U4 INCLUSION

Universities for labour inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities

Roadmap to promote European recognition of common curriculum using Europass.

Promotion of European recognition

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Tus ideas son nuestros proyectos

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Universities for labour inclusion of people with
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U4INCLUSION project

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CONTENTS

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SUMMARY

The Erasmus+ project "U4Inclusion" is a European program aimed at creating a common educational curriculum for young adults with mild intellectual disability in order to help them acquire competencies that can foster their social inclusion. The project is aimed at creating a 2-year common University curriculum intended to provide these individuals with personal, interpersonal, and vocational competencies.

Part of the output to design a common curriculum is also the recognition of said curriculum on Europan level. This paper will look at how the national qualification framework responds to the recognition of training courses/diplomas/certificates. We will then look at how Europass and its tools can be optimally used to increase the visibility of training courses/curricula. Finally, we list the steps that can be taken to increase the recognition of a course/curriculum using the Europass tools.

List of acronyms:

- EU = European Union
- NQF = National Qualification Framework
- EQF = European Qualification Framework
- NARIC = National Academic Recognition Information Centres in the European Union
- ENIC = European Network of Information Centres in the European Region
- CV = Curriculum Vitae

INTRODUCTION: THE ERASMUS+ EUROPEAN PROJECT "U4INCLUSION"

The Erasmus+ project "U4Inclusion" (Erasmus+ Grant Agreement number: 2019-1-ES01-KA201-064661) is a European project that aims to increase the employment rates of students with intellectual disabilities to ensure their full social inclusion. This aim will be carried out by designing a common curriculum of post-secondary education for young adults with mild intellectual disability to enhance their opportunities for inclusive employment and social integration.

The curriculum designed by the project partners - the University of Calabria (Italy), KVeloce and the Miguel Hernández University (Spain), the Institut für Inklusive Bildung (Germany), and Thomas More Kempen (Belgium) – is made out of a 2-year curriculum that enhances personal, interpersonal and vocational competencies of individuals with an intellectual disability.

The second part of the project was aimed at designing common materials to be included in the designed curriculum. The guidelines are intended to lead the partners in the definition of the common curriculum based on a review of the findings presented in scientific literature on the topic. The target population is comprised of ID individuals between 18-30 years of age (although the upper limit is flexible).

In addition to designing the common curriculum and common materials, the project aims to achieve a recognition of these materials on European level.

Currently, a European recognition of a curriculum is impossible because it is the authority of the national bodies of the members of the European union.

To make a common curriculum available to other institutions, a European recognition would be a great step. This is to ensure the quality and reliability of the developed curriculum.

The aim of this paper is to examine how a European recognition of a curriculum can be achieved.

We will look at what is already in place and what paths have already been explored in order to obtain a European recognition. Then the possibilities with the new Europass will be explored.

METHODOLOGY

To understand the reality around European recognition of a curriculum we interviewd James Churchill, Chaves Pedro and followed several workshops about the new Europass that is being developed.

James Churchill -CEO of Social Care Training Ltd and Chair of the European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities Interest Group on Human Resources- tried to get his curriculum 'Social Care Training' recognized on European level in the last twenty years. As it was not possible to get this curriculum recognized on European level, he opted to find as many partners in the different nations of the European Union. By finding a partner, they can get it recognized nationally so that people with the same education from another nation can easily get their education recognized in this nation. Following this solution will be time consuming and need a lot of resources. That is why we looked further for other possibilities.

Chaves pedro - policy developer and coordinator on skills and qualifications at the European commission- was interviewd about the possibilities that Europass could bring. He made clear that the recognition of curricula is the authority of the national authorities of the EU Member States, but induldged about the possibilities that Europass can bring to give the U4Inclusion-curriculum more visibility.

ROADMAP TO PROMOTE EUROPEAN RECOGNITION OF COMMON CURRICULUM USING EUROPASS.

I. THE NATIONAL AND EUROPEAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

In figuring out how to get an European recognition for the curriculum developed in U4Inclusion, we ran into the obstacle of the Nationael Qualification Framework (NQF) and the European Qualification Framework(EQF).

