

# Youthpass and how to use it in EVS projects

Youthpass<sup>1</sup>. Is it really more than an obligation? What is there for me? Why should EVS volunteers desire to have one? Youthpass (YP) has several functions we could foresee through practising using it:

## It is:

- a) Document, certificate, a confirmation of participation in youth non-formal education activity. Reporting not only the participation in the event itself, but as well the learning process that the participant in such activity undertook and description of competencies, which has been developed via that learning process.
- b) Self-evaluation tool working with 8 Key competencies for lifelong learning (European Reference Framework for the European Union countries and the Commission<sup>2</sup>).
- c) Recognition tool helping with recognition of non-formal education as valuable part of the lifelong learning educational mix (formal, non-formal and informal education).

These functions define the YP pretty well.

## Responsibility X (E)S(s)ense

In EVS the coordinating organisation (usually the receiving organisation) has a responsibility to inform volunteer about the possibility to receive Youthpass in the end of his/her project and if there is interest to support the volunteer with filling it in.

(Again make a lot of sense that it is the receiving organisation who is doing that as they spent most of the Voluntary Service time with the volunteer.)

It might feel as an obligation and burden...so how to see more behind the whole YP thing?

Here what we mentioned in point a) and b) applies well. It is a tool, a service and methodology given to you to use in order to support volunteers learning process and self-development.

Isn't that actually awesome, that you don't need to work on it hard on your own but you can use all the support available, lean into a framework which has been set and experimented thought?

At the bottom of this article, you find several useful links for materials and activities, which can help you to implement work with the Youthpass into your EVS cycle.

Now let's have closer look what is the essence of the Youthpass as a self-evaluation tool.

The essence is working with Key competencies framework.

## Key competencies in the YP are eight:

*Communication in the mother tongue*

*Communication in foreign languages*

*Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology*

*Digital competence*

*Learning to learn*

*Social and civic competence*

*Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship*

*Cultural awareness and expression*

You can find a very nice description of each of them with guiding questions especially regarding EVS at the Youthpass official website (<https://www.youthpass.eu/en/youthpass/for/evs/keycompetences/>) – click for each of them to find guiding questions.

It is important to have understanding what competence means and share this understanding with volunteers before actual working with this framework.

For clarification, each competence consists of knowledge, skills and attitude.

Developing competencies are never ending process and therefore we talk about lifelong learning. Much more can find in link under this article for you to read and get inspired.

## When a volunteer is mourning: But honestly, why it is useful for me?

Very often as a coordinator you might face the situation that volunteer doesn't see any sense in receiving the Youthpass and they might be asking you why it is important to have one.

Well, it is definitely not be forced, but offered. Sometimes, unfortunately volunteers start to see sense in having the Youthpass only later after they finished. It is good to give them some motivation to finish it and some idea how they can use it further.

### The two main reasons why it is useful are:

- It is the only official document, which describes and confirms participation in European Voluntary Service – such kind of document might be needed to proof that participation towards different institutions, university of the (future) employer.
- It is collective written self-evaluation and proof of undertaking education (not only volunteering and free-time) programme, it commits ability to learn and self-reflect. All done in a structured and understandable way. So even after several months or years, while reading it you can re-construct easily the experience that has been gained. That can be useful once somebody is asking you about your competences and how you can proof their development etc.

## Europass X Youthpass – How many passes we need to pass to another level?

Often the question what is the relation between Europass and Youthpass is set.

There is, until now, no clear connection.

Europass is way more used and know. But is not serving needs of proofing non-formal education experience.

There is, however, a nice complementarity in those two, and when creating your own Europass portfolio you can include Youthpass(es) into it as attachments of the portfolio and you can easily relate to them in several sections of the Europass CV format.

## Few tips and ideas how to implement work with Youthpass into an EVS project

- Don't start in the end, start with the end at the beginning instead – try to set and plan some **learning goals** with a volunteer, some checkpoints, regular **meetings**, achievements to be reached – How would you like to find yourself in the end of your EVS project? Too far? How would like to... in 3 months? ...
- Try to propose some system of **recording of the learning outcomes**. Make sense to work more on and with competence Learning to Learn and Sense of Initiative from the beginning to develop the skill of self-reflection. It can anything like **LAB** (learning achievement book), **Learning Journal** or even some gamification using badges etc.

- If you for some reason don't see yourself in that role of support person for learning (you might have many other things to do, you are the responsible for work division etc.) you can try to delegate that task to somebody else in the team – to find some Learning process buddy or coach or even better, if you have capable EVS Mentor, it can be a very nice role for them – but in that case it is always necessary to provide Mentor with sufficient introduction and training into such role and keep a continuous cooperation. In any case, it is always useful if the mentor is somehow involved in Youthpass process.
- Get inspired by the materials bellow, by your colleague coordinators in other organisations or just be open for experiments. Try to ask directly volunteers what would be helpful for them in the process. They might have wonderful suggestions.



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## *Resources and links*

### **Official Youthpass website –**

*Key Competences for Lifelong Learning, European Reference Framework; official brochure with nice explanation of each of the eight Key Competences -*<http://www.alfa-trall.eu/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/EU2007-keyCompetencesL3-brochure.pdf>

*Youthpass unfolded; very nice methodology books with several activities how to work with YP –* <https://www.youthpass.eu/en/youthpass/for/evs/keycompetences/>

*Youthpass in the EVS cycle; brochure with explanations of YP in EVS and methods especially for EVS project, we really tried to repeat much which has been written in this already –* [https://www.youthpass.eu/downloads/13-62-57/Publication\\_YP\\_EVS.pdf](https://www.youthpass.eu/downloads/13-62-57/Publication_YP_EVS.pdf)

*The story of Youthpass video; can be very helpful to explain your colleagues and volunteers why to spend time on Youthpass –* <https://www.youthpass.eu/en/youthpass/downloads/video/>

*Youthpass statistics and Impact Study; little statistics party never killed somebody...for those who like it numbered! –* <https://www.youthpass.eu/en/youthpass/statistics/>, <https://www.youthpass.eu/en/youthpass/downloads/youthpass-impact-study/>

<sup>1</sup> *„Youthpass is a European recognition tool for non-formal and informal learning in youth work. Youthpass is for projects funded by Erasmus+ Youth in Action and Youth in Action programmes. With Youthpass the participants of these projects can describe what they have done and show what they have learnt.“ Resource:* <https://www.youthpass.eu/en/youthpass/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=URISERV%3Ac11090>

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