



step by step
towards
recognition

...or behind
the scenes of recognition
of non-formal education
in the youthwork
in Slovakia

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Authors

Ing. Tomáš PEŠEK

Currently in IUVENTA – the Slovak Youth Institute, he coordinates the long-term strategy for the recognition of non-formal education in the youthwork in Slovakia and also monitors current trends related to its recognition in Europe.

tomas.pesek@iuventa.sk

Mgr. Andrej DUDÁČ

He works in IUVENTA – the Slovak Youth Institute - on the KomPrax national project – competences for practice, where he is involved in the issue of recognition of non-formal education in the youthwork and the creation of partnerships among sectors in this field.

andrej.dudac@iuventa.sk

Coordinator

Mgr. Alena TOMANOVÁ

In IUVENTA – the Slovak Youth Institute – she works in the National Agency Youth in Action Programme, where she is in charge of training and cooperation planning strategy and the non-formal education horizontal topic.

alena.tomanova@iuventa.sk



by way of beginning

You are now holding a brief publication, which has originated as the output of the international Innovative Learning Forum, which took place between 20th and 22nd June 2013 in Bratislava. The Forum was aimed at promoting the potential of non-formal education (NFE) in the youth work and its current challenges. ILF was one the main part of the whole initiative for the recognition of non-formal education in the youth work in Slovakia.

The aim of the publication is to introduce the philosophy of the initiative, activities and the whole strategy in Slovakia undertaken by IUVENTA - the Slovak Youth Institute. We firmly believe that this publication may become an inspiration and an example of good practice for others who are dedicated to the subject not only in Slovakia, but also abroad.

The introduction to the publication is dedicated to the main reasons, why the initiative of recognition of NFE has emerged in Slovakia. Next, we describe the first steps that were significant at the beginning of the initiative and which the key elements played an important role for its successful continuation and completion. An important part of the content is also represented by a more detailed description of the preparing “the Declaration on the Recognition of Contribution of Non-formal Education in the youth work”, which was the main result of the entire initiative.

At the end you may learn more about the next steps, which we are foreseen in Slovakia in the field of the recognition of NFE in the youth work.



●●● where it all began

In the field of education and upbringing of the young generation, we have for long been facing several problems in Slovakia. Schools produce graduates who are not sufficiently prepared for the labour market and do not have the competencies that employers need. The status of teacher is undervalued and the way in which young people are massively educated does not correspond to current trends (bright exceptions to be honoured).

This has logically led to high unemployment of graduates and empowered by the economic crisis in Slovakia, having climbed in recent years up to the critical limit of 30%, which placed us on the 3rd position of youth unemployment rate in the EU.

In the context of formal education, young people, in particular at schools, acquire a huge amount of knowledge, but they often have much less space to develop their skills, abilities, and attitudes necessary for a successful career or for life as such. Non-formal education in the field of the youth work provides opportunities for gaining the above and that's the reason why IUVENTA – the Slovak Youth Institute works on further developments of the concept of NFE in Slovakia.

IUVENTA also shelters, among other things, the National Agency of the "Youth in Action" Programme, which is EU's programme supporting international mobility and non-formal education. On the basis of the experience from the implementation of the Youth in Action Programme and previous programmes, it was necessary to create a project on a national level that would stand on the principles of non-formal education, match the current challenges faced by the young people in Slovakia, and prepare them for life.

It was a challenge for IUVENTA to create a project that would embrace a large group of young people and combine the development of leadership potential of young people and competences necessary for active citizenship, but also the so-called "soft skills", which employees expect from their employers.

●●● first steps towards the recognition

Thus arose the KomPrax national project – competence for practice, supported by the European Social Fund, whose target group consists of up to 8,000 young people aged 15 – 17 years of age and 5,000 young people over 18 years of age. The main objective of the project is the development of their competences necessary for practice. Under the practice, we understand here the competences needed for active involvement into the life of society, but also the competences necessary for future employment.

During the two or three weekend training courses, young people and youth workers are trained in project management, team work, intercultural learning, communication and presentation skills as well as financial competences and learning to learn competence. They learned how to become reliable and flexible. At the same time, they try to positively change their surroundings, what raised their interest in the society and their active role in its positive transformation. As a part of their trainings young people develop small projects. These are carried out by each participant and on whom they verify their skills in practice. These projects must respond to the current needs in their area and must bring positive changes. Each participant brings in something specific and valuable. This is high significance either for them either for society.

