

The Preliminary REFINE Test Report, Finland

First Draft

	Finnish Adult Education Association FAEA		University of Lapland	JAKK – Jalasjärvi Adult Education Centre		WEA - Workers´ Educational Assosiation	Youth Academy
type of organisa- tion	an umbrella organisation for the Finnish nonformal adult education organisations		Faculty of Education, Primary school Teacher Training	an organisation providing basic training, further professional training, short courses and training seminars for adults.		an educational organisation (liberal adult education sector). On an annual basis 58 000 course, participants, 30 000 small-group students.	a co-operation organisation aiming at building bridges between spare time activities, education and working life.
contact	Leena Saloheimo		Tuula Tolppi	Jari Alanko		Mervi Ylitalo	Lauri Savisaari
country	Finland		Finland	Finland		Finland	Finland
tool	Recommendation (criteria) for a Curriculum to Support Active Citizenship	Recommendation (criteria) for a Curriculum to Support Active Citizenship + portfolio (“my personal history as an activist”)	Teaching demonstration (+ essay, exhibition/port- folio/video/cd-rom	Learning portfolio including self assessment is a basic tool for evaluation of Rural Developer Trainees.	European CV as a basic tool for evaluation of Rural Developer Trainees especially in the Project Management module.	European CV as a tool to recognise and acknowledge all sorts of learning from childhood until present professional expertise	The Recreational Activity Study Book serves as a nonformal and informal learning CV: a young person’s participation in all forms of recreational activities can be recorded in it.
where	Alkio College, Suolahti: An Active Citizenship study entity	KSL Civic Association for Adult Learning , Helsinki Valuing work in NGOs – a study entity	Handicraft Course, Basic Studies. A part of primary school teacher examination in University of Lapland, Rovaniemi.	Specialist Vocational Qualification for Rural Developers training in Jalasjärvi Adult Education Centre		WEA Study Center, Helsinki, in a course called Member in an active working community.	Jyväskylä Vocational Institute

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candi- dates	students	students (party/trade union activists)	students (adult)	trainees (party/trade union activists, employees, one retired)		trainees (employees)	students
number	interviewed 3 of 7	interviewed 4 of 12	2	6			
age	19 – 21	40 – 71	34, 39	25 – 57		39 - 55	16 - 17
gender	female	2 women, 2 men	female	5 women, 1 man		3 women, 1 man	3 women, 2 men
purpose	entry to formal ed, job application, self-confidence,	job application, self-confidence, sharing	award of part of a diploma	award of part of a diploma		personal use, developing self- valuation skills	the award of part/whole diploma

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results							
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good points	1) a practical and a good counterpart for more theoretical studies 2) offered safe ways for finding activities and developed self- esteem 3) the possibility to include individual courses into an entity	1) documenting the history and the present activities for others 2) helps to visualize and evaluate own knowledge and competences achieved – self esteem 3) portfolio was made in communication with other participants	1) former education was taken into consideration 2) saves time 3) possibility to work independently	1) a good tool for self-assessment, forces to view one's life as an entity 2) Easy to use & update in the future. 3) Effective and useful method for self marketing.	1) Shared form makes things easy to read; information easily comparable. 2) Very clear & simple enough. 2) More useful than the portfolio.	1) Recognising the social and organisational activities and participation and skills achieved in them 2) Recognising the importance of own activity and learning methods 3) Recognising the artistic activities and skills of expressing oneself.	1) Possibility to get study credits from hobbies and from those activities that one would take part in anyway 2) It's a nice way to see, what one has done and learned. 3) It can encourage new participants into leisure activities 4) One can get entries even though one isn't an "expert" in the hobby activity.
diffi- culties	-	1) a new concept/tool 2) choosing the meaningful from the multitude of life long activities, recognising own	1) time too limited – short time to prepare 2) insufficient instructions	1) more precise instructions and personalized guidance needed 2) might be easier to make portfolios with a peer	1) Not much use for an older person. 2) A new concept in Finland 3) English language difficult.	1) The CV itself does not yet bring up and evaluate the experiences and learning results of those skills mentioned.	1) Who can record an entry? 2) Previous activities cannot be recorded (or get recognised)

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		competences		2) usefulness to employers in recruiting new workers is not clear			3) Recording and writing entries is a lot of work to the instructor or the leader.
what less		-	-		3 pages is too long but impossible to know what to leave out.		“Young person’s self-assessment of the learning” is unnecessary, since it will be the teachers who decide how many study credits are given.
what else / more	-	1) a concrete set of guidelines 2) a more critical approach	1) a possibility to continue this project to specializing studies. 2) evaluation from another fellow student (not peer evaluator)		Family relations, the number and ages of children etc.) The CV would need some more instructions for the evaluation of non-formal learning. 2) A discussion and evaluation of the competences with the candidate is necessary.	1) Possibility to record previous activities 2) concrete skills and knowledge would be listed in the book – that would give a better understanding of the learning in freetime activities. 3) More information on how the book can be used 4) More pages for real free time and voluntary activists!

