**Minutes**

**v.1**

**3rd Transnational Partner Meeting**

***Recommendations for international project managers competences recognition and validation for lifelong learning [AER-V]***

**6 & 7 September 2021  
organized by EDUCULT**

**Time:** ***1st Day: Monday,*** ***06 September 2021: 09:30 - 17:00 CEST***

***2nd Day: Thursday, 07 September 2021: 09:00 - 14:00 CEST***

**Place:** ***Q21 (at MuseumsQuartier Wien); Museumsplatz 1/e-1.6; A-1070 Wien, +43-1-5223127-0***

## Participants

Agnieszka Dadak, FAIE (PL) | on-site

Rafał Dadak, FAIE (PL) | on-site

Jerzy Kraus, FAIE (PL) | on-site

Mateusz Dadak, FAIE (PL) | on-site   
Lorenza Lupini, COOSS (IT) | on-site   
Luca Bordoni, COOSS (IT) | on-site   
Hans Jørgen Vodsgaard, Interfolk (DK) | online

Aron Weigl, EDUCULT (AT) | on-site

Oliver Löscher, EDUCULT (AT) | on-site

Vanessa Gomes, RightChallenge (PT) | online

Yiannis Laouris, FWC/CNTI (CY) | on-site

**Minutes:** EDUCULT

**Monday, 06 September 2021: 09:30 – 17:00**

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| 9:30 – 09:50 | Welcome – signing the attendance list – presentation of the 1st day agenda –short introduction round – organisational information (food, etc.)  Moderation: EDUCULT |

No changes in the agenda  
Introduction Round:

Yiannis (Future World Centre) is an NPO and active in the field of civil society engagement. FWC focuses on structured democratic dialogue that is a tool that can make a change. It is designed as a workshop and the methodology supports the process how people in a group can agree on certain issues.

Hans (Interfolk) presented his organization and his person shortly (virtually).

The presentation of the other organisations will follow at lunch as we had some delays.

We clarified some structural things regarding meals and evening program.

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| 09:50 – 10:30 | Presentation of changed project implementation strategy due to the project suspension: Project idea, timeframe and budget. Update on links with the other initiatives: FIRST Network Recaption of the project objectives  Presentation: FAIE |

FAIE presents updates and news on the project. One of the management aims of the meeting in Vienna is to decide if the project should be prolonged that was almost decided yet. AER-V is the following project of the FIRST project that was finished at the end of 2020. The FIRST project (“First-time international project realisers support network”, E+ KA2, 2018-2020, [www.first-network.eu](http://www.first-network.eu)) as a basis for AER-V was presented.   
Aim of FIRST: to support increasing innovativeness of the adult education organisations, in terms of education methodology, outreach to adult learners and managing adult education organisations, through supporting them at undertaking new ways and areas of activities in European cooperation projects.

AER-V was presented.  
Aim of AER-V: to support recognition and validation of knowledge, skills and competences of international project managers active in Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the adult education sector, acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning.

The next phases of AER-V are presented.

Regarding the payments of the unit support we get 40% for PMI (Project Management and Implementation) was refunded beforehand and 60% will be refunded after delivering and accepting the report to the Polish Agency.

The initial internal communication & information exchange, dissemination, monitoring and evaluation plans were shortly presented. These agreements are still active as no one disagreed.

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| 10:45 – 11:15 | Recaption of the former project developments and ideas:  Presentations of the outputs developed by Group 1, 2 and 3 in May 2020 at the online Ancona meeting:  Group 1: Hans, Oliver, Rafał  Group 2: Aron, Jerzy, Vanessa, Mateusz  Group 3: Agnieszka, Lorenza, Luca, Yiannis  Moderation: COOSS |

(cf. Minutes Ancona)

Group 1 by Rafał: It mustn’t be the same target group of FIRST: it can be both experienced and unexperienced participants that refers to the prior learning. Participants can be free persons or engaged in associations.

Group 2 by Aron: Prior Learning: recognition of non-Formal education (professional courses, attending conferences, volunteer work)

Group 3 by Lorenza: bachelor degree 🡪 two level format: basic level, just motivation and enthusiasm, to learn; advanced level: prior experience in management.

