

all different
all equal

non-formal education and learning

personal development

European Portfolio for youth leaders and youth workers



competences

youth work



COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE



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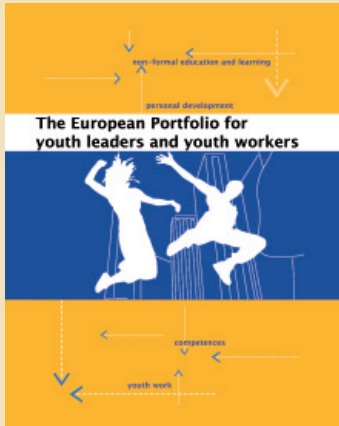
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Version: April 2007

Consultant writer and researcher: Mark Taylor, Brussels (brazavil.training@yahoo.com)



Welcome to the Portfolio!



**Finally,
we have arrived!**

Working on this project over the last couple of years has been exciting and really challenging: taking a first step at European level

- to make it more possible for youth leaders and youth workers to describe themselves and what they do; and
- to help with increasing the recognition of youth work while still keeping the faith with non-formal and informal education and learning principles...

Usually “groups of specialists” work away from the public gaze and only come out with a final product which you can take or leave. This group of specialists has been different. At all times the process has been kept open and many people have provided comments in person, in writing and through the internet. Particularly valuable was the contribution of the participants from the Portfolio Training Course who went away and motivated hundreds of people to try out the test version. From them we received 140 evaluation forms from all over the wider Europe, which helped enormously in refining this publication.

We hope you will find the portfolio useful in developing your vision of yourself and a youth leader or youth worker - and that you even spend some time reading the introductory parts which aim to give a context to this work!

And please let us know what your experiences have been in putting together your own portfolio – although this is officially the “final version”, we know that this process must go on.

The portfolio is also available on the web site: www.coe.int/youth

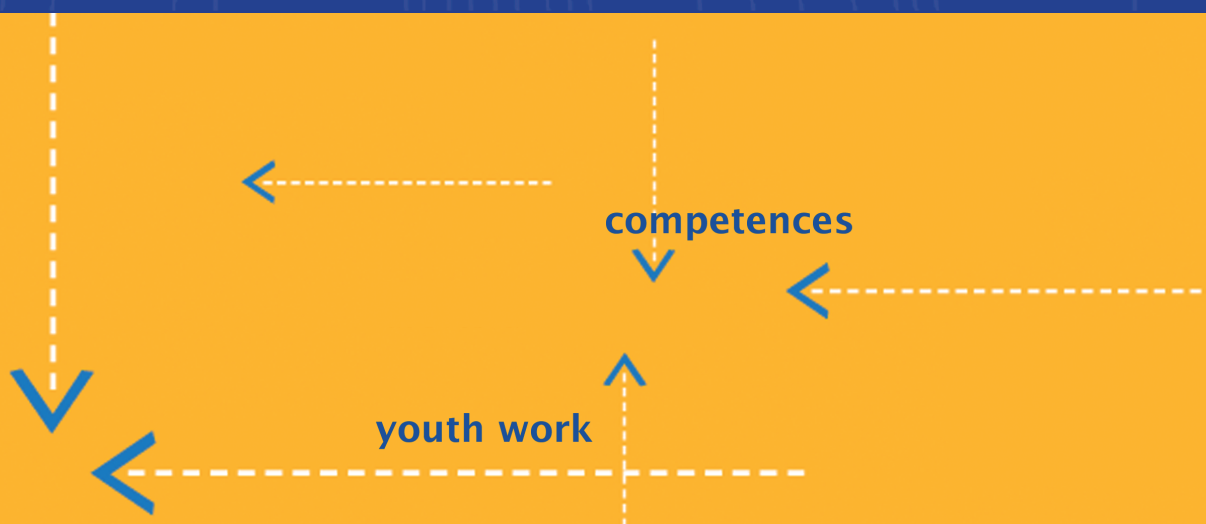
non-formal education and learning



PART ONE

INTRODUCTION

- 1 The portfolio: an instrument that aims to help increase the recognition of non-formal education and learning and youth work
- 2 The portfolio: an instrument that reflects the Council of Europe's values
- 3 The portfolio: an instrument that reflects the Council of Europe's approach to youth policy





1. The portfolio: an instrument that aims to help increase the recognition of non-formal education and learning and youth work

This European portfolio is an initiative of the Council of Europe. It has been developed as a concrete illustration of the commitment of the governments of the member states of this Organisation to promote the recognition of non-formal education and learning of young people, and of competences acquired in this framework through the practice of youth work. If you look at Recommendation N° 2003 (8) from the Committee of Ministers to the member states (see Appendix), you will see what measures and actions governments and the Council of Europe are called to take in order to achieve this. You will also notice that the creation of a European portfolio is explicitly mentioned in the recommendation.

The portfolio has been designed from the experience and practice of the Council of Europe in the youth field since the early Seventies, and particularly in the area of youth leader and youth worker training. During more than 30 years, the Council of Europe's youth sector has developed a wide range of training courses for youth leaders, multipliers, young democratic leaders involved in different areas of public life, young researchers, and civil servants from across Europe. These courses cover a large range of subjects, including organising international activities, working in international youth structures, international youth co-operation, human rights education, conflict management, youth participation, citizenship and many other topics. In this context, the Council of Europe has also developed numerous innovative educational and training tools and research work, for example on young people, non-formal education and learning, youth work and associative life, and has elaborated criteria and quality standards for youth work and youth policy.

In its work the Council of Europe builds on co-operation with a number of partners, in particular the European Commission. This co-operation is based on a common understanding of the value of youth work and the role of youth policy as expressed in the White Paper 'A new impetus for European Youth'. It led to joint activities and outcomes, amongst them the working paper "Pathways towards validation and recognition of education, training and Learning in the youth field". Also, importantly, the portfolio is mentioned twice in the Resolution of the Council of the European Union on the recognition of the value of non-formal and informal learning within the European youth field of May 2006; and there is a direct link between the portfolio and the Youthpass initiative in the Youth in Action programme.

This sum of experience and practice has inspired the concept and methodology of the present portfolio, which will hopefully help you to identify, assess and describe your profile of competences and situate it in relation to the common reference standards of the Council of Europe.

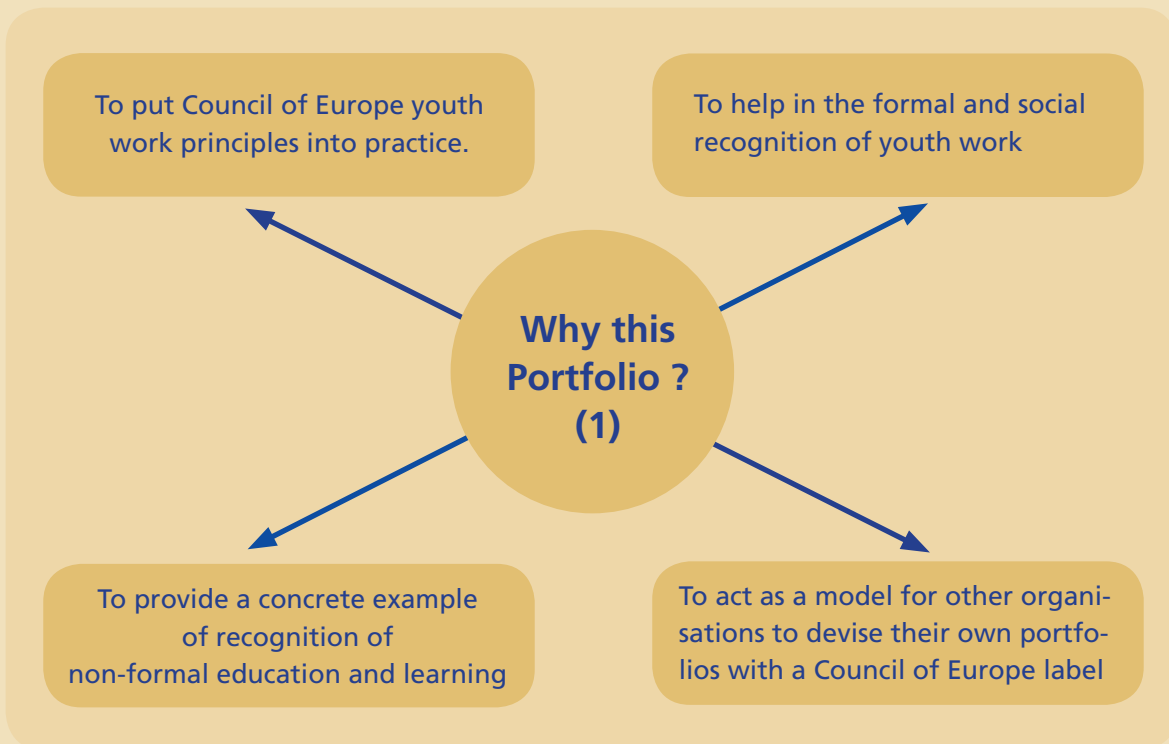
Looking at developments across Europe, we see a need from youth leaders and youth workers in non-formal education/learning settings to have an instrument which could help them:

- a) to identify, assess and record their competences
- b) describe their competences to others, and
- c) to set their own learning and development goals.

