



NEWSLETTER

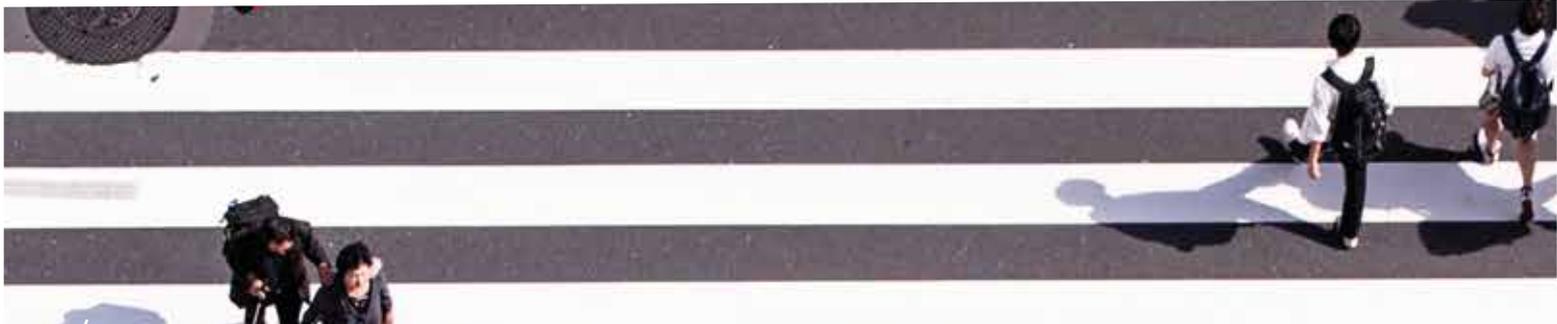
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in the news / editorial
APELE video presentation
 by Prof. Markus Meckl, the project coordinator. University of Akureyri, Iceland.

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In the news / in evidence



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Intellectual Output 1 /



Report of the existing institutional and legal framework

for access to higher education for people with fewer opportunities.

What are the conditions for entering Higher Education as a migrant, or a person with fewer opportunities? What are the legal barriers and possibilities, and what procedures are set in place to help prospective students enter university? This first output of the APELE project provides an overview of the systems set up in Denmark, Iceland, Italy and Greece, as regards the institutional and legal framework for entering and studying at university level for people with fewer opportunities, including migrants. To this aim, the report firstly provides an overview of the legal status in the involved

countries. Secondly, the analysis focuses on the organization and administrative process, highlighting both the legal and de-facto barriers to access Higher Education, including the role of proficiency in the language of the host country as a facilitator for access to university programs. Finally, the comparative report proposes an investigation based on the outline of the national systems, proposing that transparent and efficient paths towards admission, as well as an effective system of guidance services – provided in various languages – are key elements that should be part of a fair admission system. The annexes to the

report offer in-depth and detailed information on the national systems and rules enforced in the selected countries.

Access to and quality of education have a close correlation to increased equality of opportunity and to succeeding in life, as education increases the possibility to adapt to a knowledge-based, innovation economy, within a context of global competition and more frequent job-mobility for individuals. Moreover, education is of key relevance for migrants and their social integration, especially on the labour market. It is therefore extremely relevant to study what rules, procedures, and elements may function as gatekeeping to university studies. The analysis of the legal avenues, barriers, and possibilities to access Higher Education is thus a first step towards the development of evidence-based policymaking that can help broaden a fair access to universities for people with fewer opportunities.



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Intellectual Output 2 /



Report of Perceptions of Academics and Policy Makers

2

The Intellectual Output 2 is a synthesis report about the opinions and perceptions of university professors and policy makers (participants) on the assessment, recognition and certification of skills obtained in previous experiential learning in Denmark, Greece, Iceland and Italy. The report provides also an overview of the consideration and the perceptions of the participants about future changes and opportunities for recognition and certification of prior experiential learning and includes proposals at national level for the evaluation models to access higher education studies.

A comparative analysis of the state of the art in the four European countries identifies that official procedures for the recognition system of accreditation of prior experiential learning does not apply in any of the four partner countries. While Denmark and Iceland have in place a national legal background that can facilitate the accreditation of prior experiential learning to enter Higher Education via non-traditional path only Denmark has started the procedure for a recognition system. In fact the Danish procedure takes in to

consideration the possibilities to give access to Higher Education to individuals who did not fulfil the required access criteria or dropped out and to groups of people with fewer opportunities.

Though a country-by-country analysis reveals a situation that is till uneven, there is a common understanding among the participants that the recognition of the non- formal and informal learning opens the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area for people with fewer opportunities, including migrants

Concerning the evaluation system to put in practice and the number of evaluators there is not a transversal common approach among the participants. A more general consensus was about the need of transparency and trust of this process and the consideration that Higher Education institutions or a team of academics, or different committees for each academic subject are more suitable to evaluate the applicants. Only in Iceland it was proposed that the whole process for the recognition of prior learning to enter Higher Education should be at the secondary school level, because the university system is not able to grant credits at that level. An

interesting suggestion was collected in Denmark regarding the setup of a post-admission support system to give the students a real chance to succeed in their project.

