
A European inventory on validation of
non-formal and informal learning:

Examples of Good Practice - Record
book for young people: Slovenia

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1.0 EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE - RECORD BOOK FOR YOUNG PEOPLE: SLOVENIA

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1.1 Introduction

The Youth Academy project in Slovenia got interested and active in the validation of non-formal and informal learning as they felt it was an important issue as they ran training and workshops but found it frustrating that there was no recognition of this.

1.2 Description of the initiative

Validation of non-formal learning in the organisation takes place under a project called NEFIKS, and also through the Youth Academy project. Members of the organisation are asked to keep a record book, so that the following areas of their learning can be validated:

- Getting knowledge through work (so far this has been their studies, but it can be applied to work they get with employers)
- Active citizenship and responsible work projects
- Organised non-formal education such as ICT and project management skills
- Gaining knowledge at youth camps and voluntary work
- English language communication skills gained through experience abroad
- Other ways of getting knowledge e.g. through hobbies such as learning a musical instrument

The record book is used to collect traces of activity. Also personal achievement is observed 'post hoc' by the programme leader. The non-formal learning is assessed by both internal assessors and external assessors from youth centres nationwide.

The competence levels that can be validated within the organisation are different categories of youth working progressing from volunteer to youth leader to trainer. The competence levels are linked to the National Youth Council system of non-formal learning because this organisation devised this! The validation does lead to an internal certificate but this is recognised nationally.

The barriers to recognising learning gained outside formal education, are that it is not recognised as being necessary by the influential policy makers as they themselves do not have non-formal learning competences, and value the formal learning over non-formal.

1.3 Take-up and outcomes

Take-up of validation initiatives has been good – 1,000 people in the last year have used the record book for non-formal parts of their learning. The benefits are two-fold: volunteers can benefit from career progression to become youth leaders, and secondly members of the organisation can learn skills that are transferable outside the NGO sector such as ICT, and project management.

The main outcomes of validating non-formal/informal learning in the organisation are more structured career progression and greater equality, increased staff motivation through more involvement in the project, better fulfilment of the skill needs of the organisation, and the organisation as a whole gets a higher profile as a training centre.

The organisation would be helped in this initiative through more EU funding, changing the mindset of national policy makers, partnering with other businesses such as Addeco or Manpower to help their growth, and more effective validation would also be achieved through having a dedicated project manager who could just focus on the NEFIKS project.

1.4 Benefits and Outcomes at Individual Level¹

Alenka has been a youth volunteer with the NGO for about two years, has recently been a beneficiary of the log-book. She is currently undertaking a degree in Sociology and Pedagogy which has some relevance to the post. She has undertaken several non-formal training courses to help her deliver her work, which have included sessions on motivation, project management, and planning your career. These courses have been certified and a record is kept in the NEFIKS log book. The main benefits of validation of non-formal learning are seen to be improving access to training courses, and access to promotion. More generally, the benefits are seen as increasing motivation and commitment to work for the organisation, and also helping considerably in planning one's future career path.

She, however, was of the opinion that the certification would not necessarily have value outside the organisation as in general formal learning is prioritised above non-formal learning in most of Slovenia.

Overall, she felt that validation of non-formal learning had been most instrumental in giving a clearer idea of personal skills and future career planning. She found that it really helped in terms of gaining practical experience and was more useful than formal education in terms of finding out what her skills and abilities are which are relevant to her future career, and hence is able to plan her career path more productively. She did not find any negative aspects relating to her involvement in validation initiatives.

¹ Based on an interview with Alenka Petek, beneficiary.