

NEWSLETTER 15-16 April 2013

Third meeting of the expert group on promoting the creativity and innovative capacity of young people by identifying competences and skills acquired through non-formal and informal learning relevant for employability



On 15-16 April, 2013, national experts and policy makers met for the third time in Brussels as members of the Expert Group on the role of creativity and nonformal learning for the employability of young people.

This meeting focused on exchange of experience and the framework for the expert group's activities. It set milestones and concrete ways to deliver on it. Time was also dedicated to discussing relevant sources of research, policy documents and lessons learnt from good practice.



The host of the meeting

The host of the meeting, Françoise Kremer, from the French Community of Belgium, welcomed the participants in the Bureau International Jeunesse. BIJ supports the entrepreneurial spirit and the international mobility of young people. (http://www.lebij.be)



Best practice from member States

Two Member State representatives Justina Alsyte-Gogeliene (Lithuania) and Alenka Blazinsek (Slovenia) presented good practices from the national level.

Justina spoke about the projects linked to employability and entrepreneurship funded by the **Youth in Action** programme and especially about the skills and competences gained during these projects. Those include also project managements and sense of initiative as well as many more.

- team-building, self-confidence, innovation, communication, organisation
- intercultural competence and
- creative thinking
- career planning skills
- learning to learn



Alenka presented information about peer-learning activities in Slovenia and how job clubs and 'Entrepreneur Fridays' work. A particularly interesting example concerned a notebook in which young people list their skills and competences gained through nonformal learning and informal learning. (http://www.talentiran.si/en-nefiks)

Led by the chair, Dr. John Bamber, the meeting then considered a document on the vision and specific aims of the group, and the following was adopted:

Aim of the expert group

- The aim of the work of the Expert Group is to inform stakeholders such as policy makers, employers, and representatives of the economy and business, youth workers and young people themselves about the benefits of non-formal and informal learning.
- The benefits lead to skills and competences that enable young people to be innovative and creative. The skills acquired through non-formal and informal learning in particular through youth work, can bring a social and economic change.
- The report will highlight certain good practices to encourage key stakeholders on all levels to make the necessary social and economic investment in youth creativity.



In the afternoon of the first day, the next steps towards producing the report were debated; concretely the division of work and responsibilities of sub-groups, activities (research, writing, consulting, other tasks), organisation of work (meetings, contact in between meetings), timeline and milestones. The major part of the work will be done over the summer and there will be two more meetings in the autumn in order to present the report at the Youth Working Party in October.



The sub-groups brainstormed on the areas to be covered by the expert group and about the preparation of templates for different areas - research, policy and good practice. The templates will help members to focus attention on information that would be most useful for the report, and accompany all documents placed in sinapse. A number of other topics were discussed, including: lessons on the value of nonformal learning, unleashing the creative and innovative potential of young people for employability, entrepreneurship and social innovation.



The evidence for the report would come from academia, studies, articles, as well as success stories from practice. It was accepted that there needed to be criteria for 'best practice' in promoting and recognising non-formal learning outcomes among different groups of young people, employers and education. Reliable lessons could then be drawn from these examples.

Second day

During the second day, the group discussed the structure, outline and aims of the final report. It was agreed that:

The report will gather together the available information, to set out an argument about the benefits of non-formal education and learning to young people. It will focus on skills and competences involved in employability (understood broadly), and the return to wider society in terms of social and economic development. It will highlight the existing need for creativity and innovation in business and economic spheres. It will emphasise the importance of building bridges between different sectors, such as education and industry. It will match the declared needs of the business sector regarding skills and competences, and the creative and innovative outcomes of nonformal learning.



The report will provide core descriptors and definitions of the key terms (employability, innovation, creativity, non-formal education and learning, youth work and young people) and show the links between these elements. It will also provide evidence in the form of tried and tested examples of practice, while highlighting effective policy implementation in a range of areas including education, welfare, and employment. The examples will demonstrate how to recognise skills and competences in this area, in a useful and comparative way.



The report will consider how development in this area can complement and enrich other aspects of youth policy. In the main it will not establish new data, but will draw from current initiatives, for example Youth Pass, Youth in Action Programme, current work on the validation of non-formal learning, and information about young people (e.g. Eurobarometer). It will synthesise relevant messages from existing sources such the EU Youth Report.



As the current socio-economic crisis has resulted in significant challenges for young people, attention will be mainly on:

- recent policy
- research
- practice

Also specific recommendations will be part of the report. In the first instance the report will:

- Establish the evidence base from policy, practices and research in this area, and identify where this is lacking
- Provide evidence of the impact of current policies
- Identify the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours (competences) that enable creativity and innovation
- Illustrate effective ways of acknowledging, accrediting or certifying the achievement of competence, and how to measure and assess the associated learning and development
- Make recommendations about the training that can enhance the capacity of nonformal educators and youth workers to promote innovation and creativity
- Explain the need for vertical and horizontal collaboration, cooperation and joint action between stakeholders, for example between private sector employers and educators, at all levels
- Emphasise the need for the Commission to lead on working with employer organizations, large companies, young people and youth organizations, to raise awareness of the benefits of work in this area.

Going forwards, it can be anticipated that further work will be needed to:

- Develop a user-friendly framework for practice development, including tools and activities
- Provide other ways of promoting work in this area, for example through financial support, technical advice, networks, and databases
- Undertake focussed experiments to develop specific areas of practice
- Detail the resources that will be needed to implement the recommendations
- Develop other ways of conveying the findings, for example through a video, or podcast

With regard to outcomes

The information in the report should enable the target groups to understand and react to current developments, and to develop and use creative and innovative potential. For example, while taking into account the different contexts in the specific countries, matrices can be used to demonstrate different types of effective work, with various categories of young people.

The report will draw attention to short, medium and long term outcomes that can be anticipated from this investment. It should be stressed that there is no quick fix, so that thinking and commitments should be long term.

The report will show how non-formal education and learning can complement formal education in supporting innovation and creativity in young people. It will focus in particular on the contribution of youth work.

The report should enable key stakeholders to react constructively to the situation of young people in the current socio-economic downturn, to learn how to recognise (certify/accredit) skills and competences, and to use the creative and innovative potential of young people. It will do so by clarifying the ways in which non-formal education and learning, and in particular youth work, can enhance the capacity of young people for innovation and creativity. It will show how this enhanced capacity increases employability, entrepreneurship and the capacity to bring about social change.

On 19-20 June 2013 in Dublin, the next meeting of the Expert Group will take place.

Thematic focus of this meeting will be:

- Work in research, policy and practice sub-groups also organisation of work, including timeline and milestones
- Preliminary thinking about the report and recommendations of the group towards the Youth Working Party and other stakeholders