



Mid-Life Skills Review Project

Final Evaluation Report

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Background

The Mid-Life Skills Review Project is funded by the ERASMUS + programme, in the “Strategic partnerships in the fields of Adult Education” funding sub-programme. Erasmus + is the European programme in the areas of education, training, youth and sport for 2014-2020.

The project ran for 26 Months (1 November 2017 – 31 December 2019) with 8 partners from across Europe:

- Trade Union Congress (TUC – lead partner)
- Learning and Work Institute (UK)
- University of Exeter (UK)
- TSL-WERA (Finland)
- University of Frankfurt-Goethe (Germany)
- University of Milano-Bicocca (Italy)
- CEREQ (France)
- Prospektiker (Spain)

The project’s aim was to develop a suite of new materials to support the delivery of a Mid-Life ‘Skills’ Review – with the emphasis on reviewing skills and competences and targeted at adults (at or around 50 years of age) with low levels of basic skills in literacy, numeracy and digital literacy.

These were to be specifically designed for use both by Europe’s social partners and others in the workplace carrying out similar 'skills review' functions.

These materials were to include new online ‘gamified’ skills assessment tools in a variety of languages and new online learning modules for the reviewers/assessors.

The other ‘Intellectual Outputs’ were all in support of this stated aim and the ultimate materials took the form of ‘Value My Skills’ Tool that is available from the TUC website and has now been extensively trialled in all partner countries, in all partner languages. In support of delivery reviewers became ‘mid-life skills champions’, with the support of online tools and EPALE was used to help create and reach networks across Europe.

Reviewers were accredited with new Digital Badges – a very new development for a number of the partner countries. Results were disseminated through significant national and international events.

The project evaluation has taken place via online surveys, interviews and feedback forms with:

- Value My Skills Reviewers
- Value My Skills Reviewees
- Stakeholders (employers, trade unions and policymakers)
- Training Course attendees
- Event attendees
- Partners

Summary and Recommendations

The project has proven extremely successful and achieved all of its stated Intellectual Outputs. Further its true transnational nature has produced a very considerable and already very well used resource – the Value My Skills Tool which should be prioritised by ERASMUS+ as an example a successful Output making a real difference to the lives of low skilled older workers.

The only major barriers encountered by the project were:

1. The very new developments around digital badges which are still at an early stage in some countries.
2. Issues around the Tool and interpretations of GDPR across countries.

The newness of Digital Badging in some countries meant they were not as widely used as in others but this will grow over time given current developments in this field. The innovative nature of this work means that the Compendia created are helping inform a new field.

The issues around the GDPR concerns were overcome through a successful intervention from Finland where the content of the VMS Tool was mirrored onto an anonymous site where respondent's details would be anonymised. Other partner's interpretation of GDPR meant this was not needed in other countries but it is an interesting example of an unanticipated obstacle – and an innovative response.

The project has also engaged very successfully with EPALE and has sought to ensure the results are made available internationally.

This evaluation has made a series of recommendations that should help the partners to move forward with their findings and to ensure the existing considerable impact is built on in the future. They are (in no particular order):

1. Take a step-back and look at the potential for earlier interventions and new materials to support the review and Reviewer
2. Consider linking the Tool (as a Social Partner contribution) with new or expanding Policy Vehicles for Lifelong Learning
3. Maintain a Focus on Older Workers
4. Maintain a Focus on the Low-Skilled
5. Be willing to explore new uses of the Tool where approaches are made
6. Consider links with European Tools and Approaches such as ESCO and the EU Skills Panorama
7. TUC as hosts should look at growing the Scope of the Online Provision
8. Look for opportunities to Share the Learning from the Mid-Life Skills Review and Badging Compendia work

Evaluation reveals the partnership has functioned extremely well and has delivered considerable added value for partners and funders.

The final national and the Milan international dissemination events have reached a considerable audience – in line with the project application – and plans are already in preparation to build on the use of the Tool.

Functioning of the Partnership and the Project Management

The project ran extremely smoothly and partners remained very positive about the leadership and processes associated with the running of the project throughout. The very considerable time commitments from the lead partner (TUC) have meant that the project ran on-time and Intellectual Outputs were all produced successfully.

“Well organised and led.” Partner response to evaluation

In terms of the systems and tools used to help the project partners fully utilised all of these (Handbook, Partner Meetings, Email, and Skype Meetings) and all but one partner made considerable use of the Website and Project Brochure (the other preferring their own materials).

All rated the systems and tools as ‘very useful or useful’ apart from the above exception who nonetheless recognised the value of the content.

Recommendations for change were limited to seeking slightly longer meetings than they typical 1.5 day events used by the partners:

“If resources permitted (which they don't really in the current E+ projects), I would prefer project meetings to be slightly longer.”

“Would have been useful to have more time as the agendas were very busy. The meetings were very efficient and productive.”

The initial application included money for translation of the VMS Tool but this was removed at approval stage. This had some knock-on impacts where partners saw translation as quite an extra burden.

