Youthpass for Training and Networking projects

Youthpass process in T&N projects:
Some suggestions for methodology

→ Introduction

The Training and Networking activities of the Youth in Action Programme include nine very diverse activity types. They differ from each other in their duration, in whether it is a group or rather an individual activity (or with a small group of people), and in how much they are targeted towards gaining new competences – knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes. Learning happens in all of these activities, the difference being, how much it is in the focus of these activities.

Below we aim to give you some concrete hints how to approach the Youthpass process – the conscious approach to learning within the projects – in the different activity types of these Actions. Please keep in mind that these are suggestions that will hopefully support you in finding your own way of facilitating learning.

At the end of the document we make suggestions about issues that may be relevant for all types of activities. We suggest an exercise for dealing with the key competences, and provide some questions that may be helpful for the reflection about learning. At the very end, further resources are listed.

→ Short-term activities with a small group

This is mainly the category for Feasibility Visits and in some cases also Evaluation Meetings. They are meetings with the representatives of partner organisations in order to discuss cooperation projects – either upcoming or past ones. The meetings are short, typically 2-3 days, in the case of Evaluation Meetings they can also be longer and the groups bigger.

Some examples of competences that can be gained or increased in the course of such international meetings are:
Foreign language skills, project management skills, e.g. programme planning, time and financial management, evaluation etc., creativity, facilitation skills, active listening skills, knowledge about the possibilities for European cooperation, knowledge about the work of

the partner organisations as well as the youth work environment they work in, presentation skills, knowledge about quality in projects, and so on.

To reflect on the learning, we suggest for example:

- To take a few minutes at the beginning of the meeting to think, what you would like to get out of the meeting. This may include results of different types, e.g. deepen the contacts, design an activity programme for an event you are planning, etc. And although *learning* is probably not the main aim of the meeting you are having, it will be worthwhile ask the participants to pay **specific attention to what you would like to learn during the next days**. They may keep the results of this reflection to themselves, or share them with another participant of the meeting or in the whole group.

- You will probably have a general evaluation "round" of the meeting, where you assess the results and process of the meeting. This can be combined with a **reflection on learning that took place** in the meeting. Some supportive questions can be of help (see at the end of the document). These reflections can be shared in the whole group (depending on the size of the group and the "group feeling") or just with a colleague. Also a combination of both is possible.

→ Mid-term activities with a bigger group

In this category, we mainly have in mind Training Courses, Seminars, Partnership-building Activities, and Study Visits. Although their duration can be anything up to 10 days, it is typically between 4 and 7 days. They have been planned with a certain focus on learning, in some cases more evidently than in others; even when the main aim of the activity is to find partners for future projects, this will result through getting to know more about the organisations, their target groups, ways of working, etc.

Some examples of competences that the participants can gain or increase in the course of such international events are:
Specific competences that enable to do better youth work (that the course, seminar, etc. was focused on), intercultural competence, communication skills, foreign language skills, knowledge about the possibilities for European cooperation, knowledge about youth work in different countries, presentation skills, knowledge about quality in projects, experience in putting ideas on paper, and so on.

Some suggestions how to tackle learning during the project:

- It will be useful to help people **become more aware of how they learn**. You could consider providing the participants with a challenging learning situation (e.g. learning how to juggle, or how to make an origami ninja star or how to dance salsa, etc.), followed by reflection focused on exploring "me as a learner". Or, you can encourage reflection by using a range of images (e.g. cut out of magazines, printed from the internet). Ask the participants to select the picture that

represents them best as learners and share it with other participants (in small groups or in the whole group). Explore together what the image tells about the person's qualities and strengths and how these can be used in the learning process during the upcoming event.

- Ask the participants to **discuss their learning interests and needs** at the beginning of the activity. They can do so individually, writing down their learning needs and coming back to them during the different points of the event. Or, they can do so in pairs / small groups. It might be a good idea to make the learning needs visible also to the team and other participants.

- Provide **regular time and support for reflecting** on learning during the course of the event. You can set up a system of learning buddies, learning trios, reflection groups, etc; trainers/facilitators can support the groups or stay aside. Additionally, you can hand out learning diaries for the participants to keep track of their learning. In both cases it might help to offer some guiding questions (see suggestions for questions at the end of the document). Encouraging creative usage of such diaries can help those who do not feel comfortable about writing sentences and stories. Drawings, pictures and just single words can express a lot as well.

