Validation of Competences Developed in Youth Work and Volunteering

Online Workshop, 27 November 2025

Context

Why did we do such a study?

Why did **we** do such a study?

Why did we do **such** a study?

Why the study?

- High interest in the youth field in recognition generally and in the validation of learning outcomes
- Needs and developments in the educational landscape to consider other pathways
- Our work with Youthpass - a bridge between the youth and further sectors

→ Validation of competences developed in youth work and volunteering seems to remain a challenge

The premise

- Youth work and volunteering are contexts of non-formal and informal learning.
- The EU validation policies promote the validation of learning outcomes from non-formal and informal learning in other sectors, including in education and training.
- Learning outcomes from youth work and volunteering should be subject to validation in other sectors, including the formal education sector.

The
„**Validation Project**"

- Explore the **validation of competences acquired in youth work and volunteering activities**.

- Angle: validation in the context of **higher education**.

- Cooperation project between **SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre** and the National Agencies for the EU youth programmes in **Estonia, France, Germany,** and **Slovenia**.

Objectives

- **Gain insights** into the state of affairs and perspectives about competences developed in the youth work and volunteering contexts in the validation procedures (VPL) within universities.

- **Raise awareness** of youth work and its learning value in the VPL contexts, as well as of Youthpass as a channel to make it visible.

- **Explore what is needed** to build trust and promote youth work, volunteering and Youthpass in validation contexts.

- **Share the related learnings**, experiences, successes and challenges among the partners and beyond.

- **Develop concrete recommendations** to help promote youth work and volunteering in validation contexts, and vice versa.

Why us?
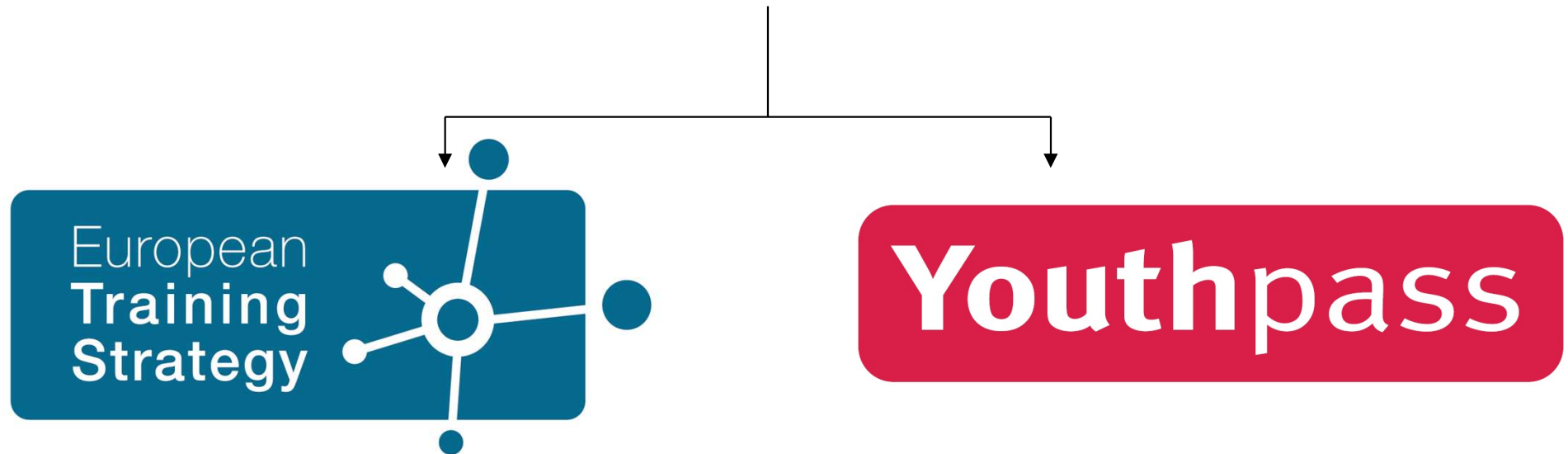
Youthpass – More than a paper!

Certificate 1 — JUANA CONTRERAS

The owner of this certificate participated in a project supported by the European Solidarity Corps. This European Union programme offers young people a possibility to help build a more inclusive society and respond to societal and humanitarian challenges. It enables a possibility to develop valuable competences abroad or in the home country. European Solidarity Corps also enables capacity-building for organisations involved in the programme.

EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS

JUANA CONTRERAS

born on 01/01/1990 in Bonn, Germany
volunteered in the project

SAVE THE TURTLES

in the organisation Nature Friends Barcelona
in Barcelona, Spain
from 01/02/2021 to 21/05/2021

About the project

Save the Turtles was a team volunteering project that involved 10 young volunteers from Spain, Malta and Latvia. Some further information about the project that lists the main facts about the focus and activities...

The tasks of Juana Contreras

• Tidying the beach
• Creating and fixing public info signs
• Implementing a workshop in a local kindergarten
• Recording and editing the videos created during the project.

JUGEND für Europa
SALTO4OUTH
Training and Cooperation
Resource Centre

Signature
Legal representative
Place of signature, 21/06/20

Youthpass is a Europe-wide validation system for non-formal and informal learning within the European Union youth programmes.

The ID of this certificate is 4UJ4-4U4Q-X
If you want to verify the ID, please go to the
http://www.youthpass.eu/qualitycontrol/ c

Youthpass Reflect

Certificate 2 — PROJECT CONTEXT

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PROJECT CONTEXT

PROJECT DETAILS

Below are further details about the project that Juana Contreras volunteered in:

LET'S TALK ABOUT TURTLES
Team Volunteering project / 01.02.2021-15.02.2021 / Barcelona, Spain

Main activities: A text describing the main activities that were carried out as part of volunteering project.

