

**Name or title of the recognition tool/practice:****Keys for Life - Personal Competences Portfolio****Developed by:**

National Institute of Children and Youth, National Institute of Further Education, and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic

**Short description:**

Within the larger framework of recognising and validating non-formal education in Czech Republic, the Personal Competencies Portfolio (PCP) provides its users with an opportunity to self-assess competencies developed and translate them into a language accessible both for formal education and the employment field. The PCP provides a picture of the acquired competences (e.g. soft skills, knowledge, and educational experiences) that are usable for and transferable to different life situations as well as with regard to the constantly changing labour market. It is well integrated into the National Qualification Framework in the Czech Republic.

**Type of the tool/practice:**

Self-assessment tool, Assessment tool, Certificate/Attestation, Portfolio, Website/Platform/Blog

**Recognition dimensions addressed by the tool/practices:**

Self-recognition, Social recognition, Formal recognition, Political recognition

**Level of influence of your tool/practice:**

Organisational, National, International

**Target group(s) for the tool/practice:**

Young people, youth workers, NGOs working with children and Youth, and other stakeholders – educational institutions and employers

**Background and the context of development of the tool/practice:**

The tool was inspired by a broader political attempt – to recognize and validate non-formal education in Czech Republic. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS) and the National Institute of Children and Youth (NICY) have been implementing a four-year national project 'Keys for life – Developing Key Competences in Leisure-Time and Non Formal Education', since 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2009. It was based on two strategic documents: The Concept of the State Policy in the Sphere of Children and Youth for the Term of 2007–2013, and The Strategy of Continuous Education for the Czech Republic. The project was aimed at approximately forty five thousand workers of leisure time centres (LTC), after-school care centres (ASCC), school clubs (SC) and non-governmental organizations (NGO) throughout the Czech Republic. These are leisure time pedagogues, child-care workers, and volunteers working with children and young people, up to 30 years of age, in their leisure time (children and people up to 30 years of age represent more than a quarter of the entire Czech population).

The issue of NFE in the field of work with children and youth, related to broader employment issues through competence development, was quite new in the Czech Republic in 2009 and, as such, quite unexplored. The 'Keys for Life' project approached recognition of NFE from three different perspectives:

recognition of society usefulness; recognition by employers and self-recognition; and 'formal' recognition of competences acquired through NFE by the state administration and educational institutions.

In addition to the various activities undertaken, the project cooperated with two other major projects/processes: the *National Register of Vocational Qualifications* and the *National Qualifications Framework*, both of which contributed to improving employers understanding of the competences of children and young people acquired through NFE. It also allowed better defining of the factors and parameters to take into consideration for a future successful recognition of qualifications in the field of work with children and young people. As stated above, the project has also resulted in the development of a *Personal Competence Portfolio* (PCP) which, based on a competence framework, led to having some of its related competences [profiles] included in the National Qualifications Framework. Upon its completion, KA06 offered a set of minimum competence profiles for selected positions in NGOs as a baseline for particular qualifications, as well as educational programmes that NFE providers (organisations) developed based on these competence profiles. These may in the future become the minimum common requirement in order to recognise qualification among themselves.

#### **Development process:**

Several years of experience and expertise were necessary for the preparation of the Personal Competence Portfolio (PCP), providing the opportunity of having the competences acquired through NFE recorded with the option of their future presentation as an appendix to the CV<sup>5</sup>. The idea to prepare such a tool was elaborated in the course of Keys for Life by the National Institute of Children and Youth in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. The purpose of this instrument is not only to show that competences for life are acquired in the area of NFE, but also to express them in a language intelligible for both young people and the education fields. The PCP emerged from the experience and knowledge of those working with children and young people and was developed on the basis of the minimum competence profiles for positions in non-governmental/non-profit organisations working with children and young people. It is connected to the Europass, to the outputs of projects dealing with the national system of professions, and to the National Qualification Framework.

