



Unleashing young people's creativity and innovation

*European
good practice
projects*



Youth

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Martine Reicherts

Director-General for Education and Culture
European Commission

Foreword

This brochure contains inspiring initiatives, practices and tools, including the EU projects, that showcase how youth work and non-formal learning can enhance young people's creativity and innovation, through their experimental nature, participatory approaches, and peer-learning, and how this can help them to find their place in the labour market - and in life. It is the result of peer learning in an expert group which was looking into constructive response to challenges faced by many young people in Europe.

At present, 13,7 million 15-29 year-olds are not in employment, education or training. And many of those who gain employment find that the reality of the job falls well below their ambitions and vision. Reliable pathways through education and training to quality employment are often lacking. Inadequate opportunities exist for practical experience in skills needed to function in a multi-agency, fast changing environment, despite the high labour market demand for such capacities. Overall, education frequently fails to deliver skills important for employment.

The experts formulated recommendations as to how youth work could narrow 'the gap between the competences acquired by young people and the needs of the labour market'. First of all, a framework is needed to enhance the role of mentors, coaches, and trainers. Investment is needed in teaching and learning, because the competence of youth workers is crucial if quality methods and tools are to be deployed.

The context too must change: recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning in the formal education and in business sectors is required. There is a wide lack of knowledge about non-formal learning processes and learning outcomes gained in youth work activities, and little agreement on how to assess them or explain them to other sectors. A common understanding must be built among all stakeholders, as only this can deliver the broad cross-sectoral cooperation and integrated approaches that will answer the unmet needs of so many young people.

The experts also emphasised the sense of initiative and entrepreneurship among the EU eight key competences in life-long learning: a developed sense for creativity, innovation and risk-taking, the readiness to seize opportunities at work and in daily life, and the ability to plan and manage projects. Acquiring such skills and attitudes can contribute to social or commercial activity. But the broader aim is to help young people become

'entrepreneurs of their own lives', able to shape personal prospects through constant updating and upgrading of skills and hybrid know-how, in a changing environment in which 'a job for life' no longer exists (Arnkil, 2015). Innovation and creativity can also help young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to become resources in co-creating solutions that give them access to society.

This brochure showcases many concrete examples exchanged throughout this peer learning exercise. They can inspire policy making and help solve problems identified by the experts, when adapted to the national context. They range from programmes stimulating young people's employability and entrepreneurship, like the Youth Competence Centres in Flanders, the 'Envie d'agir' programme in France, or the Young Entrepreneurs Network in the UK. They show how the ability can be developed to reflect on and articulate learning experiences, using the EU Youthpass or international awards. They display methods and approaches that stimulate young people's creative potential, alongside training modules for youth workers on specific issues or groups, such as young migrants or prison inmates. The effort is increasingly shared in partnerships among researchers, formal educators, youth workers and employers, as demonstrated by long-term strategies aiming at better understanding and recognition of non-formal learning in the Czech Republic or Estonia. This can continue under the Youth Employment Initiative, involving youth work in youth guarantee schemes, as shown by the successful example from Finland.

The EU programmes with their 25-year legacy have contributed to young people's learning and development through a range of non-formal learning activities: volunteering, youth exchanges, youth initiatives. Erasmus+, with its integrated approach and its focus on entrepreneurship and multi-agency cooperation, pioneers experimentation and innovation in education of young people, through further developing and testing recognition tools and methods, training programmes for youth workers, and broad cross-sectoral strategic partnerships.

As shown by the many examples in this brochure only such a combined effort and new thinking can bring about a positive change, and help young people fully unleash their potential and make the best of their lives.



Martine Reicherts



Director-General for Education and Culture
European Commission

Recommendations¹ :

Explaining non-formal learning to employers and educators

Translating non-formal learning outcomes to the world of work

Enhancing the ability of those working directly with young people

Developing a strong focus on entrepreneurship

Improving partnership working and cross-sector innovation

Enhancing the evidence base through focused research and impact analysis

Including non-formal education and learning in youth guarantee plans

1 *Developing the creative and innovative potential of young people through non-formal learning in ways that are relevant to employability*. Expert Group Report (2013) http://ec.europa.eu/youth/library/reports/creative-potential_en.pdf

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1

ENVIE D'AGIR (KEEN TO ACT)



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'Envie d'agir' is a national programme in France to support the sense of initiative and entrepreneurship of young people between 11 and 30 years of age. It is organised by the Ministry of Youth, Popular Education and Community Life and by the regions.

The project is intended to develop a culture of initiative, making young people its authors and actors and boosting their creativity, audacity and talent in local activism and social cohesion, citizenship and solidarity, sustainable development and entrepreneurialism. The programme particularly wants to provide educational, technical and financial support to help the young throughout their own projects, from conception to completion. A corps of nearly a thousand technical and educational experts have been mobilised through nearly a thousand support centres across French territory, using this original social tool based on the recognition of skills gained from personal experience.

Through non-formal and informal education and peer learning, the project has developed the autonomy, individual and collective responsibility and involvement of young people in social



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and public life and helped their social and professional integration. It has stimulated core competences and skills such as expressing ideas, defending projects, adaptation in light of constraints, teamwork and individual work.

The programme provides methodological resources, training, a website and scientific assistance in monitoring and evaluating the impact of the activities. A cross-sectoral national jury assesses the project proposals and a public-private partnership at all levels helps to promote the programme and disseminate its results. For instance in 2008, the Directorate for Youth and Sport in Lorraine initiated a partnership club between private and public organisations which joined the programme to support young people's initiatives in the region.

From 1987 to 2011 more than 28 000 projects were supported, two thirds of them relating to setting up businesses, and a budget of more than EUR 52 million in grants and EUR 64 million in sponsorship was collected by the 78 000+ young people who benefited. Personalised advice has been given to candidates through 950 contact points all over the country, along with training, financing, development and networking opportunities.

The programme was launched in 1987 as 'Défi jeunesse' and has been continued as 'Envie d'agir' since 2003. In 2011 it was transferred to regional implementation to better respond to young people's local needs. The partners to the programme include: le Centre d'information et de documentation jeunesse (Youth Information and Documentation Centre), le Conseil national des missions locales (National Council for Local Missions), l'Agence pour la création d'entreprise (Agency for Business Creation), l'Agence pour le droit à l'initiative économique (Agency for the Right to Economic Initiative), Reporters d'Espoirs (Hope Reporters), l'Office Franco-Québécois pour la jeunesse (French-Quebec Youth Office), le Réseau national des juniors associations (National Network of Junior Associations) and la Fédération nationale des foyers ruraux (National Federation of Rural Foyers).

2

ENTRUM

Entrum is the youth entrepreneurship ideas contest and development programme, which aims to develop an enterprising mindset among young people and encourage them to take responsibility for their own life and success. It brings 13- to 19-year-old students out of their everyday school and home environment and provides them with entrepreneurship experience. It is designed for teens, and uses role models and mentors drawn from Estonian celebrities in the creative economy, social entrepreneurship and business services.

Entrum applies a four-step methodology that improves youngsters' skills and helps them realise their first enterprising ideas: the first step is to inspire them; the second is to teach practical skills; the third is to help them network; and the fourth is to show new horizons.



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During an academic year, young people assemble their start-up teams, share ideas, set goals, and plan their time and manage their finances, developing their ideas and products in entrepreneurship labs. The learning-by-doing process is accomplished in cooperation with business incubators and entrepreneurs, who show in practice how enterprises and production processes work.

This builds creative and innovative thinking and the ability to turn challenges into opportunities, setting and achieving goals with limited resources. The acquired competences and skills are recorded in project diaries, which also include presentations on the results of the start-up launch. The diaries are part of the learning process, showing the team evolution while overcoming obstacles. The difficulties faced during



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the incubation period include time management and planning, communicating, delegating and sharing assignments within the team and over-reliance on mentors. But through these experiences young people learn to work together, turn ideas into practice and take responsibility for own actions while seeing them in a broader context. Even those who dropped out in the incubation period admit the beneficial impact of the methodology on their mindsets. And some alumni have continued their activity as legally registered enterprises.

Entrum's monthly interactive events feature invited entrepreneurial leaders, seminars and games on entrepreneurial skills and business-project development, face-to-face coaching sessions and hands-on activities conducted by the young people in their communities. The programme culminates in a national business ideas contest, and the winners receive further support for their business start-ups or social entrepreneurship projects.

The programme was introduced in Estonia in 2010, and has won the 2011 Swedish Business Award, the 2013 World Chambers Award and the 2013 European CSR Award.

During 2012-2014 Entrum was official partner of Centres (Creative Entrepreneurship in Schools), the first European multisectoral entrepreneurship education forum specific to the creative industries and for sharing innovation and best practice in this area. The project focused on methodologies to develop young people's creativity and entrepreneurial skills and on partnerships between schools and businesses. It was co-funded by the EU lifelong learning programme, the British Council and several organisations across Europe: Fonden for Entreprenørskab — Young Enterprise (Denmark), Entrum Foundation (Estonia), Aalto University Small Business Centre (Finland), Lietuvos Junior Achievement (Lithuania), Polskie Stowarzyszenie Kreatywności (Poland), Zavod mreža podjetništva, CEED Slovenia (Slovenia) and A New Direction (United Kingdom).

3

YOUNG SOCIAL INNOVATORS



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The young social innovators programme is working to support people from 18 to 30 years old and educators across Ireland, promoting and leading the way in education for social innovation and enabling them to act as a force for change in their local communities and in wider society.



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... a platform
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elsewhere ...

The programme encourages and assists national and local groups of young people engaged in community work to overcome poverty, deprivation, inequality, educational disadvantage and social exclusion. It provides innovative and flexible ways for young people to get involved in social action and social education. It offers a platform and a voice for young people on social issues as a means of creating a better society in Ireland and elsewhere.

The programme develops services, activities, pilot projects and models of good practice. It issues research reports, educational materials and other aids in relation to education, social exclusion, community action and other social issues. It also promotes social awareness within education systems.

At the same time it promotes projects that have a positive influence on young people's lives and contribute to their personal development. Interactive workshops, designed for various age groups, help young people recognise their creativity and their potential, learn about social innovation and entrepreneurship and get a real understanding that what they do makes a difference in terms of human rights, community, equality, mental and physical well-being and the environment. They help boost the capacity to deal with uncertainty and change. Participants are given time and space to explore their sense of identity and gain an appreciation of difference, and encouragement is offered to the youth voice and to effective communication. Participants are invited to follow up on each workshop by undertaking a small social-innovation action.

The programme, running since 2011, receives a central government funding allocation alongside funding provided by private foundations and corporations.

4

YOUNG PEOPLE IN URBAN SPACES



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Kit di Interazione Urbana Instantaneo (KIUI) is a research and action project on urban public spaces promoted by the informal group Orizzontale from late 2011. Orizzontale was set up by architects and students from the faculty of architecture and also involved other young people from the areas in Rome where the activities took place. The objectives were to introduce young people to how a city is managed and to engage them more in the community and in projects to reinvigorate urban life. Orizzontale worked at a series of public events that experimented with forgotten spaces.

The project started with three workshops combined with a practical intervention in an urban space. During the three happenings called public acts, young participants experimented with a range of techniques to create shared urban gardens, transform unsightly urban spots and reactivate disused built spaces. These events — ‘ECO AGRO



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... introducing young people to how a city is managed and engaging them more in the community and in projects to reactivate urban life ...

CULT Urbano', 'OPEN Bricolage' and 'LIBERO Mercato' — were inspired by the emergence of self-managed urban gardens and community places in many European cities, by the desire to encourage accidental encounters among citizens and by the merits of restoring abandoned buildings to new uses. Young people gathered ideas and discussed strategies for reactivation practices. They used a blank wall to build a temporary collective place and reactivated an old multicultural market as a place for people to get together, which could also serve as an open-space lab to study the idea of the multicultural city.

