

Introduction

The pages hereafter are the result of the first series of peer-2-peer visits conducted in partner countries to gain insight in good practice examples. Because of the absence of reliable measurement instruments or indicators that could be equally applied across the different learning institutions and their varied populations of learners, the researches opted for a qualitative approach.

These peer evaluations aimed at looking into the effectiveness of the teaching processes and the educational environment in regard to bridging formal and informal learning within a L2 program. In May & June of 2015, evaluators from each of the partners visited their counterpart in another country and visited both formal and non-formal learning institutions and activities.

These visits resulted in a series of reports on the findings, based on the interviews conducted with the three different target groups to discern which conditions in the respective institution contribute to the realization of learning environments that bridge formal and informal learning paths of participants. In addition, the participating organizations were asked to fill out a form about their organization and about the specific NFLA they organized.

Furthermore, in September-October 2015, each of the organizations was asked to organise 2 focus groups - one with learners and one with teachers and policy makers. The instruction given was that each focus group should have at least 6 participants who had in the past 6 months participated in one or more non-formal learning activity that was organized as part of a formal education module.

Instructions were provided to the moderator and note-takers about the information that was important for the research.

The researchers also asked in these structured questionnaires for basic demographic indicators about the participants but these data (with the exception of the gender breakdown) were not provided.

The questions were grouped by topic and the moderators were asked to follow the order as much as possible but there was also room for further exploration of interesting remarks by the participants.

The first section of this report introduces the **partner organizations** and the best practices they identified - as well as an appreciation by the evaluators that visited these projects.

The second section of the report provides a more theoretical perspective - a **literature study** - that touches upon some of the aspects of (non-) formal learning, social inclusion and learning outcomes.



The third section groups some of the most pertinent findings from the focus groups and the peer visits on these same issues - as well as on some of the more general aspects of organizing learning activities for vulnerable populations.

This section will incorporate some of the views of learners, teachers and school management.

The last section will look at some of the best practices that can be distilled.

Partners & Peer visits

8° CTP Via delle Azzorre

Founded in which year	
Stated purpose	
Sources of funding	State funding
Number and type of staff	
Main activities	

Short description of the partner organization

C Via delle Azzorre is a Comprehensive Public School. It is formed by Nursery School, primary School, Secondary School (stage 1) and CTP (center lifelong learning for adults).

Selection of non-formal learning activities or projects

Organisation 1 Italy

Name institution/organization	8° CTP Via delle Azzorre
Description of organization	State school for adults
Number of staff in total	22
Number of staff in L2 (if applicable)	6
Number of learners in L2 (if applicable)	183
Which courses offered?	Italian L2 (lev. A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2), English language, French language, Spanish language, IT, Art, Interior design, Graphic design, History of cinema
Practices of non-formal learning in the organization?	Cultural visits, International dinners, visits to market places
Website of organization	http://www.ici-giuseppeparini.it/

Organisation 2 Italy

Name institution/organization	“Io, Noi”
Description of organization	The association operates on the conservation and protection of the rights of underage children, of families and of immigrants
Number of staff in total	15 all volunteers
Number of staff in L2 (if applicable)	5 volunteers
Number of learners in L2 (if applicable)	30 / year
Which courses offered?	L2 - levels: A1 e A2
Practices of non-formal learning in the organization?	Recreational activities with the students using Italian language to communicate. End of the year party. Celebration of festivities and comparison between the Italian and foreigner holidays.
Website of organization	www.ionoi.org

Organisation 3 Italy

Name institution/organization	C.I.A.O. onlus (centro integrazione accoglienza orientamento)
Description of organization	Organization that manages an Italian school L2 since 8 years and organizes recreational events for the surrounding areas
Number of staff in total	17 volunteers
Number of staff in L2 (if applicable)	17
Number of learners in L2 (if applicable)	230 enrolled/year; 80 regularly attending
Which courses offered?	A0, A1, A2, B1; school homework help for children
Practices of non-formal learning in the organization?	Yes: social events, cineforum, football team, theatre
Website of organization	www.ciaoweb.org

Organisation 4 Italy

Name institution/organization	Istituto Culturale Islamico di Ostia
Description of organization	Cultural Centre based on the religious education, that also organizes courses of Italian and Arabic languages
Number of staff in total	5
Number of staff in L2 (if applicable)	1 volunteer for italian 1 for arabic
Number of learners in L2 (if applicable)	15-20

Which courses offered?	Italian and Arabic languages course, religious education
Practices of non-formal learning in the organization?	Yes, sport activities, cultural activities, week of the Islamic culture
Website of organization	No

Organisation 5 Italy

Name institution/organization	CARITAS DI ROMA-COOPERATIVA ROMA SOLIDARIETA'
Description of organization	VOLONTARI
Number of staff in total	250
Number of staff in L2 (if applicable)	21
Number of learners in L2 (if applicable)	422
Which courses offered?	Italian L2 (lev. A1, A2, B1)
Practices of non-formal learning in the organization?	Guided visits, multimedia projections, thematic parties
Website of organization	http://www.caritasroma.it/

The peer-2-peer visits by colleagues from Belgium

The 'evaluators' were two NT2 (Dutch as a second Language) teachers from the CVO Antwerpen, who looked at a series of cultural visits (by the learners of Italian as a second language) to a wide range of places in Rome, such as archaeological sites, places of culture or markets.

These visits aim at introducing learners of Italian with Italian culture and habits in a non-formal way. It is also a good way of getting to know each other better, which contributes to the well-being of each person and thus ameliorates and accelerates the process of integration.

The frequency of these visits depends on the permission of the school, the number and ability of the members in class, but usually 3-4 visits are organized per year. The financing of these activities is sometimes an **obstacle** - either because of the price (visit of the Vatican) or because of the means of the students.

The two evaluators visited a project in the Italian seaside town of Ostia near Rome where Italian as a second language was taught in an informal way. At the 8° CTP (Permanent Territorial Centre), (young) adults aged 16 can learn Italian as a second language as well as English, French, Spanish, IT, art, interior design, graphic design and film history to follow. They can also obtain a diploma of secondary education (second chance education). It is a much smaller school than CVO Antwerpen; there are 183 students of Italian as a second language and 6 teachers.

The first day, they conducted interviews with a student, a teacher and the director of the program. The team can not film in class because minors are present. Salvatore testifies in fluent Italian while Giovanna, his teacher, translating. Salvatore is an enthusiastic Peruvian young man who has lived for a time in Italy. Moreover, he is Spanish-speaking, which made learning Italian easier.

Giovanna is a very energetic and creative teacher who likes to stage plays in the classroom. The director speaks almost no English and is happy Simona there to translate.

Trips to Rome are very popular with the students, according to the director, they are the only school in the area that organizes this kind of cultural activities. What is immediately apparent is that the school has few financial resources, and they also receive subsidies to organize cultural activities.

The next day there was an information day at school where the evaluators have the opportunity to socialize with teachers and students. As they remark how quickly the students learn to speak Italian, even though they are sometimes less than a year in the country, the explanation given is simple: Italians often do not speak any foreign language, so foreigners have to learn Italian quickly.

The second school visited is 'Lo Noi', a volunteer project in Fiumicino where migrants can consult a psychologist or lawyer at a social tariff and which also provides free lessons of Italian. During the classes they use a soap opera about newcomers in Italy. The volunteers are very passionate and socially engaged. Once more, the evaluators notice how the program has to make do with very little resources.

The last visit was to "CIAO Onlus" - an organization that caters to the social, economic and cultural integration of migrants and where classes of Italian are also organized. Flavio, coordinator of the center, is very sociable and organizes soccer games, theater and a year-end festival. At the annual "rainbow party", the whole neighborhood is invited. The students bring food, music, dress or traditional dance from their culture. Flavio hopes in this way to promote a multicultural society.

Axxell Multicultural Centre

Founded in which year	2008
Stated purpose	To provide language training responding to needs of society and working life.
Sources of funding	State funding
Number and type of staff	1- Teacher: 65 2- Auxiliary teacher: 3 3 - Guest lecturer: - 4- Administration:5 5- Management: 7 6 - Other:
Main activities	1. Providing integration training for adult migrants. 2. Literacy training for adult migrants. 3. Preparatory vocational courses for adult migrants.

Short description of the partner organization

Axxell was founded in 2008 with the merger of a number of schools. Nowadays Axxell is a training organisation which offers VET and independent studies both for youngsters and adults. Axxell has about 2700 students that study at the 6 different departments of Axxell (Lappfjärd, Helsingforsregionen, Åbo, Pargas, Kimito, Karis, Ekenäs och Esbo).