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comments							
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candidates	<p>The candidates had learned to take responsibility of and to organize activities and to motivate others to participate; new models of teaching and learning: about different fields of active citizenship.</p> <p>The core point of the studies for them was participation and activity.</p> <p>They did not find the possibility of recognising learning really relevant during the studies.</p>	<p>Everything similar to these studies can be beneficial in the trade union work.</p> <p>Difficult to start with; found herself reflecting the stuff while doing something else.</p> <p>Brought up a multitude of old memories; it was a challenge to choose from them.</p> <p>Has a lot to do with one's identity. It is important therefore to document also the side-roads and not to prune too much.</p>			<p>The training providers should market European CV more efficiently.</p> <p>The traditional version of CV helped a lot while collecting the European one.</p> <p>Very useful in job applications and in international project activities.</p> <p>The electronic version is quite easy to use and different parts will be printed out on same format => nice.</p>	<p>Candidates 2 and 3 have used the Euro-CV as a tool to recognise their skills and competences, not only activities. They see their activities as a learning process and the concrete achievement to be an active citizen.</p>	<p>It is good that one can benefit from one's freetime and voluntary activities.</p> <p>It could encourage other young people to participate in the activities.</p> <p>It feels nice to be involved in the pilot project.</p>

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testers	<p>Only one of the young participants (7 in all) had experience of association or club activities. The possibility of getting prior learning recognised was not relevant for any of the candidates.</p> <p>The study entity was structured and conducted from a strong institutional point of view. The participants were not quite sure after all which of their other nonformal studies were included.</p> <p>The possibility of including participants' prior activities into the</p>	<p>The shared study aims of the group were stressed. The generational change in organisational work was discussed and focused.</p> <p>Participants made the portfolios for themselves. The form allowed individuality. The aim of the portfolio process was to make visible the learning that had taken place in political party or trade union activities.</p> <p>Candidates found important discussing attitudes and values. They underestimated</p>	<p>The aims of the course were achieved</p> <p>The test was easy and economical to carry out</p> <p>There were many choices for students</p> <p>Conceptuality and practice meet in demonstration Real situation (lesson) at school The candidate had contact with different levels of handicraft education</p> <p>The instructions have to be more profound and clear</p> <p>Students have to be active to find the</p>	<p>The same basic portfolio is used within the whole training which lasts at least 18 months. The Specialist Vocational Qualification for Rural Developers is divided into three independent modules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Entrepreneurship ▪ Working as a rural developer ▪ Project management. <p>In each module the trainees collect a special sample portfolio for that module. It is used for evaluation for a trainee's competence by three individual</p>	<p>The European CV is used as a self promotion tool in The Specialist Vocational Qualification for Rural Developers training which is divided into three independent modules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrepreneurship • Working as a rural developer • Project management. <p>The European CV is used especially in the project management module because in the case of international project applications it is usually demanded by the project funding regulations.</p>	<p>The participants in the course filled in the Euro-CV evaluating their personal development and non-formal education.</p> <p>Candidate 1 only lists his many demanding projects as activities, not as his skills. Candidate 4 mentioned only her formal education and activity in trade union. Discussion with the candidates is needed in order to help them to evaluate their learning process and development of new skills, and how they are able to use them in life.</p>	<p>The results were as expected. It is a conscious choice that the point of departure in the Study Book is voluntary freetime activity of young people and the learning that takes place in it. That is why the book is constructed according to the nature of the activity rather than skills, knowledge or competencies acquired in those activities. According to preliminary feedback from the teaching staff, the Study Book functions "well enough" in assessing and accreditation of</p>

