European Validation Festival

14-15 June 2018, The Egg, Brussels

14 June
Workshop' narrative

Workshop 1	Validation in Upskilling Pathways: Giving low-skilled adults new opportunities

Tags:

Low-skilled adults; early school leavers; basic skills; identification; documentation; motivation; progression; flexible pathways

Moderator: *Regina Ebner, EAEA*

Speakers:
- *Valérie Fontaine, validation in adult education, Belgium*
- *Anni Karttunen, Finland*
- *Joëlle Pochelu, Lifelong learning: Bilan de compétences, VAE, France*
- *Fjóla María Lárusdóttir, Validating prior learning for those with little education, Iceland*

According to Eurostat's latest *Labour Force Survey*, in 2017, 61.35 million 25 to 64 year olds in the EU had left school with at best lower secondary education, (ISCED 0-2). Furthermore, over 10% of young people left school early, which means that significant numbers of people in this category continue to enter the labour market annually. However, even though these people have left school without gaining a formal qualification that would allow an easier access to the labour market or further education and training, they have usually acquired through initial schooling or through work and life experience a valuable but invisible set of skills, which may contain important gaps, for example in basic skills. The aim of the Council Recommendation on *Upskilling Pathways* is to offer new opportunities to fill these gaps, to

- assess their current knowledge and skills (step 1),

- develop the basic reading, writing, numeracy and digital skills or wider skills they may need thanks to a tailored and flexible learning offer or progress towards a higher qualification if they wish (step 2),
- and have the skills, knowledge and competences acquired validated (step 3).

The Recommendation on Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning, 2012, notes that *"disadvantaged groups, including individuals who are unemployed and those at risk of unemployment, are particularly likely to benefit from the validation arrangements, since validation can increase their participation in lifelong learning and their access to the labour market"*. It is unlikely that many of the low-skilled/low-qualified people targeted by *Upskilling Pathways* will obtain to a qualification through validation alone. However, certain stages of validation – identification and documentation of knowledge, skills and competences, in particular – will make them aware of their own skills and talents and help them on a pathway to further learning. Validation can also enable them to document their further learning, which may be sporadic or interrupted, e.g. through portfolios.

The workshop will examine a number of examples, ranging from very complete pathways provided for low-skilled adults through the validation system, to partial solutions such as those providing an initial assessment but not leading directly to a learning offer, and discuss how these could be developed in the context of implementing *Upskilling Pathways*. The workshop will also address ways to recognise certification required through validation towards formal qualifications in the context of *Upskilling Pathways*, so that no further barriers are encountered by the learner.

In World café format, participants will address the following questions:
a. What are the encouraging features and weaknesses or obstacles in step1 (= to the identification and documentation stages of the validation process) in helping low-skilled people to achieve their objectives?
b. How can the learner take the next step, e.g. putting together a learning offer?
c. How can validation be enhanced as part of *Upskilling Pathways* to take the learner further?

Workshop' narrative

Workshop 2	The Youthpass experience: How to take the validation of non-formal and informal learning to a new level

Tags:
Youthpass, recognition, international, mobility projects, self-assessment

Moderator: *Rita Bergstein, SALTO RC T&C*

Speakers:
- *Lama Zeinoun Tabet, SALTO Youth Euromed - Trainer and Representative in Lebanon/ Head of Youth Department / Projects Coordinator - Chabibeh Sporting Club, Lebanon*
- *Petra Vukas, Youthpass award winner, Croatia*
- *Miguel Angel Belletti, President Società Cooperativa Sociale Vedogoviani, Piemont/ Italy*

Youthpass is the European recognition tool and a pedagogical process to identify and document individual non-formal and informal learning outcomes gained in international mobility activities, such as youth exchanges, European Voluntary Service and mobility of youth workers. Within the Youthpass experience, participants are invited to reflect on their learning outcomes and, with the support of youth workers, trainers, or youth leaders, identify the crucial moments and document their learning outcomes in different ways. The EU Key Competences Framework is used as the basis and structure of the presentation of these learning outcomes in the Youthpass Certificate after the process is completed.

