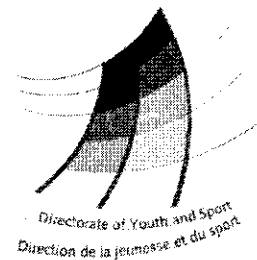1600

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SYMPOSIUM ON NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

Strasbourg (EYC), 13-15 October 2000

PROVISIONAL REPORT

Directorate of Youth and Sport
Direction de la jeunesse et du sport

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INTRODUCTION

Non formal education has already been at the core of the activities of the youth sector of the Council of Europe, but the training thus given was not recognised. Thus, in the Final Declaration of the 5th Conference of European Ministers responsible for youth (Bucharest, April 1998), European countries were encouraged to promote equality of opportunities by recognising the training and skills acquired through non-formal education and by finding various ways of endorsing the experience and qualifications acquired in this way.

Following this Declaration, the European Steering Committee on Youth set-up a working group on non-formal education in order to form a clear picture of what non-formal education should be at European level, as a learning process outside the prescribed classroom curricula or training programmes leading to some form of validated certification.

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, in its Recommendation 1437 adopted on 24th January 2000, acknowledged that formal educational systems alone cannot respond to rapid and constant technological, social and economic change in society, and that they should be reinforced by non-formal educational practices. It also recommended that the Committee of Ministers promote non-formal education in the work programme of the Council of Europe and in particular in the youth sector. Its statutory bodies welcomed this recommendation which recognised and supported their action, as the Joint Council (CDEJ and Advisory Council) decided in October 1999 that non-formal education, along with participation, education to human rights and stability in South-East Europe would be the four work priorities of the youth sector for 2000-2002.

Consequently, the European Steering Committee on Youth and the Advisory Council of the European Youth Centres and the European Youth Foundation organised a symposium from 13 to 15 October 2000 in the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg to provide the opportunity to discuss the different aspects of the broader concept of non-formal education and provide practical proposals in this field.

Its aim was to explore the different spheres of intervention of non-formal education and its objectives:

- How to develop instruments and policies on the whole issue of non formal education as a tool to improve participation and social integration of young people;
- To provide examples of good practice in this field, especially aimed upon behavioural risks;
- To set-up the guidelines for a regulatory framework, taking into account the recognition at European level of the competencies acquired through non-formal education. This will be done in co-operation with all the appropriate education and training bodies and with the intergovernmental organisations interested dealing with these questions.

Four workshops discussed, on this basis, the following items:

> *recognition of non formal education* : which legal framework, how to raise awareness with NGOs, governments, universities, employers; what is the implication on youth policies
> *education for democracy*:forms of participatory learning, education for citizenship, intercultural learning ;
> *social exclusion and employability*:combating risk behaviour and marginalisation ;
> *conflict resolution, fight against violence and intolerance, mediation.*

On the basis of examples, the workshops had to define the specificity and the values of non-formal education, find the best practices in the field and the barriers to the development of non-formal education, which measures should be adopted in favour of the promotion of non-formal education, how to measure the acquired knowledge and draft recommendations. Experts introduced each theme to the participants, in particular by giving them guidelines and their definition of non-formal education. The role of new information technologies in non-formal education, the role of the Council of Europe in this field, youth leaders training, link with formal education, the definition of a educational environment and long-life learning being transversal themes for each group.

The symposium brought together around 70 participants, 50 of them being chosen by the CDEJ and NGYOs. Representatives of other Directorates of the Council of Europe: Directorate of School, Out of School and Higher Education, Directorate of Social Affairs and Health, Directorate of Human Rights, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, the Committee of Ministers, and other international organisations, the European Commission, UNESCO, OECD, ILO, ETUC, UNICE were also invited. A team of young non-professional journalists had followed them and published a daily newspaper proving thus concretely the value of non-formal education. Their photos taken during the symposium illustrate this text.

You will find below the main interventions of experts, the conclusions of the symposium and the final report drafted by the General Rapporteur, Ms Lynn Chisholm. All these texts were used as a basis for the drafting of a global programme on non-formal education for the whole youth sector. Apart from the fact that a CDEJ working group is focusing on this activity, a more global approach of this field by the youth sector is implemented, which can lead to a political and pedagogical approach in co-operation with other relevant sectors of the Organisation, such as the Directorate of Education, the Directorate of Social Affairs (Committee on the promotion of access to employment). Moreover, within the framework of the covenant with the European Union, a working group also works on the quality standards in the field of youth work in order to set up European criteria in this field.

This three year programme should contribute largely to the recognition of non-formal education and be presented to the Conference of the European ministers responsible for youth which will be held in Thessaloniki from 14 to 16 October 2002.
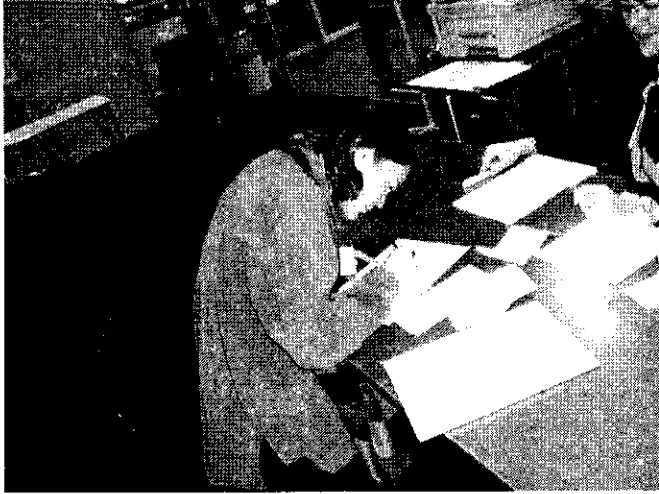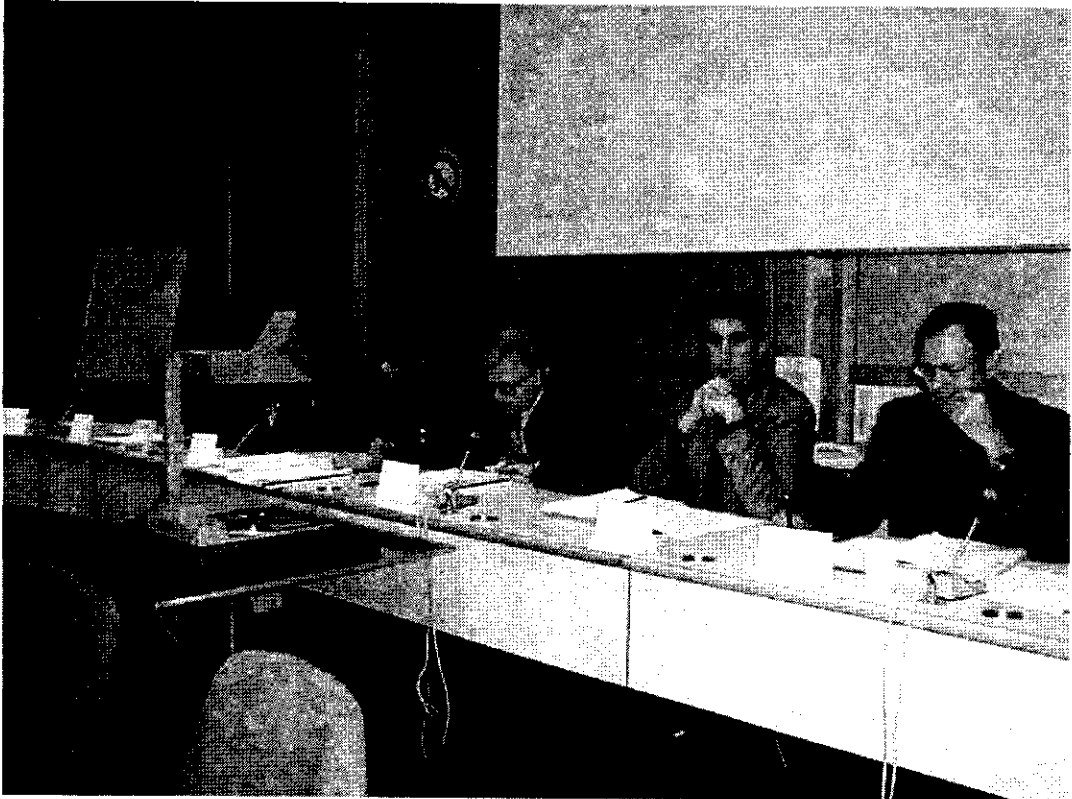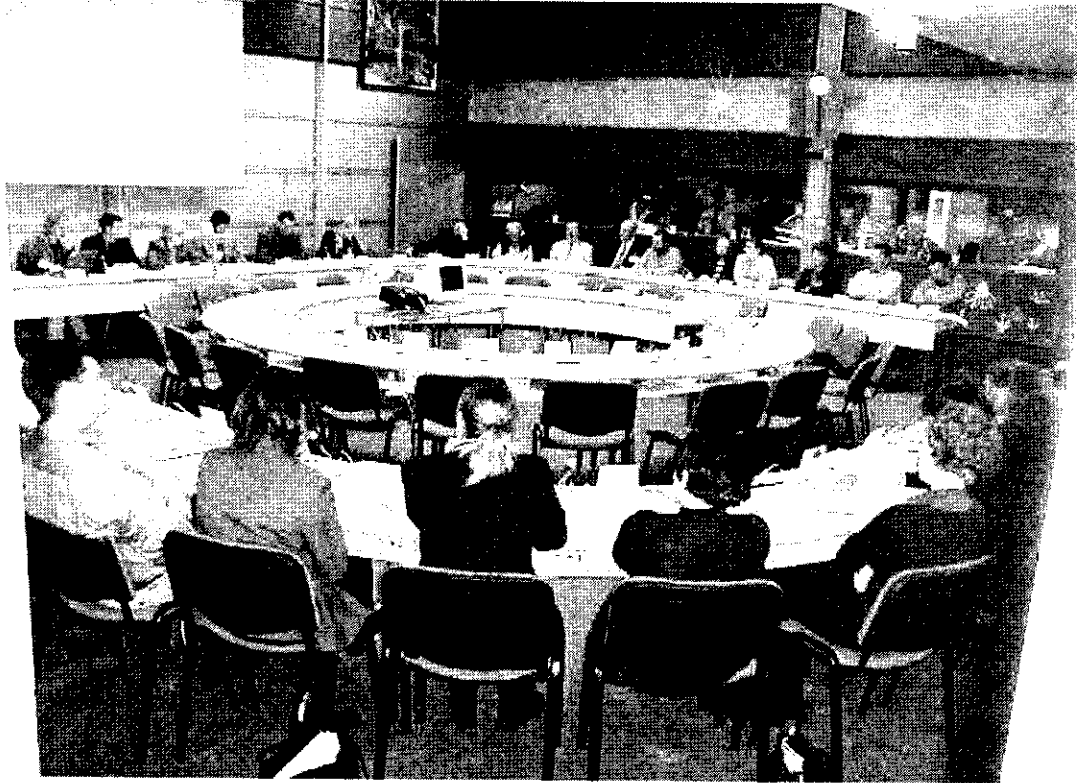
THE NON-FORMAL EDUCATION BOOM