The project culminated with a workshop, S.O.S. (Spazio Open Source), that also involved a Madrid-based collective and architecture students from Rome's La Sapienza University. It created a semi-permanent structure revitalising a forgotten public space. Using only recycled materials, the project gave new significance to an old arena, recruiting local residents to help turn a no-man's land into a space for encounters for an entire community. The S.O.S. idea could be also a prototype for reactivation of public spaces in general. It is based on the principle of reusing waste, limiting the transformation of the site to the minimum, making the intervention completely reversible, reducing the economic and ecological impact, using low technology and engaging local residents in building the spaces themselves.

The outcomes included enhanced skills and abilities among the individual participants and a greater confidence in decision-making regarding urban public spaces. Ideas and experiences were shared among young people from poor, remote and marginal urban areas, including young migrants, and helped them to exercise citizenship. The project also stimulated an entrepreneurial spirit, creativity and innovation and encouraged positive attitudes to environmental protection and sustainable energy.

This youth initiative project was funded by the Youth in Action national agency in Italy.

5

SOCIAL NETWORK EMPRENDE XL

The project, which began in 2013, aims at promoting and supporting entrepreneurship among people up to the age of 35. It also enables cooperation with entrepreneurs and provides information about resources, advice and training.

The platform (<http://www.emprendexl.com>), with 4 800 registered users, is similar to a social network, and is designed for sharing ideas, to act as a reference point for new entrepreneurship projects and to assist in obtaining funding. It offers more than 2 100 free training hours through e-learning, as well as expert advice and experience from other entrepreneurs.

The project is based on a convention between the Spanish Institute for Youth and the company Biznet.



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6

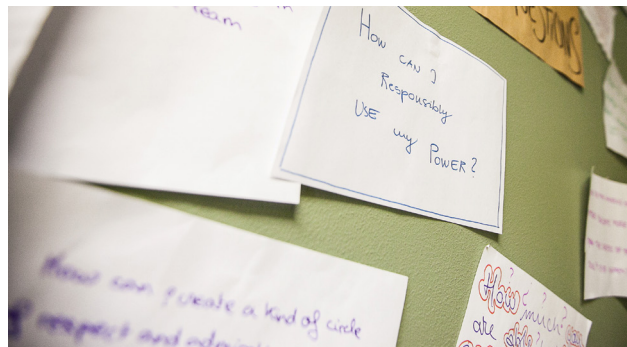
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ENTREPRENEURSHIP HUBS

The programme helps young people who have a business plan or an innovative idea to bring it to maturity and turn it into a successful business. Some 40 qualifying participants between 18 and 30 years of age and from diverse backgrounds are provided with office space in each of the hubs or incubators the scheme runs, along with a monthly grant. In return they complete 20 hours a week taking part in workshops and lectures, and follow courses in law, tax, finance and management related to business, as well as human resources and funding. They make monthly presentations of their progress. A wide range of options exist for information, mentoring and networking, as well as opportunities for exchanges with business figures and venture capitalists. The aim is to promote entrepreneurship. At the same time, the programme develops transversal skills in problem analysis and solving, communication and time management.

Approximately 400 young people took part in the three phases of the programme implemented between February 2013 and January 2015.

The programme is run by the Greek General Secretariat for Youth, in partnership with holding companies and private educational organisations: The Hub S.A. (Athens), I4G S.A. (Thessaloniki), ACME KEK S.A. (Heraklion) and Euroteam KEK S.A. (Patra). It is funded by the EU and the National Strategic Reference Framework.



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FORÓIGE NETWORK FOR TEACHING ENTREPRENEURSHIP



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This programme helps young people in disadvantaged communities to develop skills in business and enterprise, and to unlock their talents and potential. It works with 12- to 18 year-olds on in-school and out-of-school projects throughout Ireland that increase school completion and college attendance. They study all aspects of starting and running a business, including using seed grants to purchase supplies, engaging with (social) entrepreneurs and community leaders, visiting companies, working with business mentors, selling their products at a Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) trade fair and presenting their business plan to a panel of judges. Winners are recognised at the All Island Youth Entrepreneurship Awards.

Further support is offered to participants who complete the initial training. BizCamp is an intensive summer programme in youth centres that covers marketing, sales, business ethics and financial management, while also requiring each participant to set up and run their own business. NFTE Alumni, which is based on business potential rather than academic ability, helps those who wish to apply their learning in a new area or want to develop their business ideas.



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The programme runs from September to May each year. In 2013, 1 500 young people graduated from the scheme. They are now eligible for an entrepreneurship scholarship at IT Sligo, which provides a pathway to turn business ideas into reality and provides financial support, mentoring and access to international trade fairs.

Teachers and youth workers receive training in skills and resources to deliver the programme through the NFTE University. They are known as certified entrepreneurship trainers.

Research collated by Harvard University from 2001 to 2003 on the impact of the NFTE programme concluded that career aspirations, interest in attending college, business knowledge, leadership behaviour and belief in the ability to attain life goals had all increased. One participant describes how the experience gained in the programme helped her find employment: 'Having been through NFTE I have gained a lot of confidence in myself and in communicating with others. When I went for an interview I used these skills to tell the interviewer about my experience and what I could offer the company. I told them about winning the International NFTE competition. I got the job and they said that because of my knowledge of what it was like to run my own business I would understand what is expected from me as an employee.'

Foróige NFTE Ireland was founded in 2004 and cooperates with educational institutions. In 2013 it received funding from Ulster Bank's Community Impact Fund. It is linked to the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship International, a non-profit organisation with 20 years' experience of teaching entrepreneurship skills to young people. Foróige is a leading youth organisation in Ireland that has been working with young people since 1952. It involves 56 000 young people in activities across the country.

8

EQUIPPING YOUNG PEOPLE TO WORK FOR COMMUNITY BENEFIT



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The Young Entrepreneurs Network (YEN), run by the Common Ground Foundation in the United Kingdom, helps young people to develop their entrepreneurial spirit and prepares them for the workplace and business by delivering action that bridges communities. A young person joining YEN acquires a network of young volunteers who share passion, energy and enthusiasm. Through the network, individuals are given the tools and capabilities to conceive and implement innovative projects that can make a real difference to their own lives, to the lives of their families and, most importantly, in their communities.



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... the network gives individuals the tools and capabilities to conceive and implement innovative projects that can make a real difference to their own lives, to the lives of their families and their communities ...

YEN provides training to young people, who then deliver workshops to their peers on community cohesion and development, and allows them to acquire skills such as project management, leadership, communication and business planning. Throughout their progression in YEN, young people are also supported by their peers to develop their critical thinking and analytical skills. To do so, opportunities are created that help them to explore and address important social issues in creative ways and through research and debate. These skills are transferable to their future employment and to any of their entrepreneurship ventures.

The training also connects young people with entrepreneurs, agencies, businesses and researchers so they can use the skills and knowledge that they have acquired to progress along a development pathway.

The YEN programme proved particularly valuable in areas like Birmingham, with large populations of young people and significant levels of deprivation compounded by the economic crisis. Since 2011 YEN has directly benefited 56 young people from socially deprived communities in the United Kingdom's West Midlands. Four, previously unemployed for 12 months or longer, secured employment within 3 months of joining YEN. One is now setting up his own business. To date six community-based projects have been delivered, two of them international, engaging more than 400 people of all ages.

Participants said: 'I feel that YEN has pushed me into reaching my full potential. It has made me realise the self-improvement opportunities available here and in my environment and society. More than that, I am beginning to see the ways in which I can also lead initiatives to improve my community and inspire those around me' (Waye, 19); 'I have always dreamed of starting my own business but I never knew where and how to start. YEN has helped me see that with the right skills, knowledge and faith, any dream is possible. I can't wait to start on my business!' (Azad, 21).

9

YOUTHBANK

YouthBank involves young people in grant-making within their local community. It is an all-island-of-Ireland initiative of over 15 committees run by young people.

The funding distributed by these decision-making committees supports projects designed and run by young people aged 14-25 that address issues and concerns relevant to them and their community. Grant awards vary and the maximum amount is EUR 1 200.

YouthBank is more than a grant-giving body: it is a personal development programme that builds young people's self-esteem and confidence and provides them with an opportunity to learn new skills in leadership, teamwork, decision-making, problem solving, communication and negotiation. They also learn how to write reports, give presentations, manage events and behave in an interview.

While all YouthBanks are given the flexibility to adapt to local needs, their work is underpinned by principles that affirm the youth-led character of the programme, openness to young people with fewer opportunities, freedom in expression and respect for cultural, religious and political differences. The decision-making process is fair and transparent, the language used is easy to understand and the programme gives due attention to celebration of those who make a difference in their community.

YouthBank is managed by the Irish Youth Foundation, set up in 1985 as an independent charitable trust dedicated to meeting the needs of vulnerable children and young people.



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10

WINNING PRIZES FOR PROJECT IDEAS

In Austria, young people aged 14-24 can ask for support for their projects in art and culture, social inclusion, education, sports, society or global issues, and win up to EUR 500. The main objectives of this programme are to foster creativity and entrepreneurship, to empower young people to implement their own ideas, to raise self-esteem and self-confidence and to promote the acquisition of competences and skills by carrying out concrete projects.

The programme has a budget of EUR 100 000, and since it began in September 2014 it has funded around 25 projects. It is a programme of the Federal Ministry of Families and Youth, but is run by the national umbrella organisation of youth information centres in Austria.

There is a regular reporting procedure in place and the ministry holds steering group meetings with the youth information centres. A jury consisting of young people, relevant national youth work bodies and the ministry decides on the projects and monitors the process.

11

TRIPTOLEMOS TURNS GRADUATES INTO FARMERS

This programme, run by Athens Agricultural University and the Greek General Secretary for Youth, trains groups of 25 young people at a time in agricultural science, marketing and business planning. It is a response to the high level of unemployment in the country, which has caused many young people to move from cities into the countryside with the aim of starting a farm.

For a small fee that ensures wide access, the programme provides expertise in agricultural sectors where there is a good chance of starting a successful business. No prior experience is required. The programme has attracted a large number of applicants, among them highly trained people from other disciplines, such as marketing experts or engineers, with innovative ideas.

The training is delivered on the campus of the university, minimising costs but giving the participants the chance to get their hands dirty while benefiting from academic and specialist guidance. Graduates of the programme receive a certificate, and many have gone on to start successful farming ventures.

The programme is now being expanded to agricultural universities and colleges in other cities in Greece.

12

A COMPETENCE-BASED APPROACH TO URBAN CHALLENGES



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The city of Antwerp wanted to diminish the negative consequences of school dropout by strengthening the position of low-skilled youngsters through recognition and validation of competences acquired in non-formal and informal learning, especially in youth work settings. Five accessible youth competence centres combine activities linked to leisure, competence development and work. It is a deliberate attempt to allow young people to be the authors and co-owners of their projects, based on their own inspiration and responding to their own lifestyle, needs and talents. The centres are in neighbourhoods with vulnerable populations, including a large proportion of migrants, high unemployment rates and a low level of school completion.



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Youngsters become aware of their competences, develop them further in an informal way during their free time and obtain formal recognition for them. This stimulates their personal development, increases their self-esteem and makes it possible for them to acquire a sense of social engagement. Meanwhile they strengthen their suitability for the labour market, with the assistance of youth workers and specialist advisers. Counsellors dealing with recognised acquired competences focus on youngsters between the ages of 12 and 25 whom they meet in their leisure time, such as youth work, cultural activities, sport events and voluntary work. Other counsellors specialising in work-related acquired competences focus on youngsters between 16 and 25 years old who are vulnerable because they have left school early or are unemployed, and guide them towards schools, training and jobs.

