The following is a list of framework questions which highlights some of the many aspects youth workers will need to consider. It does not include all the questions that will eventually need to be dealt with but it is a way to start putting different puzzle pieces together.

| FRAMEWORK QUESTIONS<br><i>Before the activity</i>   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>What does the preparation phase for the partner organisations in our activity look like?</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What are our aims and objectives for this activity?</li> <li>- What, specifically, do we want the young people to learn?</li> <li>- Who will be responsible for implementing and issuing Youthpass?</li> <li>- When and how will this be done?</li> <li>- How do we expect our young people will use their Youthpass?</li> </ul> |

*Before the activity*

|  |          |   |
|--|----------|---|
| <p>What does the preparation phase for the participants in our activity look like?</p>   | <p>⇒</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How far in advance will the preparation phase begin?</li> <li>- What topics need to be discussed?</li> <li>- How often will we meet with the young people?</li> <li>- How much time will we have for each meeting?</li> <li>- Will we work with the young people in groups or one-on-one?</li> <li>- Etc.</li> </ul> |
| <p>At which moments in the preparation (if any) would it be suitable to start talking about Youthpass with the young people?</p> | <p>⇒</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- During our first, second, third, fourth meeting...?</li> <li>- When we discuss the overall aims of the activity?</li> <li>- When we talk about the concrete results we want from the activity?</li> <li>- Etc.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>Which aspects of Youthpass should be introduced before the activity begins? Which can be introduced later</p>                 | <p>⇒</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Non-formal learning?</li> <li>- Lifelong learning?</li> <li>- Key Competences?</li> <li>- Recognition?</li> <li>- Some, all or none of the above?</li> </ul>   |
| <p>How will we make Youthpass relevant to the young people's situation?</p>  | <p>⇒</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How will I determine what the young people need or are looking for at this time in their lives?</li> <li>- How could a Youthpass certificate respond to those needs?</li> <li>- In which situations could our young people use Youthpass in their daily life?</li> </ul>   |

*During the activity*

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <p>What does our activity look like?</p>  |    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How long is the activity?</li> <li>- What will the daily (or weekly, or monthly) programme look like?</li> </ul>  |
| <p>At what moments during the activity should we devote time to looking at learning?</p>              |    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- On the very first day?</li> <li>- In daily reflection groups?</li> <li>- In weekly meetings?</li> <li>- At the halfway point?</li> <li>- Once a month with a mentor?</li> <li>- In a final evaluation?</li> <li>- A combination?</li> <li>- Etc.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>What methods could we use to help the young people recognise and document their learning?</p>      |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Games?</li> <li>- Photos, films, comics, posters...?</li> <li>- Individual diaries?</li> <li>- One-on-one talks with a mentor?</li> <li>- Reflection in small groups?</li> <li>- A combination?</li> <li>- Etc.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>Who should be responsible for overseeing this process with the young people?</p>                   |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The group leader?</li> <li>- The hosting organisation?</li> <li>- A mentor?</li> <li>- A peer?</li> <li>- A combination?</li> </ul>   |
| <p>Should we complete Youthpass by the end of the activity (before the young people return home)?</p> |  | <p>IF YES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How/when will we summarise the learning?</li> <li>- How/when will we enter the information into the Youthpass database?</li> <li>- What tools, equipment or additional support will be needed for this (e.g. methods, computers, translators, peer supporters...)</li> <li>- How/when will we present the completed Youthpass to the young people?</li> </ul> <p>IF NO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How will we ensure that the learning outcomes identified during the activity are preserved and passed on to the home organisation?</li> </ul> |

## After the activity

|  |          |  |
|--|----------|--|
| <p>What does the follow-up phase for our activity look like?</p> <p>Should we complete Youthpass after the young people return home?</p> | <p>⇒</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- How much time do we have for follow-up?</li><li>- How soon will we be in touch with the young people after they return home?</li><li>- What form will this take (a phone call, an individual meeting, bringing the group together again, etc)?</li><li>- Etc.</li></ul> <p>IF YES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- How soon should this happen?</li><li>- How/when will we summarise the learning?</li><li>- How/when will we enter the information into the Youthpass database?</li><li>- What tools, equipment, or additional support will be needed for this (e.g. methods, computers, translators, peer supporters...)</li><li>- How/when will we present the completed Youthpass to the young people?</li></ul> <p>IF NO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- How/when can we give value to the Youth-pass issued during the activity?</li><li>- How/when can we follow up and continue to build on the learning recorded in the Youthpass?</li></ul> |
|--|----------|--|

This list of questions might seem a bit overwhelming at first but keep in mind that the point here is not to try to come up with perfect answers. These questions are not meant to be prescriptive - they are a **suggestion** and are only intended as a starting point to help youth workers establish a **first action plan**.

Now while these framework questions might give us some first ideas and help us to organise our thoughts, sooner or later we will need to find a way to put our thoughts into action. What could the answers to such questions look like in practice? **How can you “unpack” Youthpass for fewer-opportunity young people?**

Presented below are several real-life examples of the approaches, specific steps, tools and time schedules youth workers have used to successfully unpack Youthpass for the young people in their organisations.



From the seminar  
“Let’s Youthpass it on for All!”

## Examples of working with Youthpass



### EXAMPLE 1

GABI STEINPRINZ - PRINCENSLUIS (THE NETHERLANDS)

Type of activity: Youth Exchange

Profile of participants: physically and mentally disabled youngsters

Contact: [www.Princensluis.nl](http://www.Princensluis.nl)

| <i>Prior to the Youth Exchange</i>                         |  | <i>During the Youth Exchange</i>   |                        |
|--|--|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>6 months in advance</i>                                 | General preparation (What is a youth exchange, aims, expectations, etc.) | <i>Day 1 or 2</i>                  | 2 hours on Youthpass   |
| <i>5 months in advance (3rd meeting with young people)</i> | First introduction to Youthpass  | <i>Mid-term evaluation</i>         | 2-3 hours on Youthpass |
| <i>Each subsequent meeting</i>                             | 30 min. spent on competences   | <i>Final evaluation (last day)</i> | 3 hours on Youthpass   |

“My target group is very mixed and for some time I considered how I could use Youthpass with young people who are physically and mentally disabled. Generally speaking, using Youthpass with these youngsters can be easier than you might first expect because the preparation time is usually very long. The more challenging your target group, the more time you need for preparation. I take at least **one year** to prepare a group of mixed-ability youngsters and this gives me many opportunities to touch on Youthpass.

Preparing young people to go abroad is a **long process**. With my group I start looking specifically at the Youth Exchange 6 months in advance. This is too early to start talking about Youthpass. The young people are too excited and first they need to understand what a Youth Exchange is, what we are aiming to achieve, and so on. Usually in our third meeting I start to speak about the possibility to obtain a Youthpass.



I stress that all the Youth Exchange participants **have the right to get one**. I explain to the young people that they don't have many papers or educational certificates so Youthpass can be something new and interesting for them. I don't put the young people under any pressure but I expect them to at least listen to the explanation about the possibilities offered by Youthpass and what it could be used for. Beyond this it is their choice to do Youthpass or not.

From the start I make it clear that if someone wants a Youthpass, **we will do the whole thing** including the self-assessment (Part 3 of the certificate). I introduce the Key Competences in the preparation phase. Once Youthpass has been introduced, we take a moment in every sub-sequent meeting for "Youthpass time" where we sit down for about 30 minutes to think about competences and write them down. Of course the young people can come to talk to me or ask questions about the competences at any time but we always have reserved Youthpass time in our meetings.



*From Princensluis*

The reflection on competences is **very difficult** for the young people. It is hard for them **not to be abstract** – for instance they can easily say "I want to learn about other cultures" **but what does it mean?** I encourage them to try to go deeper and ask, for example, **what** do you want to learn about other cultures? You need to help the young people to make their thoughts concrete - you have to try to bring them down to earth.

Defining specific examples can be helpful. For instance: “There is a girl from Germany and a girl from Italy coming to the exchange. **What** specifically do you want to know about them?” You can also do this with a young person’s tasks before the exchange. For instance, one participant had the task of organising a bicycle tour around our village. I asked him “What do you need to organise for this? Where are the learning possibilities in this?” Such questions help to shrink the scope and to make the idea of learning as concrete as possible.

During the exchange itself, we take 2 hours to talk about Youthpass on the first or second day, then we come back to it for 2-3 hours in our mid-term evaluation and then once more on the final evaluation day for 3 hours. We work in national groups **due to language**. It is not the case that all 40 participants in the exchange sit down and busily write out Youthpass at one time. Some of the young people are keen and some are not. Some of the youngsters think Youthpass has a real value and these individuals are motivated to do it but others prefer to spend their time in the Youth Exchange talking with friends and having fun. Some just want to **think about their learning and not put it into words** – in such cases the youth workers need to help the young people to find a way to express their thoughts.

I think there is a **big difference between giving space and opportunity for Youthpass and putting young people under pressure to do it**. The Key Competences are difficult and I don’t believe that these should be the main emphasis. For some youngsters, the Key Competences are helpful because the act of dividing things into categories **makes the learning more concrete and structured** for them. Others prefer to just write out an essay where all the learning is mixed together and that’s fine. I would prefer that a young person write out their learning on a paper and feel proud of it rather than get stressed about how to correctly split it all up. For me, it is the learning itself that counts, not so much the categories it is divided into.”



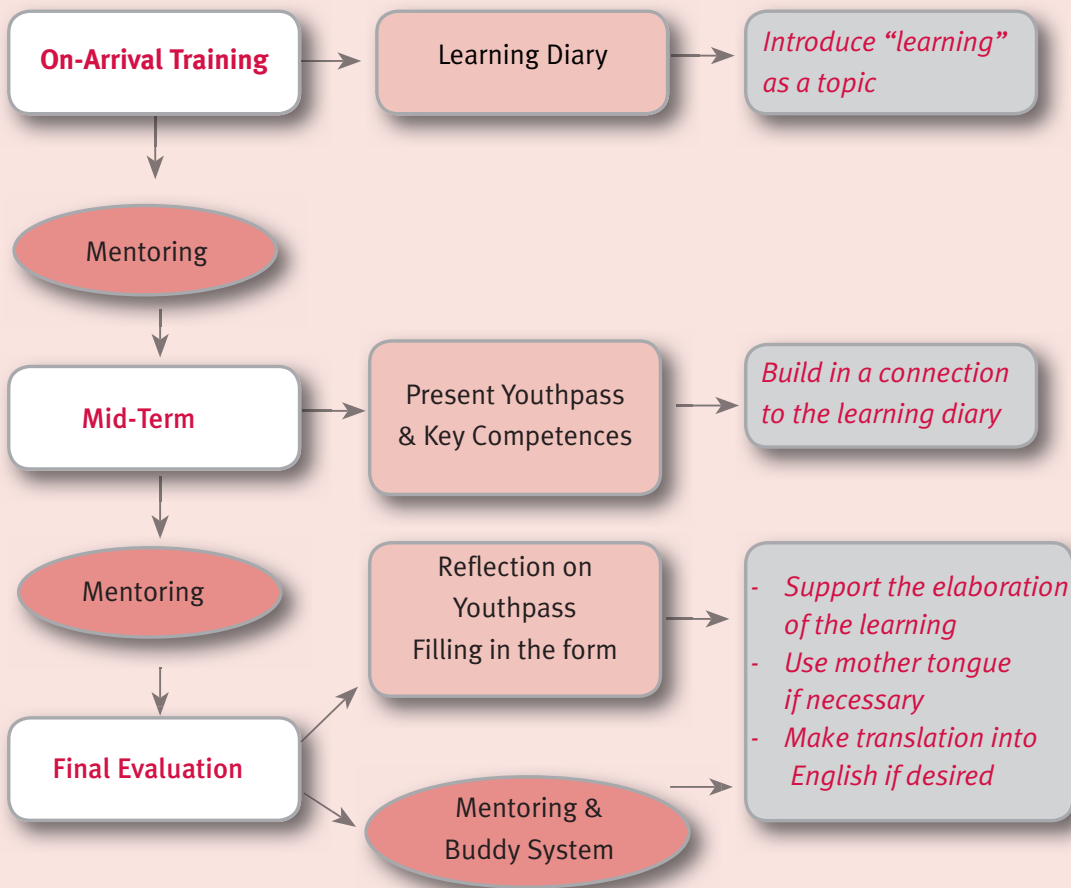
## EXAMPLE 2

LEO KASERER – CUBIC (AUSTRIA)

Type of activity: Group EVS

Profile of participants: early school leavers, migrants, learning & mental disabilities

Contact: [www.leokaserer.com](http://www.leokaserer.com)



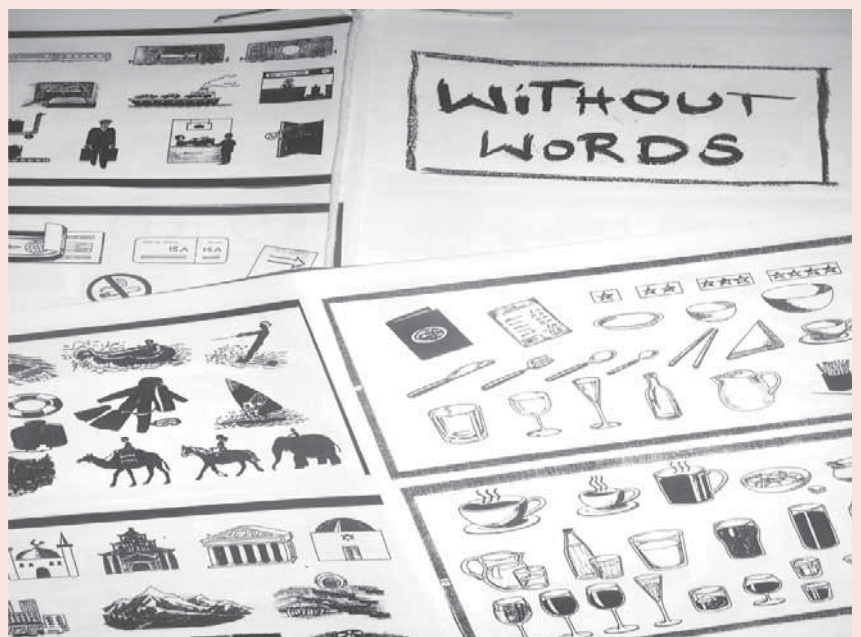
“At the start of our group EVS, we felt it might be too much for the young people to understand concepts like “non-formal learning” on the very first day. We decided instead to use a **step-by-step approach to the idea of Youthpass**.

