



EXPERIMENTATION REPORT

Unified System for transparency and transfer of LOs
Unified System for transparency and transfer of learning
outcomes

WP 4 – Experimentation of adapted models

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Foreword

The Experimentation Report is a document that, in an organic and structured manner, describes and retraces the experimentation conducted by the 3 receiving partners, highlighting its main characteristics.

In particular, in order to avoid repetitions with the Experimentation Monitoring Report and the Sustainability Plan, this Report describes the process, putting it in the 3 different reference contexts, indicating the types of supplied services, the involved stakeholders, the beneficiaries of the experimentation and giving insight on the main weaknesses and strengths found by the partners who actually conducted the experimentation, in order to give some early indications which will be thoroughly analysed in the remaining two documents.

The experimentation conducted within the LLP – UNI.SYSTEM.LO project represented a central and main part of the process which was implemented with the transfer of innovation as pursued by the project. It allowed us to observe the process implemented by the 3 receiving partners, the adaptation of the tools and the instruments subject to transfer to the specific needs and requirements of the territories, allowing outcomes and considerations to emerge in order to reflect the wealth and complexity which inevitably the processes of recognition and validation of competences, however acquired, imply.

UNI.SYSTEM.LO stems from the idea of transferring to other situations and geographical contexts tools and procedures, as well as processes, aimed at the recognition of competences acquired in formal, informal and non formal settings, for validation purposes.

The situations we were faced with during the experimentation were much more complex and multi-faceted than we could imagine, because it is the result of the interaction between the tools and the methods transferred by one partner and the different reference contexts of the remaining partners, with their characteristics and specific features. It also offers us the opportunity to reflect on the variables at play when implementing processes of recognition and validation of competences, however acquired.

1. The reference context of the 3 involved territories

The experimentation performed gives a quite articulated picture of the use and purpose that the 3 receiving contexts intended to pursue with reference to the instruments for the identification and recognition of competences.

This picture reflects the specific features of the partner territories of the UNI.SYSTEM.LO experimentation, attributable, in addition to the reference geographical context, to the functions and institutional nature of the involved partner entities and the respective institutional and regulatory frameworks on the issue of recognition of competences.

The institutional nature and the specific functions of individual partners who conducted the experimentation heavily biased the purposes of the individual experimentations that were conducted: two Italian partners, one German partner and one Region partner (the Piedmont Region) with exclusive jurisdiction on vocational training and concurring jurisdiction on the labour market, one province partner (Province of Lecce) with functions of management and supply of employment services and one German vocational training and guidance Centre (Berlin) covering initial vocational training for unemployed adults.

This element, combined with the institutional context and applicable reference legislation (that we will analyse in greater detail for each partner in the continuation of this paragraph), is at the basis of the different objective which characterized, in each experimentation, the reconstruction and analysis of learning experiences.

1.1 Piedmont Region

The Piedmont Region since 2006 outlined the main pillars of the regional system of competences of which the process of “assessment, formalization and certification of competences” represents one of the founding elements. In 2011, with the approval of the Handbook for the certification and allocation of credits, the procedures to certify competences acquired in formal settings were identified. In May 2014, with the approval of the Regional Handbook of Certification of competences acquired in non formal and informal settings the procedures to be implemented by the Piedmont Region for the identification, validation and resulting certification of competences acquired in non formal and informal settings were defined, illustrating the tools and the stakeholders involved in the process.

In parallel, the Piedmont Region provided for the review of its Framework of Job Titles, exclusively established for the formal education system, in order to make it suitable to represent and be used by the labour market as well, with reference to competences acquired in informal and non formal settings.

In 2012, the Region also completed the outline of the Regional System of employment services by approving:

- a list of minimum regional standards of supply of employment services;
- the creation of a list of accredited suppliers of employment services, based on a 3-year long experimentation to shift from an employment services system consisting of 30 public Employment Centres to a system which includes 52 accredited operators, private employment agencies and training agencies.

In the light of this institutional and regulatory reference framework, the Piedmont Region took part in the UNI.SYSTEM.LO project and in particular in the experimentation of the Evidence Dossier as a tool to identify and recognize competences, however they are acquired by citizens.

Namely, the conducted experimentation under UNI.SYSTEM.LO, because of its methodological principles, is part of a broader experimentation of the Evidence Dossier which had already been started by the Piedmont Region within the Ri.Attivo project, system-level action for the outplacement of workers expelled from sectors in distress.

As a consequence, by experimenting the Evidence Dossier through the Ri.Attivo project, the Piedmont Region aimed both at circulating and strengthening a common language between the Employment and Training sectors and at defining one reference method for recently accredited operators of employment services.

1.2 Province of Lecce

In order to face the delay built up to recognize the competences and give the integrated system of education, training and employment a Regional System of Competences, in 2011 the Apulia Region signed a Protocol of Understanding with the Tuscany Region for partnering on standards for the recognition and certification of competences.