Identifying, documenting and (self-)assessing learning experiences/outcomes became more and more crucial over the last 10 years in international mobility experiences – of course opening a path for lifelong learning in many different educational contexts. For Youthpass holders it remains a challenge if they present their learning in a context where they want their experience to be recognised and valued e.g. to employers when they apply for a job.

This workshop provides an opportunity to reflect on what we could do together to ensure that validation opportunities can be further developed and maybe even guaranteed, and how this could be supported politically.

Presentations will give an insight on the following questions:

- How can the certificates be used in practice by a young person for validation and recognition of their learning experience and outcomes (skills and competences), e.g. for employability or further learning?
- How to ensure that young people with a certificate are seen by different stakeholders (economic actors, social partners, educational institutions) as having accomplished something valuable?
- How do political contexts support youth work in recognising competences of young people?

With the participants of the workshop, we would like to discuss the following questions:

- What are possible next steps to support the further development but also recognition of Youthpass and its process behind?
- Which steps would be needed to raise the quality of the Youthpass process and tool?
- Given the fact that Youthpass is not only seen as soft tool but also sometimes is a making the difference in an application process e.g. what needs to be changed to strengthen these opportunities?
- Which steps are needed when considering social recognition and which ones for formal recognition?

Workshop' narrative

Workshop 3   **Developing validation in the workplace in cooperation with employers**

Tags:
Validation in enterprises, competence assessment, portability and transferability of validation, validation methods, validation standards

Moderator: *Jens Bjornavold, Cedefop*

Speakers:
- *The Balansekunst Project:*
  - *Tormod Skjerve, Senior Policy Officer, VIRKE*
  - *Eleni Simeou, Project Manager, VIRKE*
- *The ValiKom Project:*
  - *Tina Rapp, West German Chambers of Crafts and Skilled Trades' Council*
- *Stefano Spennati, Confcommercio - Conftrasporto*

Background and context

For enterprises, making better use of existing knowledge, skills and competences is a key concern and a necessary part of day-to-day activities. For this reason, many employers have developed competence assessment methodologies and standards supporting recruitment practises and human resource development in general. Cedefop's report on 'Validation of non-formal and informal learning by European enterprises' ([1]) show that while enterprises indeed give high priority to these activities, the results can frequently not be used outside the enterprise in question. A lacking connection between the efforts of enterprises and the public validation arrangements can prove problematic for the individuals targeted by these approached. Employees having their skills and competences assessed will normally not be able to use outcomes of this process outside the company in question. This lack of 'portability' and 'transferability' is partly caused by the fact that companies treat this information as confidential, partly because no shared terminologies, methodologies or standards are available. While the need for confidentiality has to be respected, the lack of shared terminology, methods and standards can be addressed more efficiently.

([1]) The study, published in 2014, was based on a survey of 400 European enterprises. The study can be downloaded from the following address: http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/3065

Workshop 3 presents concrete approaches to the identification, documentation, assessment and certification of skills and competences acquired at work. This will allow for a discussion on how to further promote developments in this area and whether these can be better connected to validation arrangements in the public sector, for example linked to education and training.

The projects

The 'ValiKom' project[2], taken forward by German Chambers of Crafts and Industry, seeks to develop a standardised approach to the identification, documentation, assessment and certification of learning acquired at work. The project not only seeks to make it easier for low qualified groups to access further and continuing education and training, but also seeks to support refugees. The project has been tested in a wide range of sectors (metal, retail, logistics, food industries, administrative services + various craft sectors). The project was concluded in 2018 and points to the challenges involved in implementing this approach on a wider scale and in a sustainable way.

The Norwegian project 'Balansekunst'[3] ('The art of balancing') has developed a model and a method for describing skills and competences developed at work. The purpose of this project is to ensure that these skills and competences can be understood and appreciated in other parts of the labour market as well as in formal education and training system. Focussing on the development of reference standards, the project not only supports the assessment of competences internally in enterprises but also facilitates transfer of these competences to other enterprises as well as to the public education system. The project is developed by and for the Retail sector with heavy involvement of some of the major retail chains. Employer organisations and trade unions have also been involved.

