



Report

# Bridges for Recognition

Promoting Recognition of  
Youth Work across Europe

Leuven, 19-23 January 2005

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

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# The full Bridges report

## Promoting Recognition of Youth Work across Europe

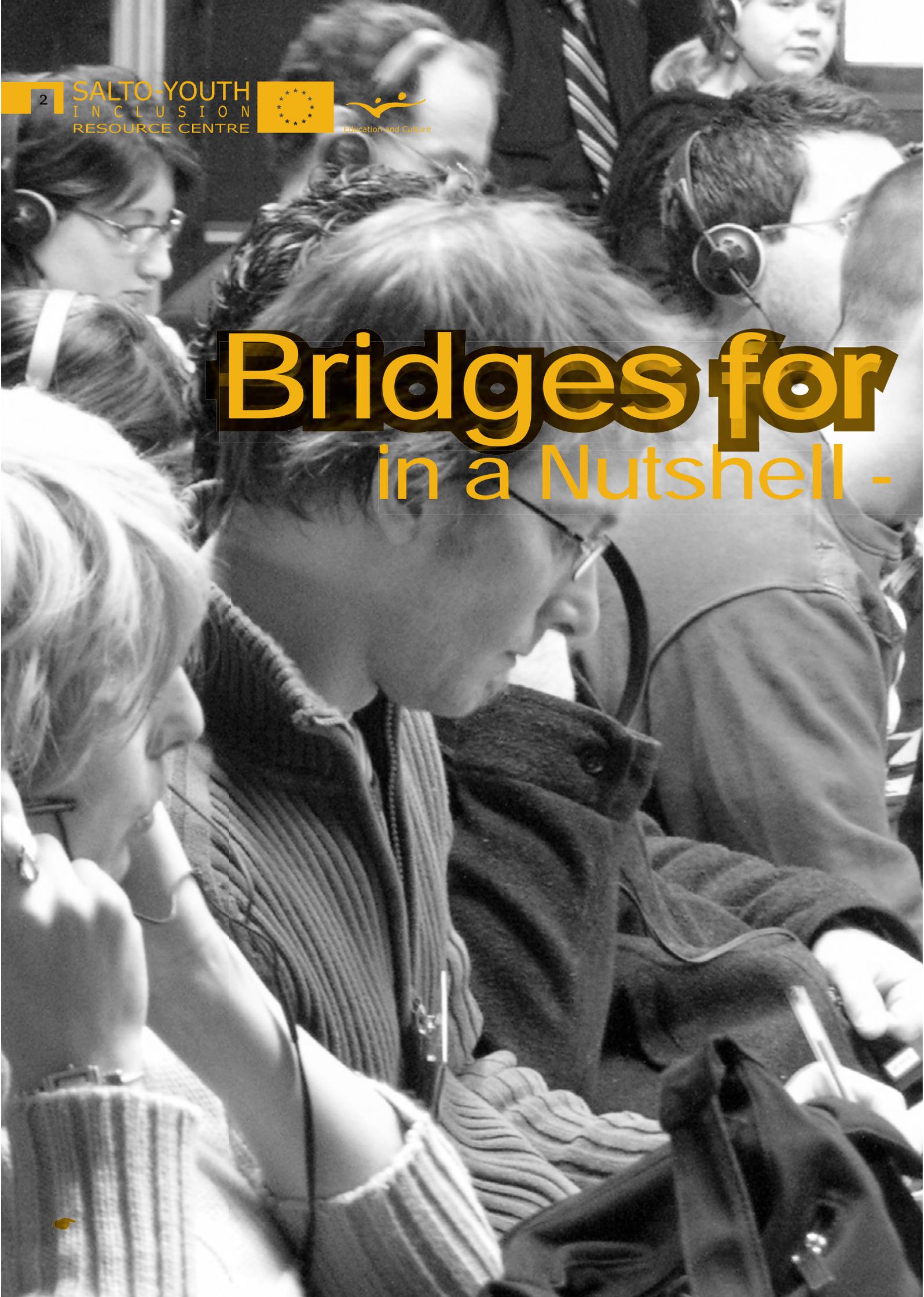
Leuven, 19-23 January 2005

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

by Jonathan Bowyer  
General Rapporteur  
& Tony Geudens  
Coordination



# Bridges for in a Nutshell -





# Recognition

## Executive Summary

Bridges for Recognition was a milestone in the journey of the **recognition of non-formal learning and youth work** in Europe. It brought together for the first time a wide range of practitioners, policy makers and stakeholders from the fields of youth work, formal and non-formal education, the labour market and National and European Authorities.

The conference provided a **showcase for an impressive range of methods and instruments for the recognition of non formal learning** by young people. Different stakeholder groups were invited to articulate their particular needs and to debate the “Hot Issues” in recognition.

Delegates were consulted on new initiatives at the European level and **contributed to the formulation of policy and action plans**. The European Institutions supported the event with key insights into the political dimension of recognition, ending with the challenge continue develop and exchange ideas and the commitment to keep youth work and recognition on the political agenda.

There were some **recurring themes** throughout the conference which point to challenges for the future:

- First, there is much work already being done and we need to continue to **share good practice**. This will not only enable improvements and further developments but it will also avoid reinventing the wheel.
- A **common language**, or at least a growing ability to speak the different languages of recognition, is crucial to communication across the various sectors and stakeholder groups. We need to be sure that we mean the same things when we use the same words.

- Understanding the **relationship between non-formal and formal learning** is also crucial to credibility. Many delegates saw complementarity but some expressed fears of competition. There is a real concern for some that formal recognition and non-formal learning are incompatible, that the voluntary engagement of young people in Non Formal Learning will be threatened.
- Delegates understood that **recognition is a complex issue**: Young People need to be recognised for a variety of things – their experience, their competences, their personal growth and their contribution to society. They therefore need a variety of tools, instruments and approaches to recognition. Portfolios seem to be the most flexible and the most popular at present.
- **Recognition of youth workers, youth leaders and youth trainers** was also a key area of debate during the conference. A proposal was formulated to move forward with functional analysis and occupational profiling in the area of training in particular.



120 people spent three full days exploring the current successes and the future challenges of recognition in Non-Formal Learning and Youth Work. The result was a celebration of **achievement**, greater **clarity** about priorities and renewed **energy** for further development.



## Suggestions for Action

The elements above were the ingredients of a number of concrete **proposals for action**:

- ★ Prepare an **extensive report of Bridges for Recognition**, with several targeted executive summaries, to be spread to different audiences and stakeholder groups. This Bridges report is made available at [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/BridgesForRecognition/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/BridgesForRecognition/) and other relevant for a.
- ★ Pierre Mairesse indicated that a possible step forward in the recognition of youth work might be a **resolution on recognition** at the May 2006 Council of Ministers during the Austrian Presidency. Efforts should be undertaken to make this resolution a reality.
- ★ The need for a common language could be addressed by actively using, fine tuning and contributing to the **Cedefop “Terminology of Vocational Training Policy – A multilingual glossary for an enlarged Europe”** (Tissot, 2004) from the youth work perspective: [www.cedefop.eu.int](http://www.cedefop.eu.int)
- ★ Use the **Cheat Sheet of Terminology** developed for Bridges for Recognition (p. 41) and continue the discussion on the relevance of different terms and concepts used in youth work and training, and making them compatible with and understandable by other sectors. For example via the **Youth Knowledge platform** developed by the Youth Research Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe - [www.youth-knowledge.net](http://www.youth-knowledge.net)
- ★ Develop a **classification** of different recognition systems, tools and procedures. The existing **good practice** in the field of recognition of youth work and non-formal learning (documented in this Bridges report – see Good Practice Workshops p. 50) can then be classified and better understood in this light.
- ★ Continue the **dialogue between different stakeholders** (youth, employment, education, civil society) with regard to the recognition of youth work and of the skills young people gain in youth work. The ‘**Pact for Youth**’ could be a chance to make recognition of non-formal education more widespread. Contacts and negotiations to integrate youth work related experience and competences in the **EuroPass framework** should be continued – <http://europass.cedefop.eu.int/>
- ★ The SALTO-YOUTH Training and Cooperation Resource Centre launched a European wide recognition system – **Youth Pass** - at Bridges for Recognition, and will further develop this recognition tool for the hundreds of thousands of young people that take part in the European YOUTH programme, in **dialogue** with a variety of relevant partners. SALTO Training and Cooperation will implement **training courses** on the use of Youth Pass and start a **SALTO newsletter** on recognition of youth work in Europe, in cooperation with relevant partners [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/youthpass/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/youthpass/)

- ★ The Council of Europe has been developing a **Youth Worker Portfolio**, which was presented at Bridges for Recognition. This Portfolio can be tested and implemented by European training partners e.g. SALTO. [www.coe.int/youth](http://www.coe.int/youth)
- ★ Bridges for Recognition gave impetus to do a **study on a ‘youth-work trainer profile’** which could be carried out within the Partnership Agreement between the Council of Europe and the European Commission on European Youth Worker Training - [www.training-youth.net](http://www.training-youth.net). However, contacts and cooperation with other relevant bodies could also be sought.
- ★ The European Youth Forum’s input at Bridges for Recognition was the beginning of a **new Youth Forum policy line on recognition** which will be further developed for a period of 2 years. Discussions on recognition will be taken up with the Youth Forum’s pool of trainers - [www.youthforum.org](http://www.youthforum.org)
- ★ Develop a **strategy for social recognition of youth work**. This could be related to a European **strategy to increase the visibility of youth work** and potentially develop a Training-Kit on PR and visibility of youth work within the Partnership on European Youth Worker Training between the Council of Europe and the European Commission.
- ★ Maintain **transparency and provide information on the different initiatives** that are being undertaken on different levels in the field of recognition of youth work, using the different channels available:
  - SALTO newsletter on recognition – [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/newsletter/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/newsletter/)
  - European Youth Portal – [www.europa.eu.int/youth/](http://www.europa.eu.int/youth/)
  - Youth Knowledge Centre – [www.youth-knowledge.net](http://www.youth-knowledge.net)
  - YOUTH Programme’s extranet for National Agencies and Coordinators – YouthNet

*(based on the Bridges for Recognition Steering Group evaluation meeting)*

We hope that you find this report useful and inspiring and we encourage readers to visit the websites and make contact with the conference contributors to **continue building bridges for recognition...**

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 General Rapporteur  
 ‘A View From Here’

*Tony Geudens*  
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 SALTO Inclusion Resource Centre



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# What is Bridges for Recognition?



# - Introduction

**Bridges for Recognition** was a European conference that took place in Leuven, Belgium from 19th to 23rd January 2005 to promote the recognition of youth work across Europe. The event brought together 120 people from a variety of stakeholders in order to explore ways forward regarding **recognition of skills and experiences gained in youth work** and the social recognition of the youth work sector. The fact that there was a significant waiting list of candidates was testimony to the interest in the subject and to the desire to take steps forward regarding recognition of youth work.

**Bridges for Recognition** took place at the Faculty Club in the University City of Leuven (Belgium), in the ancient buildings of the Convent of Chièvres and the Great Beguinage. This is a UNESCO World Heritage site and it proved an excellent environment in which to work, following in the footsteps of other important European meetings that took place there.

☞ **Further Conference Documentation can be found at**  
[www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/BridgesForRecognition/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/BridgesForRecognition/)

## Objectives

The conference set out to contribute to the following objectives:

- ★ To promote the recognition of **young people's skills and learning** acquired through participation in youth work activities;
- ★ To raise the **visibility** of youth work, its **impact** on young people's lives and its **contribution** to society;
- ★ To enhance the **social recognition** of youth work in society.

These objectives were met through a dynamic programme of keynote speeches, workshops to share good practice and discussion groups to enable understanding.

☞ **An outline programme is provided on p. 15 of this report.**

## Participants

Participants in the conference came from all over Europe and represented a **variety of stakeholders** in the youth work recognition debate. The participant list of 120 people included:

- ★ youth workers, NGO representatives & youth (work) trainers,
- ★ labour market representatives,
- ★ academics from the formal-education sector & vocational trainers,
- ★ National Agency staff and National Coordinators of the European YOUTH programme,
- ★ (European) policy makers and representatives of local and national authorities and ...
- ★ even a few people who could still be classed as “young”...



The wealth of **experience, understanding and commitment** to the development of young people as individuals and as citizens was enormous, as well as the drive to improve the recognition of youth work in society.

Sixteen workshops providing case studies of good practice from across Europe; seven stakeholder groups with different needs; and six “hot issues” interest groups, together created a framework for all these people to **build bridges** and to gather resources for further cooperation and collaboration and to make recognition of youth work a reality.

👉 A complete participants list is available in annex or at [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/BridgesForRecognition/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/BridgesForRecognition/)



## Outcomes

With so much information, and such a complex subject, it would have been easy to leave feeling overwhelmed. Over the three working days there were many pieces of **information** shared and **understanding** increased. Many new **connections** were made and there was much renewed **commitment** to recognising the work of young people and those who work with them.

On the evaluation form of Bridges for Recognition, all participants declared to have gained more **knowledge** about recognition (79% a lot, 21% a little), 100% of respondents indicated an increased **motivation** to take recognition further (75% a lot, 25% a little) and all participants built up a **network** of recognition contacts at the conference (64% to large extent, 36% to some extent).

👉 **The complete evaluation results are available on p. 82 and at [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/BridgesForRecognition/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/BridgesForRecognition/)**

Bridges for Recognition created the awareness that recognition of youth work is an **increasingly important issue** and that the discussions seem to have moved from *‘whether or not to walk the way of recognition’* to *‘what type of recognition systems and procedures do we want’*. The recognition debate moved into a phase of experiments and actions (see Good Practices p. 50). Lessons from these can be applied to more officially or structurally embedded recognition schemes.

In **summing up** the conference, Jonathan Bowyer, the General Rapporteur, mentioned the following areas where our understanding had developed:

- ★ Awareness of different **types of recognition**:  
*recognition of individual skill ≠ social recognition of youth work by society*
- ★ Overview of different **formats of recognition**:  
*certificates of attendance, certificate of skills, portfolios documenting skills, accreditations,...*
- ★ Different things that young people, youth workers and trainers can be **recognised for**:  
*for participation, for taking on responsibilities, for proven skills and competencies, for their investment and enthusiasm,...*
- ★ Ways of recording and ways of working out what to and how to record

- ★ The need to see the relational nature of non-formal learning and to build **Bridges** between different sectors:  
*youth work, youth (work) training, vocational training, education, labour market, civil society, other non-formal learning,...*
- ★ The need to negotiate **issues of status**:  
*access to the youth work/training profession, remuneration according to qualifications, professionalization of youth work and training,...*
- ★ The need to safeguard **accountability and credibility**:  
*who delivers certificates? what does a certificate certify? who is the guarantor of the certification? proliferation and devaluation of certificates...*
- ★ The need to develop a **common language** in relation to recognition across sectors and to create **‘translations’** of youth work experiences to language used in other sectors
- ★ Many well tested **approaches to recognition** in the sector were show-cased:  
*providing the opportunity to **cross-fertilize ideas** and in so doing to further understand the wide range of contexts in which participants work*



These areas are described in more detail in the chapter “Conclusions and closing remarks” of this report on p. 76.



## Partners for Recognition

The Conference was organised by the **SALTO-YOUTH Inclusion Resource Centre**, based at Jint (*the Flemish National Agency for the European YOUTH programme*) and jointly funded by the Youth Unit of the Directorate for Education and Culture of the **European Commission**, by the Department of Youth and Sport of the Ministry of the **Flemish Community** and by the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the **Council of Europe** (pending).

