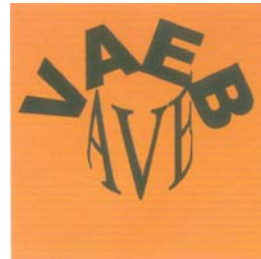


## Portfolio for the volunteer

**Tool to assess knowledge, experiences and skills acquired through voluntary activities**

**Pilot project : “AVE in a professional perspective: Assessing voluntary experiences”**



Initiated and coordinated by iriv (France) in 7 countries



**Leonardo da Vinci program - European Commission**



**With the support of the Regional Council in Champagne Ardenne**



**This project was awarded for excellent practice in addressing the priorities of the Copenhagen process and promoting an enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training.**

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**Partner countries:**

**France, Austria, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland and the UK**

**Promoter: Institut de recherche et d'information sur le volontariat- iriv**

**NAME of VOLUNTEER : .....**

**DATE : .....**

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## Introduction

### *A few words about volunteering*

What do we mean when we use the term volunteering? It can be defined in a variety of ways, but generally it is characterised by three things. First, volunteering is an activity people choose to do of their own free will; second there is

not a financial payment to the volunteer; and third volunteering is for the benefit of people (or the environment) other than (or in addition to) the volunteer's own family and friends.

Volunteering should be accessible to can be performed by anybody, irrespective of their age, gender, race, education or financial status. Volunteering happens in organisations settings that are set-up as not-for-profit organisations: these may be charities in UK, or referred to as not-for-profit organisations, or community organisations, in parts of Europe they may be known as associations and foundations. Volunteering can also be found in public institutions such as schools and hospitals.

### ***How can you benefit from your volunteer activities?***

People volunteer for all sorts of reasons. You may want to help other people or put something back into your local community. There may be a particular cause or organisation that you want to help. You may be looking to fill spare time, meet people and make friends.

If you are thinking about getting into or returning to paid employment or changing career, volunteering can be a way to gain valuable experience, skills and references. Whatever your initial motivations, the experiences you get as a volunteer should be of benefit to you.

Volunteering is one form of learning. It provides opportunities to try out various professional fields, to use theoretical knowledge in practice, to acquire new skills and to refresh existing knowledge.

If you are thinking about looking for paid work, you will need to be able to tell an employer what you have got out of volunteering. You will need to be able to interpret your experiences and show that the skills you have gained are transferable. Volunteering can help prepare you for employment.

### ***How can the volunteer's portfolio help you prepare for employment?***

The idea of this tool is to assist you to reflect upon your voluntary experiences, to help you identify the skills you have

learnt or developed and to help you to interpret these skills and experiences for potential employers.

By working through the exercises in this pack you will :

- 1 be able to identify how the activities you did while volunteering can be shown to contain valuable skills and learning;
- 2 be able to show how these skills are transferable into paid employment;
- 3 use this knowledge to create a document that can be added to your Curriculum Vitae or support you in writing one;
- 4 see how to demonstrate skills gained to potential employers;
- 5 use this to get ready for interviews.

A benefit of doing this and identifying transferable skills is that you will gain a clearer picture of how you have changed as a result of your volunteering and volunteers have found that this has given them more gain more self confidence about your skills and competences.

## ***Volunteer's portfolio - What is it?***

The Portfolio is a tool to collect information on the experiences, skills and qualifications acquired during your time as a volunteer.

On the one hand, the Portfolio is supposed to make you think about what you are doing and what benefits come from your volunteering. Often, working as a volunteer for a long time, you do not really reflect on what you do and in fact self-exploration can have a great value. On the other hand, the Portfolio should systematise the experiences and skills acquired by you when volunteering which can be useful at the time when the volunteer applies for a paid job. The Portfolio will show the potential employer what the volunteer did in the past and what s/he has learned.

The portfolio simply takes you through the process of thinking about how what you do as a volunteer can be shown to include a huge variety of skills and learning. The portfolio can be used as a kind of diary where you keep a record of what you have done in your organisation, when you did it, the portfolio then prompts you to identify what skills were needed to complete the tasks you were involved with; you may well be amazed to find out how much you have learnt from doing your day to day voluntary work.

The activities and skills you have gained are then transferred onto a single sheet which that you can add to your Curriculum Vitae. You will see that the portfolio suggests you get this signed by a representative of the organisation where you did your volunteering, possibly the person that supervises your volunteering (they may well have helped you with the portfolio).

