

## Valuing Education and Experience of the local councillors in Europe

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### Edito



The project Va2el: Valuing Education and Experience of Local Councillors, funded by Leonardo da Vinci, under the European Union's Lifelong Learning Program, contributes to a greater appreciation and labour market utilization of the skills and competences developed by local councillors.



### 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



USGM - Università degli Studi Guglielmo Marconi



KLMTCS - Kaunas Labour Market Training and Counselling Service



IRSS - Institute for the Development of Social Services



To achieve this, the partners develop a portfolio, with a digital version, an e-portfolio, documenting the councillor's background, skills and competences for recognition on the labour market by prospective education providers and employers.

### 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.

## The portfolio method

A portfolio is an organised collection of materials that presents and verifies skills and knowledge acquired through experience. The individual candidate gets to actively contribute to the collection of evidence. The portfolio method allows for a mix of different approaches, which can be presented in a single product. A portfolio might include documents

such as resumes, performance appraisals, references from current and past employers, supervisors and colleagues, and photographs of completed work certified by a referee. A Competence Portfolio, as will be developed in the VA2EL project, helps to collect key competences, which are difficult to prove evidence for on a formal way. The balance of compe-

tence is a tool for self-assessment and evaluation of own future development potentials. The final product of this process is a individual and complete competence profile of the user.



Education and Culture DG  
Lifelong Learning Programme

*«The portfolio method allows for a mix of different approaches, which can be presented in a single product»*

### 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)

## A portfolio for Local Councillors

The portfolio which was transfer of the portfolio for volunteer-developed during the second phase of the VA2EL project is based on the previous project VAEB.



The aim of this previous project was to develop a portfolio for which took place within the first volunteer workers. It was in the year of the project. responsibility of the project At the end of September the coordinator IRIV to transfer to final version of the portfolio was gained knowledge into the completed. The portfolio is now VA2EL project. This means the to be transferred in a digital e-Portfolio by March 2010.



Meeting the mayoress of Krems (Austria)



## The structure of the portfolio

The Portfolio directly addresses the local councillors. In a first step they should reflect on their motivations and reasons to work with the portfolio method, to fill out the manuscript and gather all the necessary documents. A well founded explanation of the portfolio method will introduce the user into the process of the portfolio. The interactive process of the portfolio is continued with a reflection of the motivations for becoming a local councillor and for executing the mandate for several years. Subsequently the user continues the process of reflecting his/her experience in drawing a time line of his/her political career. This will be supported by a couple of self-reflexive questions, which should be answered by the councillor himself. With filling

out a table summarizing the status quo of political responsibility, one of the main parts, the identification of competences, is introduced.

In this part of the portfolio, the user is asked to work with a list of competences, which s/he might have been developed by fulfilling a local mandate. These are competences both acquired or developed. The list of competences is organised according to five main topics: communication, administration/budget/accountancy, management/organisation, management/implementation of projects and analysis of public needs.

The local councillors now have the task to rate the competences according to the

respective development. The user can give examples for each of the competences s/he considers relevant.

In the last step of the portfolio the users are asked to reflect on what aspects of their experience they can take along to the professional labour market. The local councillor is asked to think about up to three competences s/he wants to further develop or acquire. These three competences e.g. Can be essential for a new job or for the successful continuation of the present job. The user is invited to set up some realistic, personal goals including a time limit to create a concrete action plan. This goals are to be achieved during the mandate as local councillor.



3rd transnational meeting in Krems (Austria) on september 2009

## What has happened

### International Project Meeting

On the 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> of September the third international project meeting took place in Krems, a town on the banks of the Danube. The main goal of the project meeting was the finalisation of the transfer of innovation: the transfer of the portfolio developed in the previous project VAZEB into a portfolio, which adjusted to the situation of the local councillors. On the first evening of the meeting a fireside chat with the mayoress of Krems, Ingeborg Rinke, and a representative of the government of Lower Austria, Dr. Inge Wollansky. The mayoress shared her experiences with the team of VAZEL. The project as a whole and the development of the e-Portfolio were vividly discussed. She highly appreciated the concept of the e-Portfolio and confirmed the importance of the valuation of experiences and education of local councillors.

### A testimony from Greece



On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August and in the office of the municipality of Korthi, the 2nd meeting of the peripheral network of VAZEL was

held. Korthi is a Municipality of 2 000 habitants located in Andros Island. Korthi participates in the POLISNET Network of the "Learning Cities" as well as in the Hellenic working group. The meeting was attended by a Mayor and nine Municipal councillors. On behalf of AAE Christos Doukas informed the participants about the aims and the activities of the VAZEL Project. The Newsletter of the Project in Greek was distributed as well as the minutes of the 1st Meeting of the working group. Participants were interested in participating in the portfolio process. They argued that many activities during their duties as councillors are not visible to the local communities, are implicit and not valued as learning capabilities even by the councillors themselves. Furthermore the personal learning plans can lead to supportive training schemes. A general discussion followed concerning the conclusions of the synthesis report of VAZEL. The conclusion of the meeting is that councillors in small municipalities located in the periphery could be motivated by the portfolio process. It may be a step to the opening of their life pathways towards more valuable learning and working environments.

### A testimony from Lithuania



The second national meeting of the local councillors took place in Kretinga district municipality in the west part of Lithuania on the 29th October 2009. Main specialist of Kaunas labour market training and counselling service Rimgaile Kriščiūnaitė has moderated the meeting where all the 17 participants were actively involved into the discussion about their experience, specific skills and competences acquired during the mandate and necessity to validate them and to use for the future career developing. The e-portfolio was considered as a useful instrument to help identifying and value all the experience gained during the term, and especially developed in the informal way. Local councillors were provided with the material and intermediate outcomes of the project and were interested to be involved into the experimentation sessions, and also to get further information of the project implementation and as well as the VAZEL Newsletters.

« The user is invited to set up some realistic, personal goals including a time limit to create a concrete action plan. »



2nd meeting in Korthi (Greece) AAE National workgroup



## Foresight - upcoming project activities



The next step of the project is the digitalisation of the portfolio. The portfolio will become an e-Portfolio. A digital portfolio provides the opportunity to combine text files with audio files as well as graphical and video-based information. The digital technology can support the user in summarizing the information, which was gathered in the reflection

process in the process of the compilation of the portfolio.



Italian Partners in charge of the e-portfolio development during 3rd meeting in Krems (Austria)

The Italian team from USGM (Università degli Studi Guglielmo Marconi Telematica) is in charge of the portfolio development. The first version will be completed by the next meeting, which will take place in Rome on 11<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> of March 2010. Subsequently to the meeting the experimentation

phase of the e-Portfolio will take place. All local councillors of the respective countries are invited to participate in the experimentation of the portfolio. The next newsletter will be distributed after the meeting in Rome.



Austrian partner (Oikodrom) at the 3rd meeting in Krems



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Find more information on [www.va2el.eu](http://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 GOAL AND EXPECTED IMPACT**

*The project " Valuing Education and Experience for Local councillors in Europe " (VA2EL) will propose a 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.*