



# Competences Before Diplomas

## Project Result 1

### RESEARCH STUDY

## Validation of informal and non- formal learning: Analysis of European and National Scenarios





## PROJECT INFORMATION

**Project acronym:**

CompB4D

**Project title:**

Competences Before Diplomas

**Project Number:**

Project N°: 2021-1-FR01-KA220-ADU-00030141

**Sub-programme or KA:**

KA220-ADU Cooperation partnerships in adult education

**Website:** <https://compb4d.eu/>

### CONSORTIUM





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## 1. Introduction

The project “Competences Before Diplomas”, Erasmus+ KA2 funded by European Commission under project no. 2021-1-FR01-KA220-ADU-00030141, aims to identify and develop possible ways of recognition<sup>1</sup> and validation<sup>2</sup> of competences<sup>3</sup> acquired by non-formal and informal settings, especially with left behind adult learners and other disadvantaged target groups, mainly through the use of a Validation Portfolio.

The non-recognition of certain qualifications makes it difficult for a significant number of people to get jobs commensurate with their skills, to migrate and work in other countries or to access further education, even though they have all the necessary skills and knowledge. Thus, the validation of non-formal and informal learning is increasingly seen as a key factor in the implementation of lifelong learning in all its aspects. More and more European countries stress the importance of making learning visible outside formal education and training and of giving it its fair value, for example at work, during leisure activities and at home.

This progressive inclusion in the labour market benefits everyone as employers are likewise able to access proof of skilled personnel and better match them with suitable jobs, while also increasing productivity. And governments are further able to have better assurances of increased competitiveness and economic growth, as well as social inclusion and equity.

Moving from general policy objectives to practical solutions, the service of individuals is another story. Some countries have been working on solutions since the late 1980s and have yielded significant results, others are still at an early stage of discussion and development. Other countries

<sup>1</sup> Check the definition in the glossary, p.

<sup>2</sup> Check the glossary, p.

<sup>3</sup> Check the glossary, p.





are still reluctant to introduce the validation and, in some cases, express their fear of seeing it in conflict with – or even undermine – other education, training and learning.

The Partnership of the project is composed of seven organisations located in France, Cyprus, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Romania and Slovakia who are working together. This Comparative Research is the first Project Result of this cooperation, meant to be a practical and user-friendly Study Report to investigate on European overview and on each partner country's national data regarding processes, institutions and concepts of Validation of non-formal<sup>4</sup> and informal learning<sup>5</sup>, especially in terms of Key Competences in the field of Adult Education. Furthermore, the Comparative Research can be also a useful guidance to know benefits and opportunities for validation targeted to adult learners and educators.

In detail, the PR1 - Comparative Research is the result of seven National Reports conducted in each partner country with the aims: to achieve a better understanding of the concepts related to validation, recognition and certifications of non-formal competences; to report on the actions that each country and Europe at large have implemented in this area, including identifying institutions active in the field and good practices to learn; at the same time analysing the needs and gaps still present in the sector at each level; to raise awareness among European citizens on the importance and potential of recognising and validating their learning<sup>6</sup>, enabling individuals to be more informed about different opportunities of training, validation and certification; to equip partner Organizations and educators of knowledge<sup>7</sup> and competences on validation of informal and non-formal learning, to increase their shared level of familiarity to different assessment<sup>8</sup> methodologies and validation

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<sup>4</sup> Check the glossary, p.

<sup>5</sup> Check the glossary, p.

<sup>6</sup> Check the glossary, p.

<sup>7</sup> Check the glossary, p.

<sup>8</sup> Check the glossary, p.





processes, in order to lay the foundation for the development of further results.

During research each partner carried out a consultation with professionals to better understand the target group's needs and difficulties. Then each partner identified two Best Practices in its own country to compare policies, tools, methodologies and transpositions to national systems.

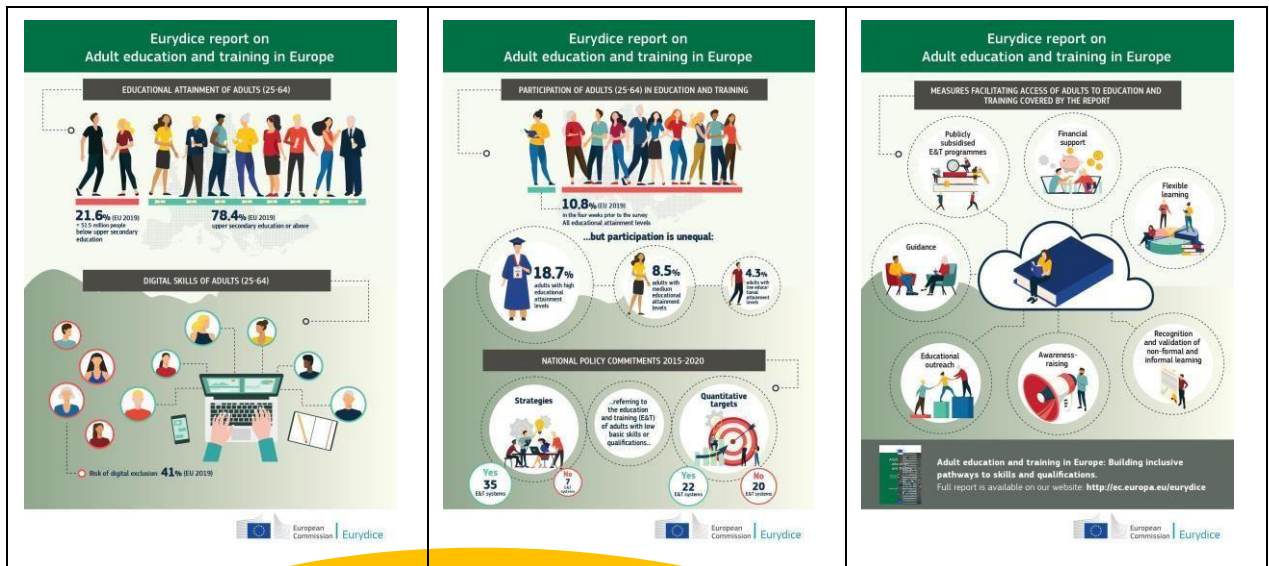
The contents and compared work of all National Reports is the key of this transnational Research.



## 2. Study Report on processes, institutions and concepts of validation and recognition of non-formal and informal competences in the field of Adult Education

### 2.1 European Scenario

According to the “Eurydice Report on Adult Education and Training in Europe” (2019) there is a majority of adults (25-64) who accomplished an upper secondary education or above (78,4%), despite it was noted 41% risk of digital exclusion. This means that the digital skills became a priority in the Adult Education. Unfortunately, the participation of adults in education and training has a low percentage and it is unequal (as indicated in the infographic below). For this reason, different measures promoted to facilitate the access of adults to education and training as Publicly subsidised E&T programmes, financial support, Flexible learning, Guidance, Educational outreach, Awareness Raising, Recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning.







To better understand the European scenario and the Institutions and processes of validation, it will give you an overview.

**CEDEFOP - European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training** is an Institution aimed at improving vocational education and training (VET) through effective policy-making in Europe. It has been working on validation of non-formal and informal learning since the early 1990s.

In 1999 the Bologna Declaration was redacted, during a process which involved few European countries to debate on higher education reforms and trying to overcome obstacles to the creation of a European Higher Education Area. The six objectives of the Bologna Treaty and Guidelines focused on “the advent of a European place of better schooling as a key way to sell the residents’ mobility and employability and the continent’s typical improvement”.

This occasion for the first time started the legitimate recognition of casual gaining knowledge by the means of proposals posted to present strategies and tips to translate casual learning effects to formal competences.

In the last years the European Educational Institutions and a few European countries have understood the importance of Validation, being the high topic on their policy agendas. “This change is closely related to the increasing importance of lifelong learning. The combination of a rapidly changing labour market, an aging population and intensified global competition makes it necessary to use all available knowledge, skills and competences – irrespective of where and how they have been acquired. The interest in validation can be seen as closely linked to efforts to create more flexible qualification systems – making it possible for individuals to build learning careers stretching ‘from cradle to grave’.<sup>9</sup>

The **Lifelong Learning implementation** means to know the mechanisms of reputation and validation of this mastering. Certainly, all of us accumulate studies and are capable of appearing lower back on

<sup>9</sup> Cedefop, *Validation of non-formal and informal learning in Europe*, 2008, [https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/4073\\_en.pdf](https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/4073_en.pdf)





what these experiences have brought him/her in phrases of information, knowledge and behaviour. Those reviews come from expert lifestyles, but also from private lifestyles: associative reviews, militant commitments, desire for self-education outside of prescribed frameworks.

Cedefop distinguishes **three groups of countries**<sup>10</sup>:

- Those for which validation is a practical reality for individuals. Since 2002, the VAE (Validation of Acquired Experience) has enabled people to validate their skills in a very wide range of professions and to obtain all or part of the diplomas attesting to their skills.
- Those in which validation is emerging. These countries are conducting very interesting experiments, but still lack the national legal and political frameworks that would allow validation to become widespread.
- Those that are in the initial stages of developing validation processes. These countries are just beginning to take an interest in the validation of prior learning, and there is sometimes strong resistance to it.

Despite this, Cedefop notes that there is a shared interest in these processes, largely stimulated by European policies.

Preparations ought to be suit for cause and designed consistent with their precise operational context, so the tips no longer promote an unmarried 'correct answer' however try to pick out applicable moves to create sustainable solutions. The purpose is to clarify choices facing stakeholders while implementing validation arrangements, and factor in feasible steps to be taken and the results of these. A primary set of ecu suggestions for validating non-formal and informal learning have been published together via the EU commission and cedefop in 2009 (cedefop and ecu commission, 2009).

<sup>10</sup> Thot Cursus, 2009, on the Web <https://cursus.edu/fr/3764/obtenir-une-reconnaissance-de-ses-apprentissages-informels-et-non-formels>





In 2012, the Recommendation encouraged Member States to put in place national arrangements for the validation of informal and non-formal competences. These arrangements would increase the value and knowledge of skills and knowledge acquired outside of formal education and training: at work, at home or in voluntary activities<sup>11</sup>.

The European Commission and the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) are still assisting Member States in this process.

In this regard the European Guidelines provide strategic and practical advice to policy makers and stakeholders to help them implement validation. The European Inventory uses good practice examples and thematic analyses to illustrate the use of validation at national, regional and local levels in Europe. The guidelines and the inventory encourage all parties concerned to continue their efforts to develop validation processes in Europe.

The necessity to make a framework at European level to validate and to recognize non-formal and informal learning outcomes<sup>12</sup> is important to enable European citizens to give value to their learning experiences and outcomes abroad, supporting lifelong and lifewide learning.

To mention important inputs published to find a meeting point between the different validation systems in Europe, CEDEFOP, outlined some guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning as a first contribution to a set of European guidelines for validation. By the means of the cooperation between the European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture and Cedefop, the publication had the aim to provide practical tools, expert advice to be applied on a purely voluntary basis to add value at national or local levels. They still not talk of policy framework approved by a law-making body<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> Web Site Europass <https://europa.eu/europass/fr/validation-non-formal-and-informal-learning>

<sup>12</sup> Check the glossary

<sup>13</sup> Cedefop, *European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning*, 2009,

<[https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/4054\\_en.pdf](https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/4054_en.pdf)>





# INSTITUTIONS INVOLVED\*



\*Cedefop, European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning, 2009

- EU Commission and Council
- EU agencies
- Cedefop and European Training Foundation (ETF)
- Social partner organisations
- Ministers of education and training
- Employment minister

# THE SYSTEMS USED

- **The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) Advisory Group monitors the implementation of the Council Recommendation**
- **The Europass group is made up of countries that produce ad hoc reports on the measures they have put in place to implement the recommendation. These reports provide an opportunity to review progress and identify problems**
- **Youthpass**
- **Common European principles for validation**
- **Draft European guidelines for validation**
- **European credit system for vocational education and training (ECVET)**
- **European credit transfer system (ECTS)**
- **National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF)**

# THE METHODOLOGY USED

Methodologies	ASSESSMENT TOOL	OBJECTIVES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open method of coordination (OMC)</li> <li>• Technical cooperation (Peer learning)</li> <li>• Experimental and research programmes (Lifelong learning programme, Framework research programmes)</li> <li>• Validation of acquired experience (VAE)</li> <li>• Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) / Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) / Validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNIL)</li> </ul>	DEBATE	offers the candidate an opportunity to demonstrate depth of knowledge as well as communicative skills;
	DECLARATIVE METHODS	based on individuals' own identification and recording of their competences, normally signed by a third party, to verify the self-assessment
	INTERVIEWS	can be used to clarify issues raised in documentary evidence presented and/or to review scope and depth of learning;
	OBSERVATION	extracting evidence of competence from an individual while they are performing everyday tasks at work;
	PORTFOLIO METHOD	using a mix of methods and instruments employed in consecutive stages to produce a coherent set of documents or work samples showing an individual's skills and competences in different ways





According to the 2018's Report in collaboration with Education Above All and UNHCR' paper:

- Norway has developed a new European Qualifications Passport, which refugees and migrants receive after an interview. This tool is being rolled out in Greece, Italy, Norway and the United Kingdom.
- In Europe, out of 36 countries in 2016, only four had implemented a single approach to recognize prior learning covering all sectors.
- And, although a small number of countries have positive practices specifically assessing prior learning of migrants and refugees, including a system in Norway introduced in 2017 to electronically map the skills of adults in asylum reception centres, most do not. Only one third of 36 European countries had projects to validate prior learning that were targeted specifically at immigrants. France, for example, does not target immigrants in its system to recognize prior learning launched in 2002.

Reasons why RPL is used infrequently in youth work in the EU -> the diversity of RPL, the differences in RPL policy between EU Member States and even within Member States, RPL is not purely related to one field of policy, formal education is more focused on knowledge than on skills

## 2.2 National Scenario

According to Cedefop, there are many reasons for developing a system for validating non-formal and informal learning at national level. This may be due to the educational system. The aim is to promote access to the formal education system and improve its effectiveness. It is also about encouraging mobility and allowing people to have a “second chance” if they have abandoned their studies or if they didn't have the chance to pursue them. Another reason is economic and fits into the logic of the economy of the acquaintance. The idea is to make the labour market more flexible and innovative, and validation can be an instrument to address labour shortages in some sectors of the economy.