In addition to vocational training, Axxell is one of the biggest integration training providers for adult migrants. Axxell has provided integration courses for adult immigrants almost 20 years. Annually about 1600 adult immigrants study in Axxell, most of them studying Finnish language. Our region of operation covers the whole capital city area where approx. 50 % of Finland immigrants live. A team of approx 70 language and guidance teachers provide Finnish language training and career guidance for migrants in Axxell helping to integrate newcomers to Finnish society. Our courses are organized in tight co-operation with authorities responsible of integration (labor administration, social workers, municipalities etc.) which gives us good opportunity to disseminate best prac-

tices developed during the partnership in our network. Our experts have been involved in a national core curriculum development work which was coordinated by the National Board of Education and did set a new core curriculum for the integration training of adult migrants and also for illiterate migrants (2012).

Axxell is very active within national and international cooperation and has taken part in many national projects financed by the Finnish National Board of Education and European Social Fund, e.g. OpinOvi, Handy, Handy2 and KompiS, Testipiste as well as international projects financed by LLP, e.g. Leonardo da Vinci IVT & VETPRO mobility projects (Techskills 2, Idetic, Axxell Across Borders), TOI (SOS-Mobilitis, WorkMentor, QafeeCare) and Partnership projects (Enhance Mobilities for Trainees at Risk of Social Exclusion, eMPROS, Aduqua). Axxell is a member in the EFVET network since 2011 and sees international co-operation as a way to develop the quality of the VET.

Axxell has the ISO certification ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and OHSAS 18001. Arxxell Utbildning Ab is also a member in Quality Network run by the Finnish National Board of Education. In order to maintain high quality in its VET the quality of the education is evaluated both internally and externally on a regular basis.

Selection of Non-formal learning activities or projects

Organisation 1 Finland

Name institution/organization	Luetaan yhdessä, Let's Read Together Network
Description of organization	Let's Read Together Network supports immigrant women in integrating into Finnish Society.
Number of staff in total	1
Number of staff in L2 (if applicable)	more than 400 volunteers
Number of learners in L2 (if applicable)	approx 1600 all over in Finland
Which courses offered?	reading and writing in Finnish, speaking in Finnish, groups for women
Practices of non-formal learning in the organization?	A network of Finnish women volunteers offer tuition in literacy and the Finnish language to migrant women in various locations all over Finland. At the moment, there are 80 Let's Read Together study groups in these locations.
Website of organization	http://www.luetaanyhdessa.fi/

Organisation 2 Finland

Name institution/organization	Multicultural Centre
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Description of organization	Axxell MCC has provided integration courses for adult migrants almost 20 years. Annually about 1600 adult immigrants study in Axxell, most of them studying Finnish language. Axxells' region of operation covers the whole capital city area where approx. 50 % of Finland migrants live. Integration courses are organized in tight co-operation with authorities responsible of integration (labor administration, social workers, municipalities etc.)
Number of staff in total	approx 80
Number of staff in L2 (if applicable)	50
Number of learners in L2 (if applicable)	1600
Which courses offered?	Integration training (L2 and social orientation, working life knowlegde)
Practices of non-formal learning in the organization?	language practice work practice study visits
Website of organization	www.axxell.fi

Organisation 3 Finland

Name institution/organization	Nicehearts
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Description of organization	<p>Nicehearts of Vantaa's (NGO) goal is to support the community's self-reliance, equality and promotion and production of multicultural activities for girls and women. Our activities aim to create long-term networks and promote a place of encounter between girls and women of different cultures and ages on a daily basis. Nicehearts of Vantaa was founded in 2001 and has been involved in various national and international projects in Finland over the past years. Nicehearts of Vantaa has received several recognition and awards for the outstanding work with women and girls, of which the most recent one was given by the Miina Sillanpää foundation for our active and commendable work in supporting the integration of migrants as well as in promoting equality in the society.</p> <p>Our current focus lies in the following areas: • Supporting employment and entrepreneurship among migrant women</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of social support for women (both migrants and locals) • Culture and gender sensitive Girls Project • Organizing cultural and free-time activities for women and girls and • Research and development. Our research and development strategy is presently centered on the integration of migrants, specifically on developing practices that will support migrants in finding their place in the Finnish society."
Number of staff in total	9
Number of staff in L2 (if applicable)	-
Number of learners in L2 (if applicable)	-
Which courses offered?	different kind of groups for young girls to long term unemployed and young moms.
Practices of non-formal learning in the organization?	baking, knitting, handcraft, physical exercise, meditation, talking
Website of organization	http://www.nicehearts.com/

Organisation 4 Finland

Name institution/organization	Learning for Integration (LFI)
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Description of organization	<p>Learning for Integration (LFI) is a non-profit organisation founded in 2012 in Finland. The mission of Learning for Integration ry is to promote the learning of languages and cultural sensitivity of migrant, immigrant and refugee children and youth in Finland and other Nordic countries in order to facilitate their integration into the new culture and the development of a multicultural society. In addition, our purpose is to support Swedish learning in Finland.</p> <p>We have a solid background in language teaching and material creation and we would like to use this experience to support our mission to create language awareness through activities such as playgroups for pre-school children, language exchange groups and free language learning material and eLearning possibilities for all ages.</p> <p>Café Lingua is an international and intercultural language exchange event that began in Helsinki in 2005. We gather every week to practise speaking in different languages, with both Finns and foreigners living in the Helsinki region. At the moment, the meetings are in Café Mascot (Neljäs linja 2) in Kallio, Helsinki, every Monday 7 pm onwards. Join us!</p>
Number of staff in total	3
Number of staff in L2 (if applicable)	2
Number of learners in L2 (if applicable)	variates
Which courses offered?	Cafe Lingua
Practices of non-formal learning in the organization?	
Website of organization	http://www.lfi.fi/

Organisation 5 Finland

Name institution/organization	Kalliola Settlement
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Description of organization	<p>Kalliola Settlement is a multi-function association founded in 1919 and as the name suggests, its activities rest on community values. Kalliola produces social services, provides adult education and supports civic and voluntary activities in the metropolitan area.</p> <p>The main services provided are adult learning, civic and voluntary activities, child welfare, youth work, substance misuse care, mediation in criminal and civil cases as well as services for senior citizens and the disabled. Kalliola settlement is a joined venture of several associations and foundations; the Kalliola Patron's Association (Kalliolan Kannatusyhdistys ry), Kalliola Senior Services Foundation (Kalliolan Senioripalvelusäätiö), Kalliola Youth association (Kalliolan Nuoret ry) and Real Estate Helsinki Kalliola Ltd (Kiinteistö Oy Helsingin Kalliola). Kalliola Settlement is a member of the Finnish Settlement Association and part of the international settlement movement. Kalliola is also one of the owners of the S-Asunnot Oy, which is a company producing housing for social services.</p> <p>The objective is to support life-long learning, help people stay in charge of their own lives as well as better communicate with each other and to implement communal values. Kalliola is politically and religiously detached.</p>
Number of staff in total	
Number of staff in L2 (if applicable)	
Number of learners in L2 (if applicable)	
Which courses offered?	
Practices of non-formal learning in the organization?	
Website of organization	

The peer-2-peer visits by colleagues from Macedonia

The Macedonian team visited both the formal learning activities organized by Axxell and the informal activities organized by the Kalliola Settlement and the Nicehearts Foundation.

The literacy trainings offered by **Axxell** take advantage of diverse teaching methods and teaching approaches which provide different learning opportunities with meaningful and varied situations to use language in different communication situations. These different situations develop the students' ability to act both as independent individuals and as members of their community, and they familiarise students with Finnish culture and promote their integration into the local environment and into the broader Finnish society.

One of the **NFLA offered by Axxell** aims to provoke learning the language in natural contexts and to inspire students to use their language skills and see learning opportunities in various everyday life situations. This is done through a period of workplace experience which also encourage students to expand their spheres of life and explore their environments.

Another NFLA is based on a more up-to-date educational technique of learning, i.e. using an online blog where the students express their opinions with the group. This educational method diversifies the teaching approaches and includes students as part of the information society, from which they could otherwise be excluded.

In regards to **providing a work practice**, the students have to find by their own a working place where they will spend one month advancing their language skills. The practice is planned several months in advance and if the student is not able to find an institution, the teacher could try to assist the process. The students do not pay for the activity, nor they have to sign an attendance list, but instead the teacher visits the student once and make an evaluation of the learning process by talking to the person that provides the practice.

