

THE VINCE PROJECT - HELPING NEWCOMERS DEMONSTRATE THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS IN A NEW COUNTRY

The EC recognises that education plays a crucial role in helping migrants and refugees settle in new countries and environments. From language learning to the recognition of qualifications, education is part of the integration and inclusion process. Newcomers and refugees face many challenges, including obstacles in accessing the labour market and continuing their studies, frequently because their competences are not easily recognised in the host society (their skills and knowledge may not fit into predefined bureaucratic policies and procedures; perhaps documentation is lacking or incomplete; or the curriculum they followed does not match certification structures in the host country). The VINCE project¹ aimed to give to higher education (HE) staff - especially those professionals working in the validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNIL) - a set of tools to deal with the extra difficulties of assessing migrants and refugees enrolled as candidates in validation processes in Europe. VINCE developed university staff training in Validation of Prior Learning (VPL), adapting existing proven VPL methods to meet the specific needs of newcomers so that they can access Higher Education (HE) and more easily integrate into European society. The process included the design of a generic set of guidelines, containing fundamental information on the culture and expectations of Europe, the host country, HE in general, the HE institution in particular, and the VPL arrangements. The adapted VPL procedures were trialled with newcomers, refugees and migrants. NGOs were actively involved in the processes, as full or associate partners, to ensure that the target users and the ultimate beneficiaries were reached at grassroots level and their interests represented in all the project phases. The outputs of the project formed the basis of policy recommendations targeted at decision makers at EU, national and institutional levels.

¹ <https://vince.eucen.eu/>