Self-assessment of Non Formal and Informal Learning

Study report

SCOUTS
Creating a Better World

Youth
for Exchange
and Understanding

Vrije
Universiteit
Brussel

Erasmus+

GREAT

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INTRODUCTION

This report is done in the framework of the project "GR-EAT - Guidelines for Recognition - European Advanced Tool". The project aims at increasing the internal and external recognition of the Non-Formal and Informal Learning (NFIL) provided by youth-led organisations and to ensure that the competences developed by long term volunteers are being identified, assessed and recognised by the learners themselves, their organisations as well as external stakeholders such as employers. The current report discusses the main elements related to the self-assessment process and outlines existing self-assessment tools in the field of youth and lifelong learning. More importantly, it provides an in depth analysis of the self-assessment process from various perspectives outlining also the best suited methodologies in the field of self-assessment of NFIL. Finally, the report offers a set of elements that should be taken into consideration for the following steps of this project. For the purposes of this report the following organizations have worked together; YEU, EUCIS-LLL, WOSM, VUB and AEGEE.

METHODOLOGY

The preparation of this report was done in various stages. Below, a short description of the tasks implemented chronologically is provided in order to help understanding the structure of this report:

- The first step undertaken for the purposes of this report included exploring the context of self-assessment and gathering existing self-assessment tools for NFIL within the youth and life-long learning field. The outcomes of this research constitute the first two parts of this report. Part A provides information about the context of self-assessment and its key elements. Part B gives a description of each self-assessment tool as well as its main features, such as strengths-challenges, quality assurance and impact analysis. These parts of the report were developed in a collaborative way between EUCIS-LLL, YEU and WOSM.
- Following this, feedback on the self-assessment tools analysis from two significant stakeholders was asked. The two significant stakeholders in this case were a tertiary education institution and two employers. These stakeholders were asked to provide their perspective towards the elements they would like to see in the self-assessment process. For the purposes of this stage, two feedback reports were prepared and can be found as annexes in the end of this report. The first report, providing the University's perspective was conducted by

VUB, while the report providing the employers' perspective was prepared by YEU.

- Taking into consideration the feedback from both the employers and the university, conclusions were drawn on the best suited-methodologies that should be used in the self-assessment of NFIL. The best-suited methodologies are presented in part C of this report which was developed by YEU.

- Last, a feedback on the best-suited methodologies was again asked. This feedback is presented in the last part of this report and provides recommendations on how to proceed with the next steps of the project. This feedback report can now be found in part D of the report and was prepared by EUCIS-LLL.

PART A - Context

In European discussion, five process phases of identifying and assessing informally and formally acquired competences are increasingly gaining acceptance (CEDEFOP, 2009). Ideally, these phases are the following, which require at least a competence model if validation is aimed at recognition and transfer:

1. Information, advice and guidance
2. Identification
3. Assessment
4. Validation
5. Certification

In the online publication "Recognition of non-formal and informal competences of workers' representatives" [1] assessment of learning outcomes is defined as: *'appraising knowledge, skills and/or competences of an individual against predefined criteria, specifying learning methods and expectations. Assessment is typically followed by validation and certification.'* There are two different types of assessment, i.e. formative assessment, which is *'a two-way reflective process between a teacher/assessor and learner to promote learning'*, and summative assessment, which is *'the process of assessing (or evaluating) a learner's achievement of specific knowledge, skills and competence at a particular time'* (CEDEFOP, 2009).

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[1] Solidar (2013). *p.* 9

Retrieved October 26, 2015, from http://www.solidar.org/IMG/pdf/kompetenzf_finalpublication.pdf.

According to OECD/CERI (2008), teaching which incorporates formative assessment has helped to raise levels of student achievement and has better enabled teachers to meet the needs of increasingly diverse student populations, helping to close gaps in equity of student outcomes. Teachers using formative assessment approaches guide students toward development of their own 'learning to learn' skills – skills that are increasingly necessary as knowledge is quickly outdated in today's information society.

Self-Assessment

Following this, "*self-assessment can be described as the involvement of students in identifying standards and/or criteria to apply to their work and making judgements about the extent to which they have met these criteria*" as defined by Boum (as cited in Boum, 2005, p.12). Boum among others outlines that self-assessment
- is a necessary skill for lifelong learning
- needs to be developed in university classes
- is necessary for effective learning

Self-assessment within the non-formal and informal learning context is really important. It helps the learners to develop a self-reflection, competence awareness and personal development perspective. Yet, how is the quality of the self-assessment process assured?

Quality Assurance

Quality assurance in youth work in general or in Non-Formal Education context has been quite explored. A lot of organisations have been working on this topic, among them Youth for Exchange and Understanding and the European Youth Forum. In fact, some of the quality assurance indicators in the context of Non-Formal Education and/or youth work refer to the self-assessment process.

In particular, in the online publication "Creating a New Vision for Non-Formal Education in YEU[2]" the following indicators may refer to self-assessment:

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[2] Youth for Exchange and Understanding International (2014). *pp. 3-7.*

Retrieved October 26, 2015, from http://www.youthforum.org/assets/2014/10/QA-Framework-for-NFE_YEUs-adaptation.pdf.

Quality indicator 8: participants influence their learning process, understand the learning process and outcomes and transfer the knowledge to their Member organizations

Quality indicator 9: the event is evaluated by everyone (organisers, participants, trainers, facilitators) involved in the project.

In addition to that, the European Youth Forum has developed the manual "Quality Assurance in Non-Formal Education Manual- A Framework for Youth Organisations" to support the implementation of the framework for Quality Assurance in Non-Formal Education. The framework entails a cycle with a number of essential steps, and the present publication aims to be a helpful companion for organisations implementing it in their NFE projects.

The quality assurance indicators relevant to self-assessment might be:

Quality indicator 1: The assessed needs of learners & society and the mission & values of the organisation are translated into objectives.

Quality indicator 9: Learners influence their learning process.

Quality indicator 10: Learners understand their learning outcomes and can transfer them.

Quality indicator 11: All actors are involved in the continuous evaluation process.

The European Youth Forum in the "Revised Policy Paper on Non-Formal Education: A Framework for indicating and assuring quality" proposes a simple definition for quality "Quality is the degree to which a set aim is reached". Quality control is the measurement or assessment of quality. This can be done once or can be part of a process of Quality Assurance. As described in the report "Quality Youth Work" "the degree of "quality" may be defined as how well something fulfils its function; to what degree the actual outcomes meet the aims. Consequently, for the purposes of this research Quality assurance of the self-assessment refers to the degree the actual outcomes meet the aim of self-assessment. Therefore, quality assurance refers to the degree the actual outcome engages the users to fulfil the 2 criteria:

- To identify standards and/or criteria to apply to their learning experience.
- To make judgments about the extent to which they have met these

criteria.

It must be noted that there is very limited literature on the topic of quality assurance of the process of the self-assessment of Non-Formal and Informal Learning. In order to proceed to an analysis of the quality assurance of the self-assessment methodology of each tool, the following quality assurance indicators will be used under each criterion. The quality assurance indicators are a result of empirical study of relevant topics, yet they appear to be important elements of self-assessment and they are worth to be analysed.

Quality assurance refers to the degree the actual outcome engages the users to fulfil the 2 criteria:

Criterion 1: To identify standards and/or criteria to apply to their learning experience
- QA indicator 1: process that engages the users into self-reflection about their competences and prepares them for the self-assessment
- QA indicator 2: process that supports the users to set criteria that they will assess themselves against

Criterion 2: To make judgments about the extent to which they have met these criteria
- QA indicator 1: process that enables the users to make an accurate evaluation of their competences

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Impact assessment

Impact of various actions is assessed to gain knowledge on whether the action has effect on the desired goals. Impact assessment can be carried out in numerous ways from assessing input and output by quantitative measures or by qualitatively evaluating how well the objectives were reached.

In GR-EAT Project, Impact assessment was carried out by identifying five impact indicators for the existing tools and finding out whether an official impact study had been performed on the tool. The five indicators were:
- quantity (number of persons using the tool)
- permeability (level or percentage of use)
- usefulness (according to the users)
- feedback (in reported issues or problems) and
- accessibility (in how available the tool is).

In the impact assessment phase the following questions were presented for the organisations that had created, or professionals who are working with

different tools. In the cases of the tools Youthpass and Europass Mobility[3], the impact assessment relied on the extensive impact studies and their final reports.

Impact assessment questions:
1. Is there an impact assessment done on the tool?
2. How many persons have used the tool?
3. What is the penetration level/percentage of the tool?
4. Did the persons who used the tool find it useful?
5. What issues or problems the users reported when they used the tool?
6. What keeps persons from using the tool?

The above mentioned elements are used as the criteria to implement the analysis of the self-assessment tools which are presented in the next part of this report. The analysis of the self-assessment tools based on the strengths and weaknesses, the quality assurance and the impact provides an in-depth information about the tools and contributes to the distinction of best suited methodologies. The distinction of the best suited methodologies is an important part of the GR-EAT project since based on this, the consortium will develop the guidelines for youth organizations who aim to develop their self-assessment tool.

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[3] Both Youthpass and Europass Mobility are described later on in this report.

PART B - Existing self-assessment tools

In the following part, a series of 11 self-assessment tools of Non-Formal and Informal Learning is provided. For each tool separately, the strengths and the weaknesses are explored, the quality assurance of the self-assessment process in analysed and the impact is assessed.

Youthpass

Youthpass is part of the European Commission's strategy to foster the recognition of non-formal learning and informal learning of youth work in Europe (Tartu & Kloosterman, 2013). It is available for projects funded with the support of Erasmus+ Youth (2014-2020) and Youth in Action (2007-2013) Programmes. The Youth Programmes are programme for non-formal and informal learning and Youthpass is the certificate that makes visible what people have gained in their project. An important element of Youthpass is the recognition of one's own learning: being aware of what people have learnt, how they learnt it and what else they would like to learn. As such, Youthpass helps to become and stay engaged in lifelong learning.

- While creating their Youthpass Certificate, (occasionally with a support person) the participants of the projects have the possibility to describe what they have done in their project and which competences they have acquired. Thus, Youthpass supports the reflection upon the personal non-formal learning process and outcomes;
- Being a Europe-wide validation instrument for non-formal learning in the youth field, Youthpass contributes to strengthening the social recognition of youth work;
- Describing the added value of the project, Youthpass supports active European citizenship of people.

Youthpass also aims at supporting the employability of people and of workers by documenting the acquisition of key competences on a certificate.

 Youthpass embeds the 8 Key Competences which are the same as in the Life Long Learning Field:

1) Communication in the mother tongue
2) Communication in foreign languages
3) Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology
4) Digital competence
5) Learning to learn

6) Social and civic competences

7) Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship and

8) Cultural awareness and expression

Youthpass provides also the users the opportunity to add anything that was learnt and is not linked with the key competences under the section "Other".

The Erasmus+ Youth Programme encourages the organisations that conduct non-formal learning projects to prepare the learners for the self-assessment and engage them into a self-reflection process throughout their learning time, yet this is hard to know if and to what extend it takes place.

Youthpass is mostly perceived as a certificate confirming participation in a project and describing the learning outcomes linked to it (Tartu & Kloosterman, 2013). The underlying question is whether Youthpass is perceived as a certificate or rather as a tool that could be used in youth projects and that would improve the quality of learning in projects.

Strengths and challenges analysis

In spring 2012, the European Commission invited two experts to carry out an impact study on Youthpass. The experts were supported by a Steering Group, which included representatives of Youth in Action National Agencies, the SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre, the Youthpass Advisory Group, the European Training Strategy Steering Group, the European Youth Forum and the European Commission. Other sources were also consulted to make this analysis. For the purposes of this research, experts from two international youth organisations (OBESSU and AEGEE) were interviewed. Below the results of the analysis on strengths and weaknesses of Youthpass according to them are presented.[4]

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[4] Taru M. and Kloosterman P. (2013). p. 4.

Retrieved October 26, 2015, from https://www.youthpass.eu/downloads/13-62-115/Youthpass%20Impact%20Study%20-%20Report.pdf.

STRENGHTS	CHALLENGES
● The final certificate describes what a participant has learnt while taking part in an EU project; ● Youthpass guidelines are easy to understand and helpful; ● Filling in the Youthpass certificate is supported by organisations which carry out Youth in Action funded projects; ● Both organisations and participants agree that Youthpass helps young people and youth workers to better understand learning processes, describe what they have learnt and become responsible for their own learning.	● It is not really a self-assessment method, it is more a type of proof, a certificate; ● The self-assessment part of the Youthpass was seen as challenging by many focus group members. They underlined the need to give support to participants; ● The complexity of the key-competences seems to be a block for participants. Group members expressed the need for a better explanation of the key-competences for young people as well as for youth workers who are beginners in the programme; ● This tool has to serve learners, not only employers; ● A relatively small number of organisations and participants are aware of young participants who\ actually used Youthpass. Providing more information about the actual use of Youthpass could help increase the perceived relevance of Youthpass amongst young people; ● Only 3% of EU citizens say that they have heard of Youthpass, according to the special Eurobarometer 417 on European area of skills and qualifications report.

