



Validation of Informal Learning in Mobility Actions

Progress Report

Public Part

Project information

Project acronym: VILMA
Project title: Validation of Informal Learning in Mobility Actions
Project number: 510577-LLP-1-2010-1-DE-GRUNDTVIG-GMP
Grant agreement number: 2010 - 4183 / 001 – 001
Sub-programme or KA: Grundtvig Multilateral Projects
Project website: www.vilma-eu.org

Reporting period: From 01.01.2011
To 30.12.2012
Report version: 1
Date of preparation: 20.01.2012

Beneficiary organisation: BUPNET GmbH

Project coordinator: Sabine Wiemann
Project coordinator organisation: BUPNET
Project coordinator telephone number: +49-(0)551-54 707 0
Project coordinator email address: swiemann@bupnet.de

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.

This communication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

© 2010 Copyright Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency.

The document may be freely copied and distributed provided that no modifications are made, that the source is acknowledged and that this copyright notice is included.

Executive Summary

The project VILMA – Validation of Informal Learning in Mobility Actions – aims at validating acquired competences in mobility actions. The project will transfer and adapt a well proven validation system (LEVEL5) to assess and evidence specifically personal and social competence developments in the domain of mobility learning.

In the first half of the project VILMA a multi-folded research was carried out as groundwork for the development of a comprehensive and transferable validation approach for mobility learning. It was based on a desk research about existing validation systems and mobility learning actions in Europe with a focus on the seven participating member states (AT, BE, DE, FR, ES, IT, LT, MT). An extensive online questionnaire campaign was carried out among experts from the European educational sector to find out which competences are mostly acquired in mobility actions and which competences are regarded as being the most important.

Mobility learning is certainly one of the most powerful modality to acquire competences that are needed in a uniting Europe. Apart from the rather formalised competences related to qualifications (subject oriented competences) the cross cutting, personal and social but also organisational competences are being considered most relevant.

As clearly shown in the desk research, there is a white spot on the validation and certification landscape when it comes to these competences.

In the EQF based systems social and personal skills and competences are (by nature) hidden in a system which expresses “competence” in terms of autonomy and responsibility. In these systems (ECTS, ECVET) social and personal skills are (if ever) assigned to job related qualification levels. However, mobility learning and social and personal competence acquisition do not necessarily follow these formal qualification levels. Also in the EUROPASS system they are not linked with specific assessment and evidencing systems.

Against this background the VILMA-partnership has transferred and applied the LEVEL5 validation system to evidence competences acquired in non-formal and informal learning in a meaningful way both for mobility learners and mobility learning providers. VILMA applies and transfers the powerful validation system into the mobility learning sector in order close the aforementioned gap.

In the project a specific inventory for competences acquired in mobility learning has been set up and each of the competences is described in a 3-dimensional reference system consisting of five levels on the cognitive, activity and affective dimension. Additionally a specific toolbox for the assessment but also for the planning of (informal) mobility learning has been developed in order to supply a holistic approach to mobility learning based on the quality circles.

By this VILMA also contributes to the ongoing discussion on quality in lifelong learning and mobility learning in particular. Approach and instruments are being piloted and evaluated in various mobility actions in the second project year.

For the stakeholders in the field (mobility learning providers, deciders, funding bodies and last but not least the learners) VILMA will provide a comprehensive and powerful approach to evidence the impact of mobility learning and the competence development of the learners herein.

Further information on the project as well as on the outcomes of the survey and the validation approach for Grundtvig actions can be retrieved at the project website:

www.vilma-eu.org

Table of Contents

1. PROJECT OBJECTIVES.....	5
2. PROJECT APPROACH.....	7
3. PROJECT OUTCOMES & RESULTS.....	10
4. PARTNERSHIPS	12
5. PLANS FOR THE FUTURE	15
6. CONTRIBUTION TO EU POLICIES	18

1. Project Objectives

VILMA aims at providing a feasible and transferable evaluation and validation system for various mobility actions on national and bilateral levels (e.g. ESF actions), European level (young adults/senior citizens) or for adult learners (e.g. in Grundtvig exchange actions in learning partnerships).

With focus on the assessment of the acquisition of transversal key competences VILMA is furthermore determined to develop and provide an appropriate approach and instruments that facilitate an interconnection with the EUROPASS mobility system. VILMA also aims to contribute to an approach for setting up appropriate standards for validation, that on one hand help individuals to evidence their competences in a European labour market, but also take into account the specific needs of learners in the volunteering sector.

