



## The VITA Binder

VITA good practice

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## 1. Overview of good practice

	<b>Educational Sector</b>	<b>Target group</b>	<b>Content/topic</b>	<b>Partner</b>
1	<b>Adult education</b>	Unemployed Men from Southhill Men's Shed	Problem solving, leadership and networking	AONTAS, Ireland
2		Organisers of activities for the Swiss learning festival	communication skills and project management, Planning and organizing an event	SVEB, Switzerland
3	<b>VET</b>	Staff of a socio-economic enterprise (restaurant TOP Lokal in Vienna)	Customer orientation	Die Berater, Austria
4		Prison inmates	Leadership and tolerance	Insup, France
5		VET trainers	Communication and self-reflection	AuTh, Greece
6		Nurses in elderly care	Coping with stress	BUPNET, Germany
7		Employees of supermarkets	Customer orientation for customers with cognitive disorders	BUPNET, Germany
8		Employees of supermarkets	Customer orientation for customers with cognitive disorders	BlinC, Germany
9	<b>Higher education</b>	Students	Communication	VMU, Lithuania
10		Managers of child care	Inclusion leadership	VIA, Denmark
11	<b>Schools</b>	Students in extra-curricular activities	Teamwork and problem solving	METU, Turkey

Table 1: List of learning projects evaluated in VITA



### ABSTRACT | SUMMARY

South Hill Men's Shed is a men's group offering a number of learning activities: carpentry, cookery, the "skills challenge" (personal development). As community education is an inclusive practice, learners have been involved in the learning process by discussing with them the course content and arrangements. Learners have been evaluated before and after "the skills challenge" course. Furthermore, a learner has been involved in the steering group and his input was fundamental in adapting the competences framework: the framework language was too complex and the tutor adapted it.

### RATIONALE | BACKGROUND

The aim of the learning activity is to upskill long term unemployed men:

- Provide further education opportunities
- Improve their self-esteem
- Increase their chance of getting into the labour market
- Provide/improve learners social skills

The aim of the learning activity is also exploring new ways of working with the learners and keeping them interested in the course.

### TARGETGROUP | CONTEXT

The target group - Southill Men's Shed- is a Men's group whose members are adult learners (from 23 to 68 years of age) from a disadvantaged background: long term unemployed, lone parents, members of the Travellers community, migrants and refugees. 41% of the population in the Southill area (over the age of 15) have left education with a primary education only or with no formal education; while 6% have a third level education.



### OBJECTIVES

Take up a new challenge; learners took part in the project because the group is supporting them. They wanted to build up their skills and increase their chances of finding employment.

### INFORMAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Networking event with Tipperary men's shed
- Table quiz planning and implementation



### EVALUATION

10 learners evaluated on the following competences: Leadership, Networking, problem solving. Each session has been documented with notes, videos and photos. The assessment took place at the beginning, middle and end of the course (only the beginning and end were used for LEVEL5). The assessment consists of a conversation with each of the learners (recorded on flip chart paper and also the final session recorded as a sound recording).



### RESULTS

The evaluation of the project was a learning process: it provided the opportunity to explore ways of showcasing the value of, and measuring, community education practice. The VITA project allows the participating organisation to highlight progress made by learners and therefore it could be a powerful tool to make a case in front of funders/donors.

## 1.1 Southill Men's Shed skills challenge (AE)

### Aontas, Ireland

#### Introduction

The pilot project took place from March 2013 to the end of May 2013. The target group - Southill Men's Shed- is a men's group whose members are adult learners (from 23 to 68 years of age) from a disadvantaged background: long term unemployed, lone parents, members of the Travellers<sup>1</sup> community, migrants and refugees. Some statistics from the area:

- 47% of family units (where at least one child is aged under 15 years) in the Southill area are lone parent households.
- 41% of the population in the Southill area (over the age of 15) have left education with a primary education only or with no formal education; while 6% have a third level education.
- The unemployment rate for the Southill area is 50%. For males, it is 56%, while for females, it is 42%.



#### Setting

Community Education works with adults who wish to return to or continue their education, offering a learner-centred approach involving personal supports and tuition leading to positive personal, social and economic outcomes. It focusses its work on people who are distant from education and the labour market, and is generally developed in

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<sup>1</sup> Irish Travellers (Irish: an lucht siúil) or Pavee, also called Tinkers or Gypsies (but not to be confused with the Romani people), are a traditionally itinerant people of ethnic Irish origin, who maintain a set of traditions.

local community projects and centres. Community Education is grounded on principles of justice, equality, social inclusion and citizenship.

### **Learning activities**

Southhill Men's Shed is a men's group offering a number of learning activities through a community education approach: carpentry, cookery, the "skills challenge" (personal development course). Learners have been evaluated before and after "the skills challenge" course. As community education is an inclusive practice, learners have been involved in the course content design to respond to their learning needs. There are 10 learners taking part in the pilot project. They are all long term unemployed. There are people with physical disabilities, sight and mental health issues.



### **LEVEL5 Evaluation Scheme Applied to the Project**

The 3 competences chosen for the development course were problem solving, leadership and networking. The learners organized a table quiz evening and a networking event to meet up with another Men's shed group based in Tipperary (a town nearby) during which they applied the new skills they learnt during the theoretical lessons.

The local conditions were taken into account when planning the programme, to ensure the group were fully consulted in the activities which they would be assessed on, and that the skills they were developing had real-life application.

The assessment consisted of a conversation with each of the learners (recorded on flip chart paper and also the final session recorded as a sound recording). Since some of the learners have a low level of literacy it would have been difficult to carry out a written assessment. The learners were informed about the validation after the completion of the course and they were enthusiastic at the idea of receiving a certificate showing the progress they made.

### **Project impact and experiences**

*“Participant D participated in the programme and from the outset presented with the greatest level of anxiety about the programme. He had negative experiences of formal learning and was uncomfortable with doing “homework”. The nature of the project was that the main activity was a group activity, and part of the assessment was based on the level of proactivity the learners displayed towards taking on additional responsibilities. Participant D although worried about his abilities to perform, was soon identifiable as one of the most proactive in the group. He strove to do all that was necessary to accomplish the work required for assessment. “as a group I think we did very well” was one of Participant D’s statements about the programme, and I think this group context allowed him to grow and develop within a safe environment. His progression was the most marked out of all of the group. His biggest learning was around his confidence to try and succeed at new things.”*

The evaluation of the project was a learning process: it provided the opportunity to explore ways of showcasing the value of, and measuring, community education practice.

The VITA project allows the participating organisation to highlight progress made by learners and therefore it could be a powerful tool to make a case in front of funders/donors. It is recommended that the tutor/trainer be fully trained on LEVEL5 before they start the

validation activity. Also, applying LEVEL5 for the first time could be time demanding in terms of adapting the rating to the context and to validate the learners’ competences but once the module has been defined it could be reapplied the following year or to a similar activity with a similar target group .



Picture 1: Southhill men after having received their certificates by the Irish minister of education and training

## **Discussion & Perspectives**

The difference between the LEVEL5 Method and the FETAC one (Irish system of qualifications) is that LEVEL5 allows for measuring learners effective progress across the competence while FETAC requires the learner to be at the same level on all dimensions and doesn't track progress if this isn't the case. There are advantages and disadvantages in both methodologies and the provider should choose the most suitable method for the group/activity.

The competences inventory is a useful tool because it gives a detailed description of the levels for each competence. The competence level breakdown was used to develop the "South Hill Men's Shed Skills Challenge" personal development course. It could be used by the same group to develop other courses for the development of other competences and other groups could use it too.

*Eleonora Peruffo, AONTAS*



## 1.2 The Swiss Lernfestival - Recognition of Competences for voluntary Event Organizers (AE)

### SVEB Switzerland

#### Introduction

The Lernfestival is a Swiss Campaign to promote lifelong learning, similar to the Adult Learners' Weeks. We are celebrating the joy of learning the 3<sup>rd</sup> week in September (each year) for 24 hours. Before that time the crucial part is, to find persons, who are willing to participate as volunteers and to organize an event in their village, town or region. These are mostly persons, who are already dealing with a workload of tasks, but find it important to promote Lifelong Learning.

#### Setting

The Lernfestival is a Campaign for Lifelong Learning, which takes place during 24 hours on the 3<sup>rd</sup> weekend in September. It starts at 5 pm on Friday and ends at 5 pm on Saturday. The idea behind is to bring learning activities directly at the doorstep of the people and in addition to connect the institutions who are involved in learning activities (including policy maker and SMEs). The goal is, to work together instead of being competitors. It also should help to strengthen a city / region through being involved in a common goal, also known as unique selling point. A good example is Hamburg, who did fight obesity and schools, sports, seniors (being a guide for kids and help them to do the homework) and nutrition companies to bring healthy food on the table at noon, including mothers who did the cooking not only for their children, but also for their friends.



#### Learning activities

The Swiss Lernfestival was celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. That's why it was a very good opportunity to invite our Coordinators for a special treat and to tell them, that it will be possible to make the competences VISIBLE they are acquiring by working for the Lernfestival. So we invited all to 3 workshops in January and March to get ac-

quainted with LEVEL5 and to discuss the competences they would like to work with. And what would help them best, to organize their own event. First, there was a lecture, then we had three workshops. After that, it was in the own responsibility to take over the coordination and work in “the field”. Each coordinator could organize their own festival (24 hours or less). A must was, to take over the Slogan “Learning with head, heart, hand and feet”. The envisaged outcome was to attract people to be part of the Festival, to be involved as a sponsor, to become a participant and to be part of a movement that could bring an added value to the city: I.e. Motivation to learn, to be active, and to be part as an active citizen.

