

Council of Europe

Youth Work Portfolio

A TOOL FOR THE ASSESSMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH WORK
COMPETENCE



Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio

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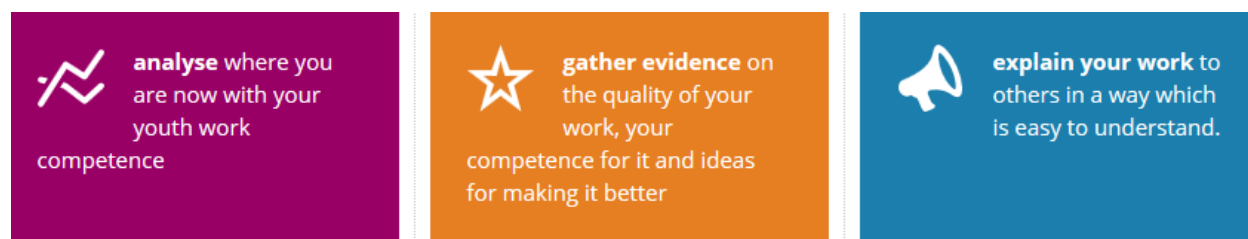
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Introduction to the Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio

This is a tool that helps individuals, teams and organisations doing youth work around Europe to understand their competence and to develop it more effectively. This tool can also be used by trainers, youth work managers and policy makers and generally all those interested in the topic of quality development and recognition of youth work.

The Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio is a tool to **help those doing youth work**, primarily youth workers and youth leaders, but also managers and administrators, to assess and further **develop their youth work competence** and that of the people under their supervision.



The Portfolio is an online tool. However, in order to respond to the demands of its users, the Youth Department has gathered the content of the website in this publication, as a support for those who want to use their Portfolio offline.

This publication reproduces most of the contents of the Portfolio website. However, it does not include the whole self-assessment and learning cycle which is facilitated by online tools on the website. It does include nevertheless the basis and the presentation of the process of using the Portfolio.

The publication also includes:

- information about youth work essentials
- information about youth work competences
- spaces for sharing practices with other youth workers from all over Europe
- updates about the process of recognition of youth work in Europe.

The Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio has been developed at the European level, but it is not primarily for people and organisations working at the European level or internationally. The

Portfolio is addressed to youth workers and leaders working at any level from local to international.

The Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio is an initiative of the Council of Europe in co-operation with partners such as the European Commission and the European Youth Forum. Read more about why and how it was developed in the section on background to the Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio.

Please share with us your experience of using the Portfolio online or offline, by contacting the Youth Department at youthportfolio@coe.int

Youth work essentials

Here you can find some basic information about what youth work is, about its main characteristics and approaches, as well as about how it links up with society and public policy.

This information may be helpful when you start using the Portfolio.

What is youth work?

Youth work is commonly understood as a tool for personal development, social integration and active citizenship of young people. Youth work is a 'keyword' for all kinds of activities with, for and by young people of a social, cultural, educational or political nature. It belongs to the domain of 'out-of-school' education, most commonly referred to as either non-formal or informal learning. The main objective of youth work is to create opportunities for young people to shape their own futures.

The range of themes that youth work covers is just as diverse as the types of people and organisations involved. Political activism, street work, sports activities, social enterprise and leisure-time activities can all be termed 'youth work'.

WHAT IS YOUTH WORK FOR?

ENABLING
young people to do the things they want to do together and individually

Providing young people with opportunities to **EMANCIPATE** and gain autonomy

Providing young people with healthy and safe opportunities for leisure that they can **ENJOY**





EMPOWERING
young people to change things they think need to be changed in their immediate surroundings and society


Helping young people to **ENGAGE** with power and policy


Providing young people with relevant and engaging non-formal **EDUCATION** opportunities that improve their competencies

Have a look at some youth work examples:

My name is Xavier. I volunteer in a local organisation and I carry out leisure-time activities with adolescents. 

My name is Anna. I am a youth work development officer in a national youth organisation that works with young people from rural areas. I run projects for supporting the social entrepreneurship of young people. 

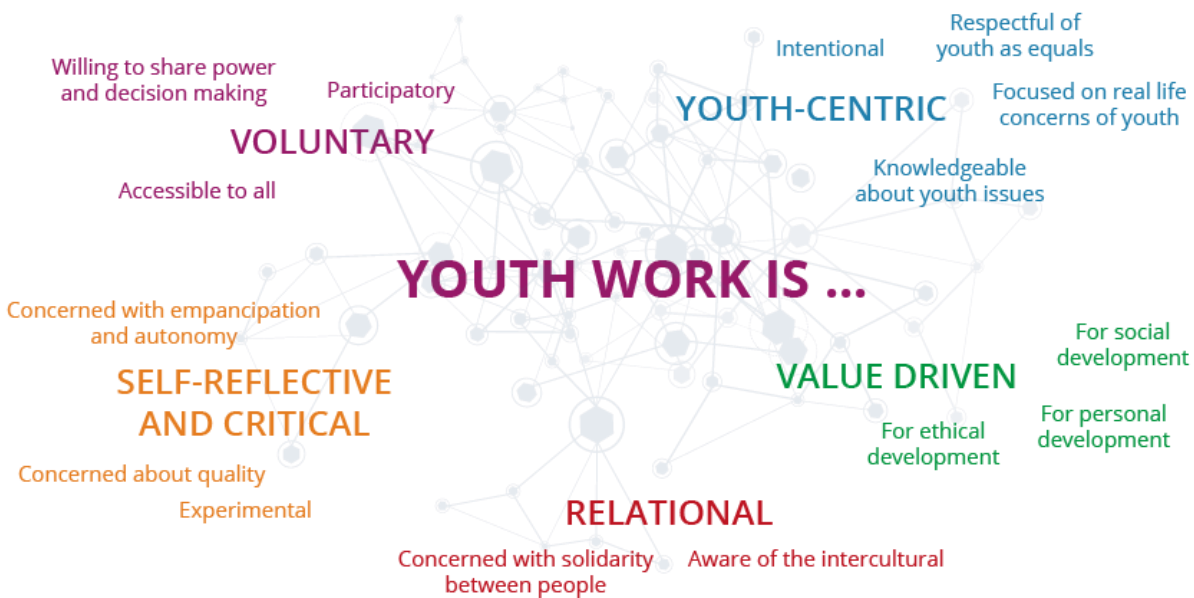
My name is Milosz. I am a youth worker in a socio-cultural community centre in an urban suburb of a large, formerly industrial town. The kids who come to the centre come from disadvantaged backgrounds – they have issues with education, drugs and violence, and the community centre is pretty much the only non-school based activity available to them. We also work with the social services of the municipality. 

My name is Satu. I am a youth worker based in a local youth centre run by our municipality. Over the last 2 years, we have been providing young people with online youth work activities: we advise them, chat with them or even offer psychological support online. 

Youth work characteristics

Youth work usually has the following characteristics

- Value-driven: youth work tries to serve the higher purposes of inclusion and social cohesion
- Youth-centric: youth work serves key needs and aspirations of youth, identified by young people themselves
- Voluntary: youth work is not obligatory, and relies on the voluntary participation of young people
- Developmental: youth work aims at the personal, social and ethical development of young people
- Self-reflective and critical: youth work tries to make sure it is doing its best to live up to its mission
- Relational: youth work seeks authentic communication with young people and to contribute to sustaining viable communities.



Youth work is diverse around Europe

Youth work around Europe is conducted by a large number of different institutions and organisations and by many different people, individually and in teams. It is very diverse, taking many different forms. Some countries have long traditions of professional youth work (qualified staff working with young people through local and national authority-funded programmes and institutions). Other countries have long-established voluntary youth work structures (activities provided by voluntary organisations). Other countries again have established youth work as part of social welfare provision, with youth work practices being put to the service of employability, social inclusion and social assistance. And, in some countries youth work takes place without the existence of a recognised “profession” of youth work, and the people doing youth work are volunteer leaders.

Think box!

- What kind of youth work do you practice?
- Can you identify these features in your youth work? Which ones are most important for you?
- What are the aims of your youth work?



