Deliverable 22

M_APP European Research Report

Work Package 5: Exploration Study

Prepared by Meath Partnership

Summer, 2014

Project Title:	Mobile Devices App for Documentation and Recognition of Informally Acquired European Key Competences during Translational Mobility Stays
Project Acronym:	M_APP
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Executive Summary

The acquisition of key competences through lifelong learning is becoming increasingly important in adult education in Europe. Competence based learning and education demands that learners are actively involved, and so traditional classroom-based learning is often considered ineffective in developing competences. Instead, adult learners looking to acquire or develop their key competences learn best in meaningful contexts, and when interacting with other learners or with their environment[1]. Supplementary to formal education in the European Union, the development and application of key competences are now seen as necessary to produce a work force which not only possesses their specific job-related skills, knowledge and aptitudes, but is also able to adapt to new circumstances as the global community commands.

Identified by the European Parliament and Council of Europe in 2006[2], the European Commission have since highlighted 8 primary key competences which are seen as particularly necessary for personal fulfilment and development, social cohesion, active citizenship and employment in Europe. These 8 key competences provide a framework for policymakers, which should be integrated into education design and provision in lifelong learning. Of particular importance when encouraging flexibility and adaptability in the European workforce are the competences of *Learning to Learn* and *Social and Civic Competence*. The capacity of citizens from EU Member States to move between Member States for education and employment is a major advantage to them in the acquisition of these key competences.

Learning mobility, i.e. transnational mobility for the purpose of acquiring new skills is one of the fundamental ways in which individuals, particularly young adults, can strengthen their future employability as well as their personal development. Learning mobility has played an important role in making education and training systems and institutions more open, more European and international, more accessible and efficient. Learning mobility has other positive features. It can, for example, help combat the risks of isolationism, protectionism and xenophobia which arise in times of economic crisis. It can help foster a deepened sense of European identity and

[1] Tilkin, Guy & Paulus, Michele (eds). (2013) *Sheherazade: 1001 Stories for Adult Learning*. Alden Biesen, BE: COMMIX Graphic Solutions. pp.22

[2] Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning. Official Journal of the European Union L394.
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citizenship among young people. It also boosts the circulation of knowledge which is pivotal to Europe's knowledge-based future. Mobility in the context of education and training differs substantially from the other types of mobility in that it is primarily a pedagogical exercise: it is a tool used to produce certain kinds of learning of an affective and/or cognitive nature with the participant. Placements abroad can be a means for achieving intercultural understanding, learning how to live peacefully together in Europe and in the world, and developing a sense of "European Citizenship". In this regard, it is apparent that the acquisition of key competences is pivotal to the continued success and growth of the European community, and that to date the issue of how to document the acquisition of these competences has yet to be fully addressed on a Europe-wide scale.

The purpose of this State of the Art Report is to ascertain how these key competences, acquired informally during transnational mobility stays, can be documented and recognised using mobile technologies. To achieve this research aim, partner organisations from Austria, Sweden, Ireland, Spain, Romania, Turkey and Germany undertook to circulate and complete research questionnaires with local individuals who had previously completed mobility stays abroad, and to interview two experts in the field of key competence acquisition and validation per partner country. This State of the Art Report shows the consortium's commitment to developing an application which is suited to the needs of mobility participants and adult learners, while also ensuring, through consultation with experts in the field, that the validation process is adequate, adding value and credibility to the application as a tool for documenting informal learning experiences. The purpose of this research is to ascertain which learning situations were experienced most during mobility stays abroad; how participants on mobilities would best like to document their learning; to raise awareness of the M_APP mobile application and also, to gain vital input from experts and end-users regarding the most appropriate method of validating learning situations and the acquisition of key competences, and regarding the design, features and functionality of the app.

In total, 160 participants completed the research questionnaire across the consortium. The nationality of these 160 respondents included, Austrian, Swedish, Irish, Spanish, Romanian, Turkish, German, English, Italian, Icelandic, Ukrainian and Polish. These questionnaires asked participants to comment on aspects of mobility stays which included the most common learning situations they encountered while on their stays abroad and their preferred methods of documenting their learning while abroad; as well as other data regarding the purposes of their

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mobility stays, etc. As regards the most common learning situation, in total there were 27 situations which were commonly experienced by those surveyed and which received a score of 92% of respondents, or higher. These included a variety of situations from organising travel and managing finances, to communicating, socialising and working with individuals from other cultures. The least frequent learning situations, which scored 40% or less most often, included volunteering activities, dealing with emergencies while abroad, facilitating conflicts, leading multi-cultural teams and participating in campaigns.

As regards the most suitable methods of documenting informal learning, 70% of mobility participants who responded to the questionnaire stated that they frequently used photographs to document and validate their learning experiences. The method of using photographs to document this learning was most popular in Germany (100%), Romania (90%), Austria (83%), Spain (80%) and Sweden (78%). Questionnaire respondents also highlighted note-taking and report-writing as other common means of documenting their learning; with both methods scoring an average of 37% or respondents and 32%, respectively. Keeping learning journals and taking short video clips were also emphasised as important methods of documenting informal learning, with each scoring an average of 28% across the consortium.

From an analysis of this data, it is clear that in order to appeal to individuals undertaking mobility stays abroad, the M_APP application should include the functionality to be able to take photographs, video and notes, when documenting informal learning. Similarly, when asked about which features the app should contain, respondents answered that the ability to take photographs, videos, notes and to access GPS are the main priority; with an average score of 77% for photography, 64% for note-taking, 62% for a GPS or location function and 54% for the ability to take and store video. The popularity of these features across the 160 respondents gives credence to their inclusion in the consortium's plans for designing and developing the application. From this research, the consortium has gained an insight into the type of app which mobility participants would not only use, but would get real value from using. The questionnaire was designed to gain this exact insight into what the typical adult learner and mobility participant requires and looks for in a mobile application.

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From a validation perspective, the opportunity to interview experts in the field of adult education, learner mobility and the acquisition of competences was very valuable; as it gave project partners the chance to raise awareness of the M_APP application among this group of professionals and policy-makers, to test the structure and the content of the competence grids developed as part of the desk-based research and to ascertain what the most important functions and features are in relation to the validation of informal learning experiences gathered by the end-user, using the app. In general, the comments and feedback gathered during these interviews was positive in relation to the aims, objectives and planned activities of the project. For example, the innovativeness of the project and of the app was praised as it promotes the European Key Competence Framework, European mobilities and, indirectly, the learning opportunities provided by transnational mobilities. Experts were also pleased that the tool will be designed for a wide cohort of people, and will encourage these individuals to develop their digital literacies as well as their social, civic and intercultural competences.

However, despite this positive feedback, experts also highlighted their concerns in relation to the evaluation and validation of the learning experiences; the complexity of the app for the end-user, particularly those with low digital competence, and the requirement of having a smart phone or device in order to access the app. Experts were also wary that the consortium would not be able to include learning situations in the app which would be relevant to all users, as each person's mobility experience may be different to the next. Further concerns included that that users may not fully understand their own informal learning and so may not be able to document it, and that the exploitation potential for an app in today's competitive mobile application market will be quite limited. Despite these comments, experts who were interviewed also proposed potential solutions to some of these problems. One such proposal was to link the app to existing transparency instruments such as the Europass tools. In this way, the issues with documenting and validating the user's informal learning and competence acquisition could be overcome, as these quality standards are already in place with instruments such as Europass. To overcome the difficulty with choosing accurate learning situations for all learners, experts suggested that individuals using the app could be given the opportunity to add their own learning situation to the list in the competence grid if their relevant experience is not mentioned. Finally, to address the issue of learners not understanding how to document informal learning, how to use the app or how to identify examples of informal learning, some interviewees suggested that an online tutorial, user guide (e-book) or an induction programme (downloadable

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pdf) could be used to explain the functionality of the app and the theory behind the documentation of informal learning experiences.

The findings and outcomes formulated by this research process have highlighted some key areas which will need further development if the consortium is to produce a mobile application that is user-friendly, relevant to users' needs and if learning situations and competences acquired are verifiable through an appropriate validation process. Furthermore, the research has underlined some examples of best practices in assessing key competences, and also highlights some existing tools which may be used in the future development of the application, to allow for the integration of the M_APP mobile app with existing assessment tools. Even though interview responses highlight that challenges do exist in the development of this mobile app, due to the innovativeness of the mobile application and the project as a whole, these challenges are to be expected. What is promising is that with regard to the usability, relevance and functionality of the M_APP mobile app, this research process has brought to the fore some key areas of interest for the project consortium. Firstly, regarding the question of learning situations highlighted in the questionnaire responses, an analysis of these responses show that mobility participants most frequently learn through cultural and social exchanges, rather than through formal learning. This supports the rationale behind the M_APP project, as a means of capturing the acquisition of competences through informal learning.

The research has also allowed the consortium to gain a real insight into what end-users will want from this mobile application; which allows the consortium to develop an app which is relevant to their needs and includes all functions and features necessary to document the informal learning experiences of mobility participants. From this research, the project consortium now understands that the M_APP application needs to contain features which allow users to take photographs, videos, notes and also a GPS function which will allow users to access a map function while abroad. As regards the operating system (OS) on which to develop the application, Android OS was the most popular choice among those interviewed, with 60% of all respondents preferring Android over Apple or Windows OS. Further to this, and an added value of the research, is the willingness of questionnaire respondents and experts to test the prototype application which will be developed in early 2015. On average, 72% of respondents agreed to test the M_APP app, with Romania (86%), Ireland (80%), Spain (80%) and Turkey (80%)

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scoring highest. The support and enthusiasm for this project which has been shown by external actors from across the consortium is encouraging, and adds to the commitment of the consortium to develop a mobile application which is user-friendly, relevant, practical, and verifiable, so that it is valid in educational and employment context across Europe.

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Lifelong Learning Programme

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Lifelong Learning Programme

Introduction

The acquisition of key competences through lifelong learning is becoming increasingly important in adult education in Europe. Rapid societal changes, shifts in the global balance of power, demographic changes and technological advances are just a few of the developments that led the European Commission and other policy making bodies to emphasise the necessity of lifelong learning of professionals in a wide variety of fields of work. The knowledge and skills of the European Union's labour force are pivotal to its continued productivity, innovation and competitiveness in the global markets. In our knowledge-based economy, the need to up-skill and re-skill in response to changes in global demands and innovations in technology is ubiquitous. Supplementary to formal education in the European Union, the development and application of key competences are now seen as necessary to produce a work force that not only possess their specific job-related skills, knowledge and aptitudes, but are also able to adapt to new circumstances as the global community commands.

Identified by the European Parliament and Council of Europe in 2006[3], the European Commission have since highlighted 8 primary key competences which are seen as particularly necessary for personal fulfilment and development, social cohesion, active citizenship and employment in Europe. These 8 key competences provide a framework for policymakers to integrate into education design in lifelong learning. These key competences are seen as fundamental for each individual in a knowledge-based society and for society as a whole to ensure future innovation and mobility in the labour market. They provide added value for the labour market, social inclusion and active citizenship by offering flexibility and adaptability, satisfaction and motivation. Of particular importance when encouraging flexibility and adaptability in the European workforce are the competences of *Learning to Learn* and *Social and Civic*. The capacity of citizens from EU Member States to move between Member States for education and employment is a major advantage to them in the acquisition of these key competences.

[3] Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning. Official Journal of the European Union L394.
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The purpose of this State of the Art Report is to ascertain how these key competences, acquired informally during transnational mobility stays, can be documented and recognised using mobile technologies. In order to meet this research aim this report will analyse the nature of these competences and investigate how these two competences can be acquired during mobility stays abroad and how they can be documented and recognised, with reference to existing standards and practices used across the European Union. Desk-based research conducted by Meath Partnership in generating this research report has also identified many existing tools and technological devices currently being used to acquire, develop and assess competences at a European level. These standards and instruments will be analysed later in this report. This State of the Art Report acts as a framework for the future development of a mobile device app that will be the primary output of the M_APP Project, which will allow adult learners to document and acknowledge the competences they have developed through transnational mobilities. This framework will also be used to generate a series of maps containing information on competence indicators, informal learning and competence acquisition possibilities and means of recognition of previously acquired key competences. This study will relate solely to the competences of Learning to Learn and Social and Civic Competences and will be supplemented by empirical research with reference to CEDEFOP's Guidelines for Validating Non-formal and Informal Learning.

Defining Key Competences

The 8 European Key Competences are defined in the Recommendation 2006/962/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning and are as follows:

1. Communication in the mother tongue
2. Communication in foreign language
3. Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology
4. Digital competence
5. Learning to learn
6. Social and civic competences
7. Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship
8. Cultural awareness and expression

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The first three competences (communication in the mother tongue, literacy and mathematical competence, basic competence in science and technology and communication in foreign languages) are linked with traditional academic subjects and can be integrated within the formal education system. The competences of the second group are cross-curricular in nature and can be supported by transversal capabilities and skills such as critical thinking, creativity, sense of initiative, problem solving, risk assessment, decision-making and constructive management of feelings. The two competences that the M_APP Project will focus on are from the second group, and so it is possible to acquire them through informal learning, particularly when linked with a transnational mobility.

Competences as defined by the European Commission and academic bodies consist of three interrelated but distinct elements:

a. a cognitive component (the understanding part),
b. a behavioural components (the overt behavioural repertoire) and
c. an affective component (including values, beliefs and attitudes).

Competences consist of a combination of skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours required for effective performance of a real-world task or activity. A competence is defined as the holistic synthesis of these components. At another level a competence again may be divided in three components or aspects. It is the ability of a person to show:

1. a particular behaviour, in
2. a particular context, with
3. a particular quality.

This is the formal definition of a competence. It implies that what matters is not only what we know about things, but more importantly what we are able to do with this knowledge, and whether we are able to continually progress in developing our abilities.

The exact information needed in order to measure an individual's level of competence can be found in the red circle (figure 1.1 below). It is the interrelation between how an individual uses their knowledge, skills and attitudes in a particular context and using a particular behaviour or quality which shows whether an individual possesses a certain competence. In other words, it is

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the point at which an individual is able to successfully harness their potential to perform tasks of increasing complexity that demonstrates an individual's proficiency in a given competence.

