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LEARNING MATERIALS for Vocational Mentors in Creative Work

Unit 1

Partner name: NGO PROSTOR PLUS

On October 17, 2014, the Croatian Parliament adopted the Education, Science and Technology Strategy, which has introduced lifelong learning as the foundation of overall education. Lifelong Learning refers to all activities of acquiring knowledge, skills, attitudes and values throughout life, with a view to their adoption or expansion, within the personal, social or professional development and activities of an individual.

Such a comprehensive concept encompasses learning in all life spans and in all embodiments - includes programs:

- formal education (early and pre-school, primary, secondary and tertiary, as well as adult education, training and education);
- non-formal education (organized workshops, seminars, study visits, but without the receipt of a certificate),
- informal education (unintentional, unorganized and spontaneous acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values).

As one of the objectives of the Strategy is the development of a system of recognition and evaluation of non-formal and informal knowledge and skills has been determined,

"The following five objectives have been identified and defined for the entire vertical of education, whether formal or non-formal forms of performance:

- build a system for identifying, stimulating, developing the capabilities and potential of individuals and strengthening services for lifelong personal and professional routing
- improve quality and establish a quality assurance system
- develop the processes and system of recognition of non-formal and informal knowledge and skills
- to improve the system of permanent professional development and upgrading of educational staff
- Encourage the application of information and communication technology in learning and education.

In addition to the above mentioned objectives, the relevant measures are not mentioned as they are defined in certain sections of the Strategy related to education levels

Goal 3: DEVELOP PROCESSES AND RECOGNITION SYSTEM OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL GAINED KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

By adopting the Law on the Croatian Qualifications Framework (2013), legal preconditions have been created for regulating the unique system of recognition and evaluation of non-formal and informal learning.

For the development of such processes, the consensus of all relevant stakeholders is necessary, and the creation of legal preconditions for every citizen to exercise his right to evaluate and recognize previously acquired competencies. It is therefore necessary to respect the need to change the cultural view of non-formal and informal learning and to take into account learning and promote the broad acceptance of non-traditional learning paths.

The system for evaluating non-formal and informal learning is primarily intended for adults with a life and work experience. By evaluating the outcomes of different ways of learning and education, the time needed for adult education is shortened, thus making considerable savings - equally for the individual and for the community, but

also removing the barriers between formal education systems and competences acquired through other forms of learning and education.

The Council of the EU recommendations cite the main phases of the process of evaluating non-formal and informal learning:

- *Identify the learning outcomes that an individual has previously gained*
- *documenting acquired learning outcomes*
- *Assessing and evaluating the learning outcomes that an individual has acquired*
- *Certification of the estimated learning outcomes in the form of qualification, partial qualification or some other form.*

In evaluating and recognizing the outcomes of non-formal and informal learning, it is necessary to provide professional support and guidance to the individual, as well as to acquire additional competences for all participants in the process of evaluation and recognition of prior learning. Evaluation should be carried out on institutions that are most professionally competent for certain content of knowledge and skills.

The first attempt to enable adults to evaluate competences acquired outside the formal education system was regulated in the 2007 Adult Education Act, which provides that adults can prove their knowledge, skills and abilities, regardless of the way they are acquired, by passing an exam. Subsequently, the Law on Vocational Education (Official Gazette, No. 30/09) stipulated that competences acquired by non-formal and informal learning should be attested to by exams, in accordance with professional standards or vocational qualifications. The law prescribes that the procedure and the method of conducting exams proving non-formal and informal competences will be prescribed by the minister.

To develop a system of valuation of non-formal and informal learning, it is necessary consensus of key stakeholders and the creation of legal assumptions that every citizen can exercise his right to evaluate previously acquired competences. It is therefore necessary to respect the need to change the cultural view of non-formal and informal learning and to take into account learning and promote the broad acceptance of non-traditional learning paths.

In addition to promoting the principle of ensuring the quality of education, the establishment of the CROQF at all educational levels will enable transparency, comparability and portability of qualifications between the various educational institutions at national level and its linkage to the EQF at European level, and a common reference point will be the learning outcomes. In accordance with the 2008 European Parliament and Council Recommendations for the establishment of an EQF for lifelong learning, the qualifications acquired in the EU Member States should contain a clear national level indicator as well as the reference level of the European Qualifications Framework.

