

VALIDATION WORKSHOP REPORT

- CYPRUS -

This is a report on the validation workshop that was hosted in Cyprus, on the 31st of July, at CARDET Premises, for the purposes of AVAL project. The main aim of the validation workshop was to gather feedback from experts and practitioners for the development of the final guidelines for the pedagogical coordinators to implement values education in pre-school and primary education.

Target groups: ECEC and pedagogical science experts, pre-primary school teachers, pedagogical coordinators, ECEC practitioners and representatives from other educational institutions, organisations and groups.

Hosting partner: CARDET

Title of the event: Ethical Storytelling and Critical Literacy

Venue and date: CARDET Premises, July 31st 900-1300

Participants: All 14 participants shared a background in education with a BA, MA, MSE or PhD in Education and Pedagogical Sciences. Most of them are members of the Pedagogical Association of Cyprus and the Cyprus Educational Society, as well as other pedagogical sciences organisations and groups in Cyprus and abroad.

As it was not an accredited continuous training event or series of events, that would provide credits for the teachers/ participants, badges and/or certificates were not issued.

All participants received a file with AVAL leaflet (with AVAL Logo and Website), a notepad and pen (complimentary by CARDET), as well as the AVAL Handbook and set of slides presented electronically, following the closure of the national validation workshop.

Program of the event¹

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 09:00 - 09:05 | Welcome address by Dr. Maria Solomou, CARDET EU Projects Co-ordinator and Pedagogical Expert |
| 09:05 - 09:15 | Warming-up – Interactive ice-breaker on Prioritizing Values |
| 09:15 – 09:30 | Who is who? – Self-presentations |
| 09:30 – 09:40 | Approaching the ‘Ethical’ in Education: An Overview of AVAL, by Elena Xeni, AVAL Project Manager/ Researcher |

09:40 – 09:50	Promoting Ethics and Values in Education: AVAL Achievements, by Elena Xeni, AVAL Project Manager/ Researcher
10:00 - 10:40	Ethics and Values in Education in Action: Results and Feedback from AVAL Pilotings, by Elena Xeni, AVAL Project manager/ Researcher (with the contribution of primary and pre-primary school teachers that were involved in AVAL implementations)
10:40 – 11:00	Coffee break
11:00 – 12:15	Group Validation and Feedback Activities
12:15 - 12:45	Group feedback presentation & Plenary discussion
12:45 – 13:00	Closure and Evaluation

Feedback and results

In the following lines, feedback received from all the parts of the workshop regarding AVAL intellectual outputs presented/ used during the national validation workshop will be reported.

- All intellectual outputs that were produced prior to the validation workshop were presented. Following an overview of the project's philosophy, aims and outputs (APPENDIX 4) AVAL achievements (see APPENDIX 5) were displayed and explained (Handbook, learning materials, methodology, symbols, etc.).

Participants express their content with how the project approached 'the ethical', by pointing out the user-friendly resources of appropriate material age-, content- and technical-wise. They stressed that the project is a step towards widely acknowledging the need systematically introduce 'the ethical' in the educational system.

¹ The programme/ agenda of the National Validation Workshop as displayed hereby may be found in APPENDIX 3.

- The AVAL website
The website was displayed and a focus on the resources content-wise and technically-wise (e.g. step by step explication on how to reach, download and print them) was given. First impressions regarding the structure and colours used were very encouraging and the AVAL Validation Workshop Chair noted that the website (www.valueseducation.odl.org) could be found on the leaflet of the project and would be sent to the participants after the workshop closure for participants to disseminate the link to their networks.
- Report on AVAL piloting (O3)
The piloting results (see APPENDIX 6) were also presented, with the highlights of O3 report (and the experiences of the three participants that were involved in the pilotings implemented in the Cypriot context), regarding the activities, the provided material and provision of training, creating avenues for participants' comments and discussion. For the case of Cyprus, AVAL Validation Workshop participants:
 - found it critical that the AVAL partnership conducted a thorough work during the piloting phase, with steps that may be easily identified and assessed

