

# **YOUTHPASS - Using Key Competences for validation and recognition of non-formal learning in Youth in Action**

## **Background of the Key Competences**

In December 2006 the European Parliament and the Council adopted a recommendation on **Key Competences for Lifelong Learning**. This recommendation provides, for the first time, a European reference tool on Key Competences that, for instance, young people need for further learning and for participating actively in society. With the recommendation, the Parliament and the Council aimed to encourage and facilitate national debates and reforms of curricula and to develop lifelong and life wide learning strategies.

The Key Competences should be developed by everyone during initial education and training. Adults and young people should learn, maintain and update their competences through lifelong learning, for example, through participating in the EU Youth in Action programme. Competence is defined as being a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes.

In July 2007 the Programme Committee adopted the decision to implement the Youthpass as validation and recognition instrument in non-formal learning in the Youth in Action programme. Youthpass is based on a self-assessment and dialogue process, uses Key Competences as a reference for describing learning outcomes and by the end of the learning process is delivered as a certificate if required by participant. For more background information you can visit the official Youthpass web-site at <http://www.youthpass.eu>

## **Key Competences in the Youth in Action programme**

Using Key Competences as a tool to describe the learning outcomes from experiences gained within the Youth in Action programme is new. The decision to go down this path is part of an overall strategy to promote the recognition of youth work and the support of young people in their personal lifelong learning. One part of the lifelong learning strategy is the focus on employability but the other part – which is important and closer to what we know as youth work - is the future life of young people and coping with challenges coming from changes in societies. With Youthpass both aspects will be highlighted.

Key Competences offer guidelines to focus on a common European approach and to start using a more coherent European language to report and present these experiences also in different environments. Below you find the European definition of the Key Competences as recommended, and an initial transfer to Training Courses. This will support you when describing learning outcomes during the training course.

You are invited to use the Key Competences terminology when describing the learning outcomes of a training course. They offer guidelines to focus on a common European approach and to start using a more coherent European language to report and present these experiences also in different environments. Especially in view of the new Youth in Action programme, the use of the Key Competences here is intended to increase the quality of courses in supporting multipliers in their work.

### **Each of the Key Competences is used in the following way:**

- 1) An extract from the original wording of the Key Competences explaining what it is, and
- 2) Suggestions on how to reflect about this competence in the context of a training course.

If you would like to receive the Youthpass certificate, please read through the description of the competences, use the helping questions and fill your learning outcomes into the appropriate boxes below the description. The last box called Learning summary is not connected with the competences – its the overall description of your learning.

You don't have to fill in all fields. In the Youthpass only the fields, which you fill in, will appear.

## Communication in the mother tongue

*“Communication in the mother tongue is the ability to express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and written form (listening, speaking, reading and writing), and to interact linguistically in an appropriate and creative way in a full range of societal and cultural contexts; in education and training, work, home and leisure.”*

### Developing in our training course

In our course working language is English and if it is not your mother tongue you use a language other than your mother tongue to express yourself and, of necessity, most of the other participants use different language too. Of course, there are for you opportunities to use your mother tongue in the course when speaking with participants who use the same language or you using your language to make notes. But if English is your mother tongue are challenged differently but still – will others understand my references? How do I learn to slow down and speak more clearly?

### Questions, which can help you in reflection, are:

- When and how well did I use my mother tongue?
- What difficulties did I experience in communication?
- How did I overcome those difficulties?
- What opportunities did I have for using my mother tongue?
- How well did others understand me?
- How am I able to translate main keywords used in the training course using my mother tongue?
- How am I good in explaining main concepts learned during the course using my mother tongue