Regarding the participation of the online blog, the students are first introduced to the concept and learn how to manage their account in order to be more active. They have to write several times per week about their daily experiences that could also be beneficial for other students who have to go to a similar experience. The teacher monitors the activities, evaluates the correctness of the writing skills and in class students debate on the topics that were written on the blog.

*The **Kalliola Settlement Pasila Neighborhood Center** organizes a course for studying the Finnish language with main aim being improving their writing and speaking skills of adult immigrants. The teachers are retired former school teachers, members of Finnish UN Women or zontians and still working adults, part of the "Let's read together network" (a project that was implemented in the period 2007-2010 with an aim to teach Finnish to illiterate or partially literate women and girls and to promote the overall integration of the immigrant women in the Finnish society).*

Teaching is organized in small groups, usually two hours a week, sometimes more often. The students are often divided in sub groups according to the level of language.

Nicehearts of Vantaa's (NGO) established in 2001 has a goal to support the community's self-reliance, equality and promotion and production of multicultural activities for girls and women. The mission of the organization is to enable women's active participation in the society, to promote gender equality and to strive towards the betterment of girls' and women's lives and living conditions in Finland.

The current focus lies in the following areas:



- Supporting employment and entrepreneurship among migrant women
- Provision of social support for women (both migrants and locals)
- Culture and gender sensitive Girls Project
- Organizing cultural and free-time activities for women and girls

Research and development (the organization's research and development strategy is presently centered on the integration of migrants, specifically on developing practices that will support migrants in finding their place in the Finnish society).

CVO Antwerpen

Founded in which year	
Stated purpose	
Sources of funding	Regional or local government (Mandate & funding by the Flemish Community)
Number and type of staff	1- Teacher: 2- Auxiliary teacher: 3 - Guest lecturer: 4- Administration: 5- Management: 5 6 - Other: 30
Main activities	1) intake and screening of prospective students NT2 and admission / enrollment in the most appropriate offer 2) language policy in organizations (in the labor market, in education and in the wider society (where non-native customers all over the floor)) 3) organizing and supporting language training opportunities at NT2 schools, voluntary organizations and other partners.

Short description of the partner organization

CVO Antwerpen is an Adult Education Center with several campuses in and around the City of Antwerp in the Flemish region of Belgium. CVO Antwerpen is one of the largest centers for adult education certified and funded by the Flemish Government. CVO Antwerpen is an open learning center in charge of:

- realizing a culture of sustainable individual, social and professional development
- by organizing open, innovating and qualitative adult education
- taking into account the needs of the students, the region, Europe and the society
- with the aim of creating a flow to further training and labor market.

It organizes more than 950 modular daytime and evening courses per year. These courses are clustered around:

- Courses for immigrants (Dutch as a second language, ICT, other languages);
- Formal Vocational Education and Training at the level of secondary education (Second Chance to Learn, potentially leading to a diploma of secondary education in the domains of general administration, welding and multimedia graphics);
- higher professional education (accounting, architectural draftsman, ICT);
- a range of language courses (Chinese, English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish);
- entrepreneurial training courses, maritime training, welding, courses in application software and cooking.

Selection of Non-formal learning activities or projects

Organisation 1 Flanders

Name institution/organization	Taalpunt en Vormingplus
Description of organization	<p>Taalpunt is an initiative in the Flemish libraries which supports adults with migrational background, low literates and native speakers to learn Dutch and to enhance their integration process. They provide language course books, grammar books, easy language novels, Dutch movies...</p> <p>Vormingplus is a non-profit organization which helps all adults develop themselves and to increase social and personal competences. The centers encourage the participation of people and groups in social and cultural life and enhance their resilience and engagement in society. At the same time, they want to create spaces close to the people for interaction and meetings to encourage people to learn from and with each other in a casual and pleasant way.</p>
Number of staff in total	They are both all over Flanders
Number of staff in L2 (if applicable)	/
Number of learners in L2 (if applicable)	/
Which courses offered?	<p>Taalpunt doesn't offer courses, they provide support for L2 learners.</p> <p>Vormingplus offers basically everything that fits the needs of society in a socio-cultural way, with the focus on the vulnerable people in society.</p>

Practices of non-formal learning in the organization?	All of what they organize.
Website of organization	www.vormingplus.be , via www.nt2antwerpen.be (House of Dutch)

Organisation 2 Flanders

Name institution/organization	Servicepunt vrijwilligers
Description of organization	Initiative city of Antwerp. They have a large database of organizations that want to work with volunteers and they help adults who want to work as a volunteer to find a job that matches their interests and background. They focus on adults with migrational background and make sure that the work they do helps them fit into society and offers them a language practice.
Number of staff in total	
Number of staff in L2 (if applicable)	
Number of learners in L2 (if applicable)	
Which courses offered?	Info on working as or with volunteers. Prep course for non-native speakers to help them contact an organization.
Practices of non-formal learning in the organization?	The work itself is a non-formal learning opportunity
Website of organization	Via www.nt2antwerpen.be

Organisation 3 Flanders

Name institution/organization	Open Inloop Taal'
Description of organization	They offer opportunities to practice the language, in different areas of Antwerp. They organize it at places where there are a lot of migrants. Everyone who wants to practice Dutch is welcome. People who study and people who aren't able to study much more. They offer divers activity's like speaking groups, grammar practice, reading and writing, ... It's a non-formal setting where they can practice the language and get to know new people. This formula make this initiative a real success.
Number of staff in total	
Number of staff in L2 (if applicable)	4-5

Number of learners in L2 (if applicable)	
Which courses offered?	/
Practices of non-formal learning in the organization?	Yes
Website of organization	Via www.nt2antwerpen.be

Organisation 4 Flanders

Name institution/organization	House of Dutch Antwerp
Description of organization	They guide people who want to learn Dutch to the schools where they offer Dutch courses.
Number of staff in total	36
Number of staff in L2 (if applicable)	36
Number of learners in L2 (if applicable)	/
Which courses offered?	The flow to Dutch courses.
Practices of non-formal learning in the organization?	Yes, a couple of projects.
Website of organization	http://www.nt2antwerpen.be/

The peer-2-peer visits by colleagues from Finland

The evaluators from Finland visited a number of projects in Flanders -

Servicepunt vrijwilligers (Atlas)

Initiative city of Antwerp. They have a large database of organizations that want to work with volunteers and they help adults who want to work as a volunteer to find a job that matches their interests and background. They focus on adults with migrational background and make sure that the work they do helps them fit into society and offers them a language practice.

CVO Cresendo

The non-formal learning activity was voluntary work, to be able to use the language in authentic situations for example in a bar or with homeless. Aim of the activity is to great opportunities to speak Dutch, encourage students or vrijwilligers to speak.

Although both organizations were quite successful, it seems really hard to find the voluntary work places. The Projects they organized were:

- One project was called **Wheelchair pushers** that aims to both help wheelchair-bound people and to give opportunity for the pusher to speak Dutch. This suits well for beginners.
- Second project was **Cozy chat volunteers** for those who could speak Dutch more fluently
- Third project was **Bar volunteer** where spoken Dutch needs to be understood. Work in bar is really demanding and hectic. So it is good to know spoken dialect and varieties of all kind of ordering. There is of course own vocational vocabulary in bar work you need to know.
- The fourth project was helping **playground animators**. This is especially good for young migrants and it is very intensive.
- Fifth project is **reading volunteers in school**. Reading books to children is important and a reader needs to have good skills in reading and no problems with pronunciation. It is good to have pedagogical education.
- And one extra project was **duo discussions** that matches people who have similar interests - for example a migrant and local person going for runs together or any other activity that can be done by two persons.

The Finish team also visited '**Open inloop Taal**', an initiative of **The House of Dutch** that offers language practice opportunities in areas in Antwerp where there are a lot of migrants, who don't find the way to the formal language courses. A low threshold and being able to talk to others, do things they like to do in a non-formal setting make this initiative a real success.

There are 3 types of non-formal learning groups: (1) guided discussion with the teacher, tutor and volunteers, (2) knitting and discussing and (3) computer-based language learning. The aim is to offer, twice weekly, non-formal discussion groups for adult migrants who are in vulnerable position and are not able to join regular courses; each learner has individual learning plans according to their needs and interests.

The last two projects visited were **Taalpunt** and **Vormingplus**.

Taalpunt is an initiative in the Flemish libraries which supports adults with migrational background, low literates and native speakers to learn Dutch and to enhance their integration process. They provide language course books, grammar books, easy language novels, Dutch movies.