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	<p>study entity is not appealing for the educational institute which gets its state subsidy according to the amount of lessons given.</p>	<p>their achieved skills and knowledge. They were not used to reflecting the latter and found it difficult to tell what they were good at – modesty is a virtue in the Finnish culture.</p> <p>The candidates' concept of learning was limited. Learning had negative connotations for some participants.</p>	<p>group for teaching demonstration.</p>	<p>evaluators representing working life and training sectors.</p>		<p>Candidates 2 and 3 have used EuroCv as a tool effectively evaluating their activities.</p> <p>The evaluation of the use of the tool Euro-cv has not been done yet. So we don't yet have the comments. We will bring them to Kaunas.</p>	<p>non-formal and informal learning. In the Study Book, young people are encouraged to record also activities prior to the purchasing of the book.</p> <p>It appears necessary to instruct the use of the Study Book "on the spot" – this far only an information event (2 hrs) has been arranged.</p>
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fast con- clusions	<p>General</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good instructions and guidance is needed with all sorts of tools. - Capability of analysing own experience, skills and competences has to do with one’s conception of learning. The concepts (learning, skill, competence, activity, participation etc.) have to be clarified in conversation with the candidates. - The process of recognising nonformal and informal learning seems to empowering for the most of the candidates of different age groups. In this case it appears as a learning process. - Working with a peer/peers could be recommended - There are institutional obstacles for the recognition of learning (how the subsidy of the educational institutes is determined etc.) <p>Portfolio</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - allows individuality and personal touch - serves also as a tool for sharing silent knowledge with others <p>European CV</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - competences achieved by raising a family? 						

ANNEX 1

Portfolio in Special Vocational Qualification training for Rural Developers

Jari Alanko 12.10.2004

Introduction

The portfolio provides a deeper and wider picture from person than the traditional CV: In working life it has been spread from architecture and fashion models to various sectors, especially to teaching. The portfolio has many purposes and it's possible to make it out depending on the personality, career, hobbies, interests etc.

Above all the portfolio looks like its owner. It is like a fingerprint, during the time it becomes wider and there might appear some scratches, but the basics are the same.

What is portfolio?

The portfolio is like a frame of a picture, in which the persons draws a picture about his/her skills and knowledge. It is his/her collection of different kind of documents which he/she believes are valuable and in which he/she has invested part of him/herself and his/her capabilities. From outside the portfolio may look variable; it may be cardboard box, briefcase, cd-rom, floppy disk etc. The appearance isn't important: the production, selection and evaluation process is.

The skills and knowledge of a person should be seen as a triangle:

- One side is professional skills which are based on education, training and work experience. That's a part usually taken care in the CV.
- Other side is all-round skills which are transferable and flexible for different tasks and workplaces. They are quite easy to prove when you think about them.
- Third side is personality; what kind of person you are, how do you react on things. This is the hard one, and it absolutely demands self evaluation.

The triangle is equilateral, all sides are equally important when it comes to picturing the person as a whole.

Why to make a portfolio?

The portfolio is a tool for self assessment and self description. The portfolio provides a method to describe and analyse your own development process and professional growth. For example in job interviews it's very useful if you have analysed your capabilities and personality beforehand.

Basic portfolio

Basic portfolio can be described as a warehouse where all the documents concerning the triangle of your skills and knowledge are stored. It may include essays, reports, evaluations, notes, figures, photos, diaries etc. It is private document storage from where you collect some samples into your sample portfolio.

Jari Alanko
Carrefour West Finland

Sample portfolio

Sample portfolio is a brochure of yourself in which you have chosen the best documents for some specific purpose. Usually it's collected for job or project application to describe your competence just for the specific purpose. The sample portfolio may be structured as follows:

- Introduction (Why just you are the best for the job)
- Table of contents
- Written description of yourself
- Attachments (evidence)

The sample portfolio has to be revised for every purpose independently. You have to analyse how you can convince the receiver about your skills and knowledge. In this point you have to pay attention to the working process, how do you do your job. The actions you have made are irrelevant, you have to analyse why they are important for that specific purpose. You have to make strategic choices what to include and what to leave out. The most important point is to choose relevant evidence into the sample portfolio and describe those processes which have led you to your current situation.

Some questions to help you to collect the sample portfolio:

- How do you describe yourself as a specific role (for example job)?
- What is important to you in the specific role?
- Why are you excited about the specific job?

Author:

Lauri Savisaari, M.Soc.Sc., Development Manager
(presented in the seminar by Ms. Kirsi Airaksinen, School Operations Manager)
Youth Academy, Finland
Olympiastadion, Eteläkaarre
FIN-00250 Helsinki, Finland
Tel: +358-9-3487 0603, fax: +358-9-3487 0610
e-mail: lauri.savisaari@nuortenakatemia.fi

Recreational Activity Study Book system in Finland: An example from experience

School is an important learning environment for young people. However, young people learn outside school, as well. Especially participation in voluntary and leisure activities offer good places for learning. Young people learn many valuable life skills in voluntary and leisure activities, i.e., co-operation and team skills, communication skills, goal-orientation and problem solving skills. These mentioned skills are also useful when a young persons attends further education or working life.