Project Outputs

Intellectual Output 1 - Mid-Life Skills Review Compendium

This state of the Art Compendium was produced in the relatively early stages of the project as one of two Intellectual Outputs that would guide the project. It was led by the Learning and Work Institute as recognised experts in this field:

“As the author of the UK report and overall compendium, working on it deepened my own knowledge and was passed on within the organisation.”

The compendium successfully identified the different training/supports/programmes mobilized by the various Governments, regions and the social partners for people in the Mid-Life Skills Review target age groups.

Consequently this included recommendations for the remainder of the project focusing on the type of materials needed to both support the reviewers and the learners/older workers; the new modules to train them to carry out effective mid-life skills reviews and the online assessment tools they were to utilise.

The Compendium is a valuable resource in its own right and the work to produce it was thought of highly by all partners. It is freely available on the project website. Partners commented:

“During our upcoming national event on the 21st of November, we will present the compendium in order to make sense of our project. The compendium will also be available through the website.”

“The compendium has been the starting point of our conversation with our stakeholders.”

“The MLSR compendium provides a useful overview of what is happening in partner countries. It also highlighted good practice and opportunity”

“The compendium has helped inform Unionlearn’s mid-life development work. We are disseminating the good MLSR practice model to ULF projects and supporting unions to embed this work in their projects.”

“We (will) use this work in other studies we carry out, it helps them to make a point of the situation at a specific moment in time.”

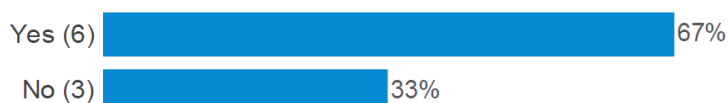
Intellectual Output 2 - Badging Online Adult Skills in the Workplace Compendium

This Intellectual Output tackled a relatively new area for Europe – that of Digital Open Badges. It included a look at how such badges could be used within topics such as EUROPASS and had recommendations for the remainder of the project focusing on the best practice approach to be taken to badging and accrediting the learning undertaken by both reviewers and learners/older workers.

The partners all contributed the state-of-the-art from their own countries and this proved to be extremely varied with the UK and Finland early adopters and well aware of the tool and others (notably Italy) with very little usage. Consequently the report manages to be both a source of innovative practices and simultaneously a state of the art report. Some found this useful and others found it too early (Figure 1).

Figure 1.

Has the work to produce the badging compendium been a useful part of the project for you and your organisation? *Tick one.*



Though some are not yet able to utilise the findings yet this is a new field and the report should help make the case for badging. For others it backed up what they were doing:

This was a new area for me - and I'm still interested to see how it can work really effectively.

Digital badging is still quite unknown in our country and the compendium has helped explain it through the examples across Europe.

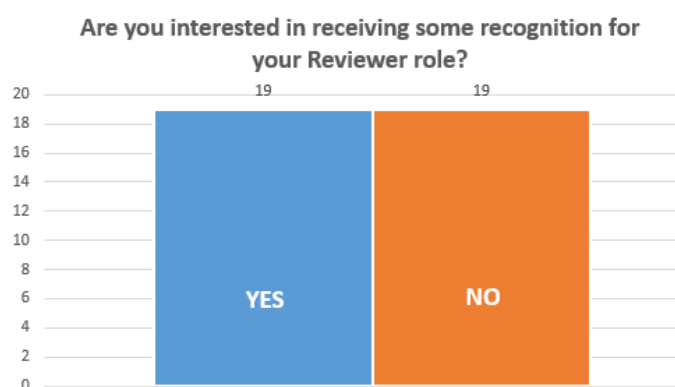
We have had positive feedback from reviewees when completing the online VMS activity on being awarded a digital badge as recognition for their efforts”.

“It is really low developed in our country”

“There is a little knowledge in Italy about Open Badges”

It makes sense for the partners and the funders to utilise this report in helping prove the case for what is still an innovative phenomenon and something that will grow in usage. Reviewers were reasonably keen to have some form of recognition (Figure 2).

Figure 2.



Intellectual Output 3 – Value My Skills Tool

Learning the lessons from the previous Intellectual Outputs this was the core ‘product’ of the project and takes the shape of a Value My Skills Online Tool with accompanying information and support materials. Replicated in the partner languages it is a very considerable resource and required a large amount of funding both from ERASMUS+ and in time and expense from the lead partner.

This Tool was the mechanism for the delivery of the Mid-Life Skills Reviews in the workplace and took the form of a gamified assessment delivered to a Reviewee by a suitably trained Reviewer.

The accompanying Reviewer training was provided both online and in the form of a more traditional Training Course also developed by the project (Intellectual Output 4). Those completing the reviewer training could opt to receive a Digital Badge.

The contribution of partners to the rapid translation, partnership formation, testing and evaluation within such a short project was considerable:

“Partners were committed to doing this well - very impressive.”

“It is now possible to incorporate the online tool into workshops and skills reviews.”

“It has been the more useful part of the project as it has allowed us to use the materials for real and see its effects on the reviewees.”

