



### III HOW TO SUPPORT THE YOUTHPASS SELF-ASSESSMENT

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Have you ever built a house? Even if you haven't done it yet, imagine for a moment the process of building it. It can be an elaborate house of your dreams, or just a simple bungalow. Imagine the whole process step by step - starting from pouring the foundations, building the outside walls, installing windows and doors, completing all the smaller pieces of work along the way, and laying the tiles on the roof. Some things will go according to the original plan, but there are many unexpected challenges to overcome along the way. Eventually, the house is finished and you want to take a picture of it. What do you need the picture for? Do you want

to take it only for yourself, to keep in your own private album? Or would you like to share it with your closest friends? Or perhaps you want to post it on Instagram and share it with the world. Depending on your intentions, you will look for the best possible angle from which to take it. This may be easiest if the picture is only for your personal use; you have been part of the process and you know it inside out already. But what kind of photo will transmit all the beauty and uniqueness of this house to other people?

If we compare the Youthpass process, which implies a personal engagement to learning and commitment to ongoing reflection, to the process of building a house, the moment you produce the Youthpass certificate is the equivalent of taking the best possible shot of that house when it is done. So before you start providing support to your participants in doing so, you need to understand what angle they are looking for. In other words, before you begin the Youthpass self-assessment process with them it would be good to ask your participants

*“Why do you need the Youthpass certificate  
and how would you like to use it?”*

Obviously, there are many different answers to these questions. In this Handbook we tackle some of the most frequent ones, represented here in the form of these four keywords:

**MYSELF**

**JOB**

**VALIDATION**

**EDUCATION**

## 1. “I NEED THE YOUTHPASS FOR MYSELF”

If the answer is “I need the Youthpass for myself”, your role in the self-assessment process will be much less focused on the form than on the content. Learners have complete freedom to describe their learning outcomes in their own words.

Here, you can focus on

- explaining the Youthpass self-assessment process and its value,
- describing the concept of key competences for lifelong learning,
- providing support tools for writing down learning outcomes,
- giving encouraging feedback on the text,
- assisting with the technical process of producing the certificate.

This kind of self-assessment is often done in a diary style. In existing Youthpass-related handbooks, a lot is said about how to approach a Youthpass self-assessment for personal reasons. In this Handbook, we want to go a step further and explore how to support participants who are working on their self-assessment for other purposes, such as employment, further education, or validation.

### SUGGESTED TOOLS TO USE:

Tools

Two sides of the coin, The cheat sheet, Connecting the dots, Learning outcomes interview, Pyramid of learning, Take it to a new level, Learning with emotions, Should it stay or should it go

## Note

### THE VALUE OF YOUTHPASS FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT

Regardless why it is being done, the value of working on one's Youthpass certificate can be summed up as follows:

1. It gives the learner a sense of completion with regard to the learning process they underwent during the project.
2. It allows them a well-deserved self-recognition of the achievements and competences gained in the project.
3. It is an excellent opportunity to practice self-assessment skills, thus enhancing their overall self-awareness and developing a highly relevant and transferable skill.
4. If properly supported by a learning facilitator or one's peers, it is often experienced as empowering and a great boost to participants' confidence.
5. It can be helpful as a basis for describing one's competences to others later on.

## 2. YOUTHPASS SELF-ASSESSMENT:

### From personal use to other purposes

Working on a Youthpass self-assessment for other purposes (employment, education or validation) will be essentially different than working on it purely for oneself. The main aim is to produce a certificate that can aid one's life choices or career path. In these cases, the support process can be summarised in the following three steps:

Explore



Match



Prove

Explore

- Explore the goals and needs of the participant. What will they use their Youthpass certificate for?
- Encourage them to research their “target” (e.g., job, validation procedure or educational institution), especially the competences these targets require.

## Match

- Identify the match between the competences required by the target and the competences developed in the project.
- When describing the competences, find a way to reconcile the language used by the target and the language of the youth work field.

## Prove

- Support participants in describing their learning outcomes while referring to the competences required by their target.
- Ensure they provide evidence to back up each claim (e.g., examples of how they demonstrated a given competence during the project).
- Verify whether the language used in the text is understood by someone less familiar with European youth programmes.

In the following sections, we provide more detailed guidelines on how to support the Youthpass self-assessment process for a range of specific purposes, namely applying for a job, enrolling in an educational programme, or preparing for a validation process.

### 3. "I'M APPLYING FOR A JOB"

If the learner intends to use the Youthpass certificate to apply for a job, there are three steps to be done in order to support them in the most effective way.

