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Refugees Empowerment through VET for an inclusive Europe
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WORK-BASED LABORATORY IMPLEMENTATION HANDBOOK (IO6)

This Handbook was created in the framework of the Erasmus+ project
REVALUE - Refugees Empowerment through VET for an inclUSive Europe

Participating partner organisations:





Summary

Introduction	3
1. Valorizing non-formal and informal learning for adults in a situation of disadvantage.....	4
2. Valorizing non-formal and informal learning: theoretical basis	6
3. What contribution may be provided by a good Work-based Laboratory	8
4. How to guide effectively a WBL user.....	9
5. How to project a WBL pathway	11
6. How to evaluate learning outcomes in a WBLab.....	13
7. Bibliography and useful references	15
Annexes.....	17



Introduction

Developed on the basis of the experiences and knowledge of the partner organizations and perfected thanks to the evidences collected during the realization of the testing activities, the sixth output of REVALUE represents the final step towards the empowerment of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees who took part to the whole pathway. This handbook will provide a series of methodological and practical information for planning and putting into action formative projects that will give users the chance of valorising their already existing knowledge, increasing their opportunity to find new employment opportunities in the host country.

This manual has the objective of strengthening the capability of the operators interested in applying the Revalue method to provide assistance and orientation to refugees and asylum seekers who are starting their first work-based learning experiences, providing them with important instruments for fostering their social inclusion and allowing an access to the job market.

According to the Revalue approach, the work-based Laboratories must represent a strategy for helping refugees to start immediately to put into action the knowledge, skills and competences they have acquired in the context of this project, integrating the knowledge acquired in the face-to-face classrooms. The rationale behind this approach is connected to the need of providing since the beginning experiences obtained directly on a work environment, understanding how to interact with their colleagues and to relate with other actors of the civil society.

Thanks to the provision of information and tools that could help operators in assessing the competences and skills acquired by migrants on the workplace, this handbook will enable them to design CVs and portfolios that could help users in taking the best profit from the other project outputs, reducing the risk that cultural barriers and scepticism could worsen their situations of exclusion.



An active participation in the Lab activities will enable the participants to:

- Increase their ability to work in team, with a problem-solving approach and an improved communication ability
- Develop a work-based mind-set, directed to understand which strategies could support them in their inclusion in the labour market
- Understand better how to ask for support, becoming more familiar with the dynamics of the different contexts in which they are looking for new opportunities

This approach has been tested in Hungary, Italy, France and United Kingdom, providing detailed information on the testing conducted in the context of the project and helping employers with detailed and efficient information on the potential exportability of the project.

1. Valorising non-formal and informal learning for adults in a situation of disadvantage

A Work-based learning formative pathway could be understood as a process, characterized by a specific point of departure and a point of arrival. The point of departure should be understood as everything that an individual knows in a specific moment of his life, composed by the knowledge he achieved in all his previous experiences, the personal characteristics and his aspirations. The point of arrival is represented by an increased self-awareness of the acquired knowledge and its practical use, fundamental step for guaranteeing more opportunities of finding a stable employment.

The most important point is: how to support refugees in getting a better understanding of their work-based learning outcomes, considered all factors that may make it more complicated for them to settle in a completely new social context?

In this manual we will focus on two important aspects:

- **the balance of competences;**
- **the procedures for valorising learning;**

The purpose of this strategy is to provide value to the learning pathway that unrolls between the point of departure and the point of arrival. This road is composed by all the activities that generate a form of learning that may result useful for reaching a professional objective, together with the awareness of the value of what we have learned.

Doing a proper balance of competences may help us in doing a good evaluation of the acquired learning and of their personal characteristics, understanding how to adapt them to a new context. This will help them in reaching more information on the work that they would like to do, understanding how to become able to do it.

A similar pathway will help these individuals in the job orientation process and in gaining a better vocational and educational training, enabling them to learn a new profession. The task of the operator is to orient effectively the user towards services that are more adapt to each to the professional ambitions of the workers, helping them in developing integration and communication projects that are adequate to their possibilities.