Our on-arrival training ran for 2 1/2 days. At the start of this event, each volunteer was given a simple but cool **little book to use as a learning diary**. The young people were invited to use the diary as much as they wanted. We didn’t expect they would use it every day (as most of them **were not able to write properly**) but we encouraged them to note down whenever they heard a good joke, a telephone number, a story, an important event, or whatever else they wanted. They had the freedom to write, to draw, to doodle or make graffiti... anything they liked.

We then started different discussions during the on-arrival training to introduce “learning” as a topic and to make it seem like something cool, fun and interesting. We prepared some questions like “Why learning?”, “What is learning good for?” or “In what different ways can a person learn?” These discussions helped the young people **to understand that learning** is not only for marks in school but it **can also be for yourself, for your independence**, for reaching aims and goals in your life.

As in every EVS project, the young people had **mentors** – one mentor for 4 youngsters. Throughout the month-long project meetings with mentors were held twice a week. These meetings were a time to discuss, share, and reflect on an individual basis. The meetings always took place on fixed times and fixed days. The mentors spoke the same language as the young people - this is important so that the young people can speak as freely as possible about learning in their own language (trying to talk about learning in a second language is extremely difficult).

During our mid-term training we presented the idea of Youthpass and the eight Key Competences. Our aim was to try to help the young people **understand the ideas behind the words**. To make a connection with the learning diaries, we posted the eight Key Competences **on the wall** and then asked the young people to think about what they had written in their diaries so far and look to see if some of the things written there (or other experiences they had had in the project so far) fit into the different categories.



*From Rückenwind “without words”*

Our group had many individuals with severe mental disabilities and also many with no foreign language skills whatsoever so when it came time to talk about learning and the Key Competences communication was a real challenge. As a solution, the youth workers put together a small booklet named “**Without Words**” which was full of different **symbols**. If the young people didn’t know the word for something, they could use this booklet to find a picture of what they wanted to say and point it out to the others in the group. (For instance we had pictures of activities inside the house, activities outside the house, activities in the garden, free time activities, pictures of different food and drinks, of tourist attractions, and much more.) In this way everyone in the group could understand just a little bit more about what each other was learning, even without a common language.

After the mid-term meeting the mentoring continued on as before but now each meeting tried to focus a little bit more on the Key Competences. The mentors would regularly ask the young people to look back over the previous days and try to think about what they had learned. They also reviewed the eight categories and asked the young people to think if they had learned anything in this area, in that area, etc.

At the end of the project we had 1 1/2 days for **evaluation** and part of the process involved helping the young people to reflect on Youthpass and then to fill in the form. There were not enough mentors to work with every young person individually so we used a **buddy system**. We matched up each group-EVS’er with a long-term EVS volunteer (who also happened to be hosted at the same project).

The young people might find it easy to tell what they **did** during an activity but not so easy to tell what they **learned**. When individuals used their learning diary, they didn’t say things like “I learned about a new culture”- they were much more specific and described things like “Today I went for a walk in the town” or “I used my money to buy beers and cigarettes”, etc. So the main task of the “buddy” was to support the fewer-opportunity volunteers to elaborate on their learning.

The buddies were invited to help support their volunteer to find the right phrasing for the Youthpass on a **peer-to-peer level**. For example: one night during the project an Italian volunteer performed a juggling act. When the buddy asked him “What did you do that night?” he replied “I was spinning around batons like crazy”. Then the buddy started a discussion to try to see what the volunteer really meant. Together they looked at the activity piece by piece – “In order to spin the batons, what did you need to do?” “First I had the idea to make a performance, then I had to set up a location, invite the people, choose the tricks I would do...” “Had you done these things before or were they brand new for you?” and so on. It is not the task of the buddy to provide the answers – their job was to help the young person to see all the different pieces. Then together the volunteer and their buddy looked to see **where the different points might fit within the Key Competences.**”



*From Rückenwind*



### EXAMPLE 3

BRIAN PERRY - BALLYFERMOT YOUTH SERVICE (IRELAND)

Type of activity: Youth Exchange

Profile of participants: early school leavers, long-term unemployed, inner-city backgrounds

Contact: [www.ballyfermot.ie](http://www.ballyfermot.ie)

“Youth workers who are inexperienced with Youthpass often ask me whether I think young people can learn the eight Key Competences from a 7-day Youth Exchange. My reply to that is: I don’t deal with Youthpass just on the exchange - **I start the process much earlier.**

For our Youth Exchanges, I pick young people that I am working with on a regular basis or those I have worked with in the past. I don’t take any young people who I don’t know. Once the group is selected, I meet with them approximately 10-12 weeks before we go on the exchange. We meet once a week for two hours and we go through different aspects of what a Youth Exchange is.

As you know, if you’re getting ready to take a group abroad there are aspects that need to be prepared. First of all you need to explain to the young people what a Youth Exchange is and what it aims to do. Then you need to get the youngsters to buy into the programme. You need to spend time talking with the youngsters about their expectations, about getting ready to travel, about meeting new people, new cultures, about trying new food and drink, etc. All of these points (and many others) should be addressed with the young people before the exchange starts.

All of these aspects can be linked in with the Key Competences. For example:

- We encourage our youngsters to get in touch with the participants from other countries before the exchange starts by sending e-mails, using Facebook, sending a digital photo of themselves, etc. These are all areas where the young people are developing new **digital competences.**

- Before we take a group abroad on an exchange, we often do some fundraising to give the young people more ownership and influence over their own activity. The young people raise some money for extras during the exchange (like maybe for a special night out, etc.) by organising football tournaments, kids' discos, car washes, and so on. Such fundraising activities are developing **initiative and entrepreneurship**.
- In our preparation meetings we spend some time getting our young people ready to meet the participants from the other countries. We help them to think about how they will explain where they're from, what their laws are, what their beliefs are, what their religion is, and so on. These are all part of developing **social and civic competences**.

Preparation for a Youth Exchange does not happen in just a couple of hours. It is a long process for the young people but if you already **build in Youthpass in small steps**, the young people will come to expect it and they won't be surprised or stressed when you start to look at learning during the exchange itself. In essence, **you are giving the young people the tools for Youthpass from the moment they sign up**.




One problem that youth workers regularly run into is how to present the eight Key Competences to young people. With my groups, I present the Key Competences in the preparation phase because I don't want to overwhelm or scare the young people by introducing them too late or too quickly. Many of our young people are baffled by the Key Competences – they don't understand a word. We have found an easy way to explain the competences to young people by putting them into **comic strip format**. This method is **simple, it's visual, it's fun** and it's a very effective way to explain to young people.



Yet even with tools like the comic strip, talking about learning can be tricky. I have found it is very helpful for the young people if I write out sub-categories for all the Key Competences in normal language. For instance, instead of talking about “digital competence”, I ask “Who thinks they learned how to use a digital camera? Who thinks they learned how to use a computer? Who thinks they learned to use Internet?” and so on. **If you put the competences into these terms, it’s easier for the young people to understand.**

We always need to keep in mind that young people join a Youth Exchange **because they want to have fun, not necessarily because they want to learn.** Youth workers have to find a good **balance.** It’s good to reflect on learning in an activity but you don’t want to de-motivate the young people by putting too much attention on the topic too often.”

 *In the section of the Mini-Toolbox, at the end of this booklet, you can find more about how to use comics (or the Comic Life programme) to express learning outcomes.*



#### EXAMPLE 4

##### CLAIR BROWN - EVERYTHING'S POSSIBLE (UK)

**Type of activity:** Short-term EVS

Profile: early school leavers, young people in care, young parents, young offenders, migrants, etc.

Contact: [www.everythingspossible.org](http://www.everythingspossible.org)

“Using Youthpass for fewer-opportunity young people on EVS projects can be challenging. When you send a young person abroad, the Host Organisation usually takes on responsibility for their Youthpass. This means you as the Sending Organisation have little influence on the reflection on learning inside the project or on what is finally written in the certificate. When you host a young person, they may only speak a few words in your language (and sometimes none at all). This makes trying to talk about “what you learned” particularly difficult.

#### YOUTHPASS IN HOSTING

When we host young people on a short-term EVS, we reserve the first day for their arrival and the second day to allow them to settle in and get **oriented** in the project. On the third day we start on-arrival training. We speak about Youthpass, the process, and the value of the certificate. We stress that the end result depends on the amount of work which is put into it.

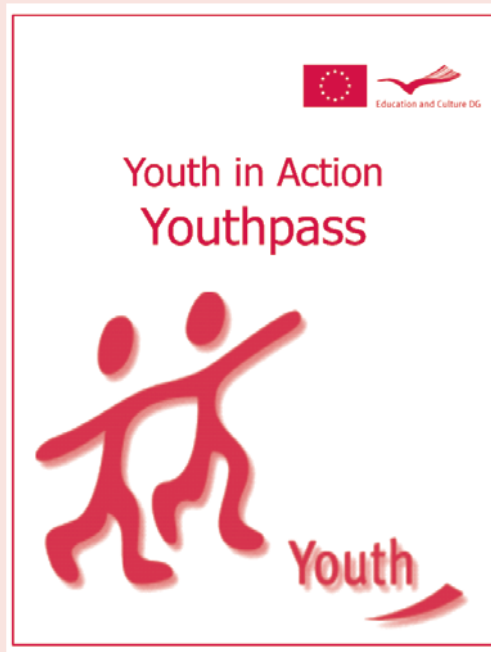
In our short EVS projects (2 weeks) we encourage the young people to look at their achievements and learning day by day – in slightly longer projects (4 weeks) we ask them to look at their achievements week by week. Then we help the youngsters to look to see where their different types of learning might fit within the Key Competences.

To help our hosted volunteers go through this process, we use a **simple handout** which is an adaptation of a **tool developed by the Icelandic National Agency**. It gives a basic explanation of Youthpass and presents the Key Competences in simple language.

If we are hosting a group EVS, it is quite common for the volunteers to speak about their learning collectively (for instance “yesterday we learned how to paint and last week we learned how to work in the garden”). If we are hosting an individual volunteer, we can have different types of discussions and here we try to help the individual to personalize their learning as much as possible.

Often the youth workers need to help the young people **to find the words (and the self-confidence)** to see and express their learning. **Many fewer-opportunity young people have gone through life being told they are not important, that they can't achieve, and as a result they don't easily recognise when they have “accomplished” or “learned”** during EVS. In such cases, the youth workers have to put in a lot of effort to tease and coax out the learning outcomes. Sometimes we have to go so far as to suggest the words that we think they should be saying themselves and then see if the young people agree with us.

This process is made even more difficult by the **language barrier**. When you can't enter into a dialogue with a young person, it is very hard even for a trained youth worker to see the development of personal skills. We can easily see, for instance, whether their foreign language skills are improving but other areas (like how well you are communicating in your mother tongue or whether you are learning to learn, etc.) are very hard for us to judge. As a result, **the content of the Youthpass for hosted volunteers can be quite general and rather basic**. Naturally as a youth worker you wish you could do more, that you could go more deeply into someone's learning, but there are limits. At the end of the day, however, this is usually more troubling to the youth workers than to the young people themselves. Volunteers are generally very proud of their Youthpass and the certificate still has great value for them even if the content itself is somewhat general.



## YOUTHPASS IN SENDING

When we prepare to send our young people on short-term EVS projects, we start working with Youthpass in the pre-departure phase. We look at what Youthpass is, what is its value and why we are going to help the young people to achieve their certificate. We talk about why Youthpass is relevant to them and why they might want a certificate like this – the answer is of course is very different depending on the individual.

Our organisation sees Youthpass as a step in preparing the young people for employment but we are more concerned with the process than with the certificate. Many of our youngsters have no qualifications or practical skills but they survive financially thanks to the well-regulated social benefits system in the UK. For many individuals, the step from unemployment to paid work is too hard. Young people are so well cared for by the welfare system that they are not motivated to try for minimum-wage jobs. As a result, the young people would not immediately see the value of getting a certificate and they would not put their effort into Youthpass with the aim of finding a job (at least not at first).

We explain to our young people that while the certificate is a good thing what really counts in Youthpass is being able to understand the skills you have developed. We tell them that a person's skills and competences can make them "more attractive" in a whole range of situations like on a job interview, when looking for a place to live, when trying to get accepted on an education course, or when dealing with officials... even when it comes to dealing with the opposite sex. This is an approach the young people can relate to!

To help with the preparation for EVS, our organisation developed a tool called the "Passport Portfolio". This booklet looks at EVS as something which follows a young person's career path and personal development. The booklet contains preparation tasks, a personal diary section, and a final segment designed to help round off the project when the young person returns home. All the young people we send on EVS receive a copy of the Passport. We integrate it into all our pre-departure meetings and a certain number of the tasks are compulsory. Many of the activities in the booklet relate directly to the eight Key Competences and this makes the Passport an excellent way to link in with Youthpass.

For instance, one task in the booklet asks the volunteers to look at their own country – its political systems, social and cultural issues – so that they can later compare it with their EVS host country. All of this involves learning about citizenship and this links in directly with **civic and social competence**. A similar task asks the young people to look into other aspects of their country like identifying typical food and drink, famous people, popular types of music, examples of folk music/dance/national costumes, and so on. This links in directly with **cultural awareness and expression**.




Another task helps the young people to look at skills – skills they have, skills which might come in useful during their EVS project, and skills they might like to develop while they are abroad. This is complimented by the diary section. The diary is a daily exercise to be used during EVS which helps the young people to think about “What did I do today? What do I want to do tomorrow?”

