

VALMOPRIS
Record of C1
October 3rd – October 7th 2016
Rotterdam, Netherlands

MONDAY OCTOBER 3rd, 2016

→ DAY 1 of the VALMOPRIS training

Day 1 of the training represented an opportunity for participants to get to know each other and for the group to develop a common understanding of why they are here, the project and the educational context of the key issues surrounding informal and non-formal learning, its validation and learning competences.

The day started with an introduction to the course agenda, learning objectives for each day, information about timings, housekeeping issues, common and independent meals and educational visits across the week.

This was followed by a couple of icebreaker-type, warm up activities led by two of the Scottish teachers – Inigo and David.

This began with introductions and a description of each person's journey to the training – whether literal or metaphorical.

We were then asked three questions:

1. How would you describe your job on a good day?
2. On a bad day, what are the challenges you face?
3. How would your students describe you?



Lots of interesting and common answers came up which effectively showed the challenges of working within prison learning environments. These included:

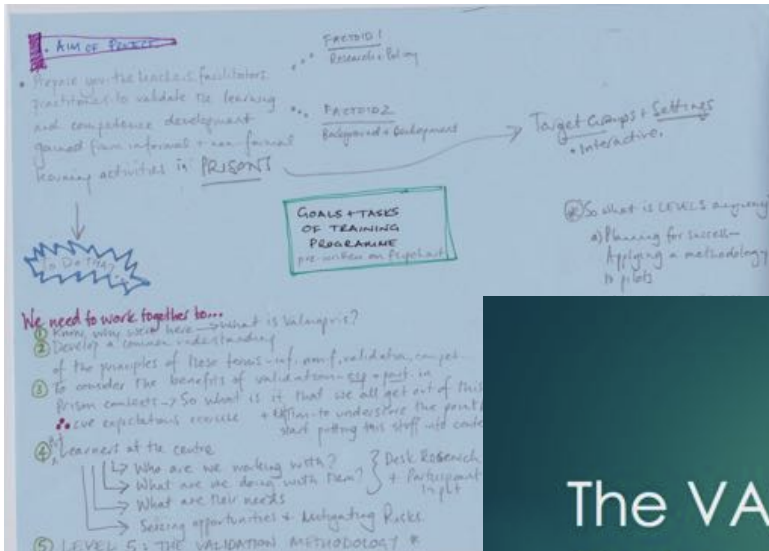
Benefits:

Potential of learning in prisons can be inspiring and motivating, teachers enjoy greater creative freedom, and the ability to bring some happiness and positivity to learners.

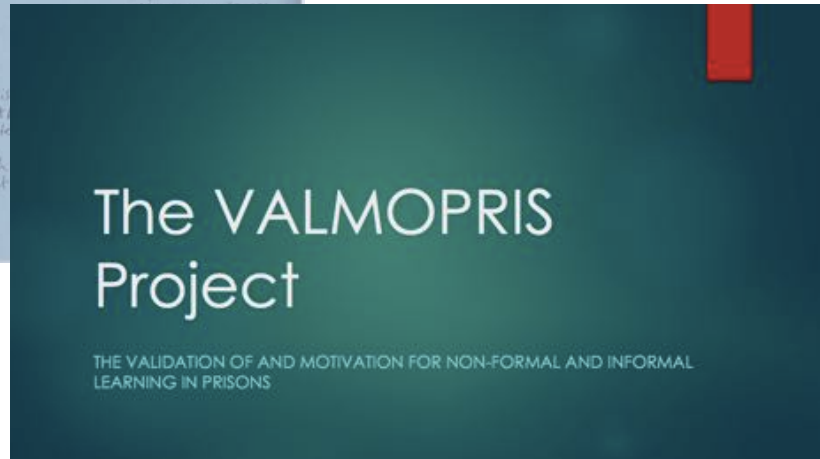
Challenges:

Resource limitations and restrictions, regular change and lack of support, difficulties in motivating and engaging learners.

VALMOPRIS – Developing a common understanding



This presentation gave participants an overview of the stages of the project, why we are researching the validation of informal learning in prisons sought to give a brief introduction to the LEVEL5 validation methodology which the project will adopt.



We ended with a discussion and activities looking at the key terms associated with the project – formal, informal and non-formal learning; validation; and competences.