By exercising KomPrax project, we also wanted to point out how big potential non-formal education in the youth work has in addressing current challenges in the education of young generation, i.e. that education is a broader term and includes not only formal school system, but also non-formal education, which is of flexible, very practical, meets the needs of young people, and may respond to the needs of the labour market and society. In this way it is a complement to formal education. It was therefore a logical step to incorporate in the ESF project activities that lead to the recognition of non-formal education in the youth work. The purpose was to show to:

- Employers that there is an education deserving their attention and support.
- Youth organisations and NFE providers that, beyond the needs of their organizations, they are able to modify their programmes so as to better prepare young people for their future lives.
- Schools, that both formal and non-formal learning may be synergic and complement each other.
- Representatives of the municipalities, government and the Ministry apart from trying to resolve the issues of the formal education system they should dedicate more attention and support additionally also NFE in youth workconcept.

The ČSOB ranks among significant employers in Slovakia with a large proportion of young people, for whom we are their first work experience. The quality of the skills of young people shaped by the family, the school, and non-formal education is considered key for their application in practice, and we consider these in choosing our future colleagues. We, in the ČSOB, are actively engaged in the development of youth and students through the creation of the positions of trainees, training work placements, and competitions for students.

Československá obchodná banka, a.s.,
www.csob.sk

Education is a very important part of the HP culture. We place high demands on our employees, not only in the admittance process, but we make sure they have the opportunity to educate themselves also in the context of their work. Young people are the future of HP and the company as such, this is why support of any form of education is one of the pillars of our strategy.

Hewlett-Packard Slovakia s.r.o.,
www.hp.sk

"A child only educated by school is a child uneducated," said George Santayana, American philosopher and writer. The American Chamber of Commerce in the Slovak Republic wants to inspire all young people work on themselves outside the school benches, too, because it's very important for their future life and career. As the saying goes, what you once learn, nobody will take it away from you. Therefore, AmCham is keenly devoted to education, whether through their university-oriented programmes oriented or the "2012: the Year of Education" initiative.

The American Chamber of Commerce in the Slovak Republic,
www.amcham.sk

Employability of a young person in practice is not only influenced by what school he/she may decide and what studies he/she completes. From an early age, they are formed by what they do in their free time, in addition to schools and families. Non-formal education influences their life's direction, attitudes and development of competences to a high degree. Member organizations of the Experiencia Association are dedicated to training experiential education. We believe that direct experience is the most effective way of learning. We believe that non-formal education of young people is the foundation for acquiring practical experience.

*Experiencia, a professional association for experiential education,
www.experiencia.sk*

●●● the idea of a „declaration“

We may discuss non-formal education with various partners, but how do we find that we have really convinced them? On the basis of what will we rely on their support and develop further potential cooperation? These questions have brought us to the idea of creating a document, in which all of those convinced would publicly and officially declare their support of NFE in youth work and willingness to cooperate. At the beginning we do not need all of the entities concerned, just a few important stakeholders from the different sectors, which would resonate and would create for us a suitable ground for further development of non-formal education in the work with youth.

This was how the document, which was given the name of the "Declaration on the Recognition of Contribution of Non-formal Education in the Youth work", originated (hereinafter referred to as the Declaration). It is a tool that would promote this issue and link all of those who realize that non-formal education is to play an important role in the education of the young generation. The key for us was to get support and engage the representatives of all the relevant stakeholders that play an important role in the training and employment of the young generation (representatives of central state administration bodies, local and regional municipalities, public administrations organisations, non-governmental organizations and employers).

●●● the background of making the declaration and preparing the roundtables

At the same time, however, we did not want it to be only a formal document, but that anyone who signs the Declaration actually understood its content and meaning. Therefore, at the level of each region of Slovakia, "roundtables" were organized (a total of 8, one in each region), in which the representatives of the employers, schools and universities, municipalities, institutions offering non-formal education and other entities active in the field of youthwork discuss together the benefits of non-formal education in the youth work and the possibilities of its further support.

At each roundtable we tried to have balanced representation of all the sectors representatives (the number of participants ranged between 15 and 20) in each region. This diversity was appreciated by many, since for most of them this was the first meeting of this type, where they had a chance to listen to and perceive different points of view on a topic that pertains to all.

