

Introduction

Target group, objectives and structure of the T-Kit

This T-Kit is primarily addressed to youth workers closely involved in learning processes and educational activities with young people: trainers, facilitators, mentors, group leaders... Nevertheless this publication should be of interest to other actors involved in youth projects like organisers, administrators and decision makers.

The ultimate aim of this T-Kit is to support and contribute to the improvement of youth projects in Europe, by developing the competence of youth workers in the theory and practice of Educational Evaluation.

In the first chapter, “The Ingredients of Educational Evaluation” (the “theoretical” part of the T-Kit) we will explore the basic ideas and concepts around evaluation that are relevant for educational activities with young people. In the second chapter “Pots, pans and spices” (the “practical” part) we will map out, share and critically look at existing practices of evaluation (strategies, methods...). We will then invite you to define your own evaluation strategies, methods and criteria so that you can improve your projects (in terms of achievement of its objectives, products, structure and process).



In the foreword, we have introduced the metaphor of cooking. It is used in other parts of the T-Kit, (you can always identify them because they are sign-posted with our cooks)...



Nevertheless, this T-Kit is not a recipe book on evaluation methods that can be automatically transferred into your activities. Rather, it is an educational and methodological tool to help you to naturally develop, integrate and improve educational evaluation in your youth work. Concrete experiences and existing practices of evaluation as developed in practical youth work in Europe will serve us as reference material.

Foci of the T-Kit: educational activities and the scope of educational evaluation

Educational evaluation is a wide topic with a lot of implications. In this T-Kit, we will deal with a number of them, but we want to stay focused:

- The first focus is an educational one. This T-Kit is about *educational evaluation*. This means that we look at evaluation as an inherent part of educational processes in youth work and we think about how to put evaluation at the service of educational achievements.

There are other approaches to evaluation: as part of decision-making processes, from the point of view of project management, income-outcome oriented evaluations, etc. Our approach does not necessarily contradict any other approaches to evaluation. It is simply different. We refer to other approaches on several occasions. Nevertheless, the focus will remain on (non-formal) education.



With this particular focus, this T-Kit complements and in some cases completes the ideas on educational evaluation already present in the T-Kit series (for example in the T-Kits on Training Essentials, Project Management, Organisational Management and European Citizenship). In the same way, the CD-Rom on Evaluation produced by SALTO¹⁶ is complementary to this T-Kit and has been used as a source in its production.

- The other focus refers to the scope of youth activities that we will consider in the “practical” part of the T-Kit. These are *educational field activities involving learning processes with / involving young people*, such as: youth exchanges, seminars, training activities, volunteering. Among these, we will concentrate on the specificity and practice of youth projects with a European dimension.

Again, this focus is not intended to be exclusive. As relevant, we have also made reference to non-field activities and other youth services such as information, publications or campaigns.



¹⁶ SALTO-YOUTH.net is a network of 8 Resource Centres working on European priority areas within the youth field. It provides youth work and training resources and organises training and contact-making activities to support organisations and National Agencies within the frame of the European Commission's YOUTH programme and beyond. More information at <http://www.salto-youth.net> In 2004, SALTO produced a CD ROM on evaluating training in European Youth Work. Theory is combined with examples of proven methods from extensive experience of evaluating training activities. It includes documents to download and adapt and some suggestions for going further. More information at: <http://www.salto-youth.net/evaluation-intro/>