### **LEVEL5 Evaluation Scheme Applied to the Project**

As the task, to organize an event, was the same for everybody, during the workshops we agreed on a self-evaluation and as planning and organizing a 24 hours event is crucial, we did focus on those two: communication skills and project management. A provisional grid was explained and discussed with the learners. Then it was adapted to their needs, worked out as a tool for self-evaluation and then presented and approved by all. People filled out first the self-evaluation, then they got the grid and we sat down for the first assessment. After the Lernfestival was finished end of October 2013, and all the internal evaluations were done, we sat down for the second evaluation and used the grid for an interview.

### **Project Impact and Experiences**

In Switzerland this kind of projects are not well known and it was not easy to find people who were willing to participate. People do not have time for long questionnaires and are mostly not so fluent in English, that's why they had to be in German. I think, LEVEL5 is a really good and acceptable method for both parties (evaluator and course organisers) involved as it offers added value for both sides.



For the learners it was an adventure as they mostly had no competences for project management, communication or working with a team, as a teamleader. That's where LEVEL5 could help here. LEVEL5 urges you to sit down and analyze the structure and gives you the whole insight: Why am I stuck here, why does it not work, what can we /

I do? And in addition, you get a feedback from LEVEL5, you talk together – it helps to understand the (may be vicious) circle and also the co-worker/team partner. It gives you a prospective and a different view of a problem and also the possibility to solve it. At the end, LEVEL5 broadens the awareness of others and sharpens your mind.

Also for the assessor it is a very good tool, to figure out, how a coordinator is already knowledgeable about the Lernfestival and what the skills are he or she already brings in. So the assessor knows exactly, what this person has to be taught or what kind of special help/counselling is needed. On the other side, the coordinator, who is volunteering get's a certificate and in addition an added value including new skills out of being part in the Swiss Lernfestival. The methods used for the assessment were considered adequate. The coordinators that participated in the evaluation are really proud to have a paper, that proofs that they begun at stretch, with no money, but a lot of guts and optimism to tell people that Lifelong Learning is most important and has not to be neglected.

### **Discussion & Perspectives**

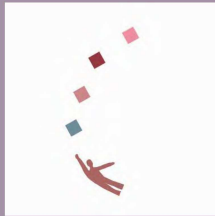
I am a great friend of LEVEL5 as it makes visible the things that had been unseen until now. And it's also a very important tool for persons who had no possibility to validate their informally acquired competences yet. It has proved a valuable tool in the context of preparing the Lernfesitval and it is intended to apply it again next year. Changes foreseen, as result of the experiences made, will be to start planning earlier and maybe to work more on regional level than only in a town or little village.

This year (2014) there will be the next Lernfestival. In addition we are celebrating the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Law of Vocational Training. We will organize a special Exhibition for further education and training. And I would like to work during these days also with LEVEL5 as an exceptional assessment tool.

*Ruth Jermann, SVEB*

### ABSTRACT | SUMMARY

The learning activity was initiated by the Austrian Labour Market Service and the SÖB Top-Lokal in Vienna, Austria.



### RATIONALE | BACKGROUND

The learning activity within the scope of the VITA project took place during 3 months with self-assessment, interviews, discussions, workshops, training. Assessments took place before and after the learning activity.

### TARGETGROUP | CONTEXT

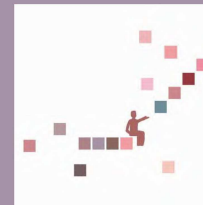
The target group of the learning activity were long-term unemployed persons who partly already worked in a hotel and restaurant industry before. Ages ranged from 23-40 years, 1 male and 5 female. Customer orientation was chosen to help them to find a new job.

### OBJECTIVES

- to support long-term unemployed persons in Austria;
- to support them in finding new jobs;
- to support them in acquiring new attitudes, knowledge and skills;
- to organise a training on "customer orientation".

### INFORMAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Two self-assessments and a workshop regarding customer orientation including SÖB Top-Lokal activities (ordering food and drinks, preparing meals, serving the food to the customers by supervision of professional cooks and front-of-house staff) were carried out.



### EVALUATION

The grids were filled in for six persons and two trainers evaluated the learning activity too. The evaluation was conducted via observations, reflections and interviews too.



### RESULTS

The results are of high importance, since it has been achieved a positive change in knowledge, skills and attitudes and they were documented in the LEVEL5 grids for certificates. A strong ground has been made for a big change and gained tools and improvement is guaranteed.

## 1.3 The socio-economic enterprise TOP Lokal Vienna (AE)

### Die Berater, Austria

#### Introduction

The learning activity was initiated by the Austrian Labour Market Service in collaboration with the SÖB Top-Lokal. The main objective of the SÖB Top-Lokal is to support long-term unemployed persons in Austria and to promise them a better future after visiting training on-the-job. This means, after visiting training, participants are trained to be able to find jobs and to change their old patterns according to new attitudes, knowledge and skills. The learning activity “learning by doing” lasts for six months for each participant. Seven persons included in the VITA project received an additional training on “customer orientation” and workshop including two self-assessments.

#### Setting

Customer orientation is one of the most important competences that need to be acquired in the service industry. Continuous learning and development of social, personal and organisational competences (SPOC) is increasingly important in order to cope with rapidly changing demands in the service industry. The challenges for unemployed people are much higher since they have to consider many factors in order to



convince their employers of their competences and landing a new job.

The activities focused on assessments before and after a learning situation where awareness raising activities took place that make learners to provoke some aha-effects. This means learners were aware what is important and how to gain necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes in order to cope better with customers in the future. As a metaphor “customer” means everybody they are dealing with in their environment, however in this specific learning project priorities are set on their customers in a restaurant. The knowledge gained can be applied as mentioned before in every single life situation!

## Learning activities

In order to create work places and development of key competences, a training course for unemployed people was launched in the SÖB Top-Lokal focusing on customer orientation and development of SPOC. At a real work place learners have the possibility of learning by doing and applying new skills, attitudes and knowledge with customers and in-front-staff of the SÖB Top-Lokal. The project and learning activities took place in a SÖP Top-Lokal restaurant. Activities were carried out such as: ordering food and drinks by delivery companies, preparing meals in the kitchen and serving the food to the customers by supervision of professional cooks and front-of-house staff. Two self-assessments and a workshop have been organised with regards to customer-orientation. Invaluable insights, self-reflection and feedback including use LEVEL5 were identified by learners.

## LEVEL5 Evaluation Scheme Applied to the Project

The system LEVEL5 was used in the development of competencies related to customer orientation. The piloting focused on self-assessment before and after a learning situation as envisaged in LEVEL5. The learning situation was incorporated in LEVEL5, the reference system was developed for customer orientation and people who were trained could evaluate themselves in the self-assessment before



and after a learning situation. The reference system is available in German. Learners were informed about validation in an informal meeting before the self-assessment. They weren't aware of their competences before the training and they become aware of their competences, they could describe them in clearly which was not the case before the training. Since learners work with customers it was important for them to teach them how to deal with customers in a work situation, with all challenges that are necessary to work in a service industry. The reference system for LEVEL5 was developed and used in order to have guidelines including indicators set for customer orientation. The evaluation process was longer than expected because learners needed more information about the VITA project and its objectives. LEVEL5 system was explained to participants, what is it and how it can be used. All participants were interested in using LEVEL5 and curious about their competence development that could be measured with LEVEL5. After self-assessments and the workshop they could reflect on the learning situation. Rating grids were used for the documentation of the learning outcomes

that were filled in the in the end of the learning activity and prepared for the LEVEL5 certificates.

### **Project Impact and Experiences**

The project provided interesting insights from parties, trainers and learners. New insights were communicated by learners. It was a learning activity mostly with self-reflection regarding own competences. The confirmation of the competences developed and made transparent were the LEVEL5 certificates that learners appreciated very much not only for their self-reflection but also for consideration of other competences and convincing employers for their future jobs.

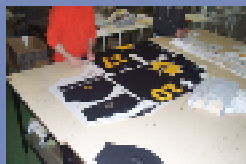
### **Discussion & Perspectives**

LEVEL5 can be seen as an effective tool for self-evaluation and self-reflection. Many people are challenged at the beginning and need more assistance and explanations why it is necessary to reflect on themselves. The major factor is always connected with the correct analysis of the people who they're, what they can, what they cannot, who can help them and how etc. Taking the seven participants into account and their failure to find a new job is because of the situation that they were not aware of their attitudes, knowledge and skills and were not able to convince their potential employers for jobs. It would be very interesting to trace the further steps of the participants, to see the changes occurred in their lives, to see how they implement the new gained skills into their future life and work.

*Bozica Ilijic, die Berater*

### ABSTRACT | SUMMARY

This training course is sponsored by the Prison Administration and related with the Aquitaine Regional Council which finances the project to the same degree as the European Social Fund. The project is in line with the expectations of the Public Authorities in terms of rehabilitation of individuals placed in the hands of Justice.



### RATIONALE | BACKGROUND

It is an innovative project in French prison: the vocational and education training and the education department (school) are working hand in hand to carry out this action: one trainer (technological aspects) and three teachers (general subjects) plus two coordinators. After a ten-months the trainees/detainees have the opportunity to obtain a diploma and probably a better situation as prisoners.

### TARGETGROUP | CONTEXT

The vocational training involves a group of prisoners condemned by the French Justice system to heavy sentences, of up to 30 years in some criminal cases. They are placed in training by the Prison Administration after approval by the INSUP training centre. These trainees receive full training delivered from a partnership between the Education Department for general subjects and the training sector for the technological aspects.

