

Interim Report on the Evaluation Activities in the Framework of the VALMOPRIS Project

The logo for VALMOPRIS features the word "VALMOPRIS" in a blue, sans-serif font. The letter "M" is highlighted in yellow and is topped with a semi-circle of seven yellow stars, similar to the European Union flag.

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1. The VALMOPRIS Project

1.1 Intention

VALMOPRIS - Validation and Motivation for informal Learning in Prison, is a European co-funded Strategic Partnership that is financed within the ERASMUS+ programme under the Key Action “Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices”/Strategic Partnerships for adult education.

The project’s main aims are:

- to enhance the learning dimension of training or working activities in prison by the validation of informal learning
- to raise the motivation of adults involved in prison education to pursue further learning and career orientation opportunities – particularly those from broadly socio-economically disadvantaged background
- to provide a new approach for the validation of informal learning in the context of prison education
- to train prison educators to work with this new validation approach
- to validate the competences developed by prisoners during their educational experience

The strategic partnership is made up of 7 partners from different European countries and it is coordinated by New College Lanarkshire from the UK (Scotland). Apart from the general contribution to project activities and outputs, die Berater® is entrusted with the internal evaluation and quality assurance of the VALMOPRIS project.

1.2 Intellectual outputs

IO1 Study & Policy Recommendations on the need and impact of VINFL

This will include an analysis of the state of the art in the validation of non-formal and informal learning, with a particular focus on prison learning within the European partner countries.

Our primary research will adopt a blended approach: including the socio-ecological model and a before & after evaluation of the validation process. This research will be undertaken in five partner countries with more than 90 prison learners. The benefits will be measured and reported in this intellectual output.

IO2 VALMOPRIS competence framework & 'Competence-oriented learning implementation contexts'

A VALMOPRIS competence framework, mapped and developed from the European Framework of Key Competences, is currently in design, to fit within prison contexts and tailored to the needs of prison-based learners.

This output will include a synopsis of our thirty non-formal learning pilots across a range of prison learning contexts and including a wide variety of learning activities.

IO3 Train-the-Trainer Course for validating informal learning in prisons

The Train-the-Trainer Course will be an online tool to enhance your skills and knowledge in the validation of non-formal and informal learning. An opportunity to engage in quality professional development, this training will be available to access as an Erasmus+ KA1 blended mobility course.

The Train-the-Trainer course will be available on a dedicated e-learning platform and will consist of around 24 hours of material. The training will also be available for download as a pdf document.

IO4 Practice Guidebook for the validation of informal learning in prisons

The practice guidebook will be an indispensable tool for practitioners delivering non-formal education within prison settings. It will provide the necessary context and information on competence-oriented learning and its validation, to effectively support practitioners.

It will contain lots of good practice examples of learning activities designed to optimize and support competence development as well as provide tips for working effectively with learners and evaluation methodologies.

2. Evaluation

Evaluation in the project is predominantly formative, but also includes summative aspects. Formative evaluation is conducted for the purpose of identifying areas for improvement, whereas summative evaluation intends to assess the overall quality of the project and its results towards the end of the project.

2.1 Evaluation Approach

The purpose of the current evaluation is not only to evaluate the project outcomes and to inform the partnership on their progress towards meeting defined goals, but rather to support

the capacity building of the partnership, to help them to improve practice through building knowledge and reflecting on activities and approaches. The evaluation seeks to develop the project manager's ability to respond and adapt in different ways to the needs of the project partners, stakeholders and beneficiaries. The ultimate objective of the evaluation is to enable the project partnership to fulfil the requirements of the project, demonstrating **progress**, with the highest level of **quality** and the most effective level of **co-operation**, whilst aligning all activities within an appropriate **sustainability** framework.

This interim evaluation report (covering the evaluation of the work in the first project year) makes the outcomes of the evaluation available to the partnership. It includes lessons learned and – wherever possible – recommendations for the further project development. The primary aim of the reports (interim and final) is to increase the learning process of the partnership and contribute to the improvement of the final deliveries. For reasons of accountability, the final evaluation report will also be attached to the final project report to be submitted to the National Agency.

Process evaluation in the scope of this project refers to the process of transnational cooperation within the partnership and the involvement of stakeholders in the steering committees.

The **process evaluation** involves:

- the degree to which defined goals and tasks have been achieved;
- the quality of transnational project meetings;
- the cooperation and communication between meetings;
- the involvement of partners
- the project coordination;
- the personal and organisational learning processes of the people and institutions involved.

The **project's core activities and products** to be evaluated in the VALMOPRIS product evaluation are:

- the VALMOPRIS training course (including training material, the e-platform, and e-learning material)
- the piloting of the VALMOPRIS Methodology (based on LEVEL5)
- the VALMOPRIS final event

Internal evaluation			
What?	Aspects of the Evaluation	Evaluation instruments	When?
Quality of the kick-off meeting and other project meetings	Achievements Efficiency Structure and content Clarity about roles and tasks Practical arrangements Overall satisfaction	Online questionnaire	Directly after the kick-off meeting After 2 nd project meeting After 3 rd project meeting After 4 th project meeting
Goals, objectives and perspectives - sustainability	Personal goals Organisational goals Clarity about roles and tasks Common understanding of tasks	Informal, unstructured interviews with project partners (members of steering group)	At the kick-off meeting Second short online interview between first and second partner meeting Between the second and third partner meeting Between the third and fourth partner meeting
Project progress	Work implemented Achievements and challenges Cooperation in the consortium Project coordination Learning process	Online questionnaire Based on the results: Review discussion at the meeting	In advance of each face-to-face project meeting At the project meeting: short presentation of results of online evaluation, additional discussion
Overall project achievement	Compliance with aims set in the project plan Lessons learned Side effects Sustainability	Online questionnaire Structured discussion facilitated by internal evaluator	In advance of the final meeting At the final meeting: additional discussion of results

Evaluation of project outcomes (internal/external)			
What?	Aspects of the Evaluation	Evaluation instruments	When?
VALMOPRIS training course – including the e-learning course and the e-learning material -face-to-face training course	Overall course quality Usefulness & feasibility Clarity of course goals and content Relevance and applicability for prison teachers/educators	Online questionnaire - external Informal feedback during the training course (bulls eye)	After the VALMOPRIS training course (NL) - f2f part - E-learning part
Piloting of the validation methodology Feedback of prison teachers/educators	Overall satisfaction with the methodology Usability (suitable for work in the context of prison education) Relevance for needs of prisoners Sustainability aspects (plans about future use)	Questionnaire - external Interviews with the prison teachers/educators	After piloting – <i>will be done in coordination with IO Research</i>
Piloting of the validation methodology Feedback of prisoners - if possible	Clarity of benefits for prison learners Relevance for needs of prison learners (importance of certificate) Influence on motivation to learn	Questionnaire - external Feedback of prisoners	After piloting <i>and in coordination with IO Research</i>
VALMOPRIS multiplier event in RO	Overall satisfaction with the event	Something interactive like “Bulls eye”, Mood stickers etc.	At the event
2 nd training course (which will be held in combination with Multiplier event)	<u>f2f training course:</u> Overall course quality Usefulness & feasibility Clarity of course goals and content Relevance and applicability for prison teachers/educators	Questionnaire to participants of the second training course Informal feedback during the training course (bulls eye)	To be filled and collected right after the event

2.2 Internal Evaluation

Evaluation activities are primarily based on partners' feedback which is gathered with respective online questionnaires (www.surveygizmo.com) consisting of multiple-choice items and open questions. Multiple-choice items are evaluated statistically whereas the statements from the open questions are collected and analysed. Due to the low number of statements a categorisation of similar answers has not been necessary so far, but whenever it was possible the answers were summarised in the comments of the reports.

