

Youthpass and the European strategy for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning in the youth field

Experiences and future perspectives

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Abstract

Youthpass is the European recognition instrument for identifying and documenting learning outcomes acquired in projects within the Erasmus+ Youth and the European Solidarity Corps programmes. This article elaborates on the experiences made with Youthpass since 2007 in recognising the value of learning in the EU youth programmes and hints at future strategic perspectives.

The Youthpass concept consists of three components: the certificate; the reflective learning process that leads to the certificate with self-assessment; and the strategic work at European level to enhance the learning value of the programmes. It is available as a voluntary and multilingual tool for the participants of the two EU youth programmes.

Non-formal and informal learning are central to the EU youth programmes and reflection processes are at the core of the quality implementation of Youthpass. Self-recognition and the development of personal awareness are the basis for other dimensions of recognition. Youthpass certificates, in combination with the improved personal awareness, help make steps towards the social and formal recognition of both individual competences as well as youth work and volunteering as learning contexts.

Youth work, the EU youth programmes, and, alongside, Youthpass need better visibility and recognition beyond the non-formal education field. Growing use of the tool and the constant improvement of its concept and technical features enhance its relevance and impact for the field.

Currently, recognition of youth work is an important focus directing the youth work related policy processes at European level. This creates potential for working on the various angles of recognition together with the community of practice. Capacity-building of youth work organisations and the recognition and validation of youth worker competences remain important work dimensions with other actors in the field.

Forum Jugendarbeit International 2019–2022