Youth work and non-formal education

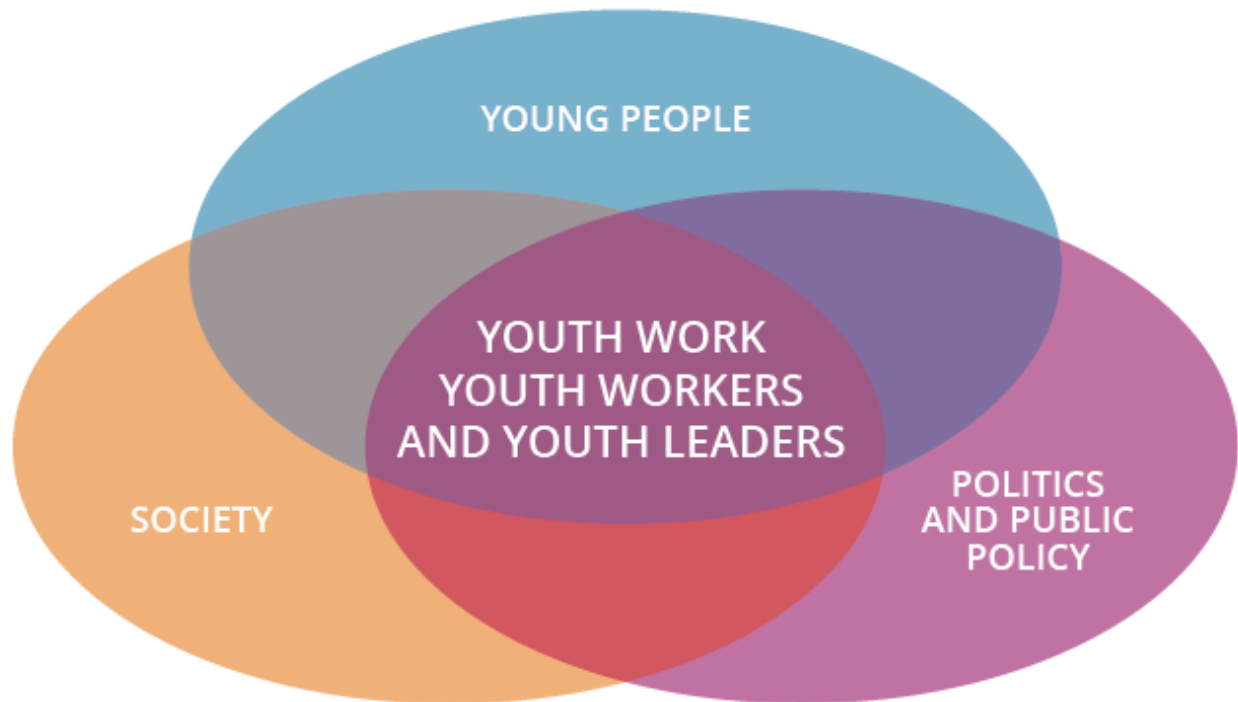
Youth work often has a strong educational purpose or dimension. Typically, the education or learning that takes place in youth work is ‘non-formal’ – not ‘formal’ and not ‘informal’. Youth work and non-formal education have many characteristics in common. Nevertheless, they are not the same.

So, what are the characteristics of ‘non-formal’ education or learning?

In brief...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •learning takes place outside the structures of the formal education system and differs from this in the way it is organised and the type of recognition this learning confers; •learning is intentional and voluntary; •learning aims above all to convey and practice the values and skills of democratic life.
Methodological features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •balanced co-existence and interaction between cognitive, affective and practical dimensions of learning; •linking individual and social learning •partnership oriented solidarity and symmetrical teaching/learning relations; •participatory and learner-centred approaches; •close to real life concerns, experimental and oriented to learning by doing, using intercultural exchanges and encounters as learning devices.
Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Values linked to personal development: autonomy; critical thinking; openness and curiosity; creativity. •Values linked to social development: communication; participation and democratic citizenship; solidarity and social justice; responsibility; transformative power of conflict. •Ethical values: human rights; respect for others; intercultural learning and dialogue; peace/non-violence; gender equality; inter-generational dialogue.
Non-formal educators ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •use participatory methods; •use diversity as a positive learning tool; •make critically reflective links between the concrete and the abstract, in order both to facilitate the learning process and continuously to improve their quality; •have knowledge about young people’s lives and cultures in Europe.

Youth work and youth policies

Youth work is also about the place of young people and their concerns in society and the public sphere. It is also about influencing society, politics and power relations, especially if those position young people at a disadvantage, marginalise them or exclude them.



Think box!

- How do the realities of the young people you work with influence your work?
- How do you find out about the needs and concerns of young people?
- In what ways do politics and policy influence the way you do your work?
- How do you see your role in relation to the wider political and social context youth work takes place in?



Youth work competence

Youth work competence

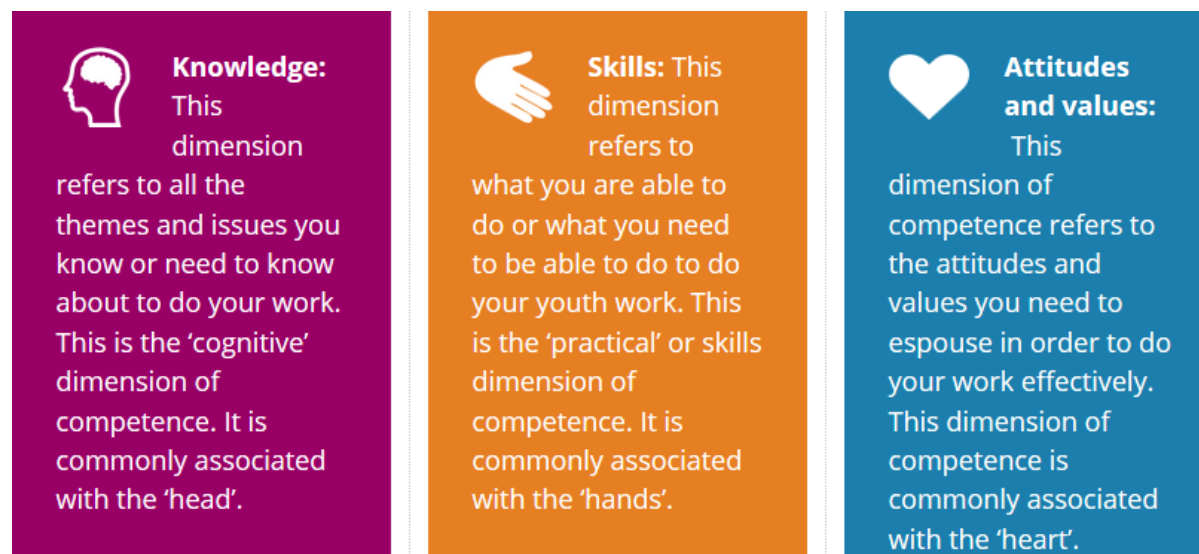
The Portfolio is a tool for assessing youth work competence and for planning how to develop it. This process is very important, because youth workers are bound to be life-long learners and youth work itself is a field constantly under development. The key questions the Portfolio wants to support you to answer are:

When you think about the youth work you are involved in, what do you do and what do you need to be able to do it well? What does it take to be a competent youth worker?

Competence is a key concept for understanding the tool.

” **Competence** is the “ability to do something successfully or efficiently”. The term is often used interchangeably with the term ‘skill’, although they are not the same. Two elements differentiate competence from skill, and make competence more than skill. When one person is competent, they can apply what they know to do a specific task or solve a problem and they are able to transfer this ability between different situations.

In youth work, competence is understood as having three interlinked dimensions:



Think box!

When you think about your own work, that of your team or your organisation, what do you associate with the head, hands and heart? Ask yourself the following questions and use the picture to document the answers:



- What should people doing youth work know?
- What should people doing youth work be able to do?
- What attitudes and values should people doing youth work have?
- What do you bring with you to your youth work, that makes you competent?

The Portfolio competence framework

The Portfolio looks at those things which ***youth work usually or most commonly does***. We call these ***functions of youth work***.

From these functions of youth work, the Portfolio tries to understand better what youth workers should be able to do, in other words, the competences youth workers need to have in order to do youth work.

The competences that one needs to have in order to do youth work have been divided into two categories:

- Specific youth work competences – competences that make this field of activity unique
- More general competences – competences relevant for other fields of activity but which are usually important for youth work

Together the identified functions and competences make up what we call the ***Portfolio competence framework***.

The list of functions and competences presented in the framework is by no means exhaustive. You may find that some competences are not relevant for the work you do or may want to add other very important competences you need for the youth work you do.

What do the competences mean?