Principally, the results of each online evaluation were first of all presented to the project management. Thus the feedback of the partners is used for the further planning and for the safeguarding of the next steps.

After that the results are presented to the group at the following transnational meeting. In a following discussion, arrangements and decisions concerning the further work of the project are developed together.

2.2.1. Project meeting evaluation

Preparation

For the VALMOPRIS project an online questionnaire to evaluate the project meetings was developed. The evaluation of the meetings is part of the formative process evaluation. It aims at assessing the quality of the meeting and at improving future meetings of this type. Starting with the kick off meeting in Glasgow, October 2015, the current link for the online questionnaire was sent to the project partners directly after each project meeting.

The meeting evaluation questionnaire included multiple choice as well as open questions. In detail the partners were asked:

- Achievements, efficiency
 - Achievement of meeting objectives
 - Level of clarification of roles and tasks
 - Level of clarification of the next steps
- Structure, content, delivery of meeting
 - Appropriateness of agenda, clear relation to project aims
 - Quality of documents and working materials

Interim Evaluation Report

Balance of the meeting programme (duration, work vs. free time)

Level of satisfaction with practical arrangements

- Quality of transnational cooperation
 - Extent to which each partner contributed to the meeting
 - Mutual understanding amongst partners about the project
 - Level of satisfaction with working language
- Overall satisfaction with the meeting
- Comments on any of the items mentioned above
- What did you appreciate most during the project meeting? What was particularly useful?
- Do you have any suggestions for the improvement of VALMOPRIS project meetings?

Results of the evaluation of partner meetings 1-3 (UK, FR, NE)

(Highest score of positive feedback that can be reached=3)

Achievements, efficiency	kick off UK	2nd meeting FR	3rd meeting NL
Achievement of meeting objectives	1,4	3,0	2,1
Clarification of roles and tasks	1,6	2,6	2,5
Clarification of next steps	1,6	2,4	2,9

Structure, content, delivery of the meeting,	kick off UK	2nd meeting FR	3rd meeting NL
Appropriateness of agenda, clear relation to project aims	1,5	3,0	2,4
Duration, date and timing of the meeting	1,4	2,7	2,1
Quality of documents, working materials	1,8	3,0	2,5
Practical arrangements	2,3	2,4	2,5

Quality of transnational cooperation	kick off UK	2nd meeting FR	3rd meeting NL
Extent to which each partner contributed to the meeting	1,4	1,9	1,9
Mutual understanding amongst partners about the project	0,5	2,3	2,1

Level of satisfaction with working language	2,3	2,7	2,1
	kick off UK	2nd meeting FR	3rd meeting NL
Overall satisfaction with the meeting	1,8	2,9	2,3

Tab. 1 Results of meeting evaluation

Kick-off meeting in Glasgow (27-28 October 2015): the first project meeting was dominated by confusion and uncertainty. Project partners were confronted with a very complex and ambitious application, which had been written by a third person who was no longer part of the project and so a lot of open questions came up at the first meeting. Apart from that, partners found out that the application included a number of inconsistencies – in the project structure and also in the administrative aspects. So a lot of time was used to clarify these open questions. Another challenge was the fact, that the majority of partners were not familiar with the validation concept, which should be used in the project. This led to a number of misunderstandings. The results of the meeting evaluation reflect the atmosphere in the meeting - the highest ratings were given to practical arrangements and the level of satisfaction with the working language.

But the answers to the open questions show, that the partners (8 persons responded to the online questionnaire) had a very positive attitude towards the project and the project aims. So most of the answers highlighted the good and friendly atmosphere in the meeting and stressed the fact that all partners showed a high commitment and willingness to overcome the starting problems and to find solutions to implement a clear plan for the project work.

The following aspects to improve VALMOPRIS project meetings in the future were mentioned:

- Include some ice-breaking activities, so that partners get to know each other better
- It is essential to clarify our project objectives and activities (was mentioned 4 times!)
- More information on the LEVEL5 methodology
- No presentation from external persons – more focus on the project activities
- Working activities in small teams during the meeting

The evaluation results of the **second project meeting in Bordeaux (7-8 April 2016)** show a very positive development, as it can be seen from the comparison of results in Tab. 1. After the kick off meeting in Glasgow, the project coordination invested a lot of efforts in project communication and to clarify the open questions step by step. In addition to that, some budget questions had to be solved, since the allocation of partner budgets did not correspond with the planned project activities and the partners who should be involved there.

From the organisational point of view, the VALMOPRIS partnership had to face another major challenge, since the coordinator got seriously ill and was not able to continue her work in the VALMOPRIS project. A new person from NCL took over the responsibility for the project coordination, but due to the fact that this change was unforeseen, there was no representative of the coordinating organisation at the second partner meeting in Bordeaux. Thanks to an **excellent preparation of working material** (rated with the highest score =3) and a very good exchange of information between the coordinating organisation and the hosting organisation in France, the 2nd project meeting in Bordeaux was very successful.

Seven persons completed the online questionnaire to give their feedback to the 2nd project meeting. The results show, that the participating partners were absolutely satisfied with the outcomes of the meeting, the **achievement of meeting objectives (3), the clarification of tasks (2,6) and next steps (2,4)**. All aspects were rated much more positively than it was after the kick off meeting.

“It was a very productive meeting and the very structured agenda supported the work a lot!”

Partners appreciated most the good and constructive working climate, the detailed preparation and the structured meeting management by the hosting organisation. They also had the feeling, that the concept of LEVEL5 was much clearer after that meeting. One critical point that was mentioned was the fact, that not all partners show the same level of contribution – especially one partner acts very passively.

The **third project meeting** was held in combination with the 5 days train-the-trainer course in **Rotterdam (3-7 October 2016)**. Due to the fact, that the training schedule was very tight, it was a challenge to find the appropriate time slot to organise the meeting and to avoid the discussion of training aspects during the meeting time. Considering the given framework of that meeting, partners evaluated the overall achievement and the level of clarification towards next steps in the project very positive (2,9). The meeting agenda was appropriate and practical arrangements, as well as the quality of working documents were rated positively. It

was also highlighted that the coordinator puts a lot of energy to clarify all points of concern and to create a structured and clear timeline - which is crucial in this complex project.

