



## 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	N DIAYE
Surname	VIVIANE
Institution	UNIR ( EX KIRON FRANCE )
Country	FRANCE
Email	Viviane.ndiaye@uni-r.org
Telephone	00 33 (0)6 81 06 36 20

### 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?

The French regulatory framework, as it is clearly detailed in the Social Modernization Law of 2002 and the Decree of higher education, grants individuals the right to validate all prior learning experience, both formal and informal. Procedures between educational establishments differ insofar as some may target professional development, while others vocational education. Overall, the vision is to access trainings or obtain a degree, full or in part, that is officially recognized by the state.

The VNL pilot program with the Collège De Paris (CDP) has been adapted to the specific needs of UniR beneficiaries, which is composed of refugees and asylum seekers who meet the following criteria:

- is a statutory refugee, asylum seeker, or beneficiary of subsidiary protection (no age limit or requirement);
- has obtained a French baccalaureate or the equivalent from a foreign country that has been recognized in France;
- has prior skills and experiences, including all professional skills acquired during at least a period of one year in a formal or informal field of activity that meets the requirements of French validation standards;
- must provide proof any prior skills and experiences (as an employee, self-employed, or volunteer work) that are directly related to the content of the degree or certification received.
- B2 level in French is required for the last stage of the VNIL procedure

### **Strengths and areas of improvement**

The VNIL global procedure dedicated to UniR beneficiaries has been adapted to their specific needs based on their situation. It should be noted that the CLP was very generous regarding the time required to work on the admissibility booklet during the first stage of the validation process. The CLP prioritized the quality of the work performed, as opposed to the planning of deadlines. With hindsight, this decision was the right one since our timeline was continuously adjusted. This is due to the availability constraints of the students selected. Editing of the admissibility booklet started in mid-September, 2018, and is currently in its final stages of completion after exhaustive efforts to gather all supporting documents.

In the first stages of the VNL procedure, UniR assigned a task manager who was responsible for implementing the program. Getting the program moving was a difficult task. At the start, everything was improvised; starting with the launch of a call for applications, to establishing deadlines, taking into account the expectations of the CPL, while also considering the constraints of the beneficiaries. Subsequently, we developed documents pertaining to the selection of students, defined and developed appropriate support tools and a methodological approach. This was essential to ensuring the applicants were properly prepared for the next stage of selections. Additionally, we had to translate any documents and information into English. This included translations of the admissibility booklet, all other documents regarding the five field degrees concerned, and additional instructional documents.

The strength of the UniR methodology lies in its ability to create programs tailored to the individual needs of its public with the support of a committed network of partners. Effectively, the first stage of pre-selection in the VNIL procedure is designed to support select students during the completion of the admissibility booklet. UniR has assigned a task manager for this pilot project who has carried out the creation and implementation of the support



methodology. Challenges to the procedure included development of the method, the launch of the call for applications, establishing deadlines and scheduling taking into account the expectations and limitations of the beneficiaries, the development of selection documents and identification of support tools. In addition, it was a challenge to produce translations of documentation regarding the five field degrees available, the related booklets and the admissibility booklet.

Our main concern is the level of French obtained by our beneficiaries. The vast majority, particularly those who are eligible for programs at the Bachelor's or Master's level, come from English-speaking backgrounds and attest to a rather insufficient level of the French language. In attempt to overcome this obstacle, which is applicable for any academic or professional integration in France, UniR is launching a French Foreign Language (FLE) programme. However, this project is just commencing, therefore in the meantime we have pursued alternative avenues for enrolling our beneficiaries in French courses with partner institutions and associations.

Additional difficulties we have encountered includes the propensity of beneficiaries to enroll in several university programs and to take on supplementary trainings or apply for informal programs at the same time. This trend seems to be a real obstacle that actually hinders their success and it is often quite difficult for us to convey to them why this approach is rather unproductive. We work to ensure that clarity and comprehension of the information relevant to the quality of the work to be provided. This is in terms of understanding information regarding the relevant background of precise concepts and terminology require in completing the booklets one and two and for passing before the jury.

In regard to time management, there remains to be a concern for the benevolence that has prevailed over firmness regarding meetings and deadlines, which is crucial. We are working to find a balance between our constraints and that of our beneficiaries, since our future potential partners will certainly be less inclined to function around non strict deadlines.

