



INNOVA

Migrant Inclusion through
Education and Skills Validation
in Europe

PR1: A1 - “ReSkills” Methodology

Date: September 2022



INNOVA



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Project partners

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Reader expectations

The ReSkill methodology is one of three tools that were developed for this Project Result. The aim of this guide is to offer complete guidance and the necessary tools for adult educators to identify, validate, and assess migrants' skills and core competences, previous work experience, and other relevant attributes.

It includes:

1. **Identification** of learning outcomes acquired by immigrants through non-formal and informal learning.
2. **Documentation** of learning outcomes acquired by immigrants through non-formal and informal learning.
3. **Assessment** of the learning outcomes acquired by immigrants through non-formal and informal learning.

Introduction

Being an adult educator means helping adults develop their personal growth, improve their competencies, and teach them new skills, that they need to live and get through everyday tasks.

Adults in general are not typical learners, and each one of them has his/her own specific background and life experience that should be taken into account and respected. So, it becomes important to them that the educational program's goals reflect their own.

In addition, adult educators should know that if adult learners are members of an at-risk or vulnerable social group: such as migrants, they can easily encounter more obstacles and barriers to learning, and they need to be motivated also in developing social relations and building self-esteem.

In fact, adult migrants, for example, can experience lifelong learning as a way to enhance their social inclusion, their active citizenship, and their integration into the local context where they arrive in order to build a more integrated and multi-ethnic society.

To do that, he/she needs to start from zero, show real interest, cope with different life situations and a very heterogeneous mixture of needs, and moreover overcome negative emotions that, sometimes (especially at the beginning), migrants can easily experience; in this way, educators become real counsellors and enablers.

Therefore, an adult educator should be prepared first to recognize, validate, and assess migrants' aptitudes and core competencies, or other relevant personal attributes, and then work with them on their employability skills and the opportunity to enter the labour market.



Please watch the following video: [Who is a Migrant?](#)

About the Innova project

Adult migrants often face the risk of social exclusion, discrimination, and stigmatization. It is critical to improve their integration in the host environment so that they have proper access to work opportunities and can lead a dignified life and be respected, recognised and valued. The development of their skills and competences is an important part of this process so that migrants can improve their employability potential and increase the likelihood of their successful professional attainment.

The INNOVA project aims to develop an effective immigrant qualifications and competences recognition and validation process that provides immigrants with equitable access to appropriate learning, facilitates their skills development, and also improves their employability, retraining, and professional specialisation.

Additionally, this project envisions providing high-quality training to adult educators/trainers of partner organizations, educational institutions, and public bodies to properly equip them to successfully attend migrants' necessities, recognize, assess, and validate migrants' employability skills and previous work experience, promote their integration into the local society, and facilitate their development of key competences. In this way, migrants' social integration and access to training and employment will be improved, promoting interregional and international cooperation within the education sector, while also fostering European values and goals.

The Partnership

WBK-Unna: Werkstatt-Berufskolleg Unna: Werkstatt-Berufskolleg Unna (WBK) has been a vocational school for the last 10 years, with a director with more than 25 years of experience in European projects and education. The Werkstatt-Berufskolleg serves to support and educate disadvantaged students. All people are welcome here: young people with extraordinary life biographies, with and without qualifications; "older" people who want to learn a new profession in their second stage of life; people with and without disabilities; students from special schools; and people with learning difficulties. So, we work as a vocational school on the level of upper secondary education and also in adult education.

For eight years, we have also been training young refugees in the German language and cultural competences to prepare them for life and work in German and European society. As an inclusive school, we learn together. In addition to their pedagogical training, all teachers have additional professional training and come from the private sector. Learning "with head and hand" is therefore our motto and programme.

The vocational school orients its teaching to the realities of its students' lives. New media, extracurricular education, differentiation in lessons and current projects, everything is developed

We also train warehouse logistics specialists (dual training system, 3-year training) and service specialists (school-based training, 2-year training). The latter training in particular plays a prominent role in this project application. The school's teaching kitchen is a central part of everything. In the vocational school, the trainees prepare larger conferences for the umbrella organization of the Werkstatt im Kreis Unna.

STEPP: STEPP is an innovative business project developer founded in Florence in 2015. Its job is focused on sectors that have to do with social innovation, such as education and training, socio-economic development, technological innovation, and research.

By social innovation, we mean a type of innovation made up of ideas, creativity, and methodologies to transform theoretical principles and research into the prosperity of a community that is increasingly attentive to sustainability and the development of "intelligent" territories. We want the success of brilliant ideas, investing time, resources, and experience with a final goal: connecting research and innovation to create a virtuous ecosystem that allows innovative ideas to become successful projects.

Website: www.stepp-up.com

IFE: Maria Pita is a qualified institute that provides training and education in **social healthcare** assistance, with special attention to social inclusion.

The Institute responds to new training needs: its study plan is based on a solid base **of general culture**, supplemented by specific knowledge, whose objective is to allow students to obtain **certifications** recognized at the European level as well as to acquire specific skills on each and every one of the subjects taught.

IFE María Pita **aims** to develop and deepen the knowledge, skills and competencies of its students. It ensures mastery of the language, methodologies, and **research techniques** used in the field of natural and human sciences.

Our focus:

- **INCLUSION AND EDUCATIONAL ATTENTION;**
- **QUALITY IN TEACHING;**
- **CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT.**

IFE María Pita SL is part of CREJOB. Using innovative and engaging methodologies, CREJOB designs training courses to spread knowledge in the educational and social sectors. The professional training courses are the heart of IFE María Pita, as well as the thematic areas of our interest.

• **HEALTH and WELLBEING:** Life is a complex journey and multitasking has become an obsession. It is crucial to know yourself, identify your own needs and desires and adapt and create a suitable environment that will lead us to a full and healthy life.

• **SOCIAL INCLUSION:** In our current society, it is essential to pay close to social exclusion, a phenomenon that results in the marginalization of the most vulnerable individuals and groups who live in the same community. Through our training we teach how to develop transversal, practical and necessary skills to deal with this type of cases in different contexts and situations.

• **INTERCULTURALITY:** Today and as a result of the changes that globalization has caused worldwide, interculturality has been gaining more and more meaning in our day to day. It has become essential to promote values such as integration, cooperation and tolerance in order to achieve harmonious coexistence.

Website: www.ifemariapita.es

Emphasys Centre: Emphasys Centre' was established in 1998 and is operating as a highly successful 'Education, ICT Training (VET), and Research Center, approved by the Cyprus Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth, and Sport (MOECYS). It was set up with the vision to offer high-quality lifelong learning opportunities in the field of ICT to learners of all ages in order to upgrade their lives and ensure inclusion, access, and participation in the digitalized economy.

Having in mind that 'education is the most powerful weapon to save the world' (Nelson Mandela), Emphasys is committed to supporting each learner to exploit his or her potential in reaching out to succeed in life.

Emphasys comprises of four main directorates:

- **Education Directorate**
- **ICT Training Directorate** (Including the STEAM UNIT, ONE STOP DIGITAL SUPPORT CENTRE, and the European Training UNIT)
- **Research Directorate**
- **Software Development Directorate**

Guidelines and tips for adult educators

EFFECTIVE TEACHING TECHNIQUES

Sometimes adult learners, especially vulnerable ones such as migrants, may resist accepting a new set of information and knowledge and redefining previous values and habits. Since the first lesson, adult educators should find a way to “break the ice” and make all the learners feel comfortable with themselves and the rest of the group; they should also try to activate positive emotions and through them a self-motivated inner process that should last till the end of the course and, hopefully, after that.

Here is a list of some recommended behaviours and tips for a successful learning experience:

- The adult learner needs to feel part of a team, accept similarities and differences, and be helped to adapt him/herself to a new context;
- He/she needs to understand his/her role and responsibilities within the group in order to develop self-esteem and self-awareness about their capabilities and how to use them in the job market and to build a professional network, for example;
- The adult- educator may decide to develop a “learning contract”, in order to define roles and contributions within the classroom. In this way, everyone knows what he/she does and what other people do;
- If possible, teachers and learners should seat in a circle during lessons. This method could be helpful to improve the socializing process and make everybody feel comfortable and at the same level;
- During the course, the adult educator should encourage the adult learners to work in couples or in groups so that they could learn how to work in a team, enhancing their ideas together with the others’ ones;
- The adult educator is invited to be enthusiastic and friendly, to walk around the classroom, to use technological and digital tools and interdisciplinary methods (music, games, drawings...) in order to create an interactive environment in which migrants are stimulated to work, for their future opportunities;
- Adult educators might create an “online library” to share and describe their activities with migrants and facilitate good practices exchange among colleagues from other countries;
- The adult educator should apply democratic rules of respect, therefore migrants could emulate their behaviour not only in the classroom but in their real life, as well.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Verbal and non-verbal communication

Communication is considered “the art of mutual understanding.” It can be described as a process of interaction and influence between people and groups of people.

Communication assumes that the message conveyed is filtered through a person’s internal status, way of thinking, attitudes, prejudices, past experiences, cultural values, etc... In this perspective, apart from verbal communication (the use of words to share spoken or written information with others), the adult educator should take into high consideration the type of context in which the dialogue with learners, especially when it comes to migrants and refugees, takes place and his or her non-verbal communication.

In general, only 7% of any message is conveyed through words; the primary form of communication is non-verbal communication. Non-verbal communication includes

- body language (gestures, facial expressions, posture, eye contact...);
- paralinguistics communication (tone of voice, inflexion...);
- symbolic communication (personal appearance- clothing, environment, time management...);
- proxemics (what is considered appropriate in a given culture in terms of the physical distance between people).

Thereby, it is vital for an adult educator not only to pay attention to his or her own non-verbal communication but also to observe the non-verbal communication of their learners as well, which more often conveys the natural and spontaneous emotions they feel at that moment behind words and speeches.

Basic communication skills with Migrants

Language could be the most significant communicational barrier in a classroom of migrants and refugee learners.

In fact, lots of them can hardly express themselves in a foreign language such as English or French; therefore, the adult educator should speak slowly and loudly to them and use as much as he or she can of a very basic vocabulary, especially at the beginning of the course.

During lessons with migrants, adult educators need to remember, while they teach, to avoid theoretical parts and benefit from practical exercises, case studies, the students' life experiences, and their different backgrounds. The aim is to give migrants the opportunity to use their existing foundation of knowledge.

Of course, it takes time to create a warm and balanced atmosphere within the class. That is why the educator should try, from the very first meeting, to be patient and empathetic, listen actively, and reflect members' group feelings with a non-judgmental attitude.