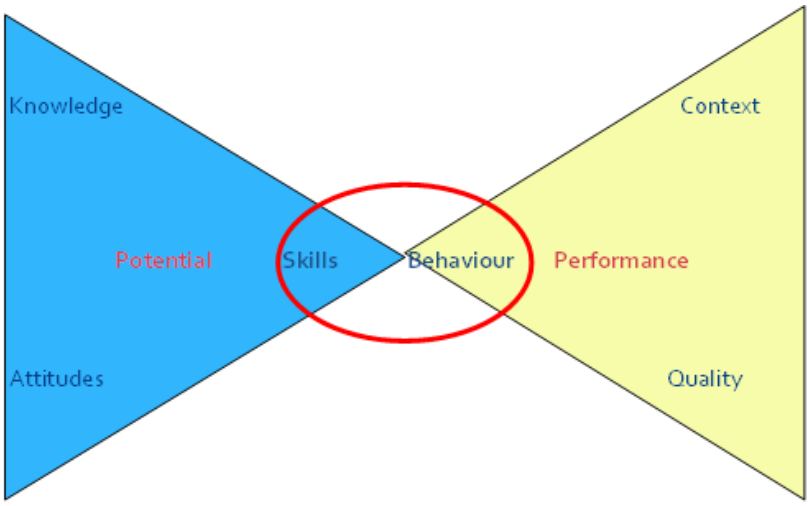

Figure 1.1
Dr. Jaap van Lakerfeld, PLATO (Vintage Project)

In keeping with the aims and objectives of the M_APP Project, we are focusing on the competences of Learning to Learn and Social and Civic Competence. These two competences are defined in 'Key Competences for Lifelong Learning- a European Reference Framework'(2007), published by the European Commission:

- Learning to learn is the ability to pursue and persist in learning, to organise one's own learning, including through effective management of time and information, both individually and in groups.

- Social and civic competences include personal, interpersonal and intercultural competence and cover all forms of behaviour that equip individuals to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life, and particularly in increasingly diverse societies, and to resolve conflict where necessary.

Learning to learn, in particular, is a pivotal competence for adult learners in Europe to possess. The ability of adults to learn a variety of skills and to acquire knowledge from a wide range of

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learning styles and environments demonstrates their capacity to develop a self-conscious awareness of how it is they come to know what they know. The ability of adults to understand the reasoning, assumptions, evidence and justifications behind the way they think and learn shows that by developing learning to learn competences adults develop a deeper awareness of how and why they learn rather than merely being able to receive a high score on a theory test or knowing which learning style suits them best. In this context, learning to learn as a competence exists far beyond the boundaries of academic formal adult education, and is more in common with an adult's ability to develop emotional awareness and intelligence. It can be beneficial to adults developing practical intelligence and everyday cognition in a variety of settings.

In summary we can conclude that the two key competences, civic competence and learning to learn have a large degree of commonality which, considering that both are essential for individual and societal success, provides important implications for education systems and the development of lifelong learning opportunities.

From the evidence that we have drawn on in this paper, what we can say is that Social and Civic Competence and Learning to Learn competence are both a requirement in relationship to real world tasks, for example, the need to learn how to learn in the knowledge society and the need to have the voices of citizens heard in a Europe concerned about democratic deficit.

Each competence has not only a cognitive element but a strong affective dimension and should be treated as a quality of a whole person. Critical thinking, creativity and the values of equality and justice are considered important dimensions of both. The values, in each case, are attributed as the basis for action – civic competence leading to active citizenship – learning to learn leading to active learning or lifelong learning. Both competences are learned most successfully though learner centred pedagogies and through an environment built on trust and respect, which is engaged with wider communities. Academic success has also been correlated with both competences.

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Key Competences in Adult Education

Competence based learning and education demands that learners are actively involved, and so traditional classroom-based learning is often considered ineffective in developing competences. Instead, adult learners looking to acquire or develop their key competences adult learners learn best in meaningful contexts, and when interacting with other learners or with their environment[4].

The following section provides an overview of the policies and practices pertaining to the integration of key competences into both formal and informal adult education across EU member states. This section also provides information on the strategies being employed and adopted across Europe in order to validate informal learning. This information may serve as some examples of best practice in documenting and recognizing informally acquired key competences, which will contribute to the development of the M_APP mobile app.

Formal Education

The Council of Europe has revised their Agenda for Adult Learning which defines the focus for European cooperation in adult learning policies until 2020. In particular, this Agenda has been amended from the original in 2006 to include five priorities for adult learning in Europe for 2012-14.

These priorities include:

1. Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality
2. Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training
3. Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship through adult learning
4. Enhancing the creativity and innovation of adults and their learning environments
5. Improving the knowledge base on adult learning and monitoring the adult learning sector

From this list, priorities 1, 3 and 4 which pertain to mobility, social inclusion and activation and developing creative thinking and innovation are directly linked to the development of competences to address these learning priorities. In this context, the competences of Learning

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to Learn and Social and Civic Competences are pivotal to developing adult learners' capacity to organise their learning and learning environments to include creativity and innovation, to undertake mobilities and to organise their learning abroad and to engage and participate constructively in social and community life.

Competences are holistic in nature, and as such any formal educative approach designed to encourage the acquisition of competence needs to be integrative and holistic as well. Therefore competence-based learning requires an approach to education that differs from the traditional approaches to teaching. In competence based education one tends to employ the methods of experiential learning to create real-world situations and scenarios where competences can be developed. This enables learners to engage in meaningful learning processes. The following elements are most characteristic of this experiential and self-directed approach to formal adult learning:

- Meaningful contexts
- Multidisciplinary approach
- Constructive learning
- Cooperative, interactive learning (with peers, teachers, trainers, educators)
- Reflective learning
- Personal learning

Following the policy recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council of Europe in 2006, there has been widespread adoption of key competence-based adult education across Europe. This action was taken following the recommendation from the Parliament and the Council that these competences were vital attributes for all workers in a knowledge-based economy to possess. For this reason, the recommendation and subsequent European framework acts as a reference for all Member States to ensure that the key competences are fully integrated into national policies, strategies and infrastructures concerning adult education and lifelong learning. As a result, the majority of EU Member States have adopted initiatives to address competence-based adult education and policies to stimulate formal and informal lifelong learning, however not all countries have adopted the 8 European Key Competences, and instead have adapted their education policies to encourage the development of comparable competences.

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Informal Education

Informal adult education refers to new knowledge, skills and competences which adults acquire outside of the formal education system. Where it differs to non-formal learning is that in informal education there is no organised structure, output or goals pertaining to the completion a training programme. Often with informal education learning is spontaneous, inquisitive and sometimes unintentional. Most informal adult education is achieved through social and working life experience and not through sitting in a classroom. In today's digital world, learning can take place almost anywhere and it can occur individually or in a group of peers. Whether it is at work, through participation in community organisations or in the virtual world of the internet and mobile devices, individually or with peers it is important that some recognition is given to the skills and knowledge acquired by adults in all areas of life.

It is widely accepted that competences are most naturally developed through enquiry-based informal education, where the holistic range of skills, knowledge, attitudes, behaviours, contexts and qualities occur freely and do not need to be simulated as is the case with competence-based formal education. In response to this belief that informal education can aid in the development of key competences, EU member states are placing a high emphasis on the need to accredit and validate the full range of an individual's knowledge, skills and competences including those acquired through informal education. To encourage this systemic validation of informal education, the Council of Europe and CEDEFOP have both published their own guidelines and recommendations for the validation of non-formal and informal learning. It is hoped that widespread validation across Europe will help to:

- facilitate a better match between skills and labour demand by addressing skills shortages in growing sectors
- promote better transferability of skills between companies and sectors
- help citizens to undertake transnational mobilities across Europe in search of education and employment opportunities, and personal development.

One approach to validating informal learning in EU member states is to adopt a modular accreditation framework. This would not only lead to more flexibility in the formal education system but also allows for informal and non-formal learning to be recognised as skills can be linked to modular learning outcomes and in this way informal and non-formal education can be

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recognised with a formal education certificate or similar qualification. Figures 1.2 and 1.3 detail the modular approaches to validation currently being adopted by some EU member states in response to European policies developed and advocated by the European Commission, the Council of Europe and CEDEFOP. In total, 12 out of the 27 EU member states have adopted some form of modular approach in their validation process in their national accreditation standards and policies. While these policies are not directly targeted towards formal validation for informal learning, the implementation of these policies allows for informal learning to be easily assimilated into these pre-existing validation structures.

Example of modules (or modular approaches)

Austria: The dynamic in professional sectors explains the current interest in modules which can lead to certificates.

Belgium: There are exemptions for years of study based on the number of years of working experience. In addition, there have been recent efforts to develop modules and to improve credit transfer between systems.

Denmark: There is great practice of various types of flexible organisation of education and training. It can be an exemption based on prior education or work experience (VEUD); modules (AMU and Open Education); or single subject courses (AVU and HF). A 'credit transfer catalogue' exists for vocational general education and training in continuing vocational training. In addition, the recent 'Better education' initiative (2002) proposes exemption from part of an education or training based on non-formally acquired learning.

Finland: Modules are fully integrated in the competence-based qualification. The instruction and the syllabi are drawn in a modular organisation. Students have individual programmes, which take into account previous studies and work experience.

France: With the 1992 validation of non-formal learning (VAP), there was exemption for courses but a complete qualification could not be obtained that way. The 2002 law on *Modernisation sociale* includes VAE[6] and credit can now be awarded leading to a full qualification. Modules can be credited and added (accumulated) to form a qualification.

Germany: Traditionally, there is very little practice of modules. However, recent innovations such as the 'Part Qualification' are important steps. In that experiment, credit is given for what 20- to 29-year-olds have achieved, even if it does not amount to a complete qualification.

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Ireland: Credit and modules are built into the system. They can be gained from any learning achieved through work, leisure, and community services.

Italy: The recent laws insist on modules and training credit that can be transferred from one system to another. The 1999 Law on Compulsory Training and Higher Technical Training strongly re-stated that approach.

Netherlands: Substantial progress is reported in the introduction of modules in vocational education and training.

Norway: Credits can be gained for learning outcomes in different contexts and settings. This also applies to Universities and University Colleges.

Sweden: Modules are integrated in education and training systems (for formal learning). Exemption is an area (with guidance) that policies for validation of non-formal and informal learning are focused on.

United Kingdom: Modules to achieve credits are largely used and recognised by the National Qualification Framework and the Higher Education Recognition Scheme. NVQs and GNVQs are extensively modularised (unit based). Credits and credit transfer schemes exist. Accreditation of prior learning and of prior experiential learning is widespread in further and higher education. It reduces the number of modules needed to obtain a qualification.

Figures 1.2 & 1.3. Source: Colardyn and Bjornavold (2004).

Assessment of Key Competences

Assessing competences is a process of identifying the performance of a person in a particular situation and evaluating the quality of the performance. In traditional educational settings assessment was assumed to consist only of identifying the knowledge, skills and attitudes that were supposed to be included in a person's potential. The focus of these assessments was on a person's potential rather than their actual performance. Nowadays, policies on learning focus on knowledge productivity, co-creation, social constructivism, etc. and assume that the knowledge is not a body of knowledge known to experts to be transmitted to others; but rather conceive knowledge creation as the mutual interaction amongst learners bringing themselves further in their itineraries towards extended personal competence. Given this shift in views on competence, and on competence acquisition the challenge is to assess the actual behaviour a person demonstrates in a realistic context. Referring to the double triangle model outlined in figure 1.1 this means that the assessment needs to focus on the right triangle rather than on the left. Nonetheless items may be included referring to the elements included in the left triangle, since these elements may be considered a valuable treasure of knowledge, skills and attitudes that may clarify or explain why a level of performance/competence is present, or not present yet.

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Functions of assessing competences

Assessments may serve various purposes. This does not imply that each purpose requires a different tool; it does however seem to imply that a same or similar tool would need different guidelines when used for different purposes. This has to be taken into account while designing the M_APP device. Firstly we will outline the concept of assessment functions as follows:

D*iagnostic:* An assessment may be used to help a person acquire a view on his/ her own abilities at a particular moment in time. A diagnostic assessment is meant to provide feedback to a question such as: What kind of competence profile do I have?

O*rientation:* Orientation focuses on providing the person with a clear image of what a competence includes or involves. By doing an assessment the learner gets an insight into the features of the competences included in the assessment. It is like doing the test in order to know what the test is about rather than being tested.

F*ormative/learning oriented:* Once engaged in a learning process a learner may wish to get feedback on how much progress he or she is making and how this progress may be optimised. This need for information is based on the curiosity on how well one is doing, how far one has come and how the learning process may best be continued.

C*ollective learning:* So far we consider learning as an individual process of acquiring competences. In learning situations, however we often come across collective learning situation in which the ultimate goal is to raise the level of collective performance (examples are sports, dancing, drama, team work, etc.) Assessments on competences with such a collective ambition will need to include ways of identifying the collective performance.

S*ummative assessment:* Once a learning process is coming to a particular level considered to be the end, or the completion of the process, the assessment needs focus on the question: did I reach my goals? Do I meet the standards? In such cases we speak of summative assessment focusing on the identification of the eventual level of performance.

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***S**elective assessment:* Another purpose of assessing competence may be for purposes of selection. In such assessment the basic challenge is to rank the levels of performance to identify who are the best, or better than others.

***P**redictive assessment:* Having gone through a learning process it may be interesting to identify the eventual level of performance; more interesting even may be the search for indicators of how the learning process may be continued and were that continuation may lead to. Formulated more simply, this would refer to finding the answer to a question like: How competent may I become?

The variety of functions does not necessarily imply that assessment tools need to vary accordingly; it may well be that one tool suits more, if not all purposes, provided it is presented with an appropriate user guide explaining to the user, how the tool may be applied, shared, discussed, applied and interpreted.

