

# Competences of adult learning facilitators in Europe: Analyses of five European research projects

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## RESEARCH PAPERS

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### ABSTRACT

Quality of educational services is highly dependent on competent teachers. Thus, the competency-based framework for teacher education has become an important issue across Europe. This approach in Europe has greatly reflected in the field of adult learning and education. There are five research projects dedicated to identifying competences of adult learning facilitators, involving regional countries or all the Member States of the European Union. Based on the results of the five research projects, this paper has a twofold aim: 1) to describe those research projects and their identified competences for adult learning and 2) to analyse the common competences identified by all the five research projects. The distinct scopes of teacher's competences and teaching competences are offering the framework for analysis. We found ten common competences that are particularly relevant to teaching roles of adult learning facilitators in Europe. Moreover, the analyses revealed that adult learning facilitators need to possess teacher competences that are relevant to institutional administration. Our conclusion is that there are common competences for adult learning facilitators which are relevant to both teaching and teacher competences.

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### KEYWORDS

Competence, adult learning facilitator, teacher competence, teaching competence, Europe

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## INTRODUCTION

Competence is a well-known term in Europe, and the concepts of competence have been widely used in education and training, particularly in teacher training, because it provides a solid basis to build on. Thus, one of the fundamental policies and activities regarding teacher training in the European Union is a competency-based framework which aims at targeting and assessing individual teacher professional development (Stéger, 2014). In other words, competences that need to be acquired by teachers have been serving as a basis for teacher's professional development programs at all levels.

Although there have been many debates on how to understand the concept of competence, a consensus has achieved that competence is a basic requirement articulated in knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Buiskool & Broek, 2011; Caena, 2011; European Commission, 2012; Research voor Beleid, 2010). Moreover, researchers (Bechtel, 2008; Ellström 1997 as cited in; Ellström & Kock, 2008) have highlighted that competence is the internal feature, which can be described knowledge, skills, attitudes, dispositions, and motivation of an individual to perform a certain task or job. A notion of requirement or qualification has also come up when we talk about the competence because it externalizes the individual's internal competences to perform the particular tasks (Bechtel, 2008; Ellström 1997 as cited in; Ellström & Kock, 2008). That is why the common definition of competence highlights teaching requirements. Knowledge indicates facts, figures, concepts, ideas and theories that help to understand the certain areas or subjects (Bechtel, 2008; Buiskool & Broek, 2011). Skills are about ability and capacity to carry out processes and apply the existing knowledge to achieve results (Bechtel, 2008; Buiskool & Broek, 2011). Furthermore, attitudes express dispositions and mindsets to act to ideas, persons, situations (Bechtel, 2008; Buiskool & Broek, 2011).

The competency-based framework for teacher education in Europe has greatly reflected in the field of adult learning and education. The clear example is that there are several research projects which solely and specifically focus on identification of competences that are needed to be possessed by adult learning professionals, including adult learning facilitators. These are "AGADE project" in 2004–2006, "VINEPAC project" in 2006–2008, "Flexi-Path project" in 2009–2011, "Key competences of adult learning professionals project" in 2010, and "Qualified to teach project" in 2009–2011. Researchers have suggested that adult learning facilitators' competences are dependent on national and working contexts as well as cultural environments (van Dellen & van der Kamp, 2008; Wahlgren, 2016). However, there could be common competences regardless of these contexts (Wahlgren, 2016). Thus, we want to see what could be the common competences of adult learning facilitators in Europe based on these five research projects.