The challenges

The participants in the workshop are invited to discuss the following questions:

1. Is there a need for increased cooperation between enterprises, for example at sector level, to develop robust methodologies and shared standards/requirements?
2. Can the portability and transferability of enterprise based competence assessment and/or validation be strengthened? How?
3. What can validation arrangements in the public sector, for example in education and training, learn from competence assessment practices in enterprises and sectors?
4. What is the role of national authorities in supporting validation at work? What could be the European contribution?

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(2) https://www.validierungsverfahren.de/index.php?id=2311&L=1
(3) https://www.virke.no/var-politikk/politiske-artikler/vi-er-balansekunstnere/

Workshop' narrative

Workshop 4	(Self-) assessing vocational skills using my-professional-experience.org, MYSKILLS and Skilllab

Tags:
Vocational skills, digital, assessment, tools, skills audit, Germany, Netherlands, migrants, low-skilled, PES

Moderators: *Martin Noack, Bertelsmann Stiftung, and Lieve Van den Brande, European Commission, DG EMPL*

Speakers:
- *Ramona López, AWO SH, Germany*
- *Ulrich Scharf, Skilllab, The Netherlands*

Validation of informal and non-formal learning has the potential to reduce educational and social inequalities. By making skills of migrants and people with low levels of formal qualification visible gives value to learning outcomes that are in demand and opens up upskilling pathways for those who so far have been partially excluded from participation in the labour market. However, existing instruments for the assessment of vocational skills often do not adequately address the needs of these disadvantaged groups. Additionally current practices are often highly cost-intensive and difficult to scale up to larger numbers of candidates.

Major shortcomings of existing instruments:
○ too theoretical
○ too much relying on written (host country) language
○ too complex
○ too time-consuming
○ not suited for bridging different guidance systems (e.g. migration counselling and PES)

Two trends have facilitated the development of innovative tools in recent years: the increase of migration into Europe and the increased digitalisation of work, education, and life.

Innovative digital (self-) assessment methods offer significant potential to reduce the administrative burden on assessors and to make skills assessment more transparent and fair. They, additionally, offer the opportunity to massively scale up validation - if done well - even or especially to disadvantaged

7

learners. What needs to be done in order to scale up existing good practices? What are the gaps still to be filled? And what challenges or even dangers lie in the use of digital instruments for validation? These questions and others will be discussed interactively.

This workshop will present different digital tools and discuss what would be needed to scale them up. Key questions to be answered in dialogue with and among the audience are
○ What is the added value?
○ **How to scale them up?**
○ **What concrete next steps should be undertaken by whom?**
○ What are the risks and potential drawbacks of such digital tools?
○ **What needs to happen to profit of these tools ?**
○ What keeps you from spreading the word and help scaling them up?

The input to this workshop consists of the practical demonstration and in part first-hand application by the audience of different instruments that rely on validated competence models. The first two address 30 high-demand VET-professions and are based on 5-7 professional action fields per profession that reflect business demands as well as curricular content. The free multilingual web tool www.my-professional-experience.org allows users to systematically self-assess in only 5 minutes their prior experience at home and abroad in the 30 professions. MYSKILLS (www.myskills.de/en) then rigorously assesses the vocational skills of migrants and low-skilled in the same 30 VET professions. These 4-hour long multilingual digital tests are based on pictures and videos and are used in all 156 PES agencies that have a test centre in Germany. Once all 30 professions are available the PES expects up to 100.000 candidates per year. The third instrument, the mobile app for competence-based CV building Skilllab, is still in developmental stage but shows interesting applications of algorithm-based plausibility checks for self-assessments of vocational skills based on ESCO.