- [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/inclusion/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/inclusion/)
- [www.jint.be](http://www.jint.be)
- [www.europa.eu.int/comm/youth/](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/youth/)
- [www.jeugdbeleid.be](http://www.jeugdbeleid.be)
- [www.coe.int/youth/](http://www.coe.int/youth/)

The European Commission set up a **Steering Group** for the Bridges for Recognition conference, which gave input into the concept and programme of the conference. This Steering Group was composed of representatives and experts of relevant institutions:

- ★ European Commission – Youth Unit: *Hans-Joachim Schild & Artur Payer*
- ★ Council of Europe – Directorate of Youth and Sport: *Inge Stuer*
- ★ SALTO-YOUTH Resource Centres: *Udo Teichmann*
- ★ European Youth Forum: *Luiza Bara & Ewoud Roes*
- ★ Partnership for European Youth Worker Training CoE-COM: *Laszlo Földi*
- ★ Youth Research Partnership CoE-COM: *Bryony Hoskins*
- ★ National Agencies of the European YOUTH programme: *Peter Barendse (NL) & Koen Lambert (BE-fl)*
- ★ SALTO Bridges Organising Team: *Tony Geudens & Hannelore Herreman*

# Day-by- Programme

Need for recognition of youth w  
non-formal education (NFE)

- To ensure improvement of the quality of y  
NFE by setting standards
- To increase feedback to young people on  
a...ments in the context of NFE
- To h... impact on the labour market
- To... competitiveness in an interna  
(European Council of Lisbon)





# Day

A summary of the programme is included below.  
You can download the full programme from  
[www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/BridgesForRecognition/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/BridgesForRecognition/)

	Wednesday 19/01	Thursday 20/01	Friday 21/01	Saturday 22/01
AM		Opening of the event: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inputs from the European institutions</li> <li>Youth work does work!</li> </ul>	Good practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• workshops - continued</li> </ul>	Stakeholder <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• needs summary</li> <li>What do we mean when we say...?</li> <li>Hot issues in recognition</li> </ul>
PM		Challenges, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• terminology and expectations of recognition</li> <li>Milestones in European recognition</li> <li>Good practice workshops</li> </ul>	Networking fair <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different stakeholders – different needs discussions</li> </ul>	Hot issues in recognition – continued <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conclusions of the event</li> <li>Evaluation</li> </ul>
Eve	Welcome reception <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• and dinner</li> </ul>	City discovery tour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	Free evening <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	Boom Ball & <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goodbye evening</li> </ul>

Figure 1: the outline programme

Participants first came together for a **reception** in the “Bishop’s room” of the former Beguinage building on the evening of Wednesday 19th of January. Some people had already met at the previous “Bridges” event in 2001 (Bridges for Training – [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/BridgesForTraining/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/BridgesForTraining/)) but the majority were in new surroundings with **new people**. There was a lot to learn from the different countries and the different sectors associated with recognition of non-formal work with young people. Excellent food provided the backdrop for many **introductions** and conversations throughout the evening. At the same time participants were wondering and finding out what the different colour badges represented – the ice was melting.

The morning of 20th January saw the **formal opening of the event** and perspectives on recognition from the European institutions. Koen Lambert of **Jint** - the Flemish NA (mother organisation of SALTO Inclusion, the organiser of Bridges) gave a welcome to the city of Leuven and to Bridges for Recognition before handing over to speakers from the **European Commission** (p.22), the **Council of Europe** (p. 24) and the **European Youth Forum** (p.26). In addition, the debate on **terminology and concepts** of recognition was opened up by Lynne Chisholm of Innsbruck University (p. 38). And to ensure the whole subject was earthed in reality, Thomas Vollner of YES Forum relayed the story of Egemen Ozyay, a young EVS participant from Stuttgart, whose life had drastically changed – to the positive – because of his participation in youth work (p.20).

Before lunch Koen Lambert chaired a **panel discussion** with representatives of a range of stakeholder groups. Panel members were: Åsa Fahlgren (Swedish National Agency), Tone Christensen (Trondheim Municipality, Norway), Clement Dupuis (youth worker at Ici ou Ailleurs, France), Jillian Hasset-Van Turnhout (European Economic and Social Committee) and Anthony Azzopardi (Youth Studies, University of Malta). The discussion covered **expectations** of the debate about recognition, the role of volunteers in accreditation processes and the involvement of young people in self assessment. The discussions clearly demonstrated the **different motivations and viewpoints** that the various stakeholders have. In particular the place of young people varied considerably: some saw them as influencers and key stakeholders of the recognition process, whereas others regarded them as the cause of social problems and people in need of “help”.

After lunch, Hans-Joachim Schild of the Youth Unit of the DG Education and Culture of the European Commission gave an overview of previous “**milestones in the recognition process**” at the European level (p.28). This served as an introduction to a series of sixteen “**Good Practice**” **workshops** (p.50). These workshops (four running during each of four sessions) provided a show case for a wide range of recognition work that is already ongoing around Europe. Light relief was provided in the evening by a city tour of Leuven... in the rain.



- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth Pass – SALTO-YOUTH</li> <li>• Euromed Training Pass – SALTO-YOUTH</li> <li>• Youth Worker Portfolio – Council of Europe</li> <li>• Europass as a tool for transparency – European Commission</li> <li>• European CV - Cedefop</li> <li>• ATTE and Recognition – Partnership on European Youth Worker Training</li> <li>• Promoting and mainstreaming Human Rights Education in Youth Work – Council of Europe</li> <li>• Recognition of Youth Work on violence prevention – Council of Europe</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural/international competency record – Germany</li> <li>• Electronic portfolio – Italy</li> <li>• Youth Achievement Awards – UK</li> <li>• Personal Record of Achievement – UK</li> <li>• Recreational Study Booklet – Finland and NEFIKS - Slovenia</li> <li>• Validation of competencies – France</li> <li>• Teacher Training and NGOs - Serbia</li> <li>• Youth worker traineeships in Scouts – Netherlands</li> </ul> |
|---|--|

Figure 2: Good Practice workshops

The final good Practice workshops were completed by lunch time on Friday 21st and this led into a further opportunity to learn about the work of participants at a **networking fair**.



The final part of Friday provided the opportunity for different **stakeholder groups** (p.56) to meet together to discuss their different needs, wishes and expectation in relation to recognition. No doubt many of these discussions continued into the evening when participants were free to choose their own restaurant and evening programme in the student city Leuven. However, the groups were required to nominate a reporter who then had the task of presenting the findings of the group briefly the following morning.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Agencies and National Coordinators of the European YOUTH Programme</li> <li>• Local and National Authorities</li> <li>• Youth Workers</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal Education</li> <li>• European officials &amp; policy makers</li> <li>• Labour market (Employers &amp; trade Unions)</li> <li>• Youth Work Trainers</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

Figure 3: Stakeholder groups for the “Different needs” discussions

After these reports first thing on Saturday, Bryony Hoskins reminded participants of the need for clarity of the **language** used when discussing recognition (p. 28). Bryony also introduced participants to the new web based resource, **www.youth-knowledge.net**, to be launched during the Luxembourg Presidency of the EU and which would contain significant information on the subject of recognition.

**Hot Issues in recognition** were the subject of the final two working sessions of the conference. These were introduced with a brief input from Manuel Souto from ECOTEC who encountered these controversial issues while carrying out a “European Inventory of the Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning” (p. 66).

The broad topics are listed below: participants had the opportunity to take part in two different discussions to **cross-fertilise the discussions** with arguments from their first discussion group or they could stay on in their first choice after lunch.

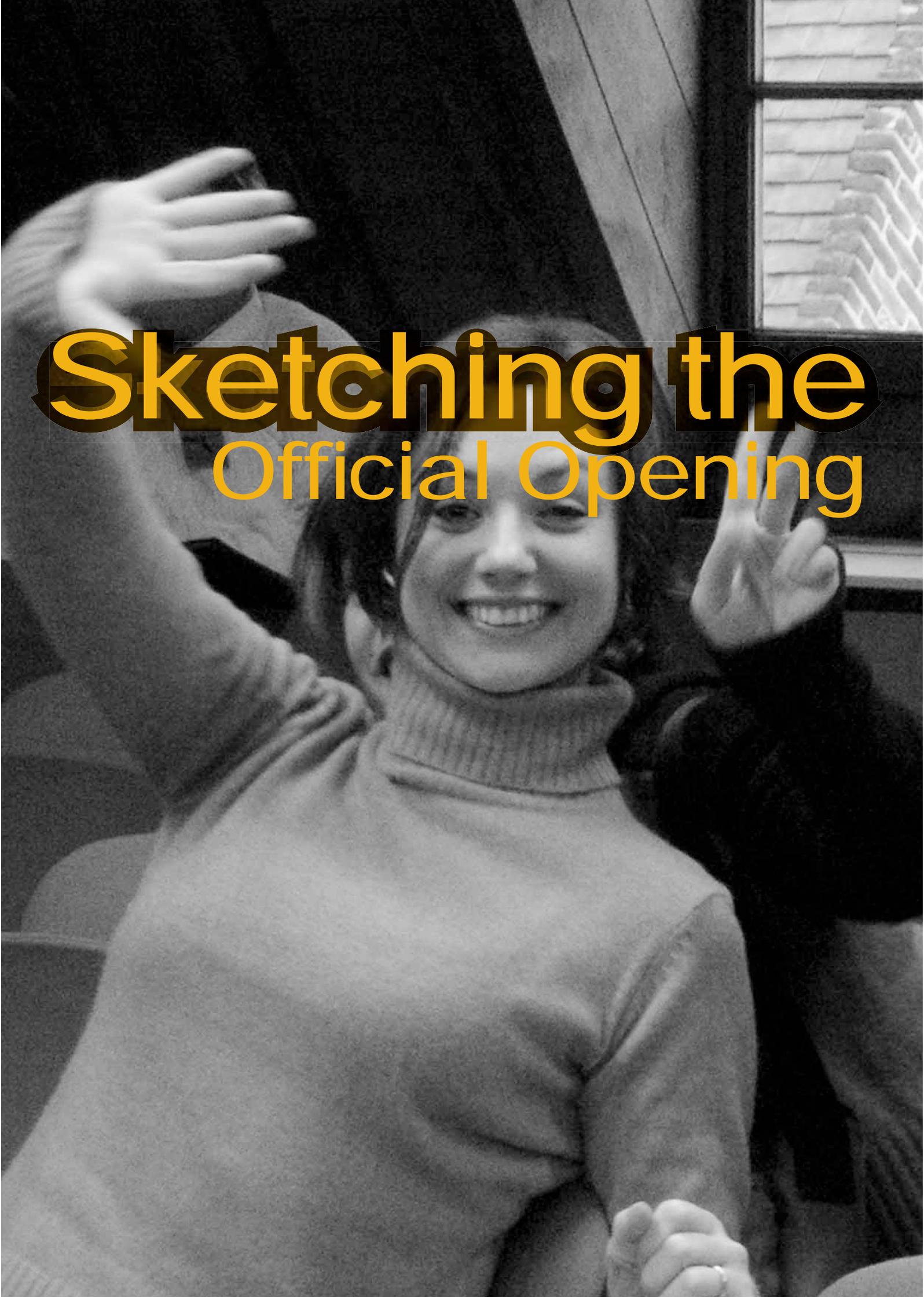
- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transferability across countries and organisations</li> <li>• Responsibilities and resources for recognition</li> <li>• Social recognition of youth work</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transferability between sectors</li> <li>• The creaming effect - recognition and equality</li> <li>• Recognition of trainers in non-formal education</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

Figure 4: Hot Issues discussion groups



Brief **reports** were brought back to the final plenary session before the general rapporteur presented his observations on the **outcomes of the conference** (p.76) and Pierre Mairesse of the European Commission formally **closed** the conference (p.81).

**Thanks** were expressed in plenary and are echoed here, to all the speakers, facilitators, reporters, organisers and helpers for enabling so many people to take an active part in the conference and for their contribution to the construction of Bridges for Recognition...



# Sketching the Official Opening



# Framework

## Youth work does work !

Thomas Vollner of YES Forum (Youth and European Social work Forum) told the story of **Egemen Ozyay**, a man of Turkish origin living in Stuttgart, Germany. Egemen could be regarded as a “young person with fewer opportunities”, but through participation in **youth work**, his life took a positive turn. He is bilingual and now, at the age of twenty, has an apprenticeship as a graphic designer.

### The story of Egemen – or – youth work does work!

When Egemen was twelve years old, Egemen’s Father died in a road accident. Egemen took on a lot of responsibility in the home, helping to look after his mother and brother. By the time he was 15 he was getting poor grades at school and was beginning to be classed as “disadvantaged. His sense of being rejected was alleviated by attending youth clubs where he loved to break dance.

It was from a youth worker that he heard about EVS (European Voluntary Service), went to a seminar and finally successfully applied to volunteer for a year in Manchester, England.

Egemen’s placement was with the Manchester Foyer – a project providing housing and training for young people in the city. He worked on the reception and “lived-in” at the Foyer. Egemen was able to develop good relationships both with his placement provider and with the people he lived with. He was considered professional and easy to talk to. He also had the opportunity to develop his passion for photography and writing by being invited to write a regular youth column in a local newspaper and was involved in a theatre play about the Foyer which toured the country; something he never had the chance to do at home.

Egemen returned home to Germany when his Mother became ill. He took odd jobs for two years and believes that he would not have managed if he not had the EVS experience to draw from. He now has a position as an apprentice with a graphic design company – he didn’t have to apply – he was invited to be trained because of the activities and motivation gained largely through his EVS project.

The case demonstrates the **efficacy of youth work** and the roles played by **youth workers** in introducing young people to new – potentially life changing – experiences, and in supporting them through those experiences.

### Linking Further...

- 👉 Youth and European Social work Forum (YES-Forum) – [www.yes-forum.org](http://www.yes-forum.org)
- 👉 European Voluntary Service – [www.sosforevs.org](http://www.sosforevs.org) or [http://europa.eu.int/comm/youth/program/sos/index\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/youth/program/sos/index_en.html)

## The Challenge of Recognition – Pierre Mairesse, European Commission

Pierre Mairesse began by welcoming everyone and expressing the pleasure that the Commission had in facilitating this event. He saw the conference as being about the recognition of both the **experiences of young people** and the work of **youth workers and social workers**.

**Non Formal Education** (NFE) and youth work are taking place in a changing world for young people: Youth now lasts longer and is less secure than previously; Human rights issues and volunteering are more to the fore and **personal pathways** have become more individualised.

NFE is not well understood by **politicians**; there is concern about the effect it might have on the formal education sector and one of the challenges for the sector is to **demonstrate its benefits** in relation to wider political issues. NFE helps to bridge the gap between school and employment and to foster **inclusion and participation** in public life.

The **Lisbon Strategy** and the **Life Long Learning** agenda both need to include Youth work and NFE, but it is not always clear how this should be done. There are issues of language, of image (it is not seen as “sexy”) and of not being held in high enough regard. But, Pierre Mairesse argued, **youth work is vital for society**; “imagine if we stopped – what would be the impact on society, the economy and young people themselves?”

The white paper “**A new impetus for European Youth**” suggests that clearer **definitions** of the concepts, skills acquired and **quality standards** are required; that higher regard should be given to those who get involved and greater recognition given to these activities. In addition, greater **complimentarity** should be developed with formal education and training activities.



Pierre Mairresse stressed that a lot had already been done. The **SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre** in Germany is currently looking at ways to certify and validate the participation of 150,000 young people in around 10,000 projects each year. The programme at Bridges included workshops on **good practices** that are being developed around Europe. Europass has been a success, as have the partnerships with the Council of Europe.

Bridges provides the opportunity to bring together a wide range of players and partners to inform each other, to **share good practice** and develop **common understanding**, to **increase synergies** and to **increase the visibility** of the youth work and NFE.

Pierre Mairresse encouraged the conference to engage in a consultative, bottom-up approach to developing the thinking and creating **concrete proposals**. We need to create a virtuous circle where social recognition is enhanced by formal recognition processes and vice versa. In 2 or 3 years we could have much better recognition of Youth Work and NFE. One possible step in this journey might be a **resolution on recognition** at the May 2006 Council of Ministers during the Austrian Presidency.

He concluded by expressing the **challenges** facing conference as follows:

- ★ Greater coherence between the diverse key players, policies and instruments involved
- ★ Active participation of young people in the process
- ★ Better comparability of methods and approaches
- ★ Enhanced complementarity of formal, non-formal and informal learning- Simplicity and effectiveness, accessibility and visibility of validation and recognition procedures and instruments
- ★ Focus on the European added value

#### Linking Further...

- ☛ Youth Unit of the Directorate General for Education and Culture of the European Commission – <http://europa.eu.int/comm/youth/>
- ☛ Lisbon Strategy - <http://europa.eu.int/growthandjobs/>
- ☛ Life Long Learning agenda – <http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/life/>
- ☛ European white paper “A new impetus for European Youth” – [http://europa.eu.int/comm/youth/whitepaper/index\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/youth/whitepaper/index_en.html)
- ☛ Youth Pass developed the SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre – [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/youthpass/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/youthpass/)

## The Council of Europe and its efforts for recognition – Peter Lauritzen

Peter Lauritzen gave conference an **historical perspective** on youth work and non formal education: At the beginning of the twentieth century a typical 14 year old boy in Munich worked twelve hours a day, seven days and week. In these conditions, 90% of young people were excluded from knowledge.