Vormingplus is an non-profit organization which helps all adults develop themselves and to increase social and personal competences. The centers encourage the participation of people and groups in social and cultural life and enhance their resilience and engage-

ment in society. At the same time, they want to create spaces close to the people for interaction and meetings to encourage people to learn from and with each other in a casual and pleasant way.

Taalpunt doesn't offer courses, they provide support for L2 learners. Vormingplus offers basically everything that fits the needs of society in a socio-cultural way, with the focus on the vulnerable people in society.

However, one of the projects of Vormingplus stands out: **Digital Storytelling**.

The target group were students studying L2 in adult education centres. They visited the school and invited students to participate in storytelling project and tell the story why they are learning the language. It was not difficult to attract the participants. Finally 12 people wrote their digital story. The process started with the introduction during the lessons (3 hours). All other work was done outside the school hours and was based on voluntary work. When all stories were ready, the film festival was organized.

The method was chosen because the organization had used it before in neighborhood stories and found they were powerful and tightened the community. They wanted to use the method especially with learners who might have difficulties in traditional school due to the poor school background.

The process:

1. choosing the problem that they want to describe and search for the pics that describe that;
2. researching how the story is linked with other stories, doing background research
3. writing the script
4. looking for the pics (sending participants out to streets with the camera or teaching them how to find pics from the internet + intellectual property rights)
5. recording the story and choosing the music
6. collecting the video with Windows moviemaker
7. uploading the video to the internet
8. collecting feedback and reflecting the results and outcome

The most difficult for the learners was to find the problem and put it into words. The tutors had to guide them to look for the results and consequences and not only to tell linear story (I want to learn Dutch because I want to find a book from the library but need to understand the instructions in Dutch in order to find the book)

Oslo Voksenoppl ring Skullerud

Founded in which year	2004
Stated purpose	To give adults education according to legal rights.
Sources of funding	State & Regional as well as other (Students payments)
Number and type of staff	1- Teacher: 105 2- Auxiliary teacher: 10 3 - Guest lecturer: - 4- Administration: 8 5- Management: 8 6 - Other: 6
Main activities	Formal: L2 for foreigners, special training for students with special needs, primary school for adults Non-formal: language practice through work experience, excursions to different places, language cafes,

Short description of the partner organization

Oslo Voksenoppl ring Skullerud is working within the field of Adult education, qualifying adult refugees and immigrants for life in Norway by teaching them Norwegian language and social science. One of our tasks, which require more attention and sometimes new skills, is to provide the ever increasing group of work immigrants from EEA training in Norwegian as a second language. It is in this we think we could have good use for evaluating our methodological approaches to language learning with experiments with new methods, including TBLT, a method that also can strengthen the capabilities of informal learning.

Selection of Non-formal learning activities or projects

Organisation 1 Norway

Name institution/organization	Oslo VO Skullerud
Description of organization	Norwegian as L2 for immigrants and adult education for adults with special needs
Number of staff in total	140

Number of staff in L2 (if applicable)	60
Number of learners in L2 (if applicable)	600
Which courses offered?	Norwegian as L2 from level A10 to B1
Practices of non-formal learning in the organization?	language training in work situation, work training an language evaluation, language training in different projects outside school, language training in everyday life
Website of organization	http://www.skullerud.oslovo.no/

Organisation 2 Norway

Name institution/organization	"Quo Vadis?"
Description of organization	Growth- and Production centre for immigrants with non or little formal school background from their homecountry. Focus: L2-training and work practice
Number of staff in total	8
Number of staff in L2 (if applicable)	
Number of learners in L2 (if applicable)	65
Which courses offered?	6 workshops within handcraft and food production
Practices of non-formal learning in the organization?	language training in work situation and social interaction
Website of organization	www.laget.oslo.no

The peer-2-peer visits by colleagues from Italy

The main method used by Skullerud is inserting learners of Norwegian in the workplace to achieve language training in work situation and in everyday life. Alongside the formal language training, the school also organizes outings - one that is particularly appreciated by the students is the ski-trip in February, where the immigrants - almost all from warm countries - learn to ski and even compete against each other. Apart from a nice time together, they learn (as all Norwegians learn at one point in their life) about edible plants, berries and mushrooms and generally about 'life in the outdoors'.

These outings also serve another purpose: teach newcomers about Oslo and its environment and show people where to go with their families on their free time. In the autumn,

the school organizes excursions in the wood, in collaboration with an association of seniors citizens who aim to keep the nearby river alive and in good health.

The Italian evaluator also visited **Quo Vadis**, a public training centre that works with refugees and their family members who are in the “introductory” state program for refugees.

They work mainly with women with low level of education and introduce them to working life through workshops such as cooking, ceramics, sewing, knitting and weaving. Quo Vadis is linked to a L2 language school and participants have to attend classes every weekday; during three of these days they spend 3 hours in class learning Norwegian.

Youth Entrepreneurial Service

Founded in which year	2005
Stated purpose	
Sources of funding	State funding
Number and type of staff	
Main activities	

Short description of the partner organization

Youth Entrepreneurial Service Foundation (YES) is a non-governmental organization established in 2005 which aims to stimulate the entrepreneurship in the country through reinforcing the business and soft skills of future entrepreneurs needed for successfully running own company. YES sets the goal to support innovative start-up businesses through many activities and subventions in order to help the local development of the currently most productive sector – SMEs.

The five employees of YES with an addition of over 30 domestic and international mentors cover the areas of:

- Business development;
- Promotion, marketing and sales;
- Capacity building trainings (ICT and soft/business skills);
- Internationalization of SMEs.

Through its main activity, business incubator, since 2007 YES has supported more than 80 start-up companies, whereas more than 2.000 people have participated in trainings and benefited from increased business/ICT skills.

Selection of Non-formal learning activities or projects

Organisation 1 Macedonia

Name institution/organization	High school "SEPUGS Vasil Antevski-Dren"
Description of organization	A secondary state school for law and economy affairs
Number of staff in total	107
Number of staff in L2 (if applicable)	10
Number of learners in L2 (if applicable)	1900
Which courses offered?	Everyday English ; Business English ; English for Law
Practices of non-formal learning in the organization?	N/A
Website of organization	http://www.vasilantevski.edu.mk/

Organisation 2 Macedonia

Name institution/organization	High School SUGS "Georgi Dimitrov" - Skopje
Description of organization	Secondary school: gymnasium and vocational classes
Number of staff in total	83
Number of staff in L2 (if applicable)	12
Number of learners in L2 (if applicable)	1183
Which courses offered?	In English, German, French, Spanish, Italian
Practices of non-formal learning in the organization?	N/A
Website of organization	http://www.georgidimitrov.info

Organisation 3 Macedonia

Name institution/organization	Faculty of Mechanical Engineering
Description of organization	Public sector
Number of staff in total	102
Number of staff in L2 (if applicable)	4
Number of learners in L2 (if applicable)	First semester – 150 students Second semester – 20 students
Which courses offered?	ESP (English for Specific Purposes)

Practices of non-formal learning in the organization?	
Website of organization	http://www.mf.ukim.edu.mk/

Organisation 4 Macedonia

Name institution/organization	Open civic university Koco Racin
Description of organization	Provider of Life-long learning non formal courses
Number of staff in total	28
Number of staff in L2 (if applicable)	14
Number of learners in L2 (if applicable)	120 adults
Which courses offered?	English, German, French, Albanian, Greek
Practices of non-formal learning in the organization?	Implementation of language and VET courses
Website of organization	N/A

Organisation 5 Macedonia

Name institution/organization	Lion
Description of organization	School of foreign languages
Number of staff in total	9 full-time, 4 part time
Number of staff in L2 (if applicable)	3 permanent, 3 part time
Number of learners in L2 (if applicable)	60 – 70
Which courses offered?	English, German, French, Italian
Practices of non-formal learning in the organization?	Language camps, drama classes, interactive methods of learning
Website of organization	www.lionschool.mk

The peer-2-peer visits by colleagues from Norway

Literature study

The current economic and social change, the 21st century and its information laden complexity characterized by a modern society, the immigrant influx shaping the demography of Europe and the care for an aging population are but a few of the challenges facing the European Union and its Member States. Hwang and Seo (2012) are of the opinion that these challenges partly necessitated a new approach to education and training, particularly within the framework of lifelong learning. Galanis, Mayol, Alier, and Garcia-Penalvo (2015) raised the question of if knowledge obtained and acquired through informal and non-formal learning means can be corroborated and quantified so as to be recognized and hence, deemed comparable to a formal curriculum.