Participants and organisations mentioned the self-assessment principle as an element that had a negative influence on the recognition of Youthpass. Self-assessment in itself was seen as a positive feature but it was perceived to be too 'fragile' when it came to external recognition (study on self-assessment does help people to reflect on and become more aware of their learning but it was questioned if employers would value the outcomes of self-assessment only). The impression of the participants was that people outside the non-formal learning world prefer to have an external assessment of what has been learnt (Tartu & Kloosterman, 2013).

This tool has enhanced the social recognition of participants' work and it has increased the individually perceived value of projects for them, made the

learning effects better visible and helped to communicate the outcomes and importance of non-formal learning.

Quality Assurance analysis
- As described above, the Erasmus+ Youth Programme encourages the organisations that conduct non-formal learning projects to prepare the learners for the self-assessment and engage them into a self-reflection process throughout their learning time. However, there is no guarantee if the self-reflection and preparation for the assessment actually takes place and to what extent.
- The Youthpass embeds 8 Key Competences that help the users to classify what they have gained through their non-formal learning under categories. It also allows the users to add information additional to the 8 Key Competences. Yet, as explained in the challenges, the complexity of the key-competences seems to be a block for participants and the need for a better explanation of the key-competences for young people as well as for youth workers is underlined.
- The Youthpass certificate does not take any measurement to enable the users to make an accurate evaluation of their competences. Instead, users have the freedom to prepare a text under each Key Competence according to their own criteria. As it is again listed in the challenges of the tool, the self-assessment part of the Youthpass was seen as challenging by many focus group members who underlined the need to give support to participants

Impact assessment analysis

The Youthpass Impact Study carried out in 2012-2013 was done as an online survey for 741 organisations and 1143 Youth in Action project participants. The response rate of the study was approximately 30%. (Tartu & Kloosterman, 2013).

Since the launch of Youthpass in July 2007 until April 2013 there has been over 235,000 certificates issued in more than 20,000 projects in approximately 10,00 organisations (Tartu & Kloosterman, 2013). As there are about the same number of Youth in Action project participants yearly (Youth in Action Programme in 2012, 2012) as there were certificates issued altogether since the launch of Youthpass, its penetration can be viewed as quite good.

A vast majority of the participants felt that Youthpass helps in communicating the importance of non-formal learning and that it enhances their chances of applying for a trainee- or internship, employment and further education or when starting a business. However, both organisations (44%) and participants

(22%) reported lack of actually knowing people who had used Youthpass as a reference (Tartu & Kloosterman, 2013).

Majority of the participants felt that they received all the necessary, clear and understandable information and assistance about using and filling the Youthpass. In the survey it was found that young people with less experience and fewer opportunities would benefit from more specific information. The Youthpass website is available in 25 different languages but 75% of the participants did not fill the certificate in their mother language (Tartu & Kloosterman, 2013). The top reason for Youthpass not reaching young people was that it was not offered to them. However, the organisations stated that the top reason for not offering Youthpass was that the participants did not ask for it. Recognition of the certificate was raised as an issue that was preventing Youth from using it (Tartu & Kloosterman, 2013).

Volunteering and skills

Volunteering and skills is an initiative launched in 2009 by the students network ANIMAFAC in order to help students to identify and assess the skills gained during a volunteering period and to prepare for their professional insertion.   The main pillar of this portfolio of competences is the accompanying process of students in the step-by-step identification and valorisation of their competences acquired through their experiences within associations. The portfolio developed by ANIMAFAC works as a self-assessment tool and four main transversal skills were identified:
- Communication
- Administration
- Team management and
- Interpersonal skills and project management.

The initiative is based on a progressive methodology and provides key advice on how to present a volunteering experience on a resume or during a job interview (EUCIS-LLL, 2013).

ANIMAFAC also proposes tutoring sessions for volunteers consisting of group work sessions followed by an exchange with human resources professionals who give them further advice for their resume and for preparing a job interview. As a result, these sessions helped volunteers to value their voluntary engagement and improve their self-esteem.

In responding to the test 'Volunteering and Skills' (11 questions), people can identify the skills they have acquired. A list of skills is not enough though; it is

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still necessary to know how to exploit it. The **'Valuing skills' link** gives them a set of tips on how to present these skills on a resume or during a job interview.

Strengths and challenges analysis

In order to analyse the strengths and the challenges of this tool, ANIMAFAC has been contacted Here are the results:

STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES
● The tool is easy to use and it was created with the input of users (so it is adapted); ● This tool is focused on real situations where competences are developed; ● The support system (training, contact with professionals and Human Resources) is very good; ● Its wider use: it can be used for self-assessment and also as a tool for raising awareness among employers.	● The lack of consideration of soft skills; ● The lack of an intercultural / international dimension.

This self-assessment tool seems to work well as both participants and ANIMAFAC agree that this tool is easy to understand. However, soft skills should be better recognised by this tool because they are the most demanded by employers.

Quality Assurance analysis
● It seems that the tool or the way it is used does not include any process that engages the users into self-reflection about their learning in order to prepare them for the self-assessment.
● The tool involves a step-by-step identification and valorisation process of their competences acquired through a test. The step-by-step process as well as the 4 thematic skill areas, provides the users the criteria to be assessed against. Yet, the tool does not enable the users to be assessed against other competences (such as soft skills and the intercultural / international competences).
● The test and the step-by-step process enable the users to make a relatively accurate evaluation of their competences.

Impact Assessment Analysis

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For the impact assessment Mr. Valentin Dupouey from ANIMAFAC[5] was contacted via email. There has been an official evaluation done on the tool in 2010-2011 and it was published in March 2012 and it is available through ANIMAFAC. Since its launch in 2009, a total of 575 young people have received the Bénévolat et Compétences training. The portfolio is also available online and has been distributed numerous through their online platform which makes it hard to measure the actual overall reach.

In the evaluation it was concluded that people who used Bénévolat et Compétences found it useful and it had an effect on their behavior after they received the training to use the tool. One of the findings of the evaluation was that the need for individuals themselves identifying, evaluating and promoting the soft skills or benefits from non- & in-formal education is not identified by the young people. Sometimes this creates difficulties in engaging the Youth to use the tool. The tool was also seen as needing accompanying measures, i.e. training, despite the simplicity and user-friendly approach of the tool. The crucial role of private sector employers was identified as a pillar of success for the tool and non- & in-formal learning in general. Getting businesses on board proved to be difficult.

Europass Mobility

Europass offers five documents to make the skills and qualifications of the learners clearly and easily understood in Europe. One of them is Europass Mobility. Europass Mobility is an initiative of five European partners from Northern Ireland, France, Malta and Germany dedicated to facilitate the recognition of competences acquired during mobility experiences. It aims to give added value to mobility projects by enhancing quality and transparency through evaluation and validation of intercultural, linguistic and vocational competences. Evaluation of the learning outcomes at the end of the mobility programme became a corner stone for the development of competence recognition, at first with a special focus on the one developed in the vocational area. The project assesses the skills acquired by a learner, in addition to the provision of the description of the learning outcomes that are evaluated. This provides a basis for the subsequent validation and recognition of skills and competences acquired in mobility.

The procedure comprises the identification of the professional activities by

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[5] http://www.animafac.net/fiches-pratiques/

project partners, creating profiles and modular units of learning outcomes to be used flexibly by the sending and hosting company. The pre-defined learning outcomes serve as a reference base and are enriched by the non-formal competences and informal skills. The process starts with the selection of the host organization, followed by the signing of a learning agreement and the CEMES test[6] and is concluded with Europass. Throughout the apprenticeship process each learner is accompanied by a mentor who supports him/her and later becomes an assessor. The assessment of skills and competences acquired in the company is followed by the test. The combination of the results is documented in a final evaluation document and concluded in Europass.

Strengths and challenges of Europass according to our communication with Animafac, AEGEE and Obessu[7]

STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES
● This tool is well known by young people and by employers.	● More tools for self-assessment should be included in Europass; ● There are too many documents.

Quality Assurance analysis
- It is possible that the involvement of the mentor engages the learners into a continuous self-reflection and prepares them therefore for the self-assessment. The mentor may also help the users to make an accurate evaluation of their competences when later on they fill in the test.
- The test provided by the tool frames the criteria based on which the user will be assessed against

Impact assessment analysis

The Europass is a set of tools for displaying competences in various fields of expertise. For competence recognition the most suitable tool among the Europass kit is the Europass Mobility document. An assessment of the whole Europass is done every four years, starting in 2008. The second evaluation that is being cited here was done in 2012 and was conducted with 48

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[6] CEMES-Method is the competence evaluation method for European specialists.

[7] Information collected through interviews conducted by EUCIS-LLL

interviews with representatives from organisations implementing Europass and four separate surveys with over 17000 respondents' reach. (European Commission, 2013).

While the most used tool in the Europass kit, The Europass CV has been issued 27 million times, the Europass Mobility document has had limited use up until 2013 when the survey was issued. Partly due to the fact that it can only be applied in the strict context of international mobility. (Evaluation of the Europass initiative, 2013) During the assessment period of 2008-2011 there was an increase in the use of the Europass Mobility Document, with nearly 80 000 documents issued in 2011(European Commission, 2013).

In the survey more than half of the responders found the Europass Mobility document as a useful tool for presenting individual competences. There was also significant interest towards the Europass Mobility document or a similar document, with 80% of the responders saying that they would like to receive such when they go abroad for learning / working / volunteering purposes (European Commission, 2013).

The most frequently mentioned hindrance mentioned by the organisations was that the Europass Mobility document required excessive administrative burden. In the interviews most responders were in favour of a self-organised recording of the mobility experience by the participants (European Commission, 2013).

Europass is very available with 27 different languages on the free online platform. In the end-user survey only 42,1% indicated that they did not know and had never used the Europass Mobility document. Unemployed with low skills and those lacking computer literacy skills were the main disadvantaged groups and hardest to reach. The survey suggested to broaden the Europass Mobility document to also record skills and competences gained through domestic experience. This was seen useful by 76,8% of the end-users (European Commission, 2013).

Valorise-toi ! (Empower yourself!)

"This [tool](#) was developed in the framework of the work of the National Working Group of Scouts et Guides de France on 'Young Adults-Rover Section' dedicated to the question of giving just value to skills acquired in volunteering. It is about gaining recognition in university and professional fields from the richness, the diversity and the seriousness of skills acquired in the framework

of the role as Leaders of the Scout Movement." (Markovic & Paddison, 2014, p.91)

This tool aims at allowing everybody to self-assess their skills and to highlight their value by proposing a list of activities linked to their role as Leader. The tool also allows the users to analyse what they already know to do or what they might still be able to learn, using a 'professional' language to talk about one's Scouting experience and to give it a just value.

The tool helps the users to assess themselves in 5 areas:
- Organisational skills
- Responsibility, sense of initiative and analytical skills
- Relationship skills
- Intercultural skills
- Technical and artistic skills

Following their assessment against the above mentioned criteria, the users proceed into a deeper analysis of the assessed skills, especially in the spectrum of career choice or educational objective. The tools also focuses on tips related to translating the assessed skills into a more professional language that corresponds with the employers.

Strengths and challenges analysis as it occurred through our discussion with WOSM[8]

STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES
● This tool is complete and very easy to use; ● The terms used are not specific to scouts but are "translated" so employers can understand.	● This tool is adapted for scouts; ● It is not really interactive.

As described by Markovic & Paddison (2014, p.92) "The feedback from the employers about the tool is very positive and they seem to be interested in this approach. The positive impact also comes from the users, who seem to gain better awareness of the competences developed within the Scout movement and who felt more confident in presenting them in the job interview."

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[8] Information collected through interviews conducted by EUCIS-LLL

Quality Assurance analysis

- There is no information about the provision of any support that enables the users to make an accurate evaluation of their competences.
- The tool suggests 5 thematic areas that support the users to describe their competences. At the same time, the tool allows everybody to self-assess their skills and to highlight their value by proposing a list of activities linked to their role as Leader.
- It seems that the tool or the way it is used does not include any process that engages the users into self-reflection about their learning

Impact assessment analysis

For the impact assessment Mme. Emmanuelle Bertrand from Scouts and Guides of France was contacted via email. There is yet to be an official evaluation of the Valorize toi! competence recognition tool. The tool is translated into 9 different languages along with the original French, totalling 10 languages. It is designed to be used in paper format and the availability online is limited to downloading a copy and printing it out. The tool has been sent out to a total of 30 000 members of the Scouts et Guides de France in 2013 and 2014 who are all young adults. There has been a positive feedback about the tool from individual users. One aspect that would enhance the usability of the tool would be to provide personal counselling while using the tool.

