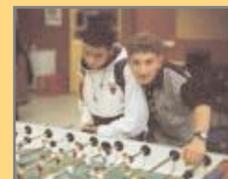**DJI**

Deutsches
Jugendinstitut

Informal Competencies and their Validation (ICOVET)

Manual for Using the Interview Guidelines

These Manual for using the interview guidelines were developed of the Leonardo project "Informal Competences and their Validation in Vocational Education and Training (ICOVET)" which is a cooperative effort of following eleven partners from six European countries.

AKC Ausbildungs- und Kulturcentrum Berlin, Germany

BFI Peters GmbH & Co. KG, Germany

CRED Centre for Research and Education Development, United Kingdom

Deutsches Jugendinstitut, Germany

Ergon Kek, Greece

INDOR, Spain

Institute of Educational Sciences Bucharest, Romania

Knownet, United Kingdom

Nexus Research Co-operative Dublin, Ireland

p&w praxis und wissenschaft projekt GmbH, Germany

Waterford Youth Service, Ireland

ICOVET has three main objectives
- To develop methods (and instruments) that make visible (validate) competences that are of relevance to vocational education and training (VET), competences that are acquired by disadvantaged youth through processes of non-formal or informal learning.
- To develop strategies/methods/concepts of how these competences can be systematically used in vocational education and training (and in preparation for vocational education and training).
- To develop and test a train-the-trainer module that will enable training or teaching personnel to systematically use these competences in vocational education and training (and in preparation for vocational education and training).

Leonardo da Vinci
ICOVET

Manual for Using the Interview Guidelines:

Stimulating self-reflection and awareness of competences and increasing self-esteem among disadvantaged young people

Making young people's competencies visible

1. Background to the ICOVET project

Invisible Competences

Young people tend to acquire a range and variety of skills and competences through processes of non-formal and informal learning. These skills may be developed when they take on certain responsibilities within their own family, when they meet up with friends, or when they get involved in sport, music-making, through involvement in employment or indeed as a result of voluntary or community work. These skills may be related to being able to work in a team, being able to organise things, being flexible, and being reliable. Young people are often not even aware of this themselves.

These competences that have been acquired therefore may well be extremely relevant in terms of the formal arena of vocational education and training. These skills and competences however cannot be used systematically, because these competences tend to be invisible. This is especially the case for disadvantaged young people, for whom the experience of engaging with the formal environment of the school or training centre has not been successful.

School-leaving certificates often do not accurately validate the skill level of young people. They tend to neglect levels of basic skills and procedural knowledge. In particular, there is a lack of information on the skills and competences gained during extra-curricular experiences (e.g. employment, voluntary work, the use of new media).

Awareness of such competences can be very relevant for increasing a young person's self esteem, their sense of self worth, as well as their interests in education and their employability. For young people, the lack of specifically tailored support for their individual skills often results in a negative understanding of their abilities and low self-esteem. This can influence attitudes toward further learning.

Where does ICOVET come in?

The ICOVET project is examining strategies to make these informally or non-formally gained competences visible in order to

- enable disadvantaged young people to better understand their own competences and to learn how to use them in engaging with the formal world of vocational education and training,
- give teachers in schools of general education a better understanding of pupils` competences acquired outside schools and should enable teachers to systematically use these competences in preparing for VET,
- give disadvantaged young people better access to training and employment in companies,
- likewise enable companies or training institutions to systematically use these competences in VET.

Within this context, ICOVET has two main objectives:

1. To develop methods (an instruments) that make visible (validate) competences that are of relevance to vocational education and training (VET), competences that are acquired by disadvantaged youth through processes of non-formal or informal learning.

2. To develop strategies/ methods/ concepts of how these competences can be systematically used in vocational education and training (and in preparation for vocational education and training).

To meet these objectives, ten partners from six European countries have been undertaking the following steps:

- examining existing strategies and instruments of validation
- on this basis: designing and testing an instrument that is appropriate for the target group

Target Groups and Sectors

The key target group for this project is disadvantaged young people at transition stage between school education and vocational training, i.e. adolescents that have been excluded from regular, vocational qualifications due to unsuitable school education, social disadvantages, or structural discrimination and have not managed to find support matching their particular conditions and requirements. Secondly, the project targets experts working in institutions that offer relevant opportunities, and policy makers of the educational sector, social welfare, labour administration on a regional, national and European level responsible for the design of such support programmes. The third target group form human resource departments of companies, chambers and similar institutions.

Target sectors are institutions that offer specifically support programmes for disadvantaged young people. In Germany these are: polytechnics, youth welfare service, companies. In Greece, Great Britain, Ireland and Romania and Spain equivalent institutions offering vocational qualification programmes to disadvantaged adolescents post school education. Together these institutions share the desire to recondition the support for social disadvantage, to develop and build on social and personal skills, tackle learning deficits and offer opportunities to catch up on missed educational qualifications, helping to find suitable professional perspectives and relevant training, mediation of basic skills necessary for successful learning.

Early work in developing the validation tool

The initial stage of the project involved the publication of a set of methods for validating skills gained through informal and non-formal learning. The basis for this was a comparative analysis of different procedures and instruments of all ICOVET partner countries. The aim was to establish a participatory set of methods matching the requirements and conditions of schools and institutions on the one hand and young people on the other.

Main emphasis is placed on key skills representative of the age group i.e. relevant skills for vocational qualification gained during time spend with peers, in jobs, with the use of new media, during internships, travelling, sports, voluntary work etc. The initial step here is to identify unrealised skill potential and then to organise these abilities i.e. establish reference points for validation and reliability criteria with an emphasis on transparency and quality.

The validation tool itself

In essence, the tool is a set of guidelines. It of probing questions, aimed at drawing a qualitative response from the young person.

The project initially examined whether an existing e-portfolio system would work with the target groups. This "e" aspect of the portfolio development was sidelined as a result of negative feedback from young people and the interviewers.