#### **Objectives:**

- To increase the consciousness of the learner of their knowledge and skills – competencies gained; they are written and saved online
- To support communication between the person and potential educator who can validate those competencies achieved in non-formal education
- To support communication between the person and potential employer who can recognise those competencies achieved in non-formal education and a value of them (mostly out of the standard view)
- To encourage public discussion on the value of non-formal education in Czech Republic
- To increase the quality of work of the NGOs or leisure time centres working with young people and children

#### **Description of the tool:**

The PCP provides a picture of the acquired competences (e.g. soft skills, knowledge, and educational experiences) that are usable for and transferable to different life situations as well as with regard to the constantly changing labour market. It also represents one of the elements to strengthen the path towards

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<sup>5</sup> *Personal Competence Portfolio* - appendix of the CV: [www.okp.nidm.cz](http://www.okp.nidm.cz) (in Czech language)

the recognition of NFE. Nonetheless, the PCP is not intended only for the labour market; it is primarily meant as a support tool for self-awareness and self-evaluation. The PCP can help identify the skills and competences acquired by a person when they have not been aware of that learning and development process, and would therefore, not have been able to put them forward and present them to employers. Such an awareness process, combined with the PCP as a tool, naturally requires the active participation of the user/applicant on the recognition of competences (self-recognition). It helps to increase the confidence of individuals and offers the possibility to improve the perception, image and opinion of oneself.

The PCP can be used to support the developing of a customised 'picture' of oneself; for one's readiness to change something in life, at work, or at school; for a personal presentation aimed at employers or educators; or as an unofficial but nonetheless important supplement to the Europass CV or personal biography.

<u>Personal portfolio of competencies – Why get involved?</u>			
<u>Employers</u>	<u>Educators</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Individuals</u>
- <u>tool for recruitment, including a portal</u>	- <u>credibility of colleges, high schools</u>	- <u>credibility of organization</u>	- <u>assert on labour market</u>
- <u>corporate social responsibility</u>	- <u>acceptance of work with children and youth</u>	- <u>partnership with employer, college..</u>	- <u>benefits for admission to college</u>
» <u>credibility of the employer</u>	» <u>recognition of practice through credits</u>	- <u>strengthening of education system</u>	- <u>recognition of practice</u>
	- <u>advantage for active students</u>	- <u>visibility, recognition of school facilities for leisure-time education and NGOs by other subjects</u>	- <u>self-confidence</u>

Source: presentation of the Personal Competence Portfolio, Keys for Life, Tomáš Machalík on behalf of the National Institute for Children and Youth

As explained earlier, developing the PCP implies a high degree of self-responsibility and the very first requirement for working with the tool is the ability to recognise not only the acquired competences, but also to clearly articulate them. A step-by-step approach to the PCP has been developed to support users in understanding every part of it as well as the meaning and intentions that lie beneath the different sections and competences.

#### *Background information for users:*

The information provided prior to using (filling in) the PCP are divided into several categories: information about the project behind and the actors involved, the aim and objectives, the approach to competence and the competence framework, and technical information.

All this is detailed in guidelines that can be downloaded in .PDF format. The webpage also offers the possibility for downloading a sample of a filled in PCP in .DOC, .ODT and .PDF formats. The PCP can be filled in on-line (through a personal account) or can be downloaded (without registration) to be filled in later on, in .DOC or .ODT formats. If online and after completing the form, the user can download and save the PCP on the computer, using an export function, in PDF (for the final version) or XML (if the user wishes to continue working on the PCP).

Among other recommendations on how to approach the work on the PCP, the guidelines underline:

- Reflecting on the personal path and professional growth in an open manner, recording anything that the person remembers as important ('remember, write, compare with the CV');
- Using the proposed minimum competence profiles for positions in non-governmental/non-profit organisations in the area of work with children and young people as a pattern for the descriptions of knowledge and skills;

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- Paying attention to the recording of soft skills;
  - Gradually and transparently compiling and recording the competences in accordance with the degree of relevance and importance of the information provided, especially when it comes to NFE practices and experiences;
  - Being aware of the degree of responsibility when assessing one's strengths, skills and competences and to remain honest (nothing artificial).
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*Structure of the PCP:*

*Personal information:* → name and surname, current contact address, and date of birth.