Communication Barriers

Apart from language knowledge, adult educators may have to consider other different kinds of communicational barriers, which can interfere with migrants' learning and socializing, during the lesson.

Some of them can be found in the following list:

- Lack of feedback to and from the students;
- Frequent interruptions;
- Authoritative communication style;
- Criticism and stereotyping;
- Threatening and assertiveness;
- Lack of incentives for the migrant learners to participate in the educational programme;
- Linguistic, cultural, or religious differences within the class;
- Ignoring non-verbal communication;
- Minimizing emotions and problems;
- Noise and the way the physical setting is arranged.



The Development of Learning Strategies and Lifelong Learning Processes

Learning strategies and lifelong learning are important skills for everyone, especially disadvantaged people.

Learning strategies can help to process and retain information more effectively, thus accelerating learning progress. There are many different learning strategies, including visualisation, linking, practice and repetition, reversal, and self-reflection.

Lifelong learning means constantly learning and acquiring new skills and knowledge in order to be ready for changes in the world and in one's job.

For disadvantaged people, learning strategies and lifelong learning can be particularly important as they can help them improve their skills and give them better opportunities for education and employment. In addition, learning strategies can counteract educational inequalities by giving students with different learning needs a better chance to succeed.

However, it is important to note that an environment must be created that enables disadvantaged people to learn learning strategies and engage in lifelong learning. This can include an environment with access to education and training opportunities, as well as an environment that is supportive and conducive to learning progress.

Developing learning strategies and promoting lifelong learning requires a conscious effort and a systematic approach. This includes:

1. **Defining goals:** Before learners start learning, it is important to define clear goals. This can only be done with goals and a timetable. In order for goals not to be unrealistic, learners must first be able to identify and assess their status quo.
2. **Active learning:** passive learning by taking in information alone is not very successful; on the other hand, active learning with all the senses (listening, reading, writing, movement, exercises, etc.), preferably mixed with playful learning elements.
3. **Taking breaks:** Regular breaks are important to rest and relax your brain. This helps the learner to stay focused and concentrate better on learning.
4. **Seeking feedback:** Learners should seek feedback from others on their progress and weaknesses. This will help them improve their learning strategies and address weaknesses.
5. **Using personal interests:** Teachers should link learning to learners' personal interests to make it more interesting.

6. **Building a network:** Learners should ideally build a network by talking to other people (also learners, but also non-topic people) about their learning goals and processes.

7. **Continuous learning:** Learners need to be aware of the goal of continuous learning and thus establish a learning routine. This keeps learners up to date and promotes lifelong learning.

The link between successful learning and self-efficacy is strong. Self-efficacy refers to the feeling that one is able to respond successfully to a task or challenge. High self-efficacy often leads to higher motivation, more engagement, and greater effort in learning.

On the other hand, successful learning can also contribute to an increase in self-efficacy. When a person successfully masters a task, this can boost their self-confidence and strengthen their belief that they are capable of mastering further challenges.

It is important to note that the relationship between self-efficacy and learning is a two-way process. High self-efficacy can contribute to more successful learning, and successful learning can lead to an increase in self-efficacy.

There are also other factors that can influence performance, such as a positive attitude, a good learning strategy, and a supportive environment. Therefore, it is important that students are equipped with both a positive self-image and the right learning methods to promote successful learning.

Methods for the Evaluation of Adult Learners

*Evaluation is the process of obtaining information and use that information to form Judgements, that in our will be used in decision making
(T.Tebrink) 2006*

The evaluation is a fundamental element in the process of training and life-long learning of adults and will therefore form part of the teaching-learning process. We must be clear that evaluation provides a guiding and quality control function for the process.

The evaluation must go beyond assessing the final results of a training activity and attend to all the moments that and adult's training process goes through, thus allowing to adapt, understand and improve the learning process.

On the basis of the aforementioned, we cannot understand an evaluation that is not **CONTINUOUS**, being this one of the objectives that allow the training actors to know the starting situation and the evolution of the whole process in order to design adapted activities, specific and adequate as possible, with the purpose of improving the teaching-learning processes, hence the evaluation acquires a formative approach.

In order to put this process of analysis and reflection into practice, it is necessary to establish a plan, and to do so we ask ourselves the following questions.

- What to evaluate?
- When to evaluate?
- How to evaluate?

Considering these questions, we will understand that the evaluation in adult education will be continuous and formative, that is, it will be carried out throughout the whole process and in a differentiated way according to the aspect to be evaluated.

Likewise, it should have a formative and guiding character, thereby allowing us to detect all the difficulties that may rise during the training process, in order to improve it, enrich it and adapt it to a greater extent to the adult.

This formative approach to continuous evaluation allows difficulties to be detected as soon as they become apparent, and to guide decision-making in order to guarantee the acquisition of the essential learning to continue the training process and improve adequate training.

Once we have established the framework on which we will focus the evaluation on adult education, we will answer the questions posed above:

1. What to evaluate?

In this case it is clearly established that the object of evaluation is the adult student. But within all the evaluable aspects we can differentiate, in the field of employability and training for work insertion, 2 different aspects:

Key competencies: established at European level as the key competencies important for human and professional development. Among them we differentiate, established by the European Reference Framework through the Council Recommendations of 22 May 2018 on key competences for life-long learning, we differentiate 8 Key competences:

- Literacy communication
- Multilingual communication
- Mathematical competence and science, technology and engineering competence
- Digital competence
- Personal, social and learning-to-learn competences
- Citizenship competence
- Entrepreneurial competence
- Competence in cultural awareness and expressions

These same recommendations tell us that in order to evaluate these competencies, we must establish learning results frameworks and complement their evaluation with diagnostic (initial), formative (procedural) and summative (final) evaluations.

- **Professional competencies:** specifically linked to the work field to which they refer in their professional retraining and which cannot be mentioned here due to the breadth of the concept. They will include the evaluation of conceptual, procedural and competence elements.

However, even though it is clear that both types of competencies are established at the European level and are mandatory elements in adult life-long training, they must be applied in a flexible way considering the diversity of personal and socio-cultural characteristics of adults. Therefore, they shall not be applied in a rigid way.

We must not forget that we are always referring to the Re-Skills methodology, so we are looking for the adult to be professionally retrained and we must find the most appropriate way to achieve this adaptation.

2. When to evaluate?

In response to this question, we will consider the moment in which we will carry out the evaluation. The evaluation we are talking about is an evaluation that will be carried out throughout the entire training process (that is why we call it continuous evaluation), and therefore we highlight 3 key moments according to which we will differentiate between:

- **Initial or diagnostic evaluation:** it will be carried out prior to the training, in order to know the adult's level, competences and capacities. This will allow us to adapt the process, methodology, organization, resources... necessary in each personalized case. It mainly has a diagnostic function, allowing us to know what the starting situation is and to identify previous knowledge, as well as to check the degree of development of the adult's competences to adjust the program to their needs and interests. This will allow us an optimal formula for their professional recycling, following the Reskilling already mentioned above, discovering initially the lack of competences, and organizing a training on specific competences adapted to each professional profile.
The initial evaluation will be, therefore, the point of reference for making decisions regarding the development of the training, as well as for adopting those support, reinforcement and recovery measures that are considered appropriate for each adult.
- **Processual or systematic evaluation:** it is carried out throughout the training in order to exercise a permanent control on the evolution of the adult's training and to take immediate measures that do not unnecessarily delay the correction of difficulties or errors, thus fulfilling a formative function, allowing the reorientation and progress of the adult, according to the competences he/she needs to develop. This type of evaluation makes it possible to manage and organize a more personalized teaching, while considering the diversity of each adult.
- **Final or summative evaluation:** it is carried out at the last moment of the process; it allows us to know the results achieved at the end of the training. The final evaluation is the culmination of the continuous evaluation, with the data collected throughout the training process and where the results obtained in relation to the goals set are evaluated.

We will see and check if it has been possible to develop those professional and key competences that we need for an optimal future labor insertion.

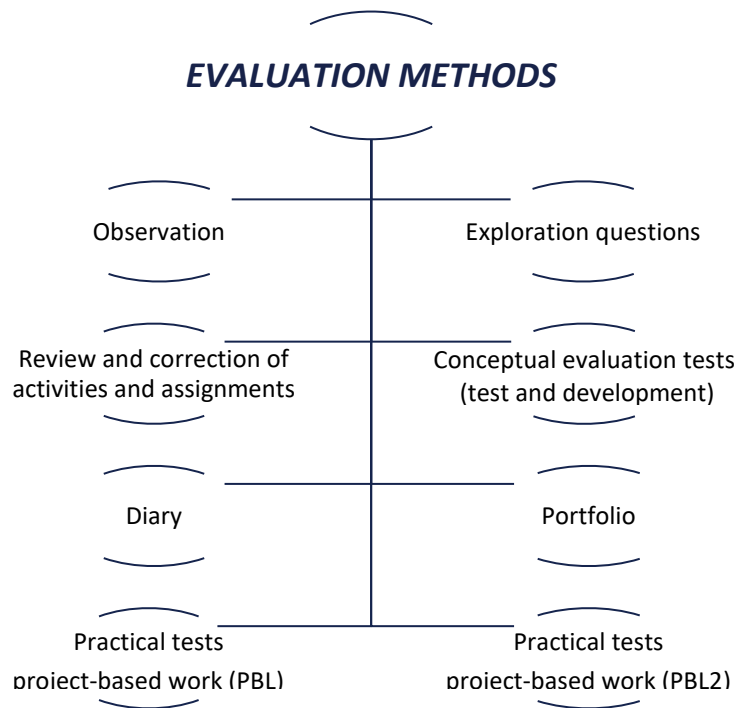
Having defined the different moments in which the evaluation is carried out, we are ready to answer the last question:

3. How to evaluate?

When we ask ourselves this question, it becomes necessary to talk about evaluation procedures, or what is the same: the methods, techniques or strategies used to carry out the evaluation process.

It is necessary to say that no procedure/method is better than another, because it will depend on the aspects we want to evaluate and at what time or in what way... the ideal, in any case, for the evaluation to be as objective as possible, will be to use different procedures/methods that allow us to request a wide range of information to assess the aspects to be evaluated.

We will differentiate some of the most appropriate evaluation methods for adult education:



We will explain below what each of them consists of, and how we can use them in adult continuing education. It will be important to make clear at what point in the evaluation it is more convenient to use one method or the other.