While formal learning continues to be highly valued and reckoned with, there have being recent clamour for the injection of informal and non-formal learning, particularly in educating a knowledge-driven society (Ainsworth and Eaton, 2010). Asides from the ongoing debate of validation and measure of acquired knowledge of informal learning, this study also takes a deeper look into what formal education entails; though the Council of Europe (2007), broadly said that formal education was and is designed to prevent social exclusion- schools, universities, other higher institutions of learning and the vocational training centers are all designed to provide students and young people a basic knowledge to be used for their social integration into the society. In the course of this study we came about different definitions for these learning strategies, but an undeniable and generally accepted fact was that formal learning/educational system remains a norm of a modern society while non formal and informal learning though, important in a knowledge society, still suffers recognition and appreciation.

Social inclusion

The desire to combat exclusion and promote social inclusion was reiterated at the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 stating unequivocally that there is a need to pay attention to exclusion as a result of low levels of initial education, unemployment and rural isolations. The Council made known that strengthening the institutions of lifelong learning and training requirements of older workers and migrants are means to achieve social inclusion. Isaila (2012), in her conclusion report on the study of social inclusion in the context of knowledge society, concluded that: training of key competencies for all as a result of effective teaching process that is based on the adjustment of supply to individual need, offers an important role to an education that promote social inclusion. In

the above conclusion by the researcher the key word worthy of note is 'effective teaching processes'.

In addition to effective teaching processes, Hwang and Seo (2012) stresses that, universal participation in lifelong learning is necessary for social inclusion in a time of rapid changes in economic and social affairs. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) deemed widening participation as necessary for meeting the economic demands of the 21st century knowledge society. According to OECD universal participation includes using both formal and informal learning methods to enhance social values, economic development and personal purpose. Having said this, universal and widening participation is centered on increasing opportunity for those who are resistant to formal learning and excluded in one way or the other from learning (Cullen, Batterbury, Foresti, Lyons & Stern, 2000).

Why is it difficult to see the evidence of social inclusion? This question is as a result of the assertion made by DeGreef, Verte and Segers, (2012) that evidences of outcome of adult education aiming to enhance social inclusion is nowhere to be found. The problem might as well be that many of the adult education programs are formulated or are of the agenda preparing participants for the labour market rather than tackling exclusion and helping to overcome social problems (DeGreef, Verte and Segers, 2012). In a related development and buttressing the point made by DeGreef et al., Cullen, Batterbury, Foresti, Lyons & Stern, (2000) from their study report, opined that measuring the outcomes of informal learning on the basis of economic rates of return rather than social value (active citizenship, personal development, social inclusion, personal development etcetera) will inadvertently realize poor results.

In providing learning and instruction for the vulnerable adults, educational programs that only consider and operates only in the formal setting is deemed not optimal and sufficient (De Greef, Verte, Segers, 2012). Having said this, in order to make a well rounded learner, organizers of adult education programs must find a means of connecting informal and formal learning processes in order not to exclude some certain people desirous of learning. What are the reasons for building frameworks to improve adult education programs? (Patridge, 1999) or rather what are the reasons for concerns to improve the effects of the learning processes in adult education programs? – questions like this and many more begging for answers were attended to by De Greef, Verte, Segers, (2012).

Social inclusion which actually is the motive and end product of this study, as defined by the World Bank (2007) cited in De Greef, Verte, Segers, (2012), is an arrangement ensuring that those at risk of being economically incapacitated and socially excluded are given the opportunity and provided avenue to participate and be fully absorbed in both economic and social-cultural life befitting or considered standard in the society in which they

live in. In achieving the above, the political agendas of the main Western International Organizations (EU, UN, and the OECD) has been to introduce lifelong learning. Seen as a key factor for the development of a more rounded individual, that is, a more productive and efficient workforce and a means of promoting social cohesion (Field, 2006:1) cited in De Greef, Verte, Segers, (2012). Summarily, according to McClusky 1970; Main 1979; Serrano-Garcia and Bond 1994; Solarczyk-Ambrozik 1998, cited in De Greef, Verte, Segers, (2012); Eaton (2010), the measure of the outcome of an adult education designed for the vulnerable or at risk of social exclusion, is defined in terms of increase in social inclusion. The European Society for Research on the Education of Adults (ESREA) corroborated that adult education allows people to participate and to be involved in the society they live in and hence, be socially included.

The last phase of this study will examine some validation and recognition projects, according to De Greef, Segers and Verte (2010), there is scarcity of evaluation studies that looks into educational programs aiming to enhance social inclusion of vulnerable adults, even in the face of the monumental attention for lifelong learning, adult education, formal and informal learning strategies etcetera by the Western International Organizations (EU, UN, and the OECD). Jarvis (2004) reiterated that, it is doubtful as to whether there are available or sufficient innovative educational programs to create and enhance active citizenship.

It is also pertinent to mention that non-formal learning is considered a form of informal learning in this study; likewise adult education is also regarded as a type of lifelong learning. Widening participation and universal participation are considered as a subset social inclusion.

Lifelong learning

Lifelong learning is not a new phenomenon, however, it is germane we discuss it were the issue of social inclusion and adult education is concerned. It is the continuous building of skills and knowledge throughout the life of an individual (Hwang & Seo, 2012). The individual is said or required to be self-motivated in the pursuit of the knowledge, while the act is a voluntary endeavor embarked upon either for a personal or professional purpose. The European Society for Research on the Education of Adults (ESREA) concluded that the international organizations guiding the educational policies of the EU and its Member States are favourably disposed to the concept of lifelong learning. The reason for the positive shift towards lifelong learning, according to Hwang and Seo (2012) was the fact that it enhances social inclusion, active citizenship, competence development, encourage competitiveness and promote employability.

One of the requirements of a knowledge society is a reform on how learning is delivered - changing educational focus from the conventional approach of transmitting isolated

knowledge and skills to one of acquiring complex knowledge in problem solving, critical thinking, employability skills, life skills, information and communication, systemic thinking and life-long learning - (O' Hara 2007) leading to a successful social and professional life. Knapper (2000) cited in (Coskun & Damirel, 2010) opined lifelong learners plan their own learning, and are active rather than passive learners. A lifelong learner learns at every opportunity; informal and formal learning spaces, from relatives, friends, in the community, among their peers, with neighbours, teachers or even colleagues at the work place - they are capable of integrating knowledge from different subject areas, able to learn under combined teaching and learning strategies in order to have a whole understanding of a concept.

From the aforementioned, lifelong learning will not only produce people with better opportunity of been employable or of a better economic status or higher standard of living but they will be more responsible, civil and actively cooperating as citizens of the society they live in (Cullen, Batterbury, Foresti, Lyons & Stern, 2010). The resultant effects of a life-long program on the society are crime reduction, improved economic distribution, and economic growth amongst others (Coskun & Damirel, 2010). Lifelong learning is continuous (Hwang and Seo, 2012) and it is centered on building knowledge and skills throughout the life of the learner. As earlier mentioned, it is voluntary and self motivated. In a time of rapid economic changes, where newer knowledge is required every now and then Hwang and Seo (2012), lifelong learning is a medium to equip oneself with the needed knowledge and dexterity, it is a channel that enable people to aim for employment, citizenship, and economic empowerment in a complex and rapidly changing world.

In their education and training 2020 action plan, the EU member States have set a target and projected that by 2020 fifteen percent (15%) of the 25 years to 64 years, that is, the adult population should be engage in lifelong learning (Council of Europe, 2007).

Adult Education

Lifelong learning and adult education as evidenced in the use of lifelong program to educate 15% of adults in Europe by 2020 seems like one and the same, that is inseparable. Finding an absolute definition for adult education has been a herculean task because the sector is very diverse and complex in terms of provisions, structures and stakeholders composition. However, according to the Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (DEDEFOP), (2009) under the European Guidelines for Validating Non-formal and informal leaning, defines adult education and learning as covering all forms of learning at all levels undertaken by adults after having left initial education and training. Some research work corroborated by calling it the second chance to get education. Hoare (2009), cited in Peeters, De Backer, Buffel, Kindekens, Struyven, Zhu and Lombaerts (2014), maintained that adult education is beyond knowledge acquisition and behavioural change, but is a

process that revises prior knowledge or a means to increase self-knowledge and a sort of human capacity development.