More specifically, the experience started by signing the Protocol of Understanding between the Apulia Region and Tuscany Region, financed with resources of Axis V of OP ESF 2007-2013, provided for the transfer of good practices in order to reform the integrated regional system of education, training and employment making it more functional to the needs of growth of the education and training level of all citizens, constant development of their basic and professional competences, complete and aware exercise of the right to work and to have a qualified job.

The experience provides for "the extensive use of the method of learning by competences", through the definition of a system that can assure to citizens the marketability of competences, however they are acquired, through the creation of the following infrastructures:

- **professional standards**, meaning the minimum characteristics describing the professional levels of the main job titles representing the economic sectors of the Apulia territory, described in terms of Areas of Activity (Ada) and related Units of Competence including knowledges/skills, as described in the Regional Framework of Job Titles;
- **standards related to the processes of recognition and certification of competences**, meaning minimum reference characteristics for the activation of processes of recognition, evaluation and certification of competences, however acquired, in line with the procedures for the issue of the Citizen Education Booklet, so that the competences may be capitalized on and used by the person;
- **standards of education process**, meaning minimum characteristics of formal training processes, aimed at acquiring Units of Competences; for each “training chain” training standards are identified. The training standards were recently defined and applied experimentally for one year.

The Framework and its descriptions were approved in December 2013 and they are the single reference for the identification, recognition and certification of competences and for the planning and fulfilment of the vocational education and training activities and services and meeting of demand and supply of employment.

1.3 ABU – Berlin

In Germany there is not one single reference model at a national level to validate non formal and informal learning. Currently, however, social changes and market globalization have led to a rethinking of the system of competences and professions and the concept of *validation* took on greater importance.

One of the main reasons should be found in the division of competences between the central level and the regional level on the issue of validation and accreditation, which are a prerogative of individual Landers.

However, the limited attention paid so far in Germany to the recognition of non formal and informal learning also depends on the German vocational education and training system, largely integrated with the employment system, thus becoming a dual system which issues a vocational qualification to approximately two thirds of the youth.

In the last years, however, the German government has paid - in its political agenda - much attention to the promotion of lifelong learning understood as a response to the growing social and employment problems of Europe. The need to be knowledgeable of different fields of life, the progressive ageing of the population and workforce have led to predict, throughout Europe, new

forms of organization of the learning processes at an adult age. In particular, the increase in adult and poorly qualified unemployed people has made the issue of validation of non formal and informal learning more and more pertinent and subject to strategic initiatives at a national level. In this view, in 2013 Germany presented the *Common framework of qualifications for lifelong learning, (DQR)*, which analyses the peculiarities of the German education system and contributes to a more adequate evaluation and comparability of qualifications in Europe.

Likewise, within the German institutional system for the validation of competences, characterized by an extensively structured and formal procedure, some significant experimental experiences are taking place, including the ***External qualification examination***.

The experimentation that was conducted within UNI.SYSTEM.LO, thanks to the support of the vocational training and guidance centre ABU, was included in this experimental experience that was developed in Berlin and characterized by the supply of a modular training to pass the External qualification examination.

The External qualification examination consists in allowing poorly qualified workers with a significant working experience in the reference sector for which a qualification is requested, to be admitted to a final exam for the obtainment of an apprentice qualification, despite not having followed a formal training experience. In this case, the citizens should demonstrate having been employed in the profession for which they have to take the exam for a period of at least one time and a half the time established for the initial period of profession (5 years).

In this case, the tools for the recognition of informal and non formal competences are used for the purposes of recognition of credits that are useful to access a modular, customized and individual training, functional for the final examination, to be taken at the competent office, usually represented by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry or by the Chamber of Craftsmanship.

2. Subject and objectives of the experimentation

UNI.SYSTEM.LO provided for the transfer to other territories of the models and services developed by the Province of Treviso and by Associazione Lepido Rocco in the framework of the experimentation promoted by Veneto Region in 2009, both with reference to formal and informal and non formal learning settings. The specific characteristics of the experimentation contexts, the purposes that each partner intended to pursue and the analysis of the starting conditions to ensure the effectiveness of the transfer allowed us to customize the subject and the method of the transfer.

As a consequence, we decided to focus the attention of the UNI.SYSTEM.LO experimentation on informal and non formal settings, which have attracted the interest of all the three receiving partners, allowing them to compare experiences, differences and specific characteristics.

One of the three partners – the Province of Lecce – however deemed it fit to start a reflection on formal procedures and on the necessary conditions for the acquisition, evaluation and certification of the competences which, despite not being specifically subject to the conducted experimentation, allowed us to compare significant practices and experiences.

The lab phase which was conducted within UNI.SYSTEM.LO on the three receiving territories favoured the adaptation of the model for the definition, development and evaluation of Learning Outcomes in formal, informal and non formal settings.