**Youth organisations** were formed during the first part of the century with the single aim of reducing work time to give more time for learning and culture. The 1920's German youth movements were not protest movements; they were “more like a long term Woodstock”. Sadly they were taken over by first the fascists and later the communists.

Over the years, youth work and young people have become associated with **change**. NFE has indeed helped to bring about change – not least the increase in access to education for young people.

There have been those who believed that NFE should promote confrontation with the formal education sector; others have taken a compensatory approach to NFE, others a complimentary approach. There are some who take a workers approach and others an emancipatory approach (women, third world). All this goes to highlight the **complexity of the issue of recognition**.

In some senses, **recognition is not new** (Education Populaire involved 100,000 people), however some of the problems of recognition are new. For example the breakdown of solidarity in society, the breakdown of communism; the adoption by some schools of NFE approaches, technological developments, migration movements and the demise of the old contract between education and jobs.

NFE is now working from a more **timid position**. The approach has become one of looking up to see if we can help rather than demonstrating the confidence of earlier years.

**Reconstruction** is underway though; the 1998 Ministerial conference in Bucharest and the 2001 meeting of the Council of ministers helped to reconnect some of the links between formal and non formal education at the political level in the Council of Europe.



A potential tool comes in the form of the CoE **Youth Policy Reports** (by country). The NFE chapters have much room for improvement and there is a risk of lip service being paid, but they have the potential to demonstrate to different sectors, the value of the work that is being done.

The new **European Knowledge Centre** ([www.youth-knowledge.net](http://www.youth-knowledge.net)), which is the fruit of a Youth Research partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe, will also contain a lot of information about the value and recognition of NFE. It should make it easier for us to use the knowledge that we already have.

One of the current trends within NFE is towards **specialisations**, for example in Human Rights Education or Intercultural Learning. The question this brings for recognition is whether we need to treat the disciplines differently.

The **aims and challenges** then are as follows:

- ★ To create coherent systems for recognition
- ★ To learn self confidence and not be too polite
- ★ To be more political – to do what we can for the Lisbon Strategy
- ★ And finally to remind the policy makers of their own experience in NFE and youth work...

#### **Linking Further...**

- ☞ Directorate for Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe – [www.coe.int/youth/](http://www.coe.int/youth/)
- ☞ Partnership in the youth field between the European Commission and the Council of Europe – [www.training-youth.net](http://www.training-youth.net)
- ☞ European Youth Knowledge Centre of the Partnership on Youth Research between the European Commission and the Council of Europe - [www.youth-knowledge.net](http://www.youth-knowledge.net)

## The European Youth Forum and Recognition ~ Bettina Schwarzmayr

Bettina Schwarzmayr introduced the European Youth Forum and set out to answer 6 questions:

1. *Who are we doing this for?*
2. *Why is the European Youth Forum doing it?*
3. *Who should recognise non formal education?*
4. *What is special about non formal education?*
5. *So what is the problem with it?*
6. *The solution!*

**Who are we doing it for?** Bettina Schwarzmayr outlined three groups – those wanting vocational training, those who want a fuller CV for prospective employers and those who might be marginalised from the formal education system. All three were legitimate but all three need **different tools for recognition**.

The Youth Forum is involved because it is convinced of the **value of Non Formal Education** (NFE) and is committed to life long and life wide learning. It wants to remove barriers and enable access to education for all young people and believes that, as young people working with their peers, it is able to communicate effectively and understand their needs. The Youth Forum is involved because recognition of NFE is closely linked to **active participation** in Society and to the **empowerment** of the voiceless.

Non-formally gained competencies should be recognised by three groups: Formal education institutions to aid pathways into the system; the labour market and most importantly; the individual learner. Again, **a variety of methods** is required and a system which avoids duplication of assessment.

The YFJ stresses **self recognition** because it aids self confidence and enables the learner to describe their own competencies. This in turn aids assessment of further learning needs. The Council of Europe's youth worker and youth leader portfolio approach is an example of this in practice.

Non Formal Education is **dynamic, flexible and relational**. It involves mutual learning together with a group and with the educator and is adaptable to the social context of the learners. This is the beauty of NFE which must be preserved.



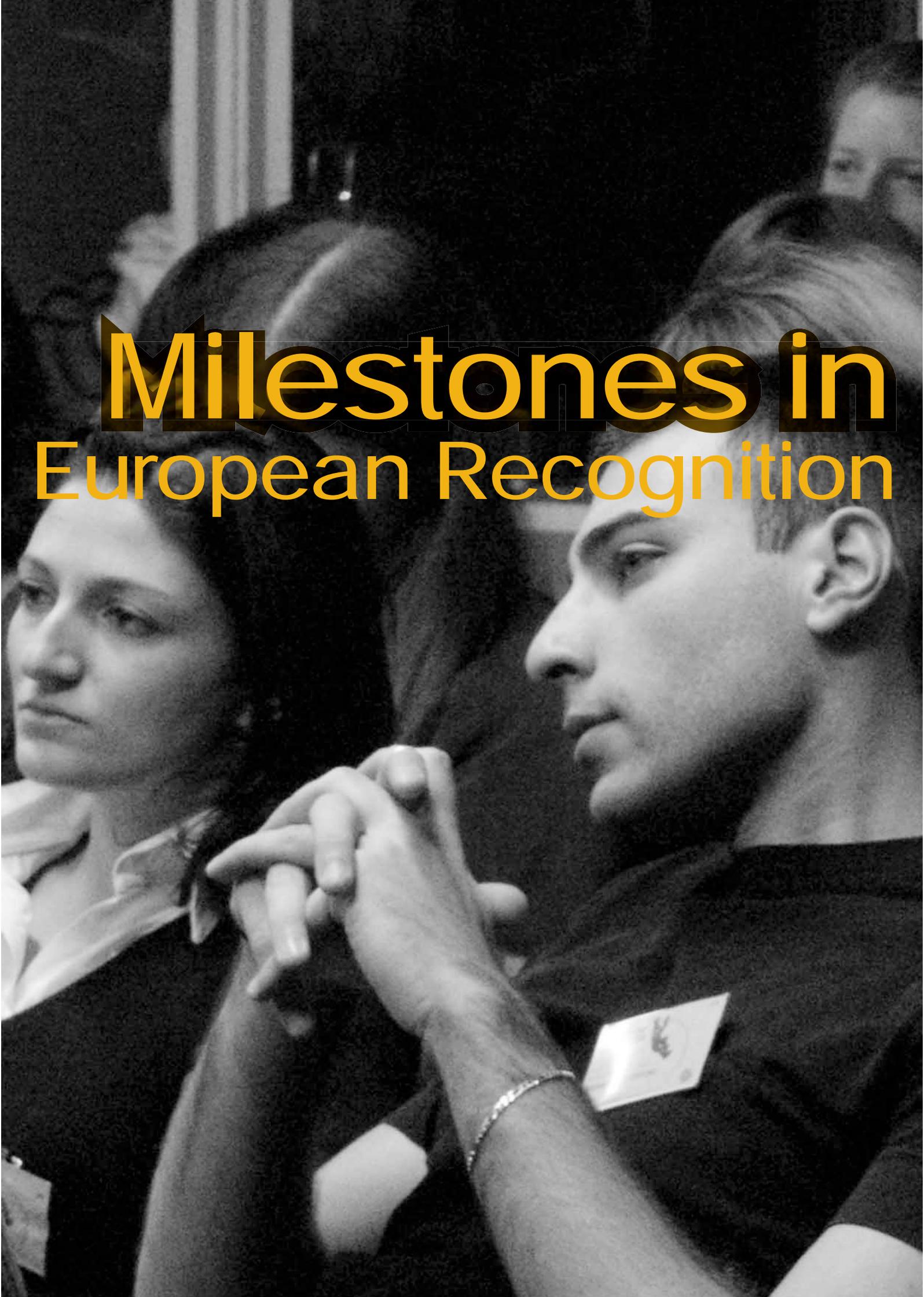
**Formal education** is resistant to change, often compartmentalised and designed for the average learner who doesn't exist. It is less able to deal with problems of social inclusion and tends to be less holistic.

But **links** between the formal and the non formal are desperately needed to ensure both the knowledge based economy *and* the social cohesion described in the Lisbon Strategy.

Bettina Schwarzmayr encouraged the conference to keep in mind that the tools for recognition need to be accessible for all young people and that **young people** need to be consulted on their design. She challenged the conference to think also about **recognition without formal certification** or assessment and to ensure that recognition tools were designed so that they could not be used inappropriately or out of context. Recognition needs to be **holistic and contextualised** for today's society, the learner's situation and the formal education sector. In doing this, recognition will aid the greater impact of NFE on society.

### Linking Further...

- 👉 European Youth Forum policy documents – [www.youthforum.org](http://www.youthforum.org)
- 👉 More about Informal Education and Lifelong Learning - [www.infed.org](http://www.infed.org)



# Milestones in European Recognition



# - Evolution

Hans-Joachim Schild (Youth Unit - European Commission) gave an overview of the milestones in the **journey** towards formal and social recognition of non-formal and informal learning in youth work.

In setting the scene, Hans-Joachim referred to **political processes** which have been initiated since Lisbon 2000 and which have influenced the debate on validation and recognition of formal, non formal and informal learning in diverse contexts. He acknowledged that there was much work that he did not have time to mention, including work in the Education and Training field, the national or sectoral level or the work of colleagues in the Council of Europe and European Youth Forum.

Hans-Joachim Schild introduced some of the milestones for formal and social recognition of non-formal and informal learning in youth work. He explained that the European Framework is based on the two related **policy sectors of Education and Training, and Youth**.

Since **Lisbon 2000**, when the Heads of State & Government decided to “make the Union to the most competitive, knowledge-based region in the world, with more and better jobs, sustainable growth and social cohesion”, a number of political processes had been initiated in both policy sectors. These have influenced the debate on validation & recognition of formal, non-formal and informal learning in **diverse contexts**.

A range of these initiatives were to be presented during the conference; in some cases initiated by national governments, in other cases by youth organisations or specific projects. They cover both, recognition of youth work for and with **young people** and of training of **youth workers/ youth leaders**.

The most relevant policy initiatives since Lisbon 2000 are the **Lifelong Learning Strategy**, a concrete work programme for the future objectives of education & training systems and the **Bruges/Copenhagen process in VET** (Vocational Education and Training). These three are now subsumed under the generic term “**Education & Training 2010**”. With regard to recognition of non-formal and informal learning all initiatives stressed the need for a greater transparency of skills and competences and a better “**Valuing of all kinds of learning**”.

More specifically, in the identified key priorities of E&T “Bringing learning and learners closer together“ and “Making learning more attractive..” it was proposed that “youth organisations should **make visible and publicize** regularly the outcomes of non-formal and informal learning that results from their activities”.

This strand was covered concretely by a working group “**Validation of non-formal learning**” within the Bruges process and a working group “**Making learning attractive/strengthening links with working life and society**” in the E&T 2010 framework.

The main activities of these groups are:

- Elaboration of **Common principles** for the identification and validation of non-formal learning
- Development of a **European Inventory** for the validation of non-formal & informal learning
- Development of a **Single European Transparency Framework** (EUROPASS)

For the European Commission the most relevant policy initiative in the Youth Sector is undoubtedly the **White Paper on Youth**. It proposes to apply the open method of coordination in priority areas of the specific youth field and to take youth more into account in other policies such as Education and training. One of the key messages is to “**expand & recognise areas of experimentation**” and to recognise the **complementarity** of formal, non-formal & informal learning



Since the launch of the White Paper recognition has played a prominent role in a number of Commission activities; for instance:

- in the joint activities with the CoE: the working paper '**Pathways towards validation & recognition**' and the research seminar on non-formal learning;
- in the support of the CoE Expert Group on a **Portfolio System**;
- in various Working Groups: on **Youth Autonomy**, on the interim evaluation of the **YOUTH Programme** and on **Engagement**
- in activities of SALTO RC Germany for **YOUTHPASS**; and last but not least
- in this event **Bridges for Recognition**

Within the Education and Training strategies a number of working groups have been convened in order to support the political processes, develop policy recommendations in the diverse areas and exchange information and good practice throughout Member States.

In 2003/2004 one of the main subjects of the Working Group H "Making learning attractive/ Strengthening links with working life & society at large", was "**Valuing Learning**". Related to this is the development of a set of common principles for the identification and validation of non-formal learning.

Hand Joachim Schild said that it is now time for an **assessment of progress and the redefinition of a strategy** for 2005/06 along with the adoption of the common European principles on validation in Member States and in various sectors and contexts, including the youth field.

The Common principles for the identification and validation of non-formal & informal learning were developed by a group of experts, approved by WG H and adopted by Council Conclusion in May 2004.

Key issues related to this are:

- There should be an **individual entitlement** to get non-formal and informal learning experiences validated, but
- It should be a **voluntary matter** for individuals asking for validation
- There should be an **obligation for stakeholders**, in accordance with their rights, responsibilities and competences, to establish systems & approaches for validation, including quality assurance mechanisms & guidance provision
- Validation of non-formal learning must be based on **confidence & trust**: this means processes, procedures and criteria must be **fair & transparent**
- Systems and approaches for identification and validation should be **credible and legitimate**

These principles should be **adapted by country & by context** on a voluntary basis and be disseminated and promoted by involved parties. NGO's engaged in providing lifelong learning opportunities are also encouraged to use and adopt the common European principles as appropriate.

The **European Inventory** for the validation of non-formal & informal learning is an activity which was asked for in the very beginning of the E&T processes. The idea is to collect information on systems for validation in different contexts (public, private, voluntary) and countries (29) and to make it available to diverse audiences. The inventory will provide information on

- methods & instruments
- norms & standards
- stakeholders and institutional, political & legal frameworks, and
- examples of good practice (by country and by context)

The results of the inventory initiative are expected from the contractor, ECOTEC, in the spring of 2005.

**The Single Transparency Framework (EUROPASS)** is based on a proposal by COM on improved transparency of qualifications and competences in order to facilitate mobility throughout Europe for LLL purposes. It led to a Decision of the European Parliament and the Council of 15 December 2004.



EUROPASS includes 5 existing instruments

- Europass Curriculum Vitae (CV) plus
- Diploma Supplement (Higher Education)
- Certificate Supplement (VET)
- Language Portfolio
- Europass Mobility

Implementation will be by **National Europass Centres** and will be open to new instruments after implementation.

Back in the Youth field, a recent milestone for Hans Joachim Schild and the Commission was the Joint Working Paper COM-CoE of Feb 04; “**Pathways towards validation & recognition of Education, Training and Learning in the Youth field**”. The paper summarises the state of art and lays the basis for further action. Its key messages are:

- There is a strong need for **social & formal** recognition of learning
- Youth work is **more than a sub-category** of education and training
- NFL contributes to prepare young people for **knowledge & civil society**
- we have to strengthen **awareness** of key persons, institutions and of young people on the value of youth work
- Youth field must develop **effective & flexible** ways of validation & recognition
- We have to take into account the **different purposes** for validation

Another milestone was the **joint Research seminar** on Non-formal learning within the Youth Research Partnership COM-CoE in April 2004. The purpose of the seminar was to initiate a dialogue across different actors from different sectors, to intensify the dialogue between researchers, policy-makers and trainers and to launch the joint ‘Pathways...’ working paper.

The key messages from the research seminar were that we have to be more **precise about value & impact** of youth work and about the skills & competences of youth workers; and that there is a high need for the development of a **professional profile** and of clear **educational pathways** for youth workers/leaders.

In the follow-up of the White Paper COM instigated an Expert & Working Group on **Youth Autonomy**. One of the main items for debate in this group was about how education, including non-formal learning, contributes to autonomy. Unsurprisingly the main finding was that Education, and in particular non-formal learning, enables young people to live autonomously. Action proposed by the group includes the integration of the issue of youth autonomy into ongoing activities in E&T; and the task of **defining & recognising** the skills and competences needed for developing autonomy.

As a Follow-up activity to the interim evaluation procedure 2000-2006 of the **YOUTH Programme**, COM invited Working Groups (WG) to look for ways of effective implementation of the **52 recommendations**. A general WG covers the recommendations with a political & general dimension including recommendation **No. 11 'Recognition & validation of NFL'**. ("It is recommended that a certificate be issued to young people and youth workers who have participated in a project, as is the case for EVS, recognising skills acquired during participation in a project."). The task now is to support the ongoing activities for the development of a **Youth-specific validation instrument**.