The individual evidence of learning progresses increases motivation to participate in mobility actions and to reflect on the learning outcomes. Beyond that VILMA is aiming at evidencing impact and quality of the learning activity itself (mobility action).

Finally VILMA contributes to better acceptance of mobility actions for potential learners thus to a clearer image of the mobility actions in the framework of the LLP.

To back-up the VILMA approach it will be piloted in different mobility projects and actions representing a large scope of different groups of learners.

Target group:

The VILMA project aims to reach a number of target groups, namely all stakeholders of mobility actions. Concretely these are adult learners and trainers of different contexts within the numerous mobility actions, e.g. in-service training, volunteering projects and different kinds of national and bilateral exchanges.

As the evaluation method is specifically suitable for “non-mainstreaming” groups like unemployed young adults, disabled persons and senior citizens, the project explicitly addresses those non-mainstreaming or even “disadvantaged” target groups that should profit most from the concept of “informal learning”. Furthermore it can create benefits for managers, partners and other organisational staff of European mobility actions and projects as well as for evaluators and validation practitioners such as counsellors, assessors, process managers and other external observers. To interconnect the VILMA-approach in national and European educational administration VILMA partners actively invite stakeholders from the political level (National Ministries, e.g. employment ministries responsible for the transnational exchange actions in the framework of national ESF programmes) to make use of the approach.

Purpose:

The VILMA partnership has stepped up to create and test a unique tool, which will facilitate validation of competences acquired during participation in transnational mobility actions. The tool is based on approaches and instruments developed in the premium assessed previous projects [ACT](#) and [ACT-NET](#) and the project [VIP](#) which aimed at validating informal learning in European projects.

Effect:

At the European level various Grundtvig mobility actions, trainers' mobility grants, and senior mobility constitute some of the mobility initiatives in support to promoting the values of the programme. This increment in learning mobility in the adult education sector (and budget's) is not systematically paralleled with sound methods to record the benefits of mobility actions

in terms of competence acquisition of participants, that justify the investment in these initiatives and the value of their sustainability.

As stated in the recent CEDEFOP publication “European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning” it is often a challenge to distinguish between learning for personal and for professional purposes. This is especially relevant for mobility actions that in most cases blend both purposes – a clear distinction is often not possible - sometimes not even favourable. Thus mobility learning validation refers to a large part to non-formal and informal learning.

However, as research work, expert discussions and real cases in VILMA partners’ actions show, there is a lack and a strong need for a comprehensive approach and a consistent set of instruments to assess and evidence the impact of mobility learning on the competence development of the individual learner on the basis of a comparable reference system and a common methodology. Hence the VILMA approach can substantially contribute to the validation of competences acquired in transnational mobility experiences and in this way to the recognition of the value of mobility itself.

2. Project Approach

The European Quality Charter for Mobility puts major emphasis on the recognition and certification as well as on evaluation of mobility action learning outcomes.

The VILMA project is aiming to tackle the issue by providing instruments for assessing and evidencing the development of competences of mobility participants using a unique approach to evaluate informal learning that has been developed in the framework of previous projects from 2005-2010. (ACT!, ACT-NET and VIP) and applied in more than 60 micro-learning projects in 18 European member states.

The evaluation approach, the system and its components (including fully-fledged software) have been thoroughly evaluated in the framework of two PhD-theses.

In the follow-up projects an informal learning evaluation community has been set up and an informal learning planning component (ILP) has been added.

The project VILMA will now transfer and adapt the approach and its instruments to European mobility actions and create a comprehensive evaluation system specifically feasible for various mobility actions. In order to adapt to specific needs and requirements of mobility projects in relation to the evaluation of outcomes of informal learning activities a comprehensive needs analysis among stakeholders in mobility projects was conducted. The needs analysis followed a two-fold strategy: It investigated the awareness about the issue on the one hand and the demand of evaluation in regard to competence development on the other hand.

Parallel, existing validation approaches and models were collected and analysed. Results were discussed and transferred to the VILMA concept.

The approach has been and will be applied and tested in different mobility actions. Training and counselling modules will be developed and delivered to adult education practitioners and mobility learning providers during the project. The whole approach and the pilots will be internally and externally evaluated. Large scale but nevertheless focused dissemination activities will be launched by a strategic collaboration with adult learning networks. A two strands valorisation strategy will be aiming at both mobility projects (facilitators and evaluators) and the participants of mobility actions.