Since we wanted that the roundtable participants as potential supporters of the Declaration, understand what we aim at, we organised individual meetings with most of the potential participants which took place in each region before to the roundtable. The purpose of those personal meetings was to clarify in the first place what we mean under non-formal education in the youth work, because so far these terms are in the business field still largely unknown. On the other hand, another important part

of those meetings was to highlight the need why the support and involvement of the given institution are important, and what benefits from such cooperation may they get. For example, it was important to explain to employers that non-formal education of young people is important, since it's them who may become their next employees. Personal meetings saved us a lot of time during the implementation of roundtables where the participants already arrived prepared and could competently express themselves on the subject of the content.

Our company considers non-formal education an important part of the development of young people. It provides them opportunities to develop a variety of skills which contribute to their readiness for the labour market and to their independent working career. In the selection of new people for our company we assess both formal and non-formal education, therefore, we join this initiative.

Dell s.r.o., www.dell.sk

Bratislava, the capital of the Slovak Republic, realizes that only active and educated young people may contribute to the development of urban society. Therefore we appreciate the efforts of all the interested bodies, institutions, organizations and individuals who operate in its territory and are interested in providing free space for young people and conditions for their successful growth and the acquisition of knowledge and skills. The capital wants to make use of the creative potential of young people by promoting their participation in various activities related to the management of the city and creating opportunities for youth participation.

Bratislava, the capital city of the Slovak Republic, www.bratislava.sk

an example of the roundtable agenda:

1. getting to know each other;
2. tasting of non-formal education - a brief group activity with small reflections on their experience and what they learned from it;
3. introduction into the topic – introduction of a wider concept of non-formal education in the youth work and its recognition through specific examples from the perspective of as well as personal participation and presentation of those who have passed the KomPrax or Youth in Action projects. They introduced what they have learned there.
4. mixed working groups – with the aim of getting their points of view, wherein they see strengths and weaknesses of our initiative and how they can contribute to it.
5. presentation of the outcomes of the working groups and discussion;
6. presentation of the Declaration, verifying the interest to support the Declaration, discussion of its content;
7. a summary of the meeting and agreeing the next steps.

One of the objectives of the roundtables was to convince the participating institutions for support and signing of the Declaration. As we wanted still other partners join to the Declaration in the future, we needed to figure out a way in which the institutions may join gradually. This is why each of the institution received its own signature sheet through which they join to the Declaration. At the same time this allowed us to give any institution a chance to write a couple of sentences, why they join the Declaration and why is the theme of non-formal education in the youth work rewarding and important for them. Apart from this the signature sheet also contained the signature of the statutory representative of the institution, its logo, a brief description of their main activities, and a link to the Web page.

DECLARATION

ON RECOGNITION OF CONTRIBUTION OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION IN YOUTH WORK

By signing the Declaration on Recognizing the Non-formal Education, the university graduates and young people can significantly increase their chances of acquiring new working skills, the ability of presentation, and thus increase their chance in the labour market. The employers appreciate that the young people are able to solve their tasks independently, bring a new creative view, implement the tasks from the beginning to the end, and present them. It is the non-formal education that helps the young people to acquire the above skills.

By signing th Declaration we thus support the non-formal education in the work young people, recognize its benefits for young people, and stimulate establishing new partnerships among individual actors in this field.

.....
Mgr. Ivana Molnárová
Executive Director Profesia, spol. s r.o.



Profesia, spol. s r.o.
Pribinova 25
SK - 811 09 Bratislava

The company Profesia spol. s r.o. has been operating on the Internet labour market for 16 years. As the leader in the field of online recruitment it is a reliable partner not only for the companies looking for new employees but also for the people searching for a job. As a member of the Alma Media, Finnish media group, it operates on the Czech and Hungarian market.

www.profesia.sk

In Bratislava on 21th June 2013

signing the declaration

After the implementation of all of the roundtables, an important date in the recognition of non-formal education in the youthwork in Slovakia followed.

Between 20th and 22nd June 2013, the international Innovative Learning Forum (ILF) was held, which was organised by the Slovak National Agency of the Youth in Action (IUVENTA) in cooperation with the Czech National Agency (ČNA Mládež), the Ministry of Education, Science, Research, and Sport of the Slovak Republic, the American Chamber of Commerce in Slovakia and Experiencia. The aim of the Forum was to promote the potential of non-formal education in the youthwork and its better linking to the current challenge faced by young people, whether it is finding jobs in the labour market or as active citizens in their community.

