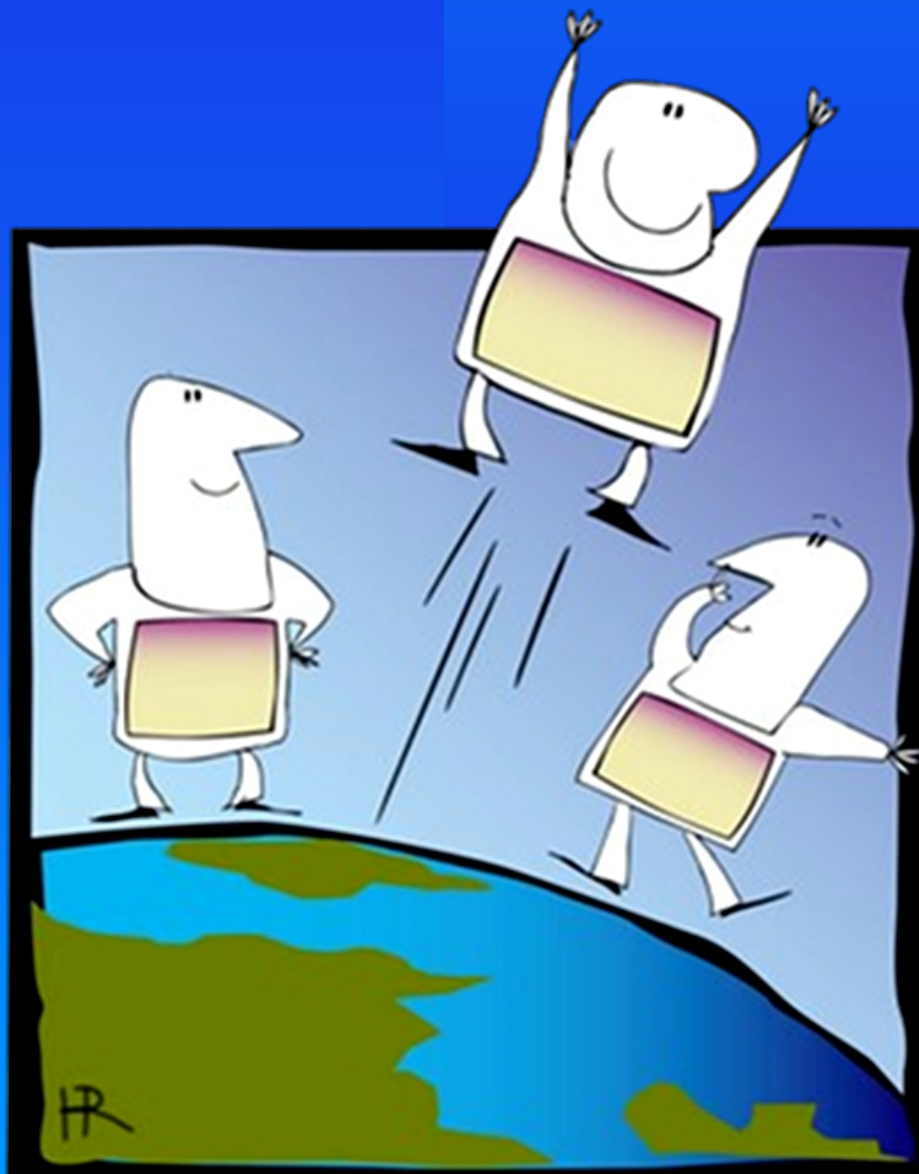


# Study report 2008 ePortfolios & Digital Identity for cooperation & development

Commissioned by the Agency for Development and Cooperation  
of the Swiss Confederation – (<http://www.deza.admin.ch>)

Version 1.0 - December 2008



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# Introduction

## 1.1. Summary of Objectives

Our society is more and more including lifelong learning programmes and competence based approaches as key tools for human development. On these basis, the general objective of this study is to gather a better understanding of how to make efficient and effective use of digital technologies to support professional development, as well as knowledge management for

- the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Capacity Building, Training and Culture section
- governmental organisations and their civil society partners operating in the area of capacity building for international development and cooperation.

More specifically, it aims to

- identify a few significant practices in e-portfolio and digital identity within the context of international development and cooperation
- produce an overview of different e-portfolio processes and aspects that could be pertinent to professional development the context of international development and cooperation
- identify existing and potential synergies in the area of e-portfolios and digital identity programmes

## 1.2. General Context of the Study

Our societies are presently in the throes of a shift from an industrial paradigm in which the individual is perceived as a "consumer" of information and learning to a paradigm in which the individual becomes a "producer" of information. Within the context of this study, we are referring in particular to the following facts:

- individuals are no longer only "navigating" the web, but also actively projecting themselves into the web space, contributing content, exchanging and collaborating; and
- education, learning and training are transitioning to accommodate and encourage self-regulated, self-directed learning and reflective practice that encompasses formal, non-formal and informal learning.

These are concrete changes in line with a new reality of lifelong learning and competence-based approaches.

Within this context, ePortfolios processes are taking a fundamental role. These emerging processes on identity building concern both the public types of ePortfolios relating to digital identity and the private aspects of ePortfolios akin to personal learning environments.

*"Organisations that have worked in isolation can be projected into a global space encouraging transnational sharing, networking, collaborating, innovating. The World Wide Web has tremendous potential to give civil society in developing countries a global audience, to help NGOs and local not-for-profits connect to each other."*

