

## Identification of good practices

This is the template for collecting existing good practices in which any kind of validation of people's prior learning experiences was part of the integration process. It could be processes concerning non-national candidates or national ones. The important purpose of this template is to identify successful stories and to explain how the experience that you present can be adapted or can be useful when dealing particularly with the validation of migrant or refugee candidates. Please do not surpass a max of 3 pages in total.

### Author's details:

Name	Chiquita
Surname	Clarissa
Institution	Kiron Open Higher Education
Country	Germany
Email	chiquita.clarissa@kiron.ngo
Telephone	

### Questions to be replied:

**1. The VNIL/VPL practice** in your country/institution

- a) Briefly, how does it work? How long has it been operational?
- b) Which are the **strengths and the areas for improvement** of this practice?

- a. Kiron Open Higher Education is an EdTech NGO that uses digital innovation and strategic partnerships to bridge the gap between refugees and higher education. Since 2015, we have been offering free digital learning opportunities to refugees and displaced persons for academic, professional and personal growth. That is why we built the Kiron Campus, to ensure that our students receive access to flexible, high-quality learning opportunities. Through an innovative model of blended learning, Kiron offers free, tailor-made study programs by clustering Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) from renowned educational platforms, so that refugees can start studying regardless of their asylum status. The MOOCs are embedded in a blended learning model with support such as tutorials and mentoring to guide the students in achieving their goals. We offer our students long study tracks: Business and Economics, Computer Science, Engineering, Social Work, and Political Science, and short study programs, such as web design or programming courses. Kiron students can transfer to regular university degree programs with the option of having their online credits recognized to earn a regular bachelor's degree. Another option would be to receive their recognition of studying at Kiron in the form of certificates. Currently, more than 6000 students are registered on the platform from all over the world.
- b. Kiron has been dedicated to addressing one of the most pressing issues affecting refugees worldwide. The inequality, lack of opportunity and barriers to long term integration of refugees are only perpetuated if refugees are not offered inclusive, equal access to education. We have developed a high quality, innovative blended learning environment through our very own modularized curriculum, online learning platform and comprehensive student support services. We have 60 partner universities across eight countries with which we have signed agreements to

recognize some of the digital learning outcomes acquired by our students on our platform when transferring to these universities. These partnerships and the learning agreements we sign with universities are crucial for our model and for Kiron staff to support our students in accessing traditional university programs as well as contribute to the wider acceptance and recognition of online learning outcomes. In addition, we host high-quality learning materials on Kiron Campus and a strong and stable support network to help our students succeed. In terms of areas for improvement, we would like to enhance our digital platform to be more user-centric, improve online student support to be more agile and scalable, and build interactive features on the platform to nurture our student community so that they can continue building bonds and connect to each other, whether they reside in high connectivity zones or low-bandwidth conditions. We believe that this will foster the mobility of ideas, the awareness of opportunities among our students and thereby enhance the impact on our students' learning outcomes and academic opportunities.

## 2. The candidate

a) Key details of the **candidate** of this case study (if applicable): age, gender, country of origin...

b) What **qualifications and/or experience** did the candidate bring to the VNIL/VPL process?

- a. Moataz is a 28-year-old Damascus native, living in Germany since 2014.
- b. Moataz was forced to leave Syria four years ago while he was in the middle of his business and economics degree at Damascus University. Like so many others, he had no idea whether he would ever be able to finish the studies he had invested so much in, before the war broke out.

## 3. What was the **outcome** of the process? (e.g. access to or credits within a course, part or whole diploma BA/MA, create a job opportunity and/or a social opportunity...)

With the support of Kiron, Moataz received three semesters of credits (90 ECTS) recognized from his previous studies at Damascus University in Syria as well as one semester (30 ECTS) from online studies with Kiron, enabled him to start directly in his fifth semester in bachelor degree program in Business Administration at the Berlin International University of Applied Sciences. Please find Moataz's full journey [here](#). Or: <https://vimeo.com/276437695>

## 4. Impact and sustainability

a) What was the impact of the process for the candidate? (i.e. further study, a job, etc)

b) How are the processes and impact sustained and how are they integrated into existing structures and processes?

- a. In the summer of 2018, Moataz graduated from Berlin International University of Applied Sciences with B.A. in Business Administration. He is currently pursuing his master's degree in International Marketing and Management at the Berlin School of Economics and Law. Moataz was also selected to a full scholarship of the Foundation of German Economy (SDW - Stiftung der deutschen Wirtschaft) through which he can finance his living and studies.
- b. Moataz has taken an essential role at Kiron in liaising with students who are undertaking a similar journey as he did, thus motivating other students to follow their academic goals and success in higher education. Moataz is also a member of a Kiron alumni group that engages to support other alumni throughout their study pathway at Kiron's partner university.

## 5. Relevance and Transferability to VINCE:

a) Are there any aspects of your practice that are adapted to the needs of refugees or people with a migrant background - what makes these aspects special?

- b) Are there any aspects of your practice that could be adapted to these groups of learners? What adaptations would be needed?
- a. According to UNHCR, the main challenges for refugees to access higher education are: 1. legal documentation 2. high student fees 3. lack of capacity in universities 4. lack of guidance and 5. language barriers (UNHCR). These obstacles currently prevent around five million young people from living up to their potential. Kiron's mission is to remove these barriers so that refugees worldwide can access higher education, regardless of their location, finances or legal status. For our students, the positive impact of Kiron is on an individual personal-psychological but also socio-economic level. Access to our platform allows students to become trained in self-paced innovative online learning methods, engage with university-level academic content and therefore gain knowledge and skills crucial in their future studies and employment. Significant socio-economic impacts of Kiron thus include increased employability of our students and their contribution to the host country's economy in the long run. Being a Kiron student can improve their personal well-being through new opportunities and extend personal networks in their local host communities.
  - b. We learned that flexibility and accessibility to online learning are very crucial aspects that would be needed for our group of learners. Our flexible model complements the relatively traditional educational systems that are ridden by rigid rules and requirements. Our students can access the Kiron Campus anywhere, anytime at their own pace, and enrolled in study programs according to their own goals; be it for their professional, academic or personal goals. In addition, we believe that community is key to ensure the successful learning of our students. We foster our global student community that will strengthen their motivation, resilience, and orientation towards different opportunities in their closely held identity as student. Lastly, despite our global reach, we have localized our offer as much as possible to provide students with learning opportunities that are tailored to their needs and cultural backgrounds.

**SEND YOUR FILLED IN FORM TO [vince@eucen.eu](mailto:vince@eucen.eu) BY 10 APRIL 2019**