This paper aims 1) to describe identified competences for adult learning facilitators of five European research projects, and 2) to analyse the common competences of adult learning facilitators. In accord with the aims, the research seeks to answer the following questions: What are the common competences relevant to teaching roles of adult learning facilitators? What are the common competences, which are not directly involved in teaching roles, but necessary competences for adult learning facilitators? When we analyse the common competences of adult learning facilitators described by the five research projects, we use two distinctions: teacher competences and teaching competences. Teaching competence is defined as the role of the teacher in action in the classroom; while, teacher competence indicates teachers' multifaceted roles in different levels, such as individual, institutional, local, and professional network (OECD, 2009 cited in Caena, 2011). Moreover, the paper utilizes two different terms: adult learning professionals and adult



Table 1. Research projects those identified competences of adult learning professionals

#	Research projects	Time period	Competences	Involved countries
1	AGADE – A good adult educator in Europe” project	2004–2006	2 competence areas	Estonia (leader), Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Sweden and Norway
2	Validation of informal and non-formal psychopedagogical competencies of adult educators (VINEPAC)	2006–2008	6 competences	Romania (leader), Germany, France, Malta, Romania, Spain
3	Flexible professional pathways for adult educator between the 6th and 7th level of EQF (Flexi-Path)	2009–2011	3 clusters with 33 competences	DIE Germany (leader), Spain, England, Estonia, Romania, Switzerland, Italy (Commissioned by European Commission)
4	Key competences for adult learning professionals	2010	7 general, 12 specific competences	32 countries (27 EU and 5 others; Commissioned by European Commission)
5	Qualified to teach – Core competencies of adult learning facilitators in Europe	2009–2011	9 key competences	Germany, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Sweden, Switzerland

Source: Authors’ own compiling based on the data provided by the five projects

learning facilitators. The term adult learning professionals composes all staff working at the field such as program directors, managers, facilitators and other administrative staff ([Research voor Belied, 2010](#)). Nevertheless, the term adult learning facilitators refers only to those who have direct contact with adult learners ([Bernhardsson & Lattke, 2011](#); [Research voor Belied, 2010](#)).

The first part of the paper describes the research projects and their identified competences for adult learning facilitators. The second part analyses the common competences for adult learning facilitators in Europe.

## THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH PROJECTS ON COMPETENCES OF ADULT LEARNING PROFESSIONALS

There are five prominent research projects dedicated to identify competences of adult learning professionals, involving regions of all Member States of the European Union ([Table 1](#)).

Competences identified by these research projects are described below.

### “AGADE – A GOOD ADULT EDUCATOR IN EUROPE” PROJECT

“AGADE – A good adult educator in Europe” research project covered Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Sweden, and Norway under the leadership of Estonian Non-formal Adult



Education Association and was implemented in two years, from 2004 to 2006 (Jääger & Irons, 2006).

The aim of the project was to create training modules for non-formal adult education practitioners (Jääger & Irons, 2006). In order to design the training modules, their initial step was to identify competences of adult educators. Based on the identified competences, the project designed a nine-week training course for the experienced adult educators with at least three years of working experience and piloted the course in several countries (Jääger & Irons, 2006).

The project defined two areas of competences: personal and professional development areas (Table 2).

The first set of competence area indicates the personal development aspects of being an adult education facilitator, particularly in the non-formal education field; while, the second set of competence area covers the professional development segment needed. In the personal area of competences, the project includes the minimum of six qualities that adult education facilitators should have. These personal qualities are self-esteem, tolerance, responsibility, communication skills, empathy and flexibility. In the professional area of competences, the project describes competences in three different dimensions: knowledge, skills and organization. The knowledge dimension indicates a singular knowledge of adults and their psychological features which is needed to be taken-into-account in teaching and learning but also utilizing the knowledge in their daily teaching. The skills dimension includes abilities and skills on motivating and activating learners and creating a learning environment that is suitable for the adult learning needs and styles. The organization dimension stresses adult education facilitator's own self-reflection on his/her professional development and external evaluation (Jääger & Irons, 2006).

## THE “VALIDATION OF INFORMAL AND NON-FORMAL PSYCHO-PEDAGOGICAL COMPETENCIES OF ADULT EDUCATORS (VINEPAC)” PROJECT

The VINEPAC project was implemented from 2006 to 2008 under the leadership of the Romanian Institute of Adult Education partnered with Germany, France, Malta, and Spain (VINEPAC project, 2008).

