

Work Based Basic Skills

Challenges for Trainers in Europe

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Project:

Profi-Train: Professionalisierung von Trainern für Arbeitsorientierte Grundbildung

Profi-Train: Professionalization of trainers for work based basic skills

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Table of Contents

Abstract	4
Scope of the report	5
Work based basic skills	5
Introduction	6
About the contributors	7
Coordinator	7
Partners	7
Associated Partner	9
Current National Systems	10
Austria	10
Czech Republic	10
Germany	11
Greece	12
Malta	12
Slovenia	13
Switzerland	14
Current Systems Evaluation	15
Similarities	15
Differences	15
Key Challenges for Professionals	16
Legal Framework and Funding Opportunities	16
Training and Professionalization / Role of Trainers	17
One size does not fit all	18
Awareness on 'Work Based Basic Skills'	19
Training Content	21
Required Competences for Trainers for Work based basic skills Training	22
Competences required by work based basic skills trainers	22
Two Broad Competence Categories	25
Training for Trainers	27
Conclusion	27
Bibliography	29

Abstract

This specialist publication, composed by six entities from the following countries: Germany, Austria, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Greece, Malta, Switzerland, aims to analyse the cross-national and country specific similarities and differences to better understand where research, policy focus and training should be directed in relation to **work-based basic skills** (Work-based basic skills (WBBS) refers to the necessary skills that a person holds in order to participate and work successfully at the working place.).

This report serves to highlight best practices that are already taking place in order to see how the different partner countries can adapt, influence and implement such measures in their current work procedures and systems.

Profi-Train aims at using the knowledge base provided by many previous experiences of work-based learning, to make a contribution to professionalization of the sector through the development of a transferable professional training concept for teaching, consulting experts and planners in the field of vocational training for adults.

Profi-Train also aims at the development of a transferable and flexible professional training concept for experts in adult education and vocational training – teaching, guiding and disposing experts – in order to contribute to professional development and on this for the professionalization of the initiative “work-based basic skills for low-qualified employees”. Therefore, the target group for the Profi-Train professional development courses are the professionals in adult education and vocational training: teachers, trainers, learning guides, consultants and the experts in planning functions in adult education and vet-institutions. Profi-Train understands work-based basic skills training as a concept where courses are tailored made to the specific needs of both the employee and the company, individualized and oriented to changing requirements on the basic competencies of the workforce.

Scope of the report

Work based basic skills (WBBS)

Work based basic skills deals with the question of what are the necessary skills that individuals should possess to be able to participate successfully in the work environment.

Through the project's kick-off meeting it was noted that work based basic skills training is a vocational training for employees whose basic competences are no longer sufficient/have never been sufficient to cope with work requirements. Work based basic skills training creates learning opportunities especially for unskilled and semi-skilled workers and for those with a low level of qualifications or for people with insufficient knowledge of the national language. The work based basic skills concept is therefore based on concrete work requirements and the specific needs of the enterprise and the employees. The content-based learning areas for work based basic skills are found from the "real" handling requirements at the various workplaces.

Following the kick-off meeting, discussions amongst partners took place to identify which basic competences are lacking. A case study from Germany was chosen to reflect the needs of enterprise at present. Empiricism in Germany shows that:

- **oral communication** (with clients, colleagues, supervisors)
- **written communication** (dealing with documentation systems)
- **mathematical competencies** (calculation, calculation of loss, purchasing, sales, time management)
- **digital competencies** (EDP, online competence, handling of new work technologies, problem solving in a digital environment)
- oral and written **basic competencies English** (Focus on work)
- **basic health competencies** (ergonomics, diet, stress / relaxation, addiction, hygiene)
- **basic financial competencies** (dealing with money, debts, avoiding payment of wages)
- **soft skills/key competencies** (cooperation and conflict capability, intercultural competences, learning strategies, self-organization and work organization)

Work based basic skills is understood as a process. It is an individual training concept developed and tailored based on the needs of the companies and entities involved. (Klein, R., Reutter, G., & Schwarz, S., 2016).

Introduction

“Both men and women in employment with low qualifications are far less likely to receive continuing training than their more qualified counterparts” (Ward, Sanoussi, Kullander, Biletta, 2009). The Council Recommendation on *Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults* highlighted that in 2015 64 million people aged between 25-64 were only in possession of a lower second education qualification, leaving them with an insufficient level of literacy when faced with the competitive needs of the current labour market scenario. Consequently, they are highly disadvantaged in the labour market and their risk of unemployment is high. Companies play an important role in securing the occupation of these employees. Providing work based basic skills training as vocational training can highly impact low-qualified employees as it develops their basic competencies. It “serves not only to raise the status of the workers in question but also to widen the job opportunities open to them” (Ward, Sanoussi, Kullander, Biletta, 2009). Nonetheless, this work based learning training concept must be professionally designed.

