



»LOOKING FORWARD, LOOKING BACK«

15 YEARS OF  
Support, Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities

**salto|youth**

**SALTO-YOUTH**  
RESOURCE CENTRES



Erasmus+

## EDITORIAL INFO

Published and written by SALTO-Youth Network,  
April 2015

Coordination and editing: Jonathan Bowyer  
Coordination support: Małgorzata Pawłowska,  
SALTO Eastern Europe and Caucasus RC

Visual design: BrandAbout

Layout: Jerzy Parfianowicz

Photos: SALTO-Youth Projects/Events

# Table of contents

- 5 Welcome
- 6 In Transition: A European perspective on Youth work and non-formal education in Eastern Partnership countries and Russia
- 10 European Voluntary Service in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus: How to feed a hippo?
- 15 The challenge of a new adventure: EVS accreditation in South Mediterranean countries
- 20 Euromed Youth Cooperation: A Permanent Miracle
- 26 Building capacities and paving the way for EU integration: The role of SALTO South East Europe Resource Centre in increasing the quality of youth work in the Western Balkans
- 30 Support for European Volunteering in the Western Balkans through Accreditation
- 34 15 years SALTO Inclusion 15 lessons to boost inclusion
- 38 Acknowledgment and recognition of youth work's contribution to social entrepreneurship
- 41 Engaged and active: Exploring new forms of youth participation
- 44 European Training Strategy 2015-2020: Supporting the development of quality youth work in Europe through capacity building
- 47 Attention to learning through Youthpass: what difference does it make to youth work?
- 50 The "slippery" road towards validation of non-formal learning in youth work: Competence development and profiles, validation and its procedures in touch with youth work settings
- 53 The SALTO Tools for Learning Strategy
- 55 15 years of SALTO support online



## Welcome!

Welcome to the SALTO-YOUTH Resources Centres 15 year celebration publication. This collection of articles from colleagues across the network is intended to inform, stimulate and contribute to thinking about work in the youth field in Europe and its partner regions.

The SALTO network; a group of 8 resource centres located with National Agencies of the Erasmus+: Youth in Action Programme; is a diverse collection of experts, influencers, coordinators, facilitators and trainers. Since the first SALTO training courses in 2000, thousands of people who work with and for young people, have benefitted from trainings, publications, web resources, contacts and advice. If you are interested to understand the reach of the SALTO Network, read some of the great statistics in the article about the history and development of the SALTO website and take a look at the SALTO 'shop window', the website at [www.salto-youth.net](http://www.salto-youth.net). You can also find an overview of the history of the network on the site at [www.salto-youth.net/about/](http://www.salto-youth.net/about/)

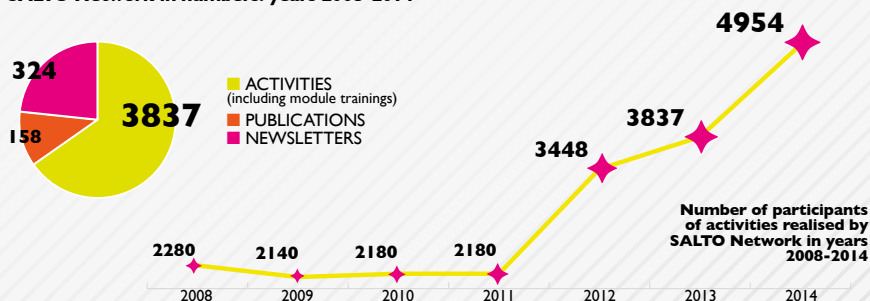
Many of the articles in this publication look back and celebrate achievements but

all of them look forward too; The issues facing young people are ever more complex and opportunities and resources provided by the SALTO network to help navigate them, continue to grow – as the graphs below demonstrate.

Through these articles you will catch a sense of the range of expertise that SALTO Resource Centres have to offer; you will discover some of the big-picture, the background thinking and the history of the work they carry out and you will be challenged to think about the future of work with young people in the European context. The publication is in part an opportunity for the SALTO Network to 'blow its own trumpet' but as always with SALTO, there is a desire to be useful and practical. We hope that you will digest the information and discuss the questions posed. Just as the SALTO Resource Centres have been bringing people together for 15 years to learn and cooperate on important subjects relevant to European Youth Work, we hope that this publication will help you make connections between your own work and that of others.

*Jonathan Bowyer*  
EDITOR

**SALTO Network in numbers: years 2008-2014**



# In Transition: A European perspective on Youth work and non-formal education in Eastern Partnership countries and Russia

When thinking about countries of Eastern Partnership and Russia it is good to start by asking two questions:

- ? Did youth work exist in the Soviet Union?
- ? Did non-formal education exist in Soviet times?

The answer to the first question is yes. Of course: Soviet communist ideology like all other totalitarian ideologies very actively used youth work as a tool for political education and social control. But, the notion of non-formal education was not known at all. In the Soviet Union young people did not have freedom of choice and volunteerism was not truly voluntary... Some remains of such thinking still exist in societies of post-soviet countries. However, thanks to internal work in particular countries, as well as international exchange of good practices, the situation is changing quite fast.

## EARLY BEGINNINGS

The European Union recognized the needs of the youth field of international support in the region in 2000, opening the YOUTH Programme to seven countries of the former USSR: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia

and Ukraine – first at centralized and, in 2003, at decentralized level. At the same time a decision was made to create a SALTO Resource Centre to be responsible for coordination of the programme in the region, called at that time Eastern Europe and Caucasus (EECA). The centre opened in 2003, in Warsaw.

Since then SALTO Eastern Europe and Caucasus Resource Center (SALTO EECA) has been promoting and supporting youth work based on the principles of non-formal education and European values in the EECA region. The main objective of its work is to encourage participation and involvement of young people in international youth cooperation in the field of non-formal education; promoting international volunteerism and mobility as complementary to formal education, but also a way to raise and strengthen bonds between particular nations. This, in a region with such a complicated history and current international political situation, is of a great value.

The next signal that young people are an important target group for the European Neighborhood Policy was creation in 2007 within Youth in Action Programme, of the new specific Action 3.1 for the cooperation between Programme and Neighbouring Partner Countries. It became very important to involve youth policy actors

from different sectors in order to highlight the European dimension of youth work and youth policy in an Europe-wide context.

## Exploring youth work realities in EECA

It became clear that only with the involvement of all youth stakeholders will the recognition of youth work in the region increase. At that time, the Partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Commission in the field of Youth (YP), already well experienced in similar initiatives taking place in countries of EU, came with an initiative to organize a seminar on youth policy in the EECA region. The event, co-organised by SALTO EECA and the YP, took place in 2008 in The European Youth Centre in Budapest and aimed to gather three types of actors from the youth sector in the region: youth workers (i.e., practitioners from youth organisations), youth policy makers (i.e., decision makers from governmental or self-governmental structures) and youth researchers. The objective of the meeting was to analyze the current state of the art in the countries of the region; to identify similarities and differences in approach towards the topic of youth policy and to support networking and future cooperation in the region in this field.

One year later SALTO EECA and YP organized a second Youth Policy seminar that took place in Poland. It was just a few weeks after the

official launching of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) initiative, which introduced a new EU strategy towards the region and placed emphasis on people-to-people contacts in the spheres of culture, education and youth.

An added value brought by SALTO EECA in the character of these seminars was a new approach, stressing the importance of focusing on the practical dimension of the discussed issues and greater involvement of youth workers in the dialog with decision makers.

One of the outcomes of these two seminars was the creation of an international group of experts on youth policy development in EECA countries to prepare detailed youth policy papers on the situation on youth policy development in individual EECA countries. The results of the research done by this group were presented during the Symposium on Youth Policy in July 2011 in Odessa, which was co-organized, by the YP, SALTO EECA and the Ukrainian Ministry of Science, Education, Youth and Sport. The research and further discussion during the symposium showed that terms like “youth worker” and “non-formal education” are hardly recognized in the EECA region. All the youth work is done on the level of non-governmental organizations, without a comprehensive and sustainable policy of particular governments or their support. As a result of this, the topic of recognition of youth work was chosen by SALTO EECA as one of the key priority for the further activities.

**Was  
Cheburashka  
a first youth  
worker?**





Since 2008 SALTO EECA, together with the YP started organizing Youth Policy seminars almost every year and engaging the national ministry of the hosting country – so far they have taken place in Odessa, Tbilisi, Yerevan and, recently, in Chisinau. As a result of this process, in some of the countries of the region, working groups have emerged, cooperating with ministries responsible for youth affairs.

All these initiatives have brought closer cooperation between SALTO EECA and national governmental institutions in particular countries which are in charge of youth.

In 2009, one year after the first youth policy seminar in Budapest, two study visits were organised: one to Belarus, organized by SALTO EECA with the support of Belarusian Ministry of Education and the second to Azerbaijan, organized by SALTO EECA and Azerbaijani Ministry of Youth and Sport. These events are particularly significant because of the fact that Belarus and Azerbaijan were and still are the less active countries in the region in the field of international youth cooperation; therefore more efforts need to be taken to increase their participation. What is more, the Azerbaijani Ministry also started establishing youth centers in the country and simultaneously started to focus on the training of youth workers. The culmination of the cooperation between SALTO EECA and Azerbaijani authorities was the international and inter-regional forum “Youth Cooperation Beyond Borders” in 2012, during which the Polish governmental Foundation for the Development of the Educational System and the Youth Foundation under the Azerbaijani Ministry of Youth and Sport signed a memorandum of understanding on cooperation in the field of youth policy.

On the other side of the fence there are Georgia and Armenia who are the most active EaP countries in the field of international youth cooperation and, what is more, this involvement is balanced between the capital cities and the regions. Even bigger decentralisation in this area one can observe in Ukraine and Russia. In contrast in case of Azerbaijan, Belarus and Moldova, majority of active youth workers and youth organizations come from the capitals.

## EASTERN PARTNERSHIP

The launch of the Eastern Partnership in 2009 in Prague was a very important moment for the youth sector in the six countries included in this initiative, i.e. Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The Fourth Platform of the programme covers topics of culture, education and youth, and opens the way for further initiatives between EU and EaP countries in these fields. The EaP initiative was an important factor for fostering new bilateral association agreements between the EU and Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia which were signed in 2014. All of these agreements include also a paragraph referring to international youth cooperation and the Erasmus+ programme.

Since the EaP initiative was launched, SALTO EECA together with other EU institutions lobbied for stronger and more direct support for the youth sector in the region; similar to those used in the EU neighboring countries of the Balkans through implementation of Western Balkans Youth Window.

The effect of these efforts was the launch of the Eastern Partnership Youth Window for Youth in Action programme in 2012. With a budget of 31,5 million of EUR for the years 2012-2013, the initiative enabled a spectacular increase in international youth projects between EU and EaP countries, giving the last ones also, for the first time, the possibility to apply for grants and coordinate projects by themselves. The two-year-long experience of the EaP youth window significantly strengthened the youth sector in the region. It also made the non-governmental sector in EaP countries realize the importance of youth work and the benefits it can bring in the future. It is very highly appreciated by both – EU and EaP youth policy actors – as demonstrated by official EU Presidency events like the Eastern Partnership Youth Forums in Kaunas (Lithuania, 2013) and in Riga (Latvia, 2015) as well as by Eastern Partnership Youth Conference in Tbilisi (Georgia, 2014) which was initiated by the Georgian Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs.





## LOOKING IN THE FUTURE

A big success of SALTO EECA Resource Centre is the fact that currently it is recognized as an expert institution disseminating European experience in the field of youth and non-formal education in the countries of EaP and in Russia. The network of youth workers, trainers and experts created by SALTO EECA supports the spread of good practice and indirectly influences reforms in the region.

However there are still many challenges for the development of consistent youth policy in the countries of the region.

One of the biggest obstacles is a fear of political groups in some of the countries; of participation of youth in political life, enhanced especially after the so-called “colour” revolutions: Rose revolution in Georgia (2003), Orange revolution in Ukraine (2004) and Twitter or Grape revolution in Moldova (2009). It makes some of the governments reluctant to actively engage in international dialogue and youth cooperation.

This issue is related to the next obstacle, which is limited participation of young people in

decision-making processes in various fields – from school, through local governmental institutions to the state level.

Another challenge is the still low recognition of youth work and non-formal education in the region – both in the legal and the social sense; and lack of synergy among formal, informal and non-formal educations.

In the future SALTO plans to continue its active cooperation with all the actors in the youth policy field, both decision makers and practitioners. We want to focus on the promotion and use of instruments of educational mobility for youth workers, being convinced that an exchange of good practice in youth work is the most effective way to raise recognition of the youth sector.

We do believe that youth work in the future will not depend on internal and international politics of particular countries and will be based on universal principles and values.

*Małgorzata Pawłowska and Andriy Pavlovych*  
SALTO EECA



# European Voluntary Service in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus: How to feed a hippo?

## Few words about (pre)history

Already for over 10 years, SALTO Eastern Europe and Caucasus Resource Centre (EECA) supports development of European Voluntary Service in the region commonly known as Eastern Europe and the Caucasus (with different political name in Erasmus+, under two separate entities: Eastern Partnership Countries and Russian Federation). While the first EVS volunteers appeared in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine already 15 years ago, until 2007 the numbers were very low, with maximum a dozen volunteers per year in each country. That was also a period when our Resource Centre prioritised contact building between organisations and first networking seminars took place, such as “EVS 4U” in 2004, “Yth 2” in 2005 and 2006, “Train to EVS” as well as “EastWestEVS” in 2006.