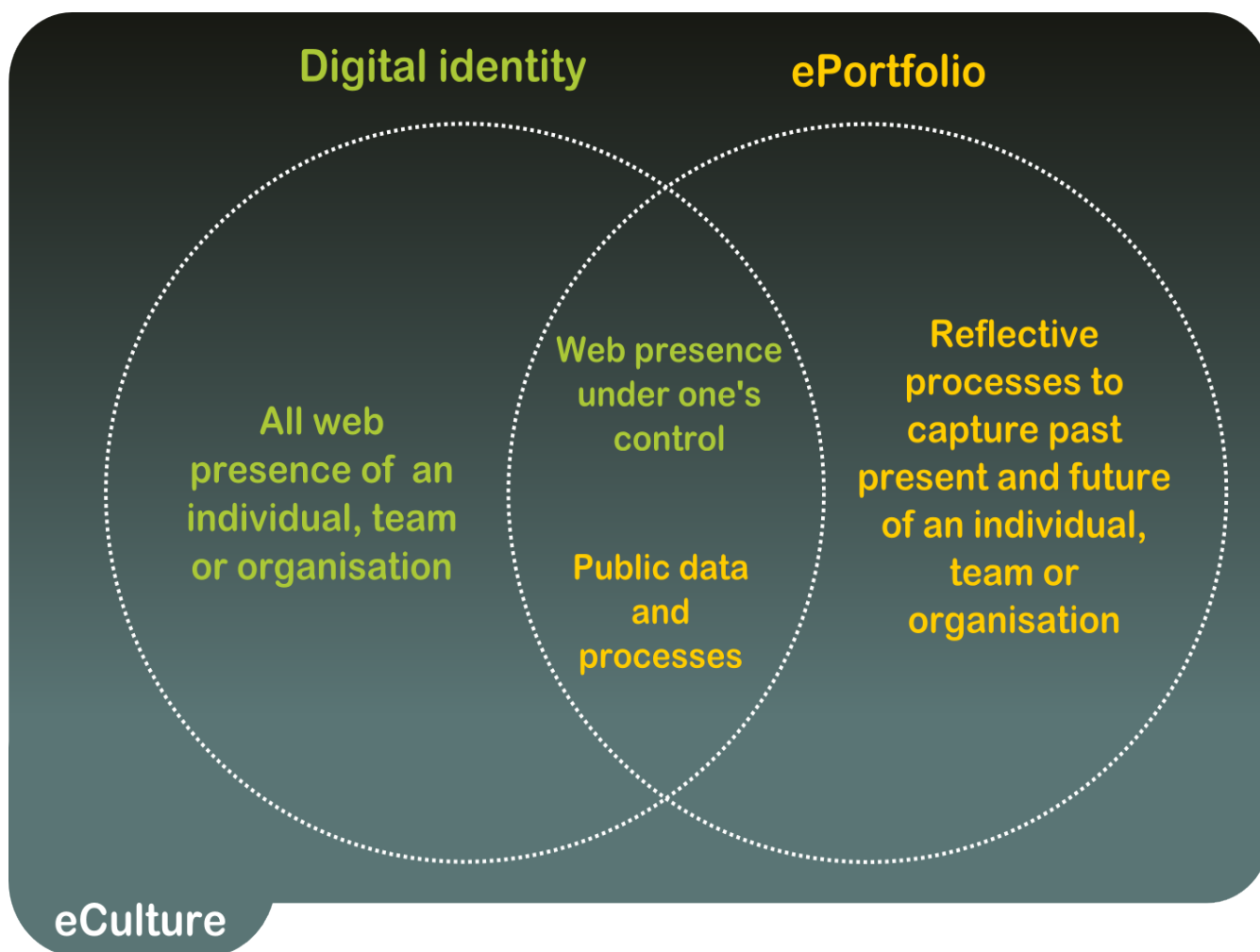
*Tobias Eigen, Director of Kabissa.org*

The limits of traditional e-learning and Learning Management Systems (LMS) to truly accommodate the learning needs and challenges of a self-directed learner, explains the rising interest of ePortfolios and personal learning environments.

An ePortfolio can be defined in different ways. For example the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) states “Fundamentally an 'ePortfolio' is the product created by learners, a collection of digital artefacts articulating experiences, achievements and learning.” For this study, we summarise an ePortfolio as an on-line environment supporting processes that allow an individual, group or organisation to capture, reflect upon, document and present who they are, what they are learning and their future goals. This may include their strengths, activities, experiences, challenges, goals, competences and values. Hence, ePortfolio processes support individuals and organisations to take charge and manage their virtual identity and develop as lifelong learners, learning organisations or learning regions.

**eCulture**, the sum of all behaviours in digital environments, includes these two aspects:

ePortfolios systems, unlike social networks systems (such as Facebook) have as a goal personal or organisational learning and development. Also an ePortfolio is about building and controlling one's on-line identity.



## **1.3. Study Activities**

The study included three types of activities.

### **1.3.1. Desk research**

Desk research was conducted to explore different agencies and organisations that should be part of the study and to gain a broader understanding of the current state of play of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) uptake by development and cooperation organisations and agencies, as well as the role of ePortfolios and digital identity within that area. See references for details.

### **1.3.2. Participation at international events**

Participants attended three international events to gather a general understanding of the current state of practice and to identify significant projects to include within the study.

#### *- 32nd International Public ICANN Meeting*

Organised by ICANN (Internet Corporation for Assigned names and Numbers) , Paris, France, June 22-26 2008. This study initiative was informally presented to civil society, governmental and non-governmental delegates who promote ICT for development

#### *- ePortfolio and Digital Identity, The Human Capital and Social Innovation Technology Summit*

Organised by EIFEL, the European Institute for e-Learning, in Maastricht, Netherlands, October 22-24, 2008. At the conference, the study was presented as a "work in progress" as a mean to gain visibility and to facilitate connections to pertinent ePortfolio processes being developed in southern countries. To view the presentation: <http://tinyurl.com/5h63oo>

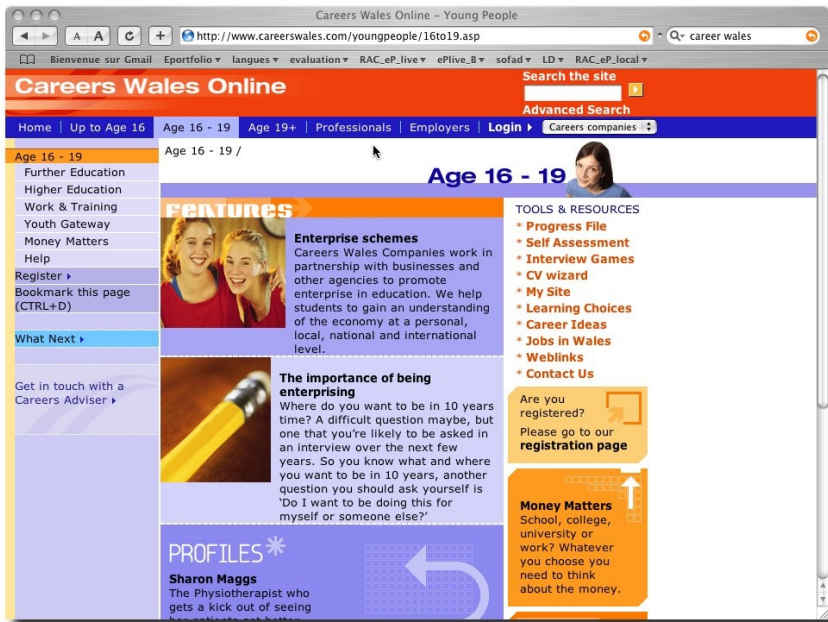
#### *- Conférence de Lyon pour la solidarité numérique*

Organised by the European Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Region Rhône-Alpes, the Communauté urbaine de Lyon, World Digital Solidarity Agency and the Global Digital Solidarity Fund, in Lyon, France, November 24th, 2008.

### **1.3.3. Structured interviews with organisations and agencies**

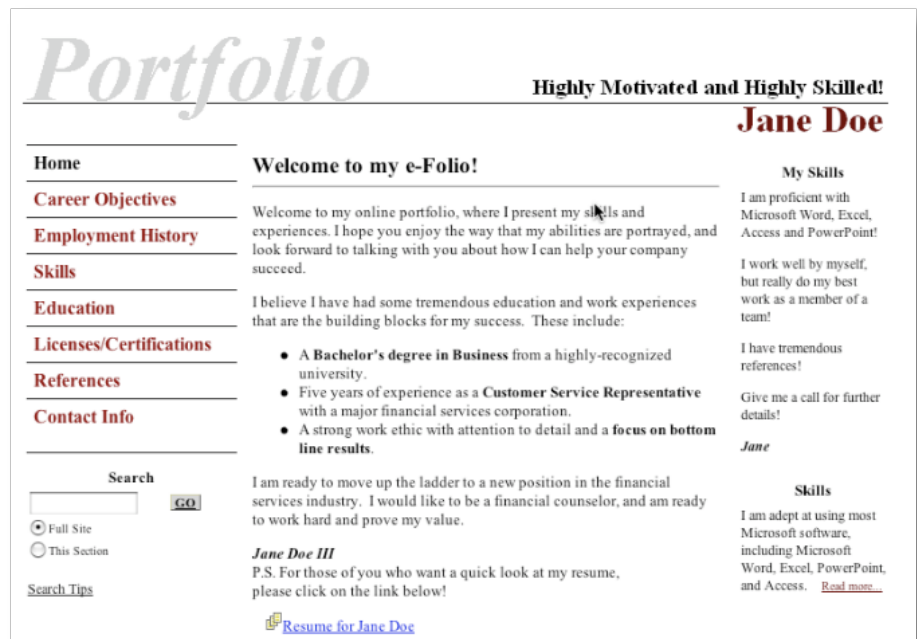
Structured interviews with targeted organisations were conducted to capture and explore ePortfolio and digital identity initiatives representing significant practice. See Appendice I for interview questions.

