



State of play regarding validation in Sweden

Sweden has a long history of working with validation of non-formal learning, now working towards a national system where informal and non-formal learning have equal valuable qualifications.

The Swedish Adult Education Association which consists of 10 study associations including ABF, The Workers' Adult Educational Association, has during spring 2014 given a company called Nordic Validationforum the assignment to produce modules for validation of informal and non-formal learning. The work is supervised through the Validationgroup in the Swedish Adult Education Association. The modules will include self-assessment, group-work and evaluation. The timeframe for these modules is 12 hours and the validation is led by tutors. The Validationgroup will meet to finalize the modules with the company in September and October 2014. The training of tutors will start in November 2014. This is the beginning of a national qualification framework (NQF) for informal and non-formal validation.

With the EQF (European Qualifications Framework) the perspective are now even broader and the hopes are to establish a validation system including European dimensions to the national strategies. The goal of the EQF is to develop a unifying European framework for qualifications from both work and study experiences to make it easier for EU citizens wishing to study or work abroad. The framework of the EQF is also supposed to benefit employers and educational institutions when recruiting foreign staff or students. EU member states are currently dealing with the task to facilitate inter-country studying and job seeking for EU citizens within EU. The progress reached by the different countries varies. Sweden has two existing frameworks: the framework for qualifications for lifelong learning and the framework for higher education. The framework for qualifications for lifelong learning is currently at a build-up stage while the framework for higher education already has been established and is in full use.

The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (HVE) has been given the task to coordinate Sweden's part in the EQF and to be responsible for its implementation in Sweden. This is carried out in cooperation with other concerned authorities, such as the Swedish Higher Education Authority and the Swedish Council for Higher Education. The mission of the Swedish National Agency for HVE includes coordinating and supporting a national structure for validation.

On August 28th, 2014, ABF, The Workers Adult Educational Association, held a national event for validation of non-formal and informal learning. Attendances to the roundtable event were representatives from ABF involved in national educational and union learning programmes. ABF is cooperating with other authorities concerned with developing model guidelines to support the industries and the education system in their validation work, such as the Swedish Public Employment Service, the Swedish Higher Education Authority, the Swedish Council for Higher



Education and the Swedish National Agency for Education. Part of this task includes responsibility for a portal of collected information about validation in Sweden.

ABF has long experience of working with validation involved in previous projects, such as Portfolio, Salt/OCN and Brobyggarna. The latest and most current project, Valiante, has so far had over 300 participants who attended and completed the validation process. For the participants in the courses an essential aim of the validation process is the possibility to develop awareness about their own competencies. One reason is that the awareness of ones competencies may increase both self-esteem and self-confidence. Another reason why validation is valuable to the participants appears when they change work and need a document of required competencies that can be used and recognized for a future employer.

The learning achieved is based on seven core competencies:

1. Democratic civil competence
2. Social competence
3. Inter-cultural competence
4. Cultural competence
5. Learning competence
6. Communicational competence
7. Organizational and management competence

The agenda for the event also included a meeting with a group of people that have been validated themselves and now are undergoing validators training to validate others. The discussions of the event focused on how to progress towards a system where informal and non-formal learning have equal valuable qualifications but also how to include European dimensions to the national strategies. ABF will continue working on an EQF / NQF adaptation of the validation.

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