One of the mechanisms for recognition and transfer of acquired qualifications, both within the country and internationally, is the volume of workload, the required workload for achieving certain learning outcomes by developing a credit score system for vocational education and training (ECVET) and linking it to a credit system in higher education (ECTS). Credit points in vocational education are support to the development of a system oriented towards learning outcomes, developing a system of evaluation and recognition of prior learning, and supporting the development of qualifications and methods of learning based on learning outcomes. Therefore, the vocational education and training system, on the occasion of the development of vocational qualifications, will be based on the principles of the CROQF.

The visibility and recognition of competences acquired through non-formal and informal means, in particular through volunteering and internships and various work experience acquired abroad, is further facilitated by the tools developed by the European Commission such as Europass and Youthpass. The use of these instruments, as well as the valuation of non-formal and informal learning, will be built on the foundations and principles of the CROQF.

Establishing the process and system of recognition of acquired knowledge and skills, especially those arising from non-formal and informal learning forms, is a long-term challenge for our community. It will enable better horizontal and vertical mobility and flexibility, by applying the principles of lifelong learning, as predicted by the CROQF and strategic EU documents. According to the CROQF Law, the process of applying, recognizing and evaluating previously acquired learning outcomes sets forth in detail the Rulebook on Recognition and Evaluation of Non-formal



and Informal Learning and is conducted in accordance with the appropriate programs for evaluating the learning outcomes from the CROQF Registry.

The introduction of the system will follow a thorough analysis of positive and negative experiences from other countries. "

The Croatian Qualifications Framework Act defines the terms:

- Croatian Qualification Framework
- European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning
- Qualification Framework of the European Higher Education Area
- Qualification
- Full qualification
- Partial qualification
- Competences
- Learning outcomes
- Learning outcomes set
- Key competences for lifelong learning
- Standard qualification
- Standard occupations
- Formal learning
- Non-formal learning
- Informal learning
- Lifelong learning
- Evaluating learning outcomes
- Sector

and it is listed the Volume of Qualifications and Educational Outcomes - HROO (Croatian System of General Education), ECVET and ECTS credits, respectively:

"(2) The average total time spent is expressed in ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) points in ECVET (European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training) points in vocational education and HROO (Croatian Credit System for General Education) in the general education and general vocational qualifications of vocational qualifications."

Whereas for non-formal and informal learning it is stated: "Article 19: Within 12 months from the date of entry into force of this Act, the minister responsible for education and science, with the prior consent of the minister responsible for the work and the minister responsible for regional development, shall issue the Ordinance on recognition and evaluation of non-formal and informal learning ". That was in Zagreb, February 8, 2013.

The starting points for establishing the system are examples of good practice and strategic and political recommendations for the development and implementation of the non-formal and informal learning evaluation system, in particular the 2012 EU Council Recommendation, which cites 2018 as the ultimate one in which Member States should develop such a system of evaluation. Only in September 2017, the first standard and the standard of occupation Financial Accounting Forensic was entered in the Register of the CROQF.

Educational strategies, as well as its other major goals - comprehensive curricular reform, student standardization, adult citizens involvement in lifelong learning processes, and internationally competitive public universities and public research institutes - has stopped with the implementation of the government's changeover in 2015, when



majority in the Parliament was won by the HDZ party, the only party that did not endorse the Strategy in the Parliament at the end of 2014.

The issue of validation and certification of non-formal education programs of associations (because in Croatia there is a long-standing and rich practice of quality non-formal education programs implemented primarily by civil society organizations) this year was set as one of the implementation activities of the National Strategy for Creating an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development 2017-2021, and the public consultation on the Draft was open until September 8th. As a deadline for implementation of this activity was determined 2020 which caused a lot of commentary on counselling precisely because of its inadequacy. This is not surprising given the fact that it is about a living practice, about programs that have been implemented for many years, that some schools and programs are already used in teaching, and that the CROQF Law, which foresees the Rule on Recognition and the valuation of non-formal learning, has been adopted already ages ago in 2013.

Although the Republic of Croatia has a universal and free education system in principle, due to the decentralization of the funding of some of its components, the question of accessibility and the cost of education differs in different parts of Croatia.

The main advantages of the Croatian education and training system are the low rate of early school leaving and the high rate of continuing education after secondary vocational school. On the other hand, only 2.5% of adults in Croatia participated in education and training in 2014 and Croatia has one of the highest rates of youth who are not in the education, employment and training system (NEET). In this context, non-formal and informal education, as components of lifelong learning, gains more importance.

In implementing the Adult Education Act, the dimension of active citizenship has not come to fruition, but training and further training programs are still being carried out mainly for very specific, mostly deficit professions.