Actually, already during the labs of Lecce, Berlin and Turin some specific characteristics of the subject of the experimentation and the purposes that it intended to pursue emerged. A first and crystal-clear difference, resulting from the starting conditions of the contexts as described in the previous paragraph, concerns the two Italian territories, on one hand, and the German partner, on the other; in fact, while the Piedmont Region and the Province of Lecce experimented, albeit with different objectives, the service of recognition and validation of competences, in its identification, recognition and, partly, validation phases, ABU (Berlin) focused their attention on the individual instruments functional to the preparation of the Evidence Dossier, neglecting the process within which it is included in the local setting proposed by the transferring partners of the Veneto Region. This choice was determined by the presence, in Germany, of an already structured process, that is regulated in a binding fashion through the involvement of the Chambers of Commerce and Craftsmanship and that did not leave room to alternative, albeit experimental, processes.

Another difference from what was tested by the three receiving partners concerns the Province of Lecce and the interest expressed by it, despite the attention paid to the non formal and informal system, in the disclosure and comparison on its territory of the model for the definition, development and evaluation of Learning Outcomes in formal settings.

In particular, the Province of Lecce, through the direct involvement of training agencies and secondary schools in the transfer labs, promoted and coordinated an interesting comparison process between the model and the instruments experimented by the Veneto Region, subject of transfer of UNI.SYSTEM.LO and learning by competences started by a couple of schools of the Province of Lecce, in particular the Vocational High School Antonietta De Pace. As a consequence, even if this report describes the experience made in the three contexts involved within the recognition of non formal and informal competences, it also summarizes the experimental process started by the vocational high school of Lecce and the contamination of such experimentation under the UNI.SYSTEM.LO initiative.

2.1 Objectives and focus of the experimentation

The validation of the competences from experience is a process which requires, for its activation, specific context and organization conditions. To this end, in order to make the process effective, putting it in context and narrowing down its purposes, it is essential to explain, first of all, “why” we intend to validate.¹

The validation of competences acquired in different learning settings from the formal one could be aimed at the recognition of credits or the acquisition of a title or a qualification. Or it could be aimed at supporting projects of placement or vocational re-inclusion or again facilitating individual processes of vocational self-development or work re-inclusion.

Depending the purposes that we intend to reach by implementing a specific validation process, both the focus and the players of the process change.

In fact if the purpose of the competences validation process is linked to the obtainment of recognitions - credits or exemptions from attending parts of the course - which may be marketable in the formal systems, the focus of the process is on the formal education and training system and the main stakeholders are the institutions of Education and Training since it is their responsibility to define the “value” to be attached to recognized learning.

If, on the other hand, the validation process is directed at obtaining **significant recognitions for the labour market** which are useful for people to enter or re-enter the labour market, the main stakeholders of the process are social partners called to define “the value”, the significance and the marketability of learning, however acquired.

Finally, the validation of competences may pursue a less institutional but more personal objective, directed at the promotion of a greater **awareness of citizens** to carry forward their professional and career development choices in the most aware and tangible possible way. In this case the

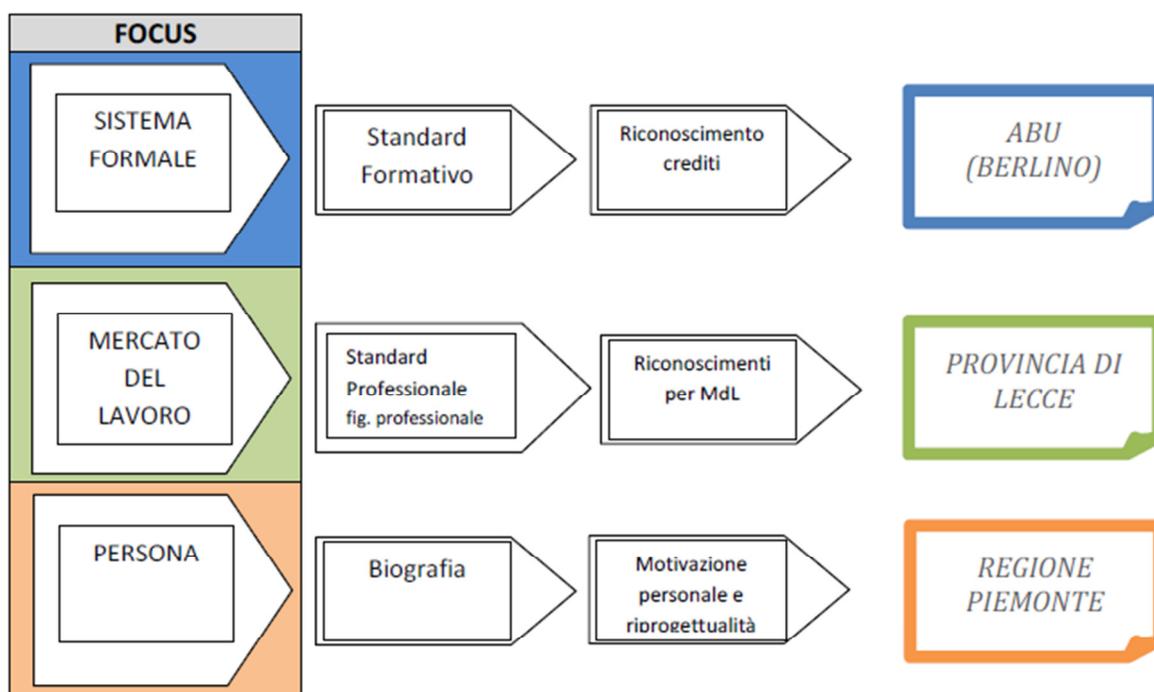
¹ See Guidelines for the validation of competences from experience – ISFOL 2011

main stakeholder is the person, as the protagonist of the validation process, able to connect the value of the service with its experience and expectations.