The ILF was attended by over 150 participants, among whom there were the trainers, youth workers, employers, as well as representatives of local municipalities and some interesting guests. One of them was Maarten Leyts, the Executive Director of Trendwolves (Belgium), who presented the findings of the European Report on Youth Trends in the year 2013. Assoc. Prof. PhDr. Zbyněk Svozil, PhD, Dean of the Faculty of Physical Culture of Palacký University in Olomouc (the Czech Republic) presented how they attempt to link both formal and non-formal types of education, and Martin Menšík, project manager of the HR Club, Profesia s.r.o. the largest job portal in Slovakia, talked about unemployment of young people in Slovakia, while trying to identify the possible causes of this condition. In addition to the above, participants of the ILF could participate in the workshops, which addressed innovative methods or techniques to youthwork or pinpointed the benefits of non-formal education.

An important moment during the Innovative Learning Forum was signing the Declaration. Representatives of several major institutions from the State, private, public and non-governmental sectors appeared in person to sign the Declaration or to support it by handing over the signature sheets. They perceive the benefits of non-formal education in the work with youth, which suitably complements formal education and contributes to gaining better positions for the young people on the labour market and in social life.

The signing of the Declaration was joined by the representatives of the following institutions:

- Ministry of Education, Science, Research, and Sport of the Slovak Republic
- Bratislava, the capital city of the Slovak Republic
- Československá obchodná banka, a. s.
- Dell, s. r. o.
- Hewlett-Packard Slovakia, s. r. o.
- Microsoft Slovakia, s. r. o.
- American Chamber of Commerce in the Slovak Republic
- Emerson a. s.
- Profesia, s. r. o.
- PosAm, spol. s r. o.
- Junior Achievement Slovensko, n. o.
- University of Žilina in Žilina
- Joined school Novohradská
- Foundation for Children in Slovakia
- Youth Council of Slovakia
- Slovak Scouting
- Experiencia, o. z.

As on 31st July 2013, the Declaration was signed by 42 institutions, the list of which you may find at the end of this publication.

"Emerson – Consider Solved" is our promise to customers. For this we need people with potential and skills to solve problems and work together in achieving the results in teams, people dedicated to new solutions, active and positive thinking people.

Emerson a.s., www.emerson.sk

It is extremely important for a company such as Microsoft to have staff who are able to promote and develop its values and business objectives. We are interested in talented young people, who have the necessary skills for a successful start of their career in this company. And many of them just acquire such skills through non-formal learning, where they have a chance to try and lead the team, promote real innovation, creativity, deal with the stress of the situation, and manage them in such a way that would not undermine the values and principles for which they work.

*Microsoft Slovakia,
www.microsoft.com/slovakia*

●●● other supporting activities

We in IUVENTA were also aware that to promote and support the recognition of non-formal education only by the KomPrax project as well as signing the Declaration is not enough. We realized that activities would have to be developed in a number of areas for us in order to achieve the desired effect. Therefore, recognition of non-formal education in the youthwork has become one of the priorities of the IUVENTA for a period of 2 years. A strategy which in addition to the above-mentioned Declaration included wider team of people and number of other activities emerged:

- Promote the accreditation of programmes within non-formal education, which is possible via Accreditation Committee;
- Lobbying the topic at Ministry of Education, Science, Research, and Sport of the SR;
- Creation of the definition of "youth work" with stakeholders and clarifying what is working with youth, what it brings and what role it plays in non-formal education;
- Promotional activities (creation of short animated videos, publications, personal meetings);
- Roundtables in the regions within the framework of the KomPrax project;
- Promotion the Youthpass, a European tool of recognition of non-formal education;
- Long-term cooperation with the American Chamber of Commerce as representative of employers on the topic of education;
- National conference "United colours of youth work" in January 2013, with aim to define and clarify the role of youth work in Slovakia and support deeper cooperation between among different stakeholders.
- International multi-measure event on a better use of the potential of non-formal education in the work with youth, the "Innovative Learning Forum" in June 2013, where the "Declaration" was signed.



●●● the key points for success

The process which we have so far gone through, as well as the quantity and significance of the partners, which have joined the Declaration to promote non-formal education in the youth work, has been very successful. And as it worked for us we decided to name the key success points, so that others who are going through a similar process, or are just planning the support the recognition of non-formal education might be inspired.