Lasse SIURALA
Director of Youth and Sport

The paper aims at (1) defining non-formal education, (2) giving it a historical and political context and (3) providing guidelines on how it could relate to the programme of activities of the Council of Europe's youth sector.

1.   Defining non-formal education

"Probably the single most important finding of this study is that we know amazingly little about non-formal education practices in general, and even less about those occurring within the youth organisations."

Building Bridges for Learning. The recognition and value of non-formal education in youth activity. Pasi Sahlberg. European Youth Forum 1999.

Non-formal education is one of those terms of which we all have a rough idea, and which often differ from one another. Let me try to clarify it. Reaching a common understanding might be much more difficult and perhaps even useless. But it certainly is useful to better understand what the different interpretations are.

A very simple and illustrative definition is presented in the following Randy Glasbergen cartoon (www.glasbergen.com

Copyright 1996 Randy Glasbergen.   www.glasbergen.com

"I can suck pudding up my nose and blow it out the corner of my eye, but they *still* won't put me in the gifted class at school!"

The cartoon identifies the main elements of non-formal learning. Firstly, it is something, which takes place outside the school. It is also learning which typically concerns young people. It is innovative (or have you sucked pudding up your nose and have you blown it out of the corner of your eye?). It is related to the life concerns of the learner – in the case of the cartoon on good food, like the pudding. Furthermore – as the young man complains - it is learning, which the formal education has problems to acknowledge.

1.1. Short tentative definitions

Much of the confusion of the term "non-formal education" is caused by its relation to, or distinction from, other neighbouring concepts like "formal education", "informal education" and "post formal education". Let me start with short tentative definitions.

Formal education: *Curriculum of the formal educational institutions* (school, university)

With this definition formal education becomes characterised by education which is structured, hierarchical and chronologically graded putting emphasis on the importance of the teacher, objective knowledge and competence of memorising and 'classical subjects'.

Informal education: *Learning that takes place in everyday life outside the curriculum* (family, peer-groups, media, youth cultures, other everyday contexts)

This is the realm outside the curriculum of formal education. It is the definitely less acknowledged and perhaps at the same time the fastest developing field of learning. It is particularly the cultural youth research which has, during almost all the period following the war, maintained that young people learn their cultural codes, lifestyles and social orientations through the informal contexts at school, during their leisure, within youth cultures and subcultures and through the media.

Non-formal education: *Out-of-school education, based on intrinsic motivation* (NGO activities, community work, training in companies, trade unions)

Non-formal education is often placed somewhere between formal and in-formal education, saying that it is not as structured nor equally clearly oriented towards certificates than formal education and saying that it is more intentional and organised than informal education. As I will later argue, these demarcation lines are not as evident as they might first appear. Within the concept of non-formal education various actors put the emphasis differently; some want to link it to formal education, some to labour market integration, some to empowering youth at risk and some to civil society and NGO promotion.

Post formal education: *Educational trend to introduce a pupil/student centred curriculum on formal education*

This concept refers to 'alternative educational thinking' with roots in the works of Grundtvig, Paolo Freire, Maria Montessori, constructivists of the seventies and finally today's educationalists like Patrick Slattery (1995) and Kincheloe, Steinberg and Hinchey (1999). The common element is to put emphasis on the learner, learning as a process and as a contradiction to formal education.

This is very vague. Non-formal education still appears as a very wide concept and it is not at all clear what its relation is to the neighbouring concepts of formal and informal education. Even if it be impossible to give a clear-cut definition as to what non-formal education might be, it perhaps could be more clearly understood through its key characteristics.

1.2. The key characteristics

> "Learning is a mental disposition to interact constructively with change"
>
> Jan Visserl, "Learning Communities", Oxford 1999

A schematic approach (inspired by Lave & Wenger 1991) is to understand non-formal education as something between formal education and apprenticeship. In formal education knowledge is 'poured' into the pupils/students through teachers / professors/ textbooks. This knowledge is then used, or put into practice, in the working and community life. This basically top-down model of knowledge transfer is based on the "objectivist conception of knowledge", which assumes that there is objective and generally applicable knowledge, which can be most efficiently transmitted through specialised staff called teachers and professors.

Diagram 1: Learning through formal education and apprenticeship

FORMAL EDUCATION:

| Knowledge |
| Actor |
| *Community of Practice* |

APPRENTICESHIP :

| *Knowledge* |
| Actor |
| Community of Practice |
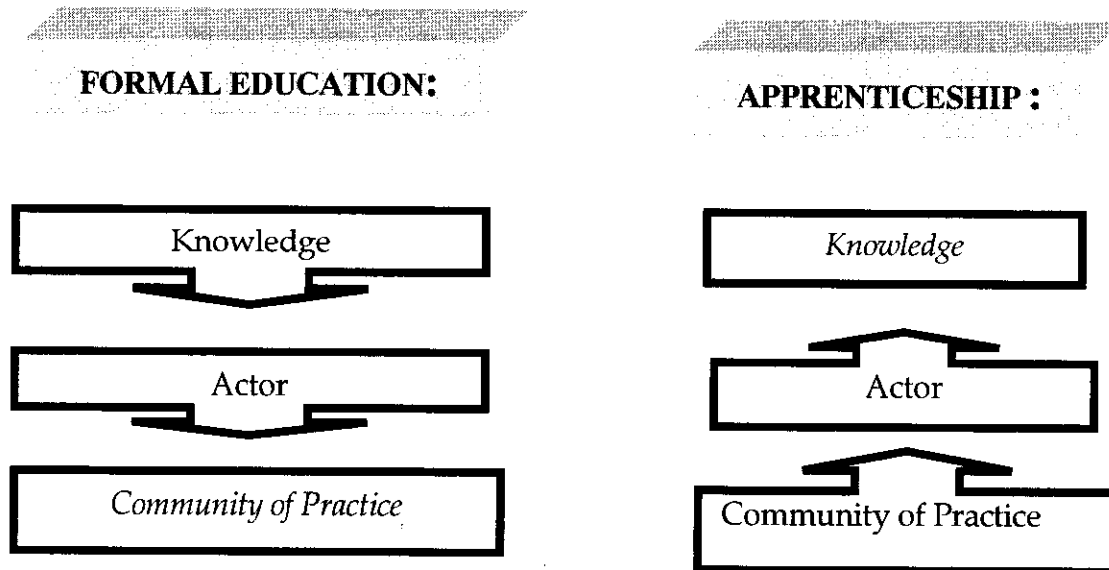
The apprenticeship approach maintains that knowledge is inherently practical and situational. It is most efficiently gained from the practices of real life work situations under the supervision of a master of the competence. In this conception, knowledge is produced bottom-up; from the real-life working practices the learner acquires his/her skills and competence.

To continue a simplified presentation, non-formal learning may be seen as an approach which does not concentrate on delivering knowledge which is decided beforehand to be useful nor the end product of the delivery process (certificates), but rather to understand knowledge as a process. As the diagram below describes, non-formal education looks at knowledge as a process of interaction between the actor and the real life situation.

