

# Thesaurus of my skills and competences (Competence portfolio)

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

**European Commission's Leonardo da Vinci program  
„AVE in a professional perspective: Assessing voluntary experiences” pilot project.**

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## **Introducing the portfolio**

When we think of volunteering, what comes to our mind first is that volunteers give everything that they have (time, knowledge, energy) but they do not receive anything in exchange, and the activity produces no value for them.

### **It is not so!**

Volunteering is one form of informal and non-formal learning. It provides opportunities to try ourselves in various professional fields, to transplant our theoretical knowledge into practice, to acquire new skills, and to refresh our existing knowledge. To experience our own boundaries.

This tool helps us to identify and summarize all those valuable experiences and knowledge that volunteers can gain through their voluntary activities. This knowledge can be beneficial when seeking employment, as long as the competences of the job searcher can be clearly defined.

### ***What does competency mean?***

Competency is the sum of knowledge, know-how, skills, talents and attitudes acquired by the individual on a certain level that is necessary to effectively perform a given task. The criteria of effectiveness are composed of subjective and objective elements, constantly changing value measurements.

The individual can obtain competences through training or by doing the voluntary activity.

### ***What is a portfolio of competences?***

It is a continually growing dossier to which you can add the knowledge you gained throughout your life, in which you can record your professional skills, degrees, and you can constantly add certifications of your new competences. This portfolio of competences focuses explicitly on the knowledge, know-how, experiences and skills you gained through your voluntary activities.

### ***Elements of the portfolio***

- Exercises helping you to identify your voluntary activities and competences gained through doing them
- complex table summarising your competences gained through volunteering
- knowledge gained through courses and training

- EU curriculum vitae
- Certificate of the organisation
- documents supporting the competences
- Document proving your voluntary activity

### ***What is the portfolio of competences good for?***

The main goal of the portfolio of competences is to assist potential employees in returning to the job market by utilizing the knowledge and competences they gained through volunteering. With the help of the portfolio of competences the individual can assess, evaluate and summarize the invaluable skills and competences he/she gained through volunteering, and that he/she can present to the employer. Thus the portfolio can function as a springboard during seeking employment.

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

The tool is primarily recommended for people doing voluntary work for a longer period and would like to enter or return to the job market. For instance, mothers returning to work (after child birth), young people starting their careers but with no professional experiences, those away from the job market due to sickness, and so on.

It is also recommended for any volunteers who would like to find out what competences they gained through volunteering.

Requirements:

- regular volunteering for a minimum of one year,
- volunteering in an organization.

## How to use the portfolio?

This is a self-assessment tool. If you need any assistance, please turn to the coordinator of volunteering at your non-profit organization who can inform you about the competences you can obtain at the organization.

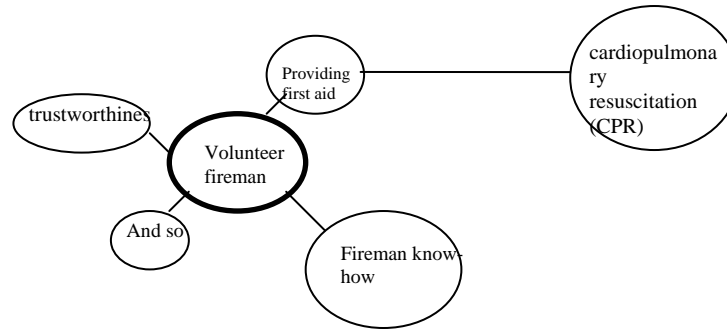
The portfolio lists the most frequent volunteer activities, competences and attitudes from which you can select those most characteristic of you. If you do not find those most characteristic of you, you can enter them into your own portfolio.

Following the instructions, you can easily collect the competences and skills you gained through volunteering, and you can create a complex map of the knowledge you obtained using the summary table.

Whenever you go for a job interview, you can use the portfolio of competences that contains your curriculum vitae, the competences you gained through volunteering and other reference materials.

