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“Transferring methods for validation of informal learning to VET institutions in the field of sustainable agriculture”

Summary Report about Partners Pilot Courses

(English Version)

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Document: Report

Partners:

ECQA – European Certification & Qualification Association

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1. Introduction

All Project Partners had organized Pilot Courses in the different countries for getting an overview about the current knowledge about recognition, validation and accreditation of prior learning outcomes.

2. Pilot Course main topic (Methodology).

Titles of the pilot courses:

“Valorisation and Certification of prior learnings (non-formal and informal)“ (ECQA)

“APL – the process of recognition, validation and accreditation of prior learning outcomes” (netEDUKACJA)

„Which skills are needed to advise and train farmers in organic farming ?“ (CA09)

“Agroskill Pilot Course” (FAZ)

“The free movement of workers and the documentation of skills” (bfw)

„Pilot Course and Workshop AGROSKILL“ (AGENEX, Gobex)

3. Course Duration.

All Pilot Courses lasted between one or two days.

4. Target audience and number of attendants to the Course.

As it is written in the Application Form, the target audiences are trainers, teachers, tutors, school/institution managers, trainees, etc., preferably related to VET.

All participants for all Pilot Courses:

Profile	Attended
Trainers	19
Teachers in (ecological) agriculture	32
School/institution managers and tutors (idem)	10

Trainees and others (general public)	109
TOTAL	170

In the following lines, details about each previous profile are explained:

- **Teachers in (ecological) agriculture.** In Germany, there is a formal training on Agriculture/Farming at VET level. Ecological agriculture is a topic in this formal training. In this profile, teachers who impart formal training in (ecological) agriculture are included.
- **Trainers.** Furthermore, there is a variety of non- formal training in (ecological) agriculture. In this way, here are included professionals (experts) in the field of (ecological) agriculture that, also, have taught non- formal and/or formal training in this field. Additionally, experts in skills recognition/validation are included in this category.
- **School/institution managers and tutors.** It means staff involved in the management of institutions or training centers.
- **Trainees and others (general public).** This profile is formed by people who have received training (included non-formal) in (ecological) agriculture and general public interested in recognition and validation of his experience and/or non-formal learning in this field.

It was decided to include trainees in the course, since they will be the responsible persons for initiating skills validation on the working level. In this regards, farmers can be multipliers in documenting and validating skills and competencies for their workers. In our pilot course, the trainees have accomplished their profound VET training as farmer, and are now conducting the second phase in their VET training (degree: management experts in farming, accredited by the Chamber).

5. Overview of the questionnaires of participants.

Two different questionnaires depending on the profiles were made. The first one was aimed at teachers/experts. The second questionnaire was delivered to the trainees.

Both questionnaires are structured in 3 sections:

1. Questions about the course. 4 questions in order to evaluate the quality of the course and its contents.
2. Questions about evaluation and validation topics. 5 questions, some of the with multi-answer, in order to know the opinion about the evaluation and validation process and what would be the best (or easiest) actions to make.
3. Personal information concerning experience and training of respondents.

Questions and data that contain both questionnaires can be viewed in Annex I.

As regards to **Teachers/Experts**, the following conclusions can be exposed:

- They have a **low/medium knowledge** about European program for validation of prior learning outcomes.
- In general, they **give a medium/high score** in terms of the increase of their knowledge, the information given and expectations
- **In some countries they don't have chance to make a process of evaluation and validation** of knowledge but in some other countries it was possible.
- Before the Pilot Course, **they had a good knowledge of different methods for evaluation.**
- They consider that **Tutorials about Learning and Evaluation written in national language, documentation and clear evidences are the key** in process of evaluation and validation of knowledge.
- **All of them**, once made the Pilot Course, **would be ready for taking part** in a process of evaluation and validation of knowledge **as evaluators.**
- **The most common training in this profile is the University (1st Degree, MA and PhD) and as experience is VET teacher.**

As regards to **General Public/Trainees**, the following conclusions can be exposed:

- They **low/medium knowledge** about European program for validation of prior learning outcomes.
- In general, they **give a medium score** in terms of the increase of their knowledge, the information given and expectations

- **Half of them have needed to perform a process of evaluation and validation of knowledge.**
- Before the Pilot Course, **the best-known method of evaluation was the practical demonstration.** Although, by and large, **there was many ignorance about all the methods.**
- They consider that Tutorials about Learning and Evaluation written in national language, documentation and clear evidences are the key in process of evaluation and validation of knowledge.
- The most of them, once made the Pilot Course, **would be willing to request or undergo a process of evaluation and validation of knowledge.**
- The most common training in this profile is High School, University and VET and as experience is Agriculture field.