Diagram 2: Non-formal learning

NON-FORMAL LEARNING

ACTOR

Learning

Community of Practice
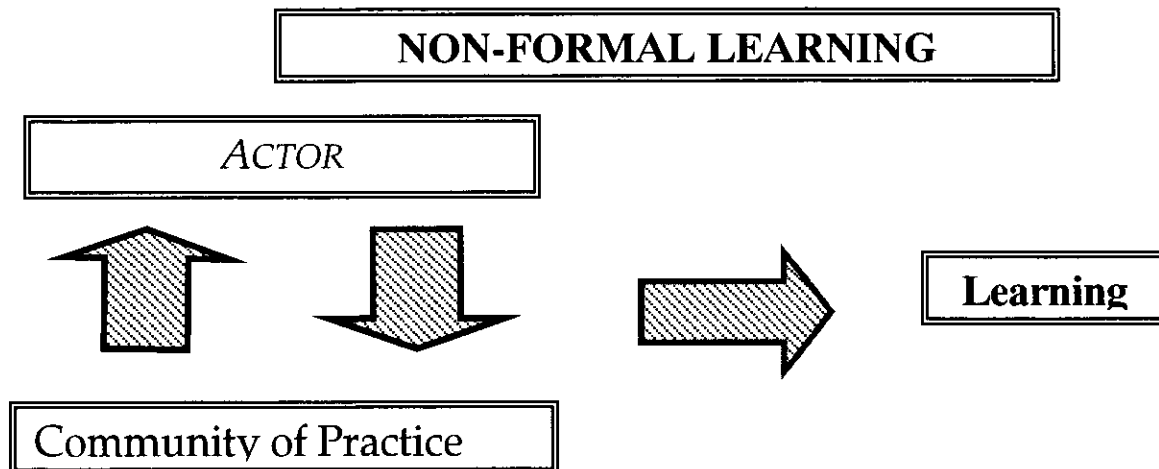
A Finnish educational researcher Yrjo Engestrom (1994) has coined the term "expanded learning" to highlight the specific meaning of learning in a post-industrial society. According to him, learning is not only about understanding the society and acquiring skills and competences to integrate into it, but also – and increasingly importantly – learning to change it. Thus, according to Engestrom, learning is essentially a process in a real life situation, which starts with criticism, followed by discovery and finally the application of the new ideas in practice. According to this broader conception, non-formal learning refers to a learning process in a social context, in a community of practice, where the learner is an active participant of the knowledge production. The actor is at the same time defined by the social relations of the community of practice as he/she defines them. The knowledge and competences, which are created in this process, are 'socially negotiated'. They do not come 'from the above', from the realm of ' objective facts' or 'universal truths'. This process of social negotiation is also a process of identity construction. In this sense "non-formal learning" cannot be separated from the notions of "participation" and "active citizenship". Non-formal learning is a participatory learning process where the actors' identities are developed and where these identities, or citizenships, change the social world.

Clearly, this line of thinking means that non-formal education is not simply an educational method; it is rather a multifaceted approach to learning. But can it be characterised more precisely?

Social and moral issues are inside the curriculum
Formal education is often criticised of lacking connections to the social issues of the real life and the concerns of young people themselves. At school the learner is said to be in a social vacuum devoid of social problems, political conflicts, moral and value-laden issues. By definition non-formal learning is situated in real life situations within the context of social power relations and their moral dimensions. In a typical youth field example NGO activities necessarily link participants/learners to social issues, and, as the choice of the NGYO is voluntary, the social issues in question relate to the personal concerns of young people themselves.

One cannot escape power relations
As real life is a part of the learning process, power relations are also involved; those between the gender groups, ethnic groups, social classes, religions, urban and rural areas, consumers and producers, industrial and developing countries, etc.

Non-formal learning is a participatory learning process
At the same time as the learner is defined and affected by power relations, he or she is supposed to actively participate in changing those relations. Non-formal learning becomes inseparable from 'participation' or 'active citizenship'.

Learning takes place through meaningful situations
Following the pragmatic and constructivist conception of knowledge, the relevance of knowledge is dependent on its usefulness to the user. Educational psychology furthermore stipulates that successful learning is dependent on the intrinsic individual interest and motivation. This leads to the necessity that the situations where young people learn must be experienced by them to be meaningful.

Learner centred approach
The significance of meaningful learning situations necessarily takes us from a teacher centred approach to a learner centred approach. The teacher, youth worker or the leader of a youth organisation or a youth club should not be one that provides the knowledge, tells the facts or gives the orders, but rather one that facilitates individual learning processes and negotiates discourses.

Replacing the concept 'non-formal education' by 'non-formal learning'
The essence of the non-formal approach is its contradiction to the teacher centred approach now prevalent in formal education. According to this key characteristic it is more sensible to use the term 'non-formal learning' than 'non-formal education'. The criticisers argue that 'non-formal education' is an established notion with a higher reputation than 'non-formal learning' and that there are problems in translating 'non-formal learning' into some of the Council of Europe languages. The counter argument is that as non-formal learning is, indeed, in the mainstream educational policy and practice, a relatively new and under-recognised concept, this would be the perfect moment to launch and rename it. Why not use the momentum of the recent top-level political back up of the Parliamentary Assembly and the Commission to recognise non-formal education as a complementary approach to formal education?

"Currere" – learning as a process
According to the prototype of the curriculum of formal education, learners passively acquire certain objectively defined outcomes (in the end in the form of certificates). This is often said to be the result of a misunderstanding of the Latin verb *currere*, which means, "to run a racecourse". The formal education has reduced this word to a noun, thus meaning the racecourse itself; passing examinations, receiving the credits and certificates. Understanding currere as a verb means that learning is the activity, the process.

Understanding learning as a process has implications in its management. In principle it should be very difficult to manage, monitor and certify an open-ended learning process. This puts limits to the planning, structurisation and formalisation of non-formal learning. One example is the difficulty in the efforts to measure the results of non-formal learning. There

are educationalists like Angelika Kruger (2000) who maintain that "learning is a process as essential as life itself. Measuring it in terms of its outcomes, without recognising its dynamic nature, risks reducing it to something similar to representing life through a display of pinned-up butterflies".

Another way towards agreeing on what we understand by non-formal education or learning is to look at its uses.

Non-formal learning can be used for a variety purposes. On the one hand it is seen as an instrument in social change, on the other as a method in social integration. Non-formal learning is about analysing the reality, situating oneself in it, developing an identity in relation to it and trying to change it accordingly. In this sense non-formal learning is about active citizenship.

The advent of neoliberalism has contributed to the use of non-formal education as a method of social integration. Neoliberalism emphasises individual responsibility for one's welfare and, consequently, the public sector has been under constant budgetary cuts. At the same time the public sector has been looking at the civil society to share tasks with it or delegate them under the concept of partnership. Within this framework non-formal education has been used, in the United Kingdom, in particular, as an instrument to increase employability and combat social exclusion. Largely, non-formal education has become to denote a method of social integration. The same applies to much of the vocabulary of the large international organisations and the Council of Europe in particular. Non-formal education is a method to combat unemployment, social conflicts, intolerance, violence and social exclusion.

In the efforts to reach a common understanding on what non-formal education or learning means, this is perhaps as far as one can get. It is possible to agree on certain of its key elements or main characteristics and notify the current fields of its use (discussed above). This paper continues to search for the intellectual and disciplinary roots and links of nonformal education to its neighbouring approaches and also to analyse some of interests behind the increased attention at non-formal education. This is a discourse where common understanding is far from evident.

2.   A family picture

However clearly we try to distinguish non-formal learning from other types of learning, it would, at the same time, be helpful to look at the 'disciplinary roots' of non-formal learning. An intellectual 'family picture' of non-formal education is presented in diagram 3.[1]

The prototype of *formal education* with a commitment to organised goals, a hierarchical curriculum, measurable objectives, a specified educational outcome, classical subjects, memorizing skills, value neutral empirical-analytical methods, competition, etc., has its origin at the beginning of the century, basically in Frederick Taylor's scientific management and B.F.Skinner's behaviourism. Indeed, uncontested success has been achieved in

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[1] The figure is a very rough description of the inter-relations between the educational approaches and their "golden ages". It is not sensitive enough to note that "New Education" has its roots even earlier (Grundvig), Constructivism dates back to pragmatist and phenomenological philosophers of the pre-war period, Life long learning was introduced in the 70's and nonformal-education has a history beyond the 90's. The boxes rather identify the recent 'booms' of the said approaches.

effectively organising mass education. The question for non-formal education is: how far can it make use of the success of formalizing a curriculum? How non-formal should non-formal education remain to retain its integrity? Is, for example, the CDEJ Working Group definition of non-formal education taking it too far in the direction of formal education, when it defines non-formal education as a "planned programme...carried out by trained leaders...systematically monitored and evaluated...[and which] might also be certificated"?