Aron asked if there is the need of a two-level system and how to proceed with this topic. It should be a point we decide today if we need courses for beginners and experienced people and so if we need a two-level certification system.

Second, we talked about the possible training offer.

Group 1 by Rafał: System part of NGO services, - define lacks in current services

Needs:

* low prices
* simple 2-level certification
* clear target groups (not divide in body and PMs)

Group 2 by Aron: Group two proposed three levels: Introductory, intermediate and advanced. Vanessa mentioned that soft skills and inter- and cross-cultural competences should be included in the trainings as it is an important topic for international operating organisations.

Group 3 by Lorenza/Agnieszka: To have a dedicated training offer, including the CSO specifics, including,

* Possibility to pay for the course from a project grant, for ex. E+ KA1,
* The reflect the current needs of the CSOs & the needs of the specific persons enrolled (‘tailored’ courses),
* Blended methodology: on-line/ in class training + some mentoring; some assignments supervised

The rest of the presentations were skipped and we went over in an open discussion.

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| 11:15 – 12:30 | Discussion and agreement on categories of a framework of training concept (e.g. levels, range, access, target groups, etc.)  Moderation: EDUCULT |

Hans mentioned that the creation of a competence model for validation and examination should be in the focus and the knowledge about civil society sector be one of the most important parts of the training.

Oliver asked if the civil society should be in the focus or the international project management. Hans said that is one important part of this training since we are doing that for this field.

Yiannis jumped and it argued that learning through actively doing is evident for project management. Words cannot show that much as the practice can do. You get the most experience when planning and implementing projects on your own. Intercultural competences and agreements are basic for the practice work and international projects.

Agnieszka answered that we talk about/define “European project management” in the future instead of “International Project Management”. In the FIRST project we developed many models and contents of possible courses for International (European) Project Management.

Yiannis asked what kind of international projects should be addressed through AER-V.

AER-V should define common and sustainable recommendations that are relevant for different EU projects (Horizon, Erasmus+, Interreg, etc.)

Hans said that the conditions in the civil society sector are special and have to be included in our training programme.

Oliver mentioned to find similarities and general competences that are relevant for this kind of job of European Project Management.

Intercultural competences are not only communicative competences but also cultural oriented.

Agnieszka asked if we can agree to focus on European Project Management. We agreed.

We agreed as well that the course and the examination are for people who are willed to work for social benefit in the CSO sector.   
We also shouldn’t exclude those working for the benefit of the CSOs and/or for the benefit of public good (public benefit) in other bodies – for example, working in the CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) area for enterprises.  
It was observed, that the potential clients might be both those who are moving to the CSO sector from the business sector, as well as those moving from CSO to business.

Agnieszka: We can think on third level. Should we now think wider or not?

Hans: Certification and validation should focus on a certain competence set and therefore we need to specify.

Aron: It is possible to create different certifications for special job areas in CSOs.

Business and strategic, leadership, technical skills as well as different roles in the project team should be taught.

Aron: What are the pre-conditions for the levels? We are getting nearer to that.

Yiannis: We have now different areas for the training and the examination. Therefore, we could create a perhaps 3-minutes video for each area, where it is explained further.  
Yiannis also observed it might be an idea to think about the competences to validate from the perspective of an ‘employer’ – what skills the employer would ask from the person applying for the project manager position.

Aron: Tomorrow we should have defined these points/categories that are part of the training before the examination.

Agnieszka: We should keep in mind what are the important things for our jobs. For us it is almost usual but what are the important things for the beginners.

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| 14:30 – 15:15 | Input on the FIRST competence model and common discussion  Presentation: FAIE |

We used in the former FIRST project the triangle competence model for project manager which uses a three-dimension approach and filled it with special skills in terms of European Project Management.

Technical Project Management, Strategic and Business Management and Leadership Competences. Each level has ten sub-categories.

Hans, Oliver and Aron said that a reducing or clustering of these already defined competences could be a first step to create a structure content-wise for the courses.

Agnieszka jumped in and said that we could also use the three stages we developed in the further training courses in the FIRST project (Planning & Designing, Realising & Implementing and Evaluating & Transfer).

Yiannis and Aron support the idea to define different certifications with different levels.

