



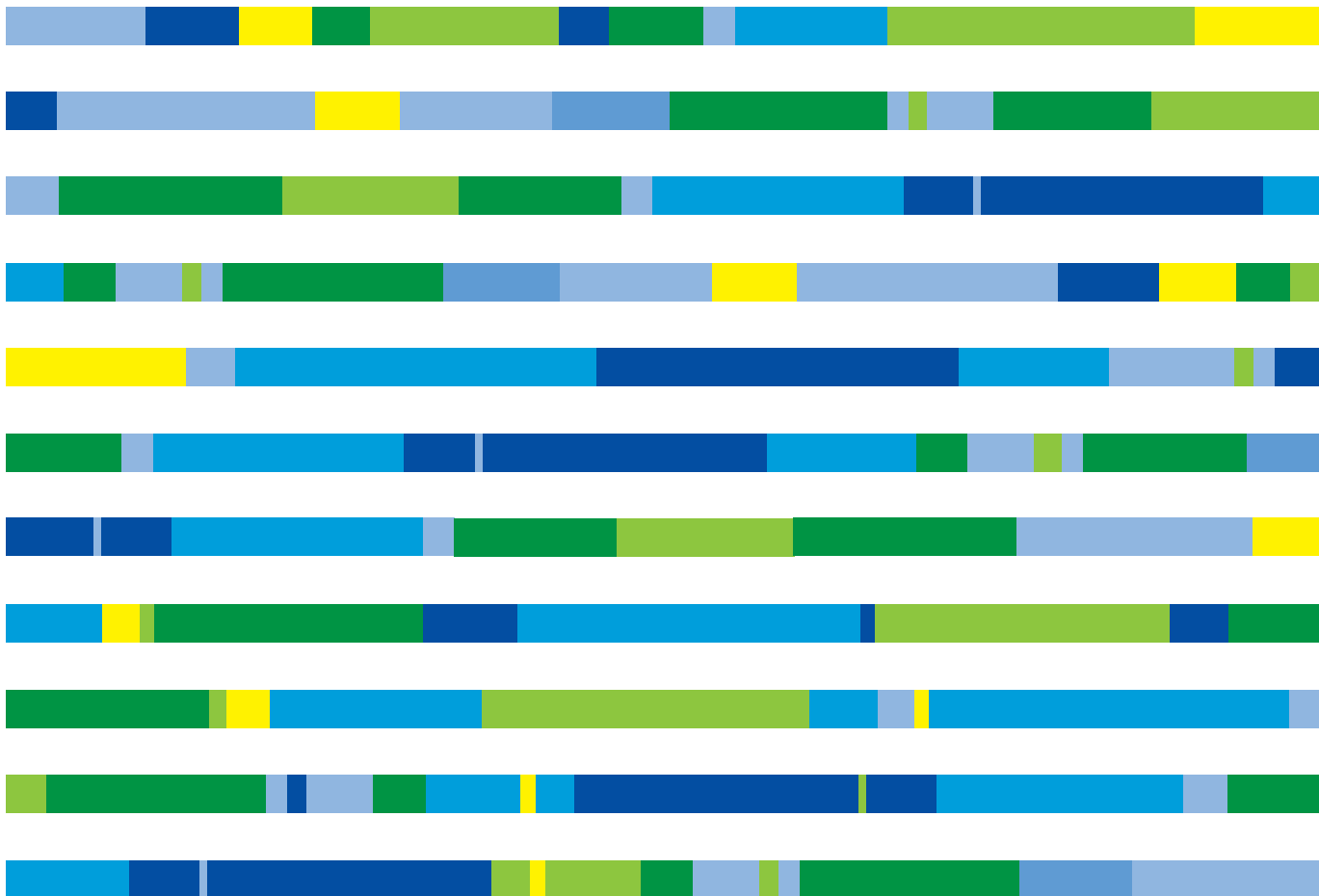
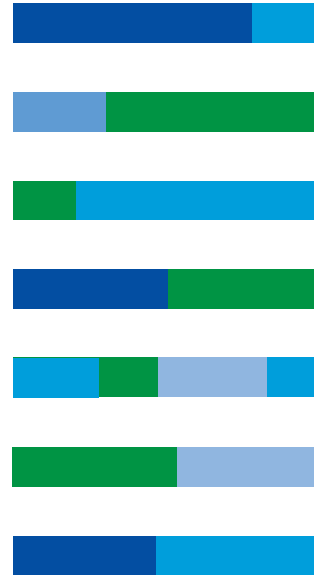
EN

European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning 2018

THEMATIC REPORT:

Validation of non-formal and informal
learning for migrants and refugees

Author: Ilona Murphy



Acknowledgements

This thematic report was produced by Ilona Murphy as part of the 2018 update to the European Inventory on validation, a project managed by ICF (lead consultants: Manuel Souto-Otero, Ilona Murphy, Gabor Endrodi, David Scott and Andreea Hrimiuc) under the supervision of a steering committee formed by the European Commission (Koen Nomden, Godelieve Van-Den Brande; Martina Ni Cheallaigh and Corinna Liersch), Cedefop (Ernesto Villalba and Jens Bjornavold), and the ETF (Michael Graham and Kersti Raudsepp).

Work was carried out under DG EMPL Implementing Framework Contract EAC/47/2014-3: VC 2017/0692

Disclaimer:

The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of the European Commission, Cedefop, the ETF, ICF, the EQF AG members or the other QA contacts. Neither the European Commission nor any person/organisation acting on behalf of the Commission is responsible for the use which might be made of any information contained in this publication.

The publication has neither been edited nor proof-read by Cedefop's editing service.

Please cite this publication as:

Hawley-Woodall, J. (2019). *European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning 2018 update. Thematic report: Validation of non-formal and informal learning for migrants and refugees.*
http://libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/vetelib/2019/european_inventory_validation_2018_Refugees_Migrants.pdf

Contents

- Acknowledgements 2
- 1 Introduction 4
- 2 Current situation 7
- 3 Stakeholder involvement and cooperation16
- 4 Key elements of validation initiatives for migrants and refugees24
- 5 Outcomes of validation for migrants and refugees30
- 6 The future of validation for migrants and refugees31
- 7 References33

1 Introduction

As many European countries continue to face large inflows of migrants and refugees, social and labour market integration services have become a policy focus at European and national levels. Ensuring the smooth integration of individuals of international protection is high on the agenda of policy makers across Europe^{1 2}.

In 2015, approximately one million people arrived in Europe with a significant proportion fleeing Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, Nigeria and Pakistan – all countries with recent or ongoing conflicts and political instability. On 1 January 2017³, latest Eurostat data reports that 21.6 million third-country nationals⁴ or non-EU migrants were residing in the EU-28 Member States. They represented 4.2% of the EU-28 population⁵. In the EU-28, the largest numbers of non-EU migrants were in Germany (5.2 million), Italy (3.5 million), France (3.0 million), Spain (2.5 million), and the UK (2.4 million)⁶. Out of all non-EU migrants residing in the EU on 1 January 2017, 1.3 million or 7.1% were holding permits for refugee or subsidiary protection status.

This rise in the number of migrants and refugees has called for attention and political action from governments throughout Europe. This has led to the introduction of a range of measures to support the integration of migrants and refugees into society and the labour market - including initiatives that enable individuals to have their skills and competences acquired by means of formal, non-formal and informal learning identified and recognised.

Supporting the integration of migrants and refugees to the labour market enhances employability, can help reduce labour market skills mismatches and address the lack of skilled workers in certain occupational fields. Helping new arrivals find jobs corresponding to their skills and experience can also have positive effects on personal well-being and social cohesion. In response, many Member States⁷ have introduced initiatives to validate the skills, knowledge and competences of migrants and refugees gained through formal, non-formal and informal learning.

The 2018 European Inventory synthesis report shows that in all 36 countries covered by the Inventory, arrangements are in place to allow for the validation of non-formal and informal learning. Of the 36 countries, only seven are reported to have systematic validation arrangements for migrants and refugees⁸. Other countries are currently implementing project-based initiatives specific to migrants and refugees, whilst in other countries, no specific measures have been identified. The latter typically offer validation opportunities to all citizens – including migrants and refugees. Whilst this presents a relatively promising picture with potential to learn from established and project-based initiatives in the future, reliance on project-based work raises concern regarding sustainability after the project has come to an end. Initiatives open to all

¹ European Commission (2015)

² Desiderio (2016)

³ Latest data available from Eurostat

⁴ Eurostat defines a third country national as any person who is not a citizen of the Union within the meaning of Article 17(1) of the Treaty, including stateless persons (see Article 2.1(i) of the Council Regulation (EC) no 862/2007).

⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics#Main_tables

⁶ Eurostat (2017) migr_pop1ctz

⁷ European Commission (2017)

⁸ Austria, Belgium-Wallonia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden.

citizens provide broader options for migrants and refugees, though may not be tailored in a way that supports the specific needs of this target group.

In the meantime, migrants and refugees continue to face many barriers when it comes to recognition of their knowledge, skills and competences – especially those gained through non-formal and informal learning. These barriers are linked to existing mechanisms for recognition and structures for integration that are often complex, lengthy and too fragmented or take account of challenging circumstances migrants and refugees face⁹. It is important to note that migrants, refugees and asylum seekers have a different status in most European countries. Policy efforts to support their social and labour market integration, and opportunities to access education, training and employment also differ significantly between countries and by year of arrival. Some individuals of international protection may take much longer to integrate into the labour market, such as the very low-skilled, older refugees or those traumatised by war. In countries where labour market conditions are favourable and where support policies for labour market integration are in place (e.g. Germany), this facilitates the smoother integration of migrants and refugees. Depending on the status of the individual, in our research we have found that some initiatives are targeted to migrants and refugees only, some are only targeted to refugees and asylum seekers, some include all three, whilst other initiatives are open to a wider range of target groups such as low skilled people.

Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers are not a homogenous group: Individuals differ by age, gender, working experience, culture and language proficiency. Education levels and geographical origins of migrants and refugees are also diverse. Some come from countries with disrupted education systems and thus may have low level or no qualifications¹, yet may be highly skilled. Others might be highly qualified but continue to face difficulties in gaining recognition of their prior learning and skills - thus securing appropriate employment that corresponds to their skills. Many face additional challenges linked to their status of residence and the circumstances of their arrival in the receiving country. For those who may have had limited opportunity to prepare for their migration and integration ahead of the journeys made, many face greater difficulties gaining recognition for their skills, competences and qualifications due to missing documentation, mastering the language (including terminology used in the employment sector) and accessing local networks in the host country.