The Passport was originally designed as a tool for our own pre-departure phase and not necessarily with Youthpass in mind. In practice, however, about 70% of our volunteers take their Passport with them abroad and a large number make the effort to keep up with the diary segment day by day. The Hosting Organisation is under no obligation to use the Passport but sometimes they do refer back to it because it provides an excellent foundation to start the reflections for Youthpass. Using the Passport seems to work best when the Hosting is dealing with an individual EVS volunteer. If they are hosting a group EVS, however (with volunteers from several different Sending Organisations) it would not be appropriate to use the Passport because the other volunteers will not be familiar with it.

As the responsibility for completing and issuing Youthpass usually lies with the Hosting Organisation, we as the Sending have no influence on what is written in the certificate. We do, however, go back to Youthpass as part of the re-intergration process when our volunteers return home. If the volunteer has received their Youthpass, we take time to review the content. Sometimes the Host Organisation saw learning that the young person didn't so we go back to examine what is written and what it means. We also return to the Passport tasks from the pre-departure phase and try to draw some conclusions. For example, if a young person said at the start of the project that they wanted to develop their listening skills (or their public speaking skill, budgeting skills, communication skills, etc), we take time to discuss whether they managed to do this, to what extent, in which situations, whether or not they are satisfied, whether they would like to develop this skill further, etc. We also give the young people opportunities to talk about the outcomes of their daily diary. Usually if they have put in so much effort to write it, they are eager to talk about it when they return home.

All the different tools, tasks and reflection moments help us to integrate Youthpass as a logical part of the EVS experience as a whole. Sometimes we feel like we are acting covertly with our young people. Our EVS volunteers often don't realise that they are involved in an educational activity, even when using Youthpass tools, but when they return home they realise that they have come through a process and they can see the different ways and the different areas in which they have changed."

 *The content of the Youthpass handout (based on the original version from the Icelandic NA) can be found in the Toolbox. The Passport Portfolio can be downloaded under [www.everythingspossible.org](http://www.everythingspossible.org)*

## Other questions around Youthpass

As you start working with Youthpass, you may quickly discover that you have to deal with a variety of challenges and some very specific issues. Presented here are some common questions from youth workers and youth leaders together with suggestions on how to deal with these types of challenges.

### What if you and your young person go through the reflection process and it appears that the learning outcomes only apply to one or two Key Competences?

With everything that goes on in a typical Youth Exchange or EVS project it is unlikely that a young person's learning will apply to just one Key Competence. A situation like this is probably a sign that the young person is having trouble remembering all that they did in their activity or that they are finding it difficult to express the different things they learned. In such a case the youth worker or youth leader should take steps to help their young person reflect and discuss more deeply.

If, however, your young person has gone through a thorough reflection and the result is that their learning really does fit in one Key Competence, then this is perfectly fine. Youthpass is not a competition and the point is not to try to list a maximum number of items in a maximum number of categories. There is no need for a young person to make use of every Key Competence – they should only use those which relate to their own learning outcomes. (The other Key Competences will not appear on the certificate if no information is entered.) If the young person is satisfied with their learning and with what is written in their Youthpass, the youth worker should be as well. “Learning”, in whatever form, should always be valued.

### What if a young person's learning fits into more than one Key Competence? How do you know for sure which is the right category for which type of learning?

It can very easily happen that a young person's learning can fit into more than one Key Competence. For instance, imagine that as part of their EVS project, a young person learns to set up and maintain a blog on Internet to stay in touch with their family and friends back home.

This learning could fit under digital competence... but it could also fit under communication in the mother tongue. Similarly, imagine that prior to a Youth Exchange the young people organise some fundraising activities to finance a special excursion during their project. This learning could fit under initiative and entrepreneurship... but it also relates to mathematical competence.

## Some tools used to support communication and learning

| Suomi   | Deutsch   | English   | PHRASE BOOK<br><br>Name:<br><br>Kingsand and Cawsand, 04.08 - 01.09.2007 |
|---|---|---|--|
| <p>Hei. Tervetuloa<br/>Kuinka vanha olet? Minä olen ...-vuotta vanha<br/>Mikä sinun nimesi on? Minun nimeni on...<br/>Mistä sinä olet kotoisin? Minä olen kotoisin...<br/>Itävaltasta, Italiasta, Espanjasta, Ranskasta, Suomesta</p> <p>Olet kaunis/hauska/mukava<br/>Mikä on lempivärisi/lempikappaleesi/lempijuomasi/lempiruokasi? (lempi=favourite)<br/>Missä on vessa/kokoushuone/keittiö?</p> <p>Miten voit? Hyvin/okei/en niin hirveän hyvin<br/>Olen rakkainen/väsynyt/sairas/janoinen/iloinen<br/>Haluan (Haluaisitko sinä) ... juoda vähän kahvia/pöytä tupakan/lähtää uimaan (?)</p> <p>Kyllä/ei/ehkä/miksi/miksi ei<br/>Haluan... / En halua...<br/>Saisinko/Kiitos/Ole hyvä</p> <p>En ymmärrä. Voiko toistaa?<br/>Miten sanotaan...?<br/>Voinko auttaa sinua? Voinko auttaa minua?</p> <p>Mitä sinä teet?<br/>Minne olet menossa? (nyt/iltapäivällä/huoneessa)<br/>Voinko tulla kanssasi? Odota minua!<br/>Kovka lapsomme?<br/>Tule! Merenään!</p> | <p>Hallo. Willkommen<br/>Wie alt bist du? Ich bin ... Jahre alt<br/>Wie heisst du? Ich heiße...<br/>Where do you come from? I come from...<br/>Woher kommst du? Ich komme aus...<br/>Österreich, Italien, Spanien, Frankreich, Finland</p> <p>Du bist schön/lustig/nett<br/>Was ist deine Lieblings-farbe/-lied/-getränk/-essen? (Lieblings=favourite)<br/>Wo ist die Toilette/der Seminarraum/die Küche?</p> <p>Wie geht es dir? Gut/okay/nicht so gut<br/>Ich bin hungrig/müde/durstig/glücklich<br/>Ich möchte (Möchtest du) ...einen Kaffee trinken/eine Zigarette rauchen/schwimmen gehen (?)</p> <p>Ja/nein/vielleicht<br/>Warum/warum nicht...?<br/>Ich will... /Ich will nicht...<br/>Bitte - Danke -Gern geschehen</p> <p>Ich verstehe nicht. Kannst du es bitte wiederholen.<br/>Wie sagt man ...?<br/>Kann ich dir helfen? Kannst du mir helfen?</p> <p>Was machst du?<br/>Wohin gehst du? (jetzt/am Nachmittag/morgen)<br/>Kann ich mit dir kommen? Warte auf mich!<br/>Wann treffen wir uns?<br/>Kommt! Gehen wir!</p> | <p>Hello. Welcome<br/>How old are you? I am ... years old<br/>What is your name? My name is....<br/>Where do you come from? I come from...<br/>Austria, Italy, Spain, France, Finland</p> <p>You are beautiful/funny/nice<br/>What is your favourite colour/song/drink/food?<br/>Where is the bathroom/the meeting room/the kitchen?</p> <p>How are you? Fine/okay/not so fine<br/>I am hungry/tired/sick/thirsty/happy/<br/>I would like to (Would you like to) ... drink some coffee/smoke a cigarette/go for a swim (?)</p> <p>Yes/no/maybe<br/>Why/why not...?<br/>I want to ... / I don't want to ...<br/>Please - Thank you -You are welcome</p> <p>I don't understand. Can you please repeat?<br/>How do you say...?<br/>Can I help you? Can you help me?</p> <p>What are you doing ?<br/>Where are you going ? (now/this afternoon/tomorrow)<br/>Can I come with you? Wait for me!<br/>When do we meet?<br/>Come on! Lets go!</p> |  |

From Rückenwind

There is no right or wrong way to categorize a young person's learning. No one is going to control a young person's Youthpass to see if the learning outcomes are divided properly or not. The Key Competences are not rules or laws onto themselves – they are just a way to give some structure to an individual's learning. If the learning outcomes can fit into more than one area, discuss with the young person to see where they think that learning fits best. Of course it is possible to list the same learning in several categories, but be careful you don't overload or clutter the text through too much repetition.

**What if the young person's learning doesn't apply to any of the Key Competences at all?**

It can happen that the learning that fewer-opportunity young people identify for themselves doesn't easily match up with the Key Competences. For example, imagine a young person says



“In our Youth Exchange we made dinner for the people in our host village and I served the food. I learned how to be a waiter.” Where does “being a waiter” fit into the Key Competences? Or imagine a young person says “I learned the names of stars and planets in the sky and how to recognise some star constellations.” Where does “learning the names of stars and planets” fit into the Key Competences?

Often the things which make the biggest impression on young people and the things they find most important to document in terms of their learning are not at all the things that youth workers expect. This can be something positive because it serves to make the adults who work with this target group more conscious about what learning can be and the different forms it can take for different youngsters. It does not, however, solve the problem of what to write in Youthpass.

Some learning outcomes may appear to have nothing to do with the Key Competences (at least on the surface) but with some reflection and discussion with the young person you may be able to identify some related elements here and there (being a waiter, for instance, involves some aspects of communication as well as social skills). Be careful, however, that you don't go overboard and over-analyze the learning just to find something for the Key Competences. If it turns out that there is no clear link, then that's fine.

In such cases you can come up many other alternative solutions for ways to show the learning without the Key Competences - for instance you can have the young people describe their learning in one or two written paragraphs or even just a simple written list of points. You can copy the text onto your organisation's own letterhead, sign and stamp it and then staple it to the back of the official Youthpass as an annex. For fewer-opportunity young people, the format is not the most important aspect.

It is much more important that the young people manage to identify and express the learning that *they* think is most important for them. Be sure **never** to give the young people the impression that their learning is “not good enough” for Youthpass just because it does not match the categories of the Key Competences. In such cases you can choose to use the field in Part III for “Other specific skills” - this is a space where you can highlight other specific types of learning (e.g. practical or job-related skills).

Bear in mind that the question of “which learning should go in which section” is really only a secondary concern. It is much more important that the young people manage to identify and express the learning that *they* think is most important for them.

**If the youth worker knows that a young person has learned a lot during their activity but the young person themselves can't see this, is it acceptable for the youth worker to “prompt” the young people or to “suggest” to them what could be put into the Youthpass?**

This is a very grey area. We know from experience that there are many profiles of fewer-opportunity youngsters who find it extremely difficult (if not impossible) to recognise their own learning in any form or who have such a low level of self-confidence that they cannot find even the most basic words to describe their achievements. In cases when the youth worker can see that progress has been made but the young person cannot, it is hard to know what to do with Youthpass and where the borders lie.

There is a very fine line between trying to help a young person by “prompting” them (for instance, actively suggesting learning or skills that they may not have thought of) and putting words into their mouth. Remember that a big part of Youthpass’s strength lies in the sense of empowerment and pride that comes from a young person actively recognising their own learning. The value of Youthpass is weakened if youth workers simply write what *they* think a young person learned (even if it is 100% true).

There may be situations, however, where the youth worker has to more actively steer the reflection process and propose/suggest/elaborate on the learning which might have taken place. This is acceptable as long as it is done through a dialogue and in partnership with the young person (for instance, “From my point of view, I think you improved a lot in this area... what do you think?” or “The volunteers on this project last year said they learned this and this and this... do you think you learned this, too?”) Obviously these kinds of “suggestions” can be risky and youth workers must be extremely careful not to cross the line.

**If a young person does not have strong language skills, is it acceptable for a youth worker or youth leader to reformulate their words?**

This depends on what the individual wants and on how they plan to use Youthpass in future. Youthpass is first and foremost for the young person themselves so ideally the text written on the certificate (and the language which is used) should match their own words as closely as possible. It should also describe the learning in a way that the young person can easily recognise and understand.

If the young person wants to use their Youthpass in specific situations (like to help them apply for a job), it may be a good idea for youth workers to offer to check the text. Be aware that there is big difference, however, between checking for grammar and spelling mistakes and going overboard by rewriting the entire Youthpass in the language of a doctoral dissertation. **Youthpass should always present and value a young person's learning for what it is – it should not try to make that learning into something that it is not.** Furthermore, it is no help to the young person if they cannot understand their own Youthpass. It is the individual's right to have Youthpass the way they want it. If they ask you for help, youth workers should by all means give it but at the same time they must be careful not to write what *they* think should be in Youthpass.

**If an organisation did not manage to introduce Youthpass at an earlier stage, does it make any sense to start a reflection on learning with young people at the end of an activity, even if the participants are unprepared?**

It is always worthwhile to reflect on learning but be aware that it is **extremely** difficult to work on Youthpass with fewer-opportunity young people who are not adequately prepared. There is no sense to try to introduce Youthpass “cold” on the last day of an activity – this will just serve to overwhelm and stress the young people.

If you do find yourself in this situation, it is still possible to pull out some pieces of learning, even if you only have time for a one-hour evaluation session, but the young people will likely express their learning outcomes in much more basic and generic terms than if they had been able to reflect over a longer period. If this is the case, don't worry. Identifying some learning is always better than identifying none at all.

**What if a young person and their mentor/youth worker disagree about what has (or hasn't) been learned and therefore about what should (or should not) be entered on to Youthpass?**



From the seminar  
“Let’s Youthpass it on for All!”

Disputes over learning don’t happen often with the fewer-opportunity group, but they do happen. The question of “what has been learned” is largely subjective and disagreements can arise between a young person and their mentor/youth worker. For instance, a young person may feel that during their activity they learned a lot about being a leader and they want to include this on their Youthpass. The youth worker, however, may feel that this young person showed no leadership qualities during the activity whatsoever and in consequence they do not think it is correct to include this on the young person’s Youthpass. These kinds of disagreements can be sensitive and should be handled carefully.

It can be helpful to remind ourselves what is meant by “learning” in the context of Youthpass. When we speak of what an individual has learned, we do not mean to say that that person has become an expert. It is possible, for instance, to learn a lot about leadership through observation, without ever having been a leader yourself. So in this case, is it a question of a young person learning *about* leadership or about *being* a leader? Taking time to explore the “learning” in question in more depth and making the effort to understand exactly what the young person means, maybe even helping them to express the learning in another way, can go a long way to resolving disagreements.