6. Conclusion.

As the most important statement of the participants was, that they would be willing to undergo or at least request the process of evaluation and validation of their prior (non-formal/informal) knowledge, there is a clear need for that in Europe. The prior Results and documents show, that there is validation and evaluation in almost all of the participating countries, but the knowledge about where and how to undergo this process isn't. The circumstances that in some occasions, universities are the ones to decide if they validate or not validate this knowledge leads to the problem, that different universities/institutions will handle those validations/evaluations differently. This leads to the suggestion that there should be official European institutions, which will check any validation/evaluation request and decide about the best method in how to verify and certificate the knowledge. These institutions should have branches in every participating country to help speed up the communication with interested people as well as with universities/companies/governments. The main task here will be to gather a pool of experts in different fields that can be used for evaluating the handed in evidences or to perform the suggested exams/interviews/practical assignments. This enables the applying person to concentrate on the evidence. The validating organization from the European union on the other hand will hand out a validation or certification, valid in Europe, stating that the prior non-formal or informal gained knowledge is validated and certified and has to be accepted in all institutions all over Europe. This valorization process has to be paid by the applicant and directly reduces the cost at institutions all over Europe, as they don't have to deal with validation of prior knowledge any more, but can rely on a Europe wide system for validation/certification (as it is used in industry already e.g, by ECQA for different job roles Europe/world wide). Additionally a lot of people don't have to take courses with knowledge that they already have, so also the time within the degrees can be shortened for several participants in the future and thus get the earlier to work.

Possible next steps:

- Europe wide, use existing channels to generate those local valorization and certification points all over Europe
- Generate a knowledge database of experts in the different fields for Europe, to make sure to have skilled people validating the knowledge of the applicants
- Teach those experts in different methods and ways of validating and evaluating the prior knowledge of the applying people
- Distribute the knowledge about validation and evaluation of prior knowledge within Europe and raise awareness
- Make sure that universities and VET schools know about this validation and make sure that they have to accept these certificates

Annex I. Questionnaires and its results.
Questionnaires for **TEACHERS/EXPERTS**:




Questionnaire

1 Questions on the given course

1.1 How familiar were you, before the course, about European program for validation of prior learning outcomes?
(Possible answers 1= not familiar, 5= completely conversant)

1 2 3 4 5

1.2 Did you find the given information sufficient?
(Possible answers 1= not sufficient, 5= completely sufficient)

1 2 3 4 5

1.3 Was the given information useful?
(Possible answers 1= not useful at all, 5= very useful)

1 2 3 4 5

1.4 Did the course meet your expectation?
(Possible answers 1= not at all, 5= completely satisfied)

1 2 3 4 5

2 Questions on the topic of validation and assessment

2.1. Did you have the need of assessing prior learning outcomes already for one or some of your participants?

Yes No

2.2. What non-formal learning assessments were you aware of before the course?

Practical demonstration	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Oral description/test/exam	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Project description	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Theoretical exam/test	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Expert/employee/boss interview	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

2.3. What are the problems that you could identify when you would validate prior non-formal and/or informal learning outcomes?

Application documents not in English/local Language	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know
Evidences in Documentations no clear	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know
Document issued long time ago	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know
Practical demonstration/test needed	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know

2.4. What non-formal learning assessments are you aware of now?

Practical demonstration	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Oral description/test/exam	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

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Project description Yes No
Theoretical exam/test Yes No
Expert/employee/boss interview Yes No

2.5. Do you plan to introduce the possibility of validation and accreditation of prior learning (non formal/informal) for your customers?

Yes No

3. Personal Information - Please assist our efforts by informing us of your experience and training.

3.1 Education/ Background

- High/Technical school _____
- Vocational Education _____
- Polytechnic type (1st Degree) _____
- University (1st Degree) _____
- University (PostGraduate MSc level) _____
- University (PhD level) _____
- Other (please specify): _____

3.2 Sector of Work / Research

- Formal Education (High school, University etc)
- Research Institutions
- Vocational Education and Training
- Industry
- Advisory Services
- Ministries and Local/Regional Administrations
- NGOs / Non Profit Organizations
- QA Certification Bodies
- Other (please specify): _____

Questionnaires for **STUDENTS**:

Questionnaire

1 Questions on the given course

1.1 How familiar were you, before the course, about European program for validation of prior learning outcomes?

(Possible answers 1= not familiar, 5= completely conversant)

1 2 3 4 5

1.2 Did you find the given information sufficient?

(Possible answers 1= not sufficient, 5= completely sufficient)

1 2 3 4 5

1.3 Was the given information useful?

(Possible answers 1= not useful at all, 5= very useful)

1 2 3 4 5

1.4 Did the course meet your expectation?

(Possible answers 1= not at all, 5= completely satisfied)

1 2 3 4 5

2 Questions on the topic of validation and assessment

2.1. Did you have the need that your knowledge out of prior learning (non-formal/informal) needed to be assessed?

Yes No

2.2. What non-formal learning assessments were you aware of before the course?

Practical demonstration	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Oral description/test/exam	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Project description	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Theoretical exam/test	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Expert/employee/boss interview	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

2.3. What are the problems that you think are the most common when validating prior non-formal and/or informal learning outcomes?

Application documents not in English/local Language	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know
Evidences in Documentations no clear	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know
Document issued long time ago	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know
Practical demonstration/test needed	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know

2.4. What non-formal learning assessments are you aware of before now?

Practical demonstration	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Oral description/test/exam	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Project description	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

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