When the Youth in Action programme was starting, our region entered it with already well developed network of partners. Moreover, the newly established action 3 targeting partner countries, helped to recognise importance of such cooperation. The number of EVS projects with Eastern Europe and the Caucasus increased rapidly and soon reached a few hundred volunteers hosted and sent. Beside high numbers of EVS volunteers, this practically meant tens of

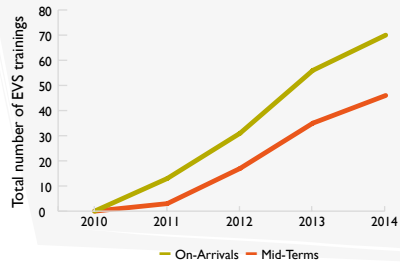
organisations from the region involved in EVS projects, hundreds of coordinators and mentors. Other needs for support in EVS became clear: Annual, international trainings for EVS coordinators were established under the flagship course “EastWestEVS”. Throughout the years, over 100 coordinators from the region and another 100 from programme countries were trained on how to organise EVS projects with all the specifics of such cooperation. Several partnership building seminars, study visits and thematic trainings were organised where many EVS coordinators could find project partners and develop their own competences. Finally after a few years of lobbying the European Commission, since 2011 our Resource Centre became responsible for the EVS Training Cycle, EVA Accreditations and more support for EVS organisations

## EVS training cycle

The most urgent challenge was to identify trainers who could run EVS trainings; equip them with a common understanding of the process and build a recognised identity. Luckily the process did not start from scratch. Already between 2007 and 2010, our Resource Centre cooperated with many organisations and persons

from the region experienced in EVS, to support on-arrival and mid-term trainings for volunteers. During these 4 years we have brought together volunteers for 99 EVS trainings. But only from 2011 were the responsibilities to offer such trainings removed from hosting organisations themselves and given to SALTO EECA. Today, the EVS trainers' pool includes 18 trainers coming from almost all countries of the region ([www.salto-youth.net/eeca\\_evs\\_trainers](http://www.salto-youth.net/eeca_evs_trainers)). The pool meets every year to synchronise the concept of EVS trainings. Additionally each year members of the pool have the chance to take part in different European capacity building activities to learn from and influence the European youth training field. Due to the number of volunteers and geographical size of the region, the training cycle was divided into 3 sub-regions, so volunteers in Caucasus have their cycle in Georgia, in Eastern Europe they gather in Ukraine and separately there are trainings in Russia. On average we organise 15 on-arrival trainings and 12 mid-term meetings each year, with 6 to 25 participants in each. This allows us to cover all several hundred EVS volunteers coming to the region annually. In total, after 4 years of running the EVS training cycle in the region, we managed to organise 70 on-arrivals and 46 mid-terms.

Cumulative number of harmonised EVS trainings in EECA until end of 2014



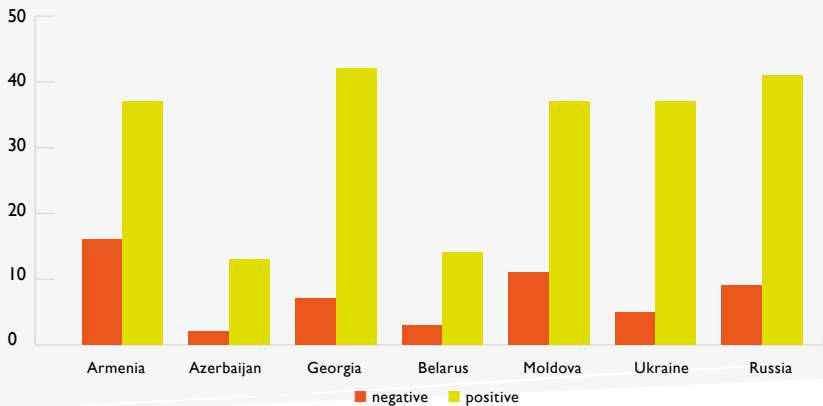
Together with EVS trainings organised before 2011 in a decentralised way, it makes over 200 trainings for over 3000 EVS volunteers!

### **EVS accreditations**

Five years ago the EVS accreditation process was a novelty in our region. It started already at the end of 2010, as the first accreditations were required from organisations from February 2011. Three big waves of accreditation visits were organised by our Resource Centre with the support of almost 30 EVS experts (among them youth workers, EVS trainers and accreditors



Number of positive and negative EVS accreditations in EECA (10 Feb. 2015)



from programme countries and National Agencies officers). During November and December 2010, we managed to accredit ca. 100 organisations in all 7 countries. From 2011 the accreditors group was reformulated and for the first time experts from the region joined it. Today they make over half of the team, which in total counts 26 EVS experts coming from different fields ([www.salto-youth.net/eeca\\_evs\\_accreditors](http://www.salto-youth.net/eeca_evs_accreditors)). The accreditors' group meets annually to harmonise understanding of qualities expected from receiving and sending organisations. Moreover, members of the group take part in European meetings focusing on EVS accreditation, in order to actively shape it. We understand accreditation not only as a check of organisations' capacities to be involved in EVS, but also as a support process where organisations can benefit from consultancy and increase their knowledge.

Therefore it

takes time, especially where the mentoring process is run on-line following an on-the-spot visit. On average one accreditation takes place about every 3 months in our region. During 5 years of accrediting organisations in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, we managed to accredit 466 organisations, so almost 100 per year. Over 90% of organisations are visited, which in such a vast territory, that spans over 12000 km and 10 different time zones, is our great value. Today, at the end of the standard period of 3 years accreditation from Youth in Action finished for many organisations in our region (2011-2014), we have 221 positive organisations active in EVS. Almost half of them were (re) accredited already under Erasmus+ (see more: [www.salto-youth.net/eeca\\_accreditation\\_stats](http://www.salto-youth.net/eeca_accreditation_stats))

### More support for EVS organisations

Beside the EVS accreditations and trainings, which are the basics for well functioning of EVS projects anywhere, our SALTO EECA Resource Centre additionally offers a set of different supporting measures, such as:

- EVS events: Organised since 2011 annually in 3-4 different "blank spots" of our region, so the ex-EVS volunteers can not only meet to reflect and evaluate own experiences abroad, but also to promote the programme and volunteering (see the

Watch the movie:  
[www.salto-youth.net/  
 Train\\_Adventure](http://www.salto-youth.net/Train_Adventure)



campaign here: [www.flickr.com/photos/evsevents/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/evsevents/). In 2014 for example, the events took place in Goris (south Armenia), Akhalsikhe (central Georgia), Ivano-Frankivsk (western Ukraine), Kazan (Tatarstan Republic of Russian Federation). All those cities have very high potential to be involved in EVS, yet there were almost no EVS volunteers hosted or sent.

- EVS coordinators meetings: Offered on national level in each of 7 countries in the region. Since 2011, EVS coordinators have been meeting to discuss challenges and particularities of EVS projects in their own countries, to learn from each others' good practices, to network and build trust and support. The meetings are unique activities where EVS coordinators can communicate in their mother tongues.
- International trainings for EVS mentors: Organised together with Polish and French National Agencies of the Erasmus+: Youth In Action Programme, where each time up to 30 EVS mentors from 7 countries of the region can raise their competences in learning facilitation and mentoring.
- Participation of EVS coordinators in international trainings like SOHO etc: Each year up to 20 EVS coordinators from the region have the chance to participate in such international trainings organised by National Agencies and the SALTO network.
- Seminars for contact making and partnership building as well as study visits organised every year for EVS coordinators from the East and the West. Such events allow coordinators to meet together,



to build common understanding of EVS principles and to experience EVS projects in the realities of countries in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus.

### Perspectives for further development

We have to understand that the 7 countries that the SALTO EECA Resource Centre works with are very different in social, economical, cultural and political development. It is worth noting that the population of the region itself is half that of the European Union and there are millions of young people and tens of thousands of youth organisations. We would identify the main challenges and opportunities we see for development of European Voluntary Service in the East as...







# The challenge of a new adventure: EVS accreditation in South Mediterranean countries

The accreditation of EVS in the South Mediterranean countries is a logical continuation of the processes started in South East Europe and Eastern Europe and Caucasus and was promoted by the other two regional SALTOs. The accreditation process in the South Mediterranean countries aims to guarantee the quality of EVS project and promote the quality in youth work as a whole. The situation of youth work and the understanding of volunteering are quite different in the South Mediterranean countries. In the last years, the SALTO Euromed RC started some research in order to consolidate knowledge about the situation. The main outcomes of this path can be found on the Salto-Youth EuroMed website: <https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/euromed/EMlibrary/>.

EVS is about moving individuals but it is a collective project in which there are different actors involved, as partners and institutions (Sending and Receiving NGOs, National Agencies and SALTOs RCs). It is a structural action based more and more on the long term approach and stability of NGOs. It has a big impact in the quality of the Programme and contributes to the improvement of NGOs work in the field.

## Was the EuroMed region the last to set up the EVS accreditation?

First of all we have to remember and carefully consider the geopolitical background: Soon after the inception of EVS in 2000, there was an event in 2001 that dramatically upset and influenced a number of things that happened thereafter, namely September 11.

In the aftermath there was the second Gulf War, several terrorist attacks from both sides of «our sea», the “years of lead” in Algeria and the Arab revolutions and most recently the conflict in Syria and recent terrorist attacks of symbolic targets.

Since 2000 and the creation of the SALTO-YOUTH Resource Centres by the DG EAC-Youth Unit, it has always been a very sensitive and challenging environment for SALTO-YOUTH EuroMed & Good Practices to work: many events happened, clearly highlighting the increasingly relevant role played by Youth in the Euro Mediterranean framework.

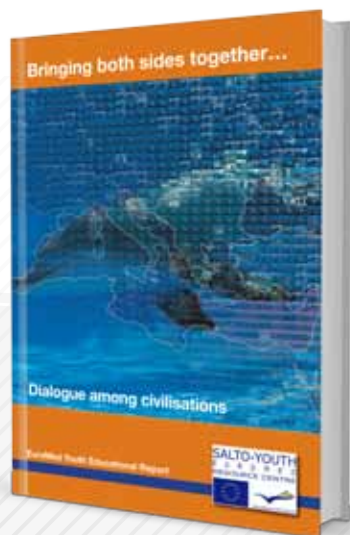
In the beginning, there was no question of accreditation for neighboring regions: this was only for the «Program» countries. When the idea began to mature, the EuroMed Youth program, which was co-managed with DG DEVCO, it was decided to develop in a decentralized and autonomous manner. Then, at the end of 2004

there was what was called the «suspension» which lasted until 2006. DG EAC was unclear about how to handle accreditation for NGOs from the southern shore of the Mediterranean, with or without DEVCO, and decided to put it in place in the other two regions (SEE and EECA) first.

In 2010 the idea came back but then came the year of the so called «Arab revolutions» (2011). And finally, in July 2013 Salto EuroMed asked the Commission to a meeting on this subject. It turned out that the time was right and that the two parties had arrived at the same time at the same conclusion: the accreditation had to be put in place!

### **EVS in EuroMed as cultural challenge: Dialogue among Civilisations!**

The accreditation as such has also the objective to increase the numbers of projects realised in cooperation between the two shores of the Mediterranean Sea and support the quality of them.



Salto-Youth EuroMed started to work on this topic many years ago in 2004 with the development of a training format about EVS in South Mediterranean countries called: Dialogue among Civilisations”: [www.salto-youth.net/rc/euromed/emeducpub/reportscollection/reportdialogue/](http://www.salto-youth.net/rc/euromed/emeducpub/reportscollection/reportdialogue/)

In fact the background idea was to highlight and establish the link between Civilisations and Education and to determine whether it was a driver or an obstacle to the qualitative development of the Mediterranean European Voluntary Service.

The trainings were based on idea of providing opportunities to know Euro Mediterranean civilisations and their reciprocal influences, and reflect on the influence of Civilisation on

Education and on the latter on the different pedagogical attitudes on both sides of the Mediterranean.

During the four training course it became clear that to acquire the skills required to take on the role of a tutor or mentor within the framework of the EuroMed Youth programme, it was necessary to have the whole picture of the complexity in which the EVS is developing.

The challenge is to train NGOs, mentors and those responsible for projects to be able to deal with the continuing complexity that they will face within the political changes and instability.

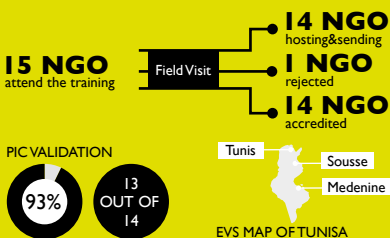
In this sense, EVS is an opportunity for many NGOs to create new competencies in mutual understanding and also to give the chance to some youth to see over the borders of their local community.

### **How will ensure all this?**

As decided in the kick off meeting with the European Commission representatives in charge of EVS, at the beginning of 2014, a specific training course for future mentors and those responsible for projects is part of the EVS accreditation process in the south Mediterranean countries. Each NGO which would like to become accredited for sending or hosting volunteers should send 2 participants to the trainings organised at national level. This requirement is to ensure quality. The training is the entry level to inform and enable one mentor per

From Tunisia 14 accreditation requests were received and 15 NGOs took part in the Training course for mentors and those responsible for Projects in EVS, organised in cooperation with the Tunisian EMYU from 9<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> of June 2014. 13 NGOs got favourable feedback from the accreditors who did the field visits.

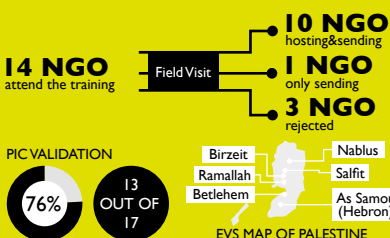
## TUNISIA



From Palestine 17 accreditation requests were received and 14 NGOs attended the training course for mentors and those responsible for EVS projects organised in cooperation with the Palestinian EMYU and the Italian National Agency of Erasmus+:Youth in Action from 18<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> November 2014. 10 NGOs were accredited for Hosting and Sending, 1 only for sending and 3 didn't get the accreditation.\*

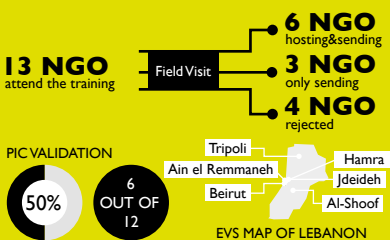
\* One organisation didn't managed to apply online (was not able to submit online the PDF) for this reasons we had 13 NGOs to the training course.

## PALESTINE



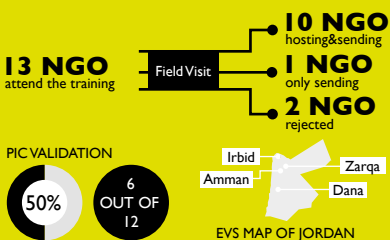
From Lebanon 12 accreditation requests were received on line<sup>1</sup> and 13 NGOs attended the training course for Mentors and those responsible for Projects in EVS organised in cooperation with GIZ and Civil Peace Service from 11<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> November 2014. 6 NGOs were accredited as Sending and Hosting, 3 only for sending and 4 were rejected for the moment.

## LEBANON



From Jordan 16 accreditation requests were received and 13 NGOs took part in the Training course for mentors and those responsible for EVS projects organised in cooperation with Jordanian EMYU from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> September 2014. 10 NGOs got accreditation for hosting and sending volunteers and 1 NGO only for sending volunteers.

## JORDAN



NGO with regard to her/his role and one person in the NGO to be responsible for the program. Their participation in the training courses is the first step towards accreditation and it avoids the situation where NGOs start the process without any basic information.

In 2014 training courses for mentors and responsible of the EVS projects were piloted in Tunisia, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine: 55 NGOs and 110 participants in total.