With regard to recognition of competences of **youth workers /youth leaders** the Decision of the CoE's European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ) in 2003 to develop a **portfolio** on non-formal education of youth workers / leaders was a real milestone. As a result the CoE invited an Expert Group to work on the Portfolio System. The purpose of this system is to **describe experiences & competences** of youth workers / leaders and to enable users to **assess & monitor learning progressions**.

The Portfolio will function as a Reference Framework of Competences with a **functional analysis** of youth work and of the responsibilities and competences of youth workers/leaders. It is a work in progress and further development will also be coordinated via the Virtual Platform at CEDEFOP.

A further milestone will hopefully be the agreed enlarged activity in 2005/06 of SALTO Resource Centre Germany. COM has agreed with SALTO DE to develop the "**YOUTHPASS**" (working title) with the aim of developing and implementing a European level **validation instrument** for YOUTH Programme. The SALTO RC will also aim to integrate YOUTH-PASS into EUROPASS, **building links** between international and national youth work and provide an analysis of options for links to the citizenship and volunteering strand.

The RC will be inviting expert groups and stakeholders to be involved in the assessment of **existing models** and the design, development and testing of new models. The RC will also be responsible for training staff and publishing tools and user guides (see also notes from the good practice workshop on this subject).

In order to facilitate the implementation of the White Paper priorities, the General Directors for Youth convened three working groups: One on participation, one on information and one on Engagement/Commitment.



The working Group on **Engagement/Commitment** is led by France and includes representatives of 12 Member States. Its purpose was/is the “**valorisation**” of the commitment of young people and to ensure a better recognition of their engagement. Its main activities were awarding **prizes** for good practice in engagement projects and the exchange of good practice and information on validation systems. The group is now reflecting on the application of the **common principles** to youth, support for the political debate and on the recommendations leading to Council Resolution under the Austrian Presidency in the first semester of 2006.

Hans Joachim Schild identified **Bridges for Recognition** as the most up to date milestone. The conference should be seen as a follow-up to Bridges for Training in 2001, with the aims of increasing **visibility of the value** of youth work; discussing ways to formal and social recognition; exchanging good practice and laying the foundations for further action.

Together these **milestones** created a picture of a lot of work being done, particularly at the policy level, and provided an appropriate introduction to the workshops on good practice which followed. They demonstrated commitment at the political level and highlighted the **need for the bridges** to be built at all levels from political to operational.

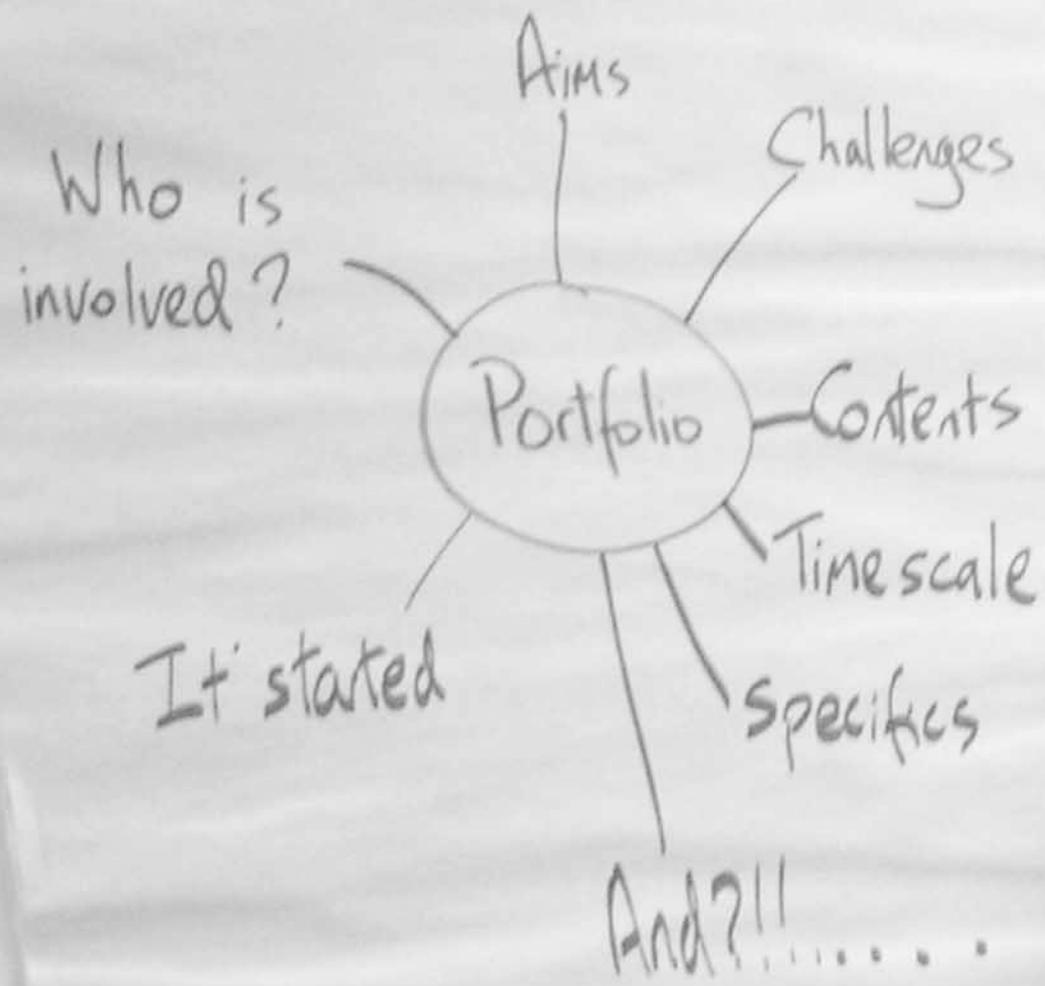


### Linking Further...

- ☛ Lifelong Learning Strategy – <http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/life/>
- ☛ Lisbon Strategy – <http://europa.eu.int/growthandjobs/>
- ☛ Working Group H – Making Learning Attractive, Strengthening Links with Working Life and Society - [http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/objectives\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/objectives_en.html)
- ☛ Common principles for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning - [http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/doc/non-formal-and-informal-learning\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/doc/non-formal-and-informal-learning_en.pdf)
- ☛ The European Inventory for the validation of non-formal and informal learning - <http://ecotec.com/europeaninventory2004/>
- ☛ The single transparency framework – EUROPASS - <http://europass.cedefop.eu.int/>
- ☛ The White Paper on Youth – [http://europa.eu.int/comm/youth/whitepaper/index\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/youth/whitepaper/index_en.html)
- ☛ Joint working paper “Pathways towards validation & recognition...” - <http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/BridgesPreparation/>
- ☛ Council of Europe Expert Group on a portfolio system – [www.coe.int/youth/](http://www.coe.int/youth/)
- ☛ SALTO Resource Centre Germany – YOUTHPASS – [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/youthpass/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/youthpass/)
- ☛ General Directors working group “Engagement/Commitment” -
- ☛ Bridges for Recognition Conference January 2005 - [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/BridgesForRecognition/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/BridgesForRecognition/)

# Terms and

What do we mean when





# Concepts

## we say...

There were two inputs on the subject of **terminology and language in the field of recognition**: On the opening morning, Lynne Chisholm, of the University of Innsbruck

Institute of Education, introduced delegates to the differences between **terms and concepts** and between social and codified (formal) recognition. On Saturday morning, prior to the Hot Topics debates, Bryony Hoskins from the Partnership on Youth Research between the Council of Europe and the European Commission reminded delegates that language is **dynamic** and that it can both unite and divide communities of interest.

Lynne Chisholm defined a **term** as something we use when we name something and a **concept** as how we think about something. We cannot have terms without concepts but can have concepts without terms. To confuse terms means to confuse meanings and this is where confusion in recognition can begin.

The **purpose** for which we use a term and the culture in which we use it can make for different meanings. The reality that when we use terms there will always be “**conceptual approximations**”; we think we understand and have been understood but we are not always certain. This is not necessarily a bad thing and the trick is to know how much approximation is acceptable. Bryony Hoskins also talked about levels of specificity in the use of language and both mentioned that language is not fixed, that **concepts don't stand still**.

Bryony Hoskins talked about the **power of language** as a framework for understanding the world around us and a construct for our identity – including which community we fit into. She also talked about the **difficulties of language**: The barriers it can create, the complexities that can be lost and the risk of following conversations in the wrong direction on the assumption that everyone understands in the same way. More positively, delegates were encouraged to think of language and terminology as a **tool for building bridges to new communities**.

Lynne Chisholm said that recognition is to acknowledge that something is there and to place a value on it. She drew the distinction between social recognition and codified or formal recognition. **Social recognition** is related to status and esteem that individuals receive as a result of participating, achieving or demonstrating something. **Codified recognition** is more formal or official and is most often associated with assessment and certification. Clearly **Social and codified recognition are linked**: The value of codified recognition can be reduced by low social recognition and vice versa. Forms of codified recognition were increasingly important in social society and at the same time there is a diversification of the ways in which achievement is recognised and evidenced.

Both speakers referred to **resources** to help in the challenge of developing a common language for recognition: Lynne Chisholm had produced a “Cheat Sheet” of terms used in the recognition (see p. 41 below) and noted that it would need to be reviewed as the language – and the thinking – evolved. Bryony Hoskins referred to the new **youth policy knowledge platform** at [www.youth-knowledge.net](http://www.youth-knowledge.net) which would be launched at the Luxembourg Presidency Conference later in 2005.

Lynne Chisholm also mentioned importance of the **mediating bodies** such as SALTO in promoting the language of recognition. Such bodies can help to create neutral “game rules” and take decisions. They can help to develop trust and confidence in recognition processes and terminology and they can foster transparency and consistency – fulfilling the role of gate keeper for many.

The **Cheat Sheet on Recognition Terminology** (below) or Cedefop’s multilingual publication on **Terminology in Vocational Education and Training** could provide a starting point to understanding and **negotiating meanings** of different terms and possible realities behind it.

### Linking Further...

- 👉 Cheat Sheet on Recognition Terminology – available at [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/BridgesForRecognition/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/BridgesForRecognition/)
- 👉 Cedefop’s “Terminology of Vocational Training Policy – A multilingual glossary for an enlarged Europe” (Tissot, 2004): [www.cedefop.eu.int](http://www.cedefop.eu.int)
- 👉 Youth Knowledge Platform of the Partnership on Youth Research between the Council of Europe and the European Commission – [www.youth-knowledge.net](http://www.youth-knowledge.net)



# Cheat Sheet on Recognition Terminology

*“Some terms that might cause confusion or discussion...  
... and their definitions to stimulate the discussion”*

*- by Lynne Chisholm*

## Object of recognition

- ★ **Potential** refers to all the cognitive, affective and practical capacities and achievements that a person could develop and that could be fostered by motivation and desire, by effort and application, by learning and life experience.
- ★ **Capacity** is similar to potential, but is typically used in a more specific way to refer to particular kinds of individual potential and also implies having some kind of related knowledge, skill or competence.
- ★ **Ability** refers to capacities that someone can already demonstrate that s/he possesses, such as having the ability to speak a certain language.
- ★ **Capability** refers to what someone can demonstrably or presumably do, and therefore it is similar to the terms skills and competence.
- ★ **Knowledge**; it is impossible to provide a satisfactory account of the conceptual background behind the term ‘knowledge’ in a few words. In the everyday world, the meaning of the term knowledge appears self-evident: it is what someone individually knows or the sum of what a given civilisation collectively knows. But what does it mean to know something? What is it that is known, how do we come to know it, why does it count as something worth knowing, and what do we do with it when we know it? In educational practice knowledge is what there is to learn, but it is not necessarily useful and worthwhile of its own accord. It has to be joined up with skills and competences (to become useful) on the one hand – and no less importantly, with principles and values (to become worthwhile) on the other hand.

- ★ **Skill** means having the knowledge and experience needed to perform a specific task or job – someone who has learned what to do (possesses the knowledge) and how to do it (can transfer the knowledge into real practice), which also means that someone else can observe the skill in action.
- ★ **Competence** is often used interchangeably with the term skill, but they do not really mean the same thing. Competence means the ability to apply knowledge, know-how and skills in a stable/recurring or changing situation. Two elements are crucial: applying what one knows and can do to a specific task or problem, and being able to transfer this ability between different situations.





## Forms and Procedures

- ★ **Documentation** refers to a (virtual or real) paper or visual record. Documents stand for evidence, either because of the information they actually contain (for example, the love letter), or because the content bears recognised witness to the truth and accuracy of what it claims (for example, the university degree certificate).
- ★ **Comparison** means to set one thing next to another (or several other things) in order to be able to see and perhaps measure the similarities and differences between them. Comparison only makes sense if the items to be compared either can be held to belong to the same category of phenomena or can all be set in relation to a quality external to themselves.
- ★ **Evaluation:** in English, evaluation only means to make a reasoned judgement about or to give a plausible account of something. It does not imply any specific purpose (such as grading individual performance), nor does it imply any particular method of evaluation (such as a written test), and nor does its outcomes automatically suggest that something is of greater value or importance than something else (such as Council of Europe activities in comparison with SALTO activities).
- ★ **Assessment** takes place when evaluation has a comparative dimension that involves setting individuals, activities or institutions into a ranking order of performance or achievement. The ranking may be set in relation to criteria that are specific to the context, process or outcomes that are being assessed (such as: who swam the river fastest, or which EVS agency has the highest success rate in attracting socially disadvantaged young people into the programme). Alternatively, relative performance may be assessed against an external standard (such as in the case of the PISA attainment tests for 15-year-olds in different countries).
- ★ **Formative evaluation or assessment** refers to a dynamic process over time, which tries to capture the developmental dimensions of learning, performance and achievement. It records the pathways and the changes between two points in time, with the primary accent on what lies between those points and how the journey has unfolded.

- ★ **Summative evaluation or assessment** refers to assembling a picture of the outcomes of an activity in relation to the aims and purposes with which it began and/or in relation to a set of performance criteria that apply to all comparable activities. This kind of evaluation or assessment places the primary accent on comparing the starting and ending points of a process, but is less concerned with what happened along the way.
- ★ **Standards and quality standards** are terms that can be used in several different ways. To say that an organisation uses standard methods of youth work might simply mean that it uses what the commentator judges to be the usual methods, that is, those used most commonly. The comment might well also convey the judgement that the methods in question are those generally recognised in the youth sector to be appropriate. This carries the suggestion that standard methods reflect professional norms, that is, they are seen to be good and valuable methods. At this point the term standards takes on a distinctive flavour, because it introduces the idea that some youth work methods are better than others (depending, of course, to some extent on the purpose and the participants). This raises the question of the bases for such quality judgements, which take the form of criteria, that is, attributes that should be present (or not present in some instances) if a particular youth work activity and its methods are to be seen as of good quality. The criteria that are applied are not necessarily the same for all cases, although some criteria may apply in all cases.
- ★ **Criterion referencing** means to assess the type and level of service, experience or outcomes of youth work/education on the basis of a set of criteria external to the event, activity or achievement in question.
- ★ **Normative referencing** means to assess the type and level of service, experience or outcomes of youth work/education on the basis of the performance of all participants relative to each other.
- ★ **Learning outcomes** are the results of a learning process, which may be expressed in a variety of ways. In fact, the outcomes that are recorded and measured at any one point in time are interim moments in a learning process, that is, a snapshot frame in a film (which could also run backwards).



- ★ **Learning achievement or attainment** is somewhat more narrowly defined than when using the term 'outcome'. These terms refer to the set of knowledge, skills and/or competences that an individual has acquired and is able to demonstrate at the end of a given learning process.
- ★ **Certification** refers to a standardised process of formally validating knowledge, know-how, skills and/or competences acquired by an individual or represented through a learning/service provider.
- ★ **Certificates or diplomas** are the 'piece of paper' which record the outcome of the certification process. It most frequently has the status of an official document, but this is not an absolute prerequisite.
- ★ **Credential** can simply be a synonym for a certificate or diploma, but it can also carry a wider meaning. The word credential is associated with the term credibility, which means to be believable, or something in which one can have confidence.
- ★ **Qualification** can also simply be a synonym for a certificate or diploma. In the world of formal education and training in Europe it is usually an official record or document testifying to the fact that a person has successfully completed a given course or reached a given standard of achievement for a specified field, skill or competence.
- ★ **Accreditation:** formally or socially recognised authorities or instances accredit courses, activities and their outcomes. This means they testify that organisations and individuals meet standards to which all have agreed to conform. They vouch for the credibility of the certificates and diplomas that are issued, and hence for the reliability and validity of the monitoring, evaluation and assessment of the individuals and the organisations whose judgements are given the stamp of approval.
- ★ **Accreditation of prior experience and learning (APEL)** refers to the application of some kind of formal recognition to the knowledge, skills or competences that individuals have acquired in non-formal and informal ways during the course of their lives.



