

European Training Strategy

Development of a set of competences for trainers

Document for consultation – revised version



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→ This **document** for consultation was revised and further developed by Gisele Evrard in close cooperation with Rita Bergstein (SALTO T&C RC) on behalf of the SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre and after the first consultation phase, which took place in August-September 2012.

This document is divided in 5 sections: the part 1 is dedicated to the introduction (p.2). In part 2 (p.4), the reader is provided with the draft proposal of a list of competences for trainers in youth work – based on reference documents collected from the youth work field; part 3 (p.6) contains a series of recommendations related to the draft proposal; part 4 (p.10) the reader will find a list of reference documents while the appendices (p.12) provide general observations resulting from the reading and the analysis of the reference documents.

Part 1 Introduction

1.1 Background information

The question of a ‘set of competences for trainers’ in the youth field is on the agenda of the European institutions, non-formal learning providers, and Youth in Action programme providers for some years now. Moreover, there is a rather general consensus on the fact that educators, trainers and practitioners active in the youth field ought to work toward the development of quality training programmes and related competence development. Therefore and no matter where and in which specific field, there is a need for a set of competences for trainers in order to run European/international educational projects. To describe such competences in a standardised way, to identify trainers’ competences and to support the implementation with material such as quality indicators, self-assessment tools, etc. will lead to better recognition of the contributions of youth work to society and to appropriate capacity-building strategies.

The development of a set of competences for trainers in youth work takes place under the development of the European Training Strategy (ETS) for the Youth in Action programme. The ETS aims at contributing to the development of quality of support systems for youth activities and the capabilities of civil society organisations in the youth field. For more information: <http://www.salto-youth.net/rc/training-and-cooperation/trainingstrategy/>.

1.2 Objectives and target group

One of the reasons behind the attempt to develop a set of competences is also for trainers to work towards a competence framework, in order to provide a common reference when developing training courses for trainers and when looking for further advanced training opportunities. Another reason is to enhance quality training, as stated in the study of Yael Ohana and Hendrik Otten *those who are providing training to other deliverers of non-formal education are [also] those likely to be most interested in [a] competence profile.*¹

Hence, the objective of this analysis and proposal is to support the development of a set of competences for trainers active within the context of the Youth in Action programme and beyond, meaning the broader framework of training in international youth work and non-formal learning. Indeed and while considering the above, to raise the quality of training activities also means and requires focusing on the ones who provide training in the youth field or on those in charge of delivering non-formal education training activities - namely trainers.

1.3 Note on the proposed list of competences

The draft set of competences should be seen as a framework to be adjusted to various training situations, strategies and contexts for further discussions and implementation measures.

Therefore, the draft set of competences is not meant to be a 'must-have' list of competences each trainer in European youth work should possess to the same level of excellence, but rather a possible series of training-related competences, training elements to consider while develop training courses and training modules, or for a trainer to consider for his/her further professional development.

The draft set of competences is not to be seen as a closed process but rather as a dynamic document, which will keep on evolving.

¹ 'The eight key competencies for lifelong learning: An appropriate framework within which to develop the competence of trainers on the field of European youth work or just plain politics?' by Hendrik Otten and Yael Ohana for SALTO T&C RC (2009) – p. 5

Part 2 Draft list of competences for trainers and description

Competences in this document are to be understood as an overall system of values, attitudes and beliefs as well as skills and knowledge, which can be put into practice to manage diverse complex situations and tasks successfully. Self-confidence, motivation and well-being are important pre-requisites for a person to be able to act out his/her developed competences.²

Understand and facilitate individual and group learning processes

is about and includes:

- Choosing, adapting or creating appropriate methods;
- Creating an inspiring learning environment;
- Supporting learners in identifying and pursuing their learning needs;
- Supporting learners in overcoming barriers in their learning process;
- Understanding and facilitating the dynamic in a group in a way which is favourable to different ways of learning;
- Stimulating active participation;
- Motivating and empowering learners;
- Ensuring creativity, problem-solving and thinking 'out-of-the-box';
- Strengthening the self-confidence of learners.