Individual or group competences will be evaluated in a process orientated way, visualised in a 3-dimensional cube model and fully documented in a specific software system. The approach is especially suitable for the adult learning sector – and rather innovative, unusual learning settings which are classified as rather “informal” learning models.

This so called LEVEL5 evaluation procedure is on the one hand standardised and enables individual mobility projects at the same time to establish individualised reference systems for assessing and evidencing relevant competence of their beneficiaries in a process-orientated way. The LEVEL5 system allows users to evidence the impact of their work according to a standardised procedure while, at the same time, keeping up their individuality as informal learning projects in their specific contexts.

Approach

The evaluation approach is based on a five step procedure:

- 1. Mobility Project Description**
 - Describing the properties of the informal learning project in a preformatted pattern
- 2. Selecting topics**
 - Selecting relevant learning topics (competences) from an open inventory and further refinement
- 3. Establishing an individualised reference system**

- Developing individual reference systems on the basis of a 3-dimensional (cognitive, affective, activity related) rating system with five individualised stages according to the specifics of the target groups and mobility projects

4. Assessment

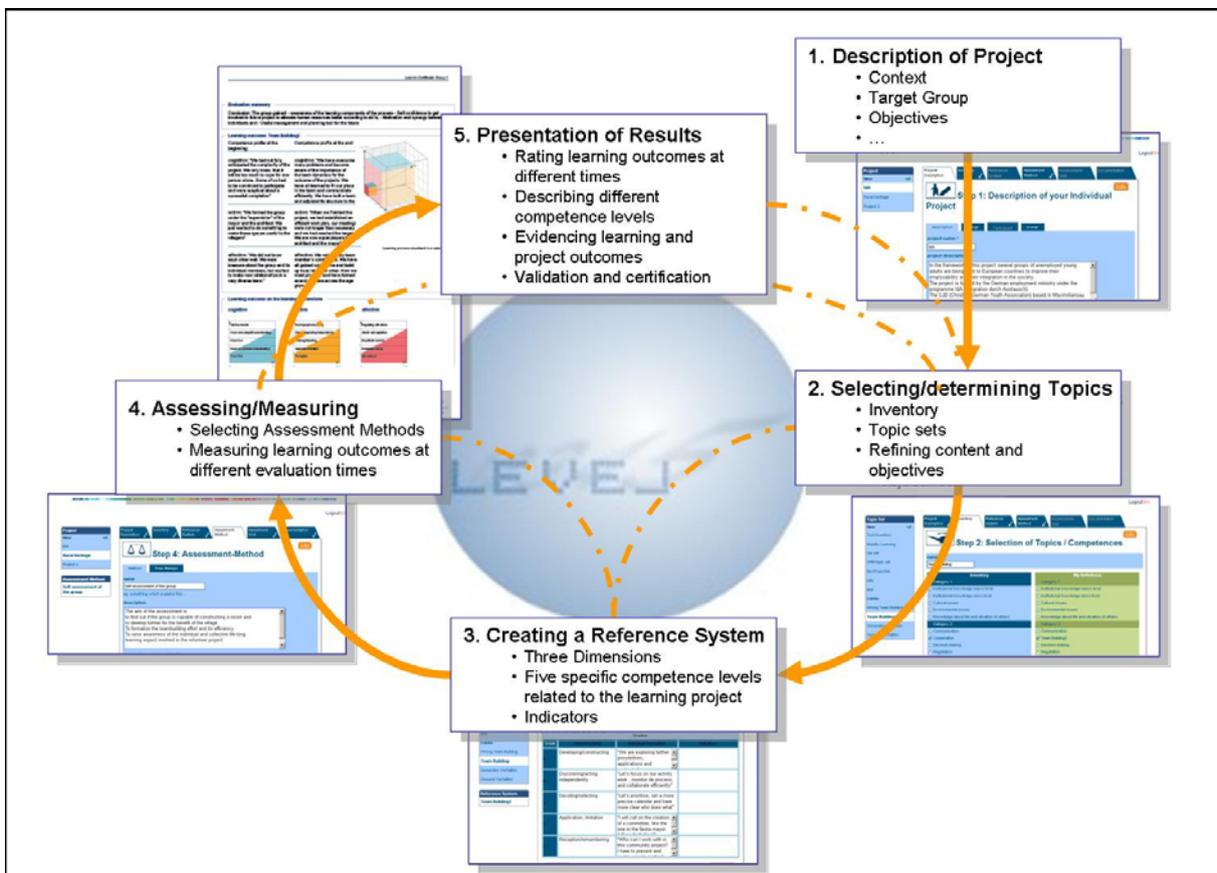
- Defining the evaluation procedure, including assessment methods and a time schedule for the assessments
- A practice oriented assessment toolbox is annexed to the manual, where an overview of suitable assessment methods is given.

5. Rating/Documenting/Visualisation

- Inserting the ratings in the individualised reference system and displayed in a 3-dimensional evidencing system (**CUBE**)
- The ratings are substantiated and documented in the software
- Results may be recorded internally and/or connected with learners' certificates

Each of the procedural steps is transferred in the LEVEL5 software: In this way the results from informal and non-formal learning can be recorded internally and/or connected with individual learners' certificates and e-Portfolios.

It is important to state that LEVEL5, being based on Action Theory principles, works with a rather cyclic procedure. Concretely, this refers to the fact that some components of the system have to be adapted in the course of the evaluation procedure.



It is evident that a “perfect” evaluation system in informal learning contexts cannot be developed from the shelf. This is why there should always be the opportunity to modify some elements of the reference system (be it some descriptors or indicators) during the evaluation.

Transnational Training Course

A pilot course dealing with validation of collaborative and mobility learning was already delivered to an international audience (20 persons) in October 2011. It will be again offered in 2012.

The transnational training course deals with the validation of informal learning in mobility projects. The course aims at raising awareness for the topic of evidencing and validating informal learning taking place in mobility and enables participants to apply the methodology utilising the developed general or refined reference system in their projects and collaborative learning contexts.

The methodology how to assess informally or non-formally gained competences has been in the focus of the VILMA training course.

The course will not only be restricted to evaluation issues but will enable participants to actively plan their informal collaborative learning with the help of so called informal learning patterns that describe and prepare prototypical informal learning situations in mobility.

The course was piloted with a European audience in the 2011 in the premises of partner Alden Biesen near Brussels. On the basis of the results of the pilot course the validation approach as well as the course design will be optimised and finalised.

Transversal Activities

A comprehensive evaluation strategy for VILMA has been developed including both internal and external evaluators. The external evaluation will concentrate on the achieved project results (concept, materials and the pilot course), whereas the internal evaluation is focusing on the workflow and internal processes in the partnership. Quality criteria and operational targets for each of the aspects have been defined.

The project team met three times face-to-face, in monthly virtual conferences and formed working groups in which the main project results have been jointly developed.

Dissemination has been a high priority of VILMA from the outset of the project. As first step a consistent CI (corporate identity) was developed with a logo symbolising both mobility and European value.

A central dissemination instrument is the project website www.vilma-eu.org with basic information on the project, the validation approach and an interactive area.

Valorisation has been on the VILMA agenda since the project start. As the project addresses the whole LLP community VILMA aims to establish a network of relevant stakeholders.

During the project lifetime partners and participants will be invited to join the network and to participate in the VILMA-community. As services the VILMA will offer consultation via helpdesk, via public online conferences and especially via another European training event for participants and later for accredited VILMA-evaluators who may assess and evidence competence development in mobility actions with the VILMA/LEVEL5 approach.

3. Project Outcomes & Results

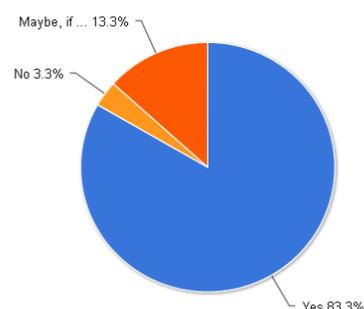
The main achievements of the VILMA project in its first year:

- ★ A comprehensive desk research on existing validation approaches and existing programmes that foster mobility on European as well as on national levels to draw conclusions for the further development of the VILMA-approach.
- ★ Research on the effects and benefits of participating in mobility projects in different project categories and life stages
- ★ An online survey to investigate the awareness about the issue on the one hand and the demand of evaluation in regard to competence development in mobility projects on the other hand
- ★ Identification of the main fields of interests in regard to validating informal mobility learning among European stakeholders
- ★ Setting up an inventory and reference systems for competences acquired in mobility actions
- ★ Informal learning patterns to support good practice of mobility learning
- ★ Planning and organising national and transnational mobility pilots including competence validation along the VILMA/LEVEL5 procedure
- ★ Developing a comprehensive evaluation concept comprising the monitoring and quality assurance of internal processes as well as to externally evaluate the fulfilment of tasks
- ★ Implementation of valorisation and dissemination activities including Corporate Identity, logo, website, flyer, newsletters, publication of articles in several media, and presentations/keynotes of VILMA at national and European events
- ★ to participate in two European conferences on the validation of informal learning

