
D1. Report on youth needs for accreditation of skills acquired through informal learning activities



Author: Claire Fragiadaki, Joseph Terzis, Katerina Zourou

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1. Introduction

The Credibly project aims to enhance the recognition and accreditation of skills acquired by young people in non-formal learning environments. The project seeks to develop a digital accreditation system that integrates the functionalities of Youthpass with the European Digital Credentials Infrastructure (EDCI)/Europass. By doing so, Credibly contributes to quality assurance, evidence-based policy development, and innovation in youth work, with a focus on implementation in Finland and Belgium.

This report compiles the insights gained from the kick-off brainstorming session, providing an overview of key needs, challenges, and proposed features for the Credibly prototype. It also outlines the necessary steps for implementation and stakeholder engagement in the digital accreditation of youth skills.

The brainstorming session included representatives from the three partners, each contributing their expertise and perspectives to the development of the Credibly prototype. The discussions focused on creating a digital accreditation system that is accessible, engaging, and aligned with youth needs. The combined efforts of these organizations ensured a holistic approach, addressing technical, usability, and engagement-related challenges:

- **Web2Learn (Greece)** – Emphasizing the importance of involving young people in non-formal recognition processes and promoting the digital agenda.
- **SYSTEM & G Finland RY (Finland)** – Advocating for a user-friendly and accessible approach to facilitating non-formal recognition for individuals, ensuring inclusivity.
- **Association for European Cooperation Development and Communication (CODEC) (Belgium)** – Focused on enhancing the system's visual and functional appeal to increase engagement and usability.

Background and context

Non-formal learning plays a significant role in young people's personal and professional development. However, recognition and validation of these skills remain a challenge. The existing Youthpass framework provides some level of accreditation, but there is a need for more integrated and digitally accessible solutions.

The European Digital Credentials Infrastructure (EDCI)/Europass aims to provide a standardized system for digital credentials across Europe. By combining these frameworks, Credibly seeks to offer a comprehensive and user-friendly accreditation system that aligns with current digital and policy trends while improving youth employability.

2. Proposed Features for the Credibly Prototype

Based on the discussions during the brainstorming session, several essential features were identified to ensure that the Credibly system is effective, user-friendly, and aligned with the needs of young people and youth organizations. These features aim to improve accessibility, engagement, and credibility while integrating with existing EU digital credentialing systems.

1. **Simplified Validation System** – Youth workers and trainers validate credentials through an intuitive and streamlined approval process, reducing administrative burden while maintaining authenticity and reliability.
2. **Mobile-Friendly Design** – An optimized mobile interface to enable young people to easily submit competencies, and receive credentials from their smartphones.
3. **Competencies** – Keeping the eight key competencies of Youthpass to ensure alignment with existing frameworks and enhance relevance for future accreditation developments.
4. **Accessibility Options** – Implementing an accessibility solution, to provide a more inclusive experience for individuals with disabilities, ensuring ease of navigation and usability for all participants.

3. Challenges in Digital Credentialing and Proposed Solutions

During the brainstorming session, the partners identified several key challenges that could hinder the adoption and effectiveness of digital credentialing for youth. These challenges, along with their respective solutions, were discussed in-depth by the partners to ensure that the final system would be as efficient as possible. The following challenges were highlighted:

Time Constraints

- **Challenge:** Participants and organizers have limited time to validate credentials, which may hinder the efficiency of the accreditation process.
- **Solution:** Introduce validation during the learning process and upon completion by youth workers, allowing for final verification.

Technical Issues

- **Challenge:** Users may face technical difficulties while accessing or using the digital system, leading to frustration and disengagement.
- **Solution:** Provide manual and video tutorial, explaining the process, plus contact information for further assistance.

Lack of Mobile Accessibility

- **Challenge:** Many young people primarily use mobile devices for digital interactions, making accessibility a critical factor in engagement.
- **Solution:** Ensure that at least the competencies submission process is mobile-friendly, allowing users to upload images, videos, and other proof of learning directly from their devices.

Low Motivation for Participation

- **Challenge:** Youth may not immediately see the benefits of obtaining digital credentials, leading to low engagement and participation rates.
- **Solution:** During activities, trainers will actively explain the importance of digital credentials in the job market, highlighting how they enhance employability and career opportunities. By providing real-world examples and success stories, trainers will help participants understand the value of these credentials and motivate them to engage.