From a social point of view, validation can be seen as a means of integrating groups of disadvantaged people, including the unemployed, immigrants, refugees and people of a certain age. This reason is not independent of the demographic factor.

Similarly, the development, in a non-formal and informal setting, of certain skills and abilities in the field of new technologies, encourages validation. The last factor which favours the development of national systems of validation according to Cedefop, is the growing interest of all interested parties, especially the private sector and the third sector. The latter tend to use this method more easily. Some European Union Member states have already developed The European Commission's Directorate for the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection whereas, in some other European Union Member states, they haven't<sup>14</sup>.

Also, the European Policies transpositions to national systems were gathered. The extent to which validation has become a practical practice for individuals is closely linked to the 'opening up' of the national qualifications and the fact that the learning results obtained outside are accepted as the legitimate basis for a certificate or diploma. The rapid development of national qualifications frameworks (CNC) throughout Europe, in response to the European qualifications framework (CEC), a (during the period 2005-07) strengthened the interest for the validation and can be considered as the main and unique influencing factors developments in this area.<sup>15</sup> The European Commission's Green Paper on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection.

<sup>14</sup> Hélène Dereszowski, *La valorisation et la validation de l'expérience non formelle et informelle. Une solution pour le marché de l'emploi européen?*, may 2009, [https://firca.ci/download/110/publications-institutionnelles/3205/affairessociales\\_valorisationapprentissage2\\_0.pdf](https://firca.ci/download/110/publications-institutionnelles/3205/affairessociales_valorisationapprentissage2_0.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> [https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/4073\\_fr.pdf](https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/4073_fr.pdf)



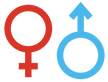
# Demographics France



**Over 18**



**low level of qualification**



**Male/Female**



**Employed, unemployed**



**Young and adults from modest and disadvantaged backgrounds, sometimes with a low level of education**

## Public and Private institutions

In each country there are lessons provided for migrants, immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, etc. Those lessons can be provided by public, semi-private or private bodies. Here is what exists in France:

PUBLIC BODIES	SEMI-PRIVATE BODIES	PRIVATE BODIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the Ministry in charge of lifelong learning</li> <li>Conseil national de l'emploi, de la formation et de l'orientation professionnelles - CNEFOP</li> <li>Comité interprofessionnel pour l'emploi et la formation - COPANEF – with regional branches</li> <li>Pôle Emploi</li> <li>Mission locale</li> <li>Cap Emploi</li> <li>National Agency for Adult Vocational Training (Afpa)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Professional Certification Commission (CCP)</li> <li>Certifiers</li> <li>The Professional Advisory Commissions (CPC)</li> <li>The social partners</li> <li>Consular bodies</li> <li>Training organizations</li> </ul>	<p>"Each one in motion" : revives the professional projects of refugees, with the help of students, French and English lessons, and professional support. The objective is to increase from twelve to forty-seven partner establishments to support more than 1,400 refugees.</p>



# Actions taken

When it comes to fees, it is true that the budget of people differs. Even if some people are not able to pay for their courses, trainings and language learning can happen through some organisations and with the help of EU projects. You can find more detailed information below.

## Tools and Systems

- Systems VAE- validation des acquis de l'expérience.
- CVET Credit system for Vocational Education and Training.
- EDUFORM
- Commission de la certification professionnelle
- FRAFP
- Qualéduc
- EVA

## Methodologies

- Validation of Professional Acquired known as 85 (VAP 85)
- Individual Activity Account (Compte Personnel d'Activité - CPA)
- Curricular approach

## Policies

- The Social Modernisation Act (2002)
- Eduform
- Law NOTRe (Nouvelle Organisation Territoriale de la République)

# FEES

As part of the employment skills pathway, employers can benefit from monthly assistance for professional integration paid by the State in the amount of 30 to 60% of the gross hourly SMIC.

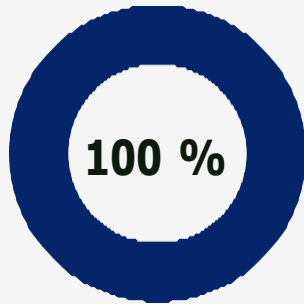


# Available Funding

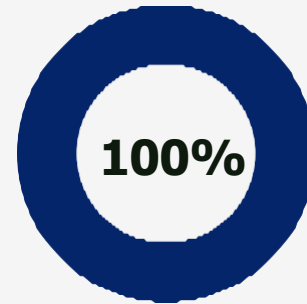
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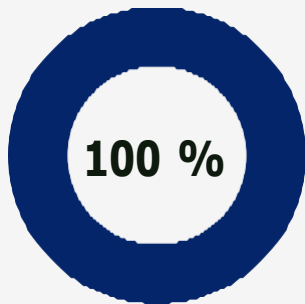
In this page you can see which institutions offer funding for classes



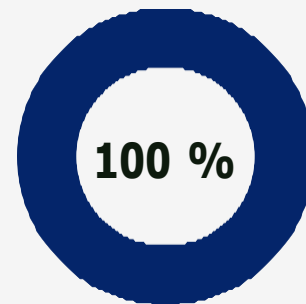
**#1 THE SKILLS  
DEVELOPMENT PLAN (PDC)**



**#2 COMPANY'S CDP**



**#3 FINANCING BY YOUR  
REGIONAL COUNCIL**



**#4 FINANCING YOUR  
RETRAINING WITH THE  
COMPTE PERSONNEL DE  
FORMATION**



**#5 FUNDS FOR DISABLED PERSONS  
(THE FIPHFP, AGEFIPH, CAISSE  
PRIMAIRE D'ASSURANCE MALADIE)**

# European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

- European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS for European Credits Transfer System)
- ECVET (for European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training)
- Tools for shared recognition of learning outcomes: Europass and Youthpass
- National Directory of Professional Certifications (RNCP): Levels of national qualifications frameworks, based on the outcomes of learning, therefore contribute to transparency by specifying what is expected the holder of a certification; This builds some trust in certificates from other state

## The National Commission for professional certifications (CNCP)

- The inter-ministerial commission, interprofessional and interinstitutional created by the law on the modernization social, which is responsible for setting up equivalences between the levels of French certifications and the European qualifications framework.
- Conseil d'évaluation de l'école established in 2020, acts as an independent public body to ensure consistency between national and international assessments in education.



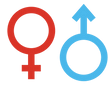
# Demographics Cyprus



18+ Young Adults



Secondary/High School



Male/Female



Full-time, Part-time  
Unemployed



Migrants, Immigrants, Asylum Seekers

## Public and Private institutions

In each country there are lessons provided for the migrants, immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers etc. Those lessons can be provided by Public or private bodies. Here is what exists in Cyprus:

### PUBLIC BODIES

- Adult Education Centers
- State Institutes of Further Education (SIFE)
- HRDA- Human Resources Development Authority
- Nicosia Municipality
- Multifunctional Centre

### SEMI-PRIVATE BODIES

-

### PRIVATE BODIES

- Emphasys Centre offers a number of free trainings through its initiative 'The Learning Hub'.
- Agapi Fundraiser

# Actions taken

When it comes to fees, it is true that the budget of people differ. Even if some people are not able to pay for their courses, trainings and language learning can happen through some organisations and with the help of EU projects. You can find more detailed information below.

## learning

- Online platform
- Collaboration of Unic and Cardet (NGO) and CUT
- Helps migrants, immigrants, asylum seekers & third-country nationals
- Helps the vulnerable people with:
  - a. Housing
  - b. Employment
  - c. Education (formal non-formal and informal)
  - d. learning Greek and English,
  - e. health,
  - f. social benefits,
  - g. rights & responsibilities,
  - h. advice & guidance
  - i. traveling

## Learning Hub

- Free educational workshops and activities
- Collaboration of Emphasys centre and Citizens act
- Life-long learning opportunities
- People from different backgrounds and ages (refugees, migrants, immigrants etc)
- Training workshops are about
  - a. Digital Skills
  - b. Digital & Media Literacy
  - c. Active Aging & Mental Health
  - d. Cultural Awareness & Social Inclusion
  - e. Social Entrepreneurship
  - f. Climate Change & Sustainable Development
  - g. Career Orientation & Employability

## Mingle

- EU project
- Implemented by Nicosia Municipality
- Helps create
  - a. an active interaction with the country's locals
  - b. the TCNs learn the language and cultivate social skills and get a better understanding of the community,
  - c. finally to help them improve their economic, social and individual perspectives
- 350 hours of language training and having a 5-day workshop on Intercultural skills.
- 400 hours of mingling experience
- 1000 hours of individual mentoring sessions in order to improve their vital resources.





# FEES

In order to attend the lessons, migrants, immigrants, asylum seekers etc sometimes should have to pay a small amount of money.

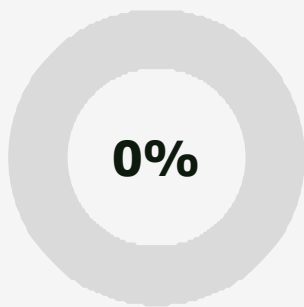
1. **Adult Education Centre (Epimorfotika)**, 0 up to 55 euros per year
2. **State Institution of Further Education (SIFE)** 10 euros to 400 per year.
3. **HRDA-** unemployed residents of Cyprus are entitled to the training programs for free.
4. **Agapi & Emphasys** provide lessons for free.



# Available Funding

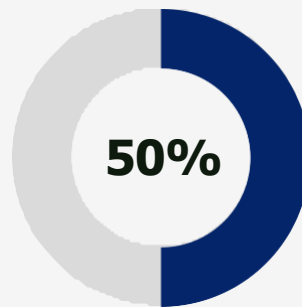


In this page you can see which institutions can offer you funding for classes



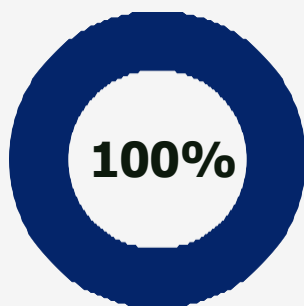
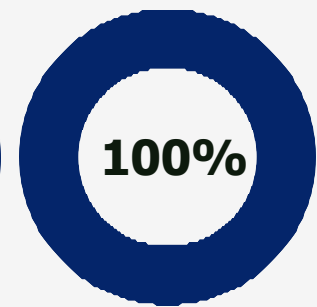
## #1 ADULT EDUCATION CENTRE

They only provide free Turkish lessons to Cypriot-Greeks and free Greek lessons to Turkish-Cypriots



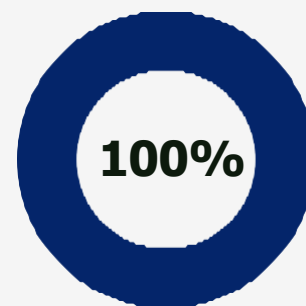
## #2 STATE INSTITUTION OF FURTHER EDUCATION

- Full or Partial scholarships for pupils economically unable to pay 250-400 euros per year
- Children from big families have 50% discount.
- If 3 students attend classes and they are siblings then the 3rd student does not pay.



## #3 HRDA

All programs funded under HRDA are fully funded for the unemployed. At the end of the lessons or seminars they take an examination and if they pass they are given a certificate of recognition under HRDA



## #4 AGAPI & EMPHASYS

free education for the vulnerable groups (migrants, asylum seekers etc) therefore they do not provide fundings. When it comes to Emphasys by the end of the training courses people are given a certificate.

# European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

- Cyprus has a lot of limitations due to the country's budget. One of them is the NQF or EQF communication strategy which has not been developed yet. Therefore, Cyprus does not have a national framework and is unable to validate non-formal and informal learning but there is a project that was funded for the ESF and which will be creating an appropriate mechanism developed in 2018. This plan was focusing on youth, adult education and volunteering. In order to validate such learning the process will contain 5 stages;
  - Information-individualized counselling ;
  - Identification ;
  - Recognition of learning outcomes;
  - Assessment of learning outcomes;
  - Certification.

## CyQF

- HRDA, has developed a System of Professional Qualifications (SVQ) - Systima epagelmatikon prosondon (ΣΕΠ) - through which informal and informal learning can be verified by awarding full or partial qualifications. An additional 80 professional qualifications are planned to be developed during the ESF 2014-20 programming period.
- The standards used in the system of professional qualifications refer not only to professional skills, but also to interpersonal skills developed through work experience (such as teamwork and collaboration); they are different from those used in apprenticeship or school-based VET qualifications and are not recognized in formal education. However, as CyQF develops, ways are being considered to connect the two VET systems. Once the process is completed, there will be a potential link between the two VET systems.
- The Cyprus Council for Higher Education Qualifications (KYSATS) also recognizes work experience credits as part of an individual qualification.



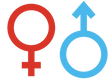
# Demographics Ireland



30 - 50



Secondary/High School



Male/Female



Unemployed



People with disabilities

## Public and Private institutions

In each country there are lessons provided for adults and specially people with disabilities. Those lessons can be provided by public, semi-private or private bodies. Here is what exists in Ireland:

### PUBLIC BODIES

- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process whereby evidence of learning (formal, non-formal or informal) that has taken place prior to enrolment in higher education is recognised and given value.

### SEMI-PRIVATE BODIES

- Professional competence assessment centres and practitioners in the validation of non-formal and informal learning of adults.

### PRIVATE BODIES

- AONTAS organises and represents the Community Education Network (CEN) across the island of Ireland.
- ACE is the Centre for Adult Continuing Education at University College Cork (UCC).

# Actions taken

When it comes to fees, it is true that the budget of people differs. Even if some people are not able to pay for their courses, trainings and language learning can happen through some organisations and with the help of EU projects. You can find more detailed information below.

## Tools and system

- On behalf of the Departments of Education and Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation, and Science, a new organization called Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) was created in 2012. It is an independent State agency under the Department of Education and Skills that is in charge of promoting, maintaining, implementing, and reviewing the NFQ. It collaborates with ministries, higher education institutions, employers, and the nonprofit sector and is at the centre of the qualification system.

## Methodologies

- Both the Principles and operational guidelines for the recognition of prior learning in further and higher education and training, first published by NQAI in 2005, and the Policy and criteria for access, transfer, and progression for providers of further and higher education and training were restated by QQI in 2015. Both documents were first published in 2003 and 2005, respectively. In addition to adhering to QQI regulations on credit accumulation, credit transfer, and identifying and evaluating previously acquired knowledge, skill, and competence, providers are also required to implement their own local ATP policies and procedures. The 2019 Qualifications and Quality Assurance (amendment) Act gives providers a more prominent position in the RPL application processes.