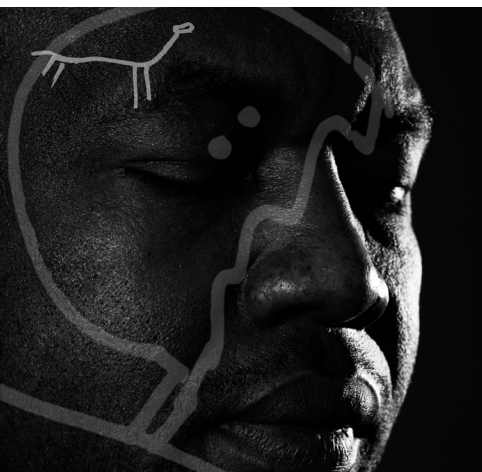
The project matches work-related and school-based competences with the competences gained during non-formal activities. It also brings vulnerable young people and the public employment service closer, and fosters the link between education and the labour market. For instance, it offers young people the possibility of having a first work experience with a temporary job or an internship.

The partnership between the city of Antwerp, youth work organisations, non-profit organisations and public employment services is a crucial factor in the success. An important aspect was also to raise awareness of the value of non-formal and informal learning among young people and employers.

Since 2008, two centres have been run by JES — a metropolitan laboratory initiating innovative projects to increase opportunities for young people in Antwerp, Brussels and Ghent through leisure, training, culture, education, employment, welfare and sport. JES contributed to developing a pedagogical model of the centre based on the competence-based approach. The concept and methods have been multiplied and extended to three additional centres run by other youth organisations: Formaat and Kras Jeugdwerk.

13

AIM HIGHER



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The project aimed to offer young people from migrant communities new perspectives on the value of school and education by discussing the issues that affect them directly.

It brought together 30 youngsters from Denmark, Sweden and the United Kingdom in Brønshøj (Copenhagen area) for 10 days in December 2013. Many of them were underachievers in school and lacked support and direction at home. The immediate goal was to produce a positive impact on attendance, grades, test scores and, eventually, graduation, with the longer-term intention of helping them to be better prepared to cope with life. It also sought to widen understanding of opportunities available in Europe and increase their participation by involving other young people and role models.



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Non-formal learning approaches were used throughout the project, and the participants were involved in every aspect of the project, helping with creative, administrative and managerial tasks, event planning and budgeting. The project was run by young people for young people, and they had to overcome some unexpected organisational challenges. Everybody had the opportunity to discuss and reflect, and experienced trainers facilitated role plays, debates, workshops and teamworking, as well as personal development activities on CV building, job interviews and career progression. The outcome was that an increasing numbers of students have better skills, are more confident and are more workforce-ready. Many participants — even the

... the participants were involved in every aspect of the project, helping with creative, administrative and managerial tasks, event planning and budgeting ...

shyest ones — overcame their insecurity and many of them created lasting bonds.

This youth exchange project was funded by the Youth in Action national agency in Denmark and was carried out by the Somali Diaspora Organisation (Denmark), in partnership with Sheeko (United Kingdom) and Barahley (Sweden). All three organisations aim to create an environment of friendship and belonging where young people can gain strength and power, collectively and as individuals, through creative learning.



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VOLUNTEERING FOR DIVERSITY

As part of the European Capitals of Culture programme in 2013, young people had the chance to get involved for several months as volunteers in the cultural activities of the Marseille-Provence event. Seventeen volunteers took part, aged 25-32, coming from different countries and regions within the EU and beyond: Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Hungary, Italy, Lebanon, Morocco, Poland, Slovenia and Serbia. In the intensely international environment of the event they were exposed to wide diversity and the chance to become acquainted with many different nationalities and views of the world.

The aim was to promote the personal development of the young people involved and to build a sense of civic duty, solidarity and tolerance, as well as an appreciation of different cultures, practices, languages and ways of thinking. The project also contributed to promoting volunteering and active European citizenship.

The volunteers were engaged in promotion and communication, running websites and social networks, organising press conferences and maintaining contact with journalists. They were involved in workshops and debates, in accompanying school visits, in setting up productions and performances and in welcoming artists and foreign delegations. Some of them with an interest in art helped to organise and maintain art exhibitions. They supported the staff in their daily work and logistics and participated in meetings with partners. The young people were also invited to attend the opening of many of the events.

The accent was on non-formal learning, adjusted to the personal capacities of each young person, and the project also ensured strong links with the cultural life of the region and with the local community. The project stimulated the young volunteers' creativity and initiative; they learnt from each other and enriched each other, and they improved their French and learnt Arabic. They learnt how to manage obstacles, evaluate the results and make innovative proposals. They became more autonomous, responsible and more confident in their capacities. They built contacts and networks and acquired a range of organisational, administrative, technical and artistic skills that were useful to them in the world of work. Most of the volunteers subsequently followed a career

... the intensely international environment of the event exposed the participants to wide diversity and the chance to become acquainted with many different nationalities and views of the world ...



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pathway, with jobs, internships or higher education. Their personal and professional development was recorded in the Youthpass certificate.

The hosting organisation and the local community also benefited from the presence of the young people from different countries, who became ambassadors of volunteering and of the EU youth programmes, raising awareness among the local population.

The project ran for over 2 years, from February 2012 to March 2014 with preparation and follow-up, and extended to Beirut. This European Voluntary Service project was funded by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency in Brussels. It was carried out by Association pour le développement culturel européen et international (ADCEI), in partnership with Marseille-Provence 2013 — Capitale européenne de la culture, Agence régionale du Livre de la région PACA and Bureau des compétences et désires (France), Egyeségek Ifjúsági Egyesület and AFS Magyarország Nemzetközi Csereprogram Alapítvány (Hungary), the Vega Youth Centre and the Jules Verne Centre (Serbia), the Albanian Forum for the Alliance of Civilisations (Albania), Stowarzyszenie Centrum Wolontariatu (Poland), RCP — Razvojni Center Ptuj (Slovenia), L'Association coopérative des arts et de l'éducation — Khayal (Lebanon), VIA vzw (Belgium), FIRE Theatre-Art-Culture Foundation (Bulgaria), Going to Europe (Italy) and Association Rosselli Maroc (Morocco).

15

BREAKING WAVES



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'Breaking waves' was a training programme for young inmates of four prisons in Latvia, which ran from December 2012 to June 2013. The Latvian and Russian participants, aged 14-30, of both genders, had learning obstacles, language obstacles or mental disabilities.

The project organised long-term non-formal learning activities to develop social skills and attitudes that would ease resocialisation and employability in the target group. In normal circumstances young inmates receive basic and secondary education and vocational training, but little in terms of non-formal learning. To change this the project initially gave training in non-formal learning methods and approaches to staff who were coached by experienced trainers from the field. These staff then ran training activities in prisons, based on each group's or individual's needs.



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Psychological testing of young inmates before and after receiving non-formal learning experience revealed an increase in their ability to work in groups, their imagination and creativity and their foreign language and digital skills, as well as the capacity for learning to learn and for project development. Participants received Youthpass certificates that described the competences acquired.

This training programme was developed and funded by the Youth in Action national agency in Latvia. The project was carried out in partnership with the Prison Administration of Latvia, a governmental institution supervised by the Ministry of Justice. Its main task is to ensure pre-trial detention as a security measure and imprisonment as a criminal punishment. In order to fulfil that task, the Prison Administration organises and supervises the work of the institutions it is responsible for, and provides financial, material and technical resources, as well as professional training for staff.

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JOB CLUBS



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Zavod Nefiks has created job clubs that bring together up to 15 young people in joint searches for work opportunities. For 4 months participants meet on an equal footing once a week as a group, as well as conducting smaller meetings during the week to complete designated tasks. A club sets its own objectives and pursues them as a group. Where they lack knowledge, they seek external professional help. Over the course of the 4 months each young person creates a personal Europass CV, holds speed-dating interviews with employers, acquires entrepreneurial experience and develops a social network. When a club member gets a work opportunity he or she is excused from club meetings, but is expected to help the group to meet employers.



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... each young person creates a personal Europass CV, holds speed-dating interviews with employers, acquires entrepreneurial experience and develops a social network ...

The latest round of clubs has attracted mainly university-educated people with a social science or humanities background, and mainly women, since getting a job is much harder for them. So far some 150 people have been involved in 15 clubs, and more than 50 of them have got some kind of work opportunity. However, they all develop skills and connect to employers, and they become more motivated and constructive.

The biggest sponsor in Slovenia is a telecommunications firm, Slovenia Si.mobil, which provides help in terms of finance and expertise: it shares knowledge about how to act on the job market and helps with skills development, and invites other employers to events. It won a prize for social responsibility for this work.

Zavod Nefiks is a youth organisation in Slovenia which applies non-formal learning methods in its work with young people with the aim of developing skills and assisting them into the job market. It has established close cooperation with the business sector and contributed to recognition of non-formal learning. The organisation's activities — mainly workshops, stakeholders meetings, a system of peer advising and public promotion — are complemented by a web portal (<http://www.talentiran.si>), which provides young people with skills and knowledge of employment literacy. Apart from job clubs, Nefiks organises career clubs and promotes employment among young women. Enterprising Friday is an opportunity to get to know people from companies and develop social networks.

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JOB AHOI! — WORK CAN BE FUN!



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The premise of the 'Job ahoi!' project is to teach young people that work can be fun and give a sense of purpose and fulfilment to their lives. The aim is to encourage them to adopt new perspectives after periods of unemployment, and to make them feel that they are needed.

It approaches gaining qualifications and employment through teaching unemployed young people technical and social skills, improving their personal situation and



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promoting their personal development by supporting them in further education and in job hunting. It also aims to help them attain independence, and to make use of the opportunities for obtaining qualifications in informal situations as a stepping stone towards employment, rather than resigning themselves to unemployment.

Clarifying their life situation from a social work point of view begins with settling their financial situation, as well as legal and official matters, and agreeing on objectives. Their situation is stabilised step by step through regular work, which can also motivate the search for further work. Career orientation, coaching and job application support prepare their reintegration into the labour market as they recognise their own abilities and plan their career.

Weekly training sessions on social skills include self-examination (defining targets, awareness of oneself and others, defining strengths and weaknesses), along with the opportunity to practise interviews, job application situations and telephone conversations, and to visit companies and exhibitions and meet experts on topics such as violence, addiction and sexuality. Group recreational activities also take place.

The young people gradually take control of their own lives. The project is based on voluntary participation. In order to increase the young people's sense of their own responsibility, individuals are paid only for the hours they work. And there is flexibility in handling work times as well as the individual care of the young people allowing them to gradually adapt to new situations.

The project is implemented by the Open Youth Work Dornbirn Association in Austria, in partnership with the Vorarlberg federal province.

18

OPENNESS TO CHANGE

Four European Voluntary Service (EVS) volunteers from Austria, France and Turkey worked in Lithuania for 10 months in 2013/14 at the Panevezys special school for mentally disabled children and young people. The school is based on the concept of openness to change: disabled children and volunteers working with them are inquisitive and open to new ideas, and the project creates opportunities for wide experiences, open and direct dialogue, and collaboration between able and disabled young people to promote personal, social and vocational changes among all of them.

The project develops civic awareness and responsibility, and self-confidence among participants, alongside young people's interest in social problems, while allowing them to make new friends in a cross-cultural context and to improve their capacities for self-expression and cooperation and for other skills valuable for future professional activity.