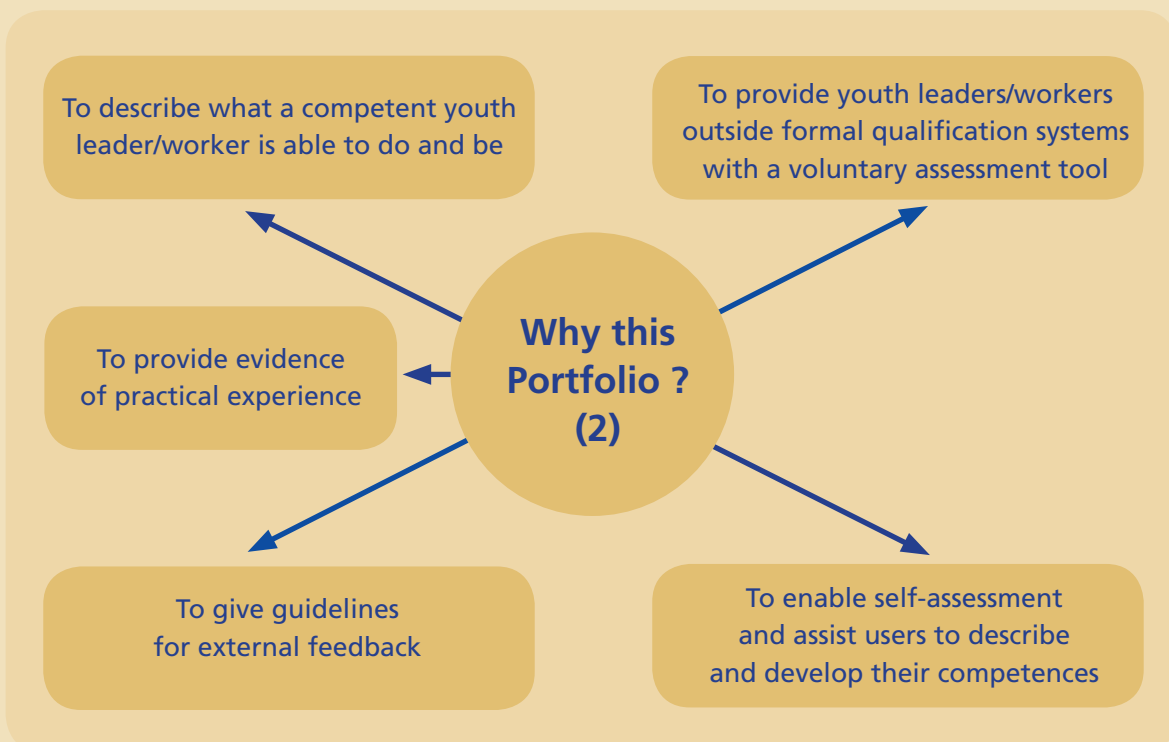
And that is precisely what this portfolio is designed to do.



On a policy level, the aims of the Portfolio are as follows:



For individual youth leaders and workers, the aims are:





2. The portfolio: a tool that reflects the Council of Europe's values

It goes without saying that the way in which we practice youth work, and the context in which we do it, be it within a youth organisation, a youth centre or any other youth structure or body, reflects our vision of society and the values we believe in.

This portfolio has been designed in coherence with the values, principles and standards which underpin the overall action and policy of the Council of Europe in the field of youth.

The Council of Europe's primary goal is to achieve a greater unity between its 46 member states in safeguarding individual freedom, political liberty and the rule of law, principles which form the basis of all genuine democracy and which touch the lives of all Europeans in many different ways.

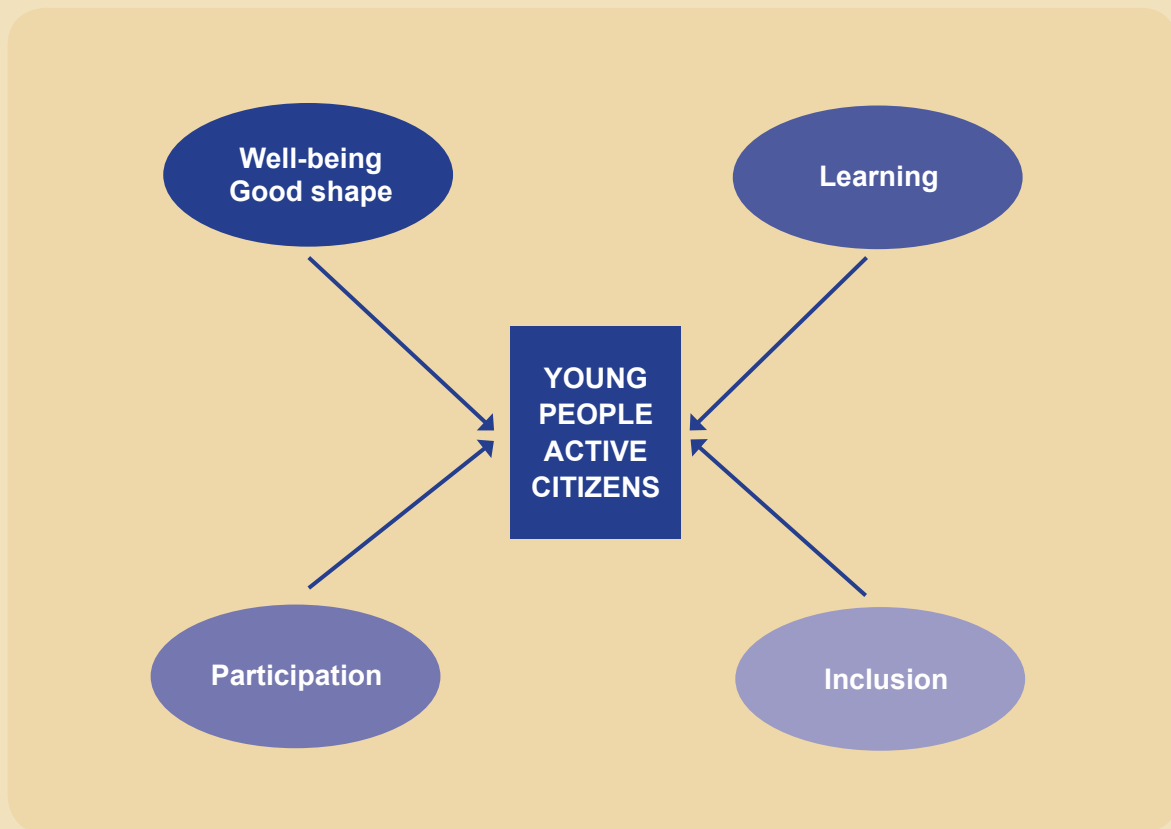
For those who will use the portfolio, it is important to be aware that the Council of Europe is an organisation that is committed to promote a Europe which:

- respects human rights and human dignity;
- promotes participative democracy by all citizens;
- struggles for better social cohesion and increased social justice;
- strives to achieve gender equality in all aspects of life in society;
- considers that cultural diversity should be a chance rather than a problem;
- believes that living together in a multicultural society is a factor of social and economical progress;
- encourages the development of civil society;
- promotes tolerance among people and combats racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia;
- refuses any kind of discrimination regardless of an individual's social and ethnic origin, religion or sexual orientation;
- considers that Europe has a responsibility in contributing to make the world a better place for all.

3. The portfolio: an instrument that reflects the Council of Europe's approach to youth policy

For the Council of Europe, the core mission of youth policy is to enable young people to be active citizens and to ensure the necessary conditions for enabling them to play this role successfully. To accomplish this, youth policy has to fulfil four main tasks:

- To ensure young people's well-being (both mentally and physically);
- To provide young people with adequate learning (informal, non-formal and formal);
- To ensure young people's inclusion (integration into society);
- To empower young people to participate (access to decision-making).



The above tasks refer to broad youth policy domains which cover all aspects of young people's lives. This clearly shows that youth policy has to be seen as a transversal policy, involving different public policy sectors such as, for example, education, health, social affairs, family, justice, etc., and should therefore be implemented in a co-ordinated manner (this is known as a cross-sectoral approach).

Youth policy may be implemented in many ways, combining different means of intervention such as legislative measures or specific programmes for young people. But for the Council of Europe, it is essential that the implementation of youth policy integrates the educational dimension which will enable young people to acquire the necessary competences to be active citizens (access to autonomy, sense of responsibility and initiative, engagement and solidarity, etc.).

In this respect, one of the key approaches of youth policy is non-formal education and learning.



→ **Non-formal education and learning :
a key youth policy and youth work approach**