- ★ **Validation of non-formal/informal learning:** APEL is one way of validating non-formal and informal learning, that is, evaluating (possibly assessing) and recognising learning progress and outcomes. In the world of research methodology, the adjective ‘valid’ means that there is an accurate link between a theoretical concept (an idea) and its empirical indicator (a measurable observation). More simply, this means we assume, in good faith and with reasonable confidence, that something we can observe (and perhaps measure) in real life does genuinely reflect an idea in our heads.
- ★ **Valuing learning:** to value learning may simply mean that one thinks that learning as such is a good thing. More precisely, it refers to the process of encouraging participation in learning of all kinds and making its outcomes visible, so that (more) people and society as a whole become more aware that learning is an intrinsically worthwhile activity and thus to enhance the rewards that learning brings.
- ★ **Social recognition** points to the status and esteem (‘feel good factor’) that individuals, organisations or sectors receive as a consequence of displaying certain characteristics, reaching certain achievements or engaging in certain activities – such as learning. It might also extend to material rewards, such as higher incomes for those with higher level qualifications.
- ★ **Codified recognition:** for education and training purposes, regardless of sector and level, this term specifies a formal and often official (including legal) recognition of learning participation or outcomes, such as a certificate or a diploma.



## People involved

- ★ **Learning providers** are organisations or a set of institutionalised arrangements that deliver learning, that is, that manage and monitor the provision of courses of some kind, whether formal or non-formal. Learning providers may also design and/or execute the courses they offer, and they may operate in either the public or the private sector. They may or may not be subject to some form of state or professional regulation to assure quality and standards.
- ★ **Learning facilitator** is a new term that aims to establish an inclusive word for all those who shape, guide and accompany the learning process, regardless of the sector in which they work and the kind of learning involved.
- ★ **Trainer** is the word traditionally used to refer to those who shape, guide and accompany learning processes in the initial and continuing vocational education and training sectors. They most typically work in vocational schools and colleges, both public and private, in company-run training units or at the workplace itself. They may also staff vocational tracks or subjects in general education institutions, and they could work in ‘second chance’-type projects that aim to integrate disadvantaged or unemployed young people or (older) adults into the labour market.
- ★ **Teacher** is the word traditionally used to refer to those who shape, guide and accompany learning processes in schools, colleges and – to some extent – higher education. They may teach vocational subjects, but it is not common to use the word ‘teacher’ for those who work in company-based contexts.
- ★ **Tutor** is a term that is sometimes used as a synonym for teacher, but generally it connotes someone whose pastoral role (looking after someone’s overall personal well-being) is at least as important as a purely teaching/training role.
- ★ **Mentoring** is a structured process for providing personal guidance and support to someone who is younger, less experienced or new to the game – whatever the context may be, but most commonly in education, training and employment contexts. Mentors act as critical but non-judgemental friends, provide a role model and a source of useful information and advice, and can take on a coaching task (helping to improve performance). They may be freely chosen, but may also be allocated using a set of matching criteria. Formal mentoring programmes are likely to specify a given time-period for the mentoring relationship.

- ★ **Youth trainers** are people who train others to work with young people, using non-formal methods, focusing on personal and social development and with an emphasis on fostering intercultural competence.
- ★ **Youth workers** are people who work with young people in a wide variety of non-formal and informal contexts, typically focusing on personal and social development through one-to-one relationships and in group-based activities. Being learning facilitators may be their main task, but it is at least as likely that youth workers take a social pedagogic or directly social work based approach. In many cases, these roles and functions are combined with each other.





## Types of Learning

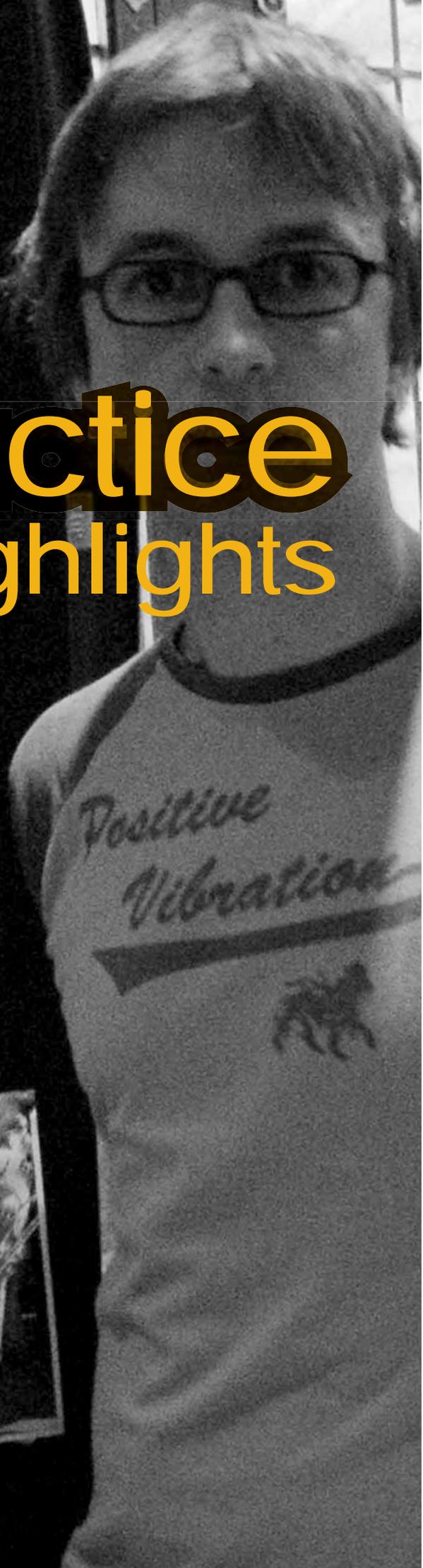
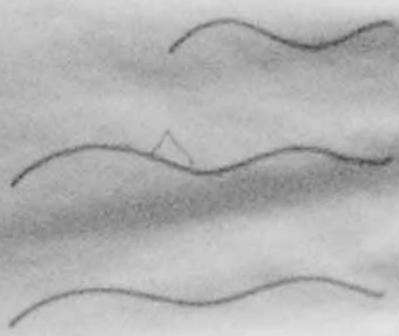
- ★ **Formal learning** is purposive learning that takes place in a distinct and institutionalised environment specifically designed for teaching/training and learning, which is staffed by learning facilitators who are specifically qualified for the sector, level and subject concerned and which usually serves a specified category of learners (defined by age, level and specialism). Learning aims are almost always externally set, learning progress is usually monitored and assessed, and learning outcomes are usually recognised by certificates or diplomas. Much formal learning provision is compulsory (school education).
- ★ **Non-formal learning** is purposive but voluntary learning that takes place in a diverse range of environments and situations for which teaching/training and learning is not necessarily their sole or main activity. These environments and situations may be intermittent or transitory, and the activities or courses that take place may be staffed by professional learning facilitators (such as youth trainers) or by volunteers (such as youth leaders). The activities and courses are planned, but are seldom structured by conventional rhythms or curriculum subjects. They usually address specific target groups, but rarely document or assess learning outcomes or achievements in conventionally visible ways.
- ★ **Informal learning:** from the learner's standpoint at least, this is non-purposive learning which takes place in everyday life contexts in the family, at work, during leisure and in the community. It does have outcomes, but these are seldom recorded, virtually never certified and are typically neither immediately visible for the learner nor do they count in themselves for education, training or employment purposes. APEL systems are one way in which the outcomes of such learning can be made more visible and hence open to greater recognition.
- ★ **Open and distance learning (ODL)** combines two distinct categories of learning provision and participation which frequently occur together. Open learning is purposive learning that takes place where, when and how the learner chooses. It may also be self-directed learning, that is, the learner also voluntarily chooses what and why to learn. Open learning may be formal or non-formal in character. Distance learning covers the spectrum from correspondence learning ('by post') to eLearning (IT supported learning, whether as content, pedagogy or medium). It may or may not be designed as open learning, and can include highly formalised and closely assessed types of learning processes and outcomes.

ds on

# Good Practice

## Overview & highlights

ACT seminar  
HIP





# workshops

A significant part of the programme of Bridges was used to **share good practice in Recognition** from across the whole of Europe. In all there were 16 workshops and delegates were able attend four. Some examples were of well established work and others were “work in progress”. Some were country specific and others were Pan-European.

The **target groups** for recognition include young people looking for jobs; disadvantaged young people and those from minority groups; youth workers and youth leaders and youth trainers. Most, if not all of the examples shown were **voluntary schemes** in that there was no compulsion to participate. In one case there was a right by law to have non-formal learning validated. Whilst the idea of recognition was universally seen as a **personal outcome**, the process could be carried out individually or in a group setting.

**Support for learners** was seen as fundamental to the process of recognition and was discussed many times – whether the role was that of tutor, facilitator, mentor, counsellor, or assessor. The concept of **peer support** –learners working with each other and providing feedback - was also mentioned in at least one case.

A common theme was the opportunity to **integrate** with and **compliment** the recognition processes of the formal education sector. There was an obvious commitment to the holistic development of young people and so the **connections** between formal, non-formal and informal education were highlighted in several workshops.

The **benefits of recognition** were varied: **Employability** was cited in several cases as the main motivating factor, whilst for others there was the desire to help young people develop a **positive vision** of their lives. For youth workers, recognition processes provided an opportunity to **describe and assess** the work they and their young people were doing; for some, recognition was merely a **tool of communication**, enabling others to see the value of their work. At least one example had grown out of the desire to properly evaluate the benefits of a particular type of project.

Some **fears** were expressed in the discussions in the workshops: The question “Where is the fun?” summed up the concern that recognition was a step towards **formalising the non-formal sector**. It seemed that in many of the examples given there was a balance to be achieved between participation in a process of evidence gathering and self reflection and the demand or desire for a recognisable outcome – the certificate to prove you were competent.

The **instruments** described in the workshops were many and varied; from paper based to electronic; from self-assessed and peer assessed to assessment by a “jury” of youth workers. It was interesting to see examples of recognition processes being adapted for different sectors and in different countries – for example from arts and culture to international youth work and from Finland to Slovenia.

An example of using a **self perception inventory** was given (in relation to recognition of youth trainers), as a tool to establish base lines at the start of the learning experience. This would enable learners to **measure** how far they had travelled during the experience. Other approaches highlighted the need for multiple points of entry and the freedom to keep trying if the required **standard** was not achieved at the first assessment. Some had no formal assessment but focussed on collecting and presenting evidence in a way which highlighted the skills, knowledge and attitudes of the individual; others had extensive lists of **competencies** arranged at different “levels”, from which learners can choose the ones they wish to demonstrate.

As a communication tool at European level, a **common language** is needed for jargon and terminology (see p.38). Some examples were given of certificates or equivalents being available in more than one official language. Together these things will promote **transferability** from sector to sector and country to country.

Another **challenge**, particularly in relation to **meeting standards**, is the question of who is competent to say that one person meets the required standard and another is not. Who should sit on the “jury” if there is one and are we allowed to say that one person is not a good youth worker – particularly across national and cultural boundaries?



The **role of governments and other national authorities** was a common discussion point in many of the workshops. National Authorities give **credibility** to awards and so aid **social recognition**; they also bring a strategic view and assist with transferability of awards – this helps with currency, in particular with employers. And finally, national authorities are more often than not, the gatekeepers to **funding**.

All together the workshops demonstrated the innovation and huge **commitment** that exists across Europe to recognising the high standards, competencies and achievements of young people and those who work with them (be they paid or unpaid).

## Good Practice documentation

The following Good Practices are documented in annex or online at

[www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/BridgesForRecognition/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/BridgesForRecognition/) or at the various websites of the organisations:

- ☛ The SALTO Youth Pass – SALTO-YOUTH  
[www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/youthpass/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/youthpass/)
- ☛ The Euromed Training Pass – SALTO-YOUTH  
[www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/euromed/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/euromed/)
- ☛ The Youth Worker Portfolio – Council of Europe  
[www.coe.int/youth/](http://www.coe.int/youth/)
- ☛ Europass as a Tool for Transparency – European Commission  
<http://europass.cedefop.eu.int>
- ☛ The European CV – Cedefop  
<http://cedefop.eu.int>
- ☛ NEFIKS - Slovenia & Recreational Study Booklet – Finland  
[www.nefiks.net](http://www.nefiks.net) & [www.nuortenakatemia.fi](http://www.nuortenakatemia.fi)
- ☛ Cultural/International Competency Record – Germany  
[www.kompetenznachweiskultur.de](http://www.kompetenznachweiskultur.de) & [www.ijab.de](http://www.ijab.de)
- ☛ IN.T.R.A Electronic Portfolio – Italy  
[www.solcosrl.it](http://www.solcosrl.it)
- ☛ Youth Achievement Awards – UK  
[www.ukyouth.org](http://www.ukyouth.org)
- ☛ Personal Record of Achievement (Exchanges & Youth Initiatives) – UK  
[www.connectyouthinternational.com](http://www.connectyouthinternational.com)
- ☛ The Right to the Validation of Non-Formal Learning – France  
[www.travail.gouv.fr/dossiers/vae/index.html](http://www.travail.gouv.fr/dossiers/vae/index.html)
- ☛ ATTE and Recognition – Partnership for European Youth Worker Training  
[www.training-youth.net](http://www.training-youth.net)
- ☛ Youth Worker Traineeships in Scouting Gelderland – Netherlands  
[www.scoutinggelderland.nl](http://www.scoutinggelderland.nl)



- 👉 Teacher Training and NGOs – Serbia  
[www.hajdeda.org.yu](http://www.hajdeda.org.yu)
- 👉 Recognition of Youth Work on Violence Prevention – Council of Europe  
[www.coe.int/youth/](http://www.coe.int/youth/)
- 👉 Human Rights Education in Youth Work – Council of Europe  
[www.coe.int/hre](http://www.coe.int/hre)



# Different Different Needs



# Stakeholders

Following the Good Practice workshops and the Networking Fair, the next opportunity created by Bridges was for the groups of **different stakeholders** to meet together to **discuss the needs** of their particular sector or interest group.

Seven groups were convened and conference participants were free to choose which group they felt most aligned to. Facilitators were asked to chair the debate towards the following **questions**:

1. *What are the needs of the different stakeholders?*
2. *What are the gaps in the recognition debate?*
3. *What is missing in the recognition instruments?*
4. *What could be the way forward?*

Groups were asked to nominate a reporter from within the group who would supply notes for this **report** and present to plenary the following morning. The sections below were compiled from those two sources and hence have a variety of length and detail.

A number of **common themes** emerged from these discussions:

1. Most stakeholder groups recognised the need for the development of a **common language of recognition of Non-Formal Education** that would help to define it and explain the scope of it. With a language comes the **need for translators and interpreters** to ensure the language can be used and understood internally and externally.
2. Allied to language is a wider process of developing a **culture of recognition**. Such a culture would include partnership, consultation (taking into account the needs and constraints of partners) and cooperation.

3. There was frequent recognition of the need to engage with **local and national authorities**; to lobby them and to encourage them to coordinate activities.
4. And there was a frequent identification of the need for **agreed standards** in recognising Non-Formal Education.

### YOUTH Programme National Agencies & National Coordinators

- The group of NA/NC felt that there was a need for strong political **support and resources** from the Commission and from National Governments for recognition of (international) youth work. Practical suggestions on how to this were:
  - The appointment of someone in the EC Youth Unit with responsibility for recognition of youth work
  - Similarly a member of staff in each National Agency could have recognition as part of their work
  - Provision of training on the subject of recognition for NA staff and NCs
- There was a request for **information and consultation** about processes within the European Commission and Council of Europe, to allow sufficient time for stakeholders to have an effective input.
- The group identified a need for a **common understanding** of the definition of non formal learning in the frame of the YOUTH Programme, with defined learning outcomes.
- There is a need for a discussion about skills and competencies with **beneficiaries** (of the YOUTH programme) at national level, which could then be fed into the European level.
- The group called for the use of **existing models** of working that have already been developed in the networks – rather than “reinventing the wheel”.
- The group discussed the role of National Agencies and noted that they are seen as **intermediaries** in the process of recognition. This has implications for resources and training as mentioned above.