“Hot issue”

Correct timing, when the society in Slovakia has already become ready to discuss such a topic and give its space was important. We have taken a chance of the long-term crisis of formal education which has become a hot issue of public debates, as well as high unemployment rate of young people, which has become a priority issue even at the European level.

Have a clear goal

We wanted to have "big actors" for each sector (private, public, non-governmental), so that they officially support the importance of non-formal education in the youth work. The purpose was to gain a powerful tool to promotion and create basis for specific pilot projects in the future that would show how the representatives of the sectors may work together.

Define the key arguments for different actors

Each sector looks differently on non-formal education, from its own perspective. Therefore, we have been carefully searching what, to whom, and how to communicate. The argument which work for employer that if they ask the graduate at the job interview what experience they have gained from non-formal education may help them to choose the better candidate and it costs them nothing doesn't work as an argument for the municipalities or the school and vice versa.

Personal contact

Personal meetings with each of the key partners have turned out highly valuable. It was necessary to travel to the regions, which is mainly time consuming, but face-to-face meetings have greatly helped to ensure that we convince all the necessary partners to participate in the roundtable and later to support our Declaration. During the personal meetings, there is at the same time a better chance for the partners to familiarize themselves with our entire initiative and place it within the context of specific businesses or institutions. And in doing so, we have also learned a lot.

The Foundation for Children of Slovakia supports the multilateral development of children and young people, to which significantly contributes non-formal education. It is a space for shaping their attitudes, dissemination of knowledge, competences and skills, which in the family and at school may not receive as much attention and space as in non-formal education. At the same time, it is appropriately complemented by them. The Foundation therefore calls upon all relevant actors to accept non-formal education as another type of education, and to take into account its added value with job seekers and in increasing the expertise.

*Children of Slovakia Foundation,
www.nds.sk*



PosAm has for long been supporting activities contributing to improving the educational system, since it is aware of its crucial importance for the future of the society as a whole. An example is the project "Nemaj na saláme" (say no to ignorance), which gives to thousands of students an authentic message from their potential employers and emphasizes the importance of non-formal education for prospective jobs. We are committed to continue to participate in activities that increase the added value to education and its ability to flexibly respond to the needs of the labour market.

PosAm, spol. s r.o., www.posam.sk

The Nitra self-governing region, Department of Education, Youth, Sport, and Culture supports non-formal education of youth, which appropriately complements the system of education and training, it is voluntary and is based on the needs and interests of young people. We express our agreement with the targeted support and the development of specific competences for practice, which improves the prospects of young people in getting a job. Therefore, we support the development of active citizenship and participation of young people in public life – education of the members of the students' school boards.

Office of the Nitra self-governing region, www.unsk.sk

A balanced representation of the various sectors

Even though to find willing employers was more difficult than to find interested organizations, we always tried to ensure equal representation of all the sectors at the roundtable. The reason was to avoid happening that just one employer or just one school are present among the participants. Equal representation of the participants created a feeling that they are not alone for the given sector to talk about the theme, but that they are part of a larger whole.

"Flagship"

The important thing is to have clear and understandable examples from practice, relating to a large group of young people. It is hard to convince a large company employing several thousand people, if you're talking about examples that relate to a few dozen of youngsters. We had an example of a strong national project KomPrax and the EU Youth in Action Programme, where we were able to clearly define the competencies which young people develop in these projects, and give examples of a number of interesting projects, which young people are able to implement with suitable support.

Personal relationship with partners

It appeared important to find balance between formality and informality, to promptly respond to e-mails, always keep the promises arising out of communication within the agreed time, behave professionally, but in an informal spirit and language. We indeed talk about non-formal education, so positive and personal approach was appreciated by many partners. And we cooperated with them all the better.

The strategy of the whole institution

It is very good to be backed by a strong institution that recognizes the importance of this topic. In the case of IUVENTA, the recognizing non-formal education has become one of its priority topics in the youth work for a period of two years. This was reflected in practice in a number of supporting activities and equally important financial and human resources, which were necessary for its implementation. It appeared worthwhile that in preparing the Declaration and in communicating with all the



stakeholders who signed the Declaration, worked one full time employee of IUVENTA alongside with the supporting (both external and internal) working groups focused on the topic of the recognition of non-formal education in the youth work.

