



## PEER LEARNING ACTIVITY

April 27<sup>th</sup> 2023

### PLA REPORT

**Venue:**

Escola Artística e Profissional Árvore  
Rua do Dr. Barbosa de Castro 51,  
4050-091 Porto

#### Project information

<b>Project acronym</b>	<b>ONE</b>
<b>Project title</b>	Opening adult education Networks to European cooperation
<b>Project number</b>	621467-EPP-1-2020-1-IT-EPPKA3-IPI-SOC-IN
<b>Sub programme or KA</b>	KA3 - Social inclusion and common values: the contribution in the field of education and training
<b>Project website</b>	<a href="https://www.adult-learning.eu/en/project-one/">https://www.adult-learning.eu/en/project-one/</a>

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April 27, 2023	
15:00 – 16:25	<p><b>Welcome and starting the PLA – Kerigma, all participants</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit of the provider facilities</li> <li>• Overview of the PLA agenda</li> <li>• Presentation of participants - icebreaking</li> </ul> <p><b>Coffee break</b></p> <p>Due to logistical reasons the agenda was slightly modified. Once all the participants had arrived, the PLA activity began with a visit to the premises of the Escola Artística e Profissional Árvore, located in the Historic Centre of Porto, guided by the hostesses Rita Amado and Elodie Teixeira, followed by a coffee break.</p> <p>The participants went then to the PLA activity room, where Luísa Santos and Lígia Teixeira (Kerigma) respectively presented the PLA Agenda and the participants.</p>
16:25 – 16:55	<p><b>Presentation of the hosting provider - Escola Artística e Profissional Árvore</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brief presentation of the provider</li> <li>• Q&amp;A</li> </ul> <p>Rita Amado presented the Árvore - Escola Artística e Profissional, which has already about four decades of experience. She mentioned that this is the first UNESCO school in Portugal with EQAVET certification (European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training). In addition of being a founding member of the Common Home of Humanity, it is also a school with ERASMUS+ accreditation and a member of EfVET - European Forum of Technical and Vocational Education, ANESPO, National Association of Vocational Schools and an integral part of the ESN - European Schools Network. Moreover, it is responsible for the action of the Qualifica Árvore Center, that has a focus on career guidance, certification of skills and vocational qualification of adults. After the general presentation, she focused on the school's training offer at the Adult Education level. This is carried out through the Certified Modular Training, organized in short duration training units (UFCD) of 25 or 50 hours, individually certified and capitalizable to obtain one or more qualifications defined in the National Qualifications Catalogue (CNQ) and through the Qualifica Center, that promotes lifelong learning and the access of citizens to qualification paths according to their needs, motivations and expectations. In this presentation Rita Amado also talked about the school's participation in European projects co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union, namely mobility of students and teachers in Europe (Key Action I). Time was left after the presentation for questions.</p>
17:10 - 18:00	<p><b>Round Table with transnational Peers</b></p>



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The project partners and invited peers from the three networks involved in the project (IT, PT, SK) participated in this activity. A Swedish expert on qualifications & validation of prior learning also joined remotely.

Marta Jendekova, Klaudius Silhar - AIVD  
Armando Loureiro, Maria Antónia Gonçalves, Zara Sousa – APEFA  
Sylvia Liuti, Chiara Marchetta – FORMA.Azione srl  
Anni Karttunen - GLOBEDU  
Luísa Santos, Lígia Teixeira - KERIGMA  
Stafania Armati, Chiara Tiranno - RIDAP  
Alena Stefanikova, Katarina Smalova – SIOV

#### Invited peers present:

Rita Amado and Elodie Teixeira (Hosts from Árvore - Escola Artística e Profissional) - PT  
Rafael Araújo (GTI) - PT  
Maria Angela Oliva (CPIA Siena) – IT;  
Anna Uttaro (CPIA 1 Roma) – IT;  
Vladimir Hlinka (Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic) – SK;  
Monica Janikova (Zeleny Klobuk) - SK

#### Invited expert:

Anna Kahlson - Swedish National Agency for Professional Higher Education (MYH), expert on qualifications and validation of prior learning.

The discussion, led by Anni, had the following guiding topics:

**Topic 1** – The ONE experience: how the project activities supported Quality Assurance in training services and improved the capacity to deal with the topics of guidance, VNFIL, outreach and basic/transversal skills.

**Topic 2** – Recommendations and suggestions from peers for systematising the project practices in the 3 national networks.

#### Facilitator: *Globedu*

Anni started by welcoming and thanking all the Peers from the three countries (IT, PT and SK) participating at the Peer Learning Activity and the invited Expert from Sweden, Anna Kahlson, for her online contribution to the session.