Each member state within the European Union has a National Qualification Framework that they use to rank the qualifications obtained within that country. This National Qualification Framework differs from country to country so that qualifications obtained in one country cannot be accepted in another. A level obtained within one country will not be the same level as another country. For example, a Bachelor's degree obtained in Germany is at level 6 of Germany's National Qualification Framework. In Romania, a bachelor is at level 7 of their National Qualification Framework. Getting started with a Romanian bachelor in Germany will not be automatically possible because a Romanian bachelor is not equivalent to a German bachelor. One must first have the Romanian bachelor validated before it can be effectively used in Germany.

If one wants to have a qualification recognized outside the country where the qualification was obtained, a recognition procedure has to be started with the national authority for recognition (NARIC/ENIC). They will then decide whether or not your qualification will be recognized and to what level it belongs.

Training courses that are organized can also not simply be organized the same way in every European country. One has to take into account the educational level of that country. This means that it is difficult to develop a curriculum/training that every country automatically recognizes. For qualifications one can start a recognition procedure in every European country, but for training one will have to adapt the training to the level of the country.

In the case of the curriculum developed within U4Inclusion, it is a framework. This means that each country/institution can implement the training itself based on the level and learning outcomes they want to see achieved.

It is also important for agencies to be able to see at what level this developed curriculum stands on the National Qualification Framework. Here one can make use of the European Qualification Framework.

The European Qualification Framework is a tool that facilitates the comparison between different National Qualification Frameworks. Each country has compared their National Qualification Framework with the European Qualification Framework. This way you can see

on a European level what level of qualification you have obtained and you can easily compare it with different countries.

By determining the level of the U4Inclusion curriculum on the European Qualification Framework, countries can immediately determine what level this curriculum is in their own country. E.g. a bachelor in Germany in a level 6 on the National Qualification Framework but also a level 6 on the European Qualification Framework. In Romania, a bachelor is a level 7 on the National Qualification Framework, but also a level 7 on the European Qualification Framework.

II.   EUROPASS

Europass is a set of online tools that aims to manage your learning experience and career. The purpose of these online tools is to facilitate mobility in Europe. Studying and working across Europe would be easier in this way.

The Europass used to consist of five documents:
1. Curriculum vitae
2. Language passport
3. Europass mobility
4. Diploma supplement
5. Certificate supplement

The curriculum vitae was a kind of template to show one's experience and obtained qualifications. Through the language passport one could show the languages one spoke. And through the Europass mobility one could officially record experiences such as studying or doing an internship abroad.

The diploma supplement and the certificate suppelement, on the other hand, are documents that provide further explanation of the qualification obtained when obtaining a diploma or a certificate. In this way, schools and employers from other European countries can get more explanation about the qualifications one has obtained in their home country.

Since July 2020 a new Europass has been launched. Here the European Commission has completely renewed the Europass and introduced a number of new tools. To date, the new Europass is still being developed and new tools are being launched all the time. In this paper we will look at which tools that have been developed so far can be used so that

courses/curriculums such as the U4Inclusion curriculum are more visible to educational institutions and other actors.

a. EUROPASS TOOLS

The newly launched Europass has introduced a number of new tools to facilitate mobility across Europe. In doing so, the Europian Commission has not only digitised a number of existing Europass tools, but has also developed a number of new tools. We will look below at what exists so far.

b. EUROPASS PROFILE

The European Commission has developed an online platform where all your documents and more information about your career are structurally collected in a kind of wallet. You can compare it to a LinkdIn profile but than for your studies, experience and career. You can share this profile with a friend or colleague through a personalized link. Please note that this profile is private. Only with a personalised link that you create, can someone else view your profile or a document on your profile.

You can also use your Europass profile to create a Europass CV. This is one of the best-known CV formats in Europe. You can also use the Europass to create a Cover letter. In both tools you will be guided in the layout. Again, you can easily share your CV and Cover Letter with your employer or others.

c. EUROPASS DOCUMENTS

As already mentioned, the Europass has not only developed new tools, but has also digitized existing ones. The following documents were improved, digitized and available in your Europass profile at the launch of the new Europass:

1. Europass mobility
2. Diploma supplement
3. Certificate supplement

d. EUROPASS QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK

As stated above, the European Qualification Framework and the National Qualification Framework are tools to compare the levels of qualifications between the different European countries. Through the new Europass, the National Qualification Frameworks of all EU member states can be found on the website. The information is thus centralized and should be easy to find.