Diagram 3: A family picture of non-formal education
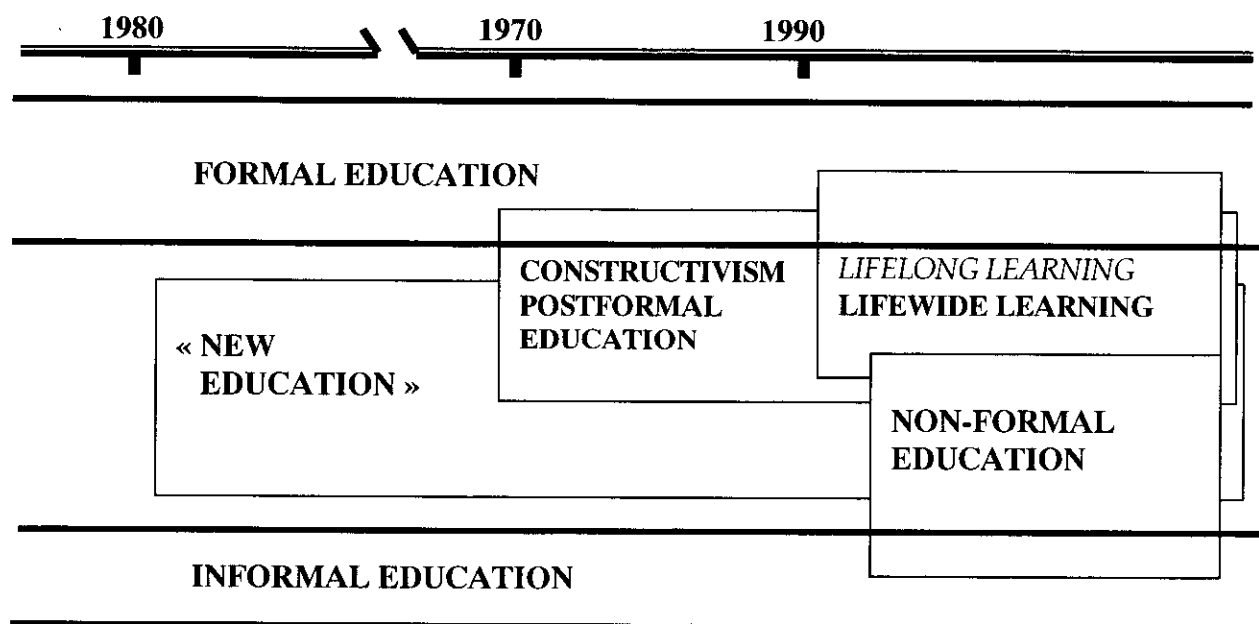
Alongside formal education there has arisen an alternative field of education, often called *"New Education"*. In principle it already had its roots in the work of the Danish educationalist Grundvig in the 19th century, but became more widespread during the first part of the 20th century. Persons like John Dewey (USA), Maria Montessori (Italy), Celestine Freinet (France), Paolo Freire (Brazil), A.S. Neil (The Summerhill School, UK) serve as main examples. Their starting point was the child's own frame of reference, learning as a process, importance of practice, learning social skills and social emancipation. As can be seen already from these short characterisations, the pedagogical approach of non-formal learning is very close to that of the "New Education".

An influential philosophical trend behind many of the current reforms of education is *constructivism*. The key issue is the controversy between *objectivism* and *constructivism*. To be brief, objectivism believes that knowledge refers to something which is in a 'real world' and which exists independently and separately from the knower. The knowledge we have is true if it corresponds to the real world. The constructivist view argues that knowledge or reality do not have an objective value independent of the knower. The knower interpretes and constructs a reality based on his experiences and interactions with his environment. Rather than thinking of *truth* in terms of 'match to reality', the constructivist speaks of *viability* or *usefulness*: "concepts, models, theories, etc., are viable if they prove adequate in the context in which they were created" (von Glaserfeld 1995).

In terms of learning theory objectivism believes in the existence of reliable knowledge about the world. As learners, the goal is to gain this knowledge; as educators, to transmit it. Objectivism further assumes that learners gain the same understanding from what is transmitted. The role of education is to help students learn about the real world. The role of teachers is to interpret events for them. Learners are told about the world and are expected to replicate its content and structure in their thinking. Constructivists, however, do not believe in objective, universally true or universally shared knowledge, but rather to knowledge which relates to the student's framework of meanings, to his/her cognitive growth and ability to interpret and master the world. Within this viewpoint learning must be a self-steered communicative process which aims at critical reflection producing knowledge which the student experiences useful. The teacher is a 'guide' and the student a 'sense maker'. Constructivist theories often emphasise the emancipatory nature of the knowledge and action that should follow it (as in the case of Paolo Freire and Jack Mezirov).

Post formal education is a constructivist educational approach, which gives more emphasis on internal experiences than external objectives. Learning is essentially a method of learning yourself; how is one's identity constructed within the social power structures of gender, ethnicity, class, capitalist production, global economy, sustainable development, etc. The main aim is to "uncover the role of power in shaping the way the world is represented" (Steinberg et al 1999). The outcome of learning is a perception of how these structures can be changed. Constructivist thinking made its first offensive on formal education in the early 1980s but did not
have any discernible effect in curriculum or in teaching practices. The late 90s witnessed a revival, which now seems to be looking for alliances in the discourses on citizenship (Isin & Wood 1999) and Lifelong Learning. As an educational philosophy, constructivism backs up the key characteristics of non-formal learning.

Informal education was defined to refer to learning which takes place in everyday life outside the curriculum, in the family, peer-groups, media, youth cultures or in other every-day contexts. This is a very diffuse field of learning which is gaining a more and more important role in young peoples' lives. Young people spend more time together, watch more media, spend more time in the cyber space, involve themselves in youth cultures and subcultures to the extent that, for instance, British youth researchers maintain that "participating in dance cultures (raves) is a necessary part of growing up in contemporary Britain" (Thornton 1997). Clearly these contexts are also learning environments. Some of this type of learning is formalised or legitimated and becomes part of the mainstream (like a computer driver licence, computer art, rap music, techno, punk mode etc.). Some elements retain their informal character. However, as it is a seemingly very dynamic and innovative realm, non-formal education should perhaps keep its doors open to informal education.

The expert report on Swedish Youth Policy (1999) lists a few "Building Blocks for European Youth Policy". One of them is the proposal that the educational approach of the Council's Youth Sector should be involved in the modernisation of European education. The authors feel that the educational systems of all European countries face similar problems: motivation problems, irrelevant and/or outdated curricula, badly meeting the needs of the labour markets, etc.

What does 'educational modernisation' entail? I will not go into the knowledge society discussion on the social and economic reasons for educational re-thinking, because it is well presented elsewhere.[2] Instead, I will shortly outline the key challenges as they appear in the current debate on lifelong learning.[3]

Firstly, that there are strong pressures to redefine and modernise "basic skills for all", "teaching methods"and "learning contexts". There is a need to define more broadly what citizens need to learn, with increased emphasis on 'citizenship competences' (instead of only labour market skills, qualifications to improve 'competitiveness' etc). There is a strong need for changing the teaching paradigm towards learner-oriented 'participatory teaching'. There is the need to recognise and promote non-formal and informal learning on the side and in co-operation with the formal education. This is very much in line with the recent (draft) recommendation of the European Youth Forum on non-formal education when it talks about creating 'an integrated model of education'; "Probably the single most important principle in improving education in the third millennium is to establish co-operation. We recommend that youth organisations focus on an integrated model of education in which co-ordination, co-operation and identification of new resources are the core processes. This could also act as an invitation to all other parties to participate in the dialogue on the new Crossing Boundaries Paradigm that aims to create better education for all" (Sahlberg 1999, 36). Finally, teacher training is also expected to be thoroughly reformed so that "it genuinely caters for the full range of learning contexts and target groups".

Furthermore, there is the tendency of "bringing education to people", "opening up of the school to the community" (with even a recent Parliamentary Assembly recommendation, 1437(2000) and Doc. 8595(1999)) which includes the idea of pupil/student participation and new institutional solutions such as "learning centres in everyday locations". Finally, there is the new policy of combining social and educational objectives and working with partnerships; that is, more emphasis on political and social awareness raising of education, responsibility of the school for social exclusion and increased work with 'social partners', communities, civil society and the NGOs.
In short, formal education is opening up to new types of competences (citizenship skills, human rights), to the civil society (NGOs), to participatory teaching methods (non-formal education), to public governance (participation), to social issues (human rights, combating social exclusion), to the community (where youth NGOs have their roots, other youth work structures), to partnerships (with youth work and youth policy structures) etc. There is a new and wide area of potential co-operation between non-formal learning on the one hand, and formal education and LLL, on the other.

The intellectual family picture of non-formal education shows important links within the family. Perhaps, there is even an expression of togetherness, of a family reunion in the picture?