Tools for Assessing Key Competences

In this section of the report a summary selection of assessment tools currently in use across Europe are presented.

- *ProfilPass (Germany):* A portfolio instrument based on a biographical approach to visualise and document competences from all areas primarily focusing on work life and formal education, but also on informal and non-formal areas; combining self and external evaluation.

- *Selbst Check Beschäftigungsfähigkeit (Germany):* This tool assesses the ability to learn across 5 thematic areas which could be linked to Learning to Learn:
  - Communication competences
  - Tolerance towards frustration and persistence
  - Organisational abilities
  - Innovation skills
  - Network thinking

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The Selbst Check Beschäftigungsfähigkeit combines self-evaluation and external evaluation and offers a reliable profile of the user. It aims to offer orientation and support for future plans and actions within the workplace. It is explicit for self-evaluating employability and assesses those skills, competences and qualifications that are considered to be necessary in order to stay employed and to be able to react towards changing requirements in a fast changing working environment.

- *Beurteilungsbogen zu sozialen und methodischen Kompetenz – smk72 (Germany):* An online tool based on a theory test that can be accessed without registration, but only for the assessment of social competences assessing on 7 dimensions: ability to cooperate, self-sufficiency, social responsibility, leading ability, communicational ability, context appropriate behavior, ability to deal with conflict. These are reflected through 42 statements focusing on social and methodological competence in the sector of vocational training and further education. The instrument is based on occupational and economic educational approaches where these two competences are considered to be valuable for the professional life.

- *Intercultural Awareness and Cultural Competency (Ireland):* This course is delivered by the National Youth Council of Ireland and is for adult learners who volunteer or work with youth organisations or young people in an out-of-school setting. This course offers modules on understanding culture and identifying aspects of one's own culture; the role of culture in communication and how different cultural and ethnic groups interact with each other; identifying different ways of working and communicating; and recognising the different stages of cultural competency (www.intercultural.ie).

- *Competence-based self-assessment portfolio for students (Ireland):* The Health Promotion Department of the National University of Ireland, Galway has drafted a competence-based self-assessment portfolio for students undertaking the Masters in Health Promotion. The portfolio provides students with the opportunity to reflect on their learning and to assess the course as a whole, allowing them to integrate materials across modules and assignments completed and leading to a more holistic learning experience. This portfolio is a combination of assessments which leads to the learner being able to identify their strengths and weaknesses by the end of the programme. Further information on this tool can be found at: www.nuigalway.ie/healthpromotion/documents.

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- *TellVit teacher training programme (Sweden):* This assessment tool is part of a multimedia kit virtual trainer with video, audio, ppts with animation and text. It contains a Handbook explaining the technical requirements and how to use the tool and a Training Needs Analysis Matrix. The online tool no longer exists but the final Project Report is available on the project available on TELLVIT-Website.
- A Swedish initiative for training of teachers to measure / assess learning-to-learn competencies is also available as an online learning activity, and can illustrate a practical approach to informally provide learning services on assessing key competencies. This initiative is introduced from the following: http://www.bedomningforlarande.se/formativaprocesser/1/3

- *EdaLab PON and SAPA PON (Italy):* EdaLab PON is a diagnostic tool to verify the initial and in progress competences of adult people. SAPA PON is a systematic survey of literacy competences in specific target of adult people in the region Calabria, Sicilia and Puglia. Within these 2 projects have been implemented scientifically tested instruments to assess competences.

- *Self-evaluation. A collective transactional process of self-evaluation (Italy):* The self-evaluation is a model designed by prof. Marco Guspini, experienced by a group of researchers and experts of educational processes and adult education, in the university training of trainers. It has been also recently experienced and tested during the sessions of training of trainers within a Leonardo da Vinci Project Transfer of Innovation ITUBE - **I**nnovation **T**ransfer in contin**U**ous education of an integrated model **B**ased on p**E**rsonalization and digital portfolio (Reference n.: N. 7DB846DCEAB0604E). Self-evaluation is based on an inductive, not didactic nor directive approach. The role of the trainer is to scaffold and encourage peer tutoring and collaborative interactions. During the whole life cycle of the process the trainer with his/hers assistants (one or two) go through the groups, gives suggestions, answers the questions, encourages participants who are less involved, makes questions, etc. The model focuses however on the results reached by the group before those reached by a single individual. The goal is therefore to assess, more precisely self-assess, the work group's efforts. The self-assessment of the group focuses on the communicative, emotional and social areas as well as its contents.

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- *LABOBS (Italy):* LABOBS – Learning Abilities Observatories is a Grundtvig Multilateral Project (134430-CP-1-2007-1-IT-GMP, (www.labobs.eu). The objective of LabObs project is the promotion of the empowerment of all the adults who wish to further their education along all their life. To pursue this aim the project examines the strategies applied in order to recognize the different educational experiences, thus increasing the number of people involved in non-formal education and promoting specific tools, like for example the Study circles that are an experimental approach experienced in Genova Region in Italy. The project focused on:
  - analysis of the 8 key competences as a base of every learning experience;
  - informal learning deriving from the participation of adults in the Study Circles;
  - a self-evaluation approach adopted in order to identify, record and make visible the changes incurred during and thanks to the learning experience: a personal development plan leads the adult to reflect on the expected progress of the learning experiences, an open interview guides the adult to describe the perceived changes, a blog is used in order to track the changes as a sort of portfolio.

- *Action Research project (Italy):* Research project about the design of a strategy and a toolkit for evaluation and self evaluation of key competences in the VET for trainers and students. The focus is on key competences, the research and developed strategy and toolkit were limited to the key competence Mother Tongue. The experience and the realised products are available on the website http://www.agrariosereni.it/as/pagine/progetti/valutazione/valuta.php

- www.competenzestrategiche.it *(Italy,* ASSOCIAZIONE FORMAZIONE 80*):* This platform is the result of a research about planning and implementation of a guide and digital device for self-assessment and for development of strategic competences in study and work) commissioned by the CNOSFAP of Rome and realized in 2010-2011. The development of the platform and guidelines was appointed to a group of researchers and expert from important academic institutions (Università Pontificia Salesiana di Roma, Università degli Studi Roma Tre), coordinated by Michele Pellerey.

- VILMA Project: Information to be added - http://www.vilma-eu.org/index.php?id=2

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Documenting and Recognising Informal Competence Acquisition

In designing a mobile device mechanism to document and validate informally acquired key competences, it is important to analyse the competences in question to identify which individual skills and attributes the competences are composed of, as it is only in demonstrating individual skills, knowledge and attitudes in a given context that competence acquisition can be proven. The following clusters of skills have been identified by another on-going Grundtvig Multilateral project, Online Tool for Self Evaluation of Key Competences in Adult Age (Vintage). The Vintage project consortium has undertaken research to identify which are the key components in each of the 8 European Key Competences. Focusing on the competences of Learning to Learn and Social and Civic Competences, the corresponding clusters are as follows:

- **Learning to Learn**

In summary

In personal life, educational life, professional life and community life:

- Co-creating knowledge
- Reflective
- Strategic
- Self-direction oriented
- Self-initiated
- Self-efficacy
- Interactive
- Digitally proficient
- Managing motivation
- Experimenting

Mobile Learning App

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Lifelong Learning Programme

v Social and Civic Competence

Knowledge	***Skills***	***Attitudes***	***Qualities***	***Behaviours***	***Context***
· Understanding codes of conduct and manners · Awareness of concepts individual, group and culture · Knowledge of good health · Understanding of existence of cultural differences · Understanding politics/political concepts · Knowledge of the constitution and civil rights · Understanding policy-making · Knowledge of key figures in politics · Understanding legal matters · Knowledge of main events of world history · Knowledge of minorities issues in the world · Knowledge of human rights and responsibilities · Knowledge of cultural heritage · Understanding of cultural identity · Understanding of value-based 'rights' and 'wrongs' · Understanding social cohesion · Knowledge of civics · Knowledge of immigrant rights	· Communicative skills · Ability to communicate constructively and socially · Ability to express frustrations constructively · Negotiation skills · Social skills · Ability to resolve interpersonal conflict · Ability to solve problems · Ability to achieve personal goals in social interaction · Ability to separate personal and professional issues · Ability to create confidence · Decision making skills · Researching skills · Reflecting skills · Debating skills · Listening skills · Cooperating skills	· Moral responsibility · Non-judgmental · Disposition to compromise with integrity · Assertive · Sense of belonging to one's culture · Acceptance (of human rights and equality) · Self-efficacious · Sense of citizenship · Sense of equality · Tolerant · Interest in politics · Ideological sophisticated · Politically efficacious · Political trust · Autonomous and · Resilient · Appreciation of one's own culture and respect for other cultures · Openness to difference of opinion · Self-confidence · Positive attitude toward government responsibilities	· Active · Non-violent · Effective · Caring · Responsible · Supportive · Positive · Sensitive · Responsive · Peaceful · Sustainable · Fair · Respectful	· Participating/being involved in civil society, community and/or political life · Participating in public affairs · Collaborating with others · Building positive relationships · Developing a clear self and/or group/community/ national/ global identity · Participating in civic activities · Adaptively assimilating changing technologies · Dealing with diversity · Finding and sustain community links · Managing motivation and emotion · Engaging in democratic dialogues · Influencing policy and society	· Context of civil society · Context of civic community · Context of your country, Europe or the world · Context of human rights · Context of representative democracy · Context of everyday life · Context of public affairs · Context of political life/affairs · Context of social interaction

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Lifelong Learning Programme

In summary:

In personal life, educational life, professional life and community life:

- Seeking to have an impact
- Standing for a good cause
- Participating in public life
- Acting democratically
- Respectful
- Caring
- Developing one's identity and a sense of belongingness

Competence development and transnational mobilities

Learning mobility, i.e. transnational mobility for the purpose of acquiring new skills is one of the fundamental ways in which individuals, particularly young people, can strengthen their future employability as well as their personal development. Learning mobility has played an important role in making education and training systems and institutions more open, more European and international, more accessible and efficient. It can also strengthen Europe's competitiveness by helping to build a knowledge-intensive society, thereby contributing to the achievement of the objectives set out in the Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs. Learning mobility has other positive features. It can, for example, help combat the risks of isolationism, protectionism and xenophobia which arise in times of economic crisis. It can help foster a deepened sense of European identity and citizenship among young people. It also boosts the circulation of knowledge which is key to Europe's knowledge-based future.

Mobility in a context of education and training differs substantially from the other types of mobility in that it is primarily a pedagogical exercise: it is a tool used to produce certain kinds of learning of an affective and/or cognitive nature with the participant. Placements abroad can be a means for achieving intercultural understanding, learning how to live peacefully together in Europe and in the world and develop a sense of "European Citizenship". The benefits for

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mobility are very well detailed in the MoVE-iT survey issued by the European Commission, namely the benefits of Learning Mobilities for trainees:

- Increased cultural awareness
- Increased language ability
- Increased self-confidence
- Willingness to go again
- Understanding other countries in Europe
- Improved communication skills
- Work relationships
- Personal relations
- Higher motivation for study completion
- Increased interest in other people
- Expected positive impact on career opportunities
- Improved vocational knowledge

International mobility of students can ensure a number of benefits for society in general. Mobility and the possibility for European citizens to move across countries is positively viewed as a great advantage and benefit of the European Union, yet mobility and work placement still affect a very small percentage of workers and students. An increase in mobility contributes to promoting and sustaining understanding and respect among EU citizens and would contribute at a later stage to greater worker mobility, thus increasing the flexibility of the European labour market. An increase in students' involvement in mobility would contribute to social cohesion and mutual understanding in a society characterized by greater multicultural and multi-ethnic composition.

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D.22(b) M_APP Feedback from Questionnaires

Work Package 5: Exploration Study

Prepared by Meath Partnership

June, 2014

Project Title:	Mobile Devices App for Documentation and Recognition of Informally Acquired European Key Competences during Translational Mobility Stays
Project Acronym:	M_APP
Project Number:	539068-LLP-1-2013-AT-GRUNDTVIG-GMP

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Introduction

The aim of the M_APP Project is to develop a mobile application (app) which allows for the documentation and presentation of informal learning experiences and outcomes made during mobility stays in the context of 2 key competences namely *Learning to Learn* and *Social and Civic Competence*.

To assist the project consortium in the development of this mobile device, the project consortium were tasked with undertaking research with 160 citizens across Europe who have been involved in organising, hosting or participating in mobility stays abroad. A questionnaire and feedback template were prepared by Meath Partnership, and completed by all partners during this research phase. The purpose of this primary research is to ascertain their views and opinions on how informal learning can be documented, clustered, described, reported and evaluated by using smart phone and tablet devices. This research has been further enhanced by desk-based research completed by Meath Partnership when generating the project State of the Art report, and a total of 14 interviews, 2 per partner organisation, conducted with experts in the field of learning mobilities and the acquisition of key competences through informal learning. This document presents the findings of the questionnaires completed with 160 citizens from across Europe.

Background information

I. Nationality of Research Participants

As part of the primary research phase of this exploration study into the acquisition of key competences during mobility stays, the following nationalities were engaged and surveyed across the project consortium:

Austrian; Swedish; Irish; Spanish; Romanian; Turkish; Germany; English; Italian; Icelandic; Ukrainian; Polish

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II. Gender of Research Participants

The following table presents the gender breakdown of research participants per partner country.

	Austria %	Sweden %	Ireland %	Spain %	Romania %	Turkey %	Germany %	Average %
Male	8	42	10	35	24	70	70	37
Female	92	58	90	65	76	30	30	63

Questionnaire Research Findings

The following section of this report introduces the questions which were presented to participants in the research questionnaire and logs their responses, where possible in tables. Where a score of 100 % is not reached in each country, the rest of the questionnaire respondents did not answer the question.

1. Prior Knowledge of EU Key Competence Framework

Participants were first asked if they had any knowledge of the EU key Competence Framework, and also if they were aware of the skills and knowledge required for the acquisition of the key competences of Learning to Learn and Social and Civic Competences.

