

## AUTHOR

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## DESCRIPTION

### 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 Lisbon City Council - Qualifica Centre's process for validation of prior learning has undergone continuous development since 2004. It is an endeavour assumed by the Lisbon City Council and Qualifica team as an effort to close the opportunity gap by transforming how adults access and experience learning and the paths they can take to turn it into empowerment and success.

We hope to foster consolidated, transformative change to adults who are locked out of traditional paths to success and ensure everyone can develop their full potential in life and work.

#### Methodological approach

Through the implementation of Paulo Freire's Problematizing Pedagogy and Marie Christine Josso's Histoire the Vie, in which learning becomes a critical understanding of the world, our team sets the methodological principle of challenging the participants to explore several dimensions of their life, so that, through critical thinking and confidence-building collaboration, one's personal interests, supportive relationships and diverse learning opportunities are leveraged, embraced and self-recognised as important and empowering.

Secondly, the adoption of Marie-Christine Josso's Histoire de Vie's methodological approach as a path to one's acknowledgement of the importance of all their life choices and experiences is paramount to how we work with adults towards the creation of their Competences Portfolios and validation process, where achievements are shared and skills are showcased.



### Trigger-questions

Lisbon Qualifica Centre's process for validation of prior learning Process is based on 15 trigger questions, from "How does one learn?" to "Why am I do the way I am?" to "What's next (Future steps)?". The trigger questions are deployed through multiple-sessions workshops by a cohesive and diverse team of professionals. Questions put the focus on the participant and aim to instigate the identification and characterization of one's competences by implicating the participants in the analysis and reflection of their own life history, allowing them to take charge of their own skills and knowledge, but most importantly, their strengths and empowering opportunities.

Trigger-questions were developed by Lisbon Qualifica Centre's team and are drawn upon the following key principles:

- i) Interdependent - all questions overlap and are reinforced by each other. Although sessions are planned beforehand, all trigger questions are interchangeable and may relapse.
- ii) Nuclear - questions are core to the validation process and oriented towards certification and achievement showcasing.
- iii) Flexible - questions are not binding nor are they forced. Participants are free to explore or skip trigger questions according to their own interests and sensibility.
- iv) Customizable - are open and thought provoking. Can be approached partially and isolated. Questions can be modified and must adapt to participants' goals, expectations and workflow, allowing for individual pathways to validation.
- v) Empowering - questions are purposefully set in a progressive manner in order to help the participant solidify its own tools to uncover and evidentiate its skills. Trigger questions ask participants to look into themselves from new and different perspectives, supporting their own (re)signification.

Thru this process and with the guidance of Lisbon Qualifica Centre's team, the adults demonstrate their lifelong acquired competencies, in order to achieve a school certification.

b) Its strength lies in its continuous development, methodological approach and respect for each participants potential. Validation process documentation and customised digital tools available to candidates constitute areas for improvement.

## 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) Vic (fictional name) is 40 years old, female and its country of origin is Portugal. She started the validation process in early 2018 and concluded 14 months later.
- b) Vic had just completed 9 years schooling. She had a lot of experience working as an urban cleaning worker, which, adding to her previous job experiences, turned Vic into a respected and promising worker in the local parish urban cleaning department.

## 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...)

Vic effortlessly achieved an academic High School certification through the validation of non-formal, formal and informal learning. But most importantly, she gained renewed confidence in her capabilities, allowing her to pursue a career change within the local parish.

## 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) Documenting her life, both her strengths and her areas for improvements, was a process of great impact to Vic. The candidate changed her life outlook, her academic qualifications, her aspirations. Consequently, she applied and secured a career change from urban cleaning worker to secretary assistant.
- b) Advisement, guidance and planning of each participant's concrete next steps in regards of training, academic goals, personal goals and work goals is integral and mandatory in Lisbon Qualifica Centre's methodology. This way, the empowerment that was achieved during the validation process is maximised and transformed into impactful changes for the candidate.  
 Qualifica's methodology has been modified in order to ensure as much impact as possible.  
 Firstly, Qualifica's Centre is part of a larger learning ecosystem: it is integrated into Lisbon's Lifelong Learning Program and it belongs to the City Council's Department for training and development.  
 Secondly, candidates come to Qualifica from other lifelong learning initiatives and/or take part, after or during the validation process in training courses, VET or other lifelong learning initiatives from the department, from partners or other organisations.  
 Moreover, Candidates are often depicted and/or invited to awareness initiatives ensuring continuous follow-up to interested candidates.

**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?

Lisbon Qualifica Centre is open to refugees and people with a migrant background. Lisbon itself is one of [Europe's most prominent refugee welcoming cities](#). Our centre is coordinated with city's refugee network and has active partnerships with refugees' associations such as *Conselho Europeu para os Refugiados*.

We have served, since 2014, more than 600 candidates whose country of origin is not Portugal.

One of the main aspects that has been most relevant to migrants is the assignment of an advisor that accompanies the candidate throughout the entire process. The advisor (Técnico ORVC) acts as a mediator between the candidate and the validation process team.

Another important aspect would be the focus of our methodology on valuing each candidate's heritage. Trigger questions, Life story (Histoire de Vie), Workshop sessions and, finally, the Competences Portfolio, all are oriented towards mapping heritage and lifelong experiences and learning with empowerment and enrichment.