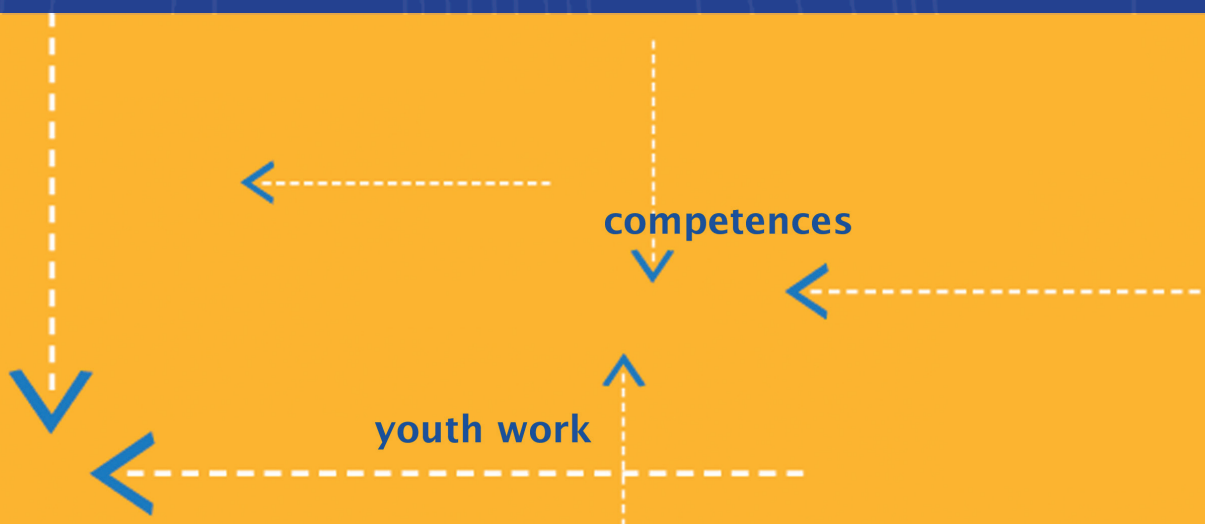
Structural features	Methodological features	Basic values	Key competences of non-formal learning practitioners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • takes place outside the structures of the formal education system and differs from this in the way it is organised and the type of recognition this learning confers; • intentional and voluntary; • aims above all to convey and practice the values and skills of democratic life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • balanced co-existence and interaction between cognitive, affective and practical dimensions of learning; • linking individual and social learning, partnership-oriented solidarity and symmetrical teaching/learning relations; • participatory and learner-centred; • close to real life concerns, experimental and oriented to learning by doing, using intercultural exchanges and encounters as learning devices. 	<p>Values linked to personal development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • autonomy; • critical attitude; • openness and curiosity; • creativity. <p>Values linked to social development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communication capacity; • participation and democratic citizenship; • solidarity and social justice; • responsibility; • conflict resolution. <p>Ethical values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tolerance and respect for others; • human rights; • intercultural learning and understanding; • peace/non-violence education; • gender equality; • inter-generational dialogue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • using collegial and participatory methods; • using diversity as a positive learning tool; • making critically reflective links between the concrete and the abstract, in order both to facilitate the learning process and continuously to improve their quality; • knowledge about young people's lives and cultures in Europe.



PART TWO

STEPS IN MAKING YOUR PORTFOLIO

- 1 How to use this portfolio
- 2 The youth work context
- 3 Knowledge, skills, attitudes and values
- 4 Youth leader/youth worker - a functional analysis
- 5 Competence framework
- 6 Getting feedback from others
- 7 Personal development and learning plan





1. How to use this portfolio

Each person is different and approaches the construction of a portfolio in ways appropriate to themselves.

Section 2-3-4

1. Have a quick look at sections 2, 3 and 4, which are constructed as entry points to the portfolio. Whichever is most attractive to you is the right place to start! Some people have also found it useful to go through all three sections, as they gained some important elements for reflection.

Section 2-3 or 4

2. Read the introductory material and think about your place as a youth leader/worker, your relationship to young people and to youth work. [2 - The youth work context]

and/or:

Take some time to complete the drawing of the youth leader/worker – what skills, knowledge, attitudes and values are needed? [3 – Knowledge, skills and attitudes]

and/or:

Compare your experience of being a youth leader/worker with the functional analysis/occupational profile. [4 – Youth leader/worker functional analysis]

Section 5

3. Go to the competence tables and reply to the statements, reflecting on yourself. For each table, complete also the section on evidence for your ratings. Remember to collect together any certificates which back up your experience. [5 – Competence framework]

Section 6

4. Find someone or some people you trust and who have direct experience of your performance as a youth leader/worker. Give them your competence tables and ask them to give their views on each statement as applied to you. Agree a set time to talk individually with each one about their feedback. [6 – Getting feedback from others]

Section 7

5. Use the feedback you receive to help in your reflections about your own competences. Then use the Personal Development & Learning Plan to prepare your ideas for future action. [7 – Personal development and learning plan]

After a few months, go back to your competence framework and personal development & learning plan and check what your impressions are now and how you are doing with your plan.

If there are terms used here which you want to check, then the Short Glossary at the end of the Portfolio could be a useful starting point and further background can be found in the references section. [Part three – Appendices]



PART TWO - STEPS IN MAKING YOUR PORTFOLIO



2. The youth work context

This portfolio is intended for the use of:

youth leaders - which we understand to refer essentially to young adults holding a responsibility in a youth organisation, network or any other youth structure, mainly on a voluntary basis, and youth workers holding the same kind of responsibility mainly on a professional basis.

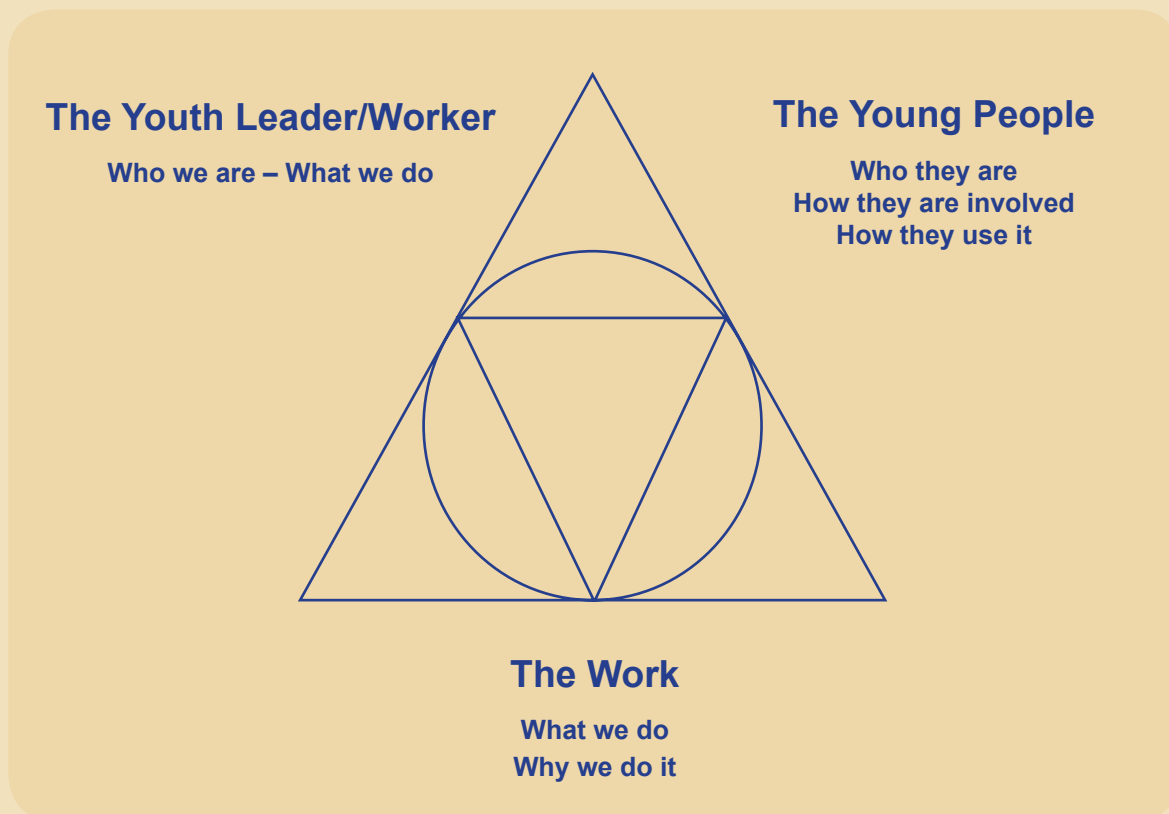
Most of the users will probably be people who have gained experience and skills in youth work through being active as youth leaders or youth workers, without having any formally recognised qualifications in the field. Feedback we have already received suggests that the portfolio may also be useful for qualified professionals who would like to review their current situation and plan their continuing professional development.

Youth work takes place in all sorts of places, settings, times and for very different reasons. One of the biggest challenges facing us in creating the portfolio has been to produce something which might hope to reflect the huge diversity in youth work throughout Europe. Some countries have traditions of professional youth work practice; others combine this with volunteers; others have voluntary youth work practitioners; and others again have little in the way of a youth service preferring to talk of social welfare. Youth work can cover a wide spectrum from political activism to streetwork to sport to running a cheap youth café. Here is not the place to detail every type of youth work available – this portfolio is for all who would call themselves youth leaders or youth workers and who pay at least some attention to non-formal and informal learning possibilities for young people.

As we can see in the following model¹, youth work is essentially made up of different relationships. As with all models or maps, it does not tell «the whole story»; rather it can be seen as a useful entry point for reflection by youth leaders/workers as part of an internal and external dialogue about their competences. You may, indeed, find nothing new in this model – we just find it a useful starting point here.

Here we look at the relationship between youth leaders/workers, young people and the work we do:

1. This model has been adapted from Woods et al., see references.



---> **Consider how you think this model fits together:**

- In order to be purposeful in our work, we need to understand that there are three main component parts to youth work (represented by the base triangle);
- We need to be equally aware of all three areas to be effective. These areas are interconnected (represented by the circle);
- While young people are a part of the groundwork, they are also at the centre of how we do our work (represented by the inner triangle).

In thinking about the model, how does it fit into your reality?

How well do you know the young people you work with? What is their background? Where do they come from? What are their interests? Why do they participate?

