VISIBLE SKILLS OF ADULTS

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WHAT IS VISKA?

- **VISKA is**
  - a *new policy experimentation project* focused on the Validation of NFIL, particularly of migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and low skilled adults

- **VISKA means:**
  - VISKA is an acronym for „Visible Skills of Adults“ which is a direct reference to the them of the project
  - **VISKA is** an old Icelandic (old Norse) word and means WISDOM in English
  - The equivalent word for VISKA in Norwegian and Danish is VISDOM and VISHET in Swedish

- **VISKA is** - a *36 month project*; 7 partners, 4 countries

- **VISKA is** expensive - total project cost is 1852.930 €
VISKA BACKGROUND - POLICY

- VISKA addresses the European policy priority of diminishing skills mismatch, fostering employability, economic growth and job creation, and social inclusion
  - making knowledge, skills and competences of adults more visible through validation of informal and non-formal learning, particularly the skills of migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and low-skilled adults. (Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning 2012 and A New Skills Agenda for Europe, COM 2016)

- VISKA further addresses the priority to make all skills visible. Skills are not always properly identified and thus risk being undervalued and not used in full. This is particularly true for skills acquired outside formal learning environments, e.g. work experience, online learning, or volunteering. (Council Conclusions „Rethinking Education“ 2013)

- Lastly, VISKA addresses the need to create an international consensus on the meaning of skills and competences, in particular a common definition/criteria to assess transversal skills (composed of cognitive and non-cognitive skills). (See various EU policy documents, e.g. Recommendation on Key Competences and EQF)
VISKA PARTNERSHIP

Ireland

NORWAY LEADS

VOX NASJONALT FAGORGAN FOR KOMPETANSEPOLITIKK

Research Partner

Cork Institute of Technology

Belgium (FL)

Vlaanderen

is onderwijs & vorming
VISKA PARTNERS – STATE OF AFFAIRS

- 4-phased validation arrangements *(identification, documentation, assessment and certification)* described in policies in all partner countries... **YET**
  - in some countries a legal framework for validation arrangements *is missing*, in others the financing of validation is *not secured*

- Validation arrangements are fragmented within countries creating challenges for *access to validation* for ALL target groups, for *scalability* and for the *development of long-term holistic views* on the importance and potential outcomes of validation for the individual, employers and the system (policy-makers).

- Validation arrangements are further *not yet sufficient* to make all human capital visible and usable. There is need for:
  - better tools, including *electronic tools*, for identifying and documents skills (skills audit)
  - improving the competencies of *guidance counsellors* and other frontline staff involved in validation processes.
  - Consensus on definition and meaning of *transversal skills* and skills audits, and a criteria for identifying, documenting and assessing these skills
VISKA – AIMS

The **overall aim** is to:

"create holistic validation arrangements in 4 European countries accessible to all target groups. Holistic validation arrangements will support meeting current and emerging needs for validation, ensuring faster access of individuals, particularly migrants, into validation, and a proper transfer of outcome-led skills audits into education-led led validation arrangements (and in some cases certification), or employment."

⇒ To achieve its aim VISKA proposes **five interventions** centred mostly on qualitative improvement of current validation policies and practices in the 4 partner countries. Linked to each of the interventions are **expected outcomes**.

⇒ It is further **hypothesized** that the 5 interventions in the current processes of validation in the 4 partner countries will lead to impact on both individual and systemic levels.
VISKA METHODOLOGY

- VISKA is a large-scale action research project

- During preparation phase considerable differences were detected in contexts, labour markets, education systems and skills priorities which add to the variation in the validation environment in the 4 partner countries.

- Due to this complexity, the evaluation framework developed by Rollison et. Al. was chosen for analysing impact: The Realistic Evaluation Approach. The framework:
  - focuses attention on how interventions bring about change and takes into account how these are embedded in social systems
  - further addresses the challenges of impact evaluation and limitations of randomized experiment approach

- Learning from another policy experimentation project GOAL (evaluation of adult guidance) built into the project
Interaction with a variety of contexts and a variety of actors does not offer much in the way of quasi-experimental design. Thus a mixed-methods research approach will provide some quantitative outputs but the most significant and richest outputs of VISKA will be qualitative in nature.

Overall target group will extend to 500 individual beneficiaries across the 4 partner countries. Data collection will extend to:

- Country of origin
- Age
- Gender
- Status (asylum seeker, refugee, migrant, low-skilled adult)
- Formal education attainment
- Work experience
- Willingness to work

Not all interventions are appropriate for all countries and their contexts.
### How to measure/benchmark impact?

- **At the level of the individual**
  - reflection on and awareness of knowledge, skills, competence and confidence;
  - development of a new or enhanced career or a learning pathway;
  - embarking on a new or enhanced education or training plan;
  - obtaining employment;
  - addressing skills underutilisation or mismatches (i.e. getting a better job).

- **At systems level?**
  - almost impossible to use a parallel control group,
  - measure/explore changes on existing validation systems as a direct result of one or more interventions
  - exploration of existing quality assurance mechanisms in current validation arrangements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partner Country</th>
<th>Size of Sample</th>
<th>Features of sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10 refugee/asylum seekers; 40 migrant workers working in the tourism and construction sectors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>Newly arrived adult quota refugees and asylum seekers still staying in asylum reception centres in Norway.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>Low-skilled adults – healthcare, food and services and IT sectors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>Low-skilled adults; employed/unemployed, may include migrants/refugees</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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VISKA 5 INTERVENTIONS

1. **Developing and extending regional/national networks** to include policy makers, social partners and practitioners working on the Validation of NFIL

2. **Extenting and/ or adapting tools** used in the Validation of NFIL – includes digitisation as well as customisation for use with specific beneficiary groups and enhanced quality assurance of validation processes

3. **Creating a common set of criteria for the documentation and assessment of transversal skills**, able to be used with one or more adult learner groups

4. **Training and/or capacity-bulding for guidance counsellors** and other frontline staff working on the Validation of NFIL, including with specific adult beneficiary groups

5. **Improving access to and awareness of validation services and support**, including among specific adult beneficiary groups.
VISKA OUTCOMES - EXAMPLES

**Intervention 2**
Extending/adapting current validation tools

- Improved validation arrangements relying on enhanced tools (e.g. digitisation and criteria for assessing transversal skills); more qualified practitioners

More awareness among employers of the broad set of skills employees have

Improved access for specific adult learner audiences, e.g. through digital means
Improved validation arrangements enabling all learning experiences to be recognised, including skills which are transversal and transferable

Consensus between partners on what transversal skills comprise and how to document and measure them as part of VNFIL

Intervention 3
Creating a common set of criteria for documentation and assessment of transversal skills

Transversal skills recognition embedded into existing VNFIL practices and policies
| Months | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 |
|--------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| WP1    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| WP2    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| WP3    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| WP4    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| WP5    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| WP6    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| WP7    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| WP8    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
WANT TO FOLLOW VISKA?

Are you interested in sharing your validation arrangements, validation tools, participating in training of guidance counsellors or VISKA project meetings?

- Follow us on the upcoming website, www.viska.eu
- Sign up for the VISKA newsletter
- VISKA also offers you a chance to be PROACTIVE!
  - share your experiences and new developments in your country on the upcoming VISKA blogg
  - ask to join thematic partner meetings dealing with issues linked to your own validation challenges
  - participate in the upcoming PLA on validation of non-formal and informal learning (early 2018)

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