



## Validation of Informal Learning in European Projects

VIP Newsletter

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In European projects, networks and partnerships stakeholders from different countries gather under a multinational umbrella to develop new approaches, products and services. In this context it is unquestionable that the collaboration in international teams, in contrast to national teams, requires not only considerably stronger efforts in terms of resources but also preparedness to interact with people from different professional, social and cultural backgrounds.

On the one hand special competences and skills are needed to work efficiently and effectively with European colleagues to reach the expected project objectives. On the other hand European projects and partnerships are an ideal frame to acquire and further develop personal competences and skills in many aspects. Apart from enriching their knowledge on the project topic, partners improve their communication and language skills, become more open and tolerant towards other cultures, views and opinions, learn to interact in a multicultural team in a face-to-face situation as well as in a virtual environment, improve their writing skills when formulating marketing material, improve planning, organising and monitoring competences, learn how to moderate and animate group events – the list is much longer.



In a nutshell, it is evident that European collaborative projects and partnerships are informal learning spaces for the European partners.

In this context VIP seeks to assess and evidence the competence development of team members working in European projects and wants to improve the visibility of informal learning that takes place in collaborative European projects, networks and partnerships.

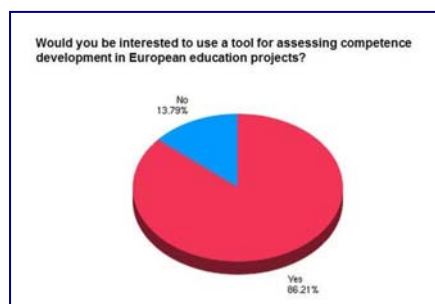
### VIP Project activities in the first project phase

The project started in December 2009 and was officially inaugurated with a virtual meeting that took place mid-January 2010 with representatives of the seven partner institutions. During this meeting the first project steps were discussed and scheduled in accordance with the project design.

#### Needs analysis and stocktaking

In a comprehensive desk research different approaches and instruments for validating informal learning were collected and discussed in the partnership. With validation we mean the process of assessing and evidencing learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and/or competences) acquired by an individual in an informal setting. To substantiate the findings and to investigate the awareness about the issue and the demand of evaluation in regard to competence development in European projects and partnerships, the VIP partners launched a survey among European experts. The survey is based on an online questionnaire and a range of expert interviews.

Interim results clearly show that a vast majority of European project team members have never evaluated individual competence developed in European projects but would be ready to dedicate up to 20% of the project evaluation to the assessment of individual learning and competence development within the partnership. The survey tries also to find out which are the competence areas people need and develop while working in a European project or partnership. Competences that are in












the main field of interest are project management competences such as planning, organising and monitoring project activities and communicating effectively in different project situations.

The survey will still be open till the end of October. The results will be published on the VIP website and will be summarised in our next VIP newsletter which will be published end of November.

If you also like to share your view on the issue, you are warmly welcome to do so. Please follow this link to our survey: <http://dieberater.vipsurvey.sgizmo.com>

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