	Austria %	Sweden %	Ireland %	Spain %	Romania %	Turkey %	Germany %	Average %
Yes	50	13	60	70	86	60	0	49
No	50	87	30	25	14	20	100	47
Only One	0	0	10	0	0	20	0	4

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2. *Extent to which key competences can be acquired*

Participants were then asked to what extent they thought that the two chosen key competences (Learning to Learn, and Social and Civic) could be acquired informally and applied during mobility stays abroad. The following section presents the responses to this question per partner country.

Austria

In general, participants from Austria agreed that mobility stays provide participants with an excellent opportunity to acquire these competences informally, and can also improves one's soft skills, language learning and cultural awareness. Respondents also felt that undertaking study or work abroad allows individuals to begin an internal evaluation process; to take stock and view their lives objectively and to test themselves by seeing how they react to new unfamiliar environments and cultures. Mobility stays can also breed tolerance and acceptance of cultural differences, as well innovation and creativity, as through immersion in new cultures facilitated through mobility stays, participants can learn how to do things differently and can bring their learning back to their home country and can implement change. In this respect, respondents from Austria saw mobility stays as a form of further education and a commitment to intercultural exchange and lifelong learning.

Sweden

Respondents from Sweden suggested that with Social and Civic Competences in particular, these can be acquired through mobility stays; however, one stay can really only give you inspiration and motivation, some insights and new perspectives but you need to undertake several mobilities in order to gain a deeper understanding, and an intercultural and interpersonal competence. Also a longer mobility stay will give you more knowledge and deeper insights. Once gained, this competence in particular can help individuals to get more out of their working and personal lives through the experience of immersing yourself in another culture, as is the practice with mobility stays. This is because individuals often need to take independent actions in new situations when they go abroad, meaning they need to make decisions based on their own opinion in situations that they're not familiar to.

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Ireland

In Ireland, respondents expressed that they felt the organisational skills involved in undertaking a mobility stay are similar to those acquired through Learning to Learn and the experience of meeting new cultures can foster the development of Social and Civic Competences. The ability to overcome obstacles on these mobilities and the process of compiling reports for the funders at the end of the experience helps the participant to process and assimilate their learning. Meeting people from different backgrounds, cultures and expanding their awareness of diversity throughout Europe will enhance the participant's ability to engage with others more effectively and thus develop their Social and Civic Competence. Furthermore, respondents from Ireland highlighted that volunteering, while on a mobility stay, is a great way for people to grow their personal, interpersonal and intercultural competences which will equip them to participate in an effective and constructive way in their social and working life.

Spain

In general, respondents from Spain agreed that the two competences in question are important to acquiring skills in all aspects of an individual's professional and/or personal life. Both competences can and should be acquired if the aim is to be integrated into the social system of the country the individual is visiting. Moving to another country involves learning and knowing the rules and customs that govern it. It was also agreed that both competences are needed if the participant's goal is to undertake further education and/or employment opportunities abroad. An individual's learning takes place through contact with groups from different countries, with their customs and languages, enabling the acquisition of values and knowledge that a person could not reach in his/her home country. This is because learning to cope in a different environment that is far from the known, helps to form the character of an individual, as being in a foreign country requires the individual to develop certain skills to help them to organise their own learning opportunities, as well as to manage different cultural norms and a foreign language, for example.

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Romania

The 21 respondents from Romania all agreed that the acquisition of key competences facilitated through mobility stays is really dependent on the type of mobility undertaken, the openness of the participant to engage in learning and cultural experiences, the duration of the mobility and finally, how the participant gets involved in the local events, social and cultural life of the host community. Nevertheless, it was also agreed that the process of acquiring these competences can begin even in the preparatory phase of the mobility stay, and this can also enhance the participant's development of these competences during their actual mobility stay.

3. Learning Situations

Respondents in each of the seven partner countries were then asked to analyse the list of learning situations, as presented in the tables below, and to assess which situations they encountered during mobility stays which they had undertaken. Respondents were then asked to specify which situations they felt were relevant to their mobility experience, and then to rank these relevant learning situations from 1 to 5, where 1 is very important to their mobility stay and 5 is not important in relation to the individual's mobility experience.

The following tables present the research findings per partner country, in table format.

Austria

LEARNING SITUATIONS	Total % who thought this situation was relevant to them	Importance to my mobility stay				
		1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5 %
Applying for a transnational mobility	83	30	10	40	20	0
Making your travel arrangements	100	40	25	25	10	0
Liaising with the host organisation	75	44	22	22	12	0
Planning your finances/ making grant applications	50	50	33	17	0	0
Participating in formal learning courses abroad	83	50	10	40	0	0

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Learning how others learn	50	0	20	80	0	0
Learning by doing	75	45	33	11	11	0
Problem based Learning – learning from your mistakes	83	30	20	40	0	10
Trying new experiences	92	73	0	18	0	9
Experiencing new cultures, environments, languages	92	82	0	9	0	9
Participating in cultural activities, competitions, events and sports	92	27	37	27	9	0
Changes to your plans and schedules	75	22	22	0	56	0
Evaluating your mobility stay	50	20	0	80	0	0
Greetings and Introductions	83	10	20	30	30	10
Finding your way in a foreign country	100	84	8	8	0	0
Conversation with local people	100	76	8	8	8	0
Using or practicing local language phases/words	100	79	8	0	8	8
Visiting local businesses or places of work	75	11	11	77	0	11
Presenting your own organisation or country	83	20	20	20	40	0
Participating in cultural activities	100	8	40	16	16	0
Participation in campaigns	58	14	28	14	44	0
Volunteering activities	58	14	0	44	28	14
Meeting new people and personalities	100	50	42	0	8	0
Working in teams with people from different cultures	100	32	32	16	16	0
Leading a multi-cultural team	33	25	50	0	25	0
Awareness of rules and regulations in different cultures/societies	100	42	25	33	0	0
Drawing on your own experiences to solve complex problems	92	27	36	27	10	0
Facilitating conflicts of interest and disagreements	58	0	57	14	29	0
Presenting your own view point in a non-confrontational manner	83	10	40	30	20	0

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Awareness of own strengths and weaknesses in your own culture	91	27	18	37	9	9
Awareness of own strengths and weaknesses in different cultural settings	100	33	25	17	17	8
Dealing with an emergency situation in a different country i.e. visit to doctor or hospital, reporting an situation to the police etc.	75	33	56	0	11	0

Sweden

LEARNING SITUATIONS	Total % who thought this situation was relevant to them	Importance to my mobility stay				
		1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5 %
Applying for a transnational mobility	88	5	19	19	43	14
Making your travel arrangements	92	5	14	14	41	27
Liaising with the host organisation	100	0	0	33	38	29
Planning your finances/ making grant applications	88	5	29	24	19	24
Participating in formal learning courses abroad	88	14	0	10	38	38
Learning how others learn	92	9	9	23	46	14
Learning by doing	96	0	4	17	61	17
Problem based Learning – learning from your mistakes	100	0	17	38	25	21
Trying new experiences	100	0	0	8	29	63
Experiencing new cultures, environments, languages	96	0	0		44	48
Participating in cultural activities, competitions, events and sports	92	9	9	36	32	14
Changes to your plans and schedules	83	10	10	50	25	5
Evaluating your mobility stay	100	0	29	50	17	4
Greetings and Introductions	96	4	9	39	35	13
Finding your way in a foreign country	92	5	14	9	46	27
Conversation with local people	96	9	4	26	17	44

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Using or practicing local language phases/words	92	9	9	14	32	36
Visiting local businesses or places of work	83	15	10	25	20	30
Presenting your own organisation or country	96	4	13	52	17	13
Participating in cultural activities	92	0	5	50	36	9
Participation in campaigns	63	20	40	27	7	7
Volunteering activities	54	54	8	39	0	0
Meeting new people and personalities	100	0	4	13	21	63
Working in teams with people from different cultures	100	4	0	33	17	46
Leading a multi-cultural team	75	11	28	22	22	17
Awareness of rules and regulations in different cultures/societies	88	14	14	33	29	10
Drawing on your own experiences to solve complex problems	92	5	18	36	32	9
Facilitating conflicts of interest and disagreements	79	16	16	37	21	11
Presenting your own view point in a non-confrontational manner	96	9	13	30	39	13
Awareness of own strengths and weaknesses in your own culture	96	9	0	39	26	26
Awareness of own strengths and weaknesses in different cultural settings	96	13	4	30	35	17
Dealing with an emergency situation in a different country i.e. visit to doctor or hospital, reporting an situation to the police etc.	71	24	6	24	29	18

Ireland

LEARNING SITUATIONS	Total % who thought this situation was relevant to them	Importance to my mobility stay				
		1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5 %
Applying for a transnational mobility	30	33	0	67	0	0
Making your travel arrangements	40	25	50	25	0	0
Liaising with the host organisation	50	40	40	0	20	0

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Planning your finances/ making grant applications	50	0	0	40	60	0
Participating in formal learning courses abroad	40	25	25	0	25	25
Learning how others learn	60	50	33	17	0	0
Learning by doing	90	11	45	11	0	33
Problem based Learning – learning from your mistakes	50	40	40	20	0	0
Trying new experiences	100	40	20	20	0	20
Experiencing new cultures, environments, languages	100	60	20	0	10	10
Participating in cultural activities, competitions, events and sports	70	29	43	14	14	0
Changes to your plans and schedules	70	14	14	14	14	44
Evaluating your mobility stay	80	25	25	0	50	0
Greetings and Introductions	90	23	22	0	44	11
Finding your way in a foreign country	80	25	50	25	0	0
Conversation with local people	60	50	17	33	0	0
Using or practicing local language phases/words	70	14	14	29	29	14
Visiting local businesses or places of work	80	38	62	0	0	0
Presenting your own organisation or country	90	11	22	56	11	0
Participating in cultural activities	90	67	11	11	11	0
Participation in campaigns	10	0	0	0	0	100
Volunteering activities	10	0	0	100	0	0
Meeting new people and personalities	90	45	33	0	11	11
Working in teams with people from different cultures	80	50	25	13	12	0
Leading a multi-cultural team	30	0	67	33	0	0
Awareness of rules and regulations in different cultures/societies	60	33	50	17	0	0
Drawing on your own experiences to solve complex problems	50	20	20	40	0	20

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Facilitating conflicts of interest and disagreements	20	0	50	50	0	0
Presenting your own view point in a non-confrontational manner	60	33	17	17	33	0
Awareness of own strengths and weaknesses in your own culture	60	0	33	67	0	0
Awareness of own strengths and weaknesses in different cultural settings	50	40	60	0	0	0
Dealing with an emergency situation in a different country i.e. visit to doctor or hospital, reporting an situation to the police etc.	40	25	50	0	25	0

Spain

LEARNING SITUATIONS	Total % who thought this situation was relevant to them	Importance to my mobility stay				
		1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5 %
Applying for a transnational mobility	40	10	0	50	30	10
Making your travel arrangements	82	6	0	12	59	24
Liaising with the host organisation	82	9	0	9	18	64
Planning your finances/ making grant applications	83	0	11	6	33	50
Participating in formal learning courses abroad	73	0	7	20	40	33
Learning how others learn	75	0	8	17	8	67
Learning by doing	78	0	0	22	33	44
Problem based Learning – learning from your mistakes	93	0	0	7	20	73
Trying new experiences	83	0	6	11	11	72
Experiencing new cultures, environments, languages	100	0	0	0	16	84
Participating in cultural activities, competitions, events and sports	82	0	0	18	41	41
Changes to your plans and schedules	75	0	0	25	17	58
Evaluating your mobility stay	33	11	0	56	22	11
Greetings and Introductions	43	7	14	36	14	29

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Finding your way in a foreign country	79	0	5	16	26	53
Conversation with local people	85	0	0	15	25	60
Using or practicing local language phases/words	72	0	11	17	22	50
Visiting local businesses or places of work	64	0	18	18	36	27
Presenting your own organisation or country	27	9	18	45	18	9
Participating in cultural activities	62	8	8	23	46	15
Participation in campaigns	50	0	0	50	33	17
Volunteering activities	83	0	0	17	33	50
Meeting new people and personalities	82	0	6	12	18	65
Working in teams with people from different cultures	83	0	4	13	39	43
Leading a multi-cultural team	70	0	20	10	40	30
Awareness of rules and regulations in different cultures/societies	72	0	0	28	39	33
Drawing on your own experiences to solve complex problems	68	0	11	21	26	42
Facilitating conflicts of interest and disagreements	60	0	10	30	30	30
Presenting your own view point in a non-confrontational manner	75	6	0	19	31	44
Awareness of own strengths and weaknesses in your own culture	56	6	0	38	31	25
Awareness of own strengths and weaknesses in different cultural settings	67	7	0	27	47	20
Dealing with an emergency situation in a different country i.e. visit to doctor or hospital, reporting an situation to the police etc.	78	0	11	11	22	56

Romania

LEARNING SITUATIONS	Total % who thought this situation was relevant to them	Importance to my mobility stay				
		1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5 %
Applying for a transnational mobility	57	19	5	24	0	10

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Making your travel arrangements	86	10	19	38	10	10
Liaising with the host organisation	71	19	19	10	19	5
Planning your finances/ making grant applications	62	19	10	14	0	19
Participating in formal learning courses abroad	62	43	5	0	10	5
Learning how others learn	48	14	5	19	0	10
Learning by doing	76	48	10	0	5	14
Problem based Learning – learning from your mistakes	67	14	24	14	0	14
Trying new experiences	100	48	24	14	5	10
Experiencing new cultures, environments, languages	95	62	14	0	5	14
Participating in cultural activities, competitions, events and sports	62	33	14	5	5	5
Changes to your plans and schedules	43	10	10	14	5	5
Evaluating your mobility stay	38	5	10	10	5	10
Greetings and Introductions	48	19	10	10	10	0
Finding your way in a foreign country	86	38	19	10	5	14
Conversation with local people	95	33	24	5	14	19
Using or practicing local language phases/words	91	19	33	10	10	19
Visiting local businesses or places of work	71	29	14	14	10	5
Presenting your own organisation or country	67	29	14	5	19	0
Participating in cultural activities	67	24	29	10	0	5
Participation in campaigns	14	0	5	0	0	5
Volunteering activities	24	10	5	5	0	5
Meeting new people and personalities	90	33	24	14	10	10
Working in teams with people from different cultures	81	43	14	5	5	14
Leading a multi-cultural team	29	5	10	0	5	10

