

SURVEY |

ANALYSIS OF THE POTENTIAL FOR NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING AND ITS VALIDATION IN PRISON SETTINGS

This survey is being distributed as part of the European VALMOPRIS project which aims to investigate and facilitate the recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning within a variety of prison settings. Much of the valuable work that goes on in prison is either non-formal or informal in nature and generally responsive to the needs of prisoners – seeking to develop improved skills, knowledge, values and wellbeing.

The terms ‘non-formal’ and ‘informal learning’ are subject to some debate and national variance. To avoid undue confusion, we have included the following definitions, adapted from the *European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training*.

- **Formal learning:** occurs in an organised and structured environment and is explicitly designated as learning. Formal learning is intentional from the learner’s point of view and typically leads to certification.
- **Non-formal learning:** is integrated into planned activities which are not always identified as learning activities; it is not usually rewarded by a certificate
- **Informal learning:** results from daily activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support and is, in most cases, unintentional from the learner’s perspective.

Despite its value, non-formal and informal learning are traditionally unaccredited. The validation of non-formal and informal learning (VINFL), therefore, seeks to redress this balance and ‘make tangible’ enhanced skills and competences, both to learners and stakeholders.

We are circulating this survey across the European partner countries as part of our research. The questionnaire seeks to help us better understand the current awareness and perceived value of non-formal and informal learning within prison settings and the possibilities and challenges presented by its validation.

*** This survey contains 13 questions and should take around ten minutes to complete.**

Status

1. Which of the following best describes your current employment or role:

- Teacher
- Education Manager
- Prison Officer
- Prison Manager
- Prison Governor
- Social Worker
- Other: _____

2. Do you work in direct contact with prisoners?

- Yes
- No

Non-formal and Informal Learning

3. Were you aware of the concepts of non-formal and informal learning?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

4. Would you consider yourself directly involved in the delivery of non-formal and informal learning?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

5. As far as you are aware, do prisoners engage in non-formal and informal learning opportunities?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Not sure

6. In your prison setting, where are prisoners able to access non-formal and informal learning opportunities?
 - a. Work parties / Employment
 - b. Gym / Sports
 - c. Kitchen
 - d. Education
 - e. Projects / Visitors
 - f. Other: _____

7. Please provide a little more detail about the types of non-formal and informal learning activities that prisoners can access?

Competences

8. We would like you to consider the following competences.
 In your day-to-day work with prisoners which of the following competences are most relevant to them?
 Please rank the top five competences in order of perceived importance and add any you think are missing.

Autonomy	Problem solving
Planning and resources management	Conflict management
Team-working	Flexibility
Communication	Intercultural communication
Critical thinking	Self-reflection
Creativity	Planning and organising one's own learning competences
Learning to learn	Networking
Leadership	Managing diversity
Other (not listed)	

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Potential of non-formal and informal learning in prisons

9. What are the main benefits of non-formal and informal learning for prisoners? Please list the first five.
 * Number in order of importance

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a. Broadens horizons | _____ |
| b. Deepens thinking | _____ |
| c. Increases motivation | _____ |
| d. Raises aspirations | _____ |
| e. Improves self-esteem | _____ |
| f. Improves self-direction | _____ |
| g. Increases engagement | _____ |
| h. Increases empathy | _____ |
| i. Improves one's ability to work as part of a team | _____ |
| j. Forges positive relationships between participants | _____ |
| k. Improves communication skills | _____ |
| l. Increases productivity | _____ |
| m. Opportunities for spontaneous and unstructured learning | _____ |

Others:

10. Do you feel that the potential of non-formal and informal learning is properly considered and recognised by prison institutions and educators?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Not sure
11. Do you feel that the potential of non-formal and informal learning is properly considered and recognised by prisoners?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Not sure
12. How do you validate non-formal and informal learning in prisons?
- a. Self-assessment
 - b. Peer-assessment
 - c. Tests
 - d. Observation
 - e. Certification
 - f. No validation
 - g. Other: _____
13. What do you think the challenges or obstacles might be when considering the validation of non-formal and informal learning?
- a. Lack of training for staff
 - b. Capacity issues – workload, funding, contact time
 - c. Lack of understanding – learners and stakeholders
 - d. Lack of value – learners and stakeholders

Others:

If you have any other comments or suggestions to make about the validation of non-formal and/or informal learning please feel free:

If you would like to be keep up-to-date on the progress of the Valmopris project, please include your email address below. We will not use your contact details in any other way.

We'd like to thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Warmest regards from the Valmopris Project team.