



Education and Culture DG

'Youth in Action' Programme

# **YOUTHPASS IN EVS**

**Youth in Action Programme**

## **INFO KIT**

**Part 2**

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## 1. EVS as a learning experience

Being an EVS volunteer is a valuable personal, social and cultural experience, which allows the volunteer to express initiative and solidarity by providing a service to the benefit of the community. For some EVS is a way to do something good for the community or to support a specific cause or group. For others it is a chance to try something different and explore a new country and a new culture.

Beyond this, EVS is an important learning experience for the volunteer and participation in EVS enhances her/his professional skills and competences and thus makes the volunteer more attractive to potential employers. To help her/him reflect and put words on what she/he has learned, the European Commission introduced Youthpass.

Youthpass is an instrument that supports young people in making best use of the experiences they have had during their participation in the Programme. The Youthpass Certificate can be a useful document to describe the learning outcomes of an EVS project to future employers or to formal education institutions recognising competences acquired through non-formal learning experiences. This document briefly explains how Youthpass works and how it can help volunteers to fully benefit from the EVS experience.

## 2. What is the Youthpass Certificate?

The Youthpass Certificate confirms and recognises that a person has carried out a service as a volunteer abroad, and it acknowledges some of the competences she/he has learned and developed during the voluntary service. The Youthpass Certificate consists of three parts:

- **Part one** certifies that the volunteer participated in EVS. It provides personal details of the volunteer, the service period in the project and a general description of EVS.
- **Part two** gives a description of the specific project, the role, tasks and training undertaken by the volunteer, as well as a description of the activities of the Host Organisation and the name of the Sending Organisation.
- **Part three** is a description of the learning outcomes the volunteer achieved during the voluntary service.

## 3. Why is there Youthpass in EVS?

Youthpass can be used to confirm that a person has participated in EVS and to describe what she/he learned through the voluntary service. As such it can be used as an addition to the CV when applying for jobs or courses.

Even more interesting is the educational impact that the Youthpass process can have. By following the learning process and preparing the learning outcomes for Youthpass, volunteers need to plan, follow and assess their own learning. Most volunteers have experience with learning in formal education; like school or university, but it might be the first time that they find themselves in a situation where they themselves will be responsible for their own learning and development. In this sense, Youthpass can

improve and increase the learning within an EVS project, and the Youthpass Certificate makes this learning visible.

#### 4. Who is responsible for Youthpass?

The organisations (**promoters**) involved in EVS must inform the volunteers about Youthpass. If a volunteer wishes to receive a Youthpass Certificate, the organisation/mentor has to support her/him with this.

In order to **issue a Youthpass Certificate** at the end of the service period, the promoter needs to register on the Youthpass website: [www.youthpass.eu](http://www.youthpass.eu). The project and the participant details have to be entered, before the Youthpass Certificate is validated and generated.

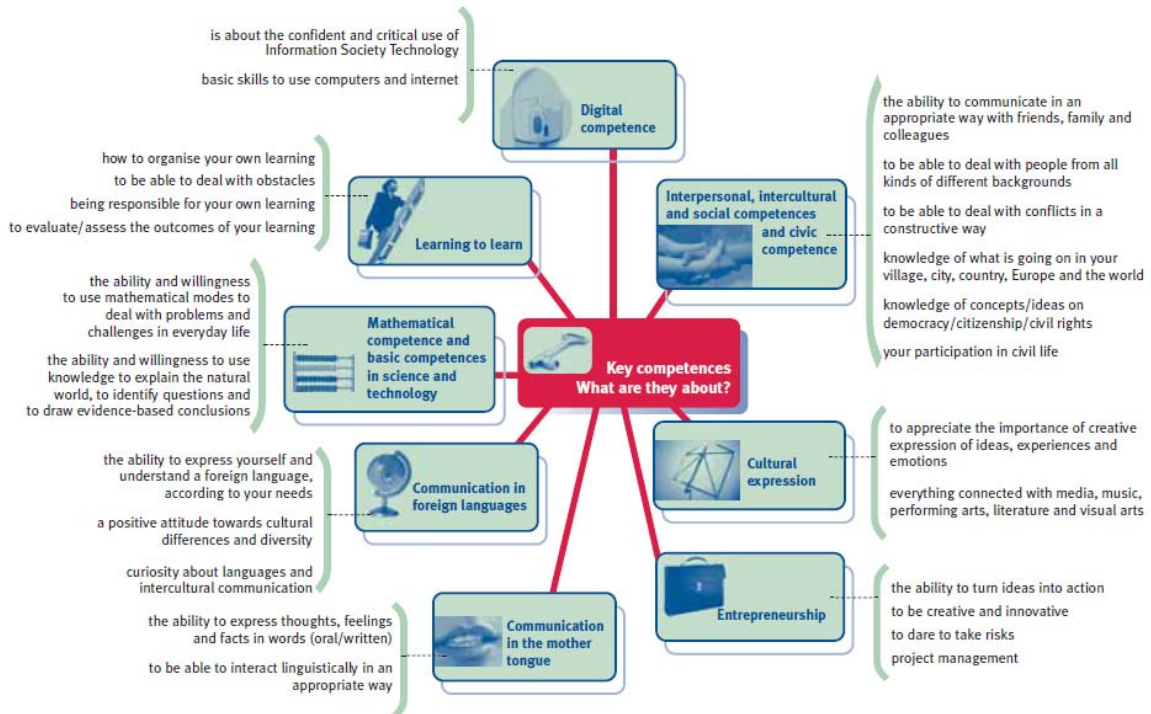
Since Youthpass is not only a certificate, but also a tool aimed at promoting the learning process throughout an EVS project, the following aspects should be kept in mind:

- Every volunteer should have a **mentor**: it is recommended that the mentor and the volunteer start a dialogue about learning. This can be a part of the reflection/evaluation meetings between them during the service period. This dialogue about experience and learning is important in order to give the volunteer the chance to reflect on and deepen the learning experience. Observations and inputs from another person are often needed for the volunteer to become aware of hers/his needs and progress. The mentor follows the volunteer's personal development and sees changes and improvements in the skills, knowledge and attitudes. Through dialogue the mentor can help volunteers to be more specific about what they have learned and how they learned it.
- **The EVS Training and Evaluation Cycle** also supports the volunteer's learning process. During the service period, all volunteers have the right and obligation to attend the *on arrival training* and the *mid-term-evaluation*. Together with the evaluation at the *Annual EVS event* after the service period is completed, these meetings help the volunteers to prepare, improve, and evaluate the EVS experience. During the meeting there is time to share questions and common experiences with other volunteers, and the time away from the project can help volunteers to take a step back and reflect on their expectations and experiences.
- The main responsibility of the learning process rests with the **volunteer her-/himself**. It is therefore important that the volunteer already before the start of the service period is aware that Youthpass is not something that can be done in the last few days of the EVS project. Although the Youthpass Certificate will be completed at the end of the service, it reflects an ongoing process during the entire EVS experience – from preparation to follow up.

#### 5. Key competences

Youthpass is particularly designed to assess certain key competences. These key competences were adopted by the European Commission in 2006 as a reference instrument for policy makers, employers, educational institutions and for the learners themselves. They are competences that equip people for adult life and are the basis for lifelong learning. These competences are essential for personal fulfilment and development, for active citizenship, social inclusion and employment.

Below is a table showing all 8 key competences. In this table the key competences are adapted to learning in the youth work context<sup>1</sup>:



## 6. Importance of reflection

Reflection is a crucial element in learning. It is through reflection that one can look back at experiences, understand them and incorporate them into new concepts or ways of thinking. It is therefore important to regularly take time to look back and digest the experiences. The EVS Training and Evaluation Cycle should give the time and space for this.

For reflecting:			
What did I learn?	How did I learn it?	Who helped me learning it?	When did I learn it? (AHA moment)
For setting objectives/identifying learning interests:			
What do I want to learn?	How would I like to learn it?	Who needs to help me learning it? (Whom do I need to learn it?)	When do I plan to learn it?

## 7. Further Reading

Youthpass guide: <http://www.youthpass.eu/en/youthpass/guide/>

Youthpass in the EVS Training and Evaluation Cycle:

[http://www.youthpass.eu/downloads/13-62-57/Publication\\_YP\\_EVS.pdf](http://www.youthpass.eu/downloads/13-62-57/Publication_YP_EVS.pdf)

<sup>1</sup> The table was developed by Paul Kloosterman and is taken from the Youthpass guide, p. 39.