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The volunteers educated themselves through peer learning and boosted their creativity. Joint analysis of the project helped them understand their successes and failures, and what they could change. With the assistance of coordinators, mentors and school staff, volunteers learned to plan their own projects and activities, to write programmes adapted to each target group, to manage time effectively and to recognise the importance of structure for working in a team.



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They learned enough Lithuanian to talk with the children, and how to use body language in new ways. Afterwards some of the project volunteers chose to work in this field and engage in activities with disabled children that helped meet challenges in their countries. The French volunteer said: 'This project was great for my personal development because it took me out of my comfort zone and taught me how to handle responsibilities. It was also a great way to discover Lithuanian culture and be closer to the people who live there than is possible during standard holiday travel.'

The Austrian volunteer said: 'In the mornings I worked in a class which I chose, and in the afternoons I was involved in sports, music or creative stuff. I also ran my own activities, which I had to organise myself, and I was part of events I helped to manage. During my EVS I learned a lot about myself and what I want to do in my future. I have progressed and found new interests which I never thought about in the past. I always wanted to work in the social field and my volunteering helped me with the choice of my studies: family work and working with disabled people.'

This European Voluntary Service project was funded by the Youth in Action national agency in Lithuania. The volunteers came from InfoEck-Jugendinfo Tirol (Austria), Altea France and Sof dađı gençlik ve spor kulübü derneđi (Turkey).

19

WIN A TRAINEESHIP

Final year university students and recent graduates under 30 years of age are eligible to take part in a competition organised each year by Gazeta Wyborcza (one of the biggest national newspapers in Poland) and the consulting company PricewaterhouseCoopers, offering a chance for contact with employers. The programme was put in place by businesses in 1996, and since 2004 the traineeships have also been available to successful applicants in public bodies and non-governmental organisations.

It is a link between formal education and employment based on learning by doing, which allows young people to gain practical skills in a professional environment. They can test and expand their knowledge and improve their chances of being hired.



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Employers also gain the chance to obtain qualified trainees and to build their reputation for social responsibility.

To win the competition entrants must address a challenge of their own choosing such as writing an analysis of a business problem or similar, for instance in relation to banking, biotechnology, power engineering, IT logistics, marketing, environmental protection, law, telecoms, insurance or project management.

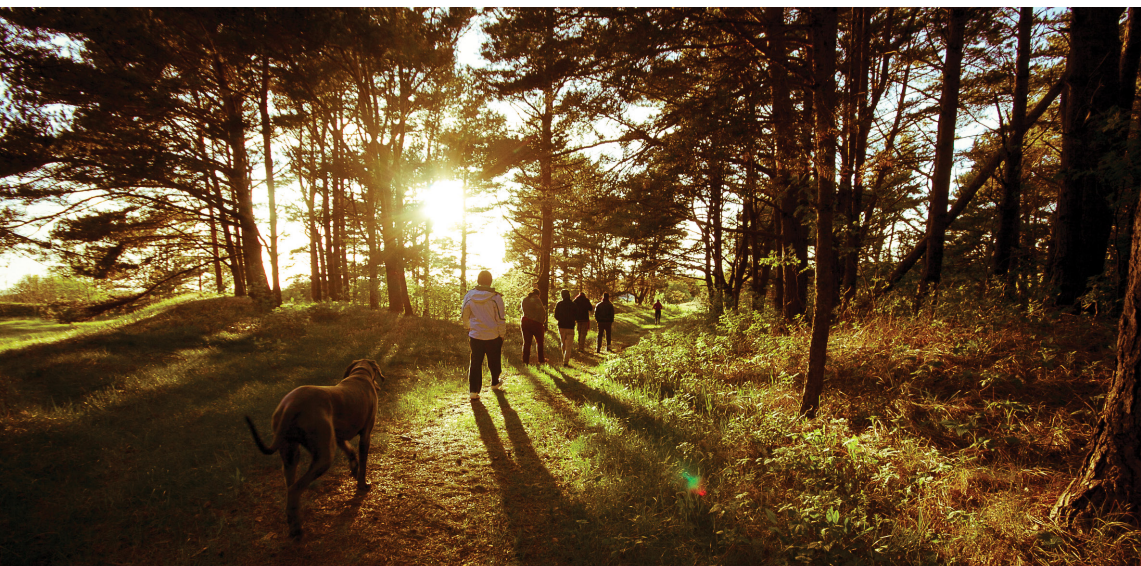
The topic chosen might cover, for instance, the natural gas market in Poland. In the analysis the candidate provides an overview of the key relevant events in Poland, highlighting probable future moves — with a focus on national and EU regulations — and outlining challenges for leading companies and assessing strategic responses by the industry.

Winners are awarded a paid traineeship of 4 weeks or longer, and a third of them obtain employment. There are also bonus prizes, including language courses, simulation games and postgraduate studies funded by private companies or universities.

Five hundred Polish and international employers have participated, and more than 2 500 young people have won a traineeship. The initiative has been recognised with awards such as Students' Project of the Year 2011, Best Brand in Practice and PROstudent for its wide coverage, professionalism and student friendliness.

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RÜCKENWIND STRATEGY (TAILWIND STRATEGY)



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Since 2007 this project has been supporting people aged 16-30 with fewer opportunities, in particular those not in employment, education or training. It has enabled them to participate in international youth exchanges and European Voluntary Service, funded by the EU youth programmes Youth in Action and Erasmus+: Youth in Action.

This has been part of a long-term strategy to include disadvantaged groups in education and professional careers. It has built up a network of organisations that work with young people with fewer opportunities and a team of specialised professionals in international



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... a network of organisations that work with young people with fewer opportunities and a team of specialised professionals in international mobility ...

mobility. In this way it has created hosting opportunities for small groups of young people to volunteer for up to 12 months, while rebuilding an old fishing boat in the United Kingdom, restoring a playground in Spain or getting involved in an environmental project in Finland. The learning approaches are adapted to individual needs and the young people gain a broad range of skills through learning by doing. The learning outcomes are certified in Youthpass.

Erwin Zangerl, President of Arbeiterkammer Tirol, says, 'The projects support young people as individually as possible, particularly those who do not have perfect starting opportunities in their progress from school to training and work. We offer live hands-on learning opportunities to help them cope with their lives and make them better prepared for the job market. We motivate young people by offering them positive experiences and preparing them for their professional future. The combination of working and learning in everyday projects gives young people the experience of seeing immediate benefit from their efforts.'

In 2007-2012 the project was part of NGO CUBIC, consisting of specialised youth workers, social workers and trainers. But since 2012 it has been adopted by Arbeiterkammer Tirol, a professional body of employees, showing the relevance of experimenting with innovative approaches in finding solutions for youth unemployment and helping young people in disadvantaged situations.

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EVERY VOLUNTEER HAS A STORY TO TELL



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Scriptamanent plus is a project that ran over 14 months in 2013-2014 and in seven countries, stimulating more than 100 ex-volunteers, including those participating in European Voluntary Service, to record their experiences in written and multimedia form. The outcome was a website displaying their stories, videos, pictures and audio files, as well as a compendium in traditional book form published in several languages and a 260-page e-book. Scriptamanent plus is also available as a free application for Android mobile devices.



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The aim was to promote international volunteer activities and to involve other young people by bringing new interactive tools to the dissemination of good practices and mobility opportunities, and through innovation in daily youth work with new technologies and new media. These tools, along with USB keys, posters, postcards, T-shirts and bookmarks, supported information campaigns to increase the number of young people in international projects.

The project involved kick-off meetings, training for over 50 youth workers and the training of around 2 400 young people directly taking part in local activities. It promoted multilingualism and cultural diversity, active participation, commitment and a sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, and raised the quality of youth work in Europe.

This Youth in Action project encouraging innovation and quality was funded by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency in Brussels. The project was carried out by Associazione Culturale Link (Italy), in partnership with LinkYouth UK CIC (United Kingdom), Actor (Romania), La Vibria Intercultural (Spain), Yasar University (Turkey), Eurocircle (France) and Activar — Associação de Cooperação da Lousã (Portugal).

22

YOUTH IN ŁÓDŹ



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To encourage young people to stay and work in the city after completing their studies, a consortium of the municipal workplace office, three major colleges and some 70 leading employers in Łódź have created a range of local inducements and incentive schemes for students and graduates since 2010.

The initiative is intended to counteract the trend for many young people to leave the city as soon as they graduate, and to demonstrate that Łódź is conducive to career development and provides a future for youngsters. Scholarships are offered by



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employers and a website helps provide practical skills in writing CVs and in making contact with companies for jobs and internships, and free courses on communication, presentation or project management. Study visits to companies are also available, along with co-financed language courses in e.g. Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, Finnish, Hungarian, Portuguese, Swedish or other languages demanded by employers in Łódź for business contacts.

The programme also organises a competition for the best business plan, with awards of consultancy and, for the winners, financial and material support, free language courses and accountancy services for their company. Over its four editions to date the competition has received 354 entries, including 95 that were judged to be professional business plans and that have led to the setting up of 48 companies.

Another competition is run for the best promotional movie about Łódź, with a year's free accommodation or equipment as the prize.

The programme has been widely promoted through college networks and at cultural and employment events, and has attained a high level of visibility among its target audience. In particular, it has ensured close cooperation between education and employers and has provided practical support and encouragement to young people, as well as stimulating creativity. It has also helped to develop an understanding of the relationship between youth and the city.

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SUSTAINABILITY VOLUNTEERING



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The volunteer-run Centre for Ecological Learning Luxembourg (CELL), which coordinates a network of groups working on sustainability and low-impact transition, hosted a European Voluntary Service (EVS) volunteer from Germany in its Beckerich office from March 2014 to March 2015. CELL promotes permaculture, sustainable development and citizen-led societal change. It enables action groups, grassroots projects and transition in the local, regional and national community. It is also a founding member of SEED (regional heirloom seeds Luxembourg) and is active in international networks like Ecolise. The organisation and the volunteer co-designed and put into practice a framework for working and for personal safety.

Swantje, a 26-year-old with an interest in agriculture, supported CELL staff in organising and running events, including planting, seeding, harvesting, managing the library and resources, producing a monthly radio broadcast and updating the blog, the website and the email list. She coordinated CELL's presence at music and arts festivals, actively



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promoting its values, and travelled to partner organisations in Germany, Greece, Liechtenstein and Spain. She also learnt about vegetable production at TERRA, Luxembourg's first community-supported agriculture project founded by CELL members, and she developed her own activities, including a workshop on the relationship between body and well-being.

She says her EVS gave her the opportunity to make a wide range of contacts through the CELL network and to become familiar with the concept of non-formal learning. She admits to facing challenges herself in acquiring the skills of self-management and planning, but she says she obtained a clearer vision of her own strengths and limits and how she might plan her own future.

This European Voluntary Service project was funded by the Youth in Action national agency in Luxembourg and was carried out by the Centre for Ecological Learning Luxembourg, in partnership with Loesje e.V. (Germany).



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HELP IN FINDING THAT FIRST JOB



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This brochure is produced every alternate year by the Austrian youth information centres with the support of the Federal Ministry of Families and Youth, and some 25 000 copies are distributed, backed by online and offline advice. The most recent edition was from September 2014.

The age group catered for is 15-26, but the main target group are first-time jobseekers aged 15-18. The brochure provides young people with information and tools for finding their first jobs as well as supporting them in taking their first steps into employment and making them aware of their rights and duties. Young people can, for instance, find advice on how to write a CV, look for a job and assert their rights when working. Some federal centres also operate databases with concrete job offers.

The youth information centres cooperate with the employment services, the Chamber of Commerce, the Federal Chamber of Labour and, in case of concrete job databases, with local businesses.