- **Direct and systematic observation:** it is a method that will allow us to collect a wide range of information, mainly during the initial evaluation and the procedural evaluation. It is particularly suitable for an initial assessment to test the capabilities of an adult in carrying out a practical job in their field of work and to establish their initial skills and knowledge, e.g., through a practical exercise. It will also allow us to check the acquisition of attitudinal contents, competences and/or procedures throughout the training process, where we will be able to observe and take note of the capacity of an adult in the realization of a practical work applying new concepts.
- **Exploratory questions or interviews:** method that allows in the initial evaluation to identify previous professional knowledge, work experience and any other important aspect through specific and elaborated questions. In addition, needs and interests can be detected that will help guide the training process. Interviews can be conducted either in person or online via simultaneous online connection. It is important to follow some specific steps for the interview:
 - Clearly define the objectives or goals of the interview or questions.

- Pre-plan the most appropriate questions to ask each interviewee, the order in which the questions should be asked, the level of detail and the duration of the interview (maximum around 30-45 minutes).
 - Create a pleasant and comfortable environment, where the adult feels confident and allows the trainer to direct the questions to the appropriate area.
 - Include in the list of questions different types of questions: closed questions and open questions.
- **Review and correction of activities and work:** evaluation method typical of the procedural evaluation. It allows us to know how the adult acquires the conceptual contents and develops the competences applied to specific activities and exercises elaborated with a clear intentionality. It is the ideal method to detect possible training needs in situ.
 - **Conceptual evaluation tests (test and development):** this is one of the most traditionally known and used methods in lifelong learning. The adult must demonstrate through these tests the knowledge (conceptual and procedural) through the realization of various activities or development of different situations. They should be used as a complementary method to other techniques and should not be the exclusive method of the training process. They are suitable, fundamentally, to carry out the final evaluation. For this we must take into account several issues:
 - Design tests that adhere to the contents worked on throughout the training.
 - The tests must be elaborated in a clear and precise way, using a suitable language avoiding misinterpretations.
 - They must be adjusted to the time given for their completion.
 - It is important to indicate to the adults the evaluation criteria in each of them.
 - **Practical tests of project-based work:** PBL (Project Based Learning) is one of the methodologies that best enables the assessment of adults' competency development. PBL is a learner-centred model, where a project of execution of various activities, research and learning to achieve a final product, especially designed to develop many skills, as well as work on problem solving, search for alternatives, application of content in various environments... Is an approach designed to provide the opportunity to develop knowledge and skills through engaging projects that revolve around challenges and problems they may face in the real world. Clearly, it is a methodology to assess throughout the process, in procedural assessment, which allows to carry out an assessment through a competency test (key competencies and professional competencies).
The 3 fundamental elements of PBA are:
 - Acquiring basic knowledge and skills
 - Learning to solve complicated problems
 - Carrying out complex tasks using acquired knowledge and competencies.
 - **Problem Based Learning (ABP2):** methodology that focuses adults on their own learning where they develop knowledge, skills and attitudes, facing real life situations and problems within the

field we want to recycle. The objective will be to train adults to be able to analyse and face new challenges and problems they will encounter in their professional activity, which will lead to the development of professional competences. This method thus makes it possible to establish ideal scenarios of situations where adults must integrate their theoretical and practical knowledge to investigate and solve a problem. Decision-making, logical reasoning and critical analysis are integral components of these scenarios, together with the theoretical knowledge of the specific field to be evaluated.

Both Project-Based Learning and Problem-Based Learning allow for different types of assessment, in which the responsibility is given to the adult to assess whether the process is appropriate. Here the evaluation is a shared responsibility, a novel aspect in relation to the more "traditional" evaluation that always remains in the hands of the trainer. In this case this evaluation is processual, and at the same time, formative, being centred on the adult, where he/she will self-evaluate him/herself, they will be able to evaluate each other and there will also be the evaluation of the trainer. It provides aids to discover their needs, the quantity and quality of their learning, the causes of their problems, difficulties and successes in training.

This kind of tests are very popular if we also do them online or 3D, with practical activities to solve them.

- **Diary:** it is about designing daily/weekly/monthly monitoring sheets, which allow the trainer to collect the most significant information after monitoring the learning process of adults. It will allow us to summarize the evolution of the adults since the beginning of the training, pointing out the difficulties and achievements, the most appropriate orientations and strategies, and the results obtained. For this reason, this technique allows us to evaluate throughout the whole process, in the three moments described above.
- **Portfolio:** a technique that consists of the compilation of all the work and projects carried out by the adult, always accompanied by reflections included based on the criteria of each trainer. According to Sánchez Verá, M. (2001) "it is a very useful technique since it collects evidence of adult learning, therefore, it becomes an instrument of great value to carry out the continuous evaluation, since it allows to evaluate the learning path, trying to understand the student's abilities and skills through the knowledge of the executions and achievements obtained, also incorporating the reflection on the process".

It is important here to quickly differentiate, given the importance of adult education in social and economic life, various types of evaluation. We will use these 3 types of evaluation in our planning of evaluation methods and instruments:

1. **Self-evaluation:** method where the adult evaluates him/herself and self-assesses, in an honest and critical way. It is very positive because it allows the adult to be aware of the goals achieved, the objectives surpassed, their achievements or failures, as well as their capabilities. It is very enriching and motivating for adults who are in permanent training.
(An example of an online self-evaluation has been launched by the European Commission that allows testing digital competences: "Test your digital skills", available on the European Digital

Skills and Employment Platform, and on the Europass. This online test, based on the DigComp Digital Competence Framework, covers the domains of information and data literacy, communication and collaboration, digital content creation, security and problem solving. It will thus help respondents to understand their strengths and weaknesses in order to find suitable training opportunities, decide on their careers, grow in their profession or increase their employability).

2. ***Co-evaluation***: method where adults or students evaluate each other, taking the role of those responsible for the evaluation. Benefits include teamwork, empowerment of responsibility and promotion of interpersonal relationships.
3. ***Heteroevaluation***: the most traditional, where the trainer is the one who assesses the knowledge and skills of the adults/students.

The Role of the Adult Trainer

The adult trainer has an important role in adult education. His or her role is to help adults realise their full potential and continue their education by providing them with access to knowledge, skills and abilities.

To do this, he can use different methods, such as lectures, workshops, online courses, internships, discussion groups and more. The adult educator often works in educational institutions such as colleges, adult education centres, community centres and businesses.

His or her goal is to motivate participants to increase their knowledge and improve their skills in order to help them be more successful in their professional and personal lives. The adult educator is responsible for creating a positive and supportive learning environment in which participants can achieve their goals.

An adult educator should have a certain set of competences and skills to be successful in their profession. These include:

1. **Pedagogical skills**: A good adult educator should have an understanding of the learning process and the needs of adults. He should be able to create a pleasant and supportive learning environment.
2. **Professional competence**: An adult educator should have extensive knowledge in the field in which he/she is teaching.
3. **Communication skills**: An adult educator should speak a clear and understandable language and be a good listener.
4. **Organizational skills**: an adult educator should be able to prepare a lesson plan and organise the teaching process efficiently.
5. **Adaptability**: an adult educator should be able to adapt his/her teaching style and methods to the needs and abilities of his/her students.

6. **Empathy:** a good adult educator should be able to understand and respect the needs and feelings of his/her students.

7. **Enthusiasm for the profession:** an adult educator should be passionate about his/her profession and the subject matter and be able to inspire his/her students.

European Programmes / Documents for Adult Education

The Eurydice Report on "Adult Education and Training in Europe" (2021) puts the emphasis on Governance and Policy Frameworks focused on adult lifelong learning. It confirms that adult learning policy coordination is established across Europe, and that most European countries have one or more cross-sectoral bodies that are responsible for the coordination of adult learning policies and measures.

Between 2015 and 2020, almost all high-level authorities adopted strategic policy documents that aim to support adults and in particular their training, primarily those adults with low levels of qualifications or who have basic qualifications. More than half of the European countries report having introduced other key policy initiatives with this objective.

The Eurydice Report reports that across Europe, adults can be trained to improve their basic skills and competencies through a variety of publicly funded programs, ranging from formal basic education programs to non-formal basic skills and competencies courses.

- Most European countries subsidize "compensatory" or "remedial" basic education programs for adults linked to the initial education system up to the end of lower secondary education. These programs sometimes include vocational elements and thus lead to officially recognized vocational qualifications.
- Some countries organize basic education programs on a modular basis, which allows flexibility and gives adults the opportunity to take shorter courses in different specific subject areas. In this case, it may be formal or non-formal, depending on the needs of the students.
- Throughout Europe, public authorities subsidize several (rather short) basic skills courses for adults. This type of provision is generally less structured and systematized than formal programs. However, there are some frameworks in Europe that structure and institutionalize the provision of non-formal courses in basic skills such as reading, writing, numeracy and ICT.
- In some countries, there are large-scale programs aimed at newly arrived **migrants**. While language skills are the core element of these programs, other skills (e.g., general literacy) or broader integration issues may also be included.
- A range of providers, including public and private education and training institutions and organizations such as libraries, voluntary organizations, and companies, offer programs aimed at developing basic skills.

In any case, when we talk about recognized qualifications, they are becoming more and more diversified in European countries:

- Almost all European countries are working towards a comprehensive national qualification framework (NQF). This implies that the frameworks will include qualifications awarded outside formal education and training
- Several countries have invested in the development of qualification systems that complement the general education system. The qualifications included in these alternative systems often involve a less substantial workload and may therefore be a more accessible option for adults with limited prior formal learning. When formally recognized by national authorities (e.g., within NQFs), these alternative qualifications can potentially become a pathway to higher learning achievements.
- Some countries have programs open to adults that use work-based learning as a delivery modality. In some cases, these programs incorporate flexible learning options, such as accelerated learning opportunities.

We may therefore conclude that in all European countries, adults with few or no qualifications have at least some publicly subsidized opportunities to obtain a qualification.

Programs designed to raise the lowest levels of education

In most European education systems, there are "compensatory" or "remedial" education and training programs that are linked to lower levels of education. In general, these programs are aimed at people who have passed the age of compulsory schooling and who, for whatever reason, have not obtained a comparable level in the initial education system.

The programs seek a level of functional ability in a number of areas, such as reading, writing, mathematical competence and ICT, i.e., key and basic skills. These usually lead to certificates or qualifications, which are necessary for further progression in the formal education and training system. This type of offer can be found almost everywhere in Europe.