Learning to learn

is about and includes:

- Assessing one's own learning achievements and competences;
- Identifying learning objectives and pursue them pro-actively;
- Openness for flexibility and readiness for learning and unexpected learning;
- Identifying and organising appropriate resources to support individual learning.

Design educational programmes

is about and includes:

- Developing an educational approach based on the key-concepts, values and consolidated practice of non-formal learning;
- Knowledge and understanding of the values and purposes of youth programmes and policies;
- Identifying appropriate ways and methods to address the values and purposes of youth programmes and policies in an educational activity;

² SALTO T&C RC, Training of trainers. Self-Perception Inventory, <http://www.salto-youth.net/rc/training-and-cooperation/tc-rc-nanetworktcs/tot/tot-background-docs/>

- Linking current developments in the policy areas and in society with the educational activity;
- Integrating ICT, e-learning and related tools and methods into the educational activity;
- Designing an evaluation process and impact assessment based on the needs of the stakeholders and the objectives identified, which will also support drawing relevant conclusions from the evaluation outcomes;
- Choosing and designing appropriate ways and methods for collecting, interpreting and disseminating data;
- Explaining to learners the reasoning of a methodology and its various parts and to properly debrief the exercises.

Cooperate successfully in teams

is about and includes:

- Contributing actively to the tasks of a team;
- Readiness to take on responsibility;
- Encouraging and involving other team members;
- Learning with and from others;
- Dealing constructively with disagreements.

Communicate meaningfully with others

is about and includes:

- Ability to listen actively;
- Ability to be empathetic;
- Ability to express clearly thoughts, feelings and emotions;
- Sensitivity to gender-related issues.

Intercultural competence

is about and includes:

- Reflected acceptance of ambiguity and change;
- Awareness of one's own identity;
- Willingness and ability to take on new roles;
- Critically reflecting about and take distance from one's own perceptions and stereotypical constructions of reality;
- Self-reflection and making use of diverse ways and methods to increase self-awareness;
- Ability to apply human rights principles.³

³ Although that 'quality' (attitude, skills, knowledge and values) isn't stated as such in other competence lists and profiles, it is part of the definition of the 'Intercultural competence' as defined by SALTO CD RC (promotion and protection of human rights'). Going beyond the Youth in Action programme and looking at other training contexts, human rights values and principles are part of the so-called IC competence

Part 3 Recommendations

3.1 Adaptation to specific training contexts

The complexity in analysing the competences proposed in the reference documents lies in the fact that they all belong to a rather specific approach. They are part of a competences development framework, which varies very much depending on the target group, the youth workers and the young people those training address and – once again, the working context. Therefore and on top of supporting the development of training modules, this proposed set of competences should be seen as an opportunity to further develop one's competences.

The latter certainly calls for risk-taking and for addressing personal challenges. It can also open the doors to peer-support and peer-review, to (self) assessment, to a 'trying-out' process, and to working on personal and professional development. There is not such thing as a 'perfect trainer' and this is not the aim of such document. Using the set of competences would therefore mean adapting it to the context of use!

3.2 Ensuring a quality approach and the development of quality support measures

Since few years now, quality is an aspect of training and non-formal learning which is getting a bigger attention with the aim to define a possible common approach to demonstrate the quality, seriousness and impact of youth work and non-formal education activities, providing dimensions, aspects, criteria and indicators of the related training activities which would allow peer review as well as –perhaps, external assessment.

Moreover and with regard to measuring quality in training, it appears important to enlarge our understanding of quality and develop a holistic and systemic approach to it. Quality is too often limited to the aims of objectives of the educational activity, to the competences of the trainers-trainees and to other general elements as an attempt to preserve the inherent diversity of youth work within trainings of trainers. If those are indeed extremely important and relevant aspects to reflect upon when looking at educational and training activities, it is however equally important to consider that quality intrinsically encompasses the following dimensions⁴:

1. Ethos: Coherence
2. Fidelity to the objectives
3. Change: transformation

and Intercultural Dialogue and seen as necessary in numerous training for trainers, notably those of the Council of Europe and the EU-CoE youth partnership.