Workshop' narrative

Workshop 5 | **Validation and Blockchain: Challenges and opportunities**

Tags:
Open Learning; open recognition; digital technology; blockchain technology; credentials; transparency-provenance; learning outcomes; trust; non-formal learning; informal learning; immutability; decentralised data; ownership; dis-intermediation.

Moderator*: Angeliki Dedopoulou, European Commission, DG EMPL*

Speakers:
- *Dr Alex Grech, Senior Advisor to the MT Ministry of Education, Author of the report "Blockchain in Education", Member of Core Working Group of the EU Blockchain Observatory and Forum*
- *Anthony Camilleri, Quality and Standardisation Expert, Author of the report "Blockchain in Education"*

Learning increasingly takes place outside classrooms, at work, at home and during leisure time. This workshop will explore how new technologies like blockchain can be used to support the validation of these important learning outcomes - notably by complementing and strengthening existing qualifications and certificates. The workshop will identify key challenges in using blockchain technologies within non-formal and informal learning contexts and propose ideas on how these may be addressed in the short term such as to enhance visibility for such learning and trust by key stakeholders.. The speakers will make reference to Open vs Closed blockchain, highlight the non-aligned interests of different actors and provide examples of pilot projects that issued academic credentials based on blockchain.

Presentations from Alex Grech and Anthony Camilleri will provide some insights into the emergence and use of blockchain technology within a formal and informal learning context. This will be followed by an interactive discussion where participants will split in three groups to exchange views and discuss about opportunities and challenges of blockchain technology in the validation of non-formal and informal learning.

Key questions:

- What is blockchain technology?
- What is an open and closed blockchain?
- What are the opportunities and challenges for using blockchain in the validation on informal and non-formal learning?
- How can we increasingly make visible and value learning credentials outside the formal systems; including the learning by groups of people who face social exclusion in further learning and continuing training?
- How can technologies like blockchain complement and support the validation of international qualifications and credentials?

Workshop 6	Qualification frameworks and validation of non-formal and informal learning

Tags:
Validation, quality, quality assurance, certification, qualifications, qualification frameworks

Moderator: *Carlo Scatoli, European Commission, DG EMPL*

Format: *no presentation, all participants/delegations are able to take the floor in small groups.*

Should validation of prior learning always lead to a formal qualification, or at least to credit towards a qualification? We know that this is not always the case. The different phases of validation all have a purpose and a value for individuals, organisations and institutions, independently from the link to formal qualifications. For instance, skills identification helps people define their career plans, documentation reinforces their self-confidence, assessment and certification may be enough for career advancement, without any link to qualifications or credit points. Still, it matters that people have opportunities for identification, documentation and assessment of skills with a view to obtain credit towards a formal qualification or indeed a full qualification. That should not be a shortcut to second division qualifications. Validation should lead to qualifications that are – and are considered – as good as when they are awarded following formal programmes. Therefore, quality is necessary throughout all phases of validation, and in particular when it comes to assessment and certification.
Participants in this workshop will discuss the following questions:

- *How can we move towards a situation where the following conditions are achieved?:*
- o *Validation of prior learning is a standard way of obtaining formal qualifications (or credit towards them).*
- o *Each qualification in the national qualification framework can in principle be obtained through validation, while ensuring the quality of each qualification.*

An interesting angle from which to look at both national qualification frameworks and validation arrangements is their potential contribution to national skills strategies. With their focus on learning outcomes, NQFs clarify the links between qualifications and skills. Validation of prior learning is a crucial way to make skills visible and improve their management – by individuals, organisations and authorities. The development of a national skill strategy provides a good framework to discuss the (co-ordinated) evolution of NQFs and validation arrangements.
Participants in this workshop will discuss the following questions:
- *How can we move from the current situation to an approach that integrates the NQFs and validation arrangements into a comprehensive national skills strategy?*

11

| **Workshop 7** | **Supporting the employability of migrants and refugees through validation** |