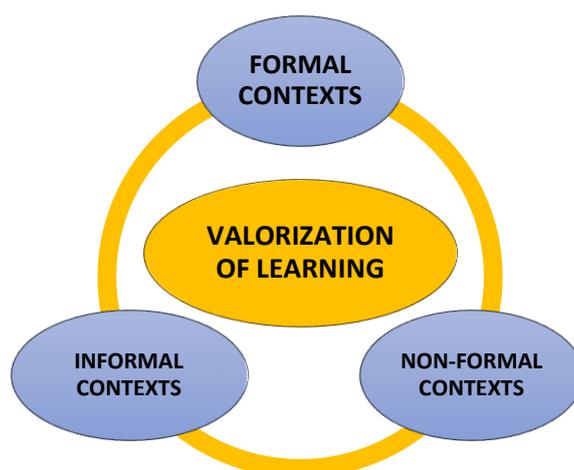
Here we will face to specific cases:

- How to support a user in a disadvantaged situation to find a specific work, for which he has interest or that he already knows how to do partially or completely (procedures of valorisation of non-formal and informal learning)
- How to support/orient a user in a disadvantages situation to understand which job he could reasonably do and which actions are needed for reaching this objective (balance of competences).

2. Assessing skills in a work environment: theoretical basis

Each process that leads to put newly acquired non-formal competences in transparency may lead to a double outcome:

- 1) The ***acknowledgment of a set of formative credits***. It is a strictly regulated process through which, on the basis of an individual request, formal, non-formal and informal learning is evaluated, thanks to an analysis of the admission requirements and the learning outcome units.
- 2) The ***certification of competences*** is a procedure that is regulated on national or regional basis, allowing the individual to achieve a professional qualification without having previously attended a course, on the basis of the achieved learning outcomes, in any context (especially on work environments).



Each work and life experience may generate certifiable learning, that could be important to the purposes of a qualification or for having access to a personalized learning pathway. This could be evaluated on the basis of two different criteria:

- **Value:** on the basis of the kind of proof/evidence certifies the experience
- **Relevance:** on the basis of the pertinence and completeness of the requirements, in front of the competence that must be validated.



As already anticipated, every form of learning could be valorised through a series of procedures that may lead to a legally recognized certification or qualification; it is a result that could be easily achieved and expended on the working place.

The certification of competences is based on the concept that learning happens not only in formal contexts (educational institutions, schools, etc) but also in informal contexts (in everyday life, during the free time, etc) and non-formal contexts (working context). The main idea is that life experiences, with all the different circumstances that are connected to them, represent important learning opportunities, also if compared with those that are characteristic of the traditional learning contexts. Such assumption makes it easier to overcome the traditional view, according to which the only kind of learning that could be identified and validated is the one that is achieved in traditional situations.



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3. What contribution may be provided by a good Work-based Laboratory?

The Work-based Laboratory has the purpose of supporting users in implementing what they have been learning during the face-to-face activities. A positively-set WBL will allow learners to explore and grow in a risk-free environment, observing and making decisions according to specific circumstances defined in a set of scenarios defined by the mentor.

In order to set up a work-environment and guarantee a realistic Work-Integrated Learning experience, it's important to make sure learners have the opportunities to:

- Follow standard workplace procedures;
- Work with specific timelines, in order to learn to manage deadlines;
- Work in teams with colleagues;
- Manage the communication with customers and colleagues;
- Learn to face the most common set of problems they could face on the workplace;
- Learn to manage and prioritize multiple sets of tasks;
- Provide assistance to other individuals by taking profit of the knowledge they have already developed.