Even if this Report does not set the purpose to analyse the different uses for which a service of validation of competences however acquired may be performed, it is important to briefly mention them here since the three experimentations conducted are attributable to a different set objective.

As a consequence, the experimentation conducted by the three partners during the process of validation of informal and non formal competences, also in consideration of the existing context and organization conditions, was oriented:

- ✓ to the recognition of credits which are useful to be admitted to customized training processes in view of acquisition of a vocational qualification (German partner ABU);
- ✓ to the recognition of acquired competences to be exploited in the labour market (Province of Lecce);
- ✓ to the empowerment of people and the redesign of a training and employment experience (Piedmont Region).



3. The characteristics of the experimentations in the 3 involved territories

As mentioned in the previous pages, the given context, and in particular the reference institutional and regulatory framework, on one hand, and the function and role of the partners, on the other, contributed to define the distinctive traits of the experimentations conducted, while biasing the purposes and objectives to pursue.

The following pages outline the main data and information concerning the experimentation conducted, by specifying, for each partner, the types of beneficiaries reached, the players and stakeholders involved and some input on the operating modes applied.

3.1 The experimentation in the Piedmont Region

The experimentation of the UNI.SYSTEM.LO Model of recognition of informal and non formal competences is part of the System-level Action already started in 2012 in Piedmont for the outplacement of workers expelled from the labour market in three specific sectors: mechanical, ICT and textile.

In particular, the experimentation concerned the phase of identification and formalisation of competences through the use of the Evidence Dossier as a supporting tool for the description of the competences possessed by the beneficiary.

As a consequence, UNI.SYSTEM.LO was included in that context, supplying a methodological contribution aimed at guaranteeing the service quality standards, through the organization of training labs on the method which allowed to strengthen the competences of the operators in charge of transferring the methodology.

One characteristic of the conducted experimentation in the Piedmont Region concerns the extent of the reference sample which, if on one hand assured the significance of the results achieved, on the other hand it represented a potential source of weakness for the number of involved players and for the need to give them an adequate and homogeneous transfer of the basic tools and methodological principles. Another characteristic is the obligatory creation of the Evidence Dossier for all the beneficiaries included in the Ri.Attivo programme; thus the Dossier represents a process output.

An additional element worthy of attention was represented by the fact that, for the very first time, thanks to the inclusion of private partners, the synergistic implementation of a public-private

partnership in employment policies was experimented, actually accomplishing an experiment within an experiment.

The Evidence Dossier that was experimented within the System-level Action of the Ri.Attivo project for the outplacement of workers expelled from the sectors in distress favoured the strengthening of a common language with the Employment and Training sectors and contributed to the definition of one reference methodology for operators recently accredited to supply private employment services.

In addition, albeit used as a tool to favour the outplacement of workers, the Evidence Dossier played the role of a loose consultancy tool, to support the “motivation” of citizens and favour the reacquisition of their competent action. It therefore represents an additional tool to the CV, to interact with the worker, the companies and the vocational training system for work inclusion purposes.

In consideration of the overwhelming attention on the individual and his/her empowerment, the choice of the Piedmont Region to experiment the Evidence Dossier was to free the creation of the Dossier from a reference professional profile, encompassing many competences and evidences to be identified and recreated.

BENEFICIARIES

The beneficiaries of the experimentation concerning the phase of identification of competences, through the tool of the Evidence Dossier, were workers expelled from the textile, ICT and mechanical sectors as well as disadvantaged people already in the care of the services of the Employment Centre.

In consideration of the system-level measure that was already started by the Region, the beneficiaries who took part in the process of identification of their competences and co-creation of the Evidence Dossier were as many as 2216, with a majority of people aged between 36 and 55 years (1517 beneficiaries).

INVOLVED PLAYERS

The governance of the experimentation was the responsibility of representatives from the two regional sectors involved – Training Standards and Employment - who gave their methodological support and coordination of the activities related to the process for the issue of the Evidence Dossier.

The Region also received the support of Italia Lavoro Piemonte which favoured, through its operators, the transfer of the methodology that had been prepared by the Veneto Region to the public and private operators who conducted the experimentation and that guaranteed its monitoring.