The underlying methodological approach has been based on one-to-one contact with young people, engaging with them on their level, asking them key questions, allowing them to expand on their own real-life experiences, using the expertise of the interviewer to draw out key competences from the discussion, elaborating on these competences, eliciting detail in the examples, ensuring that the young person felt engaged in this interview process, aiming to promote confidence in the young person through the experience of being interviewed.

Privacy and ownership issues

As the tool is completed through a number of sessions between the young person and the facilitator, very valuable and detailed data is collected, demonstrating and validating the skills and competences of the young person in question.

This data is owned wholly by the young person. It is a matter of choice for the young person as to what happens next with the completed tool. Where it is considered useful, the young person will be encouraged to engage and work within the EuroPASS infrastructure. However this is the choice of the young person.

The young person will be encouraged to maintain the tool as a living document. As skills and competences are further explored, developed and honed, the young person will be facilitated in adding to the tool.

Other supporting work to the tool

To support staff in their role as facilitators, the project has worked on a framework and best practice guide. The best practice guide is envisaged as a guideline for schools and institutions providing them with valuable information for the tool for different target groups.

To support this, a train-the-trainer module seeks to establish systematic reference to the changing teaching/learning dynamic by communicating to the teaching staff new perspectives for more mentor-oriented and more supportive education models based on higher transparency of qualifications and skills. This specifically designed module is to match the requirements of training staff. Emphasis is placed on how much teachers and trainers can support the informal and non-formal learning experiences in the institutional context in their roles as advisors and mediators.

On the basis of the findings, teachers, instructors, and social workers can in turn adapt their teaching and training more appropriately to the young people and their special abilities. Finally, potential employers can obtain additional expert information about candidates' abilities that goes beyond traditional marks in school certificates.

2.   Overview of the validation tool: Questions and Answers

2.1   What does the tool for assessing competences look like? Is there a prepared list of questions that you go through?

No, the basis of it is talks with the young people that a trained interviewer carries out according to specific guidelines. The tool consists of a guideline for interviews relating to seven areas:

- leisure time
- family
- school/training
- voluntary involvement
- jobs
- health
- special life situations

The assumption is that young people acquire abilities in at least one of these areas and that they will want to talk about it.

2.2 How do you set up the interview to ensure that the tool has maximum impact?

There are a number of requirements for the interview:

- The interview takes place on a one-to-one setting
- The young person must feel comfortable
- Ideally, the young person has a trusting relationship with the interviewer
- The young person is involved in the process on a voluntary basis

2.3 And how does the discussion then proceed?

The interviewer first presents all of the seven areas to the young person. The young person then picks the area that appeals to him or her most. Starting questions for each area, which make it easier to start the discussion off, are listed in the guideline. They are always open-ended questions.

The interviewer is then required to go on asking questions until a clearly outlined activity can be described. The young person can then assess which abilities were needed for it and what they learned from it. The activities and abilities are documented and listed. The document is the property of the young person; he or she alone can decide what s going be done with it.

2.4 Who are the interviewers?

The interview guideline takes a resource-oriented approach. It is designed for youth workers, specialists in youth welfare services and also for teachers who want to find out what the strengths and abilities of young people are in order to adapt the support they provide accordingly. The ideal scenario would involve use of the tool during the transition from school to vocational training or work for example, as part of careers advice in schools.

The school students can first think on their own about things they do in any of the areas, and this can then be explored in greater depth during the discussion and compared with specific characteristics and abilities. In addition, the guide can be used in careers preparation and vocational training as a diagnostic tool to discuss and document developments. If employment agency staff are also pursuing the same goals and they can abide by the requirements of the interview set up, there is no reason why they cannot use the guide as well.

2.5 Is training provided for the interviewers?

A train-the-trainers module will be made available online. It will explain the educational approach, the potential target groups, and the general set-up.

2.6 How have young people reacted to early testing?

The response has been very positive. Young people are pleased that somebody is finally taking an interest in what they do after school. And they enjoy explaining in detail what they get up to with their friends and in their family. They were very surprised to be asked by an adult what their favourite subject is.

In young people between the ages of 17 and 21, the top priority is training or a professional occupation. In this case what matters in the interview is how each person is able to deal with conflicts in the workplace, the best way of articulating what they want, and how to deal with problems. The areas that are most frequently discussed are friendship and family . Everyone has something to say about these. The areas of voluntary activities and health were hardly ever mentioned in the testing in Germany. Testing in Ireland presented similar results.

2.7 How long do the discussions last on average?

The talks take much more time than was originally thought. The interviewer has to keep the list of activities in mind the whole time, so that he or she has to keep guiding the focus back to the detailed description of activities. It is better not to discuss all the areas, but to concentrate on one or two activities.

The maximum for one interview session is one hour. After this, the young person loses interest. It is always possible to return for a second or third session if the young person is eager to continue.

2.8 The young people's own reports are the main source for competence validation, then. Is it not possible for their self-assessments to be quite off the mark, or for them just to be making things up?

Of course they can. We are well aware ourselves how far apart other people s perceptions of us can be from our own. We are all accustomed to being assessed by other people by teachers with grades, or by external examiners. Such traditions are based on the idea that more objectivity can be achieved by outside assessment. But there have been studies showing how subjective the marks given in school can be.

In the ICOVET project, we also want our questions to encourage disadvantaged young people to take a closer look at their own abilities and learn to assess them more realistically. So we use both aspects self-assessment and confirmation by someone they relate to, such as a trainer in a football club, or their mother.

If there is a problem, it does not lie so much in overestimation of their own abilities, it is a much bigger challenge to deduce acquired abilities from what is sometimes a quite detailed description of activities. Agreeing about what it is meant is certainly quite time-consuming. It is not easy to find the right terms for certain abilities, because the young people, each of the interviewers, and of course each potential reader of the competence profile may associate something different with the particular attribute.