- In **Germany**,
In Germany, there are various programmes and initiatives aimed at motivating people with no or low education to obtain educational qualifications. Here are some examples:
 1. "Bildungsketten bis zum Ausbildungsabschluss": This programme of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research supports youths and young adults without vocational qualifications in their search for a suitable training place and accompanies them during their training.
 2. "Komm auf Tour - meine Stärken, meine Zukunft" (Come on Tour - My Strengths, My Future): This programme of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research is aimed at pupils in the 7th grade and is designed to help them discover their strengths and talents and improve their educational opportunities.

3. "BISS - Education cheque for small and medium-sized enterprises": With this programme, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research promotes continuing vocational training for employees in small and medium-sized enterprises.
4. "Berufseinstiegsbegleitung": This programme of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research supports pupils with special support needs in the transition from school to work.
5. "Education premium": The education premium of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research provides financial support for employees to participate in further training.
6. "Education voucher": With the education voucher, the Federal Employment Agency promotes continuing vocational education and training for jobseekers.

These programmes and initiatives are intended to help motivate people with no or low education to acquire educational qualifications and improve their educational opportunities.

- In **Italy**, the education system is predominantly public and is managed by the Ministry of Public Education (MIUR) and the Ministry of University and Research. Compulsory schooling in Italy is divided into a 10-year course. It concerns the age group between 6 and 16 years. By the age of 18, anyone should achieve an upper secondary school diploma or a professional qualification lasting at least three years. Since 1 September 2015, the new Adult Education system (IdA) has been fully operational in Italy. The system, completely renovated and with its own system, is now aimed at adult education with the aim of raising the level of education of citizens, allowing the achievement of the upper secondary education qualification.

This choice of the legislator responds to the need to adapt our country to European standards, adopting the commitments undertaken in the field of Education and Training within the Community. The training guarantee is part of an adequate response to face new and complex critical issues: a) a high number of citizens who only have a secondary school diploma (41% in the 25-64 age group) b) a growing number of NETTs (people mostly young people who are not engaged in study, work or training); c) a very small number of adults in training; d) the growth in the number of immigrants with fewer possibilities of accessing higher levels of education.

- In **Cyprus**, evening gymnasiums/lyceums (εσπερινά γυμνάσια/λύκεια) Formal adult education programs at the secondary level of education are offered by evening gymnasiums/lyceums in the 5 towns of the island. They serve as "second chances" educational initiatives for people who dropped out of mainstream education. An applicant must typically be older than fifteen, working, or have been unable to finish their education for whatever reason in order to enroll in one of the evening schools. Programs at the evening schools last seven years as opposed to six years in normal secondary schools. With the exception of the fact that Physical Education and Music are not taught at the evening schools, the curriculum is the same as that used in secondary schools.
- In **Spain**, for all those students who do not reach the objectives of compulsory education (CINE 2), they are given the option of taking what is called "Curricular Diversification Programs" which consist of a modification and adaptation of the curriculum from the third year of compulsory secondary education for students who present relevant learning difficulties. They will have a duration of 2 years and a specific methodology will be used to allow the students to achieve the objectives of the stage and the corresponding competences, through an organization in areas of

knowledge, practical activities and, if necessary, different from the one established in general. There is also the ESA (Secondary Education for Adults), which is the option for those over 18 years of age who have not previously obtained the Compulsory Secondary Education diploma. There is also a distance education option (ESPAD - Educación Secundaria para Personas Adultas a Distancia). It is organized in a modular way in 3 areas of knowledge (communication area (Spanish Language and Literature, Foreign Language - English), social area and scientific-technological area) and 2 levels in each of them. Each level is composed of 2 modules.

- In **Greece**, special second-chance centres (Scholia Defteris Efkerias) offer two-year programs for adults who have not obtained the diploma of compulsory education (ISCED 2). The same certification can also be obtained through 3-year evening programs in lower secondary (evening) schools (Esperino Gymnasio). The latter are designed for both adults and working minors.
- In **Portugal**, adult education and training courses (*Cursos de Educação e Formação de Adultos*) aim to increase the education and qualification levels of the Portuguese adult population. Different types of courses are available corresponding to four, six, nine and twelve years of schooling and the level of qualification achieved depends on the course.
- In **Turkey**, it is possible to complete the first stage of secondary education within the first stage open secondary education system (AçıkÖğretim Ortaokulu).
- In **Estonia**, upper secondary VET (2. taseme kutseõpe) refers to a lower secondary education program for learners aged 17 and over who have not completed basic education (ISCED 2). This program leads to a vocational qualification and may be combined with a general oriented "adult basic education" (põhiharidus täiskasvanutele mittestatsionaarses õppevormis).
- In **Romania**, the second chance program (programul 'A doua sansă') seeks to support young people and adults who have not passed compulsory education. Graduates are entitled to continue their studies at a higher level. It is also possible to complete 720 hours of practical training, after which successful participants will receive a level 3 vocational qualification certificate.
- In **Slovakia**, adults who have not completed lower secondary education can take two-year vocational study programs with an intensive practical component. Although completion of these programs does not give direct access to upper secondary education, successful participants receive a certificate corresponding to the final examination and a vocational training certificate. Upon completion of an additional (optional) course to formally conclude the first stage of secondary education, participants may pursue vocational studies in the second stage of secondary education.
- In **Serbia**, functional primary education for adults (funkcionalno osnovno obrazovanje odraslih) refers to a formal education program organized in three cycles lasting between three and five years. The content covers eight courses of the usual single-structured primary education (i.e., ISCED 1 and 2). The first two cycles focus on general education, while the third cycle combines general education with vocational education.

- In **Denmark**, the general adult education system (almen voksenuddannelsen) is aimed at people aged 25 and over. The content is equivalent (but not identical) to the curriculum of primary and lower secondary schools (folkeskole). Single-subject courses can be taken separately or together, leading to a general preparatory examination for adults. This examination provides access to higher preparatory examination courses (upper secondary education).
- In **Finland**, adult basic education (aikuisten perusopetus) is aimed at students who complete their basic education after compulsory school age. This type of provision consists of one course. Students can study individual subjects (e.g. languages) as "subject students" or prepare for examinations in several subjects, which enables them to move on to the second stage of general secondary education.
- In **Sweden**, in municipal adult basic education (komvux grundläggande nivå), the courses correspond to those of compulsory school education (ages 1 to 9), but the content and curriculum are adapted to adults. Participants who achieve at least a passing grade in the four basic subjects - Swedish or Swedish as a second language, English, mathematics, and social studies - are awarded a school-leaving certificate.
- In **Norway**, the diploma of compulsory education for adults (grunnskoleopplæring for voksne) refers to primary and lower secondary education for adults. Exams have to be passed in different subjects.

In general, formal compensatory basic education at ISCED level 1 or 2 works (at least to some extent) in most European countries. The absence of this type of offer is generally related to the organization of the initial education system, i.e., this type of offer may not be available in countries where the lower secondary school leaving certificate is not required for access to upper secondary education programs (e.g., the diplôme national du brevet in **France**). Thus, programs covering fundamental knowledge and skills often take the form of non-formal courses. However, even in this case, the learning offer may have a systematic and institutionalized character.

Migrant integration programs

The supply of basic skills subsidized by the public sector also includes programs for the integration of migrants. In several countries, these programs are part of the systematic learning offer open to adults. Although the language component is often a central element of these programs, their content may go beyond language training. For example, they sometimes include more literacy support or other elements that facilitate the integration of migrants into a different culture and society.

- In **Luxembourg**, intensive basic instruction, and linguistic integration courses (parcours d'instruction de base et d'intégration linguistique) are aimed at people who have never attended school or who do not know the Latin alphabet. Literacy courses are given in the French language.

For those who can read and write, French is taught as a language for speakers of other languages. The learning path is individualized.

- In **Finland**, language training is part of integration training for migrants (maahanmuuttajien kielikoulutus). The target group consists of migrants above compulsory school age. The training consists of teaching Finnish or Swedish and, if necessary, reading and writing skills, as well as other instructions that support access to the labour market and further training. Training may also include recognition of prior learning, recognition of diplomas and vocational planning and career guidance.

It should also be noted that programs aimed at the integration of migrants are sometimes included in other types of institutionalized learning provision. For example, in the **Flemish Community of Belgium**, these programs are provided within the adult basic education system (basiseducatie).

Moreover, courses for the integration of migrants are not always of a non-formal nature. **Sweden**, for example, includes this type of provision in the municipal adult education system (komvux) and recognizes it as qualified language education at ISCED level 1 and EQF level 2. Like **Sweden**, **Norway** also has a formal education program (ISCED 2) for the integration of migrants. It includes a language component, a basic literacy module and courses related to social sciences.

As a final point to highlight about the assessment of adult competencies, we should mention the Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), as an international assessment carried out in more than 40 countries. It measures the cognitive and work-related skills needed for individuals to participate successfully in society and for the economy to prosper.

The results of this OECD assessment help countries better understand how education and training can help develop skills. Educators, trainers... will be able to use this information to develop appropriate training practices to work on skills in adults.

Source: Eurydice

Useful tools

"Real and tangible tools used by the assessor to systematize his assessments person who evaluates to systematize his or her evaluations different aspects" (Rodriguez and Ibarra, 2011).

Once we have gone deeper into the methods that we can use in the training and evaluation of adult continuing education, it is convenient to elaborate different instruments or tools that allow us to systematically record all the information collected through the above-mentioned methods.

The instruments or tools we create should be as objective as possible, so it is important to pay attention to their elaboration.

Among many others, we highlight the following for the training of adult learners:

- **Personalized file of the adult/student:** it is important to consider all the data of the students, their personal, family and professional situations. In this case, when dealing with migrant students, it is essential to take into account the casuistry of each one of them. In this sheet we will note down relevant information that may affect the training process, initially/diagnostically, and systematically throughout the course:

Student's Personal Data		
Surname	Name	PHOTO
Birthdate	Mother Tongue	
adress	Country of Bird	
Personal situation	Professional status	
Studies		
Laboral Experience		

Student's Professional Information		
Initial/diagnostic evaluation		
Known contents	Unknown contents	Contents to work on
Evaluation methods and instruments:		

Process/systematic evaluation	
Follow-up of the learning process	
Learning difficulties:	Guidance:
Achievements:	Proposals for expansion or advancement:
Evaluation methods and instruments:	
Final/summative evaluation	
Acquired contents:	
Orientations and proposals for progress:	
Evaluation methods and instruments:	

Observation scales / Anecdotal record: are constituted by a series of behaviours or traits that we want to evaluate. They consist of cards for the collection of information through observation, about aspects that may be important to highlight in order to carry out a correct evaluation:

Student:	Date:
Description of what was observed:	
Relevant circumstances:	
Interpretation:	
Valuation:	



- **Checklists:** the observer records whether the behaviours are manifested. They are based on a double-entry table: in the left column the criteria to be evaluated are listed and in the top row a dichotomous rating scale, where yes or no is usually used. In the criteria, fundamental aspects of the learning process should be considered.