The objectives of these training courses were:

- To develop a common understanding of the EVS process
- To discuss and agree about the roles and tasks of the mentors and volunteers
- To familiarize participants with the Youthpass
- To assess the competences of mentors
- To assess NGOs and plan their development
- To do a consistent risk assessment for mentors and volunteers
- To explore Intercultural Learning and its tools
- To promote the political recognition of EVS and non-formal education

The training courses helped mentors and those responsible for EVS projects to understand more about their roles in an EVS project, and to answer their questions and develop their abilities about creating and managing EVS projects and mentoring volunteers. The programme also helped the participants develop tools for engaging volunteers, local communities and organizations in an educational and learning experience. The training course tackled the following topics:

- EVS structure: the principle actors, the pedagogical approaches;
- Learning in the EVS process for the volunteer and the NGO
- Mentors and those responsible for EVS projects: task, roles, values, attitudes, and competencies
- The official documents referring to EVS
- Youthpass
- Risk prevention and communication

The trainings and accreditation process help to increase the importance and clarify the definition of volunteering in NGOs in the different national contexts and cultures. The training provides opportunity to connect NGOs at national level and to assess the meaning and value of volunteering.

On the 01.12.2014 Salto-Youth EuroMed received 74 accreditation requests from Tunisia, Algeria, Palestine, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Jordan and Morocco.

## How is it sustainable?

This process is sustainable due the high level of cooperation and contribution from different actors involved in the EVS working group.

The **key-actor number 1** has been the **European Commission** and the key word was to describe their contribution is **“Institutionalisation”**. **The Commission brings** legitimacy to the whole process.

The founding Act was held in Brussels on July 12<sup>th</sup> 2013, followed by the official the “Kick off” meeting of the EVS South Mediterranean countries working group on January 29<sup>th</sup> 2014 in presence of both DGs: EAC and DEVCO.

Pascal Lejeune; then Head of DG EAC Youth Unit, opened it with these words: “The accreditation in EuroMed is the logical continuation of the processes started in South East Europe and Eastern Europe and Caucasus and promoted by the other two regional SALTOs. The fact that the accreditation will be done in the Meda countries will guarantee the quality of EVS projects and promote the quality in youth work as a whole”.

Without the **2nd key** partners it would have been impossible: **5 National Agencies** willing to support, and not only financially! On same level but with a different role the 2 others regional SALTO Resource Centres, sharing, informing and involving SALTO EuroMed in their experiences and ongoing work.

And last but not least the **EuroMed Youth Units** (linked to DG DEVCO), in charge of the implementation of the EuroMed Youth Program IV in the South Med countries: Their commitment has been commendable.

## **And for the future...**

The strategy for the future will provide more focus on the recognition of Non Formal Learning within the NGOs and in this way support the quality of Youth work in the different countries.

The role of volunteering is an important aspect of the strategy and of the training course and this will become more and more relevant in the future..

There are growing challenges in the political area and constraints on the NGOs trying to realise their projects. The geopolitical instability is playing a big role at the moment in the creation new partnerships among South Mediterranean countries and Program countries. Many NGOs in Europe have fears in starting cooperation with the southern shores of Mediterranean Sea. The challenge is to increase the possibility to cooperate and create shared experiences and good practices that can lead future projects.

*Federica Demicheli*

*SALTO EUROMED & GOOD PRACTICES  
RESOURCE CENTRE*

# Euromed Youth Cooperation: A Permanent Miracle

The cooperation for and with Euro-Mediterranean Youth can be described as a “permanent miracle”. Considering the geopolitical background, since the inception of Euromed cooperation in 2000, there was an event in 2001 that dramatically upset a number of things that happened thereafter, namely September 11. Then, in the aftermath, there were the second Gulf War; several terrorist attacks from both sides of “our sea”, the “years of lead” in Algeria and the Arab revolutions and now what is happening in Syria and the recent terrorist attacks on symbolic targets.

## **How can the SALTO-YOUTH EuroMed & Good Practices Resource Centre be an active element in a region looking like a powder keg in which causes are never easy to pinpoint?**

Since 2000 and the creation of the SALTO-YOUTH Resource Centres by the DG EAC-Youth Unit, it has always been very sensitive and challenging for SALTO-YOUTH EuroMed & Good Practices due to our specific geopolitical background: many events happened, clearly highlighting the increasingly relevant role played by Youth in the Euro Mediterranean arena.

SALTO-YOUTH EuroMed & Good Practices has faced many challenges in very close cooperation with National Agencies to better support their NGOs and Youth, to understand the current reality and to have appropriate tools to work in the youth field and the developing youth policy.

Glancing at the statistics, exchanges between the two sides of the shore have never been more important: every year more than 3,500 young people and youth leaders are the beneficiaries of the existing programmes. This would tend to prove that the need is there and, supported by a strong motivation, “you can move mountains, or at least build bridges”.

## **SALTO-YOUTH EuroMed & Good Practices - Key numbers since 2000**

- » **157 activities**
- » **5899 participants**
- » **42 publications**
- » **5 229 « likes » on our « page » SALTO Euromed: at 26/01/2015**
- » **673 followers on Twitter at 26/01/2015**



The acute sensitivity of the context in which SALTO operates has, paradoxically, reinforced its legitimacy to act for the development of youth projects and for cooperation between the two shores of the Mediterranean. At the beginning of SALTO EuroMed, some participants from the southern shore advised the team never to tackle topics such as politics, sex and religion; to avoid any trouble. Notwithstanding this well-meant advice, the SALTO participants have addressed all three without encountering any major difficulties. However, the necessary *savoir-faire* to tackle and sometimes manage these topics has been strained over the years in an increasingly complex geopolitical context and the need to have more and more competent trainers proved to be essential when events brought more tension or exacerbated the situation.

To read more on the *Geopolitical context*: “N°3- GEOPOLITICAL CONTEXT OF MEDITERRANEAN YOUTHS: considering human security”; <https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/euromed/EMlibrary/emeducpub/studiesandresearch/>

## How SALTO-YOUTH EuroMed & Good Practices defined its strategy within the European Neighbourhood one?

*“Change your strategies and tactics, but never change your principles”*

This quotation by science fiction writer John Kessel perfectly sums up the evolution of the European strategy during the last decade; a strategy which it relies on its General Principles and a geographical area: create an area of prosperity and good neighbourliness.

Let’s compare the objectives of the 19<sup>th</sup> of June 2000:

“Common Strategy 2000/458/CFSP of the European Council of 19 June 2000 on the Mediterranean region” Extracts –

1. The Mediterranean region is of strategic importance to the EU. A prosperous, democratic, stable and secure region, with an open perspective towards Europe, is in the best interests of the EU and Europe as a whole.

2. The Mediterranean region continues to be faced with political, economic, judicial, ecological and social challenges. If these complex and diverse challenges are to be overcome, the EU and the Mediterranean partners must work together with a common vision, sensitivity and mutual respect.

3. The Union aspires to play its full part in bringing about stability and development in the Middle East. The Union will therefore support the efforts of the parties to implement the peace agreements. This Common Strategy will cover the EU’s contribution to the consolidation of peace in the Middle East once a comprehensive peace settlement has been achieved.

*For those of 2001-2011, the EU reviewed the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and put a strong focus on the promotion of deep and sustainable democracy, accompanied by inclusive economic development. Deep and sustainable democracy includes in particular, free and fair elections, freedom of expression, of assembly and of association, judicial independence, the fight against corruption and democratic control over the armed forces. The EU also stressed the role of civil society in bringing about deep and sustainable democracy. The EU unveiled the «more for more» principle, under which the EU will develop stronger partnerships with those neighbours that make more progress towards democratic reform.*

The principles are the same but objectives were (had to be) adapted.

The repercussions of the uprisings in North Africa and the Middle East; violent sectarian conflict in Syria with its fallout in Jordan and Lebanon, as well as a new outbreak of hostilities between Israel and Hamas, indicate that the ENP has been no longer successful to the south. The winner-takes-all approach that prevails after elections in many of these countries has intensified underlying political, economic, social, and religious tensions. It has become a barrier to “transition” toward a more inclusive form of liberal democracy. To sum up, a strategy has to be progressive.

Politics and religion, ancestral rivalry and geo-strategies interpenetrate each other endlessly. That is why, even at a very low level (realism and humility are required), it is needed to integrate

all these parameters so as to define the best-adapted strategy to reach objectives that were defined with every partner. It is this integrated approach which better characterised the SALTO EuroMed & Good Practices strategy:

- Do with it before you do for it!
- Create and promote a balance of “competences” between the two sides of the Mediterranean
- Promote and support the emergence of a Euro-Mediterranean trainers’ network

SALTO EuroMed & Good Practices has always implemented a 3-year-strategy since its creation. The use of this medium-term approach has enabled the Resource Centre to anticipate, change when needed, and get used to modifications - geopolitical, structural, and institutional - without ever losing its values or its “moral compass”.

### What are the key issues for SALTO-YOUTH EuroMed & Good Practices?

**Youth participation** is a phenomenon whose social relevance we need to really understand. The events which are currently taking place in the region, and particularly the role of young people involved in demonstrations and in the real changes in their own country, have to be considered. The significance of the participation of young women and men who are of different socio-cultural backgrounds and beliefs, but united by their desire for a better future for their country is not to be underestimated. Young people are the future of Euro-Mediterranean co-operation; and mutual understanding is the starting point for the new historical path that these young people have engaged in. In this context, the role of NGOs and youth organisations is very important in the development of active citizens and in supporting a better understanding of youth participation at local and national levels. In general, NGOs and youth organisations have a key role in civic participation and democracy; putting values such as solidarity and non-discrimination into action and contributing to the development of societies. Within the context of youth work, NGOs and

youth organisations can provide unique opportunities for young people to become active and responsible citizens in their societies through participation; to get informal (spontaneous and individual) and non-formal (more planned and structured) education opportunities; and to be included and integrated into the society.

**Dialogue:** The events of 11 September 2001 gave Huntington’s thesis on a looming “clash of civilizations”<sup>1</sup> new weight when decoding international relations.

But does the supposed centuries old hostility between the East and the West really exist? Has it a real basis in fact or is it no more than an “imaginary fracture” to quote Georges Corm?<sup>2</sup> The Greek and Cypriot National Agencies and the SALTO EuroMed & Good Practices Resources Centre have spent much of the year working on their contribution to the issue.

SALTO EuroMed took as a starting point the idea that our Civilizations are, and have always been, diverse, heterogeneous, changing and permeable and that they are more closely linked today than ever before; whether we call such ties “globalization”, with its negative inferences or prefer the term of “mutually enriching” in the humanist sense of the term.

While it is generally accepted that societies differ in terms of their internal organisation, the question is whether such differences necessarily produce different value systems.

As Fernand Braudel wrote<sup>3</sup>: “The notion of Civilization is at least dual, designating both moral and material values”.

To read more on *Youth participation* visit: <https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/euromed/EMlibrary/emeducpub/reportscollection/reportdialogue/>

1 Huntington, Samuel P., *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, New York, Simon & Schuster, 1996

2 Georges Corm, *Christiane Veauvy, Moyen-Orient et conscience historique. Entretien, FMSH-WP-2015-87*, February 2015.

3 Braudel, Fernand, *Grammaire des civilisations*, Paris, Arthaud, 1987

**Democracy:** “We believe we can show that existing cities would be completely transformed with just one change. While it is true that this change is neither unimportant nor easy, it is possible”.

Those are Plato’s words, from his work entitled “The Republic”, written many years ago.

Like Glaucon, we can also wonder what such a change might be; a transformation with almost miraculous powers, able to change lead into gold. For Plato, it was philosophy: He believed that if politicians possessed such knowledge, anything would become possible, since philosophy was truth. Nothing could be stronger than truth, making it the ideal means of bringing about such a metamorphosis.

This close link between ethics and politics in the Greek world is central to Plato’s philosophical approach: he believed that “A fair city breeds a fair man”.

At that time, a citizen was a person who enjoyed the right of citizenship, which in turn was inseparable from democracy. Despite the fact that the term “citizenship” suffers from a myriad of definitions, it would appear to be an integral element of the concept of democracy. For the thinkers who contributed to the promotion of the democratic movement, democracy was a synonym for Good: not merely a form of political organisation but also a value that represented the inalienable right of mankind to take charge of its destiny, both individually and collectively.

Today, everywhere in the world, attempts to reinvent the citizen as not only a sovereign being, but also and more specifically as a new political challenge are evident.

Modern official structures linked to the right to vote tend to ask people WHO they want, rather than WHAT they want. This has helped bring about a form of membership democracy where the power of the people is restricted to choosing who will decide on their behalf.

As G. Burdeau wrote: “The freedom of people is limited to the power they hold to appoint and dismiss their masters, no longer implying any responsibility to influence based on the requirements of an ethical form of community life”<sup>4</sup>.

This is reflected in the far-reaching mistrust and pessimism expressed by many toward a world they often feel they no longer control, which has led them to accept being governed by the outward forms of democracy.

The democratic process as it is lived by many can thus be summarized as either “being in the city or being outside”: in other words, being an active and intelligent cell in a body or merely being an appendix delegated to other vital functions.

How can we give a new impetus to democracy and citizenship? How can we ensure that it allows for “the free and full development of personality”, as set out in the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man (s.29)?

What does being a citizen mean today?

If we start from the premise that democracy is also a form of teaching (in the etymological sense of “bringing about”), then we must accept that the components of democracy are more diverse than are usually stated. Such an acceptance facilitates the logical involvement of young people, from birth to their coming of age, alongside adults, the existence of an area of dialogue with young people and the invention of democracy at local level.

Adults still play a predominant role. The impetus to reinvent local democracy can only come from adults and if the objective is to improve voting numbers (the most visible expression of democracy), make local institutions more efficient and boost the participation and expression of citizens, then adopting an educational approach would seem the obvious path to follow. Non-formal education projects are a particularly rich and privileged source of resources to do so.

To ensure that space is truly set aside for our youngest citizens in the modern city, decision-makers such as politicians and associations must be prepared to move beyond the trap of mere “showcasing” and instead become vehicles for the expression of representative democracy; preparing the ground for a move to a real participatory democracy further down the road. Youth workers have a role to play in the process as the interface between institutions and individuals.

4 Burdeau, G. “La Démocratie” 1956

By choosing Venice and its “Republic”, which provided us with a Brechtian “Abyss” and by using “role play” activities, the Italian National Agency and the SALTO Euromed & Good Practices Resource Centre provided a special dimension to the debate on Democracy within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean region. “Illusion or Reality?” directly challenges socio-political relations between the two sides of “Mare Nostrum”.