Expectations for training

We had a lively discussion about why participants were here and the issues they hoped or expected to have clarified by the end of the week as well as things to avoid or guard against. The following list is a summary of the key points:

Expectations	To avoid...
✓ Learning to work with LEVEL5	✗ Fights/arguments
✓ A very good understanding of LEVEL5	✗ Too much theory – balance of theory and practice
✓ Understanding of how to practice the verification process	✗ Too much confusion
✓ Knowledge	✗ Intellectual waffle
✓ No more questions	✗ Boredom
✓ To find out how we write up reports and documentation (especially non-writers)	✗ Language barriers
✓ Open and honest discussion	✗ The methodology is not practical and difficult to apply
✓ Clear Goals	✗ Lack of meaning or relevance for a prison setting
✓ Network and support	
✓ To grow as professionals	
✓ Meeting potential partners for other projects	
✓ New tools for teaching, techniques to improve our practice	
✓ Project timetable/timelines	
✓ Sharing practices and experiences across countries	
✓ Information from other prison settings	
✓ New friends, new connections	
✓ Interactive language and cultural development	

What is VINFL?

Ed, one of our Dutch partners, delivered an inspiring presentation on his experiences with the validation of informal learning through his work with **Changes and Chances** and over years of European research.

This included a discussion of learning styles and learning theory, soft skills, a discussion of the importance of non-formal learning for prisoners and a summary of the comparative SEPE project funded by Grundvig.

Ed framed these points within a discussion of Changes & Chances' professional practice, giving us an insight into four of their previous projects – **STOWAWAYS**, **ROB IN DA HOOD**, **INESQUISIVEL EMILIA**, **THE BOSCH PARADE** – one of which (The Bosch Parade) was used as a pre-pilot for our VALMOPRIS project.

Two quotations about the nature of unlearning were particularly poignant when considering the importance of lifelong learning and VINFL:

“In a world of change, the unlearners shall inherit the earth, while the learned shall find themselves perfectly suited for a world that no longer exists.”
Eric Hoffer

“The illiterate of the 21st Century will not be those who cannot read, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn.”
Alvin Toffler

We ended the day with a discussion about the types of competences and skills that participants feel are vital for prisoners to develop through their learning. Those attending the training work with a very wide range of prison learners in a broad variety of contexts so it was an ideal opportunity for VALMOPRIS to garner this information for future research.

TUESDAY OCTOBER 4th, 2016

→ DAY 2 of the VALMOPRIS training

The day started with five very interesting presentations on working with the target group of learners and the various prison systems in each country. These included videos, recordings from the learners, facts and statistics, as well as good practice examples.

The collage features several elements:

- Rehabilitation Centre Buzias:** A title in blue text above a quote: "The motto is: Tell me and I will forget, Show me, and I may remember, Involve me, and I will understand!" attributed to Confucius. Below the quote are four small images: an outdoor area with a green fence, a classroom with green desks, a lounge area with a sofa, and an aerial view of a building complex.
- GOOD PRACTICE:** A blue header above a list of five bullet points:
 - PROMOTING THE VALUE OF THE PROCESS.
 - ENSURING LEARNING IS RELEVANT TO INDIVIDUAL'S EXPERIENCES.
 - USING A TRACKING OR EVALUATION SYSTEM.
 - BUILDING IN POSSIBILITIES FOR COMMUNICATION WITH OTHERS.
 - SELLING THE VALUE OF ART EDUCATION TO DO MOST OF THESE THINGS.
- Art Education:** Two small images at the bottom right showing hands holding a colorful, textured art piece.

We continued the day with the **KEY POINTS** of the **VALMOPRIS** Desk Research. This section was designed to give participants an insight into the work that has gone on already, the main findings of our research to date and how this all connects up to the validation methodology.



The rest of the days training focused on practical learning. The morning ended on a workshop which took account of prisoner learners' needs.

Two questions were provided as the starting point for discussion:

What can be done to increase motivation to learn?

Responses were varied and included:

The provision of a secure environment, providing incentives, celebrating success, creativity and variety, providing feedback, being clear about the benefits, and involving learners at all stages.

How can prisoners benefit from the validation of their competences?

Again, responses were varied and included:

It provides encouragement, increases self-confidence, shows learners that teachers believe in them and their potential, improves employability and helps with rehabilitation.

After lunch, our partner and specialist on LEVEL5, Enrica shared information about **the LEVEL 5 approach** and all that this process entails. She Explained to us that LEVEL5 is **"an approach and instrument to document and visualize competence developments"**. She led us through the various stages and purpose of the methodology before we undertook a hands on session to develop and define our learning projects.