2.9 But that means in the end that there is no comparability in the ICOVET certificates.

That s right, the final product from the interview process is not meant to replace school reports or testimonials. This may mean that a young person might not get a job because another candidate's ICOVET certificate is better or worse . It is not an evaluation measure- it is more a "resource-oriented diagnostic procedure". In addition to diagnosis, it also has an educational aim, namely to direct the young person's attention to their own strengths. When a young woman becomes aware that she has also learnt something important outside of school, where she may have had difficulties and that this type of learning takes place incidentally and can even be fun, the insight is capable of motivating her for future activities. She will take a closer look at that type of activity and will be more likely to be aware of her own progress.

2.10 The competences recorded in the ICOVET validation are also to be transferred to the EuroPASS. What is EuroPASS?

EuroPASS is intended to make it easier to apply for jobs inside Europe. It consists of several documents a curriculum vitae, a language pass, an explanation of certificates and testimonials, etc. Anyone can use these documents to document and present his or her experience at home or abroad. The EuroPASS presents a comprehensive overall picture of an individual's qualifications and competences and makes comparisons easier in the European context.

Anyone can download the standard forms from the Internet and fill them out, and detailed instructions are also provided in various languages (http://www.europass-info.de, http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/europass/home/hornav/Introduction/navigate.action).

During the project, the idea came up that the abilities identified could be linked with the competence classification in the EuroPASS Curriculum Vitae. At the end of the consultation, the young people taking part are meant to have a document they can be proud of and which they can use for their subsequent vocational training and education.

This is a great opportunity to use an established tool that was also developed in the European context. The EuroPASS Curriculum Vitae has a separate heading for personal competences, which in turn are subdivided into social, organisational, technical, computing, and artistic competences. Within the project, we have kept to this classification of competences and we attempt to fit the abilities that are identified into that scheme.

The problem of transfer comes up again here, however. A few suggestions have been made for describing the competences, but they are not adequate for our target group. It would be helpful if EuroPASS could offer a ready-made list with definitions of the competences that are given.

3.　　Specific pedagogic approaches and ethical issues

3.1　Clearly stating the purpose and added value of the experience

In the case of working with many disadvantaged young people, the interviewer must make every effort to motivate the young person for the interview to make them understand that this might be an useful experience for him/her. This mission may be especially difficult because many young persons are not familiar with this type of experience. They may find it difficult to understand the manner in which this interview could help them in practical terms.

This is why it is very important for the interviewer to understand how the interviewed young persons could use the experience, the interviewer should get to know the personal story of the interviewed and his or her own context (if the interviewer is not already familiar with these details). It is important to make clear from the very beginning the purpose of the interview and to highlight the added value of the experience, framing this value within the context of the personal story of the interviewed person.

3.2　Understanding and respecting cultural differences

The interviewer that intends to apply the tool should be first aware of the life context of the disadvantaged young person, for instance in working with young Roma people in Romania or young Travellers in Ireland or young Turkish women in Germany, the interviewer must be extremely aware about the culture, social perception, habits and history of the ethnic groups. There are some specific sensitive issues that can disturb the interview, in case are not taken into consideration. Some of the most important specific **cultural factors** that have to be considered are the following:

- language
- gender stereotypes
- social discrimination experience of the group, but also the personal history of the discrimination
- specific group values related to education, work, life in general
- specific role in the family
- poverty experience

Information regarding these factors should be studied and reflected upon by a potential interviewer before starting the interview. We would like to talk a bit more on the language issue.

3.3   Language

If the young person speaks and has a good comprehension of the language of majority, then the language issue may not be a real concern for the use of the validation tool. However, in order to detect this, there should be a preliminary discussion with the young person. If we discover that language is an issue, there are **two alternatives**:

- use a **double interviewer procedure**, the specialised interviewer and a community facilitator that is acting in the community, a friend of the young person that is speaking the language or a member of the family of the interviewed;
- **find and train a pool of native language speakers** (that have the necessary prerequisite to be an interviewer) on the tool and let them do the interview.

Both alternatives can have strengths and weaknesses that can be discussed, but most favourable solution is to analyse the following aspects carefully before choosing one of the above alternatives:

- resources available;
- the community context;
- perceptions in the community toward the facilitator that we are going to involve;
- the relationship between young person and the friend or a member of the family that we are going to ask for help;
- the profile of the young person to be interviewed.

3.4   Understanding the context and the background of their previous school experience

The former school experience of many disadvantaged young people may have been significantly different than those young people who have had a successful experience of the formal education system. There may have been experience of discrimination, there may have been competing specific values and perceptions in relation to education promoted by their families. It might be the case that they are tempted to deny any other type of learning experience, because the notion of "learning" has negative connotations.

That is why, before applying the ICOVET tool, it would be a good idea to research with the interviewed persons, the story of their schooling experience, trying to understand:

- What is his/her attitude towards school and education?
- Did they feel that they had experienced discrimination in school?
- How had they dealt with the feeling of failure in school?
- What were the main reasons for drop-out, in their opinion?

3.5   Building an optimum level of mutual trust

Some core elements of the tool aim to explore the private sphere for the interviewed persons. However, it must be borne in mind that the young person might not wish to discuss or open up these topics because of the possible fear for *socially not desirable answers*. For instance, the young person may have been engaged in illegal work experiences and the person may not be happy to share this experience, even if it could be a good example of different types of competences that they have acquired. To avoid such situations, it is critical for the interviewer to build an optimum

level of mutual trust. This can be done either in the first stage when we present our selves as an interviewer and when we explain the purpose of the tool, but signs of trust should be sent constantly during the interview.

3.6   Searching the level of expectations for their future learning experiences

Because of economic constraints, many families in disadvantaged settings may have short-term expectations with regards to their children's educational prospects. This again should be borne in mind by the interviewer. If it is reasonable during the interview, the interviewer may introduce positive and concrete examples of the benefits of addressing lifelong learning opportunities. Such a perspective may in some way encourage the interviewed young person to reflect on further learning experiences.

