

EUROGUIDEVAL: a brief outline of the Thematic Action project (2005-2007)

Implementing the Common European principles through Improved Guidance and Counselling based on a common framework for guidance professionals

The Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning [APEL] has become a major European challenge as well as a priority objective as stated in the "Copenhagen Declaration." The systems already in place and their management in different European countries are in contrast with one another in terms of specific policies, cultural and historical contexts even though it is possible in some cases, to discern similarities and influences coming from one or the other.

APEL arising from non-formal and informal learning comes for the most part from learning acquired in the workplace, and to a much lesser extent from voluntary based and activities of daily life. This last type of learning presents methodological problems as well as issues of competencies with regard to APEL professionals. The ordinary trainer is not automatically prepared for this and would be advised to dip into a wide variety of disciplines to construct appropriate methodologies of guidance and accompaniment. (Psycho-sociology, Ergology, Education, Linguistics...). Specific problems arise when dealing with APEL for a marginalised or disabled target audience. If the levels of transparency and mutual confidence required by the 2010 objectives are to be attained, it is essential to develop the appropriate training curricula covering specific target groups and easily adapted to the different cultures of the member states whilst maintaining a minimum of common norms.

This project is conceived in spirals and in links that are reflected in the production procedures and in the methodology.

1. A survey of professional practice, counselling, orientation and guidance with regard to NFL and IFL in the partner countries
2. The results of this survey will form the bases of identifying the competencies, knowledge and methodological approaches used by the professionals concerned as a means of assisting the emergence, formulation and certification of non-formal and informal learning outcomes. Particular attention will be paid to the approaches and professional practices mobilised to support target groups such as those who are the furthest removed from successful academic and formal learning environments as well as those experiencing the greatest difficulties with regard to social and professional integration
3. The information drawn from stage 2 will provide the basis for
 - Guidelines for the identification of learning outcomes from non-formal and informal learning
 - A trans sectoral set of function and training standards

The outcomes of the research carried out by the European Certificate of Basic Skills [EUCEBS] and the University of Flensburg will be drawn upon for this stage.

4. Training standards will be devised directly linked to the occupational standards, as well as recommendations for a Diploma course leading to a Bachelor's or Master's degree, according to the target group. Particular attention will be paid to differentiate course content according to the specific roles of VAE professionals (i.e. Core themes plus specific modules)
5. Modular based packages for further training for professionals already involved in the APEL process will be made. On this theme we intend to cooperate with and contribute to other relevant transnational and national projects.
6. Ongoing perspectives after the project cycle: (on condition of feasibility, and funding)
 - Permanent Internet forum for APEL professionals with exchange of information and ideas and analysis of professional practices;
 - Annual meetings;
 - Publishing of articles and reflection activities.

Methodology:

- Documentary research and capitalisation of results of previous relevant European projects; local and national experiments for the identification of professional counselling, orientation and guidance practices. Examination of existing training provision in each partner country.
- Evaluation of these practices in the light of the common European principles for the validation of non-formal and informal learning
- Specific research will be undertaken concerning the type of problems met concerning access to APEL with regard to non-formal and informal learning and the outcomes for certain target groups: the long-term unemployed and economically inactive; women returners; those with learning and other disabilities; people living in isolated rural communities. Innovative and transferable solutions will be actively sought.
- Action research completed by interviews with professionals, stakeholders and beneficiaries from each partner country to enrich and validate the content of the "Common European Principles for the Identification and Validation of Non-formal and Informal learning" (May 2004), the occupational and training standards (in two stages) consistent with the requirements of national systems and sectors.
- Self assessment will play a prominent role in these two kinds of research
- Cross evaluation and valorisation by all partner countries both nationally and using the Cedefop Virtual Community.

Throughout the whole project: regular exchanges with the other projects in the Thematic Action 2 group of projects. Specific correspondents will be responsible for maintaining these links.

Web site: <http://www.euroguideval.org/>

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