There is little left to add, except that politicians, by showing willingness and youth leaders via their actions, need to pay special attention to the methods they employ to prepare young people for governing the City.

Every learning process is long and difficult and that leading to freedom is no exception.

To read more on *Democracy* visit: [www.salto-youth.net/rc/euromed/EMlibrary/emeducpub/reportscollection/reportdemocracy/](http://www.salto-youth.net/rc/euromed/EMlibrary/emeducpub/reportscollection/reportdemocracy/)

**Intercultural Learning** is another Key issue:

*“The participants recognise that the traditions of culture and civilisation throughout the Mediterranean region, and dialogue between these cultures and exchanges at human, scientific and technological level are an essential factor in bringing people closer, promoting understanding between them and improving their perception of each other.”*

*(Barcelona Declaration, 1995)*

The richness of European and Mediterranean societies lies in cultural diversity expressed by the variety of religious, ethnic and cultural groups and communities which have been present across the region for many centuries. In this context, intercultural dialogue is essential to counter and overcome mutual prejudices and the clash of civilisations, and instead to learn “to live together peacefully and constructively in a multicultural world. Because, otherwise, we are doomed to be people who are full of fear, anger and enmity in our Euro-Mediterranean environment”<sup>5</sup>.

5 See: [Mosaic: The Training Kit for Euro-mediterranean Youth Work](#), Council of Europe

Understanding another culture, but also recognising and accepting it.

Respect for diversity and the fight against racism and xenophobia, is at the heart of many EU initiatives, including former Youth in Action, now Erasmus+ Programme and the EuroMed Youth ones. These programmes support projects and activities in which young people from different cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds can work together.

The aim is to promote “intercultural learning” that encourages tolerance, mutual respect and understanding between participants but also in society in general. Projects should harness intercultural working methods that reflect on the potentially diverse nature of participants, allowing them to take part on an equal footing.

To stimulate and encourage mutual understanding between young people within the Euro-Mediterranean region and to fight against stereotypes and prejudices...

- It is especially important to encourage intercultural dialogue among young people, at a time they are still developing their own vision of the world and acquiring skills and competences for their future
- Contact and interaction with cultures other than their own stimulates their curiosity and the desire to connect with peers from around the world.
- Intercultural dialogue also generates new ideas and fosters an understanding of society. It allows them to discover the richness of cultural diversity for their own development as well as for society.
- EU policy recognises the valuable contribution that young people can make through their active participation in society and encourages young people to travel and experience new cultures.

To read more on *Intercultural learning* visit: <https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/euromed/EMlibrary/emeducpub/reportscollection/report3culturesen/>

## **Do you know the Reality of the work done by SALTO EuroMed & Good Practices?**

It is like the Myth of Sisyphus. Sisyphus was a hero of Greek mythology. His name means “wise man”. He is the son of Aeolus, god of wind and Merope daughter of Atlas.

Because he opposed and ridiculed Zeus, Hades the god of the dead, and Ares the god of war, Zeus sentenced him to eternal punishment. So Sisyphus was condemned to roll a huge boulder up a mountain, which fell each time to the other side and Sisyphus had to bring back to the top.

SALTO EuroMed & Good Practices over the past 15 years has been good sometimes, often patient, persevering all the time and especially learned that humility is the main quality.

When we thought we had reached the top we had to deal with multiple things: The permanent turnover of trainers, National Agency staff, European Commission colleagues, EU Delegations and EMYUs colleagues in which a human and training investment had been made; new programmes and rules that suspend and change the long term strategic vision, not to mention the geopolitical instability in the region.

Yet despite all this it worked, works and will work again because the human factor, which is and will be an added value to everything, and still makes the difference. This should never be underestimated; and because our differences are a richness.

*Bernard Abrignani*

*SALTO EUROMED & GOOD PRACTICES  
RESOURCE CENTRE*

# Building capacities and paving the way for EU integration: The role of SALTO South East Europe Resource Centre in increasing the quality of youth work in the Western Balkans

The field of youth in the Western Balkan has experienced dynamic progress in the last fifteen years. In addition to various achievements at the national level, countries have taken important steps towards harmonisation with the developments in European youth work and youth policy. Since its establishment in 2002, SALTO South East Europe Resource Centre has had the privilege to support the process of building capacities in the region and facilitate dialogue among various actors in the Western Balkan youth field and their other European counterparts.

Fifteen years ago the Western Balkan region was ever more struggling with the consequences of the 1990's conflicts and the aftermath of structural reforms following the fall of socialism a decade earlier. As a response, a number of civic initiatives had emerged in the region, yet the civil society as a whole remained fairly weak, primarily due to political instability and lack of national funding.

At that time, the European Union's YOUTH Programme contributed considerably to the efforts to consolidate an independent youth sector in the region, by supporting initiatives aimed at increasing young peoples' civic engagement and reopening their horizons towards other countries and cultures, in particular, towards Europe. Furthermore, following the Thessaloniki

Summit in 2003, in which the prospect for accession to the European Union for the Western Balkan countries was confirmed by the heads of States and Governments, the YOUTH (2000-2006), Youth in Action (2007-2013) and finally the Erasmus+ Youth in Action (2014-2020) Programmes became the single most important tools to facilitate the EU integration process in the field of youth.

The role of SALTO South East Europe Resource Centre in facilitating the cooperation with the Western Balkan region in the frame of these EU Programmes has evolved along with the overall development of European youth policy as it manifests itself in the Programmes' objectives and priorities, and along with the relevant developments in the region. The primary task of the centre in the beginning was to promote partnership-building between the Programme Countries and the Western Balkan countries in order for cooperation to take off the ground. However, within the past thirteen years, the SALTO SEE Resource Centre has developed into a much broader regional support structure, contributing to increasing the overall quality development of the Programmes' implementation in and with the Western Balkans, therefore effecting youth work and youth policy developments on a larger scale.



In 2011-2012 SALTO SEE Resource Centre carried out a study, aimed at investigating how the then ongoing Youth in Action Programme had influenced the involved individuals, organisations and wider communities<sup>22</sup>. The study clearly showed a positive effect of the Programme on a number of thematic and structural spheres, extending from the level of personal development of young people and youth work practitioners to the shaping of youth work and – to a lesser extent - national youth policies. Below the role of SALTO SEE Resource Centre in facilitating the process is further explored.

### **Increasing capacities and building competences in the field of youth**

In the Western Balkans, youth work largely relies on small, youth-run organisations without stable funding and trained staff. This often leads to a lack of continuity and long term strategic goals. One of the highlights of the impact study was the increased level of professionalism and broadened organisational capacity through the participation in the Youth in Action Programme. Ever since the beginning, SALTO SEE Resource Centre acknowledged the need to provide systematic support in developing the organisations' capacities in successful project management and quality assurance, encompassing practical as well as conceptual aspects. A number of measures have been established to serve this purpose.

Activities, such as entry level training courses, study visits and partnership-building seminars support less experienced organisations and newcomers in the Programme. The aim is to enable organisations to handle basic project management, understand the main principles and objectives of the Programme and have international contacts. More experienced organisations benefit from thematic training courses, which aim at increasing their competences in

working with their target group, in particular in the international and intercultural setting. For the organisations which are well established in their local context, have prior experience in the Programme(s) and have a strong perspective in developing the youth work in the local, national or European level, SALTO SEE Resource Centre provides possibilities for networking in seminars, conferences or symposia organised internationally for topics relevant in the European youth work and youth policy.

### **Supporting the principles and implementation of non-formal education and learning in youth work**

Notably, in the past decade, the emphasis in European youth policy has shifted towards highlighting the educational value of youth activities, and recognising youth work as a pedagogical approach to facilitate young people's non-formal learning. Historically, non-formal education in the Western Balkans remained fairly unknown and unrecognised. The impact study however shows the increase of understanding and applicability of different approaches and methodologies of non-formal education in youth work in the Western Balkans.

Raising the awareness of the principles of non-formal learning as well as transferring the competences in delivering non-formal education in youth work remains an important focus in the work of SALTO SEE Resource Centre. The centre also aims to provide a high quality non-formal education as a backbone of its own training strategy. Firstly, the training courses and educational tools are designed by experienced trainers and consultants. The learners' needs, interests and varying learning styles are in focus when setting the objectives and framework for the activities, a variety of innovative methods are used and the learning process is supported and assessed by appropriate tools, such as Youthpass. Beyond the youth work practise, SALTO SEE Resource Centre promotes the value and social recognition of non-formal education and learning in the Western Balkans

<sup>22</sup> The impact study evaluation report is available at <https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/see/resources/seepublications/yaiimpactsee/>

through national, regional and European level mechanisms<sup>23</sup>.

## Unravelling the essence of intercultural and European dimensions

One of the main findings of the impact study was the increase of European and intercultural awareness among beneficiaries and participants as a result of common projects. In the study one of the respondents described his / her view on the region as follows:

“ A very special European dimension – a region which is in many ways so uniquely European and then again not at all”

The notion of Europe remains ambiguous in the context of cooperation with the Western Balkans. The definition of the region alternatively as a part of Europe, mirroring Europe or being in the process of becoming Europe, reflects the historically specific debates on both geographical and conceptual borders, through which Europe is continuously constituting its identity. As the Western Balkans is inevitably in the heart of such debates, the theme remains important, even more so as the socio-political tensions as well as cultural stereotyping in contemporary Europe heighten, as a consequence to economic uncertainty. SALTO SEE Resource Centre organises various training courses to contribute to the youth organisations' preparedness to explore the themes of European dimension, intercultural competences and their various implications, in a constructive manner.

## Cooperating with local actors

A need to bring knowledge and resources closer to potential beneficiaries of the Programme(s)

23 A highlight of this process was the *Symposium on Recognition of Youth Work and Non-formal Learning*, organised by SALTO SEE in cooperation with various other stakeholders (Tirana, Albania, 2012); report: <https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/see/resources/seepublications/tiranasymposium/>.

was addressed already in the early years. SALTO SEE Resource Centre nominated local Contact Points in the Western Balkan countries for the first time in 2005, and based on good practise, the network has existed ever since. Contact Points are local youth organisations, which have accumulated experience in the Programme(s) and have the capacities to transfer the knowledge further on to others. Their task is to promote the Programme, as well as to provide information, advice and training at the national level. With time, as the overall experience in the Programmes increased in the Western Balkans and the region got smaller due to Croatia (2011) and the FYRO Macedonia (2014) becoming Programme Countries, the number of Contact Points has been reduced from the original twelve to the current five.

Cooperation with the Contact Points has also been beneficial beyond its initial purpose. In addition to their advisory role, they function as intermediates, providing the SALTO SEE Resource Centre with information about the youth field in the region, and on the other hand, taking up an active role in advocating for the Programmes' objectives and priorities in the national youth work and youth policy scene.

SALTO SEE Resource Centre continues to support the Contact Points as well as trainers and other experts (e.g. EVS accreditors) from the Western Balkans, as one of the guiding principles in its work has been to facilitate capacity building of local experts. Training, resourcing and networking of actors based in the Western Balkans, instead of relying on foreign expertise, has enabled the sector to develop further and ensured a multiple impact.

## The future: responding to the contemporary European challenges

The increased organisational capacity, heightened intercultural and European awareness and the further understanding and application of non-formal education and learning have led to a significant progress in the field of youth in the Western Balkan region. SALTO SEE Resource Centre together with its local multipliers has

taken up an important role in facilitating this development within the framework of the YOUTH, Youth in Action and Erasmus+ Youth in Action Programmes.

The decrease and redistribution of resources at the European level, together with the growing need to invest in youth, education and employment in the aging Europe, places high expectations as well as difficult challenges for the Erasmus+ Youth in Action Programme. Consequently, the EU integration process in the Western Balkans faces obstacles related to the European uncertainty, to which young people respond with changing their attitude to the EU accession to hesitant or even negative. Continuous efforts to promote European cooperation, non-formal learning and active citizenship are ever more important in

reference to the young generations facing the contemporary challenges as it was in the post-conflict context in the beginning of the millennium.

Along with the increasing complexity of the Programme's structure and political context in comparison to its predecessors, it is important for the SALTO SEE Resource Centre to continue its work in the region by renewing and developing appropriate educational concepts, approaches and methodology, as well as maintaining a platform for exchange with the Programme's key multipliers, potential beneficiaries and other stakeholder groups in the Western Balkans and beyond.

*Majja Lehto*

SALTO SOUTH EAST EUROPE  
RESOURCE CENTRE

# Support for European Volunteering in the Western Balkans through Accreditation

Besides the fifteenth anniversary of the SALTO YOUTH network, SALTO SEE has another, smaller anniversary this year: ten years of accreditation of EVS organisations in the Western Balkans. Accreditation is a means to foster quality in European volunteering. A lot of resources and reflection have gone into this part of our work. What has it changed?

## European volunteering in a changing region

European volunteers in the Western Balkans have contributed to the development of youth organisations and their local communities. The impact seems to be greatest with regard to non-formal learning and the capacity to use it in youth work and volunteering as well as intercultural understanding and competences. In a region where international mobility among youth is comparatively limited, European volunteers have played an important role by bringing their experiences, habits and values from other parts of Europe closer to the people in their host organisation and community. Equally, young people from the Balkans, deciding, often without much support from their direct social environment, to volunteer in another European country, have

“ Even if Europe is so ‘modern’ there are a lot of stereotypes, old fashioned opinions and a lot of things to change. It needs people to be critical, to ask, to be interested and creative enough to have ideas...EVS gave me the opportunity to find out that I want to support these changes!”

(EVS volunteer in Albania)

brought back new experiences and know-how and the initiative and motivation to promote changes in their home environment. European volunteering has thus been contributing to opening up societies and promoting European integration of a region that wants to move closer to the European Union and is in the process of doing so.

Less than a decade ago, the Western Balkans was a region that seemed far away, pictures of the recent wars and conflicts that had torn the region apart were dominant in many people's minds. The region attracted mainly the most adventurous of European youth, who did not shy away from taking the perceived risk to move into unknown territory. Some organisations did offer a great hosting environment, but there was no quality check in place and unless volunteers knew their receiving organisation in advance, they could not be sure of what they might find. For organisations in the region wishing to host or send volunteers, possibilities to receive support were limited. Today, laws regulating volunteering and the residence of volunteers from abroad are in place and volunteers who come to the Balkans are all kinds of young people, eager to

## Quality Assurance through/in/ of the EVS accreditation



### Values promoted through EVS (accreditation)

*Created by Darko Markovic for National Agency staff training on EVS accreditation, Ljubljana, December 2013*

contribute and learn for their own personal and professional advancement. Challenges still exist, as everywhere, but one can safely state that the conditions for European volunteering offered by organisations in the Western Balkan countries today are as good, country specific and diverse as anywhere across Europe.