“The VMS online tool has been well received by ULRs, learners and some employers. The VMS online tool is very user friendly and easy to use to help people to reflect on their career paths and projects by correlating skills and future actions.”

In practical terms the production was commissioned and the non-ERASMUS+ elements funded by the TUC. Others recognised that this was something they could not therefore have quite so much input to:

“I would have liked to be involved in the designing of the tool (having experience in software development) to suggest a more flexible approach.”

However the material is available Open Source as required by the project application and it can therefore modified by partners if this is something that they perceive to be essential.

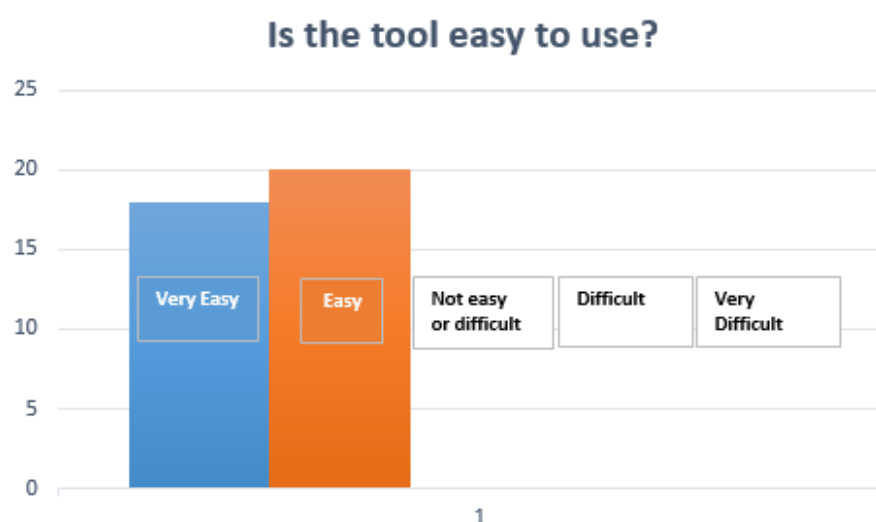
The Reviewees taking the assessments were very enthusiastic about the simplicity and ease of use of the Tool:

I found this very easy and informative I like the online tool as it's easy to navigate through this.

This is a great resource for people who are not overly confident with using IT as very straight forward.

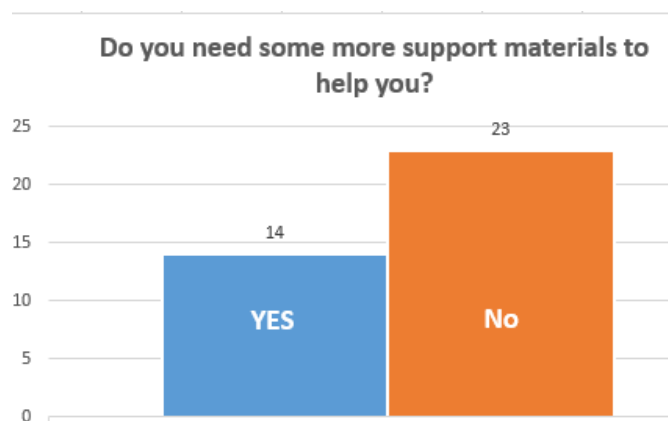
In our evaluation, Reviewers also found that the tool was easy or very easy to use (Figure 3) and the only regular issues were with the registration process which has been simplified.

Figure 3.



In terms of delivering the Review the Reviewers on the whole had enough materials but some would have appreciated more – which may link to suggestions later for a subsequent project to add value to the tool (Figure 4).

Figure 4.



The Reviewees found it primarily useful for identifying existing skills (Figure 5) but a significant percentage also identified new skills (Figure 6):

Figure 5.

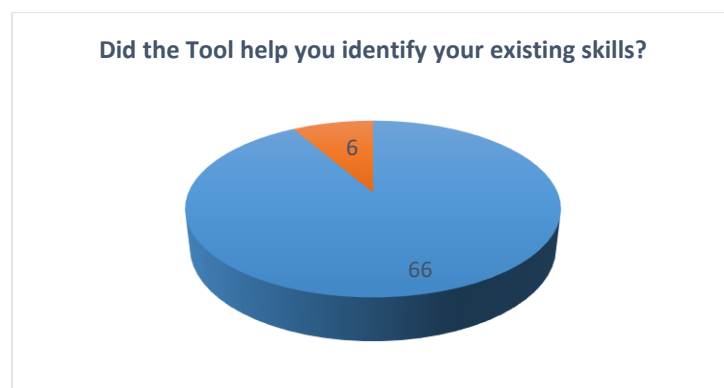
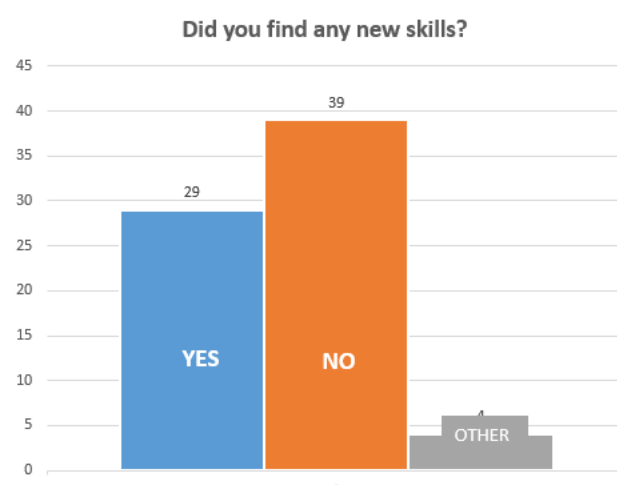


Figure 6.