The contents of the Declaration co-created and consulted with all the key actors

We have not designed the final version of the Declaration by ourselves. Each roundtable allowed some space for the partners to be able to comment on its content and structure. We wanted to know, how should such a Declaration look by them, how they would be willing to sign it, and we took all this into account in designing the same.

Signing the Declaration as a part of other event

To highlight the importance of signing such a Declaration, we were looking for ways to engage as many people from the practice as possible. For us, the opportunity to do so was offered at the international multi-measure event of Innovative Learning Forum, which was just one of the support activities of IUVENTA in the context of the recognition of non-formal education in the youth work.

A discourse of non-formal education is for an institution training teachers inspirational due to the need to link theoretical knowledge with practical experience and the subsequent development of acquired competences of graduates up to the expert level. The intent of this institution is to prepare students to be successful in getting their jobs in the labour market. Whereas the present naturally indicates progressive blurring the differences between formal and non-formal education, we want to respond flexibly to the current need for recognition and acceptance of non-formal education.

Faculty of Education, Prešov University in Prešov,
www.unipo.sk/pedagogicka-fakulta



●●● other things which help us

Testing with partners who already know us

Until we came to know what arguments are our potential partners interested in and what are irrelevant for them, we needed to go through a few meetings. Then, especially among the employers, we started with those who already knew us and were willing to provide us with an open and very direct feedback. We wanted to know what kind of arguments are important in this topic from their point of view.

Go in the regions

Slovakia suffers from the fact that most of the things are going on in Bratislava, which is on the southwestern border of the country. If we wanted to make the recognition applied throughout the country, it was necessary to travel in the regions and there to meet with people from regional institutions. Only in this way a potential longer-term co-operation may be established, having a guarantee, that we understand each other.

Get a strong partner and your (first) good reference

The American Chamber of Commerce was for us such a partner from among the employers. Thanks to them, we managed to have at the roundtable held in Košice the representatives of the U.S. Steel in Košice s.r.o. and of the T-Systems s.r.o, which are well known companies in that region. And when you tell someone that representatives of these companies will also take part (or took part) in our roundtable, everything goes easier.

Refer to the European trends

For some of the potential partners, in particular in the field of State administration and self-government, it is important to know what legislative background we have in this topic and reflect on them. To have a reference from the level of the European Union may come in handy. For us, the Council of Europe recommendation on the validation of non-formal education and non-formal learning of 20th December 2012 was such a reference.

The General content of the Declaration

Originally, we wanted to make each of the partners state at the signing of the Declaration how they will in practice recognize and promote non-formal education in the youth work. Such a binding character would, however, require often a very complicated approval process within the institutions, for example, at the level of the board of directors or the university rectorate. In addition, this is associated with other legal and legislative issues. While this is not impossible, at least it would take a longer time, and would so jeopardise the involvement of some of the partners. Therefore, the final nature of the Declaration does not strictly bind anybody to do anything, but at least partners states the reason for joining the Declaration. And enough space remains for specific activities even after the signing of the Declaration.

Sustainability of the newly emerging partnerships

In this case, we chose a path, when less is more. It is better to have a smaller number of partners with whom we manage to maintain long-term cooperation rather than having a large number of partners with whom we would not even have enough capacity to communicate on a regular basis.

A strong name of the institution

IUVENTA – the Slovak Youth Institute has for long cooperated with organizations on various projects that address young people, municipalities and schools, and has a good name created. This definitely is instrumental in finding partners from these areas. And in regions or sectors where we so far have no partners, good references from others is useful.

Communication inwards

We have been trying to deliver and discuss the topic of non-formal education in the youth work within the framework of cooperating organisations and institutions for several years on a variety of seminars, conferences or meetings at the Ministry of Education, Science, Research, and Sport of the Slovak republic. It may be just due to the above why the signing of the Declaration attended the Minister in person.

Promotion

Various promotional activities are an effective tool for the promotion of non-formal education or its recognition, such as the use of social networks, regional media, contributions at conferences, promoting good practice, information on job portals. For example we created short cartoon videos promoting history of youth work, the role of youthworker, explaining gained competences via non-formal education, promoting Youthpass etc.

Signing of the Declaration on the recognition of non-formal education may significantly increase the chances of graduates and youth to gain new work skills, the ability of their presentation, and may thus increase their chances in the labour market. Employers today value in young people in particular their ability to independently deal with the tasks, bringing in new creative looks, to implement the tasks entrusted from the beginning till the end, and also know how to present these. And it is non-formal education, which creates the preconditions for a young person to acquire the required skills.