Such barriers have obvious implications regarding restricted access to validation initiatives and for the way in which they are delivered. This reinforces the need for tailored or target-group specific validation measures, supported and delivered in close cooperation with other key stakeholders – yet the evidence suggests such approaches are limited. The recent development of most initiatives means that they have been mainstreamed only recently, with many others in ‘pilot-phase’, making an evaluation of their impact difficult to establish.

The overall aim of this report is to provide an overview of validation initiatives for migrants and refugees as identified under the scope of the 2018 European Inventory. The report begins with a discussion on the status of validation initiatives for migrants and refugees and explores the purpose of such initiatives. It then discusses the pivotal role of stakeholder collaboration in the design and implementation of validation initiatives for migrants and refugees and the key elements that are reported to make validation initiatives for this target group work. Following a brief discussion on the impact of validation for migrants and refugees in terms of education and employment outcomes, the report ends with a discussion

⁹ UNESCO (2018)

about issues for consideration with regards to the development of validation initiatives for migrants and refugees in the future.

This report is one of five thematic reports developed as part of the 2018 update to the European Inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning. It has been put together using data from the following sources:

- Data from the 2018 European Inventory country fiche database, in which the country experts were asked to answer specific questions related to this thematic topic and provide examples of validation initiatives for migrants and refugees in their countries¹⁰;
- 2018 European Inventory country reports for the corresponding countries;
- Interviews with six national stakeholders working on validation initiatives for migrants and refugees; and
- Relevant literature.

This thematic report is primarily based on seven countries where country experts have reported systematic validation arrangements (or at least partly) for migrants and refugees are in place: Austria, Belgium-Wallonia, Denmark, Finland, Germany the Netherlands and Sweden. Examples of good practice are integrated throughout the report and are based on initiatives put forward by the country experts. Where relevant, we also draw on practice emerging from specific project-based initiatives, namely (Greece, Italy, Switzerland, Turkey and the UK-Scotland) and relevant European projects (namely from the Norwegian perspective of the VISKA¹¹ project¹²).

1.1.1 Target group

In terms of the target groups, although the available data does not allow us to differentiate between different types of immigrants, the focus of this thematic report is on non-EU migrants and refugees and asylum seekers. The main target groups are defined in the box below.

Definition of target group

Non-EU migrants, refugees and asylum seekers are a broad and diverse group of third-country nationals residing in the EU.

In this thematic report, these groups are defined as follows¹³:

(Non-EU) migrant / third-country national (highly skilled or medium/lower skilled):

Any person who is not a citizen of the European Union within the meaning of Art. 20(1) of TFEU and who is not a person enjoying the Union right to free movement, as defined in Art. 2(5) of the Schengen Borders Code. According to this definition, nationals of NO, IS, LI and CH are not considered to be third-country nationals. This is also consistent with Art. 2(6) of the Schengen Borders Code.

Refugee: a third-country national who, owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group, is outside the country of nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling

¹⁰ See Annex 1 for details of questions included in the 2018 country fiche database for this topic

¹¹ <http://viskaproject.eu/>

¹² Additional Erasmus+ projects focusing on the validation of NFIL for migrants and refugees have been identified. These include VIC (www.evta.eu) and the EMBRACE project (www.evta.eu). As the projects are part way through the project timeframe, it is too early to incorporate any key findings into this report.

¹³ All definitions stem from the European Migration Network (EMN) Glossary v3.0, available here: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/glossary/index_a_en

to avail themselves of the protection of that country, or a stateless person, who, being outside of the country of former habitual residence for the same reasons as mentioned above, is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to return to it, and to whom Art. 12 (Exclusion) of Directive 2011/95/EU does not apply.

Beneficiary of subsidiary protection: A third-country national or a stateless person who does not qualify as a refugee but in respect of whom substantial grounds have been shown for believing that the person concerned, if returned to their country of origin, or in the case of a stateless person, to their country of former habitual residence, would face a real risk of suffering serious harm as defined in Art. 15 of Directive 2011/95/EC, and to whom Art. 17(1) and (2) of said Directive do not apply, and is unable, or, owing to such risk, unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of that country.

Asylum seeker: A person who has made an application for protection under the Geneva Convention in respect of which a final decision has not yet been taken.

Source: Extracted from the note on using skills audits for specific target groups: migrants and refugees, produced as part of the 2018 study: Skills Audits: tools to recognise talent final report.

2 Current situation

This section presents the status of validation initiatives for migrants and refugees across Europe identified by the country experts as part of the 2018 European Inventory.

Table 2.1 Validation initiatives in place for migrants and refugees

Current status of validation initiatives for migrants/refugees	Country
Systematic arrangements in place ¹⁴ / arrangements in place but not fully systematic	AT, BE-FR, DE, DK, FI, NL, SE
Project based initiatives in place	CY, CZ, EL, HU, IS, IT, LV, NO, SUI, TR, UK-S
No specific validation arrangements in place	BE-NL, BG, ES, IE, FR, LU, MT, PL, RO, SK, UK-ENI, UK-W
Information not available/do not know	HR, EE, LI, SI, LT, PT

Source: 2018 European Inventory country fiche data

As Table 2.1 shows, seven countries are reported to have systematic validation initiatives aimed at recognising the skills and competences of migrants and refugees gained through non-formal and informal learning. This includes Austria, Belgium-Wallonia, Denmark, Finland, Germany the Netherlands and Sweden. Although systematic validation arrangements for migrants and refugees have been identified in these countries, many initiatives are targeted towards 'highly skilled' individuals.

In 11 other countries, efforts are currently underway to test validation approaches through a project-based approach. Although 'no specific validation initiatives for

¹⁴ Defined as: Specific arrangements that involve validation targeted towards migrants and refugees. By this, we mean systematic arrangements that allow for open access; meaning generally there are no conditions in place to prevent access to the initiative (or that they are reasonable); broad coverage meaning the initiative is open to the majority of the target group; no time element meaning the initiative is stable and not restricted to a short-time frame (of one year for example); it is supported by a funding package)

migrants and refugees' were identified in a number of other countries, this is typically because migrants and refugees use the same validation opportunities available to nationals. In these countries there is typically no differentiation between different user groups of existing validation initiatives. In France, VAE was not designed in relation to one or several target groups but aimed at validating acquired experience regardless of an individual's status¹⁵. Similarly, in Spain, validation of non-formal learning that leads to the acquisition of national vocational qualifications is available to each citizen – including migrants and refugees.

Focusing on countries where it is reported that systematic (or partly systematic) arrangements are in place for migrants and refugees, Table 2.2 below presents a brief overview of current initiatives.

¹⁵ VAE is not meant to address the needs of all disadvantaged groups (job seekers, school drop outs, NEETs etc.) and to represent a unique solution to all situations. The needs of vulnerable groups are addressed via multiple tools and programmes, e.g. self-positioning tools, self-assessment tools, exemptions to access training programmes. The objective of VAE is to enable a person who has exercised activities in a trade or professional field to obtain certification based on evidence of such activities. (Source: 2018 European Inventory Country Report for France).

Table 2.2 Overview of current systematic validation arrangements for migrants and refugees

	Initiative	Key features
Austria	Competence check of PES	A tool is used to assess the skills, qualifications and language skills of people recently granted asylum or subsidiary protection
	Du Kannst was!	A tool is available to refugees entitled to asylum or subsidiary protection who are at least 22 years of age, with professional experience and basic German. The initiative maps the skills/competences of a person against the requirements of a job/profession. A document/certificate is issued which describes what skills they have and how they can be used on the labour market,
	Just Integration	Initiative aimed at unemployed young people (18-30) entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection. Focus is on vocational education and training whereby prior experience; knowledge and skills are considered
	Start Vienna (youth college)	Prior skills, talents and competences are assessed to determine level of education and draw up an individual training plan. Modular/individualised programme is used to support further learning and/or integration into the labour market
	Competence analyses by social services Tyrol	A tool used to identify linguistic, educational and professional knowledge, interests, strengths and aptitudes to support further learning and/or integration into the labour market
	Migrare	Migrare is a centre for migrants in Upper Austria ('Zentrum für MigrantInnen OÖ') ¹⁶ : It uses a range of tools including the 'Competence Kaleidoscope', to help identify and recognise the skills and competences of migrants and refugees. Migrare works on behalf of the PES of Upper Austria.
Belgium-Wallonia	Skills Audit	Various skills audit approaches as part support provided to help individuals arriving in Belgium (e.g. Induction Module including skills audit (<i>bilan social</i>))
Denmark	Special Vocational education programme,	The Basic Integration Education (IGU) programme offers a two-year traineeship in which the refugee undergoes training for a total of 20 weeks and works in a business for the remaining period. The refugee receives a paid trainee wage.

¹⁶ <http://www.migrare.at/cms1/index.php/angbote-kompetenzzentrum>

	Initiative	Key features
	Integration Basic Education (IGU)	
	KompetenceKortet	This tool is used to assess the skills and competences of migrants and refugees in relation to concrete work tasks, and may be part of a longer skills audit/development process.
Germany	Kompetenzbilanz für Migrant/inn/en	A tool for the identification of skills and competences acquired through life experiences.
	Kompetenzkarten (myskills.de and my-professional-experience.org)	MYSKILLS is a technology-based test that uses pictures and videos to assess the job-relevant skills of migrants and refugees. Jobseekers complete the test following the initial PES counselling interview. The test takes place in a PES-run test centre and covers 30 different occupational areas.
Netherlands	IVC	The initiative focuses on the outcomes of training which can be used for setting up career opportunities in further learning, in volunteering or paid work, and for embedding the personal life of individuals in a country with different cultural customs. One of the activities is help women identify and describe their personal skills and competences. The training is organised according to the Swiss CH-Q method (a Swiss vocational qualification programme) and follows the steps of: raising awareness, documentation, presentation, assessment and certification.
Finland	SHIM	The 'Supporting Migrants in Higher Education' (SIMHE) is aimed at enhancing the identification and recognition of prior learning of highly educated immigrants of different statuses and makes it easier to direct immigrants to higher education and/or into labour markets on a national and regional level. This is a national initiative aimed at improving and promoting work-related migration, tackling labour market skills mismatch and lack of skilled workers.
Sweden	Snabbspår	The initiative consists of a range of tools and methodologies focused on validation and skills audits. Materials have been translated in non-European languages and encompass appraisal (and recognition) of qualifications gained overseas, learning outcomes from non-formal and informal contexts, language proficiency, personal competences and general knowledge. These are then matched with specific occupation or job vacancies, and the necessary upgrade of skills and competences is initiated.
	<i>Jobskills.se</i>	<i>Jobskills.se</i> is a tool aimed to help asylum seekers, migrants and refugees to identify and document skills gained by means of formal, non-formal and informal learning. An online tool is used to produce a profile of the individual. It is freely available on the internet and has been translated into English and a number of other non-European languages.