## Policies

- The creation of a framework for RPL and greater acknowledgment of workplace learning, encouraging lifelong learning, was one of the aims of the National Skills Strategy 2025 - Ireland's Future, announced in 2016. Both the higher education plan and the further education and training (FET) strategy called for the systematic application of RPL in the two sectors as well as a national RPL framework that spans sectors.





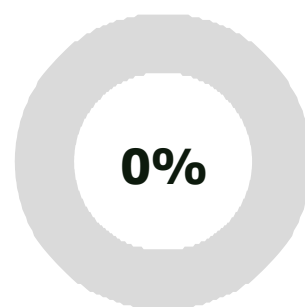
## FEES

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In order to attend the lessons, sometimes there are fees. Specifically in Ireland:

The costs of RPL depend on a range of factors such as the assessment methods used (e.g. portfolio assessment vs. challenge exam), and the scale and maturity of the RPL system. It should be noted that fees for RPL do not necessarily reflect total RPL costs. Total costs would include developing systems, training staff, mentoring, dealing with queries, processing applications, verification, knowledge centres, guidance or other support structures. Specific costs are also pertinent to employers – staff training (mentors, assessors), and time spent by employees in undertaking RPL. RPL costs in Ireland range between €600 and €2000 for each individual, depending on the type of RPL procedure, with an estimated average cost of €1,250 per individual.

## Available funding



There is no ongoing public funding available for access to the recognition and validation.

# European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

The EQF is well established in Ireland. Qualifications that are part of the Irish NFQ are assigned an EQF level. Ireland was the first country to implement the EQF in 2009 and now qualifications in Ireland enjoy European currency and recognition throughout Europe and beyond. Ireland was the first country in Europe to establish a clear and transparent relationship between the 10-level NFQ and the 8-level EQF.

Quality and Qualifications Ireland provides advice on the recognition of Irish qualifications abroad. But it also gives advice on the recognition of foreign qualifications in Ireland.

## Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)

Established in 2003, the Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) describes qualifications in terms of what learners know, understand and are able to do. It also sets out qualifications pathways from one NFQ level to the next.

The NFQ gives employers, education providers and learners a simple, transparent frame of reference for qualifications in Ireland.



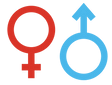
# Demographics Italy



18 - 30



Secondary School, High-school, Higher-education



Male/Female



Unemployed



Vulnerable due to unemployment, Lower qualifications, Gender-based discrimination.

## Public and Private institutions

In each country there are lessons provided for the migrants, immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers etc. Those lessons can be provided by public or semi-private or private bodies. Here is what exists in Italy:

### PUBLIC BODIES

Public entitling body':

- 1. The Ministry of Education, University and Research
- 2. Regions and the Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano
- 3. The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy
- 4. The Ministry of Economic Development

### SEMI-PRIVATE BODIES

Accredia:

operates on a non-profit basis under the supervision of the Ministry of Economic Development. It is the only accreditation body in Italy appointed by the Italian government, in accordance with the European Regulation 765/2008, to certify the competence, independence and impartiality of certification, inspection and verification bodies, and testing and calibration laboratories.

### PRIVATE BODIES

Audit:

a • multifaceted entity in the Italian context, which offers innovative compliance services to organizations. Among its key services we can mention the following:

- Training
- Risk Management
- Services for Certification
- Bodies
- Software Compliance
- Register (web-based)
- software to better manage compliance activities

# Actions taken

In Italy, the context for designing and awarding qualifications is complex, governed by multiple legislative acts under different regional and national authorities. Since 2001, the regions increased their competence in **education**, kept their competence in the **vocational training** field and in the definition of **professional profiles** and **qualifications**.

## Tools and Systems

- **Libretto Del Cittadino** ("Citizen's booklet"), renamed "Electronic dossier",
- The **Regional System of Formalization and Certification of Competencies (SRFC)** defines and regulates the formal recognition of the competencies acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning.
- In Emilia Romagna the competences of beneficiaries can be referred to and correlated with the professional standards referred to in the (Regional System of Qualifications) **SRQ**.

## Methodologies

- A few regions, such as Tuscany, Valle d'Aosta, Emilia-Romagna and Piedmont, have enacted laws to promote **methods of recognizing non-formal and informal learning outcomes and awarding credits-however there is lack of continuity in the service that needs to be addressed**.

## Policies

- **The Decree 13/2013**, defined a specific step devoted to the validation of skills, specifically in the '*Identification phase*', which aims to identify and bring transparency to the individual's competences. In the case of **non-formal** and **informal** learning, this step involves specific support in the analysis and documentation of the learning experience and in correlating the results to one or more qualifications.



# Available Funding



According to the latest European Inventory on Validation (2018 Update), the funding framework for validation activities is mostly represented by public funds, regional and European (ESF or the Leonardo da Vinci Programme of the Lifelong Learning Programme, LLP).

**Inter-professional funds** (Fondi Interprofessionali) have also been used for financing validation projects and models.

Between 2016 and 2018, there was an increased use of the Youth Guarantee funds for validation procedures addressed to NEET beneficiaries, including the national project of validation in the Civil Service.

Certification costs vary however, the development and certification costs are essentially composed of three items:

- Cost of the certifying body
- Cost of consultancy
- Cost of personnel

The EQF National Coordination Point for EQF)is staffed by 6 ANPAL employees with permanent contracts and receives financial resources from EU funding (EQF NCP grant agreement).

It is further supported by collaboration with co-applicants within the EQF grant agreement 2018-20 (Eurodesk, CIMEA, CINECA, Unioncamere) (European Commission and Cedefop, 2020). The EQF NCP is responsible for NQF operational implementation and for updating the referencing report. The National Institute for Public Policies Analysis (INAPP) is currently involved as an independent evaluator to guarantee quality and reliability in referencing qualifications to the NQF/EQF.

## FEES

An unofficial estimate made within the validation system of the region of **Tuscany** estimated that the cost of an average process of validation would range from EUR 500 to EUR 1.200 per individual. In Italy however, most of the validation practices are carried out through public funds but in some contexts, there has been co-funding between private and public capital.

# European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

With the Convention signed in the "State-Regions Conference" on 20/12/2012, the "*First Italian report on the referencing of qualifications to the European Qualifications Framework*" (EQF) was adopted.

Since the 13th of April 2017, the EQF Coordination Point in Italy is no longer managed by ISFOL (*Institute for the Development of Vocational Training for Workers*), but by the *National Agency for Active Labour Market* (ANPAL).

The process of referencing to EQF is an autonomous national process through which national stakeholders and authorities agree on appropriate links between national qualification levels and the EQF levels.

To ensure that the national processes are carried out in a transparent manner to guarantee the best conditions for mutual trust, the EQF Advisory Group has approved ten criteria to support the countries.

To date, Italy has assigned the EQF level to most public qualifications issued by the Ministry of Education, University and Research and by the Regions.

In the Italian synoptic framework, the EQF levels of the different types of qualifications are indicated.

The information on the EQF level is included in the certificate that attests the achievement of the qualification (e.g. Diploma) or in the Europass documents accompanying the certificate (Certificate Supplement or Diploma Supplement).

## National Qualifications Framework

The NQF aims at coordinating and strengthening the different systems which contribute to the public offer of lifelong learning and of the services for the identification and validation and certification of competences.

The NQF develops three descriptive dimensions of competences in terms of:

- knowledge;
- skills;
- autonomy and responsibility.

The procedures for referencing to the NQF are managed by the National Coordination Point of the EQF (European Qualifications Framework) at ANPAL (Agenzia Nazionale Politiche

Attive Lavoro - National Agency for Active Employment Policies), making use of INAPP (Istituto Nazionale per l'Analisi delle Politiche Pubbliche - National Institute for the Analysis of Public Policies) for the independent evaluation of referencing proposals.





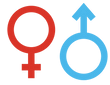
# Demographics Portugal



Over 23



Equivalent to 6th grade or less



Male/Female



Unemployed; mostly low-salary, and/or precarious jobs



- Low-skilled/qualified (early school dropouts);
- migrants (with Portuguese language competences);
- adults at risk (institutionalised, on welfare support, incarcerated).

## Public and Private institutions

In each country there are lessons provided for the migrants, immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers etc. Those lessons can be provided by public, semi-private or private bodies. Here is what exists in Portugal:

### PUBLIC BODIES

### SEMI-PRIVATE BODIES

### PRIVATE BODIES

- National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education (Agência Nacional para a Qualificação e o Ensino Profissional - ANQEP, I.P.) - interministerial public institution managing adult education.
- Institute for Employment and Vocational Training (Instituto do Emprego e da Formação Profissional - IEFP, I.P.) - the national public employment service, with responsibilities on adult qualification.
- Qualifica Centres Network (Rede de Centros Qualifica) - specialised qualification centres for adult learners, local providers of vocational and training guidance and VPL (in Portugal, known as RVCC, Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences)

-

- Qualifica Centres can be promoted by private training centres and similar entities.

# Actions taken

When it comes to fees, it is true that the budget of people differ. Even if some people are not able to pay for their courses, trainings and language learning can happen through some organisations and with the help of EU projects. You can find more detailed information below.

## Tools and Systems

- The Qualifica Centres provide information and guidance to adult learners and implement RVCC processes, formal qualification within the national education system.
- Qualifica Passport (Passaporte Qualifica) – digital tool managed by the adult learner, to register and credit qualifications and competences acquired, and possible training paths to improve qualification.
- Information and Management of the Education and Training provision (Sistema de Informação e Gestão da Oferta Formativa SIGO) – national digital platform for registering and managing all educational and vocational provisions, only accessible to operators and coordinators. Also works as a monitoring tool for central authorities.

## Methodologies

- The RVCC process is a guided educational path based on a skills audit and validation of evidence of knowledge and competences acquired in formal, non-formal and informal contexts, throughout one's life. It is framed by key competences descriptors, aggregated in a reflective portfolio and the design of a final project, to be assessed by a panel of trainers, to produce a formal qualification and diploma, academic and vocational.

## Policies

- Qualifica Program (Programa Qualifica) - National strategic program to implement the European Agenda for Qualification (2017-2020/2021-2027), combining tools and mechanisms and a broad network of operators, the Qualifica Centres.

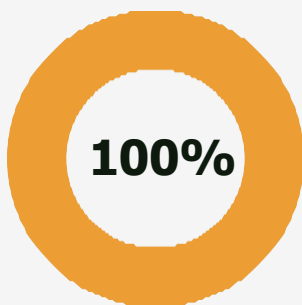


# Available Funding

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in the case of Portugal, this is a totally free process. Even to cope with the transport issues, the program envisages the displacement of educational teams to neighbouring villages and municipalities.



## FEES

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The whole RVCC process is free.

Acelerador Qualifica – a monetary grant available for adult learners improving their qualification through processes of RVCC. It equals a percentage (1,25) of the national social support indexing, and it is granted after the certification is concluded.

# European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

National Qualifications System (Sistema Nacional de Qualificações – SNQ) and National Qualifications Framework (Quadro Nacional de Qualificações – QNQ) - reference tools to all the qualifications in the national educational and training system. It defines a set of structures and mechanisms, and it adopts the qualification levels and descriptors of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

The National Catalogue of Qualifications (Catálogo Nacional de Qualificações - CNQ) – a open digital tool, regulating over 270 vocational qualifications in 40 educational and training areas, with detailed information on: occupational profile, training reference and frameworks for training courses or recognition, validation and certification of informal and non-formal competencies (academic and vocational).

The National Credit System for Education and VET (Sistema Nacional de Créditos do Ensino e Formação Profissionais - SNCEFP) – a system to allow attribution, capitalization and transference of credits, expressed in a quantitative value, to acquired learning in varied educational and training pathways, and in different contexts. Following the principles of European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training, ECVET, it was implemented in 2017 and defines the model for Qualifica Passport.

The Dynamic Digital Competence Framework for Portugal (Quadro Dinâmico de Referência de Competência Digital) – a tool to assess and certify the digital competences of the Portuguese population, based on the European Digital Competence Framework for Citizens. It also works as a support to design policies, strategies, and educational programs.

Europass and Youthpass – implemented in 2005 and managed by Centro Nacional Europass, CNE.



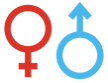
# Demographics Romania



18+



Secondary school  
(Gymnasium)



Male/Female



Fulltime, part-time, unemployed



(Young) adults coming from low-income households or from disadvantaged areas, such as the countryside, with a low level of education.

## Public and Private institutions

In each country there are lessons provided for the migrants, immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers etc. Those lessons can be provided by public, semi-private or private bodies. Here is what exists in Romania:

### PUBLIC BODIES

- The National Qualifications Authority (NQA)

### SEMI-PRIVATE BODIES

- Professional competence assessment centres and practitioners in validation of non-formal and informal learning of adults.

### PRIVATE BODIES

- Professional competence assessment centres and practitioners in validation of non-formal and informal learning of adults.

## Fees

The validation centres apply different fees for the recognition of competences acquired through other ways than formal, depending on the type of qualification. For example, fees can range from 100 euros for a retail worker certificate to 250 euros for a cosmetician.

# Actions taken

When it comes to fees, it is true that the budget of people differ. Even if some people are not able to pay for their courses, trainings and language learning can happen through some organisations and with the help of EU projects. You can find more detailed information below.

## Tools and Systems

- The National Register of Qualifications in Higher Education (RNCIS)
- The National Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training Development (NCTVETD)

## Methodologies

- The legislative basis for the **ROQF** states that qualifications obtained through non-formal and informal education will be included in the framework using ROQF level descriptors. The current methodology allows competence certificates to be obtained through validation of non-formal and informal learning up to ROQF level 3

## Policies

- Legislative measures to establish community lifelong learning centres were adopted in 2017
- Legislative framework for the validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL)
- From 2004 The National Education Law No 1/2011
- The National strategy for lifelong learning (2015-20)
- The establishment in 2014 of a dedicated structure for validation within the National Centre for Accreditation (NQA) has contributed to improving validation system coordination



# European Qualifications Framework (EQF) & RQQF

- In response to the EQF initiative, the Romanian national qualifications framework for lifelong learning (ROQF) was created in 2013 by Government Decision No 918/2013 (further updated in 2015 and 2018), with the goal of increasing qualification transparency, comparability, and portability. The NQA is responsible for ROQF implementation and development.