## PEER LEARNING ACTIVITY

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She started by briefly introducing Anna Kahlson, mentioning her great work at the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education as Expert on Qualifications & Validation of Prior Learning.

Anna thanked for the invitation and said that she has been working in this field for about 14 years. In relation to the ONE project, she briefly stressed the importance of two aspects from her perspective: working together and learning from each other with regard to quality issues and working on learning together to develop skills.

She said that the Nordic Cooperation has been working together over many years. There has always been a strong cooperation between the Nordic countries and the Nordic Council of Ministers, working on these issues since the 1950's. This synergy has been both on a political and on a practical level, allowing learning from each other. The agency where she works provides support more on the practical level than on the political one, but brings everyone together on a platform in order to exchange practices.

She stressed the importance of going outside one's system, network and country for benchmarking the quality of the work. Having someone from outside that reviews what has been done and brings another perspective is indeed an added value, because it helps to improve the quality of work. Having discussions and comparing systems with other people is an important part of learning as well, this also being at the same time quality assessment, so learning more about quality assessment and about one's system with regard to quality.

Anni complemented this idea by saying that often it is the questions that outsiders ask, that we initially do not understand because we think they do not make sense, the ones that make us think about a certain aspect in a more analytical way that we would not have thought about otherwise.

About the Capacity Building Strategy of the ONE project, Anna Kahlson mentioned that it is in a way related to the work that the Nordic countries have been doing.

Anna also added that it is necessary to have a strategy about what the Capacity Building is supposed to be for, what are its final goals and to have an idea of which activities we should implement to achieve them.

According to Anna, the Capacity Building's key principles that are being followed in the ONE activities are functional to develop competences and reinforce the networks in the different countries, with different suppliers and stakeholders. The way the Capacity Building is outlined will be an asset for the countries participating in this work.

Therefore, according to her opinion, the cooperation allows us to learn more about the overall ALE system in terms of quality and of comprehensive response to the main challenges.



## PEER LEARNING ACTIVITY

April 27<sup>th</sup> 2023

### PLA REPORT

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Here, Anni recalled the fact that the countries involved in Capacity Building activities are Italy, Portugal and Slovakia and that their Adult Education systems are very different, with various strengths, as well as the fact that they are in different stages. Even the Nordic countries, which even if working so closely together, have very different systems. Having said this, Anni asked Anna, taking into account the four areas: guidance, validation, outreach and basic/transversal skills, what she thought is being sought more in the Nordic countries and what is being discussed less.

Anna mentioned that regarding Sweden, a weakness would be guidance, which is done but is very much linked to separate parts of the education system where it is very difficult for learners to have a clear idea of how to pursue their career on their adult learning journey. On the contrary, in Finland there is one guidance which covers the whole Adult Learning. Anna also mentioned Norway, considering that their biggest weakness is Validation, warning that it is only a general idea.

After inviting Anna to stay online and watch the continuation of the discussion (which she promptly accepted), Anni addressed the Peers, asking them about their experience in the ONE Project, especially about the Capacity Building they are doing in their respective countries.

Starting with Italy, she asked what they think quality assessment is developing/improving in their Adult Education system when they are doing Capacity Building activities and if they have any practical examples on how quality has improved.

Anna Uttaro (CPIA 1 Rome) said that it is complicated to talk about this, first of all because in Italy there are different levels that normally do not communicate with each other about formal, non-formal and informal education. Anna mentioned that formal education is carried out by the public school, which are the centres in Rome, Siena and Bologna (CPIA). In her case they deal with formal education but also recognition of Italian schooling, which allows them to map the competences before starting the whole process of adult learning. In Italy though, the practices vary from centre to centre and that is the reason why it is very difficult to give a general overview of the Italian system.

She is informed about experiences at a local, regional and national level because people interested in adult education are not many and they often meet in national and international meetings, this allowing them to get to know each other and exchange experiences. What Anna Uttaro emphasised about this is that even though there is a national law on Adult Education, the Centres do not work in the same way, which leads to the impossibility of having an evaluation of quality, if the indicators are not shared.

Regarding the strength of this system, Anna Uttaro highlighted the variety of the experiences available and that when they talk about Best Practice on a European level, she suggests to



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say rather Inspirational Practice, because even if there are many in Italy, nobody knows about each other's practices.

Anna mentions that there are national guidelines but each Centre applies them in a different way and that there is no such thing as validation of competences.

Sylvia intervened, mentioning that validation also affects vocational training, thus the pathways to connect the labour market and this sector. Vocational training, education and training are regionally based. According to her, Italy only has a legislative framework at a national level but in the end it is up to each region to decide how to implement it effectively.