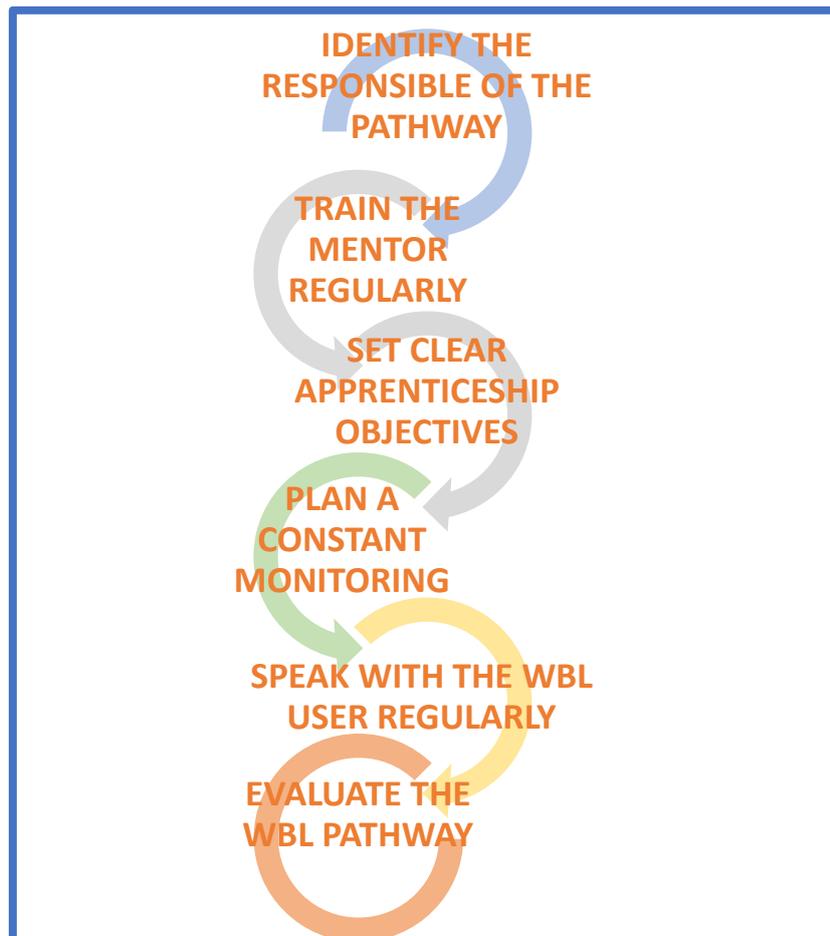
THE IMPORTANCE OF TACIT KNOWLEDGE



Proximity and interaction are two fundamental factors for the development of a set of knowledge that could be fundamental for the growth of the individual and for the success of the firm. In this way, individuals will exchange knowledge automatically and build relations of trust, increasing the internal levels of connection (Schilling, 2016).

4. How to guide effectively a WBL user

Mentors play a fundamental role in supporting the users in their laboratory experience. In order to define an effective mentorship process, it is important to keep in mind the following passages:



- ***Identify the responsible of the pathway*** – Identifying a mentor that has adequate competences for keeping an open dialogue with the user is important, in order to guarantee the success of the pathway. Keeping into account linguistic and social cultural skills is fundamental
- ***Train the mentor regularly*** – The mentor is supposed to guide the user, but he may also need support, in order to achieve better results



- ***Set clear apprenticeship aims and objectives*** - It seems obvious, but keeping clear, measurable and achievable results for the WBL pathway is crucial
- ***Plan a constant monitoring activity*** - Mentors should monitor constantly and clearly the activity they are following, checking regularly the accomplishment
- ***Set a regular dialogue with the WBL user*** - Make sure the mentor has a regular and open dialogue with the user, helping him in getting the best from the experience
- ***Evaluate the progress of the designed pathway*** - Consulting the user and the mentor may allow you to evaluate the success of the pathway, checking progresses and eventual shortcomings.

According to the European Training Forum (2012), there are three specific aspects that will be empowered by the setting up of a good Work-based Learning Experience:

- **Hard skills, technical expertise and tacit knowledge:** a properly set-up WBL may lead the migrant to develop the set of skills and competences that could be found only on the working place, thanks to a learning through observing and doing approach. Some of the most important competences are in fact those who are developed through Tacit knowledge, thanks to the reproduction of sets of practices learned directly through experience
- **Soft Skills, other Competences and behaviours:** In order to integrate in a new labour market, it is important to work for the development of key competences (communication, ability to work in a team setting, customer relation skills) and other skills connected to problem-solving or project-based thinking.
- **Socialization:** Despite often overlooked, the importance of socialization is fundamental for the success of the WBL experience, helping



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the individual to reach a better understanding of the “workplace culture” that is typical of the host country and to increase self-awareness.



5. How to Project a Work-Based Laboratory

A formative project is the ID card of a work experience. In the formative project, we are supposed to describe objectives and contents of the Work-based Laboratory, with particular reference to the activities that must be done and the knowledge/skills that the learner must acquire. In other words, a laboratory must guarantee the possibility to reach a Learning Outcome unit, to be evaluated and validated.

A formative project, if well built, may represent a fundamental tool for a correct setting and realization of the experience, since it allows an evaluation (and possible validation) of technical-professional and transversal competences that could support the employability of the user.

Technical-professional competences could be evaluated in reference to a professional profile that exists on the labour market, with an acceptable level of standardization of the related competences. In order to be profitable, a laboratory **must be developed in reference to a specific work context, with reference to one or more learning units**. In this way, the user may experiment a professional performance in a safe and protected context.