The Portfolio belongs to you. While talking to the potential employer, you can show them the summary of your voluntary experience – a single page document that is clear, easy to read and understandable for somebody who knows little about volunteering.

The Portfolio layout has been developed in the Leonardo da Vinci programme, the AVE project – Assessing Voluntary Experience in a Professional Perspective. The project gathered 7 European countries. Here is the website of the project : [www.eEuropeassociations.net](http://www.eEuropeassociations.net). In case of any question, please contact the webmaster : [contact@iriv.net](mailto:contact@iriv.net).

## ***Who is the portfolio of competences for?***

The tool is primarily aimed at people who have been volunteering for some time and are thinking about looking for paid employment, either for the first time or returning to work. For instance, returning to work after child-care, young people starting their careers but have no professional experience, those away from the job market due to sickness, and so on.

However, the tool could equally be applicable to volunteers who would like to find out what competences and skills they have gained through volunteering.

The tool would be most useful for volunteers :

- 1 who have volunteered on a regular basis for a minimum of one year,
- 2 who volunteer in an organisation as informal volunteering (such as helping out in the neighbourhood) would be quite difficult to assess (proof of evidence of the voluntary experience should be required) .

## ***How to use the portfolio?***

This tool is designed as a self-assessment tool as well as a tool that can be used with the assistance of a "portfolio coach".

For example do you have a volunteer manager or co-ordinator, or someone who knows you as a volunteer within your organisation? It can be very helpful to work on some parts of the portfolio by discussing the tasks you have performed and what skills you have demonstrated or learned through performing those tasks.

However, this is only a suggestion, it can also be rewarding to use the tool as a method for reflecting on one's own.

Every volunteer has one portfolio and the size of the portfolio can vary. When more space is needed, new pages can be added to the Portfolio.

Whenever you go for a job interview, you can use the updated summary sheet which you have streamlined for the specific job.

## ***2. Volunteer biography***

### ***What is it?***

- 1 Your (volunteer) history is a chronological list of important events in your life that are connected with your volunteer activities.

### ***What can you use it for?***

- 2 Compiling this list is a first step to get you to start thinking about your life course in connection with your volunteer activities
- 3 It is useful to open your mind to what you have done over your life course that have led to your volunteering.
- 4 This way you will find the past towards your skills and competences that you have gained through volunteering.

### ***How should you complete it?***

- 1 Reflect on your life course from the beginning until now.
- 2 Think of the crucial events in your life.
- 3 List those events that have influenced and had an effect on your volunteering.

These can be training and further education, professional and other activities, but also private events such as moving house, getting married or having children if they have a connection with your volunteer activities.



## **Example**

<b>Dates and duration</b>	<b>Training, further education, professional and other activities</b>	<b>Connection to volunteering</b>
1974 - 1982	High school (secondary school); high school diploma (a-levels?)	I first volunteered in high school
1986	Studied nutrition at the university (partly)  Licence to become a nutritional counsellor (diet counsellor)	I would like to volunteer in the area of nutrition in the future
1990  1991/1994	Marriage  Birth of my two children	While caring for my children, I had to limit my volunteering
1990 - 1995  seit 2001	Teaching in "Volkshochschule" (adult education)  Cooperation with company XXX	I had ideas for new areas of volunteering

# My volunteer biography

Dates and duration	Training, further education, professional and other activities	<b>Connection to volunteering</b>

### **3. List of trainings and seminars attended (related to your volunteering)**

#### ***a. What is it?***

It might be interesting for your future employer to learn about training activities related to your voluntary activity.

Also, it can be interesting for you to have an overview of all the courses you have participated in.

On the next pages there is space to document this. The table will give an overview of the training courses and seminars you have completed in the framework of your volunteering.

#### ***b. What can you use it for?***

The aim of this exercise is to collect all the useful knowledge that you have learnt through different trainings you have participated in before or while you have volunteered.

As above mentioned it can give you a general idea of your training activities.

It can also help you to think about your future plans based on the knowledge you have already gained.

In addition this can be used for proof of qualifications during a job interview.

### ***c. How should you complete it?***

#### **CHECK THIS NEXT BIT**

We recommend to document all of your training and other educational courses you took during or before your volunteering in the table below.

In case you attended very many courses, our suggestion is to concentrate on those that might be the most relevant one's for your professional perspective or that were important for your personal development..

You can expand the table to fit your preferences.