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... information and tools for finding their first jobs and supporting them in their first steps into employment, and making them aware of their rights and duties ...

SKILLS FOR EMPLOYABILITY

An 11-day youth exchange in Hungary in 2012 used non-formal learning tools to increase the creativity and employability of 30 young people from Bulgaria, Spain, Croatia, Hungary and Romania by raising awareness of jobseeking skills and promoting a change in attitudes.

Games, simulations, workshops and role play explored working and communication styles, cooperation and cultural differences. The participants were actively involved in designing and organising the activities. An outdoor expedition also helped them develop their capacities for planning, engagement, decision-making, autonomy and responsibility.

The participants had a chance to try out what they had learnt through a short placement in a real company, and the project invited NGOs and human resources managers to consult with the young jobseekers. They learnt how to write a CV, and gained experience in job interviews and in job searching.

This youth exchange project was funded by the Youth in Action national agency in Hungary. The project was carried out by an informal group, Youth for Creative Life (Hungary), in partnership with the Egysesek Youth Association (Hungary).



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KNOW YOUR NEEDS



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'Know your needs' aims to confront problems faced by young people in the EU who emigrate for economic reasons without any serious prior thought about their actions or what they really want from life. By using non-formal learning methods, the project encouraged youngsters to evaluate situations and identify what factors drive their decisions. Its basic premise was that if you know what you want from life you stand a better chance of knowing how to achieve it. The project also provided information about volunteering opportunities and building positive change within society, and it discussed migration, education and youth unemployment issues.



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... the project encouraged youngsters to evaluate situations and identify what factors drive their decisions, since knowing what you want from life improves the chances of achieving it ...

The non-formal learning methods used in the project helped participants to become more alert to their own characteristics and personalities and those of others with whom they shared teamwork on the project. They discussed and then simulated job searching and interview experiences, and considered the importance of motivation in attaining career goals. Through role play they explored the differences and similarities of distinct education systems, and how education systems can — and cannot — help young people find their own identity and personal path. They also discussed the results of research and interviews conducted with migrants prior to project activities.

The outcomes were that the young people learned to make decisions on clearer criteria and to avoid chaotic or unconsidered steps. They learned more about themselves and reflected on the abilities and skills they would need for their professional ambitions. They also developed their English and wider communication skills, and learned about adaptability and tolerance.

The project ran in Zarasai, Lithuania, for 1 week in October 2013 and included 30 young people and youth workers from Estonia, Spain, Lithuania and the United Kingdom. The average age of the participants was 18 to 25 years old. Mostly they were students who were thinking about leaving the country and seeking work abroad.

This youth exchange project was funded by the Youth in Action national agency in Lithuania. The project was carried out by the Lithuanian Youth Centre, in partnership with Youth for Society (Estonia), Asociación Juvenil Inter (Spain) and Hammersmith and Fulham Volunteer Centre (United Kingdom).

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FINNISH YOUTH GUARANTEE

The Finnish youth guarantee is a governmental programme run by the Ministries of Employment and the Economy; Education and Culture; and Social Affairs and Health, with partners among national and municipal authorities, the business sector and NGOs. It aims to help young people gain access to education and employment, with a view to preventing social exclusion. It makes use of a skills programme for young adults, employment and economic development services for youth and rehabilitation services, including municipal social and healthcare services, youth outreach work and youth workshop activities. It also offers initial vocational education and better apprenticeship training, as well as developing on-the-job learning models. The programme operates on the principle that young people should be heard and allowed to influence the course of their life. It supports the growth, emancipation and life management of young people.

In 2013-2015, municipalities are required to have a youth guidance and service network for planning and cooperation in providing services for young people, including education, social, health and youth services and labour and police administrations, supported by municipalities, the government, the church and other sectors. Each young person under 25, and recently graduated people under 30, will be offered a job, a work trial, a study place or a period in a workshop or rehabilitation within 3 months of becoming unemployed. Every person completing basic education will be guaranteed a place in general upper secondary school education, vocational education, apprenticeship training, a youth workshop, rehabilitation or a place in some other form of study.

The partners of the programme reached broad agreement on the target group from the beginning of the planning, and took early account of the views and opinions of young people. A youth guidance and service network has been established in 256 municipalities and is under preparation in 34 more. Youth outreach has made contact with more than 20 000 young people, and youth workshop activities exist in around 270 municipalities and involve more than 14 000 young people.

The joint responsibility for this cross-sectoral approach involving young people in shaping their own future is integral to the success of the initiative. The Finnish youth guarantee model serves as one of the examples recommended by the EU for Member States.



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The youth guarantee is a new approach in the EU to tackling youth unemployment which ensures that all young people under 25 — whether registered with employment services or not — get a good-quality, concrete offer within 4 months of them leaving formal education or becoming unemployed. The good-quality offer should be for a job, apprenticeship, traineeship or continued education and should be adapted to each individual need and situation. EU Member States endorsed the principle of the youth guarantee in April 2013 ⁽¹⁾. The EU tops up national spending on these schemes through the European Social Fund and the EUR 6 billion youth employment initiative.

(1) Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013 on establishing a youth guarantee, OJ C 120, 26.4.2013, pp. 1-6 (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32013H0426%2801%29>).

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TRAINING FOR EMPLOYMENT



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Youth Dynamics hosted a 1 week training course in Nicosia in April 2013 with 20 young people from Estonia, Greece, Spain, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Poland, Portugal and Romania who were unemployed, dissatisfied with their jobs, or students unsure of what to do with their future. Youth workers shared methodologies, experiences and tools with the unemployed youngsters, to build common knowledge about these problems and define new personal and social strategies to combat youth unemployment in Europe, including how to create a job portfolio and Europass.

The training, delivered entirely in English, supported genuine dialogue and exchange among participants working in culturally mixed groups. They were critical, open-minded and full of fresh ideas. The training boosted their skills and helped to develop active job search strategies. A social network site created before the training session enabled sharing and networking among the participants, who were encouraged to design joint projects to fight youth unemployment.

The activities adopted interactive non-formal learning methods in workshops, reflection groups and roundtable discussions. There were also presentations delivered by trainers and experts from the EU Careers Office of Cyprus, the European University of Cyprus, EURES, the House of Europe in Nicosia, and Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus. In addition, participants from the European Voluntary Service and Erasmus projects shared their experience, highlighting opportunities offered by EU programmes.



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... the training supported genuine dialogue and exchange among participants working in culturally mixed groups and helped to develop active job searching strategies ...

The participants discussed how non-formal learning and youth work could increase youth employability and shared examples of good practices in combating youth unemployment. They also explored the possibilities for youth entrepreneurship at a European level through existing strategies and available funding. The project made them more aware of their own skills, opened up their minds, and taught them how to open career doors by building on their skills. And it stimulated their spirit of initiative and creativity. All participants received a Youthpass certificate at the end of the training course.

The local community was involved in intercultural events organised alongside the training course. The event was also commented on in the media and the project promoter organised follow-up seminars for local students, unemployed young people and teachers to share the training outcomes.

All partner organisations were involved in the project work with unemployed young people in their home countries. Recommendations prepared by trainers at the end of the training course help the youth workers involved to improve their own methods and offer practical tools in working with young people to foster their employability.

The training course was funded by the Youth in Action national agency in Cyprus, and it was carried out by Youth Dynamics (Cyprus) in partnership with Praxis (Greece), Estonian Unesco Youth Association, Baltic Regional Fund (Latvia), Associazione culturale Strauss — ARCI (Italy), Asociația super tineri — ASIRUS (Romania), Asociación cultural Inglicia (Spain), Associacao para a formacao profissional e desenvolvimento do montijo — CMM (Portugal), and TSD club (Poland).

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LINKING FORMAL AND NON-FORMAL LEARNING FOR EXCLUDED YOUNG PEOPLE



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This study visit aimed to allow participants to explore links between formal and non-formal learning, especially when used for young people with a criminal record, a history of violence or other behavioural issues, and who may have been excluded from the classroom.

There were 23 participants from 10 EU Member States and partner countries — Austria, Croatia, France, Iceland, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Turkey and the United Kingdom. They were aged 22-62, and came from a variety of formal and non-formal professional backgrounds: teachers and lecturers as well as youth work professionals.

They were given opportunities to share best practices and experiences from around Europe throughout the 3-day event in Birmingham in May 2014, using non-formal learning methodologies. They visited a forest school, a leading non-formal learning establishment in the United Kingdom, to see how craft skills can be used in challenging young people and to increase self-esteem and motivation. They also visited a pupil



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... links
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referral unit, a specialist education facility for pupils excluded from mainstream schools.

Presentations were provided by staff about working with pupils with poor English skills, disabilities and other challenges, as well as policy discussions on multiagency working, working with parents and supporting staff in a stressful environment. Emotional intelligence and its role in low-level behaviour management was also discussed.

Feedback indicated that participants learnt extensively from each other as well as from the study visits. They felt inspired by this learning to modify their own practices and incorporate new ideas. They increased their knowledge of non-formal learning methodologies and were better able to apply them to their everyday work. Positive outcomes were also recorded for participants' communication in foreign languages, and cultural awareness and expression.

Participants' views included: 'I learnt about other educational systems in other countries, what formal, non-formal and informal education is, how they function and how to apply non-formal methods in formal education'; 'I saw how to cooperate with people who work at the same area, to use different tools for students with special needs, and to be more creative at work. The emotional intelligence component was particularly useful'; 'It was interesting to see that there are similar problems all over the world — learning and behaviour difficulties — and they are treated in similar way. So it is good to know you're doing the right thing.'

It was a Youth in Action project hosted by the United Kingdom's Youth in Action national agency, the British Council, and co-funded by the Norwegian Youth in Action national agency, the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs.

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LOG IN



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This 6-day training course in Malta in October in 2013 gave 27 youth workers from Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Italy, Malta, Moldova, Portugal, Ukraine and Turkey an opportunity to become more aware of the internet and of online practices that influence young people's lives and the profession of youth work. It followed the approach of implementing youth work in the contexts where young people choose to be, giving youth workers a better understanding of this medium and how it can be used in their work.

The methods applied during the training course were non-formal and included simulations, role plays, workshops and discussions, as well as hands-on practical sessions such as interviewing people in the streets of Valetta. They helped to facilitate



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... implementing youth work in the contexts where young people choose to be, giving youth workers a better understanding of how the internet can be used in their work ...

team building and to develop skills in leadership, negotiation and intercultural communications. An online platform for contacts, resource sharing and preparation was created in advance for the participants. The course also included visits to online best practice websites and some youth cafes in Malta. At the end of the project the participants received their Youthpass, which they had been compiling every day as part of the learning process.

The course helped to narrow the digital divide between youth workers and young people. Participants emerged with a clearer idea of concepts such as e-participation, physiological and psychological changes related to use of the internet, copyright, hate speech, cyberbullying, online relationships and online identity.

The participants were also encouraged to plan future partnerships and common projects. Experience gained during the training course was used in the preparation phase of the No Hate Speech online campaign in the Dnipropetrovsk region in Ukraine, which was promoted by the Council of Europe.

This training course was funded by the Youth in Action national agency in Malta and carried out by Prism (Malta), in partnership with Youth Cooperation Centre of Dilijan (Armenia), Asap — Europe As Soon As Possible (Italy), MIKS (Ukraine), Casa da Juventude da Póvoa de Varzim — City Council — YouthHouse (Portugal), Asociatia Obsteasca Medium (Moldova), CISV-Georgia, RPO Belarusian Association of Unesco Clubs (Belarus) and Genç Akçakoca İletişim Derneği (Turkey).

