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## **RECOGNITION AND VALIDATION OF PRIOR LEARNING AS A STRATEGY TO OPEN ACCESS TO LIFELONG LEARNING FOR ALL**

This paper will present some results of a research made in four countries from southern Europe about the strategies to improve access for all to lifelong learning.

For this research, we have interviewed a sample of people who didn't participate in lifelong learning activities for a long time. These interviews show the reasons of their non-participation and their representation of education and training. We have also asked them if they thought they had learned something and if it was the case, what they thought they had learned through their personal and professional experience.

This first research forced us to reconsider our representation of non-participants. We have learned to distinguish more clearly the notions of "non-participant" and "non-learner" and to criticize the second one. This made us question ourselves about the idea that the participation in formal learning activities is an obligation for all, as well as about the injunction of participating in learning or training, that could, under certain conditions and for certain people, worsen the process of exclusion instead of reducing it.

Next, we will present a research in progress about a new measure concerning the validation of prior learning (*Validation des Acquis de l'Expérience : VAE*). The methodology of this research is based on interviews to candidates to validation of prior learning as well as to people in charge of organisations involved in this measure (training centres, universities, vocational school's administrations). We have also interviewed employers and people working in human resources services in companies.

The theoretical model for the content analysis and the interpretation of our results is based on the concept of recognition, as it has been elaborated by the work of authors like Axel Honneth and Paul Ricoeur. This model allows us to better understand the function of recognition in the construction of identity and self-confidence as well as the negative consequences of the non-recognition in the emotional and cognitive development of the person.

As a conclusion this paper will present the lessons of our first results concerning the educational learning strategies for active citizenship in the areas of work and social life, particularly for groups at risk of social exclusion.