Aspects to be evaluated	YES	NO	SMTM
Knows specific vocabulary			
Knows how to work in a team			
Solves the problems posed			
Applies practical knowledge			
...			

- **Estimation scales:** the observer records progressive assessments, which allows the evaluation to be more precise and not so generic in some aspects that need to be recorded with this numbering and grade.

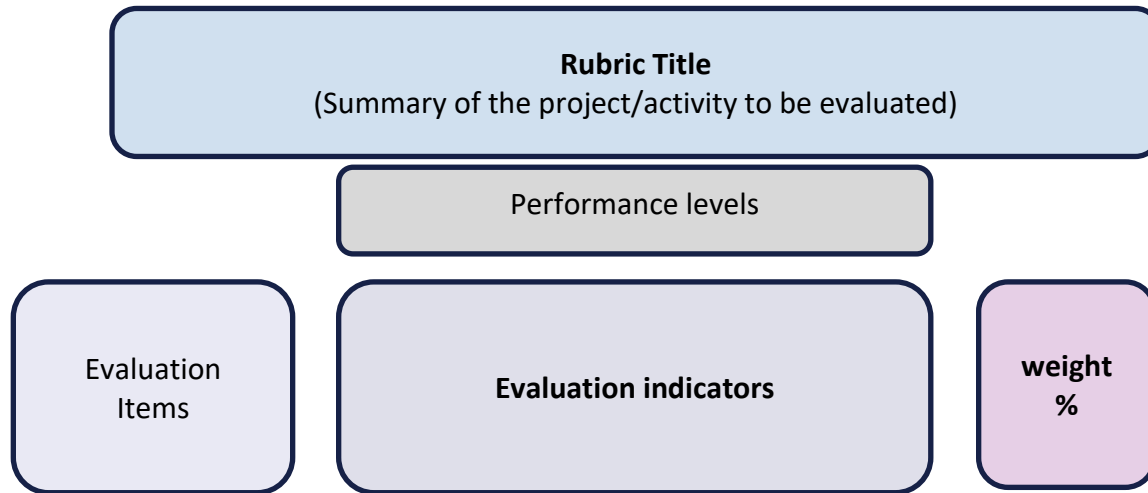
Aspects to be evaluated	1	2	3	4	5
Knows specific vocabulary					
Knows how to work in a team					
Solves the problems posed					
Applies practical knowledge					
...					

- **Evaluation rubrics:** these are very precise guides that assess learning and products. They are tables that break down the performance levels of students in each aspect, with specific performance criteria.

We favour this instrument as one of the most objective and critical, fair, and concrete instruments for evaluating the work done by adult learners. Rubrics do not allow for diversity of opinions depending on the evaluator, since it is determined what a student must know how to do concretely to reach an established level. This means that the main characteristic of this tool is objectivity.

This tool should always establish qualitative, not quantitative criteria (for this type of evaluation we have other tools such as checklists or scales already mentioned).

The structure of a rubric should be as follows:



- Evaluation items: key aspects to be evaluated.
- Performance levels: scaled criteria for each of the items (recommended: 4, maximum 5).
- Evaluation indicators: descriptors for each item that allow us to ensure a specific level of performance. They must be well described, well written and coherent at the scalar level.
- Weight assigned to each item, based on the importance of each one.

Example of Rubric in digital competencies:

Rubric of Digital Competence in content search, curation and creation activity for Vocational Training students					
	1	2	3	4	
Information search	Search Google without using filters and without using keywords. Just use a few very general terms in your searches	Performs searches using filters and keywords. It includes phrases in quotation marks but does not use advanced search.	Perform searches using keywords and various filters as well as advanced Google search	In addition to advanced Google searches, he has used other search engines, such as: DuckDuckGo, Google Scholar, RefSeek, Science.gov, etc.	20%
Information evaluation and selection	The selected resources have not been evaluated to determine their quality and suitability. Links to pages without any scientific rigor are included	It has made the selection of resources, although the criteria used for their selection are not specified.	Describe the criteria used to select the resources. Including at least the following: author, institution behind the information, url or domain, commercial or academic purpose, etc..	Describe the criteria used to select resources. Including, in addition to the above, the following: intended audience. Whether the information contained is fact or opinion. Whether there are clear bibliographic	30%

				references. Dates of last update	
Organize, store and retrieve	It stores the information found, without classifying or labeling. It uses mainly local storage media. Has problems to find the stored information	Uses a form of local storage although it does so using an appropriate category of folders and subfolders.	Uses cloud storage (Drive, Dropbox) uses an appropriate folder structure. Knows and uses the different private or shared copy options.	In addition, it also uses social bookmarking tools such as Diigo or scoop.it, using tags in an appropriate way to facilitate your search.	50%

Source: Miguel García Gálvez

- **Review of assignments and activities:** we will review the students' own notebooks to be able to evaluate:
 - Language acquisition (an important aspect for migrants)
 - Comprehension capacity (linguistic competence)
 - Ability to select key ideas and concepts
 - Inclusion of own reflections
 - Discourse structure

- **Theoretical test correction templates (test and development):** this tool is still highly useful for the evaluation and assessment of the learning achieved, but it can never be the only assessment tool. We can provide both written and oral tests. These evaluation instruments measure the maximum results through a standard and uniform application common to all students, so they should be considered as another means of analysing the work and effort of each student. It is also a good tool for self-criticism. In the case of tests and / or questionnaires, there are platforms that allow you to create them for the student to answer individually or in a more playful way in a group, in the latter case will give us a global view of knowledge (Kahoot, Google Forms, Quiziiz, Socrative, PropofsQuestbase ...).

- **Concept maps:** they are a fundamental tool as graphic organizers that demonstrate the logical structure used by a student when schematizing a question or topic. They allow to evaluate the contents that the student has worked on, their internalization and comprehension and help to establish a logical order, as well as to establish the fundamental ideas.

We must not forget that within all this variety of assessment tools or instruments, each trainer must adapt this tool to the contents worked on, the objectives to be achieved and the characteristics of each learner. Referring to the Eurydice Report, the recognition and validation of learning outcomes in adult training in most European countries is carried out, at a formal level, with competency audits, tests or interviews.

Certification of Adult Teacher Qualifications

CERTIFICATION OF ADULT EDUCATORS IN EU COUNTRIES

The role of educators in training centres is becoming an increasingly important and fundamental issue for educational policies, which is motivated by the educational, social and economic challenges in Europe. Typically, European education systems tend to face similar problems in all of them and often related to the supply and demand of teachers.

To be qualified as an educator, teacher or professor, the main step usually begins with the completion of initial teacher education (ITE). However, the final qualification is diverse in different states. In almost half of the education systems, teachers are fully credentialed at the end of ITE, but in the remaining 23 systems, additional steps are required.

The transition from initial teacher education (ITE) to professional life seems to be a crucial phase both for educators and from the perspective of the education system. The traditional way to become an educator or teacher in Europe starts with obtaining a teaching qualification. In some countries, passing the ITE is the only condition for full access to the recruitment process. In others, the transition from ITE to professional life includes additional steps that graduates completing the ITE must take in order to be eligible for employment as fully qualified teachers.

Several OECD studies on educational issues conclude that improving the effectiveness and equity of education depends to a large extent on encouraging competent people to want to work as educators, that their work is of high quality and that all students have access to high quality education.

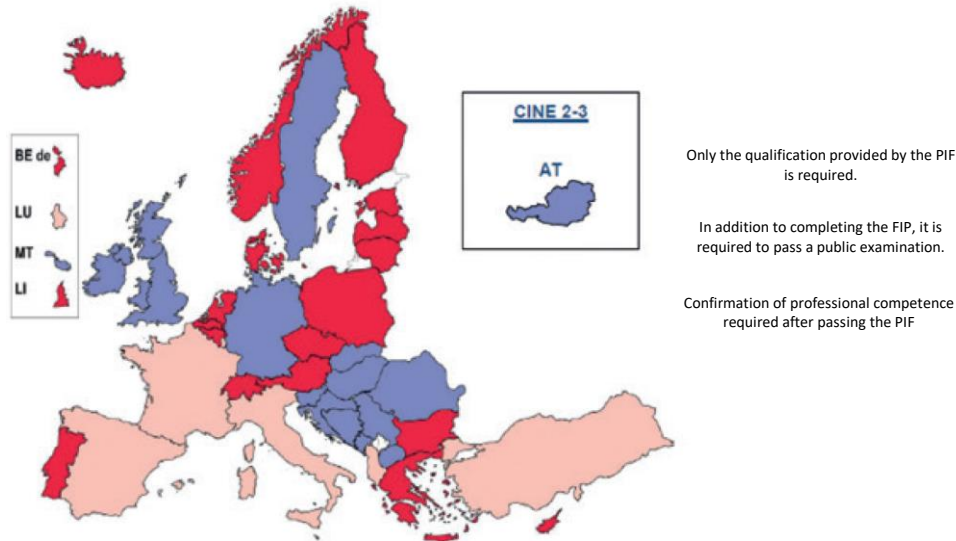
Requirements for access to the status of professor:

In almost half of the European education systems, successful completion of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) is the only condition for full qualification as a teacher. In these systems, the IPT diploma certifies not only the performance level of graduates but also their ability to teach. In other words, the institutions responsible for the IPT award the teaching qualification to their graduates.

In 23 other education systems, graduates who have completed the FIP must meet additional requirements to be considered fully qualified, such as passing a competitive examination or confirming their professional competence.

In six countries (**Spain, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Albania, and Turkey**), prospective teachers must pass a competitive examination to obtain full qualification to teach in the public sector. These examinations are not required in informal and non-formal training, if they are provided in private or subsidized schools.

In 17 educational systems, in order to obtain full certification, graduates who have completed Initial Continuing Professional Development (IPD) must confirm that they are qualified to teach. Although in all countries prospective teachers receive professional training during IPT, usually through school placements, training periods or induction programs (in some education systems), in some countries graduate teachers must pass an additional step after IPT to confirm their professional competence. This may take the form of a professional examination (national or state examination), assessment at the end of an induction program, or accreditation, registration, or certification.