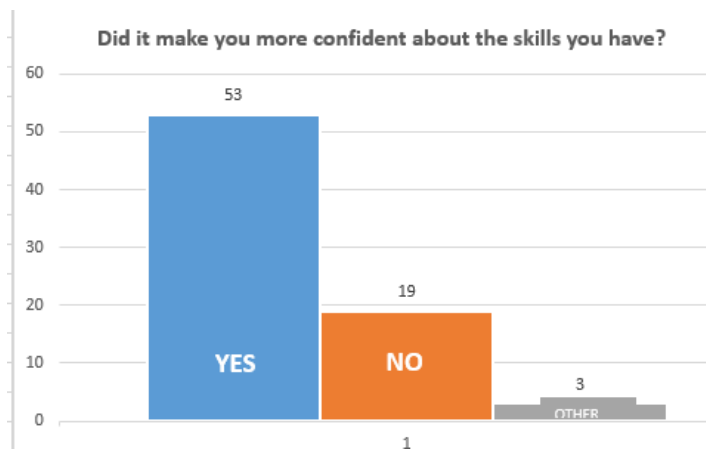
The Action Planning function was very well used – only 25% of respondents had not used this – typically preferring to set training targets or use existing internal systems for this.

Confidence is a central issue for many workers with low skills levels and significantly the tool helped with this (Figure 7):

“It helps to reinforce skills as sometimes these just get overlooked.”

“I think I am more aware ... My skills set is bigger than I thought.”

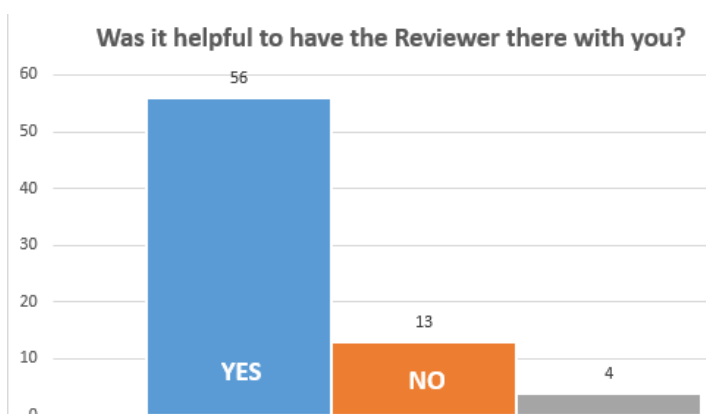
Figure 7.



The role of the Reviewer was important and cited so by most Reviewees. The exceptions were those with higher skills levels who were happy to work through on their own – most notably in the French reviews targeting slightly higher skilled workers (Figure 8).

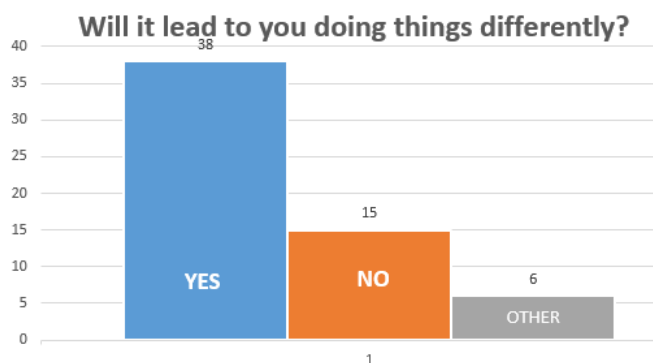
“I tend to underestimate myself ... she motivated me”

Figure 8.



Significantly most reviewees having completed the Tool and stated that it would lead to them doing things differently (Figure 9)

Figure 9.



When discussing the Tool, Reviewers cited:

"The tools is a good excuse/ pretext to sit down with a person and see what worries them in the near future, what is it that they feel that they are falling behind at. The most important thing is to find out so that we can help them work it out before it is too late."

"It is a very practical application which helps reflect on skills that you did not even though you could possess."