Please attach any documents certifying/ proving the qualification obtained.

#### **Example:**

Topic of training	The institution organizing the training	The form of training (seminar, training, conference, exchange of experiences)	Methods used at the training (team games, presentation, interactive exercises, fieldwork, role playing, tests, etc.)	Length of training, number of hours (1 day, ,3 months, etc)	Qualifications obtained (degree, recognition, certificate). Attach these.
Communication within a group	Central European University	workshop	Presentation, Group exercises	1 day	certificate of attendance



## 4. Review voluntary activities

This next section starts to get you to think about what activities you have done as a volunteer, some suggestions and exercises follow to help you do this.

### ***a. What is it?***

- 5 This is a reflective part of the Portfolio. The aim of this reflection is to collect information about your voluntary experience. You will find here several questions about your voluntary activity.

### ***b. What can you use it for?***

- 6 Reflection is the process of thinking critically about an experience;
- 7 Reflection is important to your volunteering because it helps you get meaning from the experiences and enables you to learn from them;
- 8 Reflection can help you understand how your volunteering has benefited you as an individual and the community;
- 9 It is useful to write down what you have done as a volunteer. This way you will get easier to your skills and competences gained through your volunteering.

### ***c. How should you complete it?***

- 2 Take some time to think about what you have done in your volunteering so far and then answer the following questions as fully as possible:

**Reflective Questionnaire:**

**1. How have you become a volunteer?**

Write down your first interest in volunteering, models of people who volunteered, first contact, expectations, first activities, etc.

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**2. What activities have you carried out as a volunteer?**

List here all the organizations you have volunteered for and all the tasks and roles you have done.

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**3. What did you find most rewarding about your volunteering?**

Think of the aspects of volunteering you like and what you feel you got from your volunteering.

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**4. What did you find difficult and why?**

Think of the aspects of volunteering you found difficult and why .

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**5. How do you think your voluntary activity benefited you, your family, local society etc.?**



Does your voluntary work gives something good to the others? What and why?

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**6. What have you learned about yourself?**

As a volunteer have you found something new about yourself?

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## 5: Identifying Skills

Volunteering can help you acquire new skills or use and improve existing skills. The aim of the following exercises is to identify what skills you have developed.

### Mind Map

You might find drawing a mind map helps to identify the skills you have developed through undertaking different activities as part of your volunteer role. In this exercise we use a mind map to visually chart the skills you have developed through volunteering. You can either fill in the boxes below or draw your own mind map with a different number of boxes. You can do this to help you fill in the table below or as a separate exercise. Start by thinking of one of your volunteer roles. Then think of some of the different activities you have done as a volunteer. Then think of two or more skills you needed to use in carrying out the activity. Finally, give an example of when you have used the skills.

Role: Mentoring Children in Schools

Activity: Helping with homework

Skill 1: Teaching

Skill 2: Interpersonal Communication

Example: I worked closely with children to help them understand mathematics problems

Role: Mentoring Children in Schools

Activity: Taking children on cultural visits,

Skill 1: Motivating Others

Skill 2: Leadership

Skill 3: Responsibility

Example: I took a group of children to the museum

## **Skills Table**

Skills can be developed in a number of ways including formal learning (school, further education, higher education, courses, training you might have attended as part of a job or volunteer role), non-formal and informal learning . Please see the glossary on page 44 for further information.

The table below provides a list of 26 different skills you may have gained or developed through volunteering. These include core and transferable skills that are recognised by employers as necessary in the workplace today. Filling in this table will help you to find examples that you can also use on a CV or in job applications and in completing the Summary Sheet at the end of this portfolio (page 34).

Thinking of the volunteering you have done, think of an activity or role through which you might have developed each skill. It would also be useful if you can identify ways in which you can collect evidence to show the way you have developed each skill. For example, you could mention the number of times you have done a certain activity or job, describe a piece of work you have done, report you have written, or mention an event or project you organised etc.

Not all the skills listed below will be relevant to your volunteering. There is also space to include additional transferable skills specific to your volunteer-role, such as childcare, mentoring, driving, horticulture etc. In addition to those listed, choose up to 5 role-specific skills.

It may be useful for you to rank the skills you have developed through volunteering. If you would like to do this, please scale the skills from 1 to 4, where 1 means you feel very confident and 4 means you do not feel confident and may need to improve. If the skill is not relevant to you, please indicate this.