Tags:
Migrants, refugees, validation, stakeholders, tools, badges, testimonial

Moderator: *Dennis van Gessel, European Commission, DG EMPL*

Speakers:
- *Alla Aboudaka, Director EU Affairs at Skillab*
- *Osman Seçkin Akbiyik, Head of Qualifications Framework Department, Turkey*
- *Gerard Pruim, Owner of Gear-Up, The Netherlands*
- *Teresa Valentino, Social Cohesion Management, Standard Training Sector and Professional Orientation in the Piemonte Region, Italy*

On validation, there are specific initiatives in Member States for migrants and/or refugees. Although many refugees and migrants arrived in Europe in recent years, only a few Member States have reported migrants as being one of the main users of validation opportunities.[4] In these cases, there is usually a mixture of organizations involved, most commonly education & training providers and civil society organizations, but there appears to be little coordination across initiatives. Stakeholders have pointed out that early involvement and cooperation between key actors are critical to the success of validation opportunities for migrants/refugees. To provide the best level of support for migrants many actors should be involved, as early as possible, ideally meeting at one place in an informal setting.

Reflecting these developments, the aim of this session is to take stock of good examples and offer a platform to discuss the benefits of new solutions and opportunities in the field of validation for migrants/refugees. In the workshop, some good practices will be shared (4 x 10 minutes) from diverse perspectives (e.g. from the perspective of a refugee, two organisations dealing with validation and an example of an innovative/technical tool on validation). After this, there will be ample room for open discussions among participants (40 minutes), during which the group will be split in four groups, rotating twice to discuss two questions raised by the four speakers of the workshop. Each speaker presents two ideas / concepts from their own work and asks the group if these could be used by their organisations to enhance the employability of migrants and refugees through validation.

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[4] www.cedefop.europa.eu/validation/inventory

Other main questions that could feed into discussions are:

- How can we create broad stakeholder involvement and cooperation among key actors?
- How can we offer tailored support (e.g. mentoring or guidance) for a highly heterogeneous migrant / refugee population?
- Should the European Commission do more on this field?
- How can we communicate new and innovative practices among stakeholders?

Speakers:

Alla Aboudaka, a (former) refugee (currently Director EU Affairs at Skillab), will give a testimonial about his experiences after coming to Europe as a refugee. He will talk about his arrival in Belgium and reflect on the difficulty in adapting to the new life, specifically in the scope of the workshop and experiences with validation, and accordingly the difficulty to get a job that reflected his professional experience with no qualification or anything that proved what he was doing in his country of origin.

Osman Seçkin Akbiyik (Head of Turkish Qualifications Framework Department) from Turkey will talk about the validation arrangements in Turkey for host communities and the initiatives for making these arrangements also available for migrants and refugees from Syria.

Gerard Pruim (Owner; Gear-Up) from the Netherlands will talk about the project in the southern part of the Netherlands to use an online CV tool as an Open Badge. In the past, Open Badges were only issued by awarding bodies like schools. Now, with the new specifications, a person can have his self-declared skills endorsed by peers or by a company where he / she followed an internship.

Teresa Valentino (Social Cohesion Management; Standard Training Sector and Professional Orientation in the Piemonte Region) will talk about several regional projects and pilots dealing with the integration of migrants, and more specifically validation services. For instance, the Italian project "DISCORSI-MIGRANTI" focuses on three core themes concerning integration of migrants: housing, health and competences. With respect to competences, migrants are specifically the target of the validation services being offered within the project (being authorised by the Piemonte Region).

Workshop' narrative

Workshop 8	Encouraging solidarity activities and the validation of learning outcomes through an enabling policy environment

Tags:
Solidarity, volunteering, policy cooperation, European solidarity Corps, Youthpass, non-formal learning, validation

Moderators:
Szilvia Kalman, European Commission, DG EAC, and Gabriella Civico, Director, European Volunteer Centre

Speakers:
- *Anders Probst-Jensen, Department of Youth, Aarhus, Denmark;*
- *Alžbeta Brozmanova Gregorova, Vice-dean of the Faculty of Pedagogy, University of Matej Bel, Slovakia*

