



Validation System in Lifelong Learning Experiences of Youth Volunteering



Newsletter

September 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 volunteering sector represents a very powerful informal learning context, where people of all ages, education, cultural and social backgrounds, have the opportunity to experience different challenging situations, putting into practice their own skills and competences and acquiring new ones. Most of these new competences represent an asset for volunteers in other areas of their life, as for e.g. in their professional career.

The project will maximize the transferability of this learning to other dimensions of young people's life to help understand the global benefits of volunteering in terms of social integration and (re)engagement, civic participation, mobility opportunities, etc.

VALLEY targets youngsters already involved in volunteer activities, who want to have recognised, validated and certificated their competences and skills gained during volunteering. VALLEY will put a special focus on young migrants and NEET young people (not in education, employment or training) who have never experienced volunteering.

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 does VALLEY want to achieve?



VALLEY seeks to develop and pilot a validation methodology and system for validating the competences gained in volunteering activities. The results will complement existing EU validation systems currently used in the youth field e.g. Youthpass.

Moreover, the VALLEY team wants to promote an exchange on good practices and information on volunteering opportunities for young people by means of the VALLEY community and e-platform.

The main project outcomes will be compiled in a unique "VALLEY toolbox" consisting of the validation methodology, mentoring guidelines for volunteers, good practices from the piloting phase and information on how to join the VALLEY community.

A VALLEY quality label will also be designed that will be awarded to volunteering organisations that work along the lines of the VALLEY validation methodology and will ensure sustainability of the project.



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The partners believe the VALLEY approach can become a comprehensive European concept to promote the validation of learning outcomes in volunteering, especially for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

What has happened so far?



The representatives of the six partner organisations met for the first time for the kick-off meeting on 11th and 12th May 2015 in Göttingen, Germany. During the kick-off meeting, the partnership came together to plan the implementation of the project and to share their experiences of volunteering and methodologies to support the recognition and validation of skills and competences of learners. The partners established a list of competences that volunteers acquire during their volunteering service.

The competences that the VALLEY team listed are:

- ✔ Team work
- ✔ Intercultural competences / managing diversity
- ✔ Self-initiative and entrepreneurial thinking
- ✔ Autonomy
- ✔ Problem solving
- ✔ Leadership
- ✔ Adaptability and flexibility
- ✔ Civic competences / active citizenship
- ✔ Critical thinking
- ✔ Taking responsibility
- ✔ Organising and managing tasks
- ✔ Communication skills
- ✔ Managing relationships

The list is currently being enriched – the VALLEY team has 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 online surveys are still open and can be accessed here:

Survey for volunteering organisers:

<http://survey.bupnet.de/index.php/survey/index/sid/454824/newtest/Y/lang/en>

Survey for (ex)volunteers:

<http://survey.bupnet.de/index.php/survey/index/sid/738838/newtest/Y/lang/en>

The findings from the surveys will be consolidated by a number of interviews in each partner countries with stakeholders in the field of volunteering.



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