## 6. Skills

Use this table to identify skills you have acquired or developed in your voluntary experience.

Skills	Volunteer role / activities	Level	Have you an example to show how you have demonstrated this skill in your volunteering?
<b>1. Interpersonal Communication</b> <i>(Being able to communicate ideas and information to others and work with a variety of people in multi-cultural environments, for example volunteers, clients, staff members)</i>		<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> Not relevant	
<b>2. External Communication</b> <i>(Managing public relations; lobbying and advocacy; promotion of your work / organisation through presentations, media contact etc.)</i>		<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> Not relevant	
<b>3. Written Communication</b> <i>(Being able to present information in written form, e.g. reports, articles, minutes of meetings)</i>		<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> Not relevant	

<p><b>4. Administration</b>  <i>(General office work e.g. filing, typing, organising meetings, purchasing supplies)</i></p>		<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> Not relevant	
<p><b>5. Accounting</b>  <i>(preparing accounts and managing budgets; listing income / expenditure, preparing balance sheets etc.)</i></p>		<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> Not relevant	
<p><b>6. Fundraising / Marketing</b>  <i>(Raising money; writing funding applications; increasing membership; developing sponsorship; publicising / advertising)</i></p>		<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> Not relevant	
<p><b>7. Event Organising</b>  <i>(Organising events such as seminars, conferences, general assemblies, exhibitions, competitions, shows etc.)</i></p>		<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> Not relevant	
<p><b>8. Managing information (documentation)</b>  <i>(Selecting and organising useful and appropriate information and data to better understand situations and identify needs and/or resources)</i></p>		<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> Not relevant	

<p><b>9. Research (analytic approach)</b>  <i>(Looking for appropriate information / data; desk research or field research; using qualitative or quantitative approaches; presenting findings to different audiences)</i></p>		<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> Not relevant	
<p><b>10. IT</b>  <i>(Using computer programmes, e.g. Word, Excel, Access; using internet and e-mail; using databases; designing websites; programming)</i></p>		<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> Not relevant	
<p><b>11. Foreign languages</b>  <i>(Understanding spoken and written language/s; translating and interpreting; using language for business purposes)</i></p>		<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> Not relevant	
<p><b>12. Human Resources Management</b>  <i>(Recruiting, training, supervising volunteers, organising responsibilities and roles between staff and volunteers)</i></p>		<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> Not relevant	
<p><b>13. Project management</b>  <i>(Planning and developing programmes, defining scope, objectives, activities, resources and evaluation steps)</i></p>		<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> Not relevant	

<p><b>14. Stress management</b>  <i>(management of conflicts, facing any human or practical problem)</i></p>		<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> Not relevant	
<p><b>15. Active Listening</b>  <i>(Being receptive to what others say, showing empathy, not assuming a major role in the conversation, responding to requests for help)</i></p>		<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> Not relevant	
<p><b>16. Being Proactive</b>  <i>(Showing initiative and creativity, responding to changing situations; being flexible)</i></p>		<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> Not relevant	
<p><b>17. Advice Giving</b>  <i>(Specialist or general consultancy; counselling)</i></p>		<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> Not relevant	

<p><b>18.Negotiation / Mediation</b>  <i>(Facilitating constructive debate; finding compromises; finding satisfactory solutions to conflicts)</i></p>		<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> Not relevant	
<p><b>19.Problem Solving</b>  <i>(Finding appropriate solutions to specific situations; management of stress)</i></p>		<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> Not relevant	
<p><b>20. Decision Making</b>  <i>(Identifying possible options and assuming responsibility for choosing best outcome)</i></p>		<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> Not relevant	
<p><b>21. Leadership</b>  <i>(Being able to take a lead, make strategic decisions to move forward; representing your organisation externally)</i></p>		<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> Not relevant	



<p><b>22. Team working</b>  <i>(Contributing to a collaborative climate; cooperating to reach common goals, accepting others points of view)</i></p>		<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> Not relevant	
<p><b>23. Networking</b>  <i>(Creating and developing partnerships with individuals or organisations)</i></p>		<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> Not relevant	
<p><b>24. Motivating Others</b>  <i>(Encouraging others to get involved)</i></p>		<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> Not relevant	
<p><b>25. Training / Teaching</b>  <i>(Teaching / training on an individual basis or in a group; in an informal or formal environment)</i></p>		<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> Not relevant	