Source: Eurydice

In **Germany, Croatia, Romania, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia**, upon completion of the induction program, new teachers must pass the so-called "state" or "national" professional examination. The purpose of the professional examination, which may consist of theoretical and practical parts, is usually to assess the prospective teachers' ability to do their job.

In **Ireland, Sweden** and the **United Kingdom**, graduates who have completed the IFP must undergo a formal registration or accreditation process. While professional standards are applied in **Ireland** and the **UK** to assess the professional skills and attitudes demonstrated by novice teachers, in **Sweden**, teacher registration is sufficient for qualifications and qualifications to be officially recognized.

In **Hungary, Malta, Austria** and **Slovakia**, a positive evaluation at the end of the initiation phase leads to full certification.

In some education systems they require a level of language proficiency (Lithuania and some Regions in **Spain**) or certain certificates, e.g., in swimming and first aid (in primary education in **France**).

Source: ANPE

In the specific case of **adult educators**, in most European countries, the qualification requirements for teachers and trainers providing formal programs for adults are the same as those for those providing primary, lower secondary or upper secondary education in the initial education and training system. However, in most countries, initial teacher training does not include elements on approaches or methodologies adapted to the adult population. There are few exceptions to this rule in Europe. For example, in **Norway**, general initial teacher training includes preparation in adult-specific teaching methods. In **Slovenia**, all upper secondary school teachers must have a master's degree in a given field (with the exception of some professional fields, where no such training is provided). The courses leading to this degree usually include a module of theoretical knowledge essential for teaching both young people and adults.

In the event that this module is not included in the initial teacher training, teachers must take a supplementary course in the corresponding area in order to obtain a permanent position.

In the **United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)** there are differences between basic education and post-16 or higher education. The training of teachers who will work in post-compulsory education includes activities aimed at providing future teachers with the necessary skills to teach both young people and adults returning to school. The legal requirements for teaching in basic education (up to 16 years of age and from 16 to 19 years of age, if such education is provided in schools) are different. This is so even though the programs taught in schools and in post-compulsory education centres are sometimes the same.

Source: Eurydice

SUGGESTED WAYS FOR ADULT EDUCATORS' CERTIFICATION

Based on the current situation of the certification of adult educators at European level, it is necessary to establish a series of suggestions for validation and certification of the training of those who wish to dedicate their working life to adult education. For this purpose, we establish a series of important suggestions in order to achieve a European unification:

- It is necessary to be able to **unify the certification of adults at the European level**, to give a transnational character to the training received in each country. This is necessary in order to internationalize the professionalization of adult educators. Therefore, it is essential to create the same level of certification, specifying the requirements and capabilities of adult educators.
- For the above item to be feasible, it is necessary to be able **to homologate the degrees at an international level**, in a process that is fast and affordable to all university careers. Currently, there is the European Diploma Supplement, through which Higher Education Institutions establish the standards agreed by the Commission, the Council of Europe and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). This European Diploma Supplement has been created to facilitate the recognition of academic degrees, being an important tool within the European Higher Education Area that guarantees graduates the recognition of their degrees by higher education institutions, public authorities, and employers both in the home country and abroad. However, it does not exactly replace the original degree, and for most degrees the process is tedious, long, and complicated if what is needed is homologous recognition. In addition to this, this homologation is only granted to new degrees within the Bologna process, but not to previous degrees.
- In some European countries there is an obligation to hold a **specific teaching qualification** to be able to provide training at any level. Spain, for example, requires a master's degree in Teaching to provide adult training at a formal level and a Certificate of Professionalism in Teaching for Vocational Training for Employment, in the case of wanting to provide informal or non-formal training. In some EU countries this is not an essential requirement, so we think it would be very important to homologate this training requirement for the certification of adult educators.

- Therefore, another important aspect within Adult Education is to be able to establish a **specialization** within higher education, specifically for adult education. Including specialization within adult education careers would be an important aspect for specialization in this field. This aspect is fundamental for the existence of a single profile of adult educator/trainer, as the trajectory of adult trainers is currently extremely varied.
- Although this is considered in every country of the European Union, many other countries do not require teachers to have work experience in the sector in their curriculum vitae in order to teach (with adults in professionalized fields), which greatly limits educational and training practice. It would be essential to have vocational adult educators, in specific fields, with previous work experience to reflect the professional needs in the future real life of the students.

"The professionalism of the adult educator is based on a body of theoretical and practical knowledge that is necessary to be able to adapt the educational task to the psychological, social and cultural characteristics of adults" (Villanueva, 1987)

- **Considering** the importance of flexibility in adult education, to be able to reconcile their family and professional life with training, the need for online training is becoming more and more evident. It is therefore essential to require all adult educators to be in possession **of digital knowledge and skills**, to be able to develop the educational practice efficiently. It would be interesting to include in the curricula of teacher training, subjects or modules on digital skills and *eLearning*.

Based on the above, it would be a priority to achieve, once all these suggested policies have been carried out, in the words of Begoña Rumbo Arcas: "revive social and institutional recognition of the role of adult educators".

GOOD PRACTICES AND POLICIES FOR ADULT EDUCATION

Based on the European Recommendations, adult continuing education is one of the priority objectives in today's education. The labor market increasingly demands higher qualifications and specialization, and workers are confronted daily with the impossibility of validating the professional experience of people who lack official qualifications.

To solve some of these problems, many countries have begun to develop policies and so-called "best practices" to achieve the objectives set out in the European Recommendations. Some countries have designed a common framework encompassing "second chance" programs at different educational levels aimed exclusively at adults.

This framework in some cases includes only general education, as in **Denmark**, and in others general and vocational training, such as the EFA courses in **Portugal**. It may also include formal education (at different levels) and non-formal courses, such as education for social advancement in the French-speaking Community of **Belgium**. In the French-speaking Community of Belgium, education for social promotion (enseignement de promotion sociale) is aimed at people over the age of 16 who wish to improve their educational level or career prospects. The programs offered within this framework in some cases lead to

formal diplomas equivalent to those issued in ordinary initial education or to certificates specific to social promotion education (e.g., after completion of ICT-related courses, foreign language courses, language training for immigrants, etc.). Social promotion programs are offered in different types of centers.

A similar system exists in the Flemish Community. The courses offered in **Denmark** within the framework of general adult education are open to persons over 18 years of age and consist of three levels: preparatory adult education (FVU), general adult education (AVU) and higher preparatory courses for each subject (HF). Adult preparatory education is non-formal in nature and includes short courses in Danish Language, Reading, Writing and Mathematics at the primary and lower secondary levels. General adult education consists of single-subject courses that can be completed by taking an examination equivalent to the Folkeskole school-leaving examinations. Preparatory courses in one subject correspond to the general upper secondary level.

In **Germany**, there are several good examples of "second chance programmes" targeting adults and supporting the educational goals of the European recommendations. Here are some examples:

1. "Second Chance": This programme is aimed at adults who do not have a vocational qualification or who want to improve their knowledge and skills. It offers a combination of training, coaching and internships to help participants enter the labour market.
2. "Chance hoch 2": This programme is aimed at young adults between 18 and 27 who do not have a school-leaving qualification. It offers comprehensive support in improving reading and writing skills, career orientation and internships.
- 3, "Skilled Worker in Focus": This programme supports companies in integrating people with a migration background and improves their skills and knowledge through customised training.
4. "Weiterbildungskollegs": These schools are aimed at adults who want to catch up on their school education. The courses are flexible and tailored to the needs of the participants.
5. "Recognition of vocational competences": This programme helps people without formal vocational qualifications to validate their experience and skills. It helps them to obtain formal recognition of their competences and improves their chances on the labour market.

These programmes and initiatives show that Germany is actively engaged in implementing the European recommendations on adult learning and developing innovative solutions to help adults improve their knowledge and skills.

In **Italy**, an adult education system has existed in Italy since 1997 with an organization and offer divided into Permanent Territorial Centers (CTP) and evening courses held by upper secondary education institutions. In 2007, through a specific ministerial decree, the process of reforming the system began,

which began in 2012 and ended in 2015/2016. The expression 'adult education' has been replaced by "adult education" which has a more limited domain as it considers only those educational activities aimed at acquiring a degree, with the aim of raising the education level of the population adult. Furthermore, with the reform, the Provincial Centers for Adult Education (CPIA) were established which constitute the heart of the reform of this sector and which, together with the secondary schools for the 2nd level courses, have replaced, respectively, the existing CTP and evening courses.

The CPIAs are autonomous educational institutes, organized in local networks. They have the same level of autonomy as schools, i.e. they have their own headquarters, staff and collegial bodies.

CPIAs offer programs that correspond to basic education up to the completion of compulsory education, as well as language courses for immigrants.

Provision in the adult education system includes:

- level I courses (created by the CPIA) aimed at obtaining the final qualification of the first cycle of education and certification attesting the basic skills acquired at the end of compulsory education in professional and technical education;
- II level courses (carried out by upper secondary level educational institutions) aimed at obtaining a diploma in technical, professional and artistic education;
- courses of literacy and learning of the Italian language for foreign adults aimed at obtaining a qualification certifying the achievement of a level of knowledge of the Italian language not lower than level A2 of the CEFR (provided by the CPIA).
- There is also an additional course to acquire basic primary education skills for those who do not have a primary school leaving certificate.

In **Cyprus**, there are several active public and private bodies that offer courses for adults.

In the public sector some organisations include:

- Adult Education Centres - <http://www.moec.gov.cy/epimorfotika/en/index.html>
- State Institutes of Further Education (SIFE) - http://www.moec.gov.cy/en/state_institutes.html
- HRDA- Human Resources Development Authority https://www.cea.org.cy/en/we_qualify/anad
- Nicosia Municipality Multifunctional Centre- Δήμος Λευκωσίας - Πολυδύναμο Δημοτικό Κέντρο (nicosia.org.cy)

In the private sector some organisations include:

- Emphasys Centre - <https://emphasyscentre.com/>
- Agapi Fundraiser <https://agapi.org.cy/>

The Adult Education Centres do not provide any type of funding for the people attending except for the free Greek and Turkish language lessons that both Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots can attend. However, the State Institution of Further Education does provide some sort of funding. As previously stated, the State institution of further education accepts both pupils and people who are over the age of 18. Pupils and adults, especially those that have allowances, already have a great discount on the fees. There are also full or partial scholarships for pupils who are economically unable to put up with 250-400 euros fees per year. Children who come from a 5-membered family or are part of big families have a 50%

discount on their fees. Finally, if 2 children already attend some lessons, the third one gets to attend any lessons for free.