### Role of SALTO SEE: support for quality in EVS through accreditation

The Western Balkans was the first region of the Programme's neighbouring partner countries where accreditation (in 2006) and the EVS training cycle for volunteers (in 2007) were introduced in a systematic way. These support measures were established in parallel with the possibility for organisations in the SEE region to apply directly for project grants in Brussels. The message was clear: youth organisations were offered participation in the Programme on a more equal footing to project promoters in Programme countries, but they had to show as well that with some support they were able to implement quality projects.

Accreditation is the first step to ensuring that organisations fulfil minimum standards required for receiving or sending volunteers or for coordinating EVS projects. It also carries an important support function. The system of accreditation put in place by SALTO SEE builds on the principle that the experts (accreditors) should come from the applicant's country, and keeps in mind the importance of giving the accreditation a European dimension. Our aim has been to ensure that standards applied in Programme countries are also applied in the SEE region. First, knowledge of how to accredit an applicant organisation was built: Experienced youth workers from SEE countries accompanied accreditors coming from various Programme countries and National Agencies, informing them about the regional and local context while learning from them about the process of accreditation.

Shortly afterwards, roles were changed for good: Every applicant is accredited by an accreditator from their own country, or exceptionally from a neighbouring country, who also visits the organisation. Accreditation is carried out in pairs, with close communication between the accreditator from the country of the applicant and a second accreditator who comes from a Programme country

and looks at the application from a distance; more with the eyes of a volunteer from abroad, as well as SALTO SEE. In 2006, this systematically transnational approach to accreditation was a new concept and it has proved to be a challenge and a strength. Annual meetings of accreditors serve to discuss and harmonise perspectives and develop a joint code of understanding, which is written down in a set of guidelines. A detailed checklist that every accreditor needs to complete during the process ensures that the same elements are considered in every accreditation process. As a support tool, every applicant for EVS accreditation receives the handbook »Hopscotch to Quality in EVS« (SALTO SEE, 2009, [www.salto-youth.net/rc/see/resources/seepublications/hopscotchevs/](http://www.salto-youth.net/rc/see/resources/seepublications/hopscotchevs/)). A new edition (Hopscotch 2.0) in line with recent Programme developments, trends and research outcomes will be published by SALTO SEE in 2015.

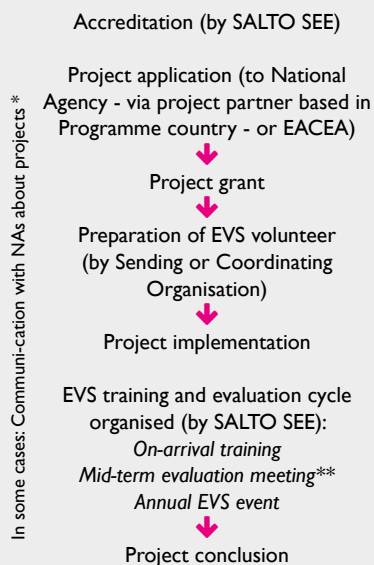
### A framework for supporting quality in EVS beyond accreditation

Importantly, accreditation is only one element of a framework supporting EVS projects in the Western Balkans. The EVS volunteer training cycle (today essentially on-arrival and mid-term training for long-term volunteers) offers support to volunteers and serves to collect feedback about the overall satisfaction of volunteers with their project, its strengths and shortcomings, which SALTO SEE follows up in further contact with hosting or sending organisations. Where deemed necessary, organisations applying for accreditation are systematically advised to look for training opportunities at European or national level. Contact Points for the Programme nominated by SALTO SEE play an essential role: Since 2005 they have offered advice, information and training for organisations at the national level, with increasing professionalism, forming the backbone of the support offered for the Programme in the Western Balkan countries. This has been even more successful where they can count on additional governmental support (currently existing or under discussion for 2015 in Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina).

### Main challenges and strengths

A particular challenge of supporting quality in EVS in a partner region is the lack of continued contact with the applicant organisation. Given the fact that the Erasmus+ programme in the youth field is managed largely in a decentralised way through National Agencies, and partially in a centralised way via the Commission's Executive Agency, communication between the different actors involved in the process, from accreditation to project application and implementation, (National Agencies or EACEA - in charge of projects; and SALTO SEE - in charge of EVS accreditation for the Western Balkans) is a rather challenging task. This is why SALTO SEE is likely to give more attention to accreditation in the Western Balkan region than National Agencies

### Overview of the process of EVS projects in the Western Balkans



(\*) Some NAs contact SALTO SEE for or with information regarding submitted or selected projects.  
(\*\*) For projects with a service of 6 months or longer.



in some Programme countries: Accreditation is the only occasion for systematically checking an organisation and for offering advice on how to further develop their potential.

Given the increasing expectations under the Erasmus+ programme of what EVS organisations should offer to their European volunteers, especially in the context of support for learning for employability, the support currently offered to EVS promoters in the SEE region needs to be adapted and extended.

The main strength of our system of accreditation lies in the experience and attitude of the accreditors; their joint wish to motivate organisations to host and send European volunteers and to prove that quality EVS projects can be offered in this region. Most accreditors have worked with SALTO SEE since the introduction of accreditation in the Western Balkans and have been actively contributing to the youth work development in their countries. Accreditation is only a small part of their involvement. Continuous and structured exchange within the pool of accreditors as well as within the larger pool of SALTO SEE multipliers, supported by jointly developed tools for accreditation, has offered a valued framework for regional (Western Balkans) and European exchange – both equally important – promoting the increase of know-how and a joint understanding that is applied in accreditation, but also in various other contexts and roles.

Current questions to be tackled include, how to deal with new target groups of applicants for EVS? Do we and should we apply different standards in different countries (of the SEE region)? And how to ensure that accreditors that are new to the pool are well informed about the shared knowledge of the pool.

## Harmonising EVS accreditation at European level

Since 2013, SALTO SEE has had the opportunity to use its experience in the Western Balkans at European level, by coordinating a National Agency working group on EVS accreditation as well as two staff trainings on this topic. The aim of this process is to harmonise accreditation across

the participating countries, respecting at the same time different accreditation standards and practices and reflecting the diversity of volunteering and youth work in Europe and beyond.

The process so far has reconfirmed, maybe surprisingly strongly, that National Agencies indeed share a joint understanding of what represents quality in EVS and of the role that accreditation has in this context. Joint tools for accreditation are being developed. On the other hand, there is equally strong agreement that it is undesirable (and quite likely impossible) to define minimum standards at European level to be fulfilled by organisations applying for EVS accreditation. A difficult tension to manage remains in the need to increase the number of European volunteers while ensuring that they find themselves in safe and prepared environments offering the potential for positive and framed learning-service.

Together with the other support tools offered, accreditation has played an important role in promoting the quality of EVS projects in the Western Balkan region. The fact that the specific approach to accreditation applied in the »mini-cosmos« of the Western Balkans has allowed SALTO SEE to bring their experience to the European level is not a matter of course. Usually, we work in the opposite direction: trying to bring experience, knowledge and know-how from the European level, or from EU countries, to the SEE region, or to involve actors from the countries of this region into European processes. It is great to see that European integration can work both ways.

*Sonja Mitter*

SALTO SOUTH EAST EUROPE  
RESOURCE CENTRE

# 15 years SALTO Inclusion

## 15 lessons to boost inclusion

### Inclusion in the European youth programmes

The Youth for Europe programme (YfE), a long time ago, started off as an alternative mobility programme for young people who did not have the possibility to go on Erasmus or Leonardo projects. The idea was to create European opportunities for ALL young people, not only those in higher education or vocational training.

**1** the European youth programmes strived for inclusion from the start.

However, it soon became clear that the YfE, and the youth programmes after that, did attract the same relatively well-off students (to be). This was not really the situation that was hoped for, not only because the same people benefited from multiple programmes, but mainly because the young people who could benefit most, did not find their way into international mobility.

**2** a programme needs to set clear priorities to reach its goals.

### A central structure to push the inclusion agenda

When the SALTO-YOUTH network was created in 2000, there was a drive to make the YOUTH programme more accessible for what were then called 'disadvantaged young people'. The European Commission asked the SALTO Resource Centre in Belgium-Flanders to organise training courses *on Inclusion*. But a general course on the mechanisms of inclusion was most likely not going to bring more disadvantaged young people into the programme. That's why we organised our first courses around specific actions (e.g. EVS, youth initiatives) – to make the courses more practical and results oriented.

**3** projects working towards tangible outcomes have the biggest impact.

But even though these first courses had a lot of impact on the personal and professional lives of the participants, the number of projects coming out of a course was limited. Logical, because different types of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds', as we called them by then, do not have a lot in common. It proved complicated to promote projects between e.g. young people with a disability, LGBT, ex-offenders and rural youth.

**4** inclusion is not about mixing all disadvantaged groups together.

### Common actions to address shared needs

To raise the likelihood that course participants found common interests and set up projects together, SALTO Inclusion started organising training courses for specific target groups. The courses addressed the special needs or requirements of the different types of 'young people with fewer opportunities', the latest politically correct term at that time.

**5** the most effective inclusion projects are built up around common needs.

Our target group specific approach showed clearly that some project formats were not suitable for certain young people or the organisations working with them. Thanks to the feedback from the inclusion field, the European Commission created the possibility to do short-term EVS, after piloting it with the work camp organisations. After a French try-out, also the extra work of the inclusion professionals was rewarded with extra funds for 'reinforced mentorship'.

**6** European programmes do adapt to inclusion needs if the field shouts loud enough.



### Working towards a common frame

Already back in 2001, the European Commission convened a working group on inclusion. It made an inventory of approaches implemented by the National Agencies to include young people with fewer opportunities in the YOUTH programme. The working group developed a European Strategy on Inclusion, which was launched in Warsaw in June 2001. This was the first time there was a common frame to work on inclusion and an explicit invitation to NAs and SALTO to take action for inclusion. In 2003 the Programme Committee prolonged the strategy to cover the whole duration of the YOUTH programme (till 2006).

**7** if all noses point in the same direction, you will more likely come to results.

The Programme Committee had some criticism though. The inclusion strategy did not contain a definition of the target group. Intentionally so: We had originally not wanted to establish a definition, because the more you describe a group, the more people you exclude from it. So, we came up with 7 categories of obstacles (or exclusion factors as we call them nowadays) that young people are facing. Besides being less stigmatising, the suspension marks [...] at the end of the descriptions clearly indicates that the lists of examples is not exhaustive.

**8** it is important to know what you are talking about, without being exclusive.

## Support for inclusion

SALTO started off as a training centre, but soon our activities diversified. SALTO Inclusion realised that the impact of a few training courses at the European level remained limited. That's why we started to develop practical youth work manuals<sup>6</sup> based on the content of the courses. This meant that besides the 1800 participants at our courses and conferences, we also reached 25,000 additional inclusion workers with our paper publications and a further 275,000 downloaded our booklets (2000-2014). There are currently 22 translations of our publications which make our expertise even more widely accessible. Because not everybody speaks English.

**9** we need to use modern technology to reach as many as possible.

But not only youth workers should get trained about the potential of mobility projects for their inclusion groups. The staff in

### 7 reasons why people don't get their fair share in life:

- » **Disability**
- » **Health problems**
- » **Educational difficulties**
- » **Discrimination**
- » **Poverty & unemployment**
- » **Social issues**
- » **Geographic disadvantage**

Have a look at the concepts we developed in the Inclusion & Diversity Strategy for Youth [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/InclusionStrategy/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/InclusionStrategy/)

6 Find an overview of all SALTO Inclusion publications at [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/InclusionForAll/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/InclusionForAll/).

the National Agency should be sensitive to inclusion issues too to be successful. In 2007 SALTO organised the first Staff Training on Inclusion. We supported our NA-colleagues to set up their own national inclusion strategies. The booklet 'Shaping Inclusion' was a manual for this. Currently we regularly gather inclusion officers around particular inclusion issues. These smaller groups allow the colleagues to discuss more in detail and come up with concrete actions. The reports are detailed and shared with all inclusion officers.

**10** you cannot work with inclusion groups if the structures are not prepared for it.

## Working strategically

Unless we are really lucky, we all have limited resources. There are only 24 hours in a day. So we need to plan well what we do with our time and money. Focussing on a few inclusion topics at a time will generate a bigger impact than spreading out your efforts thinly. Making Waves<sup>7</sup> is a guide for youth workers on how you can achieve greater impact and visibility with a project, with just a little extra investment.

**11** set clever priorities and make conscious choices to reach more with less.

Also SALTO Inclusion started working more strategically over longer-term periods. In 2009-2011 we focussed on employability<sup>8</sup>, 2012-2013 on urban solutions and 2014-2016 on NEET (those Not in Employment, Education or Training). This allowed us to make an inventory of what has been tried in the field and extract the lessons from it. These are documented in our research publications. Based on these success factors we are implementing a number of courses and seminars to share our learning and document good practices online.

7 [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/MakingWaves/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/MakingWaves/)

8 [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/InclusionThroughEmployability/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/InclusionThroughEmployability/)



**2** don't start from zero. There are so many practices out there to learn from.

SALTO Inclusion in a way has a pioneer role. Instead of repeating the same thing over and over, we set the ball rolling. We shocked part of Europe, for instance, by organising a much-needed course for LGBT projects within Youth in Action<sup>9</sup>. We were one of the first to focus on the controversial topic of 'employability'<sup>10</sup>. After planting the seeds, we trust in our partners (NAs, NGOs, ...) to keep the plants growing. We continue to support NAs that want to take initiatives in our fields of expertise.

**3** have the courage to try out new things and inspire others to carry the torch.

### Looking towards the future

Just like we did in 2006 at the advent of the Youth in Action programme, SALTO Inclusion took the initiative in 2014 to upgrade the existing Inclusion Strategy to the new Erasmus+ Youth in Action programme. A new programme creates new opportunities and it is important to make sure they are as adapted as possible to the needs of inclusion groups. That's why we organised, together with our SALTO Cultural Diversity colleagues, a number of consultations, to make sure the strategy is as effective as possible.

<sup>9</sup> [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/OverTheRainbow/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/OverTheRainbow/)

<sup>10</sup> [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/WorkingOnWork/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/WorkingOnWork/)

### Results of 15 years SALTO Inclusion

- » **Inclusion strategies for 3 EU youth programmes**
- » **5 European stakeholder conferences**
- » **55 inclusion training courses & seminars**
- » **22 practical manuals on inclusion, translated 22 times**
- » **250,000 visits per year to inclusion webpages**
- » **15,000 inclusion newsletter subscribers**
- » **8,500 Facebook likes, 650 Twitter follower**

Discover more at [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/).