Building on 20 years of experience from the European Voluntary Service, the European Solidarity Corps, which was launched in December 2016, creates opportunities for young people to develop their skills and increase their labour market prospects through volunteering, traineeships and jobs in the Solidarity Sector. To date more than 60,0000 young people have registered on the European Youth Portal, which demonstrates a great interest. The 2008 Council recommendation on the mobility of young volunteers aims to create an enabling policy environment for volunteering, including by inviting Member States to promote the validation of learning outcomes of voluntary activities and encouraging the use of EU tools, such as Youthpass. The objective of the workshop will be to review experience from national and local level on the relevance of the Recommendation. The workshop will gather the opinion of participants on the main obstacles for cross-border solidarity activities and how the legislative and policy environment could be improved to encourage solidarity activities and the validation of learning outcomes gained through such an experience.
The workshop will discuss in particular the following questions:

- What policy measures are needed at European, national and local level to promote solidarity and encourage a deeper volunteering culture in Europe among young people?
- What can be done at European, national and local level to offer more young people a quality volunteering experience?
- What policy measures are needed to fully exploit the benefits of a volunteering experience to make a sustainable impact at individual and societal level?

Workshop' narrative

Workshop 9	Funding models for validation: Bridging employers with other stakeholders

Tags:
Costs/funding models; employers; investment; benefits; uptake validation; social partners; multi-stakeholders cooperation

Moderator: Ernesto Villalba-Garcia, Cedefop

Speakers:
- Alain Kock, Dirigeant, Consortium de Validation des Compétences
- An De Coen, PhD, Senior Consultant Labour Market & Socio-Economic Policy, IDEA
- Ria Deketele, Projectleider Open services, Projectleider WMC Strategische allianties
- Anni Karttunen, Consultant, Finland

Background
The issue of funding validation has remained elusive in terms of policy interventions due to its complexity. Validation is a complex process that involves different stakeholders, institutions and processes. It is also difficult to delimitate what constitute the validation process, as it might be interlinked with training opportunities, career counselling and guidance services. In addition, the fragmented nature of existing practices makes it even more complicated to calculate actual financial investment on validation. There is the perception, especially among training providers, that validation requires a considerable amount of investment in financial and human resources, which might hinder their intention to provide validation of non-formal and informal learning.

Validation requires establishing legal and institutional arrangements that allow for the validation of non-formal and informal learning, centred in individual's needs. There are cost associated with making validation visible and attractive to individuals, providing the adequate amount of information, guidance and counselling along the process. Validation requires establishing mechanisms for the identification and documentation as well as for the assessment and certification of learning. This requires investment in assessment tools and materials as well as on assessors' time and skills that need to be trained with the proper tools to be able to validate non-formal and informal learning. Validation also requires clear quality assurance mechanisms that make the system reliable and trustable by all different parties, in a way that qualifications or certificates obtained through validation can have equivalent value to those

acquired through formal education.

This complexity and diversity of costs makes even more important to quantify the benefits of a validation system. Determining the benefits of validation, especially in terms of monetary value might be even more difficult than calculating its cost. The few evaluation studies of validation practices that are available rely mainly on qualitative analysis. They tend to show a positive relationship between going through a validation process and a range of diverse outcomes. It has been documented that validation impacts people's ability to obtaining jobs, improves their self-confident and develops their learning strategies.

The 2016 inventory shows the limited information available in terms of cost and benefits, signalling the difficulties in collecting adequate data on actual costs of validation.[5] The inventory data indicates that the majority of the validation arrangements existing in European countries do not have specific budgets earmarked for validation. When there is dedicated funding, it might be only available for one small part of all validation opportunities, normally within VET budgets. Funds tend to be included within the overall education and training budget, in many cases within the budget allocated to training providers. EU funds and other time-bound funding provide an important 'start-up' source to enable new developments to be introduced. Individuals cover some of the cost in many countries, which raises questions on how certain target groups might have difficulties in accessing the services.