Function 1. Address the needs and aspirations of young people

COMPETENCE 1.1 Build positive, non-judgemental relationships with young people

This involves:

- Skills: democratic leadership, active listening
- Attitudes and values: curiosity, empathy, self-awareness, confidentiality, interest in young people's views

COMPETENCE 1.2 Understand the social context of young people's lives

This involves:

- Knowledge: situation, status and condition of (youth in) society
- Skills: analysis, information management

COMPETENCE 1.3 Involve young people in the planning, delivery and evaluation of youth work using participatory methods, as suitable

This involves:

- Knowledge: interests, concerns and needs of young people
- Skills: active listening, identification of aims, needs analysis, facilitation, group management
- Attitudes and values: honesty, patience, interest in young people's views, openness

COMPETENCE 1.4 Relate to young people as equals

This involves:

- Knowledge: ethics of youth work
- Skills: representing one's own identity as a youth worker
- Attitudes and values: being ready to be challenged, solidarity, interest in young people's views

COMPETENCE 1.5 Demonstrate openness in discussing young people's personal and emotional issues when raised in the youth work context

This involves:

- Knowledge: ethics of youth work
- Skills: management of one's own emotions
- Attitudes and values: active listening, openness, patience, sensitivity, emotional stability, trustworthiness, honesty, transparency, confidentiality, empathy, interest in young people's views

Function 2. Provide learning opportunities for young people

COMPETENCE 2.1 Support young people in identifying their learning needs, wishes and styles, taking any special needs into consideration

This involves:

- Knowledge: learning theories (learning styles, preferences, etc.), non-formal education and learning, group dynamics, diversity backgrounds and challenges of young people
- Skills: identification of aims, needs analysis, facilitation, leadership, delegation, inclusive educational approaches, inclusive methods
- Attitudes and values: openness, sensitivity to diversity, interest in young people's views, support for young people taking the lead

COMPETENCE 2.2 Create safe, motivating and inclusive learning environments for individuals and groups

This involves:

- Knowledge: learning theories (learning styles, preferences, etc.), non-formal education and learning, group dynamics, diversity backgrounds and challenges of young people
- Skills: motivating young people, coaching, feedback, creativity, inclusive educational approaches, group management, facilitation, debriefing, problem solving, mediation and conflict transformation
- Attitudes and values: willingness to experiment, support for young people taking the lead, acceptance of the positive potential of conflict

COMPETENCE 2.3 Use a range of educational methods including ones that develop creativity and foster motivation for learning

This involves:

- Knowledge: non-formal education and learning, diverse methods, sources of information about activities
- Skills: learning by doing, creativity, facilitation skills, information management, motivating young people
- Attitudes: openness to the suggestions of young people about activities they like and want to do, willingness to experiment, curiosity

COMPETENCE 2.4 Provide young people with appropriate guidance and feedback

This involves:

- Knowledge: ethics of youth work
- Skills: training, coaching, mentoring
- Attitudes and values: empathy, openness, readiness to challenge others

COMPETENCE 2.5 Inform young people about learning opportunities and support them to use them effectively

This involves:

- Knowledge: information, counselling and relevant educational / professional guidance sources, available learning opportunities inside and outside the community, educational institutions, etc.
- Skills: counselling, coaching, motivating young people

Function 3. Support and empower young people in making sense of the society they live in and in engaging with it

COMPETENCE 3.1 Assist young people to identify and take responsibility for the role they want to have in their community and society

This involves:

- Knowledge: politics, society, power relations, policies relevant to young people
- Skills: critical thinking, active listening, political literacy

COMPETENCE 3.2 Support young people to identify goals, develop strategies and organise individual and collective action for social change

This involves:

- Knowledge: interests and concerns of young people, issues that young people are passionate about
- Skills: participatory decision-making, democratic leadership, active listening, critical thinking, planning for action and change, group management, facilitation
- Attitudes and values: power-sharing

COMPETENCE 3.3 Support young people to develop their critical thinking and understanding about society and power, how social and political systems work, and how they can have an influence on them

This involves:

- Knowledge: politics, society, power relations, policies relevant to young people
- Skills: political literacy, active listening, critical thinking, facilitation, advocacy

COMPETENCE 3.4 Support the competence and confidence development of young people

This involves:

- Skills: coaching, empathy, communication, feedback
- Attitudes and values: responsible risk-taking, willingness to experiment

Function 4. Support young people in actively and constructively addressing intercultural relations

COMPETENCE 4.1 Support young people in acquiring intercultural competences

This involves:

- Knowledge: intercultural theory, human rights, international awareness, cultural awareness
- Skills: facilitation, communication, intercultural learning, human rights education, debriefing
- Attitudes and values: empathy, tolerance of ambiguity, solidarity, self-awareness, emotional stability, sensitivity, distance from social roles, clarity on one's own values

COMPETENCE 4.2 Promote interaction between young people who come from diverse backgrounds at home and abroad so that they can learn about other countries, cultural contexts, political beliefs, religions, etc.

This involves:

- Knowledge: intercultural theory, cultural awareness, foreign languages, international awareness, diverse backgrounds / identities of the young people
- Skills: facilitation, intercultural learning, group dynamics and management, mediation, conflict transformation
- Attitudes and values: empathy, tolerance of ambiguity, solidarity, self-awareness, emotional stability, sensitivity, distance from social roles, clarity on one's own values

COMPETENCE 4.3 Work creatively on and with conflicts with a view to transforming them constructively

This involves:

- Knowledge: conflict
- Skills: facilitation, conflict transformation, mediation, dealing with unexpected situations
- Attitudes and values: openness to be challenged, readiness to challenge others, orientation towards the common good, respect for others, tolerance of ambiguity

COMPETENCE 4.4 Actively include young people from a diverse range of backgrounds and identifications in youth work activities

This involves:

- Knowledge: intercultural theory
- Skills: facilitation, inclusive education, intercultural learning
- Attitudes and values: self-awareness, clarity on one's own values, emotional stability

Function 5. Actively practise evaluation to improve the quality of the youth work conducted

COMPETENCE 5.1 Involve young people in planning and organising evaluation

This involves:

- Knowledge: inclusive evaluation approaches
- Skills: democratic leadership, active listening, process management, group management, research techniques, ICT

COMPETENCE 5.2 Plan and apply a range of participatory methods of evaluation

This involves:

- Knowledge: inclusive evaluation approaches
- Skills: participatory methods, democratic leadership, facilitation
- Attitudes and values: openness to constructive criticism and feedback

COMPETENCE 5.3 Use the results of evaluation for the improvement of their practice

This involves:

- Skills: evaluation
- Attitudes and values: openness to constructive criticism and feedback, adaptation to new/unforeseen situations, personal initiative

COMPETENCE 5.4 Stay up-to-date on the latest youth research on the situation and needs of the young people

This involves:

- Knowledge: youth research approaches, actors and sources
- Skills: analysis, information management
- Attitudes and values: personal initiative

Function 6. Support collective learning in teams

COMPETENCE 6.1 Actively evaluate teamwork with colleagues and use the results to improve effectiveness

This involves:

- Knowledge: team work, learning in teams
- Skills: evaluation, co-operation, communication, partnership-building
- Attitudes and values: trust, openness to the views of others, self-management, adaptation to unforeseen changes, orientation towards the common good
- Attitudes and values: personal initiative, openness to constructive criticism

COMPETENCE 6.2 Seek and give feedback about teamwork

This involves:

- Skills: feedback, active listening, conflict transformation, mediation
- Attitudes and values: being constructive, ready to challenge colleagues and be challenged, curiosity, trust

COMPETENCE 6.3 Share relevant information and practices in youth work with colleagues

This involves:

- Skills: communication, information management
- Attitudes and values: solidarity, willingness to share resources

Function 7. Contribute to the development of their organisation and to making policies / programmes work better for young people

COMPETENCE 7.1 Actively involve young people in shaping their organisation's policies and programmes

This involves:

- Knowledge: organisational management and development, policies and programmes of the organisation
- Skills: needs analysis, democratic leadership, active listening, participatory decision-making
- Attitudes and values: transparency, personal initiative

COMPETENCE 7.2 Co-operate with others to shape youth policies

This involves:

- Knowledge: youth policy concepts, actors and mechanisms at different levels (local through European)
- Skills: communication, networking, co-operation, partnership building, democratic leadership, advocacy, public speaking, presentation
- Attitudes and values: willingness to partner with other actors, curiosity, open-mindedness, patience, tolerance of ambiguity, personal initiative

Function 8. Develop, conduct and evaluate projects

COMPETENCE 8.1 Apply project management approaches

This involves:

- Knowledge: project management frameworks
- Skills: management (including finances), leadership, delegation, planning, facilitation, communication,
- Attitudes and values: capacity to adapt to new/unforeseen situations

COMPETENCE 8.2 Seek and manage resources

This involves:

- Knowledge: resource management
- Skills: financial management, human resources management and development, creativity in looking for resources, fundraising, communication, advocacy, networking
- Attitudes and values: open-mindedness, honesty, transparency

COMPETENCE 8.3 Give visibility to projects, write reports and make presentations, for a variety of audiences

This involves:

- Skills: presentation, public speaking, report writing, capacity to adapt your discourse to different audiences
- Attitudes and values: self-confidence

COMPETENCE 8.4 Use information and communication technology tools when necessary

This involves:

- Knowledge: information, communication and media tools (online)
- Skills: using ICT in youth work (projects), creativity
- Attitudes and values: curiosity, personal initiative

Making your own Portfolio

A Youth Work Portfolio includes a self-assessment based on the Portfolio competence framework and a learning development plan that allows the user to set up learning goals. The process of the Portfolio is not a one off process. It is thought as a dynamic process, from self-assessment to setting learning goals, to self-assessment of achieved goals and learning, to setting up other learning goals, and so on.