**4** it is important to focus on the opportunities, rather than the difficulties.

What is new this time round, is that there will be a Steering Group that will make sure the strategy comes to life. Part of the work will be to get the new Inclusion and Diversity Strategy known. But also someone should steer and monitor the necessary developments. That's where the Inclusion Steering Group comes in, to make sure things happen and that the situation for young people with fewer opportunities continues to improve, both in the Programme, as well as in society at large.

**5** a strategy of good intentions is not enough, it needs a driving force.

SALTO Inclusion is ready to steer the next 15 years of inclusion efforts. Are you coming along?

*Marija Kljajic & Tony Geudens*  
SALTO INCLUSION RESOURCE CENTRE

# Acknowledgment and recognition of youth work's contribution to social entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship has certainly received a lot of political attention in Europe in the past decade. One recent policy document, the “Conclusions on promoting youth entrepreneurship to foster social inclusion of young people”<sup>11</sup>, adopted by the Council of the EU in May 2014 under the Greek Presidency, emphasizes the important role that enterprises, particularly social enterprises, play in contributing to the general good of society. They do this by giving young people, including those from vulnerable groups, the opportunity to find innovative solutions to the current economic, social and environmental challenges. It is considered that entrepreneurship education and learning should be reinforced, social entrepreneurship should be made more visible and structural barriers to entrepreneurship creation need to be removed by measures taken by both the European Commission and EU Member States. These Conclusions enhance what other important initiatives taken by the European Commission, namely the Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan<sup>12</sup> (2013) and the Social Business

Initiative<sup>13</sup> (2011) call for. The Council conclusions recognize the key role that youth work plays in developing entrepreneurial competences in young people. In the Erasmus+ programme (the main EU financial scheme supporting education, training, youth and sports) entrepreneurship is considered an important transversal competence useful to young people in all areas of life. The Programme aims to promote entrepreneurship education and learning to develop active citizenship, employability and new business creation (including social entrepreneurship).

Has entrepreneurship also gained momentum among youth workers? There is not any doubt that youth workers empower young people through fostering their active citizenship and employability, but can they assist them in setting up their ventures? Firstly, we can recognize that entrepreneurship, in the sense of new business creation, can scare people from the youth work field off. Many youth workers seem to believe that entrepreneurship has no connection with their daily work. They rather associate the term with profit-maximizing activities, incompatible with the principles of youth work, and deem they lack the capacity to help young people become entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship is one of

11 [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/142702.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/142702.pdf)

12 <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2012:0795:FIN:EN:PDF>

13 [http://ec.europa.eu/internal\\_market/social\\_business/docs/COM2011\\_682\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/social_business/docs/COM2011_682_en.pdf)



the most recurrent terms in recent youth-related policy documents and in some people's minds it is just a key word that should be used in project proposals in order to meet the expectations of evaluators to obtain the requested funds.

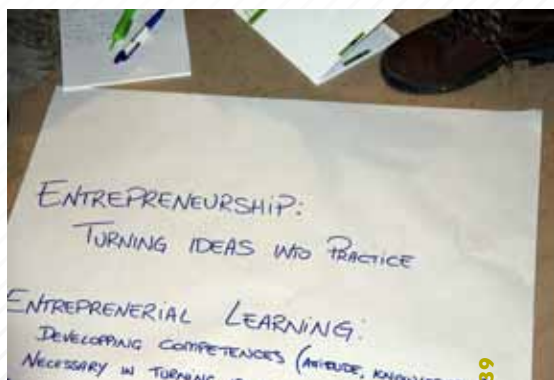
But is there more to entrepreneurship than meets the eye? SALTO-YOUTH Participation has tried to demystify the meaning of entrepreneurship and its connection to youth work and non-formal learning. Through training courses, reflection seminars and publications, the resource centre has contributed to the clarification of the concept and its characteristics and of the role played by youth work in supporting entrepreneurship. It has also assisted youth workers in developing coaching approaches to work on the personal and professional development to improve the employability prospects of young people and be aware of the entrepreneurial learning potential of their work.

The resource centre has identified social entrepreneurship as a way of doing business close to the ethical values of youth work. SALTO Participation now advocates the value of youth work in relation to social entrepreneurship to civil society and policy-makers, collects youth work practices, methods and tools supporting social entrepreneurship and explores the bridges that can be built with other social entrepreneurship support structures/programmes.

Youth workers cannot transform young people into successful entrepreneurs overnight through short-term activities. Youth workers have a role to play in fostering entrepreneurship, but not by blindly encouraging young people to start their own ventures, as entrepreneurship is certainly not for everyone. There are many ways in which youth work can support entrepreneurship, in addition to enhancing entrepreneurial skills in young people. A few ideas gleaned from the "Young people, entrepreneurship and non-formal learning: A work in progress"<sup>14</sup> book, produced by SALTO Participation in 2014 are worth mentioning here. Youth work can help young people make informed decisions through shedding light on the risks of choosing



an entrepreneurial career. It can enable more responsible economic behaviours by making young people reflect on the values and ethics of young people's enterprising ideas. Youth work may therefore encourage young people's participation in alternative business models – as actors in the social economy – such as associations, cooperatives, foundations, mutuals and social enterprises. These types of business are in line with the values, practices and attitudes promoted by youth work. They are based on European principles of cooperation, team-work and social impact awareness. These forms of entrepreneurship are of a collective nature, valuing democratic ownership and control of business and participative management.



<sup>14</sup> <https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-2949/010>

SALTO\_Participation.web\_A%20work%20in%20progress%5B2%5D.pdf





The youth work field needs to be aware of its capacity to support social entrepreneurship, of its strengths and boundaries, and showcase its role in fostering social entrepreneurial learning with the ultimate goal to help young people and obtain recognition for it.

Youth workers can build entrepreneurial skills and attitudes in young people, design training courses to introduce young people to the social business model, its characteristics, values and factors for success and organise networking activities. They can guide young people to other services that can help them, complementing youth work services: employment offices, specialized training courses, local and regional administrations, funding programmes etc.

Young people engaged in entrepreneurship need to be supported over an extended period of time. They can benefit from being guided throughout the whole process most frequently through coaching and mentoring. Coaching does not require previous social entrepreneurship experience, but requires instead the capacity to motivate young people, enable them to set their goals, discover new possibilities and ways that will lead them there. Mentoring from social entrepreneurs is also beneficial; to inspire young people and share their knowledge and experience. Likewise, partnerships

can be established between local support structures and social entrepreneurs to ensure networking and exchange of information and practice.

Social entrepreneurial learning among young people is a long and thorny process in which many factors are at play. Youth work can certainly be one of them, in close synergy with other actors and young people themselves. Youth work has the privileged role of helping young people to discover their hidden potential and it may as well be that it is not related to entrepreneurship. Whatever that potential might be, youth work needs to be able to explore all possible routes to the personal and professional development of young people.

Raluca Diroescu

SALTO PARTICIPATION RESOURCE CENTRE

## References:

- Conclusions on promoting youth entrepreneurship to foster social inclusion of young people, Council of the European Union 20 May 2014, [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/142702.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/142702.pdf)
- Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan. Reigniting the entrepreneurial spirit in Europe COM (2012) 795 final
- <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2012:0795:FIN:EN:PDF>
- Social Business Initiative. Creating a favourable climate for social enterprises, key stakeholders in the social economy and innovation COM (2011) 682 final
- [http://ec.europa.eu/internal\\_market/social\\_business/docs/COM2011\\_682\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/social_business/docs/COM2011_682_en.pdf)
- Pantea, M.C., (2014) Handle with care. Youth work and entrepreneurial learning, in Pantea M.C., Diroescu R., Podlasek-Ziegler M. (Eds.) *Young people, entrepreneurship and non-formal learning: a work in progress*, Brussels, SALTO-YOUTH Participation. [https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-2949/010\\_SALTO\\_Participation.web\\_A%20work%20in%20progress%5B2%5D.pdf](https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-2949/010_SALTO_Participation.web_A%20work%20in%20progress%5B2%5D.pdf)

# Engaged and active: Exploring new forms of youth participation

Traditionally, when thinking about the participation of young people in modern democracies, some keywords like vote, political party and elections come to mind. However, when looking at the last voter turnouts of young people at the European elections in 2014, it seems like young people have become increasingly disengaged from the traditional forms of political and civic participation, a phenomenon that might make us think that young people are completely uninterested in democratic life.

Indeed, according to research published by the Eurobarometer<sup>15</sup>, once again, the greatest abstainers at the European elections in 2014 were young people (only 28% aged 18-24 voted). This is a big contrast from the two thirds (64%<sup>16</sup>) of young Europeans surveyed in May 2013 who said they intended to vote in the European Elections.

In the light of these results, a question arises... Why do these young people not participate? According to research from the Eurobarometer, young people, by not voting, even if they generally fell optimistic about the EU, express a lack of trust in or dissatisfaction with politics in general. It seems like they do not see anymore a solution in the traditional political system. In spite of that, other variables influencing participation have to be taken into account. Either, the economic

situation of these young people doesn't allow them to participate; or they don't have access to the necessary resources for participation (i.e. material resources, interest, and knowledge). Even more, they are not stimulated enough, or they don't have enough time to participate. Indeed, participation is a life-long learning process which is still not accessible to all groups of young people, especially young people with fewer opportunities or in vulnerable situations, and who need to be supported and accompanied<sup>17</sup>.

Nevertheless, according to many researchers, young people still want to have their say but they address their dissatisfaction using different ways or tools and by acting in unexpected areas. Nowadays participation is no longer a matter of voting and being part of a political party. Participation can be individual or collective; continuous or isolated; internet-based; private or public; manifest or latent. The last decade provided us with many examples of young people's engagement: they gather and protest in Turkey, France, UK, Italy, Greece; they take part in social movements like the Arab Spring and Indignados; they sign petitions such as "Stop TTIP<sup>18</sup> and CETA<sup>19</sup>", they support

<sup>15</sup> European Parliament, [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/pdf/eurobarometre/2014/post/post\\_2014\\_survey\\_analytical\\_overview\\_en.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/pdf/eurobarometre/2014/post/post_2014_survey_analytical_overview_en.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> European Commission, Press Release, [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-13-462\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-462_en.htm)

<sup>17</sup> SALTO Youth Participation RC, *Jugend Für Europa, Nationale Agentur für das Eu-Programm E+*, Amplify participation of young people in Europe! Recommendations for policy and practice, Seminars, Brussels, <https://www.salto-youth.net/trc/participation/participationpublications/>

<sup>18</sup> TTIP- Transatlantic Trade Investment Partnership. CETA: Comprehensive Trade and Economic Agreement

<sup>19</sup> <https://stop-ttip.org/fr/signer/>

The last decade provided us with many examples of young people's engagement: they gather and protest



causes online, write blogs, post on Facebook with political and social messages, change their habits of consuming food and goods, find new alternatives to our consumer society. By engaging in their communities, educational environments, the labor market, social enterprises, cultural projects, their daily life, they demonstrate that engagement happens in different ways, sometimes unexpected, and young people, through their daily life, intensively participate in the development of our democratic societies<sup>20</sup>. Therefore, participation is not only political but also civic, economic, social and cultural. Institutional and political actors have to acknowledge and take on board these new mechanisms of participation in our democratic societies because young people are not only the actors of tomorrow's

20 SALTO Youth Participation RC, Jugend Für Europa, Nationale Agentur für das Eu-Programm E+, Amplify participation of young people in Europe! Recommendations for policy and practice, Seminars, Brussels, <https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/participation/participationpublications/>

democracies but they are already the actor of today's democracies.

SALTO Youth Participation RC plays an essential linking role between actors in this field and National Agencies and policy-makers at the European level. SALTO Youth Participation RC, with its bottom-up approach, provides political and institutional actors with expertise and knowledge on the paradigm shift related to public participation and forms of participation used among young people<sup>21</sup>. Furthermore, since 2014 SALTO Participation has adopted and continues to promote a cross-sector approach in the support provided to youth workers, National Agencies and beneficiaries of the new integrated Erasmus+ Youth in Action Program. Indeed, in order to better support participation of young people in democratic life in its different forms and promote a broader understanding of the concept of participation, SALTO Youth Participation RC creates bridges between youth researchers, youth

21 Idem

leaders, young workers, entrepreneurs, private companies, political and institutional actors and young people. By extending its field of action, SALTO Participation RC intends to deepen reflections on the link between young people's engagement and its impact on the development of democratic societies. For example, in the context of globalization including new ways of communication, different economical contexts, and various political systems and structures, SALTO Participation will further address the issue of active citizenship by exploring new or alternative forms of civic engagement and their connections, including E-democracy.

Moreover, SALTO will play a more dynamic role in the development, promotion, recognition and dissemination of new tools and methods to increase the participation of young people in

their daily life. Through trainings, conferences and seminars, SALTO Youth Participation RC in cooperation with National Agencies, creates conditions and opportunities for youth workers to develop new participatory approaches, techniques and tools. These will enable young people to actively participate in projects supported by the Erasmus+ Youth in Action Program.

Once more, there is not only one way but thousands of ways for young people to participate in democratic life. By recognising these new mechanisms and taking it on board, political and institutional actors will send a strong signal to young people that they are ready to build the future hand in hand with young people.

*Stéphanie Nowakowski*

SALTO PARTICIPATION RESOURCE CENTRE

# European Training Strategy 2015 - 2020: Supporting the development of quality youth work in Europe through capacity building

LOOKING FORWARD, LOOKING BACK

In 2002, shortly after the former YOUTH Programme (2000-2006) was launched, the European Commission developed and launched a new feature for the EU youth programme, the European Training Strategy (ETS) for the YOUTH Programme; some readers might remember it as the “Temple of Training”. Looking at a glance at the available financial resources provided under the YOUTH Programme for the training of youth workers and other youth work experts as well as for the networking of organisations working in the youth field, it became clear that there should be a more coordinated approach.

This would enable the main stakeholders in this field to find greater synergy in their work in the field of training and more cooperation projects to be carried out between them.

During the YOUTH Programme as well as the Youth in Action Programme (2007-2013), many successful synergies and cooperation projects were achieved under the “ETS roof”. In 2010, the SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre (SALTO T&C RC) offered to the European Commission to renew the ETS in order to better link it to the developments which happened in the meantime in the European youth policy and youth work arena. The „European Training Strategy of the Youth in Action Programme<sup>24</sup>” was adopted in Nov. 2010 by the Programme Committee of the Youth in Action Programme and the SALTO T&C RC was requested to support the European Commission in the implementation and further development of the ETS.