“Even if the time schedule was tight, we worked out a useful plan for the next months”

“Even it was not a "long" meeting, we had enough time to discuss and agree about important next steps”

The **unbalanced contribution of project partners** is still evident, not only during the meeting but in the whole project communication – this was also mentioned by some partners in the open questions. The lower level of satisfaction with the quality of transnational cooperation in the evaluation results, might reflect this opinion. As one partner stated:

“Especially in this challenging project it would be important that ALL partners show a high level of commitment and contribution – for one partners I miss this”.

Conclusions

The **positive development of the project meeting evaluation results** shows, that there was a lot of **improvement in the preparation, organisation and implementation** of the VALMOPRIS project meetings. The project consortium has to deal with a very complex and very ambitious application concept, making it vital to have well-structured and strict project management. Based on the kick-off meeting, which left partners with a lot of open questions, the project coordination took the required measures by organising regular online meetings and providing detailed project information and communication in between the online and face-to-face meetings.

The **project planning and the definition of next steps** are the **core elements** in each meeting. The more time could be dedicated to the clarification of these aspects, the more satisfied project partners were with the results of the meeting.

The **general working climate** in the partner meetings is rated **very positive** and **partners appreciate the high commitment of the project team** to develop high quality project outcomes – this highlights the under-involvement **of one partner** further, making it an aspect which was criticised in the meeting evaluation.

- **Here it might be useful to arrange a bilateral meeting between the coordinator and the respective project partner, to find out the reason for the low level of contribution.**

2.2.2 Progress Evaluation

Preparation

Furthermore, a second online questionnaire to evaluate the progress within the VALMOPRIS project was developed. This questionnaire is regularly prepared in advance of the face-to-face meeting (approx. 2 weeks in advance) and partners are asked to complete it before the meeting, so that the internal evaluator can present the results at the project meeting. Here is the opportunity, to reflect on the results together with the project group and to discuss crucial points.

Since there will be a long period between the third partner meeting and the final meeting (October-June), the third part of the progress evaluation will be carried out at the end of January 2017 and results will be discussed in an online meeting. The 4th progress evaluation will be done in advance of the final meeting (June 2017)

The intention for this evaluation is basically for internal use of project management and provided as an early warning system.

Besides comments the partners are asked to consider different aspects of the process by rating them with three colours:

(R) Red: Major deviations from the work plan (delays etc.), problems encountered and (partly) unsolved

(Y) Yellow: Minor deviations from the work plan (delays etc.), problems encountered but solved

(G) Green: Everything according to plan (time, quality, results)

The topics for discussion reflect the respective activities within the relevant work packages of the previous working period. Topics that were taken into consideration in the first two rounds of progress evaluations are:

- Project management in general
- Dissemination
- Evaluation and Quality Assurance
- Project activities implemented
 - IO1: Methodology paper; desk research; online survey
 - IO2: LEVEL5 competence framework; development of learning projects
 - IO2: Train the trainer course (Progress evaluation II)

- Are you satisfied with the progress of the project since the last meeting?

Moreover, the progress evaluation includes general questions, including:

- Cooperation within the transnational partnership
 - Clarity and adequacy of information given by the coordinator
 - Collaboration with other project partners
 - Efficiency and intensity of communication within the partnership
 - General working climate
 - In case of yellow or red:
Please describe the challenge / problem. What could be done to improve the situation?
- Learning process
 - Extent to which you have been able to use your expertise in the project
 - Extent to which you have gained new expertise / knowledge in the project
- Other comments

Results of VALMOPRIS Progress Evaluation I

The first part of progress evaluation covered the first six months of the VALMOPRIS project. The starting phase of the project did not run absolutely smoothly, as we could also see from the result of the kick-off meeting evaluation. The topic of the project is quite complex and specialised, so it took a lot of time to bring all partners on a certain knowledge level on the project content.

However, the majority of partners gave “green” to the project management, also the evaluation activities were rated positively. Dissemination, partners rated partly with green – a slight majority gave “yellow”. This was mainly because some decision on dissemination instruments and tools had not been taken at this moment of the project, so the work was still in progress.

Partners mentioned that the most challenging aspects were the organisational and administrative questions which had to be clarified, regarding budget allocations, or how to plan the short-term training activity in combination with the steering group meeting – considering the given budget. The procedure to reason that out, took a while, and restricted the project group’s ability to concentrate on the main project activities.

Project activities

Not only the topic of the project itself is quite complex – also the description and the structure of the intellectual outputs was convoluted, so it was a challenge to find out exactly which kind of activities were linked to each intellectual output in which phase of the project.

IO1: Study and policy recommendation

The first intellectual output will span the entire project and is split into a number of sub-activities, such as

- Methodology paper
- Desk research on validation of informal learning in prison
- Online survey validation of informal learning in prison

At the stage of the first progress evaluation the results show that the desk research was more or less completed (only one person rated this activity with a “yellow”), while some data of the online survey were still missing. For that reason, it was still too early for the responsible project partner to develop a clear concept for the research strategy, so this activity was still connected to some open questions, therefore 3 partners gave it a “green”, 4 persons rated this activity “yellow”. This shows that this delay was not really seen as a major problem, but the partners were aware that there was still some work to be done.

IO2 Development of LEVEL5 competence frameworks and COL implementation contexts

- Inventory of key competences
- Development of learning projects

The activities included in IO2 were closely connected to the methodology of LEVEL5. As it was explained in the beginning of this report (in the results of the kick off meeting evaluation) it took some time to bring partners on the same level of knowledge about LEVEL5. Three of seven persons thought that the development of the inventory of key competences was following the schedule, while another three think this activity was little behind (yellow) One person rated the activity with red – which was maybe caused by some misunderstanding (as it could be seen from the additional comments).

A similar rating was given the “development of learning projects” – two “green”, 4 “yellow”, 1 red. The work of this a sub-activity was still in progress at the moment of the progress evaluation; two partners had not completed this task at that time.

Cooperation & learning

In general, the partners were rather satisfied with the working climate and the clarity and adequacy of information given by the coordinator, even if two persons thought the intensity and efficiency of the communication within the partnership could be improved and not all the partners are completely satisfied with the collaboration with other project partners.

In this first phase of the project, most activities concentrated on organisational and administrative issues and on the national level of partners, so that collaboration between the partners was limited to the online meetings and several e-mails.

Learning processes are mentioned from the majority of partners. But since at the beginning of the project, the content was not completely clear, it seems that project partners were more reserved with their answers. But in total the attitude towards learning and exchange of experiences and expertise is seen positively by the partners.