## 2. Findings



ePortfolios are becoming more and more widespread in academia, both in the north and the south. For example, the Ministry of Education of Tunisia supports ePortfolio "as a proof of competency" and the University of Pretoria is including ePortfolios in its e-education transition.

There is a rise in large-scale regional ePortfolio initiatives: Wales offers an ePortfolio to its 3 million citizens, Minnesota (USA) has had an ePortfolio initiative operating for over five years with more than 100,000 registered users (now expanding to the state of California) and there are various regional initiatives underway in France and the Netherlands. Europortfolio leads the "ePortfolio for all" campaign in Europe.



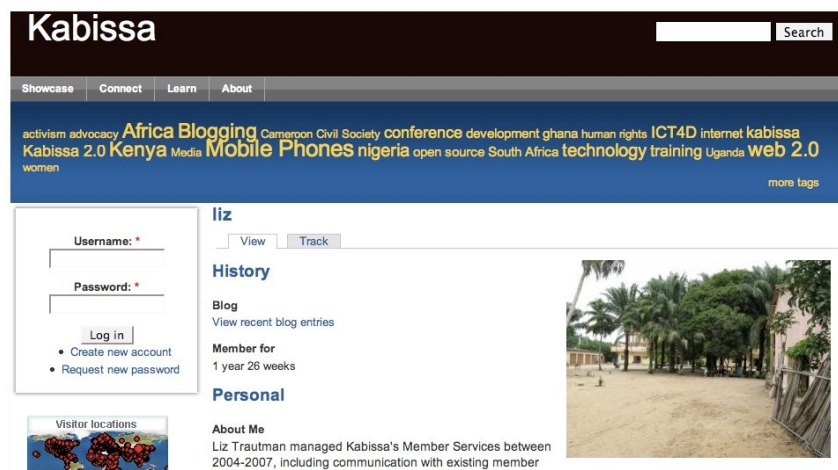
While making strong headway in education, in professional development and training, ePortfolios are still a very recent approach. Schmidbauer offers both hope and caution regarding how "ePortfolios might play an important role in future corporate learning strategies". The Dutch Ministry of Defence (MOD), having had a positive pilot experience introducing an ePortfolio to facilitate the development of

career skills of the MOD employees and to support Validation of Prior Learning, will be implementing the ePortfolio company-wide (for 60,000 employees) "as the foundation of the Human Resource Development processes". In the UK "professional bodies are increasingly turning to customised ePortfolio systems to enable members to engage in Continuing Professional Development. For example, the Institute for Learning (IFL) is introducing the optional use of ePortfolios to record the statutory 30 hours of CPD now required of the 300,000 practitioners in further education in England. The chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP) has also piloted an optional ePortfolio system for Continuing Professional Development (CPD). To practise within the UK, physiotherapists registered with the health professions council undertake to keep a record of the reflective and professional learning that underpins their practice" (JISC, 2008).

However, in human development and training in the area of development cooperation, initiatives are few. Most organisations and agencies are working to increase the integration and potential of the web into their activities, but the ePortfolio has not yet been adopted to support learning. Rather, seven types of related practices can be identified:

I - Original best practices of the founder of the web, related to World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) community, based their communication on the principle "First I present myself on a webpage, then I get in touch with other web users."

II - Technologically savvy organisations and learning partnerships such as Inwent, Kabissa, TakingITGlobal, Hivos or GINKS (see references) are integrating the Web 2.0 into their activities, focusing on networking individuals with common interests via succinct member profiles.



III - Low level technology solutions, appropriate to the realities of the south, such as D-groups, (a starting point for fostering groups and communities in international development) are being adopted that include clunky non-dynamic user profiles as part of their online system.

IV - Online courses, such as *International Community Development* of the Royal Roads College (Canada), are offered to development workers throughout the world, that request students to keep an online presence such as a blog.

V - Disconnected face-to-face workshops that could potentially be part of ePortfolio practices, such as the sub-regional and national workshops organised by the Knowledge Initiative for Action Aid International front-line practitioners "to support the deepening of front line rights-based practice for change using critical writing as the primary vehicle. Each participant will write a critical reflective story on their work for change. Documenting one's work for change (ppts, comics, photo stories, narratives

etc.)."

VI. The self-promotion programmes developed by agencies aiming to develop skills of micro-entrepreneurs, through training programmes on accessing strategic information, creating clusters of producers and promoting products in international business networks with new marketing methods, eliminating the middle man (example both KENEYA and INTRACEN.org programme in Subsaharian countries).

VII - The notion of trust in digital environment, based on traceability of contributions. From e-bay buyer-seller processes to free software developers, from wikipedia authoring to social entrepreneurship development, information society actors are more and more encouraged to value their profile in order to generate trust for their public.

These novel practices, though interesting and potentially effective, are a far cry from the integrated, long-term and more transformative impact that ePortfolio processes can offer for human and professional development. In the few initiatives or areas of potential identified, we have been able to bring together some general information on ePortfolios in this specific context.

## **2.1. ePortfolio Purposes**

Though ePortfolio processes and tools can support a variety of purposes, they truly appear to be a response within in a context of transformation to new and innovative practice. In the context of international development and co-operation, five potential purposes of ePortfolios and digital identity processes were identified.

### **2.1.1. Empowering Individuals and Organisations**

According to Schmidbauer, "Most existing educational systems in companies and organisations are still grounded in a cognitive approach to learning. That means that mere knowledge aggregation with the aim to achieve qualifications (certificates, diplomas) is still the predominant way of education. But the growing complexity of problems in daily work increases the demand for more self-directed acting and requires competency-based approaches" (2008, p. 2). ePortfolios, on the other hand, revolve around the *learner* who is the main subject, entering information, thoughts, records, results, etc., related to themselves, their interests, their needs and their competences. The learner is the *owner*, responsible for managing the contents and the access over a long period of time. In this way, ePortfolios are ideal for empowering individuals and organisations to become self-regulated and self-organised learners with a strong sense of self-efficacy. As Schmidbauer observes, "the powerful self motivation of employees for deeper learning and development is utilized".

With ePortfolios, learning *can* be personalised rather than forced into a one-size-fits-all model. ePortfolios can support the shift from teacher/trainer-centric learning and professional development to learner-centric processes, supporting the development of creative, innovative, networked individuals who take responsibility for their personal and professional well-being and development.