4. Key Outcomes of the Kick-Off Brainstorming Session

Main Discussion Points:

- Developing a digital system that is credible, and easy to use.
- Addressing technical and motivational barriers to participation.

The key outcomes from the kick-off brainstorming session reflect a well-rounded approach to designing the Credibly prototype. Here's an analysis of the main discussion points:

1. **Developing a digital system that is engaging, credible, and easy to use**
 - The combination of credibility and usability is crucial for widespread adoption.
 - Credibility depends on alignment with recognized accreditation frameworks (Youthpass, Europass).
 - Ease of use ensures accessibility for diverse youth backgrounds, including those with limited digital literacy.

2. Addressing technical and motivational barriers to participation

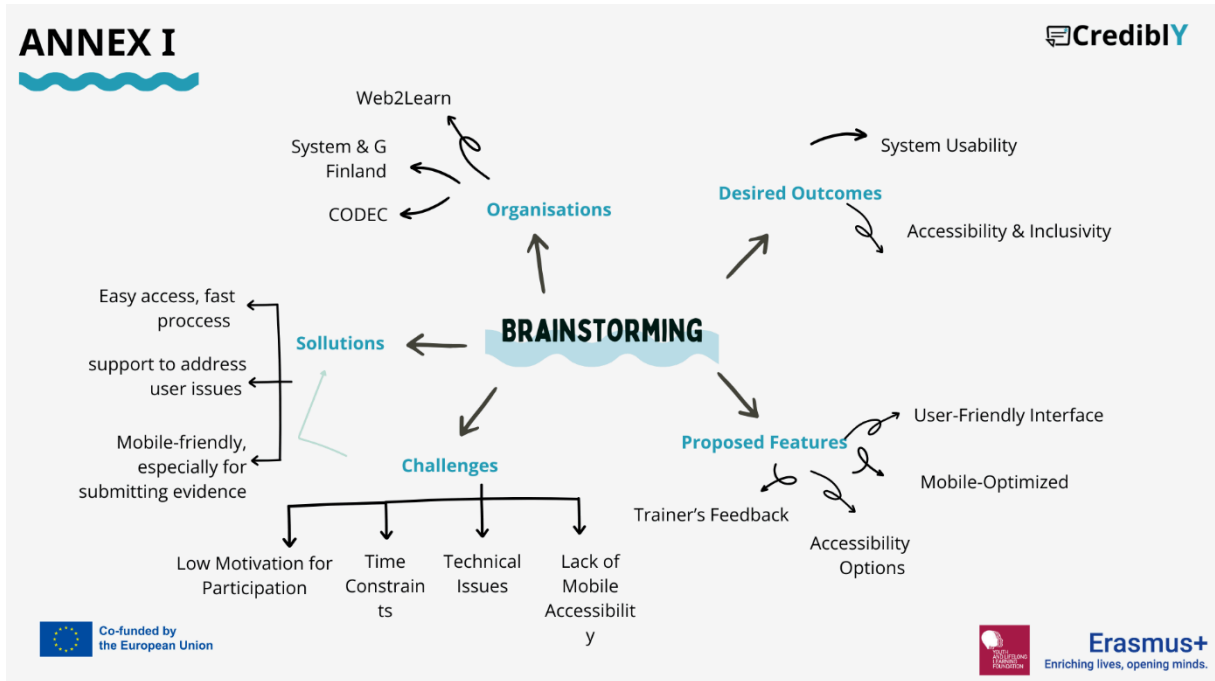
- Technical issues such as system crashes, poor mobile support, or complex navigation can discourage usage.
- Motivational barriers stem from the perception that digital credentials may not hold significant value in the job market.
- Providing a seamless experience through mobile-friendliness, and integration with Europass enhances motivation.

3. Conclusion

The Credibly project presents a timely and innovative approach to validating skills acquired through informal learning. By addressing the identified challenges and implementing the proposed features, the system can provide young people with credible, digital accreditation that enhances their employability and lifelong learning prospects.

Future steps will focus on further user testing, refining mobile accessibility, and ensuring that the accreditation system aligns with both Youthpass and EDCI. Through collaboration with youth organizations and policymakers, Credibly aims to contribute significantly to the recognition of non-formal learning in Europe.

ANNEX I



ANNEX II