2.2 Users of validation

In this section, we consider the extent to which migrants and refugees are users of validation initiatives. In doing so we draw on information collected through the 2018 European Inventory – namely country fiche data on beneficiaries of validation. We also draw on the targeted initiatives for migrants and refugees presented by the country experts and provide examples of measure that concentrate on the integration of certain sub-groups of migrants and refugees where they exist (e.g. low-skilled, highly skilled, young people and women).

2.2.1 Migrants and refugees as users of validation initiatives

Data collected as part of the 2018 European Inventory indicates that migrants and refugees are reported as a dominant user of validation in only four countries. This includes Finland, Italy, Turkey and the Netherlands. In Finland and the Netherlands (countries with systematic validation arrangements), migrants and refugees are reported to be a dominant user group of validation in the higher education sector. In Italy and Turkey (with project-based validation initiatives in place), migrants and refugees are a dominant user group of validation in the CVET sector. Whilst these findings are promising, they suggest migrants and refugees are not making much use of validation opportunities across the different sub-sectors of education and training or within the labour market or third sector areas. Though based on limited data, it could also imply that existing validation initiatives may be geared towards highly qualified / highly skilled newcomers whose skills match labour market demands - and not on the low skilled or vulnerable migrants and refugees who might find it more difficult to get their competences recognised¹⁷.

In the section that follows, we provide some examples of validation initiatives that are used by migrants and refugees. It should be emphasised that some of the initiatives are open to multiple target groups – rather than being exclusive to any one specific target group.

Validation initiatives for low-skilled migrants and refugees

For individuals with low-level skills and those who have limited experience with formal education, validation of non-formal and informal learning is key to supporting individuals adapt and integrate into the host society and labour market. Several countries have established validation initiatives that target low-skilled individuals – including migrants and refugees. Though open to all low-skilled individuals, this could mean the idiosyncrasy of the migrant situation and the challenges one may face is not fully taken into account in the design and implementation of generic measures.

The ‘**Du kannst was!**’¹⁸ initiative in Austria, targets a range of low-skilled workers, including migrants and refugees. The aim is to update and officially validate professional competences of semi-skilled or unskilled workers, which they have acquired in non-formal and informal learning contexts. Participants can obtain certificates if they are successful in the final apprenticeship examination. Advice and guidance is also available to migrants and refugees, informing them of potential validation opportunities and requirements of participation. If an individual decides to participate, personal portfolios are created with a focus on competences relevant for the individual's chosen profession.

¹⁷ See Souto-Otero and Villabla-Garcia (2015)

¹⁸ <http://www.dukannstwas.at/>

In Germany, the **ValiKom**¹⁹ initiative has developed validation processes that allow for the skills and competences of migrants and refugees acquired outside of the formal education and training system be assessed and certified. As part of the process a range of methods and tools are used, including work placements and simulations. The initiative is aimed at low-skilled adults – including migrants and refugees with prior work experience but with no professional qualifications. At the end of the procedure, certificates are issued by either the Chamber of Commerce, Chamber of Crafts or Chamber of Agriculture. These certificates demonstrate full/partial equivalence with a German reference occupation.

Validation initiatives for young migrants and refugees

There is growing literature on the challenges young migrants and refugees face in their participation in education and training. Depending on personal circumstances, some young migrants and refugees may have not been able to complete their education. For those who have, they may no longer possess documented evidence of their qualifications. This makes recognition of their prior formal, non-formal and informal learning difficult to prove. For some, educational institutions in origin countries may no longer exist or may not be able to provide copies of transcripts or referrals. Validation opportunities to help young people identify, document and gain recognition of their skills and competences regardless of the context in which they were acquired is therefore highly important. Young people who remain idle are amongst the most vulnerable and at risk of being drawn into anti-social activities and crime²⁰.

Validation of non-formal and informal learning can contribute to the personal development of young migrants and refugees, helping them to be more aware of their competences and documenting them in a way that might increase their employability. For many years, Austria has developed initiatives specifically targeted at young migrants and refugees. This includes the '**JUST INTEGRATION**' initiative²¹ aimed at young adults between 18 and 30 years of age. It is an Austrian-wide initiative aimed towards unemployed persons entitled to asylum and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection as well as other unemployed young adults facing various difficulties. The aim is to support young people to access apprenticeship schemes. Skills and competences gained through formal, non-formal and informal learning are identified leading to shortened apprenticeship training. Another example from Austria is **StartVienna** – Youth College ('*STARTwien das jugendcollege*' - initiative for refugees)²². The overall objective of the programme is to provide recently-arrived young migrants, refugees and asylum seekers (mainly from Afghanistan, Syria and Somalia) the best possible opportunity to integrate into the Austrian education and training system. The programme starts with a clearing phase, where existing skills and competences acquired through prior formal, non-formal and informal learning are identified and the level of education is determined. Based on this information, an individual 'educational plan' (Bildungsplan) is then developed. In addition to technical training, participants develop their German language proficiency and cultural knowledge with the view to empowering young migrants and facilitating their social cohesion.

In Germany, as the labour market continues to face skills shortages, companies are increasingly offering apprenticeship places to young people who arrive in the country

¹⁹ <https://www.validierungsverfahren.de/en/home/>

²⁰ See World Bank (2015)

²¹ http://www.aufleb.at/just-integration_/

²² <https://www.wien.gv.at/menschen/integration/ankommen/start-wien-fluechtlinge/jugendcollege.html>

as refugees. In response, a range of measures are in place to help young people prepare for apprenticeships, including through the validation of non-formal and informal learning. Tools to support the identification and documentation of an individual are well established²³ and include www.my-professional-experience.org which can lead to an assessment of skills using the MYSKILLS tool (discussed in more detail below).

In **Finland**, in the remit of project 'VALMA'²⁴, young migrants and refugees applying for vocational or general upper secondary education are offered studies that prepare them for secondary education. Following an initial assessment of skills and competences acquired by means of non-formal and informal learning, the aim of the preparatory training is to help migrants and refugees enter the labour market and/or progress into further education. Preparatory training lasts between 6-12 months depending on the individual's training/upskilling needs. The course offers possibilities to improve one's language skills, ICT skills, maths or natural science knowledge. It also offers possibilities for participants to gain an insight into different occupations through workshops or business visits and/or VET programmes. The student automatically receives competence points in a VET programme for successfully completing VALMA. The scheme is free of charge for the individuals.

A related factor to support the integration of young migrants and refugees is the importance of the learning environment. Here it is recognised that providers of education and training (schools, colleges, universities) are important arenas for social and cultural inclusion²⁵. Validation initiatives that support the integration of young migrants and refugees into the formal education system by means of learning acquired in different contexts is crucial. Whilst not the focus of this thematic report, it is important to acknowledge that in many countries, the integration of minority children have been given priority in school education policy. This includes enhancing multicultural and second language competences among teachers and other staff and improving education opportunities for newly arrived young people. These topics are increasingly being added to national regulations for teacher education, multicultural competence, second language and multilingualism.

Validation initiatives for high-skilled migrants and refugees

There is evidence to suggest that, in some cases, migrants and refugees who are not successful in securing employment soon after arrival are likely to be overqualified for their work²⁶. Here it is commonly reported that over-qualification is a widespread phenomenon among migrants residing in the EU. According to the OECD (2014), highly educated immigrants show lower employment rates than their native-born counterparts in virtually all OECD countries. Moreover, even when they are employed, they are 47% more likely to be in jobs for which they are formally over-qualified.

Although the recognition of prior formal, non-formal and informal learning of migrants and refugees has been a key component of European, national and institutional efforts, the need to simplify procedures, increase flexibility (through multiple methods of recognition) and reduce costs have been emphasised²⁷. Literature purporting the ambivalence of recognition systems, (including measures in place for the validation of non-formal and informal learning) raise concerns that, 'whilst representing potential

²³ Noach, M., Ehmann, K. (2017)

²⁴ <https://www.hel.fi/helsinki/en/administration/administration/services/service-description?id=3083>

²⁵ Desiderio (2016)

²⁶ See OECD/European Commission (2014); Desiderio (2016)

²⁷ World Bank (2018), Cedefop (2016), Hakala, K. & Pesonen, J. (2018)

means of social inclusion, in certain conditions, risk becoming invisible instruments of discrimination'²⁸.

Based on the examples presented by the country experts, there are many established and project-based initiatives that are building on existing recognition systems and apply them to the needs of migrants and refugees. The aim is to identify and recognise the skills migrants and refugees have acquired by means for formal, non-formal and informal learning. For example, in Finland, the initiative, 'Supporting Migrants in Higher Education' (SIMHE)²⁹ aims to enhance the identification and recognition of prior learning of highly educated migrants of different statuses and make it easier to direct migrants to higher education and/or into the labour market. The purpose is to ensure that the previous studies and degrees of highly educated migrants are identified and recognised according to national policies as quickly as possible so individuals can find their way to appropriate education and careers paths. Guidance and counselling services are in place to support individuals through the process. On a national level, the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture has a dedicated steering group tasked with monitoring the Higher Education Institutions responsible for supporting immigrants in higher education towards the recognition of their skills.

In Scotland, individual projects are also being developed to support validation for migrants and refugees. Glasgow Caledonian University, in partnership with the Bridges Programme (supporting the social, educational and economic integration of refugees, asylum seekers, migrants, and anyone for whom English is a second language, living in Glasgow), are piloting an initiative, the 'Skills recognition and accreditation hub for the common good'. The aim of the project is to establish a hub for benchmarking participant's skills and learning against the Scottish Qualifications Framework (SCQF), and then identify further education needs to address gaps in learning according to the SCQF. Staff at the Bridges Programme are trained as validation practitioners. While the focus is on refugees, the processes established as part of the hub may be applicable to other disadvantaged groups.