## Il Centro Nazionale per il Riconoscimento e l'Equivalenza dei Diplomi (CNRED)

The National Centre for the Recognition and Equivalence of Diplomas (CNRED) was created on the basis of H.G. no. 49/1999 and operates as a division within the Ministry of Education, with the main tasks: recognition and equivalence of foreign qualifications and elaboration of regulations and methodologies for the recognition and equivalence of foreign qualifications.



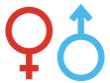
# Demographics Slovakia



18+



Secondary/high-school



Male/Female



Part-time, Low-income, Low-skilled labour



Low-skilled individuals, Early school leavers, Jobseekers

## Public and Private institutions

In each country there are lessons provided for the migrants, immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers etc. Those lessons can be provided by public, semi-private or private bodies. Here is what exists in Slovakia:

PUBLIC BODIES	SEMI-PRIVATE BODIES	PRIVATE BODIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic</li> <li>State Institute of Vocational Education</li> <li>Slovak National Observatory (SNO)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slovak Youth Institute (IUVENTA)</li> <li>Methodological and pedagogical centre (MPC)</li> <li>Slovak Catholic charity</li> <li>Migration Information Centre (MIC)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Academy of Education</li> <li>Bratislava International School of Liberal Arts</li> </ul>

## Fees

The current law on lifelong learning determines the amount of the fee up to max. EUR 300 for the aptitude test (the same limit applies for the re-examination). Act no. 145/1995 Coll. on administrative fees sets the amount of fees for conducting examinations of professional competence in relation to various legal regulations (ex. the Act on Road Transport, the Trade Licensing Act, the Fire Protection Act and other).



# Actions taken

When it comes to fees, it is true that the budget of people differs. Even if some people are not able to pay for their courses, trainings and language learning can happen through some organisations and with the help of EU projects. You can find more detailed information below.

## Tools and Systems

The initial step in this direction was made in 2013, when the “Declaration of Recognition of the Benefits of the informal education in youth Work” was introduced. The Declaration is a tool which highlights the argument of non-formal education and connects all entities which understand the important role it plays in educating the younger generation. So far the declaration was signed by more than a hundred important representatives of state, private, public and non-governmental sectors.

## Methodologies

The creation of a strategy which, in addition to the declaration, included several other initiatives and the work of a wider team:

- Support of accreditation options programs of non-formal education, lobbying of accreditation options within the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic
- Stipulate a definition of “youth work” with stakeholders and clarifying what youth work is all about and what role of non-formal education plays in it
- Promotional activities (creation of short animated videos, publications, personal meetings)
- Visibility of the non-formal education recognition tool within the EU (Youthpass)
- National conference on the further direction of youth work

## Policies

Youth Institute: Within the recognition of non-formal education in youth work, it is important for youth workers to know that the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic established an Accreditation Commission in the field of youth work. Its activities are regulated by the Statute of the Accreditation Commission in the field of youth work and consist of 11 members that work in the field of youth work. The Accreditation Commission assesses applications for accreditation and, as an advisory body, recommends that the Ministry issue or not issue an accreditation certificate. The aim of accreditation of educational programs is to help the perception of youth work as an important tool for non-formal education. It is possible to apply for accreditation and the exact instructions are regulated by IUVENTA.

# Available Funding



Slovakia is one of the countries where project funding is an important resource for starting and setting up validation processes and is used rather to support validation projects than to mainstream validation systems ". The advantage of this method of financing is especially the possibility of supporting activities where there are no state or private sources, but carries a high risk in terms of sustainability of results and focus on the end-user.



**#1 ALLOCATED FUNDS FROM THE STATE BUDGET**



**#2 FINANCING THROUGH PROJECTS (CO-FINANCED BY THE EU OR OTHER SOURCES)**



**#3 COMBINATION OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE RESOURCES, FEES COLLECTED FROM LEARNERS**



**#4 OTHER PUBLIC FUNDING**

# European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

- The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is a common European reference framework whose purpose is to make qualifications more readable and understandable across different countries and systems. Covering qualifications at all levels and in all sub-systems of education and training, the EQF provides a comprehensive overview over qualifications in the 38 European countries currently involved in its implementation. In close cooperation with the European Commission, Cedefop provides analytical and coordination support for the implementation of the EQF and carries out a number of comparative studies and analysis on issues related to the implementation of the framework at EU, national and sectoral level.

## State Vocational Education Institute

- This qualification system currently is in a stage of preparation by the State Vocational Education Institute, and it is their responsibility to implement it on the territory of the Slovak Republic. Apart from that the results of this project will find its place in the new legislation concerning so-called lifelong education. Another mission of the State Vocational Education Institute is to write an annual official report which covers the topic of validation, and then to share it with entities from other EU countries.



### 3. Consultations with professionals

In order to reinforce the Need Analysis of the Research the consultations made in each partner country. Almost 5 professionals from non formal and informal education fields were involved by each partner. Teachers, trainers, consultants of Adult Education, and directors of associations and training centres participated to the Consultations.

It was applied the method of research **Focus Group** to involve a small group of people who were guided through a discussion by a facilitator. Some of them took place in presence and other ones in online sessions.

The Consortium choose 5 themes to conduct the interview in order to identify the levels of:

- Awareness
- Accessibility of the Validation process to professionals and learners
- Recognition methods
- Barriers to validation
- Level of Satisfaction of validation processes

After each Consultations, also an evaluation form was sent to the participants to evaluate the discussion, but an other one to evaluate the accuracy of their replies gathered.

The heterogeneity of professional roles involved in the Focus Groups, has allowed to conduct a significant analysis on the accessibility and the barriers to validate competences acquired in non formal and informal settings.

In **France** the **Association ANI International** involved 6 professionals through the Platform Zoom. They introduced themselves without hesitations. There was 1 facilitator and 2 assistants to take





notes and to assure the organization. The facilitator introduced the objectives of the project and explained to the participants the framework of the focus group. Acknowledgements to the participants. The facilitator explains the various post-focus group procedures (particularly the survey at the end of the focus group). The desire for an exchange at the level of the network project throughout France also emerged. Overall the discussion was interesting to analyse different perspectives between public and private sectors. But also to understand which kind of barriers and gaps learners have to face in France to recognize and to validate their competences in non formal and informal settings. A productive discussion developed among participants, discovering different professional and personal experiences.

In **Cyprus** the **Organisation Emphasys** involved 6 participants with 1 facilitator. During the presentation and discussion seemed to have had in mind the same public and private bodies which the Partner has already mentioned in the national report such as HRDA (Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus), the Multipurpose Municipal Centres and provided them with a new organisation that they have not mentioned on the report Cyprus Refugee council. Overall, the focus group seemed to understand and to provide with a lot of information and personal experiences around the CompB4D topic for informal and non-formal education and gave their thoughts on barriers while they are validating.

In **Ireland**, **Redial** involved 5 participants who introduced themselves before the beginning of the Focus Group. The facilitator then gave a brief overview of the project and herself. She went over the focus group's structure with the participants. The focus group's facilitator gave an overview of each component, focusing particularly on the first component, awareness raising. Non-formal and





informal learning are not uniformly acknowledged and validated by Ireland's many industries. Ireland's National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and Recognition of Past Learning (RPL) are

46

linked, and only people who are using past learning to acquire official certification in certain sectors are allowed to use RPL in Ireland. On the one hand, this is quite advantageous for any applicant who is successful in having their past learning acknowledged because there will never be any question that they do not meet the requirements of a certain level. RPL is linked to the NFQ and standards must be kept, thus the applicant must put in a lot of effort and submit a tonne of supporting evidence in order to have their past learning accepted. Quality and Qualifications Ireland is the name of the official agency in charge of qualifications in Ireland (QQI). Contact your local education and training provider or adult education support agency if you have questions about being recognised through an RPL procedure, advises QQI. Today, many jobs demand some amount of IT literacy, and validation activities are no exception.

In **Italy Promimpresa** involved 5 professionals. The participants were invited to take part in the focus group through a “Call for participants” which was posted online and through internal channels of communication. Their experiences and professions were very relevant to the topic discussed and intertwined well with each other as overall the participants came partially from a validation background and partially from a teaching/educational background. In conclusion it is possible to assume that the validation system of competences on the Italian soil still has considerable distance to go. Certainly, the need is felt for more communication between entities, both public and private, but above all, more reaching out to the main ingredient, namely the individuals who can access these validation processes and who can therefore benefit from them. It is important to keep in mind that the world and especially the world of work is constantly





changing and as a result, one must adapt to the needs and demands of a reality that is in fact multifaceted.

In **Portugal** the school **A2BEJA**, involved 6 professionals with 2 facilitators. The focus group procedures were accomplished in 2 sessions, online and in-site. The facilitators presented the objectives and relevant information about the project and this stage to the participants. The discussion was conducted through the questions and the participants spoke freely. There were 6 participants all within the same region, Alentejo, and all are part of Qualifica Centres teams: 2 are coordinators, 2 are professionals of orientation/guidance, recognition and validation (TORVC); 2 are teachers/educators.

The process of recognising and validating prior learning, experience and competences acquired throughout life, in every informal, non-formal and formal context, is a very effective way to enhance qualification, employability, and social welfare. It requires a common and coherent structure and guidelines, suitable tools and methodologies, and quality assurance measures, but its flexibility allows varied responses. RVCC or VPL is based on an autobiographical approach, relies on a good diagnosis and it is adaptable to every individual, especially vulnerable publics: displaced, migrants, low-qualified, unemployed or with precarious job situation, incarcerated or institutionalised people. Target publics: adults over 23, with professional and social competences and skills. The process should take into account profile and features of the individual, regional and cultural characteristics.

- RVCC process still needs to be socially known and acknowledged among employers as a credible way to enhance competences, qualifications and improve workers productivity and employability. The success and satisfaction of adult learners can attract new candidates.
- Establishing partnerships with local entities and employers and networking with peer entities anchors the process and maximises impact and results.





- Pedagogical teams require stability, enough human resources and time to manage the whole process, coherent guidelines, regular training and close support from responsible authorities.

In **Romania CPIP** involved 5 professionals with 1 facilitator. The focus group activities were placed online over the duration of one session. Based on a partnership with Rahova Penitentiary, Luminita Medelet, Deputy Director of Social Reintegration, who also participated in the focus group, facilitated the participation of 4 professionals with extensive experience in formal and non-formal education. The facilitator gave a brief overview of the project's goals and went over the focus group's structure with the members. Before we began, the participants introduced themselves and shared their backgrounds. Overall, even though participants were young adult and adult educators, their area of work is focused on the prison system from Romania, in which currently the process of validation of non-formal and informal learning is not used. They were aware of the presence of such techniques, however, they did not have that much information about the topic. They do believe in its usage and consider that it would be helpful to apply such methodologies in the prison system, for the persons deprived of liberty so that it can help with their integration back into society.

In **Slovakia, ICEP** involved 6 professionals, they managed to gather together some of the best experts in the field from Slovakia. At least for three of them validation of non-formal/informal education and skills is the main focus of their job. The Focus Group revealed that the field of validation does not receive enough attention from the state, and what is, perhaps, even more important the general public is not aware of such procedure. Later this year an international conference will be organized in Bratislava by the Association of Adult Education Institutions in the Slovak Republic, in frames of this upcoming event







foreign experts will have a chance to share their experience. The State Vocational Education Institute is planning to launch an information campaign about validation opportunities in Slovakia, which may help the industry. Also, the new legislation can change the current situation for the better, but it is not guaranteed that the draft law will be passed by the Slovak government.





## 4. Best Practices

The Best Practice means “A procedure that has been shown by research and experience to produce optimal results and that is established or proposed as a standard suitable for widespread adoption”. The authors of the Research used following criteria for identifying best practices in each country involved:

- *Effectiveness*: The method or technique has been successful in achieving the desired output.
- *Efficiency*: Good use of resources. In other words, it can be put into practice with resources easily available.
- *Relevance*: It can be useful within the Competences Before Diplomas project.
- *Sustainability*: It can be continued far into the future.
- *Possibility of duplication*: It can be easily replicated.

The types of best practices considered are best practices developed by public bodies and institutions and by NGO’s and non- profit organizations.

In addition was considered the criteria of transferability assessment, which means to what extent the implementation of the practice is systematized and documented, making it possible to transfer it to other contexts and countries. This means to analyse practices which use instruments (e.g. a manual with a detailed activity description) that allow for repetition/transfer, resources easily available, already been successfully transferred. For this part each partner had to identify and write down the best practices developed by public bodies/institutions, NGO’s or non-profit organizations in their own countries. After intensive research and being able to identify the best practices of their countries, a word template was given to the partners and they have documented their results. The description of the practices includes all organizational and environmental elements, the local setting, the practice’s implementation costs, and the practice’s characteristics for the target population.





# Best practices France

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## IDENTIFICATION DETAILS - I Good Practice

**Name:** E2C PARIS - école de la 2eme chance

**City and Country:** Paris, France

**Responsible authority/organisation:** Chantal Lebernady (director)

**Type of validation:** Individualized training (with internships)

**Description of the practice/action:** Validation of non-formal and informal learning through ICT operationalisation

**Key goal:** Maintaining balance between labour supply and demand, Supporting individuals to develop an action plan that is matched to current labour market needs, fight against school drop-out and support young people without diplomas and qualifications. The strong characteristic of the Second Chance Schools scheme is that it focuses on particularly vulnerable sections of the population: young adults who have left the traditional education systems without a diploma and who now have to face marked social and human difficulties

**Specific objectives:** The White Paper, Teaching and Learning - Towards the Learning Society, sets out 3 main principles on which the Second Chance Schools base their operation:

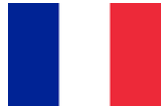
1. Doing more to take account of their social situation and their feeling of exclusion
2. Involve companies from the outset in the training effort, particularly vocational training
3. Use active teaching methods that facilitate action rather than passive learning

The Second Chance Schools scheme offers three complementary forms of support to trainees in order to promote their social, civic and professional integration:

1. develop their skills and knowledge to better define their professional project
2. find a job (fixed-term or permanent contract, temporary work, etc.) in the profession of their choice
3. or to access training (CAP, Bac pro, BAC, BTS, etc.) adapted to their professional project
4. facilitate their social and civic integration: know their rights (health, housing, money) and their duties (discover institutions, civic activities, etc.)