⁴ L. Harvey and Green D. 'Beyond Total Quality Management', 'Approaches to Quality Assessment' (1993).

4. Innovation

According Harvey and Green (1993) and when adjusting those dimensions to training in the youth field, we tend to refer to quality as a process of transformation or *qualitative change*. Transformation (and therefore learning) goes beyond the very basic elements of the training and encompasses not only an active involvement of the learner but also of all those involved directly or indirectly in the process, thus exerting an influence on the potential for change. It is about looking at the different aspects of quality in an apparently single process (the learning process, in our case). According to Elton (1992) [...] *unlike many other services where the provider is doing something for the consumer, in education [...] the provider is doing something to the consumer. This process of transformation is necessarily a unique, negotiated process in each case.* Hence, such notion not only implies a need for quality in training (and education) but also fully considers the participation and the empowerment of the learner.

The above builds on the approach to quality as stated in the Total Quality Management (TQM) initially developed by W. Edwards Deming, Joseph. M. Juran and Armand V. Feigenbaum (1989⁵) and later on revised by Cua, McKone and Schroeder (2001⁶) in their nine common *Total Quality Management (TQM) practices*. They describe a series of elements that – when adjusted to our youth training context and in a quality framework – stakeholders and trainers aim at providing learners / trainees with. While implementing a TQM approach and again when adjusted to training of trainers in the European youth field, teams therefore ought to concentrate on:

1. Ethics
2. Integrity
3. Trust
4. Training (process, contents and methodology)
5. Full involvement and participation of the learner
6. Quality culture and approach
7. Recognition
8. Communication (including partnerships)

This is not without recalling some of the elements listed under the values and principles of non-formal learning in training as stated by Helmut Fennes and Hendrik Otten in *Quality in non-formal education and training in the field of European youth work* (2008).

The quality debate that will follow should take the above into consideration when developing assessment tools and mechanisms. Considering the natural evolution of competences and competences development, to simply look at a set of competences for trainers, the curriculum and the level of ‘acquisition of competences’ by the participant-trainers may be biased - no

⁵ W. Edwards Deming, Joseph. M. Juran and Armand V. Feigenbaum . How to Build Quality, *Economist*, September 23, 1989, 91-92 (1989)

⁶ Cua, McKone and Schroeder. Relationships between implementation of TQM, JIT, and TPM and manufacturing performance. *Journal of Operations Management* 19 (6) 675-694. (2001)

matter whether we consider self or external assessment. In the case of long-term training courses, the quality of the set of competences for trainers and the 'evaluation' of the level of competences development of participant-trainers ought to encompass other dimensions to reach a rather holistic and systemic approach to quality, and therefore to quality standards and indicators.

3.3 A point on culture and identity⁷

If culture is considered as a dynamic process and strongly or mostly related to the notion of identity, anything related to culture therefore also relates to the individual and to a series of group s/he may belong to, in a given context, situation and period of his/her life. Although this may still not be so obvious in many sessions or approaches to 'intercultural learning' in training activities, it is most probably the most accurate and relevant one nowadays, though calling attention on the danger to enter into relativism. Hence, this does not mean to state that 'such thing as culture doesn't exist' but rather intends shifting the perspective to a more 'beyond' or systemic approach. In other terms: to think outside the box.

Tackling culture and identity also challenges the views on culture and intercultural learning as practiced in training in European youth work and questions the fact that a repeated approach may actually lead to beliefs and established 'training modules' which have proven not to be totally adequate or accurate anymore. Deeper reflection could of course link this to other approaches such as those inspired from Gestalt therapy, art therapy, emotional intelligence, drama, coaching, etc. If not new, those pedagogical approaches are more and more used in training and have therefore enlarged our vision to culture and identity (but also on group-related processes), enhancing our duty to consider our work on such topics differently than in the past.