The project focused on a competence profile that contains the main and most frequent roles performed by adult educators in general. Based on the competence profile, the project further designed a package of instruments, called Validpack, to validate those competences of adult educators. The validation package aimed to create the documentation and the evaluation of competences of adult educators in different levels (self-evaluation, external evaluation and consolidation), regardless of their acquisition of learning which occurred in formal, non-formal and informal settings (VINEPAC project, 2008).

The project identified six competences of adult educators: knowledge, training/management, assessment and valorisation of learning, monitoring and counselling, professional and personal development and an open category (Table 3).

Knowledge competence covers the adults' psychosocial characteristics, group dynamic and the content of what he/she teaches. Training/Management competence involves needs assessment, preparation of training, delivery of training and adequate usage of technology and resources.



Table 2. Competences defined by AGADE project

Competences	Descriptions
<b>Personal development area</b>	
1) Self-esteem	Appreciating one's worth and competencies being accountable for oneself acting responsibly towards others
2) Tolerance	Ability to demonstrate fairness and understanding of people whose way of thinking and opinions differ from others
3) Responsibility	Meeting norms of living together Being responsible for one's actions Considering the results and effect in advance
4) Communication skills	Foster dialogue in the learning process by developing the ability to listen actively and to get learners into the learning process through IT in distance education classroom Transmit information in oral and written form particularly in email and web format Ability to make oneself understood and to understand others
5) Empathy	Responsiveness Understanding others' thoughts and feelings
6) Flexibility	Ability and willingness to change Achieve the best result taking a permanently changing situation into account
<b>Professional development area</b>	
1) Organizing stage – knowledge dimension	Knowledge about how adult learn and understanding the psychology of adults Knowledge of methods in AE and learning Skills in preparing value-based (democratic and humanistic) programs Planning and organizational skills Good knowledge of the subject
2) Performance stage – skills dimension	Ability to motivate for learning (before, during and after learning process) Development of a learning environment in accordance with students' needs, focusing on self-directed learning Skills to activate learners
3) Evaluation stage – Organizational dimension	Skills in self-reflection and critical thinking Skills in evaluating and promoting self-evaluation in oneself and students

Source: Jääger & Irons, 2006

Competence on assessment and valorisation of learning indicates assessing learners' needs, interests and learning styles, developing training plan based on collected data through assessment and monitoring of the learners' progress constantly, using a variety of methods. Motivation and



counselling competences cover tasks of sharing useful information to motivate them to pursue their future education and careers and of making referrals if learners need counselling beyond professionals' expertise. The competence of personal and professional development includes professionals' self-interests on their professionalism and reflection on professional development needs and opportunities. The final competence is an open category that can be filled with tasks or activities in relevance to teaching which are not mentioned in previous sets of competences and can be a country-specific competence (VINEPAC project, 2008).

## THE "FLEXIBLE PROFESSIONAL PATHWAYS FOR ADULT EDUCATOR BETWEEN THE 6TH AND 7TH LEVEL OF EUROPEAN QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK (FLEXI-PATH)" PROJECT

The Flexi-Path project, sponsored by the EU, ran from 2009 to 2011 and coordinated by DIE – German Institute for Adult Education, was partnered with Spain, England, Estonia, Romania, Switzerland and Italy (Flexi-Path project, 2011).

The project aims were 1) to analyse the system or the qualification frameworks for professionals in adult education in the different European countries; 2) illustrate the complex high-level skills and knowledge of adult education practitioners; 3) contribute the comparability and transparency of the adult educator qualifications in order to facilitate the access and progression in careers and mobility on the European labour market; 4) design a common competence profile of an adult educator on the 6th and 7th European Qualification Framework (EQF); and 5) develop a validation instrument of learning and competence (Flexi-Path project, 2011). The project was based on previous European projects, and the most recent was the VINEPAC project mentioned above.

Each partner country reviewed a sample of qualification models and compiled a national report which clearly explained the job roles performed by adult education professionals, and this enabled to design the common competence profile. Based on the competence profile, the project developed "Flexi-Path Toolkit", launched in 2010, in order to create a professional portfolio to demonstrate high-level competences of adult educators.