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BOOSTING EMPLOYABILITY FOR YOUNG MIGRANTS



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Language Integrated Content Kit (LICK) was at the heart of a 5-day professional development project in migration and employability, organised by Wild Cherry Training and Education in multicultural Leeds, in the north of England, in June 2013. The aim was to increase the capacity of individuals and organisations working in this field.

Twenty-eight youth and community workers from Bulgaria, Spain, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and the United Kingdom shared their experiences of supporting young people to



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... teaching
English as
a foreign
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using non-
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methods — an
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access employment. They identified common barriers to employment and explored situations of under-employment where communities are prevented from fully utilising the skills available among migrants. Participants were supported by a multiskilled training team with experience in teaching English as a foreign language using non-formal learning methods — an innovative approach to language learning in context. This helped to avoid the ambiguity and misconceptions that can arise from cultural difference and impede shared understanding on issues relating to migration.

The participants gained the knowledge, understanding and skills to pursue a topic relating to their national context while discussing the issues at European level. The results were improved communication skills, including advocacy, and intercultural and teamworking capacities. Feedback also recorded in Youthpass showed that, delivered in this way, the training became a source of empowerment for each participant — enabling them to make more of a difference in the lives of the young people they worked with.

Originally from Brazil, Liz has lived in the United Kingdom for 2½ years; she credited the LICK training with helping her find a job as a community support worker: 'It helped me with my confidence and inspired me to apply for the job. Two months later I was working.' 'Everyone knows good communication is important, but our experience has shown that one of the biggest obstacles to successful international projects is where the people involved have poor English language skills', said Sue Dudill, Director at Wild Cherry Training and Education.

Wild Cherry Training and Education is a social enterprise that supports learners at national and transnational level to optimise their skills. The training course was funded by the Youth in Action national agency in the United Kingdom.

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KEYS FOR LIFE



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The Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and the National Institute of Children and Youth implemented a 4-year national project, 'Keys for life — developing key competences in leisure-time and non-formal education', in 2009–2013. It was aimed at 45 000 youth workers, and supported the sustainable development of leisure-time and non-formal education, increasing its quality and extending its range. It brought together various partners: educators, NGOs, youth centres, school clubs, state administration and local government, as well as employers. The activities were aimed at system changes to boost interconnectivity between formal, non-formal and informal learning.

The project focused on two concepts: education and the recognition of education. It began with research into the preferences of young people for leisure-time activities, looking particularly at how far they were engaged or interested in public or civic life; at the multicultural dimension of minority and socially excluded youth; and at obstacles to the inclusion of children with special educational needs and the role of a safe and tolerant environment. The research also focused on those working with children and young people in their leisure time — either professionally or as volunteers — and targeted training for them.

To help organisations and individuals providing services in quality development, an online tool was created with an evaluation of the key competences of youth workers and their development in interactive e-learning educational programmes. Two educational programmes in leisure-time pedagogy were designed, making use of blended learning through distance learning and in-class modules and leading to formal qualifications. Both programmes were accredited by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, and led to the identification of two profiles depending on the duration of the accomplished learning: educators performing complex direct pedagogical activities and those



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performing partial pedagogical activities as a part of leisure-time education.

Special attention was also given to the continuous professional development of those involved in leisure-time activities. Some 20 000 educators took part in training courses and expertise meetings, which promoted the exchange of best practices at regional level. This resulted in 40 accredited programmes for continuous professional development. In addition, training in topics identified in the research was offered, with a network of regional coordinators. Training was also provided to management staff — school headmasters and NGO managers — through a 3-year programme, preparing them for changes in their organisations.

One of the key outcomes was that non-formal education became more widely explored and recognised in the country, including among large employers who signed the common memorandum on supporting the results of non-formal education in work with children and youth in 2011. The personal competence portfolio provided an opportunity for recording competences acquired through non-formal learning in a language understandable for both sides. The cooperation with the National Register of Vocational Qualifications and the National Qualification Framework has also led to the establishment of minimum qualification standards for youth workers.

A focus on information improved its quality and distribution, supporting the information system for youth and increasing the competences of staff working with young people at youth information centres. Methodology brochures and other special publications have been made available in digital form.

The large scale of the project was a success factor: it involved over 1 000 organisations from a range of sectors, with 12 000 participants in 650 events. The project gained broad media coverage.

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VOLUNTEERING AS AN ASSET IN THE LABOUR MARKET



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In 2013 the Polish national agency of the Youth in Action programme undertook a research study, *European Voluntary Service and the labour market*, on the competences and skills acquired and developed during European Voluntary Service (EVS) projects, in relation to young people's subsequent chances of employment. EVS, funded by the EU youth programmes, involves people of 17-30 years of age in up to 12 months of

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unpaid voluntary work in another country within or outside the EU. The research confirmed that participation in such EVS projects gives young people a wide range of competences and skills that are useful in the labour market and are welcomed by employers. According to the agency the skills and attitudes most valued by employers — besides necessary know-how, professional skills and knowledge of foreign languages — are teamwork, taking initiatives, solving problems, flexibility, openness and creativity, ability to express oneself, responsibility and reliability. These attributes are among those developed during EVS projects.

The results of the study, its assumptions, goals, methodology and participants, have been collected and presented in the booklet. They show that participation in EVS contributes to the development of all key competences for lifelong learning, including significant development of a sense of entrepreneurship, civic competence, communication skills and teamworking skills closely related to ability to cooperate with diverse groups and in various cultural backgrounds. Other skills and attitudes identified as being of benefit include adaptability to changing circumstances, flexibility, self-confidence, intercultural skills, management skills, critical thinking, learning to learn and recognising the kind of thinking that different tasks require.

In general terms, respondents find competences and skills gained in non-formal learning projects more useful on the labour market than those gained in formal learning, though the research also showed that participants in non-formal education projects are more eager to commence formal education studies.

The research involved more than 544 EVS volunteers from programme and partner countries through an online questionnaire, and was complemented by focused interviews with 40 project coordinators. The research revealed that a large number of the EVS volunteers found jobs or began studies in their host countries after completing the EVS project. For those coming back to their home countries, the competences gained during their EVS projects were often crucial for starting a professional career.

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YOUTHPASS

Youthpass is a recognition tool for non-formal and informal learning in projects funded by EU youth programmes, and is a part of the European Commission's strategy to foster non-formal learning in the youth field. It contributes to strengthening the social recognition of youth work and aims at supporting the employability of young people and of youth workers by documenting the acquisition of key competences on a certificate. It is available in 24 languages with outreach in more than 60 countries.

As a tool to document and recognise learning outcomes it puts policy into practice and practice into policy. While creating their Youthpass certificate together with a support person, participants in projects have the possibility to describe what they have done in their project and which competences they have acquired. It supports reflection on the personal non-formal learning process and outcomes.



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Youthpass also has an impact on youth workers and organisations, helping them gain greater awareness of the value of their work. Youth workers need to further enhance their competences and awareness of the potential of learning in youth work and of how their projects make a difference in the competence development of young people.

Youthpass is available for all projects funded by the Youth in Action programme (2007-2013). The Youthpass certificates for Erasmus+: Youth in Action (2014-2020) are



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... strengthening
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available for youth exchanges, European Voluntary Service and youth workers' mobility within key action 1. It is planned to also provide Youthpass certificates for key actions 2 and 3.

By October 2015, 470 000 Youthpass certificates had been issued. The Youthpass impact study (2013) revealed that, among 80% of the participants, Youthpass increases the recognition of the value of non-formal education and youth work alongside the usefulness and quality of the projects.

The SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre supports the European Commission and the Erasmus+: Youth in Action national agencies in the development and implementation of the European training strategy and the Youthpass strategy. It coordinates regular European training activities of Erasmus+: Youth in Action and provides training and educational material on the topics of recognition.

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THE PLACE OF PRIOR LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The project began in 2006 as LÜKKA project run by the University of Tartu and was followed by the Primus programme (2008-2014), with a system of recognition of prior learning in Estonian universities, for admission and for academic credits. The prior learning includes all forms and contexts of learning: formal, non-formal and informal. It has since led to the creation of quality standards in this area, the training of 770 counsellors and assessors and the preparation of a quality code, manuals and e-tools.

Higher education institutes — and particularly their staff — are supported in implementing and developing the scheme so that they can adequately assess prior learning. The aim was also to improve knowledge among employers and vocational training providers about prior learning, as well as to increase recognition of non-formal and informal learning among students themselves and in wider society.



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A national network of experts involved in higher education, along with the Estonian qualification authority, vocational education development programmes and the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, now exchange best practices, and statistics are compiled on recognition given to prior formal, non-formal and informal learning in Estonian higher education systems. The principles of this concept have also been widely publicised across the country, including among prospective students, through a dedicated portal, seminars and events. As a result, the usage of recognised prior learning has risen by 25% in Estonian higher education institutes. Early hostility among many academics has given way to wide recognition of its place in the educational process.

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STEP BY STEP TOWARDS RECOGNITION



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Responding to high youth unemployment in Slovakia and the inadequacies of mainstream education in preparing young people for the labour market and for life, a long-term strategy set out to demonstrate how non-formal learning can provide valuable skills, abilities and attitudes. Some 8 000 15- to 17-year-olds and 5 000 people over 18 took part in training courses that combined developing leadership potential with competences for active citizenship alongside transversal skills.

During a series of 2- or 3-weekend training courses, young people and youth workers were trained in project management, teamwork, intercultural learning, communication and presentation, as well as in financial issues. They learned how to become reliable and flexible. At the same time, their awareness was raised of the society they live in, and they developed small projects that brought positive transformation to their local environment and allowed them to test their new skills in practice.



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Recognition of non-formal learning in youth work was also promoted through regional round tables with local governments, employers, schools and universities, youth NGOs and youth work structures, and through demonstration of its merits. National inter-school competitions were run on the use of non-formal learning outside the framework of school lessons, and human resources executives visited educational activities in youth work settings. This process culminated in the international Innovative Learning Forum in Bratislava on 20-22 June 2013, attended by 150 trainers, youth workers, employers and government officials, which obtained the signature of participants to a declaration recognising the contribution of non-formal learning in youth work.

The project was run by the Iuventa Slovak Youth Institute, which was also the national agency for the EU youth programme Youth in Action, in cooperation with the Ministries of Education and of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, DELL, Microsoft, the University of Žilina, the University of Prešov, the American Chamber of Commerce, the European Social Fund and the state budget.

The Iuventa Slovak Youth Institute was also involved in creating a new youth worker's position in the national framework of qualifications, aimed at legitimising the profession, since most youth workers are volunteers with competences acquired in practice. After an expert group defined the main competences and public discussions and consultations had taken place, a Sectoral Steering Committee on Education authorised the introduction of the new profession and laid down how youth work practice competences should be recognised.

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LAUNCHING YOUNG PEOPLE INTO WORK

Stardiplats ('launch pad' — <http://www.stardiplats.ee>) is intended to improve recognition of non-formal learning outcomes in youth work. It helps young people to assemble their formal education, work experience and non-formal learning in one place, and promotes self-analysis. This assists them in creating their portfolios and in future job applications or university credit points. The service also gives users the opportunity to convert their CVs into a European format, such as Europass. Daily updates to the website identify job openings or volunteer work, and provide a channel for employers to find skilled workers. It also offers practical tips on how to apply for a job or set up a business.

After initial testing among 100 users Stardiplats was launched in 2010, and was adopted by youth workers and career counsellors. It helps overcome the difficulty that young people often have in realising that they have acquired some skills and competences through youth work or other activities. Stardiplats plays a role in translating non-formal learning outcomes to the world of work.