At the same time, the empowered, under-represented voice of the "south" can take more place in the collective web space. Olivier Kaloudoff and Marie-Jane Berchten, delegates of Switzerland at the World Youth Forum of United Nation System, (August 2001, cooperation.net team) share how the challenge of training 400 young United Nations' delegates within a 2 days workshop on ICT was met by concentrating the training on the simple notion "show us who you are" resulting in their online portal and a base of cooperation that continues today. They recount the experience:

*Imagine groups of 20 young african leaders entering into this computer room of the university in Dakar in 2001. Most of them had arrived by bus from the sub-*



region, after a tremendous travel. We were proposing them to act on the web instead of being consumer of information. They could develop their digital literacy skills, such as how to type on the keyboard, while typing words about their own life.



### 2.1.2. Supporting Deep and Complex Learning

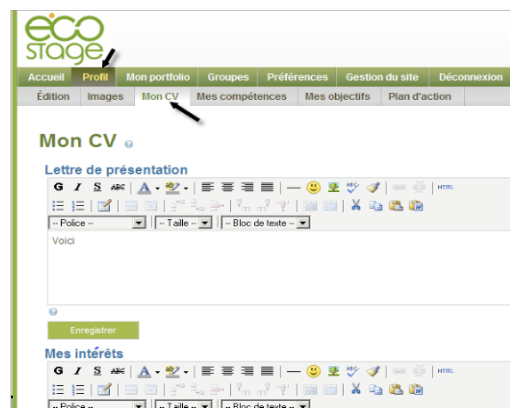
ePortfolios help individuals and organisations develop a clearer and more integrated vision of themselves and their learning over a long period of time by connecting fragmented training sessions and by helping individuals look at their learning in relation to their own personal strengths, values and beliefs. Learning is not just about developing technical competence; it is also about developing self-awareness, self-reflection and discernment. Continuing professional development in this way can help individuals gather a global long-term personal perspective on the complex issues that are part of.

The New Era Educational and Charitable Support Initiative (NEEDCSI) explains how individuals need “to discover and develop their inherent gifts, talents and abilities and to help raise ethically responsible, self-disciplined, and creative citizens capable of participation in a positive and sustainable society.” Cooperation work is about competent, confident, responsible, and caring adults.

ePortfolio processes are creative and reflective tools that can be helpful for individuals and also for organisations to get at this deeper level of learning.

### 2.1.3. Expanding Types of Learning

In a world of lifelong learning there is more and more recognition of the potential and importance of non-formal and informal learning. Formal accreditation becomes less relevant with time and even regular training courses for updating skills are not enough. There is a growing need to develop reflective practitioners, professionals who are good non-formal learners, able to capture and connect learning wherever it occurs. ePortfolios are ideal



tools to support such learning in an integrated and structured environment.  
ecoInternship ePortfolio

In the case of the development of "eco-citizenship" in Katimavik, there is an agreed-upon framework of competence and each individual, depending on his/her specific interests, intern context, and experience will be developing competences in different ways. Monique Charpentier, eco-internship project manager, explains, "The intern experience IS the learning program". It is the competence framework that helps to commonly express learning that has occurred and the ePortfolio to capture, demonstrate, reflect upon and communicate competence as it develops.

#### **2.1.4. Professionalisation of a Field of Work**

ePortfolio processes offer great potential in helping a field of work to professionalise, or to gain in credibility and self-confidence. In the case of community and development workers, and change agents where roles are neither clearly defined nor recognised by society, common competence profiles and e-portfolio processes can help to bring together and unite a professional field, developing a sense of professional identity, pride and value that is crucial to maintaining committed professionals in their line of work.

This is particularly important given the increased professionalism of development work along with the increased accountability requirements for development activities. Using e-portfolios to critically reflect on the type of professional one is, and would like to be, can be facilitated via a personal online environment in which one may maintain and reflect upon one's work, achievements, thoughts. In this way the e-portfolio process support the development of a long-term and integrated view of one's learning and career and a person's professional identity.

Paul West, Director of Knowledge Management and Information Technology at the Commonwealth of Learning, points out that there is a real need to raise the profile and status of teaching, especially across Africa where there is a dire shortage of teachers. He states, "There is a perception amongst teachers that they are at the bottom of the ladder of employment. Teachers seem to be prepared to leave the profession for just about any other kind of employment." By professionalising and increasing the status of the teaching profession, giving it value and respect, there could be a positive effect of teachers motivated to enter and stay in the profession.

In the Netherlands, it has recently been adopted that e-portfolios will be provided to all "temp" workers to help capture the multiple and rich competences that such a job type develops despite the social stigma associated with it.

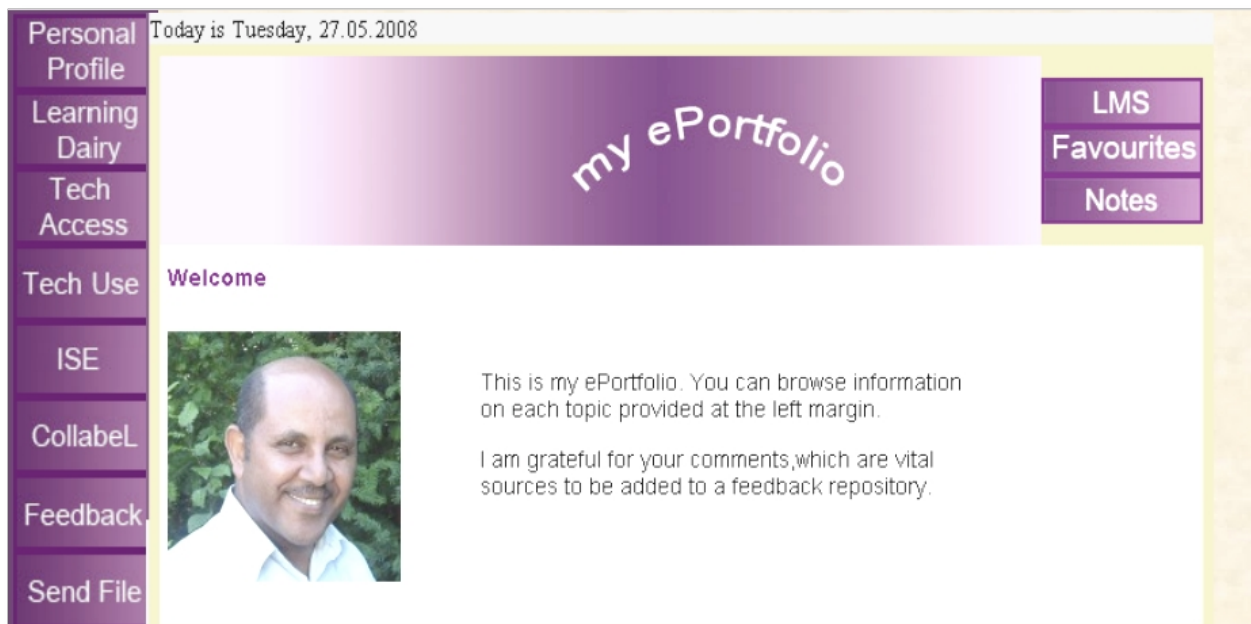
#### **2.1.5. Transregional Information Sharing, Collaboration and Communities of Practice**

At the same time, an online ePortfolio can also serve the role of knowledge management or information sharing. ePortfolios are a place to collect and collate activities, demonstrate competence, and bring together the mass of knowledge that is usually either tacit or dispersed. The benefits of having an evolving knowledge base, at whatever level, are numerous: from induction, to continual improvement, to sharing knowledge development, collaboration, etc.