Validation initiatives for migrant and refugee women

Migrant and refugee women may have limited opportunities to participate in education, training or take up employment³⁰. There are multiple factors contributing to this, including language barriers, lack of prior experience and/or educational attainment³¹, or limited childcare support (e.g. no family network) in the host country. The European Commission has reported that despite having a share of tertiary-educated similar to that of native-born women and migrant men, women born outside the EU are both more likely to be over-qualified for their job and less likely to be in employment³². Whilst policy efforts are underway to support the integration of migrant and refugee women across Europe, initiatives to promote their integration through education and training, specifically through validation of non-formal and informal learning initiatives are rare. Some good practice examples providing validation opportunities for migrant and refugee women have been identified as part of the 2018 European Inventory. This includes the International Women Centre (IVC) in the Netherlands (see Box 2.1 below) and the competence mapping and career planning initiative in Austria called 'Competence Kaleidoscope' (see Box 2.2).

²⁸ Lodigiani and Sarli (2017)

²⁹ See for example, <http://simhe.karelia.fi/en/> and <http://www.metropolia.fi/en/services/for-immigrants/>

³⁰ European Commission (2017)

³¹ European Commission, (2018)

³² See <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/feature/integration-of-migrant-women>

While open to a wide range of target groups, the Austrian initiative focuses on Roma women, female migrants and asylum seekers and women returning to the labour market. Competence checks (as described in section 3 in more detail) are also available to refugee women in Austria. The initiative offers certification of skills to refugee women or provides training to update their skills to possible career opportunities in the Austrian labour market.

Box 2.1 The International Women Centre (IVC)

The International Women Centre in Den Helder (Netherlands) offers a skills audit initiative to support the social and economic integration of migrant women. The objective is to enable participants to identify and document skills and competences acquired in their working, learning and personal lives. The tool is developed as a self-reflection tool with the aim of compiling a personal portfolio. In this portfolio, personal skills are formulated, documented, linked with evidence and assessed. Methodologies used to extract information about knowledge, skills and competences include 360 degrees feedback, performance assessment, interviews, observations, presentations and simulations. The outcomes of the training can be used for setting up career opportunities in further learning, in volunteering or paid work, and for embedding their personal life in a country with different cultural customs. The initiative is based on the Swiss CH-Q method (a Swiss vocational qualifications programme designed to enable individuals to manage their own careers, articulate their own development needs and build up their own competencies). The skills audit is guided and steered by an accredited CHQ-trainer/assessor in the field of career-management.

An important feature of the IVC initiative is its personalised approach. The tools used take into account the autonomy and independence of the participant. Where relevant and available, contact with the applicant is limited to the individual/small group settings. In some circumstances, the aim is to protect the identity of some female participants.

Further information: <https://www.ivcdenhelder.nl/>

Box 2.2 Competence mapping and career planning with 'Competence Kaleidoscope'

Competence Kaleidoscope is a competence mapping and guidance tool developed as part of an Erasmus+ project. It represents a strategic partnership project implemented by four non-governmental European organisations. This includes Akropolis and Genderove informacni centrum NORA from the Czech Republic, migrare Zentrum für MigrantInnen in Austria, and Miesto pod Slnkom in Slovakia from September 2015 to August 2018. The aim of Competence Kaleidoscope is to help participants identify and make visible competences acquired by means of non-formal and informal learning. A key aim of the project is to enhance the employability of individuals and support their social integration.

During the project, a range of methods were developed and tested with various target groups, including Roma women, asylum seekers and migrants seeking access to the labour market, or for women re-entering the labour market after maternity leave. With its modular design Competence Kaleidoscope is suitable for a wide range of target groups and different organisational settings.

Migrare in Austria, has successfully been using Competence Kaleidoscope since January 2018. Over 100 participants have taken part in 12 courses in Linz and Wels, run by three experienced trainers. A very diverse group of participants participated in the courses, covering a wide range of age groups (young people to retired), those seeking career changes, high-skilled and low-skilled. The diversity of the participants, as well as their different life stories and career paths offered important learning opportunities.

2.2.2 Purpose of validation for migrants and refugees

The main purpose of validation initiatives for migrants and refugees as reported by the country experts are aimed at both labour market and social integration. All initiatives include a focus on the identification and documentation of knowledge, skills and competences. Some initiatives lead towards assessment and certification, whilst others identify potential next steps or pathways, including education and training. Methods and tools used in many initiatives are designed in a way to leverage migrant and refugee's soft skills. For many migrants and refugees who lack formal proof of their qualifications and work experience, these initiatives offer an important way to provide evidence of their skills whilst getting a foothold in the host country's labour market.

In relation to certain initiatives, the assessment phase is linked to formal education. Whilst this provides opportunities to access or acquire qualifications (or partial) on the national qualification framework of the host country, the focus on formal education of the host country, queries the extent to which the learning process allows for intercultural dialogue and exchange. Selecting the most appropriate method will depend on the needs of the individual and the overall purpose of validation. These issues are discussed in more detail under section 4 below.

3 Stakeholder involvement and cooperation

Stakeholder involvement and cooperation between key actors is critical to the success of validation opportunities for migrants and refugees – especially organisations who have more direct access to migrants and refugees such as civil society organisations operating at local levels. Cooperation with labour market stakeholders is also key for gaining employer trust and acceptance in the results of validation. Where the aim of validation is to support integration into the labour market, employers need to trust that the skills and qualifications gained through validation are equal to those gained through formal education and training.

3.1 Organisations involved in validation initiatives for migrants and refugees

In this section we explore the different types of organisations involved in validation initiatives for migrants and refugees put forward by the country experts. In some countries there is evidence of targeted efforts dedicated to engaging hard to reach groups, especially migrants and refugees. Key to the success of such efforts is the cooperation and collaboration of organisations working directly with these groups. This might be regional centres dedicated to supporting and integrating migrants and refugees such as civil society organisations - there is no single approach. By and large education and training providers are often involved in the initiatives, but depending on the country and its infrastructure, other stakeholder involvement varies – this may also be linked to immigration policies to support labour market and social

integration of migrants and refugees where the PES are also seen to play a considerable role.

Civil society involvement

Civil society organisations together with local authorities have a key role to play in efforts to improve the integration of migrants and refugees. Community-based and voluntary organisations are often providers of non-formal and informal learning. They play an important role in establishing contact between locals and newcomers and facilitate social cohesion. Moreover, civil society organisations have a key role to play in engaging migrants and refugees and those hardest-to-reach through opportunities for non-formal and informal learning.

Based on the initiatives put forward by the country experts as part of the 2018 European Inventory, civil society organisations play a key role in validation initiatives for migrants and refugees in four countries. This includes Austria, Finland, Germany and the Netherlands. In this section we also draw on experiences from Norway where it is reported migrants and refugees actively participate in voluntary activities to a high degree. In the narrative that follows we explore the experiences of civil society organisations and other key stakeholders in supporting migrants and refugees in the validation process.

In Austria, migration is generally regulated at the national level, however as a federal state, Austria's provincial governments also have their own regulatory rights and access to resources making them important stakeholders in the field of integration. Through the Department for Integration and Diversity, these departments also fund integration projects implemented by NGOs and local associations. A concrete example of this is the Vienna Youth College initiative as presented above. A number of non-profit organisations also offer competence checks for a range of different target groups. ABZ* Austria offers the aforementioned competence check for female refugees. The programme last for several weeks, with opportunities to also undertake internships. Through the programme, refugee women can prove their knowledge and skills – especially those acquired by means of non-formal and informal learning, bolster their language skills, expand their social network and become financially independent.

The Netherlands has a long history of collaboration between third sector organisations and the labour market to support the integration of migrants and refugees. Validation of non-formal and informal learning has featured in integration policies and mainstream employment programmes since the late 1990s. Here there has been strong collaboration between refugee organisations and the business community since 2012 to offer an 'indication of education' or proof of Dutch equivalent credentials based on information provided by the refugees through the validation process. Moreover, volunteering groups from the Refugee Council (*Vluchtelingenwerk*)³³ are involved in validation initiatives at local levels providing important opportunities for the validation of non-formal and informal learning.

In Norway, the interviewee reported that migrant and refugee community-based organisations have established themselves as an integral part of the third sector. Grants are provided to migrant organisations and other NGOs with the aim of strengthening the participation of migrants and their children in community activities – including opportunities for non-formal and informal learning. Similarly, in Belgium-Wallonia, the third sector is increasingly involved in validation initiatives for migrants

³³ <https://www.vluchtelingenwerk.nl/artikel/dutch-council-refugees>

and refugees. As outlined in the 2018 country report for Belgium-Wallonia, validation centres and non-profit organisations are collaborating to support individuals through the validation process. Moreover, a refugee support organisation, has as one of its main aims to provide guidance to refugees including information concerning validation programmes³⁴.

PES involvement

PES have an important role to play in validation initiatives for migrants and refugees. In response to the high number of refugees that arrived in Austria in 2015, this generated the need to understand the qualifications and competences of migrants and refugees in order to support their integration into the labour market as well as into society. To this end, the Austrian Public Employment Service (PES) Vienna, carried out a pilot project for people admitted as asylum seekers in 2015, that was then rolled out nationwide in 2016. The initiative which is called 'Competence Check' is presented in Box 3.1 and it includes validation of non-formal and informal learning.

Box 3.1 Competence Check of PES - Austria

The 'Kompetenzcheck des AMS für AsylwerberInnen'³⁵ initiative for asylum seekers is based on a pilot project launched by PES Vienna in 2015. It was rolled-out nationwide at the beginning of 2016. Competence checks are offered to people admitted as asylum seekers and aim to promote their fast integration into the labour market. The focus is on helping them to recognise their existing qualifications, competences, aptitudes and professional experiences and/or desired qualifications. These competence checks include tests carried out in real work places (enterprises). The competence check has been designed as a course of ten hours. It lasts for five weeks and includes one-to-one coaching. Language support is also provided (e.g. in Arabic, Farsi, Russian and French). In 2016, 5 982 people (75% men) concluded a competence check. As of March 2018, approximately 12 500 people have taken part in competence checks since 2015³⁶.

In some countries, the PES is tasked with ensuring migrants and refugees are dispersed across municipalities where local employment opportunities match their needs. An example of this can be found in Sweden. Here the Swedish PES in collaboration with different social partners focus on developing effective actions for newly-arrived migrants with education and skills in areas with strong demand in the labour market. A range of tools and initiatives support this process. As part of **Jobskills.se**, a digital tool for self-assessment enables migrants, refugees and asylum seekers to identify and document their skills and competences. The tool is aimed at helping participants establish contact with employers during the time they wait for a decision on their residence status. Learning acquired by means of formal, non-formal and informal learning can be entered into the user's personal profiles. The tool is freely available online and has been translated into English and other non-European languages.

The **Snabbspåret** initiative in Sweden is another example of a measure that aims to match opportunities for migrants and refugees with the demands of the labour market. It is coordinated by the PES and its success is facilitated by an agreement between the labour market authority (Arbetsförmedlingen) and the social partners. Snabbspåret is primarily used in sectors that offer favourable employment prospects or where there is a lack of qualified labour. The initiative is currently available for 30

³⁴ CVDC (2012)

³⁵ European Commission (2017); 2018 European Inventory Country Report for Austria

³⁶ See 2018 European Inventory Country Report for Austria

occupations in 14 different sectors and aims to fast track migrants and refugees into occupations with labour shortages. The social partners are actively involved in the process by providing placements and being involved in practical tests conducted in the workplace. Social partners can apply for state funds to cover the cost of their contribution towards the implementation of Snabbspåret³⁷. A key strength of the Snabbspåret initiative is that it offers validation of learning based on industry driven procedures, thus valued and understood by employers.

Similarly, the **Kompetencekortet** initiative in Denmark is primarily used by the PES as a tool for the systematic, dialogue-based identification and documentation of 'hidden' competences of migrants and refugees. As with many initiatives led by the PES, referral to competent authorities (e.g. national agencies, Ministries) is required to undertake the assessment and certification stages of validation, where relevant and appropriate.

Whilst Sweden and Denmark represent good practice examples of where there is strong PES involvement in validation initiatives for migrants and refugees, in other countries, it should be observed that the PES is not always located in all municipalities/local authorities so this may hinder capacity to match initiatives for migrants and refugees with the actual needs of the local labour market. As a consequence, migrants and refugees may have no other option than to relocate to regions where employment opportunities corresponding to their skills are more prosperous. Even where the PES is present across municipalities/local authorities, their involvement in validation initiatives for migrants and refugees varies (e.g. this is reported to be the case in Switzerland)³⁸.

Private sector employers and SME involvement

A key observation to highlight is that there is little, if any reference to the role of SME's in validation initiatives for migrants and refugees put forward by the country experts. Indeed, this is related to much broader challenges employers report when employing migrants and refugees and/or when offering opportunities to support their skills development, including opportunities for the validation of non-formal and informal learning. According to research undertaken by the OECD (2016), employers cite several reasons for not hiring migrants and refugees, such as uncertainty about the rules governing the refugees and asylum seekers' rights to labour market access, and uncertainty about their skills and qualifications, the risk of lowering productivity due to a lack of host-country language skills, at least initially, and a public opinion that is sceptical about hiring refugees or asylum seekers. In this respect, further support is needed to assist SMEs who already face higher resources constraints. One suggestion is for SMEs to pool their resources and share the costs of identifying, training and hiring migrants and refugees. Such initiatives can be led by Chambers. In Germany for example, the German Chambers of Industry and Crafts have been active in offering validation opportunities to match labour market opportunities to the skills and competences of migrants and refugees³⁹.

In Turkey, authorised certification bodies are established and run by the private sector (half of ACBs are private sector companies) and by public and non-governmental bodies such as Chambers of Commerce and Industry, trade unions, employer

³⁷ In 2016, app. EUR 1 million were distributed for this.

³⁸ Interview with representative from SUI.

³⁹ <https://www.thelocal.de/20160126/small-german-firms-hope-refugees-can-plug-job-gaps>

associations and unions for craftsman. They mainly focus on empowering employees in the sector, to improve their skills and competences with a view to obtain Vocational Qualifications Authority certification. Recently, several ABCs have initiated validation programmes specifically for migrants and refugees as presented in Box 3.2 below.

Box 3.2 TOBB MEYBEM, an ACB, supporting the labour market integration of the host community and the migrants

TOBB MEYBEM, founded by TOBB (the umbrella organisation of the Turkish business community), together with the local and provincial offices of TOBB in 81 provinces, works on VNFIL. This ACB provides validation in hazardous occupations in cooperation with the local Chambers of Industry and Trade in all provinces. TOBB MEYBEM focuses on 5 main sectors; construction, metal, machinery, automotive and electronics. By the end of March 2018, TOBB MEYBEM has validated more than 30 000 people throughout 81 provinces and 160 districts. Moreover, with its capacity and local network, TOBB MEYBEM also aims at contributing to the revision process of the national occupational standards while taking the sectoral perspective into consideration and expanding its accreditation into more sectors and occupations.

Moreover, the organisation actively validates migrants' non-formal and informal learning as well as develops awareness by providing them with VNFIL information to facilitate their labour market integration. The ACB also seeks to extend these activities to local communities. In addition, the organisation supported the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) pilot work on migrants in September 2017.

3.2 Collaboration between partners

In response to high numbers of migrants and refugees arriving in Europe, many countries have introduced a range of collective measures to support their social and labour market integration. This calls for strong collaboration among reception services, employment agencies, education and training providers, civil society organisations and other key stakeholders. Coordinating the different services needed to address the multiple and complex disadvantages that migrants, refugees and asylum seekers face is challenging for authorities at different levels. A lack of coordination often results in duplication of efforts and a drain on much needed and often limited resources. It also means the skills and competences of migrants and refugees go unrecognised and thus, individuals become isolated and remain at a greater distance from the labour market. Coordination between partners can facilitate early integration into the labour market and society by leveraging on the skills, knowledge and competences of the individual. Moreover, the strength of a 'hands-on', coordinated approach means that partners (including employers) are more likely to value and trust the outcomes of validation initiatives.

In this section we build on some of the initiatives introduced above and explore the extent to which there is collaboration between key stakeholders to support the implementation of validation for migrants and refugees. Based on the information provided by the country experts, it is reported that some countries have strong collaboration between stakeholders involved in the implementation of validation initiatives for migrants and refugees. These tend to be in countries where validation initiatives are closely linked to the labour market (though these do not always have a legal basis) and/or where there is a long tradition in the establishment of collective agreements between social partners (such as Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden). As discussed in the previous section, in these countries the PES is also significantly involved in the implementation of validation initiatives for migrants and refugees.

In Austria, whilst there is no overall coordination of validation initiatives at national level, there are examples of regional coordination between PES, Chambers and adult

education providers. In relation to the '**competence analyses**' initiative, social services Tyrol delivers a programme specifically for asylum seekers ('*Kompetenzanalysen*' - *Tiroler Soziale Dienste GmbH*)⁴⁰: The initiative is based on two main aspects: On the one hand, the identification of linguistic, educational and professional knowledge; on the other hand, the visualisation of interests, strengths and aptitudes. Visualising the competences of migrants and refugees is intended to support their social and labour market integration. In addition, the organisation works in partnership with other local services and providers in order to identify suitable charitable activities, apprenticeships and leisure activities which can be accessed during the asylum procedure.

Good collaboration between partners involved in validation initiatives is also reported in the case of Germany. As soon as refugees receive a visa/work permit they are invited by the PES to undergo a skills audit of their knowledge, skills and competence – including those acquired by means of formal, non-formal and informal learning. In many cases, an initial skills audit has already been conducted prior to the individual arriving at the PES. This is typically undertaken at the immigration counselling offices of the AWO⁴¹ and other welfare organisations. Ideally, insights gained, and results compiled during this initial analysis by the immigration counselling offices is prepared in a way to foster smooth integration into next stages of skills identification and documentation. Based on the 2012 Recognition Act and range of initiatives to support the integration of migrants and refugees in Germany, coordination between key actors is reported to be working well (see 2018 European Inventory Country Report for Germany).

In Denmark, the government launched several new 'recognition' initiatives targeting migrants and refugees, by the Spring of 2016. The aim of these initiatives was to promote the use of validation and improve the recognition of migrant and refugees' skills and competences. As part of a tripartite agreement with the social partners and a bipartite agreement with the municipalities in Denmark, one of these initiatives is the aforementioned **Integration Vocational Education (IGU)** for refugees, where validation of prior non-formal and informal learning is part of this programme (VPL). One of the issues concerning validation in Denmark, is that it remains the responsibility of the education institution. To support the implementation of the IGU, there is a view that coordination between stakeholders (including social partners, enterprises and third sector organisation) could be strengthened to improve the support offered to migrants and refugees in terms of access and understanding of the process. As VPL is completely in the hands of the education institutions, the entire VPL process is reported to be relatively isolated at the educational institution without much cross-sectorial support. To support the implementation of the agreement and to strengthen collaboration between partners, the Ministry of Higher Education and Science has established a 'VPL working group' with representatives from the social partners and the CVET institutions, vocational academies and professional high schools. The working group develops recommendations to the government concerning a more flexible and transparent use of VPL, including in the context of the IGU.

There are many factors that limit the scope for successful coordination between stakeholders involved in validation. These are covered in the Thematic Report on Stakeholder Involvement in validation produced in parallel to this report. The absence of a legal framework defining validation, lack of commitment from the side of social

⁴⁰ <http://www.tsd.gv.at/kompetenzanalyse.html>

⁴¹ Arbeiterwohlfahrt, a German welfare organisation with different associations all over Germany

partners, underused/undeveloped social dialogue models and a lack of expertise in practitioners involved in the implementation of validation initiatives for migrants and refugees are among factors reported. In Belgium-Wallonia, two specific reasons are cited. In the absence of a legal framework for validation opportunities for migrants and refugees together with limited information on available initiatives, there is little collaboration between relevant stakeholders. In Finland, both third sector organisations and the PES provide opportunities to migrants and refugees for the identification and documentation of their knowledge, skills and competences. However, the outcome of the identification and documentation procedures are not always transferred to the education sector. As a result, the same interviews and data collection is carried out several times. To strengthen coordination between stakeholders involved in validation, under new VET legislation⁴² cooperation between different actors is strongly emphasised, which is expected to lead to improved results in terms of exchange of information and sharing responsibilities within validation.

When thinking about the degree of collaboration between partners involved in validation initiatives for migrants and refugees, it is important not to lose sight of the individual at the centre of the process. Depending on the situation of the individual (in terms of their residency status, family circumstances, personal well-being) there are likely to be multiple agencies involved in their settlement/integration process (education, housing, employment, welfare/social policies). Some individuals will be at different stages in terms of their 'readiness' and availability to engage in procedures aimed at recognising their knowledge, skills and competences, which is also highly dependent on language proficiency. Careful coordination between services can help facilitate a smooth transition for the individual, at a pace that is suitable to their needs and circumstances. Whilst this seems the most pragmatic and efficient approach to support the integration of migrants and refugees, this type of model is not so straightforward and not so easy to implement. As part of the VISKA trials in Norway, each participant involved in the trials is involved in extensive plans and programmes of integration and language training. These plans and programmes are regulated by different laws and ministries and local providers. Working across the three-tier administration that exists in Norway has been identified as a key challenge, as different levels govern the different interventions pertaining to the same group of people. For example: Integration measures are municipal, whereas upper-secondary validation is a county responsibility.

Collaboration between partners is necessary for the effective design and implementation of validation initiatives for migrants and refugees - but it takes time. Collaboration is complex given the nature of the target group, the different types of agencies across different sectors and levels of government. And it needs time to develop and evolve.

3.3 Stakeholder awareness and trust

In this section we explore the level of awareness / understanding of, and trust in validation opportunities for migrants and refugees amongst labour market related stakeholders. As discussed in the previous section, in countries where collaboration between partners is strengthened by collective agreements and/or where the

⁴² In 2017, two previously separate laws (Vocational Education and Training Act and Vocational Adult Education Act) were joined into one single law, Vocational Education and Training Act (531/2017) and was enforced on the 1st of January 2018.

validation initiatives are closely linked to the labour market, it is reported that there is a relatively high level of awareness, understanding and trust in the outcomes of the validation initiatives for migrants and refugees.

In Finland, across the labour market, full/part qualifications gained through validation regardless of the target group are widely accepted. As the labour market is strongly involved in validation activities, this is reported to promote a high level of trust. Moreover, as the entire VET system is based on validation, certification does not differentiate between learning outcomes gained by means of formal, non-formal or informal learning. Similarly, in Denmark, standards and procedures for assessment in validation initiatives is set by the 'Branch Committees'. This means that validation outcomes in terms of access, exemption and / or acquisition of certificates is highly trusted by employers, educational institutions and in society. The certificates issued by validation do not differ from those obtained in formal education.

In Sweden, employers are heavily involved in the design of aforementioned Snabbspår according to national/regional skills needs. They are also actively involved in offering work placements and are involved in work observations. As such, employers trust and value the outcomes of the Snabbspår initiative. Conversely however, in some countries, regardless of the target group, some employers continue to favour formally acquired diplomas over diplomas acquired by means of validating non-formal and informal learning.

As reported in the 2018 European Inventory synthesis report, in some countries, the level of awareness, understanding and trust in validation opportunities in general is high. When initiatives are not primarily aimed at and/or taken up by migrants and refugees, trust in their outcomes for this target group is less clear. This was reported to be the case in Belgium-Wallonia. In countries where the validation initiative incorporates all four stages of validation (especially assessment and certification) there tends to be a higher level of trust in the outcomes of the initiative, regardless of the target group. In Austria, where assessment and certification are part of the initiative (which is the case when obtaining an apprenticeship diploma), the trust is considered relatively high because the standards and procedures are the same as those used in the formal system. Identification and documentation is usually used for supporting the candidate in taking the next steps in terms of career orientation, progression into further education. In this case, the outcomes of these stages are unlikely to be visible to employers.

Similarly, in Germany, trust in the outcomes of validation by employers and society seems to a large extent to be based on the reliability of the institution issuing the certificate⁴³. More specifically, initiatives such as *Anerkennung in Deutschland*, Prototyping/Prototyping Transfer, **ValiKom**⁴⁴, **MYSKILLS**⁴⁵ and **my-professional-experience.org** have contributed significantly to increasing public awareness and trust in validation initiatives for migrants and refugees. In addition, these initiatives have promoted a greater understanding of the practical application of validation and validation opportunities especially in the field of vocational education and training and adult education.

A related and important factor to raise about the level of awareness, understanding and trust in validation initiatives for migrants and refugees, is about the way in which

⁴³ Reutter and Engelmann (2017)

⁴⁴ <https://www.valikom.de/en/home/>

⁴⁵ <https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/en/topics/latest-news/2018/maerz/myskills-new-test-makes-professional-knowledge-visible/>

migrants and refugees are often portrayed in the European media. The description of migrants and refugees are often highly limited in scope and characterisation in terms of gender, age or their professions. Migrants and refugees quite often emerge from European media as an anonymous, unskilled group. Recognising the knowledge, skills and competences of migrants and refugees, carries clear economic benefits for the individual, employers and the economy of the host country. The benefits are not just economic. Validation opportunities also increase an individuals' capacity to learn by building up their self-esteem and confidence, encouraging them to engage in lifelong learning and sharing cultural experiences through active participation in host communities. Where validation opportunities exist in the workplace, employers benefit in terms of a rich and diverse workforce.

4 Key elements of validation initiatives for migrants and refugees

This section aims to identify what is 'special' about targeted initiatives for migrants and refugees and specific subgroups – exploring key elements that initiatives should include for them to be of value. The narrative below is based on the examples and opinions put forward by the country experts and interviewees.

4.1 Tailored tools and methods

As noted above, some countries have introduced tailored procedures for the validation of non-formal and informal learning. Initiatives rely on individual or combined methods and tools tailored to the individual. This might include one-to-one interviews in the first language of the individual; multilingual self-assessment tools, aptitude tests, exams, workplace observation or simulation. Selecting the most appropriate methods and tool can be used to actively target those who are hardest to reach. It is important to keep in mind potential limitations of individual approaches in terms of language barriers or where certain tools are not common in the culture of a person's home country. Online-guides for migrants and refugees may be helpful for those who may not be experienced with the concept of self-assessment. Using a combined set of measures rather than sequential measures for migrants/refugees can also provide a more holistic approach to the identification and recognition of non-formal and informal learning.

Digital tools have the potential to help individuals identify new and existing skills and overcome language barriers. Digital tools can also support the matching process by facilitating direct contact between refugees and employers. The **MYSKILLS** initiative implemented by the German Public Employment Services and the accompanying online self-assessment tool, [my-professional-experience.org](https://www.myskills.de/en/), are two ICT-based assessment tools used for the validation of non-formal and informal learning across 30 occupational areas. **MYSKILLS**⁴⁶ provides multilingual electronic tests that assess competences of migrants and refugee job seekers who may have several years of experience but without formal qualification or documented proof of their competences. The **MYSKILLS** tests are based on standardised computer-based tests, supported by pictures and videos to overcome language barriers and allow for a statistical analysis of the results. The test is available in six languages – German, English, Arabic, Farsi, Russian and Turkish.

⁴⁶ <https://www.myskills.de/en/>

In Austria, **Multilingual Competency Questionnaires**⁴⁷ have been developed by the PES Graz. These are used for the systematic collection/evaluation of the competencies of refugees who register as unemployed in various PES across Austria. In some cases, the information collected from the Multilingual Competency Questionnaire acts as an advisory tool for the PES, enabling PES practitioners to decide whether refugees are assigned to further planned integration measures.

The Danish '**My Competence Portfolio**', enables users to describe and document prior learning with a view to identifying skills gaps and thus further education and training opportunities. A range of methods are used to assist migrants and refugees during the process including the use of pictures. Once an individual has created a profile and filled in all information, it is possible to download a copy of the portfolio and enclose it with a job application. Also in Denmark, in the case of the aforementioned **IGU initiative** for migrants and refugees, the process includes the four stages of validation: identification, documentation, assessment and certification. For the assessment stage, a test and practical demonstration of skills is used. A variety and combination of tools and methods can be used to meet the needs of migrants and refugees.

In Sweden, as part of the aforementioned **Snabbspåret**⁴⁸ initiative, self-assessment tools are available in other languages (e.g. Arabic). As part of this initiative, the validation process varies according to the goals and background of the individual but encompasses a 'competence mapping' phase. This involves information and identification of competences, and a second stage of 'competence assessment' which tests individuals on their knowledge, skills and competences against specific standards.

In Norway, from August 2017, adults who have the right to upper secondary education and training also have the right to an assessment of their formal, informal and non-formal competence and to a certificate showing the level of competence. A system for electronically mapping the skills of adults in asylum reception centres through the use of multiple-choice questions about language, education, work experience and digital skills is available in 14 different languages⁴⁹.

The selection of tools and methods should be linked to the overall purpose of the validation initiative and tailored to the needs of the individual. For some individuals, the focus may be on identification and documentation – others may participate in validation processes that lead to or incorporate assessment and certification. An important consideration in this respect is that for specific groups of individuals, particularly marginalised / disadvantaged groups, they may require a pre-stage of information, guidance and counselling prior to identification and documentation – as used in Norway for example. The importance of information, guidance and counselling for migrants and refugees in the context of validation is discussed in more detail in section 4.4 below.

4.2 Intercultural training for practitioners

In this section, we reflect on the professional competences of practitioners involved in validation for migrants and refugees based on the information provided by the country experts. Enabling migrants and refugees to participate in validation and make

⁴⁷ European Commission (2017); 2018 European Inventory Country Report for Austria

⁴⁸ In 2016, app. EUR 1 million were distributed for this.

⁴⁹ Norwegian Ministries (2017)

judgements about their experience, may require information, advice and guidance that goes beyond what is provided to nationals. It may also require practitioners to have a broader understanding of the different cultural needs of individuals, including an awareness of the experience individuals may have endured prior to and during their resettlement process.

In Austria, it is reported that validation initiatives are offered by institutions with strong experience and with help from experts specifically trained in validation for migrants and refugees. In Norway, cultural orientation is an integral component in many validation initiatives. This component of the validation process is typically delivered by trainers who have lived in Norway and share a similar background to migrant or refugee participants. In Germany, practitioners involved in validation initiatives for migrants and refugees are required to have experience in intercultural work as well as knowledge of foreign languages, preferably languages spoken by migrants.

Trained practitioners can help select the methods that are best suited to individual profiles during the valuation process and be equipped with intercultural capacity to ensure the diverse needs of migrants and refugees are met and to recognise the different life circumstances they may face.