Towards the end of the century formal education developed formalisation to its extreme. Since the late 80s' it has started to turn back and increase flexibilities and individual choices

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[2] Teaching and learning, Towards the learning society, European Commission White Paper, Luxembourg 1995, Accomplishing Europe through education and training, European Commission, Luxembourg, 1996, The profile and strategies of educational reform in Europe, Council of Europe, DECS, 1999, Chisholm, Lynne: The educational and social implications of the transition to knowledge societies, 2000 (forthcoming).
[3] A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning, A working document of the Commission services, SEC(2000) 1832

within the curriculum and between the educational institutions. Most recently, as we have seen, new agendas - bringing formal education back to civil society, to the community, emphasis on learner-centred methods, on social objectives, on participation and partnerships - take formal education even closer to Lifelong Learning, non-formal and in-formal education and to constructivism. One clear example is that current educational policy has, in fact, sent an invitation for co-operation to non-formal education through its Lifelong Learning programme. Another example is the emergence of constructivism-inspired educational thinking in school education (Slattery 1995, Steinberg et al 1999), in university education (Mezirov 1999), in teacher education (M Young 1998), in adult education (Engestrom 1994) and in out-of school education (Bentley 1998), to mention only a few cases.

To my understanding, the family picture shows that the family members want to do things together. To the Council of Europe's Youth Sector this means an opportunity to develop activities in non-formal education, which are of a complementary interest to the formal education sector (in the DGIV, to start with). Bearing in mind that the Youth Sector has a partnership agreement with the Commission, this working instrument could also be used to enlarge the co-operation with the formal education structures of the Directorate of Education and Culture of the Commission.

The family picture also reveals that informal education, the black sheep of the family, has now come back full of vitality. What youth and cultural researchers have tried to show for decenniums has now become more widely acknowledged. Young people learn more and more outside the formal and non-formal learning contexts. These, often cultural and digital contexts, are also the most quickly developing areas of learning. It would not be wise to make too rigid demarcation lines towards informal learning. It should rather be seen as a complementary arena of learning among current youth, and, perhaps, also as a source of inspiration and innovation to be implemented in non-formal education.

3.   A battlefield of interests

Non-formal education has become popular. As the family picture indicates many actors show interests in non-formal education. But what are the individual interests of the family members in their efforts to do things together? What are they expecting from non-formal education? What do they understand by it? Do these interests coincide with those of the Council of Europe youth policies?

The analysis to follow (diagram 4) is equally as rough as the family picture. Its aim is to kick off a discussion on political and ideological uses and understandings of non-formal education.[4]

Promoting participatory learning processes
One large interest group is the educationalists. This group consists of academic educationalists (educational philosophers, educational sociologists, educational scientists) and applied youth and social work methodologies, like 'sozialpedagogi', community

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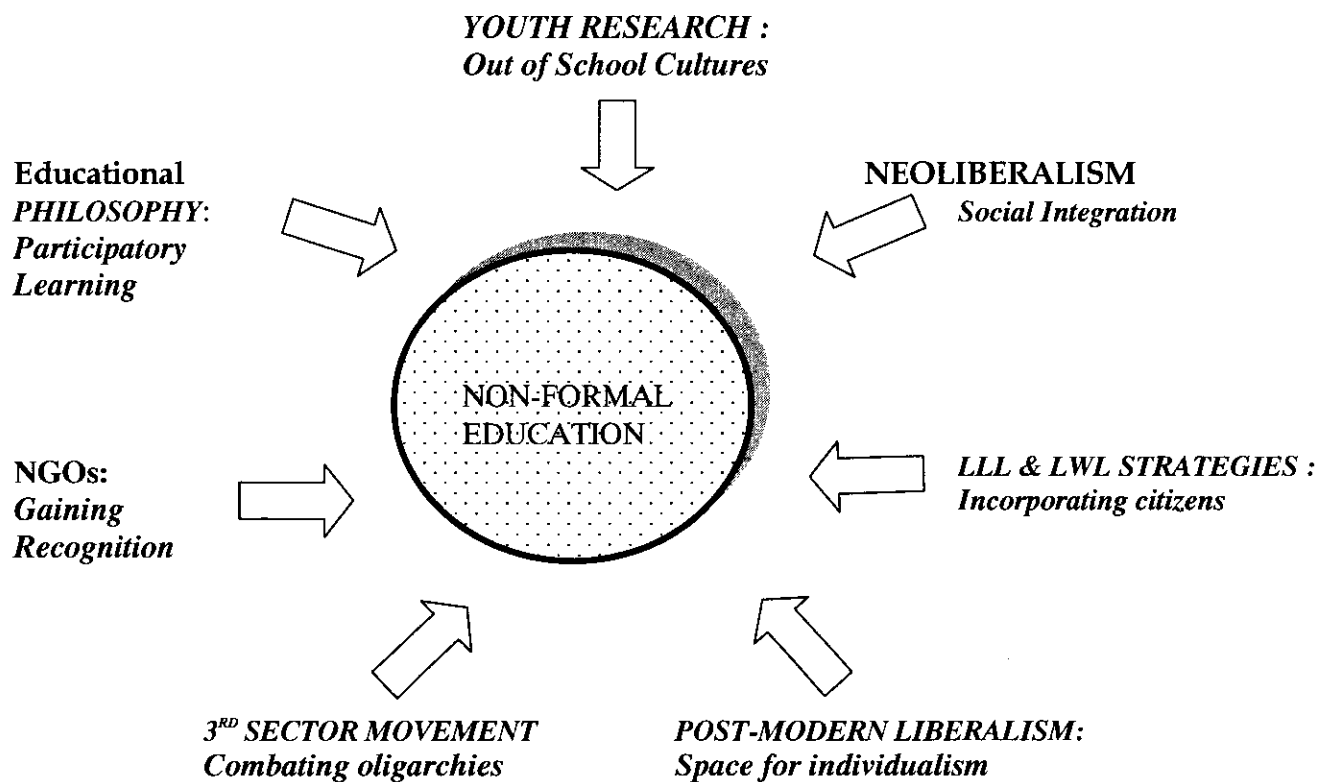[4] A current example is the Greek intervention on the Commission's recommendation document on non-formal education. The Greek Minister of Education was strongly against a recommendation on the recognition of non-formal education because in his country non-formal education referred to the grey market of uncontrolled small businesses providing 'alternative' formal education and formal education diplomas.

education, intercultural learning etc. To be put very concisely, their interest is to promote participatory learning processes in real-life situations.

Nurturing alternative learning

Then we have youth and cultural researchers such as Thomas Ziehe and Paul Willis who have analysed young peoples' reactions to formal education. There is a large amount of 'unconventional learning' taking place outside the curriculum and to a large extent as a reaction to the deficiency of the formal educational system to respond to young peoples' real needs.

Diagram 4: the battlefield of interests

YOUTH RESEARCH :
Out of School Cultures

Educational
PHILOSOPHY:
Participatory
Learning

NEOLIBERALISM
Social Integration

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

NGOs:
Gaining
Recognition

LLL & LWL STRATEGIES :
Incorporating citizens

3ᴿᴰ SECTOR MOVEMENT
Combating oligarchies

POST-MODERN LIBERALISM:
Space for individualism

A neoliberalist integration instrument?

Moving over to politics, the cutting down of the public sector and the advent of the neoliberalist dogma of individual responsibility have contributed to new models of organising public services. It has been realised that non-formal education run by voluntary workers is a way to make citizens and their groups responsible for some of the social services. Under the attractive banner of 'partnership' it is also a cheap method of providing services. Within this interest, non-formal education becomes predominantly a method of social integration improving employability, empowering youth at risk, combating social exclusion, etc.

Gaining governance of "citizens running out of control"

A larger political interest to non-formal education raises from the (post modern) perception that citizens tend to develop their identification outside formal education, express themselves outside the established political systems (parties, elections, representative political structures). Finally, and from the perception that these identifications tend to be different

from those of the City Council, the governments, the Commission, The World Trade Organisation, etc., this worry of "citizens running out of control" (Chisholm 2000) might be one of the reasons why the uncontrolled realm of non-formal education has come under the attack of efforts through the strategies of LLL and LWL to 'incorporate' it into formal education.

A new space for post-modern citizenship
The hard-core post-modernists claim that after the 'collapse of the collective structures' only the individual is left. The 'old' conception of citizenship as a relationship between the individual and the state is gone, because there is no state. Instead, new types of citizenships emerge which are very individual, fluid, multiple and group based. Such citizenships are not created in established collective contexts (formal education, family, church, NGOs, youth work), but nurtured in non-formal learning contexts. The field of developing and expressing post-modern individual and group based citizenships becomes non-formal.

Combating oligarchies
The so called 3rd sector debate argues (using the militant voice of Jeremy Rifkin) that the non-profit sector should be developed into a political counterforce to the public sector and the private sector in order to be able to combat the adverse effects of consumerism, environmental damage, political apathy and the oligarchies of the private and public sector (see Rifkin 1995)

Lobbying for the NGOs
Finally, the youth NGOs have been, and justly so, very active in trying to find recognition to the important work and vital learning that takes place within youth organisations. This approach also forms the basis of the Council of Europe's Youth Sector strategy and understanding of non-formal education. NGOs are not always clear themselves on what they mean by non-formal education. They do not always systematically practice it in their own activities. Fighting for the recognition of non-formal education is still a reasonable objective and also a politically feasible lobby-strategy underlining the importance of the existence of the NGOs as a whole.

