How to make learning visible

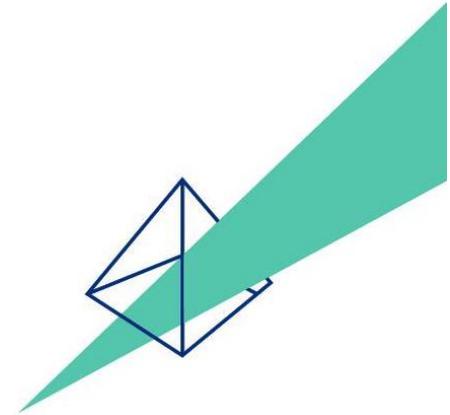28 and 29 November 2016
Thessaloniki, Greece

Strategies for implementing validation
of non-formal and informal learning

CEDEFOP
European Centre
for the Development
of Vocational Training

DISCOVER
YOUR TALENT!

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The past
  What can we learn from three decades
  of validation work in Europe?

VALIDATION – a question of changing VALUES

All learning, irrespective of where and when it takes place, is potentially of high value, to individuals and society.

Formal learning needs to be supplemented by

validation - to make visible and value the diverse and rich learning of individuals

Critical conditions for changing values

For validation to succeed, two critical conditions must be met. Validation requires the existence of :

- Institutional settings guaranteeing credibility, legitimacy and trust.
- Methodologies for validation guaranteeing reliability, validity and overall quality.

A lack of trust, towards the institutions and methods, undermines the values in question and prevents successful implementation.

(Making learning visible, 2000)

Validation in Europe - three stages and three questions

- Emergence - when and how was validation (and its associated values) first promoted and established; and by whom?

- Spread and diffusion - when, how and by whom was validation spread?

- Internalisation - has validation, and its associated values, been generally accepted, trusted and internalised?

Emergence of validation at European level

1995-99
- Commission White Paper on teaching and learning
- Testing and piloting of automated assessment

2000-2002
- Lifelong learning Memorandum
- Valuing learning as part of a lifelong learning strategy

2002-2004
- Bologna and Copenhagen processes embracing validation
- Expansion of testing and piloting in Leonardo, Socrates and Equal (ESF) programmes

Emergence of validation at National level – the frontrunners…

1985
- France: Validation of professional competences 1985, Validation of experiential learning 2002

1994
- Finland: Competence based qualifications

1990
- UK: National vocational qualifications (NVQs), APA, APL, APEL etc,

Spread of validation at European level

2004-2009
- European Principles on validation
- European Guidelines on validation

2004>
- Agreement on the shift to learning outcomes

2004 >
- European qualifications framework and the promotion of national qualifications frameworks

2000>
- Increasing importance of testing and piloting, in particular European Social Funds

2012>
- Council Recommendation on validation

Spread of validation at National level level

2000 >
- New active countries enter: Denmark, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden….etc.

2000>
- Expansion of piloting and experimentation in all countries, notably through ESF

2003>
- Rapid development of NQFs explicitly linking to validation

2004>
- Overall shift to learning outcomes providing reference for validation

What has been achieved?

➢ In 2000 we only observed intentions, projects and experiments; today we observe full scale arrangements serving actual people (in 2012-13 more than 350.000 individuals were reported to have taken part in some form of validation)

➢ A massive shift to learning outcomes has taken place across Europe; this provides a much improved reference point for validation at all levels and types of qualifications

➢ The NQFs established in all countries now provide a way to structure and promote validation which only existed in a minority of countries in 2000

➢ The political awareness and acceptance of validation, for example supporting the integration of migrants and upskilling of adults, is higher than ever before

What has not been achieved?

➢ Resources are generally scarce – validation competes with established sectors

➢ Awareness of validation too weak among potential users

➢ Access to validation varies too much

➢ Validation outside the education/qualification system is not sufficiently developed

➢ The professional competences of validation practitioners are too varied

➢ Outcomes of testing and piloting are not sufficiently exploited

➢ A significant group of countries still belong in the category 'low activity and low acceptance'

Has validation, and its underpinning values, been accepted and internalised?

➢ Yes, in policy statements and in (an increasing number of) 'pockets' of activity at national and sector level

➢ No, not as a taken for granted and fully implemented feature of modern learning societies