4.3 Work experience and apprenticeships

Large and fast-growing inflows of migrants and refugees have triggered a host of validation initiatives linked to the labour market. Several examples of validation initiatives linked to the labour market through work experience and apprenticeships have been identified by the country researchers. Such initiatives offer migrants and refugees an important way to demonstrate their skills and accelerate employment transitions. They offer a salary and provide opportunities for individuals to enhance their self-confidence and esteem.

Box 4.1 Du Kannst was (You have skills) - Austria

The initiative 'Du kannst was' ('You have skills') is a project initiated by the Austrian social partners, which validates competences acquired in informal and non-formal learning contexts. It leads to the acquisition of an 'Apprenticeship certificate or diploma', the certificate of successful completion of the final apprenticeship examination, in a two-step examination process. The initiative was first implemented in 2012 and was transferred from the successful pilot project in Upper Austria to other regional provinces in Austria (Burgenland, Lower Austria, Salzburg). There are ongoing discussions to roll out the initiative on a federal level in the course of the Austrian strategy for validation of non-formal and informal learning.

After an initial counselling session, beneficiaries participate in three workshops, during which - guided by qualified trainers - they create competence portfolios with evidence files. These documents are then taken into consideration by the Apprenticeship Office of the Economic Chamber (i.e. the awarding body for apprenticeship certificates in Austria), which evaluates and further processes the cases: in a first 'Competence Check' the existing competences are evaluated, and the missing competences can be further acquired in internships or specialised courses. After that, a second and final 'Competence Check' takes place, which constitutes the second part of the final apprenticeship examination, which focusses mainly on the competences which were lacking during the first 'check'. Thus, the specific characteristic of this initiative is that the final apprenticeship examination is taken in two parts.

Depending on the regional province, 'Du kannst was' is available for a range of apprenticeship occupations with a relatively high number of unskilled workers, such as baker, retail salesperson, cook or carpenter. The specific offer of occupations available depends on the regional province and currently ranges from 3 to 19 occupations.

In Switzerland, a 'pre-apprenticeship' programme to help refugees and asylum seekers to prepare for the dual apprenticeship programme was launched in 2018. The programme is implemented at canton level and aims to prepare those with labour market potential for the dual apprenticeship. Similarly, the Basic Integration Education (IGU) programme for migrants and refugees in Denmark, offers a two-year traineeship in which the participants undergo training for a total of 20 weeks and then work in a business for the remaining period. As part of the programme, participants receive a paid trainee wage and the terms of employment and a training plan are collectively agreed.

A key aim of the Snabbspåret initiative in Sweden is to bring migrants and refugees closer to the labour market. As such a range of tools are used to facilitate a fast and direct route to the labour market. The type of methods and tools used are selected according to the needs of participants whereby a variety of methods may be used (individually or in combination). These include, for instance, opportunities for work placements, work observations and practical tests together with methods of self-assessment.

4.4 Guidance and counselling

In some of the initiatives identified by the country experts, guidance is an integral component of the validation process for migrants and refugees. In Austria, the Ministry of the Interior and Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection launched an information initiative in 2012 for recognition, (*Berufsanerkennung*) targeting migrants and refugees. The website⁵⁰ provides information about the recognition of vocational qualifications or professional experience acquired in other countries. In addition, counselling is offered to individuals at dedicated information centres – providing participants about the opportunities for validation and requirements of participation. As part of the Competence Kaleidoscope initiative offered by migrare, intensive competence-oriented counselling is offered to migrants and refugees to support their transition to the labour market.

In Switzerland, as part of a project financed by the Federal state office of Migrants, a range of instruments are being developed to 'evaluate the potential' of migrants in Switzerland to support their labour market and social integration. The 'evaluation of potential' is the term used to describe the process of identifying and documenting skills and competences gained through formal, non-formal and informal learning. As part of this process, a guidance practitioner is central to coordinating the process and for also supporting the individual in terms of next steps and establishing links between different services and agencies. Whilst this work is at project stage in Switzerland, a case management approach with high levels of coordination around referrals is currently being explored. Whilst this approach might be difficult to implement for large numbers of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers – a case management approach, with guidance practitioners at the centre might help match the individual to education and employment opportunities that align with their skills.

⁵⁰ <https://www.berufsanerkennung.at>

The central role of career guidance is also explored in the context of the Norwegian VISKA trials. As part of this initiative, the career guidance service has a lead role in identifying relevant candidates for validation and carrying out the validation process, according to the wishes of the candidates (through the adult learning centres / schools).

Another example of validation information and guidance initiatives targeting migrants/refugees is *migranet* in Germany. This website provides validation information for migrants in Bavaria, with similar initiatives also existing in other Länder. Similar Information Awareness raising and Guidance (IAG) projects are offered by the Employment Agencies⁵¹.

Regarding the provision of information, advice and guidance, many countries now have dedicated websites for migrants and refugees offering material in different languages. In Denmark, a new web portal of measures and tools based on a tripartite agreement between the social partners and municipalities has been launched (www.ug.dk). The portal provides general information about opportunities for the validation of prior learning. Stakeholders, including study committees, job-centres, trade unions and others, provide general information and support for documentation concerning the validation process, and they also provide guidance to the individual about their choice of further learning and career options.

In Sweden, **Jobskills.se** provides information about the Swedish labour market and on how users can have their foreign qualifications assessed and recognised in Sweden.

4.5 Early labour market and social integration

Early and successful social and labour market integration of migrants and refugees can facilitate economic self-sufficiency and help prevent social exclusion. Opportunities to validate non-formal and informal learning can also facilitate culture and social integration by providing migrants with early access to mainstream networks and services at a community/local level. Yet some validation initiatives available to migrants and refugees are only open to beneficiaries of social protection or residence status. For those whose application is being processed (through lengthy procedures) or do not qualify for programmes are often ineligible for introduction programmes and other labour market integration services. Consequently, many individuals experience lengthened periods out of employment and/or training. The process of securing social protection is often long and reception procedures are rarely swift. Time spent in this process can interrupt career paths and affect employability and education.

Drawing on the outcomes of the recent Skills Audit study⁵² and broader research⁵³, we know that migrants and refugees are often offered a skills audit as part of introduction programmes for new arrivals. Furthermore, some of the initiatives put forward by the country experts represent examples of validation initiatives offered in reception facilities whilst individuals await decisions regarding their residence status. This includes the aforementioned '*Kompetenzanalysen*' - *Tiroler Soziale Dienste GmbH*⁵⁴ initiative in Austria that has been launched specifically for asylum seekers.

⁵¹ BMBF (2015)

⁵² European Commission (2018)

⁵³ Aiyar, S. et al (2016)

⁵⁴ <http://www.tsd.gv.at/kompetenzanalyse.html>

In Sweden, *Jobskills.se*. is also used to help asylum seekers establish links with the labour market during the time they wait for a decision on a residence permit.

In 2015, the State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) in Switzerland, commissioned a study on the integration of migrants to the labour market and society. The report includes an inventory which shows that the assessment of potential is already carried out in many cantons and that it is often integrated into a case management approach allowing an individual integration plan on the labour market (SEM et al., 2016). A key finding is that it is highly important to integrate people more quickly – especially in the labour market where there is unemployment and considered to have more employment among the migrant population than currently the case. Similar concerns are raised in the case of Belgium-Wallonia. With regards to the implementation of skills audits for migrants and refugees, there are no specific legal provisions in place that could initiate further coordinated and timely efforts. Moreover, it is noted that additional resources might be needed for all validation centres to broaden their missions and include skills audits for migrants and refugees.

4.6 Overcoming language barriers

For some migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, leaving war-torn/politically unstable countries makes preparation for language learning less feasible. Acquisition of host language skills are widely accepted as the basis for successful integration and necessary for economic and social participation.

In many countries, it is a legislative requirement that participants in validation initiatives are sufficiently proficient in the language of the host country. All validation initiatives aimed at migrants and refugees (as presented by the country experts) include some form of language instruction models and/or cultural orientation components. As outlined in 4.1, many initiatives offer tools that are available in other languages.

Based on the experience of the VISKA project in Norway, many migrants and refugees ordinarily would not be eligible to access validation opportunities. Current participants in the VISKA target group have not been able to learn Norwegian at the required level due to the short duration of their stay in the country. As part of the project, the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training has granted exemption from the required use of Norwegian during the validation process. This has highlighted key challenges associated with overcoming language barriers. As part of the VISKA project, interpreters have been used to help overcome language barriers faced by participants. However, it is reported that the use of interpreters in the validation process can be challenging. To communicate professional subjects in a professional setting may be difficult with interpreters without the professional vocabulary.

Although limited language skills are a major obstacle to employment, especially in occupations for which qualifications are needed, according to research undertaken by the OECD (2016), employers have emphasised, however, that on-the-job language learning is highly effective and that – for jobs where this is possible – initially limited language skills should not be a reason to avoid hiring asylum seekers and refugees. In this respect there is an argument to suggest that individuals should be able to demonstrate his/her competences regardless of the language skills for those parts that do not require specific language skills. One way to support the development of technical language is demonstrated in the example of MYSKILLS that offers a tool that provides technical and vocational language.

5 Outcomes of validation for migrants and refugees

The aim of this section is to present a brief overview of the impact of validation for migrants and refugees in terms of employment and education outcomes. In doing so, we draw on examples provided by the country experts, though it should be noted that the recent development of initiatives means that these are often in a 'pilot' phase or have been mainstreamed only recently, making an evaluation of their impact difficult.

Where data is available, there seems to be some promising results. With regards to the IVC initiative in the Netherlands, it is reported that approximately 90% of participants either progress into education (either at VET or HE level), employment, or volunteering (to gain employability skills) upon completion of the programme.

In Denmark, recent statistics⁵⁵ show an increase over the past three years in the number of migrants and refugees entering the labour market. It is reported this is likely to be due to the current labour market situation, whereby migrants and refugees are playing an important role in addressing gaps in the workforce. The integration of migrants and refugees into the Danish labour market is also facilitated by collaboration between enterprises, and tailored subsidies in the form of government grants. With regards to the IGU having started quite slowly over the year 2016, the number of registered IGU's, by April 2018 is 1 440.

In Finland, access to the labour market and/or education and training is influenced by the geographical nature of Finland. In the south, where there are higher rates of people with migrant backgrounds, access is better. In addition, unemployment rates vary significantly across different parts of the country, thus limiting access to the labour market in those parts. Within the education sector, there are key established procedures and initiatives which support migrants and refugees to progress well in the education system – particularly from the VET sector into higher education. The SIMHE initiative in the higher education is well established and facilitates access. It also offers guidance and validation services to migrants with prior higher education experience.