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Awareness of rules and regulations in different cultures/societies	86	29	29	19	5	5
Drawing on your own experiences to solve complex problems	33	14	5	10	0	5
Facilitating conflicts of interest and disagreements	19	5	5	0	5	5
Presenting your own view point in a non-confrontational manner	43	10	5	14	5	10
Awareness of own strengths and weaknesses in your own culture	81	24	29	0	14	14
Awareness of own strengths and weaknesses in different cultural settings	71	19	19	10	5	19
Dealing with an emergency situation in a different country i.e. visit to doctor or hospital, reporting an situation to the police etc.	48	10	5	10	5	19

Turkey

LEARNING SITUATIONS	Total % who thought this situation was relevant to them	Importance to my mobility stay				
		1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5 %
Applying for a transnational mobility	70	20	80	0	0	0
Making your travel arrangements	90	10	50	40	0	0
Liaising with the host organisation	60	40	60	0	0	0
Planning your finances/ making grant applications	100	30	70	0	0	0
Participating in formal learning courses abroad	100	20	80	0	0	0
Learning how others learn	90	20	80	0	0	0
Learning by doing	100	40	60	0	0	0
Problem based Learning – learning from your mistakes	100	10	90	0	0	0
Trying new experiences	100	80	20	0	0	0
Experiencing new cultures, environments, languages	100	40	60	0	0	0
Participating in cultural activities, competitions, events and sports	100	20	50	30	0	0
Changes to your plans and schedules	100	10	70	20	0	0

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Evaluating your mobility stay	60	50	50	0	0	0
Greetings and Introductions	100	60	40	0	0	0
Finding your way in a foreign country	100	30	70	0	0	0
Conversation with local people	100	10	90	0	0	0
Using or practicing local language phases/words	90	20	80	0	0	0
Visiting local businesses or places of work	60	30	70	0	0	0
Presenting your own organisation or country	100	10	60	30	0	0
Participating in cultural activities	80	10	70	30	0	0
Participation in campaigns	30	10	50	40	0	0
Volunteering activities	50	10	40	30	20	20
Meeting new people and personalities	100	20	80	0	0	0
Working in teams with people from different cultures	100	40	60	0	0	0
Leading a multi-cultural team	40	40	60	0	0	0
Awareness of rules and regulations in different cultures/societies	100	60	40	0	0	0
Drawing on your own experiences to solve complex problems	100	50	50	0	0	0
Facilitating conflicts of interest and disagreements	90	30	70	0	0	0
Presenting your own view point in a non-confrontational manner	80	20	80	0	0	0
Awareness of own strengths and weaknesses in your own culture	90	40	60	0	0	0
Awareness of own strengths and weaknesses in different cultural settings	80	30	70	0	0	0
Dealing with an emergency situation in a different country i.e. visit to doctor or hospital, reporting an situation to the police etc.	10	80	20	0	0	0

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Germany

LEARNING SITUATIONS	Total % who thought this situation was relevant to them	Importance to my mobility stay				
		1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5 %
Applying for a transnational mobility	60	0	0	20	25	15
Making your travel arrangements	100	5	5	25	40	25
Liaising with the host organisation	60	0	5	30	15	10
Planning your finances/ making grant applications	100	5	5	30	40	20
Participating in formal learning courses abroad	100	10	25	35	15	15
Learning how others learn	100	15	20	10	30	25
Learning by doing	100	0	5	20	45	30
Problem based Learning – learning from your mistakes	100	5	15	35	30	15
Trying new experiences	100	0	10	25	45	20
Experiencing new cultures, environments, languages	100	10	10	35	30	15
Participating in cultural activities, competitions, events and sports	100	5	10	45	25	15
Changes to your plans and schedules	100	20	20	35	20	5
Evaluating your mobility stay	60	5	20	30	5	0
Greetings and Introductions	100	0	10	25	35	30
Finding your way in a foreign country	100	5	10	15	45	25
Conversation with local people	100	0	0	15	60	25
Using or practicing local language phases/words	100	0	0	20	55	25
Visiting local businesses or places of work	60	0	10	30	15	5
Presenting your own organisation or country	100	15	30	25	25	5
Participating in cultural activities	100	0	15	35	35	15

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Participation in campaigns	40	0	0	5	20	15
Volunteering activities	70	0	0	15	30	25
Meeting new people and personalities	100	5	10	25	40	20
Working in teams with people from different cultures	100	5	15	20	35	25
Leading a multi-cultural team	40	0	0	5	25	10
Awareness of rules and regulations in different cultures/societies	100	5	25	50	10	10
Drawing on your own experiences to solve complex problems	100	5	20	35	25	15
Facilitating conflicts of interest and disagreements	90	0	25	35	25	5
Presenting your own view point in a non-confrontational manner	80	0	15	35	30	0
Awareness of own strengths and weaknesses in your own culture	100	10	20	30	30	10
Awareness of own strengths and weaknesses in different cultural settings	100	5	15	35	30	15
Dealing with an emergency situation in a different country i.e. visit to doctor or hospital, reporting an situation to the police etc.	25	0	0	10	15	0

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4. Additional Learning Situations

Based on their experience of mobility stays abroad, participants in this research phase were asked if they had encountered other learning situations during their mobility stays that were not mentioned in the previous question, but which they felt were equally important to the acquisition of competences through informal learning. The following points highlight the suggestions made by participants in Austria, Ireland and Spain regarding additional learning situations which may be worthwhile including in our research questionnaire.

Austria

- Learning how to use the traffic system in a new country (with car and bike)
- Adjusting to a new teaching and grading system
- Recognising and selecting from the various new opportunities available (courses, things to do in free time)
- Learning how to use a new currency
- Learning how to run a household for the first time: household budgeting, division of chores, dealing with flatmates

Sweden

- Get friends and spend time with the locals outside your own organization and context

Ireland

- Traditional gifts exchanged by the host and sending countries
- Learning about new food and customs in your host country, and knowing how to share information about your own country's food, customs and traditions.

Spain

- Processing official documents and / or services
- Solve basic administrative problem in a foreign country.

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- Moving in Public Transportation
- Establish telephone conversation
- Local Festivals

5. Purpose of Mobility Stays

Survey respondents were then asked to specify what the purpose of their mobility stay was. For the most part, individuals surveyed as part of this research in Ireland, Spain and Turkey primarily undertook mobilities for cultural exchange and professional development, with a high percentage of respondents undertaking Erasmus University mobilities in Sweden (66.7%), Germany (35%) and Austria (33%), and the majority of Romanian respondents planning mobility stays for their professional development (76.19%).

	Austria %	Sweden %	Ireland %	Spain %	Romania %	Turkey %	Germany %	Average %
Cultural Exchange	33	13	45	60	38	40	30	37
Professional Development	8	29	25	60	76	40	5	35
Teacher Training	0	4	5	20	38	10	0	11
Youth Work	0	0	0	0	5	0	15	3
Erasmus University Study	33	67	0	40	5	0	35	26
Volunteering	0	0	0	20	0	0	5	4
Learning Partnerships	0	0	20	20	29	10	0	11
Work Placement	8	17	0	40	5	0	10	10
Other	8	0	5	5	19	0	0	5

Participants were also given the opportunity to list other reasons why they had undertaken mobility stays abroad. Of all respondents, one Irish participant stated that they had previously undertaken a mobility to attend a conference, and several Romanian participants listed sightseeing, a job as an au-pair, involvement in the implementation and management of

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transnational meetings and visiting partner organisations working in schools, as alternative reasons for undertaking mobility stays abroad.

6. Role in relation to Mobility Stays

Survey respondents were asked to reflect on their mobility experiences, and to specify the role(s) they undertook during the planning and completion of their mobility stay. The following table presents the research findings from Question 6.

	Austria %	Sweden %	Ireland %	Spain %	Romania %	Turkey %	Germany %	Average %
Participant/Learner	100	65	60	90	86	70	90	80
Sending Org	0	35	30	30	43	20	0	23
Host Org	0	0	10	10	10	10	0	6
Intermediary	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	1
Funding Body	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

7. Documenting the Learning

When asked to reflect on how participants documented their own learning when undertaking mobility stays abroad, survey respondents were given a list of documentation methods. These included taking notes electronically, keeping a diary or a learning journal, taking photographs, making small videos, creating short audio files and writing a report(s). The following table presents the findings from this question, and acts as a good insight into the features and functions which those undertaking mobilities use on a regular basis to document their learning. For this reason, these responses should be highlighted when the M_APP mobile device app is being planned and designed.

	Austria %	Sweden %	Ireland %	Spain %	Romania %	Turkey %	Germany %	Average %
Note Taking	33	30	15	40	43	40	55	37
Learning Journal	33	30	25	40	38	10	20	28
Photographs	83	78	40	80	90	20	100	70
Video	17	17	0	50	24	30	60	28
Audio Files	0	9	0	10	0	0	0	3
Report	33	56	20	25	42	0	45	32
Other	17	0	0	10	5	0	0	5
None of the above	0	4	0	10	0	0	0	2

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Participants were also asked to list if they had used other methods of documenting their learning. Participants from Austria stated that they had used blog entries to document their learning, and also received a certificate of participation to validate their learning through their mobility stay. Participants from Spain had answered that they wrote letters and emails to document key events and learning opportunities which they encountered during their mobility stays.

8. Access to Smart Devices

Question 8 asked survey respondents if they had access to a smart phone or a smart device, such as a tablet, where they could access mobile applications. Overwhelmingly, across the consortium, an aggregate score of 85% of all respondents had access to smart phones or other devices. Sweden had the highest percentage of individuals with access to these devices with a rate of 95.7% of respondents, and Romania had the lowest percentage with only 61.9% of survey respondents having access to smart phones and/or smart devices. A summary of all responses can be seen in the table below.

	Austria %	Sweden %	Ireland %	Spain %	Romania %	Turkey %	Germany %	Average %
Yes	92	96	80	95	62	90	80	85
No	8	4	20	0	38	10	20	14

9. Operating System

For the respondents who answered ‘yes’ to Question 8, they were then asked to specific which operating system was supported by their smart phone or device. Respondents were given a choice of Apple, Android or Windows platforms.

Results from this question highlight that Android is the most widely used operating system across the consortium. In particular it is the most popular platform among individuals surveyed in Austria, Ireland, Spain, Romania and Turkey. Apple was the most popular operating system amongst those surveyed in Sweden and Germany, with Windows scoring quite low across all survey responses.

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	Austria %	Sweden %	Ireland %	Spain %	Romania %	Turkey %	Germany %	Average %
Apple	36	71	13	25	15	20	60	34
Android	46	29	75	85	77	70	40	60
Windows	18	0	12	15	8	10	0	9

10. M_APP App Features

Participants were given a list of features and functions which you would expect to find on a mobile app device. They were then asked to 'tick' which features they would expect to find on a mobile app specifically focused on allowing learning to document their learning experiences while undertaking a mobility stay. The following table summarizes which functions participants from each country would expect to find on the M_APP mobile app.

	Austria %	Sweden %	Ireland %	Spain %	Romania %	Turkey %	Germany %	Average %
Photographs	92	76	92	95	81	10	90	77
Video	67	48	63	80	62	30	30	54
Notes Feature	100	71	77	70	67	0	60	64
Google Translate	50	52	63	60	43	10	40	45
Dictaphone	42	24	17	50	38	0	5	25
Location (GPS data)	75	38	92	75	67	20	70	62
Social Media Links	50	33	63	45	24	30	80	46
Others	17	0	0	20	10	0	0	7

Survey respondents were also asked to list other features and functions which they think should be included in the M_APP mobile app, but which were excluded from the table above. Some of the additional features listed by participants in Austria include a budget planner and a free messaging service such as 'Whatsapp' or similar. These participants also suggested that the app ensure the user's guaranteed data protection. Participants from Romania suggested that the app should be linked to a person's email account or personal blog as a means of documenting their learning experiences. Similarly, participants from Spain also stated that they thought a link from the mobile app to a personal email account would also be beneficial, as would a 'scan' function, where users could scan in evidence of their mobility stay and learning experiences. Further suggestions from Spain included a separate function just for documenting cultural events and learning, and a 24-hour service offering users technical assistance around

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the clock in using the app. The only recommendation made by a Swedish participant is that the app should not be linked to Facebook, while one respondent from Ireland suggested that a 'Log in with Facebook' function might be useful for the app, if users can create their own account, as this would reduce the time it would take for the user to create this account, and would also allow the user to 'share' their mobility and learning experiences with their friends and contacts online.

11. Willing to trial M_APP in the Future

When asked if they were willing to participate in a trial of the M_APP mobile device application during their next transnational mobility stay, the majority of respondents from Ireland, Spain, Romania, Turkey and Germany agreed to take part in this piloting of the M_APP application, with the majority of individuals surveyed in Austria and Sweden preferring not to be involved in this piloting and testing phase.

	Austria %	Sweden %	Ireland %	Spain %	Romania %	Turkey %	Germany %	Average %
Yes	75	46	80	80	86	80	60	72
No	25	54	20	15	14	20	40	27

12. Summary of Research Findings and National Recommendations

Members of the partner organisations who were responsible for undertaking this research phase within their own networks and communities were then asked to summarise their experience when conducting this research, and to provide a brief summary of their research findings. Some partners also generated some recommendations for the progress and implementation of the M_APP project, from their national perspectives. The following paragraphs present the experiences, findings and recommendations from each of the seven partner countries.

Austria

In general, the Austrian team were very pleased with the enthusiasm the people surveyed showed for the M_APP project. All respondents felt that they had benefited a great deal from their mobility stays and relished the opportunity to somehow impart what they had learned by using our survey. This makes us feel very positive about the project in general. The fact that

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people are so keen to show others what they have gained during a mobility stay bodes well for the usage of a mobile learning app.