The Flexi-Path project defined 33 competences, split into three broad clusters: learning, people and practice (Table 4).

Learning cluster demonstrates all tasks and activities relevant to teaching and learning, for instance, knowledge and skills related to the specific subject, effective teaching and learning methods, continuous monitoring and evaluation. People cluster indicates, in general, communication and collaboration tasks and activities within and outside of an institution. Practice cluster stresses tasks and activities of adult education practitioners within an institution covering financial, marketing, leadership and staff development areas (Flexi-Path project, 2011).

## "KEY COMPETENCES FOR ADULT LEARNING PROFESSIONALS IN EUROPE" PROJECT

The European Commission funded this research project implemented in 2010. The aim of the project was to develop a common set of key competences that contribute to the development of a



Table 3. Competences defined by VINEPAC project

Competences	Descriptions
1) Knowledge	Initial knowledge of psycho-social profile of the adult Knowledge of the group characteristics Knowledge base in own content area
2) Training/Management	Needs analysis Preparation of training Training programme delivery Use of technology and resources (time, material, space, people)
3) Assessment and valorisation of learning	Develop work with learners to identify their needs, strengths, and goals, and advice or refer them to appropriate programmes and levels of instructions Use of assessment results on a regular basis to plan lessons, develop curricula, monitor progress towards objectives and goals and verify learning Monitoring of learning beyond simple recall of information using a variety of assessment strategies Structuring and facilitating ways for learners and peers to evaluate and give feedback on their learning and performance, through reflection and self-assessment Guiding learners in the development and ongoing review of their educational plans
4) Motivation and counselling	Use of qualitative methods to valorise the learners' progress Sharing information with learners and colleagues about additional learning resources, educational opportunities and options for accessing support services Making referrals to appropriate resource when guidance and counselling needs are beyond own expertise Guides learners in the development and ongoing review of their educational plans
5) Personal and professional development	Analysis of the needs and opportunities of professional development Demonstrating interest for self-development
6) Open category	

Source: VINEPAC project, 2008

reference competence base for Europe, usable by the Member States voluntarily ([Research voor Beleid, 2010](#)). Furthermore, it identified all the potential ways of utilizations or applications of the common set of key competences. The research covered 32 countries, including all of the 27 EU Member States and other five EFTA countries ([Research voor Beleid, 2010](#)).

To define the common set of key competences of adult learning professionals, the project utilized the three-staged approach: competence identification, competence modelling and competence assessment. In the competence identification stage, the project compiled all available information about the duties, tasks, responsibilities, roles and work environments related to the job and identified the relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes required by adult learning



Table 4. Competences defined by Flexi-Path project

Competences	Descriptions
<b>Learning cluster</b>	
1) Curriculum and subject development	initiate and monitor curriculum design and development
2) Personalization	ensure individual learners are supported to optimize progression and achievement
3) Metacognition	initiate and monitor learning and teaching strategies that enable effective individual learning
4) Teaching and learning methods	ensure that staff and learners engage in activities that promote effective learning
5) Fields of knowledge	obtain, analyse, and apply information
6) Learning resources	ensure sufficient and appropriate assessment of resources to support learning
7) Quality improvement	monitor and evaluate learning programmes, using data for implementing improvement
8) Accreditation and validation	lead on awarding bodies' QA and ensure appropriate accreditation pathways are adopted
9) Specialist subject knowledge	maintaining a high level of preparedness within your principal curriculum area
10) Learner progression	within and across curriculum and institutional boundaries
11) Evaluating learning	recognizing and responding to the challenges for and the successes of learners
<b>People cluster</b>	
12) External relations	maintaining relationships with all stakeholders
13) Marketing	demonstrating, in highly visible ways, the responsive nature of the organization to individual and collective adult learning needs
14) Learner engagement	keeping "the learner" as the as the central concern of the organization
15) Communication	demonstrating that you communicate effectively with all employees within your organization and in your wider networks
16) Information, advice and guidance	ensuring that learners individually and collectively are supported to enter, enjoy and progress through and beyond their specific learning activity
17) Context and community	ensuring that your organization remains a listening and responsive body, capable of changing to meet local expectations and needs and ensure the organization is the right place to learn
18) Community development	contributing to empowerment of individuals and groups and enhancing the wider social and economic development of the various communities in the area of benefit
19) Diversity and equality	inclusion, equality of opportunity, intercultural awareness and engagement