### Target group

The Second Chance Schools welcome young people on the verge of exclusion who wish to access a chosen profession, either through training or through direct access to employment: between 16 and 25 years old (average age: 20), qualifications (90% do not have a validated BEP/CAP), unemployed (87% have no work experience and 6% have been unemployed for more than a year), women and men (48% women) of French or foreign nationality with legal status for a period varying from 4 to 18 months (average duration: 7 months).



# Best practices France

## IMPLEMENTATION DETAILS

### Main activities

- Support for young people without qualifications and without jobs who are motivated to acquire the skills necessary for their social, civic and professional integration.
- Independent structures, built on a strong local base, they build partnerships with companies and all the actors of integration. They must also put in place dedicated resources.
- Each trainee benefits from an individualized and alternating pathway to enter the world of work.
- Young people who join an E2C have the status of vocational training trainee and receive an average of €500 per month, financed by the Region (the amount varies according to the young person's situation and includes social protection). **Individualized course: to conquer autonomy outside the classic school system (permanent entry and exit):**
  - **Coaching:** capitalisation of the competences acquired post-training support
  - **Alternation:** experience of the world of work the professional project in and with the company
  - **dedicated resources:** membership of an institutional system the benefit of a solid anchorage in the local environment

**When:** Anytime in the year

**Where:** Paris, France

**Who was involved (authorities, volunteers, CSOs):** Employees (trainers, coaches...) and volunteers

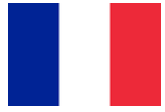
**Effectiveness:** The Second Chance Schools implemented several activities, involving the trainees, that show their effectiveness. First, the creation of a radio show: discover the interviews conducted by the trainees of the E2C Toulouse as well as the topics discussed in this radio show. Thanks to the Edith CRESSON Foundation for the E2Cs for supporting this project.

Then, an art exhibition: discover the works of the trainees of the E2C Nîmes site around the theme "a look at beauty", as part of the Printemps des poètes. As well as making a documentary at the Louvre Lens museum: the E2C Artois trainees made a documentary on the organisation of the "Empire of Roses" exhibition at the Louvre-Lens museum. Then, eight young people from the E2C de l'Artois, camera in hand and microphone in hand, filmed, interviewed and captured the highlights of the opening in the presence of Christian Lacroix (set designer), Xavier Bertrand (President of the Hauts de France region) and Mrs LIENARD (Total Foundation).

Then, production of a video clip, Then, we have the Bel espoir project of the E2C Yvelines: the trainees left for a week to discover Brittany on board a 3-masted ship belonging to the AJD association (Association des Juifs et Dimanches). The aim of this project was to give them a taste for community life and mutual aid. This adventure also allowed these young people to discover themselves, to gain confidence and to take responsibility. Following this experience, the majority of them took a step back from their project and made decisions that led them to employment or training.

And finally, "Parcours ma ville": aims to give trainees a better understanding of the city of Nantes.

**Transferability assessment:** The practice could replicate in other Member States, because people migrating to Europe come with language barriers or professional integration problems because they do not have a diploma, which could facilitate the labour market and reduce the unemployment rate in other states.



# Best practices France

## IDENTIFICATION DETAILS - II Good Practice

**Name:** Association d'Éducation Populaire Charonne Réunion

**City and Country:** Paris, France.

**Responsible authority/organisation:** Yahia Adane (Director)

**Type of validation:** Popular education made in an individual way

### Description of the practice/action:

- Physical, intellectual and moral training of children, adolescents and adults of both genders and useful occupation of leisure time..
- Promote popular education
- Create, administer and support any social work
- Promote true citizenship and educate people to freedom, respect for the equal rights of each person and fraternity
- Show solidarity with those in difficulty

**Key goals:** To raise awareness and educate young people and young adults about all the issues of citizenship, society and work. Accompany them in all the steps leading to their socio-professional integration

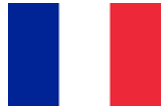
### Specific objectives:

Whatever his or her function in the association, the facilitator is in an educational position:

1. Called to work with each person by developing a quality of presence and encounter.
2. Concerned to establish a true and authentic relationship with each person received.
3. Attentive to the quality of life by ensuring a mission of protection and by investing in a dynamic of empowerment.
4. A pedagogy of trust: based on trust, the relationship established with each person, whether a young person or an adult, favours listening and dialogue. By encouraging support, the facilitator develops a preventive approach, accepting the element of risk and uncertainty.
5. A pedagogy of hope: by looking at things from a hopeful perspective, the facilitator never reduces the person to his or her present behaviour and mobilises him or her in a dynamic of change.
6. A pedagogy of alliance: positioned in a relationship of good distance and good proximity, the facilitator establishes an alliance with each person entrusted. By developing a climate of participation, with each person being called upon to exercise responsibilities, he or she makes an alliance with the group. By establishing a true spirit of partnership, he or she creates the conditions for an alliance with the families, as well as with all the other educational actors

### Target group:

Children, adolescents and adults of both genders.



# Best practices France

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**Effectiveness:** The Second Chance Schools implemented several activities, involving the trainees, that show their effectiveness. First, the creation of a radio show: discover the interviews conducted by the trainees of the E2C Toulouse as well as the topics discussed in this radio show. Thanks to the Edith CRESSON Foundation for the E2Cs for supporting this project.

Then, an art exhibition: discover the works of the trainees of the E2C Nîmes site around the theme "a look at beauty", as part of the Printemps des poètes. The exhibition was open to the general public at the Maison de la Région. As well as making a documentary at the Louvre Lens museum: the E2C Artois trainees made a documentary on the organisation of the "Empire of Roses" exhibition at the Louvre-Lens museum. The theme of the film: the museum world and the setting up of an exhibition.

Then, eight young people from the E2C de l'Artois, camera in hand and microphone in hand, filmed, interviewed and captured the highlights of the opening in the presence of Christian Lacroix (set designer), Xavier Bertrand (President of the Hauts de France region) and Mrs LIENARD (Total Foundation).

Then, production of a video clip: the trainees of the E2C Côte d'Opale wrote, sang and directed a video clip to present their life path and their choice of the E2C. This video clip was produced with the help of two professionals. Then, we have the Bel espoir project of the E2C Yvelines: the trainees left for a week to discover Brittany on board a 3-masted ship belonging to the AJD association (Association des Jeudis et Dimanches). The aim of this project was to give them a taste for community life and mutual aid. This adventure also allowed these young people to discover themselves, to gain confidence and to take responsibility. Following this experience, the majority of them took a step back from their project and made decisions that led them to employment or training.

And finally, "Parcours ma ville": aims to give trainees a better understanding of the city of Nantes. The aim is to enable them to develop their capacity for mobility while strengthening their sense of belonging to the life of their city. The young people at the E2C created an application called "GuidiGo", which combines audiovisual elements, text and puzzles. The aim is to present the city's artistic, urban planning, architectural and heritage features. This project has both a fun and educational aim by associating digital technology and the use of social networks

**Transferability assessment:** The practice could replicate in other Member States, because people migrating to Europe come with language barriers or professional integration problems because they do not have a diploma, which could facilitate the labour market and reduce the unemployment rate in other states.



# Best practices in Cyprus

## IDENTIFICATION DETAILS - I Good Practice

**Name:** Mingle EU Project

**City and Country:** Nicosia, Cyprus.

**Responsible authority/organisation:** Nicosia Municipality

**Type of validation:** Individual validation

**Description of the practice/action:** In the short-medium term 1000 people (500 TCNs & 500 locals in 5 countries) will benefit through a range of innovative activities/workshops which are built on successful project results (Hwawar u Fjuri, EMKIT, multicultural workshops for employers and language training using the CLIL methodology). The project's legacy is ensured via the development of the "How to MINGLE" platform which provides a holistic approach for the stakeholders on how to replicate/repeat all the project's actions in order to reinforce HC and SC for TCNs through interventions to both TCNs and locals. All the materials developed (facilitator guides, training materials, assessment tool, step-by-step guide for activities implemented by mentors etc) will also be available on the platform.

**Key goal:** Facilitate active citizenship and TCN integration.

**Specific objectives:** 1. Human Capital Increase (HC)

2. Social Capital Increase (SC)

3. Active Citizenship Acquisition/Social Integration

## IMPLEMENTATION DETAILS

### Main activities

1. Language courses
2. Cultural and institutional activities
3. MINGLING experiences
4. Mentoring sessions
5. Training workshops and materials

**When:** during 2020-2021

**Where:** Nicosia, Nicosia Municipality and MMC

**Who was involved (authorities, volunteers, CSOs):** Nicosia Municipality & MMC (Mediterranean Management Centre)

### Target group

Refugees, Immigrants, Migrants, Asylum Seekers, Third Country Nationals, Locals.



# Best practices in Cyprus

**Effectiveness:** During their last conference in Cyprus, trainees talked expressed their feeling for this unique experience. Language Assessment and Training:

- I enjoyed the information by the police and that the police talked to us about our rights. (Classroom teaching)

- We visited traditional Cyprus villages [...] I liked that we learnt how they make honey. (Visit)

Intercultural Workshops (Classroom Teaching and Visits)

- Great experience! (MMC Participant)

- [I enjoyed] the company of others and the tasty food. (Nicosia Municipality Participant) - Mingling Experiences

- An extraordinary experience [through which] I met versatile people and ways of thinking. I would relive the experience. (MMC Mentor)

**Transferability Assessment:** The practice can be replicated by other Member States. This EU project was made in collaboration with 10 organisations and was translated in 5 languages and one can find the manuals online at Materials – Mingle ([projectsgallery.eu](http://projectsgallery.eu)). There are activities online concerning Human Capital Accumulation ( Language Skills Assessment Tool and CEFR Training Curricula and Materials for 3 levels). When it comes to the Active Citizenship Assessment and Mentoring with EMKIT, there is a mentor's guide for EMKIT using and a training curricula for an effective multicultural communication & mentoring. Finally, for the mingling experiences there is a methodological guide and questionnaires for matching TCN's with locals.





# Best practices in Cyprus

## IDENTIFICATION DETAILS - II Good Practice

**Name:** FREE TRAINING COURSES FOR UNEMPLOYED, MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

**City and Country:** Nicosia, Cyprus

**Responsible authority/organisation:** Citizens In Power

**Type of validation:** Individual validation

### Description of the practice/action:

enriching their skills in Information and Communications Technology (I.C.T.)

**Key goals:** Increase the chances of these groups of people who are excluded for employment.

### Specific objectives:

- Creation of learning offers and activities that lead digital education to rural areas, thereby promoting the importance and impact of digital skills for the future of Industry 4.0;
- Increase social inclusion of individuals that come from disadvantaged backgrounds, including not only residents from rural areas, but also refugees and migrants;
- Increase awareness on the importance of digital education and the opportunities that stem from it.

## IMPLEMENTATION DETAILS

**Main activities:** Gain knowledge, competences and skills related to the ICT field: opportunity for personal advancement; Enhanced employability; Social inclusion in the daily life of the local society; Smooth incorporation on a long term scale; Opportunity to meet new people; Increased access to a range of products and services, like information, education, economic and civil rights opportunities

**When:** 4-5 hours per week for 90 days

**Where:** Nicosia (Alexias, Lakatamia/ CIP), Limassol ( B' Technical School Limassol)

**Effectiveness:** According to CIP's newsletter EDesign Newsletter Vol.6 (e-designproject.eu) the participants were very pleased with the skills and competencies they gained after completing Hotspots, and many more requested to be notified of new courses available in the future.

**Technical Skills Developed:** Coding and Programming. Debugging. Analytical reasoning; User experience design; People management;

**Active learning Soft Skills Developed:** Flexibility and creativity; Problem-solving; Communication and collaboration; Planning and managing.

According to CIP and their partners the feedback received from the participants was excellent, and the hands-on workshops have shown the potential of these digital technologies in multiple sectors so that future industry 5.0 does not compromise employability or exclude specific populations. It really helped to open up people to these developments.

**Transferability assessment:** This practice could be replicated in other Member States because this specific project provides trainers with a handbook. The handbook is translated in 6 different languages ( Deutch, Greek, English, Portuguese, Italian, Lithuanian), which means that trainers speaking one of those languages can use it. The handbook is given in an online form which makes it accessible E-DESIGN WP10 Handbook (e-designproject.eu).

### Target group:

Unemployed, Refugees & Migrants (16 years old and above)



# Best practices in Ireland

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## IDENTIFICATION DETAILS - 1 Good Practice

**Name:** SOLAS Further Education and Training Authority

**City and Country:** Dublin, Ireland

**Responsible authority/organisation:** Andrew Brownlee, acts as a direct liaison between the Board and management of SOLAS.

**Type of validation:** Group validation

**Description of the practice/action:** SOLAS was formally established in October 2013. Since that time the body has been developing a 5-year Further Education and Training Strategy. They work closely with Regional Skills managers and with partners in Education and Training Boards nationally, SOLAS manages a range of Further Education and Training programmes which enable learners to succeed in the labour market and thrive in society. Programmes include Apprenticeships, Traineeships, Skills to Advance, eCollege and the European Globalisation Fund.

SOLAS also manages the Safe Pass Health and Safety Awareness Training Programme, the Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) and the Quarrying Skills Certification Scheme (QSCS).

They manage the National Skills Database and provide research, data and analysis for the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs, and to inform our work.

SOLAS is the designated Intermediate Body for the European Social Fund Programme for Employment, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) 2014-2020. Eligible further education and training programmes are co-funded by the Irish Government, the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI). Co-funded programmes include ETB Training for the Unemployed, Adult Literacy, Back to Education Initiative, Community Training Centres and Youthreach.

**Key goal:** SOLAS was established to integrate the Further Education and Training sector in Ireland and give strategic direction to that sector. It is the Further Education and Training (FET) Authority with responsibility for co-ordinating and funding the wide range of training and further education programmes in Ireland.

**Specific objectives:** Facilitate access, transfer and progression of learners via recognition of prior learning (RPL) within the national framework of qualifications. Provide guidelines to FET providers and ensure minimum standards are attained Monitor RPL processes and promote co-ordination of approaches, documentation of best practice.

### Target group

Learning disabilities, unemployed adults, traveller groups, ROMA community, lifelong learning for adults



# Best practices in Ireland

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## IMPLEMENTATION DETAILS

### Main activities

Safe Pass Health and Safety Awareness Training Programme, the Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) and the Quarrying Skills Certification Scheme (QSCS), ecollege, traineeships, apprenticeship, skills to advance programme (aims to equip employees with the skills to progress in their current job, or to take advantage of new job opportunities), skills to compete (an initiative to support those who have lost their jobs as a result of COVID-19, to re-enter the workforce).