Anni then asked Anna Uttaro in relation to the Capacity Building activities and the Peer Learning in which she participated, if she noticed any positive change afterwards in her organisation.

To this question, Anna recalled that it was not her school that participated: she visited another school as a teacher, colleague and Peer. She highlighted the knowledge she gained regarding the Peer Learning Methodology, mentioning that each methodology is like a common language to talk about different realities. That is why she said that it was a powerful tool to share practices with the support of a common framework, understandable for everyone even with such different experiences. The participants in Anna's group, she said, were from different Italian regions and according to her it was interesting how the methodology allowed them to learn from each other. She even added the, although the visit took place in February, they still keep in touch today.

Anni found this excellent as this is one of the main points of this project, to create a network and learn from each other.

After the Italian testimony about her experience in the ONE project, Anni continued with her questions addressing Portugal. The Portuguese Peers were Rita Amado and Elodie Teixeira (Escola Árvore) and Rafael Araújo (GTI).

Rafael started in this project as a Peer, making a visit to Escola Árvore, and GTI received a visit from Kerigma.

He explained that GTI is a private company that works mostly with European projects, funded by the European Union for certified modular training. Regarding this project, Rafael says that it was a fantastic experience and that learning with each other had a positive outcome. Through the Peers visit, they could improve and develop their website, which had several problems being this one in the Outreach area. In the Information area, also on the website, problems were identified in the adult enrolment procedures.

Regarding the visit to Escola Árvore by GTI and what Escola Árvore may have learnt from GTI's pair, Rafael mentioned that they work very differently. GTI is more focused on the objectives to be achieved in terms of numbers of people and the training they offer is also transversal

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to several areas and from several different areas (professional, educational, life areas) in case the person is employed or unemployed, if they are in or out of the labour market. Árvore's approach, on the other hand, is more personal and individualised. In this case, Escola Árvore may have understood their point of view and the way they achieve these numbers.

After the Portuguese answer, Anni turned to Slovakia, asking the same question. Vladimir Hlinka (Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic), began by saying that it has been difficult to follow up on the new legislation, but the persistence of Klaudius and the activities of this project helped them to become more quality oriented. He listed some setbacks that made it impossible to implement the new legislation. Again, he mentioned that the project activities have allowed them to make some changes and take some small steps towards a better legislation. In his opinion there are still some flaws, but it is important to know that despite everything, they continue to work and proceed with the activities that help to look inwards and start making small progresses. Anyway, Vladimir stressed that he will persist without ever forgetting the main goal.

Meanwhile Anni turned to the other Peer present from Slovakia, Monica Janikova (Zeleny Klobuk). She talked about her work as a practitioner, mentioning that her work is focused on the commercial segment. Regarding the ONE project she said that she considers it very important because it is possible to focus on educators who provide education in practice. She added that it is extremely positive because of both the inspiration provided to the professionals involved and the exchange of experiences, allowing to improve performance and services and even to design programmes through needs analysis and focus on quality, which she considers to be a key factor for Adult Education.

Monica visited a commercial organisation, which focuses on personal development in commercial companies and provided some soft skills training for their employees. She highlighted the importance of this training in companies and how it can have an impact on the way people work afterwards. In this sense, Monica emphasised that she felt inspired by this example.

After Slovakia's intervention Anna Kahlson asked to speak again to leave an important note on this discussion, suggesting that everybody should take every opportunity to visit other schools, countries, regions, etc, but also make sure that there is a disposition to receive visits as well, because it is when you are together that learning truly happens. Anna also said that you need some time to reflect on what has happened during that interaction, but that the real Capacity Building occurs when you are meeting, talking, discussing the subjects you are working with. She concluded that sometimes this can be scary because we are exposing ourselves, but that it is necessary to overcome that feeling.





