

Non-formal youth work on European Citizenship

in the framework of the «Youth in Action» programme

The European Union youth programme «Youth in Action» has just entered its third generation and spans over 7 years from 2007 to 2013. Under its Priority 1 «European Citizenship» it brings together four spheres in a specific constellation, namely youth work, non-formal education, intercultural learning, and European citizenship. The set of basic characteristics of non-formal youth work projects on European Citizenship introduced in this document refer first and foremost to projects combining all four areas in their approach – which are related and connected to one another and should be seen as complementary.

Non-formal education and youth work are based on a shared belief in common principles and values subsumed under the notions of human rights, democracy and peace.

European Citizenship is a notion based on the same shared values and, in a nutshell, is: disassociated from belonging to a particular territory and connected with voluntarily chosen belongings to value-based communities of practice; a complementary rather than an exclusive identity; an ongoing process of re-negotiating power structures and relations (rights and responsibilities, theories and practices) among and between citizens themselves as well as citizens and institutions; an active role of citizens in their different communities across social, cultural, economic and political domains; locally rooted practice and collective work in progress.

Based on, informed by and aiming for human rights, democracy and peace, non-formal youth work projects on European Citizenship should therefore combine:

<i>European Citizenship</i>	with	<i>Intercultural Learning</i>	<i>Non-formal Education</i>	<i>Youth Work</i>
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and in doing so, should:

be based on the described understanding of European Citizenship and hence:

- ⊙ encourage and work with European communities of practice (**be collective**),
- ⊙ take up and take in diverse forms of active, democratic citizenship (**be inclusive**),
- ⊙ address values and beliefs as well as attitudes, knowledge and skills (**be holistic**),
- ⊙ include several dimensions of identity, belonging, and practice (**be multi-dimensional**)
- ⊙ locate interactions with larger frameworks of power (**be power-conscious**).

respect the principles of non-formal education and learning and therefore:

- ⊙ make results available, have a planned follow-up, valorise outcome (**be accessible**),
- ⊙ be based on participants' needs and co-constructed with them (**be learner-centred**),
- ⊙ be assessed in a collective process without judgement on individuals (**be evaluated**),

- ⊙ be based on the intrinsic motivation and self-responsibility of learners **(be voluntary)**,
- ⊙ be based on collective and individual experiences of people **(be experiential)**.

reflect experiences of youth and community work and consequently:

- ⊙ be rooted in local, authentic situations, communities and needs **(be contextualised)**,
- ⊙ progressively involve and empower young people **(be participatory)**,
- ⊙ improve real-life situations of people, leading to action and change **(be transformative)**,
- ⊙ relate to current discourses and research on issues related to the project **(be informed)**,
- ⊙ provide information, feedback and proposals to policy, practice, research **(be informing)**.

Respond to current demands towards intercultural learning and as a result:

- ⊙ explore cultural realities and conceptual understandings of culture **(be plastic)**,
- ⊙ recognise contesting discourses on culture and their political relevance **(be political)**,
- ⊙ be aware of the limits and dependencies of culture as a concept **(be modest)**,
- ⊙ be aware of the contexts and purposes of intercultural dialogues **(be sensitive)**,
- ⊙ explore identity and connectivity beyond culture, individuals and Europe **(be complex)**.