The workshop: Creating more effective validation funding

The workshop will give the participants an overview of the ways in which validation is funded in Europe. Brief country examples will provide input for the discussion on methodologies for the calculation of cost and benefits. Participants will have the possibility to reflect in the validity and usefulness of cost-benefit analysis in validation as well as the way of creating sustainable financial arrangements.

The following are the guiding questions:

- What methods can we use to calculate the cost and benefits of validation?
- Which are the conditions to optimise the effectiveness of validation funding?
- How can we assure the sustainability of funding for validation practices?
- In what way can cost/benefit analysis create incentives for stakeholders to participate in validation practices?

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[5] www.cedefop.europa.eu/validation/inventory

Workshop' narrative

Workshop 10 **Making transversal skills visible using Competence Cards and PIAAC tests**

Tags:
Transversal skills, migrants, low-skilled, guidance, tools, Italy, Germany, Netherlands, Czech, identification, documentation, assessment, PES

Moderator: *Martin Noack, Bertelsmann Stiftung, and Lieve van den Brande, European Commission, DG EMPL*

Speakers:
- *Ramona López, AWO SH, Germany*
- *Francesca Carta, ANPAL (Agenzia Nazionale per le Politiche Attive del Lavoro Corso), Italy*
- *Vincenza Tersigni, ANPAL (Agenzia Nazionale per le Politiche Attive del Lavoro Corso), Italy*

Social & personal skills as well as basic skills like numeracy, literacy, and digital competences are more and more crucial for labour market access and progression. **Why then has so little been done in order to identify, document or even assess, that is, validate these transversal skills?**

Major shortcomings were identified of existing instruments to validate these transversal skills[6]:
- too theoretical
- too much relying on written (host country) language
- too complex
- too time-consuming
- not suited for bridging different guidance systems (e.g. migration counselling and PES)

However, some innovative instruments that help identify, document and assess transversal skills have been developed in recent years. Some of them will be presented as an input to a discussion around the following questions:

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[6] https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/de/publikationen/publikation/did/potenziale-erkennen-kompetenzen-sichtbar-machen/

How important is it really to assess transversal skills?

- **In order to facilitate the validation of transversal skills, what concrete next steps should be undertaken by whom?**
- **What is the added value of the presented instruments?**
- What are the risks and potential drawbacks of the presented tools?
- **What keeps you from starting to advocate or engage in the validation of transversal skills tomorrow?**
- What keeps you from spreading the word and helping to scale up the presented instruments?

We will first show you how to identify clients' social (e.g. leadership, communication), personal (e.g. resilience, creativity) and transversal methods skills (e.g. organisation, pedagogy) using the free multilingual Competence Cards (www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/competence-cards). Ramona Lopez, who is using the cards in her every day practice as a guide and counsellor, will visualize along two practical cases how to use them. The second part of the workshop will focus on the assessment of numeracy, literacy and digital skills in Italian public employment services, using OECD's PIAAC survey. The short input will display how the survey is integrated into the job placement process and hint at first results. Other instruments such as ENTRECOMP (for entrepreneurship) and DIGCOMP (for digital competences) developed by DG EMPL with the support of DG JRC will be part of the discussion.

Workshop 11 | **E-portfolios and Open Badges: Methods to support validation**

Tags:
Open Learning; open recognition; digital technology; open badges; e-portfolio; endorsements; learning outcomes; self-assessment; self-reflection; experience; visible

Moderator: *William O'Keeffe, European Commission, DG EMPL*

Speakers:
- Simone Ravaioli, Business Development Executive, Digitary
- Serge Ravet, President of Reconnaître — Open Recognition Alliance, France

Learning is at the centre of our modern society – people increasingly seek and rely on new, flexible forms of learning to find new opportunities, ensure their employability and be active citizens. The knowledge, skills and competences we acquire are the building blocks of non-formal and informal learning and the past number of years has seen the growing use of digital tools like **Open Badges** and **e-Portfolios** as tools to give visibility to this learning – and lead to endorsement, recognition and new opportunities.