To sum up, the ideological and political interests behind the promotion of non-formal education are numerous. There are actors who endorse non-formal learning because it is an essential instrument in participation, intercultural learning and community action (educationalists, youth and community workers). Others (neoliberalists) emphasise it as an instrument in employability and social integration). Some see it yet again as an alternative citizenship site in relation to the school (Ziehe, Willis) or in relation to other established collective structures (post-modernists). There might be actors, who want to gain better control of citizens through formalising the non-formal education field ("governing citizens"). Others defend non-formal learning to promote themselves (NGOs) or to create a counter force to the public and private sector (Rifkin).

The first lesson from this analysis is that the term 'non-formal education' does not have a clear-cut, universally shared, objective definition. It is an ideologically loaded term. Secondly, it might be useful for the youth sector to be aware of the ideological and political interests, meanings and assumptions of the actors – family members - with which it is supposed to co-operate with in promoting non-formal education.

4. Future challenges for the Youth sector

"To make a meaningful European Youth Policy means opening Europe as a cultural learning field"

Manuela du Bois-Reymond, 5 May 2000,
Round Table on New Forms of Youth Participation, Biel

The promotion of non-formal education is one of the four priorities of the Council of Europe Youth Sector. It has not, however, been clear what is actually meant by 'non-formal education'. The paper has tried to clarify the concept by explaining its key characteristics, by indicating its relationships to the 'neighbouring concepts' of formal, informal and postformal education and by deciphering the ideological and political assumptions behind the various uses of non-formal education. It seems that non-formal education, or non-formal learning, is not as much an educational method than a *disposition to learning*, which emphasises learning as a critically reflecting process in "a social reality which recognizes tensions and conflicts" (Greene, 1995) aiming at social change. In the context of developing European youth policies this would mean – as Manuela du Bois-Raymond says - "opening Europe as a cultural learning field". How could the DJS non-formal education strategy promote 'Europe as a cultural learning field'? The Challenge could perhaps be summarized in following proposals:

- promoting the change of the paradigm of learning:

    - a general mission to promote a participatory, learner-centred approach of learning and education with emphasis on real life situations.

- creating new learning environments in 'real life situations':

    - the DJS has a long experience of anchoring learning in real life situations, not only through applying intercultural learning but also through its long term training courses where young peoples' own projects constitute the core of a participatory learning process. This experience should be used to search for other learning contexts, even in new areas like culture, sport, cyber world etc.

- developing the curriculum of non-formal learning:

    - this is a difficult and important task. It is difficult because of the dangers of formalising non-formal learning, but important because that might be the only way to promote its recognition and develop it systematically;
    - One important part of this strategy is to develop a curriculum for European Youth Worker Training (in partnership with the Commission).

- exploring links to formal education and creating joint projects:

    - As discussed earlier, it is important to identify the area of complementary interests of formal and non-formal education. How could the activities in our priority areas be linked to formal education?
    - There are various levels of educational policies in which synergies should be sought: at the level of local, national and European policies.

- establishing guidelines for the use of non-formal learning in social integration:

  - how to use non-formal learning to work with unemployed young people, school drop-outs, low achievers at school, delinquent youth, youth at risk, or youth in conflict regions, etc?
  - promoting peer education, peer involvement (like mediation).

- enhancing non-formal learning as active citizenship:

  - how to promote, in a more transparent manner, non-formal learning as a form of young people developing and expressing their identities and being active participants of society?

- being open to informal learning:

  - the field of informal learning may be a source of innovation and inspiration;

  - citizenship skills are also developed and exercised in informal mear,o,g contexts.

- making co-ordinated use of the programme and the partners of DJS:

  - we have a large variety of instruments of non-formal learning: study sessions, training courses, consultative meetings, symposia, EYF, Mobility Fund, Partnership Agreement with the Commission, CDEJ intergovernmental programme, National Youth Policy Reviews, networks of the governments, NGOs, Youth Information, Youth Research, etc. A co-ordinated and targeted use of them is the best way to create synergies and to learn from our own practice.

- being aware of the instrumentalisation of non-formal learning and the political interests behind:

  - despite all the positive prospects that the co-operation with a variety of actors seem to open, the Council of Europe Youth sector should, at the same time, be aware of problems of instrumentalisation and the one-sided use of non-formal education (such as patching failures of the formal education or replacing lacking public services).

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TEXTS PRODUCED

DURING THE WORKING GROUPS OF THE SYMPOSIUM

Workshop 1 on Recognition of Non-Formal Education

Facilitators :   Adriana Ciorbaru (Ministry of Youth and Sports, Romania)
                    Algirdas Augustaitis (State Council Youth Affairs, Lithuania)
Resource Person: Peter Lauritzen (Council of Europe)
Rapporteur: Andreas Karsten (European Youth Forum)

Contents of the report

0.   Approach of the report

This report contains the outcome of the discussions held in the workshop on the recognition of non-formal education (NFE). Due to this nature, the processes that lead to the conclusions of the group are referred to under point 2 in general, but only described in detail if necessary for the understanding of the conclusions drawn by the group.

1.   Objectives of the workshop

Based on the symposium's objectives and the description of the workshop in the explanatory notes, the workshop aimed to discuss recommendations on further steps to be taken to reach a higher recognition of non-formal education in Europe.

2.   Working methodologies of the group

In his introduction Peter Lauritzen gave a brief overview on the history of the non-formal education sector as well as recent developments. Using this information as a framework, the group agreed to work on 5 different topics that are closely linked to the debate on the recognition of non-formal education, namely:

- institutional recognition of providers of non-formal education
  (by the state, with certain guaranteed rights and obligations)
- measures and methodologies of the NFE-sector
  (the way we work, the speciality of this way of working, its added value)
- the learner's success
  (achievements of the individual and assessment of these achievements)
- educators/trainers in NFE
  (key qualifications and qualities of a trainer and their assessment
- content of NFE
  (underlying values, diversity of the sector, acceptance of this diversity)

The group worked on these issues in 3 smaller groups. After the feedback of these groups the participants elaborated and agreed upon the workshop's recommendations.

3.   The state of discussion on the recognition of non-formal education

The discussion on the recognition of non-formal education is a very old one and well known to the participants of this symposium. They were in addition described during the introductory session as well as some of the preparatory documents. Therefore it is not necessary to recall all of this again.

Generally speaking, there seems to be a common agreement among the European countries that non-formal learning experiences are valuable and that they contribute important elements to the education of young people, both in terms of life skills and core qualifications for active citizenship. These achievements of NFE are usually recognised on national level as well as on European, though this does not necessarily result in official recognition.

Moreover, there is one observation the participants of the workshop made that is relevant to be mentioned in this report: it seems that the non-formal education sector has arrived at a point, at which the majority of the partners at the European level agree that there is a need to go deeper into the issues of accreditation/certification and assessment (both of trainer's qualifications and the individual learner's success). In the understanding of the group this debate (still) has the danger to formalise a non-formal system, however the results described in this report show that this does not have to be the case and is often not even the intention of the initiators.

4.   A closer look at some aspects of recognition of non-formal education

Where does NFE belong?

Non-formal learning deserves its own place within the field of education, besides the formal education system such as schools, universities and vocational training. Its task is not to fill the gaps left behind by the formal education system. It is complementary and contributes together with other forms of learning to the development of life skills of a personality.

The group felt that the following principles describe the specific character and the added value of non-formal learning best:

Non-formal learning:
- has a voluntary nature
- is accessible to everyone
- is an organised learning process with educational objectives
- is very diverse in its form and nature
- is about learning life skills and preparing for active citizenship
- involves both individual and group learning with a collective approach
- is based on experience and action and starts from the needs of the participants.

What does NFE achieve?

Due to the diversity of the NFE sector and of projects, activities, etc. it is impossible to define a list of achievements that *every* non-formal activity is accomplishing. Therefore the following list should be understood as possible achievements. Depending on the nature of the activity and its educational aims and objectives, NFE activities can improve the skills of a young person in the following areas:

- facilitation – guiding group processes
- mediation – conflict management
- creativity –problem solving – ability to adapt
- goal/value/task oriented working and thinking
- communication skills – intercultural awareness
- co-operation – teamwork – responsibility – tolerance
- planning skills – evaluation skills – project management
- entrepreneurship

All these possible skill improvements can potentially contribute to shaping an active and democratic citizen (beyond the advancement of an individual person). Moreover, learning in a non-formal environment can motivate the learner to become active him/herself in society, to actively and constructively participate.

The group expressed the need to improve the comparability of the quality of NFE achievements. Such a harmonisation of possible achievements is a precognition in order to be able to assess the success or failure of an individual's learning process.

This shouldn't be done by developing fixed standards according to formal education systems (such as grades, marks, levels or classes). It is the diversity of the non-formal education sector, which makes it so strong and rich. Different learning environments allow for different learning experiences, which have, despite their difference, the same value.

This richness and diversity still needs to be recognised as the strength of NFE. Therefore the group recommends that member states should be encouraged to take the necessary steps for that, such as to re-design curricula of formal education systems in order to give young people the space to become involved in NFE.

How do we work to achieve all this?