- were pleased to be informed that the pilotings participants would recommend the activities to fellow-teachers and considered the high impact of the piloting (and the programme, the resources, etc.) to the co-workers as well as the children. They mentioned that the numbers that the piloting and the programme itself is targeting are much higher, since as commented, knowing that for the case of Cyprus a class-teacher might visit/ teach at least one more class in both the pre-primary and primary school, a wide audience will be definitely targeted, starting from the pilotings.
 - were interested and content to notice that positive feedback was given throughout the pilotings in all partner-countries and they agreed with all comments, e.g. simple, innovative and child-friendly activities that promoting learning and having fun at the same time; easy to apply and appropriate to specified age groups (and even other age-groups); strengthening self-confidence, creativity, critical thinking skills and motivation among the children), pointing out the effective, target-oriented, good quality and updated work that was done throughout AVAL project, in terms of the learning material for Ethics and Values in Education and the teaching recommendations provided. Based on this, an in-depth discussion on the significance of best teaching practices in the respective field was held, since it was highlighted that how to teach 'the ethical' should be considered a priority.
- **The e-Learning Platform/ Learning Material**
The e-Learning Platform with the learning material and its recommended activities were thoroughly presented (see APPENDIX 7) and the Valorisation Workshop participants were given enough time to work with these in small groups and provide feedback on specific queries/ questions/ topics. The AVAL Validation Workshop participants:
 - Commented that all in all, they found it a good practice for all displayed learning material to have a clear and common structure with a beginning, a middle and an ending.
 - Stressed that in all cases they reviewed, they believe that content corresponds to the age-group pointed out.
 - Said that all the reviewed material is relevant to the topic tackled.
 - Saw the aspect/ element of storytelling (e.g. a story, either an at the beginning, in the middle, or in the end of a learning material, either as a known or unknown story, or as a request/ activity where children are asked to tell/ make, etc.) in a number of learning material as a very effective way to approach ethics and values in education, pointing out the benefits of storytelling in the early years. e.g.
 - Realised that all learning material they reviewed addressed aspects of critical literacy which is an approach of high importance in the Cypriot Curricula and the Cypriot classroom nowadays. This, to them, ensured the wide appreciation and impact AVAL project and its outputs will have in the formal Cypriot educational settings, to begin with, that may be considered as a big step towards AVAL project sustainability.
 - **On O4 – Guidelines for the implementation of values education in pre-school and primary education**

The Chair of the AVAL Validation Workshop moved on to O4 – Guidelines for the implementation of values education in pre-school and primary education explaining to the participants the scopus of this document and the role they play in its making. A discussion

on the recommendations to be included in the general guidelines document took place and an agreement on how to prioritise the recommendations was made. These recommendations are displayed in the section below.

Recommendations to be included in the general guidelines document

As derived from the feedback and discussions held in the course of AVAL Validation Workshop in Cyprus, the following recommendations are to be included in the general guidelines document:

- Ethics and values (i.e. ethical literacy) should be supported in the educational system in Cyprus. It should be considered as a must field to be encompassed in the policies, priorities and practices of the educational system in Cyprus at all levels (pre-primary, primary, secondary and higher education level). It should exist in the educational system as a school subject and a higher education strand.
- Due to its high significance in humans' lives and societies, it should not remain as an isolated subject, but also govern all subjects and all activities in in-side school/ classroom initiatives, actions in children's everydayness (storytelling on ethics and moral values, discussion on values, self- and group- reflection, role-play, study-visits, etc.).
- Besides school literacy, ethics and values should be strongly supported (taught, practiced, experienced) in the context of family literacy, which has an important role to play from the early years of an individual as the first environment hosting a child immediately after birth.
- How to teach values in school and at home, now and in the future, in formal and informal educational settings, should be a critical issue. Good practices in methodologies, tools, and resources should be constantly (re-)visited and research should feed practice and vice-versa, so as for best practices to be identified and applied, in the best possible (joyful and meaningful) way(s), in order to succeed with inspiring and motivating children to experience and adopt ethics and values in their lives.