The purpose of this specialist publication is to analyse the cross-national and country specific similarities and differences to better understand where research, policy focus and training should be directed. This report serves to highlight best practices that are already taking place in order to see how the different partner countries can adapt, influence and implement such measures in their current work procedures and systems. This report also serves as a resource that social partners and training providers can use to better understand and improve their learning offer. This report allows for coordination and partnership to better support course design, outreach, guidance and evaluation of the concept of WBBS.

PROFI-TRAIN intends to use country specific and cross-national knowledge gained from the basic specialist country report to target the development of a transferable and flexible professional training concept in adult education.

The professional training concept “**Competence for work-based basic skills**” consists of three building blocks:

- Manual for self-study;
- Six curricular edited thematic modules for the realization of seminars;
- European roadmap – guidelines for stakeholders.

About the contributors

Coordinator



bbb Büro für berufliche Bildungsplanung, R. Klein und Partner GbR, an independent private institute, Germany.

It focuses on adult education, learning process and competence development. bbb main profile is research – consulting – training. This is realised in research projects, concept and project development, scientific assessing research. Their role is also to assist educational foundations, as well as private ones, adjust and develop their structures. In Germany, they are experts for work based basic skills.

Website: www.bbb-dortmund.de

Partners



BEST Institut für berufsbezogene Weiterbildung und Personal-training GmbH, an independent vocational qualification institute, Austria.

This institution mainly focuses on adult education and vocational qualification. It also offers training and serves as guidance to unemployed people. It caters for up to 13,000 students yearly. Trainings are constantly being updated and individualised according to target groups. In most programmes (including for basic skills provision), BEST closely cooperates with a vast network of companies to organise for, monitor and evaluate traineeships/work place (basic) skills training.

Website: www.best.at

ERUDICIO, nadační fond **ERUDICIO**, an independent non-governmental public benefit organisation managed by a board of directors, Czech Republic.

It supports human resource development, education, science and research focused primarily on law and its impact. Erudicio has worked closely with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, targeting social systems and pension reform. Other experts on the board have vast knowledge regarding the labour market, educational system and guidance.

Website: www.erudicio.cz



Andragoški center Republike Slovenije
Slovenian Institute for Adult Education

Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (SIAE), a public entity, Slovenia.

SIAE is the main national institution for research and development, quality and education, guidance and validation, and promotional and informative activities in the field of adult education. It screens the progress of the adult education system, creates adult literacy programmes and drafts professional bases and evaluation. One of its goals is also to develop expert basis, models and supporting policies for education and training of vulnerable groups of adults. Professional education and training for adult educators are also provided. SIAE's mission is to remain active and contribute quality education and learning to all Slovenians under the principles of free choice and equal opportunities.

Website: <http://www.acs.si>



Ergani Centre, an independent Non-Profit Civil Association, Greece.

Its main aim is to support women, youngsters and vulnerable groups who want to receive professional skills and re/join the labour market, or develop their own enterprise / organisation. Furthermore, they provide psychosocial support, computer literacy courses, mentoring and networking activities.

Website: www.ergani.gr



MINISTRY FOR EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

The Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability within the Ministry for Education and Employment, a government entity, Malta.

Its main vision is that 'learning should be a lifelong journey for everyone.' The Directorate offers policy guidance on lifelong learning and organises adult learning courses through a more personalised and innovative approach to education. It strives to improve the quality of adult teaching and learning in Malta and increases participation.

Website: www.education.gov.mt

Associated Partner

S V E B ■ Schweizerischer Verband für Weiterbildung
Fédération suisse pour la formation continue
F S E A ■ Federazione svizzera per la formazione continua
Swiss Federation for Adult Learning

SVEB, the Swiss national umbrella organisation for adult education, Switzerland.

It operates as a professional association and pressure group. Furthermore, SVEB runs the Training for Trainers and strongly supports “Edu Qua”, the main quality label for organizations in the field of adult learning. Its main aim is to have an effective, forward-looking and high-level quality adult education system. *SVEB develops, promotes and implements concepts for the promotion of work based basic skills.*

Website: <https://alice.ch>

Current National Systems

In this section, we shall briefly analyse the implementation of work based basic skills training that can be found within the different partner countries involved in this publication.

