

Validation of learning outcomes

Why is validation relevant to ULLs?

The four ULLs of the PS-U-GO project created spaces of exchange involving academia, the public sector, and plural publics to explore and address urban challenges. Through situated learning, participants could negotiate shared goals and experiment collaboratively with innovative co-creation methodologies.

Given this openness and flexibility, validation served as a key mechanism for assessing participants' acquisition of knowledge and development of skills, thereby supporting knowledge transfer and helping to ensure that academic standards were maintained. Validation was conceived as an ongoing reflective process that assessed the effectiveness, quality, and impact of the learning activities implemented across the four ULLs.

How did the ULLs validate learning outcomes?

The participants of the ULLs consistently documented their learning activities using descriptive and analytical approaches grounded in self-reflection. This approach was agreed upon in the Validation Framework of the PS-U-GO project, which clearly defined three aspects that had to be carefully documented:

1. Specifying Learning Outcomes

2. Participants' Self-Assessments



3. Formal Recognition





Commoning Cottbus illustrated how ULLs can be guided and implemented through formal university teaching modules. Academic staff from the Chair of Urban Management at BTU guided students through a complete ULL cycle each semester. Students were responsible for running the shared space and designing and delivering their own learning activities, which included repair cafés, festivals, and exhibitions.



Students' reports were the key mechanisms through which students documented their learning progress. They articulated their reflections on the diversity of urban dynamics and groups, the potential of the Stadtlabor, and the many challenges involved in running the premises and organising events.



Students of BTU had access to detailed descriptions of the modules linked to CoCo, which specified the expected workload and the number of ***ECTS*** credits awarded upon successful completion. In this way, participation in the ULL was formally recognised in accordance with higher education standards.



Towards an accessible and free sea focused on collaborative production of knowledge and on addressing conflicts related to the access to and governance of coastal areas of Naples. It was a laboratory where participants tested diverse action-research methodologies, including participatory mapping, territorial information systems (TIS) and Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis (MCDA).



Pre- and post-event questionnaires were systematically administered to assess learning outcomes. They documented participants' increased familiarity with the methods explored throughout the learning activities and supported an assessment of their effectiveness.



Consistent with European principles for the validation of non-formal and informal learning, ULL participants were awarded ***certificates*** recognising their active engagement in workshops, site visits and collaborative sessions, as well as the extracurricular learning hours they completed.



Open Madonie Living Lab - MaLL was implemented through three residencies, during which students from Palermo collaborated with local residents, practitioners, and institutions to develop prototypes addressing real challenges faced by the Madonie region. These prototypes explored ways of preserving and promoting local craftsmanship, cuisine, and cultural representations through a variety of tools and media, including 3D printing, digital photobooks, and audiovisual productions.



Before the ULL, participants completed a questionnaire and took part in a focus group to document their initial knowledge and expectations. ***During and after*** the ULL, they participated in group discussions, completed a post-it note exercise, and responded to a final questionnaire, through which they documented and reflected on their learning and progress.



The participants who completed the cycle were not recognised with ECTS credits but with an ***open badge*** that certifies their engagement as well as the competences they acquired. Open badges are secure, verifiable, and portable digital credentials recognised in the EU.



Urban Living Lab in Nicosia activated public spaces in the district of Aglantzia as collective learning environments, where participants gained experiential and practice-oriented knowledge. University students, school pupils, public authorities, residents, youth organisations, and other stakeholders collectively explored urban issues, discussed and developed possible solutions, and implemented site-specific actions.



Questionnaires were administered before, during, and after the learning activities, prompting participants to reflect on the learning processes and their achievements. ***Students' reports, feedback sessions, and Mentimeter discussions*** provided additional material for assessing participants' experiences and learning outcomes.



The ULL introduced innovative, practice-oriented, and collaborative methods into the existing teaching activities of UCY. University students were awarded ***ECTS*** credits, while participants who were not enrolled in higher education institutions received ***certificates*** recognising their engagement and participation.



What did we learn about *Participants' Self-Assessments?*

The continuous implementation of self-assessment mechanisms documented how participants progressively acquired knowledge and skills throughout their involvement in the ULLs. Methods based on open discussion and reflection were especially valuable, as they made visible learning outcomes that had not been anticipated at the outset of the project. These methods also provided insights into what participants valued most and which activities they considered the most effective. This validation process showed how the ULLs supported participants' development while also advancing the objectives agreed collectively.

- Self-assessments conducted before, during, and after the ULL enabled us to continuously document participants' progress and levels of satisfaction.
- The use of diverse evaluation methods encouraged participants to share detailed reflections and personal remarks, generating rich qualitative data.
- Conversely, the ULLs that repeatedly employed the same or similar validation methods produced data that were more concise and easier to compare.



What did we learn about *Formal Recognition?*

The PS-U-GO project was committed to recognising the valuable engagement of participants across its four ULLs. Accordingly, participants received certificates or open badges acknowledging the knowledge and skills they had acquired. Moreover, where the ULLs were integrated into the formal learning structures of higher education institutions (HEIs), participants were awarded ECTS credits. In this way, the ULLs provided formal recognition of participants' learning achievements and supported their future academic and professional pathways. Alongside transparent communication about the ULLs' activities and expected outcomes, this formal recognition was a key factor in encouraging participants to join and actively engage in the ULLs.



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