## Local and National Authorities

The group had discussed the different ways in which **validation of youth work** took place in their different countries and had drawn a number conclusions:

- There is a need to put recognition on the **national youth policy** agendas and to discuss the issue at national level.
- Within countries there is a need for a common system for all parts of the country leading to **standardised forms** of recognition to aid transferability.
- The link between National Agencies and Local Authorities is important: NAs could **support** local authorities in order for them to operate by the rules.
- Unions, employers and youth workers should create the **tools** and implement ideas together: There is a need for partnership and collaboration.
- The group encouraged stakeholders to ask (and answer to) the question “**why recognition?**” before carrying out the work.
- The group called for National Governments to **initiate** the work and then let the employers, labour unions and youth workers create the tools to carry out recognition work.
- They agreed that the system must be **flexible** and not be equal to formal education. They were concerned that the “beauty” of **non-formal education** must be kept.
- In designing frameworks and tools for recognition and validation, the group said that there is a need to reconcile flexibility with copying the formal education system; a need to consider **cost benefit** (outputs and cost) and a need to **support** the local authorities in their coordinating role.

## Youth work

- The group of youth workers agreed that the issue of recognition is a very **complex** issue!
- They agreed that recognition by **society** is the key and that validation/accreditation/assessment are just means to an end.
- The group identified the need to understand and appreciate that answers to the question; “What is youth work?” will be **different** in each country and that there are also **different levels** and issues of recognition in different countries.
- The group also agreed that it is better to think of recognition as cooperation or **partnership** rather than hierarchy or a “top down” or “bottom up” process.
- The group discussed issues around **financial recognition**. Should youth workers be paid? There is a problem of youth workers giving up youth work after a few years. Much of the work depends on project based finance – which leads to lower quality. As a result the group called for a strategy (or strategies) for financing youth work for e.g. five year periods

## Formal Education

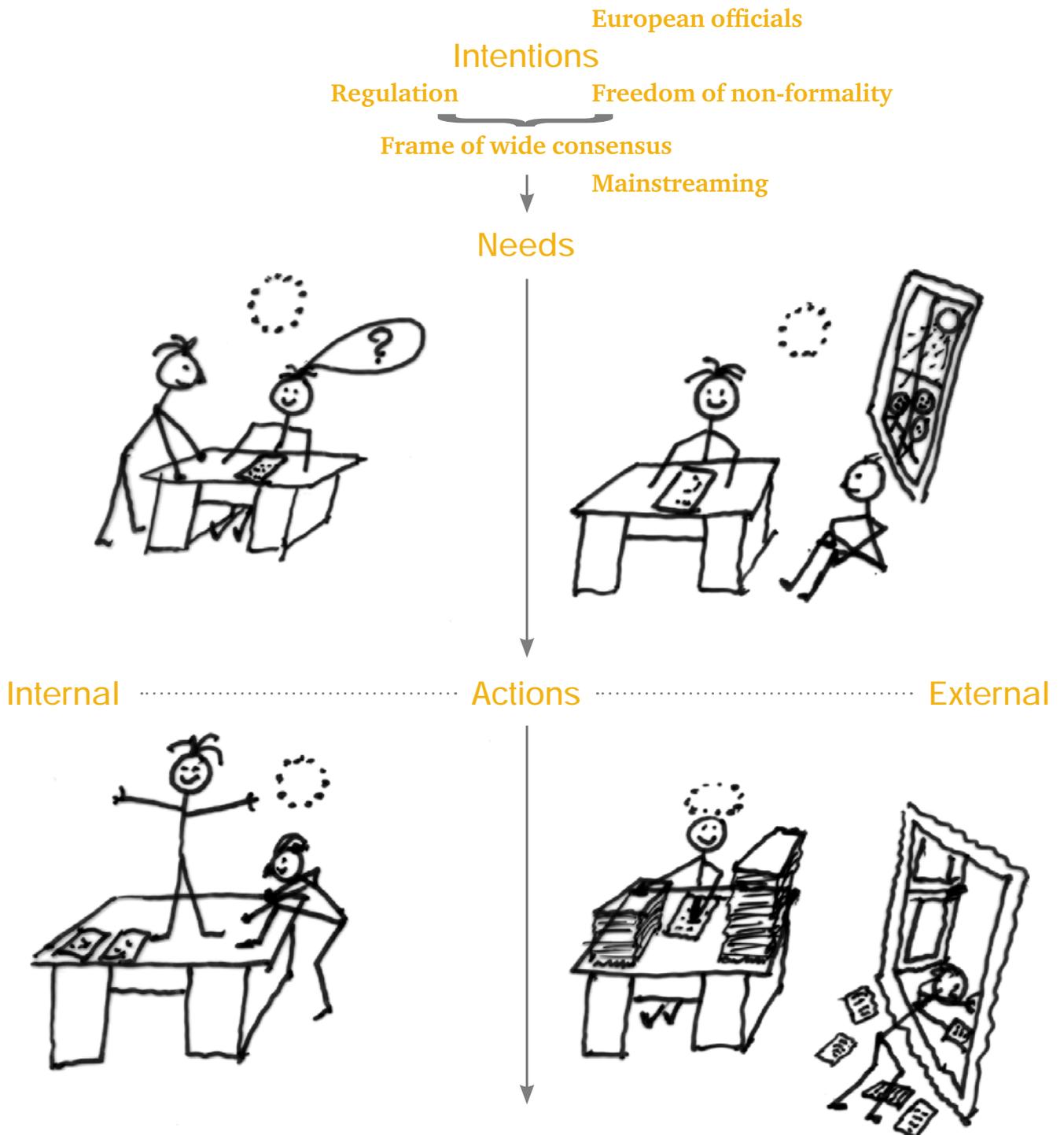
This group talked about the **different perspectives** on recognition which reflect different experiences of...

- The value of informal learning
- Recognition of experience in qualifications
- Availability of pathways
- Bridges between formal and informal
- Like many others, they identified the need for a **common language** between the different stakeholders.
- In relation to **instruments**, the group said that the following are needed:
  - Availability of standards
  - In service training/learning
  - Portfolios as useful mechanisms
  - Dynamic approaches to teaching
  - Definition of scope of occupation
- The group wanted to raise awareness of and **learn from the differences** between University and VET sectors
- They suggested that a **credit system** could assist in adding value and currency to recognition of non-formal learning and linking into formal education systems.
- The group had also discussed the need for **flexibility** and for greater consideration of the **motivation** behind recognition systems.



## European Officials – Policy Makers

This group presented their thinking in graphical form and their picture is reproduced below.



- The group expressed the need to achieve **balance** between regulation and freedom for non formal education and the need to take people from needs to the **Actions** – internally and externally.
- **Internal needs** (professional field) were described as...
  - Minimum standards
  - Lobbying at National level
  - Self confidence
  - Consensus about quality criteria
  - Specific knowledge of youth work realities
- The following possible **internal actions** were suggested as ways of meeting these needs...
  - Development of portfolios
  - Comparative studies
  - Certification procedures
  - A language that can be used to communicate with others
- **External needs** (other fields, politics) were described as...
  - A new view agreed with the formal sector
  - National Government support – linking to National policies
- The following possible **External actions** were suggested...
  - Better marketing
  - Copyrighting and referencing
  - Partnerships with Formal education and employment sectors



## The labour market (employers, trade unions etc)

This group had listened to a presentation of the method of the Dutch public employment service of **Matching Competencies**. Key messages that came from the presentation and the ensuing discussion were that...

- Matching is and should be done on the competencies that are needed to be successful in a job and not just skills or diplomas.
- An inventory of competencies is needed across the different stakeholders
  - Public employment service
  - Labour Union
  - Volunteer sector
  - Youth work training sector
  - National Agency
  - Intermediate Labour Market

The group went on to describe a number of needs, including...

- **Standards** for the **exchange of information** about competencies between stakeholders
- **Clarity and coherence** in relation to **pathways** of recognition
- **Gap analyses** between supply and demand
- **Independent assessment** of acquired informal and non-formal competences should be accessible for young people and volunteers
- Different channels for **information exchange** on competences should be developed
- Development of a **common language** on competences and recognition methods
- **European agreements/standards** on the qualification of the youth workers
- Collecting more **evidence** of the “production function” of youth work and the volunteer sector
- Prominence and PR about the **inventory of methods** used in youth work.

## Youth (Work) Trainers

The group, which contained both trainers and non trainers first considered the question: “**Why do I consider myself to be a trainer?**”

- Trainers considered themselves to have become trainers because:
  - of their own personal charm
  - of a fascination with groups of people
  - he likes the independency of freelancing
  - it’s the best way of learning
  - she was never told that she is not
  - he was a “victim” of the formal educational system
  - she wants to learn from herself
  - “any idiot can call himself trainer, and I do”
  - of the challenges offered by such work
  - he has to be a trainer
  - she wants to be a trainer
  - he is a learner
  - although she’s a formal teacher in the university, she has a powerful sense of analysis
  
- The group also came up with a list of other **questions** to be asked:
  - How do we see ourselves as trainers?
  - What aspects of ourselves do we want to be recognised?
  - By whom we want to be recognised?
  - In an ideal world what should recognition look like?
  - Do we need to focus more on the work of the trainer generally rather than specifically the trainer in the youth field?
  - Whom do we want to address?
  - Are the profile and competencies of a trainer needed?
  - Is the non-formal environment providing the premises and space for improving ourselves?
  - Is there actually a real demand for us, as trainers in the youth field?
  - Do we really care if we are recognised or not?
  - How many of us would refuse a training contract from other sectors?
  - Who is stating a status (or quality) of a trainer (who is a good one and who is a bad one)?
  - Which are the instruments that we have?
  - Who would recognise me as a trainer?



- Should we produce a competencies questionnaire/wish list?
  - A set of competencies should come from the youth work field - or is there a need for an extra something or someone to provide it for us?
  - Is there any common accepted understanding of a Portfolio?
  - What do we as trainers not want to happen?
  - Who do we need to engage in these discussions?
- 
- The group also discussed the real need to **clarify the terms** that we are using/working with?
  - The group discussed the idea that the process of recognition of trainers should be **institutionalised** and that the **Institutions** should be involved in some way.
  - Recognition should be given also for the **practitioners** in the field and that Trainers should be a in a **permanent qualification process**.
  - The group called for action to be taken so that in one year's time we should have in place a **Youth Trainers Portfolio** and an analysis of "The profile and quality of the Non-formal education trainer"
  - The group proposed that a **360 degree consultation** should be organised to ask institutions, youth workers, and other potential clients what they expect from trainers.



# Hot Issues

discussion



# groups

Manuel Souto of ECOTEC Research and Consulting, introduced some of the controversial or ‘Hot Issues’ that they encountered when establishing an “**Inventory of the Recognition and Validation of Non-Formal Learning**”. During this task, which they undertook on behalf of the European Commission, they aimed to get an overview of different systems for the recognition of Non-Formal Learning, not only within youth work but also in the work place and in civil society. The aim of the Inventory was to support and stimulate the development of high quality **validation methodologies and standards**.

👉 [www.ecotec.com/europeaninventory2004/](http://www.ecotec.com/europeaninventory2004/)

Manuel Souto highlighted that Validation and Recognition of Non-Formal Learning is by no means a simple affair. Many **controversies** exist around it. The so-called controversial ‘Hot Issues’ could be organised around **three strands**.

1. **Preconditions** for validation of non-formal and informal learning in the Youth sector
2. **Implementation** of validation and recognition procedures or systems
3. **Monitoring and transferability** of recognition tools

Under the **first strand**, discussion will focus on some of the necessary elements to establish systems for validation of non-formal and informal learning, with a focus on the Youth sector. These elements are the predisposition of Youth Organisations to take part in the validation of non-formal and informal learning, allocation of responsibilities, and funding sources.

The **second strand** will focus on how validation initiatives can actually be implemented. In practice implementation relates strongly to standard-setting, quality assurance, the degree of formalisation of validation methodologies and ensuring equality between different target groups.

The **third strand** will explore the feasibility of alternative transferability across different sectors, countries and Youth organisations –a topic of much relevance for practitioners.

The three strands are not self-contained, but rather, they are strongly **interlinked**. *For example, the level of funding available in Youth organisations for validation initiatives determines to an important extent the conditions for the implementation of these initiatives.*

## Individual “hot issues” and some background information

### Strand one: Preconditions

#### **1. Predisposition of Youth Organisations to take part in the validation of non-formal and informal learning: what is the situation now and how can it be stimulated?**

A very basic issue when reflecting about validation issues in the Youth sector is around the degree to which Youth organisations are willing and capable of engaging in validation initiatives. The key question is the extent to which Youth organisations actually see themselves as “educational agencies”. For many Youth organisations such as Student Associations and volunteer agencies the mission of their organisation (for instance environmental issues, human rights issues, etc.) is their main focus. The issue of education can be of relative minor importance for them, or an issue where they are not ready to invest their scarce resources and time. How can these organisations be made aware of their educational value and what incentives can be made available to them to increase their involvement in validation?

#### **2. Division of responsibilities: Who is to do what in validation?**

Bringing Youth Organisations and young people into validation further will require the establishment of clear responsibilities for them and other policy actors. This group would discuss who should be made responsible to identify, assess, and document non-formal learning in the Youth sector to maximise take up. Should it be Youth organisations, the European Union, national institutions (government, other bodies), Youth workers and/or young people? What difficulties are there ahead? E.g. Youth organisations have limited resources and thus may not be willing to invest funds to set up learning evaluations, assessments or anything else that basically costs money and draws them away from their main mission. How can benefits of validation issues be made clear to different stakeholders so that they are willing to take their share of responsibility in validation?



### 3. Resources: funding validation

The Youth Forum Jeunesse has argued that the best way to give political recognition to non-formal education is through providing it with sufficient funding. However, politicians often fear that providing funding without monitoring outputs, without regulations or some other type of bureaucratic rules may lead to spending without achieving anything. Detailed regulation is, in turn, something Youth organisations fear may jeopardise the essential value of non-formal learning in the Youth sector. So, in this group we ask firstly, in what ways could public bodies ensure that the funds they invest in validation initiatives are used in a constructive way without imposing too much of a burden on Youth organisations? Secondly, we ask what sources, other than public funds (perhaps therefore less subject to bureaucratic controls) could be attracted to validation initiatives in the Youth field? –E.g. should all who benefit from validation contribute? (young people, Youth organisations, etc).

- ☛ Point 2 & 3 were discussed in the Hot Issue discussion group ‘Responsibilities and Resources for Recognition’ (with Karolina Vrethem)

## Strand two: Implementation

### 1. Formalising the informal: a risk or something to gain from?

One of the institutions that could “recognise” activities from or competences gained in Youth work is the formal education sector. On occasions, however, it is considered that using formal institutions to validate non-formal and informal learning may be inadequate in Youth sectors, and in particular for some Youth groups (e.g. those who did not well at school may not be thrilled by the prospect of facing educational institutions again, so that engaging those institutions on the validation process may actually have detrimental effects). To what extent and under what conditions is it appropriate to engage formal educational institutions in validation of non-formal learning in the Youth sector? Moreover, are formal education and training systems prepared for extensive use of initiatives which validate non-formal and informal learning? Is it likely that education institutions will collaborate in further inter-linking or oppose it? –E.g. will they see validation initiatives as “competing” with them in creating and certifying knowledge and skills, in particular in the context of shrinking age cohorts? Will they also see further inter-linking as a way to lower standards and therefore oppose it? How could collaboration be facilitated and how can bridges between the different sectors be created?

### 2. Standards setting: a framework for quality and legitimacy

In order for validation to be legitimate in the eyes of different stakeholders (employers, educational institutions, individuals) some kind of standards for validation must be in place –both for the validation process and the level of competences that are validated. To establish standards in the Youth field it is necessary to compare the non-formal education process within one Youth organisation with similar processes in another Youth organisation. But how can this be done, especially as most skills learned in Youth work are soft-skills? It is difficult to measure how much young people learn for instance in a Youth Association, sports club or voluntary service using the traditional criteria and qualifications available, or even job profiles, which are obvious reference points in standard-setting in the formal learning sector. So what new criteria, reference points or qualifications should be developed to define competence levels and validation processes of non-formal and informal learning, and how should these be developed?