3.4 Two entry-points while considering establishing a list of competences for trainers in the youth field

The development of a set of competences does not exclude having a list of self-standing competences as such, but would support considering the latter in different complementary contexts and situations. Training for trainers do always have a specific focus or entry point and such model would support the development of training modules in the most adequate manner possible.

Indeed, we may consider competences from two different though not antagonist perspectives:

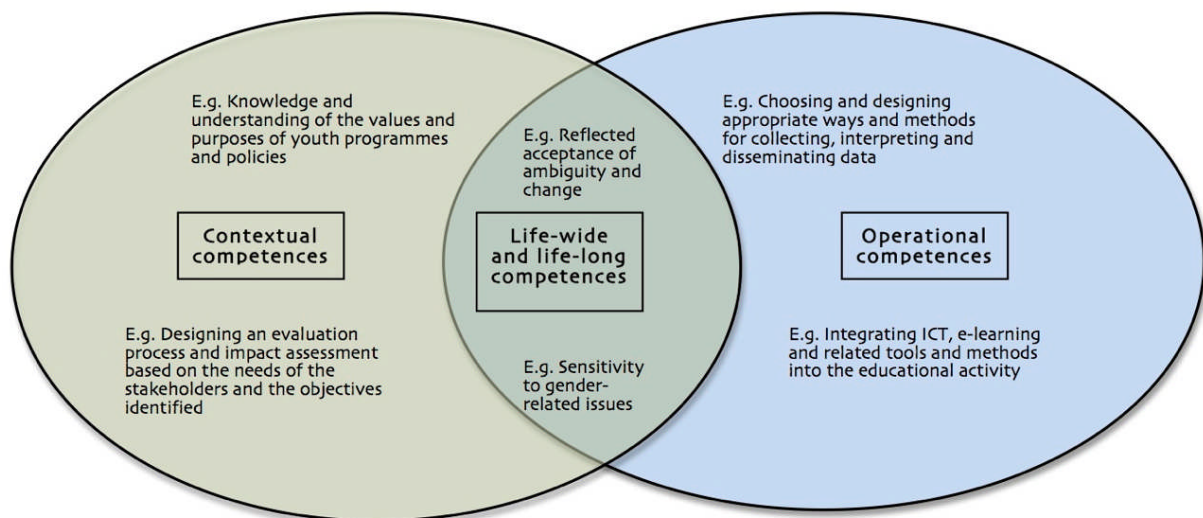
⁷ The first consultation phase highlighted the complexity of the approach to interculturalism and to culture, mainly in the competence areas 'cooperate successfully in teams' and 'intercultural competence'.

- a) Competences necessary for trainers involved in training activities in the youth field and non-formal learning
- b) Training modules which ought to be addressed in training for trainers

To describe the competences, to focus on and the context and situations to which they belong or relate to would surely represent an additional support in an attempt to ‘harmonize’ the approach to training of trainers.

3.5 Visualisation of the competence framework

Given the nature of the training of trainers several competence frameworks may be considered as relevant for a future set of competences for trainers as to allow addressing both the profile of trainers as well as the training modules to develop. The approach which has been chosen for this draft set of competences divides competences into *Contextual competences*; and *Operational competences*; and a third category called (so far) ‘*Life-wide and life-long competences*’ which would gather those competences which belongs to the formers but which are also seen or considered as essential for the development of an individual as such. This could look like:



This possible competence framework would have the advantage to not separate life-wide and life-long competences from the other categories clearly highlighting their inter-relation and interdependence.

Part 4 Reference documents

This following first draft proposal of competences for trainers in the youth field is an essence of the analysis of already existing studies, models, communications and recommendations:

- 'Quality in non-formal education and training in the field of European youth work' by Helmut Fennes and Hendrik Otten for SALTO T&C RC (2008): <http://www.salto-youth.net/rc/training-and-cooperation/europeantotstrategy/trainercompetencestudy/> ;
- 'The eight key competencies for lifelong learning: An appropriate framework within which to develop the competence of trainers on the field of European youth work or just plain politics?' by Hendrik Otten and Yael Ohana for SALTO T&C RC (2009): <http://www.salto-youth.net/rc/training-and-cooperation/europeantotstrategy/trainercompetencestudy/> ;
- 'Competency Model for Trainers in the Youth Field', Estonian National Agency for Youth in Action Programme (2011); <http://mitteformaalne.ee/compmodel>
- Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 'Key competences for a changing world', draft joint progress report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the 'Education & Training 2010 work programme' (2010); http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/progress-reports_en.htm
- 'Competence Framework for VET professions – Handbook for practitioners' by Kristiina Volmari, Seppo Helakorpi & Rasmus Frimodt (Eds) for the Finnish National Board of Education and Cedefop http://www.opf.fi/english/publications/2009/Competence_framework_for_VET_professions
- 'Competence Improvement Map', TALE (Trainers for Active Learning in Europe): <http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/TALE-Documentation/11.html> (2009-2010);
- Self-perception Inventory - SALTO T&C RC Training of Trainers (ToT): <http://www.salto-youth.net/rc/training-and-cooperation/tc-rc-nanetworktcs/tot/tot-background-docs/> ;
- 'Evaluation form for Experiential Facilitator's Competences', Via Experientia (2009); <http://www.viaexperientia.net/uploads/Evaluation-form-for-experiential-facilitators-competences.pdf>
- 'Youth Work as part of the Flemish Qualification Structure', by Michael Debusscher for CESOR and VUB (2007);
- The Interim Standards Council for Community Learning: 'The Competences for Community Learning and Development' http://www.cldstandardscouncil.org.uk/the_competences/Competences_for_Community_Learning_and_Development (2009);

- Networks for Youth Development: 'Core competencies for youth work' http://www.nyc.gov/html/dycd/downloads/pdf/core_competencies_for_yw_professionals.pdf (2008);
- Spanish National Agency of the Youth in Action Programme, XL2 Training for Trainers: Mapa de Mejora de Competencias (2011-2012);
- SALTO Cultural Diversity Resource Centre: Intercultural Competence (ICC) developed and acted out within the framework of European youth work

Specific attention has been given to:

- What types of competences are tackled, taking into account the related possible clustering results (contextual, professional, social, etc.), when relevant and appropriate;
- What are their links to non-formal learning training activities/courses?
- The transferability and/or adaptability of the examined competence profiles or models.

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Appendices – sources of the draft set of competences

None of the frameworks analysed and taken into consideration for this document look at competences from a single entry point or limit themselves to a list of competence for trainers in the youth field, being at national or European level. Instead, they all propose a series of competences as part of an overall ‘competences development framework’ and ‘set of competences’, which comprises several elements to be taken into account with a special attention to the working context and the training situation. Therefore the list proposed under part 2 should not be understood as a self-standing list of competences (skills, attitudes, abilities and knowledge). The context and settings of the training activity - meaning youth work and non-formal learning, should always be taking into considerations.

Indeed, the complexity in analysing the competences proposed in the reference documents lies precisely in the fact that they all belong to a rather specific approach and are part of a competences development framework which varies very much depending on the target group (trainers), the young people those training address and – once again, the working context.

Out of seven frameworks analysed, those that have been used for the list of competences are as follows:

Competency model for trainers in the youth field (Estonian National Agency of the Youth in Action programme)

Such model is based on basic requirements (‘core’ competences) for a trainer in the youth field, all supported by a series of values, attitudes, and personal characteristics. In the model proposed, the core competences are supplemented by ‘competence clusters’ or ‘fields of basic competences’, namely:

- Competence to comprehend the youth field;
- Competence to facilitate and guide learning;
- Competence to promote (training course) in the youth field;
- Leadership competences.

Each field is then divided into a list of explicit abilities, attitudes, values, and skills that we will simply call ‘competence’. Moreover, the so-called ‘fields of basic competences’ and what is embedded in each of them is then related to their use depending on different types of activities. Such ‘types of use’ are displayed on five levels (not prioritising one over another):

- Targeted, relevant, creative and unconstrained use of knowledge and skills in different situations;
- Targeted and creative use of knowledge and skills;

- Targeted use of knowledge and skills;
- Use of knowledge and skills in routine situations;
- Limited use of knowledge and skills in routine situations.