1 2 3 4 5

Competences → What is LEVEL5 → The Cube → Reference Systems → Documentation & Certification

STEPS OF VALIDATION

1. IDENTIFICATION – design of our learning plans
2. DOCUMENTATION – adapting reference systems and indicators to fit with project
3. ASSESSMENT – chosen assessment methodologies
4. CERTIFICATION – it is not always necessary to end with certification

The first question is WHY do I want to validate? –

- To become more aware of what I am capable of?
- Helping learners to develop and learn they are capable of development
- To help me get a job?
- **THIS DICTATES THE NEED FOR CERTIFICATION.**



We ended DAY 2 with an **evaluation bulls eye** to give the partnership a sense of the work we had to do.

The findings from the first couple of days showed that there was a great deal of work to do in order in all areas to ensure that participants expectations were fully met.

However, the concerns arising – primarily around the implementation of LEVEL5 validation and timelines – were scheduled to be covered in detail throughout the rest of the training programme.



WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 5th, 2016

→ DAY 3 of the VALMOPRIS training

The morning of DAY 3 of the VALMOPRIS training was reserved for a focus on the more opaque competence of LEARNING TO LEARN and a development of the LEVEL5 training and how to work with the reference system – a key component of the validation of learning from informal and non-formal learning.

Learning to Learn is the ability to organise learning. Includes effective management of time and information (both for selves and groups), the ability to deal with learning obstacles, look for and use others for learning support and feeling responsibility or our own learning success.

Aina, our Latvian partner, delivered an in-depth presentation on the competence of Learning to Learn, including: Learning stages (Darnell); learning communities (Hoffmann); the practical benefits or the development of learning to learn; and, finally, ways we can measure the development of the competence, including learning logs and reflection sessions.

Enrica provided an introduction to the competence framework and how to access the documentation on the platform, before she, Maren and prison-based partners supported teachers to develop the provided templates and exemplar reference systems into a format that they would be able to apply to their projects and use with their learners.

Assessing competence and competence development – Reference system

	KNOWLEDGE		SKILLS		ATTITUDES	
Level	Level Titles	Individual description/ explanatory statement	Level Titles	Individual description/ explanatory statement	Level Titles	Individual description/ explanatory statement
5	Knowing where else (knowledge for transfer)	Having expert knowledge on competence assessments, and how to transfer these techniques into to other domains of life and work. Knowing how to use the results for benefit of learners and own work.	Developing, constructing, transferring	Developing own assessment techniques/approaches/strategies based on theory and to be able to transfer them to a variety of purposes and contexts and how to make profit of results. To support others in doing so.	Incorporation	Having incorporated to apply assessment techniques in different domains and to continuously develop own competence. To find it important that the sector adopts assessment of learning outcomes. To inspire others develop this competence.
4	Knowing when (implicit understanding)	Being familiar with theories of competence developments. Knowing in which situation to apply the right assessment technique/approach. Knowing how to create appropriate instruments.	Discovering acting independently	Researching on assessment techniques for competence developments. To be able to select adequate assessment techniques for different contexts and objectives and to make use of results.	Self-regulation, determination	Being determined to be pro-active and creative in assessment of competence developments in order to profit from its benefits and to develop own competence to do so.
3	Knowing how	Knowing a variety of assessment instruments for competence developments like tests, interviews, observations and how to apply them correctly. Knowing single concepts of competence development.	Deciding/ selecting	Selecting and applying known assessment instruments in a correct way.	Empathy/ Appreciation	Valuing assessment techniques for competence developments in general. Being motivated to develop own competence to do so.
2	Knowing why (distant understanding)	Knowing different purposes of assessment of competence developments: e.g. for learning, for selecting or for profiling.	Using, imitating	To occasionally applying given assessment instruments as imitated or instructed by others.	Perspective taking	Being interested in assessment of competence developments and considering to learn more about it.
1	Knowing what	Knowing what assessment is. Knowing that assessment is the measuring of individual progress.	Perceiving	Recognising competence assessment activities and processes.	Self-oriented	Feeling that competence assessment may affect oneself.