Scout leader skills: The tool for recognising and valuing skills acquired by scout leaders and managers9

The Fédération Les Scouts has worked towards the creation of an online tool called Scout Leader Skills for leaders and managers. It is a tool to recognise and validate the skills acquired as a scout leader or manager, after completing one year of experience as leader. This project, which began in April 2012, was developed in collaboration with the Dutch-speaking counterparts, the Scouts en Gidsen Vlaanderen (scouts and Guides of Flanders) (where leaders and managers also benefit from Scout Leader Skills) and with scientific expertise from two universities. This project is fully in line with the current European trend of evaluation and validation of skills.
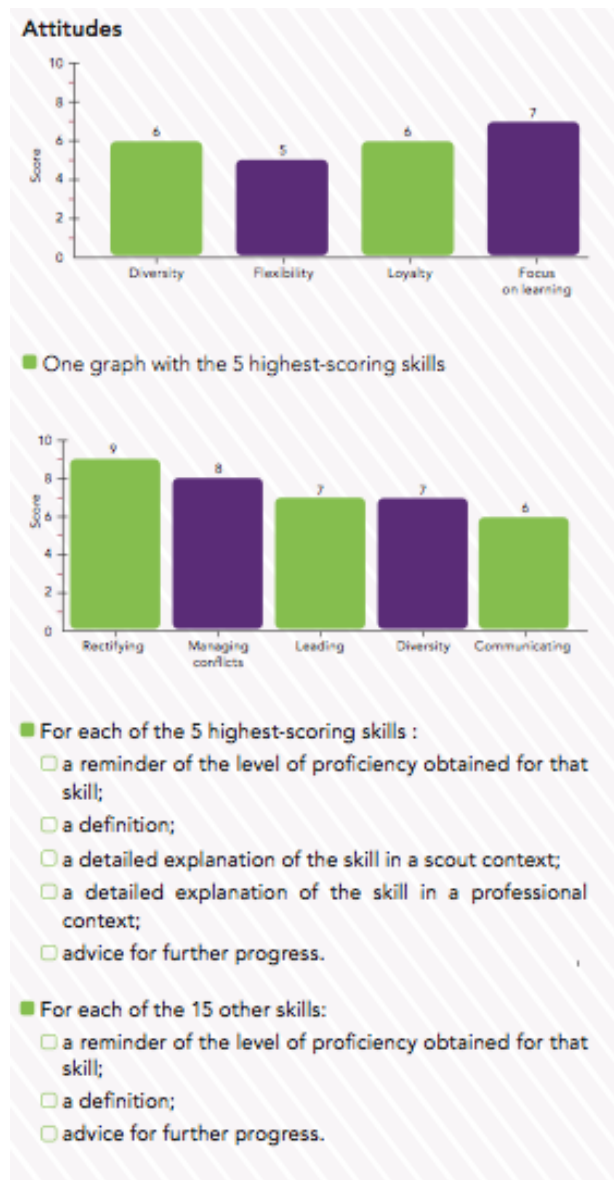
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[9] Walmag, J. (editor) (2013). pp. 16-21.

Retrieved October 26, 2015, from https://sf2.lesscouts.be/methodology_en.pdf

The scout leader or manager is asked to respond to 100 questions, linked with 20 skills. The 20 skills are classified into 3 categories, as explained in the online publication "Scout Leader Skills":

- Interpersonal skills: negotiation, motivation, management, coaching, collaboration, communication, empathy, conflict management.
- Functional skills: taking the initiative, rectification, reflection in problem solving, critical reflection, decision-making, priority-fixing, time management, organisation.
- Attitudes: diversity, loyalty, flexibility, learning-oriented.

There are 20 scenarios on each page, and there is a progress bar at the top of the page indicating the user's progress through the questionnaire. The user is asked to respond with the frequency they act in the manner indicated in the scenario. Users should allow twenty minutes to complete the questionnaire. When the user has responded to the 100 questions, the results are published. If they missed out one or more questions, a message will indicate which ones were missed. The results are presented in a report which is available in the four Scout Leader Skills languages (French, Dutch, English, German), despite the language used to complete the questionnaire. The report presents the overall results in the form of three graphs, one for each of the categories used (interpersonal skills, functional skills, and attitudes). It also provides information for each of the 5 highest scoring skills and as well as the rest of them as illustrated next to here.

Attitudes

■ One graph with the 5 highest-scoring skills

■ For each of the 5 highest-scoring skills :
☐ a reminder of the level of proficiency obtained for that skill;
☐ a definition;
☐ a detailed explanation of the skill in a scout context;
☐ a detailed explanation of the skill in a professional context;
☐ advice for further progress.

■ For each of the 15 other skills:
☐ a reminder of the level of proficiency obtained for that skill;
☐ a definition;
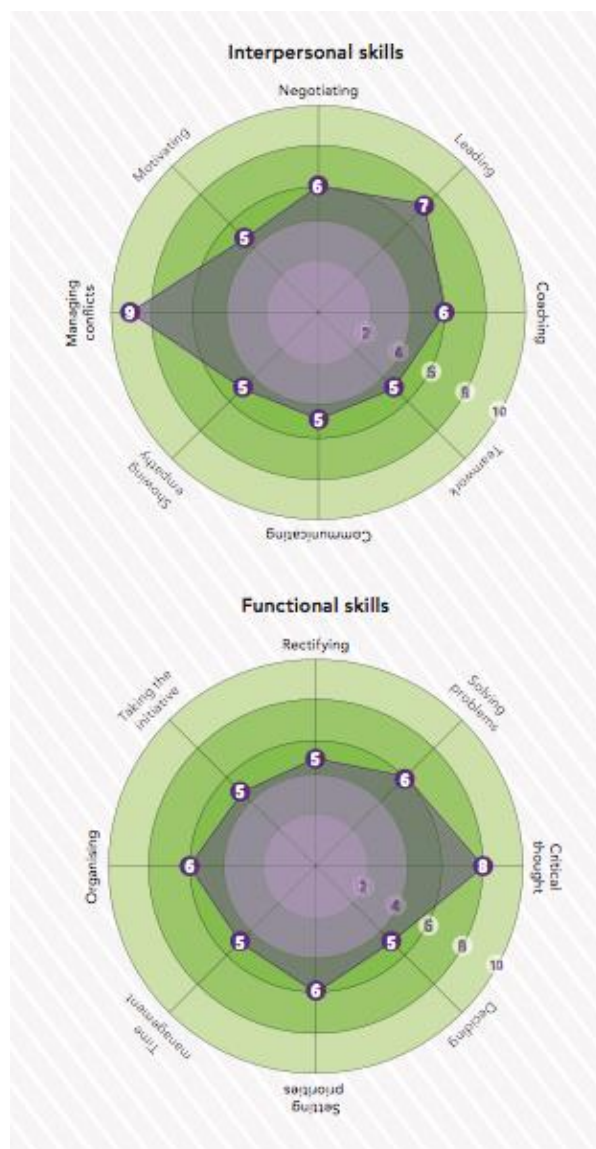☐ advice for further progress.

Figure 1: Presentation of overall results of online tool (Retrieved from https://scoutleaderskills.lesscouts.be/methodology_en.pdf)

Once the skills assessment has been completed, the user has access to the third part of the Scout Leader Skills site. There, the user will find advice on debriefing and using their assessment and developing their skills. The user will also find advice and anecdotes, as well as additional advice from recruiters and civil society actors from a variety of sectors.

The advice on debriefing relates to:
- Why and how should participants debrief their skills assessment?
- With whom and when should participants debrief their skills assessment, keeping in mind that the assessment is personal and that a debriefing is a strictly personal choice.
- How to progress? How to acquire new skills or develop other skills

further?

The advice on using participants' assessment relates to:
- Using their skills assessment for personal projects: creating a non-profit making organisation, volunteering with the United Nations, developing an artistic project...
- Valuing their skills when looking for employment identifying appropriate job opportunities; writing their Curriculum Vitae; presenting them at a job interview.

STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES
● Ensures the recognition and validation of the skills acquired by the 25500 Scout volunteers of the Fédération Les Scouts and the Scouts en Gidsen Vlaanderen by the world of work, parents and the wider public. The skills and values acquired as scout leader or manager are an advantage for a young person in their adult life as they seek employment; ● Raises awareness among scout leaders, local and federal managers of the skills they acquire during their volunteer experiences. They will be able to understand the skills and use them to their advantage when looking for a job, or in any project undertaken during their adult lives.	● This tool is designed for scouts.

Quality Assurance analysis

- It is unknown how well the users are prepared for the self-assessment and have been involved previously in a self-reflection process regarding their learning.
- The tool uses concrete thematic areas, with concrete question on which the user will be assessed. This does not allow the users to touch competences that are not covered by the tool, although the tool addresses a wide range of skills.
- The questionnaire offered by the tool is well developed yet and the time pressure enables the users to make a relatively accurate evaluation of their competences

Impact assessment analysis

As of 30th of June 2015 the organisations that own the Scout Leader Skills did not provide an answer to the the impact assessment questions that were presented earlier in this report.

ProfilPASS

ProfilPASS is an assessment tool, which helps to establish a systematic overview of personal strengths, skills and competences. It comprises professional experience as well as experiences gathered through family, leisure time or volunteering, thus combining formal, non-formal and informal learning.

Developed by the German Institute for Adult Education (DIE), the German Institute for International Educational Research (DIPF) and the Institute for Development Planning and Structure Research and financed by the German Ministry for Education and Research as well as the European Social Fund, the tool was established in the context of the lifelong learning policy with the aim to help:

- Personal and professional (re) orientation;
- (Re) integration into professional life;
- Planning of professional evolution;
- Planning of future learning aims.

According to the German Institute for Adult Education, most people are not very conscious about their skills and competences. They rarely experience a reflection and exploration of their competences. For this reason it is important to provide accompanying advice and support. In addition to the tool in form of a folder, the second important element of the ProfilPASS is therefore the provision with professional counselling. The ProfilPASS counsellors are trained in a course in which they get to know the philosophy and the underlying theoretical approaches in order to assist people in finding out what competences they have.

ProfilPASS is structured on several levels. A personal assessment tool is available online, **eProfilPASS,** or in the form of a printed publication. It can be used individually but guidance is available from a network of consultants. Training courses on the efficient use of the tool are organised on a regular basis. ProfilPASS can also be used by companies in the context of their

human resource development. Professionals working in the field of education can take part in training sessions in order to become consultants or integrate the tool into their learning strategies. A second ProfilPASS for youth has been developed especially catering to the circumstances of young people. Available in German at the moment, efforts have been made to transfer the tool to other contexts.[10]

Strengths and challenges analysis

In order to analyse the strengths and the challenges of this tool, the German Institute for Adult Education has been contacted. Here are the results:

STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES
● Visualisation of personal competences: people then realised they can do more than they thought; ● An increase of self-esteem by becoming aware of personal competences; ● Possibility to express individual objectives and steps of actions with regard to further plans for life and/or work.	● Some questions are complex with a need for guidance to complete the self-assessment; ● Some people think ProfilPASS is too long; ● Because counselling is an important element in the ProfilPASS system the intensity of the ProfilPASS process is dependent on the quality of the counselor. Usually the counselors are very good, but some might be better than others.

Quality Assurance analysis

● The tool considers self-reflection as very important process before the self-assessment and provides a professional counselling to its users.
● It seems that there is a particular form in which the users need to describe their competences. The counsellors are trained on the elements of the tool and support the users to understand their competences.
● The support from the counsellor potentially can help the users to make an accurate evaluation of their competences.

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[10] Schoger, M. and Patecka, A.(2014). p. 9.

Retrieved October 26, 2015, from http://www.europemobility.eu/download/publications/007-BOOK-A4-TC5-Validation-web.pdf.

Impact assessment analysis

For the impact assessment Fr. Brigitte Bosche from German Institute for Adult Education was contacted via email. There is yet to be a survey of the impact of ProfilPASS and information here relies from the feedback of the users and counselors who work with the tool. So far there has been 160 000 ProfilPASS folders sold and the awareness that it is being copied beyond the sold items. More than 7 000 people have participated in a three-day qualification course for the use of ProfilPASS. It is used in 35 educational centers and self-employed ProfilPASS counselors in the whole country of Germany. ProfilPASS is also available in France, Ireland, Spain, Slovenia and Bosnia-Herzegovina and this year it is planned to launch another project that aims to disseminate the ProfilPASS to more countries within the EU.

The counselors have reported that people using the ProfilPASS have found it very useful and in the small-scale evaluation that has been carried out it is found as an useful way to balance the competences of the users. ProfilPASS is viewed as a good start to plan future education or when applying for a new job. Some shortcomings of the tool are that it is based on written language which proves to be difficult for some persons. Also some schools have reported that they are only able to use tools that are available for free.