3.7   Pay attention to the survival strategies and try to understand them

In some cases, you might expect strong feedback, active participation to discussion from the side of a disadvantaged young person. We should research if this is authentic or is only a survival strategy that it used sometimes in order to make his/her image *appropriate*. Many disadvantaged young people may learn from their experience of discrimination that it can be generally quite productive for them to dissimulate. And this is perfectly understandable. This may well be the case for all interviewed persons who have experienced cognitive and affective dissonance in their previous learning experiences in school, family or in the community.

For some other persons, the survival strategy might be more aggressive. It would be advisable to stop the interview in case any sign of rejection is noticed during the interview.

4.   Practical suggestions for the interviewers

In terms of practical suggestions, we can draw attentions to the following aspects that we think are important in case of Roma young people:

4.1   Preparing the interview preliminary contact

If working with communities who have different living conditions, engage in traditional activities, or experience a heightened level of segregation, it is necessary that before starting the interview, it is important to collect useful information related to the real life context of the interviewee. A pre-meeting might precede the interview itself, where small talk can prepare the ground for the stage of applying the tool. Even a visit to the community might be extremely useful, because this way we can find important information to better understand the interviewee's life story.

In the preliminary meeting, general questions like: What do you usually do during the day? When and how do you start in the morning? With whom do you spend the evenings? What is your role in the family? How do you see your living conditions?

It may be necessary to ensure parental agreement. Obviously, do this sensitively.

4.2   Choosing the best space for discussion

The young person to be interviewed may be more confident if the interview is done in his/her own environment. But this does not necessarily mean their family or their community; even when in some cases the young person may have a high sense of community and strong family relationships. This depends rather on the type of relation that the interviewee has with his/her

belonging family or community. Try to investigate which is the best place that provides confidence to him/her.

4.3   Using relevant examples

Providing examples in order to encourage the interviewee is an obvious and general aspect in a interview. In the case of disadvantaged young people, we should look for relevant examples for their lifestyle and context. This means that the interviewer should know beforehand some features about the context and life experience of the young person.

4.4   Interviewer profile

To sum up, apart from being transparent with the purpose of the tool and presenting good skills as an interviewer, the following qualities are necessary:

- good knowledge of the life situation of the young person, especially when the young person is a member of a minority group (social disadvantage features, education and employment barriers);

- good knowledge of the community that the young persons belong to;

- willing to be free of any type of prejudice;

- general community research skills.

5.   Adapting the tool content

It is critical for users of the tool to understand that the tool is both flexible and adaptable to its very core. This is the key design feature of the tool.

Depending on the target group, some small changes might be necessary. These changes are at the call of the interviewer.

For instance in working with young people from the Roma community, some changes may be introduced in sections related to Civic, Social and Political Involvement, Household and Family, Jobs and Work Experiences. Changes are regarded as:

- some questions might be avoided;

- some other questions can be changed not in meaning, but only in terms, in order to avoid misunderstandings and misinterpretations.

- some additional questions might be useful in few cases in order to search some aspects of their lifestyle that have not been mentioned.

See below for specific comments and examples on the tool.

6.   Preparing to use the validation tool in practice

6.1   Objectives

Young people acquire competencies not only at school, vocational education and training and other formal learning settings. They also acquire competencies when they take up responsibilities within their family, when they are meeting their friends, when they work in jobs, when they engage in sports or music, when they do volunteer work.

It is the purpose of this validation tool, to make visible competencies that have been acquired by young people in various areas of activities outside formal learning. Making these competencies visible should be useful for a number of reasons:

- Making competencies visible will help the young person to better understand what abilities she/he has and how these abilities can be applied in further learning, in vocational training, in a job but also in private life.

- Making competencies visible will help educators (teachers, trainers, social workers) to better link education and training to what competencies the young person has already acquired.

- Making competencies visible to prospective employers will help them to learn more about the abilities of applicants that are not shown in the certificates that they are able to present.

This validation tool is designed to achieve the following objectives:

- At the end of the interview process, the interviewer (facilitator) and the young person will have clarified how specific activities and experiences of the young person relate to competencies or abilities. Activities and competencies will be recorded in a document that will be owned by the young person and can be used at her/his will.

- In addition, the interviewer and young person will cooperate to translate these competencies into the terminology of the EuroPASS. With the EuroPASS the young person will own a document that has been specifically designed for effective presentation of one's competencies and experiences to prospective employers and institutions of education and training and has found wide acceptance in many European countries.

6.2   How can competencies be made visible in an interview?

It should be made clear to the young person that the purpose of the interview is to learn more about competencies that she/he has acquired in various areas of activities. Of course, the young person will – in the course of the interview – want to talk about particular troubles as well as what pleases her/him etc. This cannot be ignored by the facilitator. Nevertheless it is her/his task to keep the focus on activities that involve the acquisition of competencies. After all, to be able to talk about things she/he can do, should be gratifying to the young person!

In order to support the interview process, for each area of activities a few questions and examples are proposed. The questions and examples are intended to serve as a general introduction into whatever the young person may attribute specific significance to. Activities of great importance to the young person and high relevance to the acquisition of competencies should become apparent in the discussion. If activities are considered of significant importance, efforts should be made to collect specific and concrete information.

In order to learn more about what a person has learned in an activity, the facilitator will need very specific information about what the young person is/ has been doing in an activity.

To give an example: the hobby "collecting stamps" may simply involve going to a shop and buying a set of stamps and putting them into a drawer. But collecting stamps can also involve a wide range of operations: learning about countries, finding sources were you can get stamps for free, exchanging stamps with persons in other countries, etc.

To provide this type of concrete and specific information will be important as a first step on the route to drawing conclusions about competencies that have been acquired.

6.3 How can competencies be "validated"?

It is the purpose of the interview, to produce evidence that the activities described have actually taken place and that the competencies that are recorded presumably have been acquired.