### **3. Validation methodologies and quality assurance: making standards a reality in practice**

Validation is wider than accreditation. Equally, Youth organisations could validate skills acquired outside Youth activities or developed through Youth activities. Accreditation of skills acquired through Youth activities, however, is an important mechanism to show the added value of Youth work and the contribution of Youth organisations to developing a wide range of skills for young people. What instruments and validation methodologies can Youth organisations employ to assess that a person really did acquire new skills within the context of its activities? To take it a step further, how can fraud be avoided in this field? –e.g. how can it be avoided that people claim that they have acquired skills through the membership/work of a Youth organisation on their CV falsely? In formal institutions records of performance are kept, but similar records are not available in a Youth work context.

### **4. Validation of non-formal learning and equality**

The danger exists that validation of non-formal education will benefit the young people who have already extensively benefited from formal education and exclude the less educated, who could benefit greatly from validation initiatives –in terms of self-esteem, career prospects, further education, etc. It is important that these groups are not excluded for reasons of social justice and also economic performance –E.g. validation will increase their employability and their possibilities for life-long learning which would increase their productivity in the long-term. How can these groups be reached to ensure that all young people can benefit equally from validation of non-formal and informal learning? Are some methodologies better suited than others to stimulate participation by groups, for example, which have had bad experiences in the formal education system?

- 👉 This point 4 was discussed in the Hot Issue discussion group ‘The Creaming Effect – Recognition and Equality’ (with Kathy Schroeder)

## Strand three: transferability

### 1. Transferability between sectors: flexibility, recognition and employability

One of the reasons for getting skills acquired in Youth work recognised, could be to improve your employability. Youth work does indeed provide young people with many valuable skills but how could skills acquired through Youth work be presented to employers in order to have these skills recognised and valued? Where could bridges between the labour market and the Youth work sector be established? –with or without the intermediation of formal education institutions. How can, more broadly, job prospects of young people with skills acquired outside the formal or vocational education be enhanced through validation? This may be of even greater importance and difficulty in countries where individual companies and social partners have a prominent role in standard setting for the formal education sector and may not be willing to recognise skills acquired in learning non-formal and informal settings, over which they lack the same extent of influence.

- 👉 This point was discussed in the Hot Issue discussion group ‘Transferability between Sectors’ (with Anthony Azzopardi)





### **3. Transferability between countries: Validation in a mobile Europe**

European young people are increasingly mobile. How can recognition of non-formal education between countries be promoted? Often Youth organisations, even within a single country, view non-formal education differently: should common terminologies regarding the skills and levels of competence in Youth work be developed at European level, who could do this and how should they be disseminated? What other initiatives could facilitate recognition of skills acquired in a non-formal setting in a country different to that where they were acquired?

### **4. Transferability between organisations: Making the most of good practice**

There are examples of good practice in validation of non-formal learning in the voluntary sector, but, do you know about them? Many formal education providers do communicate and co-operate to share their strengths and weaknesses, clarify what has worked well and what has not worked well in a variety of issues, but Youth organisations often have difficulty reaching each other. How can these difficulties be overcome? How can a forum be set up where different Youth organisations learn from each others' expertise and experiences?

- 👉 Point 3 & 4 were discussed in the Hot Issue discussion group 'Transferability between Countries & Organisations' (*with Manuel Souto*)

## Some Steam from the Hot Discussions

A total of **five Hot Issues discussion groups** had been devised to cover these subjects and an additional one was added after a request from the floor. There were two opportunities to engage in the hot issues debate. Conference delegates were free to either discuss two different subjects or to stay with one subject for both discussion sessions. The topics were:

- ★ Transferability across countries and organisations
- ★ Responsibilities and resources for recognition
- ★ Social recognition of Youth Work
- ★ Transferability between sectors
- ★ The creaming effect – recognition and equality
- ★ Recognition of trainers

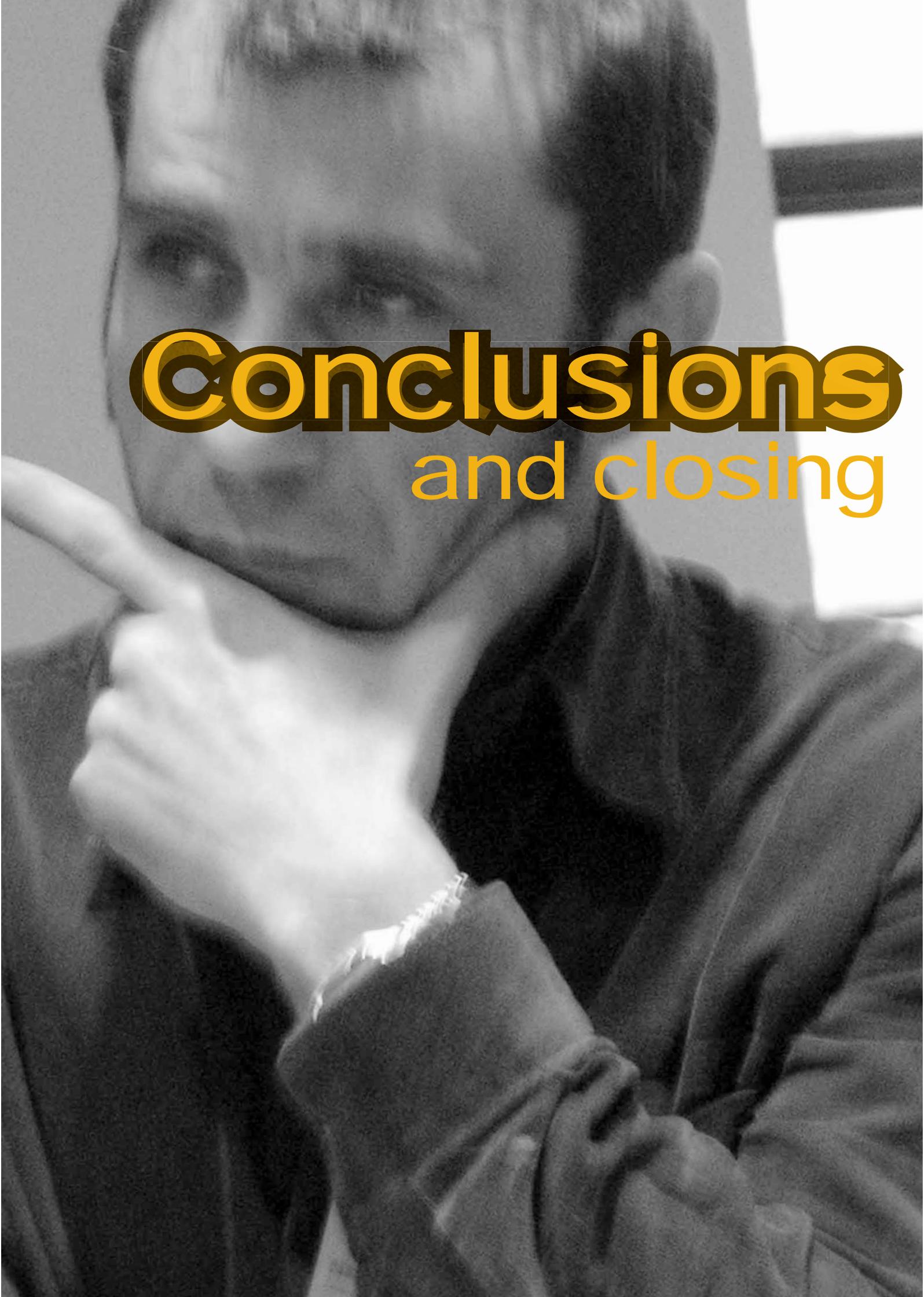
The hot issues discussion then took place in groups rooms throughout the conference centre. Brief reports were given in the final plenary session. The highlights from the discussions were as follows:

- There was, of course great appreciation of the **value** and further potential of non-formal learning.
- The need for **common understanding** of terms and concepts across sectors was discussed many times.
- Recognition was seen by one group as needing to move through a **progression** of “Self – Sector – Society”.
- There was a lot of discussion about the relationship between the **formal and the non-formal learning** sectors. Several groups recognised their complementarity and called for greater mutual respect. Others expressed the concern that any certification would be interpreted as the formalisation of the non-formal sector.
- “**Recognition for ALL young people**” was the response of the group discussing the “creaming effect”; articulating the risk of reinforcing the disadvantages of less able or marginalized young people.
- Real **concerns** were expressed about the risk of losing something of the culture of Non-formal learning; its links with play and voluntary participation were particular areas where recognition posed a threat.



- There was an interesting debate about the **differences** between recognition for achievement or set standards and recognition through simply describing processes and experiences and allowing the reader to place value on this. This links to the view expressed that the process of recognition or validation is as important as the outcome.
- It was recognised that there are **many stakeholders** in non-formal learning and many complex relationships between them. Stakeholders were at different stages in understanding and development and were operating in very **different environments**.
- The role and value of **intermediaries** was discussed in a few places. National Agencies were seen as natural and useful intermediary bodies.
- It was recognised by several groups that currently there is **strong political will** to support non-formal learning in Europe and that actors need to engage more at the political level.
- As well as receiving **support** from the political sector, at least one group called for support from the labour market and employers.
- One group talked about the need for **great PR and promotion** of non-formal learning and its benefits.
- And finally it was recognised that **many bridges already exist** and that the actors should use these to build for the future.

The group that met to discuss the recognition and responsibilities of Non-formal youth trainers carried on the debate which had started in the different needs sessions. This resulted in a **formal proposal** for a project which would create an **occupational profile of non-formal youth trainers**. The proposal – which included a description of the envisaged process; including the creation of a steering group, the writing of an historical overview, needs and functional analyses and the creation of the profile.



# Conclusions

and closing



# remarks

Jonathan Bowyer, the General Rapporteur aimed to bring together some of the **key learning** from the conference. His comments, notes from his PowerPoint slides and post conference reflections are combined here.

## Where we have been

**120 people** from many different countries, organisations and backgrounds have worked together for three days on the subject of recognition of non-formal education and youth work in Europe. We have heard about the **political and policy context** in which we are working and we have reviewed some significant milestones in the journey so far. We are not starting from nothing; we are working in a positive context. There is a lot of **good will** amongst practitioners and there is a lot of political will amongst policy makers.

We have seen and discussed sixteen examples of **good practice** in relation to recognition and we have had two opportunities to discuss the future – once in stakeholder groups and once according to the hot topic that interested us most. We have discussed recognition for **three groups** of people – young people, youth workers and youth trainers at the European level. We have seen, if not experienced, that good practice exists at local, national and European levels.

We have recognised that there is a lot of **innovation** throughout Europe in relation to this subject and we have not been afraid to ask some perhaps awkward questions about where it is going. Is non formal education under threat from recognition? Will the fun be taken out of it and will the voluntary nature of participation be eroded? We were challenged to make some **concrete proposals** about the way forward.

We have studied the different needs of the **various stakeholders** in recognition – young people themselves, employers, institutions and youth workers.

## What we have learned

We have learned that there is more than one bridge to be built in the field of recognition: **Bridges** between young people and employers, between youth workers and policy makers, bridges between formal and non formal educators. Building bridges will increase the **quality** and the **credibility** of the recognition processes being developed. We have frequently mentioned the need for a **common language** of recognition; one which will enable all stakeholders to play an active part and to achieve a **synergy** for our work.

We have talked about the concepts of **social** and codified, or **formal recognition** and the way in which they are inextricably linked and we have become more aware of the benefits of recognition, particularly for those who are disadvantaged in society.

We have been challenged by the fact that some see **non-formal education** as somehow romantic rather than serious. Within the field we have discussed the issue of voluntary and paid workers and whether or not they are equally valued. We have highlighted the need many times for at least better understanding if not **cooperation** with the **formal education** sector.





We have discussed the issue of **credibility and accountability** with the field of recognition: In particular to young people as the end users of whatever schemes, awards or processes we devise and we have been challenged – in light of current policy – to **consult** with and involve them more. We have also been challenged to **engage** more with politicians – to promote, provide evidence and demonstrate the effectiveness of non-formal education with young people and its benefits to society, the economy and the citizenship agenda. And we have been encouraged to ensure that recognition is credible on a personal level; that those being recognised (be they young people, youth workers or youth trainers) will be confident in the process and the **relevance of the outcome**.

On a more **practical level**, we have studied the different things that might be recognised: Standards achieved, competencies demonstrated, distance travelled in personal growth, contributions made to society, communities, organisations, families and individuals. We have seen some **innovative thinking** about what can be recorded and how it can be recorded. These include skills, knowledge, experience, achievements, values and attitudes; and they can be recorded in portfolios (electronic and paper based), in pictures and videos, through discussion and writing and even singing!

We have thought a little about how we know what to record and how to organise the information available. We have seen processes which rely on comparison with **agreed standards** and we have seen **processes** which focus on clearly setting out evidence so that it enables the reader to interpret for themselves. For trainers and youth workers we have heard about **occupational profiling and functional analysis** (involving 360 degree consultation with stakeholders) leading to a set of standards.

Crucially in all of this we have learned that recognition in the non formal sector is relational – it's a **two way processes** between the person wanting recognition and the educator or assessor. For many it is an evolutionary, developmental process rather than a pass or fail situation. We have also heard that recognition should be a lifelong and a life wide learning process: To separate the learning and the recognition is to devalue the whole.

## Where we are going

We were challenged to make some concrete proposals for action to follow the conference, and whilst there are few of these, it is clear that some of the **ingredients for proposals** (see action plan p. 5) have been gathered.

In more general terms then, there are two key directions for development:

1. First is towards a **common language of recognition** that will be understood by us, politicians, employers, and formal education and of course by young people. This will enable or at least facilitate a higher level of accountability, inclusion, and recognition for the work of the sector and the achievements of young people.
2. Second we have to move towards the **securing of more resources**. In order to do this we will have to more fully analyse the benefits and costs of recognition processes. We will have to communicate those benefits by using the right language for the right audiences. We will have to build bridges of recognition and recognition of the bridges and we will have to become translators and interpreters for those who are not fully conversant with our evolving language.

- 👉 A list of suggestions for actions was drawn up by the Bridges for Recognition Steering Group based on the conclusions and outcomes of the conference: see p. 5.



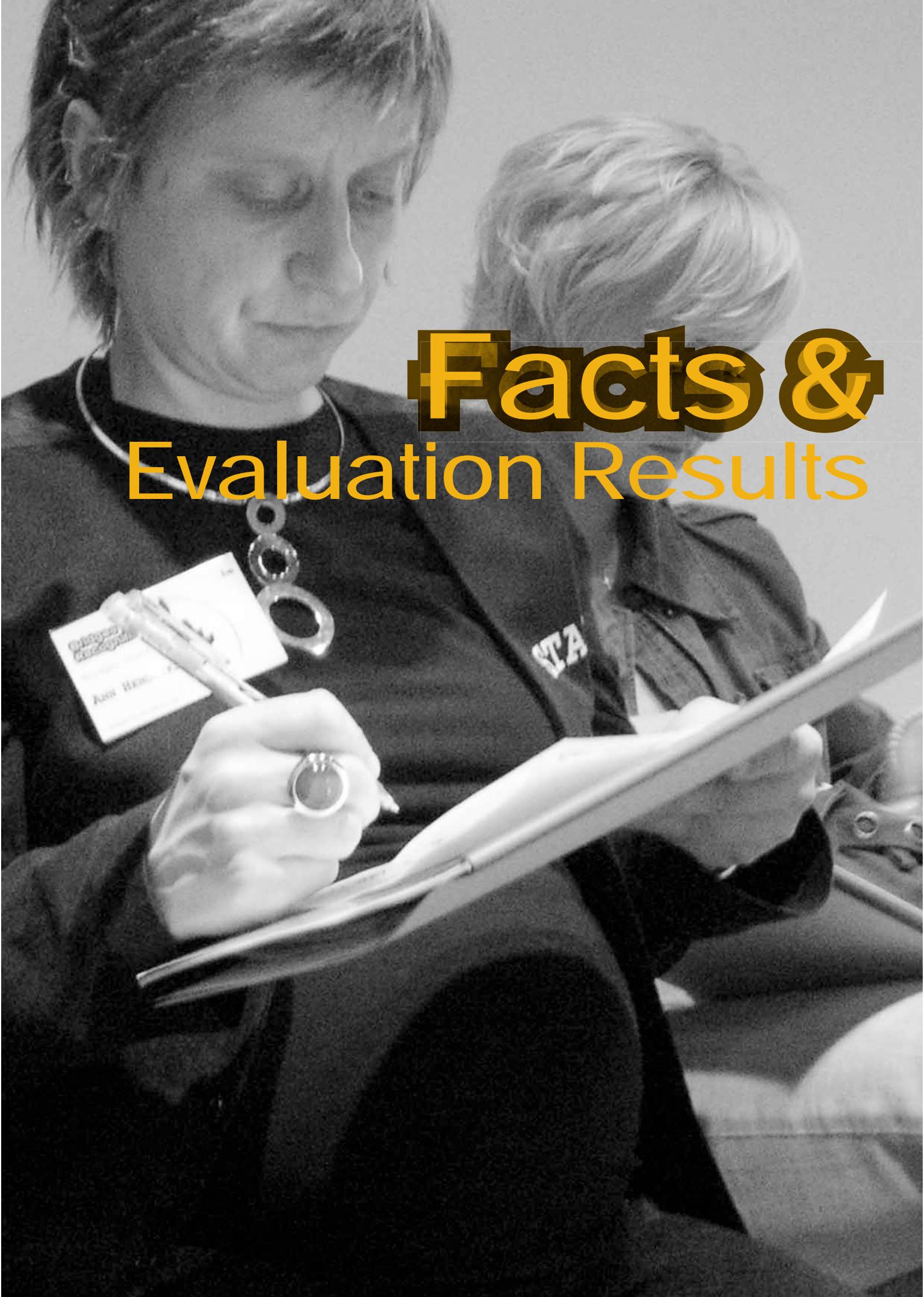


## Closing remarks from Pierre Mairesse ~ European Commission

Pierre Mairesse closed the conference by stating that now is the **time for action**, we have a window of opportunity and the conference has been a starting point. He acknowledged the complexity of the field and the impressive work already being done. Youth work is very different in each of the countries of Europe, it happens at grass roots level with local islands of activity. **Bridges are needed** between the islands and between the different levels of interest and influence. There is a need to disseminate the benefits upwards from the grass roots.