### OBJECTIVES

- For the Prison Administration:
  - to generate activity for prisoners to limit tensions in detention.
- For the trainees:
  - to obtain an Education Department qualification;
  - to continue incarceration in another type of prison, where they will be given work involving sewing;
  - to have access to work experience placements.

### INFORMAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

LEVELS was integrated in the learning activity through following activities:

- Trainees' competencies (leadership and tolerance) to be assessed as part of the learning activity were determined in consultation with the teachers and the trainer.
- The competencies were contextualized in line with the project goals and activities.
- The trainer was asked to fill out the LEVELS assessment tools for each detainee (a total of 5 due to turnover).
- Assessment for each dimension in LEVELS was done for each trainee to summarize the development for each competency.



### EVALUATION

Group: 5 detainees  
 Competences: leadership and tolerance  
 Methods: observation and regular feedback within the team (note taking and minutes), discussions with Education Department teachers, individual interviews with participants based on the assessment grids  
 Process: assessment for each dimension in LEVELS was done for each detainee to summarize the development for each of us

### RESULTS

- The competencies selected for assessment were selected specifically to create a debate within the group and the stakeholders
- The contextualization of the competencies appears to be important in relating the common descriptors to the ones that are relevant to the context of learning activity.
- Trainer and teachers used the LEVELS system in assessing trainees' competencies in spite of the regular turnover of detainees.
- Multiple methods of data collections were effective to do the assessment.



## 1.4 Sewing qualification in prison (VET)

### Insup, France

#### Introduction

The training project is commissioned by the prison authorities and cofinanced by the Aquitaine Region and the European Social Fund. It is an innovative project in a French prison: the vocational and education training and the education department (school) are working hand in hand to carry out this action: one trainer (technological aspects) and three teachers (general subjects) plus two coordinators. The trainees/detainees have the possibility of obtaining after ten months of learning, a diploma and probably a better situation as prisoners. The objectives for the learners/detainees of the project are:

1. To obtain an Education Department qualification.
2. For certain types of prisoner, to continue incarceration in another type of prison where they will be given work involving sewing.
3. For other types of prisoners, to have access to work experience placements when they are released, or in the case of day release, probation, parole, etc.

#### Setting

Penitentiary centre of Bordeaux-Gradignan in South West of France: the INSUP training centre was provided with a room in the heart of the workshops within the prison walls. Here, about fifty inmates execute work for outside companies. Eight project participants spend time alongside these workers, sometimes joining them in their production of tramway seat covers, professional overalls, immersion heater covers, etc. which is a similar situation to a work placement in a professional environment. These trainees/detainees are adult men aged between 25 and 57. They have been incarcerated under correctional or criminal procedure for offences - ranging from individual or group



violence to drugs consumption and/or trafficking, theft, fraud and rape - or crime. Their initial level of qualification is mainly French level VI (no qualifications, early exit from the education system and non acquisition of basic knowledge...).

### **Learning activities**

The LEVEL5 was integrated at the very beginning of January 2013, i.e. four months after the launch of the training course. It was a deliberate choice of the coordination unit: the turnover within this target group of detainees was very important to start with and the students/trainees weren't available for such an additional activity as the LEVEL5.

The LEVEL5 was presented by INSUP and integrated in the learning activity as a way of assessing the informal learning outcomes of the detainees who take part in the training course.

### **LEVEL5 Evaluation Scheme Applied to the Project**

Leadership and tolerance were the two topics chosen by both coordinators and staff. Three types of assessment methods were implemented:

- Observation and regular feedback within the team (note taking and minutes)
- Discussions with Education Department teachers
- Individual interviews with participants based on the assessment grids

The detainees were informed about the validation. So that they are reassured ("the evaluation, will it be integrated to my criminal file?"), we had to explain the "informal learning" and our methodology. We did insist on one point: the LEVEL5 as a tool of assessing their progress or



not. The two topics were finally chosen by both of teams (Education department and vocational training) and the coordinator was very close to a clash when he announced and explained one of the topics: tolerance. There was moreover a second expectation of trainees about the assessment: if there is no progress will I get my diploma?

The aim of the piloting was to evaluate LEVEL5 in the development of competencies related to VET sector: 1) use of LEVEL5, 2) check the impact of the assessment with this type of trainees LEVEL5 was integrated in the learning activity through following activities:

Trainees' competences (leadership and tolerance) to be assessed as part of the learning activity were determined in consultation with the teachers and the trainer. The competencies were contextualized in line with the project goals and activities. The trainer was asked to fill out the LEVEL5 assessment tools for each detainee (a total of 5 due to turnover). Assessment for each dimension in LEVEL5 was done for each trainee to summarize the development for each competency. The competences selected for assessment (leadership and tolerance) were selected specifically insofar our training centre did want that to create a debate within the group and the stakeholders to make the mentalities evolve: VET sector must not be generally in consensus. The contextualization of the competences appears to be important in relating the common descriptors to the ones that are relevant to the context of learning activity. Trainer did have some difficulty in using the LEVEL5 system in assessing trainees' competences due to the context of regular turnover. She received help and advices of the VITA French team. Multiple methods of data collections were effective to do the assessment. About the impact of the assessment to the detainees, we can state that the implementation of LEVEL5 has allowed to launch the discussion even if it was usually rough and get people wonder about themselves and their vision of others. The evaluation of informal skills cannot just hide behind the access to a diploma and above gives an overall consideration of the individual. Elsewhere and finally, the detainees found quite fair their assessment.



## Project Impact and Experiences

The teachers and the trainer consider that the implementation of LEVEL5 was a very good way to share and to compare our point of view on detainees. Most of time, we had informal debates on these topics and lines of thought thereby



structuring knowledge of persons. The training session in prison gave the team necessary knowledge on their general work and the LEVEL5 methodology added them fineness and consistency of judgement certainly more adequate in our global approach. The team did have the feeling to learn about their way to observe trainees and the acuity of judgement on them. Our view on detainees had an influence on the good results of the training. For our team it was the first experience with this methodology.

The most difficult step was to identify two topics and above all keep a good balance in the fact of thinking permanently to LEVEL5 and be natural not to overplay one or the other subjects. The team that applied it had to take some extra time in order to familiarise with the reference system content, but in the end, the LEVEL5 has been perceived as a useful tool in extracurricular activities. So the effort was real all along the training course and sometimes a bit time-consuming but the result was very finally interesting: the input-output ratio was good beyond our hopes.

One of the effects on detainees is that LEVEL5 have led them to open their way of thinking about topics to controversy especially in prison. In this place or we do not talk or we solve the problem without discussion. So they made progress in relation to leadership and tolerance competencies: the idea that any subject can be conceptualized in a 3D cube with multiple levels and dimensions had a strong impact for some of them. Several detainees used the LEVEL5 to signify the family they make progress on themselves, they make an effort and they get closer to rehabilitation. Even if the problem is not resolved (tolerance), talk is a first step. The 3D-stage system was a suitable approach to describe competence development of our trainees. This training course was a very concrete action and the objectives were very clear since the beginning as extra-possibilities for them: salary, qualification, shorten the stay in prison, work placement... So, the teamwork didn't have to motivate them at all to act or to be in

daily life in community. Moreover in prison, emotions are palpable. The observation on the 3D-stage system was facilitated.

### **Discussion & Perspectives**

Three teachers out of four were specialists of this public in charge of the training and of the prison sector. For the fourth contributor, she was the technical trainer in sewing for first time and in prison. She did appreciate to be involved about the LEVEL5 approach and not just to evaluate the technical progress of the detainees. The team considers the LEVEL5 was very useful and relevant to determinate precisely the situation of each trainee: that is to say to formalise the informal learning. The LEVEL5 was very helpful to tell the Prison Authorities how the prisoners advanced on the training course on an individual point of view and within the group.

LEVEL5 requires a good level of learning and practice. In our case, the coordinator of INSUP participated in a workshop on LEVEL5 and made the link with the new teamwork. In addition the good communication among the partner teachers and trainer leading the learning activity was essential in sharing experiences and col labourating on the tasks to be accomplished. The system is flexible and very relevant to our training centre. At last, in VET sector, the fact is that the trainers have the obligation to evaluate the trainees and so tools are available.

*Jean-Marie Dubile, Insup*

### ABSTRACT | SUMMARY

"Validation of Informal and Non-Formal Psycho-Pedagogical Competencies of Adult Educators" responds to the European needs by developing specific measures, instruments, strategies for recognition, validation and certification of the competences acquired in non-formal and Informal settings and contexts – especially for adult educators. One of the aims was the validation of social, personal and organizational competences as part of the psycho-pedagogical competencies of adult educators in Greece. The following competences were assessed: communication, self-reflection and problem-solving.

### RATIONALE | BACKGROUND

As the profession of adult educator is not recognized unless the training is formal, the involvement of social partners in the recognition of competences becomes a priority. Frequently, these competences have been acquired in less traditional learning contexts and through a variety of working experiences. Thus, they became difficult to be standardized and validated, especially as in different countries there are different contexts.

### TARGETGROUP | CONTEXT

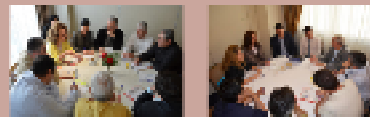
Validpack is directed to all educators defined as trainers. That means, if someone is an adult educator who has trainer experiences for more than one year / 150 h of working with adults, they are entitled to use the Validpack and to get their adult educators' competencies be validated.

### INFORMAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

These took place in 2 Adult Education Centres (KEEs) and 2 CVET Centres (KEKs) in Thessaloniki (1 urban KEE), in Athens (1 urban KEK), and in Crete (1 rural KEK in Chania and 1 urban KEE in Heraklion). During the implementation of the pilot the aim was to look at modes of validation of social, personal and organizational competences as part of the psycho-pedagogical competencies of adult educators and trainers in continuing VET. 80 days in total was the duration of the whole piloting process. This counts to 150 hours over the period between 2 May and 19 July 2013.

### OBJECTIVES

The main aim of the project was to create a set of instruments for the validation of competences of adult educators to make a contribution to the professionalisation of adult educators in Europe and to quality management in the field of Adult Education in Europe.



### EVALUATION

Validpack is organised around three main validation steps: (i) self evaluation, (ii) external evaluation and (iii) consolidation. The adult educator has to prove the indicated competences that define an adult educator. This can either happen through self evaluation or through external evaluation. Some of the most important competences needed in adult education are not directly observable, but can be proved through self evaluation, whereas some competences cannot be easily self assessed, but they need to be observed by an external evaluator.

### RESULTS

The reflection on biography acted as a smooth introduction to the whole process. The mind map is a useful way for the user to condense illustrate what was previously mentioned. Finally, the attachment of the validating documents, fosters the objectivity and validity of the research and helps the user understand which competences he/she "officially" has. As the majority of participants see it, it is organized in a correct way as the self-evaluation introduces the user to the whole process. Subsequently, the external evaluation acts supportively to the first stage by enabling the researcher to draw more objective conclusions.



## **1.5 Validpack: Validation of informal and non-formal psycho-pedagogical competencies of adult educators (VET)**

**Aristotle University Thessaloniki, Greece**

### **Introduction**

“Validation of Informal and Non-Formal Psycho-Pedagogical Competencies of Adult Educators” responds to the European needs by initiating and developing specific measures, instruments, strategies for recognition, validation and certification of the competencies acquired in non-formal and informal settings and contexts – especially for adult educators. Furthermore one of the aim of the project was the validation of SPOCs as part of the psycho-pedagogical competencies of adult educators in Greece. We assessed 3 competences: communication, self-reflection and problem-solving.

### **Setting**

This pilots took place in Thessaloniki (1 urban KEE), in Athens (1 urban KEK), and in Crete (1 rural KEK in Chania and 1 urban KEE in Heraklion). During the implementation of the pilot the aim was to look at modes of validation of SPOCs as part of the psycho-pedagogical competencies of adult educators and trainers in continuing VET. 80 days in total was the duration of the whole piloting process. This counts to 150 hours over the period between 2 May and 19 July 2013.

### **Learning activities**

30 adult educators and VET trainers with at least 2 year teaching experience but with no formal teaching professional qualification or pedagogical training were trained in 3 different cities of Greece. Validpack is directed to all educators defined as trainers. That means, if someone is an adult educator who has trainer experiences for more than one year / 150 h of working with adults, they are entitled to use the Validpack and to get their adult educators’ competencies be validated. All participants essentially reflected on their biography and experience in order to self-assess their psycho-pedagogical competences and essentially to respond to the following:

- What are your previous experiences related to your role/position as a trainer in adult education?

- Have you been involved in adult education activities without having an explicit adult education job (consultant, counsellor, coordinator of study groups etc.)? If yes, please mention them.
- What opportunities for initial and further professional development have you taken as a trainer (courses, peer tutoring, mentoring, study visits, internships etc.).
- What other contexts you find as offering relevant/possible opportunities for the achievement of competences defining the performance as a trainer?
- Which concrete abilities/skills can you associate with a concrete learning context? What competencies have you acquired in this context?
- Can you name concrete activities where you learned/acquired competences/things you now use in your adult education work?
- What are the learning outcomes of the profession / home / leisure time / work etc.?

## Thessaloniki

The process roughly consisted on the following instruments: mind map, reflection on biography, reflection on competences (social and organisational in particular), “attachment”, a possible observation checklist, an interview grid, a validation sheet. In addition to it contained some useful guidelines and indications for adult educators and CVET trainers on how they should approach the validation process. The whole pilot project was organised around three main validation steps: (i) self-evaluation, (ii) external evaluation and (iii) consolidation. The validation was completed only after all the three steps were taken. The process also involved four in-vivo sessions, namely foci groups, in the premises of the adult education centres and CVET structures mentioned previously. 10 adult educators participated in the focus group that was held in Thessaloniki, 10 CVET trainers participated in the focus group that was held in Athens, 5 CVET trainers in the focus group that was held in Chania and 5 adult educators in the focus group that was





held in Heraklion, Crete. During these session adult educators and CVET trainers had to explain (with the help of a facilitator that was appointed by George Zarifis who was also present during the entire process) of their understanding and interpretation of SPOCs in their own working context and provide their feedback on the implementation of VALIDPACK and LEVEL5 as validation tools. Based on a list of short questions (provided in Greek) the facilitators guided through the sessions. Finally, the facilitators collected the feedback in a voice-recorded format which they later transcribed. During the sessions the adult educators and CVET trainers also worked closely with the facilitators in order to reflect on SPOCs and especially to focus on those SPOCs that more easily applied in their cases. The facilitators again provided all the instructions. This process ended with a written report in which the facilitators summarized the results of the four sessions according to the reporting grids of LEVEL5.

## **Athens**

All facilitators are from AUTH and they are trained and qualified adult educators. Their role were to select at least five (5) trainers who are operating/ activating in adult education field, no matter if they are activating in vocational education and training field or in general adult education field. Each facilitator had to provide the trainers the Validpack instrument and to work closely with them in order to help them self-evaluate their competences.



## **Heraklion, Crete**

During the first session of testing the facilitator will present the Validpack instrument and next, the trainers will have to take a look on the instrument and to give their feedback on it at first sight. We provided the facilitator a list of questions that guided the session. Finally, the facilitator collected the feedback. During the



second session of testing, the trainers worked closely with Validpack instrument for a two weeks period, time in which they have to reflect on the three parts of the instrument (to analyze the design, the content and the structure of the instrument) and especially to focus on the first part (to apply the self-evaluation part on themselves). The

project partner provided the facilitator instructions for this testing session. After the two weeks period, the facilitator met the trainers (face to face meetings in Thessaloniki, Athens and Crete) according to a grid provided by the project partners.

### **LEVEL5 evaluation scheme applied to the project**

Level 5 was integrated in the pilot learning activity from the beginning as a way of self-assessing and self-evaluating the psycho-pedagogical competences who participated in the process. The LEVEL5 cube was presented to all participants prior to the Validpack process and the initial idea was the whole process to take place on-line through a platform that was developed for the BACK TO WORK project that introduced a tool for competence validation for employment counsellors, in which we were involved. However the coordinator of that project refused to give access to our participants with the argument that BACK TO WORK platform must be accessed only by employment counsellors. However and since we had already located our participants we decided to visit them ourselves and do the whole process in situ. It must be noted at this point that the pilot was based on the validation procedures prescribed in Validpack, but within the logic of LEVEL 5. The fact that often job relevant competences - SPOC in particular - are not covered by traditional qualification documents is an opinion shared among practitioners, researchers and decision-makers involved in adult education in Greece and elsewhere; as these competences have been acquired in less traditional and official learning contexts and through a variety of working experiences, they become difficult to standardize and validate, especially as in different countries there are different contexts. However, the attempt to validate or accredit prior learning is common: the accreditation of previous & experiential learning (APEL), the French „Bilan de compétence” – not limited to a specific profession, the Swiss Qualifications book „CH-Q”, the German „ProfilPass” or the German „skills analysis”, are only some of the examples used to validate job relevant competencies in Europe. Generally speaking the validation of competences can be described as a process of competence identification, competence measurement and competence assessment that can be done using different methods and instruments. A lot of competences that are job relevant have been developed in informal and non-formal learning contexts. This also applies to the competences defining the adult educator that frequently go unrecognized. A lot of adult educators and trainers interact with adults in a didactical way without an explicit qualification (i.e. a higher education degree in education or pedagogy or andragogy or didactics) for their activity. Most of them have acquired their specific psycho-pedagogical competencies for dealing with adults on the job, through working experiences, during

on the- job trainings, through voluntary work or simply by dwelling with adult learners. According to the above mentioned social and economic new developments and challenges in Europe validation of informal and non-formal psycho-pedagogical competences of adult educators as part of SPOC, needs to be applied by initiating and developing specific measures, instruments, strategies for recognition, validation and certification of the competences acquired in non-formal and informal settings and contexts – especially for adult educators and CVET trainers. Within the context of psycho-pedagogical competences therefore the following SPOC were evaluated: communication competence, intercultural competence (social), self-reflection competence (personal) and problem-solving competence (organisational). In this process LEVEL 5 was essentially integrated in Validpack approach. The reflection on biography acted as a smooth introduction to the whole process since the adult trainer recalls his previous experiences and commences thinking reflectively. The mind map is a useful way for the user to concisely illustrate what was previously mentioned and in a way visualize it. Following, the reflection on competences takes a “deeper dive” into user’s skills and abilities while, finally, the attachment of the validating documents, fosters the objectivity and validity of the research – assisting researcher’s work – as well as helps the user understand which competences he/she “officially” has. As the majority of participants see it, it is organized in a correct way as the self-evaluation introduces the user to the whole process by engaging him/her to a process of self-reflection. Subsequently, the external evaluation acts supportively to the first stage by enabling the researcher to draw more objective conclusions. Finally, the consolidation stage brings the two previous stages together and as a consequence, both participants gain an overall, deep understanding of their work. The instrument is clear and well structured and organised. It is accessible and easy to understand from the first instant. All together –especially the self-evaluation section as most trainers have noted– is comprehensive and useful as it gives the opportunity to trainers and educators to look upon certain issues they haven’t thought before. The appearance is attractive and easy to use. However, it would be more convenient if it had the form of a book instead of a folder; a book with pages that could be detached from the main body. Organization and structure is very clear and so is the methodology. The three steps are very easy to understand and also to respond. Perhaps some parts are too extensive but this is also understandable. If it is to be translated in Greek accessible language should be used as some questions needed clarification by the facilitators. This is easy to adapt in the Greek context considering that the majority of those acting as adult educators and trainers have no degrees (some perhaps have the certification from

EKEPIS, the National Accreditation Centre but this is different). The language needs to be clear and perhaps some examples on how to fill in sections like in the self-evaluation step and consolidation could be useful. Also a short pilot procedure before applying the instrument to different groups would also be useful as many adult educators in Greece would be sceptical in using this instrument for their validation. Finally, it is also important to consider who will apply this instrument. If it is the University it is reliable, but trainers should not be under the impression that this validation equals to a university degree or certificate. After the instrument is translated into Greek we will have to make it known to those interested. A way of disseminating this form of validation will also demand adaptation to the laws and ministerial decisions on validation and APEL that will be enacted soon.