But who ultimately decides? In the first instance the best judge of what has or has not been learned is the young person themselves. If they claim some specific learning (after careful reflection and dialogue with their mentor), the odds are good that this learning did in fact take place and this should be respected. However, the responsibility for what is written in a Youthpass is two-sided. When a youth worker puts their signature on Youthpass in the name of an organisation, they are agreeing with what is written there. It is not correct (and it does not help the young person) to endorse learning which has not actually taken place.

With fewer-opportunity young people, it does not often happen that an individual will claim to have learned something they did not. It is much more common for them to be overly modest, to express their entire learning in only one short sentence, or to fail to recognize what they have learned at all.

### **What should you do in a situation where you feel a young person does not deserve a Youthpass?**

There are many ways in which a Youth in Action activity can go wrong. In EVS, for instance, it can happen that a volunteer decides to leave the project early or that they do not get along with the Host Organisation or that they do not manage to perform their tasks, etc. In a Youth Exchange, it can happen that an individual does not take part in the daily programme, refuses to eat foreign food, fails to interact with the other participants, and so on. In such cases, youth workers may say to themselves “That individual doesn’t deserve a Youthpass!”

It is extremely frustrating when an activity runs into problems, especially when it seems the cause is a young person’s unwillingness to behave or to co-operate, but nevertheless **youth workers do not have the right to refuse a Youthpass**. Youthpass is not a reward, it is a self-assessment tool, therefore it is not appropriate to think in terms of whether an individual does or does not “deserve” one.

When Youth in Action activities take a turn for the worse, there are several important points to keep in mind. First, we don’t always know why a young person behaves the way they do – we don’t know what else is going on in their lives which might be negatively affecting the activity (for instance, it may be that they

just received very bad news from home or that they just broke up with a boyfriend/girlfriend or that they had a conflict with another participant in the group.). Second, it is impossible to predict how an individual will react when they go abroad. When everything around you is completely strange and new, it can sometimes be too much. What might look like sulky behaviour can actually be a young person's defence mechanism.

Most importantly, we need to remember that learning still takes place even in bad situations. Therefore it can be argued that Youthpass is most needed and is most helpful when projects have been difficult. Fewer-opportunity young people don't need yet another situation where are made to feel they have failed, where they are blamed or where they are judged. They need support and to learn from their mistakes and Youthpass can play a role in this.



*From the seminar  
"Let's Youthpass it on for All!"*

## Some final do's and don'ts

By now you are hopefully chomping at the bit and eager to get busy implementing Youthpass with your young people. Just before you take action, here are some final words of advice from youth workers and youth leaders in the form of “do's and don'ts” on Youthpass.

As you get ready to take your first steps with Youthpass:

- Do start off by making sure the young people **understand the aim of their Youth Exchange or EVS project**. Stress that the whole point of such an activity is about having fun, a good experience, but also learning... and Youthpass is one piece inside that framework.
- Do make it clear to the young people **what Youthpass is and what it is not**. The young people will likely be more receptive to Youthpass if they understand its purpose and function.
- Do **take a gentle long-term approach** to presenting the Youthpass tool. It is more effective and less overwhelming for the young people if you introduce the idea of “looking at learning” in small steps.
- Do **give yourself and your young people sufficient time**. Youthpass becomes more complicated and stressful for everyone involved if you don't allow yourself the time needed to go through the process properly.
- Do **be honest** with the young people. Admit that the Youthpass process can be difficult at times but the benefits are worth the effort.
- Do **maintain a balance**. Some aspects of looking at learning can be serious but don't let the Youthpass process become too heavy or formal. Keep it fun, too.
- **Don't do an activity just to get a Youthpass**. Youthpass is a registration of learning in the specific context of Youth in Action activities. It is a tool, not an aim in itself.
- **Don't spend too much time worrying** over the Key Competences. The Key Competences are important but at the end of the day they are just categories for learning. Don't let yourself or your young people be overwhelmed by them.
- **Don't take over the self-assessment process**. Youth workers and youth leaders may have a lot to say about a young person's learning but it is not up to them to identify it – rather they should make every effort to help the young person see their learning for themselves (as far as possible).

- **Don't wait too long** to start the process. It is extremely difficult (and not at all satisfying) to work on Youthpass in the last week or on the last day of an activity.
- **Don't just see Youthpass as the certificate at the end.** Youthpass is the process that takes place before, during and after an activity.

\* \* \* \* \*

Hopefully all of the previous information has given you not just the motivation to start working with Youthpass but also some concrete ideas about the different approaches you can take and the methods you can use. Additional suggestions to help you get started are included at the end of the booklet in the “Mini-Toolbox”.

Up to now we have been focusing on Youthpass as a tool for the recognition of learning in the very specific context of Youth in Action activities. The next section of “Youthpass for All” will look at how we can take the processes we began with Youthpass and expand them into other areas of our work with the fewer-opportunity target group.



*From the seminar  
“Let's Youthpass it on for All!”*





# GOING beyond

## Youthpass

As soon as you start working with Youthpass, you also start working with competences... but what is all the fuss around competences about, anyways?

The idea of working with competences goes far beyond Youthpass and the Youth in Action programme - it can be applied to many areas of our work with young people. In the following pages we will explore why the notion of competences is receiving so much attention and what this could mean for fewer-opportunity young people.

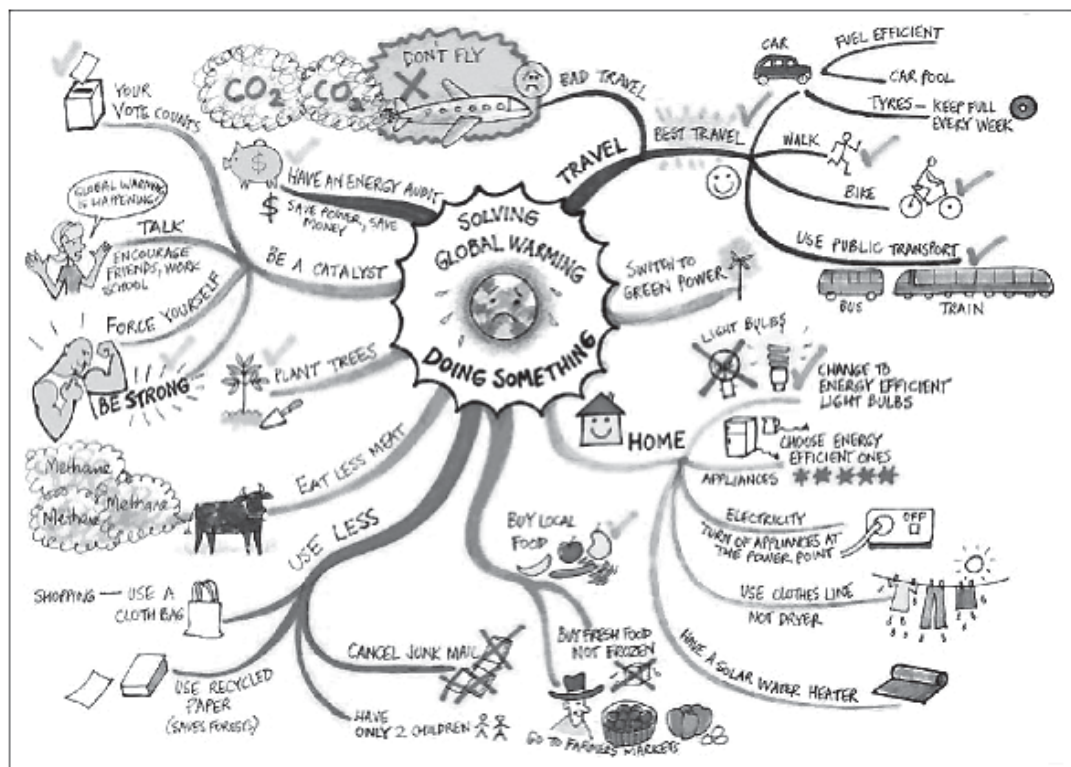
## Why all the talk around competences?

“Competence” has recently become a popular buzz-word and it is because the world around us (and the situation in terms of our learning) is changing.

In today’s digitized globalized world, our lives are looking more and more like puzzles. Our life path is no longer straight and predictable. We live in societies which are diverse, highly mobile, and constantly changing. The same can be said of our learning path. What we learn at school (and even in university) no longer lasts throughout our professional life. Post-secondary degrees and diplomas no longer guarantee a successful professional career. The employment market is changing so fast that a course of study which is cutting-edge today can be completely obsolete tomorrow. It is likely that we will need to re-orient ourselves, find new work and new professions, not just once but at several different stages in our adult working lives.



## initiative and entrepreneurship



From Apple

At the same time, **our attitudes towards learning are beginning to change**. In the past, educational policies and practices approached “learning” as something which ceased as soon as a young person left school. More recently, however, these policies have changed to actively recognise and reflect the fact that **learning takes place throughout our lives**. Until recently it was believed that “learning” ceased as soon as a young person left school. We know that **learning takes place throughout our lives**. With this has come new awareness that a large amount of our learning does not take place only inside the formal education system but also in other contexts (like in work experience, volunteering, free time activities, with family and friends, etc) and as a result these other areas of learning are beginning to gain more respect.

However, young people today (and particularly those from fewer-opportunity backgrounds) are extremely savvy. They are not interested or motivated to learn if they cannot clearly see what the learning is for and where it will take them. It is not enough to offer vague promises about what an activity or an education course or a certificate “might” do for them. **Young people need practical and reasonable reference points to know (and to accept) why they should learn what they are asked to learn.**

All of this suggests that there is a need for a different approach to learning. There is **a need to move away from the traditional emphasis on diplomas or degrees and to move towards a new view of learning as a lifelong process with an emphasis on the development of competences.**

Adopting such a view will have **big implications** – for formal education, for the employment market and also for youth work – but it also offers some exciting new possibilities in terms of how to see learning and for the way we work with young people.

## Competences and the youth sector

For the youth sector, the idea of emphasizing competences is not actually as new or strange as it may first appear. If we understand “competence” to mean the combination of knowledge, skill and attitude (as described in the context of Youthpass) then it could be argued that youth work is, by definition, all about working with competences. Much of the work we do with young people is designed to contribute in some way **to increasing an individual’s knowledge, contributing to their skills or improving their attitudes**. This in essence is developing competences.

Many youth workers and youth leaders are probably working on competences with their fewer-opportunity young people right now – but they **might not be aware** that they are doing so and they are probably not taking full advantage of their possibilities. Youth workers regularly face the tough challenge of trying to maintain the right balance between providing young people with something to do in their leisure time (something they enjoy, something that keeps them busy, something that keeps them safe) and providing young people with opportunities to learn. We know that there is learning present in all the activities and in all the layers of the work that we do with our youngsters... but a lot of the time that learning gets pushed to the background.

With the fewer-opportunity target group, resources are never sufficient and crises occur regularly. In such circumstances it is not easy for a youth worker or youth leader to stop and reflect on learning – too often we content ourselves with the thought that the learning is happening “out there somewhere” and leave it at that.

However, we can greatly improve the results of our work with fewer-opportunity young people if we take the time **to focus more consciously on learning** and if we find ways **to structure the development of competences**. This methodology is known as a “competence-based approach”.

## What is a competence-based approach?

While there may be different official definitions, a “competence-based approach” in youth work can be summarized as a way of working that makes young people **aware of their own competences** and offers them opportunities to **develop their competences further**. In many ways, a competence-based approach resembles the **process** youth workers use with Youthpass, the main difference being in terms of scale. Youthpass looks at learning within just one activity but a competence-based approach looks at **learning throughout a whole range of activities and experiences over a longer period**.

A competence-based approach focuses on **the individual and their life pathway**. It looks at the development of professional knowledge, skills and competences as well as the development of soft skills, attitudes and values. It takes account of all types of learning in many different areas (like learning that takes place in school, work, volunteering, free time activities but also in household and family, volunteer work, through strong or important incidents like a birth or a death, big social and/or political changes, and so on.) Such an approach is intended to strengthen an individual’s motivation, sense of initiative, sense of responsibility and, most importantly, their **awareness of learning as an integral aspect throughout their lives**.

There are many ways to set up and carry out a competence-based approach but in general this way of working involves taking a young person through a series of different steps or phases:

- helping them to understand the basic concept of a “competence”
- helping them to recognize competences they already have
- helping them to define and take steps to develop their competences (those they have as well as those they may lack)
- helping them to document their progress over time and to make their learning visible
- helping them to self-reflect and self-assess regularly throughout the process

Self-reflection and self-assessment are vital aspects of a competence-based approach. Although the term “self” suggests that the individual is meant to reflect and assess independently, this is extremely difficult to do in practice. **It may sound contradictory, but self-assessment often works best when the individual is assisted through the process.** Young people (especially those from fewer-opportunity backgrounds) will definitely need extra help and support to reflect and assess their competences.

In practice, there can be many variations on this general framework. Depending on how an organization works and on how their approach is structured, some steps may be more explicit than others while some may involve longer time periods than others.



## learning to learn



*From Apple*

Regardless of the format, there are several **key elements** which should be observed when using a competence-based approach with young people:

- **Participation must be voluntary.** Self-assessment only works if the individual wants to do it. Pressuring or forcing someone to take part in a competence-based approach is counter-productive – it is more likely to put a young person off.
- **The young person should not just be a consumer.** A competence-based approach is about self-development and this means that the young person should be as actively involved in the process as possible. This does not just mean taking part in discussions or doing exercises – it also means that the youngster plays a role in managing and steering their own learning process (as much as possible).
- **There must be a clear structure or framework.** The individual needs to see clearly *what* they are doing, *why* they are doing it, *how* the process works and *when* they successfully take steps forward.
- **It must start from what the individual already has.** As a rule it is much easier to recognize our weaknesses than our strengths but a competence-based approach must start from the positive rather than the negative – otherwise it is again giving young people the message that they are not good enough. A competence-based approach must start out by looking first to see what a young person *has* and what they can *already do* and then go forward from there.

## Advantage, added value and specific challenges

A competence-based approach may sound good in theory, but is it really worth the effort? If learning is happening inside of our youth work activities anyways, why should we go to the trouble of restructuring the way we work with young people?