<p><b>26. Personal Responsibility</b>  <i>(Showing commitment and reliability; being able to organise your time and manage your work; motivating yourself)</i></p>		<p> <input type="radio"/> 1  <input type="radio"/> 2  <input type="radio"/> 3  <input type="radio"/> 4  <input type="radio"/> Not relevant </p>	
<p><b><i>Specific skills developed as a result of your volunteering (please write in):</i></b></p>			
<p><b><i>Specific skills developed as a result of your volunteering (please write in):</i></b></p>			
<p><b><i>Specific skills developed as a result of your volunteering (please write in):</i></b></p>			

## Ways and means to acquire skills

The following table asks you to consider the skills you have explored in the tables above, you should then:

- 1 Select up to 5 skills you judge the most relevant to you when looking for a paid role,
- 2 Fill the table below starting with the most important, describing in what way these skills have been acquired and how they could be useful in a work context.

<b>skill</b>	<b>Training - how have you acquired these skills?</b> <i>(tick all applicable answers)</i>	<b>When do you acquire these skills</b> <i>(indicate one or more response)</i>	<b>Applicable of skill to paid work</b> <i>(indicate only one response)</i>
<b>1. skill 1</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> acquired through paid work <input type="checkbox"/> 'on the job' experience in my volunteering <input type="checkbox"/> through training events connected to my volunteering <input type="checkbox"/> training activities offered in other contexts (e.g. universities)	<input type="checkbox"/> On identified courses <input type="checkbox"/> This is a skill acquire from time to time <input type="checkbox"/> This is a skill I have acquired through a specific project <input type="checkbox"/> It is a skill I acquire frequently through my day to day work	<input type="checkbox"/> This skill will be useful to me in the kind of paid work I am looking for <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, I myself use it in my present job <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is too much related to volunteering <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<b>2. skill 2</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> acquired through paid work <input type="checkbox"/> 'on the job' experience in my volunteering <input type="checkbox"/> through training events connected to my volunteering <input type="checkbox"/> training activities offered in other contexts (e.g. universities)	<input type="checkbox"/> On identified courses <input type="checkbox"/> This is a skill acquire from time to time <input type="checkbox"/> This is a skill I have acquired through a specific project <input type="checkbox"/> It is a skill I acquire frequently through my day to day work	<input type="checkbox"/> This skill will be useful to me in the kind of paid work I am looking for <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, I myself use it in my present job <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is too much related to volunteering <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

<b>skill</b>	<b>Training - how have you acquired these skills?</b> (tick all applicable answers)	<b>When do you acquire these skills</b> (indicate one or more response)	<b>Applicable of skill to paid work</b> (indicate only one response)
<b>3. skill 3</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> acquired through paid work <input type="checkbox"/> 'on the job' experience in my volunteering <input type="checkbox"/> through training events connected to my volunteering <input type="checkbox"/> training activities offered in other contexts (e.g. universities)	<input type="checkbox"/> On identified courses <input type="checkbox"/> This is a skill acquire from time to time <input type="checkbox"/> This is a skill I have acquired through a specific project <input type="checkbox"/> It is a skill I acquire frequently through my day to day work	<input type="checkbox"/> This skill will be useful to me in the kind of paid work I am looking for <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, I myself use it in my present job <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is too much related to volunteering <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<b>4. skill 4</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> acquired through paid work <input type="checkbox"/> 'on the job' experience in my volunteering <input type="checkbox"/> through training events connected to my volunteering <input type="checkbox"/> training activities offered in other contexts (e.g. universities)	<input type="checkbox"/> On identified courses <input type="checkbox"/> This is a skill acquire from time to time <input type="checkbox"/> This is a skill I have acquired through a specific project <input type="checkbox"/> It is a skill I acquire frequently through my day to day work	<input type="checkbox"/> This skill will be useful to me in the kind of paid work I am looking for <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, I myself use it in my present job <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is too much related to volunteering <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<b>4. skill 5</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> acquired through paid work <input type="checkbox"/> 'on the job' experience in my volunteering <input type="checkbox"/> through training events connected to my volunteering <input type="checkbox"/> training activities offered in other contexts (e.g. universities)	<input type="checkbox"/> On identified courses <input type="checkbox"/> This is a skill acquire from time to time <input type="checkbox"/> This is a skill I have acquired through a specific project <input type="checkbox"/> It is a skill I acquire frequently through my day to day work	<input type="checkbox"/> This skill will be useful to me in the kind of paid work I am looking for <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, I myself use it in my present job <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is too much related to volunteering <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

### Interpreting Skills: Moving to Competences

**The process so far has helped you to identify the skills you have gained or developed through volunteering. Now we begin to think about how these skills can be presented to potential employers. Part of this process is learning to talk the language of employers, the language of competences.**

A competence is the sum of knowledge, know how, skills and aptitudes acquired by an individual to effectively perform a given task. Competences are continually developed as you move between jobs, volunteering, and different stages of life ( This is often referred to as `life-long learning` ).