### **Expected project impact and experiences**

This is easy to adapt in the Greek context considering that the majority of those acting as adult educators and trainers have no degrees (some perhaps have the certification from EKEPIS, the National Accreditation Centre but this is different). The language needs to be clear and perhaps some examples on how to fill in sections like in the self-evaluation step and consolidation could be useful. Also a short pilot procedure before applying the instrument to different groups would also be useful as many adult educators in Greece would be sceptical in using this instrument for their validation. Finally, it is also important to consider who will apply this instrument. If it is the University it is reliable, but trainers should not be under the impression that this validation equals to a university degree or certificate. Perhaps it would be useful if self-evaluation could be processed online as well as consolidation. It is not always easy to access adult educators and trainers or arrange a certain time to meet with them. External evaluation of course is different as the evaluator needs to be present and observe but also take the interview. The interview could also take place through the phone or online through 'skype' or teleconferencing when this is possible maybe. Based on the feedback of the participants the instrument is clear and well-structured and organised. It is easy to comprehend and from the beginning all facilitators were attracted by its format. The language is clear and simple. When it is translated to Greek, similar language should be used. It will be well received depending on whether it is or not adapted to the national legislation. If the validation is used and provided by trained people from the University then the degree of reliability will be high and many adult educators and trainers without any credentials but with long experience in the area will decide to come and be validated. If it is provided by an external organization

i.e. non-university or even more so irrelevant to adult education and training, then many people will look at it in a suspicious way as similar attempts were not well received lately. For example the EOPPEP certifies trainers but now most trainers would rather go and have a degree instead. The university is a good place to provide validation using this instrument.

*Georgios Zarifis, AuTh*

## 1.6 Specialised and Applied Palliative Care (VET)

### BUPNET, Germany

#### Introduction

This learning project was a certified qualification course for employees in the field of geriatric care in rural areas in northern Germany on the issue of palliative care. Palliative care is understood as an individual, holistic care and support strategy for people with incurable diseases and people in the last phase of their lives. The course, awarding with a credited certificate in line with German care law, was organised in several extra occupational modules and took place from Mai to October 2013. The course focused on the key issues and problems of palliative care and provided insights, viewpoints, and the corresponding social, technical and methodological skills.

#### Setting

The aim of the piloting was to evaluate the development of competencies related to coping with (chronic) stress, which is considered an integral part of the work of a nurse. The choice of



the topic was based on the notion that this competence is crucial in order to be able to permanently work in this field, which is characterized by heavy physical and mental burdens and low salary. Also this was the main cross cutting issue for the participants, frequently discussed on the side during all the modules of the course, indicating the high importance dealing with stress has for the nurses and being an ideal example of informal learning.

#### Learning activities

The course consisted of 160 teaching hours in classroom blocks of three days each, plus 40 hours of shadowing to deepen the theoretical content. The lessons were held from 09.00 - 16.00 o'clock. The lessons focused on theoretical inputs and moderated reflection rounds, additional work shadowing at the nursing homes served to apply and deepen the learning content. In 6 modules the participants learned the basic knowledge of pain management and symptom control; Burn -out and self-care: psychologi-

cal aspects of coping; communication and working with relatives; special possibilities of basic care and treatment; dealing with dying, death and grief; religious , cultural and ethical aspects of palliative care.

### **Level 5 Evaluation Scheme Applied to the Project**

The aim of the piloting was to evaluate the development of competencies related to cope with (chronic) stress as integral part of the work of a nurse. The competence assessment was not integrated into the course. It took place approximately 3 months after the end of the course. The assignment (as internal service at BUPNET) to evaluate the course was given only after it had ended so that it was not possible to integrate the assessment into the course nor to do an ex ante assessment. Thus the procedure had to be planned in a way that made it possible to cover the before-state as well, retrospectively getting answers about a state about 6 months before. In order to achieve this and to gain meaningful results the strategy developed built on the close relationship and great confidence that had developed between the participating ladies and the course manager , who was the one giving the lectures on burnout prevention during the course. It was assumed that participants would feel more free to speak about their coping with stress with someone they know well, rather than if questioned by someone external or in a paper questionnaire. Thus telephone based interviews were conducted which followed an interview questionnaire, that served to document the results as well.

The interview questionnaire was designed in to cover the before and after and to deliver indicators to allocate the answers to the respective levels and dimensions in the reference system. Literature on coping with stress and the contents conveyed during the course in the module about burn-out prevention were the knowledge basis for producing the described materials. Before the interviews were held, the materials went through a feedback loop, being commented by persons working in the field and knowing the target group and their understanding of questions well and were then refined accordingly. The analysis of the results and the ratings, including reasoning was quite time consuming as the questionnaire was rather complex and indicators were very individual, which made it difficult to standardise the rating procedure. A rough structure resulted from dividing coping strategies for stress into several categories, e.g. such aiming at relief on the physical, social or individual level in terms of self-perception and expectations. Also the intensity and frequency of the application of certain coping strategies was considered for the ratings.

The results of the individual ratings were offered to the participants during the interviews. They were informed about the context of the evaluation and application of the results and guaranteed anonymity. Those who were interested were marked by the interviewer to later receive certificates. These were distributed in November 2013 to 8 of the 12 persons interviewed. For the purpose of VITA anonymized certificates was created for all learners who participated in the interviews.

## **Project Impact and Experiences**

The outcome of the evaluation was satisfactory. It could be shown, that all participants improved their way of coping with stress in one way or another. The interview questionnaire included a question on the state of well-being before and after to allow a cross check and almost all persons interviewed stated a more or less significant improvement of their subjective well-being.



Interestingly most participants intensified their coping strategies in regard to their social environment and interaction, like active conflict solving or using opportunities to exchange about stressful experiences, and those in regard to their self-image and the expectations directed towards themselves. The intensification of physical measures was mentioned comparatively seldom. The results of the knowledge dimension showed least variance. A possible explanation for this result could be the similar educational level and work context of the participants and the fact that they all received the same inputs.

LEVEL5 was not integrated into the course, so it is not possible to comment on the impact it would have had for the development of the competency assessed, as the reflective interviews were held after and there was no follow up assessment. Generally it can be said that reflecting on ones own learning stimulates competence development and may create motivation to further improvement. In terms of competence development the evaluation results clearly showed a development in the observed competence for all persons interviewed. The learners were open for the assessment as they felt that the topic is important for them personally and were open to reflect their learning progress in this regard. The ones deciding to receive certificates documenting



their learning outcome weren't sure if they would use it to display their development towards others, like the employer, but appreciated to have a documentation in which their learning is contextualized against the reference system.

## **Discussion & Perspectives**

This project proved that retrospective assessments are possible and lead to satisfying results. The main difficulty in this regard was the design of the assessment materials, as they needed to be more complex and sophisticated as if the before and after assessments would be pursued in two separate situations. The interview situation made it possible to stimulate the participants reflection by additional questions. If it would have been a pure paper based survey it can be guessed that it would have been much more difficult to gain meaningful results.

LEVEL5 is a valuable instrument to assess and visualise progress in competence developments informally gained. Already we're working on applying the approach to courses in the health care sector and for a youths training on soft skills. Therefore new reference systems have been developed focussing on the competences on communication as team leader in the nursing sector and communication in a team for the youngsters. The experiences gathered in SuperMAN and Palliative Care are valuable and helpful to reduce future effort and for the design of the assessment and rating procedures.

*Sabine Wiemann & Julia Busche, BUPNET*



### ABSTRACT | SUMMARY

SuperMAN aimed at opening the theme of accessibility to the social level, promoting accessibility especially for cognitively disabled people. In 2007 in France, some supermarkets implemented training courses to enable their staff to deal with mentally disabled people. SUPER MAN's goal was to transfer the good practice developed in France to Italy and Germany in the framework of a Leonardo transfer of innovation project running from 2011-2013.

### RATIONALE | BACKGROUND

Within SuperMAN the French concept was adapted to Italian and German conditions - about 100 employees of CONAD in Italy and tegut... in Germany were trained. The 60 participating markets were awarded with the symbol of social accessibility which enabled them to communicate their engagement for an inclusive society towards their clients. The future perspective is to spread the initiative to other public spaces in accordance with the European priority of promoting inclusion and equality combating discrimination based on disability.

### TARGETGROUP | CONTEXT

The participants are staff of partner supermarkets. In particular, employees in contact with clients, market leaders, department heads and security staff. Most fulfilled a vocational training as salespersons but hardly any participants had academic or theoretical background about learning or the social psychology of customers, but much experience in practically dealing with people of all kinds. The SuperMAN training made them aware of their capability to deliver good service to all clients and strengthened their motivation to do so.