We must consider the fact that a professional performance asks for an expected outcome, that is the need to realize a specific product/service, with a well-defined level of responsibility and autonomy. **The expected outcome is, indeed, the competency**. Each competency is built on a set of knowledge and skills that, in order to be acquired, they must be connected as the tiles of a mosaic, each one with its own learning outcomes' units.

The learning outcome unit is a didactic element of the formative pathway, both experiential or classroom-based. It is composed by a set of knowledge and skills that could be evaluated and validated. If the unit could be used to each, in a progressive and cumulated way, a most valuable outcome, it becomes a Capitalizable Competency Unit (UFC). The UFC is a set of autonomously significant competences, that could be identified as part of a learning pathway.

The concept of capitalizing, means that all knowledge, skills and competences that are acquired need to be turned in cognitive capital. With this purpose, we must adopt an approach that allows us to collect and transfer all forms of formal, non-formal and informal learning to increase their value.

This means that, in order to make it significant, the laboratory must be developed in reference to a standardized professional profile, with capitalizable learning units.

In order to favor the validation of codifiable knowledge, the laboratory should be developed to make competences clear and univocal in the following senses:

- In terms of required skills and knowledge
- In the way in which skills and knowledge are activated
- In the procedure that leads to the realization of the objective and that defines the competency in action.

The steps leading to the definition of the laboratory, which learning could be validated and certified (if relevant) are the following:

- 1) Identification of the related competency
- 2) Identification of the evaluation criteria
- 3) Definition of the final tests

Few practical advices

The first step to take is to ***identify in your national or regional competence framework the professional figure or the productive process to which you want to anchor the laboratory*** (or the whole formative process of which the Lab is part).

Each national framework has a set of competences that must be achieved in order to develop a competence. These competences are always put in reference to the **expected learning outcomes**. In many repertoires, you can also find mention of the formative standards that define the minimal characteristics of the learning, providing a compass in the development of the experiential process.

It is not important that all foreseen learning outcomes are developed in the laboratory. It is also possible to focus on one or more learning outcome. The important thing is to make sure **your national framework/repertory remains your main source of inspiration in writing the project**.

In the repertory you will also find a level of competency that is required for the qualification, for each professional figure, in reference to the European Qualification Framework (EQF). This is built:

- a) on three descriptive dimensions in terms of: knowledge, skills, autonomy/responsibility
- b) on eight levels, characterized by a growing complexity of the achieved learning in reference to the abovementioned dimensions.

ALWAYS REMEMBER TO KEEP IN MIND THE TASKS AND ACTIVITIES THAT MUST BE ACCOMPLISHED ON EACH WORK ENVIRONMENT WHEN YOU ARE CREATING THE SET OF LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR YOUR LABORATORY, IN ORDER TO STRUCTURE A FEASIBLE AND REALISTIC PLAN

6. How to Evaluate Learning Outcomes in a Work-based Lab

A proper evaluation of results must keep into account the quality of the work experience done by the learner in its pathway, providing proof of the acquired learning, so that any enterprise or organization interested in its profile may evaluate the potential contribution of the individual in a work context.

The **evaluation** of learning outcomes derives from a good evaluation and is a necessary condition for their validation. It is a process well regulated by each national and local authority and allows the access to qualification on the basis of a reconstruction and evaluation of the formal, non-formal and informal learning. This opportunity represents an integrated part of the system of certification of competences: hence, **identification, validation and certification of non formal/informal competences may be read as a perfect alternative to the formal qualification pathway.**

The evaluation requires the selection of a precise approach, in order to have clear and well-defined learning outcome units and a method to read their effective attainment. In this context, quality and precision with which learning outcomes are described are important to allow a proper evaluation.

Here are few suggestions concerning the criteria that allow an evaluation of the formative pathway:

FIRST RULE: FEASIBILITY

The evaluation should focus exclusively on the achievement (or not) of the learning outcomes that were agreed in the phase of project realization. The evaluation procedures must be appropriated to the context, the length and the goal of the laboratory.



SECOND RULE: LEARNING OUTCOMES' GROUPED IN A PROPER WAY

It is important that the evaluation tests are realized on the basis of correct tasks, in order to:

- Allow the definition of a good project, based on observations and simulations
- Make the evaluation easier, thanks to practical situational tests
- Make it easier to agree the evaluation criteria
- Make the work easier for evaluators

From an operational point of view, for each learning unit, it is important to find a task that has to be completed, in order to evaluate if the learner has acquired the related competences, with an adequate level of autonomy.