"The advisers are used to action plans here so it worked well"

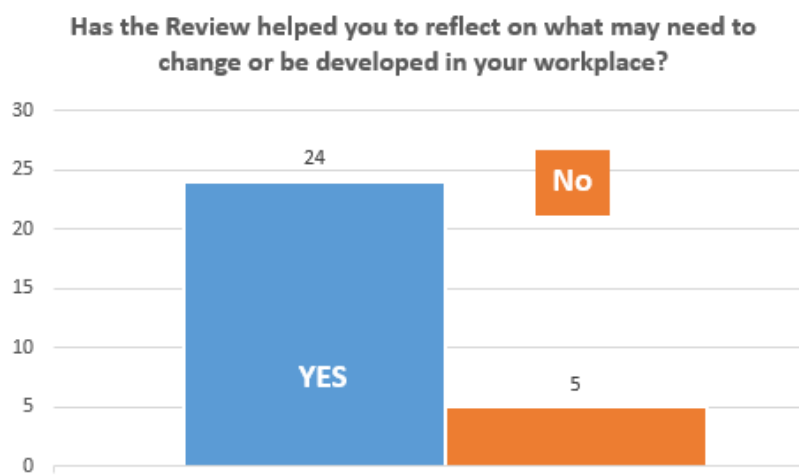
"As a Team Leader and rep it is very important that if we use this tool during the advisors shift that it is really easy to use and not too long. The tool is just the right length of time to do"

"Also it is a great ice-breaking and a useful starting point for discussing the professional potential of the reviewees, even the one that think that do not have any skill."

"Really good and clear overall!"

The Tool helped the Reviewers to think about the setting of the Tool in relation to their own workplaces (Figure 10):

Figure 10



"It is useful also for retirement plans."

"We found we need better resources for computing, English and maths for learners eager to get new skills but not ready for courses."

"We realise that the initial contact with our service users is key to how they progress with us so we will make the experience as positive as possible"

"More communication with colleagues about how to move around the company."

"We are looking to embed the reviews into our processes."

Ultimately Reviewers identified one or two things that would have helped but were very enthusiastic about the Tool:

"A really good engagement piece between the learning centre and the learners"

"The online tool has really helped our colleagues to see a journey for themselves."

"The online tool is amazing and can help us to connect and understand our service users better"

"It is a very practical tool for a VAE (validation of prior experience) and for the preparation of a professional project."

"It was noted by everyone the fact that is not possible to save and to download the overview of competencies... and it could be useful to hand out to the reviewee for personal reflections."

"Having more innovative tools like this one."

Intellectual Output 4 – Value My Skills Training Course

This Output helped with the delivery of the Value My Skills Tool and was piloted successfully at a workshop in Helsinki.

The work led to the development and delivery of new Training Course – to teach how to use the new modules for training the reviewers; how to use the new Value My Skills Tool; and how to use the associated badging materials for Reviewers.

Partners were pleased with the course and the materials for training and supporting the reviewers:

"(They/TSL) did a good job on the course. A useful alternative to learning online solely"

"There is real scope to do something with this in the wider adult education context. It would be possible to adapt some of the training to meet this."

"The Spanish course and presentation is available for all reviewers and will also be presented at our event."

“These materials are available via the unionlearn website for ULRs to use with their learners. We will continue to provide briefings and training sessions for ULRs to deliver MLSR and we are working with unions to encourage its use.”

“We will present it to Unions and several of them are (already) very interested.”

Impacts

The setting for the work was very important. In some countries policymakers continue to struggle with high levels of youth unemployment and older worker were less of a focus (Figure 11).

When exploring the impacts that can be achieved Mid-Life Skills Review Compendium partners suggested:

“Publish the findings and keep lobbying”

“LWI has already used the work as the basis of a report and event on Transitions in life and the support that learning including skills and careers reviews can help people enhance their lives.”

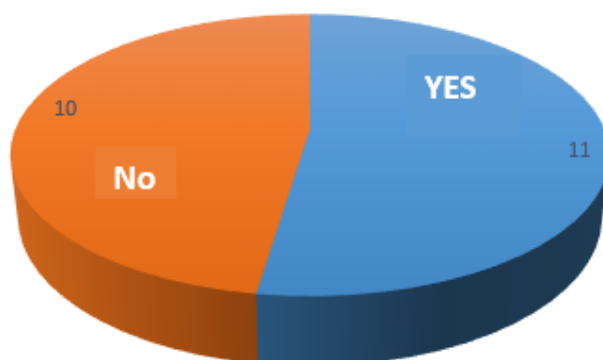
“During our upcoming national event on the 21st of November, we will present the compendium in order to make sense of our project. The compendium will also be available through the website, EPALe and the platform of the Value My Skills Tool”

“The compendium has helped inform Unionlearn’s mid-life development work. We are disseminating the good MLSR practice model to ULF projects and supporting unions to embed this work in their projects.”