Outcomes of the European survey:

Results clearly show that a vast majority of stakeholders in mobility projects have little experience with evaluating individual competences developed through mobility experiences. The survey tried to find out which are the competence areas people need and develop while going abroad. Competences that are in the main field of interest are intercultural competences, such as intercultural communication and awareness and personal competences like self-confidence and self-reflection, autonomy and flexibility.

Would you be interested in using a standardised tool for assessing social and personal competence development in European mobility actions?



A vast majority of respondents expressed the interest to use a tool for assessing competence development in mobility projects. About one third would be ready to dedicate 20% and more of the project evaluation time to the assessment of individual learning and competence development within the partnership. Half of the respondents would opt for internal self-evaluation by the participants themselves for assessing competence development. Another 42% consider a combination of external and self-assessment methods most suitable.

The results from the survey, substantiated by individual interviews in combination with existing validation approaches presented in various studies have been taken into account for the further project development.

The most comprehensive compilation concerning validation of informal learning in Europe is certainly the ECOTEC inventory. In its 2010 revision 30 European countries were analysed concerning their efforts to implement validation of non-formal and informal learning. The in-depth analysis of the country studies clearly shows that also in those countries that are advanced in relation to validating non-formal learning, validation of informal learning is not very common. In France for instance the authors claim a “culture shift“ to allow greater value to be attached to vocational skills and to bring the formal education system and informal/non-formal learning closer together. This clearly indicates a rather utilitarian approach of learning in connection with vocational training.

The authors state that more needs to be done to recognise competencies achieved at work and from taking part in liberal adult education as well.

VILMA Validation System:

The results were transferred into the LEVEL5 validation system.

As first step the VILMA partnership developed an inventory and respective reference systems for validating informal learning in mobility projects. Reference systems were drafted for those competences and skills that were considered most specific to be gained through mobility experiences. Those competences are (among others):

- ★ intercultural communication
- ★ intercultural awareness
- ★ self-reliance, autonomy
- ★ flexibility
- ★ networking
- ★ team competence
- ★ problem solving
- ★ readiness to be mobile
- ★ evaluating, reflecting
- ★ diversity management

In VILMA these competence have been included in a specific inventory for mobility learning and build the basis for a growing repository of competences acquired in mobility.

Each competence can be contextualised (e.g. flexibility in regard to the purpose and the environment of the mobility action, be it a vocational or a volunteering learning context just to name two of uncountable mobility learning options). This contextualisation is done by the evaluating team by fine tuning the competences and by describing each competence in the three-dimensional (cognitive, active and affective) LEVEL5 reference system.

VILMA Training Course:

VILMA offers training on how to validate informal learning in mobility projects by introducing this innovative approach. Moreover, an exchange of good practice on validation of informal learning among participants was initiated. A specific task will be given to the course participants to transfer their newly acquired knowledge to their mobility projects.

4. Partnerships

Geographically the VILMA consortium represents nine partners from nine different countries with a specific cultural background and different experience linked to adult education and validation of learning. The diversity of the consortium provides a dynamic basic structure that is intrinsically rich in terms of experience, culture, knowledge and skills. Each partner contributes to the whole project activities implementation and is responsible for specific work packages.

All partners have shown excellent performances in their area of work on the national and European level (adult training, European networking and coordination, evaluation, consulting and system design) and are acting as experts in their specific project work packages.

Partners were clustered according to their area of expertise (partners from practice, science, dissemination, EU-policies, management and organisational development).

Since most partners have been focusing on mobility actions they bring in practical experiences in this field, be it mobility for young adults, adults (FR, DE, BE, AT, MT, LT, IT) and senior citizens (IT, ES).

Four partners bring in their methodological expertise from successful European projects of the years 2004-2010 in the fields of evaluation and validation of informal learning, didactic planning and implementation of informal learning projects and networking.