### *The steps of preparing the portfolio*

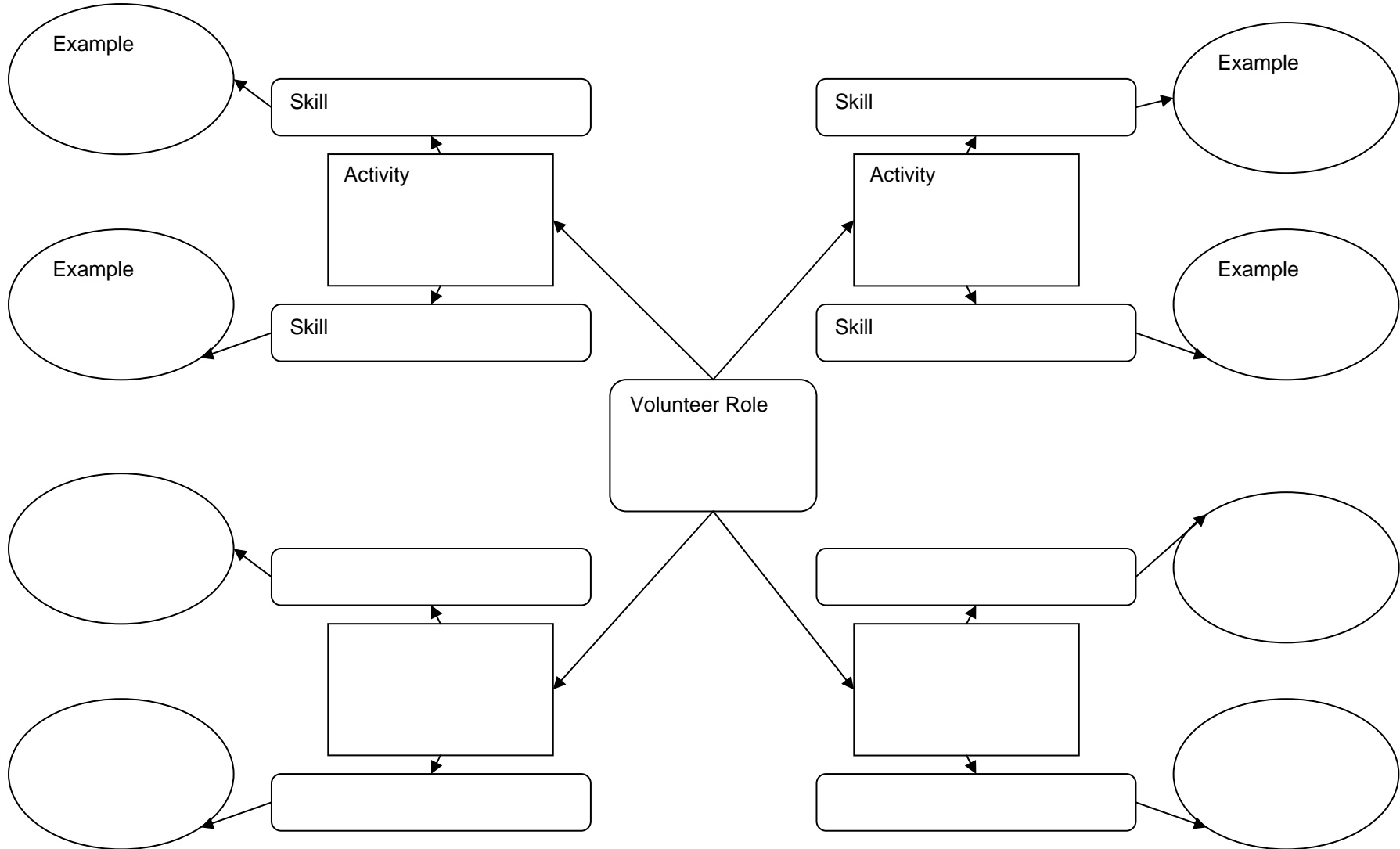
1. Review and summarize the main events of your life and the activities that had an impact on you (volunteering, personal experiences, public service, training, special achievements, hobbies, recreational activities, etc.).
2. Identify your career and educational goals.
3. With the help of the test below, classify the knowledge you gained from your experiences doing voluntary work. Fill in the test. The so-called “mind map” is recommended to unearth activities and competences. You write down the central topic in the centre of an empty page (in our case, the volunteer activity) and then put all those activities and related competences around it that come to your mind. This visualization will help you remember more and more activities and skills linked to them. You find an empty mind map on the next page to help you to start!