THIRD RULE: TRANSPARENCY OF EVALUATION CRITERIA

In order to guarantee a good level of transparency, it is important that each evaluation procedure contains the following information:

- a) **Focus** (the evaluation of each learning outcome is separated from the others)
- b) **Methods** (the way in which the evaluation is done: test, observation, portfolio, etc)
- c) **Context and conditions** (the kind of tasks that are required, the work environment, the materials and the tools to be used)
- d) **Evaluator profile** (qualification, professional profile, functions, etc)
- e) **Quality assurance of the evaluation process**



7. Bibliography

Books and articles

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- **UNHCR, OECD**, (2018), Safe Pathways for Refugees. OECD-UNHCR Study on third country Solutions for Refugees: Family Reunification, Study Programmes and Labour Mobility, available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/5c07a2c84>

Other tools and websites

- **EU Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals** – This tool could be used by organisations offering assistance to Third Country Nationals. It helps to map the skills, qualifications and work experiences of the third country nationals and to give them personalised advice on further steps, e.g. a referral to recognition of diplomas, skills validation, further training or employment support services.

<https://ec.europa.eu/migrantskills/#/>



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- **Repository of Promising Practices** -This database wants to enhance mutual learning and transferability between EU Member States of the most effective policies in the area of social and labour market integration of refugees and asylum-seekers, as well as skills.

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1208>

- **Employers Together for Integration** - On 23 May 2017 the Commission launched the initiative Employers together for integration at the occasion of the second meeting of the European Dialogue on Skills and Migration to give visibility to what employers are doing to support the integration of refugees and other migrants into the labour market.

https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/legal-migration/european-dialogue-skills-and-migration/integration-pact_en

Appendix

- a. Skill assessment questionnaires
- b. Template of a portfolio;
- c. Template of a certificate of attendance
- d. Template of a participation list



Annex A - Skill assessment questionnaire:

The following questionnaire must be filled by the user **at the end of the Work-based laboratory**. Its purpose is to help us understand the user's perception of the usefulness of the co-working activities he realized. This self-assessment will also help migrant learners to identify the **soft skills** and **job-related skills** they acquired in the Lab experience, understanding their strengths and areas for improvement, allowing them to comprehend which areas they want to improve more.

The questionnaire could be freely edited and modified according to the needs of each operator who is implementing the REVALUE methodology.

Please note that the last section needs to be filled accordingly to what **REVALUE pathway** you followed (social enterprise manager; migrant service provider).

Name of the user:					
Name of the mentor:					
Name of the hosting organization:					
Quick description of the Work-based Laboratory activities					
Questionnaire to be filled by the WBL user:					
GENERAL EVALUATION			Yes	Moderately	No
Are you satisfied with the experience you have had in your Work-based laboratory?					
<i>If not, please explain why:</i>					
Do you think you have been properly followed and supported during your Lab experience?					
<i>If not, please explain why:</i>					
Was the outcome of your Lab experience in line with what was defined with the mentor at the beginning?					
<i>If not, please explain why:</i>					
Do you believe that the tasks and activities you have been doing are in line with what could help you in finding an employment?					



<i>If not, please explain why:</i>			
In relation to the tasks assigned in the Laboratory, do you feel that in general your level of knowledge and skills has grown at the end of this experience?			
<i>If not, please explain why:</i>			
Was the level of responsibility in line with the previous expectations?			
<i>If not, please explain why:</i>			
Do you believe that the contents you have studied in the REVALUE modules have been helpful for you?			
<i>If not, please explain why:</i>			
Do you believe that your knowledge of the new language has improved after the Lab experience?			
<i>If not, please explain why:</i>			
After the Lab, do you feel more positive about your possibility to find an employment in this country?			
<i>If not, please explain why:</i>			
PROBLEM SOLVING	Yes	Moderately	No
Do you think that your ability to solve a problem in a job environment has improved?			
<i>If not, please explain why:</i>			
Do you think your ability to read set of information for solving a problem has improved?			
<i>If not, please explain why:</i>			
Do you think that your ability to understand the potential consequences of the decisions you take has increased?			
<i>If not, please explain why:</i>			
Do you believe you are now able to stand pressure in front of a complicated issue better than before?			
<i>If not, please explain why:</i>			
COMMUNICATION SKILLS	Yes	Moderately	No
Do you think your ability to express your needs on a job environment has increased?			