*(continued)*



Table 4. Continued

Competences	Descriptions
20) Employer engagement	maintaining links with human resources and technical experts to ensure a responsive approach to meeting their learning agendas
21) Rights, responsibilities and restrictions	demonstrate a balanced approach to challenging attitudes and behaviours
22) Inter-generational learning	contributing to age-inclusive strategies for adults of all ages that are mutually advantageous for children
<b>Practice cluster</b>	
23) Organizational strategy	developing a client-centred lifelong learning culture within the organization which responds to political, social and economic issues
24) Financial management	financial planning and budget management
25) Accountability	ensuring that the delivery of adult learning in your organization adheres to local, national and European principles and priorities and identifying and planning for risk
26) Programme development	achieving a balance of activity that, within available resources, reflects organizational priorities, attracts learners and meets community needs
27) Premises and facilities	managing the infrastructure to allow the provision of a quality adult learning service
28) Sustainability	balance protection of the organization, the local economy and the environment
29) Leadership	inspiring and leading change within your organization
30) Team management	leading performance improvement within your team and responding to underperformance
31) Staff development and appraisal	ensuring your staff explore and reach their potential, managing performance and improvement
32) Professional development	being aware of your own professional development
33) Learner responsiveness	listening and responding to the concerns of individuals and groups of learners

Source: Flexi-Path toolkit, 2010

professionals. This is done on the basis of the study of existing competence profiles, job descriptions, educational programmes, academic literature, and European wide studies on competences of educational staff. In the competence modelling stage, the project developed a consistent competence profile by making use of the compiled information on tasks, responsibilities and necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes. This was done with involving experts and relevant stakeholders. Furthermore, in the last stage, they checked whether the set of key competences is complete, consistent and workable for supervisors in the sector, professionals and other stakeholders ([Research voor Beleid, 2010](#)).

The project defined 19 key competences of adult learning professionals in two different levels: generic and specific ([Table 5](#)).



Table 5. Key competences defined by the project

Groups	Competences
A. Generic competences	<p>A1. Personal competence in systematic reflection on one's own practice, learning and personal development: being a fully autonomous lifelong learner</p> <p>A2. Interpersonal competence in communicating and collaborating with adult learners, colleagues and stakeholders: being a communicator and team player</p> <p>A3. Competence in being aware of and taking responsibility for the institutional setting in which adult learning takes place at all levels (institute, sector, the profession as such and society): being responsible for the further development of adult learning</p> <p>A4. Competence in making use of one's own subject-related expertise and the available learning resources: being an expert</p> <p>A5. Competence in making use of different learning methods, styles and techniques including new media and being aware of new possibilities and e-skills and assessing them critically: being able to deploy different learning methods, styles and techniques in working with adults</p> <p>A6. Competence in empowering adult learners to learn and support themselves in their development into, or as, fully autonomous lifelong learners: being a motivator</p> <p>A7. Competence in dealing with group dynamics and heterogeneity in the background, learning needs, motivation and prior experience of adult learners: being able to deal with heterogeneity and diversity in groups</p>
B. Specific competences	<p>B1. Competence in assessment of prior experience, learning needs, demands, motivations and wishes of adult learners: being capable of assessing adult learning needs</p> <p>B2. Competence in selecting appropriate learning styles, didactical methods and content for the adult learning process: being capable in designing the learning process</p> <p>B3. Competence in facilitating the learning process for adult learners: being a facilitator of knowledge (practical and/or theoretical) and a stimulator of adult learners' own development</p> <p>B4. Competence to continuously monitor and evaluate the adult learning process in order to improve it: being an evaluator of the learning process</p> <p>B5. Competence in advising on career, life, further development and, if necessary, the use of professional help: being an advisor/counsellor</p> <p>B6. Competence in designing and constructing study programmes: being a programme developer</p> <p>B7. Competence in managing financial resources and assessing the social and economic benefits of the provision: being financially responsible</p>