The group identified some key characteristics of the way we work in non-formal education, namely:

- learner-centred ness
- participatory approach based on equality between the educator and the learner
- voluntary participation
- collective approach without denying the importance of the individual person
- democratic environment
- approach to learning as a life-long process
- learning by doing – concrete, but at the same time universal
- value-based motivation
- creative, inventive and challenging atmosphere
- accessibility for everyone.

How can we guarantee quality?

Without the attempt to be complete, the group developed a set of key qualifications they consider relevant for an educator/a trainer at the European level. These key qualifications and qualities are:

- belief in the values of the Council of Europe, such as human rights, tolerance, etc.
- pedagogical competence, facilitation, presentation and project management skills
- knowledge about Europe and the reality of young people today
- knowledge of and experience in the European youth "scene"
- ability to create a learning environment and to manage learning processes
- ability to work with and within a team
- ability to facilitate the work of international, inter-cultural groups
- ability to motivate and to stimulate thinking without imposing
- ability to tolerate and accept diversity and utilise differences
- ability to generalise and think in abstract terms

How can we assess the level of quality?

Until now there hasn't been a common understanding on how to assess the quality of non-formal learning and the level of success (or failure) of the individual learning experience.

The group discussed the principles on which the assessment of learning should be based on. There are many different opinions and ideas about the need for and the way in which to assess learning that takes place within non-formal environments. It is important to respect the diverse nature of non-formal education projects and activities. There is no blue print for non-formal education. Different projects can have different objectives.

But to succeed in giving non-formal education the place in society it deserves a common set of key qualifications needs to be developed. These core skills should allow enough

flexibility to be applied to different realities (e.g. youth exchange or peer project on sexual education.

The group agreed on three important principles in relation to the assessment of learning within non-formal education:

. The learning outcomes have to be based on a self-evaluation of the participant's own experience.
. Non-formal education is accessible to everyone and no one should be excluded. The content and methods of assessment should be based on this principle. Even learning from mistakes should be taken into account.
. The role of the youth worker, facilitator, etc. is to help the participant to become aware of the learning. The youth worker is not an examiner!

The participants of the workshop felt that the discussion on the assessment of the individual learner's success needs to be continued and therefore recommend that:

1. *Further research and work should be done to identify core skills and qualifications such as developed by Connect Youth international and the European Youth Forum. This should also include searching out options for certification of the learning outcomes in a national and European context.*
2. An inventory should be made of the existing examples (projects and studies) of non-formal learning in the European countries and these examples should be made available.
3. The assessment of learning also requires training of the methods and content as well as marketing the concept and this could be taken up within an European context as well as nationally.
4. These core skills and qualifications should be elaborated within a European context, but should allow enough flexibility to be applied within the different national situations.
5. The starting point should be not to formalise non-formal learning – the diversity is one of its strengths – but to enhance its position complementary to the formal education systems and vocational training.

5. **Resources for further information**

Connect Youth International – Personal Record of Achievement for young people

More information can be found in the report of the seminar on the recognition and accreditation of international youth work.

Contact: hazel.patterson@britishcouncil.org

Recreational Activity Study Book – Youth Academy

More information available at akatemia@alli.fi
There are lots of other examples of assessment of non-formal education in other European countries. A further inventory of content and methods should be made and made available.

Workshop 2 on Education for Democracy

Facilitators :	Mr Arjen Bos, European Federation for Intercultural Learning (EFIL)
	Ms Miriam Lexmanova , Rada Mladeze Slovenska (RMS)
Lecturer:	Mr Micha De Winter Department of Youth Studies, University of Utrecht
Rapporteur:	Mr Arjen Bos, European Federation for Intercultural Learning (EFIL)

Information

The COE should facilitate access to information concerning education for democracy for young people and for organisations working with young people, through:

1. Identifying relevant information content sources and resources, such as:
   - democratic principles
   - good practice examples
   - relevant research studies and results
   - methodologies (T-kit on citizenship)
   - publications
   - contacts for help and support

2. A pro-active strategy for mutual promotion and dissemination of information above:
   - make the information available on the COE-website
   - stimulating an interactive use of the Internet
   - make active links to other relevant initiatives, e.g. dialogue on Europe
   - using other information networks targeted towards young people
   - dissemination to key individuals and/or institutions in the field.

Framework for local action

We recommend to the COE to investigate in co-operation with the EC new types of funding, specifically devoted to local non-formal education activities in the field of democracy, participation and active citizenship. This funding can be based on a system of co-financing by local, national and European bodies; supporting local initiatives on European issues, targeted at pan-European target groups.

Methodologies

Education for democracy should be practised in both formal and non-formal ways, which are complementary to each other. In any of these ways, education for democracy should reflect democratic rules and values. Besides developing educational materials on democracy, democratic methodologies should also be further developed, promoted and implemented. The *T-Kit on Citizenship* could take this onboard.
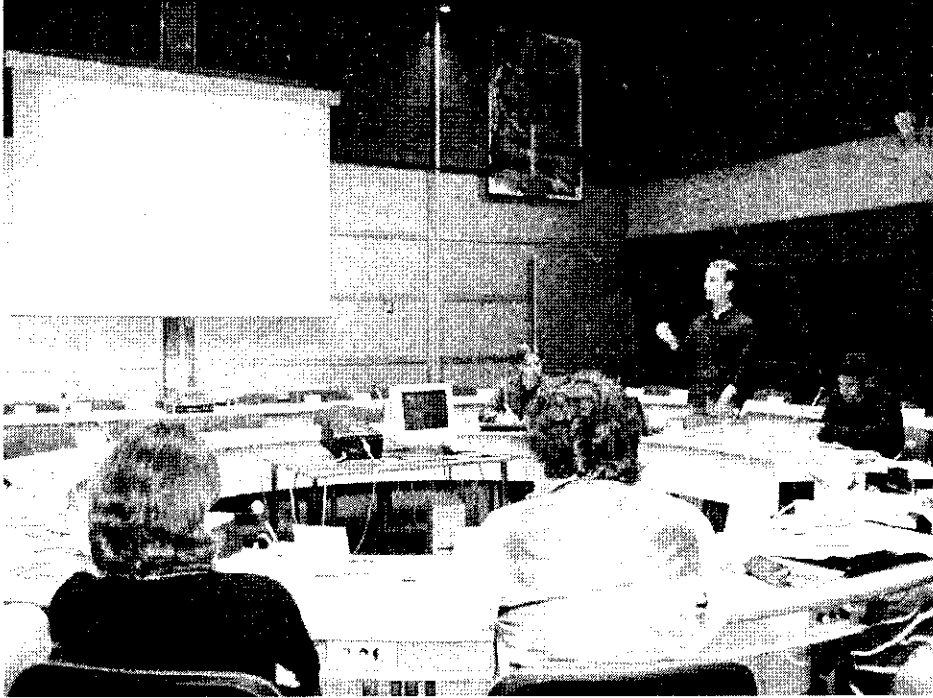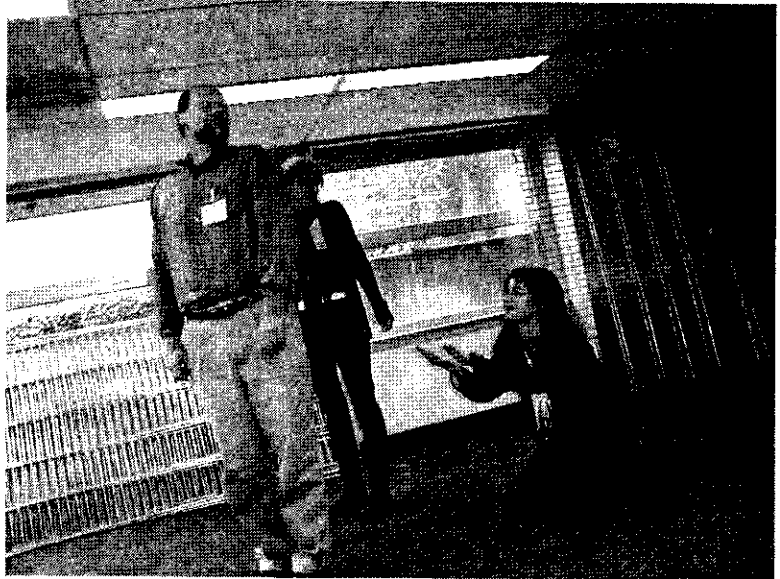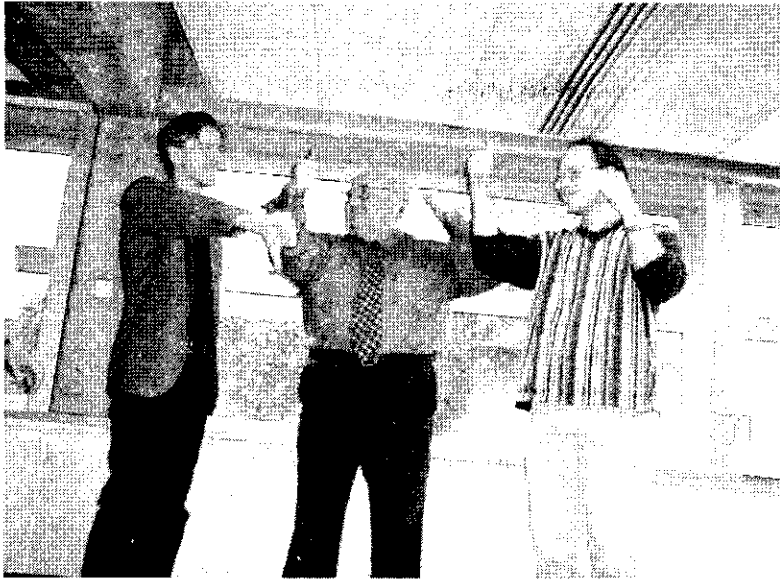
Workshop 3 on Social integration and employability