The online course, "Principles and Tasks of Leadership," at the University of Hamburg is offered to students in developing countries across the globe. It makes use of what they call the "basic" ePortfolio (BeP) "to enhance intercultural collaborative online learning". It has been demonstrated that by editing and publishing their personal profiles via their ePortfolio, students across more than 15 countries have increased interaction and collaboration.

ePortfolio from the course Principles and Tasks of Leadership

Thanguy Nzue Obame, co-founder of forum des Amis du Net and Coopgabon.net in Franceville,



Gabon, Africa, and local independent trainer for national and international organizations such as Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF) and World Health Organization (WHO) recounts how the portfolio experience contributes to collaboration:

... while profiling freely on a social network dedicated to cooperation and development, I can see the efforts done by other social entrepreneurs worldwide to share the results of their personal and collective development. This is great because it generates a hierarchy of contributors and various thematic communities of practices, like in wikipedia, but this time for fields actors of civil society. It is very motivating for a person living in Gabon or in Congo Kinshasa to discover and share the actions of NGO leaders in Ouagadougou or Bamako without depending on occidental support, thanks to ePortfolio processes. It is also a way for me to see if my local potential NGO partners are seriously involved into social entrepreneurship or not : I look at their personal site, see if it is updated, if content is relevant, etc.

## **2.2. ePortfolio technological systems and implementation**

While many ePortfolio type activities are still in the paper phase, there is a growing number of online versions and accordingly a variety of technical systems to support ePortfolio processes. These can be organized into three different types of ePortfolio technical solutions:

- non-dedicated tools such as blogs platforms
- off-the-shelf dedicated ePortfolio systems, both proprietary and free and open-source
- tailor-made ePortfolio systems, i.e. context-specific developments

For example, blogs serve to profile oneself in the public internet realm and can support reflective informal learning processes in either a non-structured or structured way, depending on whether guidelines are present. For example, Kabissa provides online space without stipulating what should be

included.

Katimavik, on the other hand, has adopted Mahara, a free and open-source ePortfolio system (which they translated into French for the community of users). Though Mahara offers many ePortfolio features, it lacks the means to integrate a competence framework, so the system was "tweaked" to embed a competence matrix.

Noosfero, part of the ecoPC coalition (including African, European, North & South American partners) works with the [www.Zen3.net](http://www.Zen3.net) platform which offers basic e-services for all : ePortfolio free hosting together with social networking tools, professional email, intranet and training tools, without adds, and with possibility to chose different graphic layout and to add independant domain names.

Note: It is not within the scope of this study to conduct a comparative analysis of ePortfolio systems, nor to address issues of mobility, durability and the protection of data or issues of control of permissions.

### **2.3. ePortfolio Contents**

Despite the fact that the terms used within ePortfolios change from one culture or context to the next, we do continue to see very similar elements included within ePortfolios. Here is a brief summary of the recurring types of content that can be found in ePortfolios :

- personal profile (including interests, values and beliefs, dreams and goals, personal description, psychometric tests, personality characteristics, preferences etc.)
- work experiences
- learning experiences (depending on the context this might include general life experiences)
- competence/strengths/expertise (again, depending on the context, this might include formal competence matrices, and it might distinguish between technical competence and generic competence and even sometimes between competences the individual is interested in developing or not)
- artefacts of achievement or activity that demonstrate competence
- thoughts and reflections on specific artefacts, specific competences
- tools to communicate to employers, potential employers, clients etc. (such as a curriculum vita or summary of core competences)
- tools to explore career opportunities, develop a learning plan or seek employment or develop a project
- resources and even services that are embedded within the ePortfolio
- an inventory of networks, resources, information feeds that an individual taps into for learning
- an expression of learning, such as a blog, to provide more regular reflexions on learning and activities

A key structural element of ePortfolios is competence frameworks or matrices. At one end of the systems spectrum, the user can identify or create their own competence framework. At the other end of the spectrum there may be a fixed and standard competence framework.

### **2.4. ePortfolio support Models**

Support is essential to the success and pertinence of an ePortfolio practice. The degree of human

support required depends on diverse factors: the context, the ease of use of the ePortfolio owner in ICT, the support embedded within the ePortfolio system, etc. For example, for a person who wants to record generic competences in their ePortfolio, a dedicated page with examples, activities and competence frameworks does not require the same amount of support as a simple blank page. The user needs to understand what is meant by a generic competence, have an appropriate competence framework, and be able to reflect on and demonstrate their competence. These types of tasks are not yet familiar to us and we are truly transitioning to competence based approaches and require support. During this transition period there is even a need to "train the trainer".

In the example of Katimavik, working with young digital natives and a structured ePortfolio, a half day of ePortfolio training with an external expert was deemed sufficient to introduce users to the ePortfolio as a concept and explore its potential. This introduction is then followed up through support from internship coaches. The challenge in this situation is developing the ePortfolio expertise of the coaches, who are also new to the world of ePortfolios.

In the cooperation.net model (developed by Yinternet.org since 1998 with support of SDC, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation), all training tools and material are accessible to all potential trainers as soon as they show their ability to show evaluators or to all internet users the results of their own ePortfolio process. Then the potential trainer receives certification after having given proof of ability to coach others to develop their ePortfolio.

It is becoming evident that the task of completing an ePortfolio can be an excellent means to develop ICT skills/awareness/competences/aptitudes/attitudes. We progressively move from ICT literacy, in which skills are evaluated through processes such as the International Computer Driving Licence (ICDL), to digital fluency in which skills could be evaluated via ePortfolio developing processes. ePortfolio is therefore becoming a meaningful way to develop and certify good practices in ICT skills and even knowledge management.

## **2.5. ePortfolio Synergies**

There is an enormous potential and need for ePortfolio synergies. We have identified three types:

### **2.5.1. From Complementary Tools to Essential Tool**

As more and more organisations move their activities online, internauts are required to manage an ever-larger and more complex set of accounts and user profiles. It is therefore more and more important to develop an online space that supports the integration of one's fragmented activities, learning, and online presence. Project proposals could require that individuals or organisations include ePortfolios, allowing them to become more and more part of common practice and connecting them to different systems. This step also increases the transparency of organisations and their activities.

### **2.5.2. Common Knowledge Base**

Adopting and integrating an ePortfolio approach to support professional and human development involves many inherent challenges: a shift in professional human development, work culture, technological and accessibility decisions, related policy issues, training and support structures, etc. At the same time, there is no fixed way of setting up and using ePortfolios.

Given this open field, producing quality and robust tools and activities to support ePortfolio and digital identity processes that can be used freely in local languages and local ways can be complex.