4. Using the form, group the knowledge you gained through training, courses and professional exchanges.
5. Collect all certifications that support the competences you gained (e.g. certificates for attending courses, certificates of advanced training, references and recommendations by non-profit organizations, etc.).
6. Summarise your competences on one of the summarising sheets at the end of the portfolio!
7. **REMEMBER!** If you wish to use the portfolio for a job interview, only assess the competences that are typical for the job you are applying for.
8. Prepare your professional curriculum vitae with the attached EU format.
9. Fill in the documents found in the appendix
10. Assemble all the materials into a dossier (the portfolio).
11. Keep the portfolio updated with information on any new knowledge you gain.

# Mind Map

While doing voluntary activity you might gain new competences and improve your skills. It is not always easy to remember and identify these. The table below will help you to identify the skills you have developed through undertaking different voluntary activities. 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 tables below or as a separate exercise.



## List of voluntary activities

**Voluntary work** is voluntary activity that involves no remuneration that is provided for the good of a third person (not a family member) or a group and takes place in the context of an organization.

Please read the following list of activities and indicate those with an X in the last column of the table that you did as a volunteer at a non-profit organization at least for a year, regularly. **If you wish to use the portfolio for a job interview, only indicate those that are typical for the job you are applying for.**

You will have to pull together the competences indicated here in the summary table. If the voluntary activity you do is not on the list, you can add it the table.

Possible voluntary activities	Description of the activity: examples. If you did any of these, put an X to that activity	My voluntary activities
Voluntary positions in organizational leadership, boards, and committees	Member of an organization's leadership, board member, volunteer member of a professional committee, etc.	
Fundraising	Locating sponsors, fundraising from private and state donors.	
Translation, interpreting	Translating materials of non-profit organizations, communication in any foreign language.	
Office work, administration	Secretarial activities, etc.	
Financial activities	Voluntary treasurer, accounting and budgeting activities.	
Research	Survey research, interviews, writing reports.	
Consulting	Voluntary consultant, expert advice.	
Information provision and service	Telephone information service, postering, leafleting, voluntary work for hotlines.	
Organizing events and programs	Organizing conferences, meetings, campaigns, festivals, exhibitions.	
Training, education	Providing training on a voluntary basis.	
Informatics	Voluntary database management, website development, programming, maintenance.	
Caring activities (of people)	Baby-sitting, taking care of handicapped or sick people, nursing, providing therapies, first aid, etc.	
Caring activities (of animals)	Maintenance of animal shelters, nursing sick animals, taking care of animals.	
Other physical activities	Planting trees, gardening, construction, driving, etc.	
Other intellectual activities	Rights protection, lobbying, network development, etc.	
Other, that is .....		



## Competences

**Competency** is the sum of knowledge, know-how, skills, talents and attitudes acquired by the individual on a certain level that is necessary to effectively perform a given task. Or it is proven and demonstrated ability to apply knowledge, know-how in a situation.

The criteria of effectiveness are composed of subjective and objective elements, constantly changing value measurements.

The individual can obtain competences when volunteering through training or doing the voluntary activity.

**Skill** is human (usually learned) ability to perform actions. Skills are the abilities acquired by people through education, training and experience that permit them to be more productive.