## Communication in foreign languages

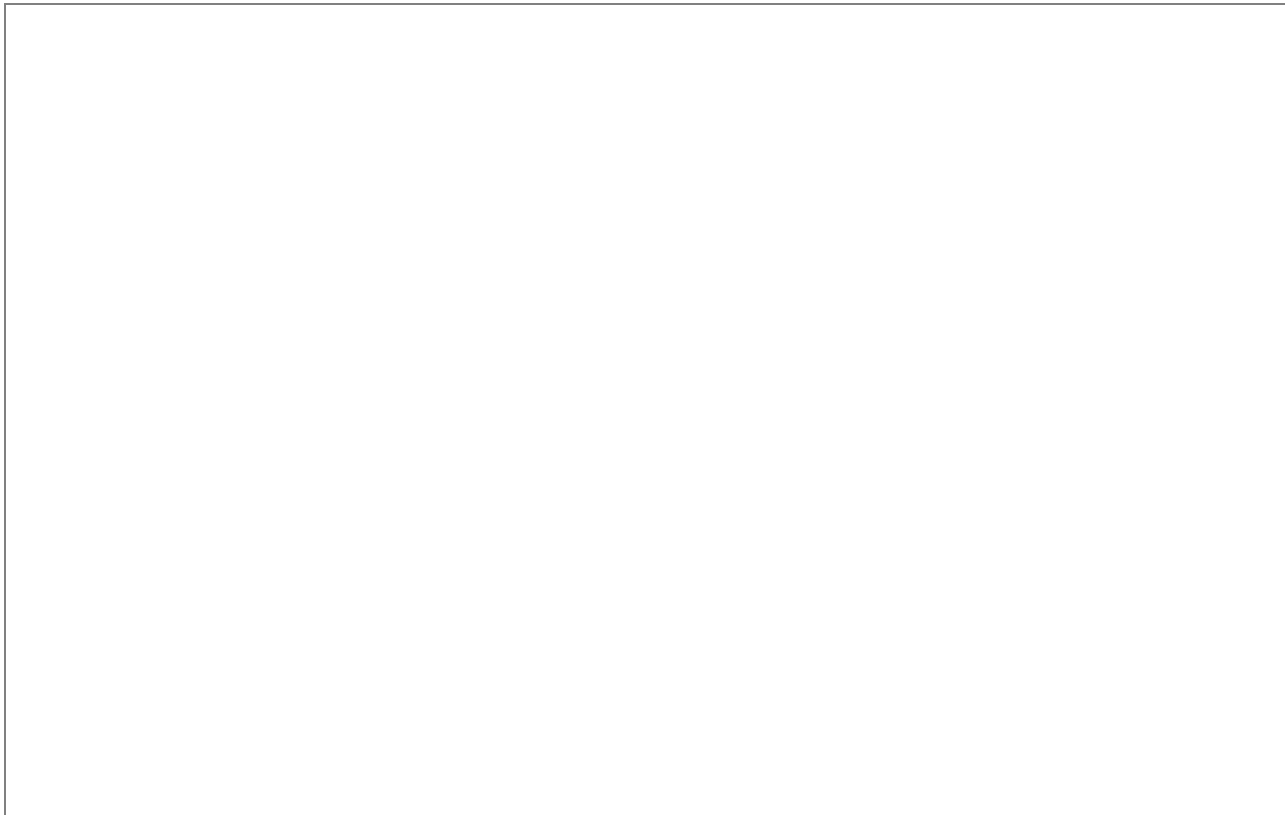
*“Communication in foreign languages broadly shares the main skill dimensions of communication in the mother tongue: it is based on the ability to understand, express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and written form (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in an appropriate range of societal and cultural contexts (in education and training, work, home and leisure) according to one's wants or needs. Communication in foreign languages also calls for skills such as mediation and intercultural understanding. An individual's level of proficiency will vary between the four dimensions (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and between the different languages, and according to that individual's social and cultural background, environment, needs and/or interests.”*

### Developing in our training course

In our course working language is English and if it is not your mother tongue you use a language other than your mother tongue to express yourself and, of necessity, most of the other participants have a different language too. By using foreign language you are challenged of expressing yourself clearly, trying to understand others, learning new words and expressions, trying to understand concepts and definitions. But if English is your mother tongue are challenged differently but still – will others understand my references? How do I learn to slow down and speak more clearly?

Questions, which can help in reflection, are:

- When and how well did I use another language here?
- What difficulties did I experience in communication?
- How did I overcome those difficulties?
- How well did others understand me?
- What are my future plans regarding learning another language?



## Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology

*“A. Mathematical competence is the ability to develop and apply mathematical thinking in order to solve a range of problems in everyday situations. Building on a sound mastery of numeracy, the emphasis is on process and activity, as well as knowledge. Mathematical competence involves, to different degrees, the ability and willingness to use mathematical modes of thought (logical and spatial thinking) and presentation (formulas, models, constructs, graphs, charts).*

*B. Competence in science refers to the ability and willingness to use the body of knowledge and methodology employed to explain the natural world, in order to identify questions and to draw evidence based conclusions. Competence in technology is viewed as the application of that knowledge and methodology in response to perceived human wants or needs. Competence in science and technology involves an understanding of the changes caused by human activity and responsibility as an individual citizen.”*

### Developing in our training course

Apart from budgetary competences, it is initially a bit of a challenge to think how these competences can be addressed in our course! But once we start to think about it, there is a lot to work on! One of the key issues in current youth work is how to relate youth work practice with the growing area of youth research. This is especially important regarding the encouragement for you to become what is known as “reflective practitioners”.

Questions, which can help in reflection, are:

- When did I use my mathematical competence in this course?
- Which presentation skills did I develop here?
- How did I integrate youth research results into my discussions with others in the course?
- How do I intend to contribute to youth research or use youth research results in my youth work?



## Digital competence

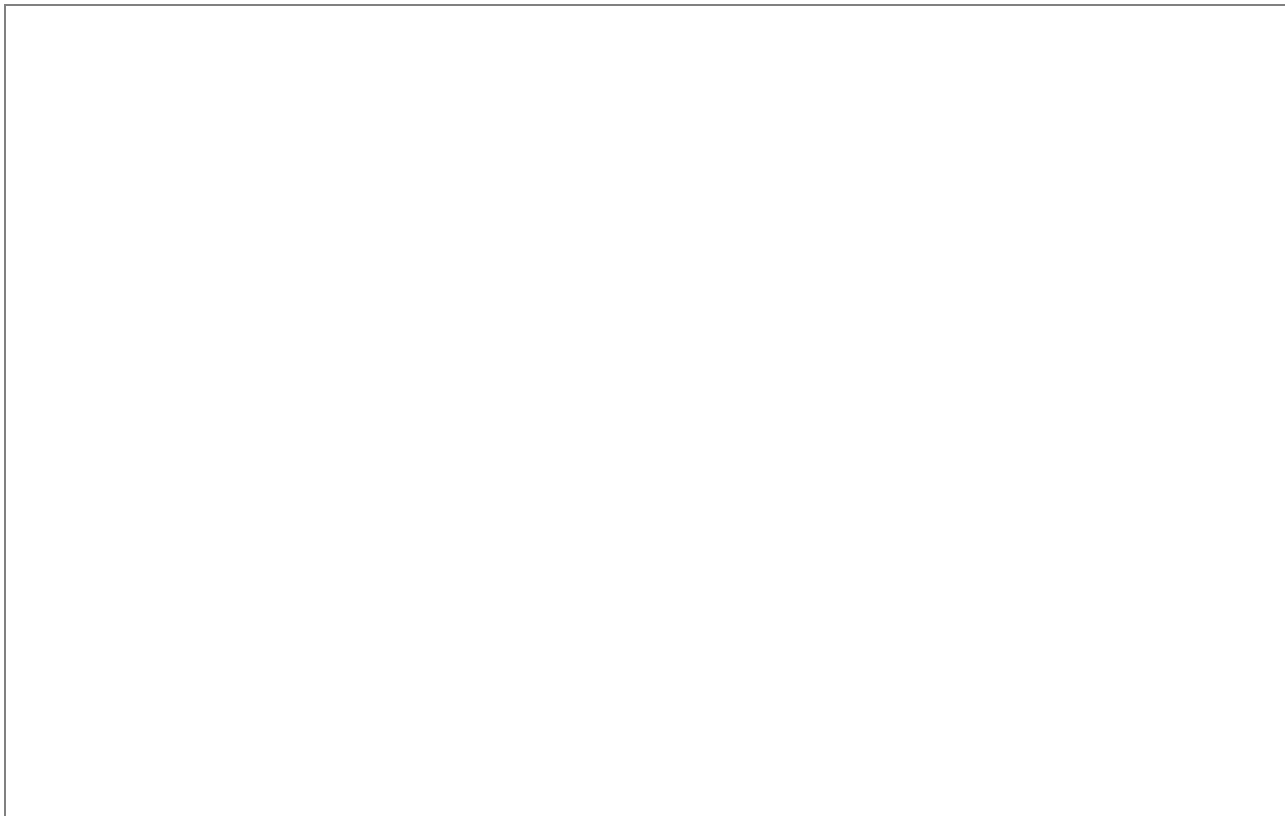
*“Digital competence involves the confident and critical use of Information Society Technology (IST) for work, leisure and communication. It is underpinned by basic skills in ICT (Information and Communications Technology): the use of computers to retrieve, assess, store, produce, present and exchange information, and to communicate and participate in collaborative networks via the Internet.”*

### Developing in our training course

In our course there are chances to work by using ICT. Nowadays many young people are interested in using new technology for expressing their ideas. Being so attractive as well with the massive expansion of computer and Internet use recently, the need for developing a critical usage of ICT is growing in youth work.