The comments made by the people surveyed in response to the second question regarding key competences shows that whether people had previously heard of these key competences or not, they had little difficulty in grasping the concepts of 'Learning to Learn' and 'Social and Civic Competences'. All comments made reflect that respondents felt achieving both of these key competences was a major factor in making their mobility stay worthwhile.

The survey respondents identified very well with the learning situations presented in the survey. The majority of situations received a high percentage of people selecting them as relevant to their own mobility stay with the exception of; planning your finances; learning how others learn; evaluating your mobility stay, and leading a multicultural team. All of these learning situations were only relevant to 50% or less of respondents. The situations most relevant to people (100%) included:

- Making your travel arrangements
- Finding your way in a foreign country
- Conversation with local people
- Using or practising local phrases
- Participating in cultural activities
- Meeting new people and personalities
- Working in teams with people from other cultures
- Awareness of rules and regulations in other cultures, and
- Awareness of own strengths and weaknesses in different cultural settings

The degree of importance each situation had to each individual respondent was very varied with no real trend to be seen. This shows, in our opinion, how individual each mobility stay and learning experience is and emphasises the importance of having a broad range of situations with weighted importance available in the final app.

In terms of documenting their mobility stays it is interesting to see that taking photos was for the majority of respondents the most important means of documentation. In response to the

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question on what people would ideally like in a mobile learning app, the ability to take notes featured most highly. We feel that the difference between the tools that people had used for documentation (i.e. taking photos) in the past and the things they would ideally like to see in a future app show that a multi-feature learning application which is quick and easy to use would be widely welcomed.

Sweden

The people who answered the questionnaire are in general very satisfied with their mobility stays. They rank interaction with local people as the most valuable experience in their stays as well as experiencing new cultures, environments and languages. The most common tool for documentation is by far photos and they find this feature most important in an app besides a notes feature.

Ireland

Research participants in Ireland all undertook mobilities facilitated through Meath Partnership, either as Participant or Learner (60%), a Sending Organisation (30%) or a Host Organisation (10%). At the beginning of the research phase, very few participants were aware of the 8 European Key Competences, or specifically the two competences being targeted by the M_APP project; however, after a brief discussion with participants, all were made aware of the elements involved in the acquisition of key competences, and of their importance to the development of the culture of European Lifelong Learning. When the project aims and objectives and the EU Key Competence Framework were explained to the participants, all were very happy to complete the research questionnaire and to provide feedback. In general, participants thought that this was a very innovative and useful project, with the majority (80%) agreeing that they would use the M_APP mobile app on future mobility stays abroad.

When asked about the most pivotal learning situations which they encountered during their mobility stays, Irish respondents tended to favour the more interpersonal, participative elements of their mobility experience. For example, experiencing new cultures, languages and environments and trying new experiences were both voted as the most relevant learning situations by 100% of Irish respondents. This was closely followed by meeting new people and

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personalities, greetings and introductions, presenting your organisation, participating in cultural activities and learning by doing, which were all chosen as relevant learning situations by 90% of Irish research participants. This reflects that Irish participants undertaking mobility stays regard highly the opportunities which these stays allow them to interaction and engage in collaboration with other people and cultures. For this reason, it is no surprise that Irish respondents most frequently undertook mobility stays abroad to facilitate cultural exchange (45%).

Regarding the recommendations made by the Irish study population for the functionality and features contained on the new M_APP mobile device application, it was agreed that the ability to take photographs and to monitor location through GPS data were the most important tools for documenting a mobility experience for this particular Irish audience. It was also suggested that linking the app to a personal Facebook account would allow the user to document their learning and mobility experiences and to 'share' photographs, videos and items, including the location of their activities, with their informal social networks and contacts. Overall, the feedback from the Irish study population pertained to the development of a user-friendly app, which is equipped with all of the ubiquitous features we expect to find on smart devices, such as a camera, an electronic notepad, location (GPS data) and links to social media. Google translate or a similar function was also highlighted as a beneficial feature for the M_APP application, which is indicative of the language barriers which Irish citizens often encounter when undertaking mobility stays within Europe. In this way, users will be already familiar with the functionality of the app, and will ensure the success of the app with a wider target audience.

Spain

Of all respondents to the Spanish survey, 70% have prior knowledge of EU Key Competence Framework which is a large percentage of the study population. From these respondents with knowledge of the two competences in question, there is wide consensus that these 2 competences can be acquired in informal context. It was generally agreed amongst these participants that when an individual is abroad, it is the ideal place to develop these two competences, because individuals are most willing to learn and are more open-minded when they are in an unknown environment, and surrounded by new cultures, languages and customs.
When asked which learning situations were most relevant to their mobility experience, survey respondents from Spain listed experiencing new cultures, environments, languages (84%);

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problem based learning – learning from your mistakes (73%) and trying new experiences (72%) as the most relevant shared learning situations to this group. For the study population, the main purpose of mobility stays were for Cultural Exchange and the Professional Development (60% of the respondents consider one of these purposes). When asked about their role in undertaking their mobility stay, a total of 90% of respondents completed mobility stays as a Participant or Learner.

Regarding this group's advice to the partners in the development of the M_APP mobile device application, the ability to take photographs (95%), video (80%) and to have some function to track one's location (GPS data) (75%) were listed as the main features people would expect to be included in order to allow them to document their learning experiences effectively and in real time.

Overall, the experience of engaging these individuals in this research was very positive, which is represented in the 85% of respondents who have agreed to participate in a trial of the M_APP mobile app during their next transnational mobility stay.

Romania

In Romania, the questionnaires were completed by 21 respondents in total. All respondents were really enthusiastic about the M_APP project concept, proposed products and activities, and welcomed the initiative. According to the responses received by the Romanian team, the highest percentage of our respondents were involved in transnational mobilities for professional development (76.19%) and took part in these mobilities as participants or learners (85.71%). The most commonly listed feature for documenting the learning and also a feature for the future mobile application that the partnership intends to develop was the possibility of taking photographs.

The majority of our participants in the study population expressed their willingness to take part in the pilot testing of the M_APP mobile device application when it has been made available.

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Turkey

In Turkey, 70% of the research participants were male and 30% female. Of these individuals, 60% have prior knowledge of EU Key Competence Framework. When analyzing the responses to this questionnaire, it is clear that the most relevant learning situations to the survey respondents were related to all kinds of learning experiences. In general, in the Turkish study population, the purpose of their mobility stay was to enhance their professional development (40%) and/or to undertake a cultural exchange (40%), with the majority of respondents completing these mobility stays as either a participant or a learner (70%). It is also worth noting that the majority of the Turkish study population agreed that they use mobile devices to a wide extent in their daily and educational life.

Germany

The 20 respondents to the questionnaire in Germany where aged between 22 and 40 years. Most of them are very familiar with mobile app usage. While very few respondents were aware of the EU Competence Framework before this research phase, after a short explanation by the German partner, research participants gained a clear understanding of the meaning of the competences, their key features and attributes and the importance of these competences to the development of the individual adult learner in Europe.

While this understanding was fostered with the study population, the group also expressed that the main factor which will influence the use of the M_APP mobile device application during transnational mobility stays will depend on the benefits of using this app for the participants, and if it will help to validate and enhance their learning experience in any way.

Conclusion

In total, 160 participants completed the research questionnaire across the consortium. The nationality of these 160 respondents included, Austrian, Swedish, Irish, Spanish, Romanian, Turkish, German, English, Italian, Icelandic, Ukrainian and Polish. These questionnaires asked

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participants to comment on aspects of mobility stays which included the most common learning situations which they encountered while on their stays abroad and their preferred methods of documenting their learning while abroad; as well as other data regarding the purposes of their mobility stays, etc. As regards the most common learning situations, in total there were 27 situations which were commonly experienced by those surveyed and which received a score of 92% of respondents, or higher. These included a variety of situations from organising travel and managing finances, to communicating, socialising and working with individuals from other cultures.

The full list of learning situations which scored 92% or higher is as follows:

- Making your travel arrangements
- Trying new experiences
- Experiencing new cultures, environments, languages
- Participating in cultural activities, competitions, events and sports
- Finding your way in a foreign country
- Conversation with local people
- Using or practicing local language phases/words
- Participating in cultural activities
- Meeting new people and personalities
- Working in teams with people from different cultures
- Awareness of rules and regulations in different cultures/societies
- Drawing on your own experiences to solve complex problems
- Liaising with the host organisation
- Learning how others learn
- Problem-based Learning – learning from your mistakes
- Evaluating your mobility stay
- Greetings and Introductions
- Presenting your own organisation or country
- Presenting your own view point in a non-confrontational manner
- Awareness of own strengths and weaknesses in your own culture
- Learn by doing
- Awareness of own strengths and weaknesses in different cultural settings
- Planning your finances/making grant applications
- Participating in formal learning courses abroad
- Changes to your plans and schedules

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The least frequent learning situations, which scored 40% or less most often, included volunteering activities, dealing with emergencies while abroad, facilitating conflicts, leading multi-cultural teams and participating in campaigns. An analysis of these responses show that mobility participants most frequently learn through cultural and social exchanges, rather than through formal learning. This supports the rationale behind the M_APP project, as a means of capturing the acquisition of competences through informal learning.

Regarding the reasons for undertaking mobility, the following table represents the most popular reasons for mobility stays among the adult learners who were surveyed:

	Austria %	Sweden %	Ireland %	Spain %	Romania %	Turkey %	Germany %	Average %
Cultural Exchange	33	13	45	60	38	40	30	37
Professional Development	8	29	25	60	76	40	5	35
Teacher Training	0	4	5	20	38	10	0	11
Youth Work	0	0	0	0	5	0	15	3
Erasmus University Study	33	67	0	40	5	0	35	26
Volunteering	0	0	0	20	0	0	5	4
Learning Partnerships	0	0	20	20	29	10	0	11
Work Placement	8	17	0	40	5	0	10	10
Other	8	0	5	5	19	0	0	5

As regards the most suitable methods of documenting this informal learning, 70% of mobility participants who responded to the questionnaire stated that they frequently used photographs to document their learning experiences, and as validation of their informal learning. The method of using photographs to document this learning was most popular in Germany (100%), Romania (90%), Austria (83%), Spain (80%) and Sweden (78%). Questionnaire respondents also highlighted taking notes and writing reports as other common means of documenting their learning, with both methods scoring an average of 37% or respondents and 32%, respectively. Keeping learning journals and taking short video clips were also emphasised as important

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methods of documenting informal learning, with each scoring an average of 28% across the consortium.

	Austria %	Sweden %	Ireland %	Spain %	Romania %	Turkey %	Germany %	Average %
Note Taking	33	30	15	40	43	40	55	37
Learning Journal	33	30	25	40	38	10	20	28
Photographs	83	78	40	80	90	20	100	70
Video	17	17	0	50	24	30	60	28
Audio Files	0	9	0	10	0	0	0	3
Report	33	56	20	25	42	0	45	32
Other	17	0	0	10	5	0	0	5
None of the Above	0	4	0	10	0	0	0	2

From an analysis of this data, it is clear that in order to appeal to individuals undertaking mobility stays abroad, the M_APP application should include the functionality to be able to take photographs, video and notes, when documenting informal learning. Similarly, when asked about which features the app should contain, respondents answered that the ability to take photographs, videos, notes and to access GPS are the main priority, with an average score of 77% for photography, 64% for note-taking, 62% for a GPS or location function and 54% for the ability to take and store video. The popularity of these features across the 160 respondents gives credence to their inclusion in the consortium's plans for designing and developing the application.

From this research, the consortium has gained an insight into the type of app which mobility participants would not only use, but would get real value from using. The questionnaire was designed to gain this exact insight into what the typical adult learner and mobility participant requires and looks for in a mobile application.

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D 22(c) M_APP Key Questions for External Experts

Work Package 5: Exploration Study

Prepared by Meath Partnership

July, 2014

Project Title:	Mobile Devices App for Documentation and Recognition of Informally Acquired European Key Competences during Translational Mobility Stays
Project Acronym:	M_APP
Project Number:	539068-LLP-1-2013-AT-GRUNDTVIG-GMP

Mobile Learning App

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Lifelong Learning Programme

Introduction

The purpose of this short report is to outline the research findings and to summarize the responses gathered during the external expert interviews within the M_APP Project. It was agreed by all partners at the First Consortium Meeting in Ireland, that all partners would conduct interviews with a minimum of two experts in the field of the acquisition of key competences. The interview questions were agreed and implemented by all partners during the interviews, so as to ensure comparable responses and research findings across the consortium.

Purpose of Interviews

In each country two experts working with *learning* and *acquisition of competences* were interviewed by each partner. The purpose of the interviews was four-fold:

1. To raise awareness of the M_APP project by introducing its aims and objectives
2. To test the structure and the content of the competence grids
3. To explore how the information could be presented through the M_APP mobile device application in a way that will be of benefit to experts and facilitators in this field for the purpose of recognising and validating informal learning
4. To gather suggestions for the future development of the M_APP mobile device application.

Methodology

The length of interviews varied greatly depending on the expert involved, the format of the interview chosen and the style of the interviewer. However, on average the interviews lasted between 30 – 60 minutes each. Interviews were permitted to take place in any of the following formats: face-to-face, telephone, Skype, video conferencing, etc. Where possible, partners were encouraged to record the interviews using a Dictaphone or their smart device, and to secure the permission of the expert being interviewed to allow the consortium to use their answers and feedback in generating this report. To assist with the interview process and to ensure a degree of commonality across the interview, nine questions were recommended. Partners were then tasked with contacting relevant local and regional experts in the field of adult education, with particular expertise in the acquisition of competences, in order to conduct the interviews. Partners were then encouraged to summarize the responses to each question. This summary is presented in the following report.

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Interview Questions

1. What is your initial opinion of the aims and objectives of the M_APP project and what it is trying to/setting-out to achieve? Do you think it is possible and worthwhile?