SOLAS fund, plan and co-ordinate a wide range of training and further education programmes, working in partnership with local ETBs, Intreo services, schools and colleges, and a range of education agencies and bodies nationally.

**When:** 2013- now

**Where:** Dublin, Ireland

**Who was involved (authorities, volunteers, CSOs):** authorities, volunteers, organisations, employers, Education and Training Boards (ETBs), Non Education and Training Boards.

**Effectiveness:** They have published data on their website with the results of previous programmes that have been implemented. Numbers are clearly demonstrating

Here it can be found an overall data from the early outcome of how many learners they have reached and how many of them have been employed. There is a very detailed statistical report.

**Transferability assessment:** It is transferable because it involves a large number of partners nationally and funded by the state as well. Their strategic plan is rational and easy to apply in other settings.



# Best practices in Ireland

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## IDENTIFICATION DETAILS - II GOOD PRACTICE

**Name:** AONTAS National Adult Learning Organisation

**Website:** <https://www.aontas.com/contact>

**City and Country:** Dublin, Ireland

**Name of the responsible authority or organisation:** NIAMH O'REILLY

Chief Executive Officer, AONTAS (National Adult Learning Organisation).

**Type of validation (Individual or in group):** group

**Description of the practice/action (Including Validation tools, Validation methods):** Adult and Community Education: Supported Learner Pathways 2020-2021 aims to build the capacity of community educators and develop new guidelines for using RPL in working with marginalised and vulnerable groups, and with employees with low qualifications. The programme is run by AONTAS (the national Adult Learning Organisation), as Irish National Coordinator for the European Agenda for Adult Learning (EAAL). EAAL is funded by the

Erasmus+ programme of the European Union and co-financed by the Department of Education through SOLAS.

**AONTAS - The Irish National Adult Learning Organisation** is an Irish non-governmental organisation for the promotion and facilitation of adult learning.. While it has been a non-governmental body since 1976, it receives funding from the Department of Education and Skills.

**Key goal:** Membership of AONTAS includes individuals as well as a number of state bodies such as Education and Training Boards ETBs, community education organisations, trade unions, Institutes of Technology, providers of learning, and community projects amongst others.

AONTAS produces a number of publications and periodicals such as The Adult Learners Journal as well as research publications. It is a registered charity.

**Specific objectives:** to increase the visibility, raise the voice of, and promote the value of adult learning.

### Target group

marginalized and vulnerable groups, employees with low qualifications



# Best practices in Ireland

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## IMPLEMENTATION DETAILS

**Main activities:** Promotion & Recognition, Community Education Network, Adult Learners' Festival, National Lifelong Learning Network, European activities, Peer-Reviewed academic journal about Adult Learners and Policy & Representation

**When:** 2019-2022 Strategic Plan year

**Where:** Dublin, Ireland (in England, Scotland, Wales as well with partnership)

**Who was involved (authorities, volunteers, CSOs):** there are many different partners, they are part of many European projects as well with different partners countries

## Effectiveness

They have published final article with statistical data of learners they have been working together. In their official website, there is also a part called "LEARNER VOICE", it may be found testimonies of the learner they have been part of a support from AONTAS.

<https://www.aontas.com/learner-stories/>

## Transferability assessment

They carry on a project called NALAB - the Network for Adult Learning Across Borders brings the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales together in our shared vision for educational equality. They are learning practicing transferable knowledge and application in more than a single region.



# Best practices in Italy

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## IDENTIFICATION DETAILS - I Good Practice

**Name:** KODE-KoDE NQF Recognition and validation of non-formal and informal competences within National Qualification Frameworks

**City and Country:** Bresica, Italy

**Responsible authority/organisation:** Social Innovation Label (FR)

**Type of validation:** Group validation

**Description of the practice/action:** SkillPass is based on an inductive approach to identifying skills based on the adventure of video games. In the game, the learner-player builds his hero's portfolio and gradually masters the basic notions relating to the field of competence. The off-screen animations are based on this learning to better understand the reality of young people's experiences; The application "accompanies" the beneficiaries from the experiences/situations provided to generate the attachment to capacities and then transversal skills: problem-solving, communicating, processing information, working/acting as a team etc. The set constitutes their personal (evolving) tree of skills and can be shared with their community (friends, volunteers, collaborator users, etc.)

Furthermore, there is a system of recognition/validation by a third party (tutors, trainer, HR department, etc.) The software application allows a remote and individualized approach to identifying their skills, the young beneficiary can at any time record experiences during professional internships or international mobility

**Key goal:** The purpose of the KODE-NQF, was to add the competencies acquired in non-formal and informal settings to those acquired through formal education and training. The aim of the project has been to provide career guidance practitioners with effective tools to measure, assess and validate competences and skills acquired in non-formal and informal settings, and how they relate to the EQF and NQFs. The main outcome of the project are the KODE-NQF tools for measuring and validating non-formal and informal competences according to the EQF levels, and the corresponding NQF levels, and this manual that provides guidelines for using the tools during the guidance process.

**Specific objectives:** To provide career guidance practitioners with effective tools to measure, assess and validate competences and skills acquired in non-formal and informal settings, and how they relate to the EQF and NQFs. The main outcome of the project are the KODE-NQF tools for measuring and validating non-formal and informal competences according to the EQF levels, and the corresponding NQF levels, and this manual that provides guidelines for using the tools during the guidance process.

### Target group

Kode has been designed for a wide range of people, such as:

- People seeking new challenges in their profession and/or seeking new goals,
- Persons seeking basic career guidance,
- People seeking new career guidance or starting a new job or career,
- Persons seeking a (new) place in society
- Persons with low levels of self-esteem due to physical, cultural, or social limitations and who are looking for looking for new perspectives,
- People who feel "cut off", especially people who are in the second half of their life of their lives,
- People who are unemployed or whose jobs are at risk, or who are looking for a new business or job.
- People who have to take on great responsibility in a business succession.



# Best practices in Italy

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## IMPLEMENTATION DETAILS

### **Main activities:**

KODE is based on a set of tools for training, coaching, mentoring and self-training. The competence self-assessment questionnaire is based on 64 competences included in the so-called KODE Skills Atlas.

**When:** SkillPass underwent more than 20 months of experimentation in 2011

**Where:** Europe (Partners' countries- Germany, Poland and Italy)

### **Who was involved (authorities, volunteers, CSOs):**

Partners and Regional authorities

### **Effectiveness:**

The project has resulted in the publication of the manual (translated in the partners' languages) as well as the number of participants involved (more than 1500 beneficiaries in Europe.)- as a result, it can be considered to have reached its objective.

### **Transferability assessment**

The practice can definitely be replicated by other member states, the website clearly states the application of it, its use and also its further developments through the collaboration with other partners. However, as displayed on the website, some of the materials are not free but on the contrary, they are on sale.



# Best practices in Italy

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## IDENTIFICATION DETAILS - II GOOD PRACTICE

**Name:** Project Lever - Modelling informal and soft skills learning in the volunteer experience to increase employment and mobility of citizens

**Website:** <http://www.leverproject.eu/>

**City and Country:** Milano, Italy

**Name of the responsible authority or organisation:** Centro di Servizi per il Volontariato della provincia di Sondrio (Lavops) [Service Centre for Volunteering in the Sondrio Province] (ENG: Service Centre for Volunteering in the Sondrio Province)

**Type of validation (Individual or in group):** Group (volunteers)

**Description of the practice/action (Including Validation tools, Validation methods):**

Procedure:

- Submission of the application by the candidate, with necessary reference to the QRSP and the EQF level of the selected competencies;

- assessment of the application by the certification body with attention to the EQF levels.

Orientation/information interview;

- collection of evidence by the candidate: from tacit to explicit, support tools, reference indicators, examples of tests;

- assessment by the assessor and the certification body: assessment of tests and definition of the final assessment, in presence, with reference indicators;

- certification release by the certification body: possible link to the citizen's booklet.

**Key goal:** The project aims to: Enhance the mutual trust area, based on a common model and tools to value transversal competences in full transparency and transferability between VET, Volunteering and labour market and Implementing a dedicated service, able to foster the whole system at international and national level and to run at full speed.

**Specific objectives:**

- Reach mutual recognition of frameworks and standards related to the transversal competences at stake, within the partnership as well as among the political actors involved at local and European level; this will be aimed at strengthening an area of mutual trust for mobility, in accordance with the new European directives on unregulated professions (e.g. 2013/55/EU);

- an increased awareness among stakeholders of the importance of volunteering as a learning environment for the benefit of the working world;

- the implementation of internal services for volunteers, by voluntary organizations, to facilitate and support processes of validation and formal recognition of the acquired competences

### Target group

Young people and adults





# Best practices in Italy

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## IMPLEMENTATION DETAILS

**Main activities:** The process involves 5 different steps which are: Awareness, Identification, documentation, assessment and looking ahead.

**When:** 09/2017 – 11/2019 (27 months)

**Where:** Italy (+ partners in Belgium, Poland, Spain and the Netherlands)

**Who was involved (authorities, volunteers, CSOs):**

Certifying agencies, the candidate, validator (assessor) and the tutor.

### Effectiveness

Within Avis Academy, 25 young volunteers from Avis Regionale Lombardia underwent a process of certification of the skills acquired through volunteering and validated by Randstad operators, as part of the company's CSR commitment, according to the Lever Project model, developed according to European standards- as a matter of fact, the practice was indeed effective.

### Transferability assessment

The practice can be replicated by other Member States as this project was the result of the partnership between 5 member states ( Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, Poland and Spain) and therefore the material has been translated into the partners' languages. The resources created are specifically addressed to the candidates (e.g. volunteers, students, workers, etc.) while some others are specifically designed for the assessors. Overall, all these resources are important for the tutor working closely with the candidate.

### Other information

On the Project's platform the toolkit is available in all the partner's languages as well as the availability of the The LEVER UP webtool which supplied people and validation centres with some services to support the assessment activities.



# Best practices in Portugal

## IDENTIFICATION DETAILS - I Good Practice

- **Name:** Life story script
- **City and Country:** Portugal
- **Responsible authority/organisation:** National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education and Training (Agência Nacional para a Qualificação e Ensino Profissional, I.P - ANQEP)
- **Type of validation:** Individual validation
- **Description of the practice/action:** Use of a script to carry out the record of one's life story. This document assists the adult in the organization of his life story and presents itself as a supporting tool for the adult to identify and describe relevant experiences and contexts in which they occurred. It is usually a digital written record, but it can take any other form or resort to other means (video, audio, a multimedia document) and be used creatively. This tool has been long used and improved in RVCC processes, and shared among competences centres, giving way to different versions, adapted according to the features of the entity and its public.
- **Key goal:** to recognise and validate competences acquired in non-formal and informal contexts.
- **Specific objectives:** to support the development of a reflective portfolio; to value knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired and/or developed throughout life.

### Target group

adults who have dropped out of school early seeking qualification to improve employability; migrants with no school certificate or low-qualified, seeking to recognise and certify their competences to improve their qualifications and employability or move into further education.



# Best practices in Portugal

## IMPLEMENTATION DETAILS

### Main activities

The RVCC has had a boost since 2007, with well-planned and solid governmental investment to overcome the structural weakness of low qualifications among a great part of the population. Regular specialised training and cooperative work has paved the way to improve this methodology and create activities and tools to respond to diversity.

Along the adult learner's process, the main steps are:

- presentation and analysis of the script in, what are called, "recognition" sessions with the adult learner and educators;
- multiple activities to support the adult learner to unveil the contexts and relevant experiences (survey, interview, debate, graphic presentations, texts, visuals, etc.) where learning took place; activities are adjusted to individual needs and current circumstances and/or issues;
- record of a descriptive summary, reflection and evidence of competences acquired.
- Assessment

### Individualized course: to conquer autonomy outside the classic school system (permanent entry and exit):

- **Coaching:** capitalisation of the competences acquired post-training support
- **Alternation:** experience of the world of work the professional project in and with the company
- **dedicated resources:** membership of an institutional system the benefit of a solid anchorage in the local environment

**When:** This tool has been improved over the last years, adapted to digital forms and means and became a relevant support in distance learning or hybrid educational environments. It is used throughout the adult learner's process:

- mainly at the beginning as an initial booster, to explore, plan and structure the process;
- at key moments as an assessment tool of the work done and achievements;
- at the end as an overview of the whole process and last improvements.

**Where:** Portugal

**Who was involved (authorities, volunteers, CSOs):** centre coordination; adult learner and educators' team

**Effectiveness:** This tool and practice has proven to be an important support to guide the adult learners through an RVCC process and, parallel to that, an important way to boost self-esteem and motivate adults to trust their abilities and pursue further education and qualification. We provide statistics from our institution, as an example, extracted from SIGO, the national information management system for educational provision.

**Transferability assessment:** The practice can be easily replicated in many different contexts, including national systems and scenarios. Since it is based on an autobiographical approach, it can be adapted to respond to different circumstances.



# Best practices in Portugal

## IDENTIFICATION DETAILS - II Good Practice

**Name:** e-portfolio

**City and Country:** Beja, Portugal

**Responsible authority/organisation:** National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education and Training (Agência Nacional para a Qualificação e Ensino Profissional, I.P - ANQEP)

**Type of validation:** Individual validation

**Description of the practice/action:**

Development of a structured e-portfolio as the backbone of the RVCC process. The autobiographical approach turns digital and opens up the possibility for a range of means to be creatively used to build the individual portfolio: video/audio recording, multimedia, hyperlinks, etc. This practice involves the preliminary development of basic digital competences (accessing and managing e-mail, using the cloud functionalities, online collaborative work, using a digital learning platform, using word processor, using videoconference tools, online etiquette, etc.) through training or demonstration. **Key goals:** To raise awareness and educate young people and young adults about all the issues of citizenship, society and work. Accompany them in all the steps leading to their socio-professional integration

**Specific objectives:** to support the development of a reflective portfolio; to value knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired and/or developed throughout life.

**Target group:**

adults who have dropped out of school early seeking qualification to improve employability; migrants with no school certificate or low-qualified, seeking to recognise and certify their competences to improve their qualifications and employability or move into further education.



