

Valuing Education and Experience of the local councillors in Europe

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Edito

“To identify, evaluate and validate skills and qualifications acquired by local councillors as an informal learning for a professional purpose.”

This first VA2EL newsletter informs about the project ‘Valuing Education and Experience of the Local councillors in Europe’.

This project generally addresses education and experiences of local councillors all over Europe, and mainly in the six countries of the partnership. Europe’s local councillors are facing changing environments. So it is much important to support the local councillors to identify, value and assess the skills and competences, which

they have acquired through their specific experience within their mandate. To achieve this goal VA2EL develops and disseminates an e-portfolio, which purpose is to assist the local councillors in the process of this professional support. The European team gathered under the VA2EL project will bring an international comparability to the e-portfolio, this will be the main output of the project. The project VA2EL was initiated by the INDL (leader) and IRIV (coordinator), who together with 6 other partner institutions form the international team of VA2EL from altogether 6 countries (France, Austria, Italy, Greece, Poland, and

Lithuania). VA2EL is a Transfer of Innovation project supported within the [Leonardo da Vinci](#) Programme. The Leonardo da Vinci Programme is funded by the European Commission again under the [Lifelong Learning](#) (LLL) programme.



Consortium VA2EL

INDL - National Institute of Local Development



IRIV - Institute for research and information on volunteering



ARIC - Regional Association of Information for territorial communities



OIKODROM - The Vienna Institute for Urban Sustainability



AAE - Association for Adult Education



UTGM - Università Telematica Guglielmo Marconi



KLMTCS - Kaunas Labour Market Training and Counselling Service



IRSS - Institute for the Development of Social Services



Leonardo da Vinci programme

The Leonardo da Vinci programme links policy to practice in the field of vocational education and training (VET). Projects range from those giving individuals the chance to improve their competences, knowledge and skills through a period abroad, to Europe-wide co-operation between training organisations. Part of the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme, the programme funds a wide range of actions, notably cross-border mobility initiatives; co-operation projects to develop and spread innovation; and thematic networks. The potential beneficiaries are similarly wide – from trainees in initial vocational training, to people already in the labour market, as well as VET professionals and private or public organisations active in this field.

What is expected from VA2EL

VA2EL addresses local councillors in local authorities (municipality representatives, mayors, regional representatives). During their mandate, local councillors develop specific skills and competences, both on formal as well as in informal ways. In this way they need a specific accompaniment to enhance the learning they are experiencing. It is necessary to help them to acquire and make use of

their knowledge, their skills and competences in order to acquire a higher self-confidence at work to be more efficient for their elective work, but also to allow them a more successful comeback on the private labour market. The e-portfolio, which will be developed as a main outcome for the VA2EL project, directly supports the local councillors in this endeavour.

A second target group, which we want to support within VA2EL, is the professionals in training and employment working in the field of local development. They will be able to access this e-portfolio on an online platform.



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

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The E-portfolio

The e-portfolio is meant to identify :

- the main activities fulfilled by local councillors,
- the skills and competences acquired and/or developed,
- the training to be proposed
- an action plan on the basis of needs expressed



Photo source: <http://scottish-rscs.org.uk>

The e-portfolio is taking into account :

- the different status of local councillors in Europe (institutional environment)
- the tasks they have to fulfil in the local authorities
- the administrative context (delegation of competences, decentralisation process)

Background of the VA2EL

Decentralisation – a European reality

Local autonomy as a main trend in Europe implies the process of decentralisation, further developing new responsibilities for local authorities and local councillors. The professional environment of such local leaders has become more and more complex. In all European countries, new powers and competences have been delegated to local authorities (towns, departments, regions...) in various fields (social, economic, cultural and environmental). The role of local councillors is a moving

reality: willing to be active and involved to one's community is not enough any more. Specialised skills and competences in technical and administrative matters, as well as in entertainment and management, are required. Autonomy, competence and responsibilities are linked, raising the question of a status for local councillors in the European countries. On the other hand, after the experience of political responsibilities for many years, they still don't know how they could benefit from their particular experience achieved through the years.

A referential of skills/competences has been elaborated for the professionals working in local development, but there still does not exist a proper tool for identification, evaluation and valorisation of the acquired competences by the local elects/local councillors, and as a result take advantage of their experience and skills. Due to this we want to introduce the tool of the e-portfolio. In a long term perspective we even want to think further of a real validation (with a diploma) in the perspective of a professional insertion.



The partnership of the VA2EL

INDL – The National Institute of Local development INDL acts as leader of the project. The institute was created in 2006. One of its main objectives is to promote territorial innovation by finding common interests between services provided on a local and international level. The leadership of INDL includes the overall management including the administrative and financial information, the signing of contracts and the reporting. Additionally INDL is responsible for the exploitation of the results, e.g. their will be a publication integrating the results of the project. More on www.indl.fr

IRIV – The “Institute de Recherche et d’Information sur le Volontariat” supports the project as coordinator of VA2EL. IRIV, a private non-profit research institute was created 1997 by Bénédicte Halba. Its main purpose is to participate through colloquiums, publications and studies at the public debate to promote the voluntary service. IRIV has coordinated the previous project VAEBAVE, on which results VA2EL is based on. Within VA2EL the institute is responsible for the transfer of innovation including the development of the framework of the portfolio focusing on the specific skills and competences of local councillors. More on www.iriv.net