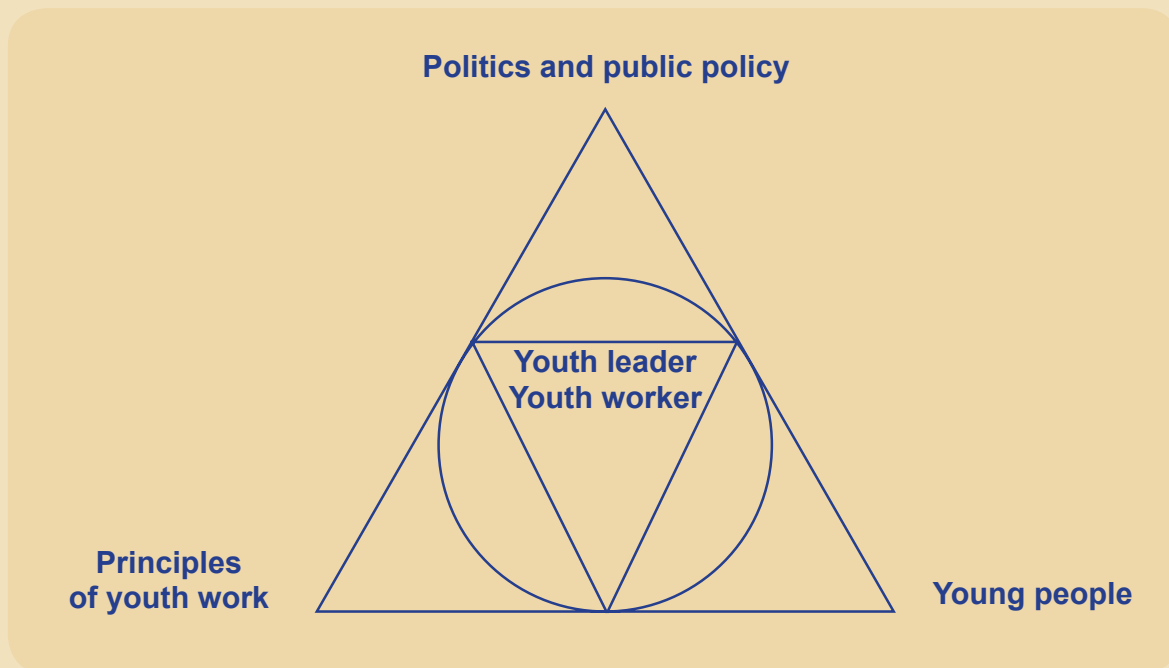
What brings you and your colleagues to contribute to youth work? What kinds of experience and competences do each of you use in your youth work? Why are you involved? How do you organise your work together?

What types of activities do you organise with young people? Are they more project-based, or do you have a more long-term approach? To what extent do young people participate in taking decisions and organising activities? How do you evaluate what you do?



PART TWO - STEPS IN MAKING YOUR PORTFOLIO

Just as we saw in the introduction with the aims of this portfolio, we emphasise working with and for the benefit of individuals AND looking more widely at society and youth policy. This means looking at how our youth work is part of a broader picture of youth policy and research - including young people, governments, youth NGO's and youth services²:



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As a youth leader/worker, you can enrich your role by thinking about how you combine the different influences on your work.

Answering the following questions might be helpful in thinking about all of this:

- to what extent has governmental youth policy in your country an influence on your approach to and practice of youth work? In what ways?
- how does the reality of young peoples' lives and expectations influence your concept and practice of youth work?
- how do you gain knowledge and understanding of young people?
- which principles guide your youth work? where do they come from?
- how do you think it is possible for you and young people to influence youth policy in your country? in Europe?

You will see that one of the functions of a youth leader/worker set out here is "to co-operate with others to shape youth policy". This came as something of a surprise to some of the people who were involved in using the test version of the portfolio! First reactions were along the lines of "why should I get involved with that?" And this reaction was then often followed up with the conclusion "actually, why shouldn't I get involved?"

2. Adapted from: Williamson, Howard: Trends and tensions in young people's socialisation. In: Bos, Arjen: Final report of the first pilot course on European citizenship. Strasbourg, 2002. www.training-youth.net



3. Knowledge, skills, attitudes and values

Given that some people are more visual in their thinking and learning, you might find it useful to freely associate your own ideas of the competences necessary to be a youth leader/worker.

As with everyday youth work, this portfolio is seen as part of an interactive process, in which you play a major role in determining what is relevant for your situation. In considering the functional analysis, you may feel that there are elements missing – for example, you may miss references to non-verbal skills... here is also a chance to define the specificity of the youth work you do.

As in French, competence can be broken down into three components:

savoir: knowledge [such as knowing about different phases in conflict]

savoir faire: knowing how to do [such as knowing how to communicate in different situations]

savoir être: knowing how to be [such as empathy]

One competence which becomes increasingly important as we go forward into the 21st century is that of “knowing how to live together” – defined by UNESCO as being one of the four pillars of learning. How does this idea fit in your youth work?³

Look at your own youth work, and answer the following questions:

- What should youth leaders/workers know [head]?
- What should youth leaders/workers be able to do [hands]?
- What emotional and personal competence should youth leaders/workers have [heart]?
- What should youth leaders/workers have in their backpack?

You can use the drawing on the next page to add your results:

3. Learning the Treasure Within, Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, UNESCO Publishing, 1999, ISBN 92-3-103274-7



PART TWO - STEPS IN MAKING YOUR PORTFOLIO





4. Youth leader / youth worker - a functional analysis⁴.

When you think of yourself as a youth leader or youth worker, what is it that you do? What functions do you fulfil?

In order to describe the competences necessary to be a youth leader/worker, one of the most important elements we found when preparing this portfolio was to build upon a functional analysis of the youth leader/worker. Some would prefer to call it an “occupational profile”. Another way to look at it would be to say that we are trying to describe the DNA of the youth worker/leader.

Putting together the functional analysis was a challenging process and we based our efforts on the values expressed in the introduction – we were very conscious of wanting to describe the youth leader/worker whose work is based on the values of human rights and democracy.

We know that we are trying to cover many different settings across Europe. So you are encouraged to reflect critically about the functions described here in order to see how far they could or should apply to you.

You will find that some of the functions overlap as every part connects to others; for example, being able to “work creatively with conflict towards peaceful solutions” is also an essential part of youth work outside of intercultural contexts. Likewise, effective teamwork is not exclusively important to contributing to organisational development! The important thing is that the concept appears in the functional analysis.

Please look at this functional analysis and compare it with your own situation in youth work. In the words of one famous methodology for organising groups “Be prepared to be surprised!» there may be parts of the functions which sound a little strange, or unusual to you. They may not be part of your direct experience NOW. One of the main messages we received from the portfolio test phase was that working through the competence framework gave people an enlarged vision of themselves as youth leaders/workers. So, before you dismiss an idea immediately, give it a second chance. – you might be surprised!

You may wish to add functions to our analysis, depending on the youth work you are doing (or want to do in the future).

We used the functional analysis – which tells us what the youth leader/worker should do – to find out what competences would then be necessary to be able to carry out those functions.

Once you have gone through this analysis, you can start working on answering the statements in section 5 – Competence framework.

4. This functional analysis owes much to the influence of the work done by the Scottish Community Education Validation & Endorsement Unit in their analysis of community educators which also covers youth work there.



PART TWO - STEPS IN MAKING YOUR PORTFOLIO

When reading these functions, you are encouraged to consider the international dimension to your work. Where do you see your work and the realities of young people as having links to other countries and people? Think globally, act locally is as important as acting globally and thinking locally!

→ 4.1 Function: To empower young people

The youth leader/worker is able to:

1. enable young people to participate through developing collective action and learning;
2. involve young people in planning, delivery and evaluation of activities;
3. enable young people to work towards their goals;
4. help the development of the confidence, knowledge, critical thinking, skills and understanding of young people;
5. get in touch with young people on an emotional level;
6. widen their awareness of the concepts of power and change.

→ 4.2 Function: To develop relevant learning opportunities

The youth leader/worker is able to:

1. target individuals and groups;
2. provide young people with appropriate guidance and feedback;
3. take advantage of spontaneous learning and development opportunities in everyday situations;
4. identify any special learning needs;
5. use a range of educational methods and techniques;
6. stimulate the creativity of young people.

→ 4.3 Function: To accompany young people in their intercultural learning process

The youth leader/worker is able to:

1. facilitate young people's recognition of their cultural background, values and behaviour;
2. promote active tolerance and interaction with people from other cultures at home and abroad;
3. work creatively with conflict towards peaceful solutions;
4. assist young people to define their place in a changing world.

→ 4.4 Function: To contribute to organisational and youth policy development

The youth leader/worker is able to:

1. find resources and manage them;
2. manage others and work effectively in teams;
3. work for change and development within organisations;
4. cooperate with others to shape youth policy.

→ 4.5 Function: To use evaluative practice

The youth leader/worker is able to:

1. plan and apply a range of participative methods of evaluation;
2. use appropriate information technology tools when necessary;
3. demonstrate skills in report writing and presentation for a variety of audiences;
4. research and use results to influence practice.



5. Competence Framework

Using the functional analysis as a starting point, we have produced the following tables which form a core set of common competences. Although everyone works in different situations, most of what follows should either be recognisable in your practice as a youth leader/worker or give you pause for thought to discover whether the statement might be applicable to you.

Please read each statement and see to what extent it applies to you in your practice. (Each statement has a short aid to reflection which can be a further explanation, a question or a challenge – they are there to help you in the process of thinking about yourself in different ways). You will see there are boxes at the end of each statement and this gives you the opportunity to practise some self-assessment.

	▲	◆	■	◆	●
KEY	Applies to me	More or less applies to me	Does not really apply to me	Does not apply to me	This competence has no relevance in my situation

Usually, you should find that your answers would be ticking one of the first four boxes. As we realise that the portfolio will be used in an infinitely varied set of ways and places it may be that, after reflection, you really feel that one or more of the competences would not make any sense for you and your situation. It is for this reason that we include the box “●”.

After each table, there is space for you to describe your evidence for your answers. This is an important part of the process, as it helps you both to analyse yourself and to start putting your competences into words. This will also help you in putting together supporting materials which demonstrate your experience and competences, such as: certificates from courses and seminars; letters from young people, employers or institutions referring to your involvement in youth work.

Give yourself adequate time to complete this exercise – the more thought you put into it, the more valuable will be the outcome!