There is every indication that employers are increasingly taking notice of skills and competences gained outside the workplace and outside formal learning. More and more companies are paying attention to skills gained through volunteering, and indeed are beginning to encourage the on-going development of skills through corporate community involvement programmes.

The development of competences is an on-going process, and you may want to set some personal targets to help you develop additional skills or skills which you think will be directly relevant for the sort of jobs you are applying (see: Preparing the Action Plan below).

By summarising competences, achievements and training on the Volunteer Summary Sheet you will be able to provide evidence of your on-going learning through volunteering. This process should make it easier to interpret your volunteer roles for the benefit of potential employers on a CV, application form or in an interview. You could show this Summary Sheet to potential employers or just use it as a tool to help you write a job application.

# 7. ACTION PLAN

- 1 What is it?** This part of the portfolio will help you to think about your future. You can plan if you would like to develop some particular skills. Action plan can also help you in finding the way to achieve that.
- 2 What can you use it for?** Skills development is an ongoing process, and you may want to set some personal targets to help you develop additional skills or skills which you think will be directly relevant for the sort of jobs you are applying for or to increase your confidence in particular activities.
- 3 How should you complete it?** Try to set realistic, achievable goals that you can put a time limit on. Identify the key goals you want to achieve through volunteering and then list them on the action plan below. Chose a time by which you want to have achieved the goal. You can fill in the progress column at this later date and decide if you need to take further action.

## Preparing the Action Plan

By working through the previous exercises you have reflected upon what you have learnt as a volunteer and identified the skills you have developed. As a starting point look back over the skills table and choose those you did not feel confident in. List those here:

1. first skill to be improved :

---

2. second skill :

---

3. third skill :

---

4. other skill :

---

Express in your own words how you would like to improve these skills?

1. first one :

---

2. second one :

---

3. third one :

---

4. other skill :

---

It is important to set realistic, achievable goals that you can put a time limit on in order to measure progress. Identify the key goals you want to achieve through volunteering and then list them on the action plan below. Chose a time by which you want to have achieved the goal. You can fill in the progress column at this later date and decide if you need to take further action.

To help you do this you may want to:

- 1 Find out what skills and experiences employers are looking for in the jobs you want to apply for;
- 2 Talk to your supervisor or volunteer manager about possible changes to your role / duties;
- 3 Investigate possible training opportunities.

**Example:**

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Action to take</b>	<b>Time by which you want to have achieved goal</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Improve my writing style	Offer to take minutes in volunteer meetings Write an article for the Newsletter Help Volunteer Manager draft reports	6 months' time	Goal achieved? Yes No Partly Actions taken until now:

## Your Action Plan

<b>Goal</b> (skills to develop, awards, qualifications you want to gain)	<b>Action to take</b> (volunteer activities / tasks to do, courses to take, training to attend etc.)	<b>Time by which you want to have achieved goal</b>	<b>Progress</b>
			Goal achieved? Yes No Partly  Actions taken until now:
			Goal achieved? Yes No Partly  Actions taken until now:
			Goal achieved? Yes No Partly  Actions taken until now:



## 8. Summary of the Portfolio

As a conclusion of the process you have been through, you need to answer the 3 following questions:

1. What is it ? a general summary of the work done so far through the 7 previous steps (pages 1 to 32), including the activities fulfilled and the skills/competences acquired
2. What can you use it for? for yourself as a record of how you have developed transferable skills through your volunteering which you can potential employers
3. How should you complete it? Please fill the following table

The organization's name	Your activities in the organization	Listing competences gained through the activity

## 9. Summary Sheet

1. What is it ? a sheet per organisation including the activities fulfilled and the skills/competences acquired
2. What can you use it for? As a proof of evidence for your volunteering and to prepare the sample organisation sheet you could ask to be signed and stamped by your organisation
3. How should you complete it? Please fill in the following:

## Volunteer Summary Sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organisation	Volunteer role	Dates of vol.	Hours worked

**Main activities and responsibilities:**

**Skills developed:**

**Key achievements:**

**Specific training attended (if applicable):**

**If possible:**

Signature of coach or supervisor / manager: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## 10. Strengths of the Organisation

Your voluntary organisation (association, club, action group etc.) has specific strengths. These strengths may concern knowledge, methods, experiences, image etc.