Learning in voluntary and leisure activities carries various names: it might be called "civic learning", "non-formal learning" or "informal learning". If a learning activity is defined to be "non-formal learning", the organising party should have a clear understanding of the learning that is supposed to take place in the activity. That implies at least some educational principles or an "educational program" behind the activity. One cannot argue a learning activity to be "non-formal" without a clear, well-defined understanding of the learning that takes place in activity. In addition, it is essential that both the learner and the educator are aware of the aims and methods of the supposed learning situation.¹ Without these definitions, the learning is "informal" or "occasional" by nature. In this context, both non-formal and informal ways of learning things and acquiring competencies are dealt with, parallely. Most organisations that deal with young people do have a clear educational role and many even have their own educational programs (for example the scout movement).

Formal education and non-formal or informal learning (that takes place for example in voluntary and leisure activities) support and complement each other. In line with the principles and aims of lifelong learning, the learning environment of young people should be approached as an entity, the ingredients of which are formal educational system, working life and free-time environments (such as home, leisure activities, family, peer groups, etc.). Integration of formal and non-formal learning implies actions and a change of traditional attitudes. Learning of young people in voluntary and leisure activities is usually observed from the point of view of formal education. When doing so, the essential concepts are a) identification, b) recognition, and c) validation of learning.

From the viewpoint of voluntary and leisure activities, it is important that the learning taking place in activities is recognised and appreciated in society. Thus, evaluation of non-formal or informal learning is also important. Through evaluation the learning environment produced by youth organisations can be further developed. Evaluation or measurement of informal learning is particularly difficult, though, since the learning outcomes are very difficult to place in a specific context, time or place. In addition, informal learning includes

¹ For example Sahlberg 1999, 10.

also non-course-based activities like information, advice or guidance, which do not usually have an agreed curriculum².

Accreditation of non-formal learning in voluntary and leisure activities can also carry risks: if, for example, a formal educational institution automatically credits a certain activity, the voluntary nature of the learning activity could be endangered. In addition, the formal educational system is relatively equal (at least in the Nordic countries) in regard to place of residence, but possibilities to actively participate in voluntary and leisure activities vary a great deal, depending on which area or region of the country one happens to live in. Therefore, it is necessary to evaluate the learning experiences in voluntary and leisure activities always personally, case-sensitively and in regard to specific fields of formal education.

In Finland there has been a system called "Recreational Activity Study Book" since 1996. The system is developed by Youth Academy, which is a co-operation organisation for major Finnish youth & sports NGOs. The Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture supports the study book system. The study book is a non-formal and informal learning CV for young people. They can collect entries from all learning experiences in voluntary and leisure activities. There are about 70.000 study book owners in Finland (updated: 02.04.2004). The book serves young people as a tool for making all the experiences and learning – self-development, growth etc. - outside school visible. It is also an instrument for identifying and crediting non-formal learning when applying for a job or further education. Youth Academy has a written agreement with 250 formal educational institutions on how to value and credit the entries in the book. The study book is a feasible way to document and recognise the non-formal and informal learning of young people. The entries in the book can be collected either in Finnish, Swedish or English.

The Finnish study book system focuses strongly on the development of the individual learner – young people. Despite of the fact that some pathways towards formal education have been created as a part of the study book system, the idea is to cherish the very voluntary nature of the learning taking place in outside-school, voluntary and free-time surroundings. Therefore, there are neither any criteria for the measurement of learning outcomes or performance, nor any public examinations held to assess the competencies supposedly acquired.

The Recreational Activity Study Book system is feasible for the documentation – and recognition – of both qualifications and competencies acquired by participating in youth voluntary activities. More focus is, however, placed on the competencies. That has to do with the individual learner-centeredness of the study book system. In the study book, more emphasis is put on the development of each young person's personality rather than the actual qualifications of the skills required in particular job requirements.³ The underlying idea is that by participating in youth voluntary or recreational activities, young people do have a chance to acquire key competencies in regard to personal development, such as social, communicative etc. competencies.

The reasons for the openness and "non-measurability" of the Finnish study book system are several. First of all, as Bentley argues, subjective perceptions of learning outcomes or competencies acquired should not be of marginal validity, as they often are in systems depending on public examinations. According to Bentley, subjective perceptions are

² McGivney 1999 & 2000, ref. Katus 2002, 124-125.

³ See Euler 2001, 197-198.