### OBJECTIVES

The word accessibility often is associated with the elimination of architectural barriers. SuperMAN dealt with the topic of accessibility from the perspective of those who are affected by cognitive disability or dementia. By training persons working in public spaces how to meet their needs is a concrete contribution to promote an inclusive society. The logo on the right visualises this engagement.

### INFORMAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

The informal learning about how to adequately support persons with cognitive disabilities or dementia in doing their shopping happened at the supermarket. In a short theory session participants learned what difficulties these clients may have in everyday life - and how you can help them when shopping. Practical exercises completed this part of the training. In the practice phase the participants transferred their new skills into the supermarkets. This process of sharing experiences and thus addressing and reflecting the theme of the training guaranteed the sustainability of the training.



### EVALUATION

Competence evaluated: "client orientation in relation to clients with cognitive disorders". The competence development of 40 participants is assessed with the LEVEL50 method. Methodology: mix of self-evaluation (questionnaires and learning diary) and peer evaluation. External supervision of a level5 expert.



### RESULTS

Through LEVEL5 it was possible to demonstrate the great competence development of each participant involved. Many had taken the initiative to learn more about disability and dementia and felt obliged to share their knowledge and experience with colleagues and others in order to contribute to an inclusive society. In regard to their attitudes fears of interaction and alienation decreased and confidence to be able to do a good job increased.

## 1.7 SuperMAN – Supermarkets meet Accessibility Needs in Germany (VET)

### BUPNET, Germany

#### Introduction

SUPERMAN aimed at opening the theme of accessibility to the social level, specifically in promoting accessibility to public spaces for mentally disabled people or persons suffering from dementia. The problems to tackle in this regard are related to the restraints of these customers and the barriers resulting from these, thus are more relational and cultural than architectonic. In 2007 in France, some supermarkets implement training courses for their staff in order to make supermarkets accessible places for cognitively disabled people. SuperMAN's goal is to import the good practice developed in France to Italy and Germany.



Symbol of social accessibility

#### Setting

The learning activities of the project took place between end of February and beginning of June 2013. In this period 6 trainings for staff of supermarkets took place to convey knowledge about the specific needs of cognitively disabled persons as customers, to open space to exchange experiences made with these persons and to reflect on ways to implement the concept social accessibility in the markets.

#### Learning activities

The trainings had a duration of 5 hours and consisted of theoretical inputs on cognitive disability and dementia and ways to meet the needs of these persons. Further moderated reflection rounds about experiences and ways to implement changes and role plays were exercised, which were designed to make the participants anticipate difficult situations that may arise for cognitively disabled persons when shopping at the supermarket. The practical part of the learning, applying the training content in real life situations, took place at the work places of the participants, the supermarkets.

#### LEVEL5 Evaluation Scheme Applied to the Project

The topic selected to be assessed was “Customer orientation towards clients with cognitive disabilities”. The LEVEL5 evaluation was based on evaluation questionnaires handed out at the end of the training and partly on contributions of the participants during the training and documented directly after for the first assessment. The second



SuperMAN training in Sondershausen, March 2013

assessment was based on questionnaires only, which were sent to the participants three months after the training. The evaluation with LEVEL5 was not communicated to the participants of the training as evaluation of competence development; instead it was justified as a measure of quality assurance. Hence it wasn't introduced explicitly to the participants of the training nor integrated explicitly into the learning activity.

The learning outcomes of the reference system in the cognitive dimension reached from “knowing that customers with cognitive disorders can have special needs and may behave in unpredictable ways” (Level 1) to “intuitively knowing (or to be able to acquire knowledge on) how to deal with customers with different cognitive disorders in different contexts” (LEVEL5).

Related to activity the range was defined between “perceiving and recognising (“not normal”) behaviours of customers with cognitive disorders that may require support, without acting” (Level 1) and “developing of own ways of interacting with and to support customers with different cognitive disorders, that go beyond purely helping to shop” (LEVEL5). Attitudes described in the affective dimensions ranged from “anticipating needs and problems of customers with cognitive disorders based on own perception and experience” (Level 1) and “developing own ways of interacting with and to support customers with different cognitive disorders, that go beyond purely helping to shop” (LEVEL5).

Indicators were derived from the individual answers given in the questionnaire (or observations made during the trainings) according to the level descriptions of the reference system.

## **Project Impact and Experiences**

The outcome of the evaluation was satisfactory. It could be shown, that all participants improved their ways of dealing with cognitive disabled clients in one or more dimensions. Some participants mainly improved on the knowledge level, having a very positive attitude and acting accordingly already at the beginning. Others questioned their own views on disability and mainly showed improvement on the affective side.

The results of the assessment helped to differentiate the learners' needs in regard to the SuperMAN training offer. It was shown that older employees are much more advanced in dealing with special needs customers, just by their professional experience. Thus training for older staff needs other emphasis than a training for younger supermarket staff in regard to the relation of theoretical inputs and space for reflection and exchange.

## **Discussion & Perspectives**

LEVEL5 professionally applied delivers good results, whether it is used as evaluation tool for the quality and design of learning offers as in this case, or as means to foster self-reflection of learners in respect to their learning progress and competence development as result of informal learning and thus to raise awareness for informal learning in general. Presently we're working on applying the approach to courses in the health care sector. Therefore new reference systems have been developed focussing on the competences to cope with stress and on communication as team leader in the nursing sector. The experiences gathered in Superman are valuable for the development of new approaches.

*Julia Busche, BUPNET*

## 1.8 SuperMAN – Supermarkets meet Accessibility Needs in Italy (VET)

**Blinc, Germany**

### Introduction

SuperMAN aims at analysing the field of accessibility for mentally disabled people. The problems to tackle are cognitive and psychic difficulties and the barriers are more relational and cultural than architectural. Considering the specific needs of mentally disabled people, the project aims to design and implement actions to allow them a fully social inclusion. In 2007 in France, some supermarkets implement training courses for their staff in order to make supermarkets accessible places for mentally disabled people. SuperMAN's goal is to import the good practice developed in France to Italy and Germany. The project aims to promote mentally disabled people in accordance with the European priority of promoting inclusion and equality combating discrimination based on disability.



### Setting

The Project started on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2011 and ended on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2013, and the Italian pilot took place in Forlì (Emilia-Romagna).

### Learning activities

From the point of view of blinc, the aim of the learning activity was to assess the participants' development of the competence "client orientation in relation to clients with cognitive disorders. Therefore, the target group, employees of supermarkets, went through a training that was divided in three phases: 1 day face-to-face training, 3 months of practical period at their workplace, and 1 day face-to-face wrap-up session and LEVEL5 evaluation. There was never a knowledge input on cognitive disorders, indeed the face-to-face training was mostly facilitation of group work and of action



learning (such as role-plays).

### **LEVEL5 Evaluation Scheme Applied to the Project**

It is important to note that LEVEL5 was integrated in the learning activity from the very beginning. A specific reference system was developed according to the needs of the participants and the context of the learning activity and then shared with the trainers. During the initial face-to-face training the trainer briefly and simply introduced LEVEL5 to the participants, explaining that the development of the competence was going to be assessed at the end of the learning activity. Also, participants were asked to keep a learning diary during the 3 months of the practical phase and wrote the first entry during the face-to-face event. Then, during the final face-



to-face session, at the end of the 3 months, a LEVEL5 expert explained again to the participants the concept of this innovative system, going more in details and showing the cube. Then, the expert guided the self and tandem assessment. At the beginning of the training, the participants did not quite understand the process and the value of LEVEL5 assessment; however, at the end they were all very interested and self-involved in the evaluation and were glad to receive a certificate showing their competence development.

### **Project Impact and Experiences**

The final results of the piloting were extremely positive, considering both the learners' appreciation and the usability of LEVEL5. In fact, through LEVEL5 it was possible to demonstrate the great competence development of each participant involved. The system was extremely useful in helping the learner realising the learning process and its results. Many had taken the initiative to learn more about disability and dementia and felt obliged to share their knowledge and experience with colleagues and others in order to contribute to an inclusive society. On the other hand, blinc was able to not only

meet the goal of managing a high number of assessments with good quality, but the approach developed and tested in the pilot (of pre-formatted learning outcomes) is extremely interesting since it can be transferred and used in any other learning activity.

### **Discussion & Perspectives**

One suggestion to improve the experience is to use neutral learning outcomes, using for instance “the participant” or “the learner”, instead of changing every time the name of the participant in the descriptions. It is time consuming and errors are easy to occur. Also, in case of pure self-assessment, the system could offer just pre-formatted learning outcomes without the summary of the learning process and the summary of the evaluation. In general we will continue using such approach of pre-formatted learning outcomes, especially in cases of self-assessment and high number of learners. In fact, we believe that the approach can match a number of different projects and actions. In particular, we are already adopting the same system in another European-funded project called Educckate (<http://educckate.eu#!/home>).

To sum up, the system was found to be extremely practicable and the outcomes were widely accepted.

*Enrica Pautasso, blinc*



## BA students of Career Guidance going to practical work placement

### ABSTRACT | SUMMARY

2nd year BA students of Career Guidance as part of their formal training went for a practical work placement to different organizations, mostly secondary schools. The placement lasted from February to May, 2013.



### TARGETGROUP | CONTEXT

Undergraduate students in their formal higher education receive high amounts of theoretical knowledge. However, their future work contexts will require high levels of personal and social competences, especially communication.



### OBJECTIVES

To assess the social competence of the BA students before and after their practical work placement. The future work contexts of these students will require high levels of personal and social competences.