Results Progress VALMOPRIS Progress Evaluation II

The second progress evaluation covers the period April – September 2016 – which is the second half of the first project year of VALMOPRIS. In general, all categories of the evaluation show a slight improvement...moving from yellow to green, but there are still a number of aspects that need improvement.

Obvious were some red marks in the evaluation of the project management (1), the IO2 “Inventory of key competences” (2) as well as in some categories of cooperation in the partnership (1). Unfortunately it is very difficult to find out the main reason for this rating, since there are no further comments in the open answer section.

Project activities

The overall project management and project coordination is rated more critical than in the first progress evaluation. Even if most of the partners are very satisfied with the quality of clarification and communication given by the coordinator and the general working climate is evaluated very positively, some partners are not happy with the intensity of collaboration between partners and see a lack of interaction between the project partners.

Regarding the status of the work plan, it is still a fact that the work for IO1 and IO2 is on track but current improvement is necessary. In this progress evaluation partners were also asked to rate the activity status of IO3 – the train-the-trainer course, but it was too early to give

comprehensive feedback to that activity, since the face to face course was planned to be held in October so it was work in progress.

Evaluation and Quality Assurance is rated positively (6 green, 1 yellow). Dissemination activities still need some improvement, since some dissemination tools need to be developed as soon as more concrete results of the project work can be presented.

The overall satisfaction with the progress since the last project meeting in Bordeaux is dominated by “yellow” ratings and there is also one person who gave a “red”.

Cooperation & learning

Obviously most partners - except one - are satisfied with the communication given by the coordinator. While six persons give a “green” to “Clarity and adequacy of information given by the project coordinator”, one person rates this with “red”.

... efficiency and timelines could be clearer and better managed. I think the development of a clear strategy for the next 12 months would be useful and more interim deadlines outlined by project coordinator...

The cooperation between partners, especially the collaboration in phases between the online meetings should be improved. Similar to the meeting evaluation, the open comments reflect the fact that one partner is not very active.

The feedback regarding the learning process shows that partners agree/rather agree that there is a learning process in VALMOPRIS and there is the possibility of making new links for professional work and to learn from each others experiences.

Conclusions

The partner feedback is a valuable source of information that is taken into consideration for the planning of further project activities. The project management should react with regard to the expressed needs and problems of the partners. The following aspects should be considered:

- The working climate is very good. The partners seem to be satisfied with the working atmosphere and the openness in the team. That makes it easier to deal with challenges and discussions on problems coming up in the collaboration.

- A lot of time had to be invested to clarify open questions in organisation and administration of the project. So in the starting phase the real project content was neglected and project partners had to catch up with the activities. Another difficult situation occurred with the severe illness of the coordinating person, so that a change of responsibilities in the project was necessary.
- The complex structure of the project application and the project outcomes show the need to regularly develop clear action plans and to set interim deadlines.
- The majority of partners show a high commitment towards the project and the focussed project goals. Unfortunately partners have the feeling, that one partner is not contributing in the same way.
- The fact that some red lights occur is a proof that the evaluation as an early-warning tool works – it gives the chance to go against tendencies. In this particular case an eye has to be kept on the intensity of the work on the intellectual outputs and the contribution to communication between the partners.
- Communication within the partners should be intensified also in the meaning of sharing information. There is a high level of communication and high amount of information provided by the coordinator, but the intensity of feedback from partners is different.

2.2.3 Product Evaluation

In the second project year, an additional evaluation of the project product will be conducted. During the piloting phase the developed validation methodology (IO2) will be evaluated. In addition to that, the final product evaluation include the Methodology paper (IO1) and the train-the-trainer-course ((e-learning and face-to-face – IO3) as well as the practice guidebook (IO4). The feedback – the results of evaluation the tested validation methodology and the socio-ecological study – will be collated from involved participants (prison teachers and prisoners) and conducted/reported in connection to IO1 and its recommendations.

The final project event in Romania will be another output which will be externally evaluated.

2.2.3.1 Evaluation of the 5 days train-the-trainer course in Rotterdam (October 2016)

The training activity C1 was linked to the IO3, the creation of a train-the-trainer course for validation informal learning in prison. The project consortium will create a structured, modular teacher training programme with a blended learning application to train prison teachers, how

to effectively design informal competence oriented learning activities in the context of prisons. In the first step of the development of the IO, the project team designed a training programme for a 5-days face-to-face training course which included the core elements of:

- Theory of informal and competence-oriented learning
- Validation approaches with a focus on the approach used in the project “LEVEL5”
- Designing informal competence oriented learning projects and how to embed validation in the didactic process

The training course for prison educators was also the starting point for the piloting. The training course was evaluated, the feedback results are used to the finalisation of the blended learning train the trainer programme which will be established in the second half of the project period.

In this report a short summary of the evaluation results is given – the whole report of the training evaluation is provided in the annex.

The training course was evaluated with the help of a **written questionnaire** which was distributed at the end of the training. Participants were asked to fill it in anonymously. In addition to that, each training day (starting on the second day) was finished with a short evaluation activity – **the bull’s eye**. Participants were asked to rate their feelings about:

- Progress towards course objectives
- Relevance of the content for their practical work
- Aspects of new learning
- Mutual learning and exchange

2.2.3.4 Conclusions and recommendations

Almost all aspects of the training course were rated “positive” or “very positive”. Only the category “balance between theoretical input and practical work were rated more neutral.

The overall satisfaction with the meeting is rated with 4,53 which can be seen as a very positive feedback.

Partners highlighted the good atmosphere in the training course and they liked that fact, that people from different prison settings took part in the training course so there was an exchange of experiences and they could learn from each other.

Proposals for the improvement of a further training course refer to the balance between theoretical input and practical workshops. For the further development of the training course concept, this aspect will be taken into consideration.

2.3 Sustainability

Sustainability is an often-overlooked success factor which is often seen as an attribute of 'effectiveness'. However, sustainability needs to be integrated into the project from the very beginning, and an evaluation of sustainability requires its own set of criteria. Certain factors such as the design of project outputs, the involvement of stakeholders, and the institutional- and organisational capacity of project partners will all impact the sustainability potential of the project, and activities need to be evaluated on the basis of their alignment to a sustainability perspective.

The evaluation with focus on sustainability aspects is carried out in addition to the meeting evaluation and the general project progress evaluation. In a first step, the kick-off meeting was used to ask project partners about their expectations of the project – especially respective to their organisation. Apart from this, first ideas to disseminate project results and outcomes were discussed.

