



Validation System in Lifelong Learning Experiences of Youth Volunteering



Newsletter

February 2017

VALLEY at a glance

VALLEY stands for Validation System in Lifelong Learning Experiences of Youth Volunteering and is a 2-year project (01.03.2015 - 28.02.2017) funded by the ERASMUS+ Programme. The project seeks to provide new resources to identify and recognise skills and competences developed by young people during their volunteering experience.

The project will maximize the transferability of the learning to other dimensions of young people's life to help understand the global benefits of volunteering in terms of social integration

During the project lifetime, young people from the six partner countries (Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Romania, UK) will take part in volunteering activities applying the validation system LEVEL5 – a flexible validation system developed specifically for validating learning outcomes in non-formal and informal learning settings. LEVEL5 has been successfully applied in numerous non-formal and informal learning projects and in the previous project RIVER (www.river-project.eu) that addressed senior volunteers.

VALLEY Award



On 15th September the VALLEY partners launched the campaign for the VALLEY Award on innovative initiatives and activities that promote the development of competences in an innovative way and include practical cases or at least ideas on how learning outcomes and competence developments within volunteering work can be assessed and evidenced also beyond the walls of formal education.

... and the Award goes to

From the 28 award entries the European jury selected the two winners. We have the pleasure to announce that these winners are:

Groeiboekje submitted by Jeugdendienst Don Bosco (JDB), Belgium, represented by Joeri Brisaert

Jeugdendienst Don Bosco is a national recognised youth work organisation, financially supported by the Flemish government.

Groeiboekje means literally 'book of growth'. It is an instrument with two purposes:

It is a book where volunteers that work as trainers can gather remarkable moments from every training course they facilitated such as memories, pictures, remembrances, messages, funny questionnaires etc.

It is an instrument to see volunteering as a long journey with different stages. Stages during which volunteers will reflect, develop competences, and grow as a whole person.

Volunteers were eager to have a self evaluating instrument. JDB did not want to use a formal document but a tool which combines self reflection and the collection of remarkable moments. The book was developed by volunteers in a period of two years. By means of this book,



volunteers can visualize their own development as a trainer. There are sections where volunteers themselves, other trainers and participants can give their feedback on their work as a trainer.

Jeugdendienst Don Bosco used the competence profile of a trainer as the base of the reflection part. The profile is clustered in four different competence areas: Guiding, Organizing, Evaluating and “Jeugdendienst Don Boscompetences” This last category contains different competences which are specific for the organisation and stand close to the vision of the organisation.

The self reflection part is divided in three different sections: before, during and after the training course. Each part uses different methods of self reflection: e.g. a questionnaire, 'not-to-forget' post its, top and flop section, the rose of Don Bosco.

Next to the reflection part, there is the 'memories' section where volunteers fill a page about themselves. Trainers can also stick post-its and pictures on certain pages which reminds them about the training course.

'Groeiboekje' is put in a binder, so that papers can be added to the different sections. Since volunteers deliver many training courses in the organisation, the binder is likely to grow bigger.

The innovation of the tool lies in its self-developed reflection methods – a big variety of less formal and playful reflection techniques – its graphics and its nice lay-out with different cartoons that gives the book a humoristic element.

Find out more:

http://valley-eu.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Award_Attachment_Don_Bosca_Groeiboekje.pdf

The leadership development assessment submitted by AIESEC, Austria, represented by Johannes Schneeberger

AIESEC, Austria is a global platform for young people to explore and develop their leadership potential. AIESEC is a non-political, independent, not-for-profit organisation run by students and recent graduates of institutions of higher education.

A key tool used to evaluate the learning outcomes in all projects is the Leadership Development Assessment. The LDA is a questionnaire every potential participant fills out during the application process for the exchange programmes as well as every member of a AIESEC local committee. This helps getting an insight of the Participants' competences based on the four Leadership Qualities. Those are:

Being a world citizen: “Being aware of what is going on in the world and enjoy taking an active role in contributing towards making it a better place for everyone”.

Self Awareness: “Knowing the own strengths, weaknesses and passion”.

Empowering others: “Being able to communicate ideas clearly, engage in meaningful conversations with others, and co-create spaces of collaboration that empower people to take action”.

Being solution oriented: “Being able to come up with solutions for challenges while being flexible and ready to take necessary risks”.

The aim of this is to evaluate the competencies of the participant and to build upon them and develop them through volunteering in the project.

We follow up on the outcome of the LDA of every participant individually through Leadership development spaces that are Individual Discovery & Reflection, Team Experience, One to One talks, Conferences & Seminars, Learning Circles and Virtual Spaces.



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Through this method, we get an insight on how much AIESEC has contributed to one's leadership development.

Find out more:

http://valley-eu.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Award_Attachment_AIESEC_LDA_Assessment.pdf

The two winners were invited to the final VALLEY conference that was hosted by the French partner EUROCIRCLE. The prize of the competition was actually the trip to Marseille. Of course, we had a European award ceremony on Thursday, 16th February, 2017, with all VALLEY partners and external guests.

VALLEY Final conference



VALLEY developed new resources to identify and recognise skills and competences developed by young people during their volunteering experiences. These resources and the validation methodology based on LEVEL5 were presented in the final VALLEY conference on Thursday, 16th February, 2017, which took place in the Villa Méditerranée in the old port area of Marseille.

The hosting partner EUROCIRCLE invited young volunteers and experts from more than 40 organisations to share their experiences and to discuss about the benefits of volunteering in terms

of social integration, civic participation and discovery of hidden talents.

After the introduction to the activities carried out in VALLEY and presentations of the national pilot approaches, the floor belonged to some young volunteers who had participated and who gave testimony of their developments and their opinion towards the project's approach. The general feedback was that they learned a lot about themselves and that they became aware of progress in their development.

"The benefit of VALLEY's method is the credibility it provides to my experience and the fact that it radically improves the self-awareness of my improvement." (Volunteer in CESIE, Italy)

VALLEY Quality label

VALLEY promotes learning and the development of social competences acquired through volunteering. Especially for disadvantaged or excluded groups of young people, volunteering offers an important link to learning for life and not least the labour market. Against this background the VALLEY consortium developed the VALLEY label.

The VALLEY label is a European quality label that provides a clear signal to young volunteers from all European countries that a volunteering organisation is dedicated to support learning and recognition of competences acquired in volunteering. The VALLEY label is conceptualised in a way that volunteering organisations follow an approach in which working with volunteers is not only coordination and placement, but also supporting individual development and competence oriented learning, so that young people can get the most out of their voluntary engagement.



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Volunteering organisations can get the VALLEY label by following a well defined procedure.



There are good reasons to obtain the VALLEY Label. Among them are:

- Promote a positive image of your organisation
- Show a clear commitment to the value of volunteering
- Attract volunteers
- Improve your project planning by knowing the potential of your volunteers

Find out more: <http://valley-eu.org/valley-label/>



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