

## What is VALMOPRIS?

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**VALMOPRIS**, an Erasmus+ funded project, sees professionals and teachers from seven European countries working in close partnership to **design, deliver** and **validate competence development**, as a result of our learners' engagement with a wide range of non-formal learning activities.

A range of pilot activities have been carried out in prisons and justice settings across five of those seven countries. Our research aims to contribute actively to policy discourse, by exploring the potential benefits of embedding validation opportunities across a range of non-formal activities found commonly within prison settings.

Our work is being carried out in collaboration with the European Prison Education Association (EPEA).

Our goals in the **VALMOPRIS** project:

- to explore the role and impact of non-formal and informal learning validation in prison
- to maximise the motivational potential of non-formal and informal learning through the introduction of validation
- to actively contribute to policy discourse on prison education, and the role and potential of non-formal and informal learning validation
- to interact with prison services, raising the profile of the social and personal competences acquired through informal learning (in line with the Council of Europe Recommendations on Education in Prison)
- to support professionals working within prison to validate informal and non-formal learning
- to establish the VALMOPRIS train-the-trainer programme, a KA1 mobility activity for prison teachers throughout Europe

To find out more please visit our website: [www.valmopris.org](http://www.valmopris.org)

## The VALMOPRIS Pilot Learning Activities

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The project has commissioned experienced professionals to design and deliver non-formal learning activities which represent the type of learning opportunities available in prison and criminal justice settings. Each practitioner validated the progress of the learners involved and evaluated the benefit and impact of the learning activity in terms of its ability to increase motivation.

Our research findings will be available at our conference in June, then from the EPEA and VALMOPRIS websites from Sept 2017. For more information on the learning projects, please see this link:

[www.valmopris.org/pilots](http://www.valmopris.org/pilots)

### France:

- Sculptural Totems
- Crossing Lives (postcards of hope)
- Maths Debates
- Authoring for Illiterate adults
- From 'Which Links to Grow'
- Visual Mapping

### Latvia:

- Employability Workshop
- Mask-Making
- Mediation Mission Im[possible]
- Film Making: Story about myself
- Book Illustration
- Repurposing Musical Instruments

### Netherlands:

- Stowaways
- Video & Augmented Reality
- Choir I (singing)
- Choir II (composition)
- Creativity in DNK
- Making a Magazine

### Romania:

- Agriculture
- Football Focus
- Forum Theatre
- Health and Wellbeing
- Story about Myself
- Prisoner Publications

## Scotland:

- Starting a Business
- Fit Together
- Philosophy
- Developing Readers
- Creative Logo Design
- STIR arts magazine

## The VALMOPRIS Train-the Trainer Course

The VALMOPRIS partnership piloted their first week-long Train-the-Trainer course in Rotterdam, Netherlands.



20 participants - working within a range of European prison settings - attended the week-long flagship training course, which took place October 3rd- 7th 2016.

### The training covered the following key areas of professional development:

- Developing a common understanding: validation, competence development, informal and non-formal learning
- Creation of informal and non-formal **learning activities** to validate competence development
- Motivating and engaging learners
- How to approach validation - the **LEVEL5** methodology, reference systems, assessment methodologies, documentation/certification
- Reflective processes - self-reflection and adapting practices

The VALMOPRIS project will see the delivery of the finalised Train-the-Trainer course, from 12th-16th June in Timișoara, Romania to a new group of practitioners from a range of prison-based learning settings. Those who take part in the training will be able to develop their own professional practice, learning the concepts and strategies for validating non-formal practices.

Follow this link for an outline of the forthcoming training programme.

In line with Erasmus+ and the EPEA's commitment to support and promote quality educational provision - a KA1 mobility training course on the validation of informal and non-formal learning in prisons is in development, and will be available for access from August 31, 2017, alongside supporting materials.

## VALMOPRIS Webinar - 24th May, 2017

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The VALMOPRIS partnership are hosting a webinar, addressed to prison teachers who have joined the VALMOPRIS train-the-trainer seminar in Rotterdam or plan to join the training in Timișoara. Other prison teachers who are interested in getting more information on the topic "validation of competence development in informal learning settings" are welcome to join us!

For more information see the [programme](#) and [info sheet](#).

### How to participate?

We offer two time slots to participate in the webinar:

**Wednesday 24 May 12.00 CET**

or

**Wednesday 24 May 16.00 CET**

You need to contact the VALMOPRIS project team to confirm that you want to participate in the webinar. Please, write an email to [m.satke@dieberater.com](mailto:m.satke@dieberater.com) and request to enroll in the webinar. Please mention the time you wish to participate!

The deadline for registration is **22 May 2017**

Once you have sent your request, you will be contacted by email and your participation will be confirmed. On the day of the webinar you will receive another email with a link to join the session. Please follow the instructions to do so. Please, enter your name when joining the session so we know who is asking or commenting if you use the chat.

## One prison teacher's reflections on his work and the forthcoming VALMOPRIS training in Romania

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The skills I have learned in my years working as a practitioner in devising, writing, performing, and in facilitating workshops have been developed both formally, through drama school, but also, equally important, informally through the experience of working with and observing fellow practitioners. However, just as I am not aware of the gradual informal and experiential learning that has taken place in my own educational journey, similarly in a classroom situation, I am not always thinking in terms of evaluating and validating the composite parts of the creative process that the students are going through. Rather the focus is often primarily on the end result: the quality of the performance, the written work etc.