### *Typology of competences:*

- ❖ **Basic competences.** These competences are easily obtainable and assessable. Upon obtaining these competences through volunteering, the individual can easily use these in any context, any time. Examples: writing, data processing, command of a foreign language, etc.
- ❖ **Organization-specific competences:** competences linked to the organizations' goals. It is difficult for the volunteer to transfer these competences outside the organization because he/she learned these competences in the specific context of the organization, through organization-specific experiences. Examples: specific activities and knowledge (football referee, sign language), management of specific groups (handicapped people, the visually challenged).
- ❖ **Attitudes and general competences** can be easily used outside the organization but are not so easy to assess. They are transposable because they can be used in various activities. Examples: organisational and leadership skills, creativity, active listening, open-mindedness, networking skills, etc.

*List of basic competences obtainable through volunteering*

**Basic competences:** These competences are easily obtainable and assessable. Upon obtaining these competences through volunteering, the individual can easily use these in any context, any time. Examples: writing, data processing, command of a foreign language, etc.

Please read the following list of basic competences and indicate those with an X in the last column of the table that you did as a volunteer at a non-profit organization.

**If you wish to use the portfolio for a job interview, only indicate those that are typical for the job you are applying for.**

You will have to pull together the competences indicated here in the summary table. If the competence you gained is not on the list, you can add it to the table.

Basic competency	Description: examples of basic competences	My basic competences
Writing official papers	Minutes and memos	
Financial knowledge	Budgeting and accounting	
Command of foreign languages	Command of any foreign languages	
Interpersonal skills	communication, negotiation techniques	
Word processing and computer skills	Word, Excel, Power Point...	
Use of modern technologies	Internet	
Contact with the public	Answering questions of the general public (by phone, e-mail)	
Use of office equipments	Telephone, fax, photocopier...	
Training or other educational skills	Training, educating groups	
Cultural competences	Basic familiarity in the arts	
Other, that is:..... .....		
Other, that is:..... .....		

***List of organization-specific competences obtainable through volunteering***

**Organization-specific competences:** competences linked to the organizations' goals. It is difficult for the volunteer to transfer these competences outside the organization because he/she learned these competences in the specific context of the organization, through organization-specific experiences. Examples: specific activities and knowledge (football referee, sign language), management of specific groups (handicapped people, the visually challenged). Please read the following list of organization-specific competences and indicate those with an X in the last column of the table that you did as a volunteer at a non-profit organization.

**If you wish to use the portfolio for a job interview, only indicate those that are typical for the job you are applying for.**

You will have to pull together the competences indicated here in the summary table. If the competence you gained is not on the list, you can add it to the table.

<b>Organization-specific competency</b>	<b>Description: examples for organization-specific competences</b>	<b>My organization- specific competences</b>
Know-how in the field of activity specific to the organization	Gaining professional knowledge, e.g. environment, social affairs, family violence, etc.	
Know-how in legal issues related to the functioning of the organization	Knowledge and interpretation of legal documents , the legal framework of the organization's operation	
Know-how in communication and PR	Developing the organization's image, promotion and cooperation with the media	
Know-how of the organization's finances	Financial management, advanced accounting know-how	
Know-how of human resource management	Team-building, running meetings, group animation and management	
Project management	Advanced management of organizational programs, organizing, managing, planning and evaluating civil programs.	
Know-how in market research	Using special techniques and methods in research: focus groups, interviewing.	
Know-how in volunteer management	Recruiting, maintaining, encouraging volunteers.	
Know-how in fundraising	Locating, persuading donors, know-how of methods	
Know-how in executing specific activities characteristic of the organization	Sports coach, street-level social worker, drug consultant	
Know-how minority affairs, mostly in Roma community development	Roma social work, community development, counselling	
Other, that is:.....		

*List of general competences and attitudes obtainable through volunteering*

**Transposable (or general) competences** can be easily used outside the organization but are not so easy to assess. Examples: organisational and leadership skills, creativity, active listening, open-mindedness, networking skills, etc.

Please read the following list of general competences and indicate those with an X in the last column of the table that you did as a volunteer at a non-profit organization.