*(continued)*

Table 5. Continued

Groups	Competences
	B8. Competence in managing human resources in an adult learning institute: being a (people) manager
	B9. Competence in managing and leading the adult learning institute in general and managing the quality of the provision of the adult learning institute: being a general manager
	B10. Competence in marketing and public relations: being able to reach the target groups and promote the institute
	B11. Competence in dealing with administrative issues and informing adult learners and adult learning professionals: being supportive in administrative issues
	B12. Competence in facilitating ICT-based learning environments and supporting both adult learning professionals and adult learners in using these learning environments: being an ICT-facilitator

Source: Research voor Beleid, 2010

Seven generic competences were identified that adult learning professionals should possess: development, interpersonal (communication and team working) skills, responsibilities and accountabilities for the institution, profession and society, subject specialization, master at using diverse teaching and learning methods that meet different learning styles of learners, motivating and empowering learners and dealing with diverse groups. Other twelve specific competences can be divided into two groups. Competences covering B1 to B6 are directly connected to the learning process. Hence, they are mainly for teachers/trainers/facilitators. Competences covering B7 to B12 are supportive for teaching and learning, and they are more linked to administrative and managerial functions, thus aimed at administrators in the field (Research voor Beleid, 2010).

## “QUALIFIED TO TEACH (QF2TEACH) – CORE COMPETENCIES OF ADULT LEARNING FACILITATORS IN EUROPE” PROJECT

The QF2TEACH project covered Germany, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Sweden and Switzerland and ran from 2009 to 2011.

The aim of the project was twofold: 1) to determine the core competencies needed by adult and continuous learning facilitators and 2) to develop a transnational qualification framework for adult and continuous learning facilitators linked to the European Qualification Framework (EQF) in order to make visible and offer comparable qualification levels of adult professionals throughout Europe (Bernhardsson & Lattke, 2011).

The project utilized the transnational Delphi survey, which consists of three waves to define core competencies of adult and continuous learning facilitators. In the first wave, the experts commented on competencies of facilitators. The answers were recorded and analysed in terms of trends, counter trends, and variances. In the second wave, the results of the first wave were sent back to the experts for confirmation and modification. In the last wave, the final set of core



competences of facilitators was set up based on the analysis of the first and second waves. The experts that commented and modified competencies of facilitators were teachers or adult educators, heads or managers, representatives of NGOs, researchers and administrators belonging to adult and continuous education and learning (Bernhardsson & Lattke, 2011).

The project identified nine key competences of adult facilitators (Table 6).

The competences include communication, group management, supporting learning, assisting learners, efficient teaching, stimulating learning, subject knowledge, learning process analysis. In addition, personal behaviour competence was identified along with the personal and professional development competence (Bernhardsson & Lattke, 2011).

Five prominent European projects aiming at identifying competences of adult learning professionals have been described separately in the above, and it offers a chance to analyse competences further.

## ANALYSIS OF COMMON COMPETENCES OF THE FIVE RESEARCH PROJECTS

Even though the competences identified by the five research projects are not directly comparable due to various purposes and perspectives, there is a common aim, that of creating an ideal competence framework for adult learning professionals, including adult learning facilitators. Thus, it is worth to look into the identified competences to define the most common competences for adult learning professionals.

As mentioned earlier, there are two distinct scopes of competences: teacher and teaching competence. We understand that teaching competence is a collection of features that required in the classroom; while, teacher competence indicates broader roles of teachers in individual, institutional, and local levels (OECD, 2009 cited in Caena, 2011). When we analyse teacher competence, we have focused on adult learning facilitators' roles, particularly in their institutions.