To fully understand the complexity of adult education, it will be important to know the motivation of the adults involved in this type of education. Before learning about the driving force or purpose Jarvis (2004) described adulthood as when an individual has reached a level of social maturity in which he/she can assume a responsible position in society. (CEDEFOP) and Jarvis, (2004) unanimously divided the motive of adults embarking on adult education into two; either for professional development and/or personal development. An adult education for professional purposes is normally closely linked to enterprises and the labour market and can be more readily identified as further education or continuing vocational training, etc. (CEDEFOP, 2009). Learning for personal development, referred to as 'leisure' and termed as liberal education in the United States context (Jarvis, 2004) is regarded as learning for simply wanting to learn, in other words for private, social and/ or recreational purposes. In line with this particular study, the later (adult education for personal development) is the platform on which the formal and informal learning strategies are experimented, and as earlier established and corroborated by the Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP), forms a very important part of life-long learning, and contributes significantly to knowledge and skills development, active citizenship, political participation and cultural integration and social inclusion.

Formal, Non-formal and Informal learning

The Webster's online dictionary simply defines 'learning' as the acquisition of knowledge or skill. In the CEDEFOP, 2009 multilingual glossary, learning is defined as a process by which an individual assimilates information, ideas and values and thus acquires knowledge, know-how, skills and/or competences. (Baxter Magolda 1992; Belenky et al. 1997; Olafson and Schraw 2006; van Rossum and Hamer 2010), cited in Peeters, De Backer, Buffel, Kindekens, Struyven, Zhu and Lombaerts (2014) also made known the shift from perceiving learning as the acquisition of absolute knowledge to considering learning as active knowledge construction.

Looking at the dimension through which learning takes place, Ainsworth and Eaton (2010) says learning is a lifelong endeavour and can happen at anyplace, anywhere and anytime. Buttressing the shift in learning as mention by Peeters et al., (2014), Bjornavold (2000) describe learning as not only reproduction, but also reformulation and renewal of knowledge and competences. This chapter defines formal, non-formal and informal as the three processes through which learning can be carried out.

Formal learning

Formal learning is typically institutionally sponsored, classroom-based, and highly structured. It refers to learning in courses or programs leading to nationally and internationally recognised qualifications (Peeter et al., 2014). It is conscious, deliberate, intentional, organized, planned and well structured learning process usually arranged by educational institutions. Credit courses, modules, programs and etcetera, characterizes formal learning scheme and they are usually guided by learning objectives and expected learning outcome (Ainsworth & Eaton, 2010).

Just as explained above formal learning is location and space bound; a type of learning that occurs in an organised and structured environment (e.g. in an education or training institution or on the job) and is explicitly designated as learning (in terms of objectives, time or resources) and intentional from the learner's point of view leading to validation and certification (CEDEFOP, 2009). In addition, the conclusion of formal learning usually leads to obtaining a diploma or certificate (European Commission 2000, p.8).

Non-Formal learning

The European Youth Forum defines non-formal education as organized and semi-organized activities outside the structure and routines of the formal educational system. Non-formal is readily ascribed to the workplace – the needed professional skill development to boost competency on the job. Though, usually well planned and executed does not necessarily lead to national or internationally accredited certification (Council of Europe, 2007).

Some other researcher described non-formal learning as an alternative where the concepts that eluded the formal learning setting are acquired. However, in the mini-compendium on non-formal education by the Council of Europe (2007) it was stated that non-formal education should not be taken as a replacement for formal education but rather a means by which the educational concept not provided in the formal system can be attained in a non-formal arrangement.

From the above, it is clear that Non-formal learning refers to learning in structured programs for developing skills and knowledge required by workplaces, communities and individuals and they are highly structured with specific aims and objectives. Finally, in the mini-compendium on non-formal education by the Council of Europe (2007), non-formal learning is said to be an essential element in the development of a fully-rounded individual.

Informal learning

Informal learning is a process of lifelong learning whereby an individual acquires attitude, values, skills and knowledge from the educational influences and resources in his or her environment; family, neighbor, friends, play and generally life circumstances (Council of Europe, 2007). Merriam and Caffarella (1999) in agreement stresses that adults as active learners often acquire information, knowledge and skills even beyond the stipulated program confines or boundary. Informal learning has educational influences or rather is an education because of its effect in changing an individual's knowledge, behavior and attitude (CAVACO, 2002) and it's an education which can be intentional within a hidden curriculum as student learn from teacher's unintentional behaviours, beliefs and attitudes and from implicit and culturally laid down rules (Ozolins et al., 2008 cited in Peeters et al.).

CEDEFOP, (2007) mentioned that informal learning is mostly unintentional and without any organisation or structures in terms of objectives, time or learning support. To this end, informal learning is readily connected to adult learning because of its learner-centeredness and the lesson that can be learned from life's experiences of the adults (Smith and Smith 2008 cited in cited in Peeters et al., 2014).

Bruce, Aring and Brand, (1998) cited in Kim, Hagedorn, Williamson and Chapman, (2004); 70% of the critical skills and competences needed in the workplace is informally learned. Another dimension found out in this study is that informal learning can actually occur in institutions, either as incidental, but the fact still remains that, it is not typically classroom-based or highly structured like the formal learning which is guided by the curriculum with specific aims of learning. Summarily, informal education comprises all forms of learning accomplished and acquired by a person through his relationship and interaction with other people (Barros, 2011).

Connecting Formal and Informal learning

In the in-depth interview conducted by Peeters et al. (2014) with 15 students, 2 teachers, and 2 program coordinators of an adult education program – examining informal learning outcomes, processes and personal informal learning experiences within formal education. The respondent of the exercise described informal learning to have occurred through self-directed learning projects, daily conversations, experiences and the program's informal and hidden curriculum. In order to adequately uncover informal learning within a formal education program, there have to be the application of the informal curriculum (the intentional transfer of information to the students by the instructor) and the hidden curriculum (student learning from the teacher's unintentional behaviours, attitudes and beliefs) (Peeters et al., 2014).

Demonstration and occasional arrangement of informal learning can also be driven by organizations; making informal learning sometimes intentional within a formal education setting (Misko, 2008). And once this learning mix is realized, informal learning then becomes an additional and suddenly more tangible way of learning for more participants – particularly adult learners involved in adult education programs. In hindsight, using the inclusive method of combining formal and informal learning suffered a set-back at the earlier attempt due to lack of know-how into informal learning processes (Ainsworth & Eaton, 2010).

Summarily, informal and formal learning experiences can occur separately and also simultaneously, the processes sustain one another and are rather complementary (Reder and Strawn 2006; Reischmann 1986, 2008; Smith and Smith 2008 cited in Peeters et al., 2014).

Validation and recognition issues

The recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April, 2008 on the establishment of an European Qualification Framework (EQF) promotes an approach to the description of qualification based on learning outcomes, regardless of the means or where the competence is acquired. However, the European Union addressing the issue of non-formal learning commissioned a white paper on teaching and learning in a bid of meeting the demands of a knowledge society; emphasizing the need to making competences and knowledge acquired in informal learning visible (Bjornavold, 2000). In a related development, the 5th International Conference on Adult Education in Hamburg in 1997, cited in DeGreef, Segers and Verte (2010) reached an agreement on the necessity of a framework for evaluation to gain insight on the outcome and possibilities for the improvement of adult education program. The Leonardo da Vinci approach to identification assessment and recognition of non-formal learning, the Personal Skill Card (PSC) mentioned in Bjornavold (2000) are some efforts just to mention a few.

The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) is an innovative tool for evaluating and validating languages learned irrespective of the form in which it was acquired (Council of Europe, 2001). Social Inclusion after Transfer (SIT) by DeGreef, Segers and Verte (2010) is another innovative tool to evaluate acquired knowledge of participants of adult education. Currently, the European Union is seriously committed to the development of methodologies and tools needed to assess key skills and competencies; including and particularly those acquired outside formal education by having them validated and defined in terms of learning outcomes. As the policy makers intensify efforts and fund projects regarding validation and recognition of non-formal learning, there is dearth of evaluation studies on outcome of it success (DeGreef, Segers and Verte 2010).

Further study revealed that there are cases, especially in vocational training where knowledge acquired informally in the course of work and life experiences have gained recognition and thus, have been adequately validated with the use of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) – a pathway that makes knowledge acquired understandable and easily converted to equivalence in formal learning (Bjornavold (2000)).

Research findings

Informal learning moments can - especially when being part of more structured formal courses - reinforce the learner's acquisition of new skills and knowledge or deepen and reinforce what has been learned in the formal aspects of the course.

This paper aims to provide qualitative evidence of this additional learning effect. Furthermore, as the courses evaluated are all 'second language' courses mainly aimed at immigrants, the question arose as to whether there was an additional effect on the social inclusion of the learners.