Yiannis asked if we plan to realize these courses and certification systems.   
  
Agnieszka: AER-V can be the base for another project where these recommendations can be implemented in trainings, etc.   
Yiannis proposed possible developments for the future in terms of cooperation with another organisation, implementing courses and how we can make the project sustainable since he has the experience that most of the projects die after the funding and he would like to avoid that.

Aron: An online implementation of the course is wise because of the European direction of this offer and so the validation system is easily to access.

Hans: It needs a good structure and sufficient and effective courses.

Aron proposed to use the thirty skill sub-categories for the group works on the second day and cluster it regarding the different levels. The consortium agreed to do it that way.

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| 15:30 – 17:00 | External Presentation of [Michael Reiner (ECQA](https://www.ecqa.org/index.php?id=26&L=0)) about the certification system and the approach by the European Certification and Qualification Association (ECQA) via Zoom  Open Discussion between the expert and the consortium |

Agnieszka summarized and introduced the FIRST project and the objectives and plans in frame of the AER-V project.

Michael Reiner presented the structure and objectives of the ECQA: The reasons for a European Certification system is to create a Europe wide acceptance of single schema of certification. The ECQA certificate is meanwhile at all over the globe and certify 30+ job professions. It is oriented to the ESCO (European Skills/Competences, qualifications and Occupations). The data set is quite good to start with and map the ideas but it doesn’t go too much in depth. The examination division goes from professions to unit to elements which are then the performance criteria. They divide their partners in training and exam organisations –> A trainer cannot be the person who examines. ECQA generates knowledge in cooperation with science, industry and education. The participants come from the industry. European certifications for job roles and micro-certification are offered. It is community driven by focus groups working on news and updates and needs of the field. The ECQA is also regularly involved in different European projects.

The certificates differ from the level and complexity of the job roles.

Yiannis asked why to work with the ECQA. What are the benefits?   
Michael Reiner: The ECQA is well-known all-over Europe and has some reputation. In the field of examination, the ECQA brings a lot of experience in an international context and uses different portals for different job role examination. The fees for the examination are paid by the industry, education providers like universities or by the participants and it is normally around 75€ (but for ex. Students may pay just 50€ - so the arrangements with ECQA’s may be flexible)

Agnieszka asked how to generate a European certificate that is relevant in an international context.

Michael Reiner answered that an exam can be international-related and it has to be developed in that way or an exam is developed for a special national context. Micro-certification is a certificate for one element or one unit and they can be added on certain platforms like LinkedIn (LinkedIn badges). MR also said it is, in general, expected that the people certified would be suited to work all over Europe.

Oliver asked for the methods of building certification systems and generating units and performance criteria.   
  
Michael Reiner: Focus groups are from the respective working fields defines the needs and criteria that are important for an examination that will the ECQA implement. Self-Assessment is one of the most important things before doing an exam or visiting a course. Through this it is possible to assign to a level. A discussion on the results of the examination with the participants is no longer be carried out since it is complicating the certification process. Recertification depends on the job role and the needs the focus group/job committee defined. Standardization of the examination is important and proof of skills should be only done by other certificates (working experience can be everything and nothing).

Farewell.  
  
**Thursday, 07 September 2021: 09:00 – 14:00**

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| 09:00 – 09:30 | Welcome – signing the attendance list – presentation of the 2nd day agenda – possible changes to the agenda  Moderation: EDUCULT |

No changes in the agenda and all signed on site or online.

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| 09:30 – 10:00 | Common reflection and discussion on the practice insights  Moderation: Interfolk |

EDUCULT:

* Standardization as an important point, how to recognize work experience?
* Not necessary to do everything of the process at the end, e.g. we only do the exams, we are a focus group
* Organisations with a will to work in projects for social benefits instead of only focusing on CSOs
* Proposed level structure: managing as a partner, managing as a coordinator
* When defining the skills ask what we would like a new PM to know etc.