## 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?

### Applicant 1

- Gender: Male
- Age: 28
- Country of origin: Afghanistan
- Legal status: Refugee
- Level of study:
  - Bachelor's degree in economics
  - Bachelor's degree in mathematics
- Work experience:
  - Regional Sales Manager With Roshan Telecom Development Company in Afghanistan (5 Jan 2015 - 11 Mar 2017)
  - Finance Manager With Afghan Literacy Organisation (1 Aug 2014 - 31 Dec 2014)
  - Program Manager with United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees / HAPA (1 April 2009 - 31 July 2014)
  - Data Processor with Japan international Cooperating Agency / HAPA ( 1 September 2007 - 31 March 2009)

### Applicant 2

- Gender: Male
- Age: 30
- Country of origin: Bangladesh
- Legal status: Asylum seeker
- Level of study: Bachelor's degree in design and creativity
- **Work experience:**
  - Assistant Manager in Marketing, Mode and Design (2.5 yrs)
  - Design and Marketing Manager (1 yr)

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...)

At the moment, UniR is unable to provide substantial data on the outcome of the process. This is due to the fact that we are still currently in the first stage of our support in terms of the transmission of the admissibility booklet for validation from our partner, the Collège de Paris, who is collaborating with UniR on the further stages of the VNIL procedure.

It remains, however, that the first stage of support is crucial for the following VNIL procedure and thus, deserves to be shared. For this reason, we have agreed with M. Yeanis KABLAN, the head of European Issues at the Université de Bretagne occidentale, to send a contribution regarding our support activities before the beginning of the next phase.

### 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?

**4A)**

According to feedback from the two applicants who have benefited from our personalized support during the first stage of the procedure, the UniR team has proven to meet the needs and expectation of our beneficiaries. One of the applicants has shared with us that he firmly believes his decision to continue his education will drastically change his life and reach the ultimate intrinsic goal of happiness in life. Since leaving his country of origin, there were no other options for furthering his education at a higher level. This opportunity fully meets his educational objectives that he had planned for his future. He has promised to do the utmost to fulfil this ambition. Due to his motivation and steady investment, I am convinced that he will reach this goal. The second application is equally optimistic as mentioned in his application "There is nothing easy in life so we have to be on it and move forward and makes life meaningful" He considers this opportunity to be the best mean for socio-economic integration. Both students are involved in UniR support activities for the resumption of their studies and professional orientation and attend a French language class.

**4B)**

In sharing aligned objectives and visions regarding sustainable educational policies and solutions to facilitate access to higher education for refugees and asylum seekers in France, UniR and the Collège de Paris have entered into a partnership agreement whereby both parties undertake dedication to cooperative efforts in offering successful academic integration. In this way, we are able to ensure encourage the education for our beneficiaries so that one day they can participate in the reconstruction of their countries of origin or benefit from better integration in France.

In introducing the VNIL procedure into the UniR methodology, it is able to reflect the will of the UniR founder and chief to continue the activities of Kiron France, her previous place of employment. Following an assessment of the Kiron France programs, UniR has built its sustainable procedures. Currently, UniR supports over 130 beneficiaries, which includes a large number of highly qualified English speakers with Master's and Bachelor's degrees from their counties of origin. Thus, the division to develop a FLE 2.0 project, which launches this April, is in remedy to this linguistic obstacle.

**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?

**5A)**

The initiative to create UniR and to propose a personalized support program for the academic integration of asylum seekers and refugees is in line with the European Union's recommendations on the issue of recognizing prior experiences, our program was built in response to the need to find lasting solutions to the integration of persons in exile through access to higher education. As such, all of UniR's activities aim to achieve and sustain this objective, hence our choice to engage in partnerships to implement and adjust existing procedures in order to facilitate the resumption of studies and the recognition of prior diplomas and experiences.



The design of dedicated, long-term monitoring and support based on the procedures, milestones, and tools to facilitate the orientation of beneficiaries towards language courses and higher education programs. People who contact us but do not fit within our guidelines are redirected towards other structures. Our support is limited to an informal social component regarding all aspects related to housing, cultural integration, and professional projects. As such, UniR is concerned by the issue of the social, cultural, and professional integration of women. We are currently conducting a research-action project, financed by the region Ile-de-France and The American University of Paris, which is oriented at supporting women to achieve successfully their academic and professional goals through identifying the obstacles and opportunities female refugees and asylum seekers face in France.

5B)

Please reference all previous questions for more information on how our program is adapted to our beneficiaries needs and expectations.

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



*WP2 - Op2.2b: external case studies*



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