### EVALUATION

The activity is initiated by the Department of Education, where students study for four years. As part of their placement students watch lessons in schools and later organize career guidance and other activities for the secondary school students.



### RATIONALE | BACKGROUND

LEVEL5 system was used to assess students' social competence before and after the practical work placement. The system allowed to increased levels of social competence for the students who participated.



### INFORMAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

170 hrs, usually 1 day a week, students spent in their future real job environment. For most of them this was a first encounter with professional relations and communication. Students had the possibility to increase their social skills.

### RESULTS

LEVEL5 allows to document progress of the key non-formal social and personal competences for HE students that are not otherwise documented as their learning outcomes.

## 1.9 BA students of Career Guidance going to practical work placements (HE)

### Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania

#### Introduction

BA students of Career Guidance at Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas went for a practical work placement to different organizations as part of their formal undergraduate training. Their *communication* competence before and after the placement was assessed.

#### Setting

The learning project took place in Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania. The participants were undergraduate students of Career Guidance. Their assessment started February 4, 2013 with the first assessment of their communication competence before their practical work placement and finished with the second assessment after their placement on May 15, 2013.

#### Learning activities

The participants were undergraduate HE students in their 2<sup>nd</sup> year of studies (4 yrs in total). After graduation they will work as career counsellors in schools or hold any other administrative or non-formal training positions in the education sector. Practical work placement is a mandatory part of credit courses. Students have their practical work placement in schools. However, formally students are graded for attendance, performance and final report of the placement.



#### LEVEL5 Evaluation Scheme Applied to the Project

The activity was initiated by the Department of Education, Vytautas Magnus University. Students were introduced to the LEVEL5 system and filled in the questionnaire that was operationalised according to the level and dimension descriptions of the commu-

nication competence. Students were interested to perform validation of the learning experience during practical work placement in schools.

Undergraduate students in their formal higher education receive high amounts of theoretical knowledge. However, their future work contexts will require high levels of personal and social competences, especially communication. Therefore, there is much expected that during their practical work placement in real life and workplace situations their communication competence may be increased. During their placement in schools students watch lessons and later organize career guidance and other extra-curricular education activities for the secondary school students. It is expected that students get acquainted with the practical functioning of a secondary education establishment, start practicing their career guidance skills and boost their communication competencies in real business environment. Students have their practical work placement mentors in schools, but their *before/after* validation of social competence was estimated by education department lecturers (participants of VITA project). The lecturer (mentor) welcomed the idea of assessment of a personal competence (social competence) in this case. She was shortly introduced into the system of 5 levels and 3D cube. She appreciated the idea, but it was evident that application of the system requires additional training and experience, so in this case the mentor of the practical work placement has passed assessment role to the LEVEL5 team.

Participants' efforts were eased by the fact that a self-assessment questionnaire related to certain levels of each dimension was prepared for them. Their achievements were easily transferred into questions that were connected to respective levels. Therefore students embraced the self-assessment willingly and eager to receive assessment of their social competence. They found it mostly easy to answer the questions, but also need guidance and certain amount of counseling as well.



Using the system in partly self-assessment way combined with partial expert discussions and counseling is feasible in assessing non-formal achievement of social competences in practical work placement in HE.

## **Project Impact and Experiences**

This validation experience was very useful for the learners themselves as they admitted that they had a chance to get to know more about themselves, their learning and their own communication skills. The experience was very beneficial for the validating teachers (participating in the project) and the department as LEVEL5 opened opportunities for validation of personal and social competencies.

## **Discussion & Perspectives**

LEVEL5 is very logical, persistent and systematic. It could be employed to validate social competences of students in practical work placement. The deficiency is that it is still rather demanding in terms of time and human resources. There are good perspectives for further use at VMU, but further developments are necessary to be made in order to make the process less time consuming.

*Elena Trepule & Ausra Rutkienė, VMU*

## 1.10 Inclusion Leadership (HE)

VIA University College and Skanderborg Municipality, Denmark

### Introduction

'Inclusion leadership' was an action learning program for leaders of Danish kindergartens. It took place in spring 2013.

### Setting

'Inclusion leadership' is part of a local municipality's policy implementation of the policy of including children with special needs in regular kindergartens. The inclusion policy is implemented partly by education of the pedagogical staff and leaders of kindergartens, partly by New Public Management measures, i.e. contracts and economic incentives. The educational part is directed toward pedagogical aspects of inclusion. The leaders typically hold a BA in pedagogy, many of them also a diploma in management and/or pedagogy. They were supposed to participate in the learning activity to improve their competencies as leaders of inclusion and in particular to support their newly trained staff.



### Learning activities

The leaders met four afternoons over three months at a local municipal school and did action learning in their own kindergartens. In the afternoons they had lectures and group work facilitated by lecturers from VIA University College.

### LEVEL5 Evaluation Scheme Applied to the Project

The focal competence, described and assessed with LEVEL5 was naturally named 'Inclusion leadership'. One of the lecturers formulated goals and indicators in LEVEL5 for 'Leading Inclusion', and used it as scaffold in her pedagogical planning of her part

of the learning activity. She introduced the LEVEL5 for 'Leading Inclusion' in her class during the second session, and the participants assessed themselves in a setting in which they could talk with peers in their team of leaders. In the fourth and final session, the leaders assessed themselves again.

A guiding principle for us in the piloting was that the activities should be an enriching experience for both the lecturer and the participants. In particular, we didn't want to bother and possibly bore them with the evaluation part. We therefore chose to ask them to reflect on their experience with LEVEL5 and chose to use their reflections as data. Reflection is regarded as a giving, but often too rare activity in our target group. The disadvantage of this method is that the data we got are unstructured and the conclusions depend heavily on our interpretation. However, there are so many clear trends in the replies that we do not see this as a major issue. During the second course session, the participants were presented for LEVEL5 for 'Leading Inclusion'. When they had evaluated themselves, they were asked to sit in silence and write down the reflections elicited by working with the schemas. This procedure was repeated the same during the fourth and final course session.

Many wrote, "it starts me thinking" and then they mentioned considerations on their leading and steps they wanted to take. Some expressed considerations specifically on leading inclusion, and among them, some also wrote about their uncertainties concerning leading inclusion. Others addressed the forms as a self-



assessment tool. In different ways, some of them said that "consciousness of the levels is useful". But others draw attention to the contingency of the assessments. It depends on the situation and on which level you are at. A handful of the participants are critical: They express that the assessments should be made in dialog with their employees i.e. not as self-assessment in the class. Two desisted from the use of the forms. You cannot measure competences this way, they said.

At the fourth and final session, there had been some rotation of the participants. Hence, some mentioned that it was the first time they saw the forms. They were fewer, and fewer of them handed in their reflections (23 the second time compared to 35 the

first time). Several of the participants related their reflections to “how far I myself am now”, as one stated it. They used metaphors like “I have moved forward” in their descriptions. And “It is good to ensure that one keeps on one’s toes,” one participant wrote. In other words, they identify with the goals and concept of LEVEL5.

Some discussed the usefulness of the forms in a leader-team: “You need openness,” one writes. Another said that the forms helped them to talk about the process in a good way. The general attitude to the forms was positive. But one wrote that reality is more complex and subtle.” Another said that “there are too many words in the forms”. A couple restated the criticism of using the forms in the class. But regardless of their attitude, they expressed that they found it good to reflect on their leading.

### **Project Impact and Experiences**

The immediate effect of using LEVEL5 was explained by the lecturer who formulated the goals and indicators for ‘Leading Inclusion’: It directly influenced her pedagogical planning as she used these goals as targets. The participants’ reflections indicate that some of them seem to shape their understanding of the way they lead their employees’ work with inclusion by the wording in LEVEL5. Furthermore, some of the participating leaders said that they have used LEVEL5 for ‘Leading Inclusion’ in their team of leaders as a way of guiding their reflections. Thus it is most likely that it has some impact on the way inclusion is led and on the understanding of the leading of inclusion in the kindergartens of the municipality. But our data does not allow us to trace the impact further, and the matter will certainly be diffused by the influence of many other activities.

### **Discussion & Perspectives**

The LEVEL5 for ‘Leading Inclusion’ is adopted by some the lecturer’s at the department of continuous education at VIA University College. Schematic methods are more and more adopted in the field of pedagogy and schematic management methods are reintroduced in leading, so we expect that there might be an interest for LEVEL5 in the general area as well as at VIA University College. On the other hand, a sceptical attitude toward it – similar to the attitude expressed by one of the participants – also exists.

*Anne Lund, VIA College*

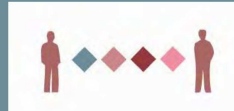
### ABSTRACT | SUMMARY

The project involved high school students calculating carbon footprint of school and developing strategies to reduce carbon emission. Students were guided by two science teachers. The school put some of these strategies into action to reduce carbon emission.



### TARGETGROUP | CONTEXT

All students, teachers and administrators at METU College were targeted to raise awareness about climate change and carbon emission. The school is a private one, where the implementation of the project activities went smoothly.



### INFORMAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Calculating the school's carbon footprint and developing strategies to reduce it, developing activities to raise awareness among students of climate change and ways to mitigate it. The project was carried out through collaborative learning, action learning and problem solving.



### EVALUATION

**Competences:**

team learning & problem solving

**Methods:**

self-assessment, teacher assessment, interviews and observations

**Group:**

Eight students involved in project

**Process:**

Assessment for each dimension in LEVEL5 was done for each student to summarize the development for each competency.