How to fill in the self-assessment form

The self-assessment is a form divided by functions of youth work and, for each function, the competences of youth workers.

For each competence of the self-assessment, you will be asked to rate first of all the **relevance of that competence** for your work on a scale of 1 – 5 (1 = not relevant at all; 5 = highly relevant). Here, you will be asked to **provide reasons** for why you have rated each as relevant or not.

If you decide that a competence is not relevant for your youth work (i.e. by rating it 1), then you will not be asked to assess it, but only to provide some reasons why it is not relevant. *For example, you may explain that a competence is not relevant because your current youth work practice is not at all related to it, or because there are other members of your team specifically dealing with this aspect of youth work.*

Further on, you will be asked to **assess your level of competence** on a scale of 1 – 5 (1 = not competent at all; 5 = highly competent).

You will also be asked to justify the level of competence you have assessed by providing examples about and describing how you acquired it or youth work situations where you demonstrated it. Have a look at the section on giving and receiving feedback.

This is one of the main ways to check that what you see as your competence is also what others youth work with see.

For example, you may indicate that you participated in training on a specific theme or skill. You may provide concrete examples of how you use your competence when working with young people. You may also indicate that you have received feedback from your colleagues or the young people you work with pointing out that you have a certain level of that competence. Other ways to describe your competence include testimonies from young people, reference letters or recommendations from your employer or volunteer manager, certificates from courses and/or examinations, proof that you participated in or tried to access on-the-job or other training.

The last step of the self-assessment for each competence is to indicate if there are any aspects of that particular competence that you would like to improve. Be concise and specific if you indicate something you want to learn in relation to this competence. What you insert in the answer to this question will guide your work and reflection on your learning development plan.

You may first want to check the description of that specific competence in order to get some ideas of what you want to learn further. You may also want to reflect on your own or discuss with others about what you could improve in relation to that competence.

If you choose to create a printed Portfolio, you will need for each competence to print a self-assessment question sheet and use it in order to assess your competence. For your 'physical' Portfolio, all you need is a folder, a print out of your self-assessment and print-outs of all the documentary evidence you have justifying your self-assessment (photos, testimonies of colleagues or young people you worked with, reference letters, diplomas, etc.). The Portfolio can be a useful tool when discussing or demonstrating your competence to employers or managers, or when reworking your CV or preparing for an appraisal.

List of functions and competences

Function 1. Address the needs and aspirations of young people

- 1.1 Build positive, non-judgemental relationships with young people
- 1.2 Understand the social context of young people's lives
- 1.3 Involve young people in the planning, delivery and evaluation of youth work using participatory methods, as suitable
- 1.4 Relate to young people as equals
- 1.5 Demonstrate openness in discussing young people's personal and emotional issues when raised in the youth work context

Function 2. Provide learning opportunities for young people

- 2.1 Support young people in identifying their learning needs, wishes and styles, taking any special needs into consideration
- 2.2 Create safe, motivating and inclusive learning environments for individuals and groups
- 2.3 Use a range of educational methods including ones that develop creativity and foster motivation for learning
- 2.4 Provide young people with appropriate guidance and feedback
- 2.5 Inform young people about learning opportunities and support them to use them effectively

Function 3. Support and empower young people in making sense of the society they live in and in engaging with it

- 3.1 Assist young people to identify and take responsibility for the role they want to have in their community and society
- 3.2 Support young people to identify goals, develop strategies and organise individual and collective action for social change
- 3.3 Support young people to develop their critical thinking and understanding about society and power, how social and political systems work, and how they can have an influence on them
- 3.4 Support the competence and confidence development of young people

Function 4. Support young people in actively and constructively addressing intercultural relations

- 4.1 Support young people in acquiring intercultural competences
- 4.2 Promote interaction between young people who come from diverse backgrounds at home and abroad so that they can learn about other countries, cultural contexts, political beliefs, religions, etc.
- 4.3 Work creatively on and with conflicts with a view to transforming them constructively
- 4.4 Actively include young people from a diverse range of backgrounds and identifications in youth work activities

Function 5. Actively practise evaluation to improve the quality of the youth work conducted

- 5.1 Involve young people in planning and organising evaluation
- 5.2 Plan and apply a range of participatory methods of evaluation
- 5.3 Use the results of evaluation for the improvement of their practice
- 5.4 Stay up-to-date on the latest youth research on the situation and needs of the young people

Function 6. Support collective learning in teams

- 6.1 Actively evaluate teamwork with colleagues and use the results to improve effectiveness
- 6.2 Seek and give feedback about teamwork
- 6.3 Share relevant information and practices in youth work with colleagues

Function 7. Contribute to the development of their organisation and to making policies / programmes work better for young people

- 7.1 Actively involve young people in shaping their organisation's policies and programmes
- 7.2 Co-operate with others to shape youth policies

Function 8. Develop, conduct and evaluate projects

- 8.1 Apply project management approaches
- 8.2 Seek and manage resources
- 8.3 Give visibility to projects, write reports and make presentations, for a variety of audiences
- 8.4 Use information and communication technology tools when necessary

Self-assessment question sheet

Self-assessment of competence

How relevant is this competence to your youth work?	1 Not relevant at all 2 Mostly not relevant 3 Relevant 4 Mostly relevant 5 Highly relevant
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If not *relevant at all*, why? Please explain the profile of your youth work by providing examples why this competence is / is not relevant.

If in question 1 you mark any of the answers from 2 to 5, then answer the questions below

How competent do you consider yourself in this competence?	1 Not competent at all 2 Mostly not competent 3 Competent 4 Mostly competent 5 Highly competent
--	---

Describe your competence here, including examples of how you demonstrate this competence in your youth work. You can include previous learning experiences that developed your competence and examples of youth work where you make use of this competence.

If there is anything more you would like to learn related to this competence, please insert the main points you would like to improve on below. If you insert something here, this will be automatically included in your learning and development plan.

How to fill in the learning and development plan

A learning and development plan (LDP) focuses on the competences you want to improve, develop, learn or acquire within a specific period of time after you have completed your self-assessment and which you identify for yourself as appropriate. In the self-assessment you will be asked if there is anything more about a competence that you would like to learn or develop.

The LDP helps you to organise your learning and development in youth work. It can help you put into practice the learning and development you have identified as necessary for improving your competence.

The self-assessment form is based on those aspects you want to develop or learn more about that you have identified when doing your self-assessment (the last question in the question sheet).

The LDP asks you to identify 'how' you want to develop your competence further by asking you to choose from a list of learning opportunities. You can decide for yourself what you think is the most adapted approach or method for pursuing your learning and development need according to your own preferences.

Next, you will be asked to set up a timeframe for your learning and a moment when you would like to check your learning progress on that specific competence. You are the one to choose your timeframe. Try to make it realistic enough for doing both short personal and professional development activities, such as enrolling in a one-day refresher course or doing some reading on an important theme, and for more intensive and demanding activities, such as going back into education to gain a new qualification.

LDP question sheet

You decided to learn more about ...	
How would you like to improve your competence? Examples: get more training, attend a university course, read more about the topic, test through youth work activities, develop a new approach in youth work, discuss with colleagues or young people, self-reflection, get feedback.	
When would you like to check your learning progress?	
Would you like to add anything else about your learning in this topic	

Feedback

Using feedback as a tool for your self-assessment

Carrying out a self-assessment is an enriching experience through which we can learn a lot about ourselves. Nevertheless, there is much to be gained in asking for feedback from others. You can get feedback or external input from many different kinds of people. More experienced colleagues or superiors and colleagues you trust are a natural choice. However, it is also important and useful to get insight from the young people you work with and for.