Lorfolio

Since 2007, the organisation Lorraine has engaged in a partnership for the implementation of two structuring tools: a Federal Charter of regional players in the AIO (Accueil, Information, Guidance) and e-skills portfolio (e- portfolio) for the benefit of all inhabitants of Lorraine.

A test version of the e-portfolio Lorraine, called Lorfolio, was launched in September 2009 to be experimented with different types of audiences with the support of several partner networks. Lorfolio was officially launched in February 2013. Since then, 16 000 accounts have been created and statistics show that people spend time online (see annex 8 page 30).

The benefits of Lorfolio are:

- Self-regulation;
- Self-assessment: participants have to choose their own competencies in a proposed list;
- Self-management: analytical and summary skills.
- Thinking, problem-solving and decision making: Analysis and summary

skills;
- Collaboration: availability; respect for procedures; Team player; ability to manage conflict; ability to manage work time;
- Motivation and confidence: advisory role.

Strengths and challenges analysis

In order to analyse the strengths and the challenges of this tool, Mr Joseph Bruno was contacted. Mr Bruno is the Person in Charge in Lorraine, holding the title: Chargé de mission Contrat de Plan Régional de Développement des Formations Professionnelles - Conseil régional de Lorraine. Find below the results:

STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES
- People are independent; - Many accounts were created (16000 within 2 years); - Its wider use (4700 users per month).	- People are independent (the tool is quite complex though); - The coordination of the actors is not very effective yet; - The self-assessment part of Lorfolio was seen as challenging by many focus group members; - The accompaniment is particularly time-consuming for unsatisfactory results.

The reform of vocational training, which entered into force in March 2014 in France included a national skills portfolio meant to largely draw on Lorfolio but which was at that point postponed by one year.

Quality Assurance Analysis
- It does not seem that the tool engages the users into a deep and assured self-reflection over their learning.
- It provides though a list of competencies from which they can choose. In addition to that, there is no guidance provided to the users.

Impact assessment analysis

For the impact assessment Mr. Joseph Bruno from Lorraine was contacted via email. During the test period of the Lorfolio that lasted from year 2009 onwards there were two evaluations done on the tool. The tool was officially launched in February 2013 and today over 18 000 people use the tool. While the penetration level might seem rather low, with about 200 000 potential users, it is the highest in France for this kind of tool and the nearly 10% reach

is hard to match outside France as well.

The users of the Lorfolio find it useful in saving proofs of their career such as diplomas, scholarships and skills. They also use it to create a website and resumes for themselves. The feedback that Lorfolio received that the tool is hard for some to use without support, resulted in working in co-operation with different kind of organisations providing employment support such as Employment Centers. It is a presupposition for the tool that people are aware that they should save their career information, manage their personal skillset and be able to promote them.

C-Stick

The C-Stick is an online digital portfolio which is developed by JES, a city lab for children and young people located in the cities of Brussels, Antwerp and Ghent (Belgium). Initially, the C-Stick was developed for low-skilled young people but has already been tested successfully with a broader target group. Basically, the C-Stick engages the users in a thorough insight into their (key) competencies and helps them to better plan their learning in order to increase their chances in life and, in extend, their path to the labour market.

In order to prepare the portfolio, users need to log in online and fill in a lot of information related to their experience. The key competences of C-Stick are organised according to thematic areas which are described below but the users have the opportunity to add new competences that are not already listed. It is important to mention that the competences offered by C-Stick are a result of an in depth research and consultation with various stakeholders in Belgium, among them the Flemish Employment Service and private companies. When filling in the data, each competence is can be analysed into sub-competences in the form of check list and YES-NO questions. Then, the C-Stick provides a score to the users, based on the information that they have filled in. This score provided by the C-Stick, as well as related information can be downloaded and used as a reference in the CV of the users.

C-Stick's users are mostly organisations, rather than individuals, as explained by Mr Jeroen Bels, person in charge of the Competences section of the organisation, in an interview with him. The reason this is happening is because the C-Stick gives the opportunity to other organisations to provide guidance, counselling and coaching to the youngsters when working with their competences. Mr Jeroen stressed out the importance of self-reflection and self-evaluation before filling in the C-Stick as well as the importance of youth

workers in guiding the young people into a self-evaluation process that can lead to as accurate as possible results.

What is interesting in this online tool, is that a whole section is dedicated in providing the users space and guidance to reflect and plan their personal development through various activities. The C-Stick is only available in Dutch and French Language.

The competences offered by C-Stick, as confirmed by Mr Jaroen Bels are listed below:

Social Competencies:	Personal Competences:	The 9+3 competences:
Ability to work Ability to make contacts Ability to listen Ability to speak Ability to deal with customers Ability to cope with authority Empathy	Ability to be flexible Ability to take initiative Ability to self-reflect Ability to give feedback Ability to handle feedback Methodical competences Ability to work independently Ability to learn	Language Proficient in Dutch Basic ICT Ability to deal with rules Ability to plan and organize Ability to self-manage Ability to be persistent) Ability to be achieve results Ability to cope with stress Ability to work safely and have respect for material Ability to manage personal presentation Working efficiently Careful and precise work

During the interview, Mr Jaroen Bels listed the strengths and challenges of the C-Stick as following:

STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES
● C-Stick gives information to other organisations about the concept of competences and how to work with them. ● The C-Stick enables the users to use it only once or continuously for a long period as a self-evaluation and self-development tool ● The tool offers the possibility to the users to use it both for the labour market but also for self-reflection and personal development	● The world is changing too fast. The competences listed in C-Stick are based on what schools and companies thought to be important but it is challenging to keep track with what is now important or relevant. ● Another challenge is related to the privacy of the youngsters and how much information can be asked and exposed. ● It is impossible to have a tool that serves all stakeholders, especially

● It gives the youngsters the responsibility to manage their own assessment and their own development. ● It is easy to use and endorses a very simple language.	when there is no national policy about it. ● The role of the counsellor, the person who guides the users of C-Stick is essential in filling in the C-Stick in an accurate way, so it is challenging for individuals to fill in the C-Stick on their own

Quality Assurance Analysis

● For JES self-reflection process is very important. Although the autonomous users of the online C-Stick do not engage in any self-reflection process, JES pairs each learner with a counsellor that facilitates the self-reflection process of the users.
● The tool provides a list of competencies based on which the users will be assessed on.
● The tool includes a series of YES/NO questions under each competence. Yet, the involvement of a counsellor might help the users to make an accurate evaluation of their competences.

Impact assessment of C-Stick

For the impact assessment Mr. Jeroen Bels from JES stadslabo was contacted via email. There is yet to be an official impact assessment done on the C-Stick but the JES have questioned several partners from the Flemish employment services and organisations in the welfare and counseling contexts. Today there are almost 6 000 accounts made on their platform.

The C-Stick portfolio has kept developing throughout its 8-year history to keep up with the needs of contemporary societies from technological and substance perspectives respectively. C-Stick is considered to be most useful in formal contexts which emphasizes the fact that tools such as C-Stick are most effective when they are used in the right context with appropriate counselling. A tool in itself only illustrates a process that an individual goes through, the process is created in the interaction between the person using the tool and the counsellor.

Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio

The Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio is a tool to help those doing youth work to assess and further develop their youth work competence and that of

the people under their supervision. It was developed by the Council of Europe in cooperation with experts and partners such as the European Commission and the European Youth Forum between 2004 and 2009. The revised version of the European Portfolio of the Council or Europe was presented during the Youth Work Convention 2015 by Laurence Hermand, Director of Bureau Internationan Jeunesse and Chair of the European Steering Group for Youth, and Mara Georgescu, Educational Avisor, Youth Department of the Council of Europe. (Brussels, 2015)

The revised Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio is an online tool that helps youth workers, youth leaders and youth organisations across Europe to understand their youth work competences and to develop them more effectively. It can also be used by others who are interested in quality development and recognition of youth work. The tool has great political relevance for the recognition of youth work in Europe.

The Portfolio contains the following 4 parts (chapters) as described by Markovic & Paddison (2014):

- Chapter 1 is entitled 'Context' and it defines who this self-assessment tool is for. In addition to that, it provides a definition of youth work, informed by history and experience, as the basis for understanding the kind of competence that shall be assessed using the tool.
- Chapter 2 is called 'Guidance' and describes the information and instructions users need for using it. It outlines instructions on how to make a self-assessment, a team assessment, or an organisational assessment of youth work competence and how to make a 'development and learning plan'.
- Chapter 3 is named 'Tool' and provides the assessment infrastructure users need for making an assessment and developing a 'development and learning plan'.
- Chapter 4 is called 'Further information' and contains background on the development of the European Youth Work Portfolio, its European context, a section with useful information and references, a glossary and acknowledgements. In comparison to the initial version of the Portfolio which was a paper-based tool, the new version will be a fully online tool.

The Portfolio includes the following functions and the users are assessed based on them:
- Function 1. Address the needs and aspirations of young people
- Function 2. Provide learning opportunities for young people

- Function 3. Support and empower young people in making sense of the society they live in and in engaging with it
- Function 4. Support young people in actively and constructively addressing intercultural relations
- Function 5. Actively practise evaluation to improve the quality of the youth work conducted
- Function 6. Support collective learning in the youth workers' team
- Function 7. Contribute to the development of their organisation and to making policies / programmes work better for young people
- Function 8. Develop, conduct and evaluate projects

Each function is divided into competences and the users need to answer the following questions for each competence:

- Rate their competence in a scale from "Not relevant at all" to "Highly relevant"
- Why? Please explain the profile of your youth work by providing examples why this competence is / is not relevant.
- How competent do you consider yourself in this competence? (Here users need to choose from a scale "Not competent at all" to "Highly competent"
- Describe your competence here, including examples of how you demonstrate this competence in your youth work. You can include previous learning experiences that developed your competence and examples of youth work where you make use of this competence.
- If there is anything more you would like to learn related to this competence, please insert the main points you would like to improve on below. If you insert something here, this will be automatically included in your learning and development plan.

Apart from undertaking the self-assessment tool, the users have the chance also to implement a Learning and Development Plan, again through a particular series of questions. Any information provided by the users in both of the tools, can be later on revised.

Strength and Challenges analysis

The strengths and challenges listed below are a result of the analysis of the authors of this report.

STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES

● The Portfolio is quite a recognised tool and has a long history in the youth work field ● The functions and competences used are well developed and a thorough evaluation is done for each of them ● The Portfolio enables the users to focus also on their learning and development ● The Portfolio is not a single-use tool. It enables the users to go back to it and revise their competences.	● It is made only for youth workers ● It makes it hard to present it to any employer out of the youth work field

Quality Assurance Analysis

- The second chapter of the guide is dedicated in providing instructions on how to make a self-assessment and therefore engages the users into a self-reflection process
- The tool provides a list of functions and competencies based on which the users will be assessed on.
- The fact that for each competence there are several close-ended and open-ended questions help the users to make an accurate evaluation of their competences.

Impact assessment Analysis

Unfortunately impact assessment for the Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio could not be made available over the course of weeks. At the same time, taking into consideration that this is a recently revised version of the Portfolio, it is probably hard to get any data related to its impact.

Mozilla Open Badges

Mozilla Open Badges is a way to get recognition for the skills learnt anywhere, offered by Mozilla. A badge is a symbol or indicator of an accomplishment, skill, quality or interest. A digital badge is an online representation of a skill earned. However, Open Badges work in a more advanced way:

1. Firstly, they allow the users to verify their skills, interests and achievements through credible organisations.
2. Secondly the users can attach that information to a badge image file while the metadata is hard-coded for future access and review.

(Metadata is data that describes other data and summarises basic information about them.)

3. Earners can combine multiple badges from different issuers to reveal all their achievements. Badges can be displayed wherever earners want them on the web, and share them for employment, education or lifelong learning.

There are 3 participating groups involved in the open badging system as described in the wiki of Open Badges

- Issuers: Issuers can be any organization that creates badges, makes them available to earners and awards them. Issuers can be Traditional educational institutions, Professional bodies, International credential assessment agencies, Non formal, community learning organisations, Communities of practice, After-school programs and learning networks, Online courses and open courseware initiatives, Government agencies and other public sector bodies, Employers

- Earners: Earners are individuals (or groups) that are interested to get badges, apply for them and decide where to display them.

- Displayers: The role of the displayers is to display badges earned by particular earners which also involves verifying the badges.

How does assessment work?

As explained in the Frequently Asked Questions of the Mozilla Open Badges wiki, when an earner sees a badge they wish to acquire, they can typically apply for it through the issuers website. Depending on the badge, the earner may be required to submit evidence together with their application. Issuer administrative personnel can then review the badge application against criteria defined for the badge, deciding whether to award (issue) the badge or not. The reviewer can optionally forward feedback to the earner regarding their application.