In a second step, a sustainability evaluation questionnaire was developed and circulated to partners between the first (kick-off) and the second partners' meeting. The same questionnaire was sent to partners between the second and the third partner meeting. The main questions included refer to the

- identification of stakeholders
- organisational environment to be involved in project communication
- communication and involvement of non-project actors
- design and development of project outputs
- analysis of project goals

2.3.1 Identification of stakeholders

The feedback of partners show that especially the partners from UK, FR, NL, RO and LV – who are actively involved in prison education and training – could establish a number of institutional contacts in their countries. It was also possible for the majority of partners to establish contacts to national probation services, prison services, ministries and other educational institutions dealing with the topic of prison teaching. Partners from AT and DE have a specific role, since they are not active in the field of prison education, but more in developing, applying and training of validation of informal learning and methodologies. So for them, exploitation activities will focus on other aspects of the project topic – such as gaining experiences in testing the methodology in new settings.

2.3.2 Organisational environment

To identify the sustainability potential of the VALMOPRIS project, partners were asked to identify important points to enable the project to be sustained **by their own organisation and by external organisations/bodies**.

For our own organisations, named aspects can be summarised as follows:

- Development of useful and easy to use tools and materials that can be adapted for the daily work of prison teachers
- Links between partners involved in the project to exchange experiences
- Positive results from the piloting phase
- Staff training that will allow prison teachers to develop new skills (those who could not take part in the project training)
- Sufficient resources to continue the work

For external organisation/bodies, named aspects can be summarised as follows:

- The new validation methodology could be attractive for other educative institutions: universities, job employment services, etc....
- Dissemination activities to involve external organisations and stakeholders
- National arrangements for prison education have to be established
- Professionalization of prison teachers – more opportunities for further training and qualification – on national levels
- Acknowledgement of informal education programmes
- Commitment and support from official authorities
- A strong role of the EPEA to support the dissemination of project outcomes

Both questions were asked in two different moments of evaluation – the answers do not really show a difference or a development. Partners seem to have a clear picture of what they can expect in their national and institutional framework.

2.3.3 Communication and involvement of non-project actors

In order to reach sustainability goals, project communication is a crucial element – internal as well as external communication. All partners describe their **internal communication** activities. Depending on the kind of organisation they work in and the given structure, there are regular meetings with other staff members, superiors or representatives of relevant departments. Non-project members inside the partner organisations were involved in the VALMOPRIS research and other preparatory activities of the project. Some partners use internal blogs or newsletters to keep non-project members inside their organisation informed on the VALMOPRIS activities. A more intense involvement of internal staff members takes place, where prison teachers – as staff members – are directly involved in the piloting activities.

Communication and involvement of **external organisations/bodies**:

A very basic tool of external communication is the announcement and description of the VALMOPRIS project on the institutional website. Apart from this, some partners disseminate regular newsletters to inform about project activities.

Partners involved in the field of prison education reported a number of activities to inform other relevant institutions, universities, networks or organisations about the aims and the content of the VALMOPRIS project. External contacts were also used to find participants for the piloting phase of the project. Especially in Romania the high level of interest and involvement of public authorities and ministries has to be highlighted. The EPALE blog and the EPEA posts are used to promote VALMOPRIS.

2.3.4 Design and development of project outputs

It is important to have a continuous look at the project product development, to identify their strengths and weaknesses at an early stage of the project and to find possibilities for adapting an improving them in order to provide an attractive and high quality product for the respective target group. In the second round of sustainability evaluation partners were asked to rate the design and development of the project products on a scale of 1-10 (1 lowest, 10 highest).

- Professional standards and expectations: average score 8,3

The partners are convinced that the project outcomes meet professional standards and are in line with the needs in the field of prison teaching and learning.

- Adaptability

At the moment of the survey (July 2016) partners rated the extent of how well project products can be used by people outside the project team with an average score of 6,8. The additional explanations in the open comments were positive. Some partners thought it was too early to evaluate this aspect, since the training course had not been held at this time. It was mentioned, that the tested validation methodology will need a basic knowledge of evaluation. It was also pointed out that the project group will aim to ensure that the design of the training concept is as adaptable as possible.

“How well do you think the project outputs can be used by people outside of the partner organisations” – partners gave an average score of 7,3 to this question. As well as in the first questions, some partners were careful in giving their rating, since the piloting has not started at that moment, and so for them it was too early to give a final rating on that aspect. Some of the project outputs that are evaluated in prisons will be only transferable to other prisons/detention centres, while other outputs, like the validation methodology can be easily transferred into other educational contexts. This corresponds with the impression that partners have on the usability of the project products outside the prison education field. The exception here is France, where it seems – from the answer of the partners - that there is no motivation or interest to focus on the validation of informal/non-formal learning in a context outside prison learning.

2.3.5 Analysis of project goals

Project outcomes are most sustainable when they help to meet other personal or organisational goals.

- The comments and answers listed in the questionnaire show that partners agree to a high extent, that the project goals meet their personal goals. All partners express a high level of motivation and interest to participate in the project and to gain more knowledge on the topic of validation of informal learning.
- All partners are very positive about the project goals and their compatibility to the long-term goals of their organisations. The participation in the VALMOPRIS project is seen as a good opportunity to demonstrate the professionalisation and high quality of teaching activities in prison. For some partners organisation the project could be the

base for the further development of prison education offers in general. For the German and Austrian partners it will be interesting to test the validation methodology in a new setting.

- Partners express the same optimism in their comments about the relevance of project goals for external bodies/organisations. Partner countries like Romania and Latvia seem to have a high potential in the development of prison education and there is a strong interest from public bodies. One important aspect in these countries is the provision of more training possibilities for prison teachers. Other partners mentioned that “Validation of informal learning” might be a long-term goal for external organisations and bodies, but the challenge will be to convince them to enter this practice as priority.

2.3.6 Conclusions and recommendations

The results from the sustainability evaluation show that partners invest a lot of time and effort to build up networks in their organisational environment to inform internal and external stakeholders about the VALMOPRIS project. Depending on the given framework and conditions in each partner country, the character of the stakeholder network differs. While some partners build their connections more between educational institutions, universities and social organisations, other countries, like Romania or Latvia show a higher involvement of public authorities. The results of the evaluation also show, that when referring to partners’ personal goals, there is a high commitment towards the project goals and partners are optimistic about exploitation opportunities for the VALMOPRIS project outcomes.

3. Final Conclusion

Both process and progress evaluation were inserted as early warning system, as a tool to support the development of the partnership. The project partners carry out regular internal evaluations to assess their collaboration and their level of contentment with the project. So far it has been a very useful tool to monitor the project work and to ensure the project progression.

In the feedback of the participating partners the progression of the project is reflected. The analysis of their feedback allowed working out central topics of the networking and positive effects as well as crucial points and challenges of the project.

This evaluation report still reflects interim stages of the project. The author wants to emphasise that, as such, the first evaluation chapters are not a final appraisal of the project but rather an evidence of interim development stages and their theoretical improvement potentials.