# Best practices in Portugal

## IDENTIFICATION DETAILS - II Good Practice

### IMPLEMENTATION DETAILS

**Main activities:** It marks the beginning of RVCC process, is build up throughout the adult learner's process, constantly guided and assessed by the educators' team and by the learner, and is the main product for the validation of competences.

The contents of the e-portfolio are totally individual and based on the learner's choices, and integrate the standards of the Key-Competences Reference Framework (Referencial de Competências Chave - RCC), with debate and reflection about soft skills, global issues, citizenship, etc.

At the end it will be one of the products assessed by a jury panel towards the certification of competences acquired in non-formal and informal contexts.

**Effectiveness:** This practice has helped adult learners to engage more easily in the RVCC process, because it allows them to manage their time better, and it is a cooperative work between learner and educators. So, adults feel supported, more confident and less prone to quit. During the confinement periods when only distance education was allowed, this method allowed adults to maintain their training with reduced constraints, and some even participated more regularly. While most adapted well to circumstances, some lacked the necessary equipment and connectivity, and it was hard to respond to in case of total confinement. However, the conclusion rates increased and reached a peak during 2020.

**Transferability assessment:** The practice can be replicated in many different contexts, including national systems and scenarios. Again, the autobiographical approach and its flexible structure can be adapted to respond to different needs. There is, however, the need to access digital equipment and connectivity. On the other hand, it paves the way to develop digital competences.



# Best practices in Romania

## IDENTIFICATION DETAILS - I Good Practice

- **Name:** Validation through centres / network of providers operating as validation/assessment centres
- **City and Country:** Romania
- **Responsible authority/organisation:** The National Qualifications Authority (NQA)
- **Type of validation:** Individual validation
- **Description of the practice/action:** Each validation centre must first get an accreditation from the NQA in order to be fully functional. Individuals/organisations must meet certain requirements in order to acquire this certification, including developing assessment instruments/tools, testing these instruments in real working settings, and producing an auto-evaluation report, among others.

The validation process has the following characteristics:

-It should be voluntary

-It should be carried out in accordance with established occupational standards; the evidence of professional competences should be gathered through the application of different methods of evaluation applied in various contexts and on different occasions

-The assessment should be independent of formal professional education and training, meaning that it can take place outside a formal education or training programme

-The assessment of each unit of competence should conclude with a result for the candidate - competent or not yet competent

The evaluation process of professional competences consists of:

-applying the evaluation tools to each candidate

-the certification of a professional competence implies the validation of the minimum conditions for the promotion of all the minimum requirements imposed by the authorised assessment tools, related to the units of competence / learning outcomes, which define the competence

-for each occupation / qualification subject to authorization, in order to test the evaluation instruments, in real working conditions, by each evaluator, a minimum number of five evaluation processes, carried out in accordance with the provisions of art. 11, para. (1), lit. c) of the Procedure.

- instrument testing is mandatory if the occupational / training / SOEFP standard is revised

- the evaluation tools are tested only once. After their approval by the ANC, each new professional competence evaluator acquires the evaluation tools of the centre. Their assessment is verified by the assessment centre, once, by a written test and simulation of a candidate's assessment. This aspect will be highlighted in the self-assessment report submitted by the centre, and the written test solved by the assessor will be presented to the external verifier at the verification visit.

- the instrument testing process does not entitle the assessment centre to issue certificates of competency to the candidates tested.

## Target group

Any person who has acquired experience previously through non-formal or informal ways. This experience should not be related to their education area.



# Best practices in Romania

**Key goal:** Official recognition and validation of qualifications and knowledge acquired through work experiences, non-formal and informal activities

**Specific objectives:** Increasing the mobility of the national workforce on the European market

## IMPLEMENTATION DETAILS

**Main activities:** Implementation of centres where individuals can come and acquire validation of their qualifications obtained through informal and non-formal methods.

**When:** Throughout the year, from Monday to Friday, as these are centres with a normal work schedule.

**Where:** Centres are implemented around the country in multiple cities such as Bucharest, Brasov or Sibiu.

**Who was involved (authorities, volunteers, CSOs):** Authorities, organisations and individuals.

**Effectiveness:** There is no data available regarding the percentage of the population that received validation of their competences through these centres

**Transferability assessment:** It would say this practice can be replicated in other Member States as in each country the government can implement validation centres, or some similar organisations .Furthermore, these centres may be tailored to the national environment so that any person can access their services.



# Best practices in Romania

## IDENTIFICATION DETAILS - II Good Practice

**Name:** SOSTRA - Soft Skills Training and Recruitment of Adult Educators

**City and Country:** Romania

**Responsible authority/organisation:** CPIP, Orange Hill, Fondazione Hallgarten, Defoin, Universidad de Córdoba, HAMK

**Type of validation:** Individual validation

**Description of the practice/action:** An EU project implemented with partners from different countries in which the need and importance of soft skills in European Adult Education were identified.

In this project, a digital open badge-driven learning process was created through which adult educators could have their prior skills and competencies recognised, as well as gain new ones.

Digital badges are electronic microcredentials that can be used to identify and promote competences. Badges (such as the Mozilla Open Badge, Badgr) refer to the student's, the earner's, participation in education or skills development; they may also be awarded following completion of a certificate. The Open Badge architecture is built upon an identification image, graphic or icon and the accompanying information content. This content shows the name of the badge, issuer identification, the knowledge and expertise criteria required, and a description of the evidence (e.g., an online document) (Abramovich, Schunn, & Higashi, 2013; Brauer & Ruhalahti, 2014).

This validation of competences that is gained through this project is not however accepted under official laws or standards. The project was implemented more as an informal practice, as a European transversal activity.

**Key goals:** Adult Educator gaining new soft skills and having their prior competences validated through Electronic Digital Badges

### Specific objectives:

- to recognize the need and importance of Adult Educators' soft skills in partner countries and at European level
- to identify and describe 15 key soft skills in learning outcomes
- to develop an online self-reflective test for assessing soft skills
- to co-create an open badge-driven learning process and multimodal learning material to improve missing soft skills

### Target group:

Adult educators, Managers and HR staff (recruiters) in educational organisations, in-company trainers, training consultants and policy makers on local, regional, national and European level.





# Best practices in Romania

## IMPLEMENTATION DETAILS

**Main activities:** 3 Intellectual Outputs were created for the SOSTRA project, however, for this research we will focus only on the 3rd one.

IO3 included two objectives:

- to develop an online self-reflective test for assessing and validating soft skills (during IO3 Open Badge Factory (OBF) was used for validating and accrediting competencies) and
- to co-create an open badge-driven learning process to improve missing soft skills.

As the final step of the project the partners piloted the new digital learning process. The pilots attracted 123 participants from various European countries and 274 badges were approved and issued around Europe. The applicants included adult educators in addition to some researchers, social workers and training managers. Two out of the seven piloting processes were held in person, the rest were held online.

**When:** January and June 2020

**Where:** online

**Who was involved (authorities, volunteers, CSOs):** project partners, participants (target group)

**Effectiveness:** When gathering feedback relating to the application of badges in most countries the participants felt the process was straightforward and didn't have any problem although a few groups reported having difficulty with reporting especially with a certain non-responding link. This then led to the conclusion that the documentation needs to be instructed well. It was also concluded that the reporting system of accepted badges could be better in Open Badge Factor. One group pointed out that some soft skills involved others in their perspective and it was hard to differentiate skills such as inclusion, diversity and respect for others when another one requested more extensive criteria for awarding badges. Furthermore, there were concerns regarding the official recognition of the badges and the evaluation process which felt that it left a lot of discretion to the corrector. The participants also felt that there could be more levels to these skills, rather than basic achievement non-achievement levels. Questions about the objectivity of the self-evaluation were also raised.

**Transferability assessment:** This practice can be easily replicated in other Member States as it can be conducted entirely online. As long as there is a translation of the content available, any citizen from other countries can access the platform and validate or acquire new competences.



# Best practices in Slovakia

## IDENTIFICATION DETAILS - I Good Practice

**Name:** THE SOUND OF BUSINESS - Leveraging the Entrepreneurial Competences of Adults To Extenuate the Business Knowledge Divide

**City and Country:** Slovakia

**Responsible authority/organisation:**

- ICEP s.r.o., Slovakia
- ECQ-European centre for quality ood, Bulgaria
- AKEP academy of entrepreneurship astiki etaireia, Greece
- CSMKIK Csongrad County chamber of commerce and industry, Hungary
- AN-spoleczna akademia nauk, Poland
- PRISM impresa sociale s.r.l., Italy

**Type of validation:** Individual validation

**Description of the practice/action:** The E+ KA2 project achieved great cooperation and a substantial exchange of knowledge and experience between project partners. As declared by the Eu Commission “An agenda for new skills and jobs”, the promotion of entrepreneurship, self-employment, and innovation “can offer a source of innovative solutions to respond to social demands in a participative process, providing specific employment opportunities for those furthest away from the labour market”.

According to the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) manifesto, Adult Education needs to be clearly framed within an overall lifelong learning strategy that considers and gives equal importance to all sectors and all forms of learning (formal, non-formal and informal):

- Adult education is a common and public good and transforms lives and societies.
- Participation of all learners and especially those with low basic skills is encouraged.
- Empowering non-formal methods and methodologies apply the creativity, existing knowledge and skills of learners and provide inspiring learning experiences.
- Professional trainers, Trainers and staff are necessary for applying the appropriate methods and achieving high-quality provision and a successful learner experience.
- Capacity-building and innovation in adult education.
- Cooperation (regional, European, global, and institutional) is crucial for the visibility of adult education but also for peer-learning and innovation transfer. The Sound of Business project contributed to promote this strategy.

**Specific objectives:** (1)To provide trainers with practical tools leading to an innovative method of training related to basic and transversal skills, innovative managerial competencies and entrepreneurial spirit, (2)To use and promote a non formal approach based on art and music, (3)To stimulate self-employment initiatives among adults, according to identified unemployed people's needs and backgrounds, (4)To promote/renovate managerial skills of the adults and foster the awareness of the importance of innovation and lifelong learning, (5)To recognize and validate non-formal learning at European level.

### Target group

- trainers/coaches for adults,
- business coaches, adult learners, business development experts, members of the Enterprise Europe Network, training departments of business development institutions,
- professionals especially interested in non-formal education, Cycle project management, business and entrepreneurship, as well as music careers,
- Educational institutions.



# Best practices in Slovakia

## IMPLEMENTATION DETAILS

### Main activities

The elaboration and development of the following 4 Project Results were developed: IO1: Training tools of the SOB methodology, IO2: Learning platform, IO3: Learning documentary, IO4: Protocol for certification of competences. This letter is well described below.

Based on the Project Cycle Management tools shared with the participants during the training course, and inspired by the criteria of certification system for project and program managers across Europe, ICEP, as IO4 leader identified a combination of skills and knowledge in all project management competence areas and produced a table of cross-reference between the Classification of European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupation (ESCO) with the Entrepreneurship Competence Framework (EntreComp) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) to certify basic and transversal skills, entrepreneurship and business innovation. The Protocol, therefore, is focused on a sustainability strategy focused on the following specific objectives: Encouraging system-level development of support for the entrepreneurship competence, including for instance new policy strategies and initiatives, the establishment of durable national, regional or local collaborative communities, high level curricula reform, strategic partnerships between different sectors etc.; Engaging with employers and employment services to support the development and assessment of entrepreneurial competencies in job seeking, in the workplace and during working life; Encouraging innovation and new approaches to entrepreneurship competence development in different learning settings (including formal, non-formal and informal settings) and the involvement of new providers, companies, NGO, intermediaries; Highlighting the changing nature of the labour market and education and training, due for instance to digital technology, to support citizens' innovation and creativity.

**When:** The Sound of Business partnership started the realization of the present project on 1/10/18 till 30/12/20 (3 months of extension included). Specifically, the Project Result N.4- Protocol of Certification of competences was implemented from 01/08/20 to 31/12/20.

**Where:** ONLINE

**Who was involved (authorities, volunteers, CSOs):** Project partner Organizations, Target Groups, Educational institutions.

**Effectiveness:** Results; Involved TGs:

- N. 23 trainers/coaches for adults (plus 1 participant who left the training after two days for personal reasons) equipped with knowledge, skills and innovative tools that blend the Project Cycle Management methodology with business development and rock music.
- N.118 (51 participants in the focus groups + 67 agreements with stakeholders) involved in the initial analysis and needs assessment. - N. 91 business coaches, adult learners, business development experts, members of the Enterprise Europe Network, training departments of business development institutions acquired professional competence, practical and analytical skills required for business development.
- N. 345 professionals especially interested in non-formal education, CYCLE management, business, and entrepreneurship, as well as music careers, reached and involved in 6 National Multiplier Events and trained about the Sound of Business methodologies.
- 133 aspiring trainers requested for certification of competences
- 2 business incubator opportunities development.



# Best practices in Slovakia

## Transferability assessment

ICEP developed a strategy based on the identification of the key stakeholders to be involved in the dissemination process of the Protocol at institutional level. The follow-up strategy aims to raise awareness among the stakeholders about the importance of the recognition process of competency certification systems, and that the process could be carried out effectively, transparently and in a way that is consistent and coherent, and to develop a Stakeholder ownership and commitment.

All the project's results are available and downloadable on the project's website/Portal to any users. Moreover, all the physical outputs are available in all partner countries in the offices of the project partners. To ensure that the project results will be taken up and embedded in the community also after the project cycle life, the developed by Dissemination and Exploitation Strategy explained already how the outcomes of the project will be shared with stakeholders, relevant institutions, organizations and individuals.

- Project website maintenance - the project website will be maintained for at least 3 years after the project completion which will grant further exploitation of the project results. The resources will maintain the project results available and up to date have been provided by all project partners.

- Linguistic diversity – All the IOs have been translated into 7 (6 partner languages + English) European languages. Also the IO3 , Learning Documentary was translated in three more EU languages (Spanish, Croatian and Serbian).

- Project information and results have been uploaded and published to the Erasmus+ website for dissemination and exploitation of results. This is another efficient way to ensure the complete display of project information to the wider public

## Other information

Investing in skills development creates a virtuous cycle in which sought-after, higher skills boost productivity and help to modernize the economy, increase employability, and ensure social inclusion and better work and life situations. Also, during the progress of the project implementation, and with the historical period we are going through, the strengthening of a multi-stakeholder approach, especially when we speak about Certification/Validation of competences has been fundamental. Maintaining links between public employment services and private employment agencies ( including experts and representatives from national and international entrepreneurship industry, vocational training centres, training organizations, social partners, and other institutions) serves as a platform to exchange views on initiatives and good practices in the socio-economic inclusion activities. A lack of stakeholder involvement in the planning and development of skills assessment and anticipation is seen as a barrier to well-informed policy making.