“We would use this work in other studies we carried, it helps them to make a point of the situation at a specific moment”

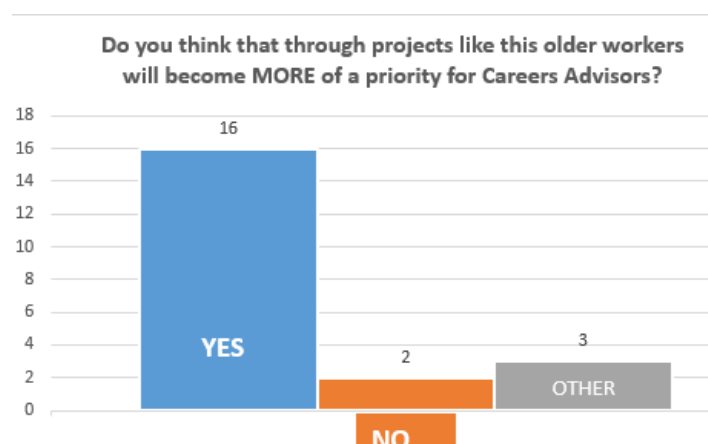
Figure 11.

Do you perceive the needs of older people in the labour market are receiving more attention from policymakers than 3 years ago?



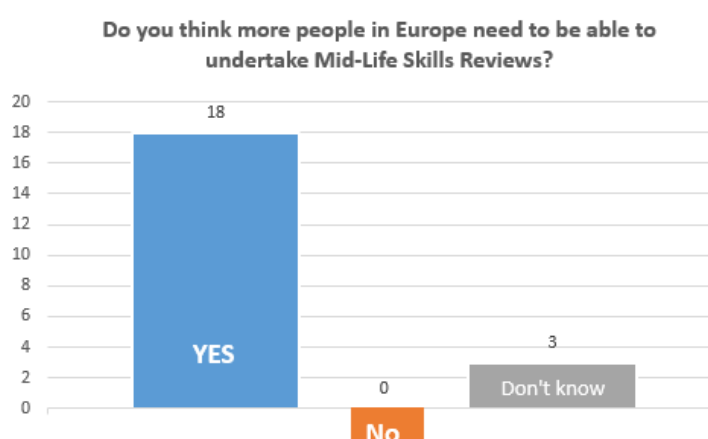
Career Advisers were noted as a particular route to impact from the project's stakeholders (Figure 12).

Figure 12.



Stakeholders also recognised that with an ageing demographic older workers were going to be an important focus for the future (Figure 13).

Figure 13.

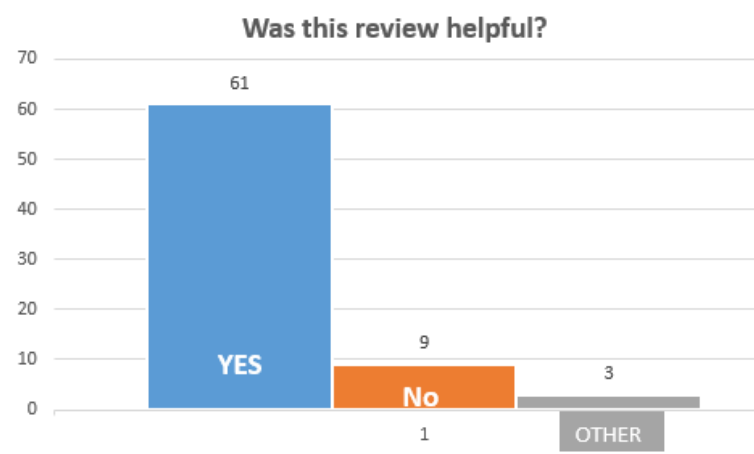


The Badging Compendium occupied an interesting area in being a real innovation report highlighting a new area for a number of countries whilst offering a state of the art review for those early adopters in the UK and Finland.

Its impact will therefore vary considerably and may in fact have a role at policy level in these later adopters. Interestingly there may also be variations across different types of education settings where more formalised systems prefer more traditional recognition – there were a number of requests for certification – from some countries whilst more liberalised systems were happy with the badges.

The biggest impacts have been and will undoubtedly continue to come from the Value My Skills Tool itself (Intellectual Output 3 – Figure 14). This has proved extremely popular with Reviewers and Reviewees across all of the partner countries and most especially with those reviewees with lower skills levels and less access to other forms of Information, Advice and Guidance.

Figure 14.



Partners noted:

“Let’s get the results disseminated widely and find people to take the materials on and keep Modernising

“We use the tool to assess the skills involved in training. We also use it to help with career guidance and job search courses.”

“We need to extend the use of the online tool and ensure that it is linked to the government's Mid-life MOT, the Careers Service's CPD training and other areas where there is a potential to deliver MLSR.”

“The results are already being used but hopefully we will have a broader impact after the event, when employers, trade unions and career advisers get to see the tool's full potential.”

“To date (December 2019) over 250 UK users have accessed the online VMS tool. We expect this to substantially grow over the coming months and years as the MLSR offer is rolled out. We will continue to provide briefings.”

The associated Training Course has also proven to be extremely useful and continues to be used:

“On a personal level - I am trying to train people to deliver wider MLSRs and MLCRs within one organisation.”

“The course was very useful in the training we delivered to the reviewers. We had to translate it but overall, it is the material we used.”

“The VMS training materials provided a good basis to work from. Many ULRs were aware of the MLSR model but were looking for more practical ways (to learn about it).”

