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WP5
**Modelling VPL system for the professional care
service provider**

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Context

The VPL procedure in Upcaring is a description of a process. This is caused by the fact that project partners agreed to use existing national, regional or even local instruments and methods at hand, instead of developing and piloting new instruments. This is the best way to ensure maximum benefit for the target group, the Home Care Worker, since only by using national material, a connection to valid qualifications can be made.

Since Upcaring described a rather unique form of VPL (later referred to as hybrid VPL) professionals need context and guidance to decide rightly where and when to use what (kind of) local instruments.

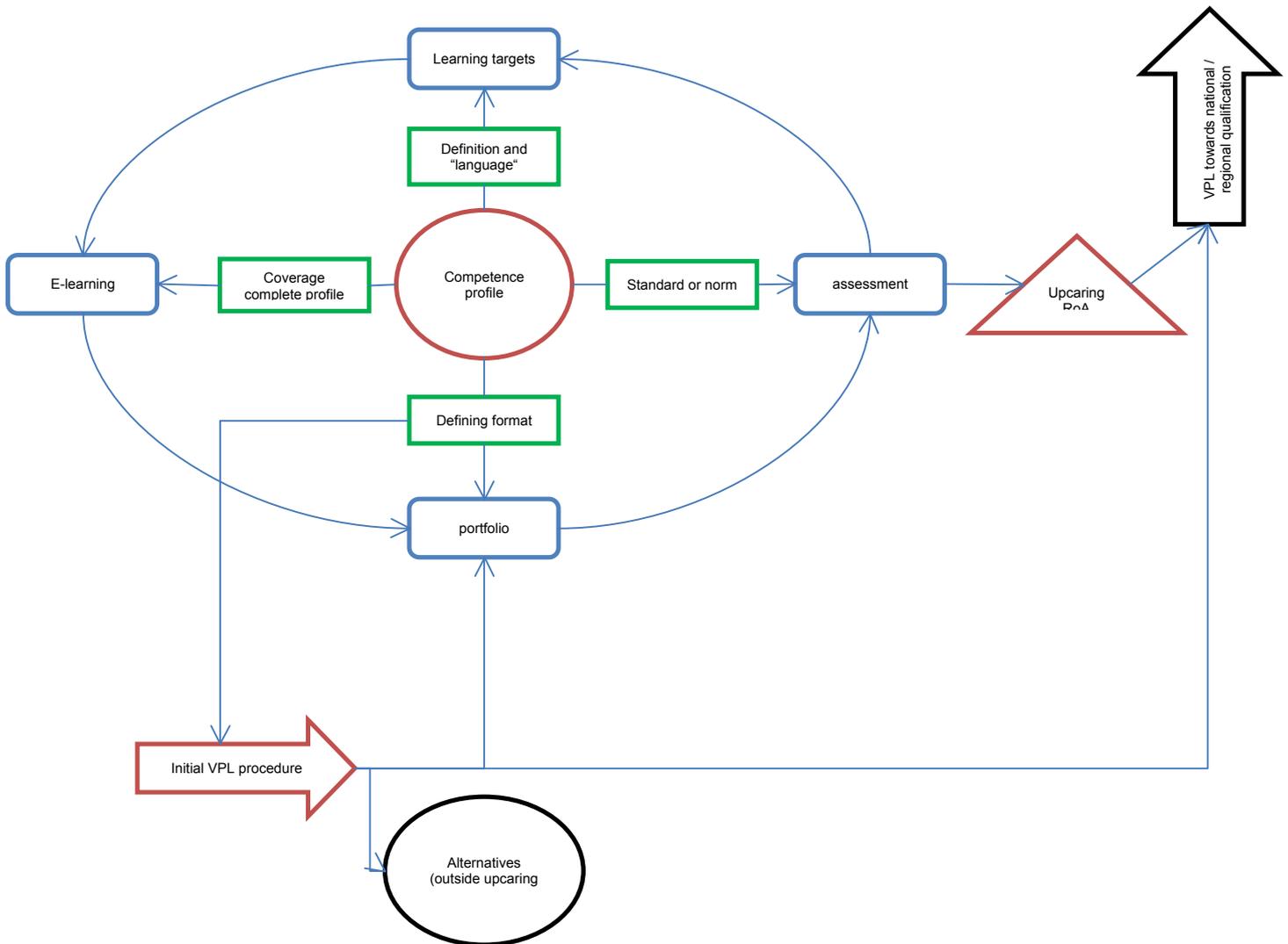
The results of 'Modelling VPL system for the professional care service provider' are described in 5 different documents:

- 5.1 – Operational VPL procedure;
- 5.2 - Learning outcomes translation table;
- 5.3.1 - VPL Toolkit for tutors;
- 5.3.2 - VPL Toolkit for the HCW;
- 5.4 - Social care provider Portfolio

Intermediate professionals, organizing training and guiding candidates are the audience for these documents. Only in some cases the portfolio 5.4 can be used by individuals, but need some modification to the local situation as indicated. Also the Toolkit for the Home Care Worker needs to be adjusted to the actual instruments used, before it can be handed over to the Home Care Worker.

Relation between the Competence framework, e-learning and VPL

For a full understanding of the design of the VPL procedure, especially the second more formal part, it is necessary to look into the design of the UPCARING project, and the relation between parts of the project and their



interdependencies.

WP 5, the VPL system, has strong relations and interdependencies with work packages 3 (Competence Framework) and 4 (e-Learning); in simple terms, work package 3 is setting the standard and goal for both 4 and 5. Those relationships are in the green boxes above, visualizing where the competence framework is used and what it is used for. Furthermore, it would be logical and easy for the HCW if the results from e-learning could be captured and proven in the same way as they initially did in the beginning of the VPL procedure. Therefore, the portfolio resulting from the VPL procedure is also in the education cycle (defining learning targets, learning, proving, assessing etc).

In this setting, VPL is used both as a system for empowerment and intake at the very start of the procedures and as intermediate to set learning goals, check those (what?) and eventually issue the UPCARING Record of Attendance. Note that the elements in black are optional, could be done by partners, but are no part of the UPCARING project. Of course, the connection to regional or national qualifications is a sound option. To achieve this, the portfolio needs to be completed with a part connecting the UPCARING Competence Framework to the thus needed competences. For that, the best solution is to bring into place the local summative VPL procedure, or continue the UPCARING procedure / development cycle with the enriched portfolio and assessment targeted towards regional or national qualification.

Introduction to the process

For the purpose of the Upcaring project, a VPL procedure is desirable that:

- will aim at empowering the candidate to make further professional choices;
- will provide tools for the identification, validation and certification of knowledge, skills and competences which have been previously acquired by the adult learner in different learning contexts, formal, informal and non-formal ones.

While the latter could be described as a formal, summative procedure, the former can be characterised as an informal, formative approach. Therefore, the VPL procedure will have to be **hybrid**, where characteristics of an informal, formative procedure and a formal, summative procedure are combined.

Furthermore, beside “*empowering the candidate to make further professional choices*” the target of the VPL procedure will be the Upcaring European Competence Framework, as designed in work package 3 of the project.

This approach means on one hand a specific instruction to the tutors guiding candidates through the VPL procedure (see toolkits) & on the other hand a procedure where the focus is initially on further professional choices and then on the competence framework. This is visible not only in this description of the procedure, but also in the (format for the) portfolio.

The fundamental decision: using VPL or not

This VPL procedure can be used for any candidate, up to the moment where the GO / NO GO decision is made (step 5 in the procedure hereunder). This is caused by the hybrid design of the procedure, where the first part is of a formative and informal nature, thus not focussing on any specific sector. However, bear in mind that candidates entering VPL expect an outcome they can build on. So for the candidates where a NO GO might be the result of step 5, redirection to other services should be made available.

For this part, people carrying out the VPL procedure also have to keep in mind that formal or summative VPL –the second part of the procedure- is as useful as

the certificate issued / standard used is for the candidate. Therefore local circumstances need to be taken into account when deciding whether the Upcaring framework of competences is the target of the procedure, or whether a local professional profile or a certificate is to be added.

Connection to (organizational) possibilities of learning

In setting up the procedure, project partners must also take into account that VPL is likely only useful if otherwise needed training can be substituted by proven experience, proving competences. This has consequences for the organization and implementation of (individual) learning programs using the e-learning modules. Before starting the VPL procedures, one should be fully aware of the limitations of the organization of learning, so as to avoid results from VPL that cannot have effect because they do not lead to exemption from the learning program.