Pierre Mairesse encouraged delegates to start with something feasible. He said that the European level can help by putting and keeping youth work and recognition on the **political agenda** and he encouraged more sharing and multiplying of **good practice** and **cross fertilising of ideas**. There will be an informal plan for action to meet with political deadlines.

Before thanking all those who had planned, organised and attended the conference, M. Mairesse concluded by explaining his conviction that it is necessary to **do something policy wise for youth work** in contrast to employment and education. He quoted from a philosopher he had recently heard who said that *“in life there are many things we cannot choose – like family, culture or first language – but values, we can choose”*.



# Facts & Evaluation Results



# Figures

- Download the dynamic PowerPoint presentation of the outcomes and evaluation of at [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/ BridgesForRecognition/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/BridgesForRecognition/)

The **Participant list** comprised

- 120 participants (and 12 staff) of which 45 speakers & facilitators and 28 reporters & 1 general rapporteur.
- There were 8 representatives from the Educational Sector, 6 people from the Labour Market, 29 YOUTH National Agencies, 6 SALTO-YOUTH colleagues, 41 Youth Organisations or Youth Trainers, 30 Policy Makers (European, National, Local)

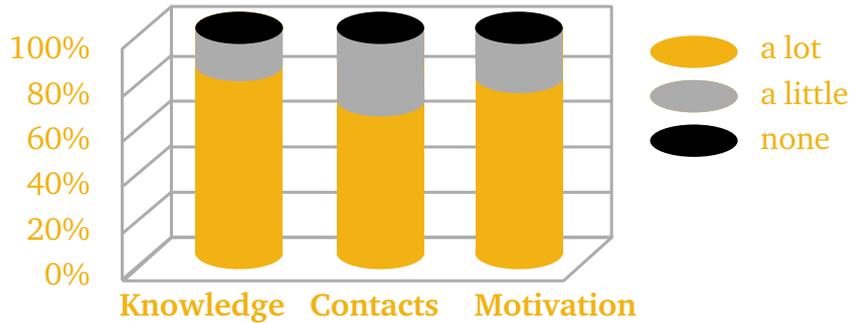
It was possible to **participate Virtually** in Bridges for Recognition

- via the Youth Worker Virtual Community at <http://communities.trainingvillage.gr/youth/>, via [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/BridgesForRecognition/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/BridgesForRecognition/) and via web cam...
- Approximately 40 new members joined the virtual community
- 1350 visitors checked the Virtual Community in the month before Bridges (compared to approx 320 visitors/month otherwise)
- 11 background documents from the SALTO Bridges site were downloaded 1110 times in the run-up to Bridges
- 19 people followed parts of Bridges via WebCam

**Participant Evaluation at Bridges for Recognition** (from the evaluation forms)

- 100% gained knowledge about Recognition  
(79% a lot-21% a little)
- 100% build up a network of Recognition contacts  
(64% a lot-36% a little)
- 100% got motivated for Recognition  
(75% a lot-25% a little)

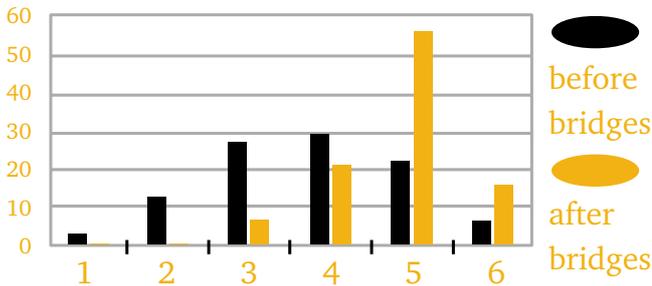
How much did Bridges contribute to your...



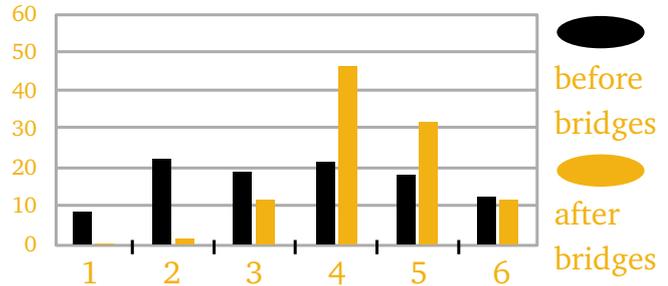
Before & After Bridges

(1 = very bad – 6 = very good)

Knowledge about Recognition (%)



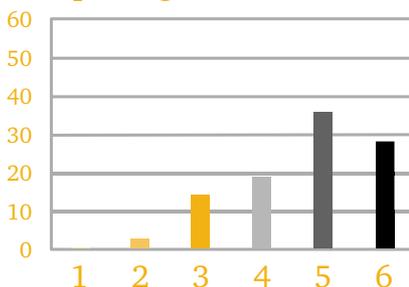
Contacts in the field of Recognition (%)



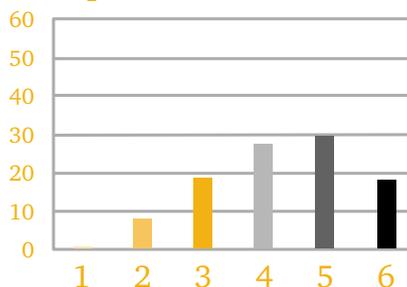
What the Participants liked best...

- 82% judged the Opening Speeches positively
- 88% rated Terms & Concepts above average
- 74% liked the Expectations Panel
- 94% enjoyed the Good Practice workshops
- 75% judged the Networking Fair positively
- 76% rated the Stakeholder Needs Discussions above average
- 88% gave positive marks to the Hot Issue Discussions
- 94% liked the Bridges Conclusions

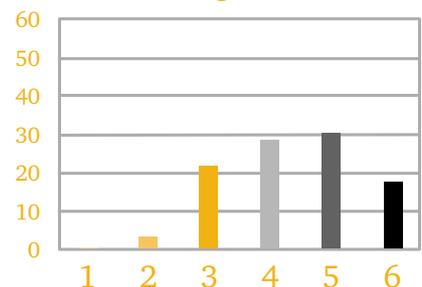
Opening Session (%)



Expectations Panel (%)

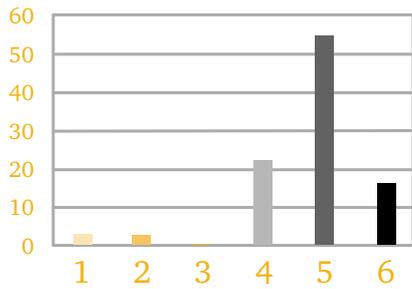


Networking Fair (%)

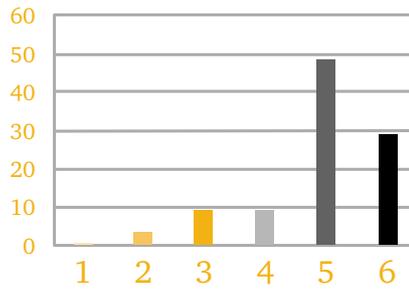




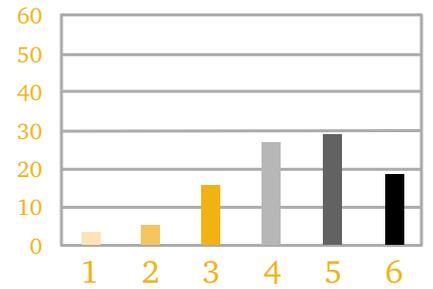
Good Practices (%)



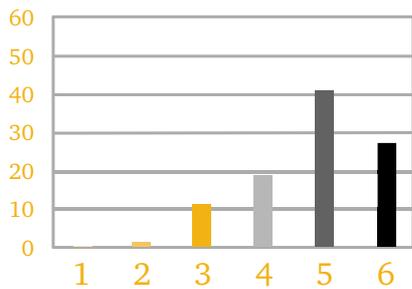
Terms & Concepts (%)



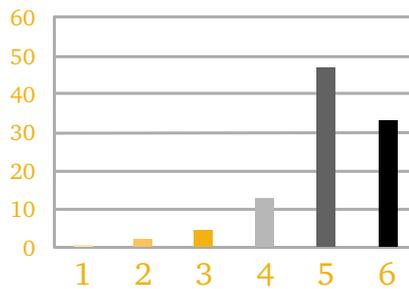
Stakeholders Needs (%)



Hot Issue Discussions (%)



Conclusions Bridges (%)

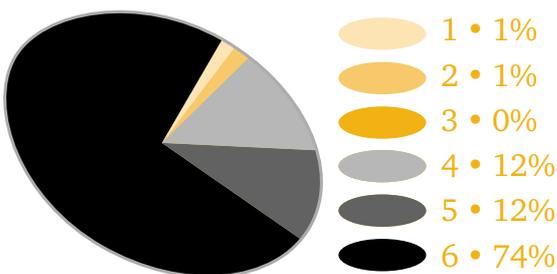


### The Practical Side of things

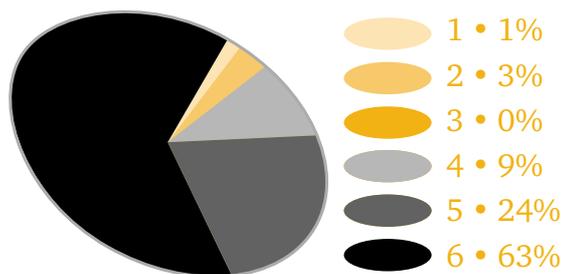
Participants appreciated positively (4 or more)

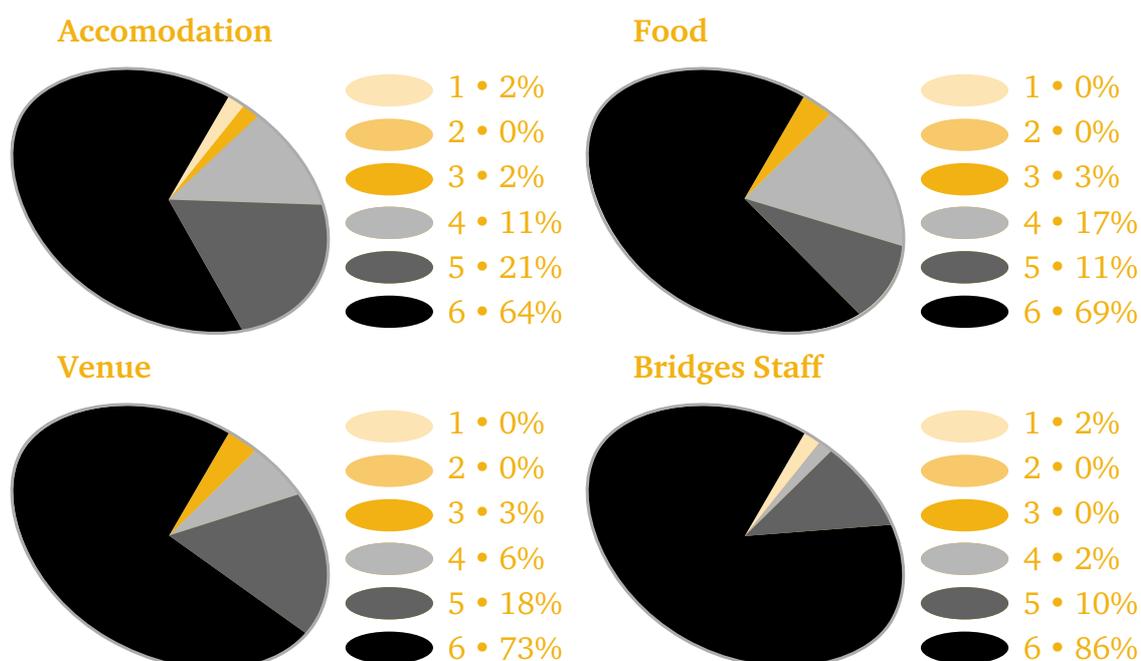
- The Registration Procedure (96%)
- Information before Bridges (98%)
- Accommodation (96%)
- Food (97%)
- Venue (97%)
- Bridges Staff (98%)

Information Before



Registration Procedure





## Visibility of the Event

Bridges was visible to...

- 381 applicants & 120 participants
- 6511 SALTO newsletter receivers
- 51 YOUTH National Agencies/Coordinators/SALTOs and their communication channels
- 539 users of the TrainingVillage YOUTH Virtual Platform and 129 users of YES-forum.org
- 1596 European-Youth-Exchange list receivers and other mailing lists
- 19 people via webcam and 6450 visitors to the SALTO website (jan 05)
- 20.000 visitors to the European Youth Portal (News item)
- 55.000 readers of De Morgen newspaper (Belgium)

## Distribution of Results

The outcomes and report will be spread and promoted to...

- All Bridges applicants & participants
- Via the SALTO website and newsletter  
[www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/BridgesReport/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/BridgesReport/)
- To a variety of mailing lists (from different sectors)
- To the users of the TrainingVillage Virtual Platforms, to the YES-forum and other relevant discussion groups
- To the network of YOUTH National Agencies & Coordinators
- To publications of a variety of organisations from different sectors



# Complete programme

- ☛ You can find the detailed programme in Annex or download it under [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/BridgesForRecognition/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/BridgesForRecognition/)

# Participants list

- ☛ Find a full listing of participants in Annex or online under [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/BridgesForRecognition/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/BridgesForRecognition/)

## Thank you Bridges Staff

The **SALTO Inclusion Resource Centre**, the organiser of Bridges for Recognition, would like to thank all **funders, speakers, steering group members, facilitators and reporters** for their contribution to the event and to recognition of youth work across Europe.

A **special thanks goes** to all staff and volunteers without whom Bridges for Recognition would not have been possible!

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**It is amazing**, all the things you learn by taking part in youth work: communication, creativity, cooperation, sensitivity, leadership or building rafts from rubbish... It would be a waste not to recognize all these valuable competencies that young people acquire through their active participation in youth activities.

**Many recognition initiatives** have been undertaken and many instruments developed to make young people's learning in youth work visible, to document it and why not have it validated by accredited organisations.

- Young people could increase their self-knowledge and improve their employability and opportunities in life
- The youth work sector would be accepted as a valid learning environment complementary to other education or even in partnership.
- Society and employers gain from the diversified skills available and formerly hidden or unconscious competencies become apparent

**The stakes for recognising youth work** and the skills gained by young people in youth activities are very high, but at present the recognition efforts are scattered. Therefore the SALTO-YOUTH Inclusion Resource Centre organized a European conference to build bridges; bridges between different recognition initiatives and instruments and most of all bridges between different stakeholders. **Bridges for Recognition.**

**This report** documents different recognition initiatives and various existing recognition instruments. It contains suggestions for action to bring recognition of youth work across Europe closer to reality.

This report as well as other conference documentation can be downloaded from

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

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INCLUSION  
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