Newsletter

"We produce a new way of validating skills and connect volunteers in Europe"

Background

To meet the requirements by the European Commission to develop systems for the validation of non-formal and informal learning, nine European countries (Germany, Finland, Italy, UK, Turkey, Spain, Portugal, Romania and Bulgaria) have set up the 'Destination eValidation for Volunteers' project (DesTeVa) as a follow up to the Volunteering Validation Highway (VVH) Grundtvig Learning Partnership.

Goal

The main goals of this project are, firstly, to raise awareness of the competences acquired in the field of volunteering and of the need for validation and, secondly, development of an online tool for the visualisation, documentation, validation and recognition of these competencies.
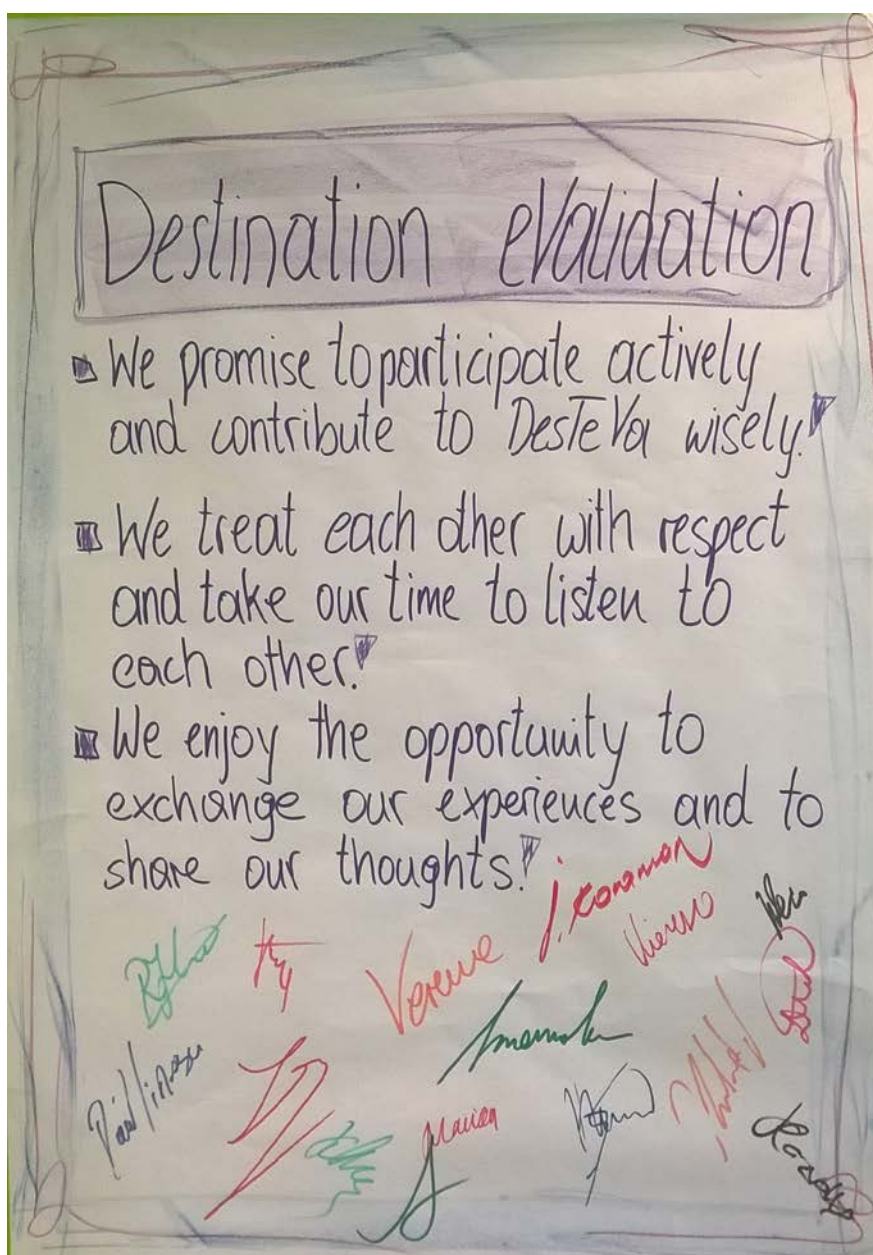
First Meeting

Representatives from the nine member countries participating in the DesTeVa project meet on a regular basis to work on the intellectual outputs, to share information and discuss findings. The first meeting in Paderborn, Germany, from 29th of October to 1st of November 2014, was used to learn about each country's contribution and to pave the way for good cooperation.

We specified our goal; clarified expectations, set our objectives and allocated responsibilities and work packages.

Second Meeting

For the second meeting, the nine partners of the DesTeVa project met at the OK Study Centre in Helsinki from the 21st to the 24th of April 2015. We set off by discussing the state of the project by approaching validation from the micro/meso/mega perspective. We also discussed the following questions: "How can the volunteer be guided through the online tool?" and "How can we bring the self- and peer- evaluation together?". An exchange of ideas about validation experiences and service learning took place with our guest speaker, Ms. Mai Salmenkangas, from the Metropolia University of Applied Sciences.