- 1 Please, try to fill in four or five strengths of your organisation
- 2 Please give them a rank, 1 is the lowest, 5 the highest

Name of the organisation	Strengths	Ranking				
		1	2	3	4	5
Organisation 1	knowledge		x			
Organisation 2	experience				x	
Organisation 3	method					x
Organisation 4	image	x				

## 11. Annex

This annex contains several useful sample documents that can help you when you apply for a job. Please note these documents are only examples, they give you basic guidelines how to prepare your own documents. Depending on what you need your portfolio for you can choose which of the following documents are useful to you.

1. **Sample Curriculum vitae in EU format** – This is the currently used CV format within the EU. It can be expanded if more space needed. Your Voluntary experience summary sheet can be attached to the EU CV.
2. **Sample organisation sheet** – It certifies that you have been volunteering in the organisation doing specific activities, gaining certain skills, attending trainings. This document should be collected from each organisation where you have done voluntary work. We recommend that you prepare a letter to be printed on the letterhead paper of the organisation you are volunteering in and signed by a responsible representative be filling in the following line and deleting parts that are not appropriate. Make sure that this document will be signed and stamped by the organisation. It is advised to have more than one copy of it in case the employers asks for it you should keep one copy for yourself in the portfolio. This can be given to the employer if asked.
3. **Sample Description of Organisation** – This document should be filled for each different organisation in which you have volunteered. The main idea is to make a record you of all the different organisations you have volunteered with.

If you have any leaflets, paper cuttings, pictures, newsletter or brochure of the organisation, please attach them to the portfolio!

# Sample curriculum vitae in EU format

## EUROPEAN CURRICULUM VITAE FORM



### PERSONAL DATA

Name [ **LAST NAME, FIRST NAME (FIRST NAMES)** ]  
Address [ **HOUSE NUMBER, STREET, ZIPCODE, COUNTRY, CITY** ]  
Telephone  
Fax  
E-mail  
  
Citizenship  
Date of birth [ day, month, year ]

### PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT

- Time (from & to) [List each position - that is important for the curriculum vitae – separately, starting from the last going back in time.]
- Employer's name and address
  - Type of activity, field
  - Profession, position
- Main activities and tasks

## **EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

- Time (from & to) [List each education - that is important for the curriculum vitae – separately, starting from the last going back in time.]
- Name and type of educational institution
  - Main subjects/know-how studied
- Name of qualification obtained
  - Level according to country classifications

## **INDIVIDUAL COMPETENCES AND SKILLS**

*Competences and skills you gained throughout your life and your career but are not necessarily certified with an official certificate or degree*

### **MOTHER TONGUE**

**[ LIST YOUR MOTHER TONGUE ]**

### **OTHER LANGUAGES**

- Reading competence
- Writing competence
- Speaking competence

**[ list the language(s) ]**

[Identify your knowledge level: excellent, good, basic level.]

[Identify your knowledge level: excellent, good, basic level.]

[Identify your knowledge level: excellent, good, basic level.]

### **SOCIAL COMPETENCES AND SKILLS**

*Living with others and joint work in a multicultural environment, in a position requiring communication and team work (e.g. in the fields of*

[LIST the skills and identify where you obtained them.]

*culture and sports), etc.*

**ORGANIZATIONAL  
COMPETENCES AND SKILLS**

*Coordinating and administering  
people, projects and budget plans; at  
work, as voluntary work (e.g. in the  
fields of culture and sports) or at  
home, etc.*

[LIST the skills and identify where you obtained them.]

**TECHNICAL  
COMPETENCES AND SKILLS**

*Computers, special equipment,  
machinery, etc.*

[LIST the skills and identify where you obtained them.]

**COMPETENCES AND SKILLS  
IN THE ARTS**

*Music, writing, fine arts, etc.*

[LIST the skills and identify where you obtained them.]

**OTHER COMPETENCES  
AND SKILLS**

*Skills not mentioned above.*

[LIST the skills and identify where you obtained them.]