The Project Manager (Ian Borkett) sat on an EPAL Group to help ensure that the project was able to engage through the ERASMUS+ Networks to grow its impact. Other activities that the project undertook included the series of National Events and an International Final Conference in Milan in December 2019.

Further, partners have used their own dissemination routes, newsletters, e-zines, websites, mailings, conference speeches etc. as well as:

"Spoken about at many meetings with Trade Unions involved in Union Learning Fund. Promoted within the Partner Organisation."

"Information to TSL webpage and in TSL newsletter, Presentation to TSL members in a couple of seminars, information in Facebook"

"Age UK - Mid-life workshops Centre for Policy on Ageing / Transitions projects - discussed MLRS with organisers and participants"

"The project appears as a highlighted project in Prospektiker's website and 6 articles have been published"

"Five Newsletters"

"Information has been put up on the unionlearn website. Articles have been written for the Learning Rep e-magazine and Supporting Study day "Valuing trade union careers and training for employee representatives", Friday 15th November."

"We mentioned the program in our web site and newsletters we will present it in a large event with unions"

"LinkedIn posts, meetings with stakeholders, trainers courses (very well participated) and the final event"

"Training courses"

Most Stakeholders who responded to our survey highlighted this as an area that was already anticipating new policy announcements and developments:

"Under the new plan of long-life learning in the Basque Country, we think that one of the priorities will be older workers, now that we are decreasing the high level of unemployment that we used to have in the past. Other policies related to digital skills are also developing in our region in a similar way."

"Perhaps new policies for unemployed people +45 but I do not think there will be new policies for older workers in the near future".

"Because the automatization and so on is a real worry in my region"

"Collaborating with public employment services, online job seekers..."

"New government has strategic programme where is strong focus to improve employment of older people."

"In Finland our new government has started a program called "continuing learning".

"I hope so, the UK needs its older workforce to remain engaged as we all live longer. Equally people will need/want to stay engaged in work for longer and

remain socially and mentally active, increasing wellness and a sense of purpose”

“Devolved skills budgets and pressures on social welfare expenditure will policies to support older people to work longer will be a priority. NCS now have older workers as a priority group and NRS will also be designed to help older workers retrain and upskill.”

Given the success of the project it makes sense for the lead partner to offer to speak about the project and its Outputs through ERASMUS+ networks and events nationally and internationally.

Most importantly the Value My Skills Tool will be maintained in its partner languages after the project closes giving considerable lasting impact for the ERASMUS+ Programme. Further ongoing activity is around a potential further bid to ERASMUS+ to support the Tool with pre and post/accompanying new materials plus partners identified:

“EPALE Ongoing work on a personal basis with Age UK, Careers Service, etc. At an organisational level ongoing work with DWP, DfE etc.”

“Prospektiker will provide support and training to any organisation wishing to use the outputs of our project”

“The MLSR training materials, resources and VMS online tool will be embedded into Unionlearn’s core learning and skills work”

“To be discussed with our partner (Regional Institute of Labour) using the online tool as it is constructed with free and open software”

This will be practical as most of this activity can be carried out at little cost and partners are committed to continuing the work:

“We have the tool on our webpage, and we take care of it in future as well. Would be nice to translate it also in Swedish”

“Through the mainstream work of the Learning and Work Institute.

“The activities will be supported by Prospektiker, they will be considered strategic activities for us, as they will allow us to”

“Unionlearn will continue to implement and support these activities and will look to build on this work.”

“Plans are being developed to be discussed with our partner (Regional Institute of Labour) by unions who want to do it”

Further TUC carry out long term evaluations of the impact of their work for DfE and use of the value My Skills Tool will be built into this to evidence real lasting impacts to individuals. This approach will be cascaded to partners to generate transnational results.

Stakeholders surveyed identified:

“It would be a good idea to implement a mandatory mid-life skills review in all organisations. The participation on training activities is still dependant of each organisation and it is still unusual in SMEs.”

“Although policies may not be in our favour, I strongly believe in the need to raise awareness on the importance of remaining in the Labour Market and tools such as the one developed could help a lot.”

Next Steps and Recommendations

The following next steps and recommendations for future action are made. They are made in no particular order.

1. Take a step-back and look at the potential for earlier interventions and new materials to support the review and Reviewer

Feedback from the trialling of the Value My Skills (VMS) Tool in partner countries, notably Spain and Italy revealed, it not only to be popular as a tool to use (for Reviewers and Reviewees) but also that there may be scope for a more introductory assessment before going straight into the VMS Tool itself. The VMS Tool itself learned from other Tools and approaches including more ‘physical’ ones – such as a set of playing cards with core skills on that Reviewees could discuss. Building on this approach to provide a basic ‘introductory conversation Tool’ ahead of the VMS Tool usage – mirroring the look and style could be a valuable addition. Particularly for use with staff who have relatively low skills/qualifications for whom starting with the online tool may be something of a leap.