4. Annexes:

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Annex 4: VALMOPRIS Sustainability evaluation questionnaire

Annex 1: VALMOPRIS template for Meeting Evaluation

VALMOPRIS - Evaluation of project meeting

Meeting	XXXX
Place, date	XXXX

Please rate the meeting in terms of the following aspects:

No	Aspect of evaluation	positive				0	negative		
		++ +	++	+	-		--	---	
1.	Achievements, efficiency								
1.1	Achievement of overall meeting objectives - developing the project further								
1.2	Clarification of roles and tasks								
1.3	Clarification of next steps								
2.	Structure, content, delivery of meeting								
2.1	Selection of topics addressed in the meeting								
2.2	Appropriateness of agenda, clear relation to project aims								
2.3	Quality of documents, working materials								
2.4	Balance of the meeting programme (duration, work vs. free time, social activities...)								
2.5	Practical arrangements (accommodation, meals, meeting room)								
3.	Quality of transnational cooperation								
3.1	Extent to which each partner contributed to the meeting								
3.2	Mutual understanding amongst partners about the project								
3.3	Level of satisfaction with working language								
4.	Overall satisfaction with the meeting Please tick:								

5. Comments on any of the aspects mentioned above

6. What did you appreciate most during the project meeting?
7. Do you have any suggestions for how we might improve the VALMOPRIS project meetings?
8. Further comments and suggestions:

Thank you very much!


Annex 2: VALMOPRIS: template Progress Evaluation Form

VALMOPRIS Progress Evaluation Form

1. Identification


Evaluated period	xxx
-------------------------	-----

2. Project activities implemented

Activity/IO	Comments	
Project Management		
Dissemination		
Evaluation and Quality Assurance		
IO1	<i>(list of activities referring to Intellectual outputs. This depends on the project status and timeline)</i>	
IO2		
IO3		
IO4		
Any comments - especially when you rated yellow, or red		
In general: How satisfied are you with the progress of the project since the last meeting? <input type="checkbox"/> Highly satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Rather satisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Rather dissatisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Very dissatisfied <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to say		

Green (G):	Everything according to plan (time, quality, results)
Yellow (Y):	Minor deviations from the work plan (delays etc.), problems encountered but solved
Red (R):	Major deviations from the work plan (delays etc.), problems encountered and (partly) unsolved

3. Cooperation within the transnational partnership

Type of cooperation	
Clarity and adequacy of information given by the coordinator	
Collaboration with other project partners	
Efficiency and intensity of communication within the partnership	
General working climate	
Other aspects of cooperation: _____	

In case of **yellow** or **red**:
Please describe the challenge / problem.
What could be done to improve the situation?

4. Learning process

Type of cooperation	
Have you already been able to use your expertise in the project	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes absolutely <input type="checkbox"/> Rather yes <input type="checkbox"/> Rather no <input type="checkbox"/> no, not at all <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to say
Have you already learned something new through being a partner in that project?	
Has the project already enabled you to make new links at professional level that might be useful for your work?	
In general, are necessary measures in place in the project to share experiences with other partners or learn from each other?	

5. What is the strength of the project so far?

6. What are, so far, the weak points?

7. Do you have further comments or suggestions on the VALMPORIS project?

Thank you!

Annex 3: VALMOPRIS Evaluation report of the training course C1 in Rotterdam

VALMOPRIS

**Internal evaluation report of the training course C1
“Train-the-trainer course for validating informal learning in prison”**

Rotterdam, Netherlands, 03-07 October 2016

Maren Satke, *die Berater*®

1. Background

The training activity C1 is linked to the IO3, the creation of a train-the-trainer course for validation informal learning in prison. The project consortium will create a structured, modular teacher training programme with a blended learning application to train prison teachers, how to effectively design informal competence oriented learning activities in the context of prison. In a first step of the development of the IO, the project team designed a training programme for a 5-days face-to-face training course which included the core elements of:

- Theory of informally and competence oriented learning
- Validation approaches with a focus on the approach used in the project “LEVEL5”
- Designing informal competence oriented learning projects and how to embed validation in the didactic process

The training course for prison educators was also the starting point for the piloting. the training course was evaluated, the feedback results are used to the finalisation of the blended learning train the trainer programme which will be established in the second half of the project period.

2. Training data

The evaluated training course was organised from the 3rd -7th October 2016 in Rotterdam /NL. 20 prison teachers participated in the training course. The training sessions were delivered by the VALMOPRIS project partners.

3. Scope and method of evaluation

The evaluation of the training course is an integrative part of the quality assurance within the project and the results will be an important base for the finalisation of the whole blended

learning training course. The overall evaluation of the training aimed at assessing the quality of the delivery of the training sessions in general, the structure and clarity of content.

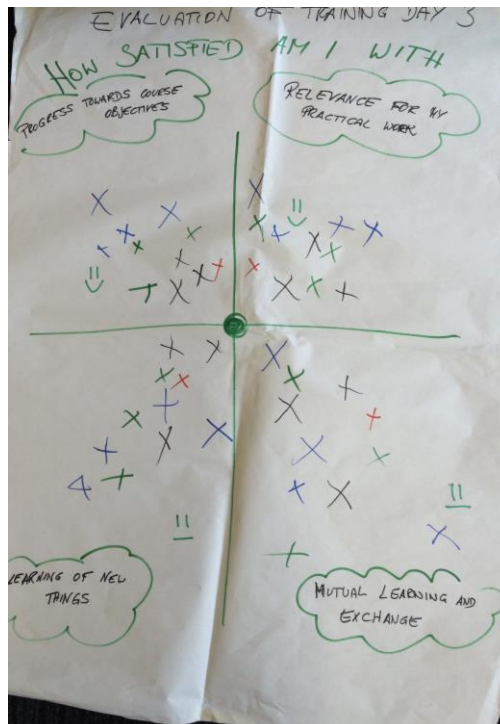
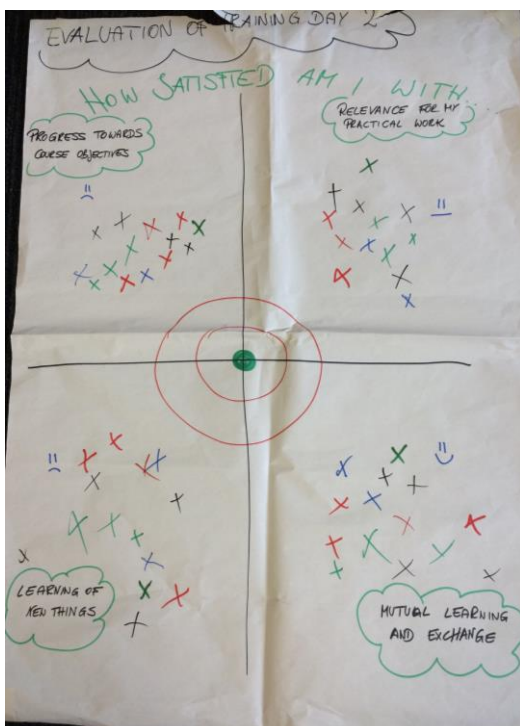
The training course was evaluated with the help of a **written questionnaire** which was distributed at the end of the training. Participants were asked to fill it in anonymously. In addition to that, each training day (starting on the second day) was finished with a short evaluation activity – **the bull's eye**. Participants were asked to rate their feelings about:

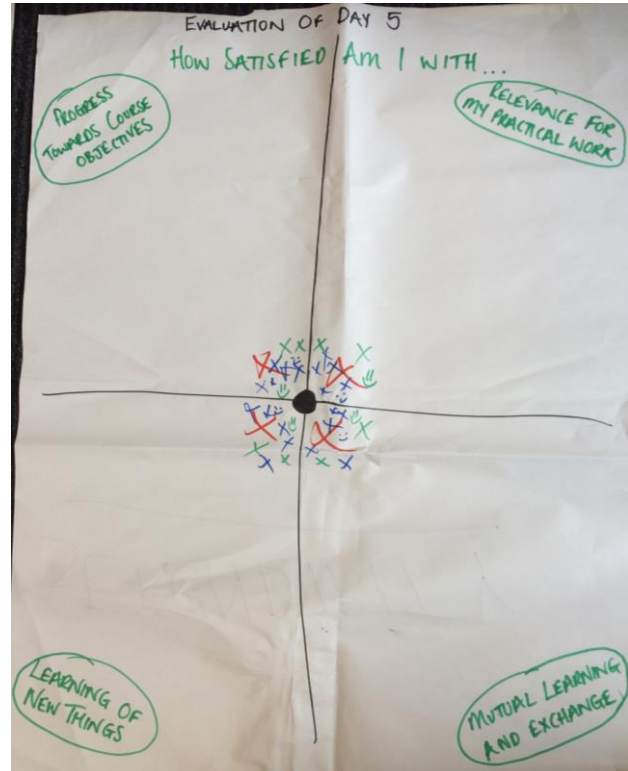
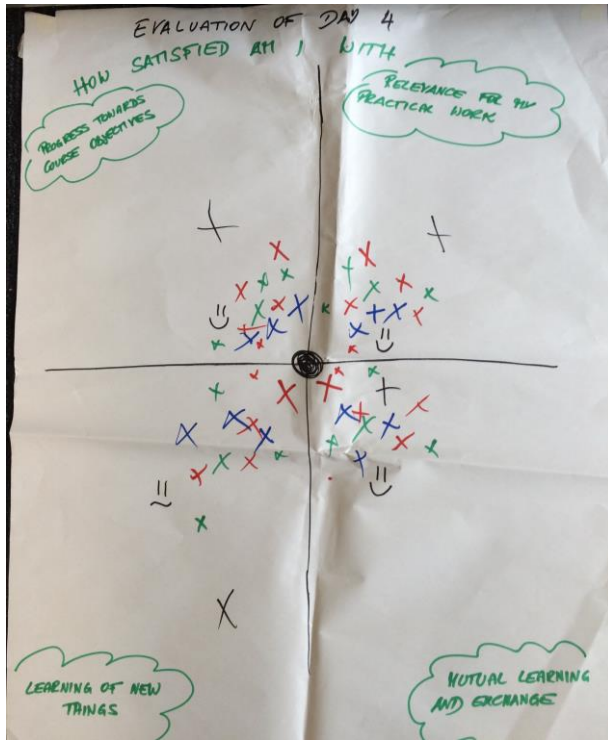
- Progress towards course objectives
- Relevance of the content for their practical work
- Aspects of new learning
- Mutual learning and exchange

4. Evaluation results

4.1. The **bull's eye evaluation** at the end of training days:

the





The closer the ratings are to the middle (the target) - the higher is the satisfaction of the participants. So it can be seen that the bull's eye evaluation reflects a very positive development. While at the second and third day of the training course some participants set their marks more in the middle of the rating fields, it seems that the level of satisfaction is very high in the end of the training – as it can be seen from the chart of the 5th training day!

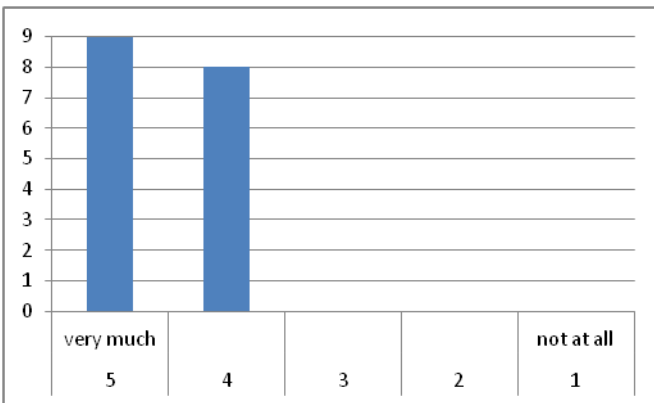
4.2. Evaluation results from the written questionnaire:

17 questionnaires were completed by the participating prison teachers

Here is a summary of the most important results:

4.2.1. General Feedback

Did you enjoy your participation in the training course?							
	5	4	3	2	1		
	<i>very much</i>				<i>not at all</i>	average	NA
	9	8				4,53	0



4.2.2 Organisation

How would you rate the quality of:							
	5	4	3	2	1		
	<i>excellent</i>				<i>low</i>	average	NA
Information and material in advance	7	7	3			4,24	0
Implementation of the course	5	12				4,29	0
Quality of the training material	6	9	2			4,24	0
Support of the trainer	16	1				4,94	0
Outside the training course, how do you rate:							
Accommodation, meals	11	6				4,65	0
Training venue	11	5	1			4,59	0
Social activities	10	5	1			4,56	1

Comments on the named aspects

Accommodation practical perfectly placed 3 mins from venue; loved the learning environment of the venue; fantastic trip on the boats/great host/informative visit to LAST CHANCE; excellent meals were all amazing

4.2.3 Structure, content and delivery of the VALMOPRIS training course

Please let us know if you agree or disagree with the following statements							
	5	4	3	2	1		
	<i>fully agree</i>				<i>disagree</i>	average	NA
The selection of topics addressed in the training course was appropriate	8	8	1			4,41	0
The aim of the VALMOPRIS training course was clear for me	9	8				4,53	0
I benefited from the transnational approach in the training course	6	10	1			4,29	0
Participants were encouraged to get involved actively	12	5				4,71	0
There was a good balance between theoretical input and workshops	3	9	4			3,94	1
The training content was provided in a clear and structured way	6	10				4,38	1
Training gave me the opportunity to exchange with colleagues from other countries	10	5	1	1		4,41	0
What I learned in the training is relevant for my professional practice	10	6	1			4,53	0
Training gave me the chance to learn about new tools	8	8	1			4,41	0
The time schedule of the training was appropriate	5	11		1		4,18	0
The training materials are clear and easy to use/understand	5	12				4,29	0