<i>If not, please explain why:</i>			
Do you think your ability to communicate with your colleagues has increased?			
<i>If not, please explain why:</i>			
Do you think your ability to write messages on a work environment has increased?			
<i>If not, please explain why:</i>			
Do you think that your ability to express a disagreement to a colleague in a calm and positive way has improved?			
<i>If not, please explain why:</i>			
TEAM-WORK SKILLS	Yes	Moderately	No
Do you think that your ability to follow a plan of actions discussed with your colleagues has improved?			
<i>If not, please explain why:</i>			
Do you think that you are now more able to share ideas in a teamwork setting?			
<i>If not, please explain why:</i>			
Do you think your ability to work under coordination of a superior has improved?			
<i>If not, please explain why:</i>			
Do you think you would now be more capable of helping colleagues in doing something than before?			
<i>If not, please explain why:</i>			
JOB-RELATED SKILLS – Migrant Service Provider	Yes	Moderately	No
Have you increased your comprehension of how to support a migrant who needs orientation for following bureaucratic procedures?			
<i>If not, please explain why:</i>			
Have you increased your job-related knowledge of administrative procedures for migrants/asylum seekers?			
<i>If not, please explain why:</i>			
Have you improved your listening skills when supporting a user?			



<i>If not, please explain why:</i>			
Have you increased your ability to understand what specific request is the user making and provide him with a valuable solution?			
<i>If not, please explain why:</i>			
Have you improved your skills in working on a database sheet?			
<i>If not, please explain why:</i>			
Have you improved your ability to deliver satisfaction questionnaires to users who have been assisted by you?			
<i>If not, please explain why:</i>			
Have you increased your ability of working with users with different cultural traditions from yours?			
<i>If not, please explain why:</i>			
Have you increased your knowledge of different ways to provide support to a customer who is asking for counselling?			
<i>If not, please explain why:</i>			
JOB-RELATED SKILLS – Social Enterprise Manager	Yes	Moderately	No
Do you think your knowledge of how to contribute to the realization of a fund raising activity has improved?			
<i>If not, please explain why:</i>			
Do you think you would now be more capable of understanding how to find a good call for tenders/proposals?			
<i>If not, please explain why:</i>			
Are you now more capable of reading and understanding a financial document?			
<i>If not, please explain why:</i>			
Has your comprehension of how to start a social business increased?			
<i>If not, please explain why:</i>			
Has your comprehension of how to manage a social business increased?			
<i>If not, please explain why:</i>			



Have you reached a stronger comprehension of what services must be provided to a newly arrived migrant?			
<i>If not, please explain why:</i>			
Are you more capable of understanding the different sectors in which social business operate?			
<i>If not, please explain why:</i>			
Have you reached a stronger understanding of how to coordinate a project?			
<i>If not, please explain why:</i>			



Annex B – Portfolio Template

The following document is a customizable portfolio that both enterprises and users could use for mentioning the sets of skills and knowledge they have acquired throughout their Lab experiences. The mentor of the WBL experience is in charge of taking care of filling the document, including all useful information. These portfolios, which could be integrated in the learners' CV, represent useful and effective self-promotional tools for both job-seekers and self-employed individuals, allowing them to present quickly knowledge, skills and competences that have been acquired throughout the course of the co-working laboratories.



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PORTFOLIO

Contact Information

Name of the User

Date and place of birth

City and address of residence

Contact information

Information about the highest title of study



Work experience
Name of the employer/employing organization <ul style="list-style-type: none">Registered office and period of the employment experienceTypology of contractSector of ActivityProfessional Area Code and reference to National Qualifications Repertory
Description of the activities of the user
Competences
<i>Key competences:</i>
<i>Transversal competences:</i>
<i>Technical-Professional Competences:</i>
Knowledge
Skills

Company

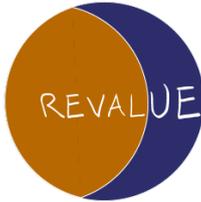
location, date
representative

Legal

signature, stamp



Template of a certificate of attendance



CERTIFICATE OF PARTICIPATION

This is to certify that

First name last name

Participated in the
Social Enterprise Manager
Work-Based Laboratory

in the

*KA2 – Cooperation for Innovation and the Exchange of Good Practices
Strategic Partnerships for vocational education and training*

Project

REVALUE

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Project Number: 2016-1-IT01-KA202-005445

On the **date** in **location**, **country**

Company

location, date

signature, stamp



Template of a certificate of attendance



CERTIFICATE OF PARTICIPATION

This is to certify that

First name last name

Participated in the
Migrant Service Provider
Work-Based Laboratory
in the

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Company

location, date

signature, stamp



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