Questions, which can help in reflection, are:

- What information sources did I use to prepare myself for this course?
- To what extent did I communicate with other participants over the Internet before the course? (Or do I intend to use the Internet for this purpose after the course?)
- What did I learn about using computers in other countries being here in the course?
- How will I work with young people to develop a critical approach to knowledge available in the Internet (for instance)?
- What ideas I have of using ICT in my work with young people for the support of their participation?



## Learning to learn

*“Learning to learn’ is the ability to pursue and persist in learning, to organise one's own learning, including through effective management of time and information, both individually and in groups. This competence includes awareness of one's learning process and needs, identifying available opportunities, and the ability to overcome obstacles in order to learn successfully. This competence means gaining, processing and assimilating new knowledge and skills as well as seeking and making use of guidance. Learning to learn engages learners to build on prior learning and life experiences in order to use and apply knowledge and skills in a variety of contexts: at home, at work, in education and training. Motivation and confidence are crucial to an individual's competence. Motivation and confidence are crucial to an individual's competence.”*

### Developing in our training course

Crucial to an understanding of this competence is the responsibility of the learner within the process. In our training course you are invited to set your learning objectives, follow your learning progress; support others in their learning process and experience different ways of learning.

Questions, which can help in reflection, are:

- What were my learning objectives within this course?
- Did I reach them?
- How did I learn?
- Which activities in the course stimulated me most in my learning?
- Where did my theoretical knowledge improve?
- Which methods did I use to evaluate what I learnt?
- Why is this important for my work, my organisation?
- How will I use what I learnt?



## Social and Civic competence

*“These include personal, interpersonal and intercultural competence and cover all forms of behaviour that equip individuals to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life, and particularly in increasingly diverse societies, and to resolve conflict where necessary. Civic competence equips individuals to fully participate in civic life, based on knowledge of social and political concepts and structures and a commitment to active and democratic participation.”*

### Developing in our training course

Much effort has been invested into developing such competences within the YOUTH Programme in the past, as these are vital building blocks both for young people and youth workers to be able to function within today's increasingly diverse societies. In our course the focus will be put on youth participation and empowerment, which are essential for developing social and civic competences.

Questions, which can help in reflection about social and intercultural competences, are:

- What was my intercultural learning process during this course?
- When was I most successful in communicating with others here?
- Which social competences I developed during this event?
- What part did I play (if any) in helping to resolve or manage conflicts in the group?
- How did I improve my ability to work in a team?

Within the Youth in Action programme, much emphasis is placed on the concept of European Citizenship and how this can help young people and who's involved in youth work to understand and be active within society and develop civic competences in Europe.

Questions, which can help in reflection, are:

- How much was I actively involved in the course?
- When did I participate in decision-making within this activity?
- How did my knowledge of national and/or European structures increase here?

## **Sense of Initiative and Entrepreneurship**

*“Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship refers to an individual's ability to turn ideas into action. It includes creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. This supports individuals, not only in their everyday lives at home and in society, but also in the workplace in being aware of the context of their work and being able to seize opportunities, and is a foundation for more specific skills and knowledge needed by those establishing or contributing to social or commercial activity. This should include awareness of ethical values and promote good governance.”*

### **Developing in our training course**

The competence is fitting into a youth work context as it is a lot about creativity and developing the ideas and putting them in practice. This course provides opportunities to develop your creativity, experience yourself in taking risks of being in new situations and roles, taking actions when implementing individual and group tasks.

### **Questions, which can help in reflection, are:**

- How did my understanding of the practice and principles of project management increase in this course?
- When did I take risks here? And what did I learn in the process?
- What chances did I take in expressing my creativity in using new knowledge and skills gained during the course?
- How will I use the concepts of innovation and risk management in my future youth projects?