Getting input from the young people you work with

The young people you work with, their issues and aspirations, should be at the centre of concern in youth work. Finding out more about how they perceive your competence for the work you do with them is important for the authenticity and credibility of your self-assessment, whether you go through it as an individual, in a team or in an organisation.

There are many ways to access input from the young people. Some of them are part and parcel of regular youth work practice and involve different kinds of participatory evaluation methods. Nevertheless, for those of you who wish to include this dimension as part of your assessment process, it is worthwhile thinking explicitly about how you can access input from the young people you work with.

Some examples include:

- Adding some questions to evaluate your (or your team or organisation's) performance / competence in activity evaluations filled out by participants
- Group or one-on-one discussions with the participants of your activities about their experience of your work with them. For the credibility and legitimacy of this kind of discussion, and to be able to include transcripts or notes from these in your Portfolio as proof of competence, you should invite a colleague to attend and record the discussions. It is important to be as transparent as possible.
- Testimonies / direct statements by your participants about your work. These should be written and in the first person, but can be delivered anonymously if you think it is more appropriate.
- Ask one or more of the young people you work with to give you feedback on the Portfolio assessment you have prepared. Here you need to think carefully about the competence of the young people concerned. Again, for the sake of transparency, such conversations should be conducted with another colleague present.
- You may feel embarrassed or insecure about asking your participants how they feel about your work directly. The participants may also feel insecure, not want to "hurt your feelings" and self-censor what they say to your face. Even if this is the case, it is extremely important to do it. The Portfolio is a self-assessment tool and it relies on a

delicate balance of self-perception confronted with outside perceptions to provide a credible and legitimate evaluation. You can organise any of the above activities anonymously, if you think this kind of dynamic might change the way the young people interact with you. Technology opens up a lot of avenues for receiving input anonymously.

If you are conducting a 'team' portfolio exercise, then ideally each member of the team would give feedback to and receive feedback from the whole team, whether individually or collectively, in addition to asking for feedback from at least one person 'external' to the team.

Feedback from colleagues or external people

Think about some people you trust and who have direct experience of your work and performance in youth work. Who you choose, and how much of your self-assessment you discuss with them, is up to you. The important thing to remember is that the person or people must know your work well.

How do I choose a "Feedbacker"?

Getting feedback is an essential part of the Portfolio learning and development process. Without an "outside eye" on your self-assessment, it is difficult to 'validate' it. In other words, it is difficult to show that it is more than your own personal opinion, and therefore not biased or exaggerated.

- It is up to you to choose the person or people who will provide feedback on your self-assessment. This checklist will help you make a decision about who to ask to provide feedback.
- The person knows you well in the youth work context in which you are active.
- The person is familiar with youth work concepts and practices in general and has some experience of working with young people themselves.
- The person has some experience of training, mentoring, counselling or providing professional feedback to colleagues.
- The person is willing to conduct the feedback process with you and act as your external validator in case you want to access the open badges method of certification for your Portfolio, including all the tasks that this requires of them.
- The person is "well-seen" and "respected" by the wider youth work community of practice in which you both participate.
- The person is able to give you constructive criticism (i.e. independent, external, not necessarily a close friend, not your mum, etc.).

Remember! You can use more than one person to provide feedback, and you may decide to have a different person act as the Feedbacker for different parts of your self-assessment

More information on giving and receiving feedback

Feedback is a dynamic process that should go in two directions. Especially if you are using the Portfolio in a team or for organisational development purposes, the 'giving feedback' part of this dynamic will be just as important as the 'receiving feedback' part.

What feedback is and what it is not?¹

WHAT FEEDBACK SHOULD BE	WHAT NOT TO SAY Why?	WHAT TO SAY Why?
Descriptive	<p>"This is bad!" or "This is good!"</p> <p><i>Because criteria for this judgement are subjective and other people can interpret them differently</i></p>	<p>"Your loud talking during the role-play made me feel stressed."</p> <p><i>Because it is up to the other person to decide what to do with the feedback; keep your observation to a description of what happened and what you felt at that moment</i></p>
Specific	<p>"You are dominant!"</p> <p><i>Because the way of saying it is both unhelpful and confrontational, and doesn't tell the other person anything specific about how you experienced the situation</i></p>	<p>"While making that decision, I had the impression that you dominated the space for discussion and that I did not have space to contribute ..."</p> <p><i>Because this indicates what you experienced, and how you experienced the situation</i></p>
Appropriate	<p>"What you need to do ..."</p> <p><i>Because this presents your suggestion as a fact rather than as an opinion</i></p> <p><i>Because this indicates a projection of your needs onto the other person</i></p>	<p>"What I see as your needs ..."</p> <p><i>Because you are speaking on your own behalf which helps prevent any reactions or opinions being presented as facts</i></p> <p><i>Because this indicates that you are thinking about the needs of the other and what they might be able to do about the feedback</i></p>
Useful	<p>If a person is unable to change something, there is no point in mentioning it.</p> <p><i>Because it just makes the other person feel powerless if they cannot change the thing you point out, and pointing it out is not constructive</i></p>	
Wanted	<p>Feedback is most effective when wanted by the receiver.</p> <p><i>Because if it is not wanted, it won't be accepted as constructive and worked with</i></p>	

WHAT FEEDBACK SHOULD BE	WHAT NOT TO SAY Why?	WHAT TO SAY Why?
At the right time	If at all possible, feedback should be given as soon as the impression was made. <i>Because if it is given much later the other person will not remember the situation as well, and will not be able to consider the feedback constructively</i>	
Clear	Ask the receiver of feedback whether they need any clarification of your point. <i>Because you may not have made yourself clear and they may not understand it completely</i>	

Tips for giving and receiving feedback

GIVING	RECEIVING
Think about the needs of the person receiving the feedback. Is what you have to say really relevant? Does it speak to something they can work on or change? Does it really respond to their needs or is it a projection of your own?	Listen actively and carefully. Hear the feedback through to the end and consider what it is trying to tell you.
Avoid being judgemental as far as possible (avoid the use of “you”). Use “I” statements and avoid speaking on behalf of others (“we”).	Try to remain open to what is being said to you. If you notice that you are becoming defensive, make a mental note of any questions or disagreements and check them out later.
If you encounter defensiveness or an emotional reaction to your feedback, deal with those reactions first rather than trying to convince, reason, or supply additional information.	If you are unsure about what the person giving feedback is trying to get at, try to rephrase what you have just heard and check with them that you have understood what was said correctly.
	Think carefully about the feedback you have received. Don’t react immediately to what you have heard.
	Go back to your self-assessment and check whether you want to change or add anything.

If you want to **find out more** about giving and receiving feedback, consult the chapter on [Training in Teams](#) in the [T-kit Training Essentials](#).

[1] Adapted from T-Kit Training Essentials, p. 102. Available online: http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/documents/Publications/T_kits/6/4_action_2.pdf

Ideas for using the Portfolio

Here you can find ideas about how the Portfolio can be used in different ways as a support for the quality development of youth work. If you have further ideas or suggestions or ways in which you have used the Portfolio, please write us at youthportfolio@coe.int.

Ideas for individual youth workers / youth leaders

The online European Youth Work Portfolio can be useful for you as an individual youth worker or youth leader to:

- self- assess the current level of youth work competence
- set up learning and development aims and pursue those in ways you will identify
- after a certain time, revisit your self-assessment to see what has changed, update your Portfolio or restart the process.

Making a Portfolio is a dynamic process and we invite you, if you use the tool, to revisit it regularly. It can be a good friend in supporting you to keep your motivation to learn more and develop your youth work competence. You can easily check whether the self-assessment made at one point in time is still valid, and then update the parts for which changes or developments have taken place.

If you are working in a formal institution or structure, you might have to take part in a performance review or appraisal. It can be relevant to conduct your Portfolio review shortly before such an appraisal takes place, because it can provide you with information and arguments to include in the discussion of your performance with your supervisor.

Otherwise, you can decide for yourself when it makes most sense to do it – for example, in conjunction with a regular team evaluation, or a discussion with your volunteer or professional supervisor, at the beginning and/or end of an internship, or when you need to revise your CV for a job application

Ideas for teams of youth workers / youth leaders

There are two ways to do a team competence assessment using the Portfolio. The first takes place in 2 steps, with each team member conducting their own self-assessment, and then collectively discussing aspects of team competence using the competence framework as a guide.