Competences of adult learning professionals have identified by the five research can be divided into these two different scopes of competences. The AGADE, VINEPAC and QF2TEACH research projects focused on the teaching competences. These research projects defined competences specifically for adult learning facilitators who directly facilitate adult learning; thus, the competences covered only teaching tasks (Table 7). Meanwhile, the Flexi-Path and "Key competences for adult learning professionals" projects have focused on the whole teacher competence. These research projects have defined competences of adult learning professionals, including adult learning facilitator but also other staff such as programme director, manager and other administrative staff (Table 7).

## TEACHING COMPETENCE

The following competences that related to teaching competence have been found commonly in all competence sets of the research projects:

1. subject knowledge;
2. knowledge and skills on various teaching-learning methods;



Table 6. Competences defined by QF2TEACH project

Competences	Descriptions
Key competence 1: Group management and communication	Communicate clearly Manage group dynamics Handle conflicts
Key competence 2: Subject competence	Have specialist knowledge in their own area of teaching Apply the specialist didactics in their own area of teaching
Key competence 3: Supporting learning	Support informal learning Stimulate the active role of learners Have a broad repertoire of methods at their disposal Make use of the participants' life experience in the teaching activities
Key competence 4: Efficient teaching	Tailor teaching offers for the needs of specific target groups Plan teaching offers according to the resources available (time, space, equipment, etc.)
Key competence 5: Personal and professional development	Orientate themselves to the needs of participants Make use of their own life experience within the learning environment Recognize their own learning needs Set their own learning goals Be creative Be flexible Reflect their own professional role Evaluate their own practice Be self-assured Be committed to their own professional development Cope with criticism See different perspectives
Key competence 6: Stimulating learning	Motivate Inspire
Key competence 7: Learning process analysis	Monitor the learning process Evaluate the learning outcomes Conduct regular formative assessment and learner/teacher dialogues Assess the entry-level of learners
Key competence 8: Self-competence	Be emotionally stable Be stress-resistant Analyse learning barriers of the learner Be authentic Proceed in a structured way Be open-minded
Key competence 9: Assistance of learners	Create a safe learning atmosphere (not intimidating) Enable learners to apply what they have learned Be attentive

*(continued)*

Table 6. Continued

Competences	Descriptions
	Encourage learners to take over responsibility for their future learning processes
	Be emphatic
	Encourage collaborative learning among learners
	Provide support to the individual learner
	Listen actively
	Be available/accessible to learners
	Assess the need of the learner

Source: Bernhardsson & Lattke, 2011

3. knowledge and skills on assessment and evaluation;
4. planning and designing programme, curriculum, course or subject;
5. motivating adult learners;
6. personal competence;
7. professional development competence;
8. communication and group management;
9. needs analysis;
10. knowledge on adult development.

Subject knowledge is one of the common competences. Obviously, an adult learning facilitator should have solid background knowledge of what s/he facilitates. The second common teaching competence is the combination of knowledge and skills on various teaching-learning methods, styles, including ICT, and using them efficiently in daily practices. The third common teaching competence is the combination of knowledge and skills on assessment and evaluation. An adult learning facilitator should possess knowledge of various types of assessment and evaluation methods, styles and skills applying those in practice. The fourth common competence is planning and designing programme, curriculum, course or subject for adult learners. This competence encompasses the planning of a course or programme using available resources, preparation, and developing contents delivered to adult learners. These four competences are

Table 7. Two competence scopes

Teacher competence	Teaching competence
Flexible professional pathways for adult educator between the 6th and 7th level of EQF (Flexi-Path)	A good adult educator in Europe (AGADE)
Key competences for adult learning professionals (KC)	Validation of informal and non-formal psycho-pedagogical competencies of adult educators (VINEPAC)
-	Qualified to teach – Core competencies of adult learning facilitators in Europe (QF2TEACH)



directly entwined to the core role of an adult learning facilitator; thus, they all are more or less highlighted by all the five research projects.