Austria

In Austria, there are many institutions that specialize in vocational education and training, namely, WIFI Österreich (Austrian Institute for Economic Development), VHS and BFI (vocational training institute owned by the Chambers of Labour and the Austrian Trade Union Federation). Because of migrant needs, a substantial amount of the budget and programmes have been focusing on literacy and German skills to facilitate migrants' integration in Austrian society and labour market.

BEST has for various target groups, also taken this into consideration and designed various training projects with the focus on basic skills training, even work-based. Each training follows a structure, including; the introductory phase (called "Clearing"), training in small groups; individual training/consulting, known as "business contacts" ("Betriebskontakter"); and internships and external professional training.

Another existent system is Train-the-trainer Education by the Public Employment Service Austria. It includes various competences, including, digital competences, mathematical competences, learning competences (autonomous learning, learning to learn), basic competences in another language (speaking, reading, and writing) and German competences (speaking, reading, and writing).

Czech Republic

Adult education and quality training in the Czech Republic are not set up systemically. Furthermore, there is no sufficient support for ministerial running and does not have adequate staff to accommodate and develop this agenda broadly.

Nonetheless, the National Institute of Education (NUV) takes care of an individual number of adult education and training projects, such as, Promotion of Quality of Further Education, E@digram and the National Qualifications Framework. The latter gives a standardised qualitative foundation for the verification and recognition of non-formal education and training. It has been developed in close cooperation with employers from all the sectors of the national economy. Courses offered through various training companies and associations, such as, The Association of Adult Education Providers (AIVD), are either paid for by adults themselves, financed by the company or drawn

through the labour office from European Social Funds as funding for lifelong learning within the field of adult education.

There are very low figures of people with no or only basic education.

Germany

German Federal States are responsible for adult education and advanced vocational training. Most federal states have "Laws on Further Training", but not related to work based basic skills. Additionally, there are no nationwide structures and funding instruments which could be offered consistently. In 2015 the Federal Government and the federal states presented the joint National Decade for Literacy and Basic Skills 2016 to 2026 (National Decade). The decade for adult literacy is based on the "National Strategy for Adult Literacy and Basic Education and Training in Germany". This was jointly initiated by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (KMK) as a result of the Level One-Study 2011. Additional social groups and groups active at a national level, e.g. the German Federal Literacy Association (Bundesverband für Alphabetisierung und Grundbildung), the German Institute for Adult Education (Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung), the German Adult Education Association (Deutscher Volkshochschulverband), the Federal Employment Agency (Bundesagentur für Arbeit), the German Trade Union Confederation (Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund) and Germany's local authority associations, have joined on the basis of a common agreement and are actively involved in the implementation of the national strategy.

Even though an official institution supporting and monitoring the basic skills situation is not present in Germany, there are various associations involved in basic skills endorsement, including:

- The Bundesverband Alphabetisierung und Grundbildung (Germany Association of literacy and basic education);
- Alfabund (offers a lot of information on funded projects in relation to adult literacy, basic skills and work-placed basic skills);
- The "Decade for Literacy" (involves the specialist monitoring of Federal Government activities in the context of the decade for literacy and the long-term transformation it is aiming to achieve. Its main target group is within labour market.)
- The German Association of Adult Education (DVV) with its special initiatives: "local planning of basic education – strategy development and practical examples" and "I want to learn".

A number of seminars and courses have been developed for teachers and trainers during funded programmes by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (2007 to 2012).

Greece

The difficult situation in Greece has a severe impact on the labour market and the mentality of the unemployed. Moreover, the migrant and refugee crisis added further problems. Thus, The Act on "Development of Lifelong Learning" (Official Governmental Gazette 163/A' /21-9-2010 -L.3879/2010), with the help of European Funding, attempts to set up a single comprehensive framework for Lifelong Learning, under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. This aims to improve knowledge, skills and competencies for personal, social and/or employment reasons.

EOPPEP, the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance, aims to connect VET with labour market needs, improving people's occupational credentials, reinforcing their employment views and strengthening social cohesion. EOPPEP is the statutory body for the growth and implementation of the Hellenic Qualifications Framework (NQF) in correspondence with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

Even though, there is no specific policy framework in Greece for adult literacy and basic skills, there exist publicly funded programmes in Lifelong Learning Centres (Kentra Dia Viou Mathisis – KDVM). These are established by municipalities or private providers. Businesses also play an active role in continuing vocational training. Some enterprises provide systematic organised training programmes for their employees (in-house training), predominantly through seminars and short programmes. Furthermore, social partners implement training programmes through ESF Funding. Finally, the National Strategic Framework for Development (2014-2020) aims to develop people's knowledge and skill, especially those with low qualifications, and integrate them into society.