Many interesting projects carried out under the ETS 2007-2013 can be read in the brochure „Developing quality of youth work in Europe - The European Training Strategy of the Youth in Action



24 <https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-2330/CJ-22-2010-2%20-%20Training%20Strategy.pdf>

Programme (2007-2013)<sup>25</sup>. This brochure also made visible for the first time, the quantitative dimension of the Youth in Action; in particular with regard to resources provided by the programme to train youth workers and other experts and the support for learning organisations and their networking cross Europe. The Youth in Action Programme managed to support ca. 300.000 youth workers and other experts in the youth field to meet in ca. 16.000 activities and made available almost 150 Million Euro for this strand of the programme.

With Erasmus+: Youth in Action (2014-2020) a new generation of an integrated Programme started. In the framework of the European cooperation in the youth field, at the same time, the topic of the quality of youth work started to get a lot of political attention, e.g. in the EU Youth Strategy<sup>26</sup>, the Declaration of the 1<sup>st</sup> European Youth Work Convention<sup>27</sup>, the Resolution of the Council on youth work<sup>28</sup>, the Council conclusions on the quality youth work<sup>29</sup> and the Work Plan of the European Union for Youth for 2014-2015<sup>30</sup>.

Not only in response to this but also because the Erasmus+: Youth in Action Programme (2014-2020) will provide even more resources for youth workers, other experts and their organisations to learn and network across Europe, the European Commission plans to introduce in spring 2015 the European Training Strategy 2015 – 2020. This will aim to support the development of quality youth work in Europe through capacity building.

25 <https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-3029/ETS-2007-13-Journal.pdf>

26 *Council Resolution on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018)*

27 *Declaration of the 1st European Youth Work Convention, Ghent, Belgium, 7-10 July 2010*

28 *Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the governments of the member states, meeting within the Council, on youth work (November 2010)*

29 *Council conclusions on the contribution of quality youth work to the development, well-being and social inclusion of young people (May 2013)*

30 *Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on a European Union Work Plan for Youth for 2014-2015*

Capacity building in this ETS context should cover the

- Micro-level - Human resource development: strategies and measures to equip individuals working as employees, free-lancer or volunteers in youth work with professional competences (knowledge, skills, attitudes) and access to information, knowledge and training that enables them to perform effectively,
- Meso-level - Organisational development: the elaboration of awareness, strategies, processes and procedures within a youth work organisation, but also in relationships between the different organisations and sectors (public, private and community) and
- Macro-level - Systemic framework development: making regulatory changes or creating systems and structures to enable organisations, institutions and agencies at all levels, and in all parts of youth work, to enhance their capacities.

The objectives of the ETS focus on the development of quality youth work in Europe through capacity building, by...

1. Encouraging European cooperation among the different stakeholders to foster quality youth work in Europe and its recognition through strategies for capacity building
2. Generating more knowledge about capacity building in youth work and its impact on quality youth work
3. Developing a modular system to train trainers in Erasmus+: Youth in Action in order to guarantee the development of the essential competences of trainers and the necessary high quality of trainings
4. Building a modular system of trainings for youth workers in Erasmus+: Youth in Action to foster a sufficient quantity and high quality of training based on a Competence Model for youth workers to work international,
5. Offering at EU level, capacity building tools for the support of quality youth work in Europe,
6. Supporting the competence building of Erasmus+: Youth in Action NA staff in the development of quality youth work.

With the implementation of the above mentioned aims and objectives, the ETS 2015-2020 aims to create a “European Academy for quality youth work” as a sustainable and continuous element for capacity building in youth work in Europe.





In addition, the ETS should have an impact beyond the Erasmus+:Youth in Action Programme: It should also support youth work development in the Erasmus+:Youth in Action Programme Countries as well as the countries covered under the Neighbouring Partner Country policy of the EU.

The ETS will be supported by an Advisory Board chaired by the European Commission. The SALTO T&C RC will most probably continue supporting the European Commission in developing and implementing the ETS and will carry out in cooperation with other stakeholders of the ETS, innovative projects being defined in the ETS under above-mentioned objectives. SALTO T&C RC will partly continue with projects started in the previous Programme period, for example with the further developments around the ETS competence model for trainers working at international level<sup>31</sup> and will also develop and carry out new ETS projects.

In order to ensure visibility of the ETS and the dissemination and exploitation of its projects and products, the ETS will provide an ETS newsletter for youth work experts, linked to an ETS dedicated web-space at [www.salto-youth.net](http://www.salto-youth.net). These measures will be accompanied by ETS Journals in 2017 and 2020 offering narrative descriptions of main achievements of ETS, exploring new challenges to be tackled and supporting stakeholders to increase cooperation. The SALTO T&C RC is looking forward to join challenging and interesting ETS projects during the coming years.

*Udo Teichmann*

SALTO TRAINING AND  
COOPERATION RESOURCE CENTRE

31 <https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/training-and-cooperation/europeantotstrategy/trainercompetences/>



# Attention to learning through Youthpass what difference does it make to youth work?

**Youthpass, the recognition instrument in the Erasmus+: Youth in Action Programme – and earlier in the Youth in Action Programme – is probably best known as a certificate<sup>32</sup>. Others may appreciate more its impact on the personal awareness of one's learning which in its turn may also affect individual pathways. Somewhat less visible is the impact that Youthpass has, or may potentially have, on the nature and quality of the youth work projects where it is applied. That is the focus of the reflection below.**

We, in SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre, always emphasise that Youthpass is not just a certificate but that it should come with a process. We call it the Youthpass process; it can also be called a learning process, a reflection process... The idea is to pay attention to the learning potential throughout the project where a (young) person participates. He or she may set personal

learning goals, reflect on the process, analyse the learning outcomes, adjust the goals, influence the process, document the outcomes, revise them for the certificate... It sounds like a lot of individual effort to come to the Youthpass certificate. But also organisations and youth workers put a lot of effort into the work with Youthpass, and ideally much more to support the reflection rather than to the technical part of filling the necessary fields in the Youthpass database.

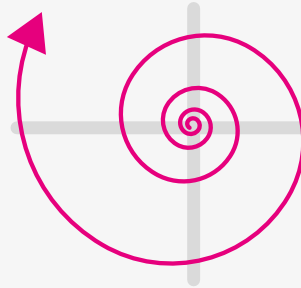
This support for the reflection process needs time and effort but it also gets rewarded through the greater awareness of the value of their work, and through the further development of their work. The organisations that receive a grant in the Erasmus+: Youth in Action Programme are required to offer Youthpass for the participants. To be able to explain the nature of Youthpass for the participants implies identifying – at least to a certain extent – the possible learning value of their planned project. Through accompanying the participants in their dialogue process, the youth workers witness the individual learning progress of the young people in certain areas. And finally, when helping the young people rephrase the learning outcomes as key competences acquired from the project, they get a better understanding of

32 Youthpass Impact Study, *Young people's personal development and employability and the recognition of youth work (2013)*, p. 16. <https://www.youthpass.eu/en/youthpass/downloads/youthpass-impact-study/>

**BENEFIT OF THE  
YOUTHPASS  
PROCESS FOR THE  
PARTICIPANT**

**AWARENESS OF THE  
LEARNING POTENTIAL**

**AWARENESS OF THE  
BENEFIT OF THE  
YOUTHPASS PROCESS  
BY YOUTH WORKER**



**QUALITY OF THE  
SUPPORT TO THE  
PARTICIPANT IN THE  
LEARNING PROCESS**

the actual learning impact of the project. Thus, working with Youthpass offers a structure for the organisations to discuss and develop the educational value of their work.

In the Youthpass Impact Study carried out in 2013, at least 80% of the respondents; organisations with Youthpass experience, agreed with statements like „Youthpass increases recognition of the value of non-formal education and youth work“, „Youthpass increased the value/usefulness of the project for the participants“, and „Integrating the Youthpass approach into the project contributed to the quality of the project“<sup>33</sup>. It was not asked explicitly in that study, but one might suggest that using the Youthpass process also contributes to the benefit that the youth worker receives from the project, becoming more aware of its impact and developing his/her competences to support the reflection process. The spiral diagram below shows how, in general, the interrelated impact of using the Youthpass process might look:

- The greater knowledge of the learning potential of the project supports the motivation by the youth worker to properly implement the reflection process

- This in its turn, helps to plan time and methodologies to provide good quality support for the participants
- The more and better support the participant receives for the reflection about the learning outcomes, the greater benefit there is for the participant – he or she may see further aspects of the acquired competences, be able to better formulate the outcomes for the certificate, etc.
- The better outcomes of the Youthpass process also contribute to the better awareness of the learning value of the project, the picture of the outcomes may become more complete for the youth worker supporting the process
- The greater knowledge of the learning impact of the concrete project, enhances the understanding of the youth worker about the value and importance of paying attention to learning in youth work...

**So there is value – how to ensure and enhance it?**

A lot in this spiral described above depends on the competences of youth workers plus their awareness of the potential of learning in youth

work and of how their projects can make a difference in the competence development of the young people. The youth workers need competences to plan projects keeping the learning dimension in mind. Youthpass supports this kind of awareness in youth workers and certainly contributes to the different ways of dealing with the learning process. Therefore, SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre is planning standard training activities for youth workers to raise the competences related to the learning value of youth work and Youthpass.

Further, a lot depends on the motivation of the youth workers and young people about whether and how they approach the Youthpass process. It is essential that Youthpass stays a voluntary tool to enhance the individual learning process and outcomes in the project. Whether the participants wish to 'work' on Youthpass, depends also on the way they are introduced to the learning potential of the project and to the role that Youthpass may have in this. It is also important in youth work to take care that it doesn't become only about learning, that 'the right to play' doesn't get neglected; this seems to be an important question of balance that may also influence the motivation of both young people and youth workers to work with Youthpass.

### **Who sees the value of Youthpass in the projects supported by the EU programme, may see it also in the work outside the programme**

There is a request from the youth field to make Youthpass as a tool available also outside the framework of the Erasmus+: Youth in Action Programme – for example it is being considered for use in national youth work in Estonia and Latvia. These are great initiatives that SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre is happy and proud to support. But we hope that in parallel to such initiatives, 'Youthpass outside the programme' is also happening in a much more simple way and on the very grassroot level – by just using the benefit of the Youthpass principles also in the work that is not financed by

the programme. This does not mean that youth work should become all about learning, it should keep all the aspects that make it 'youth work' – participation, engagement in the community, developing social contacts, and so on. All this in combination has a lot of potential to impact the pathways of the young people, and there is a lot of potential in the Youthpass process to help organisations enhance that impact.

*Kristiina Pernits*

SALTO TRAINING AND COOPERATION RESOURCE  
CENTRE

# The “slippery” road towards validation of non-formal learning in youth work: Competence development and profiles, validation and its procedures in touch with youth work settings

Since 2005, the SALTO Training & Cooperation Resource (SALTO T&C RC) has worked actively on the strategy of recognition of non-formal learning and youth work. By facilitating and supporting discussions and developments in the four different dimensions of individual, social, formal and political recognition, SALTO T&C RC supports various stakeholders in the youth field to develop their own strategies and contribute to political and educational discussion processes. Also, since 2007 SALTO T&C RC has contributed to the further development of the European Training Strategy (ETS) by developing competence models for trainers and youth workers and related training strategies. In this short article the connection between the two strategies will be reflected along with some theses in the light of current recognition and validation trends and debates.

## 1. Recognition of non-formal learning and youth work got a meaning

Looking back 10 years ago you could find already in a lot of political documents the demand to recognise non-formal learning and youth work better. But when it came to implementation

strategies and to look behind the demand, trying to understand what was meant by it, it was very difficult to find anything clear or understandable – using the words seemed to be *en vogue*. This has significantly changed during the last 10 years. Nowadays you hardly find any strategy – be it in youth policy, youth unemployment, etc. - where recognition of non-formal learning and youth work is not seen as one of the crucial paths! And it is also clear that recognition of non-formal learning is targeted to learning outcomes of individuals gained in youth work but also to a related framework and system, offering support to the young people. And recognition of youth work of course is also one of the key demands to guarantee spaces for and participation of young people. Nowadays there are more and more concrete strategies and implementation measures around Europe.<sup>34</sup>

## 2. The EU key competences remain a challenge within Youthpass

Youthpass provides an opportunity to reflect on learning outcomes and to describe them under

34 <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/recognition>

the framework of the eight EU key competences for lifelong learning. Yes, the message encourages users to see the value of bridging non-formal and formal here. However, using a pre-defined framework makes it challenging for youth workers and young people to find the Key competence where specific learning outcomes fit best. This feedback was confirmed within the Youthpass impact study<sup>35</sup>. But it seems to remain a challenge for young people and youth workers and for everybody in society to see the potential of individual learning outcomes in youth work and describe it in an adequate way; to see that learning outcomes gained in youth work provide learning in all competence areas and not limited to so called social competences. Many people still do this both inside and outside the youth work field. Maybe it is still too difficult to understand and imagine that learning can happen other than in formal settings.

### 3. The charming but tricky creation competence models

On the way to better recognition and especially when entering formal recognition debates, the question of offering fundamentals; providing contextual material and being able to describe frameworks, led recently to start setting up and developing competence models to start strategy development and steps into quality development by looking at the actors in youth work. First approaches to describe which competences young leaders and youth workers gain in youth work are there, first attempts are there to describe competence models of certain target groups like trainers and youth worker. It is also important to describe what is youth work, what is understood by this term in local, regional, national and international contexts, how can it be described – which settings are meant, where are limits towards other sectors like civil social services or formal learning. But looking at a competence model and working with has a lot of opportunities to finally see the full potential of either a youth work context or of the existing profiles in youth

35 <https://www.youthpass.eu/en/youthpass/downloads/youthpass-impact-study/>

work.<sup>36</sup> But of course the challenge remains, how to work with them, how to enable people in the youth field to use them, which instruments work to make them alive.