**If you wish to use the portfolio for a job interview, only indicate those that are typical for the job you are applying for.**

You will have to pull together the competences indicated here in the summary table. If the competence you gained is not on the list, you can add it to the table.

General competences	My general competences
Organizational skills	
Active listening – listening to the other and indicating understanding without words – only with meta-communication.	
Leadership skills	
Ability to fit into a working team	
Communication skills	
Ability to work in a group	
Ability to share responsibilities	
Constructive critical attitude	
Adaptability	
Openness and networking skills	
Conflict management in a constructive manner (problem solving)	
Creativity	
Conscience	
Enthusiasm	

Flexibility	
Learning skills	
Trustworthiness	
Independence	
Ability to take initiative	
Innovativeness	
Presentation skills	
Crafts and manual skills	
Computer skills	
Readiness to help	
Loyalty	
Punctuality	
Well-adjusted personality	
Ability to do focused work	
Integrity	
Self-confidence	
Other, that is:..... .....	
Other, that is:..... .....	
Other, that is:..... .....	
Other, that is:..... .....	

## Describing voluntary activities

You will also need to be able to prove that you have developed or increased these competences by providing specific examples. 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 or mention an event or training you attended.

Please describe at least one of your voluntary activities through which you managed to utilize or develop your competences.

Indicate the organization's name, your position; list your tasks and the utilized competences.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....







The organization's name <sup>1</sup>	Your activities in the organization <sup>2</sup>	Listing competences gained through the activity <sup>3</sup>	

Date of data entry:

### ***Table Summarizing Competences II. Version***

You can use this or the previous table during a job interview or you can attach it to your CV. Enter to this table the activities and competences indicated with an X from the above list of activities and competences.

**Remember!** Use this table to collect those competences that are appropriate for job you are applying for.  
You can expand the table to fit your preferences.

## **My competences and skills gained through voluntary activities**

Name of volunteer:

Contacts:

Organisations where you volunteered:

Volunteer role:

Duration of volunteering:

Approximate number of hours worked:

Main voluntary activities:

Skills and competences developed:

Basic competences:

Organisation specific competences:

Attitudes and general competences:

Key achievements:

Specific trainings and courses attended:

## Appendices

Samples that should be filled in by the volunteer and signed by the volunteer manager

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.
2. ***Sample Organizational certificate*** - In this document the organisation at which the volunteer is active currently certifies that they have read the competence portfolio and agree with the content.
3. ***Sample Volunteer reference sheet*** – This document should be given by /collected from each organisation where the volunteer has done voluntary work. It gives an overview on the organisation and certifies that the volunteer has been volunteering in the organisation doing specific activities, gaining certain skills, attending trainings.

Documents that should be added to the portfolio by the volunteer

4. ***Any promotional material of the organization where you volunteered***
5. ***References given by the organisations***
6. ***Any documents, certificates, degrees proving trainings and qualifications***
7. ***Press cuttings or newsletters***
8. ***Other documents relating to your volunteering such as letters of thanks and appreciation, photographs, annual reports, records of attendance***

## 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

[ list the language(s) ]

- Reading competence
- Writing competence
- Speaking competence

[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 culture and sports), etc.*

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

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.]

## CERTIFICATE

Undersigned (name, position, address, telephone number, email of the organization's representative or the volunteer coordinator) I certify that I read the competence portfolio, and I agree with its content.

Date: ....., Day.....Month.....Year.....

.....

Signature of the organization's  
Representative

Stamp of the organisation

## Volunteer reference sheet

### Characteristics of the organisation

Name of organisation:

Name of volunteer coordinator:

Address:

Telephone:

Email:

Fax:

Website:

Field of activity:

No. of paid employees:

Number of volunteers:

What kinds of volunteers are involved?



### Profile of the volunteer

Name of volunteer:

Volunteer role:

Dates of volunteering:

Approximate number of hours worked:

Main activities and responsibilities:

Skills developed:

Key achievements:

Specific training attended:

.....  
Signature of supervisor/manager:

Contact telephone number:

Email address:

Date:

Stamp of the organisation: