

Making all skills visible: the validation of transversal skills

European Policy Conference, May 24-25, 2023, Stockholm

Conference centre [Vasateatern](#), Vasagatan 19, 111 22 Stockholm, Sweden

Day 1, May 24, 2023

9.30-11.30 Study visit in Stockholm - relevance of transversal skills

Study visit will be hosted by Trygghetsfonden <https://tsl.se> together with The Swedish Employment Service <https://arbetsformedlingen.se>

Adress: Adolf Fredrik Kyrkogata 12, Stockholm

11.30-13.00 Registration and lunch

13.00 Introduction by the moderator of the conference

Anni Karttunen, education policy, validation and guidance expert, Globedu, Finland

13.05 Opening panel of the conference

Christina Månberg, Director General and Head of Division for Upper Secondary and Adult Education and Training, Ministry of Education of Sweden

Eduard Staudecker, Head of Department I/8 – VET Policy, Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research

Koen Nomden, Team Leader Transparency and Recognition of Skills and Qualifications, DG EMPL, European Commission

Helle Glen Petersen, Head of Department, Knowledge & Welfare, Nordic Council of Ministers

Tommy Lagergren, Head of School improvement, School and working life, Swedish National Agency for Education

14.00 Keynote: Transversal competences for work and life

Michele Tuccio, Economist, Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, OECD

14.30 Break

15.00 TRANSVAL-EU project: Ambitions and achievements

Karl Andrew Muellner, Team Leader NCP – National Coordination Point for the NQF in Austria, Austria's Agency for Education and Internationalisation (OeAD-GmbH)

Pauline Boivin, Policy and Project Manager, Lifelong Learning Platform (LLLp)

Maurice de Greef, Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB)

Q&As with the Audience

16.10 Key policy outcomes: Including transversal skills in national action plans

Moderation: Koen Nomden, DG EMPL, European Commission

Eduard Staudecker, Head of Department I/8 – VET Policy, Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research

Horacy Dębowski, Deputy director, Central Examination Board, Poland

Michela Bastianelli, Sociologist and researcher at National Agency for Active Employment Policies (ANPAL), Italy

Sonia Cinti, Technical Collaborator and Researcher for the Job Atlas and Competence Analysis at the National Institute for the Analysis of Public Policies (INAPP), Italy

Nora Pileičikienė, Chairperson of the Lithuanian Council for Non-formal Adult Education

Inga Puiša, Member of the Lithuanian Council for Non-formal Adult Education

Marily Rost, Methodological experts' team manager, Consortium for the Validation of Competences (CDVC), Belgium

17.00 Q&As with the Audience

17.30 Networking reception

Day 2, May 25, 2023

09.00 Good morning and bridge from Day 1, introduction to Day 2

9.15 Key findings and practice implications

World Cafés: Discover the experimentations in 5 EU countries (AT, LT, IT, PL, BE)

10.30 Break and workshop introduction

10.50 Workshops on future scenarios: innovative practices and policy action plans

Group 1: Towards integrated national skills strategies

Karin Luomi-Messerer, 3s research laboratory, Austria

Group 2: The professionalisation of validation and guidance practitioners

Erik Kaemingk, bureau kaemingk, Netherlands

Fjóla María Lárusdóttir, The Education and Training Service Centre / NVL, Iceland

Group 3: Tools and methods for validating transversal competences

Olena Bekh, European Training Foundation (ETF)

Barbara Fijałkowska, Educational Research Institute (IBE)

Group 4: Building an EU community of validation and guidance professionals

Tatjana Babrauskiene, European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)

Brikena Xhomaqi and Pauline Boivin, Lifelong Learning Platform (LLL)

11.50-12.00 Short break

12.00-12.20 Feedback and ideas for sustaining and developing the project results

12.20-13.00 Keynote – inspiration for the future

Zinat Pirzadeh, author, comedian and study counsellor

13.00-13.30 Light lunch and good-bye!

Workshops

1. Towards integrated national skills strategies

3S research laboratory from Austria will facilitate this workshop.

The aim of this workshop is to discuss what needs to be done at regional, national and European level to overcome the challenges and obstacles in order to develop sustainable integrated national skills strategies. Furthermore, examples of good practice in successfully overcoming such problems will be brought in and discussed by the participants.

Helping people acquire the right skills (including transversal ones) for quality jobs and participation in society has been high on the political agenda for many years, and the European Commission has declared 2023 the [European Year of Skills](#), clearly putting skills at the centre. In order to meet the diverse demands of the world of work and life and to be able to use synergies between activities in different areas, it is necessary that efforts with regard to skills and their development are not carried out in isolation (e.g. with a focus on one sector only). Thus, while many countries have already developed lifelong learning strategies or strategies focusing on adult learning for more than two decades, current European policies emphasise an overarching approach:

- The [European Skills Agenda](#) calls for national skills strategies that involve all stakeholders and are designed and implemented through a whole-of-government approach.
- Also the [Osnabrück Declaration](#) refers to the development of national skills strategies (by 2025) in cooperation with all relevant national, regional, sectoral stakeholders and social partners.

More about the challenges:

There must be a clear political will (across party lines) and a long-term high-level commitment to the development and implementation of integrated national skills strategies (without abusing this for party political purposes). Although they can build on existing skills strategies, they should be designed and implemented as part of a whole-of-government approach. This requires aligning initiatives across different policy fields, such as education, employment, research, industry and regional development policies. If each of these policy areas has its own strong tradition in terms of skills and its own specific language, this can pose a challenge to the development process. The inclusion of a broad spectrum of relevant stakeholders (e.g. social partners, civil society, education, training and labour market stakeholders) with different interests and priorities also harbours considerable potential for conflict. In addition, to ensure effective skills development as well as

visualisation of existing skills, measures such as career guidance and validation, outreach activities, and financial and non-financial incentives to reduce barriers to participation in skills acquisition and provision should be considered. This in turn may increase the complexity of the task, interfere with existing arrangements or require reforms and further development of different support services that have so far done their work independently of each other.

Member States can receive support from the European Commission, in cooperation with the [OECD](#), for developing national skills strategies. According to the latest [update on the European Skills Agenda](#) (March 2023), 13 Member States have started developing a national skills strategy and six are implementing theirs. Thus, not all countries have yet taken steps in this direction; one reason for this is sometimes that they already have comprehensive policy frameworks that (to some extent) fulfil the same function as national skills strategies (e.g. lifelong learning and validation strategies or policies related to the NQF). However, there are also certain challenges and obstacles that countries face in developing integrated national skills strategies or even prevent them from doing so. These challenges sometimes even go beyond those normally associated with any strategic policy process (e.g. in terms of evidence-based design, process management, collaboration, communication, securing human and financial resources, monitoring and evaluation).

2. Professionalisation of validation and guidance practitioners

Bureau kaemingk from the Netherlands and the Education and Training Service Centre from Iceland will facilitate this workshop.

The aim of this workshop is to discuss what is needed for a validation process to be adequately implemented. The different phases of the validation process will be reviewed with a focus on the assessment interview and the competences required of validation staff. Findings from the TRANSVAL-EU project support the importance of training for validation professionals before taking part in validation processes.

The validation scene and context

In the European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning the features of the validation process is described as “a process of confirmation by an authorized body that an individual has acquired learning outcomes against a relevant standard (Council of the EU, 2012) and highlights the different stages of the process. It is stated that it is crucial to attend to each stage (identification, documentation, assessment and certification) to make validation arrangements flexible for different needs and context and to be fit for purpose. This means that a validation process must contain all stages to be fair and reliable for the people undergoing the process. In addition, each stage must be attended to specifically based on individual needs, scope and context.

Knowing the learning standards and the scope of non-formal learning

The first two stages focus on identifying and documenting prior learning. For many individuals, this is an unfamiliar task. The need for guidance and support must therefore be evaluated individually in some way to underpin fair assessment.

With regards to the assessment stage, there is a need to clarify what it takes to show that an observation or validation of/by an assessor matches the objective indicators of the standards - when the learning assessed stems from the non-formal arena. On the one hand, the aim should be to make all the candidate's competences visible, while at the same time avoiding attributing competences to the candidate that he/she does not have. By what can we see or measure that during the validation trajectory, the candidate's prior learning has been adequately assessed so that it establishes the candidate's professional competence and thus future action can be expected? For this, we need to attend to the quality of the entire validation process and establish the professional competence for the roles of the assessor; guidance personnel and process/project manager.

In the workshop, the focus is specifically on two aspects: the competences of the assessor and the quality of learning outcomes used. The main question is what is needed on the assessor's side (regarding interviewing, assessment, and reporting format) and what is needed on the learning outcome/profile description side.

3. Tools and methods for validating transversal competences

European Training Foundation (ETF) and Educational Research Institute (IBE) from Poland will facilitate this workshop.

The aim of this workshop is to present good examples of tools and methods for assessing and recognising learning outcomes, putting special emphasis on transversal skills. Participants are invited to share their experience in developing and using different methodologies and discuss them in the light of the findings of TRANSVAL-EU project.

The outcome of the [ETF's](#) cooperation with the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission ([JRC](#)), the Scaffold card deck, will be presented as inspiration. It aims at supporting educators/teachers in the development of key competences of their learners. This includes a strong emphasis on transversal competences/skills. The presentation will focus on the issue of assessment of learning outcomes based on the methods included into the Scaffold methodology. The goal is also looking into the ways it could be used for validation of transversal competences. Scaffold is developed under the [Creating New Learning \(CNL\)](#) initiative of the ETF.

Another example for inspiration will be The Skills Audit Method (SAM) - developed by the experts of the Educational Research Institute. It is used to identify, describe and document competences (learning outcomes) and to prepare development plans for further educational and career paths. The presentation will focus on the use of this method in the process of identifying and documenting transversal competences. The participants will have the opportunity to learn about its assumptions as well as the consecutive steps that should be undertaken with the candidate.

4. Building an EU community of validation and guidance professionals

The Lifelong Learning Platform (LLL) and the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) will facilitate the workshop.

It will focus on exploring the establishment of an EU Community of practice for validation and guidance professionals (policy-makers and practitioners) - a European coordinating point between national (or regional) communities with their own priorities but also peer learning opportunities to exchange solutions for common challenges and interests (e.g. on tools for assessing transversal skills, micro-credentials, training opportunities for practitioners, etc.).

The workshop will use an interactive format in which the participants will assess the feasibility of the setup of such a community, sharing inspiring examples, looking at key success factors, debating on the conditions for successful launch and implementation (or potential obstacles) as well as identifying the key actors to be part of it.