Oikodrom – The Vienna Institute for Urban Sustainability. Oikodrom was funded in 1994 as a private non-profit research institute focusing on an interdisciplinary approach to sustainability in urban development. Within VA2EL Oikodrom is responsible for the dissemination of the project and its results to the wider public as trough newsletter or the publication of leaflets in all project partners languages. Additionally Oikodrom shares the responsibility for the project webpage with INDL. More on www.oikodrom.org



IRSS – The Polish ‘Instytutu Rozwoju Służb Społecznych’ (Institute for the Development of Social Sciences) was founded in 1996. The Institute’s mission is to develop and disseminate knowledge and expertise on the practice and theory of social work and social policy, and thus raise the quality of public policies in those fields. The activity of the institute includes training programs for social workers, periodic and research programs. IRSS is responsible for the integration of the national state of the art reports into the comparative synthesis report. More on www.irss.and.pl

AAE – The Greek Association for Adult Education operated informally from 2000 and as an organized structure since 2003. AEE focuses on its contribution into the development of Life Long Learning and more particularly in Adult Education. AAE’s leads the work package Evaluation, which includes the evaluation of the management and of the project meetings, but also the evaluation of the results. AAE will compile evaluation reports for each of the seven work packages. More on www.aae.org.gr

ARIC – The Association Régionale d’Information des Collectivités territoriales’ is a non-profit organisation which was created in 1971 by local councillors. It is active in four departments in the region of Brittany. The main objective of the organisation is to facilitate the analysis and access to all information concerning local development. The strength of ARIC comes mainly from its members: 320 municipalities distributed in all Brittany region, representing altogether 6.000 local councillors. ARIC develops a lot of services addressing all the local councillors (magazines, monthly news updates, days of information and training). More on www.aric.asso.fr



Kick off meeting in Paris on the 11th and 12th of December

UTGM – The Italian Università Telematica “Guglielmo Marconi” is a public University centred on the model of “Open University”. To facilitate the process of learning, the university activates all the available channels of communication through the online data processing and multimedia. The purpose is to create a new model of learning which, through the use of numeric technologies and Internet, offer university courses of high level. For VA2EL UTGM will additionally contribute through the development of the e-portfolio. More on www.unimarconi.it

« *The team of VA2EL consists of 8 partner organisation from six countries representing different parts of Europe. All the consortium members are profoundly experienced in conducting and implementing EU projects.* »

KLMTCS – The Kaunas Labour Market Training and Counselling Services was established in 1993 and is engaged in labour market regulation and coordination in the region of Kaunas. One of its main purposes is to support organizations through consulting, personnel trainings and team and leadership development services. Within VA2EL KLMTCS is responsible for the experimentation phase, in which the e-portfolio will be tested and distributed to the local councillors. More on www.darborinka.lt



Kick off meeting in Paris on the 11th and 12th of December

Foresight - upcoming project activities



On the 11th and 12th of December all the project partners met for the kick off meeting at Paris. After the introduction of participants, VA2EL and the state of the art as starting point were presented and discussed. The first day ended with an informal get-together allowing the participants to freely exchange their experiences. On the second day the general work plan was discussed and tasks were distributed to each responsible partner. The final point of the meeting was the signing of the contracts between the leader of the project (INDL) and each partner.

During the **first phase** of the project each country representative will work on the state of the art on the situation of local councillors in the respective country (Work package 2). Each national state of the art report will contain information on the local development (process of decentralization, the administrative division of the country, the legal framework), as well as the status of local councillors and their profiles concerning sociodemographic characteristics, the average pay and the personal background. Furthermore it will include information on the training support for local councillors (training courses, skills development and the needs). IRSS will compile a synthesis report integrating all the national reports until end of May.

The first meeting of the **French Steering Committee** for the Va2el project has been held in France, under the aegis of the ARIC, gathering INDL and Iriv, in March 2009. They have decided upon the participants to the next French steering committee, involving local councillors, to be organised in June 2009, following the main issue of WP Exploitation.

On the 7th and 8th of May we meet in Warsaw, welcomed by our Polish partners of IRSS to jointly discuss the project's progress. The main focus of this meeting is the presentation of the background studies on the situation of local councillors, which is at the moment conducted in each partner's country in the framework of work package "state of the art" led by IRSS. Further we will discuss the integration of the results of these reports into the development of the e-Portfolio.



Kick of meeting in Paris on the 11th and 12th of December



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Find more information on www.va2el.eu. The national reports as well as synthesis reports as well as additional information on the project's progress and the newsletter will be able to be found and to be downloaded on the projects webpage. The second issue of the periodical VA2EL newsletter will be distributed after the meeting in Poland in May.

VA2EL MAIN GOALS AND EXPECTED IMPACT

The project "Valuing Education and Experience for Local councillors in Europe" (VA2EL) will propose a portfolio, available through Internet (e-portfolio) for local councillors to help them identify and value the specific skills and competences acquired through their elected experience together with a handbook to use it on the labour market.

The e-portfolio will also identify required training to enhance and improve them, and/or will think of a real validation (with a diploma) in the perspective of a professional insertion.

Local councillors need a specific accompaniment to value and enhance the formal, non formal and informal learning they are experiencing.

The choice of a portfolio for voluntary managers as a basis for the transfer of innovation is explained by the proximity of the tasks to be fulfilled by both local councillors and voluntary managers (pathways between associative functions and elective functions are numerous).

The expected impact is to better take into account the experience acquired by local councillors, to underline the required professionalisation of their activity, and so to enhance recognition of their specific experience on the labour market.