



Newsletter

December 2015

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.

What has been achieved so far?




The VALLEY team carried out comprehensive research activities and launched an online survey among volunteering organisations and (ex) volunteers to obtain a more detailed view of the informal learning that takes place in volunteering and of the experiences and opinions concerning recognition and validation of learning outcomes gained through volunteering. The findings from the surveys were consolidated by a number of interviews in each partner countries with stakeholders in the field of volunteering.

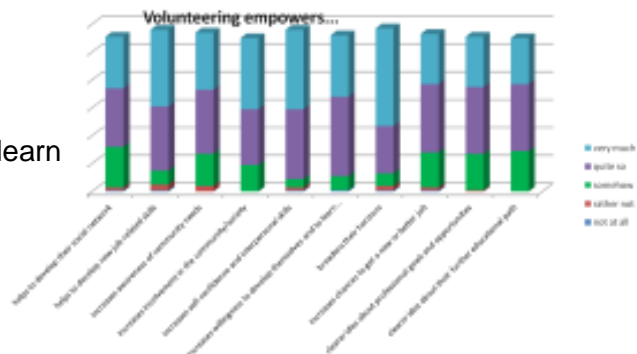
From the gathered results can be derived that volunteering is considered as important learning field for young people, especially in the formal volunteering services like FSJ (Voluntary Social Year) or BFD (Federal Volunteering Service) that are organised as long term involvement of 6 up to 24 months and include compulsory training days (25 per year) on topics connected to the activities of the volunteering organisation or other competences considered relevant for the volunteers. Also all respondents (both in the online survey and in interviews) see a number of benefits that result from the volunteering.

Benefits of volunteering

Among the highest ranked benefits are:

Volunteering

-  broadens the horizon
-  increases the willingness to change and learn
-  helps develop new job-related skills