It is definitely worthwhile to consider adopting a competence-based approach in your work. A competence-based approach has many advantages, including:

- **It establishes more equality between learning pathways and learning fields.** A competence-based approach looks at all types of learning pathways and it places equal value on learning no matter its form or where it happens. (For instance, my learning that comes out of school has equal value with my learning that takes place in my youth club or my learning that comes as a result of talks with members of my family.)
- **It can offer more opportunities for individuals.** Because the concept of learning is expanded to include all areas, a competence-based approach offers a much wider range of learning possibilities for individuals. This is particularly important for those young people who were not successful in school or who face difficulties coping in the formal education system.
- **It can help to build self-confidence.** Going through the process of getting to know your own competences – what you can do and where your talents lie – can be a big boost to an individual's self-confidence and self-esteem.
- **It can help to strengthen motivation.** Knowing your own competences can also be a way to give a new impulse or a “kick-start” to an individual in the sense that they may find the motivation to start something new or to make changes in their life (for instance, going back to school, getting a job, adjusting their behaviour or their outlook on life, etc.).
- **It can improve transparency.** A competence-based approach makes learning much more understandable – in terms of *what* is being learned as well as *why* it is being learned. This is important because we are less motivated to learn if we don't see the need for that learning.



- **It can plant the seeds for lifelong learning.** Learning to look at competencies is a skill which can be applied in many areas of an individual's life. A competence-based approach in youth work can introduce individuals to the positive aspects of learning and can encourage self-development throughout their lives.
- **It can increase flexibility and transferability.** As long as the emphasis is placed on qualifications, it means that young people without degrees or diplomas will have absolutely no chance of getting jobs. (There is no room for flexibility - either you have the qualification or you don't.) If however we change the emphasis and start to focus to competences, we look at what a young person can *do* rather than just at what they *know*. This can lead to new possibilities and much greater flexibility, particularly when it comes to finding a job, because competences gained in one area or field can be more easily transferred to others (whereas diplomas and degrees cannot).

While a competence-based approach can be beneficial for any young person, this way of working has **particular added value for young people in the fewer opportunity target group**. Many fewer-opportunity profiles have bad experiences in the formal education system and as a result they may believe that they cannot learn. However, these young people do have talents and skills - they just are not used to recognizing them.



From Rückenwind

A competence-based approach can have added benefits for this target group because:

- **It has a positive entry point.** A competence-based approach begins by looking at competences the individual already *has* rather than at those they *lack*.
- **It is progressive.** A competence-based approach starts from what someone can already do (or from what they already have) and builds upon that. In such a process, it is impossible for an individual to fail because the only direction to go is forward.
- **It has a low entry threshold.** Anyone can develop their competences and the process can begin at any time – it is not dependent upon a person’s age, their level of intelligence, their grades in school, or their personal background.
- **It can bring theory and practice closer together.** This in turn increases the relevancy of what is being learned. Young people can see more sense and usefulness in their learning and this is good for their motivation.
- **Individuals take part of their own free will.** Young people are not obliged to take part in a competence-based approach, they do so voluntarily. This can have a positive effect because young people are not *required* to look at competences in the same way they may previously have been *required* to attend school.
- **Individuals gain more influence over their own learning process.** In a competence-based approach, a young person is not just a consumer (or a pupil doing what the teacher says). Over time they can grow to become an active manager of their own learning process, perhaps for the very first time, and this is highly empowering.

While there are many benefits, it is important to admit that a competence-based approach does require effort and there are some **challenges** associated with this way of working, including:

- **It can be a complex and intensive process.** In the beginning it is always daunting to try to visualize how to implement such an approach. The process is not easy for young people or their youth workers either – while young people will need to learn how to reflect and self-assess, their mentors and youth leaders will need to learn how to manage such a process, too.
- **Assistance or guidance is necessary.** It is extremely difficult to analyse your own learning without outside help. It is not realistic to expect fewer-opportunity young people to know how to develop competences on their own so youth workers have to be ready to be deeply involved throughout all stages of the process.
- **You need a way to measure.** An important part of learning is being able to see and recognize your own progress. In order to measure competences, youth workers and youth leaders will need to define parameters, establish levels and/or develop tools that young people can use in order to clearly see their improvements and their achievements.

Perhaps the greatest challenge involved with a competence-based approach is just that – the fact that it is an approach. This makes it difficult to imagine what working with competences might look like with real young people in a real organization.

A competence-based approach is a way of working with young people and as such, there are probably hundreds (if not thousands) of forms this could take. Obviously we cannot provide a comprehensive overview of all of these forms here but in the next section we will look at two specific examples of how organizations put the theory of competence-based approaches into practice.

## Examples of competence-based approaches



### EXAMPLE 1

#### „PROFILPASS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE“

IES - Institut für Entwicklungsplanung und Strukturforschung GmbH an der Universität Hannover, Germany

Contact person: Mrs. Sabine Seidel

<http://www.profilpass-online.de/>

The origin of the ProfilPASS dates back to 2002 when the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the European Social Fund provided financial support for a feasibility study on the development of a “passport” to be used in non-formal learning.

At that time, many types of learning “passports” already existed in Germany and all of these were, in some way, geared towards the employment market. Virtually none of them contained any elements of a competence-based approach. Many of the existing passports were designed mainly to collect certificates and diplomas or else to describe what a young person *did* or what they *reached* in a specific activity... but they did not describe the learning process. Such instruments may be useful for students but they have limited benefits for young people from other backgrounds.

At the end of the feasibility study, a list of recommendations was compiled which stated that a new type of passport was needed, one which would:

- assist self-exploration and help an individual to recognise their own competences
- encompass all aspects of an individual’s life and all of their fields of learning
- be accessible to all profiles of young people, irrespective of their personal and educational background

Concretely, such an instrument should:

- promote self-organised learning and dialogue skills
- take a “biographical” approach (i.e. look at an individual’s own life as a source of learning and therefore as a source of competences).

- be process-oriented instead of result-oriented (“the journey is the reward”)
- focus on self-exploration of competences *without* the need for validation
- be open-ended
- provide professional assistance and guidance
- empower young people towards employability by strengthening their self-awareness and self-esteem
- be solely for the user’s own use (i.e. it is not meant to be shared with others)
- assign equal value to all forms of learning (formal, non-formal or informal)
- be compatible with European-level instruments (i.e. it could function as one step before the Europass C.V.)

These recommendations ultimately lead to the development of the “ProfilPASS”.

### PROFILPASS

The philosophy behind “ProfilPASS” (2006) is summed up its slogan: **“You can do much more than you believe!”** (“Du kannst viel mehr, als Du glaubst!”) While our learning in school, in our professional training and on the job is often confirmed and documented in certificates, diplomas and performance reviews, many other areas of our learning receive no recognition at all. As a result, we may **not be aware of all the things we have learned or of all the things we can do.**

“ProfilPASS” was designed to assist in determining and documenting an individual’s own competences and abilities as well as **how** they were acquired. The PASS takes the user on a personal “journey of self-discovery” through the following themes:

- My Life
- My Fields of Activity
- My Competences
- My Goals



ProfilPASS is structured so as to help the user first discover their competences and then to connect them for **different purposes** (e.g. in professional life, for further education, for volunteer work or social involvement, etc.) Expressed another way, this “journey” aims to help the user find answers to the questions “Where do I stand?” and “Where do I want to go?”

To do this, ProfilPASS uses a **series of worksheets and exercises** to help the user review all areas where they have been active in their lives in order to identify the different forms of learning that took place there, including:

- hobbies and free time
- household and family
- school
- professional training
- military service, civil service or social year
- work and career
- political/social activism and volunteering
- other important life situations

Once the user has made an inventory of what they have done and what they have learned, they then translate that learning into competences. As a final step, the individual uses their competences as a basis to define future goals and further steps.

ProfilPASS is a tool for self-assessment and as such it is meant to be used on a purely voluntary basis. Working with ProfilPASS can be an intense experience and the process is not meant to be gone through in one day or in just a few hours. The user decides which elements they wish to work on and at what pace. The different sections can be worked through independently or with the support of a mentor.

#### **PROFILPASS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

In general, reactions to the ProfilPASS were highly positive but younger people (14-15 years) found the instrument difficult to use. For this age group, the wording was often too formal. As well, only a small number of the learning fields were relevant (because as a rule, 14-15 year olds have not yet started to work, have not begun professional training, are too young for military service, etc.) In response, the original tool was adapted and a second version – “ProfilPASS for Young People” (“ProfilPASS für junge Menschen”) – was created specifically for younger age groups.

“ProfilPASS for Young People” (2007) shows the user **what they have done** in different aspects of their lives and **highlights their interests** which can, in turn, provide a basis for their future plans. The ProfilPASS helps the user to recognise which talents and skills they have as well as where their strengths lie. The tool strives to make young people aware that there are many possibilities for learning and self-development, not just in school. By going through the exercises in ProfilPASS, young people realise that they really can do more than they believe!



By using a “biographical” approach (or in other words, by looking at developments in their own lives), young people are encouraged to come to terms with their own strengths and abilities. The tool is divided into four parts:

- 1 My Life** – this section looks at an individual’s current life situation including family, school and leisure time activities as well as work experience, training and employment.
- 2 My Strengths** – the emphasis here is placed on the activities a young person does in their leisure or school time. What exactly do I do? Do I do this regularly? Do I like to do it? Which personal qualities characterise me? How do others see me? Self- and external assessments help the user to develop a realistic view of their own strengths.
- 3 My Goals** – this section focuses on interests, wishes and personal goals. What would I like to be able to do? What I would I like to know? What will change in my life? What do I want to change?
- 4 My Collection of Proofs** – when an individual participates in matches, competitions, or other projects, they are often awarded a certificate or a confirmation of participation. Space to collect these and other types of evidence of what a young person has done (e.g. photos, newspaper articles, etc.) is provided here.

ProfilPASS is extremely **user-friendly**. The methods, graphics and language are designed to match the level of this age group and they are particularly well-suited to young people from fewer-opportunity backgrounds.

Some young people might think “I already know what I can do”...many more may be unsure or unclear about what they can do... and fewer-opportunity young people often think that they can do nothing at all! However, by looking at all dimensions of an individual’s life, and not just at formal education, these youngsters quickly begin to see that they have a wide range of talents and numerous strengths, much more than they ever realised. This can have an extremely positive impact on an individual’s self-esteem as well as on their motivation to continue to develop their learning and their competences.

Although ProfilPASS takes a young person through a process of self-reflection... it does not analyse a young person’s personality (e.g. “why am I shy?”) ProfilPASS shows **the things a young person can do** and their **specific talents**. The outcomes of the different exercises are factual – “I do this” – they do not attempt to examine the “whys” of an individual’s behaviour.

It is the intention that young people who use the ProfilPASS will be guided through the process by **a support person or mentor**. This could be a teacher, a counsellor, an educator, a youth worker or a recognised ProfilPASS advisor. Regardless of *who* the mentor is, it is very important that this person to have a thorough understanding of the self-assessment process and that they are aware of the complexities involved in working with competences. (It can sometimes be helpful if the mentor first goes through the process of looking at their own competences before trying to assist a young person to do so.)

Like the original version, this tool aims to help young people first discover their competences and then to connect them for different purposes. As such, the concluding questions “Where do I stand?” and “Where do I want to go?” are also relevant here. However, “ProfilPASS for Young People” takes a soft approach. It does not push the user to come up with definitive answers or to chart out long-term life plans. Instead, it takes a more general view and encourages a young person to get to know themselves, their interests and their abilities.



Young people face many moments when they must make decisions and choose directions in their lives. Knowing how to self-reflect, knowing who you are, what you can do, where your strengths lie and what you are interested in... can all go a long way to making such choices easier. In this way, “ProfilPASS for Young People” can be seen as a first step in teaching young people how to self-reflect as well as how to learn.

- ! Additional information about ProfilPASS can be found on the homepage (in English and German) at [www.profilpass.de](http://www.profilpass.de) or contact Mrs. Sabine Seidel ([seidel@ies.uni-hannover.de](mailto:seidel@ies.uni-hannover.de))



## EXAMPLE 2

### “C-STICK”

JES vzw, Belgium

Contact person: Mrs. Marjan Van de Maele

[www.jes.be](http://www.jes.be)

JES is a plural non-profit organisation whose mission is to create equal opportunities for young people to enable them to actively participate in society. JES is based in three Belgian cities: Brussels, Antwerp and Ghent. Its main activities include training and guidance, training for youth work volunteers, outreach work, support for youth clubs and youth work initiatives. These activities focus on young people from 6-30 years of age, living in large cities, many of whom are low-skilled and from a migrant background.

While specific profiles within this large group can be very different, many of these young people face similar difficulties. Many of them have followed what can be called “a-typical” educational, work or life paths. As a result they need to find ways to give shape and direction to these pathways, to take steps independently and sometimes to literally **break their way through the obstacles that stand in their way**. This implies that the young people have the capacity for self-reflection, that they are able to take initiative and to be assertive – but these abilities are **far from self-evident**, particularly for a target group which regularly has to cope with negative experiences in formal education as well as on the job market and, because of this, with a negative or unrealistic self-image.

Over time, these young people come into contact with a wide variety of organisations and institutions (e.g. schools, training centres, youth work organisations, unemployment offices, etc.) It is common that the experiences they gain in one area are not carried over into another and this can be extremely demotivating. The young people must continually start over from zero and they can quickly lose all trust in the sense or usefulness of training and/or schooling processes.

On the **employment market**, young people from this target group have difficulty to find their place due to their lack of qualifications and work experiences. Just creating a CV can be a serious obstacle, not just because young people don't know which elements should be included but also because they **do not have the digital competence to produce a suitable electronic document**. As a result, the young people become dependent on the help of organisations to create and update their own CV. Employers, from their side, say that young people in this target group do not cope well in a job interview situation. They do not know **how to “sell” themselves**; they cannot name specific talents or qualities that they have and they cannot describe situations where they have shown specific abilities or competences.