#### ENSURE TRANSFERABILITY

step 1

- Ensure that the learner understands what Youthpass is and what to expect of it. Also, clarify what Youthpass is not, specifically mentioning that it is not a proof of qualification nor a formal confirmation of acquired competences.
- Explain how they can transfer the competences gained in one field to another; e.g., from European youth projects to professional contexts.
- Highlight the potential benefits of using Youthpass in the job application process, such as:
  - a. It may give the potential employer additional information about the applicant's interests and level of initiative and proactivity.
  - b. It may give the potential employer information about the competences the candidate has acquired in another context.
  - c. Since the certificate is based on self-assessment, it may also deliver an impression about the applicant's level of self-awareness and ability to assess themselves in a balanced way.

## question

### CAN COMPETENCES GAINED IN EUROPEAN YOUTH PROJECTS BE TRANSFERRED TO OTHER PROFESSIONAL FIELDS?

As shown in the introduction to this Handbook, there is a growing body of evidence about the relevance of competences gained in non-formal settings and how they correspond with what is required in the labour market. In most cases, these competences relate to what are known as transversal skills (e.g., communication skills, organisational skills, teamwork, self-management, flexibility, openness for learning, diversity awareness, etc.), many of which are developed in European youth projects. However, in some cases participants also develop very relevant technical competences that can be transferred to other professional contexts (e.g., training skills, elderly care skills, construction skills, digital competences, research skills, etc.).

## CLARIFY THE TARGET FOR TRANSFERRING COMPETENCES

Once participants have developed an understanding of Youthpass and its potential benefits, it is time to start working on the transferability of what they have learned to other fields.

### step 2

- First, clarify if the potential job is within the youth field or in a completely different professional context. It will be easier to transfer one's skills gained in European youth projects to another youth (work) context than to some other fields. However, there are projects, especially in international volunteering, where the actual project activities are from the same professional field as the participant's potential career choice. In this case, transferability is not limited to "transversal competences"; technical competences are equally relevant.



Are competences to be transferred within the youth field or to other contexts?



- Invite the learner to research similar job ads online to work out what competences they require. The task is two-fold: to make a list of all the commonly required competences in the targeted industry, and to pay attention to the language used to describe them.
- Explore the connection between the learning outcomes of the current European youth project and the competences mentioned in the ads. Reflect further about the competences developed during the project. Is there a match? If so, make a list of the most common ones. Please note that this process may require some translation work from you to help the learner find the equivalent for the competences from the ads. For example, what is the youth work equivalent for “customer orientation” or “resilience”?

## question

DO YOU SPEAK THE EMPLOYER'S LANGUAGE?  
SOME TYPICAL COMPETENCES MENTIONED IN JOB ADS:

Accountability, adaptability, attention to detail, clear communication, confidence, conflict management, creativity, developing others, emotional control, flexibility, handling stress, integrity, leading teams, open-mindedness, openness for learning, proactive thinking, problem solving, project management, results orientation, self-management, taking initiative, teamwork, etc.

## TARGETED SELF-ASSESSMENT

Once the list of common competences is established, the actual self-assessment starts with the following question: Which competences on this list have you developed during this project? Invite the participant to write one short paragraph for each competence describing how the project helped them develop it. In doing so, follow these guidelines:

step 3

- a. Practice using the employer's "competence language" when describing your learning outcomes.
- b. Avoid using youth work jargon that will not be understood by an employer outside the youth field.
- c. Back up your claims. Provide concrete examples of the situations in the project during which you demonstrated the competence in question.

Finally, help the participant to cluster their self-assessment according to the Key Competences framework in the certificate.

## Note

### THE YOUTHPASS SELF-ASSESSMENT AS A WAY TO DEVELOP ESSENTIAL SKILLS

By practicing this kind of self-assessment – and bridging the gap between the two worlds – the participants also develop flexibility and adaptability, both highly relevant skills when transferring competences to a different context.

In a Serbian study,\* young employees confirmed the transferability of their competences gained in the youth field and non-formal learning to a different organisational culture. However, they also underlined that this transferability was never automatic. Instead, it required a great deal of personal flexibility and adaptability for them to apply their competences in another context.

An enhanced awareness of one's own competences and the ability to back up their existence are both essential skills when applying for jobs. They should be used when preparing one's cover letter as well as during the job interview.