In Germany, data on the beneficiaries of validation initiatives is not readily available and therefore it is difficult to draw any conclusions about the outcomes of validation initiatives for migrants and refugees⁵⁶. In Germany, first experiences from the **ValiKom** project show that individuals as well as employers' approach competent bodies to seek validation for themselves or to suggest their employees for participation in validation. Cooperation between sectoral employer organisations and social partners is required on the one hand, and PES and accredited training and validation providers on the other.

In terms of outcomes, the Swedish Labour Market Authority (Arbetsförmedlingen) has evaluated the Snabbspår initiative annually since its launch in 2015 (i.e. in 2016 and 2017). In the period from Jan. 2016 to March 2017, a total of 3 340 persons participated in Snabbspåret-activities. Figures from the Labour Market Authorities (Arbetsförmedlingen) show that 33-55% of the participants (according to sector) were in employment within one year of having completed Snabbspåret. For the health sector, where an authorisation is needed to obtain employment for some

⁵⁵ See 2018 European Inventory Country Report for Denmark

⁵⁶ Gutschow and Jörgens (2015)

types of jobs, the corresponding figure was 23%, however. The initiative is seen in a context of integration, however, and not in terms of labour market policy.

6 The future of validation for migrants and refugees

Validation of non-formal and informal learning ultimately contributes to achieving the goals set by the Europe 2020 strategy as a tool for better matching skills and labour demand and supporting labour mobility across sectors and countries. The growing interest in shifting from education processes to learning outcomes is particularly suited to the needs of migrants and refugees, for whom it is important to know what learning was acquired and not where it was acquired.

The aim of this section is to set out some key issues for consideration with regards to the development of validation initiatives for migrants and refugees.

Long term versus short-term projects

Many of the validation initiatives discussed in this thematic report are emerging as promising measures for migrants and refugees. Though overall, in the majority of countries covered by the 2018 European Inventory, many are small in scale and in a pilot phase. Although a bottom up approach is a key driver to the success of migrant and refugee integration, validation initiatives need support to be sustained over time, and to ensure their fit as part of coherent and transparent systems for recognition of skills and prior learning. It is important to remember that whilst some initiatives (whether they are systematic or project based) may not bring high or immediate added value or productivity, they offer significant benefits in terms of well-being and contribute greatly to the social integration of migrants and refugees into mainstream communities.

In relation to project-based initiatives, it is important to try to prolong and extend networks after projects have completed. This has been emphasised in relation to the VISKA project.

Strengthening stakeholder collaboration and coordination

To support the social and economic integration of migrants and refugees – all actors and agencies with a stake in validation need to work together and be held mutually accountable for outcomes. Greater coordination is required to ensure that integration initiatives can build on related initiatives instead of working in silos.

Stakeholders involved in validation for migrants and refugees, including the PES should raise awareness about such procedures, using a range of difficult communication channels to inform about the existence of procedures. To help increase uptake, awareness-raising campaigns should preferably be conducted in relevant languages. Employers should also promote the cultural and economic benefits migrants and refugees contribute to the workplace and labour market flexibility.

Validation/recognition services need to be complemented with other supporting and coordinated services to help migrants' and refugees' transition to further employment and education opportunities. This includes information, advice, guidance and counselling, including language support, bridging programmes, or apprenticeships. To the extent possible, these services should be planned and delivered in close cooperation with other social partners.

Engaging civil society

Dialogue and contact between the government and civil society are important elements of the process of making and implementing policy for migrants and refugees. Joint efforts between the NGOs and social partners in their efforts to target new arrivals in the country are needed as they need to learn the language, its customs and values.

Improved data collection

In general, data on the beneficiaries of validation initiatives is not readily available and therefore difficult to draw any conclusions about the outcomes of validation initiatives for migrants and refugees. Efforts to improve data on validation initiatives more generally is necessary.

Resource implications

A key challenge highlighted in the examples presented by the country experts, is the need to find resources to validate candidates from a new target group in an already tight schedule, both financially and administratively.

Early skills assessment

Early skills assessment as part of validation initiatives can support the successful integration of skilled migrants and refugees. Yet for the lesser skilled and more traumatised, early integration in highly competitive labour markets of the receiving country might not be an option. In this respect, validation opportunities that focus on helping the individual identify their skills and competences (e.g. through volunteering) may be more appropriate. Moreover, the extent to which migrants and refugees secure employment and the type of jobs they pursue is partly determined by the nature of the labour market integration policy in a country. In some countries where continued residence in the host country may be conditional on finding work, this may put pressure on migrants and refugees to take jobs that they are overqualified for as a way of securing residence, rather than investing in training to enable them to find a job corresponding to their qualifications and experience. More effort is needed to ensure employment opportunities for migrants and refugees correspond to their skills and competences.

Improve flexibility in recognition systems

There are many initiatives in place to support the social and labour market integration of many different target groups – initiatives are open to all citizens. Whilst this offers different opportunities – the extent to which the initiatives take into account the idiosyncrasies of migrants and refugees may be relatively limited. Efforts to simplify validation procedures, increase flexibility (through multiple methods of recognition) and reduce costs involved in the validation process should also be stepped-up.

7 References

Aiyar, S. et al. (2016), "The Refugee Surge in Europe: Economic Challenges"; European Parliament (2016), "Labour Market Integration of Refugees: Strategies and good practices"; OECD (2016), "Making Integration Work: Refugees and others in need of protection", Available from: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/56af089d4.html>

BMBF (2015). Bericht zum Anerkennungsgesetz 2015. [Online] Available from: <https://www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/de/1710.php>

Cedefop (2016), Synthesis paper from the Peer Learning Activity on 'How to make learning visible and value - competences of refugees'. <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/events/how-make-visible-and-value-skills-and-competence-refugees-exchanging>

Consortium de validation des compétences (CVDC) (2012). Note d'orientation stratégique 2012 – 2014 du dispositif de validation des compétences professionnelles - Approuvée par la Commission consultative et d'agrément du 29 juin 2012. Available at: <http://www.cvdc.be/uploads/media/Note-orientation-strategique-2012-2014.pdf>

Desiderio, M.V (2016) Integrating refugees into host country labour markets: challenges and policy options. Migration Policy Institute.

European Commission (2015) A European Agenda for Migration. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/background-information/docs/communication_on_the_european_agenda_on_migration_en.pdf

European Commission (2017), Synthesis Report of the Peer Review on Competence Check for the Labour Market Integration of Female Refugees held in June 2017. Prepared by ICF and the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research (unpublished)

European Commission, (2018). *Employment and Social Developments in Europe – Annual Review 2018*, Brussels, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/news/employment-and-social-developments-europe-2018-jul-13_en;

OECD (2016) Working paper - How are refugees faring on the labour market in Europe? Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=7921&furtherPubs=yes>

Gutschow, K. & Jörgens, J. (2015). Einführung von Verfahren zur Validierung nichtformalen und informellen Lernens – Anforderungen und Handlungsoptionen. non published project description.

Hakala, K. & Pesonen, J. (2018). The challenges for employers in employing highly skilled immigrants. *Maahanmuuttajien urareitit* In T. Hirard & A. Eskola-Kronqvist (eds.) *Immigrant Routes*. HAMK Unlimited Journal 13.6.2018 <https://unlimited.hamk.fi/ammatillinen-osaaminen-ja-opetus/tyonantajien-haasteet/>

Lodigiani, Rosangela; Sarli, Annavittoria (2017) Migrants' competence recognition systems: controversial links between social inclusion aims and unexpected discrimination effects. *European journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults* 8 (2017) 1, S. 127-144

Noach, M., Ehmann, K. (2017) Overcoming language barriers: Competence Cards help reveal migrants' skills. Conference Paper VPL Biennale 2017, available online

at <http://vplbiennale.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2017/09/VPL-Biennale-Paper-9-Noack-and-Ehmann.pdf>

Norwegian Ministries (2017) Immigration and integration 2016-2017. Report for Norway.

OECD/European Commission (2014) Matching economic migration with labour market needs in Europe.

Reutter, J. & Engelmann, J. (2017). Validierung beruflicher Kompetenzen – Welche Erfahrungen machen die Kammern? In: BWP 6/2017, S.25-27

Souto-Otero, M. & Villalba-Garcia, E. Migration and validation of non-formal and informal learning in Europe: Inclusion, exclusion or polarisation in the recognition of skills? *International Review of Education* (2015) 61: 585.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11159-015-9516-7>

UNESCO (2018) What a waste: ensure migrants and refugees' qualifications and prior learning are recognized.

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000366312?locale=en>

World Bank (2015) Role of education in the prevention of violent crime. Available at <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/448221510079762554/120997-WP-revised-PUBLIC-Role-of-Education-in-Prevention-of-Violence-Extremism-Final.pdf>

World Bank (2018). Global education monitoring report (2018): policy paper, 37. <http://en.ichei.org/uploads/2018/11/2019-Global-Education-Monitoring-Report-Migration-displacement-and-education-building-bridges-not-walls.pdf>

Annex 1

Country experts were asked to answer specific questions related to this thematic topic and provide examples of validation initiatives for migrants and refugees in their countries. These include;

Q1: Are there specific arrangements that involve validation targeted to Migrants and/or refugees?

(Single response option)

- A. There are systematic arrangements in place (e.g. open access meaning generally there are no conditions in place to prevent access to this initiative (or that they are reasonable); broad coverage meaning the initiative is open to the majority of the target group; no time element meaning the initiative is stable and not restricted to a short-time frame (of one year for example); it is supported by a funding package)
- B. Arrangements in place but they are not systematic in that they do not meet most of the arrangements in place (as described in the previous option)
- C. Systematic arrangements are in development
- D. There are specific project-based initiatives – these tend not to be supported by systematic arrangements
- E. Information not available
- F. Do not know
- G. No specific arrangements in place

Q2: Options A and B from previous question triggers this question: What do these initiatives relate to?

Multiple responses possible

- A. There are initiatives relating to identification and documentation of non-formal and informal learning
- B. There are initiatives relating to assessment and certification of non-formal and informal learning
- C. Identification and documentation of non-formal and informal learning leads to the identification of training options Information not available
- D. Do not know
- E. Other

Q3: If data is collected, what is the level of participation (preferably for years 2016 and 2017)?