

2.7 Skills recognition

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Policy Framework

The Flemish Government is making efforts to better recognise voluntary activities and to value the social involvement of young volunteers and the skills they have acquired (EVC). The Policy Plan Youth (2014-2019) states that the Flemish Government aims to ensure that voluntary involvement is accredited. The Flemish Government built on skill recognition in youth work through the support of 'Oscar' and new regulations for 'a certified training' (kadervorming). From 1980 till 2015, organisations had a great deal of freedom in setting up framework reforms but there were major differences in structure, duration and content. Yet they were all honoured with the same certificates. This freedom was in line with the great diversity in youth work but had the disadvantage that it became unclear what a volunteer should be able to do.

The Flemish Decree 'certified training' of 2014 (Het Vlaams decreet Kadervorming 2014), which provides a framework for recognised framework formation, was a social recognition of the importance of training for youth workers. The new regulations harmonized the trajectories. The aim of the decree was to strengthen framework formation and to honour youth work as a powerful informal learning environment. The competences of volunteers were mapped out and recognised.

However, the initiative 'Oscar', which allowed organisations to award certificates of acquired competences to participants, no longer exists. It is also not replaced by another initiative. Volunteers can register their voluntary work at the website of the Flemish Public Employment Service (VDAB) but they do not receive a certificate.

Furthermore, a research will be done to explore other tools appropriate in the context of skill recognition in youth work.

Existing arrangements

Labour market oriented initiatives

- C-STICK JES created a [digital portfolio](#) with a personal development plan, a screening and scaling tool and a job application tool. The so-called 'C-stick' also includes a set of

techniques for the identification of competences and competence development, with the core elements: observation of competences, feedback, group dynamics, peer learning and experiential learning.

Organisations' own initiatives

Organisations working with volunteers usually provide a form of training, education or support for volunteers which may or may not lead to the award of a certificate. Although such certification is not legally recognized, these initiatives give an indication of the basic quality.

Accreditation of experiential learning for management volunteers

The Flemish Support Centre for Volunteer Work (Vlaams Steunpunt Vrijwilligerswerk) initiated a project called 'Accreditation of experiential learning for management volunteers' in co-operation with SoCius, the Support Centre for Socio-cultural work (Steunpunt voor Sociaal-cultureel werk).

'Certified training ' (Kadervormingstraject)['Kadervorming'](#) is a certified training explicitly meant for youngsters who (will) have leadership responsibilities in the context of youth work. The main goal is to strengthen their competences. One trajectory consists of a theoretical part, an internship and an evaluation. The training may lead to a certification (animator, chief instructor) delivered by the Division Subsidising and Recognising.

National validation arrangements

The Policy Plan Youth (2014-2019) mention that the Flemish government will explore other tools and how youth work fits into the Flemish structure of qualification and the EVC policy (policy to value competencies acquired elsewhere).

The existing arrangements for skill recognition don't make use of European credit systems.