In general, it cannot be the facilitator's task to verify information beyond what has been produced in the interview. There may be circumstances, though, where gathering additional evidence could help to considerably improve the quality of information and thus be of great use for the young person. For example, should the young person describe a period of youth working in a voluntary capacity or a role on a sports team, the facilitator and the young person can determine how this information can be validated by the specific youth club or sports coach.

6.4 Procedures

To make competencies visible that have been acquired in various areas of the young person's life, the facilitator will interview the young person. This interview can be completed in one session. To translate the results of the interview into the EuroPASS terminology and to agree on a procedure to produce the EuroPASS a second session will be needed. If a young person engages in a large variety of activities or if her/his span of attention is limited, more than two sessions may be necessary.

To help structure the process, it is proposed to use the following procedure:

Step One: the facilitator and the young person will inspect a list of areas of activities (you will find that list on page 15) to determine which of these areas should be covered in the interviews (set priorities!).

Step Two: the facilitator and the young person will discuss activities and experiences in the selected areas one by one. For this purpose, the facilitator will use the questions and examples given for each area of activities as a starting point or a stimulus. Beyond that, it will be up to the skills and knowledge of the facilitator to go into depth where activities seem particularly relevant to the acquisition of competencies.

Step Three: the facilitator and the young person will determine which activities and related competences will be recorded (examples are given for each area of activities). They will record these on the form.

Step Four: A summary of these activities and related competences will be compiled by the electronic document. This electronic document and a print out of this document will be owned by the young person.

Step Five: When this compilation has been completed and agreed upon, the facilitator and the young person will discuss how this list can be translated into the EuroPASS terminology of personal skills and competencies (examples of a translation into EuroPASS terminology can be found on pages **Fehler! Textmarke nicht definiert.** to **Fehler! Textmarke nicht definiert.**).

The personal skills and competences used in the EuroPASS are:

- **Social skills and competences** (that refer to living and working with other people, in positions where communication is important and situations where teamwork is essential (for example culture and sports), in multicultural environments, etc.

- **Organisational skills and competences** (that refer to coordination and administration of people, projects and budgets; at work, in voluntary work (for example culture and sports) and at home, etc.

- **Technical skills and competences** (that refer to mastery of specific kinds of equipment, machinery, etc. other than computers, or to technical skills and competences in a specialised field (manufacturing industry, health, banking, etc.).

- **Computer skills and competences** (that refer to word processing and other applications, database searching, acquaintance with Internet, advanced skills (programming etc.)

- **Artistic skills and competences** (which are an asset (music; writing; design, etc.)

- **Other skills and competences** (which are an asset and are not mentioned under earlier headings (hobbies; sports, positions of responsibility in voluntary organisations)

Step Six: As a last step, the facilitator and the young person will come to an agreement on how an individualized copy of the EuroPASS will be produced, what support will be needed and how support will be provided.

6.5   Areas of activities

It is proposed to use the following list of areas of activities to determine, together with the young person, what areas should be covered in the interview. The rationale for choosing any of these areas is evidently because they are important to her/him and because they are likely to involve the acquisition of competencies.

When discussing this list, the facilitator should give examples of how within theses areas of activities competencies might possibly be acquired.

Example: When meeting your friends, you may be the one who proposes activities, organises activities, contacts agencies about rooms to use etc. Perhaps you have a good ability to organise things?

List of areas of activities:

1) Interests, hobbies, sports, socialising: Things that you do in your "Down time" or "Spare time"

2) Household and Family: Things you do in the family that you have grown up in or in your own family or household (if you have one)

3) School and Vocational Training: Things you do outside the classroom and formal training activities

4) Civic, Social and Political Involvement: Things you do in your youth club, your sporting club, but also for the community, political commitment, neighbours etc.

5) Jobs and Work Experiences: Things you do in jobs that you hold or work experience you have been in.

6) Well being and health: Things that you do to look and feel good and healthy

7) Specific Life Situations: Difficult life situations that you have gone through and things you have done to manage.

7. The validation toll in practice

7.1 Interests, hobbies, sports, socialising: Things that you do in your "Down time"

Starting questions may be:
- What are your interests, hobbies, sports you engage in?
- How much time do you spend doing it/them?
- How important is this in your life?
- What else do you do in your free time?
- Do you do this alone or with other people?

The facilitator will want to find out: What exactly does the young person do? How much time does she/he spend on this activity? What skills/abilities does she/he need to do the things she/he does? At what level of competence does she/he engage in activities? What kind of responsibility does she/her bear for tasks and persons?

Example 1:

Activity What are you doing?	Areas of Competence Which abilities do you need in doing so? What did you learn?	EuroPASS Skills/Abilities
I have been a dancer in a break dance group for a half year. We are 8 dancers, 6 boys and 2 girls. We train for three hours once a week and I take part very regularly. At home I practice the figures and positions by myself. I have come up with ideas for our choreography and I have created my own solo part. Last month we performed at two neighbourhood events and these were great successes.	I have learned how to control my body. I am able to contribute to shaping our performance. I have learned to be a reliable and considerate member of our group. After having had two public performances I manage a lot better my nervousness in similar situations.	☒ Social skills ☐ Organisational skills ☐ Technical skills ☐ Computer skills ☒ Artistic skills ☐ Others skills

Example 2:

Activity What are you doing?	Areas of Competence Which abilities do you need in doing so? What did you learn?	EuroPASS Skills/Abilities
It is custom in my ethnical background to know how to play an instrument. We enjoy much music and dance. I know to sing since I was born! I practice singing whenever there is an event in our community. Sometimes, my father takes me to weddings to help him entertain people. Last month I performed at two neighbourhood-wedding events and these were great successes.	I have learned from my father how to play music. I am able to contribute to shaping our performance. I have learned to be a reliable person and entertain at different events. After participating at two weddings I manage a lot better my nervousness in similar situations	☒ Social skills ☒ Organisational skills ☐ Technical skills ☐ Computer skills ☒ Artistic skills ☐ Others skills

7.2 Household and Family: Things you do in the family that you have grown up in or in your own family or household (if you have one)

Starting questions may be:

- Where do you live?
- Who do you live with?
- What things do you have to do where you live (responsibilities)?
- What activities do you do with your family?
- If this involves care for your own child or younger sibling(s): How much time do you spend caring for them?
- How do you manage your money?