FAIE:

* Using grants
* Micro-certification is interesting, let trainees choose modules they are interested in
* How to build the market demand for our services

RightChallenge:

* Existing courses are business oriented, mostly technical focus, missing something for people in the social fields, how to do the things in practice
* Badges on LinkedIn / Xing
* Recognizing work experience is difficult

COOSS:

* More opportunities by micro-certification

FWC:

* Sustainability, not to lose the possibility to stay alive
* Collaborating ECQA is a shortcut, negotiate about the price, etc.
* Modular system, expand sub-modules into full module
* Position us as the “experts”

Interfolk:

* Exit strategy includes FIRST network
* Main idea of the network: support, expand knowledge, not only certification
* It seems that for the CSO people the courses would be more needed than the certification

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| 10:00 – 11:30 | Division in two working groups:  Group 1: Vanessa, Rafał, Luca, Hans, Aron, Mateusz  Group 2: Yiannis, Oliver, Lorenza, Jerzy, Agnieszka  Further development of a possible concept and recommendations for competences recognition and validation for lifelong learning based on the former practice insights and consortium agreements |

Group 1:

Micro-certification of each unit

Structuring along three project process areas:

1st: Conception and Fundraising (mix of different units of all three legs)

2nd: Organisation and Implementation (mix of different units of all three legs)

3rd: Sustainability, exit strategy and transfer (mix of different units of all three legs)

🡪 all three parts lead to the final certification as project manager

🡪 possible differentiation in project manager as a partner and a coordinator

Group 2:

Main category: managing as a partner, managing as a coordinator

Middle category: modules (Communication, Financing, Soft skills, Strategy, Technical, CSO, Sustainability)

Micro category: skills as units

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| 10:30 – 12:30 | Group presentations and common discussion  Agreement on options for a training concept/programme for a certification and validation system  Moderation: RightChallenge |

We discussed, how the second category in the model could look like (thematic/skill oriented or project/process oriented). There is no final conclusion, but a 1:1 assignment of the skills (so that one skill is exactly assigned to one module) is only possible in a thematic/skill-oriented approach. For a course structure the project process orientation would make more sense.

Job roles

1: PM for national coordination of European project

2: PM for coordination of a whole European project

3: Trainer/mentor/supervisor for EU PMs

For the next meeting(s)

* Focus on continuing certification in Lousada, focus on examination, certification in Copenhagen
* Possibly invite Tomislav Rozman (Slovenian partner for project management of ECQA); send link to Hans (possibly even others from other providers)
* Homework: develop clusters/modules (thematic/skill oriented) to find a solution in the next meeting about the 2nd category;   
  deadline to share the clusters/modules:

The homework assignment/reminder must be submitted 1 week after the date of the next meeting will be confirmed. The homework should be sent to the consortium at least 3 working days before the meeting date and presented at the meeting.

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| 12:30 – 13:00 | Outlook for the next steps in the project, evaluation, any other businesses, farewell  Moderation: FAIE/EDUCULT |

Further meetings

First option:

* TPM 4. Meeting in Lousada, organiser: RightChallenge, topic: continuing certification (22/23 Nov 2021)
* TPM5. Meeting in Copenhagen, organiser: Interfolk, topic: examination (1st priority: 23 – 24 March 2022, and as 2nd priority: 28 – 29 March (if the relevant meeting rooms at Vartov are occupied at the date of 1st priority).
* Meeting in Nicosia, organiser: FWC, topic: SDD [Structured Democratic Dialogue co-laboratory followed by TPM6] (~~poss.~~ 16-20 May 2022)

Second option (if no physical meeting is possible in November):

* TPM4. Meeting in Copenhagen, organiser: Interfolk, topic: examination (1st priority: 23 – 24 March 2022, and as 2nd priority: 28 – 29 March (if the relevant meeting rooms at Vartov are occupied at the date of 1st priority).
* TPM5. Meeting in Lousada, organiser: RightChallenge, topic: continuing certification (May 2022)
* TPM6. Meeting in Nicosia, organiser: FWC, topic: SDD (Sept/Oct 2022)

Final decision will be in October.