Methods and Process

During the project, each of the nine partners collects information about their respective NQFs and their relation to the EQF. This information is disseminated and shared with the other partners in order to compare them (find the document 'NQF Analysis' on our website: http://validationforvolunteers.eu/downloads). More steps, like intellectual output 1: Level Matrix and 2: Validation Methodology, are needed to be able to produce an online validation tool. This online tool helps users to discover and visualize their competencies, which they can use for their documentation and validation. In addition to the online tool, the project shall create an ebook that includes information from different countries. Besides this output, the project's aim is to raise awareness about competences that are acquired through volunteering and especially the need for the validation of these competences in order to make them presentable in applications and other kinds of documents. In order to facilitate the recognition of volunteering competences by relevant stakeholders, the project intends to engage various stakeholders in national seminars and transnational conferences.

No	Intellectual Outputs
IO 1	Structure Analysis of NQFs and EQF
IO 2	Guideline of Validation Methodology
IO 3	Develop and Test Online Tool
IO 4	Publish e Book
E1+2	Multiplier Event: National Seminars, Transnational Conference

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Position of Project

The project has adopted an individual perspective instead of an institutional one because the consortium is not going to target the education system but focus on individual volunteers, instead. For this reason the consortium are focused on the quadrants from seven up to twelve in matrix on the left-hand side. Concerning the micro, meso and macro levels, the project focuses on the first two levels. Within the micro level we shall concentrate on modelling, which means the focus is on the tools or instruments for validating learning outcomes.
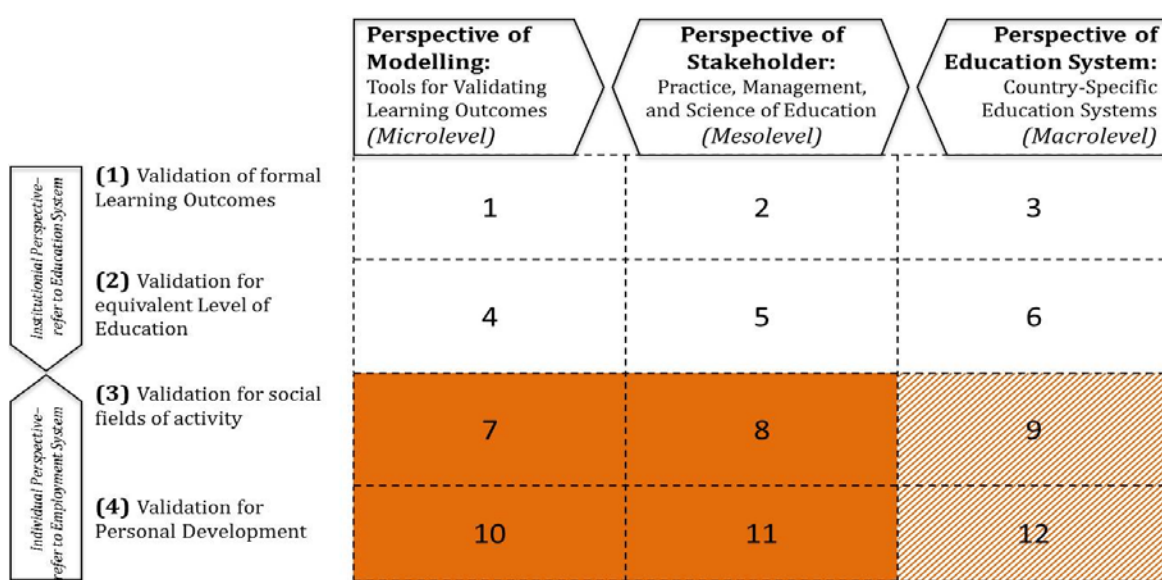
The meso level, on the other hand, presents the perspective of the stakeholders, which means that the meso level includes the stakeholders in the education sector. In the context of validation, stakeholders playing a role within the meso level include practitioners, managers, administrators and academics. The macro level, also called the perspective of the education system, focuses on the country-specific education systems. This can be the base for national development, where each stakeholder is responsible for its own change and implementation.

Intellectual Output 1: Level Matrix

The Level Matrix is the result of hard work and long discussions. It shows a description of volunteering skills relating to levels two to five within the European Qualification Framework (EQF). For the development of this level matrix, we have used our analysis of the National Qualification Frameworks in relation with each other and the EQF as a basis. In addition, the consortium has considered the key competences for lifelong learning adopted by the European Commission (http://eurlex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:32006H0962) and the model from Rego, Zózimo and Correia (2014, as competências profissionais geradas pelo voluntariado.) for its development.

The level matrix can be downloaded on our website: http://validationforvolunteers.eu/downloads.

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Next Steps

Exploitation of Level Matrix

Define Validation Methodology

3rd Meeting 4.-7. October 2015

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