

European Training Strategy

A set of
competences for
trainers working
at international
level



salto|youth

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Development of a set of competences for trainers working at international level

The development of a 'Set of competences for trainers working at international level' aims to provide individual trainers, teams of trainers and training providers like organisations, institutions and their related programmes with a model which helps

- To develop assessment tools (self-assessment as well as assessment by others) for individual trainers,
- To develop tools for trainer teams to develop their individual and team competences, and
- To develop training strategies and related tools.

The development and the context for the development of this set of competences are the main political developments at European level, among those the Agenda 2020 of the Council of Europe (2008) and its current work on the 'Strasbourg process', the EU youth strategy (2009), the Resolution of the Council of the European Union on youth work (2010), and the European programmes.

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Any kind of feedback can be sent to SALTO Training & Cooperation Resource Centre, training@salto-youth.net

Part 1 Introduction

I.1 Background information

The development of a 'set of competences for trainers working at international level' in the youth field is on the agenda of the European institutions, non-formal learning providers, and Erasmus+ Youth in Action programme providers for some years. Moreover and even though there is a rather general consensus on the fact that educators, trainers and practitioners active in the international youth field already provide quality educational programmes and projects,

there is need to work toward the development of higher 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, to appropriate capacity-building strategies and to apposite resources and support mechanisms for training.

The development of a set of competences for trainers in international youth work took 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 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 Erasmus+ 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 - namely trainers, or on those in charge of organising non-formal education² training activities – namely institutions and organisations.

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

² The process and work on defining non-formal learning/education in the youth field is still ongoing

I.3 Note on the list of competences

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

Therefore, the 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, possible support mechanisms, training elements to consider while develop training courses and training modules, or for a trainer to consider for his/her further professional development.

The set of competences is not to be seen as a closed process but rather as a dynamic and living document, which will keep on evolving, partly through an online wiki and partly through future consultation processes.

Part 2 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.³

Understand and facilitate individual and group learning processes

is about and includes:

- Choosing, adapting or creating appropriate methods;
- Creating an inspiring and safe learning environment;
- Supporting learners in identifying and pursuing their learning needs and 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';
- Effectively managing one's own emotions in training situations and keeping ethical boundaries with the group 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;
- Undergoing personal/professional development through feedback and commitment;
- Acknowledging and dealing with 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 principles and values of non-formal learning;
- Transferring knowledge or values related to the activity to the group of learners;
- Integrating socio-political contexts of learners into the educational programme;
- Where relevant, integrating ICT, e-learning and related tools and methods into the educational activity;
- Designing an evaluation process and impact assessment;

³ 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/>

- Choosing and designing appropriate ways and methods for collecting, interpreting and disseminating information (topic-related, data, resources, findings, etc.).

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;
- Being aware of the team processes and how they affect the team effectiveness;
- 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 identity-related issues;
- Sensitivity to diversity.

Intercultural competence

is about and includes:

- Reflecting acceptance of ambiguity and change;
- Awareness of one's own identity;
- Willingness and ability to look at identity, culture and related aspects and dimensions from different perspectives;
- Critically reflecting about and take distance from one's own perceptions, biases, and stereotypical constructions of reality;
- Reflecting and making use of diverse ways and methods to increase self-awareness;
- Ability to apply human rights principles.⁴

⁴ 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 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.

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 no 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 dimensions⁵:

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

⁵ L. Harvey and Green D. 'Beyond Total Quality Management', 'Approaches to Quality Assessment' (1993).

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 (1989⁶) and later on revised by Cua, McKone and Schroeder (2001⁷) 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 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

⁶ W. Edwards Deming, Joseph. M. Juran and Armand V. Feigenbaum . How to Build Quality, *Economist*, September 23, 1989, 91-92 (1989)

⁷ Cua, McKone and Schroeder. Relationships between implementation of TQM, JIT, and TPM and manufacturing performance. *Journal of Operations Management* 19 (6) 675-694. (2001)

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 identity

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:

- a) Competences considered important and necessary by the trainers' community and for all 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

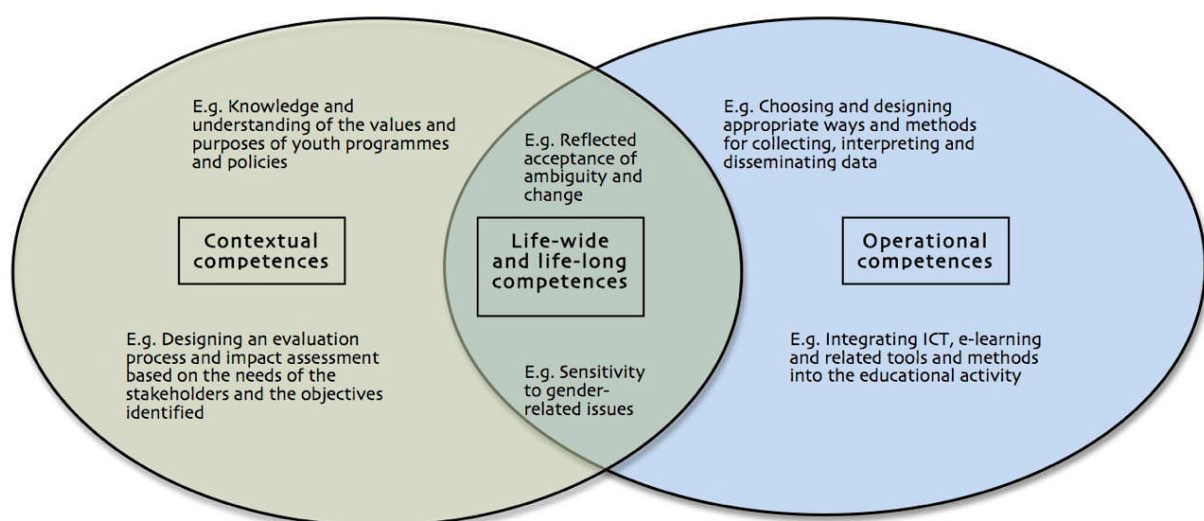
Both options are to be seen from the perspective of 'training and learning in practice' and as resulting from past and current experiences and their related evaluation outcomes.

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 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 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

The set 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.oph.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/II.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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