Evaluation

Vanessa:

* Sad because could not join
* Fruitful meeting, next steps taken, simpler to visualise what we want to do
* Like ECQA presentation
* Hopefully meet in person in November in Portugal
* Sorry for own delay at 1st day

Hans:

* Functioned well from virtual, technical point of view
* Good to have a wrap-up

Yiannis:

* Thankful for organisation, lunches etc. was fine
* Excited about progress
* Wouldn’t have been possible if not physical meeting
* Happy that came to Vienna

Agnieszka:

* Sorry for own delay at 1st day
* Project about exchange, not products is challenging
* Good to think about what could come out of it
* Next meetings can add up
* FIRST network could be a vehicle
* Hybrid meeting worked well

Luca:

* Thanks for organisation
* Blended reality worked well
* Expert invitation was good
* Happy to have physical meeting after time of not-travelling
* Happy with improvement/progress

Lorenza:

* Happy about physical meeting
* Organisation, location, dinner, time together, etc. is good
* Share ideas and experiences is fine, also around the main meeting, inofficial
* Working group was good, also to get new inputs for the project
* Really satisfied

Mateusz:

* Looking forward to how it turns out
* Great value of project in education sense
* Thanks for hosting, fluent organisation

Rafal:

* Thanks for organising, especially in hybrid form, works well
* Content: more structured dialogue would be good
* Even if product is not the aim, but would like to have more concrete outputs
* Good to meet face-to-face, hopes for physical meeting in Portugal

Jerzy:

* Happy about physical meeting
* Thank for organisation in general and of “cultural event” as example of local culture

Oliver:

* Thanks for coming to Vienna, as this was not clear due to the pandemic
* Direct personal interaction is more than virtual communication (is the reason of such projects)
* It is like Hans and Vanessa were sitting at the table
* Content: after 1st day it was difficult, but 2nd day was a break-through (good to have group work)
* Technical problems with Wifi
* Away from the project made it difficult
* Enrichment of having Yiannis with us
* Excited about next steps and also to plan to see physically

Aron:

* A bit time was necessary to come back to the project contents
* Nice to have Yiannis and Mateusz on board in this meeting
* Difficult room situation, sorry for that

Farewell

**ANNEX 1: LIST of RECOMMENDATIONS/CONCLUSIONS on Good Practices related to a training offer for acquiring/upgrading competences, preceding the recognition and validation process (for ex. the exam) – the ‘certification’ as a specialist in a certain field.**

Based on practices insights the AER-V consortium discovered new challenges and needs in the field of certification and validation of the job role “international project management and developed new recommendations tackling that:

* We decided to precise our definition of international project management: We will use in future **European project management in the CSO sector of adult education** since actors of this field is our target groups
* Recognizing of work experiences is difficult due to different job roles/experiences 🡪 We need a **flexible but standardized validation system**
* A validation should be flexible, attractive for employees and organisations 🡪 We need a system that answers to **markets demands**
* Flexibility and attraction can be built up through **micro-certification and different job roles**
* **A more level system is not appropriate** due to the blurring boundaries of job descriptions in CSOs
* **Collaborations with organisations/experts in the fields of certification**, validation and further training can **raise the reputation and expert knowledge as well as facilitate the entry**
* Only one validation provider cannot have the claim to provide the validation and certification system, the further training opportunities and the examination 🡪 **diversification of our offer and cooperation is necessary**
* The need in the European CSO sector is not only to have recognition and validation system in terms of European project management but to be able to perceive further trainings 🡪 **the exam preparation courses should be designed like a training opportunity**
* Based on these needs, challenges and recommendations designed an initial draft how to structure a recognition and validation system for **European project management in the CSO sector of adult education**

Main Category: First structuring according to three job roles

* + 1: PM for national coordination of European project
  + 2: PM for coordination of a whole European project
  + 3: Trainer/mentor/supervisor for EU PMs

Middle Category: Second structuring according to content-related modules (Communication, Financing, Soft skills, Strategy, Technical, CSO, Sustainability, etc.)

Micro Category: Assignment of necessary units/competences to the respective modules

* Certification is possible at all three levels with varying degrees of effort:
* Certification in a job role: Here, all necessary units/competences, which are still being defined, must be completed from different modules).
* Certification in a module: Here, all competences/units assigned to this module must be completed.
* assigned to this module must be completed.
* Micro-certification: It is also possible to complete a certification and thus a targeted further training on a competence/unit.
* Further training courses for all competences/units should be made available.

Prepared by: EDUCULT  
28 September 2021, v2