Comments on the named aspects
<i>It's been great to exchange knowledge and learn a new way to assess VINFL.</i>
<i>I think each partner was really involved in how they will pilot the experimentation in their own country so to find time to exchange with other partners</i>
<i>could have been done over fewer days</i>

4.2.4. Learning process and experiences

Did you enjoy your participation in the training course?							
	5	4	3	2	1		
					<i>nothing was new for me</i>	average	NA
<i>I learned a lot of new things</i>	2	10	4	1		3,76	0

Comments (If you choose 2 or 1 please explain the reason)
<i>I already was informed in Bordeaux Meeting of VALMOPRIS</i>

4.2.5 Clarity about next steps

Please let us know if you agree or disagree with the following statements							
	5	4	3	2	1		
	<i>fully agree</i>				<i>disagree</i>	average	NA
The aims of the piloting projects are clear to me	10	5	1			4,56	1
I know how to carry out the next steps for my piloting projects	12	4				4,75	1
I think I will need support to develop my piloting project	2	4	3	3	3	2,93	2

For the general delivery and organisation of the training course, the feedback was very positive. **The support given by the training team was highlighted.** Apart from this, participants had a clear idea of the training course and its aims and agreed that the training content was relevant for their professional practice. Positive comments were made on the great experience for participants to get to know colleagues from other countries and the fact that they will have the opportunity to practice the trained input during their piloting projects. It also seems that participants were quite confident on the learned aspects, since the feedback to the statement *“I think I will need support to develop my piloting project”* was balanced and only 6 persons in total are absolutely sure, that they will need support.

Most participants agreed that they were encouraged to contribute actively to the training session, but **the balance between theoretical input and workshops could have been better.** Another feeling of the participants was, that five days was a very long duration for the training content.

4.2.6 What participants liked most in the training

Summarising the mentioned aspects, people like most in the training, it was the

- Interactive and practical sessions
- Good atmosphere
- The transnational aspect of the training course - the exchange with other colleagues

4.2.7 Aspects that could be improved

As it was already mentioned in the general feedback to the training course, participants would have appreciated more interactive and practical exercises. There were some other single comments about the training room (a little too small for that number of people), the duration of breaks and the duration of the training course in total (5 days too long).

5. Conclusions and recommendations

Almost all aspects of the training course were rated “positive” or “very positive”. Only the category “balance between theoretical input and practical work were rated more neutral.

The overall satisfaction with the meeting is rated with 4,53 which can be seen as a very positive feedback.

Partners highlighted the good atmosphere in the training course and they liked that fact, that people from different prison settings took part in the training course so there was an exchange of experiences and they could learn from each other.

Proposals for the improvement of a further training course refer to the balance between theoretical input and practical workshops. For the further development of the training course concept, this aspect will be taken into consideration.

Annex 4: VALMOPRIS Sustainability Evaluation questionnaire

Sustainability potential of VALMOPRIS – partner questionnaire

The purpose of conducting an evaluation on sustainability potential is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the project in terms of its ability to understand and interact effectively with external stakeholders, to produce professional and adaptable outputs, and to ensure an alignment between project goals and organisational (internal and external) goals.

The same evaluation document will be issued 3 times during the project. Each time, partners are asked to update the questionnaire according to any changes and developments in the project.

Please answer all 6 parts of this questionnaire as well as you can. If necessary, we will arrange a short skype interview (30 minutes max.) to discuss the results with you individually) Thank you for your time!!!

Part 1 – Identification of Stakeholders
<i>For project outcomes to be sustainable, you should be aware of who the main stakeholders are.</i>
1. Who are the main people in your organisation whose support you need to maintain or promote VALMOPRIS in the future?
2. Who are the main external organisations whose support you need to maintain or promote VALMOPRIS in the future?
Part 2 – Understanding the environment
<i>It is important to have a detailed understanding of the organisational environment and its impact on the project's sustainability potential.</i>
1. Please identify 1-3 things that would enable the project to be sustained by your organisation
i.
ii.
iii.

2. Please **identify 1-3 things** that would enable the project to be sustained by **external organisations and bodies**.

i.

ii.

iii.

Part 3 – Communication with non-project actors

For project outcomes to be sustainable there needs to be systematic communication with stakeholders outside of the project.

1. Please **identify 1-3 ways** that you have communicated with people inside **your organisation** (those not on the project team), and explain what effect or outcome this communication has had.

i.

Effect / outcome:

ii.

Effect / outcome:

iii.

Effect / outcome:

2. Please **identify 3 ways** that you have communicated with people **external organisations and bodies**, and explain what effect or outcome this communication has had.

i.

Effect / outcome:

ii.

Effect / outcome:

iii.

Effect / outcome:

Part 4 – Involvement of non-project actors
<i>For project outcomes to be sustainable there needs to be a strong involvement of other people outside of the immediate project team.</i>
<p>1. Please identify 3 ways that you have involved other people within your organisation (those not on the project team) in project development and implementation.</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">i.</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">ii.</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">iii.</p>
<p>2. Please identify 3 ways that you have involved other people from external organisations and bodies in project development and implementation.</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">i.</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">ii.</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">iii.</p>

Part 5 – Design and development of project outputs
<i>Sustainability is strongly underpinned by outcomes that meet professional standards and expectations, and which are adaptable to other people, organisations and contexts.</i>
1. Professional Standards and Expectations
<p>a. On a scale of 1-10 (1 lowest – 10 highest!), how professional do you think that project outcomes are?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 </p>
<i>Please explain your answer to (a)</i>
2. Adaptability
<p>a. On a scale of 1-10, how well do you think the project outputs can be used by people outside of the project team?</p>

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>Please explain your answer to (a)</i>									
b. On a scale of 1-10, how well do you think the project outputs can be used by people outside of the partner organisations?									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>Please explain your answer to (b)</i>									

c. On a scale of 1-10, how well do you think the project outputs can be used by people outside of the affiliate organisations and associated partners									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>Please explain your answer to (c)</i>									
d. On a scale of 1-10, how well do you think the project outputs can be used by people outside of the prison education field?									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>Please explain your answer to (e)</i>									

Part 6 – Analysis of project goals	
<i>Project outcomes are best sustainable when they help to meet other personal and organisational goals.</i>	
<p>a. On a scale of 1-10 (1 lowest – 10 highest!), how do the project goals meet your personal goals:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p>	
<p><i>Please explain how the project goals meet your personal goals:</i></p>	
<p>b. On a scale of 1-10, how do the project goals meet your long-term organisational goals:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p>	
<p><i>Please explain how the project goals meet your long-term organisational goals:</i></p>	
<p>c. On a scale of 1-10, how do the project goals meet the long-term goals of external organisations and bodies</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p>	
<p><i>Please explain how the project goals meet the long-term goals of external organisations and bodies:</i></p>	