Function: To empower young people

Competence	Aid to reflection	▲	❖	■	◆	●
1. I understand and work with group dynamics	<i>Each group is different and goes through phases in a unique way. Identifying those phases helps you to know what kind of intervention is necessary and when.</i>					
2. I have good facilitation skills	<i>Agreeing ground rules with a group and helping them to communicate well.</i>					
3. I know how to motivate and interest young people	<i>Understand young peoples' concerns and needs, have respect for them, arouse their curiosity.</i>					
4. I am ready to have my ideas challenged	<i>Are you open to constructive criticism? What are the limits?</i>					
5. I know my own emotional "hot points" and how to control them	<i>Each of us knows situations or behaviour of other people which have caused very strong emotions – anger, grief, sadness, etc. What do you do when someone makes you mad?</i>					
6. I can work with concepts of power relations with young people	<i>Who holds power? How is it used? What rights do young people have? How can young people influence what happens in society?</i>					
7. I work in a democratic and participative way	<i>Young people have a say in what happens; ensure that all in the group can speak and act.</i>					
8. I work for equal opportunities	<i>What is the balance of participation in your activities?</i>					
Other competences can be added if needed						

KEY	▲	❖	■	◆	●
	Applies to me	More or less applies to me	Does not really apply to me	Does not apply to me	This competence has no relevance in my situation



PART TWO - STEPS IN MAKING YOUR PORTFOLIO

---> Competences I have acquired or am on the way to acquiring

Competence:

When did I last demonstrate this competence?

What kind of examples do I have to show this?

Who was involved?

What happened?

Based on my answers here, what do I need to put in my Personal Development & Learning Plan?

Do I have relevant certificates or letters or other types of proof with which I can demonstrate my competence here?



Function: To develop relevant learning opportunities

Competence	Aid to reflection	▲	❖	■	◆	●
1. I pay attention to situations which can provide learning experiences.	<i>When the unexpected happens – what do you do to help facilitate young people’s ability to learn from it?</i>					
2. I can analyse the different learning needs and styles of young people.	<i>One size does not fit all! What do you look for? How process-oriented are you?</i>					
3. I can apply appropriate educational approaches and methods.	<i>What is adequate for the particular situation, the people involved and the aims behind what you do? Adaptability and flexibility is needed when using your toolbox. When is it right to use online resources from the internet?</i>					
4. When I do not know the answer, I know where to refer young people with specific questions.	<i>We cannot know everything, but we do need a good network and to ensure that it is up-to-date.</i>					
5. I work towards a positive learning environment, based on active participation, creativity and joy!	<i>Being playful can be fun and can also achieve serious goals. Giving respect to people and adapting activities to their needs.</i>					
6. I can give relevant feedback.	<i>When requested by an individual young person, how do you reply? How do you try to actively understand why people act as they do?</i>					
Other competences can be added if needed						

	▲	❖	■	◆	●
KEY	Applies to me	More or less applies to me	Does not really apply to me	Does not apply to me	This competence has no relevance in my situation



PART TWO - STEPS IN MAKING YOUR PORTFOLIO

---> Competences I have acquired or am on the way to acquiring

Competence:

When did I last demonstrate this competence?

What kind of examples do I have to show this?

Who was involved?

What happened?

Based on my answers here, what do I need to put in my Personal Development & Learning Plan?

Do I have relevant certificates or letters or other types of proof with which I can demonstrate my competence here?



Function: To accompany young people in their intercultural process

Competence	Aid to reflection	▲	❖	■	◆	●
1. I have explored and know my own cultural background and values	<i>Knowing your own roots and examining your own values helps in getting to know others and makes you aware of your own prejudices and stereotypes.</i>					
2. I can cope with ambiguous situations.	<i>When things don't turn out the way you think they should, or your ideas are not immediately accepted - what do you do?</i>					
3. I reflect about my own intercultural learning process.	<i>What happens when you are in contact with people from other cultures? What do you learn from the experience?</i>					
4. I can explain the principles of intercultural learning to young people in a way they understand and can help them to experience intercultural learning.	<i>There is a lot of academic research about intercultural issues, but how do you translate them into young people's realities? What do you know about other cultures and sub-cultures?</i>					
5. I can speak at least one foreign language.	<i>Being able to communicate in another language gives you a different perspective to your own.</i>					
6. I can organise activities involving young people from different cultures.	<i>What aspects do you need to consider which are different from working with a mono-cultural group? What is the difference between "intercultural" and "international"?</i>					
7. I can take appropriate action in conflict situations.	<i>Can you analyse conflicts? Can you think of alternative actions to propose? Conflicts can be transformed into learning situations.</i>					
8. I can name European dimensions in my work.	<i>European societies are increasingly linked – where does your work fit in? Remember: Europe is not a planet!</i>					
9. I know about the situation of young people in other countries in Europe and the rest of the world.	<i>What trends are there in the lives of young people across Europe and beyond? How do the life chances of your young people compare with others?</i>					
Other competences can be added if needed						

KEY	▲	❖	■	◆	●
	Applies to me	More or less applies to me	Does not really apply to me	Does not apply to me	This competence has no relevance in my situation



PART TWO - STEPS IN MAKING YOUR PORTFOLIO

---> Competences I have acquired or am on the way to acquiring

Competence:

When did I last demonstrate this competence?

What kind of examples do I have to show this?

Who was involved?

What happened?

Based on my answers here, what do I need to put in my Personal Development & Learning Plan?

Do I have relevant certificates or letters or other types of proof with which I can demonstrate my competence here?



---> Function: To contribute to organisational and youth policy development

Competence	Aid to reflection	▲	❖	■	◆	●
1. I put project management principles into practice.	<i>Understanding how project cycles work is becoming increasingly important for people involved in youth work – to make the best use of resources for the benefit of young people.</i>					
2. I understand and can take different roles in teams.	<i>A “team” composed completely of leaders or of support people is not a team. Which roles have you played recently?</i>					
3. I can motivate others to take an active role.	<i>Listening, paying respect and giving encouragement are all crucial here.</i>					
4. I can develop partnerships with other actors and interested parties.	<i>To what extent do you develop relationships with people and organisations outside of your own?</i>					
5. I work for change and development in my organisation.	<i>An organisation which does not learn will eventually die. How do you help your organisation live?</i>					
6. I know about the youth policy situation in the country where I live and I act with others to help shape necessary changes.	<i>Which channels do you use to help influence youth policy – locally, nationally and even at European levels?</i>					
Other competences can be added if needed						

KEY	▲	❖	■	◆	●
	Applies to me	More or less applies to me	Does not really apply to me	Does not apply to me	This competence has no relevance in my situation



PART TWO - STEPS IN MAKING YOUR PORTFOLIO

---> Competences I have acquired or am on the way to acquiring

Competence:

When did I last demonstrate this competence?

What kind of examples do I have to show this?

Who was involved?

What happened?

Based on my answers here, what do I need to put in my Personal Development & Learning Plan?

Do I have relevant certificates or letters or other types of proof with which I can demonstrate my competence here?



Function: To use evaluative practice

Competence	Aid to reflection	▲	❖	■	◆	●
1. I am always interested in young people's views.	<i>How often do you ask for opinions? When do you take the time?</i>					
2. I am able to find the information I need and use it appropriately.	<i>What are your sources for information? How do you select what you want?</i>					
3. I can apply appropriate evaluation methods and use the results.	<i>Evaluating requires a diversity of approaches and a strategy for putting the results into practice. What did you use last times?</i>					
4. I have the necessary report-writing and presentation skills.	<i>Increasingly, people involved in youth work have to explain to outsiders (such as funders and decision-makers) what they do.</i>					
5. I can also use information technology to support evaluation processes.	<i>Which relevant computer programmes can you use?</i>					
6. I know how to work for change, both personal and organisational.	<i>The capacity to be self-critical is important here as is the ability to recognise that change can be a difficult process for all involved.</i>					
7. I keep up-to-date with research about young people and youth work and use it in my practice.	<i>Which publications do you read about youth work? When did you last meet a youth researcher?!</i>					
Other competences can be added if needed						

	▲	❖	■	◆	●
KEY	Applies to me	More or less applies to me	Does not really apply to me	Does not apply to me	This competence has no relevance in my situation



PART TWO - STEPS IN MAKING YOUR PORTFOLIO

---> Competences I have acquired or am on the way to acquiring

Competence:

When did I last demonstrate this competence?

What kind of examples do I have to show this?

Who was involved?

What happened?

Based on my answers here, what do I need to put in my Personal Development & Learning Plan?

Do I have relevant certificates or letters or other types of proof with which I can demonstrate my competence here?



6. Getting feedback from others

Spending time in self-assessment is very enriching and can reveal a lot to each of us. And yet, there is much to be gained in using others to give us feedback.

You are encouraged to find suitable reference persons for feedback. Examples could include young people with whom you have worked; colleagues and other peers; educators with more years' of experience; line managers; etc. Try to make sure that you have a mixture of people who are not all "friends" as this will help you get a clearer picture of yourself.

Give them a copy of your completed competence tables and the evidence you have gathered – then set a time and place to meet where you can discuss their impressions of you as a youth leader/worker. It is most important that you make an agreement with anyone who is going to give you feedback about the process. Giving and receiving feedback is not easy and the following tips may be useful in your preparations:

GIVING FEEDBACK

To be helpful, feedback to an individual should be given so that the person:

- a. understands the information ;
- b. is able to accept the information ;
- c. is able to do something about the information.

(A warning: some types of feedback serve only the needs of the person giving it and not the needs of the person receiving it. This is likely to produce defensive reactions from the recipient and they are unlikely to change their behaviour as a result.)

Feedback should be in terms of specific, observable behaviour and the effect of that behaviour.