This synthesis report is based on the input of sixty-six respondents representing universities and public institutions coming from four different European countries.

The group of respondents includes fifty-one academics and fifteen policy makers in a leadership/management position.

The data from academics and policy makers were collected from February to May 2020 using semi-structured interviews and the findings of this report in combination with the findings of IO3 lay the basis for addressing the creation of APELE project methodology and the template for a personal portfolio.

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Intellectual Output 3 /



Need Analysis of the Target Groups

3

Intellectual output 3 (IO3) is a need analysis report of the target groups. The aim of the process of IO3 was to record and explore the needs, recommendations, expectations, and barriers of the projects target groups regarding higher education in the four participating countries. This was done to help and encourage the target groups to continue their studies at European Universities as well as to improve their access to higher institutions with a recognition tool. To do so it was important to hear from the target groups themselves. The target groups are people with fewer opportunities (including migrants) such as educational difficulties, geographical obstacles, and cultural differences. The needs, recommendations, expectations, and barriers of the participants were recorded with a structured questionnaire. It included four focusing factors, demographic data, professional situation, recognition process and educational needs for study in higher education. The participants in this output were eight to ten persons from each four participating countries Denmark, Greece, Iceland, and Italy.

The majority was married, had children, and identified as women. Migration was one of the common factors amongst the participants. Work and educational experiences and years of work experiences varied greatly between the participants.

The participants expressed that going to university was important for their personal satisfaction and confident. They also felt they would be more accepted into their local society, would find better jobs and therefor increase their salary. Over half of the participants felt like that pursuing higher education could also improve their social life.

Concerning an evaluation procedure, the participants were asked about their ideas on the process as well as what tool and method would best suit them. Majority suggested that the procedure of evaluation should be done in English or in their native language. They also mentioned that a language program of their host countries language should be available and preferably free of cost to ensure equality. The type of evaluation method proposed is different between the countries, but the emphasis is on "face-to-face" methods. It is recommended to use a diverse

mix of methods where people can show their personalities, demonstrate their skills in practice and be evaluated on paper.

When asked about what educational programs the participants would like to attend their answers were very diverse between the four countries, 52 programs were mentioned. Therefore it is recommended that these needs are to be taken into consideration in each participant countries.

To be able to take part in the procedure the participants would prefer not to travel long distances, for some of them that would be very hard or impossible.

According to the participants if the recognition could be national and done by a national recognition authority and institution it would increase their opportunities regarding entering educational programs.

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Intellectual Output 4 /



Portfolio Developed For Final Stakeholders

4

The overall aim of IO4, led by the University of Bari is to give the project target group the perspective to build a personal portfolio where they can record their formal and informal qualifications. The working groups of the APELE project have guided the target group on creation of the portfolio in a creative and innovative way, so that the result of IO4 are beneficial in terms of motivation and quality to the participants. The result of IO4 has been a well-organized method and portfolio template for individuals where they are able to "record" themselves, the portfolio can be used not only for the target group of the project but also for different target groups who are interested in a self-evaluation.

The methodology used by the University of Bari for the creation of the portfolio is based both on CEDEFOP documents (2010, 2016) and on the suggestions and comments expressed by the participants of IO2 and IO3. The methodology has been further discussed among all partners with the aim to identify a Portfolio proposal that was suitable for the target groups of the project. Groups with diverse nationality, geographical location, economic, social and civil status.

So, a Portfolio model was drawn in order both to collect

documentary evidences on the previous schooling of the respective participants in the target groups, and to collect significant experiential learning transferable into strong skills, valid for university accreditation through a new procedure to be implemented. About the target groups involved in APELE Portfolio procedure, they fulfilled the indications of the Project. In fact they were made of people with poor economic possibilities (Denmark, Greece and Iceland), people residing in remote geographical areas (Iceland, ARMES Progetti) and immigrants (Iceland, Denmark, Italy).

The APELE Portfolio procedure, implemented by the target groups, complied with the indications of the Project relating to the need to enable the participating people to autonomously create their own personal Portfolio.

The goal was fully achieved and all the participants, who had often been involved in this procedure for the first time, found it very interesting. All the project partners noted, in order to achieve real autonomy in the compilation of the Portfolio, the importance of the relationship with the APELE Experts. In fact they guided the entire procedure for the portfolio's compilation. The relationship between Participant and Expert can be described as a "training relationship", due to the process of effective self-aware-

ness and personal growth achieved by the participants through the participation to the initial workshop and the subsequent phase (the Feedback meeting) for the compilation. It can be said that the preparation of the target group during the workshop that precedes the compilation of the Portfolio, helped to clarify the participants' formal and informal training path, focusing attention on those previous learning experiences that they turned out to be particularly significant in terms of knowledge, skills and the development of specific personal skills.

Furthermore, the autonomous compilation of the Portfolio proved to be most profitable in the context of the subsequent "Feedback meeting", during which, again under the guidance of the APELE expert, participants were able to clarify the importance of the Portfolio results, in view of the preparation of a possible, specific own university training project. ●

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