Operationally, the experimentation was conducted by:

- Provincial Administrations, through their Employment Centres, as managers of the outplacement actions.
- Network of accredited partners, private employment agencies, training agencies and other public bodies, at the Piedmont Region for the supply of employment services, involved as performers of the outplacement actions.

In total, 213 operators from 47 accredited bodies were involved.

OPERATING METHODS AND SCHEDULE

Operationally, the experimentation provided for a first transferring phase to the involved bodies and services (private operators of the labour market and Employment Centres) of the Evidence Dossier tool, with purposes and objectives and a regulatory framework.

In this phase there is a connection between the experience of the Piedmont Region and the UNI.SYSTEM.LO project which allows to thoroughly analyse the methodological aspect tied to the process of identification and reconstruction of the competences, focusing on the individual and the set of competences he/she developed during his/her life and in any context within the guidance relationship.

Within the UNI.SYSTEM.LO project the Piedmont Region held two different lab sessions with the people in charge of the transfer of the method first and with a sample of operators next.

Following the lab, capillary transfer sessions were held by the Region in partnership with Italia Lavoro to approximately 450 public and private operators.

As concerns the identification of the beneficiaries, starting from the regional measure, the provinces implemented the call for proposals and published it. The rankings were prepared and the candidates were selected according to clear criteria. Some beneficiaries had already been dealt with in past years within the “crisis-prevention measure” for workers under redundancy fund or exceptional mobility.

With reference to the time devoted to the service of identification and recognition of competences, as under the Ri.Attivo programme, of which the experimentation is part, the longest expected time was of 9 hours of which 3 hours of back-office activity. On average 3 one and a half hour-long meetings were held with each beneficiary.

SOME REMARKS

Based on the feedbacks received from the main involved players, it is possible to claim that the massive experimentation conducted in the Piedmont Region firstly encouraged a search for a common language between “employment” and “training” understood both as regional sectors and as professional fields and communities.

In addition, while the Region defines and implements the process of validation and certification of competences, the Evidence Dossier tool created firstly a first change of perspective towards

guidance, focusing back on the individual and his/her competent action within the guidance relationship.

Finally, even if the Evidence Dossier was experimented primarily as a tool of guidance consultancy it is important to mention the attention paid to the involvement of the production and entrepreneurial system. In particular, the Province of Turin held two focus groups on the conducted experimentation with 12 companies and groups of companies, receiving positive feedbacks on the use of the Dossier as a supporting tool of the CV, in view of learning more about the competences of a worker.

3.2 The experimentation in the Province of Lecce

In the Province of Lecce, like in Piedmont, the experimentation of the UNI.SYSTEM.LO model of recognition of informal and non formal competences focused on the phase of identification and reconstruction of competences, through the collection of evidences and supporting documents to be described in the Evidence Dossier.

There are three special characteristics to the experience performed by the Province of Lecce within UNI.SYSTEM.LO.

First, as already mentioned in this report, the focus of the experimented service on supporting the meeting of demand/supply. As a consequence, the experimentation on the creation of the Evidence Dossier, the collection of evidences and supporting documents was oriented to the outplacement of the beneficiaries, with the final goal being to allow the individual to obtain recognitions which could be marketable.

This focus, in addition to the context within which the experimentation was conducted and the typical functions of the Province as authority in charge of employment services, derives from a need that was strongly felt by the partner, with special reference to specific sectors, such as the wine and food sector, the confectionery and baked products sector, the crafts/manufacturing sector, which were involved in part of the experimentation.

These sectors, closely linked to the enhancement of the territorial specific characteristics, generate significant competences, often the fruit of the generational handover or passions which turn into work opportunities. This element, together with the common phenomenon of illegal labour, implies the lack of recognition of such competences in official settings.

The experimented model of recognition of informal and non formal competences is a necessary cultural innovation to break up these weaknesses, redefining the locations where learning happens and this ensuring new methods of validation and certification of knowledge, that the worker asks for deliberately and willingly.

Certainly, for a system of recognition of competences to be achieved, it is necessary to wait for the formalisation of this initiative by the Apulia Region, within the current process of definition of the regional system of Competences.

Another element which characterized the experimentation that was conducted by the Province of Lecce, closely linked to the above, is the focus on the phase of reception, disclosure and guidance of the process that, through the centrality of the relationship between the operator and the beneficiary, ensured the strengthening of the trust relationship between the user and the office in charge of supplying the service.

In consideration of this, the Evidence Dossier, also in consideration of the target on which it was experimented, consisting of workers under redundancy fund or exceptional mobility, represented a significant tool for the empowerment of individuals, so that they would become aware of their competences, rethink and recreate their profession/trade, according to a new perspective: competent action.

In addition, this process was made even more significant, in terms of recognition of competences, by the connection with the National Framework of Job Titles published in the previous months which, for the very first time, allowed the worker to find out and recognize his/her competences with an “official” method and manner, giving a boost to self-esteem and a motivational boost to “act”.

The third distinctive element of the experimentation conducted was the involvement, at every step of the experimentation, of the employers associations that, through the direct participation of their experts, allowed to pay attention on the value of the assessment of competences.