All the team members can also conduct the Portfolio assessment exercise together, with their teamwork being the subject of the assessment, rather than individual competence. In most cases, this only requires that you replace 'I' with 'We' when conducting the assessment. So for example, when thinking about intercultural competence, the team exercise would be to assess how the team collectively understands its own intercultural reality (i.e. team composition and composition of the groups of youth it is working with) and how it deals with it (i.e. with each other and collectively with the participants).

Ideas for organisations

The Portfolio can be used as a learning and development tool for an entire organisation! Like teams, organisations can learn collectively and reach higher potential, and Portfolio provides a tool for people in positions of responsibility in organisations to reflect on the way the organisation is functioning and developing.

You can use the Portfolio as a basis for the development of a 'quality assurance framework'. A quality assurance framework is a set of principles and guidelines that an organisation uses to make sure it is doing its work adequately, in line with its stated mission and objectives and with the needs of its beneficiaries. The development of an organisational competence assessment and learning plan can form the foundations of such a framework, and for contributing to an organisational development strategy.

Ideas for youth work managers

The Portfolio can be used as a learning and development tool for an entire organisation! Like teams, organisations can learn collectively and reach higher potential, and Portfolio provides a tool for people in positions of responsibility in organisations to reflect on the way the organisation is functioning and developing.

As a youth work manager, you can use the Portfolio as a basis for the development of a 'quality assurance framework'. A quality assurance framework is a set of principles and guidelines that an organisation uses to make sure it is doing its work adequately, in line with its stated mission and objectives and with the needs of its beneficiaries. The development of an organisational competence assessment and learning plan can form the foundations of such a framework, and for contributing to an organisational development strategy.

You can also integrate the functions and competences of youth workers from the Portfolio into the process of appraisal and objective setting for the youth workers or youth leaders that you are coordinating.

Furthermore, you can use the Portfolio framework as a tool for identifying the learning needs of the youth workers and youth leaders you are managing in your organisation of institution.

Ideas for trainers of youth workers

The Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio can be a very useful tool for trainings of youth workers and youth leaders.

In a training course, the trainers can use the Portfolio as a reference when they develop their training course curriculum.

The Portfolio can also be used as a self-assessment tool for participants in training courses related to youth work development. For example, participants can use the Portfolio at the beginning of a training course to assess where they are now with their youth work competence, and also use it to set up learning goals that they want to achieve during the training course. The trainers can use these learning goals of their participants in order to shape and fine tune the curriculum of their training course.

The Portfolio has been used in the majority of the training courses of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe on youth work topics. It has been used for setting the course curriculum and for develop an individual portfolio of each participant. As such, it has also served as a basis for the certification of the training courses.

Trainers can also use the Portfolio as a support tool during processes associated with training, such as mentoring or coaching.

Ideas for policy makers

The Portfolio initiative is a specific example of the commitment of the Council of Europe's member states to promote the recognition of youth work based on the principles of non-formal education. This commitment was formalised through the [Council of Europe's Recommendation Rec\(2003\)8 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the promotion and recognition of non-formal education/learning of young people](#) and subsequent follow-up texts. In providing a tool for individuals, teams and organisations to assess their competence, the Portfolio contributes to increasing transparency around the quality of youth work.

Policy makers on any level, from local to European, can use the Portfolio in order to set up standards or tools for recognition of youth work.

For example, the Portfolio can become the basis for the development of a profile of youth worker that can support the recognition of youth worker as a profession.

The Portfolio can be used by policy makers in defining the curriculum for the training of youth workers. The Portfolio can also be useful in certifying the training or the learning outcomes that youth workers had as a result of youth work training.

In the realities where youth workers already need to undergo a specific training to be recognised as youth workers, the Portfolio could be a complementary tool of self-assessment and development.

Policy makers can support youth organisations in making use of the Portfolio as a tool for quality improvement of youth

Translations of the Portfolio

You can also translate the Portfolio in your language: find out how! The availability of the Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio in a wide variety of the languages spoken by users and beneficiaries plays a central role in disseminating its approaches to youth work. More information about translations can be found on the Portfolio website.

Further Information

Read more about the Portfolio and about youth work recognition in Europe today through the questions and answers below.

Who developed the Portfolio?

The Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio has been developed by the Council of Europe and its partners in the European Youth Sector. Founded in 1949, the Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It includes 47 member states, 28 of which are also members of the European Union. The mission of the Council of Europe is to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Its key instruments are the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and the European Court of Human Rights. Find more about the Council of Europe at www.coe.int.

The Council of Europe and its partners want to encourage more young people to get involved actively in strengthening civil society in Europe and in defending the values of human rights, cultural diversity and social cohesion. They are also interested in promoting and developing youth policies, putting special emphasis on the participation of young people.

The core mission of the Council of Europe in relation to young people is to enable them to be active citizens. The Council of Europe believes that national and international youth policies should give young people opportunities and means for, and access to:

- well-being
- informal, non-formal and formal learning
- inclusion in society
- participation and decision making, especially on matters pertaining to their lives.

The following diagram summarises this approach:



The Council of Europe has a Youth Department, which is co-managed by bodies made up of youth organisations and governments with equal decision-making power. The Youth Department has a long-standing tradition in training and education activities for youth workers and youth leaders in Europe. Find out more about the Youth Department of the Council of Europe, the co-management system, the partners involved and its activities at www.coe.int/youth.

Why was the Portfolio developed?

1. The Portfolio is an instrument for improving the recognition of youth work:

The youth work community of practice around Europe, through ongoing debates and exchanges, has expressed the need for an instrument that could help them to gain better recognition for their work. The Portfolio does this by helping members of that community of practice to:

- identify, assess and record their competencies
- describe their competencies to others
- set their own further learning and development goals.

The portfolio has been developed taking into account the long-standing practice of the Council of Europe in youth leader and worker training. Since the establishment of the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg in 1972, the Council of Europe's youth sector has developed a wide range of training courses for people and organisations doing youth work, multipliers, non-formal educators, public servants and even researchers from across Europe, in themes ranging from human rights and antiracism, to conflict transformation and social inclusion, participation and democracy. Find out more about the educational work and publications of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe at www.coe.int/youth.

2. The Portfolio is an instrument for promoting the Council of Europe's approach to youth policy:

The Council of Europe sees the core task of national and international youth policies as creating the necessary conditions for young people to be active citizens. This task touches on so many aspects of young people's lives that youth policy has to involve many different public policy sectors including, but not limited to, education, health, social affairs, family, justice, housing, and so on. It must therefore be implemented in a co-ordinated manner between different policy sectors. The Council of Europe promotes this 'cross-sectoral' way of working to address young people's needs and concerns among its member states.

A cross-sectoral approach to youth policy means that it will be implemented using a variety of different means of intervention, ranging from legal measures to specific kinds of support programmes for young people. A key dimension for the Council of Europe is educational. Youth policy should support young people in acquiring the necessary competencies to be active

citizens (for example, autonomy, responsibility, initiative, engagement, solidarity, etc.). That is why youth work based on the principles of non-formal education and learning is one of the key working instruments of the Council of Europe's youth policy.

The Portfolio is a tool which helps people and organisations doing youth work to consider how they contribute to helping young people acquire the competence to be active citizens. It asks them to consider how their knowledge, attitudes and skills can contribute to the fulfilment of this key task of youth policy.

3. The Portfolio is an instrument for promoting the values of the Council of Europe and the European Youth Sector

The Council of Europe believes that the ways in which individuals, organisations and institutions practise youth work, diverse as these are across Europe, reflect their vision of society and the values they wish to promote.

The Council of Europe's mission is to promote a Europe which:

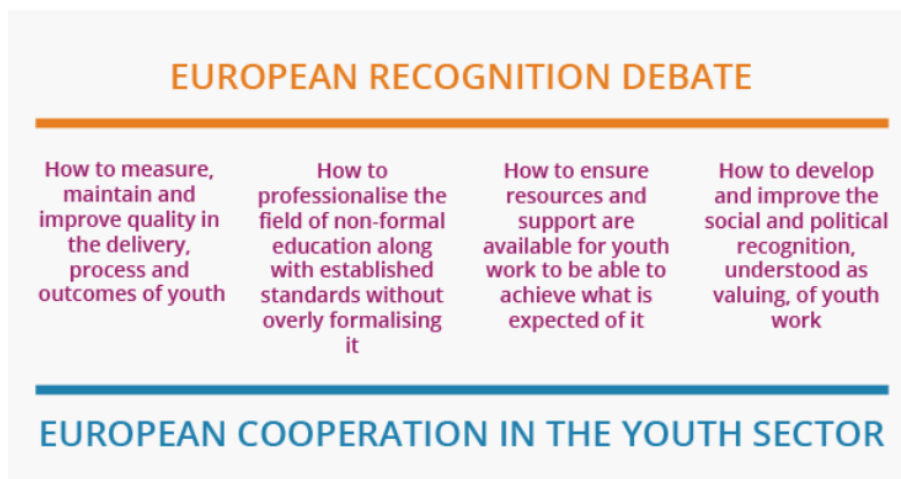
- respects human rights and human dignity
- promotes participatory democracy
- strives to achieve social cohesion, social justice, and gender equality
- considers living together in a pluralistic multicultural society as an enrichment and opportunity for social and economic progress, rather than as a problem
- encourages the development of civil society
- actively works to eradicate all forms of racism or discrimination based on social and ethnic origins, religion and sexual orientation
- contributes to making the world a better place to live, through active measures for global solidarity.