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Since 2010 the website has been visited on more than 690 000 occasions, and the tool has been used by more than 8 000 people to improve their chances in education and on the labour market. They have reported that the use of the tool improved their communication skills, their digital competences and their sense of initiative and entrepreneurship. The institutional recognition of the value of non-formal learning has advanced as well.

The project has been funded by the Estonian Youth Work Centre, the Ministry of Education and Research and the European Social Fund. Project partners included Entrum (the youth entrepreneurship ideas contest and development programme), the Association of Estonian Open Youth Centres, Töötukassa (the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund), SA Innove (a governmental non-profit foundation) and Rajaleidja (SA Innove's career and educational counselling centre).

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RECOGNISING YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACHIEVEMENT



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Several United Kingdom programmes offer structured non-formal learning, with a focus on re-engaging young people who have become disaffected, and provide awards through the Network for the Accreditation of Young People's Achievement.

It is a way to help young people understand the benefits gained in non-formal learning and to identify their own achievements. It also helps youth workers and those working with young people in non-formal learning settings to provide some form of accreditation.

The awards vary in content, range and scope, but all are linked to non-formal learning, are voluntary, set out clear outcomes and assessment criteria and help young people develop a range of skills. They emphasise building a relationship of trust and respect, taking into account the individual needs and interests of the young person involved. The learning programmes focus on functional skills and personal and social development



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skills, as described in the new Qualification and Credit Framework allowing learners to build up their units at their own pace and put them towards a full qualification. Recognition increases the chances of young people (re)engaging with education and helps in the transition to training and employment.

The Network for the Accreditation of Young People's Achievement, set up in 1989 by the National Youth Agency, brings together award organisations and youth work, as well as local authorities and some local private sector organisations and employers.

For instance, Clubs for Young People is a United Kingdom-wide network offering development pathways for everyone engaged in youth work — ranging from young people attending clubs and events to older volunteers and leaders, and including adults working with young people. These recognise an individual's response to challenge — personal and social, or at community level, or in leadership and club development, workforce development or sporting events management. The central element in the scheme is that the challenges are graded, from the most basic to the most sophisticated, so that they provide a continuity of opportunities. The outcomes include a degree of sustainability for clubs by developing new leaders from among participants.

Organisations operating within the Network for the Accreditation of Young People's Achievement also include the AQA Unit Award Scheme — an exam board promoting education for public benefit; ASDAN — a charitable social enterprise and an international awarding organisation that provides support and quality assurance to 6 000 registered centres; Scouts and Girlguiding United Kingdom; the Duke of Edinburgh's Awards — geared to supporting young people in non-competitive self-development; Mencap — a charity focusing on learning disability; Arts Award — building creative and leadership skills through the arts; United Kingdom Youth — running innovative non-formal education programmes; Youthtrain — offering an accessible curriculum designed for young people, more in tune with a less formal style of learning; and Ormiston Education — a value-driven social enterprise offering alternative education programmes, including among vulnerable groups such as travellers' children or hospital patients.

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AWARDS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE



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In Bulgaria, an international award for young people plays a role in accrediting non-formal learning outcomes. The award, initially a United Kingdom concept, has been run in Bulgaria by NC Future Now, an NGO for non-formal and informal learning activities, since 2009.

The aim is to stimulate the personal development of people aged from 14 to 25, promoting self-awareness, self-improvement, self-confidence, consistency, responsibility and action for the community. At bronze, silver and gold levels — for different age groups — the participants set personal targets and plans to achieve them, with the help of a mentor.

The activities undertaken range from adventure journeys to community service such as volunteering in hospitals, and from skills development such as learning languages or using computers to physical activities like football or folk dance. Four distinct sections must be completed, and each progressive level demands more time and commitment



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... to stimulate the personal development of young people, aged from 14 to 25, promoting self-awareness, self-improvement, self-confidence, consistency, responsibility and action for the community ...

from participants: 6 months for bronze, 12 months for silver and 18 months for gold. At gold level, participants also undertake a residential project.

The coaches and mentors are trained to monitor and assess progress. Free choice and self-motivation are the key: it is not a competition, and a certificate is ceremonially awarded to all who have set their objectives, made an effort and shown progress. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Science and the British Embassy in Bulgaria, as well as sponsors from the business sector, are partners.

Young people acquire a broad range of skills: they learn how to help others, develop a sense of belonging to a community and society, work in team and solve problems. In addition to practical life skills they also learn creativity, improve their physical condition and learn about healthy lifestyles.

Since it is an international programme, it establishes comparable standards for youth work. All mentors and trainers involved in the programme undergo training. The programme is open for all young people regardless of their gender or racial, religious or political background. It is flexible and can be adapted to national realities. The programme can, for instance, be integrated into extra-curricular activities in schools, youth clubs and voluntary organisations, as well as in businesses, football clubs and prisons.

Since its launch in 1956, millions of young people have participated in the programme, which operates in more than 140 countries in the world represented in the International Award Association. The association is supported by the Duke of Edinburgh's Award International Foundation, based in the United Kingdom.

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RECOGNISING SCOUT SKILLS

More than 25 000 Belgian Scout leaders received awareness training about the skills acquired during their volunteer experience, to help them when seeking a job. In combination with scientific partners, the project created a questionnaire, accessible via an online platform in four languages, to help the Scouts assess and recognise their skills. It identified the 33 most common skills they deployed.



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Through 100 questions, concrete skills developed in a Scouting and in a professional context were described and compared. Those who completed the test were able to better understand their personal abilities, to explain their own acquired skills and to link their experience in working with Scouts in a non-formal learning environment with the world of work. Scout leaders participating in the project, for instance, are able to credibly present themselves to potential employers as good leaders and project managers.

The project results highlighted interpersonal skills such as negotiating, motivating, leading and coaching, teamworking and empathy, managing conflicts and good communication, as well as functional skills such as taking initiative, solving problems, critical thinking and time management, alongside taking decision, setting priorities and organisational skills. The identified attitudes included flexibility, loyalty and a focus on learning. Those skills are often depicted as the most sought by employers.

The project was carried out by Les Scouts, the largest youth organisation in the French and German speaking communities of Belgium, and Scouts & Gidsen Vlaanderen, the

largest Scouting organisation in the Flemish speaking community of Belgium. Scientific partners included the University of Liege Skills Management Research Unit and Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School. Many experts in the field of skill development and human resources were consulted.

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COMPETENCE CHECK

The 'Competence check' has been developed by German youth organisations and is used at the federal level as a tool for youth workers and for active young people themselves. It consists of a template and an explanatory booklet to allow the identification and description of competences that young people have acquired in their volunteer work, easing access to the technical language by adopting a more playful approach.

It provides an overview of areas of expertise incidentally developed in everyday youth work, and uses examples of behaviour and personal reactions based on practical experience. This way young people can relate more easily to the abstract concepts often found in commonly used competency profiles. Descriptions and definitions of skills, as well as tips and hints for creating competency profiles, can be found in the booklet. In addition, the 'Competence check' provides the opportunity to describe the value and kind of volunteering engagement.

The Landesjugendring offering this tool is a non-profit organisation with 22 member associations. It works towards improving financial and legal conditions for working with children and young people in Rheinland-Pfalz, involving children and young people in all political and social areas, recognising voluntary work by young people and recognising youth organisations as extracurricular educational institutions.

It aims to promote democratic coexistence in all sectors of society, gender equality, equal opportunities and a conscious and sustainable use of nature and the environment, without nationalist, racist, sexist and discriminatory structures.

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... young scout
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VALORISE-TOI (EMPOWER YOURSELF)

Developed by Scouts et Guides de France, 'Valorise-toi' is a practical and easy-to-use self-assessment tool enabling young scout leaders and youth workers to translate competences gained in the scout movement to the more professional language used by employers. It aims at building self-confidence among its users through self-recognition and social recognition, as well as increasing their chances on the labour market by performing better during job interviews, well-framed letters of intent and even the design of a personal development plan. It was first published in 2010 and is now available in Czech, Danish, English, French, Polish, Serbian and Spanish.

It focuses on five competence areas that are typically developed in the scouting context: organisational skills; responsibility, sense of initiative and analytical skills; relationship skills; intercultural skills; and technical and artistic skills. The tool then guides users into a deeper analysis of the assessed skills while putting them into perspective, relating to career choices or educational objectives. It also provides hints on how to translate the assessed skills into a more professional language, boosting confidence for interviews.

This tool was developed over 2 years in the National Working Group of Scouts et Guides de France, Young Adults-Rover Section, dedicated to obtaining recognition in university and professional fields for the richness, the diversity and the seriousness of skills acquired in volunteering as a scout leader. A series of workshops at the Worlds Scout Jamboree in 2011 in Sweden helped spread the idea among scout leaders. An estimated 30 000 people have used it just in France. Feedback from employers and users is positive.

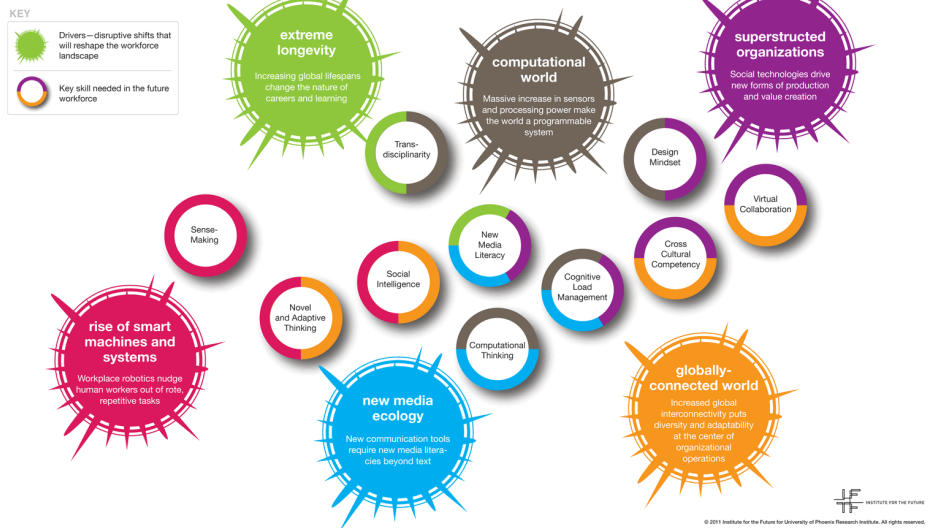
Non-formal learning: valuable out-of-school learning

Participation in non-formal education activities allows young people to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes that are frequently said to be needed in the labour market

Participation in non-formal education activities, and in particular youth work, helps young people to enhance their innovative and creative capacities in ways relevant to employability. It enables them to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes that are needed in the labour market, such as teamwork, self- and project management, communication, leadership and flexibility. According to research on the future development of the labour market, there will be new skills and competences required, which are also developed through non-formal education:

Future Work Skills 2020

While all six drivers are important in shaping the landscape in which each skill emerges, the color-coding and placement here indicate which drivers have particular relevance to the development of each of the skills.



- Sense-making:** interpreting the underlying meaning.
- Social intelligence:** connecting with others.
- Novel and adaptive thinking:** responding to unexpected circumstances.
- Cross cultural competency:** ability to operate in diverse cultural settings.
- Computational thinking:** translating data into abstract concepts and understanding data-based reasoning.
- New media literacy:** critically assessing and developing content.
- Transdisciplinarity:** understanding concepts from different disciplines.
- Design mindset:** developing tasks/work processes.
- Cognitive load management:** filtering information.
- Virtual collaboration:** working in virtual teams.

Source: Institute for the Future (IFF), *Future of work skills 2020*, 2011.



What if we combine the strengths of formal and non-formal education?