Facilitators :   Mr Hubert Olié, Council of Europe
Lecturer: Ms Carmen Rodriguez-Eyré, INFODAL
Rapporteur: Ms Jeanette Kristiansen- Kenworth, Danish Youth Council

Presentation by Ms Carmen Rodriguez-Eyré, INFODAL

Du non-formel au formel

Description d'une expérience d'un programme intégral de développement dans des territoires dévitalisés en Espagne
> À la recherche des solutions: une philosophie
> * agir d'en bas en haut /le bottom up/ endógeno
> * le principe de subsidiarité

Les résultats: naissance d'une profession

Caractéristiques communes aux territoires

* Dépeuplement
* Appauvrissement
* Rutines
* Isolement
* Méfiance
* Structures ankylosées
* Peur de l'innovation
* VIELLISSEMENT

Philosophie appliquée

* Agir d'en bas en haut
* Former à la participation
* Subsidiarité des pouvoirs publics pour qu'ils agissent dans un esprit de coopération avec l'initiative sociale.

L'Agent de Développement Local

- Attitudes
- Aptitudes
- Fonctions
- Qualification

Les attitudes:

- Vision globale
- Sociabilité
- Capacité de s'insérer dans le territoire

Les aptitudes

Être capable de développer des compétences:
- ➢ personnelles: conduire, connaissances des nouvelles technologies de la communication etc
- ➢ de communication: (écoute, sociales, convivialité)
- ➢ intellectuelles: (analyse des réalités complexes, observation, ..)

Les fonctions

Appuyer la création d'emplois
Promouvoir les petites entreprises
Appuyer l'innovation
Autres:
médiation entre la population et l'administration
informer/animer/former
coopération inter/multi/disciplinaire

La qualification

RIEN N'ÉTAIT PRÉVU DANS L'ENSEIGNEMENT REGLEMENTE DANS UN PAYS
OÙ IL N'EXISTE MÊME PAS UNE LEGISLATION ADRESSÉE À L'AMÉNAGEMENT
DU TERRITOIRE

Provenance des ADL (agents de développement local)

- Jeunes -hommes ou femmes-
- Attachés aux territoires où capables de s'y attacher
- Haut pourcentage de jeunes universitaires sans emploi: sociologues, biologistes, ingénieurs agronomes, spécialistes en psychologie sociale, géographes.....

UN EXEMPLE: Présentation d'une expérience menée par des ADL de la base vers le haut

L'équipe

- Pilar, sans diplôme, attachée au territoire
- Juan, ingénieur agronome
- María, licence en géographie
- Louise, secrétaire

Le territoire:

- 1.027 km2
- 11.731 habitants (11,4h/ km2)
- 6.003 h/ 5.763 f.
- 25 municipalités
- La participation de la base vers le haut.

La participation de bas en haut

Création de COMARSUR (Associationnisme local)

La subsidiarité

- Financement du MAPA
- Autres:

Les résultats

- Soutien aux emplois existants
- Création de nouveaux emplois
- Implantation de jeunes néoruraux
- Élargissement du mouvement associatif qui passe de 25 municipalités à 110 pour les nouvelles actions

Un autre résultat non-apparent

- Les compétences professionnelles de L'Agent de Développement Local, sans lesquels les résultats auraient été gravement compromis.

LE FORMEL COMMENCE À S'INTÉRESSER AU NON-FORMEL!

- L'INEM (Instituto Nacional de Empleo) décide de financer une place de ADL dans les municipalités.
- L'accès à ce poste de travail est réservé aux jeunes universitaires sans emploi.

...À NOUVEAU LE NON FORMEL

- Offrir une formation spécifique aux ADL
- Recycler les ADL en actifs
- Transformer leur expérience en science (i+d)
- Aboutir à une homologation officielle
- Créer de nouvelles études spécialisées

INFODAL(Instituto Internacional para la Formación de los Agentes de Desarrollo Local)

- Les partenaires:
- IDC (Instituto de Desarrollo Comunitario)
- UNCEAR (Unión Nacional de Centros de Animación Rural)

- **Les entités associées:**
- CSIC (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, del Ministerio de Ciencia y Tecnología)
- Ministerio de Agricultura Pesca y Alimentación
- Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales
- Autres

Commencer la formation par le sommet de la pyramide:
Un programme Master en Développement Local

Le programme Master en Développement Local

- **Objectifs:**
- Actualiser et recycler les professionnels du développement local en actifs
- Qualifier des spécialistes dans le DL dans le contexte des Programmes de l'UE
- Qualifier en DL des personnes ayant une formation supérieure

- Objectifs de formation:
- Analyse d'une vision multifonctionnelle et intégrale des territoires pour identifier leurs problèmes et chercher des solutions
- Aborder par le biais des travaux pratiques la diversification économique des territoires dévitalisés pour atteindre un développement durable

- Adapter aux ADL une information actualisée sur les cadres généraux, juridiques, opérationnels en vigueur dans l'UE et dans les territoires.
- Préparer l'avenir professionnel des ADL par des certificats et des diplômes adéquats

Durée du MADL: 16 mois:

- 10 mois d'Etude/Travail dans des Modules actifs - une semaine intensive par mois en alternance avec trois autres semaines de travail dans leurs territoires, entendus comme champs de travail opérationnel où se produit l'expérience et la recherche.
- 6 mois pour le Projet fin de Master, personnalisé et dirigé par un tuteur

Méthodologie du MADL:
- De l'expérience à la rationnalisation, l'investigation et le développement
- Le travail des élèves est pris comme point de départ et cadre des pratiques, et de l'étude des cas.
- Les Modules actifs thématiques sont intensifs et s'insèrent dans la dynamique professionnelle de l'élève.

Modules thématiques du MADL

I.   Le Développement Local et l'Animation Sociale.
II   L'Analyse des territoires ruraux
III.   L'Environnement
IV.   L'Agriculture
V.   L'Économie Sociale et les Services de Proximité

VI.   La Diversification Économique dans les territoires dévitalisés
VII.   L'Organisation et la Gestion des Entreprises
VIII.   Formation pour l'Emploi
IX.   Formulation de Projets
X   La Culture et le Patrimoine

Début du MADL: 8 janvier 2001
Information: Carmen Rodríguez-Eyré
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NOUS CHERCHONS DES PARTENAIRES !
Travaillez-vous dans le même secteur?
Êtes-vous intéressé/es à la formation des acteurs locaux dans des territoires dévitalisés?
Appartenez-vous à des pays en phase de pré-adhésion à l'UE?
Vous cadrez-vous dans des mouvements pour la ruralité/, l'aménagement des territoires…..?

AVEZ-VOUS D'AUTRES IDÉES?
CONTACTEZ-NOUS!

TEXT PRODUCED BY THE WORKING GROUP

Social exclusion occurs in all social classes and in all areas:
.   Rural
.   Urban
.   Suburban

Add to this, run-down territories and especially disadvantaged areas in Europe as the different countries have different definitions of this.

Exclusion happens in many fields both economic, cultural and technological. All these are forms of social exclusion.

On a personal and social level, recognition, mediation, democratic education of non-formal education are all tools to fight social exclusion and we recommend the following:

The working groups on non-formal education and on participation of the CDEJ should continue to work on these high-priority issues.

Governments should help support social networks. This can be done by intertwining labour, social and educational policies and setting up inter-professional task forces. These can consist of contribution from both NFE and FE and the Council of Europe should address governments on this issue as an area of high priority in avoiding social exclusion.

Governments should work on the complementarity on non-formal education and formal education and the working group on non-formal education should co-operate with the Committee on Education in this field.

Governments should recognise non-formal skills as a potential job market i.e. non-formal education could be a creator of new jobs.

Governments, local authorities and NGOs should support non-formal education organisations as a means to prevent social exclusion.

NGYOs should initiate work groups in their countries which should consist of people intervening in all sectors of life (governmental, non governmental, local and regional, private and public authorities, and excluded people themselves) for the improvement and development of non-formal education.

The EYCs should be a knowledge centre on an European level working with non-formal education for and with excluded people.

The working group on non-formal education should collect examples and experiences of good practices in non-formal education and develop specific guidelines at the European level.

The Council of Europe should encourage the development of a sustainable society as comparable to an eco-system.

Governments should ensure that everyone has access to democracy and to decision-making (recommendation of the Committee of Ministers on youth participation and the future of civil society).

NGOs should raise awareness of democratic participation in society.

NFE should not be formalised in order to respect the specificity of non-formal education.