Open Badges are verifiable, portable digital tools that can include embedded information on a range of topics – professional/job-specific skills; transversal/soft skills; participation; official certification; endorsements/references; and, community involvement, among others.

Each Open Badge has a visual identity and includes information about the badge, its recipient, the issuer, and supporting evidence to describe particular skills or accomplishments. This information is 'packaged' within a badge file that can be shared by the owner via online CVs, social networks or indeed for use as part of validation processes. Thousands of organisations across the world issue badges, from non-profits to major employers to educational institutions at all levels.

This workshop will explain the emergence and use of open badges and e-portfolios and how they actively support the role of lifelong learning. Both tools can be used to motivate, represent achievements and communicate success in many contexts. The workshop will explore how these tools can be used within the world of validation of non-formal and informal recognition.

19

An **e-Portfolio** is a digital collection created by a person of information on their skills, qualifications and experiences. E-Portfolios have traditionally been used in academia, for use during formal education programmes, however they are increasingly used as a learning tool in wider settings by people to store information and evidence on all aspect of learning experiences. An e-Portfolio is not simply a storage tool - e-Portfolios establish individuals as the owners of their learning and experiences, encouraging reflection and acknowledgement of all forms of learning in different settings, on an ongoing basis.

The workshop will explain both Open Badges and e-portfolios in an accessible way and demonstrate how they can make learning visible and actively support people to recognise the value of their non-formal and informal learning. The workshop will explore how the tools can be used as part of 'bottom-up' validation processes.

Presentations from Simone Ravaioli and Serge Ravet will give insight into the emergence and use of these tools highlighting their openness and inclusiveness. This will be followed by a 'knowledge-café' allowing attendees to exchange views and discuss future scenarios of how technology can be leveraged to enable validation.

Key Questions:

- How can digital tools like Open Badges support processes for validation of non-formal and informal learning? Can Open Badges, and the information they contain, address some of the obstacles we face when validating non-formal and informal learning?
- How can tools like e-Portfolios empower and support people to reflect and realise the value of their own non-formal and informal learning?
- How can we explore the potential of digital tools such as Open Badges and e-Portfolios in policy, discourse and practice on validation of non-formal and informal learning?

Workshop' narrative

| Workshop 12 | Supporting the learner: Connecting validation and guidance |

Tags:
Validation; guidance; flexible pathways; awareness raising.

Moderator: *Carlo Scatoli, European Commission, DG EMPL*

Speaker:
- Romain Pigeaud, Centre Inffo, France

How do, and how should, validation and guidance policies coordinate with each other, and the relevant services cooperate? The case for policy cooperation and operational cooperation seems clear enough.

First, there is some overlap. The first step in validation processes, and a crucial basis for good tailored guidance towards further development or career choices, is providing people with an appropriate opportunity to identify their skills. There is then room for cooperation, which might help both guidance counsellors and validation officers to improve the service they provide to people.

Second, people need information and guidance towards the right validation. A major challenge in running good validation arrangements is to ensure their take up by those groups that could most benefit. One reason why people may not take advantage of validation opportunities is that they don't know about them, or have a biased view of them, which keeps them at a distance. There is a clear need for guidance, which includes but goes beyond institutional guidance services.

Potential beneficiaries of validation come in all shapes and sizes, from all life pathways, and guiding them calls for action by companies and unions, community workers and youth workers, civil society organisations, media and social influencers. Participants in this workshop will have the opportunity to exchange experiences and views, raise challenges and propose approaches, discuss successes and failures to learn from.

The discussion will be organised around the following questions:

- *How can guidance services and services responsible for the validation of prior learning cooperate to provide a better service to individual learners and workers and to organisations?*
  - Improving skills identification processes;
  - Guiding people towards the most appropriate validation opportunities;
  - Supporting organisations in their skill management strategies and practices;

- *Besides dedicated guidance and validation services, there are many different actors involved in guidance and validation processes from the public employment services and education bodies to private companies.*
  Which actors should be involved in stimulating and contributing to the cooperation between guidance and validation, what roles should they play?