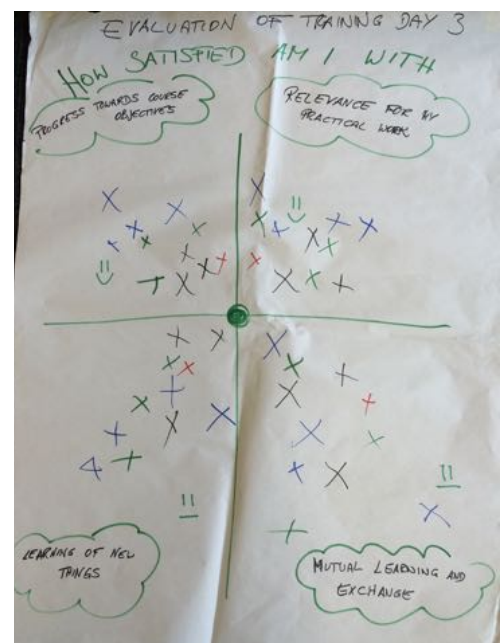
The afternoon of training DAY 3 was reserved for an educational visit to De Nieuwe Kans (the New Chance), an organization that helps disenfranchised young people look to get back on track and in education. The visit started with a boat ride and ended in a common meal. It included a number of speakers including scientists, who spoke about the biography of the young people who use the service; teachers who work in the centre; and those who work to ensure the effectiveness of the organisation and the importance of informal learning in their work.



The evaluation bullseye of DAY 3 shows some progress in the four key learning objectives:

1. Progress towards course objectives
2. Relevance for my practical work
3. Learning of new things
4. Mutual Learning and Exchange

There was still a great deal of room for improvement, particularly in terms of mutual learning and exchange which we took into account for the remaining two days of programming.



THURSDAY OCTOBER 6th, 2016

→ DAY 4 of the VALMOPRIS training

DAY 4 of the training was very practical in its approach. The majority of the day focused on ensuring participants were confident in the assessment processes – how we assess competences, what assessment methodologies we might use, how to apply assessment methodologies, and how to rate developments in competences.

Discussions around the variety of ways we might organise the **assessment of learners** and their competence developments proved very fruitful. Maren led the discussion and provided for teachers an insight into a range of common, simple and effective assessment methodologies including:

- Self-assessment
- Peer-assessment
- Personal Interview
- Reflective diaries
- Letters to yourself
- Observation
- Three chairs method
- The tree and the boat

Participants also discussed some very interesting examples, which included:

TIP TOP – repeating positive affirmations
CIRCLE game – writing up positive comments
Using an average of self- and peer-assessment
Using graphical figures on a ranking scale
Paying attention to ‘gut’ feelings on a particular day
Projective techniques: What kind of _____ are you? (car, animal...)

Reflective Reasoning and Assessment

We continued the training by applying some methodologies through a type of role play. Erica, one of our Dutch partners, applied a technique developed by Tandem project called **Appreciative Enquiry**. This is a blend of peer and self-assessment which focuses on success stories and uses an interview technique and requires a witness who provides comment and feedback.

The activity was very well managed and the feedback from participants about the benefits and usefulness of the technique was very positive:

“It’s important to get the input of fellow peers to increase confidence, help us to build on our successes and confirm our practices.”
“It’s good to reflect to see more clearly the significance of an event or a learning activity”
“Self-reflection is so important to help me measure the potential impact of my own feelings as an educator.”
“This kind of process is really important for confirming the importance of the impact of experiential learning”
“Celebrating success and values and reflecting on this progress is so important. There is no normal.”
“Recognising the value of shared experiences and similar successes”
“Self-reflection can lead to pride and confidence”

The group undertook group work on a **case study** which explored the application of assessment methodologies to a case study designed to be representative of the type of non-formal learning opportunities that exist in prisons.

The chosen model for our case study was based on the development of a prison magazine and took participants through the various stages of their professional practice:

- Choosing validation tasks
- Selecting competences with learners
- Setting indicators
- The rating process – different ways of involving the learners
- Helping learners to define goals and ambitions

Maren, then discussed practical exemplars, helping to illustrate how to document the process and findings within the templates developed for the project with the group.

DAY 4 ended with an open questions session designed to ascertain outstanding questions and issues. Everyone took part in this process including partners and participants. It included the following topics: competences, target groups, pilot learning activities, e-platform, assessment approach and other. This was scheduled for the penultimate day of the training to allow us to address any problems or concerns on the final day of the training.