Profesia, spol. s r.o., www.profesia.sk

Slovak Scouting has followed from its inception its main objective, which has remained topical for one hundred years now – to prepare children and young people for daily life, provide them with experiences and values, due to which they are able to make decisions and achieve their goals. An important point is played by peer and youth leaders who through non-formal learning acquire and shape a variety of skills and knowledge, shape their attitudes. They pass these to younger members with whom they work. In this way, the development of the personality and the participation of young people are naturally supported.

*Scouting Slovakia, o.z.,
www.skauting.sk*

●●● how to proceed further

The signing of the Declaration was certainly not the end point of our efforts. It was a significant milestone, when we attracted important partners to promote non-formal education in the youth work. The important thing is what will follow. The Declaration should therefore not remain the only official document filed in the archives, but it should be a stepping stone for further initiatives, through which the theme for the recognition of non-formal education will be implemented ever more in the real practice in cooperation with all those who have signed or will sign it.

One of our priorities for the next period of time includes conversion of traditional Free Time Centres established by municipalities into modern institutions with inclusive approach to youth, providing training and consultancy services with specific emphasis on vulnerable groups of youth, in particular the young unemployed ones. In this context, creation and validation of new types of programmes using non-formal education in the work with youth will be important, just with the primary involvement of partners, who have joined to the Declaration.

At the same time, however, we will also work on smaller initiatives, in particular in the context of the forthcoming Strategy of the SR for the Youth for the years 2014-2020. Some of them are already gaining in specific outlines.

With regard to the unemployment rate of young people in Slovakia, the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs, and Family develops increased efforts with a view to making it easier for graduates of schools and young people to enter the labour market, whether through targeted projects or by providing information and advisory services.

We believe that the non-formal education of young people contributes to the achievement of practical skills and experience, and also facilitates the entry of young people into the labour market.

*Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs,
and Family, www.upsvar.sk*

In the information age, quality education is more important than ever before. The present school system does not offer all the competencies that students need for real life. Therefore, the Associated School in Tvrdošín join to the Declaration on the recognition of the contribution of non-formal education in the work with the youth, because it appropriately complements the system of education and training, as it is student-oriented and actively engages students in the learning process, which allows young people to acquire knowledge, develop skills, and shape their attitudes.

Joined School in Tvrdošín, www.sstv.sk

the declaration on the recognition of the contribution of non-formal education in the work with youth was supported by the following organizations and institutions:

- Ministry of Education, Science, Research, and Sport of the Slovak Republic
- Bratislava, the capital city of the Slovak Republic
- Československá obchodná banka, a. s.
- Dell, s. r. o.
- Hewlett-Packard Slovakia, s. r. o.
- Microsoft Slovakia, s. r. o.
- American Chamber of Commerce in the Slovak Republic
- Emerson a. s.
- Profesia, s. r. o.
- PosAm, spol. s r. o.
- Junior Achievement Slovensko, n. o.
- University of Žilina in Žilina
- Joined School Novohradská
- Children of Slovakia Foundation
- Youth Council of Slovakia
- Scouting Slovakia
- Experiencia, o. z.
- S&T Slovakia, s. r. o.
- INA Kysuce/INA Skalica, s. r. o.
- Zovos Eko, s. r. o.
- CSI Leasing, s. r. o.
- inPlus.co, s. r. o.
- Faculty of Arts, Sts. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava
- Faculty of Education of Prešov University in Prešov
- Joined School in Tvrdošín
- Faculty of Economics and Management, Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra
- Euroatlantic Centre
- Youth Information Centre in Krupina
- ZIPCeM – Association of Youth Information and Advisory Centres in the SR
- Outdoor institute, o. z.
- Plusko, o. z.
- Regional Youth Council of Žilina
- TeCeM-ko – Youth Centre of Trenčín
- SIEDAS – Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Association of Slovakia
- Nitra self-governing region
- Žilina self-governing region
- Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs, and Family
- Edymax
- Garant Partner plus, s. r. o.
- Slovak Society for Quality
- ProIn
- Student Council of High Schools of the SR



By the Declaration, the Slovak Republic confirms that it is aware of the challenges in the field of education, training and youth, where it is the common goal to prepare young people for a full working and social life. Non-formal education in the work with youth plays an important role in achieving this objective, as it appropriately complements the system of formal education and contributes to the development of key competences of young people, which are necessary for a smooth transition from education into the labour market.