*Part 1 - the competences (knowledge and skills)*→ the PCP is divided into specific professional competencies, general competences, soft skills and additional abilities, knowledge and skills. Professional competences refer to what a person can do after education and training; to the specific expertise s/he possesses or masters and to how this can be used in practice. It is recommended to staff working with children and young people to refer to the expertise and professional skills listed in the minimum competence profiles, or to add more (as offered by the 'others' part in the Europass).

Part 1 includes:<sup>6</sup>

<b>Expertise</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Education of children, youth and adults</li> <li>- Human resources management</li> <li>- Others</li> </ul>
<b>Professional skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strategic management</li> <li>- Marketing, PR</li> <li>- Fundraising</li> <li>- Project management</li> <li>- Quality management</li> <li>- Risk management</li> <li>- Assets' management and maintenance</li> <li>- Economic and financial management and controlling (incl. tax system, economic law)</li> <li>- Others</li> </ul>
<b>General skills</b>	<p>a. Transferable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Computer and ICT literacy</li> <li>- Car-related ability<sup>7</sup></li> <li>- Numerical competence</li> <li>- Economic awareness</li> <li>- Legal awareness</li> <li>- Language competence in the mother tongue</li> <li>- Language competence in English</li> <li>- Language competence in another foreign language</li> <li>- Others</li> </ul> <p>b. Technical knowledge and skills</p> <p>c. Computer knowledge and skills</p> <p>d. Artistic skills and competences</p>
<b>Soft skills</b>	<p>a. Social skills and competences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Effective communication and presentations</li> <li>- Cooperation</li> <li>- Satisfaction of customer-oriented needs</li> </ul>

<sup>6</sup> Each sub-competence and ability offers the possibility to add additional lines for description.

<sup>7</sup> E.g. the ability to drive a passenger or the knowledge of the traffic regulations in the Czech Republic.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lifelong learning</li> <li>- Proactivity</li> <li>- Stress management</li> <li>- Influence others</li> <li>- Others</li> </ul> <p>b. Organisational skills and competences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Creativity</li> <li>- Flexibility</li> <li>- Performance</li> <li>- Autonomy</li> <li>- Problem-solving</li> <li>- Planning and organisation of work</li> <li>- Search for information<sup>8</sup></li> <li>- Leadership</li> <li>- Others</li> </ul>
<b>Additional abilities, knowledge and skills</b>	Any other information with regard to other abilities, knowledge and skills

*Part 2. Practice in the field of non-formal education* → this part requires the user to sort – from the most recent to the oldest – information about NFE/L related experiences/competences, with a description of the work experience, the duration of the activity/project/experience, and the name of the organiser (organisation/structure).

*Part 3. Education in the field of non-formal education* → in this part, it is recommended to sort the information by order of relevance/importance. Part 3 proposes three categories of educational experiences:

- a) Accredited by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, or by other accredited training structures, etc.;
- b) Educational activities organised by any educational organisation; and
- c) Informal learning activities.

For each of those categories, the user is required to provide information about the type of activity or title of the course, the dates and the provider (for a or b) or the source (for c).

*Part 4. References* → contact details of persons that can be reached in order to verify/confirm the information provided must be indicated in this part of the PCP. There is no system of external assessment.

#### **Outcomes, results and impact:**

The Personal Competences Portfolio (PCP) is still a ‘work in progress’, constantly being improved. However the interim evaluation shows that the first stage of ‘not-understanding to recognition philosophy’ has been overcome. The PCP has been well supported by the media and has been widely disseminated amongst NGOs in Czech Republic.

It appears that one of the biggest challenges might be to involve human resources agencies, for their approach to [formal] education and experiences as well as the format of their work remain relatively ‘traditional’, thus allowing a narrower space for joint work on the recognition of NFE and NFE-related competences. Another big challenge might be the implementation of the National Qualification

<sup>8</sup> Includes to search, find, identify, and select valid or important information needed in a given situation.

Framework, which should gradually move from 'education levels achieved' to 'competences acquired'. Nonetheless, the actors involved in the project Keys for Life are convinced that the PCP will become the main tool for the recognition of competences acquired through NFE or of NFE itself, either by the learner or more widely by the labour market and the social environment. This is also part of a new project 'K2', which tackles the planning of the personal development of participants in NFE projects and activities.