Recommendations to be included in the final report of IO4 and any other IO optionally

As discussed in feedback received and discussions held in the course of AVAL Validation Workshop in Cyprus, the following recommendations should be included in the final report:

- Due to its high significance in humans' lives and societies, it should not remain as an isolated subject, but also govern all subjects and all activities in in-side school/ classroom initiatives, actions in children's everydayness (storytelling on ethics and moral values, discussion on values, self- and group- reflection, role-play, study-visits, etc.).
- Besides school literacy, ethics and values should be strongly supported (taught, practiced, experienced) in the context of family literacy, which has an important role to play from the early years of an individual as the first environment hosting a child immediately after birth.
- How to teach values in school and at home, in forms and informal settings, should be a critical issue. Good practices in methodologies, tools, and resources should be constantly (re-visited and research should feed practice and vice-versa so as for best practices to be detected and applied in the best possible (joyful and meaningful) way(s), in order to succeed with inspiring and motivating children to experience and adopt ethics and values on their lives.

- Sustainable initiatives for children to understand, experience and adopt ethics and values in our everyday lives and classrooms, in joyful and meaningful ways, should be of a high significance in life, every home, every school, every society.

Summary

The AVAL National Validation Report was held in Cyprus on July 31st at CARDET premises between 9:00-12:00 in the morning. Attended by 14 participants from a wide spectrum of AVAL target-groups, the workshop generated discussions that created avenues for rich recommendations for introducing and encompassing Ethics and Values in the Cypriot Educational System in a more rigour and systematic way. The recommendations in question, address the class, school and ministerial level, linking to sustainable ideas for children (and adults) to understand, experience and adopt ethics and values in their everydayness inside and outside school settings.



@Dr Maria Solomou, CARDET EU Projects Co-ordinator, during her welcome address



@Elena Xeni, Validation Workshop Chair during AVAL Overview



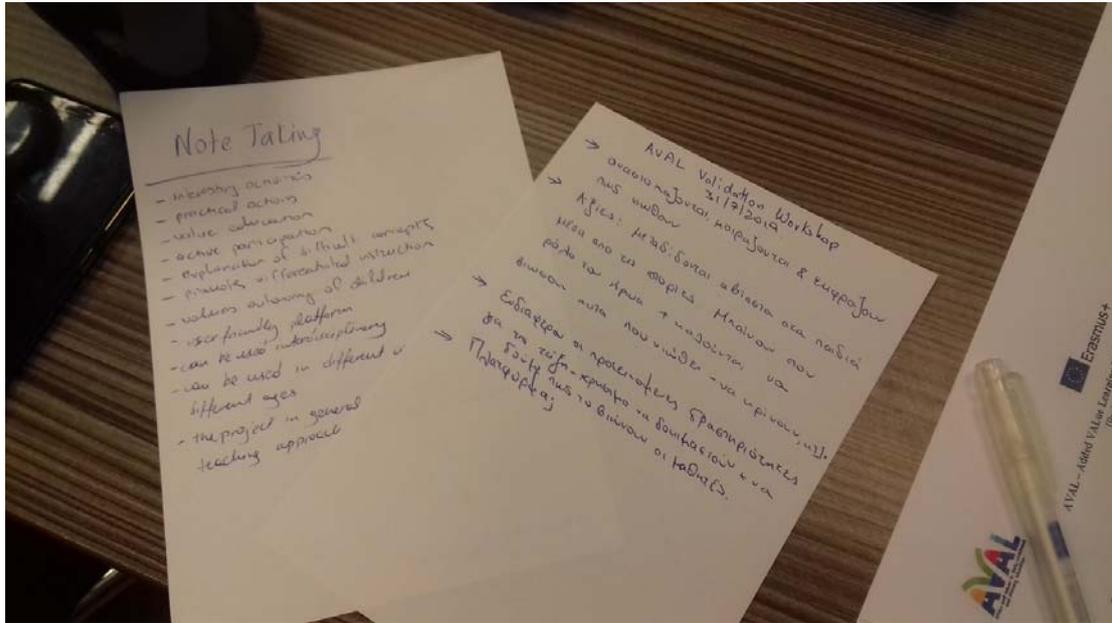
@Elena Xeni, Validation Workshop Chair while presenting AVAL Achievements



@Participants working in small groups



@Participants working in plenary



@ Note-taking