The Portfolio reflects these values in its understanding of what youth work is for, how it should be carried out, and which competencies are necessary for doing it well. The very idea of a self-assessment tool, which provides individuals, teams and organisations with the opportunity to reflect on their own competence for youth work, and to develop their own plans for improving it, is grounded in a vision of youth work as a process of continuous learning and emancipation for those who practise it as much as for those who participate in it.

What is the European debate on recognition of youth work about?

Since the early 2000s, acceptance of the positive role that youth work based on the principles of non-formal education plays for the social integration, active citizenship and the employability of young people has grown significantly. This growing awareness has put youth work and non-formal learning high on the political agenda for many national governments and international institutions.

This more positive attitude to youth work is largely the result of efforts made by youth work organisations and providers to gain better recognition. Their advocacy has resulted in a more strategic approach of the European institutions to encouraging governments to value, recognise and support this kind of work through dedicated policies, programmes and resources. What is today known as the ‘European recognition debate’ addresses four main ‘how to’ questions, as follows:



This debate takes place in many different communities of practice, from education to social work, in public institutions and in civic organisations, and from local up to international levels. Recognition is a key work area in the youth policies of the Council of Europe and of the European Union. Policy makers, youth work practitioners and researchers from all over Europe are all involved in trying to map out the best and most strategic ways to ensure that youth work gets the recognition it needs in order to be able to deliver on its commitments to young people. The main aim of the actors involved can be summed up in the following quote from a 2011 policy paper on the issue of recognition of non-formal learning in Europe:

[...] working together to establish a common ground for a medium to long term co-ordinated strategy toward recognition of youth work and non-formal learning in Europe with the involvement of actors and stakeholders of various policy sectors concerned.[i]

[i] Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth, Getting There...Strasbourg, 2013. Available online at: [i] Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth, Getting There Strasbourg, 2013. Available online at: <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/>

How does the Portfolio fit into European recognition debate?

The Portfolio initiative is a specific example of the commitment of the Council of Europe’s member states to promote the recognition of youth work based on the principles of non-formal education. This commitment was formalised through the [Council of Europe’s Recommendation Rec\(2003\)8 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the promotion and recognition](#)

[of non-formal education/learning of young people](#) and subsequent follow-up texts (see further reading section for more references). In providing a tool for individuals, teams and organisations to assess their competence, the Portfolio contributes to increasing transparency around the quality of youth work. Using the Portfolio shows that an individual practitioner, team or organisation is not afraid to put their competence and the quality of their work under the microscope. It shows they are not afraid to reflect critically on how well it achieves what it claims it can. Nevertheless, there is awareness that more practitioners on the front lines of youth work around Europe need to use the Portfolio for it to have the positive influence on recognition desired.

The ‘Strasbourg Process’, initiated by the Statutory Bodies of the Council of Europe’s Youth Department, demands a strong political co-operation process on the validation of non-formal learning and recognition of youth work. It asks the institutions to develop something similar to the Bologna Process for Higher Education (add hyperlinks). As a result of this process, the political decision makers have agreed that 5% of the youth budget of the Council of Europe will be used for activities fostering the recognition of non-formal learning and youth work.

The Council of Europe also uses partnerships with other institutions to promote recognition. That is why the Portfolio initiative is linked to several other projects undertaken by the other European institutions, especially the European Commission, and the different bodies involved in the implementation of its education and life-long learning agendas, such as the [National Agencies](#) of the [Erasmus+ Programme](#), [the SALTO Resource Centres](#) and the [European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training \(CEDEFOP\)](#).

In particular, the adoption of the [European Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning of 20 December 2012](#) acknowledges the important role this process can play in rethinking education, in improving the supply of skills to the labour market, in promoting mobility and in enhancing competitiveness and economic growth.

Ongoing activities on recognition undertaken by the [SALTO Training and Co-operation Resource Centre](#) include the development and publication of a competence profile for youth workers ‘working in international teams’ supporting activities financed by the European Commission through the ‘Youth’ programme within Erasmus+. There are some key overlaps between the competence profile developed in the Portfolio and this competence profile. This is particularly the case for the international and intercultural dimensions of youth work. In addition, the underlying concept and objectives of the Portfolio and of [Youthpass](#), the method of validation and certification available to participants of the ‘Youth’ programme activities, are very similar. You can find out more about recognition options for Portfolio users in the next section.

What are the options for recognition available to Portfolio users?

There is no specific recognition, validation or certification process associated with the Portfolio at this point. Furthermore, there is no “one-stop shop” which explains the recognition, validation and certification options available to people doing youth work across Europe. These

two facts can make acquiring recognition for their achievements, and for the value of their work, seem complicated to people doing youth work.

As a tool for the *self-assessment* of competencies, the Portfolio is one of the many *informal* recognition methods available to people doing youth work. By combining self-assessments with *evidence* of experience, testimonies from participants in your activities, reference people and certificates from further learning and training undertaken, the Portfolio provides its holder with a *history* of their competence. Like a photographer or graphic designer who creates a Portfolio of their artistic creations, people doing youth work can use the Portfolio to show what they have done and why they and eventually others think they are competent in doing it.

Nevertheless, across Europe there are a variety of ‘formal’ recognition, validation and certification possibilities available. These are more often than not organised nationally, but European options also exist. Working in your context, you will be best able to judge what kind of recognition is useful or necessary for your situation and development. Here we provide some clues for finding your pathway to recognition using the Portfolio.

Formal validation and certification pathways are typically organised in-country, and offered by state-recognised national, regional or local authorities and institutions of different kinds. These are very diverse. Each country has different forms and procedures, and some countries even have several different pathways to accessing recognition. For example, some countries have university level Bachelor degree study programmes and others have vocational training programmes. Others again allow people to gain qualifications for youth work through on-the-job practice. Some countries have no specific professional or academic qualification system for youth work at all. In addition, some countries have several routes that one can take or combine, according to one’s interest, learning style and possibilities. In many countries, local and regional authorities and other state-recognised institutions offer vocational training and further professional education opportunities through shorter- and longer-term course formats with different types of certification.

Finding out about the different pathways available in your country demands research and time. Here are some useful starting points for finding out more:

1. The higher education, vocational training or adult education authorities in your country, region or city can provide information about networks of providers and other relevant opportunities. For participating countries, the [EURYDICE Network](#) provides information on which authorities from local to national levels are responsible for which kind of education, training and recognition, and so on.
2. In countries participating in the Erasmus+ programme of the European Commission, the [National Agencies](#) responsible for the implementation of the programme can provide information on specific national initiatives in the fields of youth, vocational training, and adult education, including information in the area of recognition.

3. The [Eurodesk](#) portal is useful for finding out more about initiatives relevant to youth. Eurodesk is the main provider of information on European policies and opportunities for young people and those who work with them.
4. [Youthpass](#) is part of the European Commission's strategy to foster the recognition of non-formal learning. It is available for projects funded by Erasmus+ Youth in Action (2014-2020) and Youth in Action (2007-2013) programmes. As a tool to visualise and to validate learning outcomes, it puts policy into practice and practice into policy:
 - i. Creating their Youthpass Certificate together with a support person, the participants of the projects have the possibility to describe what they have done in their project and which competencies they have acquired. Thus, Youthpass supports **reflection on the personal non-formal learning process**.
 - ii. Documenting the added value of the project, Youthpass visualises and supports **active European citizenship** of young people and youth workers.
 - iii. Being a Europe-wide validation instrument for non-formal learning in the youth field, Youthpass contributes to strengthening the **social recognition of youth work**.
 - iv. Making visible and validating key competencies through a certificate, Youthpass finally aims at supporting the **employability** of young people and youth workers.

