



Action plan for validation and adult education (AVA)

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What is EAEA?

- It works with **adult education** and **lifelong learning**
- It concentrates on the **non-formal sector**
- It is an association with **141 members**, from **45 countries**, representing **5000 associations**



Our vision of VNFIL



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR
THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS

EAEA sees validation as a key tool to promote lifelong learning, to ensure more flexible learning pathways, to encourage learners and build their self-confidence as well as to create a more comprehensive understanding of competences



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28.4.2017



The project

Action Plan for validation and non-formal adult education (AVA)

Aim: By analysing tools and methodologies in different European countries and proposing solutions from the civil society perspective, this project contributed to reducing the fragmentation of validation systems in Europe.

The project consortium

- drafted and promoted a survey addressing adult education and validation arrangement providers and analyzed its results;
- organised a jour fixe to present the initial survey results to a wider public (Vienna – 13/10/2015) ;
- organised an expert seminar to debate the main themes and outcomes of the survey (Oslo - 1-2/2/2016);
- developed an event methodology that allowed the expert seminar participants to exchange experiences, explore the main challenges and propose possible solutions;
- drafted an Action Plan providing key messages and actions targeted at both policy makers and adult education organizations;
- organised an Policy debate in Brussels to discuss the Action Plan with key validation stakeholders (Brussels – 29/6/2016);
- Produced five articles on relevant issues related to the project's values and aims.

Duration and funding: 2 years (2014-2016), Erasmus + (KA2)

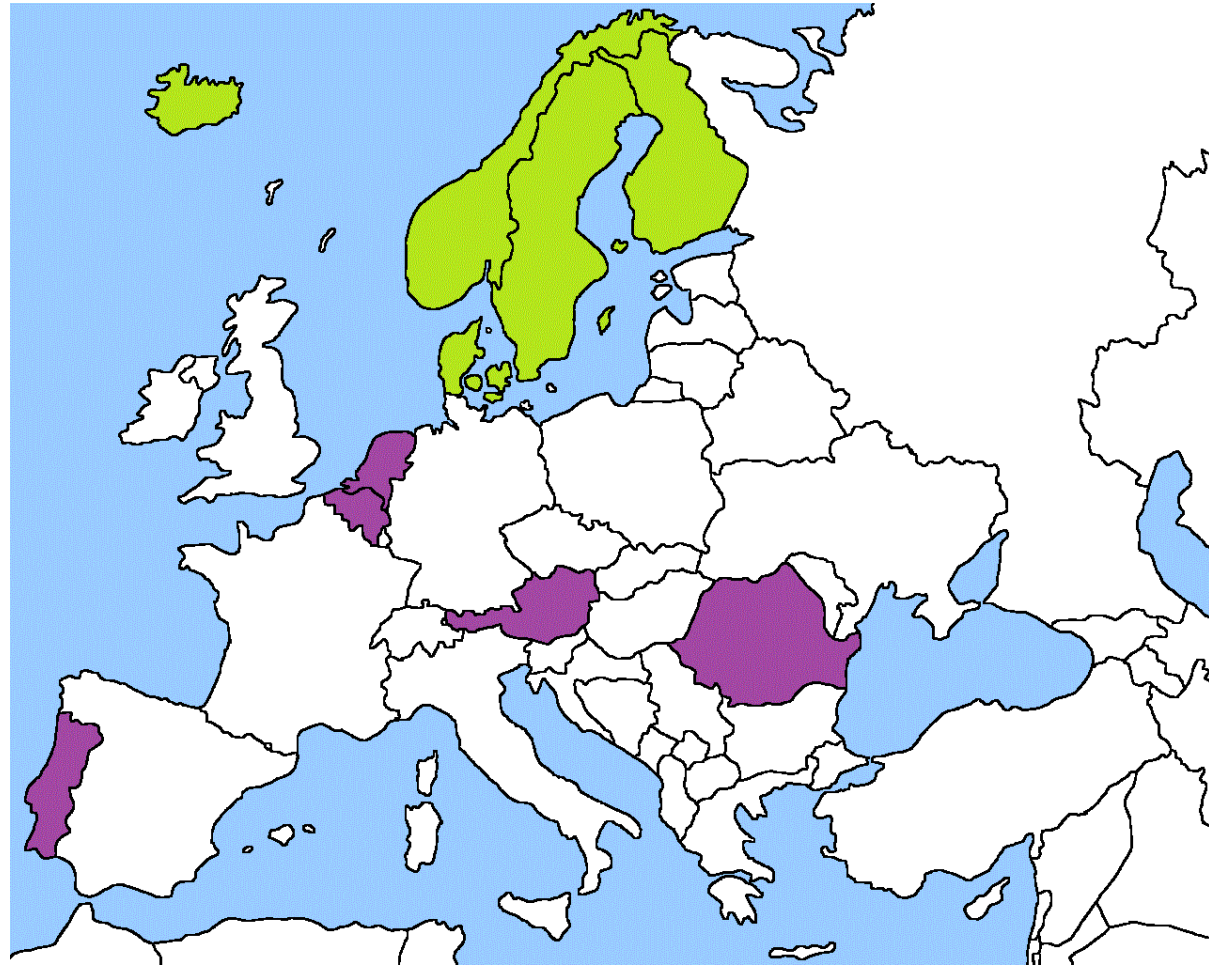


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The consortium

1. [EAEA - European Association for the Education of Adults](#)
2. [KERIGMA](#)
3. [Verband Österreichischer Volkshochschulen](#)
4. [Learn for Life - Dutch Platform for International Adult Learning](#)
5. [Asociatia "EUROED"](#)
6. [Nordic Network for Adult Learning](#)