Five partners have been applying the evaluation approach for the first time in their specific European informal learning projects. This way the consortium will additionally create its internal small scale pilots to pre-test certain elements and instruments on feasibility and usability.

Partners from AT, BE, ES and DE have been working in the evaluation of educational networks thus providing a profound insight in European collaborative issues as far as networking processes and related competence development are concerned thus providing deep insight in European policies and programme issues, being able to provide direct contact with relevant stakeholders from the administrative and political level.



BUPNET GmbH, Bildung und Projekt Netzwerk
Göttingen, Germany
www.bupnet.de

BUPNET, an adult education institute founded in 1985, was actively involved in the development of LEVEL5 and has vast experience with information and communication technologies for educational activities and will coordinate the further development of the LEVEL5 software. It has the lead of the WP Valorisation and Exploitation and is assistant coordinating partner in the establishment of the training.



“die Berater” Unternehmensberatungsgesellschaft mbH
Vienna, Austria
www.dieberater.com

Die Berater bring into the project their wide experience with a number of European projects in diverse funding programmes. They have been successfully working on the topic of networking in two European projects and are leading partner in developing a validation system for informal learning in Grundtvig Actions as well as in validation and accreditation of project outcomes.



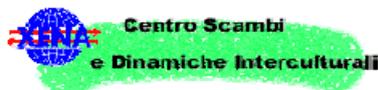
Landcommanderij Alden Biesen
Bilzen, Belgium
www.alden-biesen.be

Alden Biesen has coordinated a series of European projects and networks and has profound experience in self-evaluation. Alden Biesen was coordinator of the very successful SEALLL project on evaluation in adult learning projects. The centre is the leading partner for the WPs Pilot Training and Dissemination.



Belies Consulting S.L.
Barcelona, Spain

BELIES provides studies, strategic advice and evaluation services to European institutions and organisations working in the social field, primarily in the education and cultural sectors since 2006. BELIES contributes to VILMA with a sound experience in evaluation of EU programmes, projects and networks in the areas of education, social inclusion, youth and culture. Through its professional work in Barcelona, as well as in Brussels BELIES is connected to a broad number of non-profit organisations, EU networks and EU officials, with specific interest in the learning mobility field.



XENA - Centro Scambi e Dinamiche Interculturali
Padova, Italy
www.xena.it

Xena – the Centro Scambi e Dinamiche Interculturali - is a non-profit association for social promotion; since 1995 active in intercultural and non-formal education, vocational training, the promotion of active citizenship, local and international projects, mainly in EU programmes, In the LLP programme XENA conducts Leonardo da Vinci mobility projects and Grundtvig actions. Beyond that it promotes informal transnational mobility with adults, including elderly people and has been member of the Eurodesk network for ten years.



INSUP formation
Bordeaux, France
www.insup.org

INSUP FORMATION, a non-profit training leader in South West France, offers a variety of training courses and set up a department to promote mobility within the EU as sending and receiving institution, providing training and support to learners on exchange programmes (Leonardo and Erasmus trainees and professionals, Grundtvig; cross-border regional exchanges). Thus INSUP bring into the project their vast experience and will use their practice of certification and evaluation of the impact of mobility to consider a less academic, yet essential aspect: the evaluation of non formal skills.



Department of Education, Vytautas Magnus University (VMU)
Kaunas, Lithuania
www.vdu.lt

Vytautas Magnus University (VMU), an “Artes Liberales University” with its unique system of liberal studies is one of the most modern universities in Lithuania. In recent years numerous successful international relations with other universities all over the world have been established. The university has 10 faculties, 70 study programmes, more than 9000 students, and more than 500 teachers and researchers. The Department of Education conducts undergraduate, graduate and doctoral studies in the field of adult education. Its main research areas are adult education, assessment and recognition of prior learning as well as vocational education and training (VET).



IMOTEC - Institute of Mobile Technologies for Education and Culture, Vilnius, Lithuania
www.imotec.lt

The Institute of Mobile Technologies for Education and Culture (IMOTEC) located in Vilnius, Lithuania is a private non-profit institution offering guidance in advanced technologies and providing researches, developments, consultancy, in- service training and other services related to information, communication and mobile technologies. The IMOTEC activities include promoting competences in international co-operation based on applying new technologies and internet tools with regards to development of the knowledge society with particular focus on education and the cultural sector. The Institute works within a wide network, collaborating with local, regional and national authorities on national education strategy innovations.



OAF – Opportunities Aid Foundation,
San Gwann, Malta
www.oafmalta.eu

The Opportunities Aid Foundation (OAF) is a non profit organisation closely connected to regional social players in Malta including schools, policy making bodies and entities. OAF is involved in number of adult training activities that include the hosting of courses for teachers and teacher trainers. OAF is also involved in mobility actions as part of the ESF-funded project IdA – Integration through Exchange.

Following the idea that mobility projects are informal learning spaces for the involved partners, the joint work in the VILMA project has not only brought about valuable products but has also been an intensive process of learning from each other. The project team is aware of such precious opportunities of exchange and mutual learning and highly appreciates this important aspect of a Grundtvig Multilateral Project.

5. Plans for the Future

In the second project year (January 2012 to December 2012) VILMA will build on the results and findings of the first year and further develop the validation approach of informal learning in mobility actions.

The VILMA approach will be transferred into the development of a number of products including procedural manuals, binders, reference system(s), software and help tools, which will be used during the whole evaluation process by the stakeholders (managers, partners, participants) and valorised in practice.

After the end of EU funding the coordinating institution will ensure that the VILMA website (www.vilma-eu.org) will remain online and updated for at least two years. Project products will be available for download from there.

VILMA's vision and mission for year 2:

Based on the drafts for the piloting projects developed in year one the concepts will be transferred to practice. The pilots will be evaluated together with staff from the field. Results will be collected and interpreted by project and further processed to the WP-facilitator to prepare the report.

Lessons learnt will be documented in a comprehensive report containing results of the pilots, lessons learnt and practical acting recommendations for stakeholders in the field as well as policy suggestions that should flow in the next CEDEFOP inventory. This report is integral part of the overall evaluation concept.

Based on the results of the experiences with the partners' pilots a resource kit as a help-tool for „mobile learning providers“ will be developed including methodological descriptions, exemplary projects and acting recommendations for the planning of informal learning processes in mobility actions.

Furthermore a blended learning course concept for staff training on validating informal learning in mobility actions will be developed. The concept includes a didactic frame, a content list, aspired competences and methodology descriptions.

Therefore innovative learning materials in accordance with the different blended learning phases (e-learning, face-to-face, project) will be prepared. In the preliminary phase participants from mobility projects will be provided with e-portfolios and online conferences to enable participants to get to know each other. Moderation materials for online conference and preparatory asynchronous learning units will be developed prior to the f2f-session.

Finally the course will be delivered and evaluated according to the evaluation concept prepared in the first project year. The f2f phase (2 days) will be carried out in the locations of one of the VILMA partners. The e-learning will be organised centrally. The transnational element will lead to a larger transferability of the course, a higher attractiveness and the opportunity to network. A follow-up project phase with 2 online sessions and helpdesk will round up the action.

After the piloting phase a certification system for participants of mobility actions will be developed. Participants taking part in mobility actions that have been using the VILMA approach will get a certificate proving their competence development. The certificate will be aligned with the Europass mobility system.

The results concerning validation concept, instruments, course and materials will be discussed between evaluators and partners for the respective work packages in order to adapt, modify and finalise the projects' products.

The discussions will focus, among others, on the following points that will be broken down in detail and tackled by the different evaluation strands.

After finalisation of the piloting and the course the following products will be compiled in a VILMA-binder:

1. Procedural descriptions on validations in different mobility learning actions
2. Resource pack including information and training materials
3. exemplary mobility learning projects

The VILMA Binder will be a collection of relevant documents (approaches, instructions and best practice examples) for stakeholders dealing with mobility actions.

The procedural description shall help to develop and conduct a mobility project for external partners. This will be supported by training material and good practice examples. At this, each single product, methodology, approach will be assessed. With the help of a traffic light system each component will be valued.

In the resource pack a finalised compilation of handouts, tasks interventions, exercise, reflection stimuli and role-plays related to the training content defined in the VILMA course concept, will be provided. The training pack also includes references to online materials and online tools on the VILMA-portal.

A number of partners will be publishing at least one publication or newsletter and take over a defined load of dissemination work in its region and country to attract also (potential) project partners from the regions. Mass publications will be delivered through a specific database, including more than 3.000 entries of stakeholders in adult education all over Europe.

Already In the project lifetime partners, associated partners and other interested stakeholders will be invited to join and to participate in the VILMA-community. Most suitable for convincing potential partners and users are face to face events in the European context. This is why the network will always invite a certain amount of new partners to participate in the VILMA-meetings and workshops.