- **Sub-competences not addressed fully**
- **Is there any money to help with translation of competences?**
- **Do any of the competences and sub-competences exist in any other languages?**

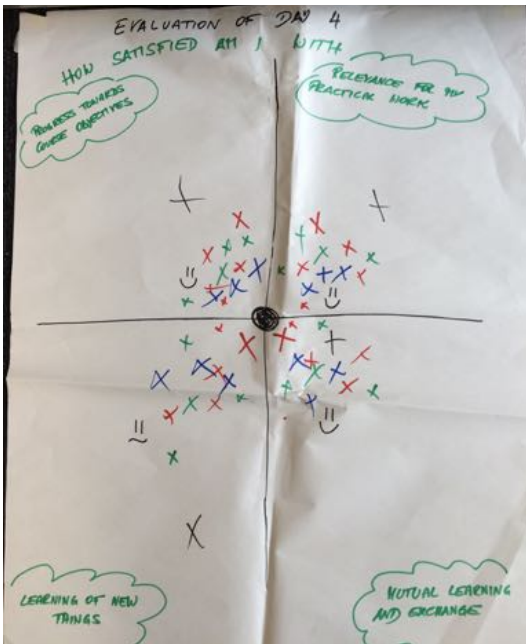
- **If we have different target groups, how do we explain in reporting**
- **Could external collaborators be part of the piloting team?**
- **Is it enough to assess 3 out of 8 participants?**

- **Volume of paperwork**
- **What are the timelines?**
- **When do we have to give periodic feedback? Who to and what is necessary?**
- **What if there are problems with teachers such as illness?**

- **To whom do I address e-platform questions?**
- **I use so many platforms already!**

- **Should we take facilitator field notes in learning pilots?**
- **Assessment approach is a tad time consuming and subjective**
- **Will the wider world and prisoners see the value of validation as much as we do?**

- **Can we access the LEVEL5 software?**
- **Consider more active sharing in the training – this is very inspirational**



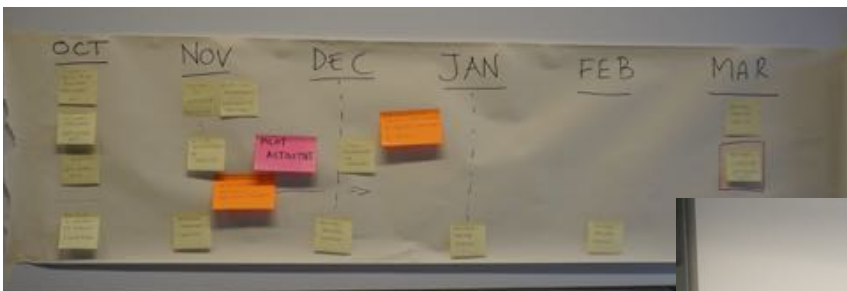
The bulls eye evaluation of DAY 4 showed that we are progressing towards our target and participants were feeling more confident with the methodology, their role within the project and the process that they will embark upon.

The Open Questions would allow for us to address as many outstanding issues or concerns as possible.

FRIDAY OCTOBER 7th, 2016

→ DAY 5 of the VALMOPRIS training

The final day of the training was reserved largely to cover the next steps in the piloting. This involved many practical aspects such as timelines for delivery of content, pilots and research; research requirements and ethical considerations; certification; and the finalisation of pilot and validation plans.



This work was done in collaboration with teachers ensuring that our schedule would meet their needs and take account of any barriers to delivery.

Participants reported having confidence in the **timeline** for preparation, recruitment, research and delivery.



There was a great deal of discussion around the nature of the **research** – evaluating the implementation process and the socio-ecological questionnaire – both of which are required for the final intellectual outputs. Ethical considerations and the storing and sharing of information which assures confidentiality was discussed and agreed amongst participants.

One of the key outstanding issues was the role and potential benefit of **certification**. The group discussed what they would like to see for learners and what would be relevant or important for each partner country; their stakeholders and prisoners alike.

Discussions centred around the appearance and content of the certificate have led to the decision to commission the media design group at Shotts prison, Scotland to consult on and design a VALMOPRIS certificate.

Educational excursion – sculptural visit

The week ended on a common outing around Rotterdam to understand the impact of art and culture on the city’s development. The walking tour around the city, allowed participants to reflect on their week and enjoy the company of fellow participants. It built on the common meals throughout the week, by allowing time for natural discussion and the sharing of ideas and opinions.



The final bullseye evaluation for DAY 5 showed great development in understanding and satisfaction. Participants reported feeling confident about the next steps, happy about the experiences across the week, and aware of how to deliver the VALMOPRIS methodology.

A final evaluation report will be available in November 2016.