JES's response to this situation was the **C-Stick project** (2006-2007) which aimed to gather and develop useful methods to work on competences with low-skilled youngsters. Specifically, the C-Stick project set itself the task of helping the young people:

- to become acquainted with the terminology  
(What is a competence? Which competences exist?)
- to discover their own competences and to be able to talk about them
- to translate their competences into a (digital) personal development plan

The first step in the process involved **defining a framework**. The project conducted a consultation process with **employers** from a variety of different sectors (sales, child care, event management, catering, logistics, automotives, wholesale and distribution, etc.) The employers were presented with an extensive list of competences and were asked: “Which of these competences would you prioritise if you were considering hiring a youngster with low-level skills?” After extensive and deep discussions, the end result was a list of **16 Key Competences** (not to be confused with the eight Key Competences of Youthpass).

These included:

1. Co-operating
2. Speaking
3. Listening
4. Flexibility
5. Planning and organising
6. Learning
7. Giving feedback
8. Coping with feedback
9. Self-reflection
10. Networking
11. Coping with authority
12. Respecting rules
13. Dealing with clients
14. Taking initiative
15. Acting independently
16. Empathizing

Next, a series of **observable performance indicators** for each of the 16 competences were defined and tested. The performance indicators consisted of simple straightforward statements on behaviour that are shown during a practical exercise and which indicate the level of development of a competency. For example:

### Are you good at listening?

- Do you understand most of the time what others tell you?
- Do you then know what to do?

|   | Yes | No |
|---|-----|----|
| I turn myself towards the speaker   |     |    |
| I look the speaker in the eye   |     |    |
|   |     |    |
|   | Yes | No |
| I ask for an explanation if I don't understand something                          |     |    |
| I show that I understood the explanation<br>(e.g. by nodding or saying "mmm hmm") |     |    |
| I understand what I have to do after an explanation                               |     |    |
|   |     |    |
|   | Yes | No |
| I let the speaker finish his explanation  |     |    |
| I listen to the speaker, even if I totally disagree                               |     |    |
| I only ask questions if I really don't understand something                       |     |    |
| I only ask questions that are related to the explanation                          |     |    |

Once this framework was established, the next step involved helping the young people to understand the concept of "competences" and to identify competences they have themselves. To do this, they used an approach that **linked experiential learning to the competence framework**. Through real-life job-simulating situations, the young people gained practical skills while at the same time learned how to better recognise and identify the competences needed in specific situations.

**FOR EXAMPLE:** A group of young people are considering finding work in the catering industry. It is not enough to just *talk* about catering jobs or about the competences catering work might require. The theory of catering work is put theory into practice by creating opportunities for the young people to spend their days learning and working in a kitchen (usually a kitchen in a youth centre). In this way, the young people learn very quickly that working in the catering industry means working in a small room under a lot of stress. It means being able to follow a recipe, knowing how to weigh ingredients, knowing how to plan and organise and, most importantly, it is very different from cooking at home.

Through this kind of practical experience, young people can more easily begin to understand what is meant by “**competence**”. They are also able to discover specific competences that they have and can discuss them within a clear relevant context.

Once the young people started to reflect on competences, the final step was to adopt a method which would allow them to translate those competences into a usable digital form. This is where the C-Stick itself came in.

The **C-Stick** is a central database where young people can gather and store all kinds of relevant information. It provides them with a framework for their personal development plans. It also contains a tool to create and adjust CVs in a very quick and easy way.

The **portfolio was created on a USB flash drive**, a very tool which is very well-known and attractive to young people. This tool has several **advantages**:

- it can be permanently updated
- it is a concrete and tangible tool that young people can carry with them at any time (unlike an e-portfolio on a website).
- the portfolio on the USB flash drive is connected via the internet to a server in order to keep a backup of the data. It is also linked to an administrative system by which tutors can send files and competence assessments to their youngsters.
- it is possible to integrate the information stored on C-Stick in other web-applications (like the website of the Flemish employment service, job vacancy websites, etc.)



In order to be sure that this portfolio was suitable for our target group, it was important to **ensure easy accessibility**. This was done by creating an attractive easy-reference interface on the C-Stick together with a simple navigation structure described in everyday language.

C-Stick allows each young person to **select those experiences and competences that they feel are most relevant for a specific job application or interview** and to **update** their CV or application letter accordingly. Because the tool is so easy to use, the young people are far less dependent on their youth worker or their organisation and can apply for jobs much more independently.

A C-Stick is the property of the individual and they can add or adjust information as they like as they gain more experience and develop their competences further over time. C-Stick is programmed so that data can be exchanged between different organisations (if mutual agreements have been made). This allows other organisations to continue the work started in different areas of the young person's learning path. In this way, **the individual gains a better overview of their growth and progress**.

As this example shows, C-Stick can be an important instrument to bring young people closer to meaningful employment. However, this does not mean that all the responsibility for finding interesting and sustainable work can be laid on the shoulders of the individual in possession of a C-Stick. It will also be **vital to sensitize employers** to this tool as well as to the importance and relevance of competences. C-Stick is an instrument with a lot of potential but nevertheless it remains just one instrument.

 *This description is based in part on the brochure “De C-Stick – Werken rond competenties met jongeren” published by JES vzw (Jan Pille & Marjan Van de Maele, editors).*

## Recommendations for competence-based approaches

Working with a competence-based approach can be a very new idea for youth workers and youth leaders but as the examples above have shown, there are many different ways of working with competences which can offer a world of **new possibilities** for our target group.

If you are thinking about using a more competence-based approach in your organisation, consider the following recommendations from colleagues with experience in the field:

### When using competence-based approaches:

- Start from a young person's strengths – never from their weaknesses!
- Give young people the freedom and the responsibility to experiment and to discover for themselves as much as possible
- Keep youth work fun! Find methods on competences that are enjoyable for the youngsters.
- Stay flexible – use different methods to suit different profiles of young people

Most importantly, remember that competence-based approaches need to be more than just a way for fewer-opportunity young people to get jobs. The emphasis must be placed on **personal development** as a whole.



*From Rückenwind*





# CONCLUSION

We hope that the information in this booklet has inspired you to start thinking about how you can use Youthpass or even how you can take your first steps towards a competence-based approach with the young people in your organisation.

If you still have questions about the tools and concepts presented here, don't worry - you are not alone. At this time Youthpass is still a new instrument and the notion of working with young people on the basis of competences is still in an early phase of development.

In the youth sector, we are on the verge of taking some exciting but challenging new steps towards learning how to work with learning. If we continue down this road, where might it lead us?

Are competence-based approaches just a nine-day wonder or are they here to stay? Is Youthpass something to display on the wall or does it offer a real chance for our target group? So far the indications are positive but only time will tell.

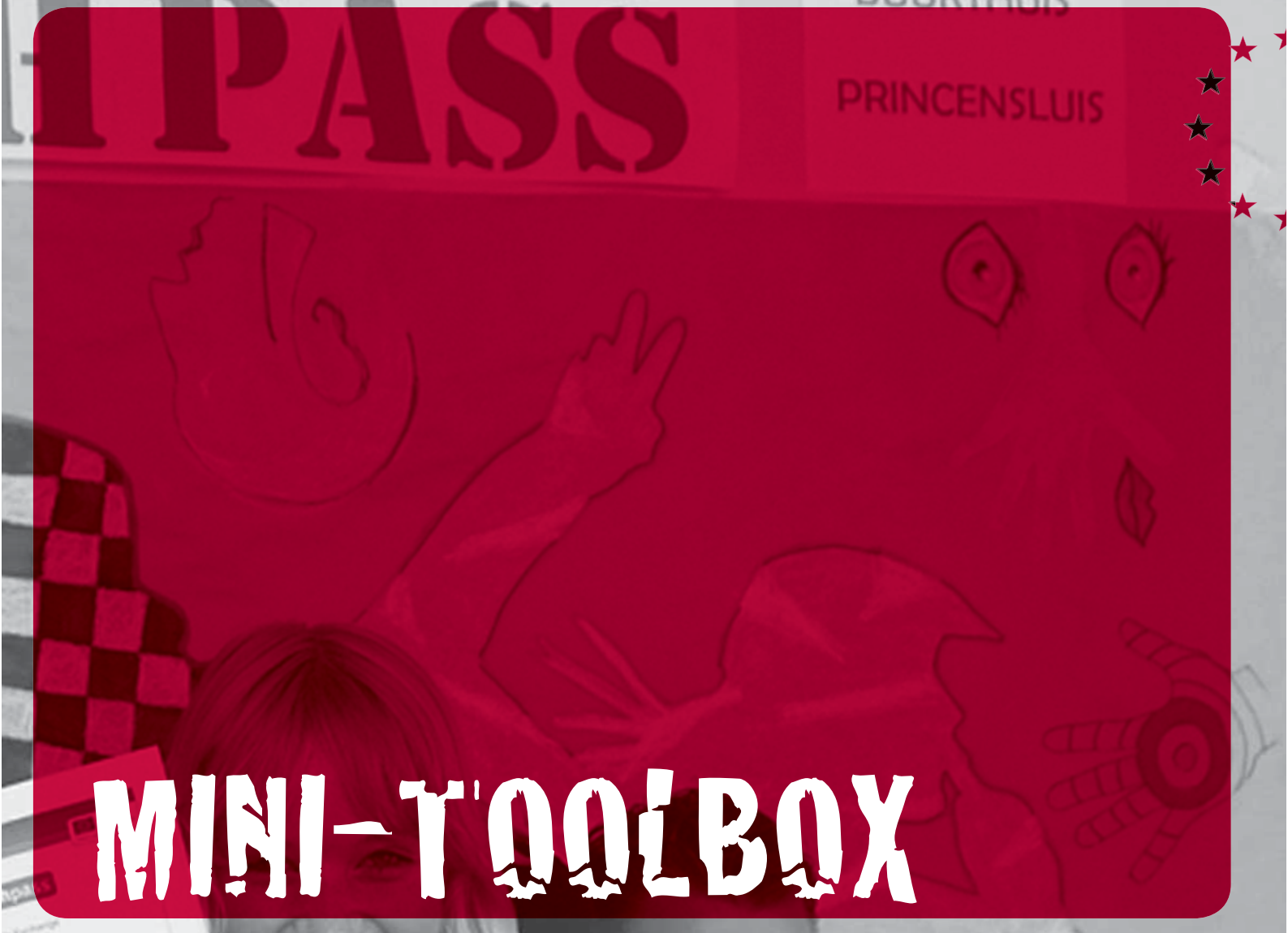


What is certain is that every day large numbers of fewer-opportunity young people are still “falling out of the boat”- leaving school with no qualifications, unable to find decent jobs and unable to create the kind of lives that they want for themselves. Given this challenge, it is **definitely worthwhile to consider competence-based approaches**, what they can offer and how they can help traditional systems to change for the benefit of these youngsters.

If you need further encouragement, consider these final tips from youth workers and youth leaders:

- Do your best to fulfil your obligation to offer your young people the possibility to obtain a Youthpass for their Youth in Action activities. The topic of Youthpass is quite broad – take time to learn and to build up your level of confidence.
- If you don't yet feel ready to use Youthpass, contact your National Agency and ask whether they can provide you with further information and/or training. (Many opportunities exist – use them!)
- Do not get lost in theory – stay practical. Seek out concrete examples of how to use Youthpass – both *before* you implement it as well as *while* you implement it - by getting in touch with experienced colleagues (in your own or in other organisations).
- Speaking about “learning” and reflecting on one's own competencies is not easy (inside or outside of Youthpass). To better understand the complexities of this process, it can be useful for youth workers and youth leaders to first look at *themselves* (i.e. to take time to look at their own lifepath, learning and competencies) before they start working with Youthpass or implementing a wider competence-based approach with fewer-opportunity young people.
- As you gain more experience, document the methods you use (for looking at learning and developing competencies), the results you achieve and your ideas for improvements. This is valuable information which should be shared with your National Agency and with other colleagues in the field (especially with newcomers).
- Always remember that a young person's learning – which may be obvious to you – is not always obvious to them. Your most important role with Youthpass or in a competence-based approach is to help the individual recognise and express their own learning as concretely as possible.





How can you start looking at learning and how can you take the first steps towards working with Youthpass? This section describes some **simple exercises and methods** suggested by youth workers and youth leaders who have successfully **used Youthpass with the fewer-opportunity target group**.

Some of the methods described here relate directly to Youthpass. Others are intended to serve as ways to help the young people to **express their learning outcomes in general**. These outcomes can then be translated to fit the Youthpass certificate or to suit other learning discussions with the youth worker or mentor. An added bonus is that many of these methods directly contribute to developing some of the eight Key Competences.



*From the seminar  
“Let’s Youthpass it on for All!”*

Many of these methods are designed to be used in a group setting and this makes them particularly appropriate for use in Youth Exchanges or group EVS projects. However, with a little imagination and creativity, the exercises for groups can be adapted to suit individual young people, too.

**Feel free to experiment... and good luck!**

- What is “learning”?
- Body Outlines
- Comic Life
- Photos
- Methods with Video
- Using the Media
- “What is Youthpass?” (handout, Part 1)
- “The eight Key Competences” (handout, Part 2)
- Youthpass EVS Handout

## **What is “learning”?**

Some young people may react negatively to the idea of “learning” or to “looking at learning”. In such cases it can be helpful if youth workers or youth leaders start off by trying to break through the negative stereotypes and offer an alternative point of view.

This quick exercise can be used to help the young people start thinking about what is meant by “learning”. It can help them to understand that “learning” does not just take place in school and that there are many different ways to learn. Depending on your group, you can choose whether you wish to do the exercise during the preparation phase or else at the start of the activity itself.

1. *Why should we learn? What is learning for?*
2. *In what ways can we learn?*
3. *How do you like to learn?*

***When working with a group...***

Write out the three questions on separate sheets of flipchart paper. Let the young people see the first question and ask them to brainstorm as many answers as they can think of. Write out all their answers in the form of key words on flipchart paper. After approximately 10 -15 minutes (or when the group runs out of answers) take a new sheet of paper repeat the procedure for the second question.

