



## Self-Evaluation and Self-Employment

### The Portuguese Module

#### General context

The identification and recognition of non-formal competencies has become an important feature of vocational education and training in Portugal. The development of instruments and tools for Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences (RVCC) has been supported by the General Direction for Vocational Training (DGFV). There are a variety of possibilities for the accreditation of non-formal and informal competences related to occupational knowledge and skills. However, these instruments and tools are only meant to be used for adults who possess a 9<sup>th</sup> degree of secondary education.

The Portuguese Self-Evaluation module offers a totally new approach in three ways. Firstly the self-evaluation module aims at the identification of non-formal personal competences, and not directly at vocational or occupational competences. Of course, competences strongly related to personality cannot be validated or certified by an instrument or tool but must be discovered by the individual themselves.

Secondly, the module does not address a particular target group but is suitable for any client, especially those with poor formal qualifications and who are facing unemployment. The overall aim is the improvement and development of self-esteem and increased motivation for participants.

A third and specific aspect of the Portuguese Self-Evaluation module is that it is designed for people who are considering becoming self-employed and opening their own business. The module forms part of a course which aims at the creation of micro enterprises. This has to be seen against the background of the specific situation in the Alentej region in which the module was piloted. In this rural region, the population has, on average, low qualifications. The average age is high and there is a high rate of unemployment, especially for women. Nevertheless, the basic idea of the module can be transferred to different contexts in Portugal as well as to other regions of Europe.

The curricular module contains four parts. These parts include reflection processes which are documented through different forms which have to be filled in by the trainee. The forms are completed alongside group discussions and interviews with the trainer(s).



Liliana has opened a flower shop after her participation in the Self-Evaluation module



## Structure of the tool

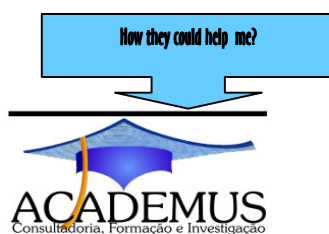
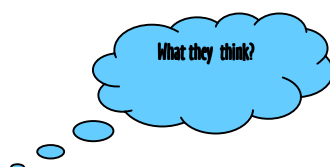
Part	Title	Related forms
I	The route of life	1) My school route 2) My professional route 3) My training 4) Other activities 5) My close family 6) My close friends
II	My own competencies	1) What competencies have I already used? 2) I know ... 3) I am ...
III	My business idea	1) My business idea 2) Who is interested in my business? 3) My worries ...
IV	Perspectives for the future and agreement with myself	1) One day in my life ... 2) One day in my life five years from now ... 3) What will be the most important moments in my life in the next five years 4) Contract with myself

The **first part** of the module “**The route of life**” aims at assisting people to reflect about their biographical pathway through life. The module starts with the school and professional route as reflection on school experiences is common to people from different contexts. In contrast reflection on the family or relations to friends is for some people rather unfamiliar and requires considerable confidence in the trainer. The following are examples of the different forms.

### My Professional Route

Date	Profession	Activities Developed	Satisfaction Motives	Insatisfaction Motives	What did I learned and preserved until now

### My Close Friends...





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_____

The **second part** of the module “**My own competencies**” is central to the whole process and is from our experience the most difficult aspect of the module for both the trainee and the trainer.

Close attention must be paid to the fact that often the courses include people with an overly high self-concept and those who have a very low self concept. The first group should be encouraged to develop a more realistic self-image through the following forms “*I know ...*” and “*I am ...*”. The assistance of the trainer is important in this task. In contrast people with a low self-image may have difficulty in reflecting about competencies they have used in the past. Their abilities are often tacit. The following is an example of the form used.

**What competencies have I already used?**

Competencies	When do I use it?
Speak in public	
Take decisions	
Analyse situations	
Solve problems	
Learn from experiences of the past	
Others	

The **third part** of the module “My business idea“ is central to the future of the trainees. It includes planning and self-evaluation and is therefore especially demanding. It focuses on the realisation and implementation of business ideas and the self-evaluation of personal competencies to develop the business. The question “Who is interested in my business?” asks the trainees to draw a realistic picture of their aim, whilst the third form should restrict unrealistic imagination.

The **fourth part** of the module “Perspectives for the future and agreement with myself“ involves planning how to use the self-evaluated competences for one’s own business. It leads to a comparison of the actual situation of the trainee, through planning a regular day, with expectations of how one day will be structured in five years’ time. The forms are very simple, and involve the development of an hourly diary. Nevertheless, through this simple exercise, people are forced to consider the responsibilities of owning a business and to check if they can rely on their present competencies or if they need further development.

Just as important is considering the main steps to be taken in the first years of starting a business. To establish a stable business is difficult and requires immediate and intermediate goals to maintain motivation. Potential obstacles need to be defined.

The major step in this fourth part is the “Contract with myself” because this defines the engagement of the trainee. It is an important document for the participant in providing motivation at times of insecurity or when thinking of giving up.

**Contract with Myself**





Considering the Self-Evaluation exercises that I've gone through,  
I promise myself to develop the following competencies:

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<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>
Flexibility in terms of application; Possibility of application in individual context or in group; Possibility to apply the parts in different order; Possibility to apply only parts of the instrument considering the target group needs; “Lets us know that we have competencies that we didn’t know we had” Easy to apply in different contexts and to different target groups; Easy to understand; Reflection about non-formal, informal and also formal competencies; Designed for personal Self-Evaluation, not concerned with certification	The number of forms can be unattractive  A facilitator (trainer) is crucial
<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>
Easy to reuse and further develop; Possibility to adapt and transfer to different contexts Possibility of links to other Self-Evaluation instruments	The financial costs of support

## Essentials

The *Self-Evaluation Module and Tool* should be supported by an experienced facilitator (trainer). Although in many cases the facilitator may use group brainstorming processes, the forms should be filled in individually.

The outcomes of the *Self-Evaluation Module and Tool* belong to the trainees and they have the right to keep them for themselves and not share them with anyone including the facilitator.

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