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Useful reference websites

Council of Europe - Youth Department	www.coe.int/youth
Compass Resource Website Resources for Human Rights	http://www.coe.int/en/web/compass
Education with young people and value-based youth work	
Erasmus+ Programme of the European Commission	http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/index_en.htm
Erasmus+Youth Programme	http://ec.europa.eu/youth/programme/index_en.htm

<p>Eurodesk Portal</p> <p>The main provider of information on European policies and opportunities for young people and those who work with them</p>	<p>https://www.eurodesk.eu/</p>
<p>European Language Portfolio of the Council of Europe Supporting the development of learner autonomy, pluri-lingualism, intercultural awareness and competence; helping people record their language learning achievements and experiences</p>	<p>www.coe.int/portfolio</p>
<p>EURYDICE Network</p> <p>The Eurydice Network provides information on and analyses of European education systems and policies. As at 2013 it consists of 40 national units based in all 36 countries participating in the EU's Life-long Learning programme</p>	<p>http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/index_en.php</p>
<p>INFED. Not-for-profit resource site on informal education</p>	<p>www.infed.org</p>
<p>National agencies of the Erasmus+ Youth Programme</p>	<p>http://ec.europa.eu/youth/partners_networks/national_agencies_en.htm</p>
<p>Recognition resources website of the Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth</p>	<p>http://pip-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/recognition</p>
<p>The Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth</p>	<p>http://pip-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/home</p>
<p>The SALTO Youth Resource Centres Network</p> <p>Support, Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities within the European YOUTH programme</p>	<p>www.salto-youth.net</p>
<p>Training Kits by the Partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Commission in the field of Youth</p>	<p>http://pip-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/t-kits</p>
<p>Unique Learning Badges Project</p> <p>Online visual recognition platform for providers and receivers of non-formal education</p>	<p>www.learningbadges.eu</p>

Glossary

Accreditation

Education organisations and institutions need permission to issue certificates, diplomas and qualifications. Accreditation is the process they have to go through to get it. For example, universities need accreditation to issue degrees, and they usually get this from the national educational authorities, who vouch for the credibility of the degrees they issue.

Assessment

The process of evaluating or estimating the nature, ability, or quality of something.^[i] In formal education, assessments are done using exams to judge performance and achievement, and usually result in a ranking of those who did best and worst according to a pre-defined standard. Assessment also takes place in non-formal education, but group experiences and processes are more important than individual achievement; non-formal education also uses different methods to conduct the assessment. Participatory processes of evaluation and debriefing are preferred to testing and ranking. **Self-assessment is a process of evaluating yourself according to a given standard or set of criteria.** In the case of the Portfolio, the Portfolio competence framework provides the standard against which the self-evaluation takes place, as well as a guide for how to do it and how to document its results.

^[i] Oxford online dictionary: www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/assess

Certification

The formal process of validating knowledge, know-how, skills and/or competencies. **Certificates** are the ‘pieces of paper’, which record the outcomes of getting certified. They usually have the status of official documents and are a very common way of communicating academic or professional achievements.

Competence

The ability to do something successfully or efficiently. The term is often confused with the term ‘skill’. Two things make a competence different from skill, and make a competence more than a skill. When you are competent, you can apply what you know to a task or challenge *and* you are able to transfer this ability between different situations. In non-formal education, competence is understood as having three interlinked dimensions: knowing, knowing how to do, and knowing how to be. These are often symbolised by the head, hands and heart.

Empathy

The ability to understand and share the feelings of another.^[i] Empathy has also been described as the ability to “put oneself in someone else’s shoes”

^[i] www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/empathy

Evaluation

Making a reasoned judgement about something. The term evaluation does not say anything about the judging being done: not about the purpose, or the method or whether the result is good or bad. It only refers to the process.

Evidence

Proof of something. In the context of the Portfolio assessment you are asked to provide evidence of your competence. This evidence refers to anything you think backs up the claims you make about your competence. These could be testimonies from your former participants, reference letters or recommendations from your employer or volunteer manager, certificates from courses and/or examinations you may have taken, proof that you participated in or tried to access on-the-job or other training, or anything else you think demonstrates the extent to which you assess yourself as competent. Evidence can take different forms too – video, audio recordings, photos, blogs, and so on. Getting input from the young people you work with or asking someone you know and trust, and who knows you in your youth-work context, to review your self-assessment are also good ways of gaining evidence to back up your competence assessment.

Intercultural competence

Intercultural competence is a combination of attitudes, knowledge, understanding and skills applied through action which enables one, either singly or together with others, to:

- understand and respect people who are perceived to have different cultural affiliations from oneself
- respond appropriately, effectively and respectfully when interacting and communicating with such people
- establish positive and constructive relationships with such people
- understand oneself and one's own multiple cultural affiliations through encounters with cultural 'difference'.

While the definition of intercultural competence provided above states that such competence involves respecting people who are perceived to have different cultural affiliations from oneself, it is important to distinguish between respect for *people* and respect for *actions*. Human beings and their inalienable human rights, and the dignity and equality of all people, should always be respected, but there are limits on the respect which should be accorded to actions: respect should be withheld from actions which violate the fundamental principles of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Actions which violate these principles should not be condoned on the grounds of 'cultural difference'.^[i]

[i] Source: Barrett, M., Byram, M., Lázár, I. and Mompoin-Gaillard, P., Stravroula Philippou, [*Developing Intercultural Competence through Education*](#), Council of Europe, Directorate of Democratic Citizenship and Participation, January 2013

Knowledge

What someone individually knows or the sum of what a given group collectively knows. In education, knowledge is what there is to learn, but this does not mean that it is good or useful. It has to be joined up with skills (to become useful) and with principles and values (to become worthwhile).

Learning outcomes

The results of a learning process. These can be expressed in many ways (not only through certificates) and they can be measured in many ways (not only exams). Recorded learning outcomes are just snapshots of a given moment in time in any learning process.

Life-Long Learning

The ‘ongoing, voluntary, and self-motivated’^[i] pursuit of knowledge for personal or professional reasons. The idea of Life-Long Learning recognises that learning is not confined to childhood or the classroom but takes place throughout life and in a range of situations. During the last fifty years, constant scientific and technological change has shown that learning takes place constantly through daily interactions with others with the world around us^[ii]. Research shows that Life-Long Learning can improve personal development, active citizenship and social inclusion.^[iii]

^[i] Department of Education and Science, Learning for Life: White Paper on Adult Education. Dublin: Stationery Office, 2000. Available online at: www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/fe_aduled_wp.pdf

^[ii] Definition adapted from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lifelong_learning

^[iii] Commission of the European Communities, [Adult learning: It is never too late to learn.](#) COM(2006) 614 final. Brussels, 2006

Qualification

An official record or document testifying to the fact that a person has successfully completed a given course or reached a given standard of achievement for a field, skill or competence. It is often used as a synonym for a certificate or diploma.

Prejudice

Preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience.^[i] Prejudice is most often negative, and prejudices are rarely borne out by facts or evidence.

^[i] Source <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/prejudice>

Recognition

A formal and often legal way of showing that participation in learning and its outcomes are worth something or valuable. Certification is a form of formal recognition. There are also less formal forms of recognition, known as **social recognition**. This means that the wider community of practice considers something valuable even though it may not have official documents to ‘prove’ its worth.

Skill

The combination of knowledge and experience needed to perform a specific task or job. ‘Skilled’ refers to someone who has learned what to do and how to do it, and can show this.

Solidarity

Unity or agreement of feeling or action, especially among individuals with a common interest; support for others experiencing some difficulty or challenge with which one or one's group / community can identify; mutual support within a group.^[i]

^[i] Adapted from <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/solidarity?q=solidarity>

Stereotype

a widely-held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing.^[i] Stereotypes can be positive or negative. Usually, there is some "truth" underlying stereotypes.

^[i] Source: <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/stereotype>

Tolerance of ambiguity

The ability to tolerate different interests, expectations, and needs, and to make allowances for them in the process of establishing understanding between people or in other new situations or situations of uncertainty.^[i]

^[i] Adapted from: Otten, H., *Ten Theses on the correlation between European youth encounters, intercultural learning and demands on full and part-time staff in these encounters*, IKAB, 1997: http://www.ikab.de/reports/Otten_thesen_en_1997.pdf

Validation

As with recognition, this refers to a process for establishing the formal and/or informal worth or value of something. In the educational field it refers to the recognition of learning progress and outcomes as valid and valuable.

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