“central to the quality of learning, and the extent to which what has been learned will be retained and applied in other contexts”.⁴

The second reason for the openness and flexibility of the study book system is the already mentioned appreciation of the voluntary nature of youth informal and non-formal learning. By formalising the system, the basic motivation for participation in youth activities, i.e. the joy of being, doing and learning together, would be endangered. Youth Academy attempts to encourage the representatives of the formal education system to recognise and value the learning and competencies young people acquire outside school, as well as to do more co-operation with organisations offering young people meaningful learning environments. But the issue is always approached from an individual learner’s point of view, not the point of view of the formal educational system, for example.

The third reason for keeping the study book system informal and flexible is that by doing so, all young people can gain access to it and collect entries from various learning activities. The Recreational Activity Study Book is not only targeted to those young people which are active in one or another youth organisation. Competencies can be acquired and things can be learned in various situations and settings, even the non-organised ones⁵. Therefore, even though the study book system is developed by Youth Academy and its twelve member organisations (major Finnish youth and sports NGOs), it is open to all young people, and the content is designed in a way that all young people “fit” in to be able to make use of it.

The study book itself is divided into nine categories, according to the nature of the learning activity. The categories are:

1. Regular participation in leisure activities;
2. Holding positions of trust and responsibility within NGOs;
3. Activities as a leader, trainer or coach;
4. Participation in a project;
5. Courses;
6. International activities;
7. Workshop activities (apprenticeship);
8. Competitions; and
9. Other activities.

By looking at the categories, one can see that there are environments of both non-formal and informal learning present. The most formalised form of learning is the category “courses” which means organised and often hierarchical educational programs offered by various youth and sport NGOs and other learning providers. The eight other categories fall more or less under the umbrella of informal learning, in which the learning-by-doing approach is often the method for acquiring competencies and skills.

According to a survey carried out by Youth Academy in spring 2003 (690 informants), the most popular category is “Courses” (17,4 %). The categories “Activities as a leader, trainer or coach”, “Holding positions of trust and responsibility” and “Regular participation in leisure activities” are also quite popular (12 – 13 % each).

The following figure illustrates an example page of the Recreational Activity Study Book.

⁴ Bentley 1998, 147.

⁵ See Euler 2001, 198-202.

Type of activity:
 Holding positions of trust and
 responsibility within NGOs

Organisation in which the activity took place

Time/dates of the activity

__/__/____ - __/__/____

In average _____ hours per week/month

Position of the young person in the organisation

Successes and competencies acquired

Description of the activity

Place

Date

Young person's self-assessment of the learning

Signature of the person responsible of activity

Contact information of the undersigned person

Position of the undersigned person

The entries in the book are always written by an adult (= over 18 years of age) person who is either responsible or well aware of the particular activity. Young people themselves fill in the part "Self-assessment of the learning". The idea is to focus more on what and how things have been learned rather than what has only been done. The person undersigning the entry adds his/her contact information, in case someone wants to check whether the young person actually has participated in the activity or not.

The educational institutions involved in the system have a written agreement with Youth Academy on how and to which extent they value and credit the entries in the book. It is essential to bear in mind that accreditation and validation of the learning experiences documented in the study book is always individual and case-sensitive. The system does not aim for direct accreditation in formal education in any way. It is of great importance that the voluntary nature of participating and learning in voluntary youth activities, whether organised or not, will not be endangered.

The Recreational Activity Study Book is distributed to young people mainly through youth and sports NGOs. Young people usually receive or purchase the study book during being involved in the activities of a particular NGO, for example when attending courses etc. Recently, more and more private companies have purchased a limited number of study books and given them to young people locally, either through schools or youth and sport organisations.

Youth Academy does a lot of marketing efforts to promote the study book in all Finland. Target groups are divided roughly into three different groups: young people, formal educational institutions and employers. The message to young people is, in simplified terms: "This is a good tool for making all the learning experiences visible (= non-formal and informal learning CV). It can also be useful when applying for further education or a job." The message to employers is: "This is a good tool for assessing the job-seeker's activity and goal-orientation. Young people learn valuable competencies outside formal education, in voluntary activities." The message to formal educational institutions is: "This is a good tool for assessing the applicant's experience relevant to the particular field of education. - youth & sport NGOs offer a good learning environment that can be used as complementary or supportive to formal education."

The Recreational Activity Study Book system has raised positive interest on European level – it is also mentioned as a good practice in the European White Book on Youth Policy by the European Commission. The Finnish study book system could be a starting point in creating a European model for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, bearing in mind the cultural and educational differences in different European countries.

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