*Ministry of Education, Science, Research,
and Sport of the Slovak Republic, www.minedu.sk*



IUVENTA – the Slovak Youth Institute is a state-subsidy budget organization directly managed by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research, and Sport of the Slovak republic. It prepares and manages a number of interesting programmes and projects for young people, youth workers and those in charge of youth policy. It is trying to make young people aware of their options, be active and work on cultivating themselves, so that they are once successful and find good jobs in the labour market. IUVENTA educates youth on human rights, promotes the development of volunteering, educational programmes, and stimulates young talent.

IUVENTA is the implementing body of the national projects in the area of the work with youth Kom-Prax - Competences for Practice and Praktik – Practical Skills through Non-formal Education in the Work with Youth, which are supported by the European Social Fund. At the same time, it administers the programmes of financial support for the activities of children and youth, is a national agency of ADAM, the Ministry of Education, Science, Research, and Sport of the SR, a national agency of the EU Youth in Action Programme, and the national partner of Eurodesk, the European youth information network. The target groups of activities are workers with children and youth, authorities in charge of the work with youth, young researchers, teaching staff of schools, members of civic associations of children and youth, and the general public.

www.iuventa.sk

The Youth in Action Programme is a grant programme of the European Union and is intended for all young people aged between 13 and 30 years of age, as well as youth workers. Its aim is to support young people who want to be active, want to travel, get to know new people from all over Europe and the world, make new friends, express their opinions, acquire new knowledge and skills, which will help them in the future to be successful.

Thus, it supports mobility within the EU and beyond its borders, non-formal education, intercultural dialogue, participation and inclusion of young people of fewer opportunities. The Programme also supports the development and exchange of experiences, expertise and examples of good practice among youth workers. The programming period is planned in the time frame of the years 2007–2013. IUVENTA – the Slovak Youth Institute is a national agency of the Youth in Action Programme in the Slovak Republic.

www.mladezvakkii.sk

Non-formal education complements and develops the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of children and young people acquired in the formal education system. In the children's and youth organizations, it links the situations and experience of the real-life with obtaining new competences also thanks to participation of children and young people in their activities and management. Participation in these organizations is the foundation for lifelong learning and ongoing active participation in social and political life of the society. Non-formal education of a young person at the same time contributes to the successful application of their skills in the labour market.

Youth Council of Slovakia, www.mladez.sk

DECLARATION

ON RECOGNITION OF CONTRIBUTION OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION IN YOUTH WORK

Representatives of central bodies of the state administration, regional and local self-governments, public sector organisations, non-governmental organisations and employers

based on the provisions of

- ⌘ The Act on Youth Work Support¹, which defines youth work and creates conditions for accreditation of non-formal education programmes for youth,
- ⌘ EU Youth Strategy², within the objectives of which it mentions also the need to recognise the economic and societal contribution of youth work,
- ⌘ Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on validation of non-formal education and informal learning³,

agree that non-formal education in youth work

- ⌘ together with informal learning, appropriately complements the system of education and vocational preparation, as it is oriented on participants of the education, whom it actively engages in the educational process, it is implemented voluntarily and it is closely interlinked to young people's needs, desires and interests,
- ⌘ does not reflect only development of young people's interests, but it creates space for a targeted support and development of specific competences, which young people can use later in their life⁴,
- ⌘ enables young people to acquire knowledge, develop skills and form their attitudes, through which it contributes to their personal development, social inclusion as well as to development of young people's active citizenship and it ameliorates their prospects in gaining employment and assertion in life,
- ⌘ requires greater recognition by all concerned stakeholders – state, self-governments, employers, institutions of formal education, providers of non-formal education and civil society in general

sign this declaration with the aim to

- ⌘ express support to non-formal education in youth work, to recognise its contribution for young people and encourage creation of new partnerships among various key players within the respective field.

¹ Act No. 282/2008 on Youth Work Support and on the amendment of the Act No. 131/2002 on universities and on the amendment of certain laws as subsequently amended

² COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS: An EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering A renewed open method of coordination to address youth challenges and opportunities, Brussels, April 27, 2009

³ Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on validation of non-formal education and informal learning, 2012/C 398/01

⁴ No Uznej, IUVENTA – Slovak Youth institute, 2011, ISBN 978-80-8072-098-8