The involvement of employers' associations in fact allowed to start thinking about the topic of validation of non formal and informal competences. At the end of the process of creation of the Dossiers, a meeting was held with the contact people of the employers' associations, experts from two of the professional sectors concerned and process methodologists which, even if it may in no way be considered as a simulation of a Local Validation Commission, was very useful to draw the attention on the complex issue of evaluation and validation, the final objective of the entire process, of “what” to evaluate and “how” to evaluate, of the prerequisites which are considered as necessary by the experts of the individual professions to assess competences, the type and quality of evidences to be submitted.

BENEFICIARIES

The beneficiaries of the experimentation concerning the phase of identification of competences, through the Evidence Dossier tool, were 7 workers under redundancy fund or exceptional mobility, included in the Welfare to Work system-level action, developed by the Employment Centre of the city of Lecce and its surroundings. Five out of seven beneficiaries are included in the 41-50 age bracket.

Each beneficiary came from the following reference professional sectors: tailoring (2 people), building and installation (2 people), logistics and transports (1 person), ICT (1 person), trade (1 person).

INVOLVED STAKEHOLDERS

The experimentation was conducted through the Employment Centre of the Province of Lecce and, operationally, for the creation of the Dossier, 4 operators and guidance counsellors of the Employment Centres were involved, who had previously taken part in the transfer labs held within UNI.SYSTEM.LO.

The capillary awareness-raising and disclosure campaign on the topic that was developed by the Province among the potentially interested territorial stakeholders favours the creation of a network of local stakeholders who were aware of the topic and were interested in working together. These included Confartigianato (the confederation of craftsmen), Scuola Edile (the building school) and Accademia della Moda (the fashion academy).

OPERATING METHODS AND SCHEDULE

Operationally, the experimentation was conducted following the transfer lab held in Lecce, through the identification of the group of beneficiaries, part of a target made up of workers in need of outplacement within the Welfare to Work system-level action and of unemployed youth.

A first plenary meeting of potential beneficiaries was held, to illustrate the objective of the action and stimulate motivation and interest in the experimentation.

Following the voluntary acceptance to start the experimental process the individual interviews between the operator and the beneficiaries were made. On average 4 one-hour-and-a-half long meetings per beneficiary were held, where first the National Framework of Job Titles was illustrated, so that the beneficiary would learn the characterizing technical language, the Areas of Activity were identified, the significant evidences to recreate were identified and all the necessary documentation and material was collected. The worker was then guided to recognize, recreate and narrate his/her work experience and, at the same time, attention was paid to the skills, knowledge and competences useful to reinforce professional development. In addition to 6-7 hours of front-office activity, supporting the beneficiary, the service also spent additional 4 hours of back-office activity.

SOME REMARKS

On the basis of the feedbacks received from the main stakeholders involved, the experimentation represented an opportunity to introduce a method innovation within the labour market guidance and placement processes.

Considering the original target, this experience gave the worker a new stimulus to re-plan his/her career, moving from an emotional attitude such as frustration, anxiety, rage, to a more rational and pro-active attitude linked to the question “what can I do?”.

From the point of view of operators, the communicative approach and the operator-user relationship were motivating and reference the need to pay attention to the training of the operator and to his/her ability to make more affordable the technical language used during the process of recognition of informal and non formal competences through specific communication and interview management competences.

3.2.1 The Province of Lecce and the experimentation of the model for the definition, development and evaluation of the Learning outcomes in formal settings

As already mentioned in the introduction of this Report, even if the experimentation conducted within the UNI.SYSTEM.LO project focused on the model of recognition of the competences acquired in informal and non formal settings, which combined, albeit the differences, the three experimentation contexts, the Province of Lecce also developed in its territory the UNI.SYSTEM.LO model of recognition of competences in formal settings.

Following the Laboratory organized locally with reference to the model and methods to plan a *competence-based* education and training processes, UNI.SYSTEM.LO got in contact with an already attentive and sensitive school setting. In particular, the vocational high school Antonietta De Pace of Lecce had already started, following the provisions established by the school reform of 2010, a process of organizational innovation, with the establishment of the departments which, with the reform of the structure of the Italian school, offer support to programme the training activity, from the planning of the training offer to the certification of competences.

The Departments were organized by Axes for the planning of competences and, when needed, by Disciplines for the definition of curricula aimed at course planning by competences. Functional frameworks were created in order to:

- create a relationship between citizenship competences and cultural axes
- determine the contribution of each discipline to achieve competences
- create a map of the contribution of disciplines to citizenship competences
- identify abilities/skills and knowledge and then group the difference disciplines based on cultural axes
- define the criteria behind methodological and teaching choices
- supply the model for the discipline-based work plans and for UDA (Learning Unit).

The Staff Meeting then traced the profile of the first and second two-year course, with a map of competences, knowledge and skills acquired in each process and divided into learning outcomes².