The facilitator will want to find out: What members are in the families/household and what are their roles? What kind of responsibility does the young person bear for tasks and persons? What exactly does she/he do (cook, fix things, other house hold tasks)? At what level of intensity and competence does she/he engage in these activities?

Example 1:

Activity What are you doing?	Areas of Competence Which abilities do you need in doing so? What did you learn?	EuroPASS Skills/Abilities
My mother takes care of everything, but there are things I do because I like to do them. I like to cook. I use cook books. I like to try new things. I go and buy ingredients. I take care of the whole meal. Sometimes I improvise, i.e. if an ingredient is not available or the number of persons changes. Sometimes friends or siblings help. Then I am the chef and organise the work.	When I like to do things, I can do the whole thing. I do the planning. I can organise the process (timing is important!). I know how to adapt my plans to the situation. I am able to organise work for a team.	☐ Social skills ☒ Organisational skills ☐ Technical skills ☐ Computer skills ☐ Artistic skills ☒ Others skills

Example 2:

Activity What are you doing?	Areas of Competence Which abilities do you need in doing so? What did you learn?	EuroPASS Skills/Abilities
I am the oldest of six children in my family. I take care of them usually after school. I like to cook. I don't use a cookbook. I learned from my grandmother. I like to try new things. All the ingredients I need I usually have in my garden, or I ask my family to buy it for me. Sometimes I improvise, i.e. if an ingredient is not available or the number of persons changes. Sometimes friends or siblings help.	I learned to be responsible and to know that someone else depends on me. I know how to feed, clean and to help my younger sisters and brothers.	☒ Social skills ☒ Organisational skills ☐ Technical skills ☐ Computer skills ☐ Artistic skills ☐ Others skills

7.3 School and Vocational Training: Things you do outside the classroom and formal training activities

Starting questions may be:

- Apart from school work did you do anything else in school, e.g. were you a member of a team/ club/ society - (Sport/ Drama/ Art)

- Which elective course did you choose?

- What exactly was your task?

- What exactly did you do?

The facilitator will want to find out: What extracurricular activities does the young person engage in (sports, music, school newspaper, school company, creating a school website, support other students, volunteering work, help to organise excursions and festivities)? How much time does she/he spend on these activities or any one of them? What skills/abilities does she/he need to do the things she/he does? At what level of competence does she/he engage in activities? What kind of responsibility does she/her bear for tasks and persons? What did she/he learn? Which abilities does she/he need in doing so?

Example 1:

Activity What are you doing?	Areas of Competence Which abilities do you need in doing so? What did you learn?	EuroPASS Skills/Abilities
For the second time, myself and six other people organised the annual school party, I am responsible for music. The week before the party, we pass out question-naires in all classes to find out what music they want to hear. Together with a cousin of mine I provide the sound equipment and select the music (my cousin is a DJ). A friend and I lay on the music.	I know a lot about different music styles and have got a good music collection. I know how to meet different tastes of music. I have learned how to organise a big event (using check lists, work in a team, coordinate different steps of preparation). People can depend on me: When the party starts, everything will be well prepared.	☒ Social skills ☐ Organisational skills ☐ Technical skills ☐ Computer skills ☐ Artistic skills ☐ Others skills

Example 2:

Activity What are you doing?	Areas of Competence Which abilities do you need in doing so? What did you learn?	EuroPASS Skills/Abilities
I was involved in the school football team for most of the year until I injured my knee. When I was injured I still went along to the matches to help the coach with the football gear.	I had to stay fit, even when I was injured, which meant doing diffe-rent types of training. I know a lot about different tactics. The manager and coach can depend on me for turning up. I helped with making sure that the gear was ready for the team.	☒ Social skills ☒ Organisational skills ☐ Technical skills ☐ Computer skills ☐ Artistic skills ☐ Others skills

7.4 Civic, Social and Political Involvement: Things you do in your youth club, your sporting club, but also for the community, political commitment, neighbours etc.

Starting questions may be:

- Do you do volunteer work: in a youth club, in a sports club, in a neighbourhood organisation, in environmental activities, in animal protection groups?

- Are you engaged with any type of political activities? Have you been on a march/protest?

- What exactly did you do?

The facilitator will want to find out: Does the young people do volunteer work: What exactly does the young person do? How much time does she/he spend on this activity? What skills/abilities does she/he need to do the things she/he does? At what level of competence does she/he engage in activities? What kind of responsibility does she/her bear for tasks and persons? Which abilities does she/he need in doing so? What did she/he learn?

Example 1:

Activity What are you doing?	Areas of Competence Which abilities do you need in doing so? What did you learn?	EuroPASS Skills/Abilities
About a year ago, I have started helping out in an animal shelter one day during the week and on weekends. I feed the animals, talk to the parrots and walk the dogs. I am there when the veterinarian stops by and answer her questions and help her to calm the animals. I also try to find new homes for some of the animals, pass out leaflets. I promote animal protection at school and among my friends. My dream is to become a keeper.	I know how to take care of animals. I have learned a lot about behaviour and needs of animals and I recognise when they are ill. The veterinary says that I am her best assistant. The shelter personnel appreciate that I am very reliable and that they can depend on me for the tasks that have been transferred to me.	☒ Social skills ☒ Organisational skills ☐ Technical skills ☐ Computer skills ☐ Artistic skills ☒ Others skills

Example 2:

Activity What are you doing?	Areas of Competence Which abilities do you need in doing so? What did you learn?	EuroPASS Skills/Abilities
About a year ago, I have been on the youth club's soccer team. I am the right defender. My dream is to become a famous soccer player, like Ionita, from Steaua. For the moment I volunteered my self to compose a hymn for our Steaua supporters in my neighbourhood!	I know how to save almost all the passes coming my way. The most important thing is that I learned how to work on and with a team. We each know what is expected of us when we are on the field. Without communication, we cannot win. A hymn for our Steaua will mean a lot for our supporter's community!	☒ Social skills ☐ Organisational skills ☐ Technical skills ☐ Computer skills ☒ Artistic skills ☒ Others skills

7.5 Jobs and Work Experiences: Things you do on jobs that you hold or work experience you have been in

Starting questions may be:
- Do you have a job?
- Are you paid for it and if so how much?
- Have you tried to find this kind of work? How did you do that?
- Did you work alone mainly or together with other colleagues in a team?
- Have you gone through work experience?
- What do you like about this area of work / profession? Why?
- Have you thought about what kind of work you would like to do now?
- What has your work experience been so far?

The facilitator will want to find out:

What exactly does the young person do? Which kinds of work experience has he/ she had? In which circumstances (internship, paid job, summer job)? How much time does she/he spend on this job etc.? What skills/abilities does she/he need in order to do the things she/he does? What kind of responsibility does she/her bear for tasks and persons? What did she/he learn? What is expected from her/him? Which abilities does she/he need in doing so?

Example 1:

Activity What are you doing?	Areas of Competence Which abilities do you need in doing so? What did you learn?	EuroPASS Skills/Abilities
I deliver newspapers and leaflets every Saturday in all kind of weather in order to earn some cash so that I can go clubbing or out dancing with my friends. That takes me three hours. Sometimes in bad weather, my friend helps me, so I am faster and we share the money. It's convenient for me that I do not have to be very punctual; I can afford to start late from time to time.	I am reliable. People can trust me to deliver all newspapers in the agreed time. I am also communicative. If the door is locked I am ringing the door bell, in order to deliver as many newspapers as possible.	☒ Social skills ☒ Organisational skills ☐ Technical skills ☐ Computer skills ☐ Artistic skills ☐ Others skills

Example 2:

Activity What are you doing?	Areas of Competence Which abilities do you need in doing so? What did you learn?	EuroPASS Skills/Abilities
I sell newspapers almost every, but especially on weekends, in all kind of weather in order to earn some cash for my family. It could take sometimes all day long and in bad weather. Sometimes, my little bother or sister helps me, so I am faster and we share the money. It's convenient for me that I sell as many as possible; sometimes I get paid by how many newspapers I sell.	I am reliable. If a client refuses me, I keep trying in order to sell as many newspapers as possible. I am conscious that I have a responsibly towards my family.	☒ Social skills ☒ Organisational skills ☐ Technical skills ☐ Computer skills ☐ Artistic skills ☐ Others skills

7.6 Well being and health: Things that you do to look and feel good and healthy

Starting questions may be:

- How do you look after your appearance?
- What do you eat?
- Do you cook your own food?
- Do you do your own shopping?
- Do you wear different clothes for doing different things?

The facilitator will want to find out: What does balanced diet and health issues mean to the young person? How important are appearance, clothes, hair style and shape of the body or body modification? How much time does she/he spend on appearance? How much is health awareness a distinctive feature of his/ her personality?

Example:

Activity What are you doing?	Areas of Competence Which abilities do you need in doing so? What did you learn?	EuroPASS Skills/Abilities
I do weight training at home daily to get stronger and for a better looks. I got the set of exercises from a friend who goes to a gym.	I am focussed. I want to reach my aim of a well shaped body. I make good progress and that's why I am motivated. Nothing and nobody puts me off doing my daily work-out.	☒ Social skills ☐ Organisational skills ☐ Technical skills ☐ Computer skills ☐ Artistic skills ☐ Others skills

Example 2:

Activity What are you doing?	Areas of Competence Which abilities do you need in doing so? What did you learn?	EuroPASS Skills/Abilities
I respect my tradition by braiding my hair and wearing long skirts. In my family we would cultivate vegetables and fruits trees for our meals. It depends a lot on the weather. It would take about two hours everyday for me.	I learned a lot about my culture and traditions. I want to reach my aim of being accepted by my community. I make good progress and that's why I am motivated to learn as much as possible. I learned how much to water the garden, when it is necessary and what kind of nutrition I need. I know that my family counts on me and that's the reason why I´m motivated.	☒ Social skills ☒ Organisational skills ☐ Technical skills ☐ Computer skills ☐ Artistic skills ☐ Others skills

7.7 Specific Life Situations: Difficult life situations that you have gone through and things you have done to manage

Starting questions may be:

- Have you ever or anyone close to you, had to deal with any of the following
  - Family separation
  - Bereavement
  - Homelessness
  - Illness
  - Pregnancy
  - Prison
  - Being in Care
  - Health Issues
  - Substance Misuse (drugs, alcohol)
- In which way were you involved?
- Do any of these issues still affect your life?
- If so how do you cope now?
- Which experiences did you make?
- Which conclusions do you draw from your experiences?

The facilitator will want to find out:

Which specific situation has the young person experienced? What exactly did the young person do in theses situations? What kind of responsibility does she/he bear for tasks and persons? What did she/he learn? Which experiences did she/he make? Which abilities does she/he need for doing what she/he does or did in such specific situations?