The overall aim of the study was to distill best practices from across Europe and to make recommendations for a 'toolkit' that could be used in the development of informal learning moments or modules to enhance formal foreign/second language courses.

The research questions were two-fold: (1) what is the learning effect of non-formal learning activities (NFLA) for the learners and (2) is there a discernible improvement of the social inclusion of the learners.

Learners and teachers were also asked about their (intrinsic) motivation to participate in the different NFLAs; furthermore the researchers asked both teaching staff and managers about the evaluation mechanisms they used to validate the teaching modules, about communication within the learning institution and with the learners and finally, with an eye to learn from the different institutions' experiences in organizing NFLAs, about obstacles and difficulties they experienced.

Findings

Social inclusion

In all organizations social inclusion is an impact part of the goals (and mandate) both in the classroom and outside during NFLA. But, as all learning institutions are organizing second language courses, they also see social inclusion as apart of the expected outcome.

*Learning language intrinsically advances social inclusion and integration.
(Axxell, Finland)*

Vorming Plus (Belgium) sees the social goals as the starting point and considers language as (one of the) tool(s) and thus organises all its activities with the aim of integrating new-

comers in society, as part of a civics course in which they bring people from neighborhoods together.

The same approach is also used in the workplace approach used in Norway, where language is the means of communication that allows the learners to better integrate on the work floor and through the social interaction at work, to integrate in Norwegian society.

An almost superfluous question was about the importance of social inclusion. In Macedonia, the teaching staff pointed to the overall benefits of equal participation in society and equal (or better) access to economic life; in Finland, the main benefits were seen as better integration in Finnish society, to avoid newcomers becoming alienated and excluded and eventually having to fall back on the social services. In Norway, the inclusion is equally deemed important for people to better function in society, to understand the culture in which the newcomers live and ensuring that foreigners are better accepted.

Social inclusion is fundamental. Humans are social beings and society should make all feel included, and equip people to do so (Skullerud, Norway)

To know native Finnish people and Finnish working culture...helps the learner to integrate to the society [and] prevents social exclusion. (Axxell, Finland)

In Macedonia, **social inclusion criteria and activities** are defined by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy; in Finland, social inclusion is a part of the curriculum with functionality as the main criterion. The broad lines are defined and decided by the management and are included in the syllabus, based on guidelines from the Ministry of Labour.

In Norway, there is more autonomy given to the teachers in how scale inclusion is integrated in the courses - but social workers at the level of local government will assist newcomers in finding workplaces and help the learners in setting the learning goals at that workplace; however the role of the teacher remains the one who decides on the approach and learning goals.

The **design of the learning activities** takes the social inclusion goals into account.

Language is the main part that leads to social inclusion, support and a resilient individual. Also in the classroom is there (emphasis on) social inclusion: respect, tolerance of others, learning a new language as a common factor to understand each other. (CVOA, Belgium)

Our participants combine the learning of the language in the school with an internship in companies. ... So they get a kind of standard language course,

but in addition we have extra focus on what awaits them in the work life.
(Skullerud, Norway)

The designs also create **new opportunities for the learners**: they have, both in the formal and informal settings, the possibility to build networks that can lead to employment or friendships. However, NFLA also lower the barriers - *"a collective visit to the library makes it easier for learners to take that first step and to familiarise themselves with new situations in the 'safety' of the group"* (CVOA).

Learning outcomes

Whereas it is neigh impossible to pinpoint which skills and specific learning outcomes are the result of NFLA, the teachers (and policy makers) are unanimous that there are gains made.

During the language practice oral skills get improved ... they learn to understand different speakers ("open their ears"). (Axxell, Finland)

The use of the language outside the classroom also bolsters the learner's self-confidence, because the situation outside the classroom pushes them to explore language more.

We put barriers: they have to do some things themselves. So they should get the site on their own; introduce themselves to their new colleagues; flour open in a new team. (SVP, Belgium)

In the Flemish courses, all learning incorporates a high degree of 'situational learning', i.e. the content of the language classes is designed around every day situations the learners are expected to be familiar with or will encounter - and separating this 'additional curriculum content' in the formal classes from gains made in NFLA is difficult; the Finish and Norwegian projects provide a longer-term perspective because the learners also have experience on the work floor, which provides for a much higher degree of 'informality'.

They got to know Finnish working culture and social culture. They learn about the company. They learn from the workmates about the Finnish way of life, they learn authentic greetings and other phrases (Axxell, Finland)

The insertion in professional life also obliges the learners to actively use the 'new' language amongst themselves during the activity.

Most of the learners (95%) use Finnish during the activity (sometimes there are Finnish people who want to use English). They start using professional slang. (Axxell, Finland)

The Norwegian experience nuances the Finish statement a bit however - and attributes the degree in which Norwegian is used by immigrants is to a large degree contingent upon the number of native Norwegians present or the lack of another common language. When speakers of a same community or language dominate, the language often reverts to their native tongue -

When they [the learners] are put in a situation where they work with people who share the same mother tongue, it works against them, it inhibits the learners. (Skullerud, Norway)

For the CVO Antwerpen, every confrontation with new situations is a learning experience - also of the situation and its context - and this stimulates the learner and the result is often also noticeable in the formal learning environment.

If learners are 'forced' to participate in an activity, then you confront them with new things. They will start to look at things differently (CVO Antwerpen)

Learners also see the **effects and benefits of non-formal learning situations** and environments and actually would often like to have more of it:

I'd like to sit in a group without pen or paper. A group in which we talk to practice phrases and a lot of repetition. Half theory, half conversation. I personally need this. (Latifa, CVO Antwerpen)

With increased knowledge of the 'formal' language acquired in formal learning situations, the need for more non-formal learning to acquire more informal language skills (dialect, slang,...)

In class, we learn 'proper Dutch' which on the street or in the shop in our neighborhood we do not hear. I also want to learn dialect. (Zhour, CVO Antwerpen)

I don't always understand dialect and I've contacted a Belgian women to learn dialect, to read together, talk, learn difficult words. (Latifa, CVO Antwerpen)

For many students, the L2 is the **language amongst themselves** during the activity - not in the least because it is the only language they might have in common and there same is often true for situations outside the NFLA; also **in daily life**, the newly learned language is

the vehicle of choice to convey needs and wants, as long as the conversation is with people who don't share a native tongue.

Yes, most of our classmates do not speak English, so if we wanted to share anything, we had to speak in Italian (Learner, Italy)

Motivation to participate in (N-)FLA

For the five organisations, the motivation to organise NFLA was in most cases part of their *raison d'être* and often part of their mandate, either formulated as part of the methodology or because of (new) approaches to teaching:

To get better learning results. To help learners to build up professional networks in order to get job later. (Axxell, Finland)

It is part of a new 'political will' to include learning in work-related contexts as part of the learner's integration in society - exposure to the world outside the classroom will better prepare them for real life situations they will encounter in their new professional life (Skullerud, Norway)

For the teachers, the motivation is more intrinsic - almost all participants in the focus groups pointed out that they feel that seeing learners in 'authentic' situations helps them in better focussing their teaching on the needs of the learners and that - in the case of Norway where the learners are also accompanied by the teachers in their work-stages - there is a personal satisfaction to see learners become professionally independent, during their NFLAs.

Teachers are motivated due to positive feedback from employers and learners. (Axxell, Finland)

I can combine what I teach with the support I can give them in their work situation and I see it works better than when I teach only in the classroom (Skullerud, Norway)

Many of the teachers also pointed out that the feedback they receive from students and society (especially social services and employers) is a particularly important motivator; the satisfaction they experience in seeing their students 'do well'; the teachers from Finland also pointed out that it sharpens their teaching skills and that it provides a welcome break from the routine of classroom-teaching.

[As] teachers [we] are motivated to see how the students learn through such activities, because we see that the students grow (Yes, Macedonia)

School management (the 'policy makers') is also convinced of the benefits of NFLA and facilitates the teachers with organisational assistance and by stimulating dialogue among teachers on approaches, best practices and ideas. Nevertheless, they feel that more could be done if more funding was available. All organisations pointed that reliable and continued funding would make planning NFLA easier and that expanding the level of funding would allow for more activities outside the confines of the classrooms.