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	<p>Klaudius intervened only to point out that for each visit there was a peer from the Ministry or the National Institute for VET and that it was decided to implement the Peer Review as Quality Assessment, which is written in the new official document of Life Long Learning Adult Education and which will go to the Parliament in June.</p> <p>Anni highlighted the important achievement regarding validation of AIVD, which is a sort of umbrella organisation for Adult Education in Slovakia. According to her this is "our favourite child", mentioning that AIVD can now start validating Adult Educators in Slovakia.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Anni was also warned that another peer, Rita Amado (Escola Árvore), was to speak.</p> <p>Rita Amado began by saying that her intervention followed on from what had already been explained by Rafael (GTI), mentioning that Escola Árvore also visited two institutions and was visited by two different other ones. She stressed that, from her point of view, the most important thing was the strength of the connections or relationships between professionals, because this is something she considers to be lacking. She thinks that Portugal has a very well designed validation system, that there are guidelines and that all the technical aspects work smoothly. The real need, though, is to increase the connections/contacts between the institutions, which they are trying to do with the "Integrated Network for Qualification of the North Coast" (RIQNL) and through more informal means. She concluded saying that this is unfortunately still lacking and that a network would be useful, for example in case there is any doubt about a certain point and/or to find solutions more easily.</p> <p>Following this intervention, Anni added that it is exactly these aspects mentioned by Rita Amado that the NVL (Nordic Network for Adult Learning) responds to, by giving the possibility to access information and discuss ideas whenever necessary, with experts always available to support.</p> <p>Having said this, Anni picked up on Anna Uttaro's (IT) idea, when she referred to the fact that the various Adult Education organisations in Italy hide a treasure, since they have many ideas and experiences that are not shared. By ending the discussion, she said that the participating organisations and their small network, plus the extension of the networks of the different countries involved are themselves a treasure.</p>
18:00	<b>Conclusions</b>
18:15	<b><i>End of the PLA</i></b>
20:30	<b><i>Social dinner</i></b>





## PEER LEARNING ACTIVITY

September 19, 2023

Venue: Národné osvetové centrum, Námestie SNP 12, Bratislava, Slovakia

### Minutes from the Round table discussion with transnational peers

Participants were welcomed by the representative of the National Cultural and Educational Center. The presentation delivered by Lucia Bistárová was focused on the activities of the Center and their involvement in project One. The National Cultural and Educational Center is a state-funded organization of the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic. The Center is a professional and methodological workplace for cultural and educational activities for theoretical, analytical, informational, documentary and consulting activities in the field of culture and education. It serves as a professional workplace that maintains the national register of cultural heritage as a central record of data and information on cultural heritage and a workplace for further training of employees in the field of cultural and educational activities.

The introductory remarks were delivered by Anna Carlsen from the Nordic Network for Adult Learning. NVL supports Nordic co-operation in a LLL perspective, highlights Nordic expertise within priority areas like adult education competence development, validation of prior learning, digital support to learning and workplace learning. Ms Carlsen explained the 3 priorities of the organisation – relevance, flexibility and practical oriented education. She also mentioned the guidelines and the 2030 E & T Framework. She emphasized the role of networks as a good practise and gave examples how NVL disseminates information about the experiences and results gained through Nordic co-operation on adult learning, primarily at the Nordic and European levels. All NVL networks participate in information activities and create new knowledge by carrying out surveys, investigations, comparative studies and analyses.

The Round table was facilitated by Peter Szovics from Slovakia (AIVD), who introduced the objective of the session and outlined the questions for discussion. The objective of the Round table was to share knowledge and skills from the peer reviews conducted in partner countries - Italy, Portugal and Slovakia.

The Italian partners explained the challenges they faced during the cooperation among institutions. Some of the topics highlighted were on certification, weaknesses of some schools with misleveled learners. The Italian E&T system is quite complex and practices vary from institution to institution. In general, peers from Italy positively assessed the activities carried out within the project.



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Venue: Národné osvetové centrum, Námestie SNP 12, Bratislava, Slovakia

### Minutes from the Round table discussion with transnational peers

The Portuguese intervention started with acknowledging the benefits of the project One for improvement of the education system in Portugal. Peer review methodology allows to improve but also provides us with the opportunity for networking and partnerships. Project One provided a good opportunity and platform for further develop partnerships among institutions in Portugal and beyond.

The Slovak experience highlighted the added value of the European peer review. Marta Jendeková emphasized the efficiency of the process and the simplicity in comparison with the ISO standards or EFQM. The whole administration of the peer review activity represents a low-cost version of quality assurance. There was a discussion how to bring the methodology forward, what improvements can be done and how to ensure the continuity of the improvements. Anni Kartunnen touched upon the question of motivation of the peers but also the motivation of trainers to work for institutions with good reputation. Klaudia Bednárová joined the discussion and gave some examples of workshops for staff conducted by the language school she is managing. Peter Szovics added his former experience from the Institute of Banking Education of the National Bank of Slovakia, that some of the trainers came to teach not primarily for money but for further business opportunities in providing consultancy services for clients. Klaudius Šilhár shared his experience on how to improve validation of non-formal and informal learning, outreach activities of AIVD and networking and building partnerships. Exchange of information and ideas among people within AIVD can help to boost the new Code of Ethics among the members of the association.

Partners agreed that further cooperation and coordination in the area of quality assurance is necessary and project One has been a vital platform for making education and training policies more effective and efficient. More research would be needed for the formulation of recommendations and suggestions for stakeholders, but peer review seems to be one of the light methods of quality assurance improvement in participating institutions.



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