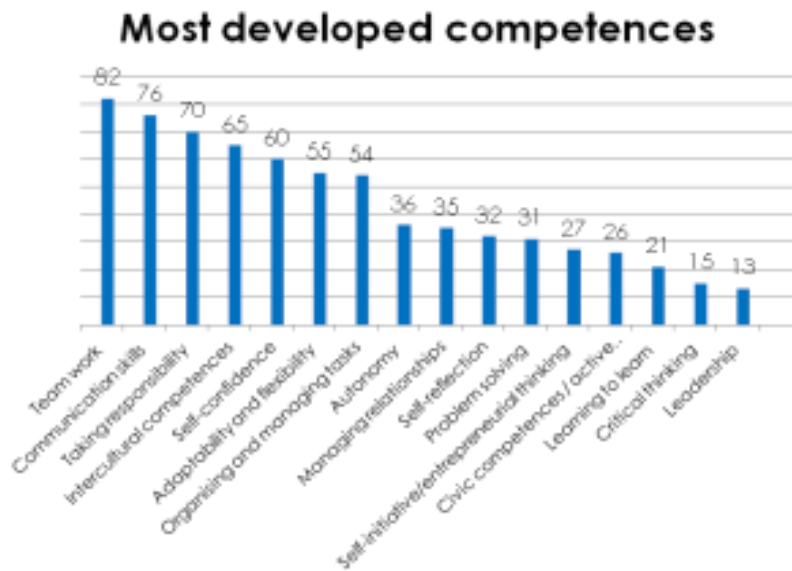


Validation System in Lifelong Learning Experiences of Youth Volunteering

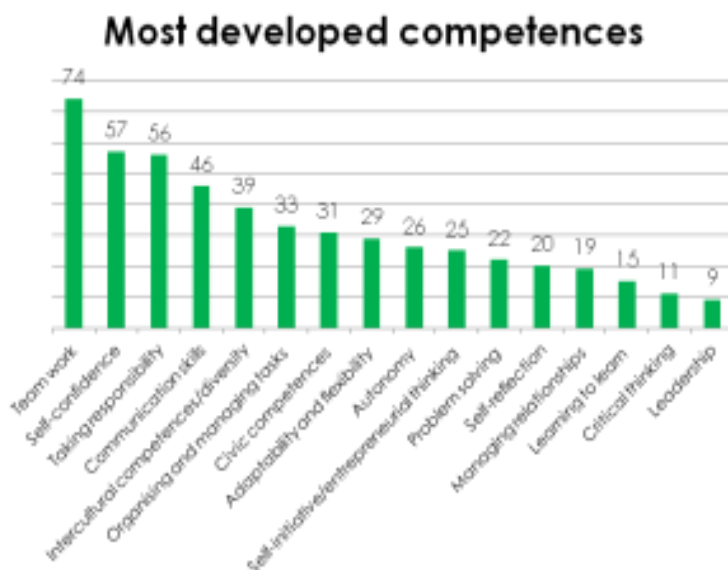
By being engaged on long term basis young people develop numerous competences that help them become ready for responsibility and to be “adult” members of society. The scope of competences that are developed through youth volunteering has been researched in a number of studies and projects, and it appears that there is a generic set of competences that young people primarily or on average develop in their volunteering experiences. These correspond to the results of the interviews, but also to the VALLEY survey and the derived VALLEY inventory of learning topics.

We can see strong parallels between organisers’ and volunteers’ answers when it comes to the question which competences are the most developed ones in volunteering.

For the volunteers:



For the organisers:





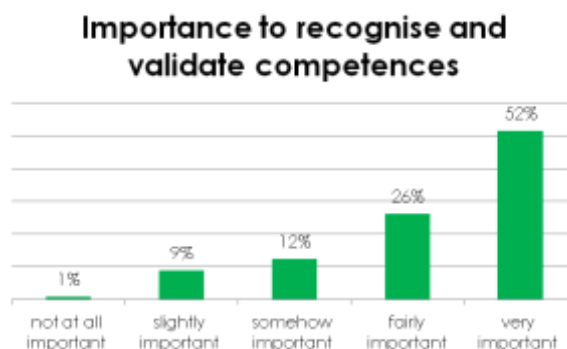
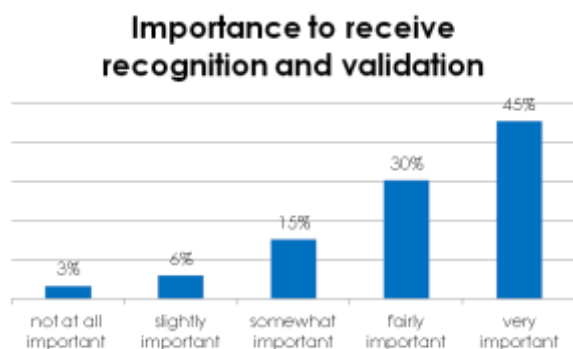
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Both groups also have very similar views on the importance of recognising and validating competences acquired in volunteering:

For the volunteers:

For the organisers:

:



There are already various instruments to recognise and document competence developments gained in youth volunteering in place – also those that are implemented on national level. This variety of instruments reflects the large scope of activities and working fields subsumed under youth volunteering.

The recognition of instruments like Youthpass by employers and representatives of business, is an issue that was raised on a number of occasions, e.g. at the “World-of-Work” conference in

Turkey 2014 but also in a study of the European Youth Forum among employers, and that regardless of country, branch and size of company, the range of answers reaches from one extreme to the other – from great appreciation to seeing not much use in it. This includes statements about the desirable format of such instruments, too. For some it should be short and precise, other employers prefer extensive descriptions. The question, what is the ultimate format of a recognition tool remains to be answered individually.

On 18./19. November 2015 the VALLEY partners met for the second transnational meeting in Palermo. The meeting was dedicated to drawing conclusions from the previous research and stocktaking phase as basis for the development of the VALLEY validation approach for assessing and evidencing competence developments in volunteering activities.

The VALLEY team sees a great need for developing a meaningful validation approach of competence developments in the following months.



Validation System in Lifelong Learning Experiences of Youth Volunteering



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