\* Sever Džigurski and Darko Marković. [Study of the impact of NFE in youth work](#) (NAPOR, 2014)

### SUGGESTED TOOLS TO USE:

#### Tools

The cheat sheet, You need me - I am worth it, Pyramid of learning, CARD GAME: Name your competences, Show me your STARS, Dream Job.

## 4. "I AM PREPARING FOR VALIDATION"

Some of the participants or volunteers may wish to use their Youthpass for validation purposes. In case you are unfamiliar with validation, the term refers to acquiring a formally recognised qualification without attending formal training or education in that field. It requires the person to document that they acquired the necessary competences through life experience and informal and non-formal learning. The key to all validation processes, regardless of the methodology, is providing evidence for one's claims. It often requires creating a portfolio and submitting it for assessment. If the assessment is positive, one may be granted a full or partial qualification.<sup>19</sup>

### Validation of non-formal and informal learning in the EU

The European Council's 2012 Recommendation called upon Member States to put in place, by no later than 2018, arrangements enabling individuals to have their knowledge, skills and competences acquired via non-formal and informal learning validated. To achieve that goal, a growing number of European countries have been developing validation systems. It is a good idea to get up-to-date information on the provisions that apply for validation in your context. This can be done by consulting the regularly updated European Inventory on Validation.

Typically, a full validation process involves the following four phases:

1. **IDENTIFICATION** of individual's learning outcomes acquired through non-formal and informal learning;
2. **DOCUMENTATION** of individual's learning outcomes acquired through non-formal and informal learning;
3. **ASSESSMENT** of individual's learning outcomes acquired through non-formal and informal learning;
4. **CERTIFICATION** of the results of the assessment of individual's learning outcomes acquired through non-formal and informal learning in the form of a qualification, or credits leading to a qualification, or in another form, as appropriate.

<sup>19</sup> European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/3073> and European Inventory on Validation: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/validation-non-formal-and-informal-learning/european-inventory>

Even though the Youthpass scheme did not originally intend to serve the purpose of formal recognition (validation) of competences or qualifications, it can potentially contribute in at least two ways to this context:

1. **Youthpass certificate** as a piece of evidence and to be included in the validation portfolio;
2. **Youthpass self-assessment process** as a help to practice reflective writing and to back up one`s claims, demonstrating the competences developed in action.

TO SUPPORT PARTICIPANTS WHO ARE CONSIDERING TO USE YOUTHPASS FOR VALIDATION, YOU CAN DO THE FOLLOWING:

step 1

Ask them to research the validation process and its requirements thoroughly. Specifically, they should work out what competences are required for the desired qualification and what kind of evidence is accepted.

step 2

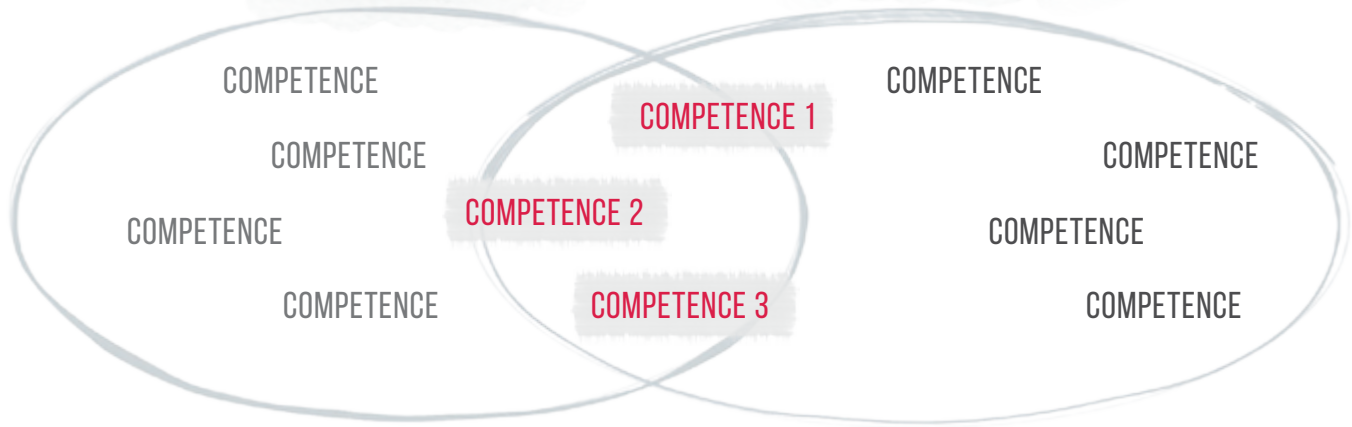
Assess the relevance of the European youth programme activity for the desired qualification. Verify to what extent the desired competences have been developed through the activity.

step 3

Once a match between the required and developed competences is established, ask participants to complete a self-assessment for those that are relevant. It is important not just to claim that they have developed that competence during the project, but also to back up that claim. Invite participants to use their Youthpass self-assessment to practice backing up their claims. What evidence can they provide to confirm they have acquired a certain competence?