Developing an online resource centre specific to human resource development and the context of international development and cooperation could be helpful for all. This resource centre could include

such elements as steps to integrate ePortfolios, explanations of how they are structured and supported, lists of policies that have been put in place, technological approaches, certification modules, and so on. Such a resource centre could be ideally set up as an evolving open knowledge base, much like wiki patterns.

### **2.5.3. ePortfolio Coalition**

It is beyond the means of small organisations to undertake these challenges on their own and it is detrimental to the common good for all organisations to try to make headway independently. Instead, different organisations could partner to develop or improve a common technological platform and development process coalition. This coalition would need to be multilingual, multidomain, multigraphical, and fitted with multicontent types. The technological part of this potential coalition already exists, such as ning.com and zen3.net

## **3. Qualitative analysis and possible future strategies**

### **3.1. Success**

The research and interviews revealed a normal and almost inevitable convergence between new ePortfolio processes and the trends impacting e-learning and professional development - that is, a shift toward competence-based approaches and lifelong learning.

Also, "ePortfolio development can make CPD a more natural process for professionals in a number of important ways: links can be made to a membership database so that personal information can be incorporated into a CV; ePortfolio development can be used in appraisal; and evidence in undertaking additional responsibilities could lead to accreditation in some circumstances. But the chief gain may lie in enhancing the professionalism of practitioners" (JISC, 2008).

The study helped to clarify an interest in and potential for ePortfolios in professional development. In the international cooperation and development field, we identified five areas (section 2.1. to 2.5) in which ePortfolios could have a positive impact. It seems that when an organisation is seeking to renew or innovate its approach to learning, ePortfolios are an ideal tool to support and evidence novel practice.

### **3.2. Weaknesses**

The study identified and interviewed far fewer ePortfolio practices in the area of training in international cooperation and development than it would have liked. It would perhaps have been simpler to reframe the study to explore **potential** interest and impact of ePortfolios in training in cooperation and development agencies and organisations. Indeed, the interview with the Commonwealth of Learning turned into such a discussion.

As for organisational ePortfolios, in 2009 the domain is so recent that only a few experimental examples could be identified (see section 5); and these are outside the realm of cooperation and development agencies. Given the immense potential in this area, it is an ideal opportunity to reinforce the cooperation between major stakeholders and agencies within existing and future ICT4D coalitions.

### **3.3. Obstacles**

#### **3.3.1. Culture of Trust and Transparency**

ePortfolios are a "disruptive technology" within our workplace tradition of information control. Information on employee development is most often in hands of the employer and key documents are kept on the personal computers of a few. Working in the spirit of ePortfolios means striving towards individual responsibility and "going transparent" which has the impact of encouraging support, encouragement and collaboration, but makes many people uncomfortable, at least initially.

We need to shift from a heritage of information control and privacy towards a culture in which the more we share, the more we receive support and develop opportunities to collaborate. Additionally, there is a generational issue. "Digital migrants" have a more difficult time in projecting themselves publicly in comparison to "digital natives".

#### **3.3.2. Risk Factor**

The area of ePortfolios, specifically in human development, is young, and there are very few existing mature initiatives from which a sector may draw. This means that an organisation or sector wishing to move forward in the field must have a certain capacity for risk taking and vision.

#### **3.3.3. Lacking Leadership and Common Competence Frameworks**

Cooperation and development agencies each have their own specific domain of interest and expertise; and understandably, each comes with unique challenges. The ePortfolio domain is specialist of none; rather it sort of floats in an interdisciplinary realm connected to learning. For an organisation to reach out to the ePortfolio world will take greater maturity in the movement: ready-made solid solutions easily available with many examples of practice and ePortfolio policy that can be tapped into and built upon. Presently, an organisation that wishes to go in this direction would need to invest a great deal to understand the field and potential of ePortfolios and make sense of it in their particular context. At the same time, there are needs to be common competence frameworks upon which new and innovative ePortfolio practices can be built upon. Given the importance of quality frameworks and the amount of work involved in producing them, it is important to share frameworks and promote the convergence of existing **competence frameworks** towards leading capacity building tools widely spread and used.

#### **3.3.4. Sustainability**

Making e-portfolio projects sustainable within a development and cooperation context is not easy. Paul West of the Commonwealth of Learning describes the opportunities and challenge of having initiatives that can become self-sufficient after their initial donor-led investment and set-up period. Indeed, most of the projects explored within this study were either getting off the ground or were pilot projects.

### **3.4. Potentials**

This study has established a clear interest in and potential of ePortfolios in the context of development and cooperation work.

#### **3.4.1. Valuing and Leveraging Incidental Learning**

In the work world, professionals from afar are often brought together for face to face meetings to work

on a particular challenge, project or theme. ePortfolios are an ideal means to capture the significant informal learning that takes place during these events. In this way, the monies spent at the meetings are being used for a double purpose, (1) attaining the planned meeting output, and (2) contributing to the professional development of the meeting participants. This could form an interesting rationale to justify and seek out budgets with stakeholders.

Using ePortfolios to support this type of learning has the added value of providing a long-term, integrated view of all the isolated and fragmented events that are related to one's learning and professional development. Overall, it is a rich and motivating approach to professional development.

### **3.4.2. Shifting to Competence-based Approaches and Lifelong Learning**

There is presently a shift to competence-based approaches and lifelong learning within education, training and learning, both in the north and in the south. Finding actual means and tools to support this paradigm shift is not an easy task, however: ePortfolio processes are naturally in line with these approaches and can serve as the "disruptive technology" that accompanies the organisational change.

### **3.4.3. Integrated Approach for ICT Competences Development**

We are going through a phase of digital literacy towards a phase of digital fluency. There are fewer and fewer courses geared toward computer use for its own sake. The actual experience of developing one's ePortfolio is in itself an excellent means to develop one's facility with computers, within a context that is motivating for the individual while contributing at a broader level to an individual's professional development.

## ***3.5. Possible future steps***

### **3.5.1. Innovative Pilots**

Now is the time to set up some innovative pilots in the field. These would best be set up as partnerships and should be followed by ePortfolio university research. The field needs leadership and those groups that begin the pilots will be making valuable contributions to this leadership role.

### **3.5.2. ePortfolio Tools for All**

Many organisations in the north are jumping on the ePortfolio bandwagon. While the same advantages are also true for the south, however, the south does not have the luxury of reflecting on and developing this area on an organisational basis. Ideally there needs to be a concerted effort. Developing and implementing tools that can be used freely and are sensitive to local languages and traditions would be helpful. For example, on an individual level, processes of how to identify and demonstrate competence, how to develop a personal learning plan. Also on an organisational level, how to make an inventory of organisational competence, how to begin developing a participatory knowledge base, develop collaboration and transparency online.

### **3.5.3. Online Collaborative Knowledge Base**

Develop an online open and dynamic syndication tool to serve as a knowledge base and resource center to support, encourage and share information, pilot projects and best practices in this new area of ePortfolios to support professional and human development. The space could be tailored to the specific area of international cooperation and development; yet its pertinence extends to the general sector of human resource development, whatever the field of practice.




### 3.5.4. Using ePortfolio processes to facilitate transition from formal to sustainable education

Everything is in the title : governments and their related partners can promote the adoption of ePortfolio capacity building processes to facilitate transition from formal to sustainable education.