In this framework the vocational high school enrolled in the Vocational Education and Training (IeFP) programme. In fact, following the Agreement of 2012 between the Regional School Office of Apulia and the Region, national trade high schools were allowed to be a part, under supplementary subsidiarity, of the IeFP programmes for the obtainment, on the 3rd year, professional qualification titles, corresponding to the 22 three-year long qualifications provided for by the State-Regions-Autonomous Provinces Agreements.

Given this context, UNI.SYSTEM.LO allowed Istituto De Pace to deal with a structured methodology and tools, to compare with its own tools to experiment, during the school year 2013-2014, with reference to the issue of the vocational qualification on the third year, the planning of training processes by competences and the verification and evaluation of technical-professional competences in terms of certification after the third year of course.

In particular, Istituto De Pace worked on 5 out of the 22 qualifications, since they meet their technical-professional specialisations and, for each qualification, a learning unit was designed, using the models proposed by UNI.SYSYTEM.LO. During this school year the expert testing was also experimented for the first time, structured according to the indications of UNI.SYSTEM.LO.

² See Departments and innovation in the research-action experience of IISS "A. De Pace" of Lecce. Document by professors G. Antonaci, A. Augenti, M.G. De Judicibus

3.3 Experimentation in Germany – ABU Berlin

The experimentation of the tools for the recognition of non formal and informal competences proposed within UNI.SYSTEM.LO took on a specific trait with reference to the German context. This is caused by multiple reasons, already mentioned in section 1 of this Report, which may be attributed to the reference institutional context, characterized by a heavily structured and formal system in which the recognition of a vocational qualification is, to date, subject to passing a theoretical-practical exam, at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry or the Chamber of Craftsmanship.

Another element that guided the experimental process is the nature of the partner that tested tools: ABU, a vocational training and guidance centre supplying initial vocational training services, adult training services and modular training services, based on the evaluation of own competences and aimed at developing customized training processes.

As a consequence, the experimentation conducted within the UNI.SYSTEM.LO project focused on the modular training, currently still under testing, which allows the poorly qualified workers with a working experience in the sector for which a qualification of at least 5 years is requested, to have some of the modules required to acquire qualification recognised, actually obtaining a customized training plan.

In particular, given the structured context in which ABU operates and the purposes for which the “competence assessment” process is implemented, UNI.SYSTEM.LO represented an opportunity to compare tools and approaches. The service per se was not experimented, in its various phases of identification, recognition and validation of competences but individual tools and methods of application were experimented, allowing to introduce elements of methodological innovation in guiding and making interviews to beneficiaries.

In order to facilitate the comparison of tools, the experimentation focused on the Logistics and transports sector and in particular on the title of the logistics expert (warehouseman), in respect of which the Veneto experience that UNI.SYSTEM.LO had meant to transfer had developed the set of provided tools, from the Detailed report of competences, to the levels of complexity, to the indicators of mastery to the set of “key questions” to support the interview.

The comparison between tools allowed to introduce in the “competence assessment” process, performed by ABU in understanding with the Chamber of Commerce of Berlin, distinctive and qualifying elements of the UNI.SYSTEM.LO model including the indicators of mastery of the competences which, being absent from their system, reinforced the “guidance” dimension of the interview, helping the beneficiaries to reflect on the acted competences, rather than on knowledge and skills.

As a consequence, the operator helping and guiding the beneficiary to recreate his/her competences and develop his/her Evidence Dossier, checks the correspondence between the

evidences submitted by the person and the indicators of mastery for each competence and evaluates the opportunity to give the worker credits in the training process to obtain the Qualification. In each case, the recognition of credits does not happen formally. It is only aimed at being admitted to a customized training plan to take the final exam on the entire training programme.

BENEFICIARIES

The experimentation involved, as beneficiaries, 10 poorly qualified workers from a formal point of view, interested in acquiring the position of logistics expert (warehouseman) and having at least a 5-year long experience in the sector.

Only if meeting such characteristics, in fact, according to the German model, the worker is entitled to be admitted to a modular training, based on the recognition of the competences acquired, also in non formal and informal settings and as such customized on the training requirements of the individual. Out of the ten beneficiaries involved, seven range between 31-40 years of age.

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED

The experimentation was conducted by ABU as a training agency qualified to develop customized training programmes to be implemented within Modular Training.

Operationally the experimentation involved both guidance counsellors and trainers, first as beneficiaries of the transfer of the UNI.SYSTEM.LO model within transfer labs held in Berlin and then as partners who conducted the experimentation in their context.

Having together guidance counsellors and trainers comes from the need to accompany the beneficiary along the process of identification of his/her competences that, with reference to poorly qualified individuals, requires support by a professional guidance counsellors able to manage the peculiarities of the target group while also being aware of the specific characteristics of the profession for which a qualification is needed. As a consequence, while the guidance counsellor supports the beneficiary in the process of creation of the Evidence Dossier, the trainer identifies the training needs, developing the customized training plan.