HRDA- All programs funded under HRDA are fully funded for the unemployed. At the end of the lessons or seminars, they take an examination, and if they pass, they are given a certificate of recognition under HRDA.

Agapi and Emphasys, as previously stated, provide free education for vulnerable groups (migrants, asylum seekers, etc) therefore, they do not provide funding. When it comes to Emphasys, at the end of the training courses, people are given a certificate.

In **Spain**, there are Certificates of Professionalism, which are an instrument that accredits, in the labour field, the set of professional competences that a person must possess for the development of a labour activity identified in the labour market.

The Certificates of Professionalism are part of the National System of Qualifications and Vocational Training, so they are recognized by the Ministry of Education through the validation of modules corresponding to the Vocational Training degrees.

Each Certificate is structured in 3 levels of qualification (level 1 (without academic or professional requirements), level 2 (compulsory secondary education degree or level 1 certificate of professionalism of the same professional family) and level 3 (higher secondary education degree or level 2 certificate of the same professional family)). Each of these levels depends on the degree of responsibility, autonomy and complexity of the knowledge to be applied, in the development of work activities.

In **Ireland**, the Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) aims to combat the low educational attainment of the adult population. It offers a range of flexible part-time education and training options and is aimed at adults who have not attained upper secondary education and who wish to return to education. The initiative offers formal and non-formal courses including, for example, Junior and Leaving Certificate (ISCED 3) subjects, basic skills courses and a wide range of modules and programs recognized by the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC).

In the **Netherlands**, general adult secondary education (VAVO) consists of part-time lower and upper secondary programs for adults who left the education system without any qualifications. The programs offered under VAVO correspond to pre-vocational secondary education (VMBO, ISCED 2), general upper secondary education (ISCED 2 and 3) and pre-university education (ISCED 2 and 3).

EFA courses in **Portugal** are aimed at people over 18 years of age who have not reached upper secondary school level. The objective of these courses is to raise the level of qualification of the adult population, offering them education and training programs combined with accreditation of non-formal and informal learning. The courses lead to a general certificate of education with four levels (primary, lower secondary,

upper secondary, and those corresponding to grades 4, 6, 9 and 12, respectively), as well as to vocational qualifications at three different levels. The EFA courses correspond to the levels of the national qualification's framework.

Best practices and policies regarding the timing of learning

Traditionally, teaching has been structured in a linear or sequential fashion, based on the idea that it must be delivered at the same time and place, with the learner being obliged to attend class and learn in a linear or sequential fashion. However, the principle of flexibility is dictating a shift towards modularization and unitarization, with positive results for learning options, manageability of learning effort, and individualization of learning pace.

Many of the countries in the transition phase, which are moving from linear to modular delivery of formal ENPA, report the existence of a mixed, linear, and modular teaching method (**Belgium** [the three communities], **Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Austria, Poland** [especially in vocational training], **Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Finland** [since 1994], **Sweden, Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway**).

Spain has a long tradition in the modular organization of ENPA teaching in the compulsory educational stages, while maintaining a linear structure in upper secondary adult education. A modular system has been developed in adult secondary education. The content is organized into three knowledge areas with a modular structure (Communication, Social Studies, and Science and Technology). The number of modules and their organization varies according to the Autonomous Communities. Access to these modules is flexible and students can enrol in the one that best suits their needs and previous learning. To access the first module, students must prove that they have completed the sixth year of primary education or an equivalent level, or have passed level two of initial adult education. Another form of access to any level of secondary education for adults is to demonstrate the necessary knowledge through an initial assessment. Vocational training (intermediate and higher) is also organized into modules, and adults may choose to enroll only in those modules that are part of a vocational training program.

In the **United Kingdom (England, Wales, and Northern Ireland)**, where the structure of the courses depends on the conditions set by the awarding body, a modular structure has been adopted for some of the qualifications available to adult learners, such as A-levels (in September 2000), and candidates can now be examined in different units as they progress through the course, rather than being examined only once at the end of the course.

Good practices and policies on personalized learning

Personalized, "tailor-made" courses are the latest development in flexibility. Learning can be directed by the learner or by a tutor who provides individualized and/or group support. Regardless of the modality chosen, the learner can receive help in person, by correspondence, and/or via the Internet.

Estonia and Slovenia have individual training plans in place for adults with special learning needs.

In **France**, the network of Personalized Training Workshops (APP) offers personalized, tailor-made learning programs for adults, usually in groups.

Italy, Hungary, Portugal, and Sweden also mention individual learning plans.

Best practices and policies on independent learning

Knowledge is no longer confined to traditional education and training institutions. Independent learning, which allows the place, time, duration, content, and intensity of learning to be adapted to individual needs, is seen as an appropriate response to adults' demands for flexibility. It can be organized by an institution or structured to be delivered at a distance, by correspondence or via the Internet. Whether this is an appropriate type of learning should be considered, especially in the case of adults with a low level of education and qualifications, as without the support of the class group and regular contact with a teacher, the benefits of learning and their involvement in learning may be reduced. However, with the regular help of a tutor or mentor in person, or via telephone or e-mail, this type of learning becomes a good option for those who do not have much time to learn.

In **Belgium** (French and Flemish Communities), individual guided learning provides preparation for secondary education and civil service entrance exams.

In **Estonia**, adult upper secondary schools offer various flexible learning opportunities, including the possibility to study as an external student.

In **Spain** there is a public body, CIDEAD, which provides secondary education at a distance (independent learning) for those who for whatever reason cannot participate in regular education.

In **Finland**, the full curriculum of general upper secondary education can be followed at a distance, but students generally prefer to combine distance and face-to-face education.

Good time planning practices and policies

To meet the needs of adult learners, educational offerings must take into account the time constraints that affect adult learners. All countries have established a range of scheduling arrangements that include part-time daytime, evening and weekend educational offerings; offerings to be delivered at the workplace during or outside working hours; and learning opportunities to be taken anytime, anywhere via distance learning, either by correspondence or, increasingly, via the Internet. The national information does not mention whether or not these provisions are widespread.

For example, in the French Community of Belgium, where the basic legislation supports "considerable time flexibility", "education for social development" is offered during the day, in the evening and on weekends (Saturdays).

Best practices and policies regarding methodology

Social changes call for commensurate changes in teaching-learning approaches and, in fact, there is a shift from a model centred on the supply side of teaching to a model based on the demand side of learning, where the learner is the centre of educational activity. There is a need for teaching methods that recognize the maturity of adults, which implies a more symmetrical pedagogy, where the adult is the key actor in learning. Adults learn best when they can choose where and when to learn, when they can draw on their past experiences to make progress, when the topics and issues addressed are "real" to them, and when they can apply the knowledge and skills acquired to their own personal and professional context. In addition, they want to be able to avail themselves of learning aids, such as guidance, literacy resources, assistive technology and study skills when needed. Two main trends can be distinguished within the teaching methods used in formal ENPA.

At least one-third of the countries report that formal ENPA providers use the same teaching methods as regular schools, which seems to indicate, according to the German-speaking Community of **Belgium**, that "in many cases these are quite traditional teaching methods".

Lithuania states that "formal education is not flexible enough and does not always understand the needs of adults". Since formal ANFE is usually provided in regular educational institutions and generally follows the regular curriculum, it is very easy for teachers to get caught up in what would be schooling and not adult education, and they may consciously or unconsciously develop teaching methods focused on the learning subjects rather than on the learners. This occurs precisely when teachers have not received initial or ongoing training in the methodologies used in the field of adult education. On the other hand, at least two-thirds of the countries report that the teaching methods used in formal ANFE are determined by the needs of adult learners. On the other hand, at least two-thirds of the countries report that the teaching methods used in formal NFE are determined by the needs of adult learners. Teaching-learning methodologies used in formal NFE that are reported as "suitable for adults" include participatory approaches, including case studies, role-plays and study clubs; personalized teaching and learning; teaching and learning using multimedia resources; and blended learning (various approaches).

eLearning Best Practices and Policies

ICT can facilitate access to learning opportunities for adults. The Commission's eLearning program aims at the effective integration of ICT into European education and training systems (2004-2006). This program is a further step towards realizing the vision of technology in the service of lifelong learning. The Commission presented a new strategic framework: i2010: A European Information Society for growth and employment, to promote an open and competitive digital economy and to emphasize ICT as a driver of social inclusion and quality of life. Many countries mention ICT as a subject and as a teaching methodology, but it is not possible to distinguish their level of penetration and use. Based on experience, it is probably accurate to say that usage varies greatly depending on quantity and quality and, of course, access to the technology. eLearning as an ICT resource to support teaching and learning is present, to a greater or lesser degree, in most of the countries in the study.

For example, in **Portugal**, the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the Ministry of Defense and through the Navy Center for Distance Learning, facilitates eLearning opportunities for adults enrolled in recurrent education courses. In this context, the Ministry of Education supports the eLearning project in various courses, including adult education in some centers in the Azores.

In **Finland**, general upper secondary schools for adults have been prominent in the development of distance learning, with the result that teaching at this level of education is organized, in whole or in part, in the face-to-face mode or in the distance mode through ICTs.

Good practices and policies in non-formal adult education

In **Denmark** there is no clear distinction between the teaching methods used in formal and non-formal education. In both cases, one of the main elements of teaching is a high level of participation on the part of the pupils/adults, although this approach may be even more prevalent in non-formal NFE. The criteria that an independent educational institution must meet in order to receive public funds are related to "popular enlightenment", based on the principles of universal access, free choice of subjects and free choice of teachers.

Broadcasting education through radio and television is present in **Ireland** (for literacy) and **Malta**.

In **Slovenia**, study circles (with mentor and leader) and blended learning approaches are believed to offer more appropriate teaching-learning methods for adults. Generally, the learning topics in study circles arise from the immediate environment in which they are located, thus fulfilling the premise that adult learning is most effective when it can be applied to their own lives.

In Spain, the **Aulas Mentor project**, managed by the National Center for Educational Information and Communication, offers open, free and distance training via the Internet. It is designed as an open training system, made up of different courses aimed at people interested in improving their cultural level, preparing for the labour market or updating their skills, regardless of their previous level of qualification or education. Students are free to choose the course, the timetable, the pace of learning and the location of the course (their home or the Mentor classrooms).

In the **United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)** learn direct operates a network of more than 2,000 e-learning centres providing access to a range of e-learning opportunities through more than 550 different courses covering multiple subjects, including management and administration, IT, life skills and languages at all levels. More than 75% of the courses are available via the Internet, allowing people to learn wherever they have access to the Internet (at home, at their workplace or at a learn direct centre).

