

Vocational Maturity and Career Orientation Portfolio

IO2 – Vocational maturity

SLOVENIA

Level: local/national

Rationale:

One of the reasons young people become a NEET is their lack of vocational maturity. During YIT Erasmus+ project vocational maturity was defined as a combination of competences that are necessary for starting and staying in a job. It is also highly relevant when making career choices like considering or enrolling in a vocational education and training programme. In Slovenian pre-tertiary education, lifelong career orientation (LCO) is integrated through different school subjects (integration through learning content or key competences) and additional activities, mostly carried out by school counselors. Resources for these activities are scarce and compete with diverse and extensive tasks school counselors are responsible for, resulting in them focusing on LCO mostly in the last or last two years, especially in basic school and gymnasias.

On the other hand, there are many freely accessible tools and materials school staff can use during education and many LCO experts and organisations willing to support the process. Yet too many young people and their families are left largely on their own when deciding on their youth's future. Too often, the emphasis is placed only on the academic ability to enter the upper secondary education, much less on the ability to enter a specific vocation or profession.

Learning Achievement Portfolio

Using portfolios can be a useful support approach for the LCO activities aimed at youth. A [Learning Achievement Portfolio \(LAP\)](#) covers some elements of LCO. With LAP focused primarily on VET students, the aim is to help them become aware of their strengths and weaknesses, plan personal and learning goals, become familiar with various learning techniques, monitor their personal and intellectual growth, and observe their vocational progress, including preparation of Europass CV. LAP is for reasons explained before not widely used.

Recommendation:

To support vocational maturity as well as other elements of career orientation, we could introduce a career orientation portfolio activity for all students, starting at least at age 12. By carrying out approximately five to ten scheduled activities in a school year led by teachers and school counselors, students can raise awareness of their own personal growth and gather achievements, ideas, contemplations, and relevant information relating to their career options in one single portfolio. Existing LAP and other LCO materials and tools can be used as a basis for development of a new tool (career orientation portfolio), the students can use to unveil the possible future career choices and paths in terms of future education and vocational or professional choices. In addition, such a tool can help teachers and school counselors implement LCO activities in a more individualised manner and more equally across all students while they are still in the education system.