For Question 3, you can again repeat the procedure of the brainstorm or else use a more personal approach. If you have a group of less than 10 persons, ask the young people to consider all the answers to Question 2 (in what ways can we learn?) and then ask them one at a time which of these are ways they personally like to learn. Note down their answers on the flipchart. If your group is larger than 10 persons, invite the young people to consider the answers for Question 2 and then put a mark on the paper next to the ways in which they personally like to learn. Then ask if anyone would like to share or explain their answer. Did anyone mark all of the points? Why or why not? Did anyone mark none of the points? Why or why not?

***These questions lend themselves most easily to discussion in a group setting but you could try adapting them for use with individual young people as well.***

***The results of this exercise provide a valuable basis and can be used to start further discussions on learning. Consider using the flipcharts again during the activity (if appropriate). You can come back to them again in a group context or else use them in one-on-one discussions between an individual young person and their mentor.***

## Body Outlines

Many young people have trouble finding the words to express what they are experiencing or learning during an activity. This method can be used to make learning visible for individuals as well as for the rest of the group.

*Have the young people work together in partners (they do not need to share the same language). Put out long sheets of paper (approx. 2 metres in length – one sheet for each young person) on the floor.*

1. Have one partner lie down on the paper while the other partner draws their outline.
2. Together with their partner, have the young people colour and fill in some features on each other's outline (e.g. eyes, nose, mouth, hair, their clothing, etc.)
3. Have each person write their name at the top of their outline
4. Display the drawings in a space where the young people will spend a lot of their time together (e.g. in a working room, in the dining room, etc.)

At the end of each day (or each week) ask the young people to put **at least one sticker or a Post-It** on their outline. They should stick on whatever they think was important in terms of their learning. They should place the sticker on the part of the body which they think is most relevant to that learning (e.g. their brain, their eyes, their stomach, their hands, their feet, etc). Encourage the young people to write out some key words on their sticker to help them remember their learning and why they put it on that particular spot.

*Use the outline like a daily diary and add a little bit to it each day. Depending on the profile of the group and on the programme of your activity, come back to the stickers at different moments and give the young people the chance to reflect on and discuss the learning they choose to add. You may wish to have some discussions in the large group (so that everyone can see what the others are learning) or you may choose to go into more detail in private one-on-one discussions with a group leader or mentor.*

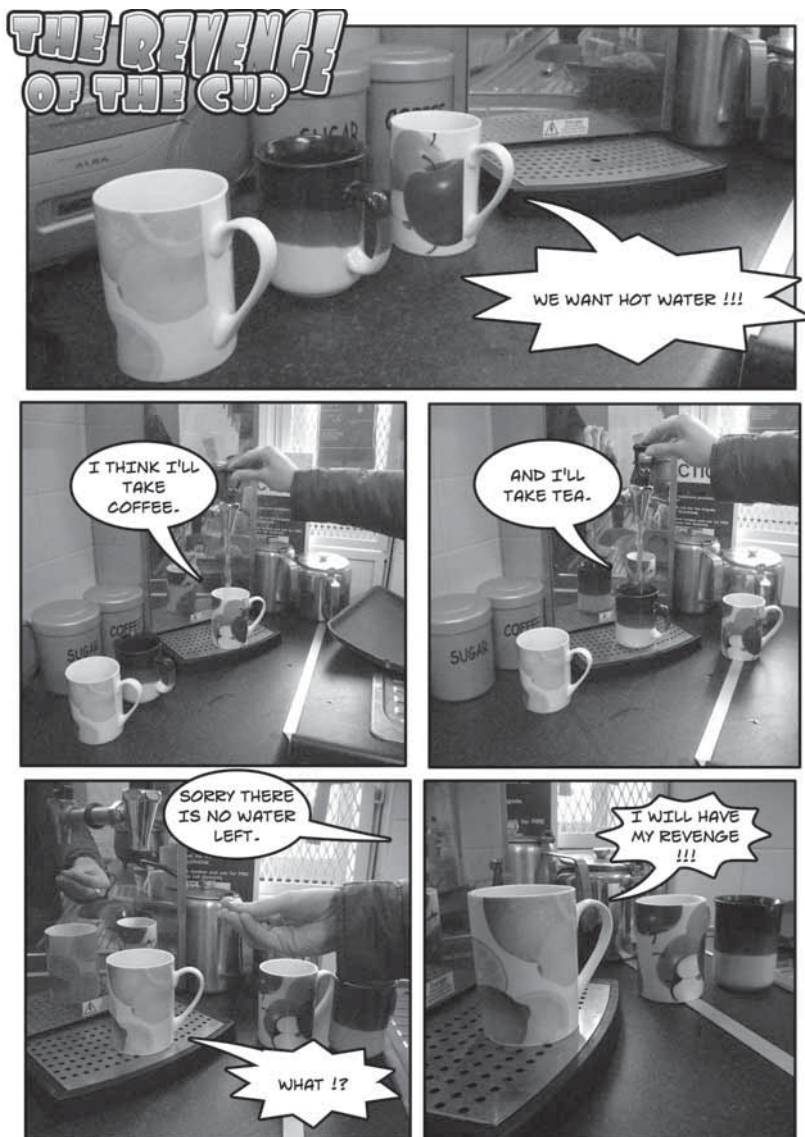
## Comic Life

If your group of young people responds well to visual images (for instance, photos, drawings, paintings, etc.), “Comic Life” is a way to use images to start a dialogue about learning.

“Comic Life” is a computer programme that can be downloaded from Internet which allows the user to design a comic strip using their own photographs, drawings, doodles, graffiti, etc. The programme is fun and easy to use and allows the young people to express their learning in a visual way.

### EXAMPLE

Have each person select 4-8 photos which show specific moments during the activity that were important to them or else which show some specific moment of learning. These can be positive as well as negative moments – it is up to the individual.



*“the revenge of the cup”*

Using the Comic Life programme, upload participants' photos and scan their images on to the computer, then have the young people put their images together so as to make a comic strip. The comic can tell a running story but it can also show unrelated moments. Have the young people give their comic strip a title and encourage them to include some special effects like lettering text (e.g. "Ka-blam!") or speech balloons.

Print out the final version and arrange for a way to exhibit and share the results. For instance, you can post the comics around the room, exchange them in small groups or have the young people present them one by one. Ask each person to explain why they chose those specific photos and to tell a little about what they learned (from that person, from that experience, etc.)

*You will need a sufficient number of computers or laptops to suit the size of your group. It will take approximately 40-60 minutes per person to complete a comic strip, so depending on your resources, you may wish to start people working a couple of days before the end of the activity..*

**N.B.** "Comic Life" is a commercial product which can be ordered via Internet. You can download a free trial version for 30 days. There may be other similar programmes available at a cheaper price or even for free, so be sure to shop around before you buy.



## Photos

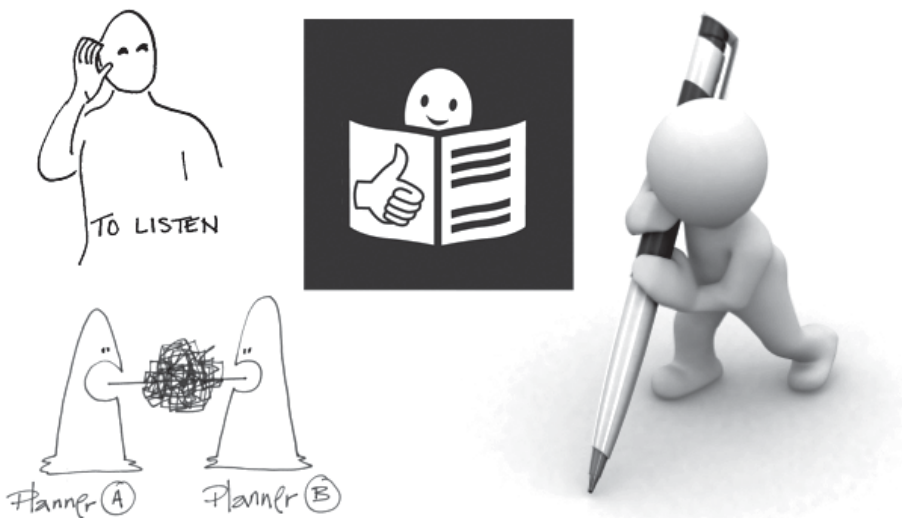
The young people may not have their own photo cameras but if the youth workers are taking pictures during the activity, these can also be used to start off a discussion about learning.

1. As the end of the activity approaches, have one or two group leaders develop a number of the photographs they have taken of the happenings throughout the project.
2. During a final reflection group or evaluation session, spread the photos across a large table and let the young people look through them.
3. Use the photos to touch on different aspects of learning (for example, what do you think you learned while talking to this person, while doing this workshop, while eating this food, etc.)

*The young people may not realise all their learning or all the different areas where it took place. By using the photographs, they can also learn more about what other people in the group learned and how – this can be very eye-opening and a great source of motivation.*



## mother tongue



From Apple

## Methods with Video

If you are get a hold of a video camera during your activity, this can offer many opportunities to help the young people spot their own learning moments.

### METHOD 1

At the start of the activity, make a short 2-3 minute video interview with each participant. Ask questions like “What do you think about... What do you like about...” etc. Play the video back to the young person at the end of the exchange so they can see how they have changed. (Be sure to make it clear to the young people whether their interviews will be kept private – so that only they see the result - or whether you intend to show it to the group.)

### METHOD 2

An alternative approach can be to videotape the young people at various moments during the first day or two of the activity (for instance, when they meet the other participants, when they have their first meals, when they first see their accommodation, etc.) Show the video at the end and use it as a way to start a discussion on how the young people changed from the beginning of the exchange until now. (You can often see interesting things, for instance on the first day participants from the same country may all sit together but by the end they are mixed. On the first day an individual may be sitting with their arms folded in a corner but by the end they are relaxed and joking with new friends, etc.)

### METHOD 3

If you have time and if it suits your group’s profile, another interesting method is to have the participants interview each other on video. Have the participants choose a partner (one who they can communicate with in the same language). Give them some time to work out the questions they will ask each other about their learning and to plan their responses (the interviews should be no more than 10 minutes per person). Take it in turns to film the pairs. Play the interviews back (for the whole group if possible, in small groups if numbers are too large). Allow a few minutes for comments from the partners as well as for questions and answers from the audience after each interview.

## Using the Media

It is one thing to try to express your learning during your activity but it is something else to try to explain it to an outsider.

If a young person is planning on using their Youthpass externally (like to apply for jobs, etc.) they may appreciate having a chance to first practice talking about their learning in a low-risk environment.

### METHOD 1

If your organisation has an internal newsletter, have your young person write an article where they describe their project and what they learned there. You can also have a third party do a short interview with them and then write the article on their behalf. (Try to find someone who was not directly involved with the activity so that the young person really has to try to describe their learning from scratch.)

### METHOD 2

Investigate whether your neighbourhood or local newspaper would be interested in conducting an interview with your young person and publishing a short article about their experience.

*Seeing their own words in print or being interviewed for a newsletter can be a strong form of recognition for a young person from this target group. However, if you are working with an interviewer or journalist from outside your organisation, you may wish to make some agreements ahead of time (e.g. on the content of the interview, which types of questions will be asked, whether any sensitive areas are “off limits” for questions, whether or not a youth worker needs to review the article before it is published for privacy reasons, etc.)*

# Youthpass Handout

This handout is an adaptation of a tool developed by the Icelandic National Agency. It gives a basic explanation of Youthpass and presents the Key Competences in simple language.

This version was designed by “Everything’s Possible” (UK) for EVS projects but youth workers can easily adapt it for Youth Exchanges or any other Youth in Action activity. The text can be copy-pasted into an A4- or A5-sized booklet for young people to note down points about their learning during their project. Alternatively, youth workers can also use this as a source of inspiration to design their own tools.

This book is for you to use in your EVS project and write down what you are learning non-formally. EVS is based on non-formal learning and for that to be evaluated in your Youthpass you have to assess your skills before and after your project.

This book is for you to write in notes and pointers, so when it comes to the making of your Youthpass, at the end of the project, you can remember how you have personally grown from the time you started to the end of the project.

**What is Youthpass?**  
**What does it do for you?**  
**Why should you ask for one?**

Youthpass is a certificate a participant can get from their promoter when they have finished their project.

Youthpass in Action 2- EVS, is based on self-assessment and peer-assessment. You do the self-assessment. Your mentor does the peer-assessment. This together makes the evaluation of your non-formal learning during your EVS project.

**Communication in the mother tongue**

How effectively have I used my own language? What opportunities have I had to use it?

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### Communication in a foreign language

How well have I coped using my host country's language? What difficulties did I have and how did I overcome them?

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### Social and civic competence

What have I learned about other cultures? What have I been successful in communicating with others? What have I done to resolve any conflicts within the group?

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### Mathematical competence and basic competence in science and technology

What sort of problems have I faced and how have I solved them?  
When have I used my number skills?

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### Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship

When have I turned ideas into action? Have I taken any risks and what have I learned from them?

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### Digital competence

What information sources did I use to prepare myself for this project? Did I use computers and the internet before the project? Did I learn anything about the use of computers in other countries?

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### Cultural awareness and expression

How willing was I to get involved with different cultures? What cultural differences have I learned between my sending and hosting countries?

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### Learning to learn

What were my goals before the project and did I achieve them? Which activities do I feel I got the most out of? How will I use what I have learned?

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## What is Youthpass? (handout, Part 1)

Some young people may find it useful to have some written information to refer to when first getting to know Youthpass. Much of the official documentation around Youthpass is written in language which is abstract and difficult for some profiles of fewer-opportunity youngsters to understand. This handout was developed by youth worker Gabi Steinprinz (“Princensluis”, the Netherlands) to explain Youthpass and how it works in more simple language.

For simplicity, the original handout has been divided here into two parts. Part 1 is a general introduction to Youthpass and the idea of self-assessments. Part 2 (see below) provides a short explanation of the eight Key Competences and gives examples to help youngsters more easily imagine what is meant by the different categories.

Depending on the profile of your youngsters, you can choose to distribute the two parts separately or to combine them together into one document. This version is aimed at young people preparing to take part in a Youth Exchange, but you can easily adapt it for participants in EVS or other Youth in Action activities.