Main outcomes: A text describing the main outcomes of the project.

Organisations: This Volunteering Project was hosted by the organisation Nature Friends from Spain. Juana's participation was supported by the sending organisation Dabas Mīļotājiem from Latvia.

Group: 10 volunteers from Spain, Latvia and Malta

The working languages of the project were English and Spanish.

FURTHER DETAILS ABOUT THE INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPATION

Duration of involvement in the project

32 days (about 256 hours)

Related training activities

An intensive Spanish course focusing on conversation skills and basic vocabulary, to help her prepare for the Volunteering project. The project was also accompanied by a training and evaluation cycle that helps participants prepare for possible cultural challenges and reflect on their experiences.

...rning in Youth Work

Certificate 3 — LEARNING CONTEXT AND COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT

EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS

LEARNING CONTEXT AND COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT

LEARNING CONTEXT

A Volunteering project within the European Solidarity Corps offers a context of informal and non-formal learning where the volunteer engages in a community or contributes to solving of societal challenges. Both the tasks and responsibilities within the project as well as the new cultural context contribute to the competence development of the volunteers. This process is supported by mentoring in the hosting organisation, and a cycle of training and evaluation activities.

COMPETENCES DEVELOPED BY JUANA CONTRERAS

The following summary of is a result of a reflection and self-assessment process which took place during and after the project, in dialogue with the mentor Max Mentor.

Personal, social and learning to learn

Personal, social and learning to learn Personal, social and learning to learn Personal, social and learning to learn Personal, social and learning to learn Personal, social and learning to learn Personal, social and learning to learn Personal, social and learning to learn Personal, social and learning to learn.

Other competences

Task-specific competences Task-specific competences Task-specific competences Task-specific competences Task-specific competences Task-specific competences Task-specific competences.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The following resources provide further context and evidence for the learning process and outcomes of Juana Corteras.

• Video of the street action held during the Youth Exchange: a youtube link
• Photo gallery of the project: a link

REFERENCES

• Name
• Connection to the project
• Contact information

Juana Contreras
Volunteer
Bonn 11/07/2021

Max Mentor
Mentor
Barcelona, 21/06/2021

The competences description in Youthpass is based on the European Union framework for Key Competences for lifelong learning:
https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/council-recommendation-on-key-competences-for-lifelong-learning_en

Youthpass Reflected Learning in Youth Work

2037759
CERTIFICATES

> Recognition and validation tool for the Erasmus+ Youth & European Solidarity Corps

> Confirmation of participation & self-assessment of the competences
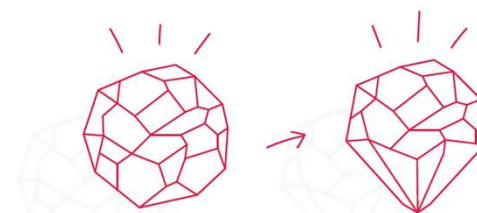
https://www.youthpass.eu

Youthpass and recognition/validation

Recognition

Self-recognition

Social recognition

Formal recognition
4 stages of validation: **identification >> documentation** >> assessment >> certification

Political recognition

Use of Youthpass

- Currently more than 2,040,000 certificates issued

According to the RAY Network survey results*

…**92%** of responding project leaders report that Youthpass was used in their project.

…**89%** of the participants who had Youthpass implemented as a process in their project confirmed that the reflection on learning and the self-assessment helped raise their awareness of their development

* RAY-MON Comparative Research Report 2014-2020 (2022). Effects and outcomes of the Erasmus+ Youth in Action Programme. Transnational Analysis.
https://researchyouth.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/RAY-MON_Research-Report-20142020.pdf

Focus of the study: validation in HE contexts

- One of the aims of the validation processes: support making use of the learning outcomes in further learning
- 2012 Recommendation on Validation: Education providers should facilitate access to formal education based on the outcomes from non-formal and informal learning settings, and if appropriate, award exemptions and/or credits.
- Validation processes in place and have a certain tradition
- Validation standards often aligned with formal education

Further specifics of the study

- Youth work and volunteering within non-formal and informal learning
- EU youth programmes context, not all youth work or volunteering
- Four country studies, different country contexts
- Desk research + interviews with experts
- Different set-up of the country studies – snapshots rather than a coherent picture

Common Insights

Structural conditions

- Validation efforts aligned with the EU-level processes and developments
    - Incl. the four elements of validation
- Legal frameworks for validation
- Motivators:
    - Mobility of learners
    - Equal access
    - Active citizenship/civic engagement

Procedural variety

- Portfolio most common method
- Examples of individual case evaluation and expert consultation
- Validation processes differ across and even within institutions
- … Leading to inconsistent outcomes

Challenges

- Non-formally and informally acquired competences are difficult to describe, assess, and translate into the language of formal education
- Cultural/academic resistance, fear of diluting standards
- Procedures heavy: requiring high individual investment or extensive evidence
- Generally little flexibility in assessment methods
- Low awareness and uptake by learners

Promising examples

- Youth work, social work, and health related studies more open to flexible learning pathways
- Several inspiring practices listed in the study

Conclusions

There is a need for:

- Raising awareness of validation opportunities
  - Specifically towards the target groups that have most to gain
- Improved guidance and support to identification and documentation of prior learning
- Training of assessors and academic staff in competence-based validation methods
- Work towards harmonisation and standardisation of validation practices
- Cultural transformation
- Shift towards competence-based thinking (as opposed to diploma-based)
- Expanding the use of digital tools
- Sustainable funding for validation services
- Cross-sectorial cooperation