Hence, for each competence in each field of basic competence, the model proposes a series of abilities, skills and attitude, which in the end may vary pretty much depending of their use in different training situations and contexts.

We are therefore in front of what one may call a 'multi-layer model' which surely presents a certain flexibility and openness and does not aim to prioritise one 'level' of use and applicability of a given competence over another. However, it also shows a rather complex approach to competence development, for each sub-division presents or encompasses a number of 'competences' (components of a competence) which have all their importance and relevance at the time of developing training modules or approach training elements in a training for trainers, for instance. This being said, one may also value the fact that the model offers a quite high level of adjustment to evaluative purposes (at least to the definition of criteria and indicators) which is not necessarily the case with those which follows (ToT, TALE).

The seven essential ToT competences (Training of Trainers, SALTO T&C RC, on a yearly basis) and TALE essential competences (Trainers for Active Learning in Europe, EU-CoE youth partnership, 2010-2011)

Very close to the model developed for the of the EU-CoE youth partnership, ToT presents a series of 'essential competence' and what they include to then relate each of them to three different clusters.

The seven essential competences of ToT are:

- The competence to plan educational activities in line with the values and aims of the Youth in Action Programme
- The competence to develop and make explicit an educational approach which incorporates the key-concepts, values and consolidated practice of non-formal education;
- The Learning to Learn competence;
- The competence to understand and facilitate learning of others;
- The competence to design, implement and evaluate training programmes;
- The competence to co-operate in international teams of trainers/facilitators;
- The competence to deal with ambiguity and change.

The competence development framework in TALE defines eighteen essential competences:

- Competence to facilitate group learning processes;
- Competence to facilitate individual learning processes;
- Competence to integrate of socio-political contexts of learners into an educational programme;
- Competence to design educational programmes;
- Competence to integrate evaluation into an educational activity;
- Competence to make use of information technology for supporting learning processes;
- Competence to motivate and empower learners;
- Competence to be a self-directed learner;
- Competence to communicate meaning- and respectfully with others;
- Competence to deal constructively with conflict situations;
- Competence to work together successfully in teams;
- Competence to raise self-awareness;
- Competence to act out ones potential for creativity and innovation;
- Competence of critical thinking;
- Competence to act as resource person;
- Intercultural learning competence;
- Competence to design educational activities in line with the values and purposes of European youth programmes and policies;
- Competence to develop an educational approach based on the key-concepts, values and consolidated practice of Non-Formal Education.

In both ‘competence improvement map’ or ‘competence development framework’, each essential competence is – once again, divided into a series of attitudes, values and beliefs, skills and knowledge.

The particularity of the proposed models is, however, that instead of relating each ‘core’ or ‘essential’ competence to a field of basic competence and to their applicability or use, the proposed essentials competences are rather related to three different ‘type’ of competences:

ToT	TALE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contextual competences • Life-wide competences • Operational competences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and educational contexts • Learning in a life-long learning context • The context I live in, work in and act in

Even though the sub-division, the elements embedded in each essential competence and their link to the different types of competences differs in both frameworks, the advantage is to look at competences and competences development from a relatively holistic perspective, where learning happens in different ways, in different contexts and situations and for different purposes. Both models are of course very much linked to the non-formal learning programmes of both the European Commission and the Council of Europe (e.g. in the case of TALE), which

may explain their particularity. But the flexibility and the holistic approach to learning make of them frameworks very easy to adjust and apply in the field of training in youth work.

Other models or frameworks have been examined which present similar competences (those considered as 'must have' competences) and which are listed in point 5, though for rather specific target groups and contexts, e.g. community work, experiential learning, or for youth workers qualification models. Hence and although all of them do tackle competences of trainers (also called 'educators' in some cases) they also tackle the competence of youth workers, which is not (yet) the objective of this analysis and of the proposed list under point 2. The latter rather addresses trainers active in the youth field and in non-formal learning.