Due to the success of conferences of prior projects like "ACT" (DE), "Art of networking" (AT, BE, ES), ACT-NET (DE, SE), VIP (DE, BE) and others the partners will continue their strategy of "active conferencing" to make the participants active in the events. After having co-located a first conference in October 2011 in Belgium VILMA will organise the next event in Göttingen with more than 50 participants expected participants from at least 15 European countries, local/regional and European stakeholders.

The partnership will also actively network with other adult learning networks to spread information about the project and to attract other stakeholders.

To create an added value and to motivate to join the community VILMA will provide a number of services such as

- ★ Counselling
- ★ Partnership with EUROPASS promoters
- ★ Public online conferences in connection with other networks and communities (such as GINCO) and especially via
- ★ Another European VILMA conference

to attract, to counsel and to bind other interested mobility learning projects and other stakeholders to actively participate in VILMA.

To maintain and stabilise the network already in the project stage efforts will be made for an organisational building (including a strategy to cover administrative costs necessary to keep the network going after the funding period).

Activities contributing to this will tackle the following issues:

- ★ Value proposition of approach and products
- ★ Proposals for organisational development (here-sectoral integration in the existing REVEAL community under the umbrella of the blinc (eG) cooperative)
- ★ IPR-issues
- ★ Conceptual development of necessary exploitation elements
- ★ Interface to dissemination strategy and activities.

As far as sustainability is concerned, VILMA will play a prominent role in the REVEAL Group, the Research and Evaluation Group for Validating, Evidencing and Assessing Informal and Non-Formal Learning (www.reveal-eu.org, founded in 2010) and take over the section of validating informal learning in mobility projects.

Evaluation/Validation:

- ★ External evaluation (product evaluation) will be concentrating on the assessment and evidencing of achieved project results in relation to concept, materials and the delivered pilot course
- ★ Internal evaluation to monitor the project outputs (e.g. the reference systems, assessment methods) related to mobility learning against programmatic requirements. The leading question in this respect is relating to the added value, usability and feasibility in regard to the mobility programmes. All products (inventories, reference systems, assessments, ratings and certificates designed for learning mobility in the framework of VILMA) will be tested against requirements and specifications of different adult learning mobility actions.
- ★ A formative process evaluation is applied as an early warning system to evaluate the process of collaboration and the degree of consent among the partnership during the project lifetime to ensure that the partnership stays “on track” during the whole project lifetime.

6. Contribution to EU policies

The VILMA project contributes to several key policies of the European Union with regard to education and training:

Promoting an awareness of the importance of cultural and linguistic diversity within Europe, as well as of the need to combat racism, prejudice and xenophobia

Mobility projects are significant areas for intercultural learning. The VILMA system will validate those processes in European mobility projects. The transnational collaboration of the partners as well as the mobility experiences of the participants promote a European exchange, thus improving individual learning: language skills, intercultural communication, knowledge about other working cultures and traditions. This increases the readiness to be an active citizen and the ability to successfully deal with diversity. Europe becomes a facet of work and life. Through the development and application of a validation approach these projects will be exploited as a learning environment for the development of intercultural competences among European adult education practitioners.

Mobility and Employment

Validation of informal learning is crucial in regard to employability. VILMA offers a validation system that facilitates the evidencing of competence development (language, intercultural competence, communication skills, increase in flexibility and mobility, organisational skills etc.) for various target groups. The validation and certification of competences gained through mobility experiences increase the employability in several ways and thus improve job chances as well as the individual acceptance of mobility. Research on the benefits of mobility further proves that social and personal competences improved by going abroad (e.g. self-confidence, self-awareness, autonomy) are fundamental for success in professional life.

Co-operation with third countries and the competent international organisations

Since VILMA is focusing on competences specifically acquired through participating in mobility projects the approach and system can also be transferred to other countries. The Validation of these competences is especially relevant for employers from international institutions respective for learners that consider working abroad.

Digital competence

Digital competence of adult educators is enhanced by the activities of VILMA. The training course is designed as a blended learning offer in which virtual phases facilitated by an e-learning platform and online communication tools complement the face-to-face course. As a side effect participants learn how to effectively use information and communication technologies for learning and training. Moreover, the validation system will be web based, enabling participants to set up a validation system and to evaluate, visualise and document the competence development in regard to European collaboration.