- At the end of the event, provide time for the participants to **collect and formulate their learning results** for the Youthpass certificate – for those who want to get one! You can support them by suggesting looking at the different sources: the initial learning objectives that were set at the beginning of the project, notes made during the project days (diary), results of a feedback session, discussions with trainers or other participants, an overview of the agenda of the event.
    - o If you are short of time and cannot give enough time for the participants to make the final formulations of their learning results, it is still important to enable them to make conclusions about their learning results from the event. They can insert the final formulations of these conclusions also afterwards in the Youthpass website.

→ Longer-term, rather individual activities

In this category, we have in mind Job Shadowing projects, and the youth worker mobility projects ("Enhancing youth workers' learning mobility", centralised Action 4.3c). Job Shadowing can last 10-20 days, whereas the activity of the long-term youth worker mobility projects can last 2-6 months.

Some examples of competences that can be gained or increased in the course of such mobility projects are:
Experience with different (youth) work approaches, knowledge and skills about the specific area of work, getting to know another country's youth work context, intercultural communication and team work skills, foreign language, presentation skills, confidence in dealing with international work contexts, and so on.

Some suggestions how to tackle learning during the project:

- It is important that the participant of the mobility project has **a support person** to discuss his/her learning throughout the stay abroad. Ideally, it is a cooperation partner from the hosting organisation.
- At the beginning of the activity, it is a good time to **discuss the participant's learning interests and needs**. One might also consider developing a **learning plan** with the participant, taking into account the planned agenda for the project. The plan could involve:
  - o the expected learning results from the project (what),
  - o the part of the agenda when it can be acquired (when),
  - o what the participant should do to learn it (how),
  - o and who else could support him or her in this (with whom).

    Some participants might not be so good at putting words down on paper, but they might be more skilled and interested in developing their learning plans in a more visual way. Furthermore it is important to stay open for the unexpected when keeping track of the plan!
- For following the "learning progress" up during the project, **a learning diary** (or a blog, or twitter, etc. – environments that allow flexible use of different media) might be an appropriate method to apply, in addition to the regular discussions with the support person.
- At the end of the project, the participant's **learning results should be discussed**, either as part of the general evaluation of the project or separately from that. One can base the conclusions on the learning plan and the diary, remind her/himself about the crucial moments of the project, and keep in mind that there probably were also learning results that had not been planned in advance.

→ Networking project

Networking projects are long-term, and can contain several activities as milestones. These activities can be of different durations and involve various target groups. In Networking projects, there might be two different types of processes that need to be kept in mind when planning support for learning:

1. The whole long-term process of the project and the people involved in it;
2. Supporting the awareness of learning within the specific activities.

Probably a **combination of the suggestions given above** can serve as examples of how to support the learning processes in a Networking project.

1. For following the whole process within a smaller group of participants, one may consider individual learning plans that can be shared and regularly discussed with the colleagues or a colleague from the group; also a learning diary type of a method will be helpful to keep track of the developments over the months of the project.
2. For the activities, you might find useful tips in the above paragraphs where we provide hints for short- and mid-term activities.

→ How to approach the key competences

In Youthpass, the description of learning results is categorised according to the **eight key competences**. Not all key competences have to be "filled" in a Youthpass certificate; categories without text will not appear on the certificate. Please see the Youthpass Guide for further explanation on the key competences.

One approach to creating a link between learning outcomes from the project and the key competences could be:

1. Ask the participants at the end of the project to list all competences they gained on post-it papers of three different colours, representing: knowledge, skills, and attitudes.
2. Prepare 8 large sheets of paper with headings of the key competences.
3. Now stick the post-it papers with competences on the respective 'key competence' papers. Find out, with the help of a colleague if needed, where they fit best.

→ Some general questions to help reflections on learning

- What kind of new information did you get?
- Did you experience new ways of working?
- Did you become inspired by some examples of projects you heard or saw?
- Did you decide to change anything about your ways of working with youth?
- What did you learn from the process of the meeting?
- Did you face difficulties during the event, and how did you overcome them?
- Did you experience any new tools or resources that you hadn't used before?
- Maybe you learned something about yourself?
- What would you still like to learn (in the further course of the event, or after returning home)?

→ Further resources

For further support and ideas, have a look into the following publications. They explain the theoretical framework and suggest suitable methodology:

1. **Youthpass Guide** (especially the chapters B1 "How to support learning", and B4 "Youthpass in Training Courses"): http://www.youthpass.eu/en/youthpass/guide/
2. **Youthpass Unfolded:** https://www.youthpass.eu/en/youthpass/downloads/youthpass-unfolded/
3. **Youthpass for Absolute Beginners:** http://www.youthpass.eu/en/youthpass/downloads/youthpass-for-absolute-beginners/
4. **Youthpass for All:** http://www.youthpass.eu/en/youthpass/downloads/youthpass-for-all/