



Education and Culture DG

'Youth in Action' Programme



„Non-formal education in youth work“

'Youth in Action' Programme

Action 5 - Support for European cooperation in the youth field

***Sub-Action 5.1 - Meetings of young people and those responsible for youth
policy***

Project proposal

Summary of the project

“Non-formal education in youth work” is an action 5.1 trans-national youth seminar that involves 30 participants from different European countries in an open process of discussing, analyzing and debating on the importance of social recognition of youth work and non-formal activities. Project objectives are: 1) To promote the recognition of **young people’s skills and learning** acquired through participation in youth work activities; 2) To raise the **visibility** of youth work, its **impact** on young people’s lives and its **contribution** to society; 3) To enhance the **social recognition** of youth work in society; 4) Raise awareness about different levels of recognition of youth work in society; 5) Share and discuss experiences, examples and possibilities of working towards recognition in different societies. Before actual implementation of the seminar national consultations will take place in each participating countries in order to see if and how is non-formal education recognized at local level. The results of those consultations will be used in the seminar as a starting point and further on, together with the conclusions and recommendations of the seminar will be used in shaping a draft recommendations document that will be sent to national and European policy makers. Various non-formal education methods will be used during the seminar to achieve planned objectives. The meeting will take place in Drobeta Turnu Severin, Romania for a period of 5 working days.

Project rationale

During the last years a number of initiatives have been taken at different levels (European, national, sub-national, industry, third sector) supporting the development of new approaches to validation of non-formal and informal learning. Validation of non formal and informal learning has been identified as a European priority on repeated occasions, including the Communication on Lifelong Learning (2001), the Education Council Decision Concrete future objectives for European education and training systems (2002), the White Paper on Youth policies (2002) and the Copenhagen Declaration (2002)

A set of ['Common European Principles'](#) for the validation of non-formal and informal learning have been developed by the Commission in collaboration with a range of partners. This political emphasis on validation was further strengthened by an initiative to organize an informal ministerial conference on the subject in June 2004. These initiatives reflect the strong political momentum existing in this particular policy field and make the inventory project highly relevant for forming current and future policy debates at European, national and other decision-making levels

Learning is a continuous and life-long process. It is not restricted to schools and Universities.

There are in fact three different kinds of learning:

- **Formal learning**, which is given in schools – ex: mathematics class (= knowing)
- **Non-Formal learning**, happens in any organization outside the formal system (e.g. youth organizations) – ex: learn how to organize an event (= doing)
- **Informal learning**, in every kind of context – ex: learn how to drive a bike (= being).

The recognition of non formal education is discussed during among others an UNESCO conference in 1992 and later incorporated by the EU in the Lisbon strategy in 2000. This strategy is further continued by the implementation of European Youth Pact to achieve its objectives.

The recognition of NFE can take different forms:

Political recognition is the legitimacy given to youth organizations by a political commitment. It can be improved by e.g. supporting the work of youth organizations and recognizing them as bodies representing youth.

Social recognition is the recognition given by communities to the contribution of voluntary work. In many cases, young people's involvement in youth work and the related skills and competencies acquired in non-formal learning environments are not sufficiently recognized.

This remains a challenge for youth organizations in attracting volunteers and participants, and for those who do volunteer, a range of hurdles in creating opportunities based on recognition of their contribution appears. In some cases, volunteering is seen as an unnecessary waste of time.

There is a low level of awareness on the benefits that volunteering brings to the society.

Achievement of social recognition of non-formal education means placing voluntary work as one of the key assets for the development of civil society, and its contribution to the development of skills, knowledge and attitudes gained through voluntary work by young people. That is why we have to work on more recognition of the benefits of NFE both to individual and the society.

Individual recognition means acknowledging the real competencies, i.e. a person's combined knowledge, skills and learning achievements, whether they are acquired in a formal, non-formal or informal way. In other words focusing on the individual more than on the degrees he obtained.

In November 2001, the European Commission has written the white paper '[A New Impetus For European Youth](#)', describing the innovative impact of youth work as part of the overall package of lifelong learning measures and demands: a clearer definition of the concepts, of the skills acquired and of quality standards, a higher regard for the people who become involved in these activities, a greater recognition of these activities, and a greater complementarity with formal education and training. The Council of Europe decides in 2003 to develop the '[Portfolio for youth leaders and youth workers](#)', which gives a real opportunity to self evaluate the achievements of a strong involvement in youth organizations.

In December 2004, the European Parliament and the Council agreed on a single Community framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences, called [Europass](#), made of five components: CV - Mobility - Diploma Supplement Certificate Supplement, and Language Passport.

From 2005, the SALTO Training and Co-operation Resource Centre is working on development and implementation of a special European level validation instrument for Youth in Action, the [Youth Pass](#), a certificate issued after youth activities organized through the Youth in Action programme. It supports the reflection on the personal non-formal learning process, the social recognition of youth work and the employability of young people and youth workers. It is officially launched in June 2007, together with the Portfolio for youth leaders and youth workers.

Even all those initiatives exists, we think is not enough in order for non formal education to be recognized at local level. The present project proposal tries to "give the floor" and raise attention on the importance of social recognition of NFE at local level. We will try to involve different stakeholders from different "layers" of the society during project activities.

The overall purpose of the project is to promote a society offering lifelong learning for all by emphasizing the importance of both formal and non-formal learning in achieving Education for All goals, and building bridges between formal, non-formal and informal learning.

Project objectives

The project seeks 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;
- Raise awareness about different levels of recognition of youth work in society;
- Share and discuss experiences, examples and possibilities of working towards recognition in different societies.

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 main activity that this project proposes is a transnational youth seminar aimed to address the above mentioned issues, exchange good practices in participating countries related to social recognition of non-formal education and to propose viable solutions that can be applied at local level. The meeting which is planned to take place in May 2011 for a maximum of 5 working days should be attended by 30 participants, youth workers, young people and different stakeholders interested by the topic of the project.

Before the meeting, national online consultations will take place in all partner countries. That is planned in order to seek for people opinion and to look for possible solutions offered at local level. The results of these consultations will be presented during the seminar and also will be included in the draft document containing conclusions and recommendations that should be drafted as a result of the seminar and presented to European Commission as well as national stakeholders (governments, ministries, etc).

A good practices database with identified European initiatives that address social recognition of NFE will be realized. This database will be available online as well on hard copies that will be printed.

Project dates:

Project will start on January 1st 2014 and will last till August 2014.

The European meeting within the project is scheduled to take place in June 2014 in Romania.

Project partners:

Right now we are looking for youth organizations based in Programme Countries that share an interest about this issue and are strongly motivated to cooperate with us in the framework of this project. Eligible countries are:

Programme countries:

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Turkey

As we need to apply in October 1st deadline, please be as fast as possible in being our partner and send us attached documents needed to join the partnership.

We are looking forward to your positive answers... 😊

Aplicant Organisation:

Asociatia „**Mod of Life**”

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