For badges to hold real value and carry the weight of more traditional grades or degrees, assessment and quality is critical. Badges can contain multiple levels of assessment, depending on the use case, community or intended audience. Some require distinct pre-defined assessment exercises and success criteria while others may be loosely defined and require earner reflection or peer recommendations.

It was difficult to get Mozilla Open Badges team respond to our request for strengths and challenges, therefore the information here gathered is from our own analysis based on the information provided on the website

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Strength and Challenges Analysis

The strengths and challenges listed below are a result of the analysis of the authors of this report

STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES
- Mozilla Open Badges is free software and an open technical standard any organisation can use to create, issue and verify digital badges. - The badges collected from multiple sources, online and off are put into a single backpack. Then the skills and achievements can be displayed on social networking profiles, job sites, websites and more. - Whether they're issued by one organization or many, badges can build upon each other and be stacked to tell the full story of your skills and achievements. - Each badge has important metadata which is hard-coded into the badge image file itself that links back to the issuer, criteria and verifying evidence.	- All skills and experience gained must be valorised by some organisation, so an individual cannot claim skills and experience taking place out of any precise context - In order for the organisation to issue badges and valorise the skills of the learners, they must be registered in Mozilla Open Badges Infrastructure

Quality Assurance Analysis

Taking into consideration that each organization can set its own criteria for awarding badges to learners, it is hard to proceed to a quality assurance analysis.

Impact assessment of Mozilla Open Badges

Unfortunately impact assessment for the Mozilla Open Badges could not be made available over the course of weeks.

Unique Learning Badges

Unique Learning Badges is inspired by the developments of Mozilla Open Badges and driven by the need to better recognise the non-formal learning of young people. (Markovic & Paddison, 2014). It was developed through a European partnership of 7 organisations. The UNIQUE Learning Badges platform enables any organisation to design their unique recognition system and use Open Badges to reward learning and achievements. UNIQUE Learning Badges offers an online accreditation platform and various other tools to support the recognition process.

As an organisation that issues badges you need to do the following, as described by Ragauskas & Kriauciunas (2013)[11]

"1. Decide on the behaviours, skills or attitudes you want to promote.

2. Think of some criteria for a badge that would begin to promote those behaviours, skills or attitudes.

3. Consider if the criteria for the badge you've come up with can be broken down in more granular ways.

4. If (as is likely) you end up with multiple badges, think about multiple (potentially interest-based) pathways through your badge ecosystem. Ask yourself, which badges depend upon other badges? What are the relationships between these badges?

5. Get someone to design an awesome- looking graphical badge for you or use the Open Badge Designer tool5 online to do it yourself and use a badge-issuing platform such as badg.us, ForAllBadges, WPBadger or BadgeOS to issue badges."

The individuals who are interested in getting a badge from their organization need to follow particular steps and processes that are described by each badging organization. Therefore, this tool cannot be explored from the learner's perspective, yet it was worth to mention it. For the same reason, the Strength and Challenges analysis for the Unique Learning Badges would be the same as for Mozilla Open Badges, while the Quality Assurance Analysis cannot be done again.

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[11] Retrieved from: http://www.toolsforlearning.org/unique-learning-badges-recognise-non-formal-learning

Impact assessment of Unique Learning Badges

Unfortunately impact assessment for the Unique Learning Badges could not be made available over the courses of weeks.

PART C - Best suited methodologies in self-assessment of NFIL

Below, an analysis of the best suited methodologies in self-assessment of non-formal and informal learning is presented. The analysis draws conclusions based on the feedback received from VUB and the employers on the self-assessment tools (see annexes). It includes recommendations regarding the most adequate methodologies with an intention to ensure the quality assurance of NFIL assessment, provide reliability in the process of assessment of competences and at the same time, satisfy external expectations.

The analysis is developed in the form recommendations for important methodological elements that need to be taken into consideration when developing a self-assessment tool. When possible, examples of existing self-assessment tools are presented in order to enrich the suggested methodologies.

Formal education's expectations

The Vrije Universiteit Brussel, department of Educational Sciences, has provided expectations and recommendations from the perspective of higher education regarding all analysed assessment tools gathered by the other partners. Based on this report, the most important methodological elements that need to be taken into consideration are listed below.

Defining Self-assessment criteria

Panadero, Alonso-Tapia, & Huertas (2012 in De Backer & Lombaerts, 2015) argued that self-assessment includes evaluating one's own performance by pre-set criteria. These criteria should be clear from the beginning of the learning experience in order to allow clear goal setting and planning. This implies three things for the non-formal and informal learning providers:

- First, that clear criteria must be set based on the learning experience
- Second, that these criteria should be set before the learning experience begins
- Third, that the learner should be aware of them, make a plan and get prepared for an assessment against them.

It must be noted that in the research study on existing self-assessment tools, there is little evidence that the second and third implication actually takes

place. Usually the self-assessment tools use some pre-defined assessment fields that are not necessarily tailored to the specific learning programme the learner has gone through.

An exception to that could be the Mozilla Open Badges in which the criteria vary from issuer to issuer, depending on the learning experience the learner has gone through.

Type of self-assessment criteria

In the majority of the gathered self-assessment tools very abstract criteria are set. In some cases, the learners just have the name of the competence and they are asked to go through a self-assessment against the given competence without any concrete criteria set, such as the Youthpass. In some other cases, the self-assessment under each competence takes the form of "yes-no" answer like the "C-Stick". These methodologies make it hard for the learner to undergo a self-assessment and also their reliability could be questioned. A possible example of rubrics can be found in self-assessment tools such as the Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio. Firstly, the Portfolio endorses 8 functions based on which the users will be assessed against. Later on, these functions are analysed into competences and following this, the users to rate themselves from a scale of "no competent at all" to "highly competent". Together with this, they also need to provide explanations and justifications why the specific level of competence was chosen.

On-going self-assessment

Panadero, Alonso-Tapia, & Huertas (2012 in De Backer & Lombaerts, 2015) argued that an adequate self-assessment intervention based on monitoring and evaluation starts when planning begins and continues throughout the task performance. This is an implication that non-formal and informal learning providers need to take into consideration. From the gathered self-assessment tools, there are very few which hold such an option, such as the Youthpass and the Europass Mobility. When it comes to Youthpass, the Erasmus+ Youth Programme encourages the organizations that conduct non-formal learning projects to prepare the learners for the self-assessment and engage them into a self-reflection process throughout their learning time. However, this is never ensured that it actually takes place. When it comes to Europass Mobility, throughout the apprenticeship process each learner is accompanied by a mentor who supports him/her.

Miller's pyramid of competence

As explained by De Backer and Lombaerts (2015) only the Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio seems to pay attention to the 3rd level of the pyramid, "shows how". The Portfolio helps the participants to design a personal learning and development plan based on the competences they would like to further develop and this is considered to be an asset of the self-assessment tool.

Quality assurance

De Backer and Lombaerts (2015) point out that quality control is vital in the self-assessment process and if not taken into consideration, it can lead to inaccurate and unintended learning processes and outcomes. In addition to that, they suggest the usage of the Quality pyramid of assessment as a tool that that adopts a holistic approach in assessment. An important element though is the distinction between standards and criteria are related. Taking into consideration that a great number of gathered self-assessment tools from the previous report do not even indicate criteria and standards for quality assessment, organisations that aim to develop a tool should clearly formulate and publish their quality criteria and standards (De Backer & Lombaerts, 2015).

Adoption of frequently occurring competences

It seems that each self-assessment tool in NFIL endorses different competences based on which the learner needs to be assessed. Yet, a consensus on the topic would push towards the recognition of NFIL (De Backer & Lombaerts, 2015). Therefore, it is suggested by the authors that organisations should use existing frameworks of competences as a reference, such as the 8 Key Competences for Life-Long Learning or frameworks used within higher education, and adapt their (existing) tools accordingly, until a common competences framework is established,

Within the self-assessment tools research report, only Youthpass endorses the 8 Key Competences of the Life-Long Learning, while the rest of the tools use their own competence framework.

Combination of assessment methods

It is highly recommended by the feedback report from VUB (De Backer & Lombaerts, 2015) that a combination of assessment methods is used in assessment. Together with the self-assessment, the peer-assessment and portfolio are suggested as potential and fruitful methods.

Peer assessment

Peer assessment has gained a lot of recognition over the past years and it is indicated that it is beneficial for the learner. Peer-assessment help the learners to observe their peers' work, reflect on it and therefore improve their future learning performance (De Backer & Lombaerts, 2015). Yet, peer assessment was not used as a method among any of the gathered self-assessment tools.

Portfolio

The analysed tools from the IO2-report do not use widely the portfolio as an assessment method although justifications and proves of specific experience need to be submitted together with the self-assessment of the learners in various tools.

Considering the learner's perspective

According to De Backer and Lombaerts (2015) the gathered self-assessment tools do not take the learner's perspective into consideration before the tool is developed. It is recommended that the learner's point of view is taken into consideration before the development of the tool, so that it can better address the learner's needs.

The perspective of the employers

Two employers have provided feedback on the self-assessment tools gathered in a previous stage of the GREAT project, outlining their expectations in self-assessment of non-formal and informal learning. Based on their responses, the most important methodological elements that need to be taken into consideration are the following.

Credibility

The employers seek for credibility in the self-assessment. According to them, the involvement of some credible and well-known organization in the self-assessment process is quite important. They argue that such an element would gain their trust towards the tool and therefore they would better take it into consideration. As one of the employers stated, the Europass Mobility gains credibility simply because it reminds the Europass CV which is well known on European level. At the same time, the other employer stresses the need to have 2-3 self-assessment tools on European level, very well-known and widely used which again implies the need for credibility.

Accuracy

The employers need to know that the competences claimed by a person are true and accurate. It is important for them to know that the result of a self-assessment reflects the reality and that the potential employee has all the competences mentioned. In order to achieve it, the following elements where highlighted from the interview with the employers:

- Involvement of a mentor or a trainer. The mentor or a trainer will help the learner to undergo a self-reflection and realize the degree to which she/he has developed a certain competence. The involvement of a mentor is suggested by Youthpass, Volunteering and skills and C-Stick but it is mandatory only by the Europass mobility
- Involvement of an external organization who will verify the competences gained by the person. The external organization will confirm that the claimed competences are valid. Such an example from the self-assessment tools could be the Mozilla Open Badges, in which the issuer needs to confirm the claimed competences of the learner in order to issue a badge.
- Justifications and explanations to each competence claimed. The employers seek for justifications for every skill claimed by the learner. They need to make sure that all competences are a result of a specific and valuable experience which should be mentioned and indicated in the assessment process. Such examples there are in the Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio and the Volunteer Passport.

Common competences/criteria

The employers suggest that it would be better if all the self-assessment tools had the same competences on which the learners would be assessed against. This would help the employers to have the same comparing standards for the job applicants. In addition to that, they suggest that a solution to this would be the adoption of the 8 Key Competences of Life-Long Learning which are also valid on European level. Such competences are at the moment used only by the Youthpass.

Clarity of the results

One of the employer argued that the clarity of the results is also very important. As a good example, the employer suggested the Scout leader skills which indicates clearly the results of the self-assessment with charts and visual elements.

Conclusions

As it can be seen from the previous analysis, there are some differences between the perspective of university and the employers. Each stakeholder, looking at the self-assessment tools from own perspective, highlights different elements that are considered as crucial for self-assessment tools. At the same time, there are also similarities between both perspectives, which strengthen the need for adopting the suggested methodologies when developing a self-assessment tool.

PART D – Recommendations

General comments on the scope and relevance of the analysis

The analysis covers the main tools that are currently being used in the youth and voluntary sector. They reflect very well the complexity of the situation as regards the recognition of non-formal and informal learning. In this section, feedback is provided on the: geographic coverage, approaches and tools, actors, purposes and perspectives in order to assess strengths and weaknesses in the report as well as make proposals for the next steps.

Geographic coverage

The geographic coverage is broad even though most initiatives can be found in France, Belgium and Germany. The others reflect EU tools/frameworks (i.e. Europass Mobility, Youth Pass, Youth Work Portfolio) and those developed as part of EU projects.

The coverage could have been broader, however the eleven tools that have been analysed provide an extensive sample of the type of tools in use, and a comprehensive overview about their strengths and weaknesses.

As the former intellectual outputs already stated, there are numerous tools available in Europe already. As the feedback from the employers show, more efforts should be made in order to ensure coherence, credibility and visibility of the tools. The problem we face is that most of these tools are not known by their potential beneficiaries and by employers and educational stakeholders. The identified tools should be used as examples for the final mythological guidelines as well as on the project website.

Of course partners should continue to upload other tools/initiatives on the website in order to cover more countries/sectors and illustrate the great variety of practices in the field.

