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*Lost in Validation:  
The French vs. the German Case  
(Concepts)*

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(The views expressed in this presentation are those of the authors alone)

# Outline

1. Conceptual Clarification (Some Key Terms)
2. Common Issues – Different Solutions
3. Key Objective: Societal Recognition
4. One Philosophy – Different Sub-systems
5. Pros and Cons of Each Sub-system

# Conceptual Clarification (Key terms)

- Validation / Assessment / Recognition
- Qualification (a piece of currency)
- Award after a validation process (the continuum)
- Production of competences / Identification of competences / Recognition of qualification
- Second chance: inclusiveness, equity
- Double currency (in the LLL system and in the labour market)

# Common Issues – Different Solutions

- Global competitiveness, and business climate
- Production of competences
- Identification of competences already there
- Validation for awarding qualifications (creating a new route to qualifications)...
- or not
- Accepting all kind of learning outcomes (including informal)...
- or not

# Key Objective: Societal Recognition

- Probably one of the most difficult endeavour
- VAE: still difficult
- Valikom: far from it

# One Philosophy – Different Sub-systems

- The philosophy is twofold:
  - We all learn every where and all the time
  - The corresponding learning outcomes should be given currency (in the labour market and in the LLL system: societal recognition)
- The sub-systems seem to target different groups especially in Germany (e.g. migrants, tertiary education learners)
- but also in France to some extent (tertiary education learners)

# Pros and Cons of Each Sub-system

- Fragmented:
  - Caters for different needs
- Unified:
  - Comparability of awards (e.g. qualification, and societal recognition is easier)

# Selected Pieces of the Table

Features	France			Germany			
	VAE	VAP85	VES	Externenprüfung	ValiKom	University	Migrants
<b>Type</b>	Second chance of qualification at all levels	Access to university (May be used in parallel with VAE)	Qualification in the Tertiary Education System only	Access to final examination	Chance to get a certificate with job-related competence from the Chambers	Chance to reduce study time	Chance to get qualifications from abroad recognised
<b>Type of learning outcomes accepted</b>	All experiential learning outcomes	All experiential learning outcomes	Prior achievements in any Tertiary Education System	Length of experience in a relevant occupation	All experiential learning outcomes	Vocational qualification, or documents for challenging the course	Qualifications from the country of origin, or assessment (if proof of qualification is not available)
<b>Outcome of the process</b>	Full, or partial, qualification	Exemption of academic prerequisite for access to Tertiary Education	Credits toward a qualification or full qualification	Taking dual system exam	Certificate of labour market competences	Exemption of part of the curriculum (50% max)	Notice of equivalence
<b>Legal framework</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Only a Project	Yes, by State Law but not fully implemented at all universities	Yes
<b>Social consensus</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Unclear yet	Yes	Yes
<b>Recognition of academic knowledge</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Only seniority	Yes	Max 50%	Yes
<b>Recognition of informally acquired competences</b>	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes (individual recognition process)	Yes (Competence Assessment)
<b>Recognition of labour market competences</b>	Yes	Yes	No	Not directly	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Information and guidance centre</b>	One per district (1 <sup>st</sup> step)	Higher education institution	Higher education institution	Responsible Chamber	Responsible Chamber	Responsible University	IQ-Counselling Centres
<b>Guidance</b>	Yes, individual (20 breakable hours, not compulsory)	Depending on higher education institution	Depending on higher education institution	Yes Fee-based	Yes (in the Project)	Study Guidance of responsible university	Yes
<b>Eligibility (Right to apply)</b>	1 year of experience in a field relevant to the targeted qualification	Not in the tertiary education system for 2 years or more Aged 20+ 3 years of experience	Pre screening of the documents provided	Pre-screening on the duration of experience and occupation (1,5x more time than training)	Aged 25+ Relevant work experience	Qualification from vocational training Relevant work experience	For migrants only (even before the acceptance to stay) completed apprenticeship/ university degree



# Selected Pieces of the Table

Standards used in the assessment process	Existing (From certifying ministries)	N.A.	Comparison of contents	N.A. (No standards, authenticated documents)	Existing (Job description prepared by the Chambers for the dual system)	Existing (University standards)	Existing (Qualification standards)
<b>Process</b>	Information Registration, Eligibility Application Guidance, Assessment Decision (Recommendations in case of failure)	Information Registration, eligibility Contract and Guidance Application Decision Study programme Regular examination	Information and definition of the project Registration, Eligibility Application Assessment Decision (Follow up in case of partial validation)	Registration Guidance Registration (Preparation Courses)	Guidance Application Assessment Guidance Practical Assessment Certificate	-Information & Guidance -Application -Examination application documents -Assessment -Recognition decision	Information & Guidance Application Assessment Decision on equivalence
<b>Assessment</b>	Portfolio of competences Panel of assessors (not compulsory but almost always organised)	Pedagogical committee	Documents provided and compulsory interview with the Panel of assessors	Time of experience based on documents and certificates	(1) Portfolio of competences, (2) Practical Assessment	Diverse Depends on university	(a) Qualifications from abroad (b) work samples/ Expert discussion/ Work trial in an enterprise
<b>Misc.</b>	- Specific process for PhDs - Possible all year around	- Possible at specific moment only (May-September)	- One application per year per qualification - Full qualification rare	Possible at specific moment only (twice a year)	Possible during project	Diverse Depends on university	Possible all year around
<b>Financing</b>	Lifelong learning funds (e.g. Individual Learning Account) (Cost from several hundreds to several thousands EUR)	Mostly no (Neither possible with the Individual Learning Account)	Connected to the VAE system	<i>Bildungsgutschein (unemployed) Bildungsprämie/Weiterbildungssparen/Weiterbildungsdarlehen (employees)</i>	During the project free of charge	<i>Aufstiegsstipendium</i>	Subvention max. 600 EUR ( <i>Anerkennungszuschuss</i> )
<b>Take up</b>	40 000 per year	N.A. on a national level	N.A. on a national level	27 651 (2016)	164 (Project test phase)	Data not collected	More than 63 400 (between 2012-2015)
<b>Success rate</b>	VAE: 50% among eligible applicants	N.A. on a national level	N.A. on a national level	21 885 (79,1%)	-	Data not collected	More than 40 700 (full and equal recognised; between 2012-2015)
<b>Main users</b>	EQF 3 and 4, both vocational	EQF 6 and 7, both vocational	EQF 6-7	EQF 3	EQF 3 and 4	EQF 4	70% EQF 6 (between 2012-2015)
<b>Comparison</b>	- VAE validates prior learning outcomes - but often followed by further studies	- VAPP85 is future oriented - Process lighter than a VAE one		- Oldest system of the 4			- For Migrants only

# Lost

- EU initiative but many applications: large variations in the implementation of the philosophical principle
  - Complex systems
  - Lack of information and guidance for the users, before and after enrolling
- ➔ There are good reasons to be lost ☹ ☹ ☹

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