The Sound of Business project's approach can inspire projects about Competitive Strategy Innovation for SMEs to treat the COVID crisis, providing the SMEs with the principles of competitive strategy, discover frameworks and innovative practices in order to evaluate existing resources, stimulate and manage innovation and set up a long- term competitive strategy.



# Best practices in Slovakia

## IDENTIFICATION DETAILS - II Good Practice

**Name:** Icep Approved © Covid Manager Certification

**Website:** [www.iceponline.com/icep-approved-courses/](http://www.iceponline.com/icep-approved-courses/)

**City and Country:** Online

**Name of the responsible authority or organisation:** Icep in cooperation with Audit in Italy ([www.verifiche.info](http://www.verifiche.info))

**Type of validation (Individual or in group):** Individual

**Description of the practice/action (Including Validation tools, Validation methods):** In some Northern Italian regions as well as in other areas of Europe, the profile of Covid Manager has started to be regulated and required, representing an added value in the business and professional context. In these areas, the Covid Manager is a key figure in an organisation or company, called to perform operational and coordination activities (site visits, data collection, meetings with company management, support for the drafting and updating of an intervention plan and related procedures, periodic audits) necessary for the containment and prevention of Coronavirus infection. The Covid Manager is also the company contact person, managing relationships with the Control Bodies. It is also predicted that such a profile will become increasingly more prominent and requested, and that these skills can be easily adapted to the management of other emergency situations and health-related needs in the workplace.

Icep's partner Audit in Italy (an ICC - Icep Approved © Competence Centre) has been delivering tailored training for professionals to acquire such competences. Icep as a Third Party has drafted a Certification Scheme outlining the basic competences of such professional profile, and developed a Validation Exam, in order to validate this learning and provide a certification for these workers. Thus, they will be able to enter or re-enter the labour market, bringing an added value to their CVs and skills portfolio.

**Key goal:** to provide transparent recognition and validation of personal and professional Competence, in order to increase the intrinsic professional value and competitiveness of the person in the labour sector.

**Specific objectives:** to validate the learning of the people involved in specific training delivered by our partner and ICC - Icep Approved © Competence Centre "Audit in Italy" on the topics of Covid Management.

### Target group

Employed or unemployed professionals that have acquired specific skills through non-formal training or professional experience in the identified sector (in this case Covid-related Regulations).



# Best practices in Slovakia

## IMPLEMENTATION DETAILS:

**Main activities:** Icep Approved © Training Courses are training activities that an Icep Approved © Competence Centre delivers, in person or in a distance-learning setting. An Icep Approved © Competence Center is a training organisation that delivers its activities according to standards of learning-oriented efficiency and effectiveness, based on the Icep CertiSkill requirements. The Competence Centre is also an Examination Centre for the certification of non-formal competences and can deliver Icep-qualified training courses that give access to certifications. After completing the trainings, trainees can request access to the Certification of Competence of the professional profile related to the competence they have acquired. The steps of the Certification process are:

1. Submission of application documents
2. Verification of compliance to requirements listed in the Certification Scheme
3. Examination on the online platform [www.competenceinstitute.com](http://www.competenceinstitute.com)
4. Issue of certificate
5. Monitoring the continued fulfilment of requirements of the certified person over time.

**When:** May 2020 - ongoing

**Where:** Online ([www.competenceinstitute.com](http://www.competenceinstitute.com))

**Who was involved (authorities, volunteers, CSOs):** Icep & Audit in Italy

## Effectiveness

Achieving a personnel certification represents a significant investment and a desirable asset for a modern professional: it qualifies the certified person as a reliable subject; moreover, it enters the person into a continuous process of updating the competences, including a verification held at different stages (annual, triennial or quinquennial, depending on the profile), in order to maintain the certification. From the perspective of an employer, a Certification issued by an Independent Third Party in accordance with International Standards is a real guarantee of the employee's specific and practical competences, rather than generic qualifications. In addition, in case of problematic situations, the employer can report any non-compliance or need for improvement of competences to the Certification Institute. To date (March 2022), **163** trained persons have been certified by Icep as Covid Manager.

## Transferability assessment

For the certification of non-formal competences related to professional profiles that are not required to be accredited at National Certification Bodies, Icep has designed and progressively updates and expands several Certification Schemes for the Personnel Certification of different professional profiles, based on national and international regulations such as ISO standards (in particular ISO/IEC 17024:12) and ESCO classifications. Since this process is based on international frameworks, they can be easily replicated and adapted in other countries, learning contexts and for other specific or generic target groups.



## 5. Conclusions

The Consortium made the analysis focusing on an **adult target** with following elements: over 18, male and female, unemployed and employed, mostly low salary and/or precarious jobs. In details coming from disadvantaged conditions like low-skilled/qualified, migrants, asylum seekers and adult at risk (institutionalized, on welfare support, incarcerated).

A **National Report from each partner country**, introduced the Research and it showed that in most countries, the recognition and validation of competences is possible thanks to numerous tools, methodologies and policies, implemented by different organizations and even institutions, public or private, working with disadvantaged groups (migrants, refugees, young people, isolated adults...). However it is at the public level that we find the vast majority of structures working for this recognition and validation of competences, except for Ireland where the private sector seems to be more active in this field. The Comparison found also that in some countries, notably Portugal, France, Ireland and Romania, the tools, methodologies, policies and systems put in place have become legalized and integrated instruments, very widely accepted and used by all sectors, public or private, to support lifelong learning. Thus, all sectors have appropriated these instruments to validate skills acquired outside the formal system of education. This shows a high acceptance and standardization of the validation of skills acquired in informal and non-formal ways.

Furthermore, in order to **access recognition and validation offer**, most countries require a certain amount of money, sometimes up to several hundred euros. However, some countries are able to offer scholarships and funding to support as much as possible those who need it.

Meanwhile in specific cases there are also free accesses. For example in Ireland there are free state-funded training and non-formal education programmes. Or in Portugal the process is totally free and right now adults even get a grant (over 500€) at the after certification, as long as they don't have any debts to social security and finance. Instead in Cyprus just if 2 children already attend some lessons





the third one gets to attend any lessons for free. Instead Italy mentioned a support just by public and funds. Continuing Slovakia is one of the countries where project funding is an important resource for starting and setting up validation processes and is used rather to support validation projects than to mainstream validation systems. At last just in Romania there are not funding available for the access to the recognition and validation at national level.

Continuing on the analysis, the Consortium found interesting testimonies during the **Focus Group**. Different needs and gaps were gathered from each partner. The majority of Partners focused on **disadvantaged social groups**, like Romania which faced the issues in the Romanian prison system, or Cyprus which discussed on migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. These elements offered to the Research an interesting starting point to suggest specific policies in the Education Adult System. Furthermore the Consultations have been essential to understand which kind of **barriers** there are for learners and for who validate skills. **For learners:** financial, linguistic, a large amount of bureaucracy and administration and a lack of information.

In details in Cyprus explained how these obstacles create a lack of opportunities. Moving on in Ireland has emerged a difficulty of terminology and language used in the FETAC learning outcomes. Meanwhile in Portugal during the discussion emerged that there are also a lack of digital equipment and connectivity, long distances and lack of public transport and women tend to drop out more due to social discrimination and pressure. In Romania the situation seems more serious than other countries, indeed in addition to issues before mentioned, they analysed a lack of vocational training centers and an unknowing of the possibility of validating skills / competences acquired informally and non-formally.

Meanwhile the **barriers for who validate skills:** some participants affirmed that in France there is a







big difference between the expectations of the official bulletins and the answers to the tests. For example at school the students work on a lot of skills that, in the end, will not be taken into account in the exams; This testimony converges with some issues that also in Italian school system there are, like the lack of communication. These weaknesses makes the validation system also highly fragmented and professionals feel that they are not prepared enough to measure the competences. In Ireland an interesting consideration was elaborated, which indicates that in order to receive meaningful accreditation, the candidate may still need to interact with the formal system (they will still have to attend classes, submit coursework etc...). Instead in Portugal emerged several issues such as lack of human resources and enough time to respond to needs, Rate of absenteeism or irregular paths among adult learners, Managing the process and training with low-skilled adult learners, lack of stability of teaching team members with impact on management and interaction, lack of digital resources, lack of support from some of the stakeholders involved. In addition, as mentioned above, in Romania the situation is very hard, indeed according their research there all these barriers: lack / precariousness of information about this concept, of information on how this validation is accepted on the labour market, regarding the continuation of the training / formation / improvement steps in the field for which we obtained the validation, of good inter-agency cooperation and lack of interest from governmental or non-governmental associations in this regard and a weak concern of economic agents regarding the organization of dual education. At last in Slovakia emerged that the process of validation of non-formal/informal education and skills is not being set properly, even if a legislation regarding this matter already exists.

As far as the **Best Practices** are concerned, we can conclude that in all countries there are methodologies and implementations of validation and recognition of competences acquired in a non-formal and informal way that should be retained for their efficiency and ingenuity and applied





in other European countries. We realise that it is therefore important to highlight the need to provide this validation and recognition of skills to the most disadvantaged social groups (particularly refugees, young people and adults who have dropped out of school, etc.) because they are the ones who need the most support. Since this is an individual process, it can be adapted to many different groups, especially those in most need or lacking competences and knowledge.

In the case of Portugal, an adult can conclude with a partial certification and later complement it with training in the lacking competences (eg.: a training course in digital competences). However, adults need competences in language (Portuguese) to do it. In Portuguese case they had a few migrants who qualified but have been living here for sometime and acquired language skills.

Then, beyond just recognising and validating these skills, it is important to provide them with other skills such as languages, administrative skills (to be able to manage paperwork), financial skills and also digital skills. We also realize that what greatly favours this validation and recognition of competences is the fact of making all these processes user-friendly and making them widely accessible and widespread, in particular thanks to good communication on all these instruments.

As before mentioned this is also what came out of the various focus groups. The discussions with professionals have enabled us to identify what is not working today in each country and to identify common issues that need to be addressed in the validation of these non-formal and informal skills.

So there's a clear need to clarify the instruments, to make them accessible and user-friendly in order to overcome the large lack of information that exists today around this issue impacting both the people who need it and those who accompany them (validation practitioners).

Another aspect should be mentioned: this process relies on social and professional experience and knowledge, so it works better with adults, older than 18, who have lived long enough and acquired experience to be unveiled. That's why only 23+ or with 3-year work experience can access it in Portugal for example.





In short, the validation and recognition of competences acquired informally and non-formally is still new; this is reflected in the lack of information, the lack of communication, the vagueness of all the instruments that are put in place. It can also be said that these are practices that are still too little implemented and widespread in all sectors. In other words, in many sectors, it is still difficult to have one's skills recognised if they have not been acquired formally. It is therefore necessary to make these instruments user-friendly, to spread them and, in particular, to accompany all disadvantaged populations in these processes in order to make these practices popular and effective. In that sense also the establishment of partnerships with local stakeholders (local authorities, employers, etc.) could be very important to anchor the process.





## 6. Glossary

**Learning:** Cumulative process in which individuals gradually assimilate increasingly complex and abstract entities (concepts, categories and models, behaviour) and/or acquire skills and competences<sup>16</sup>

**Learning outcomes/Acquis:** Body of knowledge, abilities and/or skills that an individual has acquired, and/or is able to demonstrate at the end of the learning process.<sup>17</sup>

**Formal learning:** Learning occurring in an organized and structured context (in formal training, in-company training) and designed as an apprenticeship Lead to formal recognition (diploma, certificate) Formal learning is intentional from the learner’s perspective

**Non-formal learning:** Learning integrated into planned activities that are not explicitly designed as learning, but containing a learning element important Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner’s perspective.

**Informal learning:** Learning resulting from activities of daily living in connection with work, family or leisure It is often referred to as experiential learning and in a certain way, it can be understood as accidental learning It is not structured in terms of learning objectives, learning duration and/or learning medium Usually, it does not induce any certification Informal learning can be intentional, but in most cases it is unintentional (or “secondary”/random)<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Commission européenne, “Common European principles for validation of non-formal and informal learning”, p10 Disponible sur : <http://bit.ly/atjGp8>

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p 10

<sup>18</sup> Bjonarvold, Jens ; Colardyn Danielle, *Validation of Formal , Non-Formal and Informal Learning : policy and practices in EU Member States*, European Journal of Education, Vol 39, N°1, 2004, p 71





**Competence:** Demonstrated ability to use knowledge, skills and qualities personal, social and/or methodological in work-related situations or studies, as well as in his professional and personal development .

**Abilities:** Ability to apply knowledge and know-how to complete tasks and solve problems. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, abilities are described as cognitive (i.e., involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) or practical (i.e., involving manual dexterity or the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments)<sup>19</sup>.

**Knowledge:** They can be theoretical or factual Validation of non-formal and informal learning is divided into three stages The first is identification, the second assessment and the third recognition.

**Assessment (of skills):** The sum of the methods and processes used to evaluate an individual's outcomes (knowledge, skills and/or competencies), usually leading to certification

**Certificate/diploma:** Official document issued by an authorised body certifying the achievements of an individual vidu following a standard assessment procedure Certification (of competences) Process for formally validating knowledge, know-how and/or skills acquired by an individual as a result of an assessment procedure Certificates and diplomas are issued by authorised bodies

**Qualifying:** (a) Official document (certificate, diploma) attesting to the conclusion successful completion of an education or training, or successful completion of a test or examination; and/or (b) Requirements for an individual's access to a position or to progress within of this profession

**Recognition:** (a) Formal recognition : the process of granting official status to competences, either by issuing certificates, or by issuing equivalencies, credit units or validation of competences acquired

<sup>19</sup> SCAD Plus, « The European Qualifications Framework », disponible sur : <http://bit.ly/d1iGWk>





And/or (b) social recognition : either through recognition of the value of skills by economic and social actors

**Validation:** Assessment and recognition of a wide variety of knowledge, know-how, abilities and skills that people develop while throughout their lives in different contexts, for example through the The European Union is the only country in the world to be able to do so.





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