The person giving the feedback should use so-called "I messages", such as "I think..", "I saw...". This helps prevent any reactions or opinions being presented as facts.

Feedback should concentrate on those things over which the individual has some control. If you want you can also ask for the feedback to include suggestions for future action.

When encountering raised defences or emotional reactions, the person giving the feedback should first deal with those reactions rather than trying to convince, reason, or supply additional information.

RECEIVING FEEDBACK

For you to learn the most from the feedback given to you, it is also useful to have a kind of agreement with yourself during and after the process.

Listen carefully and actively.

Try to remain open to what is being said to you. If you notice that you are becoming defensive just make a mental note of any questions or disagreements and check them out later. Sometimes it helps to rephrase what you have just heard and check with the person giving feedback if you have understood correctly what was said.

Think carefully about the feedback you have received. Make sure not to overreact to what you have heard. Go back to your self-assessment and check whether you want to change or add anything.



PART TWO - STEPS IN MAKING YOUR PORTFOLIO

Before we leave the subject of feedback, the “Johari Window” has proved itself to be a useful tool in explaining the role of feedback in educational settings. It was developed by Joseph Luft, a psychologist, and Harry Ingram, a psychiatrist – their model makes it clear what the process is trying to achieve.

	Known to self	Not known to self
Known to others	arena	blind spot
Not known to others	façade	Unknown

The top left window **arena** covers the aspects of yourself that are known to you and are clearly evident to others – usually easily identifiable facts, but still useful to check others’ perceptions...

The **façade** covers the aspects that are known to you but hidden from others – usually related to your motivation for doing things, your thoughts...

The **blind spot** covers those aspects that are known to others but not to you – often you will find that others have a different perception of your actions and their consequences, things which you will not have thought about before....

Feedback is necessary to help us **decrease** the **blind spots** and **increase** the size of our **arena**. The better we know ourselves, the better youth leaders and youth workers we can be.



7. Personal Development & Learning Plan

Becoming a reflective practitioner means putting your competence in evaluative practice into action for yourself. As you have gone through the self-assessment process you have been encouraged to make notes of areas you want to develop. Once you have also received feedback you have a lot of information about yourself. This personal development and learning plan is a simple form, designed to help you give your ideas a shape and form. Be realistic in what you want to achieve!

Experience has shown that you can be most effective in this if you make your plan as specific as possible. For example, if you have the aim of learning another language, then you should plan by which date you will be able to hold a normal conversation in that language.

So, **what** do you want to do? (and maybe add a reason to help you remember why you want to do it).

How do you intend to do it? (attending a course, reading a book, contacting a trainer, etc). And how will you know you have completed your plan?

Doing things alone can sometimes be unexciting, so is there **anyone who could help you or accompany you?**

When will you start? When will you finish? Set specific (and reasonable) deadlines for yourself.

You might also want to spend some time thinking about how to overcome anything which could be a barrier to achieving your goals – again, be realistic, but keep up your spirit!

Remember to set a date for yourself to return to the plan and your self-assessment to find out what progress you have made.

Going through the process of using the portfolio can also help in discovering and defining skills and competences that could be useful when applying for jobs. These competences should also be described in a CV (curriculum vitae). If you have not already tried it, the Europass enables people to describe their learning in voluntary or youth work in the Europass Curriculum Vitae which is free for download in all the European Union official languages here: <http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu>. The European Commission is currently developing a specific Europass-Youth.



PART TWO - STEPS IN MAKING YOUR PORTFOLIO

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Personal Development and Learning Plan

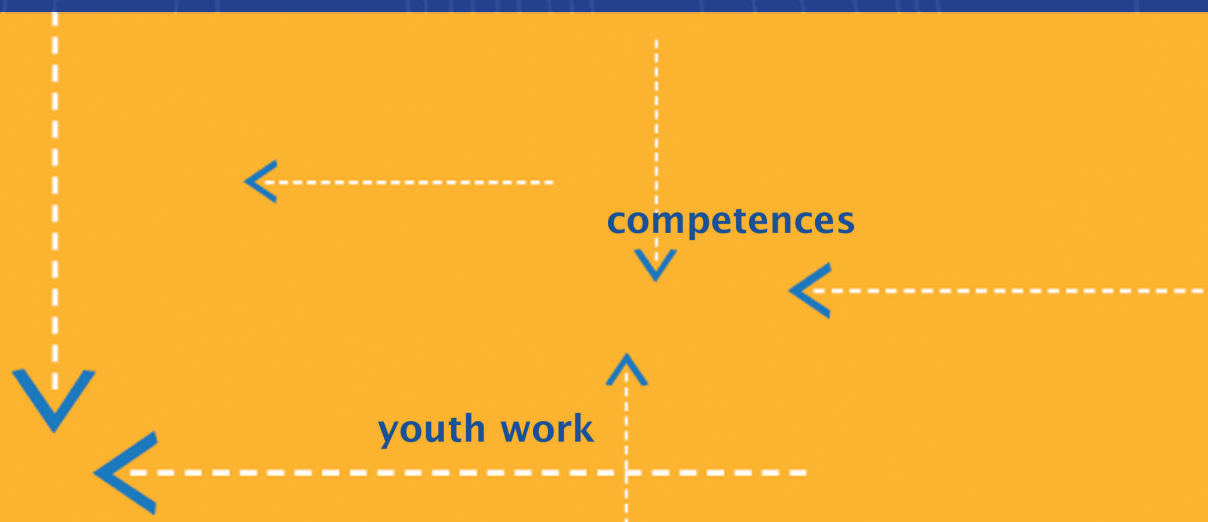
WHAT DO I WANT TO DO (& maybe WHY)	HOW	WITH WHOM	WHEN	Notes



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- 1 Short Glossary
- 2 Selected references
- 3 Council of Europe Recommendation N° (2003) 8 on the promotion and recognition of non-formal education/learning of young people
- 4 Acknowledgments





1. Short Glossary

Some of the language used in the portfolio is fairly new to youth work practitioners and so we decided to include this short glossary to help with understanding the wider context. Please note that these terms are part of the “work-in-progress” of attempting to describe non-formal education and learning in the youth work field – the debate is still open! The glossary is drawn from a paper written by Lynne Chisholm for the Bridges for Recognition conference held in Leuven in early 2005. She called it “Recognising non-formal and informal learning in the youth sector. Terminology Cheat Sheet” and we thank her for permission to use parts of it here. As things develop these terms will be further defined and others will join them on the website of the European Knowledge Centre: <http://www.youth-knowledge.net/>.

Object of recognition

Ability refers to capacities that someone can already demonstrate that s/he possesses, such as having the ability to speak a certain language.

Capability refers to what someone can demonstrably or presumably do, and therefore it is similar to the terms skills and competence.

Knowledge: it is impossible to provide a satisfactory account of the conceptual background behind the term ‘knowledge’ in a few words. In the everyday world, the meaning of the term knowledge appears self-evident: it is what someone individually knows or the sum of what a given civilisation collectively knows. But what does it mean to know something? What is it that is known, how do we come to know it, why does it count as something worth knowing, and what do we do with it when we know it? In educational practice knowledge is what there is to learn, but it is not necessarily useful and worthwhile of its own accord. It has to be joined up with skills and competences (to become useful) on the one hand – and no less importantly, with principles and values (to become worthwhile) on the other hand.

Skill means having the knowledge and experience needed to perform a specific task or job – someone who has learned what to do (possesses the knowledge) and how to do it (can transfer the knowledge into real practice), which also means that someone else can observe the skill in action.

Competence is often used interchangeably with the term skill, but they do not really mean the same thing. Competence means the ability to apply knowledge, know-how and skills in a stable/recurring or changing situation. Two elements are crucial: applying what one knows and can do to a specific task or problem, and being able to transfer this ability between different situations.

Forms and Procedures

Evaluation: in English, evaluation only means to make a reasoned judgement about or to give a plausible account of something. It does not imply any specific purpose (such as grading individual performance), nor does it imply any particular method of evaluation (such as a written test), and nor does its outcomes automatically suggest that something is of greater value or importance than something else (such as Council of Europe activities in comparison with SALTO activities).

Assessment takes place when evaluation has a comparative dimension that involves setting individuals, activities or institutions into a ranking order of performance or achievement. The ranking may be set in relation to criteria that are specific to the context, process or outcomes that are being assessed (such as: who swam the river fastest, or which EVS agency has the highest success rate in attracting socially disadvantaged young people into the programme). Alternatively, relative performance may be assessed against an external standard (such as in the case of the PISA attainment tests for 15-year-olds in different countries).



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Learning outcomes are the results of a learning process, which may be expressed in a variety of ways. In fact, the outcomes that are recorded and measured at any one point in time are interim moments in a learning process, that is, a snapshot frame in a film (which could also run backwards).

Certification refers to a standardised process of formally validating knowledge, know-how, skills and/or competences acquired by an individual or represented through a learning/service provider.

Certificates or diplomas are the 'piece of paper' which record the outcome of the certification process. It most frequently has the status of an official document, but this is not an absolute prerequisite.

Qualification can also simply be a synonym for a certificate or diploma. In the world of formal education and training in Europe it is usually an official record or document testifying to the fact that a person has successfully completed a given course or reached a given standard of achievement for a specified field, skill or competence.

Accreditation: formally or socially recognised authorities or instances accredit courses, activities and their outcomes. This means they testify that organisations and individuals meet standards to which all have agreed to conform. They vouch for the credibility of the certificates and diplomas that are issued, and hence for the reliability and validity of the monitoring, evaluation and assessment of the individuals and the organisations whose judgements are given the stamp of approval.