Furthermore, it is important to realise that a VPL procedure should not be started (or even continued) when it is clear the procedure will not lead to acquiring a certain percentage of the certificate. However, intermediate persons should leave that decision to the candidate, clearly showing them that the result of VPL might not shorten the education needed at all.

This all is on one hand to ensure a good balance in investment: balance between the time spent on the VPL procedure by both the individuals, the project partner and the intermediate persons and the overall costs of the procedure on one hand and the outcome on the other hand. Of course the motivation, empowerment and learning targets may be taken into account, although they can hardly be quantified in euros.

VPL and the relation with the learning program

- The parts of a standard recognised by the VPL procedure, can be cancelled in the training program (otherwise, VPL has no effect)
- The amount of training time saved by VPL should be at least as much as the VPL procedure lasted
- The overall costs from start to goal should always be considered
- In many cases, formal or summative VPL becomes a standard way of work; in other cases it might be suboptimal
- A VPL procedure should be stopped or altered when the gain is less than the time it costs

Macro competence	Candidate 1	Candidate 2
1 Establishing a positive relationship	10%	100%
2 Hygiene, cleaning and safety	25%	0%
3 operational care giving	75%	0%

4 organization, planning, care project	40%	50%
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Competence units	Candidate 1	Candidate 2
3.1 accompanying the person	10%	100%
3.2 providing prescribed meals	25%	0%

Principles of VPL

For a VPL procedure, a few elements are put in order as basic principles:

- candidates enter a procedure of free will;
- materials drafted by candidates will remain their personal possession;
- a VPL procedure is meant to show existing competences. It is not focussing on missing competences;
- main target of the VPL procedure is aiding candidates to draft their actionplan and carry it out. If the candidates –in collaboration with the accompanying person, feels certification is at hand, assessment of the portfolio will be

Guidance - Empowering candidates

In order to have the desired effect of empowerment during the first phase of the VPL procedure, some simple points have to be taken into account. However, though not very complicated, it is rather difficult to keep to those principles during the process. This is caused mainly by the accompanying people, partly because of the tendency to be “too helpful”, “confronting” or to maintain focus on the UPCARING Framework from start instead of after the GO / NO GO. So keep in mind:

- Focus on proven abilities, instead of testing again: motivating versus frustrating;
- The glass is half full: focus on potential and possibilities, not on shortcomings;
- Work with individual competencies that can be enlarged or enriched, rather than focusing on problems, describing barriers, defining shortcomings and distances to the final goal.

Learn to value – the VPL procedure

- Engagement, consciousness, learn how to value – general portfolio part
- Recognizing competencies, valuating learning
- Profiling: from “what **can** I do” towards “what do I **want** to do”
- Portfolio part – based on UPCARING Framework of Competences
- Personal development plan / Assessment

General design of the Upcaring VPL procedure

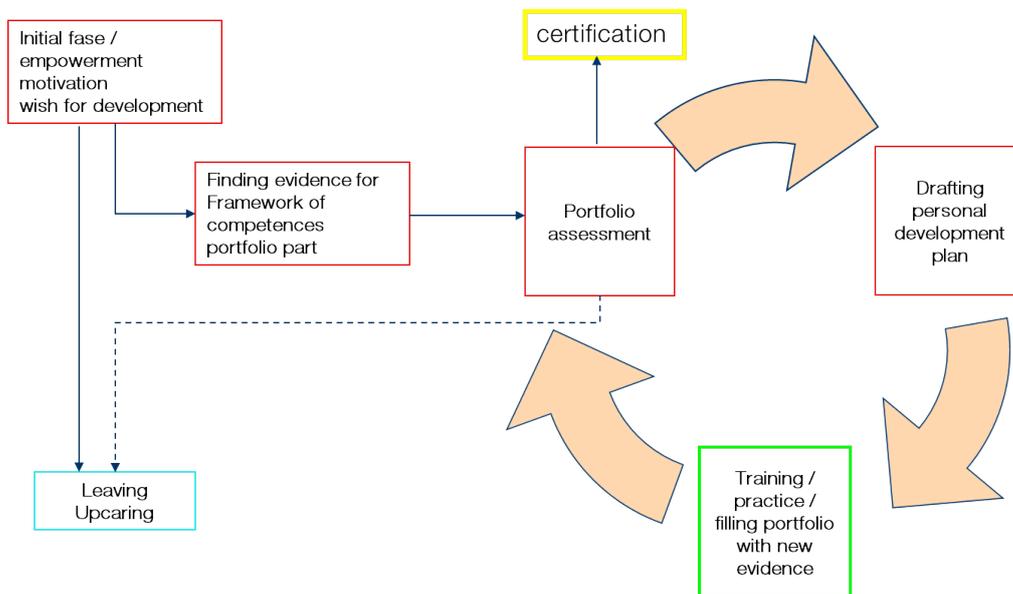
This VPL procedure consists of 9 steps, with two explicit exit points: one after the general formative part of the procedure, one after portfolio assessment. The VPL procedure is clear when combining the toolbox for the candidate, the tutor or intermediate person and the portfolio. In general, the procedure can be described as following:

1. Following the 5 structure of 10 steps in five phases (appendix a), the procedure starts with an explanation to possible candidates of what (this) VPL can do and what it cannot, what kind of work has to be done in order to finish the procedure, agreements on behaviour, rules, ownership and so on.
Special intention is needed to inform the candidate about exit moments and directions. Furthermore, candidates should be fully aware that the procedure will primarily focus on professional wishes, further development etc., has a go / no go decision and is also targeted towards the UPCARING European Competence Framework.
2. After this information, if the candidate decides to enter the procedure, the first meeting is scheduled. For this meeting, preparation is needed. The candidate is informed by letter about the date, time and place of the meeting and is reminded what "homework" the procedure will result in.
3. After a first welcome, small exercise to get a little familiar with each other the focus will be on the materials brought by all candidates. These are used to make the first point on their lifeline, describing turning points and major experiences.
4. Work on the lifeline is continued where each point of interest (to be decided by the candidate only) is described in Result, Context, Knowledge, Ability. The candidate is thus getting used to the fact experiences can be described in terms of competences.
5. Go / no go: the candidate decides on their professional / educational future. This is the first opportunity to reflect on whether or not the UPCARING procedure should be continued.
6. Finalizing the portfolio: Not only information not enclosed through the life experience is added (school, jobs, hobbies etc.) but also direct relations are described by the candidate between experiences and the UPCARING European Competence Framework.
7. Portfolio assessment, completed by a criterion-based interview of the candidate or a STAR interview on specific experience. The candidate may be asked to provide further evidence.
8. On the basis of the candidate's wishes (step 5) and the portfolio assessment, a Record of Attendance or certificates are issued (if possible)

at this stage) and an action plan is drafted. This plan is focusing on learning targets based on wishes, combined with the final profile.

- Based on e-learning and / or workplace learning, the candidate carries out the steps in the action plan, while filling in the portfolio. As soon as the action plan is completed (and the portfolio filled with the relevant evidence) step 7 is carried out again.

This procedure can be visualised as follows, where activities connected to the VPL procedure (WP 5) are in red.



Target of the VPL procedure – The UPCARING European Competence Framework

In the UPCARING project, the target is to obtain the Record of Attendance according to the UPCARING European Competence Framework. In this framework, the profile of the Home Care Worker consists of four main macro areas of competences. To obtain the UPCARING Record of Attendance, each of the four macro areas has to be sufficient. However, during the process, each of those four macro areas can be checked on the record. Depending on the outcome of the first steps in the VPL process, candidates might obtain none or up to all 4 main macro areas of competences checked on their Record of Attendance.

The target of this VPL procedure will be the UPCARING European Competence Framework. However, during piloting, project members can add specific instruments in order to connect the procedure to national or regional qualification and / or procedures. Partners may consider embedding local instruments, such as local portfolios – connected to national qualification or to specific job profiles, adapt the procedure to be able to put the use of assessment centres into place and amend the learning targets / learning program if it is possible / desirable to include training on the job.