**LEADERSHIP PERMISSION(S)**

**COMPLEMENTARY  
INFORMATION**

[Indicate other important information here, for instance, contacts, references,  
etc.]

**APPENDICES**

[LIST any appendices, if any.]

# Sample organisation sheet

(Letterhead of the organisation)

To whom it may concern

Ms / Mr. .... (put in name of volunteer) is volunteering in our organisation since .....  
(has been volunteering in our organisation from ..... to .....)

She / he fulfils (fulfilled) the following tasks: (Main activities and responsibilities could be listed here)

.....

(Short open assessment of the performance of the volunteer in her / his work)

We appreciate the work of ..... (put in name of volunteer), because  
(Developed skills and key achievements could be listed here)

.....

.....

Signature and stamp of the organisation

Contact telephone number:

Email address:

(Date, name, function)



## **Sample Description of Organisation**

### **Name of organisation**

Name of volunteer coordinator:

Address:

Telephone:

Fax:

Email:

Website:

What kinds of volunteers are involved:

Field of activity:

No. of paid employees:

Number of volunteers:

## **USEFUL DEFINITIONS (1)**

In this part you will find short explanation of technical terms you have encountered during working through this portfolio.

### **Assessment of competences**

The sum of methods and processes used to evaluate the attainments (knowledge, know-how and/or competences) of an individual, and typically leading to certification (evaluation is used for assessing training methods or providers)

### **Certification/diploma**

An official document, which formally records the achievements of an individual following an assessment procedure

### **Certification of competences**

The process of formally validating knowledge, know-how and/or competences acquired by an individual following a standardised assessment procedure. Certificate results in the issuing of certificates or diplomas by an accredited awarding body.

### **Competence**

Proven and demonstrated ability to apply knowledge, know-how and associated knowledge in a usual and/or changing work situation

### **Competence portfolio**

A continuously increasing file, which collects the lifelong acquired knowledge, registers the educations, qualifications, and certifications of newly obtained knowledge can be continuously added. This competence portfolio exclusively focuses on the knowledge, experience and abilities acquired during voluntary activities.

### **Employability**

the degree of adaptability an individual demonstrates to find a job, keep it and update occupational competences (it does not depend only on the adequacy of knowledge and competences of individuals but also on the incentives and opportunities offered to individuals to seek employment)

### **Knowledge**

definitions of knowledge are legion, nevertheless, modern conceptions of knowledge rest broadly on several basic distinctions :

(a) declarative (theoretical) knowledge differs from procedural (practical) knowledge ;

(b) various forms of knowledge correspond to different ways of learning : objective (natural/scientific) knowledge ; subjective (literary/aesthetic) knowledge ; moral (human/normative) knowledge ; religious (divine) knowledge ;

(c) knowledge encompasses tacit (the learner is not necessarily aware of having it) and explicit (knowledge a learner can consciously inspect) knowledge .

### **Know-how**

practical knowledge or skills expertise

### **Formal Learning**

learning typically provided by an education or training institution, structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support) and leading to certification. Formal learning is intentional from the learner's perspective.

### **Informal Learning**

learning resulting from daily life activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support) and does not lead to certification. Informal learning may be intentional or non-intentional (or incidental/random).

### **Lifelong Learning**

all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective

### **Non formal Learning**

learning from activities that are not explicitly designated as learning, but which contain an important learning element

(sometimes described as semi-structured learning). It is intentional from the learner's perspective .

**Portfolio (file)**

The portfolio (file) is a database, or information package, which collects the experience and outcome obtained in the past by the individual. The portfolio is not only a product, but also a process, which helps us translating the experience acquired during volunteerism into competencies, professional training subjects, and can be documented.

**Recognition of competences**

formal recognition by awarding certificates or by granting equivalence, credit units, validation of gained competences differs from social recognition defined by the acknowledgement of the value of competences by economic and social stakeholders.

**Validation of informal/non formal learning**

the process of assessing and recognising a wide range of skills and competences which people develop through their lives and in different contexts, for example through education, work and leisure activities

**Valuing Learning**

the process of recognising participation in and outcomes of (formal, non-formal, informal) learning, so as to raise awareness of its intrinsic worth and to reward learning.

**Voluntary activity**

Is a voluntary offer based activity done without remuneration, which is always carried out for the benefit of a third person (not family member) or group within the frame of an organization.

(1) Cedefop, 2002.