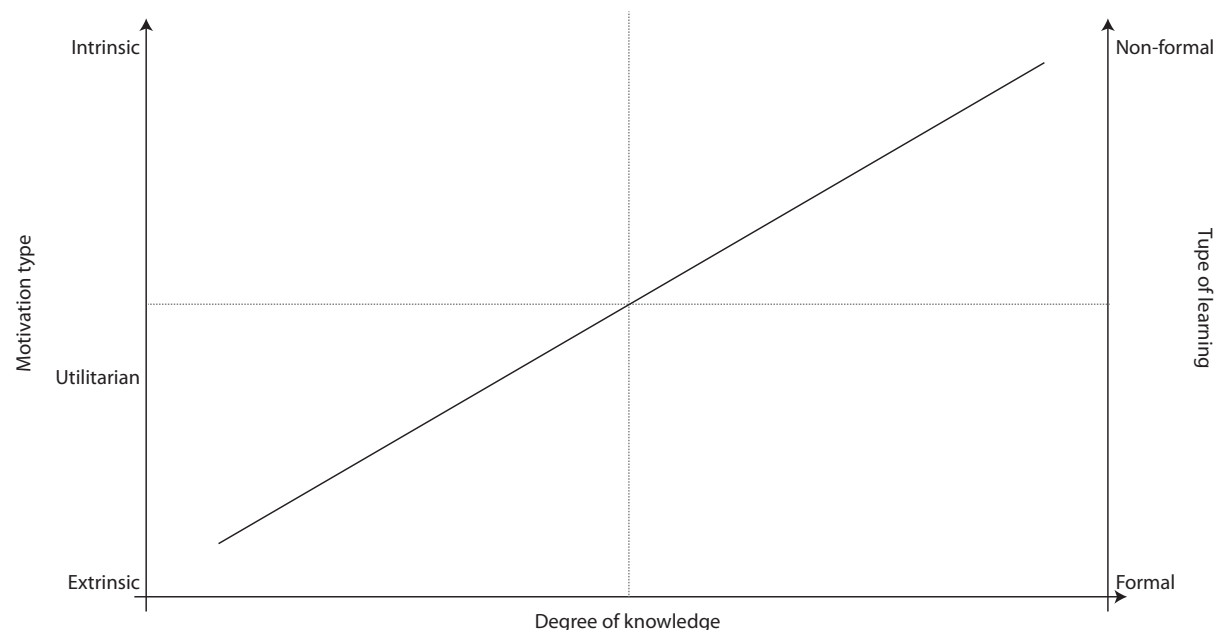
For students, the **motivation was often utilitarian** - to be able to use the language to interact with others increase their employment possibilities and to be able to interact with institutions - on behalf of themselves and their family.

I have one son, he gets homework, I'm nervous because I can not help with homework, or the parents' evening is also difficult (Zhour, Antwerpen)

In some cases the NFLA is an integral part of the L2 system (Norway, Finland) or an obligation for new arrivals as well (Flanders):

It was an obligatory part of the course, just get on and do it. Prerequisite to study in Axxell. (Student, Finland)

As the learner's skills increase there seems to be a move from utilitarian to intrinsic motivation - and with it a similar shift in educational needs.



In self-determination theory (SDT) there seems to be support for this observation. As Ryan & Deci note, Self-Determination Theory is specifically framed in terms of social and environmental factors that facilitate versus undermine intrinsic motivation. This language reflects the assumption that intrinsic motivation, being an inherent organismic propensity, is catalyzed (rather than caused) when individuals are in conditions that conduce toward its expression. (Ryan & Deci, 2000)

In their Cognitive Expression Theory - a sub-theory of SDT - Ryan and Deci also put store on their findings that feelings of competence will not enhance intrinsic motivation unless they are accompanied by a sense of autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 1985 in Ryan & Deci, 2000).

A more explicit relation between motivation and was found by Noel et al: *"The Instrumental¹ [in this article the term 'utilitarian' is used] orientation was most highly correlated with external regulation. As well, the knowledge orientation and intrinsic motivation-knowledge were highly intercorrelated."*

It is however interesting to note that in almost all focus groups students remained convinced that formal learning was (more) important - and quite a number of them asked for more classroom-based, formal learning activities.

Teachers feel generally well-supported by the management of their institutions - and they seem to agree with their managers - that it is mainly in the area of funding that improvements could be made - one organization expressed the wish for a car; another would like to see new course materials but whereas the support for their activities in themselves are concerned, teachers feel that management is behind them. Related to funding is the issue of staffing:

The demand is always greater than what we can offer. Many questions and proposals need to be planned in the future or may be underdeveloped. Colleagues are overworked. (HvhNL, Antwerpen)

Where the activities are part and parcel of the organisation's teaching set-up, the problem of funding seems to be less of an issue, but where programs are supported by donations, the (un-) predictability of funding was pointed out as being an issue.

The activities do all in all not generate any real income - with the exception of Norway:

With the income of the activity we pay the wages of the teachers it. So for us generates income; so each participant represents money coming into the school (Skullerud, Norway)

¹ Instrumental Orientation in Noels et al. (2000) refers to a desire to learn the L2 to achieve some practical goal

Conclusion

It is clear that both formal learning and non-formal learning activities are in demand by learners of all kinds of backgrounds; formal learning is seen as providing a framework in which the formal elements of language are taught...

You learn more in classroom setting, it's a systematic way to learn. You have to have a sufficient vocabulary before language practice. These two could be a good combination with stronger linguistic support of the teacher.
(Learner, Finland)

I believe that when somebody wants to learn, they will learn in any setting.
(Learner, Macedonia)

... but there is obviously a strong demand for non-formal learning from the learners too. Most learners indicate that they prefer the combination of the two.

I think it's not good to just the language cafe or to use only the school, we need to use both (Learner, Norway)

Some even prefer an 'out-of-class' approach.

It is easier and more practical and what you learn remains in your mind more easily. It is also easier to tell others what you have seen and done, so you can practice by telling other the same story you learned" (Learner, Italy)

Teachers seem to have the same preference for a combined approach

This study was able to establish some facts; how the use of a blend or synergy between formal and informal learning aims to promote inclusion. The keywords used in the review of literature associated with this review have been properly dissected in order to give an understanding or general overview of components like adult education, lifelong learning, formal and informal learning, social inclusion and validation of acquired knowledge.

The structured questionnaires and the focus groups have yielded insights that are in line with what literature brought to the fore.

Noted is the fact that there is an earnest/urgent need for reforms on how we educate people in the era of knowledge society (Hwang & Seo, 2012). The use of informal learning as a 'binding agent' (Cullen, 2010) in shaping societal reconstruction may be integrated or extended to broader policy agendas, like health reforms and social inclusion enhancement.

A clearer understanding of the working relationship between adult education and lifelong learning was brought to the fore, even, as the European Commission made known the intention to educate 15% of adults through the medium of a lifelong process (Council of Europe, 2008).

Social inclusion and active citizenship was encouraged 'as an end' (Cullen, 2010; Eaton, 2010 & Ainsworth & Eaton, 2010) rather than gains on economic rate of return usually ascribed to formal learning.

From the qualitative research, it becomes clear that all respondents alike believe that a combination of Formal Learning and Non-Formal Learning yields greater results than making one option available only. AND is better than OR, but there is no clear indication how much of one, and how much of the other approach is needed.

This has also implications for what Peeters et al call 'validating knowledge'. Validating informally acquired knowledge still eludes most researchers as recognition of it is difficult because of the tacit nature of knowledge; it is incidental and sometimes, participant are not even aware they possess such knowledge (Peeters et al., 2014).

In addition to the different situations and settings that learning occurs in, in spite of the clear gains in knowledge, it is often difficult to separate when or where such learning took place (most effectively).

Furthermore, in the research it came to the fore that different learning institutions applied different methods and criteria for the evaluation of the learning progress of the learners and the success of their approach in general. Evaluation is often based on (self-) reporting.

It is also true that there is dearth of evaluation work on the studies of how adult educational programs have enhanced inclusion (DeGreef, Segers & Verte, 2010), however, there are indications of good report even as the Western International Organizations (EU, UN, and the OECD) are throwing more weight in making informal learning visible and valid.

From the interviews with both learners and teachers, it is clear that language learning is a great tool to help newcomers integrate better in society. The formal aspects of language learning can not be dismissed, but NFLA 'sharpens' the skills, by adding dimensions of language not learned in FLA and NFLA bolsters confidence to use the language and to venture out into society.

As to the motivational aspect of participation (and organization) of NFLA, both learners and teachers have an intrinsic motivation to learn or teach a second language - and both are in favor of 'mixed approaches' but as the learner's skills increase there seems to be a move from utilitarian to intrinsic motivation - and with it a similar shift in educational needs from formal learning to a greater degree of NFL.