Competences developed during the European youth project

Competences required for the qualification



What evidence do you have to prove that you have developed these competences in the project?

Ask participants to consider including their Youthpass certificate as evidence in their validation portfolio, or to just copy the elements of their Youthpass self-assessment, or both. They should plan their further steps in the validation process.

step 4

#### SUGGESTED TOOLS TO USE:

The cheat sheet, Learning outcomes interview, Pyramid of learning, Show me your STARS

tools

## 5. "I WANT TO ENROL IN FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING"

Sometimes a former volunteer or participant may wish to use their Youthpass certificate when enrolling in a degree course or entering a formal training programme. Their reasons for doing so may vary depending on the situation: for instance, to obtain additional points for their volunteering placement, to have their previous experience and learning recognised so they can skip some parts of the curriculum, or to use their Youthpass certificate as proof of foreign language competence instead of an official language assessment certificate when enrolling at university in another country. Nevertheless, when it comes to further education, learners should inquire with the school/university/training provider whether Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) is possible and what kind of evidence is needed. After getting exact information about the process, you can go ahead and support the learner as outlined in the previous two sections.

### SUGGESTED TOOLS TO USE:

tools

The cheat sheet, You need me - I am worth it, Pyramid of learning, CARD GAME: Name your competences, Show me your STARS, Dream Job.





## Examples of self-assessment styles:

### I Diary style

#### DESCRIBING ACTIVITIES

One way for learners in European youth programmes to approach their Youthpass self-assessment is to use “diary language”, which means describing the activities they have taken part in with a limited reference to the competence development. Diary language is often full of project-specific jargon. While this style is quite suitable for personal use, it has very limited value when it comes to using the Youthpass outside international youth work context.

*Example* “We worked together in groups. I came up with ideas and together with the others we developed them. I worked hard for my group and in my group and I was trying the best I could to follow the instructions to get a good result. Making presentations in a foreign language.”

### II Summary style

#### LISTING THE COMPETENCES

Another approach commonly used in Youthpass certificates is just to list one's newly developed competences without backing up the claims. This is a good basis for enhancing the use of Youthpass, but requires some additional work to make such certificate more accessible and convincing for someone from the “outside world”.

*Example* “I learned how to turn the ideas into action. I learned how to be creative and innovative. I learned that I have to be brave in taking risks and I learned more about project management.”



## Examples of self-assessment styles:

### III Convincing style

#### NAMING COMPETENCES AND PROVIDING EVIDENCE

To enhance the applicability of Youthpass certificates and transferability of competences gained in a project, it is recommended to clearly name the competence gained (using the language of the “target”) and providing evidence of one’s claims (i.e., providing concrete examples of how applying this competence in practice led to a positive outcome). Below is an example of the STAR<sup>20</sup> format for providing evidence. This technique can also be used to make statements about one’s competences in a CV, cover letters or during a job interview.

**Example** “During the project I improved my flexibility when working in a team. I worked with a team of eight other young people planning a local campaign project for two months. Suddenly, due to funding cuts, some of our original ideas could no longer be realised, so we needed to reschedule everything. Although I was personally very much attached to some of the original activities, I agreed to merge some of the planned activities and dropping others, while keeping the main goal of the campaign in mind. The situation led to better team unity and afterwards to a successful campaign.”

The STAR approach is suitable for use not only when describing successful situations – it can also be applied to situations involving failure, when the outcome was what the individual learnt or realised in that situation. This allows learners to demonstrate openness for learning and commitment to self-development.

<sup>20</sup> Interview Skills Consulting Ltd. [The Successful Interview Guide](#) (2003-2016). STAR and similar approaches used in competency-based job interviews.



Describe a **situation** where you have demonstrated or learnt the competence that you are presenting.



What were the **tasks** you had to complete in that situation; what were the specific challenges you had to address.



What were the **actions** you took to complete these tasks and how did you deal with those challenges.



What were the **results** of your actions; what have you learnt from that situation.



The STAR format for providing evidence of your competences