As Stephen Sterling, co-director of the Bureau for Environmental Education and Training (BEET), explains in his demonstration of changes in capacity building.

The table below shows the current passage from formal towards sustainable education.

<b><i>From Formal Education</i></b>	<b><i>toward</i></b>	<b><i>Sustainable Education</i></b>
curriculum control		curriculum empowerment
fixed knowledge		recognising uncertainty and provisionality
abstract knowledge		applied and local knowledge
cognitive experience		valuing the affective, spiritual and practical domains
intellect		also valuing intuition and feeling
information and data		deeper knowledge
teaching		learning
content		process
restricted learning styles		multiple learning styles
passive instruction		participative and critical enquiry
uncritical learning		reflexive learning
selection and exclusion		social inclusion
formal education		learning for life
specialists		generalists in teachers and learners
individualism		community
institutional isolation		social and community engagement
disciplinarity		inter- and transdisciplinarity
instrumental values		a new integrative sense of social and ecological ethics and responsibility
competitive values		cooperative values
quantitative 'performance' indicators		qualitative process indicators
valuing 'knowing'	valuing 'being'	

## 4. Conclusion and Strategic Recommendations

A growing arena of research is demonstrating the positive potential and impact of ePortfolios and more and more examples of practice, but much more so in educational institutions, more recently in employability areas and it is slowly entered the realm of human resource development.

In development and cooperation organisations and agencies contemporary ICT tools are helping to support and enrich education, training and learning. However more can be done besides offering on-line web-based courses and practising open and distant learning principles and methodologies. ePortfolios leverage the potential of ICT one step further.

There is an urgent need for judicious, skilled, aware, comfortable internet users and internet-using organisations who find their voice and express it publicly; engage with their particular complex and significant issues; tap into their local learning traditions; develop a sense of meaning and professional identity; and further their networking and knowledge-sharing, ePortfolios and digital identities are new models with incredible potential to support just these requirements.

ePortfolio, as a process, is an affordable way to accompany changes in learning and lifelong learning dynamics, as much for governmental agencies bodies as for civil society partners. ePortfolio processes go beyond "taking a course" and "teacher-led approaches" towards learner centred processes that support a more vast and integrated human resource development that is participatory and empowering for the self-directed, creative, team players of tomorrow. ePortfolios offer a unique opportunity for individuals and organisations to move towards a more holistic and integrated approach to learning, tapping into the vast and wide learning experiences and methods beyond traditional formal learning. Such an approach to learning is more meaningful for the learner and more appropriate for the worker and learner in international development and cooperation context.

Finally, ePortfolios are NOT about technology. According to the JISC report, "ePortfolios are particularly important in lifelong learning, since, in the presentational sense, they provide evidence of learners' progress over time, and, in the developmental sense, they engage learners in ongoing self-evaluation through:

- reflecting on personal strengths and weaknesses
- recognising gaps in existing knowledge and competences
- celebrating achievements
- evaluating how to move forward
- entering into dialogue with others"

ePortfolios support deep and rich competence development, via integrated and long term introspection and reflection, the cornerstone of learning. They also facilitate projection into a public space enhancing communication and collaboration.

Agencies, organisations and NGOs involved in cooperation and development are all moving forward to integrate ICT tools, whether to establish a web presence or to develop more efficient working methodologies, knowledge management or learning and training. Organisations are not yet looking at these transitions and their inherent challenges in an integrated systemic way that would include ePortfolios. ePortfolio processes can work at both an individual and an organisational level to develop knowledge management, integrate life wide learning, help with responsibility-taking and give a sense of pride and accomplishment to like-minded individuals.

ePortfolios are a novel means, in line with current societal shifts in learning, education and training, to support the development of individuals, organisations and regions in a capacity-building manner.

## 5. Agencies and Organisations Explored within the Study

### ***Action Aid International – The knowledge Initiative***

[www.actionaid.org](http://www.actionaid.org)

An international anti-poverty agency based in Johannesburg, South Africa, helping 13 million of the world's poorest individuals in 42 countries. The Knowledge Initiative is a space within Action Aid which allows it to be visionary, like an internal think tank. KI aims to deepen existing organisational knowledge and package it into an accessible format for the organisation and beyond. KI's overall aim is to challenge Action Aid to work better within its rights approach.

### ***Commonwealth of Learning***

[www.col.org](http://www.col.org)

An intergovernmental organisation of the Commonwealth countries dedicated to promoting and delivering distance education and open learning. Its mandate is to be in the vanguard of technological change in education and training. Projects explored within the interview process for potential added value via ePortfolios: *Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth* (VUSSC):

<http://www.col.org/colweb/site/pid/100> and *Open Schools*:

<http://www.col.org/colweb/site/pid/5289>

### ***Cooperation.net ePortfolio platform for NGO actors***

[www.cooperation.net/cooperation.net](http://www.cooperation.net/cooperation.net)

A webplatform to host ePortfolio of individuals and organization working in Cooperation & development

### ***Dgroups: Development Through Dialogue***

[www.dgroups.org/](http://www.dgroups.org/)

Fostering groups and communities in international development, a partnership catering to both individuals and organisations by offering tools and services that bring people together: a team, a group, a network, a partnership, a community. A simple, non-commercial environment respectful of privacy and targeted at low band with users in the South. Over 2,500 groups, and 100,000 members.

### ***Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations***

[www.fao.org/](http://www.fao.org/)

Leads international efforts to defeat hunger. Serving both developed and developing countries, FAO acts as a neutral forum where all nations meet as equals to negotiate agreements and debate policy. FAO is also a source of knowledge and information. Helps developing countries and countries in transition modernize and improve agriculture, forestry and fisheries practices and ensure good nutrition for all.

### ***Association Funredes***

[www.funredes.org/mistica/](http://www.funredes.org/mistica/)

Project: Methodology and Social Impact of the Information and Communication Technologies in

America

### ***Ghana Information and Knowledge Sharing Network (GINKS)***

[www.ginks.org](http://www.ginks.org)

Promoting ICT as a tool for development.

Sharing activities and competence of the members of the collective PRO-FEMMES in accordance with its mission of dissemination and capacity building in communication, permitting exchanges via internet with other women and organisations in the world.

### ***HIVOS Media information and Communication programme (MIC)***

[www.hivos.nl](http://www.hivos.nl)

Aims to empower citizens in development countries and the organisations that support them – to express their voices and make them heard.

HIVOS community: [www.hivos.nl/eng/community/directory](http://www.hivos.nl/eng/community/directory)

### ***International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD)***

[www.iicd.org/](http://www.iicd.org/)

A non-profit foundation that specialises in information and communication technology (ICT) as a tool for development. IICD creates practical and sustainable solutions using both modern media (such as computers, Internet, email and multimedia) and traditional media (such as radio and television) to connect people and enable them to benefit from ICT, thereby contributing to the Millennium Development Goals.

### ***INwent Capacity Building International***

[www.inwent.org/](http://www.inwent.org/)

A non-profit organisation with worldwide operations dedicated to human resource development, advanced training and dialogue.

### ***Katimavik - Eco-intership Program***

[www.katimavik.org](http://www.katimavik.org)

The largest Canadian volunteer service organization that aims to empower youth and young adults to make a significant contribution to local communities and participate in nation-building while fostering their personal and professional development through a challenging youth-volunteer, leadership and service-learning program.