We know the importance of education and training in formal education, certified and institutionalised in schools, vocational training and universities. However, the creative and innovative potential of young people is often stimulated by extracurricular activities, which give young people further opportunities to extend their personal abilities.

The challenge for employers, governments, educators and employees is to recognise and value non-formal education outcomes. This education, complementary to formal education, is self-governed, structured, intentional and can be developed individually or in a group. Non-formal education and youth work is open to all young people, including those not in education and employment, and motivates them to become active members of society. Often, non-formal learning is linked to youth work — individuals participate on a voluntary basis — and it is often structured on learning objectives, with specific learning support.

The two different activities, formal and non-formal, complement each other. For this reason, combining the efforts of formal education with informal and non-formal learning creates strong synergies to improve young people's chances in life and strengthens their employability.

For any questions, contact us:

John Bamber at

jbamber@effectiveservices.org

What is already on offer?

Validation of competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning using EU instruments such as **Europass** and **Youthpass**.

The Erasmus+ programme offers:

- **staff mobility** [key action 1] for education, training and youth sector **staff** to teach or learn abroad;
- **individual mobility** [key action 1] for all types of student to study, train, gain work experience or volunteer abroad;
- **strategic partnerships** [key action 2] that provide grants for long-term cooperation projects among educational institutions and youth organisations with peers in other countries to foster quality improvements;
- **knowledge alliances** and **sector skills alliances** [key action 2] that address education and business, to foster entrepreneurship by improving curricula and qualifications through cooperation between the world of work and education.



Informal and non-formal learning adds real value to formal education

Lifelong learning competences. A recent study ⁽¹⁾ examines non-formal education in the EU Youth in Action programme, addressing the eight key competences for lifelong learning from the perspective of participants in and the leaders of projects.

The transition between education and the labour market. The University of Bath/ICF-GHK ⁽²⁾ showed that communication, teamwork, adaptability, flexibility, self-confidence and intercultural skills can be developed in youth organisations. In a survey of Youth in Action programme participants (2011), young participants learned about planning and organisation, turning ideas into action, thinking logically and drawing conclusions, and budget planning. A study on the value of youth work ⁽³⁾ confirms that youth work helps develop transversal skills demanded on the labour market, provides the opportunity to practise skills in real settings and can help match young people and jobs.

Marginalised groups. The methodology of non-formal education reaches all young people, including those who are not in education, employment or training (NEETs), and motivates them to become active members of society. As a recent study shows ⁽³⁾, youth work can play a role in preventing NEET status.

Inclusion of minorities and disadvantaged young people. Youth work supports reintegration through its close and informal contacts with young people, youth-friendly outreach and ability to instil trust in young people to get in touch with authorities.

Preventing early school leaving. A recent report ⁽⁴⁾ highlights how non-formal learning can prevent early school leaving and improve second-chance schemes.

What schools and universities can do

1. Support non-formal education providers, especially youth workers, to raise the quality of provision.
2. Provide accessible and user-friendly tools to improve non-formal education and youth work.
3. Recognise and validate non-formal learning in business terms and in the formal and non-formal education sectors.
4. Develop effective partnerships to provide a favourable operating context for the work.

⁽¹⁾ *Youthpass impact study — Young people's personal development and employability and the recognition of youth work* (2013), commissioned by the European Commission and authored by Marti Taru and Paul Kloosterman.

⁽²⁾ *Study on the impact of non-formal education in youth organisations on young people's employability* (2011), commissioned by the European Youth Forum and authored by the University of Bath/GHK Consulting.

⁽³⁾ *Working with young people: the value of youth work in the European Union* (2014), commissioned by the European Commission and authored by GHK Consulting.

⁽⁴⁾ *Reducing early school leaving: key messages and policy support — Final report of the Thematic Working Group on Early School Leaving* (2013).

In 2012 the European Commission set up a group of experts from across the EU who prepared recommendations and a report on the ways to develop creative and innovative potential of young people for the labour market in the context of non-formal education

The report released by the expert group contains data on the current youth employment situation, EU and national policies and illustrative cross-sector practices. The full report is available on the European Commission's website:

http://ec.europa.eu/youth/news/2014/documents/report-creative-potential_en.pdf

The evidence base on the impact of non-formal and informal education is expanding. In January 2014 the European Commission published the study *Working with young people: the value of youth work in the European Union*, which maps various youth work activities and their value for young people in the EU. More information can be found at:

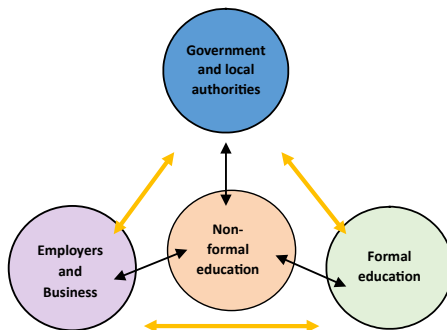
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A complete list of the national agencies responsible for managing the Erasmus+ programme and its youth sector can be found here:

http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/tools/national-agencies/index_en.htm

Developing relevant partnerships between sectors for the labour market

The long-term perspective needs new solutions focused on innovation and creativity — two competences and capacities at the core of non-formal education.



A useful starting point is an exchange of information about the different worlds and the development of mutual understanding and shared concepts. Government agencies, employers' groups, recruitment organisations and civil society at EU, national, regional and local levels can take the lead in creating the conditions and the incentives for developing these partnerships.

For more info:
visit the European Youth Portal: <http://europa.eu/youth>
check the European Commission's website: <http://ec.europa.eu/youth>
John Bamber at jbamber@effectiveservices.org

Non-formal education: what it means for your business

Participation in non-formal education activities allows young people to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes that are frequently said to be needed in the labour market

Participation in non-formal education activities, and in particular youth work, helps young people to enhance their innovative and creative capacities in ways relevant to employability. They develop knowledge, skills and attitudes needed in the labour market, such as teamwork, self-management, project building, communication, leadership, and flexibility. Research on the future development of the labour market indicates new skills and competences. These can be found at the core of non-formal education:

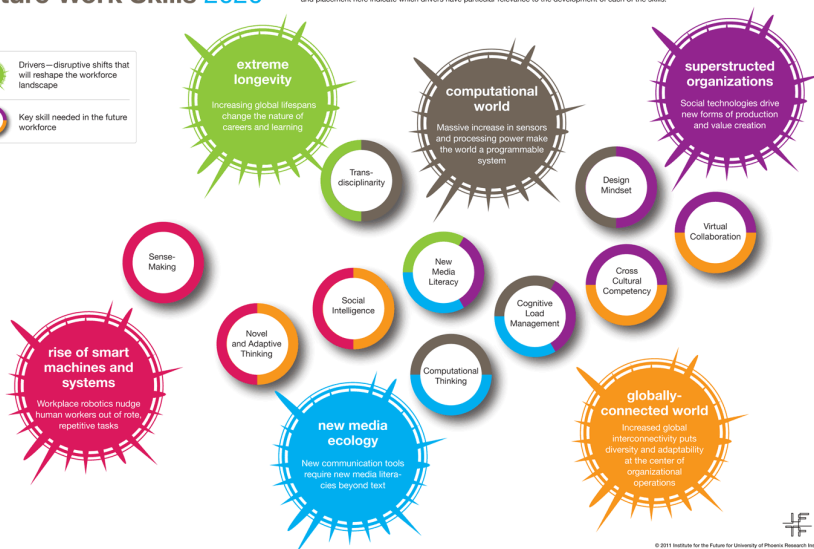
Future Work Skills 2020

While all six drivers are important in shaping the landscape in which each skill emerges, the color-coding and placement here indicate which drivers have particular relevance to the development of each of the skills.

KEY

Drivers—disruptive shifts that will reshape the workforce landscape

Key skill needed in the future workforce



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1. **Sense-making:** interpreting the underlying meaning.
2. **Social intelligence:** connecting with others.
3. **Novel and adaptive thinking:** responding to unexpected circumstances.
4. **Intercultural competence:** ability to operate in diverse cultural settings.
5. **Computational thinking:** translating data into abstract concepts and understanding data-based reasoning.
6. **New media literacy:** critically assessing and developing content.
7. **Cross-discipline working:** understanding concepts from different disciplines.
8. **Design mindset:** developing tasks work processes.
9. **Cognitive management:** filtering information.
10. **Virtual collaboration:** working in virtual teams.

Source: Institute for the Future (IFF), *Future of work skills 2020*, 2011.



An improved workplace

Imagine you could hire young employees who already have a wide range of skills for your business needs

Many of tomorrow's jobs have yet to be created, and there is an ongoing skills mismatch between labour supply and demand. As well as training young people for specific professions, education systems must provide interdisciplinary knowledge to foster creative thinking.

Non-formal education and youth work extend personal abilities, but the challenge for employers, governments, educators and employees is to recognise and value non-formal education outcomes. This education, complementary to formal education, is self-governed, structured, intentional and can be developed individually or in a group. Non-formal education and youth work is open to all young people, including those not in education and employment, and motivates them to become active members of society. Huge progress has been made towards establishing high-quality

recognition and validation systems for non-formal education with the European Qualifications Framework and the Council recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning. These can help employers and employees to describe and communicate the level of competences gained in non-formal education and to translate these for the labour market to better inform employers.

What is already on offer?

- **Erasmus for young entrepreneurs** within the **COSME** programme funds exchanges for new entrepreneurs to benefit from coaching by experienced entrepreneurs in another country.
- The **Erasmus+** programme component '**Strategic partnerships**' provides grants to long-term cross-sector cooperation projects.
- The **Social Business Initiative** addresses legal and financial aspects to foster social entrepreneurship in Europe.
- **Social Innovation Europe** connects policy makers, business, academics and third-sector workers with innovators from across Europe.



Making non-formal education work

How would you benefit?

- You gain young employees matching the needs of your business.
- You establish a good reputation for your company, adding positive and effective change in your community.
- You learn new ways of working with young people, including young employees in your company.
- Your involvement means developing skills directly related to the needs of the labour market — in cooperation with youth organisations.
- Taking a new approach towards skills and competences contributes to prosperity and competitiveness, securing improved relationships with your customers or opening new business streams.

For any questions, contact us:

John Bamber at

jbamber@effectiveservices.org

How can your business help?

- Help young people through apprenticeships, training for job interviews, using business models and creating social enterprise.
- Provide inspirational speakers and positive role models in schools, colleges, universities and youth centres.
- Inspire young people to find their place in the labour market and to put into practice their ideas for businesses.
- Share practice with organisations working with young people, based in your community, where such cooperation can be productively deepened.
- Contribute to consultations on national plans on youth employment in cross-sectoral partnerships with governments, trade unions, educators and youth organisations.
- Contribute to research studies related to skills crucial for the labour market, labour trends, improvement of career guidance and counselling — in cross-sector cooperation with universities, training agencies and youth organisations.



In 2012 the European Commission set up a group of experts from across Europe who prepared recommendations and a report on the ways to develop the creative and innovative potential of young people for the labour market in the context of non-formal education

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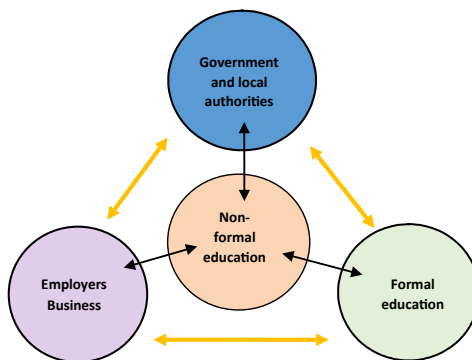
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Developing relevant partnerships between sectors for the labour market

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European Commission – Directorate-General for Education and Culture

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