### RATIONALE | BACKGROUND

Climate change issues receive much attention in Turkey. The project took place in 2012 and 2013. Club GREEN teachers implemented it with students and two professors and a researcher assisted them in developing strategies and activities.

### OBJECTIVES

- Calculate carbon footprint of the school and develop strategies to reduce it
- Raise awareness among other students toward climate change and ways to mitigate it
- Assess competencies developed



### RESULTS

- Piloting showed LEVEL5 is useful to assess informal learning outcomes that are not measured through traditional assessment.
- Competencies (team learning and problem solving) were the core skills developed.
- Contextualization of competencies was helpful in meaningful assessment.
- Multiple data collection was critical.



## 1.11 CLIMES - Climate Friendly School Management System (School)

### Middle East Technical University Foundation College (METU School), Turkey

#### Introduction

As an extracurricular activity, the CLIMES project seeks to involve teachers and students at METU School in creating an approach to reduce carbon emission of the school and develop an awareness to be more environment- friendly in school related activities and processes. Within this framework, the METU School has developed a structure to introduce the topic of climate change mitigation and adaptation to promote key competences in innovative learning environments. Students (N=8) involved in the project were guided by two science teachers and two professors from Middle East Technical University (METU). Specific objectives of the project included: (1) calculate carbon footprint of the school and develop strategies to reduce it, (2) raise awareness among other students toward climate change and ways to mitigate it, and (3) assess competencies developed in the project through LEVEL 5 approach.

#### Setting

CLIMES Project took place at a private high school (METU School) on the campus of Middle East Technical University in Ankara, Turkey in 2012 and 2013. All students, teachers and administrators at METU School were targeted to raise awareness about climate change and carbon emission. Our working project group involved



eight students; seven are females and one male. They mostly came from above average income families with university education. Academically these students were well established, and they were in the process of preparing a high stakes test called university entrance exam. The group came together on voluntary grounds to form the Green Team Club. Although students were volunteers they needed to be involved in any available club or proposed one based on their choices as a partial fulfilment of extra-curricular activities in the school context. Students ranged from 9th graders to 11th graders and their ages were between 15 and 17.

## Learning activities

The Project involved high school students calculating carbon footprints of schools and developing strategies to reduce carbon emission. Project activities involved carbon footprint calculation, developing strategies to reduce carbon footprint, developing activities and presentations to raise awareness among students toward climate change and ways to mitigate it. The Project was carried out through col labourative learning, action learning and problem solving.

## LEVEL5 Evaluation Scheme Applied to the Project

We chose team learning and problem solving as the major topics to assess through LEVEL5 approach. For assessment, we used methods of self-assessment, teacher assessment, questionnaires, interviews and observations. The



learners were informed about the validation, and they were asked to do self and peer-evaluation to provide additional data for assessing informal learning competencies. Students were interested in this assessment process since they saw it as a motivating factor in participation in the project. Through the guidance of the research assistant, students provided data in relation to teamwork and problem solving competencies developed in themselves and in their friends. The data involved descriptions of these competencies developed within the context of CLIMES Project activities, examples to processes in relation to teamwork and problem solving competencies and their own feelings regarding these competencies.

Teamwork and problem solving competencies were chosen to be assessed in the project since they seemed to be the most critical competencies for the success of the project. Teamwork competence involved cooperation and col labouration among project members in relation to achieving the objectives of the project. This process involved frequent meetings among students, sharing of responsibility, close interaction and communication among members, col labourative work to carry out the tasks and activities in the project. Problem solving competence involved a reflective and problem solving approach to the process of carbon footprint calculation, reducing carbon emission

of the school and awareness raising activities among students in the school. Calculation of carbon footprint was not an easy task and required students to be creative in finding alternative ways of data collection and data analysis. In addition, to reduce the carbon emission of the school students had to adapt a problem solving approach since many of the areas of reducing carbon emission (such as energy use, transportation, garbage disposal) did not present easy solutions for the students. So students had to use critical and creative thinking to find solutions to the problems experienced in these areas.

Teamwork and problem solving competencies were described within the context of CLIMES Project activities and potential outcomes for students involved in the project. These two competencies were contextualized in three dimensions: cognitive, activity and affective. Each of these dimensions were further described by using a five level scale ranging from the very basic level of the competence (such as knowing teamwork is required) to the most sophisticated level (such as integrating team competencies into personal and professional life). These contextualized competencies are presented in the LEVEL5 tables for the Turkish Team on the project WEB site. This helped students and teachers in assessing the competencies developed as a result of the project activities for each individual student.

These competencies were assessed in the Spring of 2013 as the project activities became more intense through awareness raising seminars, visits to sites in relation to environment protection and alternative energy use and changes in the school energy, water use. The assessment involved data collection by the teachers in school, questionnaire implementation with students and teachers, interviews with students and teachers, observations and document analysis. These data were analyzed to determine students' beginning and end levels in relation to teamwork and problem solving competencies.

In addition to the data collected from teachers and students for the individual students, teachers and students were also asked to do assessment for these competencies for individual students. Eventually all these inputs were brought together to define students' beginning and end levels in relation to teamwork and problem solving competencies. Ratings for individual students were checked several times based on the data collected by the research assistant in the project and the inputs of students and teachers.

This assessment process worked fine in terms of using various data sources and triangulating all these various data in validating the ratings and respective descriptions for the students' developed competency levels. However, data collection could better be done next time at the beginning of the project as well since both teachers and students had difficult time in remembering and describing their beginning competency levels for this project. In addition, the LEVEL5 system could be introduced to the teachers and students earlier in the project life so that they could continuously collect data to support decisions in relation to the assessment of the competencies of students.

### **Project Impact and Experiences**

Teachers thought that filling out the LEVEL5 forms for each student takes time but it is worth to spend this time since it is descriptive and shows improvement. So the time and effort they spent seem to be worthwhile to both. Since one of them had participated in LEVEL5



workshop in Gottingen, she had a good idea of what LEVEL5 was and in what ways it should be used. Teachers looked at different examples of LEVEL5 competencies and how these competencies were assessed in different learning activity contexts. Teachers thought that many competencies would be relevant to CLIMES Project implementation such as team building, problem solving, communication, leadership, research, etc.

Teachers found the contextualized descriptions of teamwork and problem solving relevant and shared them with students. Students thought both competencies and the levels in three dimensions (cognitive, affective and activity) were relevant to the experiences they went through in the project.

There was concern with the LEVEL5 tool in the minds of teachers. To what degree would they be to the point in assessing students in relation to these two competencies? They were instructed that they could use their own observations and their informal interviews with the students. In fact the two teachers found it useful to discuss

their assessments of each student to make sure that they are not subjective and not missing relevant sources of data. Teachers were also assured that the interviews and observations carried out by the project research assistant could also be used to corroborate their assessment. With this direction, teachers felt more comfortable in assessing students along the LEVEL5 cube.

Students seemed to like the idea of assessing themselves on these competencies since that was the first time they were being assessed descriptively in terms of their informal learning outcomes. One of the effects of using LEVEL5 in Project CLIMES was that students were motivated to take part in similar projects once they learned that they would have a certificate/e-portfolio to document their achievement in this activity. In this sense LEVEL5 can be a motivating factor for other students who think of joining in similar learning activities.

Another effect on students is that LEVEL5 provided them with a way of thinking about the progress they made in relation to team building and problem solving competencies. Conceptualization of their competencies could be helpful in sharing their achievements with significant others such as parents, teachers, future employers, etc.

One effect for the teachers was that they have systematic way of thinking in relation to areas they need to focus on in future learning activities since LEVEL5 helped them see each competence could have different dimensions and each dimension with different level of achievement. Both team building and problem solving competencies are not simply one entity not but a competence with different dimensions and levels. This way of thinking makes it easier for them to plan activities in Clubs for students to make better progress in relation to these competencies. Another effect on teachers is that they have a way of showing to school administrators and parents what they achieve for each student in these extracurricular activities.

Overall, we find that LEVEL5 has been perceived as a useful tool to do self and student assessment in extracurricular activities.

## **Discussion & Perspectives**

The competencies selected for this learning activity (team building and problem solving) will be used to assess participants in other similar extracurricular activities. In fact two additional schools showed interest in using LEVEL5 approach in their extracurricular activities and the descriptions were sent to them in Turkish. One school immedi-

ately started using these competencies within the context of various club activities in school. So this approach could prove effective in the long run in documenting the progress students make in extracurricular activities in many schools since they seem to spend much time and effort in these activities yet do not have a systematic approach to assess and document the learning outcomes students achieve.

In determining the competencies, we had difficult time to choose. There seemed to be too many competencies relevant to the implementation of Project CLIMES in METU School. The two project coordinators thought of different competencies and they discussed these with teachers. Among these were team building, problem solving, communication, leadership, flexibility, learning to learn, conflict management, interpersonal skills, research, global thinking, etc. The number of these competencies and the difficulty we had in choosing the most relevant ones showed that how much we ignored in the past the informal learning outcomes these activities produced and how they went by without sufficient recognition. Then we said an approach like LEVEL5 is certainly necessary to assess and document these learning outcomes since they could as important as (maybe more) content related outcomes. We seem to share this perspective with teachers as well as the two schools that showed interest as soon as they saw the news in the national media in relation to Project VITA. There is a need certainly to establish a system of assessing and certifying these informal learning outcomes in schools.

Assessment of informal outcomes has been much needed action in education of students in schools at all levels. This piloting has shown that the assessment could contribute to validation of these outcomes as well as serve as reflection for students themselves and their teachers. Other schools are also interested in using this system to validate and certify skill development in students through extracurricular activities the schools organize and welcome as part of their overall goal of education.

*Ali Yildirim & Hanife Akar, METU*