

LEARNING TO LEARN THROUGH MICRO-CREDENTIALS IN A REGIONAL SETTING



POLICY BRIEF

Norway

The Erasmus+ project “Learning to Learn through Micro-credentials in a Regional Setting” ([L2L MicroCred](#)) is a two-year initiative (2024-2026) aimed at boosting adult self-efficacy and employability in regional contexts. The international consortium brings together the University of Inland Norway (Norway), LUMSA University (Italy), the University of Limerick (Ireland), and Central Queensland University (Australia) to deliver high-quality, open-access micro-credentials tailored to local needs, fostering social inclusion and learner motivation.

FROM THE NORWEGIAN EXPERIENCE

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE PROJECT

L2L MicroCred project has contributed to advancing the state of the art by demonstrating how micro-credentials can be developed through a systematic learner-centred process that begins with understanding learners rather than content alone. Through regional mapping, stakeholder involvement, piloting, and evaluation, the project has shown how competence needs, learner characteristics, motivation, support structures, and learning preferences can be translated into concrete pedagogical design decisions. Two key project outcomes are the Open Box model and the Pedagogical Toolbox.

- 1 The Open Box Model provides a structured framework for understanding disadvantaged and hard-to-reach learners by exploring competence needs, learning preferences, learning environments, facilitation and support, and self-efficacy.
- 2 Building on these insights, the Pedagogical Toolbox offers practical guidance, templates, examples, and methods to support the design, development, delivery, and continuous improvement of inclusive micro-credentials.

Together, these outputs provide transferable models and resources that can help educational institutions create more engaging, flexible, and inclusive lifelong learning opportunities, making micro-credentials more accessible and relevant for learners who have traditionally been underrepresented in higher education and lifelong learning.

NATIONAL OUTPUTS

The University of Inland Norway (INN) developed and piloted the micro-credential **Digital Tools and Artificial Intelligence**, designed to strengthen digital competence, confidence and practical skills in using digital tools and AI among adult learners. The course was developed based on a regional needs assessment and stakeholder dialogue, ensuring that both the content and pedagogical approach reflected identified competence needs and learner characteristics. Particular attention was given to learners' prior experiences, learning preferences, self-efficacy, support needs, and preferred learning environments.

Based on these insights, the course design emphasised low-threshold access, simple language, practical and directly applicable tasks, real-life examples, flexible participation options, and opportunities for reflection and peer learning. The course combined online learning with voluntary face-to-face workshops and aimed to create a safe and supportive learning environment that encouraged confidence and active participation.

4 Weekly Modules	54 Activities	Online + 2 optional face-to-face workshops	University-issued Certificate of Completion
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POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MICRO-CREDENTIALS

1 *Adopt a holistic understanding of learners*

Successful micro-credentials should be designed around a holistic understanding of learners, considering not only competence needs but also motivation, self-efficacy, support needs, learning preferences and learning environments.

2 *Translate learner insights into pedagogical design*

The L2L Pedagogical Toolbox helps educators translate learner insights into concrete pedagogical decisions through practical templates, design tools, and examples. It supports the development of learner-centred, evidence-informed micro-credentials that respond to different learner groups and can be adapted to different institutional contexts.

3 *Use iterative development and early pilot testing*

Micro-credentials should be developed through continuous testing, feedback and refinement. Early pilot testing helps identify barriers related to content, language, technology and workload before full implementation, while continuous refinement improves relevance and learner engagement.

4 *Develop micro-credentials together with regional stakeholders and target groups*

Involve intended learners, employers, career guidance services and other regional stakeholders throughout the entire process—from needs analysis and course development to piloting, implementation and further development. Co-designing with the intended learners helps ensure that micro-credentials remain relevant, accessible and responsive to real needs, while regional partnerships strengthen recruitment, sustainability and long-term impact.

5 *Consider institutional and organisational conditions from the outset*

Successful micro-credentials depend not only on good pedagogical design but also on institutional readiness. Technical systems, admission procedures, certification, learner support, staffing, recruitment and organisational capacity should be considered early to support successful implementation, scaling and long-term sustainability.

LEARN MORE ABOUT MICRO-CREDENTIALS



Micro-credentials are central tools for acknowledging and documenting learning achievements gained through short, targeted training activities. Their core purpose is to enable continuous upskilling and reskilling by allowing adults to update and expand their competences throughout their working lives within a lifelong learning pathway. In response to rapid labor market shifts, rising competence demands, and the risk of social exclusion, micro-credentials directly address current workforce challenges by filling the gap for flexible learning opportunities.

EUROPEAN RECOGNITION

The strategic global value of micro-credentials is recognized by major international policy frameworks, including the European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience, the Council Recommendation of 16 June 2022 on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability, UNESCO, and the OECD, positioning them as a key lever for building flexible, inclusive, and resilient learning.



THE EUROPEAN PROJECT LANDSCAPE

L2L MicroCred builds on nearly a decade of EU-funded work on micro-credentials: from mapping and standards (MicroHE) to a common policy framework (MICROBOL) and dialogue between universities, the world of work and learners (MicroCredX). European University Alliances are now testing issuance, quality assurance and recognition at scale through policy experimentation (4EU+MICI), e-sealed European Digital Credentials (ECIU) and shared design practices (CHARM-EU, Osservatorio Unico per le Microcredenziali – Digital Education). CRED4TEACH and the Erasmus+ Teacher Academies such as EduSTA apply micro-credentials to teachers' professional development. L2L MicroCred adds a complementary perspective: micro-credentials designed for regional contexts, focused on adult self-efficacy and inclusion.

ACTIONS FOR SCALABILITY

Adaptive Scalability Model

Evidence from pilot phases in Norway, Italy, Ireland, and Australia supports adaptive scalability rather than direct course replication.

To expand the reach of micro-credentials without compromising quality or exacerbating the digital divide, the framework leverages a shared digital architecture while embedding localized support, stackable learning pathways, and targeted tutoring.

Seven Key Components

1. Tools for learning needs and target group definition
2. Modular and adaptable course design
3. Authentic tasks and formative assessment
4. Differentiated levels of difficulty
5. Tutorship and possibility for peer and social interaction
6. Transparent progression and certification
7. Support of local associations and institutions for delivery





Discover more on
<https://www.l2lmicrocred.net/>