### ***Kabissa – A network of African civil society organisations***

[www.kabissa.org/](http://www.kabissa.org/)

Seeks to strengthen the capacity of African non-profits to build civil society and democracy in Africa contact via ICT resources (such as Time To Get Online) and Social Networking for African Organizations

### ***KASA Komitas Action Suisse-Arménie***

[www.cooperation.net/kasa](http://www.cooperation.net/kasa)

Promoting solidarity, sharing competences and sustainable development in Armenia.

### ***Mount Royal College, Canada***

<http://conted.mtroyal.ca/community/>

International Community Development Certificate, offered online, is designed to prepare employees and volunteers of development agencies to understand global issues and work in developing communities around the world. Part of the program includes becoming “an advocate for change in helping people and communities around the world to reach their potential”.

### ***New Era Educational and Charitable Support Initiative (NEEDCSI)***

[www.needcsi.org/](http://www.needcsi.org/)

An non-governmental, non-religious, non-political, non-ethnic, non-profit and charitable educational support organization dedicated to supporting the educational goals and aspirations of the less privileged Nigerian children.

### ***Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation***

[www.ddc.admin.ch/](http://www.ddc.admin.ch/)

Switzerland's international cooperation agency within the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). In operating with other federal offices concerned, SDC is responsible for the overall coordination of development activities and cooperation with Eastern Europe, as well as for humanitarian aid.

### ***United Nations Institute for Training and Research***

[www.unitar.org/](http://www.unitar.org/)

UNITAR's mission is to deliver innovative training and conduct research on knowledge systems to develop the capacity of beneficiaries.

### ***Youth Employment Systems (YES)***

<http://www.yesweb.org/>

The YES Campaign was launched by 1600 delegates from 120 countries at the Alexandria Youth Employment Summit, in Egypt on September 11, 2002. The campaign has three goals: develop capacity of youth to lead in-country youth employment initiatives, promote youth employment to address key development challenges and build in-country coalitions to develop national strategies addressing youth unemployment.

### ***Yinternet.org***

<http://www.yinternet.org/>

Foundation for research and training in eCulture, taking part in various ePortfolio multilateral projects from European Union and managing ICT for Development programmes in areas such as North/South Cooperation, Youth empowerment, Adult Lifelong Learning and training of trainers .

## 6. Publications and Presentations Related to ePortfolios

Beyene, B (2008) *Model for e-Portfolio-based Feedback from Intercultural Collaborative eLearning in Developing Countries*, (paper forthcoming) <http://events.eife-l.org/ep2008/conference/programme-1>

Cégep@distance and SOFAD (2006) *Le portfolio numérique : un atout pour le citoyen apprenant* [http://sofad.qc.ca/pdf/portfolio\\_numerique.pdf](http://sofad.qc.ca/pdf/portfolio_numerique.pdf)

Cooperation.net programmes & network for NGO solidarity, the Cooperation methodology for ePortfolio development <http://www.ynternet.org/ynternet.org/info/110992>

Hink, M. (Logica), Riedstra, L.(Ministry of Defence) (2008) *Introducing an ePortfolio to stimulate career skills. The company wide introduction of an ePortfolio at the Dutch Ministry of Defence*, (paper forthcoming) <http://events.eife-l.org/ep2008/conference/programme-1>

IMS (2004) ePortfolio Brochure [www.imsglobal.org/ep/ePortfoliobrochure.pdf](http://www.imsglobal.org/ep/ePortfoliobrochure.pdf)

JISC (2008) *Effective Practice with e-Portfolios Supporting 21st Century Learning 2008* [www.jisc.ac.uk/effectivepracticeePortfolios](http://www.jisc.ac.uk/effectivepracticeePortfolios)

République Tunisienne, Ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation (2004, updated 2005) *Projet d'amélioration de la qualité du système éducatif Tunisien (PAQSET), consultation relative à la formation des formateurs professionnels : Dossier de suivi bilan des participants*

Schmidbauer, A. (2008) *e-Portfolios at the Workplace: A Link between Individual and Organisational Learning*

Sterling, S. (2003) Article in La Revue Durable, N°8, CERIN Ed., Fribourg, CH [http://www.nachhaltigkeit.at/monthly/2004-02/pdf/sterling\\_artikel.pdf](http://www.nachhaltigkeit.at/monthly/2004-02/pdf/sterling_artikel.pdf)

## 7. Events Attended in the Context of the Study

32nd International Public ICANN Meeting [par.icann.org/](http://par.icann.org/)

Conférence de Lyon pour la solidarité numérique <http://www.digitalsolidarity2008.org/>

ePortfolio and Digital Identity <http://events.eife-l.org/ep2008/>

## 8. ePortfolio Centres of Research and Information

Centre de ressources pour créer son ePortfolio

[www.iportfolio.fr](http://www.iportfolio.fr)

ElfEL (European Institute for E-Learning)

[www.eife-l.org/](http://www.eife-l.org/)

IMS Global Learning Consortium

[www.imsglobal.org/ep/](http://www.imsglobal.org/ep/)

International Coalition for Electronic Portfolio Research

[www.ncepr.org/](http://www.ncepr.org/)

Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC)

[www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/themes/elearning/eportfolios.aspx](http://www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/themes/elearning/eportfolios.aspx)

The Centre for International ePortfolio Development

[www.nottingham.ac.uk/ePortfolio/](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/ePortfolio/)

Yinternet.org Foundation, ePortfolio resource centre

[www.yinternet.org/eportfolio](http://www.yinternet.org/eportfolio)

## 9. Appendix I

### ***9.1. Interview questions***

- Description of the organisation
- Title of the ePortfolio/digital identity initiative/program/project
- Objectives - what challenge is the initiative addressing
- The context of development of the initiative
- Description of the initiative
- Who does it serve?
- How long has the initiative existed?
- Sustainability of the initiative (pilot project or embedded practice?)
- How many people have participated?
- What are the current challenges/difficulties?
- What are the plans for improvement for the future?
- Are there any articles or publications that could be referenced?
- Is it online? Provide urls
- What is the cost of the project?
- What software is used? Name/version/licensing information
- Training content within the initiative? Details/licensing
- Role of trainers within the initiative?
- What other human resources are engaged in the project/initiative?
- Do you have suggestions for any similar such initiatives?



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**Realized with support of Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation ([SDC](#)).**

**Author : Samantha Slade, ePortfolio at <http://samanthaslade.ca/>  
under supervision of Théo Bondolfi, ePortfolio at <http://www.yinternet.org/move>**

**Contributors and reviewers:**

- **Brice Korabié, Burkina Faso, ePortfolio at <http://www.coopfaso.net/bricek>**
- **Eric Lupi, Switzerland and Armenia, ePortfolio at <http://www.cooperation.net/eglupi>**
- **Raymond Morel, Switzerland, CV [http://www.ictswitzerland.ch/files/webcontent/documents/cv\\_rmores1.pdf](http://www.ictswitzerland.ch/files/webcontent/documents/cv_rmores1.pdf)**
- **Aurelio A. Heckert designer, Brasil, ePortfolio at <http://www.colivre.coop.br/Aurium/BlogAurium>**

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