Accreditation of prior experience and learning (APEL) refers to the application of some kind of formal recognition to the knowledge, skills or competences that individuals have acquired in non-formal and informal ways during the course of their lives.

Validation of non-formal/informal learning: APEL is one way of validating non-formal and informal learning, that is, evaluating (possibly assessing) and recognising learning progress and outcomes. In the world of research methodology, the adjective 'valid' means that there is an accurate link between a theoretical concept (an idea) and its empirical indicator (a measurable observation). More simply, this means we assume, in good faith and with reasonable confidence, that something we can observe (and perhaps measure) in real life does genuinely reflect an idea in our heads.

Social recognition points to the status and esteem ('feel good factor') that individuals, organisations or sectors receive as a consequence of displaying certain characteristics, reaching certain achievements or engaging in certain activities – such as learning. It might also extend to material rewards, such as higher incomes for those with higher level qualifications.

Codified recognition: for education and training purposes, regardless of sector and level, this term specifies a formal and often official (including legal) recognition of learning participation or outcomes, such as a certificate or a diploma.

You can also find descriptions of terms used here in the publications of the Council of Europe/European Commission Partnership (for example, in the T-Kits series) www.youth-training.net, and in the publications of the SALTO network: <http://www.salto-youth.net> (there is a good working paper on defining the "European Dimension" in local youth initiatives, for instance).



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COUNCIL OF EUROPE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

Recommendation Rec(2003)8 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the promotion and recognition of non-formal education/learning of young people



(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 30 April 2003 at the 838th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.b of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Having regard to the objectives of the Council of Europe in the youth field and in the field of education;

Having regard to the Final Declaration adopted by the 5th Conference of European Ministers responsible for Youth in Bucharest (27-29 April 1998), in particular the reference to non-formal education, and to the Final Declaration of the 6th Conference (Thessaloniki, 7-9 November 2002);

Having regard to Recommendation 1437 (2000) of the Parliamentary Assembly on non-formal education;

Having regard to the experience and achievements of the youth sector of the Council of Europe regarding non-formal education/learning, in particular the work of the European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ) and the Symposium on Non-Formal Education held at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg from 12 to 15 October 2000;

Having regard to Recommendation Rec(2002)6 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on higher education policies in lifelong learning;

Having regard to the activities undertaken since 1999 by the Council of Europe in the field of education for democratic citizenship, and Recommendation Rec(2002)12 on this issue, adopted by the Committee of Ministers;

Considering the important role attached to non-formal learning in the Lisbon process and the present debate on lifelong learning in the European Union as well as in the White Paper of the European Commission "A new impetus for European youth"; taking into consideration the on-going co-operation between the Council of Europe and the European Union in this field;

Convinced that lifelong learning has an important role to play in reducing social inequality and social exclusion, and in promoting active participation in democratic life; and that non-formal education/learning can contribute to secure all the knowledge and capacities which young people need to succeed in contemporary societies;

Convinced of the necessity to mobilise the full learning potential within children and young people, in view of the social and cultural transformations resulting from the emergence of knowledge-based economies and societies in Europe and the world as a whole,



1. Recommends that the governments of member states:

- a. reaffirm that non-formal education/learning nowadays constitutes a fundamental dimension of the lifelong learning process, and therefore work towards the development of effective standards of recognition of non-formal education/learning as an essential part of general education and vocational training, and this with regard to:
 - the qualification of professional and voluntary staff in charge of offers of non-formal education/learning;
 - the quality of the education/learning offer itself;
 - the monitoring of learning progress made by participants within non-formal education/learning programmes, both individually and as part of a group;
- b. support the creation and the use of a European portfolio as a description tool aiming to record experiences, skills and knowledge (learning outcomes) acquired through non-formal education/learning, bearing in mind the example of the European Language Portfolio;
- c. promote equal opportunities for all young people, in particular for the socially-disadvantaged groups, by creating equitable conditions of access to non-formal education/learning in order to fully develop its potential with regard to reducing social inequality and social exclusion;
- d. actively encourage innovative non-formal education/learning experiences by supporting the effective dissemination of relevant documentation about good practice, training methods and achievements of non-formal education/learning;
- e. introduce support measures for non-formal education/learning initiatives aiming to encourage young people's commitment and contribution to the promotion of values such as active citizenship, human rights, tolerance, social justice, inter-generational dialogue, peace and intercultural understanding;
- f. actively engage the non-formal education/learning sector, alongside the formal educational and vocational training systems, in the development of a common European area for lifelong learning;
- g. actively use the potential of non-formal education/learning as a complementary means of facilitating the integration of young people in society, by supporting their increased participation, in particular those from transition countries, in relevant European exchange programmes;
- h. promote dialogue between actors of formal and non-formal education/learning and encourage better understanding of different approaches concerning non-formal education/learning in the different European countries;
- i. support and further develop existing research work in the field of non-formal education/learning, as well as the use of its results; encourage the gathering and diffusion of examples of good practice in the field of non-formal education/learning, at national and European levels; and further support existing co-operation between the Council of Europe and the European Union in this respect;
- j. make non-formal education/learning a significant element of national youth policies, and of European co-operation in this field;
- k. secure sufficient human and financial resources for the implementation and the recognition of non-formal education/learning programmes and their outcomes, with a view to enabling non-formal education/learning to have an adequate space within the learning community;

2. Invites the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to transmit this recommendation to the governments of those states parties to the European Cultural Convention which are not members of the Council of Europe.



4. Acknowledgements

This portfolio has benefited enormously from the considered input and feedback provided by the members of the CDEJ's Group of specialists on the European Portfolio for youth leaders and youth workers

M. Pere GUIU, Andorra

Mr Jan VANHEE, Belgium

Mr Lauri SAVISAARI, Finland

M. Claude BODEVING, Luxembourg

Ms Ajsa HADZIBEGOVIC, Advisory Council on Youth

Mr Gareth HUGHES, nominated by the Directorate of Education

Mr Marino OSTINI, nominated by the Directorate of Education

Ms Pascale BOULANGER, European Youth Forum

Ms Gisèle EVRARD, European Youth Forum

Ms Alix MASSON, European Youth Forum

Mr Peter TORP, European Youth Forum

Mr Hans-Joachim Schild, European Commission (and later on Directorate of Youth and Sport, Council of Europe)

Mr Manfred VON HEBEL, European Commission

Ms Rita BERGSTEIN, SALTO YOUTH Training and Resource Centre, Germany

As well as from the assistance of Mr André-Jacques DODIN, the advice of Mr Peter LAURITZEN, Ms Leen LACONTE and Ms Bryony HOSKINS from the Directorate of Youth and Sport, Council of Europe. Ms Sophie BILGER did astonishing work in synthesising the results of the test phase, for which "merci beaucoup"!

Many others across Europe have given comments and encouragement during the work of the group of specialists; particular thanks for their written contributions to:

Chrysafo ARVANITI

Rita BERGSTEIN

Jonathan BOWYER

Sonja CANDEK

Andrew CUMMINGS

Dirk De VILDER

John KONRAD

Darko MARKOVIC

Marija PAVKOV

Luis PINTO

Kees SCHUUR

Alessio SURIAN

Norah SWEETMAN

Jan VAN HOVE



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The participants of the Portfolio Training Course (April 2006) who motivated hundreds of people to use the portfolio and managed to persuade 140 of them to complete and submit their evaluation forms:

Sebastien GRUNWALD

German National Youth Council – DNK Germany
Puderbacher Weg 66, 57334 Bad Laasphe, Germany
Email: sebastian.grunwald@gmx.de

Ida KRAGH-RYDING

Danish National Youth Council – DUF Denmark
Rektorparken 1, 226, 2450 København SV.
Email: Idakragh@stud.ku.dk

Kate CHACHAVA

Georgian National Youth Council - NCYOG
17 Tabukashvili street; 0108 Tbilisi, Georgia
Email: gtu_su@yahoo.com
geto87@yahoo.com

Peter LENCO

National Youth Council of Slovakia –RMS Slovak Republic
Pražská 11, 811 04 Bratislava, Slovakia
Email: peter_lenco@yahoo.com , zahranicie@rms.mladez.sk

Hafsteinn SNAELAND

European Confederation of Youth Clubs - ECYC Iceland
Barónsstígur 18b, 101 Reykjavík, Iceland
Email: Hafsteinn.snaeland@reykjavik.is

Pascale BOULANGER

World Organisation of Scout Movement - WOSM Europe Region
Deputy Director, External relations & Communications
Avenue Porte de Hal, 38, B - 1060 Brussels
Email : pboulanger@euro.scout.org

Irene ROJNIK

World Association of Girls Guides and Girls Scouts – WAGGGS
WAGGGS Europe Office, Avenue de la Porte de Hal 38, B - 1060 Brussels
Email: irene@europe.wagggsworld.org

Ecaterina MATCOV

Young European Federalists - JEF Moldova
Blvd. Cuza-Voda 19/4, ap. 4, 2060-MD Chisinau,
Email: ecaterinamatcov@hotmail.com

Lukasz ZAMECKI

Alliance of European Voluntary Service Organisations Poland
street-Brodnowska 7/11, apartment 103. Zip-code - 03-439 Warsaw, Poland
Email: lzamecki@yahoo.com

Gisèle EVRARD

European Youth Forum – Policy Officer for Education Belgium
Rue Joseph II, 120, B – 1000 Brussels
gisele.evrard@youthforum.org Tel (direct) +32 (0)2 286 94 16

**Laura PAUNONEN**

Youth Department of Helsinki City
Saniaiskuja 4 s 71, 00730 Helsinki, Finland
Email: laura.paunonen@nk.hel.fi

Christian SCHARF

Federation of Association
for Cultural Youth Education in Saxony-Anhalt
Liebigstr. 05, D - 39104 Magdeburg, Germany
Email : exchange@jugend-lsa.de