Approaches and tools

Self-assessment and guidance

Before, during and after the process: what type of mentoring is in place? We see that the different initiatives presented vary in terms of guidance/monitoring offered to individuals – most of the time due to lack of financial and/or human resources.

The importance of guidance and mentoring was demonstrated in IO1, in reference to the research of Smith and Clayton (2009) who inventories three effective approaches to support candidates in the recognition processes of NFIL:

- support by mentors or assessors with available time to assist, explain and encourage;
- involvement of coaches and peer support networks;
- enhancing interactions between learners and the assessor in order to help individuals identifying their learning from their experiences.

The recognition process should be promoted to potential candidates in such a way that they can clearly see which benefits that can be gained, where their NFIL fits or matches with learning outcomes, or the system that they were wanting to access. Also, for improving recognition outcomes it is essential to share information, to have clear guidelines and a range of communication mechanisms beyond the printed form (Smith & Clayton, 2009).

In the next phase of the project it is important to emphasize this element most probably by agreeing on a set of guidelines for youth organisations.

The above-mentioned survey on employers' expectations confirmed that volunteers experience trouble voicing the outcomes of their learning outcomes, calling the project partners to focus on helping them find the words they need to convince their future employer.

Tools

Different tools to do the assessment and produce the "report" are in place: online questionnaires and visual competence mapping tools, open badges, portfolios, etc. From the analysis, it seems that the tools that are simple and ergonomic in use and those favoured by learners. It is important to take into account both the fact that young people today are very much connected and familiar with web applications. The partners would have to take this into account when devising the project website. On employer's side, the importance is being put on the terminology that is being used.

The tools illustrate the different methods for validation NFIL described by VUB in IO1 - Research from the university side. According to the latter, "although methods are often combined to enhance the reliability and robustness of the assessment in validation, particular methods are favoured and accepted in relation to the abovementioned different stages of the validation process. Portfolio is by far the most frequently accepted method in documentation, followed by declarative methods, and simulations/evidence extracted from

work. Tests and examinations become the most accepted method during assessment. Unfortunately, this may disadvantage less favoured groups of learners, in particular those with negative previous experiences of formal education (European Commission, 2014)". Partners would have to decide if they want to promote the use of portfolios or other methods.

Competence descriptors

Some are using the 8 Key Competences while most have been built around a more limited number of competences/skills with great variation in terminology.

According to the results of Report on the expectations of employers (IO1), the 3 main competences gained by young people during a long-term youth volunteering period that are most relevant for the labour market are:

1 – The capacity to take initiative and entrepreneurial mindset;

2 – The sense of initiative and pro-active attitude;

3 – Intercultural and interpersonal skills.

This was confirmed by the survey conducted by EUCIS-LLL from February to April 2015: the three most rated competences and soft skills were: problem solving and resilience (57.02%), a sense of initiative and pro-active attitude (55.26%), and social and civic competences (47.37%).

These competences are covered by most of the tools that have been identified in the Analysis. Would the partners develop a new tool, these competences should be particularly highlighted.

Communication

Some tools are meant to be widely used (i.e. Youthpass – which is even mandatory for organisations hosting mobility students) while others are meant to serve the purpose of a particular group (i.e. Scout leaders).

The tools developed by EU institutions already benefit from a greater visibility and credibility from employers. The surveys and impact assessment conducted (IO3) by the EU show that their impact still remains limited with a small group of users. Ensuring great dissemination and use of the tools is a great challenge. The potential of using (youth) European networks is an asset in our project. The importance of designing a friendly tool that is relevant to the different target groups will be the main challenge for partners for ensuring its wide use.

Costs

Most of the tools are free of cost while others which come with additional services especially in terms of analysis and guidance are not free of charge for users.

Different actors and perspectives

Different actors

They reflect the different actors promoting the recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning:

- Adult education and youth organisations,
- Volunteering sector,
- Private actors
- Public authorities at all levels – local, national, European and International.

Multiple purposes

The tools provide an overview of the different purposes pursued by these organisations when developing them:

- Individual perspective: for supporting self-development and self-esteem
- Helping career guidance
- Improving employability
- Getting a job (as part of mentoring/coaching schemes)
- Getting an exemption from an educational institution
- etc.

Different perspectives

The feedback collected from employers and educational providers shows how the focus in put in different elements as regards the assessment of NFIL.

- **Employers**

They seem to look at (see feedback from employers' report):

1) University Degree

2) Job experience

3) The rest including volunteering and youth work

To take into account the third point, they need to have reliable information on the competences/skills acquired, and have been requesting credibility: who is validating the outcomes? Who puts a stamp to the result of the assessment process? Hence the need to go beyond a self-assessment process by providing proper guidance and feedback to individuals from an organisation/institution. The organisation would then carry the responsibility of the value given to results of the assessment process.

They also put a strong focus on the terminology used: this should be a mix of occupational skills (the tasks related to certain positions) and soft skills. This is confirmed by the results of the survey conducted amongst employers (IO1). Even if employers are positive toward young people's experience in youth organisations, a common understanding and language should be developed in order to provide the employment sector with appropriate information on the potential of non and informal learning in youth work and youth work needs to identify its potential of providing competences for the labour market.

- **Educational institutions**

The feedback from the educational institutions shows that there is a great need to emphasize the capacity of learners to show how they can use their skills/competences in practice – beyond only being able to identify and describe them. The recommendation is thus to include Miller's pyramid levels in the guidelines.

Another weakness identified is quality assurance; the recommendation is thus to develop youth organisations' knowledge about quality assurance models (i.e. using the quality pyramid of assessment, Sluijsmans & Struyven, 2014). Specific quality criteria and standards could be developed and included in the Guidelines.

- **Civil society (youth workers, voluntary sector)**

The individual development and the process are prioritised. This is clearly seen in the quality assurance indicators selected by the partners of the project in the Analysis report.

Elements that could be improved

The quality assurance part is mainly focused on the perspective of youth organisations and on the engagement of learners – on the process itself. We see that for employers and educational actors the interest is more on the outcomes of the process. The criteria could thus be further developed at the end of the document included those different perspectives.

The five indicators described in the beginning for the impact assessment do not find a strong echo in the rest of the document.

Elements for further reflexion

Option 1: Use the outcomes of the research to anchor our recommendations into the development of existing EU tools

Based on the different reports that have been produced up to now, it seems that there is a need to:

- Ensure greater coherence notably in terms of methodology: guidelines could be written by the partners in order to propose a general method to do an assessment process (before, during and after) – based on strong points identified in the tools under scrutiny in the Analysis Report.

- Partners could develop an advocacy tool kit and identify the relevant policy processes (IO1) that could be influenced and be benefitting from the outcomes of our research. This includes being involved in the development of ESCO for example. The tool kit would be specifically designed to target policy-makers at national and EU level.

- Partners could notably work with the European Commission to develop new features linked to EUROPASS and/or YOUTHPASS to ensure that the new tool/feature is visible, credible and benefits from EU-wide coverage thanks to the back up of a European institution. The same could be done for the tools developed by the Council of Europe.

- Partners could push for the use of validation/recognition processes for recognising the outcomes of youth work by employers and educational providers. However they would have to prepare a risk analysis. Indeed the certification of transversal competences could open the door to private sector actors delivering certificates. These evolutions should not lead to a further commodification of education not to the formalisation of non-formal education. Other threats and opportunities could be found.

Option 2: Use the outcomes of the research to identify success factors and give examples of tools

- The partners could use the outcomes of the research in order to produce a comparative analysis leading to recommendations as regards the use of assessment tools identifying key success factors and giving examples of tools (using those identified based on their strengths).

- Specific guidelines could be produced with the strong points of assessment tools and on the methodology that should come into place during an assessment process regardless of the tool used. This would ensure that the recommendations are general (meaning that they can be used with different tools) but specific in terms of the process. They could also contain guidelines on how to communicate about the tool and other important elements such as quality assurance.

- The website could become a repository/observatory in which users from all over Europe could post their tools and other users could rate them ("five-star" system). This would ensure that the tools reach other target groups. Would a tool be very popular, volunteers could be asked to translate it and test it in other contexts.

- The partners of the project would act as ambassadors and would commit to constantly update the website with the new tools/encounters they find. Before the partners are mainly European networks in the youth field, they are in good capacity to do so.

Option 3: Use the outcomes of the research to develop a new tool

Would the partners agree to promote the development of a new tool; the recommendation can be drawn from the examples:

- Build trust and reputation around the tool.

- Use the terminology developed by European Key Competences Framework and follow developments related to ESCO. Focus on the competences identified as most related by employers and educational institutions.

- Build a proper communication around it: using ambassadors such as youth organisations, local authorities, institutions, etc. and link it to EU project participation (// Youth Pass).

- Build up guidance guidelines and counselling techniques to support the use of the tool.

- Make the best of new technologies to render the tool attractive and ensure it is user-friendly and simple enough not to detract users.

- Work on the profile of the counsellor's/guidance professionals/volunteers.

PART E – Moving foreword

Given the fact that one of the main objectives of the GR-EAT project is to create common guidelines for recognition of NFIL acquired in volunteering context and support youth organisations in providing internal validation systems, the current report is very important. Following the in depth analysis that was conducted, the key elements that should be taken into consideration when developing the guidelines are outlined throughout the report and mainly highlighted in the parts C and D. Given this, the current report lays the foundations based on which the following steps of the project can be built on.

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Useful links:

Youthpass

Volunteering and Skills

Europass Mobility

Valorise-toi !

Scout leader skills

The volunteer passport

ProfilPass

Lorfolio

C-Stick

Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio

Mozilla Open Badges

Unique Learning Badges

http://goo.gl/MSle84

http://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/metadata

Annex 1 - Formal education's expectations regarding the assessment of NFIL outcomes

Vrije Universiteit Brussel

Formal education's expectations regarding the assessment of NFIL outcomes

GR-EAT Project Research Phase O2-A2

VUB, August 2015

Dr. Free De Backer

Prof. dr. Koen Lombaerts

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Introduction

Within the GR-EAT project the authors of the IO2-report mapped out 11 self-assessment tools designed within the field of youth and lifelong learning. Youth organisations developed assessment tools to contribute to the recognition of youth workers' experience and skills, and also to increase the recognition of youth work and NFIL (Council of Europe, 2014). Unfortunately, assessing NFIL outcomes seems to be challenging because of the difficulty of actually measuring whether knowledge, skills and attitudes have been acquired or not and linking this to a formal qualification. However, a recognition system would mainly be attractive for users when a certificate, which leads to external recognition, accompanies it. In this context, it is important to reckon with the formal education sector as external stakeholder. Therefore, the following document provides feedback on the IO2-report. The first section highlights conducted research and theoretical frameworks valuable for (the quality of) assessment processes. In the second part, expectations and recommendations are provided from the perspective of higher education regarding all analysed assessment tools.

I.   Assessment in Higher Education

Europe's answer to the worldwide 'call for accountability' within higher education was the Bologna process, which has resulted in increased demands for colleges and universities to engage in outcomes assessment. Assessment in higher education serves multiple purposes, such as informing students about their progression, institutions about their effectiveness or accrediting bodies about the output and quality of the programmes (Strijbos, Engels, & Struyven, 2015). Importantly, according to contemporary views on learning and assessment, assessment is also used to enhance students' metacognitive learning instead of only focussing on the measurement of cognitive learning outcomes with validity and reliability as leading criteria (Sluijsmans & Struyven, 2014).

1/ From summative to formative assessment

Over the past two decades, the education system was subjected to a shift from summative, product-oriented assessment towards formative, process-oriented assessment (Qvortrup & Keiding, 2015). Several authors define formative assessment as implemented activities by teachers and/or their students, which provides information used to adjust education and learning activities (Sluijsmans, Joosten-ten Brinke, & van der Vleuten, 2013). In the wake of the paradigmatic shift, the portfolio approach seems to be one of the most popular among the different learning and assessment initiatives (Qvortrup & Keiding, 2015).

Black and Wiliam (2009) developed a framework for formative assessment on the basis of two dimensions: the most important actors and instruction moments in a learning process. Sluijsmans and authors (2013) recommend a combination of methods to complete the whole instruction process (see Table 1).

Table 1. *Effective features of formative assessment in terms of methods (Sluijsmans, Joosten-ten Brinke, & van der Vleuten, 2013)*

	Where the learner is going?	Where the learner is right now?	How to get there?
Teacher	1. Feedback, asking questions, formative dialogues, rubrics[a]	3. Feedback, asking questions, formative dialogues, reflective lessons, assessment rubrics, summative tests[c]	4. Feedback, reflective lessons[d]
Peer	2. Feedback, reflective lessons, peer-assessment, rubrics[b]	5. Feedback, formative dialogue, reflective lessons, peer-assessment, assessment rubrics[e]	
Learner	2. Self-assessment, reflective lessons, assessment rubrics[b]	6. Self-assessment, reflective lessons, rubrics[f]	

[a]Which features clarify the learning goals and success criteria for teachers?
[b]Which features lead to understanding with learners?
[c]Which features lead to effective discussion, tasks and activities in the classroom that provide evidence for learning?
[d]Which features ensure that the provided feedback will help learners get on?
[e]Which features ensure that learners consider each other as a source for learning?
[f]Which features ensure that learners consider themselves as owner of their own learning process?