Annex 1 – Guideline for piloting organizations / implementing VPL procedures in 5 phases – 10 steps

'VPL in the organisation'		the VPL-process in 10 steps			
Phase	Step by step	What to do?	Why?	internal input	External services
I. Commitment	1. awareness <i>what kind of organisation is this & do we want to invest in human capital?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vision of "the glass is half full": focusing on all kinds of learning responsibilities of organisation mission 	Creating a vision of organisation targets and opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Giving space to 'future-watching' on levels of management and work floor Using social events of the organisation Acquiring knowledge on formal, non-formal and informal learning, incl. summative and formative goals 	<p>All stakeholders organise information campaigns on the topic of pro's and con's of lifelong learning within any given organisation;</p> <p>On a macro-level, they also offer an analysis of society, developments & trends, including demonstrating why and how organisations should/could react (or better 'pro-act')</p> <p>- stakeholders formulate general principles for VPL concerning: quality, access and transparency</p>
	2. starting up & target <i>what are the aims of the organisation?</i> & <i>what are the needs of the organisation in relation to the aims?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inventory Swot-analysis 	Making the vision concrete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Description of context organisation, ambitions and opportunities Identifying the leaders/pioneers 	Advice on existing public/private services available for VPL-aspirations of organisations
	Organisation Development Plan, incl. planning and budget	Demand articulation organisation level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setting the goals for an internal VPL-process Putting together an internal VPL-team Organising an informative meeting for all 	Information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> how to do this supply of external services available financial back-up ownership of VPL 	

II. Recognition	3. preparation: determination organisation profile <i>how is the organisation going to determine the need for half-filled glasses?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Function profiles Portfolio format 	Demand articulation individual level + instrumentation of one's half-filled glass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making up your mind concerning 'language' Description of function profiles Competence catalogue Setting the portfolio Setting the budget (time and money) Intake of candidates 	Information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> how to do this generic list of competences information on portfolio formats
	4. retrospective, <i>connecting to the organisation profile</i> <i>how to demonstrate the individual profile or the state of the art of one's half-filled glass?</i>	Filling in portfolios by candidates	Working on the individual contribution to oneself and the organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> guidance of candidates quick scan or self-assessment formats for eligible proof/evidence setting up a portfolio-databank, including access to a 2-yearly update (voucher) examples and role models 	Information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> how to do this examples usable standards and assessment tools quality assurance
III.	5. setting the standard <i>how to match individual profiles to organisation profiles?</i>	Choosing the assessment-method	Making a choice is part of the 'made-to- measure' approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> setting the actual standard according to the goals self-assessment assessment-protocol showing perspectives (summative/formative) 	Information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> how to do this access to assessment facilities external assessors

Valuation	6. valuation <i>valuating the half-filled glasses</i>	Assessment	Finding out personal abilities and ambitions, within the organisation context Setting formative goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> organising assessment internal assessment filling in formative perspective(s) 	Information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> how to do this external assessment advice on certification 2nd opinion facility right to appeal
	7. validation <i>validating the half-filled glasses</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certification (summative goals) Personal advice on development 	Capitalising on personal abilities and ambitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> organising summative perspectives & filling in internal summative goals portfolio's taken up in portfolio-databank for 2-yearly update 	Information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> how to do this filling in external summative goals advice on personal development plans (PDP) mutual recognition (crossing borders of sectors/regions)
IV. Development	8. prospective: connecting the individual to the organisation's future <i>How to make up a personal development plan (PDP)?</i>	Formulation of PDP	Organising 'learning/developing made-to-measure'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> matching PDP with Organisation Plan proposal for financing PDP contract with public/private services guidance information on individual rights & duties 	Information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> how to match how to finance how to guide sectoral/national rights & duties
	9. working on PDP's <i>individual action: developing/learning made to measure</i>	Learning/developing made to measure	People learn and develop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> making sure services offer 'made-to-measure' individual guidance quality-control by VPL-team 	Information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> how to do this quality-assurance

V. Implementa- tion / empowerment	10. structural implementation & empowerment	Evaluation of the pilot	Making a decision on structural embedding VPL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> evaluation form for candidates VPL-team advises organisation on future use of VPL 	Information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> how to do this
	<i>How did it go?</i> <i>If ok, how to embed VPL structural in the organisation policy (training/personnel-policy)</i>	Embedding the results in HRM	Structural embedding VPL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VPL embedded in HRM Knowledge how to use (demand-steered) public/private services Vouchers for 2-yearly update of portfolios PDP replaces 'classical' personell-cycle VPL also sets the norm for customer-oriented guidance 	Information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> how to continue this with flanking public/private services using national portfolio-databank