Mateja GERJEVIC

Youth network MaMa
Kersnikova 4, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia
Email : Mladinska_mreza@hotmail.com

Françoise CREMER

Service de la Jeunesse, Ministère de la Communauté française
Boulevard Léopold II, 44, 1080 Bruxelles, Belgique
Email : francoise.cremer@cfwb.be

Oxana PETROVSKAYA

House of Children's Leaders
Russian Children's Centre «Orlyonok»
Tuapse district, Krasnodar territory, Russian Federation
Email: vega_kseniya@yahoo.com

Vitor DIAS

Delegado Regional do Porto do IPJ
Rua Rodrigues Lobo, 98, 4150-638 Porto, Portugal
Email: vitor.dias@ipj.pt

Eneken KOKA

Member of National Roundtable of Trainings in Youth Work Field
Estonian Youth Work Centre
Riia 9-70, 51010 Tartu, Estonia
Email: eneken@yahoo.com

Guy PENSAVALLE

CEMEA Alsace
(Centres d'Entrainement aux Méthodes d'Education Active)
40, rue de l'Engelbreit, 67200 Strasbourg
Email : guytoufr@yahoo.fr

Basak DEMIR

Youth Association for Habitat and Agenda 21
Fulya Mah. Mevlut Pehlivan Sok, Ali Sami Yen Apt. 8A/2 Mecidiyekoy
Istanbul, Turkey
Email info@youthforhab.org.tr

Rosario ROSSI

Arci Catania
Via Paolo Vasta, 141 95024 Acireale (CT) Italy
Email: sarorossi@misterobuffo.org



PART THREE - APPENDICES

Oksana YURYK

Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service
Ukrainian Association for Youth Co-operation ALTERNATIVE-V
78-A, Bohdana Khmelnytskogo Street
Office 203, Kiev 01030, Ukraine
Email: alternative.v@gmail.com

Stasya DENISSOVA

Youth Network against Racism and Intolerance
(Youth Human Rights Movement), Movement «Young Europe»
St. Nevkipely, 19, Apt.9, Krasnodar, Russia
Tel. +7 89184974827
+7 89094590729
Email: sdenissova@mail.ru

Rita BERGSTEIN

SALTO-YOUTH, Training and Co-operation Resource Centre
@JUGEND für Europa - German National Agency YOUTH,
Godesbergeallee 142-148, D - 53175 Bonn, Germany
Tel: + 49 228 9506 236
mobile *: + 49 172 5883180
fax: + 49 228 9506 222
Email: rita@salto-youth.net

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(Team members of the training course)

Claude BODEVING

Attaché de Gouvernement
Service National de la Jeunesse,
B.P. 707, L – 2017 Luxembourg
Email: claud.bodeving@snj.etat.lu

Ajsa HADZIBEGOVIC

FORUM SYD BALKANS PROGRAMME
Project Montenegro
Bratstva I Jedinstva 4, 81000 Podgorica, Serbia and Montenegro
Email: ajsa@cg.yu

Mark TAYLOR

Avenue Emile Maxlaan 150, B-1030 Brussels
tel: +32 2 742 0914 mobile: +32 473 240 482
Email: brazav@yahoo.com

Nuno DA SILVA

President, YEU – Youth for Exchange and Understanding
Rua Frederico Lecor n° 55 4° dto, P – 8000 FARO, Portugal
Email: silvamago@hotmail.com

André-Jacques DODIN

Head of Division for Youth Policies & Intergovernmental Co-operation
Directorate of Youth and Sport
Council of Europe
andre-jacques.dodin@coe.int



➤ And those who have completed and submitted their evaluation forms:

Ageeva Ludmila (Russia), Aigro Mariann (Estonia), Akdevelioglu Ilknur (Turkey), Almeida Laranjeira Henriques (de) Joana (Portugal), Altinsoy Guler (Turkey), Andersen Jakob (Denmark), Asanidze Vaxtang (Georgia), Belletti Michelangelo (Italy), Bjaeldager Jakob (Denmark), Bock Damon (Estonia), Bodson Nathalie (Belgium), Brecelj Markucic Arijana (Slovenia), Briedova Barbara (Slovakia), Busemann Nina (Germany), Cares Mike (Germany), Carniel Cristina (Italy), Cauwelier Johan (Belgium), Chakvetadze Nato (Georgia), Cotis Sophy (Greece), Dagkos Anastasios (Turkey), Dechenaux Claire (France), Dotter Stéphanie (France), Dubois Christine (Belgium), Dundua Temo (Georgia), Dybowski Sandra (Germany), Elisashvili Nino (Georgia), Fedotova Yulia (Russia), Fistravec Tina (Slovenia), Fröström Linda (Sweden), Fruk Marija (Slovenia), Garcet Cédric (Belgium), Gerber Dominik (Switzerland), Gitolendia Boris (Georgia), Gordeeva Ekaterina (Russia), Grech Daniela (Malta), Griffiths Graham (UK), Grübener Klaus (Germany), Gucek Marja (Slovenia), Gunven Asa (Sweden), Häring Polona (Slovenia), Hellings Céline (Belgium), Hoffmann Verena (Germany), Hovi Merja (Finland), Hristova Milena (Bulgaria), Jankovic Jakob (Slovakia), Kajaluoto Ulla (Finland), Kakorina Svetlana (Russia), Kalan Elif (Turkey), Kalberg Helen (Estonia), Kazakov Egor (Russia), Kelly Shawn (Denmark), Khusnutdinova Irene (Russia), Kingkiladze Sopio (Georgia), Kipouros George (Greece), Kiss Balazs (Slovakia), Koracin Janja (Slovenia), Korkmaz Gulcan (Turkey), Koskinen Aleks (Finland), Koyuncu Emre (Turkey), Krajewski Mateusz (Poland), Kralik Juraj (Slovakia), Krezios Athanasios (Greece), Kylchyk Kateryna (Russia), Lambot Jérôme (Belgium), Langer Johannes (Austria), Legion Anna (Poland), Le Gludic Gaëlle (France), Lenco Peter (Slovakia), Magnier emilie (France), Malisheva Olga (Russia), Männisalu Juta-(Estonia), Marletta Giuseppe (Italy), Mattila Anu (Finland), Messina Luca (Italy), Mierzejewska Alicja (Poland), Mikeladze Lasha (Georgia), Miniac Pavillard (de) Daniela (Spain), Modra Justyna (Poland), Molokanova Tatyana (Russia), Niglas Tiiu (Estonia), Nizinska Joanna (Poland), Nordström Piia (Finland), Nowosad Anna (Poland), Nybäck Sari (Finland), Olle Cristina (Germany), Oreshkin Raul (Estonia), Otto Christoph (Germany), P.Maciek (Poland), Panchenko Irene (Russia), Panchenko Sergey (Russia), Panebianco Agata (Italy), Pavlin Andreja (Slovenia), Peters Caroline (Germany), Prost Nicolas (France), Pustelnik Valdemar (Denmark), Ratko Natalija (Slovenia), Rauravaara Jaakko (Finland), Razafinfrazaka Franck (France), Rostohar Petra (Slovenia), Saarela Laura (Finland), Sabler Meta (Slovenia), Salokannel Tytti (Finland), Scholz Carmen (Germany), Semrincova Lubica (Slovakia), Serrao Mario (Italy), Sheverdina Olga (Russia), Slimakova Dusana (Slovakia), Sommer Kerstin (Germany), Sondergaard Peter (Denmark), Spina Gabriele (Italy), Spirina Ludmila (Russia), Stergar Matic (Slovenia), Tadeusz (Poland), Tolstoguzova elena (Russia), Tonna Lara (Malta), Topchishvili Tamuna (Georgia), Toth Eszter (Hungary), Tove Iren Lea (Norway), Tsertsvadze Tiko (Georgia), Uyar Yasemin (Turkey), Vaap Riina (Estonia), Vandenhoute Genevieve (Belgium), Van hamme Olivier (Belgium), Vaughan Chloe (UK), Viigi Heli (Estonia), Virolainen Signe (Estonia), Wagner Marie-Kathrin (Germany), Willems Pieter (Belgium), Wissner Michal (Poland), Wunderlich Nathalie (Germany), Yildiran Burcin (Turkey), Zakharova Tatiana (Russia), Zamecki Lukasz (Poland), Zbrojkiewicz Katarzyna (Poland), Zhelyazkova Radostina (Bulgaria).



➤ Your feedback about the Portfolio is appreciated!

This portfolio is very much a “work-in-progress”: we realise that it will be used in very different circumstances. Therefore, we would really appreciate your feedback about the use of this Portfolio – so please feel free to send your comments to us at :
youthportfolio@coe.int

or:

European Portfolio for youth leaders and youth workers

Directorate of Youth and Sport
Council of Europe
F - 67075 Strasbourg Cedex

all different
all equal

The European Portfolio for youth leaders and youth workers is an initiative of the Council of Europe in cooperation with experts and partners such as the European Commission and the European Youth Forum. It provides youth leaders and youth workers in Europe, volunteers or professionals, with a tool which can help them identify, assess and describe their competences based on European quality standards.

In using this portfolio, youth leaders and youth workers will not only contribute to the recognition of their experience and skills but also to efforts to increase the recognition of youth work and non-formal education and learning.

Youth work in Europe covers many different realities. This is why this portfolio has been tested in many countries and has been designed to enable users to make adaptations if necessary - for instance, by adding competences specific to their circumstances.

The impact of the portfolio will depend, to a large extent, on how widely it will be used. Therefore, we hope that as many youth leaders and youth workers as possible throughout Europe – and even beyond - will take up the challenge of using and promoting it.



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