### WHAT IS YOUTH PASS?

Youthpass is a new European certificate (like a diploma) which is used in the international projects of the Youth in Action program (like Youth Exchanges). You can learn a lot on a Youth Exchange and Youthpass was made to put that learning on paper. The European Commission thinks that there should not only be diplomas for what you learn in school but there should also be something like a diploma for learning experiences outside of school and so they created a European Youthpass. Officially this is called ‘recognition of non-formal learning’. You can use a Youthpass with your other certificates and diploma, for example in a job interview.

### HOW DOES YOUTHPASS WORK?

Youthpass is composed of three parts:

#### 1 THE OFFICIAL PART

This first part is the most official part. It is about your data (your official name, birth date and place of birth) and explains what a Youth in Action Youth Exchange is. The personal data is filled in by the organization (usually your youth worker) and the part on the Youth Exchange by Youthpass people (Youth in Action). On this page we will put the official signatures....yours and ours!!

## 2 THE PROJECT INFORMATION PART

This second part is about our Youth Exchange. We put information on the aims of the exchange project, the topic, the contents, and what is special or unique about this exchange. This information is filled in by the organizers (that is your youth worker again!)

## 3. SELF ASSESSMENT PART

(write about your own personal learning)

The third part is about what you think you have learned in this project, so in other words you can write about your own learning process, if you want. Therefore it is something you write yourself (cause who knows best about what you have learned? Isn't it you yourself?) Below you can read more about how you can do that.

### SELF ASSESSMENT -

#### WROTE ABOUT YOUR OWN LEARNING

**Write about my learning? How the hell will I do that?**

Writing about your learning means that you have to think first about what you want to learn in the project and then later about what you did learn during the project. We will start on this during our preparation and we will work on it 'til the end of the project. To help you write about your learning, the Youthpass people have selected eight Key Competences that you can work on.

But what is a Key Competence? First of all, 'competence' is a word that means a person is able to use his/her experience, knowledge and attitude all together. It sounds complicated but competence really means "how you use what you know". For example, imagine you know the word 'thank you' in another language (let's say in German). So you have the knowledge, you know what "thank you" is. But you probably also know someone who will understand it and someone who won't. You also know when to use the word..... after someone has done something for you. This is how it works with competences.

Key Competences are the main competences for Youth in Action, as the European Commission thinks these are the most important kinds of learning for these kinds of projects.

Working with Key Competences can make it easier for you. The idea is that you yourself decide which competences you want to think about and work on; you are in charge!! You can choose to work on only one Key Competence, or you can choose 3 or 4 or all 8. It is YOUR Youthpass so you determine this entirely yourself. You can even think about not writing anything! (But maybe that would be a missed opportunity...)



To make it easy, you could start with working, for example, on 2 competences during the preparation and then take on extra competences during the exchange. It is your certificate and therefore it is your, and only YOUR own decision what will appear on your certificate.

Use a separate document or a booklet to write things down. You can do this in a simple way at home, but also during our preparation time. You can continue to work on it during the exchange because we have planned time and space to work on this. We will support you if you need it. But please take care, it is not very good to leave it to the last day of the Youth Exchange.....then you are busy with crying, hugging, and saying goodbye to all the others. If you want you can also work on it after the exchange, but it is more difficult to motivate yourself to finish the document.

Eventually everything has to be written out on the computer. You can do that yourself or you can ask someone to help you. The competences are numbered but you don't have to follow the exact same pattern. You can decide what you want to write and in which order but be sure it is clear which text goes with which competence. Then you e-mail your document to your youth worker (or give it to them on a USB-stick) so they have it on the computer. The youth worker will enter your words into the appendix of the official Youthpass and you will receive the certificate after the exchange.

*Written by Gabi Steinprinz, Princensluis, the Netherlands*

## **“The eight Key Competences” (handout, Part 2)**

This is the second half of a written handout designed by youth worker Gabi Steinprinz (“Princensluis”, the Netherlands) to explain Youthpass and how it works in more simple language. (See also Part 1 above.)

### **THE 8 KEY COMPETENCIES:**

#### **1. LEARNING TO LEARN**

Everybody learns every moment of the day. One can learn in various ways, like by talking to others, or by listening, by searching for information or by attending a workshop. Sometimes you learn because you are in a situation in which you know you will learn something, for example in school.

You know the teacher wants to teach you something and if you pay attention, you will learn. But you can learn quite a lot in other situations too, sometimes without noticing. Afterwards you might think: “Hey, I learned something while talking to this person or because I was responsible for organizing something”. You can develop this competence by making yourself more aware of your own way of learning. You then understand better from whom and how you learn most, from yourself, from others or from certain situations.

But you know what? You can make learning more fun if you also think about it up front. That means that you think about what you want to learn before the project or whatever you are doing on a certain day, on a certain month or in a certain project.

## 2. COMMUNICATION IN THE MOTHER TONGUE

Communication is the skill to understand and express ideas, facts and feelings. During our project you will be very active with your own language. For instance, you talk with the other participants, you write things down, you send mails to the other participants and perhaps letters to sponsors or businesses, maybe you write the text of poster or a flyer, maybe you make invitations, read notes or articles, etc. So everyone learns something new. Perhaps you learn new (difficult) words which you didn't know, or you learn something about how to write a letter. Sometimes also the foreign participants ask you something about words or expressions in your language, and of course some dirty words!! This also makes you learn something about your own language. But communication is more than just words and language....it also has to do with the way you talk to people. So maybe you will want to learn something new about that.

## 3. COMMUNICATION IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Communication is the skill to understand and express ideas, facts and feelings with people who think, talk and act differently. During our project you are active and busy with other languages and also with other cultures. You talk with each other, you hear people talk and therefore you learn new words and expressions in another language. An international project is for many people a wonderful occasion to practice or learn other languages. Communicating in another language often has a lot to do with overcoming the fear of making mistakes. That could be part of your learning process.

#### 4. MATHEMATICAL COMPETENCE AND BASIC COMPETENCES IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

During our preparation and the exchange itself, you can be busy with this skill. There is quite a lot of counting and many technical matters in exchange projects. You can think of all kinds of counting, for example converting a recipe for 4 persons to 26 persons, making a budget for the activity, keeping track of accounts in Excel on your computer, counting how many people have to help with a sport activity, or how many ice creams we have to buy. Technical matters can be things like maintaining or repairing bicycles, regulating electric connections of computer or music equipment, using photo or video cameras, using domestic equipment, tools, building something for the project, etc. In some exchanges with a specific topic people can deal with scientific competence, but that doesn't happen often. If you want to know more about it, ask me.

#### 5. DIGITAL COMPETENCE;

Digital competences have to do with when you learn to handle the computer, for example how to send e-mails, how to make a poster, or how to work with new programs. Think for example of scripting a website, or using Excel for making diagrams, or using graphics programs for photos. Here you can also think about things like learning how to improve your understanding of how a computer works or how to change the settings. Even learning to play some computer games could be part of this competence.

#### 6. SOCIAL AND CIVIC COMPETENCES (CITIZENSHIP)

How do you behave with others? Can you cooperate? Do you ever do something for someone else or for people in the neighbourhood? These are all things that have to do with this competence. If you imagine social competences in an exchange project, then you can think of how you handle people, both in the preparation as well as when you are abroad. Do you follow rules or agreements? Do you respect people or could you improve on that? Can you deal with criticism if people make comments about you? Can you express your opinion or criticism in a good way to others? Do you say nice things to people, sometimes give compliments or thank people enough for what they do for you? Are you the one who decides what happens or are you influenced by the opinion of others? Are you reserved and passive, are you lazy and leave the work to others? Do people ask you for help or do you offer help to those who need it even without being asked? What do you do to make this project a fun and unforgettable experience for yourself and for others? What is your contribution to a good environment in the project?

All these questions have to do with this competence....lot of things you can learn, and lots of things you could write about.

### 7. SENSE OF INITIATIVE AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Everyone has ideas and thinks about the things that can be done in an exchange project. But are all these ideas being executed? Some people burst with ideas but wait too long, or don't know what to decide.....and in the end, nothing happens. Others have fewer ideas but they take action and start working. They are motivated to reach a result and to succeed. Are YOU able to put ideas into practice? Do you have the perseverance and the creativity to carry them out, even if things seem difficult or impossible or if time is against you? To turn ideas into success, you need to know what you have to do, who you need to do it and how it has to be organized.

All this has to do with entrepreneurship and initiative. It is putting ideas into action, realizing your dreams and wishes and not waiting 'til others do it for you (or not). Many businesses grow because they have people with initiative and entrepreneurship working there.

### 8. CULTURAL AWARENESS AND EXPRESSION.

Do you know what is typical for your culture? Do you know why the Dutch use orange as their national colour, why Italians have an aperitivo, why the Greeks smash plates? It all has to do with our histories and our cultures. Do you know any paintings by the most famous painter in your country? Do you know who is the best opera singer, who won your town's talent show, who is the most popular street dance team or who was awarded the national literature award? In general, are you interested in arts or in history? Do you appreciate it? Would you like to know more and extend your general knowledge (for instance by visiting a national museum)? Would you like to use your knowledge to share your culture to other people?

The competence 'cultural awareness and expression' has to do with the way we appreciate our own and other cultures, in your town, in your region, your country, Europe, and the whole world. It also has to do with how we can express our emotions, experiences and feelings in a creative way through media or art forms. If you think about it, you will come up with some ways to develop this competence.

So these were the eight Key Competences. Good luck and if you have any questions, be sure to ask your youth worker.

*Written by Gabi Steinprinz, Princensluis, the Netherlands*

# Hunger for more?

## FURTHER READING & ONLINE RESOURCES

Some more 'Youthpass' publications:

- **Youthpass unfolded** – Practical tips and hands-on methods for making the most of the Youthpass process. (2012)
- **Unlocking Doors to Recognition** – Handbook for setting up strategies for the better recognition of youth work and non-formal education in different contexts. (2011)
- **Youthpass for absolute beginners** – A booklet introducing Youthpass to all those who are only at the beginning of starting to use it. The booklet was published by the Norwegian National Agency for Youth in Action. (2011)
- **Videos: The story of Youthpass,1 & 2.** – Two cartoons explaining the what and how of Youthpass. (2011/2012)

Some more SALTO 'Inclusion for All' publications:

- **Going International - Inclusion for All (updated 2009)** – practical inclusion methods and advice for preparing, implementing and following-up on international projects for young people with fewer opportunities
- **Use your Hands to Move Ahead (updated 2009)** – using practical tasks to increase participation by young people with fewer opportunities on short term European Voluntary Service projects
- **Fit for Life (2005)** – using sport as an educational tool for the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities in youth work and international youth projects.
- **No Offence (updated 2010)** – exploring opportunities and setting up youth projects with young ex-offenders and those at risk of offending
- **Village International (updated 2010)** – a practical booklet for youth workers on setting up international projects in rural and geographically isolated areas
- **No Barriers, No Borders (updated 2008)** – practical guidelines and tips for setting up international, mixed ability youth projects (including people with and without a disability)
- **Over the Rainbow (updated 2008)** – creating sensitive international projects with young lesbians, gays, bisexuals and young people questioning their sexual orientation
- **Youth and the City (2008)** – developing meaningful international projects with young people in disadvantaged (sub)urban areas
- **Inclusion & Diversity (updated 2008)** – how to make your youth work and youth projects more inclusive and reach more diverse target groups (co-operation SALTO Inclusion & SALTO Cultural Diversity)
- **E.M.power (2008)** – how to empower young ethnic minority women
- **Images in Action (2009)** – how to built a positive image of your organisation

- **Making Waves (updated 2010)** – Creating a greater impact with your youth projects, a booklet about visibility, dissemination and exploitation of your project results
  - **Working on Work (2010)** – how to use the Youth in Action programme with young unemployed people
  - **Inclusion through Employability (reprint 2012)** – success criteria for youth projects addressing unemployment, research publication
  - **Urban solutions (2012)** – tapping the talents of urban youth
- 👉 Find them all at [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/InclusionForALL/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/InclusionForALL/)



T-Kit Series: *The training kits are thematic publications written by experienced youth trainers. They are easy-to-use handbooks for use in training and study sessions, published by the Partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Commission on European Youth Worker Training.*

- Social Inclusion
- Project Management
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- Intercultural Learning
- International Voluntary Service
- Under Construction... Citizenship, Youth and Europe
- Training Essentials
- Funding and Financial Management
- Educational Evaluation in Youth Work
- Euromed Co-operation

Downloadable from [www.youth-partnership.net](http://www.youth-partnership.net) or

👉 [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Toolbox/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Toolbox/)

### ONLINE TOOLS AND RESOURCES

- In the **SALTO Toolbox for Training** you can find a wide range of interesting tools [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Toolbox/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Toolbox/)
- **Europass**: makes people's skills and qualifications clearly and easily understood in Europe (European Union, EFTA/EEA and candidate countries) and facilitates people's mobility in Europe <http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/>
- **APPLE**: The project aims to create young people with fewer opportunities an opportunity to work as a volunteer in Estonia, to transfer knowledge, skills and experience through voluntary actions and to promote voluntary work in general <http://www.continuousaction.ee/?module=news&id=9>

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Youthpass offers young people, youth workers and youth leaders an exciting new way to recognise, understand, document and demonstrate the learning that takes place within Youth in Action activities.

Early experience with this tool has shown that while Youthpass offers tremendous potential, it is not always easy to implement. Some young people, and particularly those from fewer-opportunity backgrounds, may not have the experience, maturity or cognitive skills needed to recognise or understand their own learning processes. These young people need extra support in the Youthpass process... but how, specifically, can this be done?

“YouthPass for All” tries to provide some initial answers. This booklet is intended to serve as a companion to The Youthpass Guide and is aimed specifically at youth workers and/or youth leaders who use European youth activities as part of their work with fewer-opportunity young people. “YouthPass for All” presents advice, tips and methods from youth workers who have used Youthpass “in the field”. The booklet then goes on to examine how the process of looking at learning outcomes can be expanded beyond Youthpass into a more comprehensive competence-based approach to youth work.

This booklet is part of the SALTO “Inclusion for All” series.  
Download them for free at: [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/)



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