### 4. The long and “slippery” road towards validation of non-formal learning

In 2012 the youth work field was asked to contribute to content development related to the Council Recommendation on validation of non-formal and informal learning<sup>37</sup>. Validation systems will be developed in European member states, consisting of 4 different steps: 1. identifying learning outcomes, 2. documenting learning outcomes, 3. assessing them according to standards and 4. certifying this. These steps should also be accessible for young people and should provide tools which are youth-friendly. That said, the reality is not always that nice and friendly. During these processes it has become obvious how resistant, rigid and inflexible some formal systems are; but it also becomes obvious how difficult it is to imagine how future and alternative ways of learning can happen – most people still have in mind a strong and rigid understanding of learning and education and what has to happen from their own formal learning path. A lot of people of course agree that one can learn outside curriculum settings and of course most of them know somebody who has managed an interesting path without using a formal education one. And almost everybody confirms that the skills he or she needs to fulfil the job come from other than educational contexts, such as hobbies, training-on-the-job, and other non- and informal settings. When it comes to imagining validation procedures which enable people to describe their competences, being able to express the learning and seeing how they can fit to a job profiles usually causes the imagination to stop or it seems to be impossible to contribute to these debates – too technical, too difficult, not field related.

36 <https://www.salto-youth.net/trainercompetences/>

37 <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/validation-non-formal-and-informal-learning>

The recent development of competence models of course contributes to the development of validation procedures. By making sure and showing what is possible in the context of youth work and by showing what profiles people have or in which area learning happens, a first important step is already made. It can make people proud and it can motivate them to further develop steps in validation to get the learning outcomes recognised.

Looking across Europe, discussions and processes to contribute the validation debate are different and it is good to look into the different countries, to learn from each other e.g. from the active contribution of the youth work field to care for recognition of youth work

occupational profiles (like youth worker, youth trainer) in Slovakia or from contributions of the international youth work field to develop validation procedures in Germany.

The continuation of this work needs expertise and the willingness to go down a long road, and trust in the potential of these debates; to give a push to reform educational systems; to support young people who fail in formal settings; to provide better opportunities for youth work to be more professional – in a good and innovative way!

*Rita Bergstein*

SALTO TRAINING & COOPERATION RESOURCE  
CENTREV

# The SALTO Tools for Learning Strategy

## What are the pillars of this strategy?

The Tools For Learning Strategy has three pillars: The Tools Publications, The online Tool Box and the Tool Fair annual event. Together these three enable Educational Tools to be presented, promoted, reviewed and developed. The intention of the overall strategy is to make Tools for Learning accessible and to engage users in discussion about quality and development.

- The tools Publications such as the Practical Guides, Study and Research papers and the Newsletter are used as an educational background for engaging discussions, but also creating pedagogical reference to the strategy in the non-formal learning framework.
- The Tool Box is an online library where people can search for, review and contribute to the development of Tools for Learning. The Tool Box relies on trainers uploading their ideas and on their peers to use them and provide feedback.
- The Tool Fair is an annual event held in different European countries to showcase Tools for Learning and bring different stakeholders together to experience and discuss them. The Tool Fair also promotes the process of peer review and offers the insights of 'critical friends' for those who present.

A 'Tools for Learning Working Group' has been set up to guide the progress of this strategy. The Working Group is made up of representatives of National Agencies of the Erasmus +: Youth in Action Programme plus experienced trainers, coaches, experts and facilitators.

In addition to providing opportunities for the presentation and development of Tools for Learning, the Working Group also contributes to the wider dissemination of Tools for Learning beyond the youth programmes and into other areas such as Formal and Life Long Learning. The Tools for Learning strategy is the responsibility of the SALTO-YOUTH Euromed Resource Centre as a horizontal task on behalf of the Network of SALTO Resource Centres.

## FOCUS ON TOOL FAIRS: 2015 is the 10th Anniversary!

When the first Tool Fair was held in 2006 in France and it was not expected to give birth to the dynamic which actually followed it. It has been quite a journey to the full inclusion of the Tool Fair as a pillar of the "tools for learning" strategy and beyond.

The Tool Fair is a place which offers the opportunity to test and taste new tools; to



analyse, exchange and evaluate them, in order to valorise creativity in non-formal education pedagogical initiatives. It is part of the SALTO horizontal responsibility to support active and innovative contributions to quality development, recognition and visibility of the youth sector and non-formal education as a whole. For a long time the main answer took the form of the online toolbox, which enabled youth workers to upload and discover tools. But what the online toolbox can't offer is the opportunity to share ideas and experiences within a "Rencontres du 3ème type" (or "Close Encounters of the Third Kind") way.

As needs and experiences change like calls for new answers the Fair has been renewed every year since then, proving to be a flexible model to be adapted to the place, country and needs of the moment. The core concept of the Tool Fair lies in the opportunity it offers to test, taste, analyse and improve the transferability of pedagogical tools. Involving local actors and national agencies as well as guests from the formal education domain, the Tool Fair usually lasts three or four days, and offers different possibilities to share tools and experiences: An

open space workshop enables participants to bring their tools to light, while one hour and two hour workshops permit a deeper presentation and discussion about the tools presented. During these workshops, the key idea is to remain as interactive as possible. Every participant is in turn presenting and commenting on or thinking about these tools which enrich the participants as much as they are enriched by them.

If the spirit and structure of the Tool Fair has been similar for the past 9 years, it is its permanent capacity of adaptation which has made it successful. Each place and each year has its own characteristics, constraints, advantages, needs and requirements. The strength of the Tool Fair lies in its flexibility. Despite the common goals, targets, and structures, each Tool Fair is unique and brought its stone to the pedagogical tools structure which is now to be continued in Hungary this year for the 10th Anniversary.

*Federica Demicheli*

SALTO EUROMED & GOOD PRACTICES  
RESOURCE CENTRE

# 15 years of SALTO

## support online

The website of the SALTO-YOUTH Resource Centres first saw the light of day in 2001. As any organisation, the SALTO network needed an **online business card**: What was SALTO and what did it do? That was the static content of our initial website. These were our first baby steps.

### Promoting & finding training activities

The SALTO network started off as a training network. The SALTO-YOUTH.net website was an ideal tool to post information about our training offers. But why not give an overview of all youth work courses within the YOUTH programme and beyond. That's why we created a database-driven **European Training Calendar** (ETC) with a search function, so that users could easily find the courses corresponding to their training needs. 998,937 searches for training courses were carried out among 344 courses in 2014 (2737 searches every day).

▶ [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Training/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Training/)

We created user-access for our National Agency colleagues and other training organisers so that they can upload and manage their own

courses. Quite specific for our context was that **National Agencies pre-select candidates**. They often pay travel costs for youth workers participating in courses linked to the European youth programme, so they should have a say in whom they send (depending on priorities, budget, etc.). In 2014, this was good for a total of 344 courses in the European Training Calendar.

🔔 Did you know you can register to **receive a notification** each time a new training course is added? That way you don't miss a single offer.

Another practical development in the Training Calendar is the application form system. After creating a course description in the database, you can choose to create an **online application form** via an easy drag and drop system. The link to the application form is shown in the Calendar. After the application deadline, you can simply download all applications in an excel sheet and start your participant management. This is quite a change from the hundreds of faxes or PDF applications training organisers had to manage before...

**Make your life easier.** Add your youth (work) training activity to the European Training Calendar and create an online application form. Success guaranteed.

## Finding the right trainers & finding training jobs

Not only SALTOs, but also National Agencies, NGOs and other institutions are organising a gigantic number of training courses each year. But how can we find the best trainers for each of those courses. We maybe know a few trainers, but they are not necessarily experts on the topic of your course. In response to this, SALTO created a database of **Trainers Online for Youth (TOY)**. On the one hand, this made it easier for training organisers to find the trainer that fits (outside of the usual suspects), and for international youth (work) trainers this is an additional tool to promote their services.

👉 [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/TOY/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/TOY/)

The quality of trainers has always been a primary concern. But it is impossible for SALTO to assess the competences of all trainers in TOY. For this reason trainers have to list **minimum 3 references for international youth work training courses** in their profile. That way we can A) assume that they know what it is to work on a course as we know them in our field and B) training organisers can contact the reference persons to gather more information about the trainer in practice. Because you wouldn't just marry someone direct from a dating site, would you?

Life in the youth sector is very volatile. Many new trainers come (and they can register in TOY provided they have the 3 minimum references – it is not a closed club!) but also many go. That's why we do a **yearly TOY refreshment**. Trainers are requested to update their profile where needed. If they don't, we switch them offline (after a warning or two). But also the reference persons choose every year if they are still willing to be a reference person. Here as well, if they don't react to the refreshment link, we switch them offline. This system guarantees that the trainer profiles are maximum one year old and that the contact details in their profile are valid.

👉 **WANT TO BE A TRAINER?** You can create a profile in the Trainers Online for Youth database. Read all about it at [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/NewTrainer/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/NewTrainer/).

Currently, there are **450 experienced trainers online** (each of them having 3 international training experiences in the youth field). Per year, there are on average 80,000 searches in TOY (219 per day). But to make life of training organisers even easier, we created a possibility to send a Call for Trainers to all online trainers in TOY. That way available and interested trainers who fit the selection criteria (= self selection) will apply for the course. And for trainers this is a great way to get new jobs. In 2014 we recruited 113 trainers this way.

👉 [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/CallsForTrainers/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/CallsForTrainers/)

## Sharing educational tools & practices

In the hundreds of training courses the SALTO network organised over the years, the trainers developed many effective methods, ranging from dynamic energisers to full-blown simulation exercises and every type of educational method in between. We did not want to reserve these methods for the 20-30 participants of the course. As we work with European funding, we also wanted to share all the good things developed in our activities.

This was the philosophy behind the **Toolbox for Training and Youth Work**. We created an online database with educational methods, useful presentations and practical publications. In the beginning, only SALTO added 'tools', but soon we also opened up the Toolbox for anyone to share the training and youth work methods they developed. After a standard quality check, good tools are switched online. An ideal way to promote your great work.

👉 [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Toolbox/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Toolbox/)

Insert Image IT Group website 3 or 4 here or nearby

With **1250 methods online**, it can be a bit difficult to find what you are looking for. That's why we developed a more strategic approach to categorize the different methods in the Toolbox. You can search according to type of method, the topic addressed or the type of project you

can use the tool in. That makes it easier to find the right methods for your activities. 138,859 searches were carried out in 2014 (380/day).

Receive educational inspiration in your inbox: register to **get a notification** each time a new tool goes online.

But you are not alone to assess the quality of a tool in the toolbox. There is also a **star rating system** that gives you an indication of the popularity of the method. Moreover, it is possible to add comments to the methods on how you used or adapted. A great way to get inspiration for your own activity.

Besides relevant tools, SALTO also comes in contact with many great projects. The European Commission, National Agencies but also course participants frequently asked us for **examples of good practice**. Projects can inspire and spark of new projects. That's why we also put a number of good practice projects online on different European priority topics. These are preselected by SALTO and described in a way that you can learn from them.

👉 [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/GoodPractices/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/GoodPractices/)

## Finding partners for youth projects & find interesting projects

A recurring challenge in European youth work is to find appropriate partners for international projects. Different National Agencies had partner request forms that could be sent to other NAs and published in a newsletter or on a webpage. A very longwinded and cumbersome process.

A **partner-finding database**, in which you can find partners for your project or where you can express your interest in joining one, appeared to be a better solution. The only problem was that 4 or 5 organisations at the same time had the same idea. Having a number of parallel databases reduced the efficiency of partner-finding. That's why SALTO, as a European support network for international youth work, proposed one central partner-finding databases. That is how **Otlas** was born.



👉 [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Otlas/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Otlas/)

Otlas stands for Organisational Atlas (and perceptive readers probably also noticed that it is SALTO spelled backwards) and gives a chance to **any youth NGO to register online**. Currently, more than 6300 youth organisations and youth groups did. Besides an organisational profile, NGOs can also add projects to Otlas for which they are looking for partners. And interested organisations can of course look for projects to partner with. In 2014 **1,823,620 searches** were carried out (4996 per day) to find the perfect organisation or to join one of the 3000+ proposed projects.

## Spreading the news

From the short description above, it is clear that there is a wealth of resources online. But you don't necessarily want to go through it all. Instead you can register the **SALTO newsletters** to get the most important information and the most recent changes delivered in your inbox. You can select between the different priority topics SALTO is working on.

👉 [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Newsletter/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Newsletter/) (log in with your SALTO username and password, or create one if you didn't register on [SALTO-YOUTH.net](http://SALTO-YOUTH.net) yet)

## What does the future bring for the SALTO website?

The development of the SALTO website over the years was a success story. More and more useful youth work databases were added to the web site. SALTO-YOUTH.net increasingly became the central “place” in Europe for youth work experts to find and spread information.

## Towards a portal for youth work

During Erasmus+:Youth in Action Programme (2014-2020), SALTO would like to further develop its website from a “place” towards a “portal” with an integrated set of tools for (international) youth work. The SALTO website has the potential to become the European portal for youth work, complementary to the European Youth Portal for young people.

Quite a number of online tools for youth work already exist and are well used. They serve a real need. Missing are tools for interaction and cooperation. We will start adding social features and communication tools to the SALTO website and its different databases. These should allow youth work experts to communicate and cooperate online in open and closed groups.

## The possibilities are endless...

For example, trainers could prepare participants in a closed training course environment. Youth work experts could debate online the pros and cons of educational approaches and tools. Working groups could have an online space to make available documents, to discuss and progress. NA staff could use the online possibilities to develop common long term strategic projects or single activities to support the implementation of the Erasmus+:Youth in Action Programme.

Having these opportunities on SALTO-YOUTH.net would avoid problems regarding ownership, privacy (commercial companies collect and use your information), organisational issues (in some organisations Facebook & co are not allowed during work times) and tailor-made

sustainability (SALTO will continuously develop the tools with the specific needs of the sector in mind).

## Upgrading to the mobile world

Another issue we are very conscious about is the evolution towards an increasingly mobile world. Gartner Research Institute predicts that in 2015 only 321 million PCs will be sold, in contrast to almost 2 billion smartphones. Half of all Europeans have a smartphone in their pocket. So we also need to make sure that our youth work content is also nicely available on the go, and we could also look into additional applications.

Why not think of a SALTO app that gives you a notification when a new content is added to the SALTO website? Or we could bring youth projects in contact according to their geographical location. Information should also be easily shared from any mobile or internet platform, to reach as many relevant people as possible. Because sharing resources, is what SALTO is all about.

## Bear with us

Technical changes take time and money; two precious resources we have to use carefully. However, in the step-by-step approach we are taking, we hope to complete our dream of the future by the end of the Erasmus+:Youth in Action Programme. Any web developments involve lots of trials and sometimes errors. So bear with us and please let us know if you encounter any teething problems.

Suggestions for improvements are always welcome. That is how we slowly but surely build a communication and cooperation platform for youth work in Europe, open for professionals and volunteers, practitioners, researcher and decision makers: for you!

*Andreas Bergendal, Udo Teichmann, Federica Demichelli & Tony Geudens*

SALTO IT GROUP