2. What are the primary benefits of transnational mobility projects for learners, hosting and sending organisations from your experience?

3. What are key challenges, from your experience, in terms of capturing and documenting the informal learning that takes place during these mobility stays/visits?

4. In terms of the competence grids, are you in agreement with the approach and format that we are taking?

    a. Are there some obvious gaps in the grids as presented
    b. Are there other learning situations that you would like to see included
    c. How detailed do you think the learning situations need to be in order for learners to identify with them
    d. Should there be an opportunity for learners to create their own learning situations if not provided

5. From your perspective, what are the core elements that the mobile phone application must contain?

6. How important is the ability of the mobile phone app to facilitate external validation of the informal learning outcomes in your opinion?

7. What would you consider to be the minimum documentation required in order to satisfy the evidence needed to prove a successful mobility stay in terms of competence development or acquisition?

8. Would you advocate the use of the M_APP app?

9. What do you see to be the main challenges or opportunities for the mainstreaming or exploitation of the M_APP app?

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Names and Titles of Experts

Title	Name	Position
Austria:		
Ms.	Mag. Faustina Verra	Logo Jugendmanagement, Graz
Mr.	Martin Prinz	Deputy Head of the National Agency for Lifelong Learning and Erasmus+ Programme
Sweden:		
Ms.	Camilla Winter	International Strategist at the municipality of Kungsbacka and evaluator of LLP/Erasmus project proposals.
Mr.	Håkan Persson	International Secretary, School Of Business And Engineering, Halmstad University
Ireland:		
Ms.	Enda Brennan	Director of the Life & Business Coaching Association of Ireland
Ms.	Barbara Fegan	Liaison Officer with the Louth Meath Education & Training Board with responsibility for coordinating European mobilities at a county level
Spain:		
Mr.	Asier Garitaonandia	Technician of Basque Institute of Qualifications and Vocational Training (BIQVT)
Mr.	Angel Elias	Teacher and researcher of Deusto University
Romania:		
Ms.	Maria Butyka	Educational Models and Non-formal Education Curriculum Developer at New Horizons Foundation
Mrs.	Erika Kocsis	Not Given.
Turkey:		
Ms.	Sibel Sezer	EU Project coordinator of city of Gumushane
Mr	Cumhur Apak	Experienced Director and EU Project Coordinator of Ataturk Technical and Vocational High School
Germany:		
Mr.	Ernir Erlingsson	Co-Founder of Ymir Mobile ehf., Reykjavik, Iceland - mobile App Expert with international stay experiences
Mr.	Thomas Schattschneider	University of Greifswald, Germany - Expert for international stays for students.

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Interview Responses

Austria:

The Austrian experts expressed that they saw this as a challenging project, but one which meets the interests of the funding bodies and the labour market, as it provides an opportunity to make informal learning visible and more transparent. Informal learning, as a cross-over issue in all educational levels, is of crucial importance in adult education in Europe, and as such the M_APP application could offer added value not only to the discussion about informal learning but provide for the first time a tool to capture informal learning processes during mobility stays. The Austrian experts did express that they felt it was important that the application be integrated and used in conjunction with other transparency instruments, such as the Europass tools.

When asked to name the primary benefits of transnational mobility projects for learners, experts in Austria listed the skills of learning to cope in an unknown environment, and the subsequent social competences which are acquired as a result, as one of the key skill sets fostered by mobility stays. Individuals on mobility stays also develop practical skills such as organisation, resource management, budgeting, etc, as well as improved language skills and a lesser reliance on prejudice, stereotypes towards other nationalities and other cultural barriers, which can contribute to social and civic competences.

The Austrian experts offered the following advice, when asked to comment on what they perceived to be the key challenges to the successful implementation of the M_APP project:

1) People need to be aware of their learning process before, so that they are able to capture it during a mobility stay. Only providing these individuals with an app and letting them use it would probably not be sufficient. It would probably need some kind of introduction or tutorial to the use of the app.
2) Documentation needs to be accurate, reliable and verifiable. To a certain extent we just need to believe what people are telling us, however it is foreseen that the whole documentation undergoes a kind of validation process which in fact appears to be very promising and helpful, you would need to make sure that the documents provided are reliable, e.g. photos of something totally different documenting a certain competence, or documents made by somebody else etc.

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3) Why should students / young VET learners sit and document informal learning experiences and learning situations? If an appropriate answer can be found to this question, there should not be any major problems with the implementation.

When asked if there were obvious omissions from the competence grid, the Austrian experts first spoke about the use of learning situations. In their opinions, learning situations or life situations are manifold, meaning that it will never be possible to capture all situations you can think of. Therefore, while the content of the competence grid is adequate and comprehensive, the grid still needs to remain generic enough that it applied to everyone. The second expert felt that in fact the competence grids probably need more detail. He thought that the current learning or life situations in the grid, while they are relevant to a learner's experience, they appear to be quite general which may cause some difficulties with the usability of the app. Moreover the underlying knowledge, skills attitudes etc. appear linear, meaning that one situation can only lead to one skill area which is not quite realistic and vice versa; one knowledge area or attitude can be supported by more than one of the stated learning situations.

Experts were then asked to suggest features which should be included in the design of the mobile device application. It was suggested that the app needs to be motivating for the user and be efficient at documenting learning. Apart from this it should be "user friendly, bright, funny, easy to navigate, personalised, possibly involving sounds and music and it should include the function to save GPS data with documents." The format and setup of the app is dependent upon the target group and this should act as an added value of the app; meaning that if an adult learner uses the app it will appear in a different way than if a young person is using the app. For young people it of course has to be particularly attractive and motivating to use. In any case, the app should include easy wording, no jargon or expert terms, the use of pictures, colours etc. and it must be quick and easy to use.

Regarding the ability of the mobile phone app to facilitate external validation of the informal learning outcomes, both experts advised that they felt it was very important to ensure that learning can be externally validated since it provides an opportunity to describe learning processes and outcomes as they take place. This is a key advantage of the app, as it will enhance the employability of the app user, and therefore should be exploited during the development of the app. However, both experts expressed that in their opinion, the external

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validation of learning facilitated through the app could be difficult, as it must be clear that the external evaluator, who can validate mobility experiences, has sufficient competences and reputation in order to bring credibility to the validation process.

Both experts were then asked to list what they would consider to be the minimum documentation required in order to prove the development of a competence as part of a mobility stay. On expert suggested basing our documentation processes on the European Commission-backed Youth Pass initiative. The initiative requires learners to submit information on the timing and duration of the mobility, a short overview of the reason for the mobility and a short self-evaluation regarding skills and competences acquired while undertaking the mobility. The second expert suggested that learners use the template of the Europass Certificate Supplement in order to validate their experiences, including signatures of all parties involved, as well as relevant stamps and logos; however there is no suggestion as to how this validation process should be undertaken.

Finally, both experts were asked if they would use the M_APP application, and if they envisaged any challenges to the main streaming of the app. Thankfully both experts agreed that they would be interested in testing the app during the piloting phase of the project, and that they would share the application with their target groups if it was of good quality, and was relevant to them. It was also suggested that the app should be linked to the ECVET system, as this would bring an added advantage to the exploitation of the app, particularly in Austria. Furthermore, regarding the exploitation of the app, both agreed that the app should be easy to use, while also being complex enough that it is of real value and relevance to the app end users. In general, both experts were very positive about the project, and lent their support to the project consortium in developing this innovative tool.

Sweden:

When asked about the feasibility of achieving the project aims and objectives, the Swedish experts stated that it sounds like a great project idea, as the M_APP application would complement existing tools that measure informal learning. They also felt that a mobile app is a good tool for young people who use their smart phones all of the time, and therefore it is a good idea to make an application in this format where users can document their learning using both

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text and image. The Swedish experts also felt that it was important that the app is strongly linked to existing tools such as Europass.

When asked about the benefits of mobility to the individual involved, the development of intercultural awareness and the related competences were identified as the primary benefit to the learner. The key challenge with the M_APP project was identified as measuring the informal competences. According to the Swedish experts, it is a challenge to document the right experience and to transform it to a competence that can be measured and validated.

The experts were then asked to comment on the structure of the app, where they suggested there should be three sections in the app; namely, learning situations before, during and after the mobility visit. In their opinion, the app should include language preparation before, during and after the visit. This can be linked to the language courses that will soon be released by the European Commission. It is hard to measure life experience so instead a section for self-reflection should also be included. The app should also be linked to existing tools and validation processes in order to provide more concrete validation for the user's mobility experience and informal learning. This validation process would then need to be supported by relevant proof and documentation, and this documentation should include a synopsis of the objectives and length mobility and of the competences acquired. Both experts agreed that if the app was successful in establishing a strong connection to existing tools and validation structures, that they would support the testing of the project products and would advocate the use of the app with their target groups. Despite this positivity, the experts identified the main challenges to the exploitation of the app as being the marketing, pricing and updating of the app, within the time constraints of the project.

Ireland:

Two interviews were facilitated with local experts in the acquisition of learning and competences through mobility stays. Firstly, these experts both agreed that the project is very ambitious, innovative and pioneering, and that if achieved, the mobile app will be a very useful tool for individuals undertaking mobilities, and wishing to put some kind of formal structure on their informal learning. In this regard, both interviewees thought that the project and the proposed app will be very worthwhile, if designed correctly. When asked to comment on the benefits of

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mobility stays to learners, sending and host organisations, the experts agreed that, particularly in an Irish context, the benefits to all involved in the mobility stays include an improved sense of multiculturalism, a new appreciation of the diversity of the European community and the opportunity to share knowledge, stories and experiences with individuals from different cultural backgrounds. On the geographic periphery of Europe, Irish individuals often have difficulty in identifying themselves as being 'European'. In general Irish people tend to not speak many foreign languages, for example, and so the promotion of mobility stays abroad is pivotal to ensuing Ireland's integration into the wider European community. In this regard, this project allows the partner organisation in Ireland to actively promote the benefits of mobility stays, while also giving individuals the opportunity to log, document and validate the knowledge and competences they acquire during their stay abroad. The opportunities which mobility stays provide for an individual's personal growth in terms of their resilience and ability to cope with problems and to organise themselves and their time in an unknown environment was seen as an invaluable experience for all individuals to undertake at some point in their lives. The ability of travel to broaden one's horizons and to educate individuals to realize and value the wealth of European culture was also seen as a key benefit for individual learners undertaking mobility stays.

One of the main challenges identified by the Irish experts with regard to documenting this learning is that, by its very nature, informal learning occurs without the learner having any real knowledge or awareness of it. In this respect, this poses a challenge to the learner seeking to document their learning, as they may not be aware of what they have learned or what new competences they may have gained. Similarly, there needs to be a concerted effort to make the process of collecting evidence of learning and validating this learning as simple and user-friendly as possible. The process of the documenting of learning experiences and competences seem to be quite vague, as does the method of ensuring the credibility of the external validation process. A short induction programme or user guide may be of benefit to the user to explain these processes and to ensure that both the documentation and validation of learning experience are completed correctly by individual app users.

Both experts felt that the competence grids were comprehensive, and adequate. The learning situations presented are varied to such an extent that the in some part they will apply to almost any mobility experience among the target group of adult learners. However, it is worth noting

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that as this app should be customizable and tailored to the individual experiences of learners using the app, the possibility of allowing users to add their own learning experiences would be beneficial to the individual user, and therefore would enhance the app. However no suggestions were made as to how these extra learning situations would be included in the app or moderated.

Regarding the functionality and features of the app, both experts stated that learners should be able to link their profile on the app to their Facebook, LinkedIn or other social networking platforms. This is to encourage the promotion of the app through the individual users' social media networks of friends and colleagues, and to give visibility to the app. It also means that users will see a very tangible use for the app, as they will be able to log learning experiences and 'share' it with family and friends at home, as they undertake travel opportunities and mobility stays. Furthermore, when we consider how people like to document information and events today using technology, it is through many of the features found on Facebook and similar platforms: for example; 'checking-in' at various locations, taking photographs and 'selfies', taking notes, writing comments and blogging using Blogger and Blogspot, taking short videos and uploading them to YouTube and Facebook and using photographs on social media sites such as Instagram and Pinterest. If the M_APP application could integrate with some of these platforms and include these functions, it would enhance the usability and the dissemination potential of the app. Experts also felt that the language and layout of the app should be kept simple and user-friendly to ensure that the app appeals to and can be used by a wider audience.

When asked about the ability of the app to facilitate external validation, Irish experts felt that the need for external validation is reliant on the intended use of the app. If the app is merely to document an individual's informal learning for their own records, then external validation is not really necessary, and may just complicate the whole process of documenting this learning. However, if the app is to have a tangible use, and is to be linked to other transparency tools such as Europass, ECTS and ECVET and to be used in curriculum vitae and for further education and employment opportunities, then there needs to be a very comprehensive and strict validation process in order to ensure that the competences and knowledge which the users profess to have acquired during their stay is in fact completely correct and not in any way fabricated or exaggerated. If this is the intended use of the app, then the process of external validation will become increasing complex and difficult to regulate. In this instance it may be

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worthwhile to integrate the app with pre-existing transparency instruments such as Europass, which has already developed the method and tools for documenting such learning. In documenting this learning, the documents required for the Europass Certificate Supplement is sufficient to ensure that full and transparent documentation of learning acquired through mobility stays. Irish experts thought that the consortium should use this tool as the basis for its documentation and validation requirements.