In the Flemish Community of **Belgium**, Internet-based courses for adults focus on language training. The language centres of the Flemish universities have created more than 3,000 multimedia and interactive courses that are entirely Internet-based, and have organized them into programs that are easily accessible

through the various learning management systems. The Flemish government has also initiated a project to support blended learning in Adult Education Centres.

Good practices and policies on the recognition and accreditation of prior non-formal and informal learning of adults.

The recognition and accreditation of non-formal and informal learning is one of the five priority areas of the Action Plan on Adult Learning (European Commission, 2007). Generally speaking, almost all European countries are currently developing a system of accreditation of non-formal and informal learning or extending their existing one. This process goes hand in hand with moves towards National Qualifications Frameworks based on learning outcomes. However, most countries are finding it difficult to cope with the supremacy of formal education provided in traditional educational settings, as this type of education is often seen as the only valid means of acquiring the knowledge, skills and competencies required for nationally relevant qualifications such as the upper secondary school leaving certificate. Notwithstanding these obstacles, many countries have already developed, at least to some extent, procedures that include some elements of accreditation of non-formal and informal learning in relation to regular formal qualifications.

Sometimes the process of recognition and accreditation of prior non-formal and informal learning takes place at the point of entry into formal education or training programs. Such a recognition procedure sometimes allows adult learners to access programs even if they do not meet the traditional qualification requirements for admission.

In **Finland**, legislation recognizes the right of students to apply for upper secondary programs even if they do not meet the ordinary admission requirements (i.e., possession of a lower secondary school leaving certificate). In these cases, admission is carried out on the basis of a validation of non-formal and informal learning.

In general, vocationally oriented upper secondary schools admit a larger number of candidates without the ordinary entrance qualification than general (academic) oriented upper secondary schools. Initial assessment of prospective students, taking into account all prior learning, can also be used to ensure their correct placement in education and training programs.

In **Denmark**, vocational adult education (GVU), leading to qualifications equivalent to those issued to young people in the initial education and training system, takes as its starting point the assessment of candidates' prior experience and skills. The objective of this initial assessment, known as "competency assessment", is to determine the level of each participant, taking into account prior formal, non-formal and informal learning. Based on this assessment, a personalized study plan is developed, identifying the gaps that the participant needs to fill before taking the final test or exam. At the same time, a "competency assessment" is elaborated, which identifies the elements of the vocational education and training curriculum that the participant has already mastered.

In **Spain**, within the framework of primary and secondary adult education, the current regulations require the initial evaluation of the student in order to proceed to his or her orientation and assignment. Each Autonomous Community establishes the conditions for this initial evaluation and, in some of them, the specific regulations take into account the results of non-formal and informal learning.

In some countries (**Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Spain, Latvia, Austria, Poland, Finland and Norway**), students may take examinations leading to formal qualifications without having previously participated in an education or training program, and may take examinations directly in one or more subjects (units or modules) or in the entire program.

In the French Community of **Belgium**, ordinary qualifications can be obtained either by taking the education and training programs or through examinations organized by the evaluation tribunals of the French Community (Jurys de la Communauté française). These bodies issue a considerable number of secondary education and higher education certificates with the same legal value as those issued by educational establishments. This system is an alternative way of obtaining a formal qualification. These examinations are mainly aimed at self-taught persons and those who cannot follow traditional formal education. The Flemish Community of Belgium has a similar system.

In the **Czech Republic**, the Education Act of 2004 established the possibility to sit for upper secondary examinations in individual subjects (or other specific parts of the programs) without having previously attended classes. Also, there is a possibility to sit for different parts of the upper secondary or post-secondary non-higher education final examination (maturitní zkouška, závěrečná zkouška or absolutorium). In addition, the 2006 Act on Verification and Accreditation of Post-Compulsory Education Outcomes introduced a new type of formal qualification, the so-called "partial qualifications", which are issued only in the continuing education system and can be obtained either by undertaking an organized teaching program or by accreditation of prior learning.

In **Denmark**, general adult education consists of single-subject courses at three different levels. Students who have not taken such courses can take examinations in the subjects of their choice on their own.

In **Estonia**, students can complete basic or upper secondary education by taking external examinations and are entitled to guidance while preparing for them.

In **Spain**, the Education Act of 2006 stipulates that educational administrations may organize tests for persons 18 years of age or older to enable them to obtain the certificate of completion of lower secondary education (Graduado en Educación Secundaria Obligatoria). Likewise, the Law stipulates that educational administrations must periodically organize tests for persons aged 20 years or older to enable them to directly obtain the certificate of completion of upper secondary education (Bachiller). The same applies to vocational training: students who have reached 18 years of age may sit directly for the tests leading to the Technician's diploma (upper secondary vocational) and those who are 20 years of age may sit for the tests leading to the Higher Technician's diploma. In addition, since 2009, people with certain professional experience can apply for the evaluation of their competences in relation to the different units of the

National Catalog of Professional Qualifications. The units acquired in this way count towards obtaining a full professional qualification.

In **Latvia**, the Vocational Training Law of 2011 has made it possible to obtain ordinary vocational qualifications by passing an examination, without the need to have previously completed the corresponding education/training program.

In **Austria**, persons working in a position similar to that of an apprentice in a particular trade are allowed to sit an apprenticeship accreditation examination (Lehrabschlussprüfung) and thus obtain a formal vocational qualification. In Poland, persons over the age of 18 who are not in any program, either part-time or full-time, may take external examinations, the passing of which is directly equivalent to the completion of primary or secondary education.

In **Finland**, the Act on the Higher Education Entrance Examination authorizes school principals to admit to the general upper secondary school leaving examination even those who have not attended the course. In Norway, adult students may sit the lower and upper secondary examinations in various subjects on their own, without the need to have attended the courses.

In addition to the above examples, **Austria** has implemented a special higher education entrance examination for adults (Berufsmatura) that includes some recognition of prior learning. In particular, students may be exempted from certain parts of the examination if they can demonstrate appropriate competencies. In Austria, the special higher education entrance examination for employed adult students (Berufsmatura) includes tests in German, Mathematics, Modern Foreign Languages and a work-related major related to the candidate's professional field. The diploma obtained after successfully passing this examination has the same value as that of a regular higher education entrance examination (Matura) taken at Austrian upper secondary schools, as it entitles the holder to study at an Austrian university or other higher education institution, and also leads to the same rank within the civil service salary scale. Anyone who has previously completed an apprenticeship program or intermediate technical and vocational education, attended a nursing school or paramedical center, is a master craftsman or has passed an aptitude test (Befähigungsprüfung) is eligible to take this special examination.

In several countries, the knowledge, skills and competencies required by formal training programs can be recognized and accredited through assessment methods other than traditional school examinations. These assessment models include portfolio, demonstration, simulation and observation. The first method is quite widespread in **France** and **Portugal**, while an example of another type of method is **Finland's** competency-based qualifications.

In **France**, all professional qualifications can be obtained through a validation process called VAE (Validation des Acquis de l'Expérience). This process, established in 2002 by the Social Modernization Act, allows adult students to validate the learning acquired in different contexts (professional activities, charitable works or social, political and cultural activities) in order to obtain a formal qualification. The minimum period of experience required for access to the VAE process is three years. The process of accreditation of learning outcomes related to regular upper secondary programs consists of several stages

and uses, above all, the portfolio method. The applicant's portfolio of evidence is assessed against the requirements of the particular qualification being sought. The validation process can lead directly to the issuance of a full qualification or a partial certification specifying the elements that the candidate must acquire in order to obtain the full qualification. If the candidate fails to demonstrate any relevant learning outcomes, the process does not lead to any certification.

Under the "New Opportunities" initiative, **Portugal** has promoted a systematic approach to the recognition and accreditation of non-formal and informal learning (called the RVCC process). The recognition process can lead to basic level qualifications (corresponding to six or nine years of schooling), secondary level qualifications (corresponding to 12 years of schooling) or vocational qualifications. The recognition process is carried out according to the specific Key Competency Standards for each qualification. To access the process, candidates must be at least 18 years of age and have a minimum of three years of professional experience. Normally, those who meet the access requirements prepare a portfolio of competencies indicating their knowledge, skills and aptitudes, which is evaluated by a board of examiners. The recognition process may lead to the issuance of a full or partial degree. In the latter case, the recognition and validation of prior learning can be completed with an education or training program (e.g. an EFA course or modular vocational training). Candidates are supported by the guidance services throughout the process.

In **Finland**, accreditation of prior learning is used primarily in competency-based training programs. These programs can be at three levels: upper secondary vocational qualifications, supplementary vocational qualifications and specialized vocational qualifications. The former corresponds to those of vocational education and training for young people. To obtain them, students must prove that they possess the knowledge and skills required for the exercise of the corresponding profession. Adult learners can demonstrate their professional competencies through competency tests, regardless of how and where they acquired them (e.g., candidates can take the exams during or after formal education or without any formal education at all). The qualification criteria establish the professional competencies that must be demonstrated in order to acquire the qualification and also define the elements that constitute the qualification, as well as the methods of verification of the professional competencies (demonstration of competencies, observation, interviews, questionnaires, portfolio work or other projects). Assessment methods such as portfolios, demonstration of competences, simulations or observations (e.g. partial qualifications in the Czech Republic) are often used in the validation procedures of professional qualifications that exist only in the system of continuing education and training. These assessment methods are also used in other countries as a tool for guidance and counselling.

This is the case in the **United Kingdom (Scotland)**, where the portfolio is commonly used as a guidance tool to help students assess their own progress and make appropriate choices for further education or training. Thus, the assessment process does not lead to the issuance of a formal degree or certificate, but rather serves to advise the student regarding their future study options.

In general, the recognition of non-formal and informal learning is primarily a process that is used in relation to vocational education and training, rather than general education or academic guidance. For example, the Flemish Community of Belgium notes that, in the proposal for a recognition of prior learning

mechanism (eerder verworven kwalificaties - EVK), a very clear distinction is made between academic and vocational qualifications. According to this proposal: academic qualifications are qualifications that can only be obtained through the education system and that give access to further studies, to a profession, or to successfully conduct oneself in society. Vocational qualifications are the set of competencies that a person puts in place in a given profession or social context to effectively perform his or her professional tasks or social role. These competencies can be acquired through formal education, but also through learning outside the education system (EACEA/Eurydice, 2010).

Source: Eurydice

Finally, we can review examples of Good Practice projects of Erasmus+ projects focused on adult education, in the following link:

<http://sepie.es/comunicacion/buenas-practicas.html>

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