## **Cultural awareness and expression**

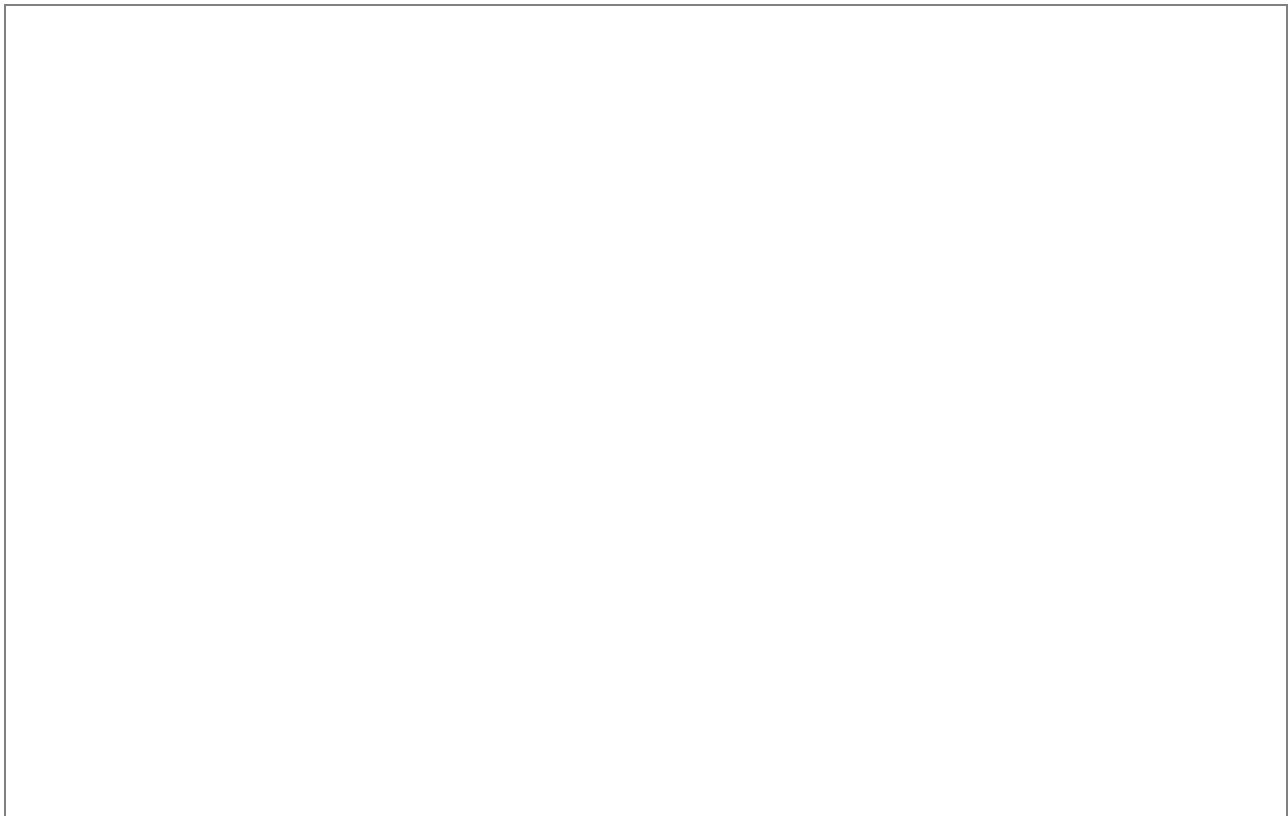
*“Appreciation of the importance of the creative expression of ideas, experiences and emotions in a range of media, including music, performing arts, literature, and the visual arts.”*

### **Suggestion for use in training courses**

All forms of creativity and media can find their place in youth work and are the main reason for many young people to participate. As well it is included in our course through the group task there you are invited to use media and our creativity.

### **Questions which can help in reflection are:**

- How willing was I to get involved in new forms of cultural experience here?
- When was I able to use different media to express myself during the course?
- Which skills did I improve?
- How do I intend to involve young people in such cultural expression in the future?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, occupying the lower half of the page. It is intended for students to write their reflections or notes in response to the questions listed above.

## **Overall learning summary**

*Please fill in a summary of your learning on the training course.*