

## **Working Group "Youth and Education"**

### **Formal Education**

#### **The complementary role of formal and non-formal education**

We strongly believe that formal education should interact and be complimentary of non-formal education. Formal education structures should seek to employ and develop means of stimulating and encouraging young people during the course of their learning.

Formal education should learn from non-formal activities and adopt them in their curriculum when it comes to methods, skills and knowledge.

#### **Quality of the formal education**

It is extremely important that the level of all basic education, primary and secondary is consistently high. Subsequently, we ask for a reassessment of the content of the formal education system as it is at present, not only the transfer of knowledge as an important aspect but also the development of skills as being an integral part of the education process. This will make the education systems more rewarding for young people and could serve as a motivating factor.

Education should concentrate more on how to prepare all students for their difficult transition from secondary education to the labour market.

#### **Accessibility of formal education**

Formal education has to be not only obligatory but made accessible to all. This means that each individual should have access to all educational institutions. For this to take place, barriers currently in place, whatever their nature, (whether they be financial or cultural), should be broken down and subsequently removed.

It should be of the utmost importance that accessibility to all strands of education is guaranteed starting with primary education, progressing through to secondary level, in order to remove the anomalies that exist with regard to the access of higher education.

Accessibility also means that the knowledge produced by these institutions of education should be provided to everybody without restriction. We believe that open education systems can and should co-exist with quality education.

Governments of all the Member States should develop and apply a governmental funding scheme supporting young people during their studies.

Positive discrimination quotas should apply with regard to education entrance criteria, only in those cases where it is deemed important and necessary to overcome an existing discrimination.

With regard to the life-long learning approach, we favour the development of special mechanisms which will allow people to reconcile education in latter stages of their lives with their family and professional obligations.

### **Non-Formal Education**

Youth work has special characteristics and a special value since it provides the opportunity of non-formal learning. The purpose of youth organisations in this context, should not be fashioning up the CVs of young people but youth organisations should encourage the society and the employers to value the competences youth acquire during various activities.

#### **Recognising and communicating NFL**

We find that the opportunities of non- formal learning should be more visible, as well as the benefits gained during such activities. We should raise awareness among the youth themselves about the values that are gained through participation in Non Formal Educational activities because we believe that self-awareness helps to avoid over-formalisation. We suggest that the Youth Policies should put an emphasis on self – awareness as they do on recognition.

Recognition of non-formal learning can work more efficiently if youth organisations have the infrastructure to communicate the opportunities they provide. Therefore we propose that youth organisations should be assisted through political and financial support to provide the necessary opportunities and a good communication strategy.

Recognition should be at political, social and personal level. A legal framework should be provided for non-formal education and also for the recognition and competences of the trainers (e.g. France).

#### **Communicating Non-Formal Education**

Youth organisations are diverse in nature but share common values, such as active citizenship. These common values should be clearly communicated;

- to society; in order to be recognised and
- to NGOs themselves in order to raise self- awareness.

Since national campaigns in many cases have been proven to be inadequate, we suggest that activities be developed at a local level, i.e. at schools, in the community. Furthermore, both the media and employers should be directly involved and included as partners. This can be realised only through institutional support from both the European Union and the governments of all member states.

We believe that there should be a network of Youth NGOs running non-formal educational programmes which are institutionally linked with EU institutions and governments, to assist with the validation of non formal activities.

An Important step for the recognition of the competences acquired by young people through non-formal education, would be their certification by using the Europass and the Portfolio for Youth Workers and Youth Leaders. For this reason we believe that an effective communication strategy should be developed at all three levels, (Regional, National and European.)