So, I am wondering - hoping - that this week in Romania might, allow me to explore just how to evaluate and validate those important but informal aspects of the learning process. Many of the important messages of a play happen between the lines and off stage, and so too does much important learning occur between and outside the formal learning situation, and often in quite unexpected ways. I am keen to explore how best to enable and encourage prisoners to pursue their own learning. Nothing is more exciting than a student getting so motivated, inspired - or just itchy with curiosity - that they come back the next week with their own ideas that they want the whole class to explore. This happened in the protection class just a couple of weeks ago, when one student suggested we look at the 1930s song "These Foolish Things" - which is essentially a 'list' song and come up with our own version of it - the 'foolish things' that remind us of our own friends and loved ones. This was a brilliant idea and I will indeed be bringing in the words and music so we can pursue this. Students often come up with suggestions which inspire both myself and the rest of the class. However, how do I evaluate this high-level contribution to the class? This well thought through self-motivated piece of informal learning? How can this kind of informal off page/off stage learning be validated?

I am always being asked by new students, "What's the point in creative writing and performance?" or "How can this help get me a job?" This often results in conversations about the many ways in which the skills and experience they learn from writing and performance projects are transferrable: English, articulacy, confidence, lateral thinking, empathy etc - or simply making you a more interesting all round human being in the eyes of a potential employer. More recently in the class we have begun to discuss the concept of cultural capital, and the idea that just by being in the class and discussing literature, theatre, the arts in general increases that cultural capital and allows them access to cultural areas (both concrete and intellectual) from which they might previously have felt excluded ("that world is not for the likes of me"). Actively participating - reading, writing, creating, performing of course improves confidence, increases cultural capital and opens up even more of those cultural doors.

For some students, the qualification is the thing, while for many others it's about personal growth; the building of a new identity for themselves, an opportunity to be seen by others and to see themselves, afresh; to define themselves as something other than just a prisoner. Family, fellow prisoners and staff are often surprised and delighted when they read a poem or story from a prisoner, or see them perform - "I didn't know you wrote poems! I didn't know you wrote stories! I never knew you had it in you!" etc There is no doubt that a qualification, having that piece of paper, that proof, is important, and not just to move up the academic ladder or open doors in the work marketplace. Many prisoner/students come from difficult backgrounds in which educational shaming at school was a norm; these qualifications offer reparation and validation. Those qualifications tend to focus on, and give credence to, formal learning, but it does feel important that prisoners know that the value of their informal work can be acknowledged and validated, that it is not inferior to the formal learning. I'm hoping that this week in Romania may address some of those questions.

There are issues specific to working with students in prison (one being that I work continuously with some prisoners over long periods of time up to 5 years). Many have been through (or don't want to do) the basic qualifications and want to do project based work. Others have gone on to do OU creative writing courses. There is no doubt that they have all developed over this period. But how do I evaluate those non-formal/informal aspects of their learning?

**Stewart Ennis** | HMP Shotts

## The VALMOPRIS conference: Validation and Motivation: Non-formal Learning in Prison

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The **VALMOPRIS** conference will be hosted in Timișoara, Romania on Friday 16th June, 2017. Practitioners, professionals and academics from European member states will be in attendance.

Experts in the fields of prison education, competence development and validation will speak on a range of key issues.

This includes:

- the current status of education within prison
- developments in competence validation
- the work of the VALMOPRIS project within prison settings
- the impact of our research into the validation of non-formal and informal learning in prison settings

There will be space for parallel workshops and social discussion. These will focus on the issues of informal learning and policy within prison education. In addition, we will offer a preview of our brand new blended training programme, designed to support professionals working with prison learners - available from September 2017.

Limited spaces are still available. Some financial support may also be available to support travel. If you would like to attend or for more information contact the email address below.

For more information on the project or our conference, please visit [www.valmopris.org](http://www.valmopris.org) or email [info@valmopris.org](mailto:info@valmopris.org)

- **Event language:** English
- **Event type:** Conference
- **Attending fee:** No
- **Registration deadline:** 09/06/2017
- **Organised by:** Centrul de Reeducare Buzias | Romanian Prison Administration on behalf of the VALMOPRIS project
- **Target group:** Educationalists; prison workers; policy-makers, academics, and researchers in Criminal Justice, rehabilitation and prison-based learning; adult learning networks & organisations
- **Theme addressed:** The validation of informal and non-formal learning

Austria | **Die Berater**



France | **Euro-CIDES**



Germany | **Blinc eG**



Latvia | **EPPEA**



Netherlands | **Changes & Chances**



Romania | **Centrul de Reeducare Buzias**



Scotland | **New College Lanarkshire**



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To be kept up-to-date with our progress and opportunities email project coordinator: [Marisa.Farrell@nclan.ac.uk](mailto:Marisa.Farrell@nclan.ac.uk)

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We will update you on our progress in a few months time. To unsubscribe from this email, please email [unsubscribe@valmopris.org](mailto:unsubscribe@valmopris.org)