2. Consider linking the Tool (as a Social Partner contribution) with new or expanding Policy Vehicles for Lifelong Learning

Education and Skills have been areas of pretty relentless change and developments for many years and this shows no signs of abating. Social Partners have been absolutely pivotal to the use of the VMS Tool and to the success of this project. Their role varies between countries in terms of direct delivery and support but nonetheless the availability of this Tool – tested by Social partners – gives a direct route into policy developments. For some countries this relationship is already strong but for others the Social Partners can be left out of the conversation at times. Logically therefore the partners have identified new policy areas that the Tool could influence and support their own involvement. The most significant of these are:

- The new National Employment Service in the UK and the future of the Union Learning Fund
- New Policies to tackle long-term unemployment and older workers in the Basque region (especially given the commitment already from the Basque Government’s Employment Agents – Lanbide)
- New Lifelong Learning developments and commitments within the incoming Government elected in Finland
- VAE (recognition of existing skills) in France remains a significant activity and one where the Tool offers the potential to support the recognition of soft skills and skills

that may not be traditionally identified in sector-based discussions but nonetheless are significant to an individual's work

3. Maintain a Focus on Older Workers

Partners have already explored the use of the VMS Tool with younger workers at an early part in their carer/apprenticeship/training. But this is very crowded market where Tools and Information, Advice and Guidance is relatively plentiful. This makes the potential added-value from such a tool significantly less than where it is now – in a market with very few players and considerable 'need'.

Though some countries are still primarily concerned with youth unemployment:

"The older worker subject still seems low down the policy priority list."

Partner response to evaluation

The topic is bound to grow over time due to demographic changes and in particular to the threat posed by 'Digitalisation and Automation'. This remains the right topic for activities such as this and if the Tool is maintained it will remain relevant to the willing audience it already has.

4. Maintain a Focus on the Low-Skilled

It was clear from the many reviewer and reviewee responses to the evaluation of the VMS Tool that there were some users and respondents/audiences that benefitted most from the Tool. The clearest group were the 'low-skilled' for whom the Tool and indeed the involvement with Information, Advice and Guidance seemed very much appreciated. Those benefitting least were those who have access to similar tools and guidance and indeed access to CPD and more formalised lifelong learning provision. This was most clearly seen in the use of the Tool in France where it was trialled with a variety of learners – some from more professionally qualified backgrounds – who were less positive about the tool – as they were looking for more nuanced links to their own professional development and CPD.

This contrasts a little with findings in the UK where it has been used with some very well qualified staff who have seen a benefit. Probably the dearth of guidance and similar adult provision has contributed significantly to this – making the UK an unusual comparator – and one where the Tool may have more potential audiences.

5. Be willing to explore new uses of the Tool where approaches are made

Maintaining a focus on the low skilled and older workers should be the priority. However to help give added value to ERASMUS+ and the partners it also makes sense to respond where there are significant direct approaches.

This has already happened in more than one of the partner countries:

"The Public Employment Service is interested in adapting the evaluation tool for unemployed jobseekers and also in translating the (associated materials)".

Partner response to evaluation

"Mapping the VMS tool results to labour market gaps and skills needs - to assist workers make a smooth transition into new jobs" Partner response to evaluation

The former response relates to use within the Basque region and the latter to potential linkages with European policy vehicles such as ESCO.

6. Consider links with European Tools and Approaches such as ESCO and the EU Skills Panorama

As mentioned above, there have been discussions about how the Tool could add value to ESCO and the EU Skills Panorama – given the role in these played by a number of the partner members – who are engaged in the European network for regional labour Market monitoring and have worked extensively with CEDEFOP and the Commission.

It is unsure how much of a ‘finished’ article such policy support vehicles would want but if the VMS tool were to be modified to directly link with the skills identified within ESCO and the EU Skills Panorama – and rather than a focus on the provision of a ‘finished’ VMS Tool, the materials essentially just allowed Open Access to the ‘approach’ and to the content of the VMS Cards it could be a valuable resource for other Information, Advice and Guidance practitioners to start working with.

“Yes, we could develop the "bridge" between the evaluation of competencies and the competencies requested for a job (using ESCO)”. Partner response to evaluation

7. TUC as hosts should look at growing the Scope of the Online Provision

The suite of materials represented primarily by the VMS Tool is a considerable, free resource that has been developed in line with the ERASMUS+ Project application. The Tool is already being very well used in a number of countries and building on this to add complementary Tools and materials again focussed on older workers seems a very obvious priority.

“Broadening the scope of the online offer - reviews are not just about the skills on the VMS cards.” Partner response to evaluation

8. Look for opportunities to Share the Learning from the Mid-Life Skills Review and Badging Compendia work

The initial work carried out in 2018 created very considerable new learning – particularly from the non-UK partners where both the approach and the in particular the use of Digital Open Badges was a real innovation. Steps have already been taken – led by the Learning and Work Institute to publish and disseminate this learning and this needs to continue.

A final recommendation therefore is for all partners to continue to target these Compendia findings for the next few years (after which they will inevitably become a little out of date) at audiences within both their own countries and within the European Policy field. Seeking opportunities to share the findings and to update the national positions.