2/ Different assessment methods

For a long time higher educational contexts were characterized by both the multiple-choice examination and the essay format (Struyven, Dochy, & Janssens, 2005). However, learning has not merely to do with what students know but also what they can do with this knowledge. Therefore, assessment methods should be used to measure what students can do with what they know (Struyven, Dochy, Janssens, Schelfhout, & Gielen, 2006, p. 203). More recently, alternative assessment tasks like portfolios,

simulations, case-based evaluation and presentations and, methods – mostly related to these tasks – such as self and peer assessment were introduced and have enriched the traditional formats of evaluation (Struyven, Dochy, & Janssens, 2005).

Each task/method assesses different skills and competences. The assessment method needs to be valued within the learning environment for which it is intended (Struyven, Dochy, & Janssens, 2005, p. 337). Indeed, the appropriate selection and use needs careful consideration, as it should match the purpose of the assessment, the properties being assessed and the intended outcomes of instruction (Struyven, Dochy, Janssens, Schelfhout, & Gielen, 2006, p. 219). The assessment itself should facilitate students to demonstrate how much they understand instead of focussing on scoring. Given the diversity of goals and objectives in education, the triangulation of methods is highly recommended for the assessment of learning outcomes of students (Struyven, Dochy, Janssens, Schelfhout, & Gielen, 2006).

3/ Self-assessment, peer assessment and portfolio assessment

Most of the selected tools in the IO2-report use often solely one, but sometimes a combination of two of the following methods: self-assessment, peer-assessment or portfolio assessment. As these assessment methods appear to be commonly used in youth organisations, we will go into more detail.

Self-assessment

Self-assessment involves evaluating one's own performance by pre-set criteria. Clarity of these assessment criteria is mandatory from the beginning of students' learning trajectories in order to enable clear goal setting and planning (Panadero, Alonso-Tapia, & Huertas, 2012).

Alonso-Tapia and Panadero (2010) distinguish three types of interventions to promote self-assessment:

(1) self-evaluation[12] or self-assessment without the assessment criteria,

(2) rubrics[13], and

(3) scripts[14].

Research has shown that self-evaluation is not always the most optimal approach, as it is flawed. Consequently, only rubrics and scripts provide students with assessment criteria and, therefore, are adequate for self-assessment (Panadero, Alonso-Tapia, & Huertas, 2012; Panadero, Alonso-Tapia, & Reche, 2013).

Learners should carry out a self-assessment before any outcome arises to improve their skills along the way (Black & Wiliam, 2009). An adequate self-assessment intervention based on monitoring and evaluation starts when planning begins and continues throughout the task performance (Panadero, Alonso-Tapia, & Huertas, 2012). Dignath and colleagues (2008) found that such interventions had the greatest effects on student' self-regulation. Self-assessment activates people as the owners of their own learning (Black & Wiliam, 2009). Next to augmented responsibility, it also encourages self-reflection and keeps students, involved, interested and highly motivated in the process (Chang, Tseng, & Lou, 2012). Unfortunately, empirical evidence for the effectiveness of self-assessment is scarce (Chang, Liang, & Chen, 2013).

Peer assessment

Peer learning and assessment have gained considerable interest in higher education because of its educational value to encourage the development of essential transferrable skills that might be required at the workplace (McGarr & Clifford, 2012, p. 677). Peer assessment enhances the learner's metacognitive understanding, as students are stimulated to adopt an active role in the management of their own learning, which

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[12] Students evaluate and score their work without using a specific tool (Panadero, Alonso-Tapia, & Reche, 2013).

[13] Rubrics are documents that indicate the expectations for an assignment. The assessment criteria are listed and levels of quality are described in relation to each of these criteria (Panadero & Jonsson, 2013, p. 130).

[14] Scripts (incl. cues and prompts) are specific questions structured in steps accordingly to the expert model of performing a task from beginning to end (Panadero, Alonso-Tapia, & Reche, 2013, p. 126).

heightens the learner's responsibility (McGarr & Clifford, 2012). Indeed, in line with self-assessment, peer assessment is especially relevant to people's own capacity to learn how to learn and the development of learner autonomy (Black et al., 2006 in Black & Wiliam, 2009).

Some authors claim that students get naturally inspired with comments of their peers (Chang, Tseng, & Lou, 2012). In this case, people become activated as instructional resources for one another (Black & Wiliam, 2009). Via peer-scoring students can observe their peers' work through which ideas or reflection can be encouraged and, consequently, their future learning performance can be improved. Observing and comparing others' portfolios progresses students own individual learning and develops their self-reflection and critical opinion about their own learning progress (Chang, Tseng, & Lou, 2012; McGarr & Clifford, 2012, p. 679).

Portfolio assessment

Chang and authors (2013, p. 325) define a learning portfolio as an assessment tool trough which the users purposefully collect learning processes over a period of time in a way that reflects their academic achievements (i.e., evidence of progress, reflective thinking, etc.). Portfolio assessment implies the analysis of a systematic collection of the users' work that documents their endeavours, growth and achievements (Chang, Liang, & Chen, 2013, p. 325).

According to Qvortrup and Keiding (2015), portfolio descriptions of how they work are scarce. However, research has shown that a learning portfolio that serves as assessment tool has five characteristics (Chang, Tseng, & Lou, 2012, p. 303):

(1) being dynamic, authentic and comprehensive;
(2) focusing on both the processes and outcomes of learning;
(3) scoring participation to improve students' overall knowledge and skills;
(4) reckoning with past performance to respect individual differences of students;
(5) delivering diverse and multi-dimensional evidence of learning to ensure reliable assessment results.

Although the Web format has several restrictions (e.g., time management, reliability and validity, technology etc.), it is preferable to traditional learning portfolios as the latter is considered to be relatively ineffective in showcasing and viewing due to the huge amount of paper documents (Chang, Liang, & Chen, 2013). The three most common methods employed in Web-based portfolio assessment in higher education are teacher-assessment, student self-assessment and peer-assessment. Teachers can adopt the method(s) related to the pedagogical needs they like to address. However, the three methods should be combined to make the most of a portfolio and to enhance the authenticity of it. As mentioned above, students get the opportunity to reflect, observe and compare portfolios among peers, which stimulates them to imitate the strengths and avoid the weaknesses of peers, and consequently, improve their own learning (Chang, Tseng, & Lou, 2012). However, although portfolio assessments are validated as a powerful and trustworthy approach, there is no general consensus on the reliability and validity of the three assessment methods (Chang, Tseng, & Lou, 2012).

II.   Presented tools in the IO2-report

This section presents formal education's expectations and recommendations regarding the assessment tools of NFIL outcomes provided in the draft report IO2 of the GR-EAT project.

1/ EVC-procedure

As presented in the IO1-report of the GR-EAT project, the Vrije Universiteit Brussel follows two separate procedures to recognize previously acquired competences (EVC-procedure) and qualifications (EVK-procedure). To be validated as an EVK three conditions should be cumulatively met: (1) a purposeful learning programme; (2) followed by an exam; and (3) ratified by a degree or a certificate (Brussels University Association, 2007). As nearly all tools presented in the report of IO2 provide no qualification to their long-term volunteers, it will be difficult to exploit these competences during the EVK-procedure. Applicants to the EVC-procedure need to

submit a substantiated portfolio. As stated above, portfolio assessments are validated as a powerful and trustworthy approach in higher education (Chang, Tseng, & Lou, 2012). Volunteering experiences and skills within youth organisations can be added to this portfolio. Important to know is that each acquired competence needs to be described in performance-indicators based on planning, implementing, reflecting and/or controlling. For each performance-indicator the applicant should tick the extent to which he/she masters it (i.e., having knowledge of, making a contribution to, or independently performed) and explain it briefly (Brussels University Association, 2009). See also IO1-report to read more about this topic.

2/ Miller's pyramid of competence

Recently, the Department of Educational Sciences of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel decided to use Miller's pyramid of competence (1990, see Figure 1) – also known as framework for clinical assessment – to construct their educational programmes on bachelor and master level.
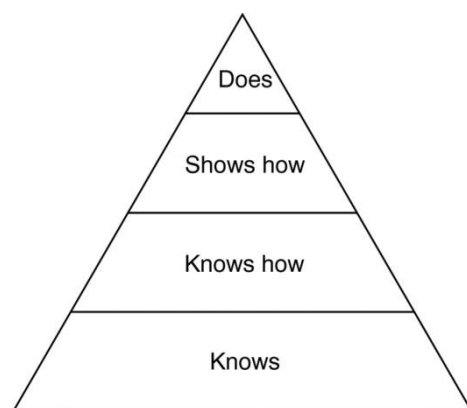

Figure 1. Pyramid of competence (Miller, 1990, p. S63).

Miller (1990) proposed a framework due to the incompleteness of every single assessment method to fully cover the complexity of assessing competences acquired in professional contexts. He distinguishes four levels that a student should go through to ensure that he/she is able to carry out professional functions effectively. Many people consider the lower two levels as most important. However, tests or academic examinations as the most common methods to measure knowledge seem to neglect an

important part of the learning process. Indeed, students should be able to *show how* to use the acquired knowledge. The last level of the pyramid – the action component of professional behaviour - seems to be the most challenging to measure accurately and reliably.

The analysed tools from the IO2-report stress the first two levels of the pyramid, which goes in line with Miller's statement. This means that the tools often neglect the importance of evaluating learners' capability to put knowledge into practice. Except the tool developed by the Council of Europe, which seems to pay attention to the 3rd level of the pyramid. Participants need to design a personal development plan. In this stage three dimensions are distinguished when assessing competences: knowing, knowing how to do, and knowing how to be. Generally speaking, the presented tools are more focused on supporting learners to identify and document their experiences acquired through volunteering and preparing them for the labour market instead of evaluating acquired competences and showing how participants can relate those with practice.

It is recommendable for youth organisations to include all Miller's pyramid levels. In this way, all aspects of learners' volunteering experiences are taken into consideration during assessment through which a competence can be fully revealed.

3/ Quality pyramid of assessment

The presented tools often lack quality control, which is also often the case in educational practice (Sluijsmans & Struyven, 2014, p. 3). This can lead to inaccurate assessment and unintended learning processes and outcomes. When designing assessment tools, youth organisations should be aware about what constitutes assessment quality (Sluijsmans & Struyven, 2014). A helpful tool for youth organisations can be the quality pyramid of assessment (see Figure 2). As it adopts a holistic perspective, the quality of assessment is determined by the weakest link. This means that if one of the entities of the pyramid is poorly designed, the quality of the other entities will also be affected (cf. bi-directional arrow on the left side). Besides being a matter of control (using criteria, procedures and checklists), quality assurance in assessment is predominantly guaranteed by the quality of the users (i.e., volunteers

and educators in the GR-EAT project) and the way this is reflected in the spirit instead of the letter of assessment (Sluijsmans & Struyven, 2014).
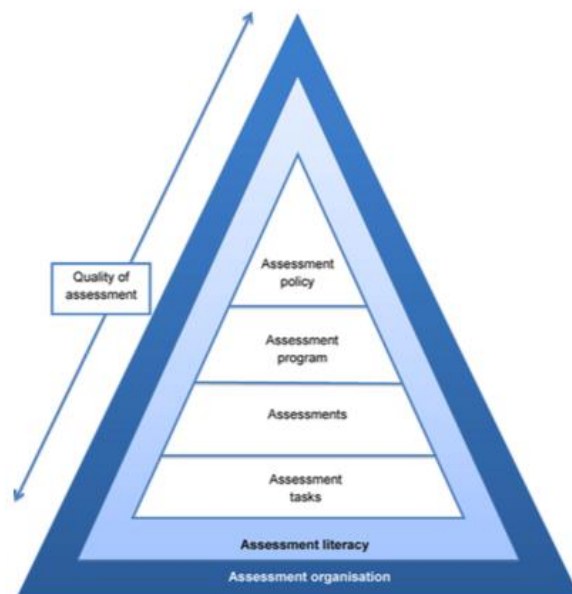

Figure 2. Quality pyramid of assessment (Sluijsmans & Struyven, 2014).