In addition, a tool has also been developed that shows the comparison between the National Qualification Frameworks of two or more countries alongside the European Qualification Framework. This way you can see at a glance what the level of the National Qualification Framework of two or more countries is compared to the European Qualification Framework.

This is a useful tool to compare the level of a developed curriculum such as the U4Inclusion curriculum with what the level of this developed curriculum would be on a European level or on a national level of other countries.

Other countries would also be able to see at what level they can organize this curriculum if they choose to implement it. In the case of the U4Inclusion curriculum it is about a framework. This means that other European countries have the freedom to implement the curriculum at their own level.

e. EUROPEAN DIGITAL CREDENTIALS FOR LEARNING

The final tool and most interesting tool for this paper is the European Digital Credentials for Learning. The learning credentials are statements of learning activities that organizations can assign to their students. This can include diplomas, certificates and other types of certificates that capture learning activities. These credentials are multilingual and are signed with a unique electronic seal which is the digital equivalent of an institution's rubber stamp.

These credentials are interesting for individuals because in this way they have an online portfolio that collects and centers all their learning activities in one place. They can also consult these credentials or have them verified at any moment in their career. This is also the case if the organization that issued the credential closes down. Once the credential is issued, this data will be available in the database for use throughout Europe.

These digital credentials are also interesting for institutes because they can better understand the obtained credentials. On the one hand, these credentials can be translated

to the student's own language, but on the other hand, the explanation of such a credential is very detailed, which gives a very good idea of what the student exactly has learned.

For this reason, it is interesting to use the European Digital Credentials for Learning to present courses/developed curriculums. If one can explain the U4Inclusion curriculum through this tool, then other countries will immediately know what competencies/learning outcomes are being developed. The explanation of such a learning credential immediately gives a picture of what is being learned within the program in terms of content. Based on this explanation one can then also determine at what level the training can possibly be organized if one would like to organize it in one's own university.

III. STEPS TO GET MORE RECOGNITION OF YOUR CURRICULUM

As mentioned before, at the moment it is not possible to get a recognition of a course/curriculum at European level because this authority lies with the national authorities and not with the European authority.

However, you can use the Europass tools to give your curriculum more recognition with educational institutions in other European countries that might be interested in implementing it in their own institution. Next steps should be taken to give for example the U4Inclusion curriculum more recognition in Europe:

1. **Contact the national agency responsible for the Europass and inform about the steps that need to be taken to be able to use the tools as effectivly as possible.** Each country has its own regulations in implementing the Europass. It's nessecary to contact the organisation responsible so that the right steps can be taken.

2. **Get the curriculum implemented in the university and valorized by the ministry of education of the country.** At this moment the U4Inclusion curriculum is a framework that has not been implemented in any institutaion yet. In order to get an insight about the curriculum and to know which level the curriculum has on the European Qualification Framework, it is necessary to get the curriculum implemented and valorized by the ministry of education in one country. Once that is done, other institutation can use the European Qualification Framework to compare the level of education in their country and make necessary changes if needed.

3. **Use the Europass tools to display the curriculum.**

CONCLUSIONS

To get a European recognition of the U4Inclusion curriculum we researched two possible ways. The first one -recommended by James Churchill- is to get the curriculum recognized in each country of the European Union. As this will be time consuming and needs a lot of resources we went on to find other possibilities.

The second way is to make use of the newly developed Europass. By making use of the National en European qualification frameworks, the level of education of the curriculum in each country can be decided. Once that is decided, can we make use of the Europass tools such as the Europass profile, documents and European digital credentials for learning.

The steps needed to be taken to promote a European recognition of the curriculum is as follows:

1) Contacting the national agency of the Europass and informing about the steps to get the tool involved in the project.
2) Getting the curriculum implemented in the university and valorized by the ministry of education of the country.
3) Using the Europass tools to display the curriculum.