With regard to the mainstreaming of the app, both experts agreed that the biggest challenge the consortium would face is in getting individuals and stakeholders to use the app. There are so many different apps on offer today that there will be market competition for this app. The other challenge in an Irish context is that the existing tools developed to document formal learning, such as Europass, are not widely known or used in Ireland, and so introducing another tool where there isn't really a market for it may be problematic. Both interviewees suggested, as a way of overcoming this perceived difficulty, that the use of the app could be exploited among using students in Europe undertaking mobilities as part of the Erasmus University program. By targeting this audience, the app could be exploited directly to the university departments sending students on Erasmus. The process of documenting the informal learning which these student semesters abroad provide could be integrated into the formal learning coursework, and could streamline the process of validating these informal learning experiences, as a certain amount of assessment and documentation of evidence of learning outcomes will already be sought by the sending and host universities. This option would also allow for integration of the app with the Europass tools, as on the successful completion of the Erasmus program, students in Ireland are usually presented with a Diploma Supplement or similar, which documents their learning experience during their mobility stays. Both experts agreed that if the app, when completed, is easy to use and successfully documents the learning acquired by individuals through mobility stays, they would both be happy to disseminate the tool with their clients and contacts, and to participate in the pilot testing.

Spain

The project objective seems complex, according to experts. One of them regards apps as a tool to search for information, not as data and information repository, and a means of evaluation. The other expert sees it as a practical tool. When technology was not so widespread, this kind

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of collection and documentation of skills and learning would have been impossible. Today, however, it would be very useful to be able to collect information through this system so that it can be used by other people in their mobility.

Concerning the benefits of transnational mobility projects, the experts agreed that the main advantages of mobility include learning about new cultures, personal enrichment, opening our minds and self-knowledge. The transnational mobility projects allow the learner to face different problems in each country, finding the suitable solution for each case. It is a learning that would not exist in your environment with the people you already know.

Regarding the competence certification, both experts think it is very difficult, as there is no third party (objective element) who decides if the supporting documentation and evidence provided really validates the acquisition of the competence. Similarly this was also mentioned when experts were asked to identify the main challenges to documenting informal learning. These challenges include the difficulty between completing this kind of learning and competence acquisition by being abroad and documenting it and reflecting it somehow. The evaluation of informal learning seems much more difficult, as it is the user who carries out this evaluation, without a previously set standard. The Spanish experts also thought that it will be very difficult to formalize these two competences, to allow for their assessment and documentation.

Regarding the content of the competence grid, both experts agreed that both competences are well analysed and detailed. From Mr. Aitor LAGO´s point of view, the one regarding social and civic is better described. Mrs. Laida Delgado proposed as another situation to include in the grid for social competence; working and living in a house with a family or for group work (for example, as an au pair). This learning situation could help an individual to acquire knowledge about the culture, family and traditions of the host partner; to have more adaptability, initiative, more flexibility and respect for other cultures.

Regarding the structure of the mobile phone application, experts agreed that it should be easy to use and to design. It would make sense if the user's initial competence level (before undertaking the mobility) could be reflected, as well as the competence level acquired after having been abroad. It is an evaluation which the user would complete at the beginning of the mobility stay, and would be beneficial to them, as they will be able to track their progress and

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acquisition of competences and knowledge when abroad. This was seen as a way to motivate the users to use the app. The experts also thought that it would be interesting if the app could include links to personal blogs and to social networks. Other suggested features to be included in the app include the ability to take photographs as well as information and links to basic services (hospitals, the police, transport, etc). It was also suggested that the app should be multilingual.

The Spanish experts agreed that to facilitate external validation is very useful and important, but very complicated, and they both agreed that the main challenge to the exploitation of the mobile app would be the evaluation and validation of the competences. Despite this, both experts discussed the benefits of exploiting the M_APP app. These include disseminating the concept of the 8 European competences with a particular emphasis on the two competences being studied by this project; the increased number of users using this app in a translational setting, improved organisational skills, soft skills and critical and creative thought. To ensure the successful exploitation of the app, and to bring about some of these positive outcomes, the app should be promoted through social networks, in particular platforms which appeal to young people and to those who travel.

In general, the experts believed that the project idea is good, but that the success of the project is dependent on the usability of the app.

Romania

The Romanian experts expressed from the beginning that they thought the project was very positive but that it is a “long term” project, meaning that the project should focus on long-term uses of the app as the modern technology used by the app is ubiquitous today, and so the exploitation opportunities for this app are numerous. However, it was also highlighted that in order for the app to be successful, methods of evaluation and validation need to be integrated into the design and development of the app. While talking about the benefits of the mobility actions Mrs. Kocsis expressed her opinion that travelling, even on national levels, can bring about different learning opportunities. But, in her opinion, one of the key challenges the project might face is that people may not be aware of the advantages these trips can bring. Similarly, Ms. Butyka agreed that the project has the potential to raise awareness regarding the fact that

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"learning is happening in every move and on every step we make" and that this is further enhanced when we travel to another country. If successful, the app should also create a new perspective to "reconsider the benefits of the informal time spent during a transnational project". In this way the project and the proposed app were seen as very positive and useful resources. Nevertheless the experts expressed their concern that the application would not be accessible for too many and that it may be of more benefit to the user if it was also hosted on an on-line portal which may make it more accessible.

As far as the project's target group is concerned, in her opinion, the project is aimed at adult learners, but she expressed her concern about those adults who are not able to travel. As a result, she says that "the target group could have been defined a little bit more precisely". End users may also not see the benefit in using the app, as they may not be aware that they are acquiring competences and knowledge through their travels. In this regard, promoting the project idea and assuring that the target group understands the purpose of the project is important to the success of the project. Mrs. Kocsis also emphasised the need for a comprehensive dissemination and exploitation plan, to encourage end users to take the time to document and validate their learning experiences, which she thinks they will be motivated to do if the project is properly promoted among the target group.

Regarding the grid for the two competences, the experts believed that the complexity of the grid may be off-putting for the user if it is presented in this way to them through the mobile device app. In their opinion the competence grid and the mobile app should be simplified, and should be easy for the end users to navigate. In particular, Mrs. Kocsis evaluated the competence grid, and determined that in the learning situations column, 'meeting new people' is repeated and the whole grid could be simplified to make it more concise. While talking about the mobile phone application, our professional suggested that the app should be kept as simple as possible and user-friendly, with the possibility of expanding the complexity of the app once some feedback is gathered from the target group. Similarly, Ms. Butyka agreed that for someone involved and working with these concepts the language in the grid is understandable and clear. But that for general use by the target group, she says that she would rather use more quantifiable verbs, instead of "understanding" in the grids, such as *identifying, listing, describing, etc.* She also commented that the idea of learners creating their own learning situations proved to be a good one in her opinion.

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When asked about the facilitation of an external validation process, both experts agreed that validation is quite a delicate issue but a very important one also. In their opinion, the validation would be possible after proving that the app is “useful”, “used”, “requested” and “working as it was planned and dreamed”. This could be achieved in a few years, if the app is regularly updated, however given the fact that today there is a wide variety of mobile apps on offer, there will be competition in the market, as users seek to find the app of most use and benefit to them. Therefore, the experts wouldn’t exclude the possibility and the importance of a future validation of the informal learning outcomes as having a validated structure would influence the popularity of the app in a positive way. Mrs. Kocsis also remarked that the success of the project depends on how well people understand what the project is about. Mrs. Butyka mentioned another challenge; that in Romania the main problem is about reflection. People are not taught to reflect and express their ideas, to self-asses themselves and therefore they will not be able to recognize the learning situations.

When asked if they would support of the use of the mobile application, both experts agreed they are “in favour of the new and easy and accessible developments” of any kind so consequently they would support the M_APP app. When asked about the main challenges for the project the experts outlined once again, that if the project is targeted at a wide remit of adult learners, the language and terms used should be simplified so that it is easily understood by all end users, and also that getting people to use the application will require a greater effort than merely creating the app itself. Despite this perceived difficulty, both experts think that the project is worthwhile and the development of the mobile application, with a well defined and structured dissemination plan can become a success. The project outcomes and results are seen as really valuable. The validation process which is foreseen in the project has also received positive feedback. Their suggestions for improving the usability of the app include simplifying the language used in the app and perhaps reconsidering target group in order to appeal to a wider audience.

Turkey

The Turkish partner organisation applied the 9 key questions given to two experts. The experts stated that most of the students and teachers use mobile devices in their daily and educational

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life. They also mentioned that in the near future mobile devices will be the most important factor in learning, so it is important to develop necessary applications for mobile devices. The primary benefit of mobile devices is that they allow for more flexible and sustainable learning environments, because they expand the borders of the conventional classroom and make education flexible and enjoyable. Students are more willing to learn through mobile devices than through conventional methods. Regarding the structure of the app, it was agreed that the application must not be detailed, it must be easy to complete, and it must be colourful and not too complex. Therefore the design of the app must remain clear and simple. Furthermore, both experts expressed that it is very important for the mobile phone app to facilitate external validation of the informal learning outcomes as outcomes will be used in daily life.

When asked about the key challenges to capturing and documenting informal learning acquired on mobility stays, experts agreed that the main challenge is the inability to measure the progress knowledge facilitated through indirect learning. You cannot always reach students who have participated in mobility stays through mobile environments because of the nature of mobile medium. There are similar problems in reaching participants without mobile devices after mobility stays as some of participants do not communicate well after mobility stays. Regarding the minimum documentation required in order to prove the acquisition of competences and to validate informal learning acquired through mobility stays, both experts agreed that in terms of competence development or acquisition students must complete questionnaires, pre-tests and post-tests to assess their progress. Both experts also agreed that the M_APP app can be used widely if it is presented in a simple format, and if its use is made compulsory through all steps of documentation and recognition of Informally Acquired European Key Competences during Transnational Mobility Stays. However, both experts highlighted that the biggest challenge in mainstreaming or exploiting the M_APP app is that many experts are not able to use mobile technologies and that most of them also underestimate the importance of mobility in the life of young and adult learners and as a result they tend to avoid the use of mobile applications.

Germany

Experts from Germany began by highlighting that they felt the aims and objectives of the project are a little ambitious, but deserve to be supported. Both Interviewees see this project as very positive as it gives the user the opportunity to collect objective and documented results and to

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present their skills after mobility stay. Both interviewees agreed that the biggest threat to the success of the app could be the adoption of the technology by students who travel and their willingness to keep records of their learning.

The primary benefit of mobilities to all stakeholder groups is the opportunity they allow individuals to meet with people from other countries and to experience their culture, traditions and different point of view. This is seen as a very important step in the development of an individual's character. Furthermore, experts agreed that sending organisations might see additional advantages to mobilities, as they will benefit from the knowledge exchange facilitated through the influx of individuals on mobility stays from different countries and cultures.

When asked to give input on the structure and content of the app, the experts agreed that the core elements in designing the app should be the documentation and display of the achieved goals. They also agreed that the mobile app should not be used for external validation in the first place as the external evaluator who can process the validation of the app will require more freedom to evaluate all information or make additional notes than the structure of the app permits, and the overall working might take some more time.

The main challenge to the successful documentation of informal learning was identified as being that informal learning does not happen while we are willing to learn, and the individual might not recognize that they have learned something that they should record. Another challenge is trying to spur an individual's motivation to document a particular learning opportunity. This is because it will take extra commitment and effort by the individual to take notes, photographs and gather other evidence of their learning experience, and the individual might not be motivated enough to do the recording right away. When asked about the main challenge to the exploitation of the app, the experts expressed that the biggest challenge might be to create an app people are willing to use. However, both agreed that all stakeholders should be able to see the advantage in using and promoting the M_APP app. Both interviewees also agreed that they would advocate the use of the M_APP app but would make it dependent of the usability of the app.

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Conclusion

The purpose of this phase of the M_APP European Research was to gain an insight and advice from key experts in the documentation and evaluation of informal learning, and the acquisition of key competences in each of the partner countries. The aim was to get feedback on the planned development process of the M_APP mobile device application, and to discuss any challenges which project partners currently envisage with regard to the documentation and validation of informal learning experiences and the exploitation of the app itself.

In general, the comments and feedback gathered during these interviews was positive in relation to the aims, objectives and planned activities of the project. Other positive points included the innovativeness of the app, the fact that it promotes the European Key Competence Framework, European mobilities and, indirectly, the learning opportunities provided by such mobilities and the fact that the tool will be designed for a wide cohort of people, and will encourage these individuals to develop their digital literacies as well as their social, civic and intercultural competences. Where concerns were raised was in relation to the evaluation and validation of the learning experiences, the complexity of the app, the requirement of having a smart phone or device in order to access the app, the relevance of the chosen learning situations to all adult learners, the fact that users may not fully understand their own informal learning and the exploitation potential for an app in today's competitive mobile application market.

However, as well as highlighting these challenges, the interviewees also offered solutions to these potential problems. By linking the app to existing transparency instruments such as Europass, the issues with documenting and validating the user's informal learning and competence acquisition could be overcome. To overcome the difficulty with choosing accurate learning situations for all learners, individuals using the app could be given the opportunity to add their own learning situation to the list in the competence grid if their relevant experience is not listed. To address the issue of learners not understanding how to document informal learning, how to use the app or how to identify examples of informal learning, an online tutorial, user guide (e-book) or an induction programme (downloadable pdf) could be used to explain the functionality of the app and the theory behind the documentation of informal learning experiences.

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Some experts suggested that the app should instead be hosted on an online platform instead of on a smart device, as not all individuals will have access to these devices. The reason why this is problematic is that it would essentially shift the orientation of the project, away from creating something with is mobile and can be used to document learning on-the-go, to something which is less innovative and can only be reached through a PC or laptop. However, the app could perhaps be promoted through existing popular platforms which also host applications, for example Facebook. Regarding the exploitation of the app, by ensuring the app is easy to use, clear, concise and free of jargon, the potential to disseminate and exploit the app with a wide target audience will increase. The app could also be exploited with further, higher and adult education providers, national agencies and other stakeholders involved in informal learning and European mobility programmes.

Despite the challenges that lay ahead, the feedback gathered to date reflects the innovativeness and creativity of the M_APP mobile device app. To ensure the successful design, development and implementation of the M_APP application, it is important to continue involving experts in the field and members of the target group in the development and testing phase, to guarantee that the app remains relevant and useful to its intended end users. With the majority of individuals who completed the questionnaire and the experts who were interviewed agreeing to stay involved with the M_APP project and to engage with the consortium during the pilot testing of the app, the consortium should be able to produce a user-friendly, useful and worthwhile app, with the continued support of the external experts and learners.

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