A significant number of proposed tools in the IO2-report do not even indicate criteria and standards for quality assessment. Any assessment design of NFIL outcomes should imply assessment standards to indicate the constructs on which judgements are based on or referred to. Although standards and criteria are related, both constructs should be distinguished from one another. Criteria disentangle the meaning of the competence to be measured. Standards are general statements that articulate how well the competences have been achieved (Strijbos, Engels, & Struyven, 2015, p. 21). Learners can benefit from this description of standards, because they give them a clear idea of the assessment expectations. Also, when educators have a good and common understanding of the intended learning outcomes, through the standards of the competences to be achieved, it can result in (Strijbos, Engels, & Struyven, 2015, p. 21):

   (1) goals for the professional development of educators,

   (2) explicit assessment guidelines,

   (3) enhanced validity of assessment practices, and

(4) improved alignment between programmes and assessment for/of learning.

By and large, the information presented in the IO2-report regarding quality criteria and standards does not mention anything related to the above-mentioned topics, especially points 1, 3 and 4. The assessment guidelines are generally referred to. In some cases, the organisations stress the need for improvement by adapting the tools according to the needs of the learner/volunteer. However, investing in the professional development of educators is essential to ensure quality, innovation and more efficiency in the assessment processes. Additionally, keeping educators updated is necessary to adapt their approach to the constant changing trends of the field (i.e. assessment processes).

Criteria and standards should be precisely expressed in order to retain their ability to monitor interreliability and transparency (Strijbos, Engels, & Struyven, 2015, p. 29). Although it can increase the trustworthiness to other stakeholders, most of this information seems to be not accessible online for learners or other beneficiaries who would like to consult the analysed tools, or are interested in using it. Therefore, youth organisations that develop a tool should clearly formulate and publish their quality criteria and standards.

4/ Different competences occur

Higher education programmes aim for both competences specific to a professional context and generic competences. According to Strijbos and authors (2015), no international consensus exists on the selection of competences in bachelor's degree programmes. However, the most frequently occurring competences are:

- communication skills,
- creativity,
- critical reflection (and self-management),
- thinking skills (and reasoning),
- information processing,
- leadership,
- lifelong learning,
- problem solving,

- social responsibility (ethics and responsibility), and
- teamwork.

The same trend can be determined within the youth field considering the analysed tools. Each organisation appears to promote specific competences through its learning programmes while there is no common framework to guide the organisation. Although some competences are task, programme and/or position-specific it would be advisable to set out certain intended learning outcomes. It helps to establish credibility among stakeholders, improves potential volunteers' mobility between youth organisations without the need to start from scratch when building up, for example, a portfolio, and enables organisations to prove their effectiveness and accountability.

Plenty of the above-mentioned frequently occurring competences in higher education are also pushed forward as important and validated by the tools (at least with the ones listed in the report of IO2). Although the sector has his doubts, perhaps there is more consensus then they are actually aware of. If the youth field wants to increase the recognition of NFIL outcomes in higher education, the frequently occurring competences can be a good starting point.

As establishing a competences framework in the youth field in agreement with all organisations seems to be challenging, organisations can use existing frameworks of competences as a reference, such as the 8 key competences for LLL of the European Council (2011) or frameworks used within higher education (see above), and adapt their (existing) tools accordingly.

5/ Combination of assessment methods

Assessment has impact on student's performance. Therefore, the selection of appropriate methods is crucial, as it needs to match the purpose of the assessment, the properties being assessed and the intended outcomes of instruction (Struyven, Dochy, Janssens, Schelfhout, & Gielen, 2006, p. 219). As stated above, it is highly recommended to combine several assessment methods in tools.

In the IO2-report Taru and Kloosterman (2013) are cited when unravelling the Youthpass tool. These authors label self-assessment as being too fragile for obtaining external recognition. For higher education, self-assessment can be valuable when assessment criteria are provided (Panadero, Alonso-Tapia, & Huertas, 2012). However, there is no general consensus on the reliability and validity of this assessment method. In higher education, self-assessment is often combined with forms of teacher-assessment and/or peer-assessment (Chang, Tseng, & Lou, 2012). For example, applicants for the EVC-procedure in higher education need to submit a portfolio, which mainly stresses self-assessment, but leaves some space for adding evidence from alternative assessments per competence (Brussels University Association, 2013). However, it is not guaranteed that this will be positively perceived.

6/ Considering a learner's perspective

As the impact assessment part of the IO2-report shows, the user (i.e., learner) perspective is often neglected until after the tool is developed. Though, the sooner a learner's point of view is taken into consideration, the better the tool will align with the learner's needs. Assessment can have a positive influence on their learning and is perceived as 'fair' in case it (Struyven, Dochy, & Janssens, 2005, p. 337):

(1) relates to authentic tasks;

(2) embodies reasonable demands;

(3) boosts learners to apply their knowledge to realistic contexts;

(4) highlights the need to develop a range of skills; and

(5) seems to have long-term benefits.

Alternative assessment, such as self- and peer assessment, seems to be characterized by these aspects. Importantly, the way in which a learner thinks about learning, determines the way in which he/she deals with assignments and evaluation tasks, and vice versa (Struyven, Dochy, & Janssens, 2005)

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Annex 2 - Employers' expectations regarding the assessment of NFIL outcomes

Employers' expectations regarding the assessment of NFIL outcomes

GR-EAT Project Research Phase O2-A2

YEU, August 2015

Table of Contents

Introduction

This report is a follow-up of the study "Research on self-assessment tools which have been developed in the field of youth and lifelong learning, their quality assurance and their impact" conducted by YEU, EUCIS-LLL and WOSM within the GREAT project in June 2015. The current report aims to explore the perspectives of employers on the self-assessment tools within the non-formal and informal learning context. In order to achieve it, two interviews were conducted with two employers from Cyprus. In both cases, the same methodology was used. The employers received the online version of the study and then an interview followed with them. By sharing the study, employers had the chance to get familiar with the self-assessment tools and therefore the interview process would be facilitated. During the interview, the employers were asked to provide an answer on the following:

Main question is "To what degree does each tool satisfy your expectations as an employer?"

Main question simply explained: "If a candidate employee presented any of these self-assessment tools in his/her CV, how much would you count on it and consider it as an asset of the candidate?"

Elements to check for each tool

- Accuracy of the tool (how much the tool reflects reality?)

The employers' answers were written down, translated into English and formed into the current report.

Perspective of employers

Below, information about the persons being interviewed as well as a report of the interviews is presented.

Interview with Ms Nadia Karayianni, Business Development Manager at IMH

Information about the person being interviewed and the company

IMH works in the field of knowledge transfer. The company organizes various training courses and conferences, publishes magazines and newspapers with main target group businessmen/businesswomen.

Ms Nadia Karayianni holding the position of Business Development Manager has the overall project management. Among others, she is involved in the recruitment process of people who will work in different parts of the company.

Report of the interview

"As a person involved in the recruitment process of the company I come across a lot of applications every time there is an open position. Usually applications reach a couple of hundreds. This makes it very hard to look into the details of every candidate. In addition to that, each applicant usually uses different CV template and attaches to it different kinds of certificates. Firstly it is difficult to deal with so many CV templates. Each CV template highlights different elements or experiences of the candidates and it makes it less easy to compare. Secondly, it is even more difficult to understand what each certificate represents. A typical employer pays attention only to the university degree and the job experience. The rest of the things come after. Personally, I do value the extra-curriculum activities, the training courses and the voluntary activities a candidate has previously done. For me it these things are an indication that a candidate is active and will bring on board additional skills, not necessarily required by the job description but very vital for the company. But what does a certificate represent? How is the certificate translated into our work environment? This is where the self-assessment tools could be useful. If the tools translate the certificate into skills it will

help to understand what exactly the candidate can bring on board. I am very interested to see how the certificates are decoded into skills. However, I am concerned that this might not be an easy process.

1. My first concern is about the organizations that issue certificates. These organizations should be very careful to whom they give the certificate. If 2 people undergo the same course and they get the same certificate it does not mean that they have developed the same skills at the same level. Sometimes, a candidate comes with 20 certificates but when we invite him for an interview we realize that all certificates were just given to him without a lot of thought. I personally don't believe that all participants can claim that they gained the same competences. As I understand, self-assessment helps the participants to underline the specific skills they gained from their experience. In general I think that this is very good. Yet, it would be crucial to ensure that the self-assessment of an individual is accurate and this constitutes my second concern.

2. As an employer, I need to know that the skills or competences an applicant claims are accurate and valid. If we speak about self-assessment, it must be ensured that what the participant claims reflects reality. So personally, I would like to see two elements.

   - The first is to see that the person who is undergoing a self-assessment works together with a mentor or a trainer. These people have worked before with the learners and can help them to do a self-assessment. In addition, they can validate the skills of the learners. The role of the mentors is very important.

   - The second is to have a big, credible and independent organization involved in the self-assessment process. This organization should ensure that whatever the person claims is accurate. As an employer I would love to see a signature of a credible organization under the self-assessment, implying thus that the self-assessment is accurate

3. In addition to that, a vast amount of tools makes it very hard and complicated for the employers. The recruitment process is strictly time limited and very hard. There is no time to spend in understanding self-assessment tools. In my opinion

there should be only 2-3 self-tools, very well-known and widely used so that the employers can get acquainted with them.

4. I believe also that there should be some agreement on the competences and all self-assessment tools assess the candidates against the same competences/criteria. These competences can be analysed into sub-competences if needed. Additionally, training courses to the companies to get to know the competences. If I see a competence named "social and civic competences" it is hard to understand what it really means.

Following all these, in my opinion, the most relevant tools in regards to the needs of the employers would be the following

a) Scout leader skills: The tool for recognising and valuing skills acquired by scout leaders and managers

This tool has been selected because some of its elements are quite useful. The tool aims to assess the learner not by asking direct questions trying to check the knowledge of the learner. Instead, it introduces various scenarios on which the learners have to respond. In addition to that, the time taken to respond is taken into consideration. This process works as a simulation of the reality and therefore the results are more deep and profound.

At the same time, the analysis of the outcomes of the self-assessment in charts is very useful and clear. This enables the employers to quickly understand the best qualities of the candidates

b) Mozilla Open Badges

This tool has an interesting element. All knowledge and skills claimed by the learner is confirmed by the organization that provided the experience. The learner can apply and submit evidence to get a badge from an organization. The person in charge of issuing badges from that organization assesses the applicant on pre-defined criteria and it is then decided if the badge will be issued. In this way, the learner goes beyond the certificates, she/he can translate the certificate into competences and all competences are verified by the organization who provided the learning experience.

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Interview with Ms Nicoleta Zamba, editor in chief of the "Toutoukki News" free press

Information about the person being interviewed and the company

"Toutoukki News" is a free press newspaper highlighting the cultural events in the country and providing information about forgotten aspects of the cultural heritage.

Mrs Nicoleta Zamba is the editor in chief and the manager of the free press and therefore is the one dealing with the recruitment process of the newspaper.

Report of the interview

The involvement in non-formal and informal activities presents many aspects of one's personality and it shouldn't be neglected. I know from my experience that this knowledge is very unique and special. Giving the opportunity to any future employee to present such skills clearly and in an understandable way is crucial, according to my opinion. At the same time though, having to employ people for the newspaper, brings on board various concerns that need to be taken into consideration.

Regarding the self-assessment tools, there is not one tool that satisfies all my expectations. But the following tools are identified as addressing different needs and expectations from the employers' side.

1. Europass Mobility

Personally I am very well aware of the Europass CV and I believe that it is a tool very well known amongst young people and the employers. Some people argue that Europass has many documents (CV, Language Passport, Europass Mobility, Certificate Supplement, Diploma Supplement). I agree with this argument although the provided CV is a straightforward indication for the employer of the candidate's knowledge and skills. The additional documents are more of a certification of what is already written in the CV. Yet, from my perspective, the Europass CV does not

clearly state a candidate's skills achieved through informal or non-formal learning. I believe that a self-assessment tool coming from a well-known European Institution would help a lot the employers to build credibility around the tool. The Europass Mobility, being associated with Europass CV gains the attention of the employers simply because Europass CV is well known and because it sounds that the tool is applied on European level. These elements are very important for giving credibility to the self-assessment of the learner. The disadvantage with Europass Mobility is that it is used only for specific learning experiences, mostly in vocational training.

2. Youthpass

Another thing similar to what was said previously is related to Youthpass. Youthpass uses 8 competences which as I understand are the same with the Life-Long Learning. Having common, widely known competences based on which the learners will be self-assessed is very important. This will help the employers to get familiar with the relevant competences and it will also enable them to compare the candidates based on the same criteria. At the same time, I think that the 8 Key Competences could be further elaborated, maybe with some sub-competences that will help the learners to highlight what they actually gained

3. Valorise-toi!

In my point of view, Valorise-toi has an element which validates the skills that the learner claims. This refers to the fact that the learners need to propose a list of activities linked to their role as leaders. I see this as a kind of justification, an explanation why the person claims these competences. I am not sure from the description of the tool if this explanation is visible on the final outcome of the tool, yet I would consider it as very important.