Main findings from the AVA research



The survey

- The survey was two folded:
 - Meso level= umbrella organisations and other organisations working with policy, programmes, etc. on validation;
 - Micro level= Providers and other organisations working directly with validation.
- 50 respondents from 20 countries
 - Non-formal adult education providers (29)
 - Umbrella organisations (10)
 - Other 11 organisations.
- Responses' distribution:
 - Meso level: 16 respondents
 - Micro level: 34 respondents

The AVA analysis

Analysis structure





Main findings

Permeability is verified when:

- a) A coherent and well-structured system in place
- b) Use of legitimate standards and criteria
- c) Recognition about validation and its wider benefits for society
- d) Cooperation with stakeholders and social partners as well as across sectors and among institutions



Main findings II

Fragmentation risks are particularly high, *when*

- a) Incoherent and fractional implementation of the validation system
- b) Bureaucratic obstacles
- c) Lack of financial resources
- d) Lack of guidance and training for validation professionals



Main findings III

Inclusion is strengthened by:

- a) Awareness raising activities
- b) Outreach and accessibility strategies at the national and institutional levels
- c) The clear definition of the purpose for the organisation and for the individual
- d) The availability of guidance and counselling paths for the candidates



The AVA action plan



Main goals

- Increase the accessibility and transparency of the systems benefiting all candidates, especially those with a disadvantaged background.
- Set up a structured and transparent validation process
- Develop a structured and cross sectorial dialogue between validation stakeholders and foster the cooperation
- Increase the use of the existing tools and to study their transferability

The action plan

- Provide not only key messages and recommendations (I part), but also examples, concrete proposals and critical factors to overcome (II part – grouped following the validation timeline)
- Strengthen the concrete responsibility of all stakeholders involved and make them feel a sense of ownership for the process



Validation stakeholders

- Public authorities
- Non-formal sector and validation providers
- Stakeholders (other education providers, NGOs, etc.)
- Social partners
- Business sector



Key principles

- Validation processes need to be individual-centred
- Tailor-made approach in designing and implementing validation arrangements is needed
- Transparency and flexibility of procedures, customised learning offers, continuous and personalised guidance and counselling have a relevant impact on candidates' lives and careers



Recommendations I

For public authorities (national / regional / local levels)

- Develop a strategy that includes all lifelong learning sectors as well as comprehensive information about validation
- Disadvantaged candidates should be the key target group
- **The non-formal sector should be adequately heard and taken into consideration**
- Provide a legal framework that includes the accreditation of validation providers
- Provide a stakeholders' cooperation framework for mutual understanding and to avoid fragmentation
- Provide national arrangements for competence development



Recommendations II

For the non-formal sector and validation providers

- Foster the dialogue between the validation stakeholders and be prepared for cross-sectorial cooperation
- **Develop a strategy for reaching out to and empowering disadvantaged groups**
- Focus on individuals: try to provide formative-oriented as well as certificate-oriented and offer adequate training for staff
- Specify the learning outcomes and collect statistics
- Advocate the concept of validation to interested people
- Decide on the purpose/purposes of validation



Recommendations III

For stakeholders (other education providers, NGOs, etc.)

- Lobby for the creation of appropriate legal frameworks as well as for the needs of the local society and individuals
- Create networks between stakeholders and validation practitioners in order to 1) talk together about the methodology, process' functionality and benefits of validation; 2) understand each other's language better; 3) work together for validation
- **Help to spread information about validation, increase knowledge about validation: find or train “ambassadors” for validation; those who can talk about validation to businesses, employers and who have good knowledge related to the field of activity of the company**
- Support different sectors in skills mapping



Recommendations IV

For social partners

- **Get involved in the validation process in an early stage (agree on the value, make VNFIL part of the agenda, engage in discussions on advantages and disadvantages of validation with other stakeholders)**
- Promote validation within networks and amongst target groups
- Develop skills strategies within sectoral and company agreements that include validation
- Cooperate with non-formal adult education providers and advocate for more inclusive and accessible validation procedures in skills councils



Recommendations V

For the business sector

- Lobby for validation with policy makers and advocate benefits of validation among peers
- Find partners from non-formal sector; contribute to validation funding and provide space for validation of practical skills
- Get involved in defining the standards of validation and contribute to legislation of validation
- Recruit employees based on validation services and identify potential candidates for validation
- **Set up a skills mapping process to investigate what competences are needed now and in the future**



BEFORE

- **RAISE AWARENESS** towards the main target groups (i.e. campaigns, field work, involve municipalities, communities and families)
- **FOSTER THE ENGAGEMENT** (map, network, cooperate)
- **GET THE BROADER PICTURE** (deep knowledge about validation and the potential target groups)
- **SETTING THE SCENE** (professionalisation as well as accessible contexts and conditions)



DURING

- **ACCESS** (Neutrality, impartiality and flexibility)
- **CONTENT** (combination of competence development and practical skills, main aim should be the personal development)
- **QUALITY** (Quality management, transparency standards and peer review)
- **GUIDANCE** (continuous and personalised guidance and counselling throughout the whole validation process as well as provision of further education opportunities)



AFTER

- **MONITOR** (Policies' functioning, implementation and accessibility, test the performance of participants through a ladder model)
- **COMMUNICATE** (Make the validation advantages visible to the general public by showing the candidates results (both facts and figures), allow and enable individual witness of the personal benefits and success)
- **MAKE A STEP FURTHER** (optimize the procedure, investigate if the process/methods can be transferred, from a project level to a sustainable one)



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