Example 1:

Activity What are you doing?	Areas of Competence Which abilities do you need in doing so? What did you learn?	EuroPASS Skills/Abilities
My mother was ill several months. I procured the medicines, called the doctor, shopped and prepared the meals and looked after my three younger brothers and sister.	I learned to cope without my interests largely. I needed much patience and had to be considerate of my mother's and my sibling's needs first. I had to handle disgusting situations. I am discreet because I promised not to speak about certain circumstances in my family. I know that crises should and must be overcome. I am optimistic that things will come good in due course.	☒ Social skills ☒ Organisational skills ☐ Technical skills ☐ Computer skills ☐ Artistic skills ☐ Others skills

Example 2:

Activity What are you doing?	Areas of Competence Which abilities do you need in doing so? What did you learn?	EuroPASS Skills/Abilities
I had to go through a couple of years between homes. I was in care during this time. My father was not well. I was homeless for two weeks.	I had to cope without new situations. I had to learn to be independent and know when to speak up. I think that I would be able to deal with another crisis if I had to.	☒ Social skills ☒ Organisational skills

7.8   My skills and abilities (name, surname)

Summery of all activities and areas of competence to transfer into the EuroPASS.
Taken from Example 1 above:

Activity What are you doing?	Areas of Competence Which abilities do you need in doing so? What did you learn?	EuroPASS Skills/Abilities
I have been a dancer in a break dance group for a half year. We are 8 dancers, 6 boys and 2 girls. We train for three hours once a week and I take part very regularly. At home I practice the figures and positions by myself. I have come up with ideas for our choreography and I have created my own solo part. Last month we performed at two neighbourhood events and these were great successes.	I have learned how to control my body. I am able to contribute to shaping our performance. I have learned to be a reliable and considerate member of our group. After having had two public performances I manage a lot better my nervousness in similar situations.	☒ Social skills I am reliable, considerate and disciplined. I was able to show these abilities at a break dance group. ☒ Artistic skills As a dancer in a break dance group I can dance figures and positions. I create solo parts and combine it with the choreography.

Activity What are you doing?	Areas of Competence Which abilities do you need in doing so? What did you learn?	EuroPASS Skills/Abilities
My mother takes care of everything, but there are things I do because I like to do them. I like to cook. I use cook books. I like to try new things. I go and buy ingredients. I take care of the whole meal. Sometimes I improvise, i.e. if an ingredient is not available or the number of persons changes. Sometimes friends or siblings help. Then I am the chef and organise the work	When I like to do things, I can do the whole thing. I do the planning. I can organise the process (timing is important!). I know how to adapt my plans to the situation. I am able to organise work for a team.	☒ Social skills I work independently and in a well-planned manner. I succeed in seeing my projects through from planning to finishing. ☒ Organisational skills I am most successful when I cook meals. I search for new recipes, buy ingredients independently and prepare - also together with other people - the meals. I learned to proceed in a well-planned manner, to calculate low-priced and also to arrange duties to other people. ☒ Others skills My hobby is cooking. I taught myself a lot of cooking skills, adopted from TV or from books.

Activity What are you doing?	Areas of Competence Which abilities do you need in doing so? What did you learn?	EuroPASS Skills/Abilities
For the second time, myself and six other people organised the annual school party, I am responsible for music. The week before the party, we pass out questionnaires in all classes to find out what music they want to hear. Together with a cousin of mine I provide the sound equipment and select the music (my cousin is a DJ). A friend and I lay on the music.	I know a lot about different music styles and have a good music collection. I know how to meet different tastes of music. I have learned how to organise a big event (using check lists, work in a team, coordinate different steps of preparation). People can depend on me: When the party starts, everything will be well prepared.	☒ Social skills I can work very well independently and also in a team. I was able to show these abilities at the preparation of parties at school. For example, I was responsible for the music (music selection, music plant, DJ).
About a year ago, I have started helping out in an animal shelter one day during the week and on weekends. I feed the animals, talk to the parrots and walk the dogs. I am there when the veterinarian stops by and answer her questions and help her to calm the animals. I also try to find new homes for some of the animals, pass out leaflets. I promote animal protection at school and among my friends. My dream is to become a keeper.	I know how to take care of animals. I have learned a lot about behaviour and needs of animals and I recognise when they are ill. The veterinary says that I am her best assistant. The shelter personnel appreciate that I am very reliable and that they can depend on me for the tasks that have been transferred to me.	☒ Social skills I am reliable and responsible. I am a good observer and I can deal with other people's needs. I was able to show these abilities during my work as a volunteer in an animal's shelter. ☒ Others skills I love animals. For more than one year I have been working voluntarily at the animal shelter. I feed and look after the animals and try to find new homes for some of them.
I deliver newspapers and leaflets every Saturday in all kind of weather in order to earn some cash so that I can go clubbing or out dancing with my friends. That takes me three hours. Sometimes in bad weather, my friend helps me, so I am faster and we share the money. It's convenient for me that I do not have to be very punctual; I can afford to start late from time to time.	I am reliable. People can trust me to deliver all newspapers in the agreed time. I am also communicative. If the door is locked I am ringing the door bell, in order to deliver as many newspapers as possible.	☒ Social skills I am frank with other people, I am communicative and I work reliably. I was able to show that during my job, delivering newspapers.

Activity What are you doing?	Areas of Competence Which abilities do you need in doing so? What did you learn?	EuroPASS Skills/Abilities
I do weight training at home daily to get stronger and for a better looks. I got the set of exercises from a friend who goes to a gym.	I am focussed. I want to reach my aim of a well shaped body. I make good progress and that's why I am motivated. Nothing and nobody puts me off doing my daily work-out.	☒ Social skills I think of myself as persistent and disciplined, because as a sportsman I am training daily.

My mother was ill several months. I procured the medicines, called the doctor, shopped and prepared the meals and looked after my three younger brothers and sister.	I learned to cope without my interests largely. I needed much patience and had to be considerate of my mother's and my sibling's needs first. I had to handle disgusting situations. I am discreet because I promised not to speak about certain circumstances in my family. I know that crises should and must be overcome. I am optimistic that things will come good in due course.	☒ Social skills I am sensitive to other people and I can deal well with the needs of others. I acquired this ability when I cared for my mother during her long illness. ☒ Organisational s. I can coordinate several tasks well; I am responsible person and do my tasks in time. During the long illness of my mother I led the household and cared for my younger brothers and sisters

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Referee

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Referee

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Signature Interviewer/Date