OPERATING METHODS AND TIMES

The experimentation was started following the transfer lab of the UNI.SYSTEM.LO model and tools as implemented in Berlin.

Since the Logistics sector (Warehouse) represented for ABU a novelty in terms of development of training processes aimed at taking the exam at the Chamber of Commerce, the tools already prepared within UNI.SYSTEM.LO with special reference to this production sector gave an important contribution to the enunciation of the Dossier, to the identification of the competences and, as a consequence, in the preparation of the customized training plan.

Initially the reference profiles for the job title of logistics expert were compared: the German profile and the one under UNI.SYSTEM.LO following the experience previously developed by the Province of Treviso. Since the profiles were similar in terms of competences, knowledge and skills requested, the levels of competence and indicators of mastery were adopted as tools of in-depth analysis for the performance of interviews.

The time on average devoted to the creation of each Dossier is of approximately 12 total hours of which half spent to make interviews with the beneficiary, held during the course of 4 meetings.

SOME REMARKS

Based on the feedbacks received from the stakeholders involved in the experimentation, the comparison activity performed by ABU with reference to the tools submitted by UNI.SYSTEM.LO for the identification and recognition of the informal and non formal competences was very useful to refine the process used by ABU on the basis of the constraints placed at system level and to reinforce the “guidance” dimension of the process, by searching, through the use of the indicators of mastery of each competence, the acted competence.

This care for the process that was made possible by the tools proposed by UNI.SYSTEM.LO was considered especially useful in consideration of the responsibility of the training body, in this case ABU, to recognize “credits” linked to specific training modules and, in actuality, to allow the beneficiary to shorten the training process to be admitted to the final exam at the Chamber of Commerce.

Figure 1 – Comparative chart of some experimentation data

	PIEDMONT REGION	PROVINCE OF LECCE	ABU BERLIN
TARGET	WORKERS EXPELLED FROM SECTORS IN DISTRESS (WELFARE TO WORK SYSTEM-LEVEL ACTION) – ACTIONS OF EMPLOYMENT CENTRES IN FAVOUR OF DISADVANTAGED PEOPLE	WORKERS UNDER REDUNDANCY FUND OR EXCEPTIONAL MOBILITY	POORLY QUALIFIED WORKERS WITH AT LEAST FIVE YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN THE LOGISTICS SECTOR INTERESTED IN ACQUIRING A PROFESSIONAL POSITION
COMPLETED DOSSIERS	50 ANALYZED WITHIN UNI.SYSTEM.LO 2216 COMPLETED UNDER THE EXPERIMENTATION STARTED AT A REGIONAL LEVEL	7	10
IDENTIFIED SECTORS	ICT, TEXTILE, MECHANICAL	TAILORING, BUILDING AND INSTALLATION, LOGISTICS AND TRANSPORTS, ICT, TRADE	LOGISTICS
INVOLVED INDIVIDUALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ITALIA LAVORO OPERATORS (FOR METHODOLOGICAL SUPPORT) • EMPLOYMENT CENTRES AS MANAGERS OF OUTPLACEMENT ACTIONS • NETWORK OF PRIVATE PARTIES ACCREDITED WITH THE REGION FOR THE SUPPLY OF EMPLOYMENT SERVICES 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMPLOYMENT CENTRES OPERATORS • EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATIONS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GUIDANCE COUNSELLORS • TEACHERS AND TRAINERS KNOWLEDGEABLE OF THE LOGISTICS SECTOR

AVERAGE TIME FOR THE CREATION OF THE DOSSIER	9 HOURS MAX OF WHICH 3 HOURS OF BACK-OFFICE ACTIVITY (AS PER CALL UNDER RI.ATTIVO MEASURE)	7 HOURS WITH THE BENEFICIARY + 3-4 BACK OFFICE	12 HOURS
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Conclusions

The experience made through the experience conducted within the UNI.SYSTEM.LO project draws attention on the complexity of the service of identification, recognition and validation of non formal and informal competences and on the innumerable variable biasing the supply of the service.

The multiplicity of the objectives for which the service may be implemented, the high number of players involved, the reference institutional framework, the cultural heritage on the “competence based” language, the professionals needed to ensure the service quality standard and the cost-effectiveness are crucial elements within a lifelong learning process in which the stress is placed on learning, acting accordingly and the development of an effective integration between individual and employment, learning and not formal learning.

The attempt that was made with UNI.SYSTEM.LO to transfer a previously developed good practice on identification, recognition and validation of the competences to other national and European contexts was firstly an opportunity to make a comparison and “contamination” and, as such, it enriched the players involved for any reason.

The outcomes which emerged during the experimentation showed strengths and weaknesses with reference to the tools and the governance model implemented. However, they confirmed that the approach by competences, albeit by approximation and progressive steps, is unavoidable in Europe where lifelong learning, hence the possibility to value and highlight the outcomes of learning processes performed outside traditional training settings and circuits and at any age, is very important for the growth and productivity of Europe, for its jobs and its ability to adapt to change.