



# Breaking the waves

## The lifelong learning perspective to enhance a professional integration

dr Bénédicte Halba, Iriv, Paris, France.

University of Northampton

22nd of March 2012



- A crucial issue in Europe, unemployment of youngsters and special target groups (seniors, migrants, handicapped people...)
- The Bologna process and the reform of the University – enhancing the link with the labour market
- the lifelong learning perspective:
  - The ALLinHE project – 2011-2013
  - The VAB project – 2009-2011

# The lifelong learning perspective



- Council of Europe : EU as a knowledge society and economy able to compete with the World
- Lifelong learning : a key for economic growth as well as an opportunity to be involved in society
- A new strategic framework (LLL) with 4 long term strategic sub-programmes : Comenius (primary and secondary school), Erasmus (higher education), Leonardo da Vinci (professional education), Grundtvig (permanent education)

# Bologna process and Copenhagen process



- Bologna : expressing diploma in terms of skills and competences to be understood on the labour market
- Copenhagen : Validating non formal and informal learning (both formative and summative approaches)
- Both Bologna & Copenhagen: opening University to a wider audience and so bridging the gap between University and Community
- ALLinHe & VAB : both Bologna and Copenhagen oriented





- ➔ An Erasmus project led by the **Inholland University of Applied Sciences (Amsterdam)**
- ➔ Main goal : facilitating access to higher education for public with special profiles
  - migrants,
  - persons aged 50+,
  - ethnic minorities,
  - handicapped persons

# The ALLinHE main objectives



- Europe needs dynamic HE to stay competitive ,  
'an open door policy'
- Top-down facilities are in place (legislation, EQF, etc.), but practical method for opening up HE (bottom-up practices) fails
- VPL supports learning chances for all citizens, but is under-developed and –used
- ALLinHE : facilitating access to HE for social inclusion of target groups and bridge the gap between the top-down and bottom-up practices in HE

# The ALLinHE main outputs



- A multi-targeted VPL-model: VPL-procedures with diagnostic or personalized support
- A comparative analysis of the VPL methods and approaches for under-represented groups in HE
- A training program for HE professionals
- A pilot of the multi-targeted VPL-model which focus on managing Europe's diversity
- A transversal analysis of new strategies and methods highlighting best practices
- A European Academic Bank Credit System.



- A Leonardo da Vinci project led by the **University of Evry Val d'Essonne** and coordinated by **iriv (France)** in **5 countries**
- Unemployment of youngsters a crucial problem even for graduate students
- Bridging the gap between University and the labour market
- Enhancing the competence approach thanks to a tool and method for valuing non formal and informal learning



# Main outputs of the VAB

## An e-portfolio and an e-training



- A pedagogical tool, a portfolio
- A digital development, an e-portfolio
- A training course for the University teachers and trainers (UT&T)
- An experimentation of the e-portfolio and e-training
- Networks of University teachers around Europe
- Exchanging good practices in the field of training for UT&T and professional support for students

# The holistic approach of the VAB



- ➔ Personal, social and professional experiences are taken into account in the global evaluation
- ➔ 4 types of activities might be assessed
  1. Professional activities (student job)
  2. Sport, culture and art activities (leisure)
  3. Transnational/mobility activities (placement)
  4. Involvement in associations and active citizenship (volunteering)

# The special experience of volunteering



- 2011 was celebrated as the European Year for Volunteering
- An opportunity to insist on the many positive aspect of voluntary effort both on a micro-level (individuals) and a macro-level (Community)
- A communication on EU Policies and Volunteering (September 2011) emphasizes the recognition of the competences and skills gained through volunteering as non-formal learning experiences

# Volunteering and education



- Voluntary activities are an essential component of education and lifelong learning
- In the ALLinHE perspective : through Valuing Prior Learning (VPL), many Universities offer the opportunity to have access to a diploma thanks to a voluntary experience
- In the VAB perspective: a voluntary experience allows to develop skills and competences that are identified and valued by UT&T



# Volunteering and employability



- volunteering may have been a controversial issue in times of economic crisis - volunteers seen as « job killers »
- For youngsters : a voluntary experience may be a first « real professional experience »
- The VAEB project : a portfolio to identify a voluntary experience and the skills and competences attached to them
- The Bénévolat & competences portfolio : a French development



## Benefits for UT&T

- UT&T, mediators between University and the Community by taking into account learning outcomes acquired outside the University
- by enhancing access to special profiles of students with VPL strategies (ALLinHE)
- by integrating this non formal and informal learning in global evaluation of students (VAB)
- both : by using innovative tool and method with the support of University and the Community

# Benefits for students



- Learning is a lifelong process: life is no more linear, studies are not separate from “real life”
- Students have to integrate this mobility together with a circular approach
- Personal, social and professional background have to be taken into account to prepare a future (VAB) or to have access to HE (ALLinHE)
- portfolio (VAB) or multi-trageted approach (ALLinHE) : a way to make the link between all the aspects of life (studies, labour market)



# ALLinHe & VAB

## Changing the perspective

- University is not the only place where knowledge, skills and competences may be acquired
- The official recognition of non formal and informal learning is a step forward to bridge the gap between University and Community
- University is not a world apart
- University needs to be open to Community (VAB) and vice versa (ALLinHE)





# ALLinHE and VAB a challenging approach

- The VAB project is more labour market oriented (LdV project), the ALLinHE is more HE oriented
- Social integration is very linked to professional integration
- The VAB portfolio is based on self-evaluation and should enhance self-esteem and self-confidence among students
- the ALLinHE approach aims at enhancing access to HE for special groups and so gives them strenght to overcome social/professional exclusion



# HE and experience

- A diploma is no more the only key to prepare a professional life or to make a career
- human capital : diploma + other experience
- VAB approach : UT&T values this experience in their evaluation of students
- Access to a diploma is important for special target groups
- valuing other experience gives a social recognition:
- ALLinHE approach : enhancing VPL strategies



# Conclusion

- Close collaboration between University and Community is a key issue for preparing the future of the students (VAB) or preparing new students (ALLinHE)
- VAB project : enhancing professional integration by proposing a holistic approach valuing all kinds of experience
- ALLinHE project : social, personal and professional experience to be taken into account to have access to HE on the basis of national VPL

# Useful Contacts



- ❖ <http://vab-univ.eu>
- ❖ <http://www.allinHE.eu>
- ❖ <http://allinhe.blogspot.fr/>
- ❖ Ueve – [www.univ-evry.fr](http://www.univ-evry.fr)
- ❖ <http://www.inholland.nl/inhollandcom>
- ❖ <http://www.northampton.ac.uk/>
- ❖ *iriv* – [www.iriv.net](http://www.iriv.net)