There are other teaching competences those also important for an adult learning facilitator. A competence of motivating adult learners seems to be important since four research projects highlighted it. This competence consists of skills on sharing information with learners, empowering, inspiring and advising future learning or career. Three research projects have listed the competence of activating adult learners separately from the competence of motivating adult learners. This competence reflects skills on how to engage adult learners into the teaching-learning process through stimulation, using their experiences, by collaboration and by supporting them. However, we think that this competence is part of the competence of motivating adult learners; thus, we did not list this competence separately.

Another essential teaching competence is personal and professional development competences that are emphasized by the four research projects. Personal competence reflects empathy, flexibility, tolerance, self-esteem and emotional stability. While, professional competence indicates self-reflection on personal and professional development, identifying the needs for further professional development and being lifelong learners.

The next group of competences identified by three research projects are communication and group management; needs analysis; knowledge on adult development. Communication and group management competence include communication with diverse groups, listening actively and understanding group dynamic and development. The competence of needs analysis is emphasized separately only in three research projects. It indicates assessing needs of a learner to reveal prior experience, learning needs and identifying entry-level requirements of a programme. One important adult psychological factor that influences the learning process strongly is that an adult brings his/her experiences that could be a valuable source of facilitation and motivation. In this perspective, needs analysis could be a crucial competence that all adult learning facilitators should possess. The final competence highlighted by the three research projects is knowledge about adult development. This reflects knowledge on adults' psychological and social development and related learning process. It seems to be a ground knowledge for all adult learning professionals, and although it is not defined explicitly in other two research projects, it may be implicitly included competence of subject knowledge which may present on how to teach a specific subject for adult learners.

## TEACHER COMPETENCE

The two research projects (Flexi-Path and KC) define the complex competences that should be possessed any adult learning professional including facilitators but also programme directors, managers and other staff. Since the teaching competences identified by the two research projects already discussed in the above, other competences are analysed.

The common teacher competences are responsibility and accountability of the services offered by the professionals and organizations; financial management; management; and marketing and public relations skills.

The first competence regarding the responsibility and accountability of the services indicates being responsible for services that adhere to local and national level policies and decisions, ensuring outcomes and impact on individual and community development and assuring the quality through accreditation and validation processes. Second necessary competence is the financial management



that is reflecting planning, allocating and managing financial resources. The third, manager competence demonstrates human (staff development, cooperation, appraisal and evaluation) and physical (efficient usage of premises and facilities) resource management. Additionally, leadership, team management, and organizational knowledge and skills should be possessed to manage human and physical resources. The fourth, marketing and public relation competence is crucial to reach out to the target groups, communities and other stakeholders, including donors and investors, in order to ensure the development of teaching and learning activities.

## CONCLUSION

Adult learning facilitators' competences which were identified by the five prominent European research projects, running from 2004 to 2011, have been analysed; in consequence, several common competences for adult learning professionals have been revealed in terms of teacher and teaching competences. The common competences regarding the teaching role are subject knowledge; knowledge and skills on teaching-learning methods; knowledge and skills on learning assessment and evaluation; planning and designing programmes; motivating adult learners; personal competence; professional development competence; communication and group management; needs analysis; and knowledge about adult development. Despite these competences that regard to teaching roles, adult learning facilitators should also need to possess competences that are marketing and public relations, financial responsibility, accountability and quality assurance; thus, they can contribute to their institutions' development or sustainability effectively. This shows that adult learning facilitators should possess not only competences that are relevant to their teaching roles, but also administrative ones. However, we also would like to highlight that the heads and managers of adult education institutions are required to possess competences that are specific to teaching roles; thus, they could support adult learning facilitators' professional development in various ways.

Although national and working contexts and cultural environments have a significant impact on the competences of adult learning facilitators, there seem to be ideal common competences for adult learning facilitators. In other words, adult learning facilitators should possess all these common competences to be effective and better serve adult learners.

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