Malta

The Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability within the Ministry for Education and Employment offers policy guidance on lifelong learning and organises adult learning courses through a more personalised and innovative approaches to education. The National Lifelong Learning strategy aims to; promote adult skills as the optimum, flexible route to employability; set up and develop work based learning environments; and finally, develops a set of guidelines for work based learning programmes. To implement these strategic measures, the Directorate, through the project EU Agenda for Adult Learning led a small scale awareness campaign to provide information to employers on how they can work with members of their workforce who have problems with basic skills. Training sessions have also been set up with employers through EU Agenda Project (Irish Collaboration).

In addition, sector specific training by specific employers on Work place learning takes place by various entities in Malta, some of which are, ITS, GRTU, KPMG and Reggie Miller Foundation, Jobs+. The latter also provides subsidy on training cost.

Slovenia

At the national level the main responsibility for adult education and training lies within two ministries, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and its Upper Secondary, Higher Vocational and Adult Education Directorate and the ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and its special Sector for Lifelong Learning and Scholarships, however other ministries that are responsible for specific aspects of adult education and training are the agriculture, culture, health and interior. The legal basis for basic skills at work education and training lays in Adult Education Act (2017) and the strategic adult education document Adult Education Master Plan (SI) for the period 2013-2020. It was drafted by the ministry of education in collaboration with other ministries and relevant stakeholders. The Master Plan 2013-2020 defined specific target groups and addressed their access to quality adult education, among them the unemployed above 50 years of age without vocational or professional education or with lower professional capacities; employed above 45 years of age with less than 4-year upper secondary education or lacking key or professional competencies; employed that are not able to continue practicing their profession above a certain age due to the specific psycho-physical requirements; young school drop-outs; socially deprived, immigrants, Roma, the elderly, the handicapped and convicts; other adults with limited access to social, cultural and economic goods, such as farmers and the population of less developed regions. Despite the solid legal base and extensive research and development work completed in the last decade the basic skills at work provision remains small scale under the responsibility of the ministry of education.

The research project, *The workplace as a factor in developing basic skills* (Ivancic, 2005), supported financially by the Ministry of labour, drew attention to procedures in managing a new workplace. It proposed two things; the development of an adequate range of education for employees with low education; and implementation strategies for raising the level of basic employee abilities. Even though proposed by experts, there was no interest among policy makers, employers and other stakeholders (trade unions) to support the basic skills at work policies at a larger scale.

Guidelines for the strategy of development of basic skills for employees (Drofenik, Ivancic, Mozina, 2007) is a publication compiled by SIAE which includes principles, expert basis and systematic possibilities for the most educationally underprivileged employees. The Proposed Guidelines incorporate goals, formal legal basis, target groups, institutions, procedures and competences.

National Evaluation study (2010 – 2013) of the basic skills at work programme showed that the needs of the learners are an amalgamation of different goals and expectations. The participants taking part in this study were positively affected.

Ultimately, the PIAAC survey (2016) has shown that adults with low skill levels are associated with rather poor economic and social outcomes, and are ever more at risk of being left behind in a changing world. One-third of working age population in Slovenia – almost 400 000 adults – have low levels of literacy and/or numeracy, they need up skilling in order to stay employed and to participate actively on the labour market.

Switzerland

The Swiss national law on Further Education introduces basic skills as a matter of promotion and public funding. The cantons are responsible to implement it and federal state doubles the investments of the Cantons. Currently there is a focal point of support on the promotion of work based basic skills promotion. The Swiss Federal Council recently decided on a national programme for workplace basic skills to be implemented from 2018 to 2020 in addition to the provision of the national law on Further Education.

In 2009, SVEB started to work on a model for work based basic skills with the financial support of the Swiss State Secretariat of Education. The GO MODEL and the GO 2 MODEL were developed. Currently the focus of the third GO project, GO NEXT, is to spread GO to more regions and to attain collaboration with regional governments (regional divisions – cantons); and to collaborate with trade organisations.

Current Systems Evaluation

Similarities

- Each country is aware of the importance of work-based basic skills and they are striving to provide further education, either through governmental entities or other funding available.
- However, there is no formalized structure with regards to work-based basic skills in most countries participating in the project. Neither is there any national law or other legal regulation in relation to work related basic skills, (except Austria, to some extent, Slovenia and Switzerland).
- Ministries, NGOs and Associations are mostly responsible for work based basic skills.
- Consequently, adult education and quality training are not set up systemically in most of these countries (except Austria).
- Also, there is no regular funding in Germany, Slovenia, Malta and Czech Republic.
- However, even though not consistent, trainings and programmes are mostly national or European funded.
- There have also been immigration concerns, in Austria and Greece mainly.

Differences

- In Austria, the state government itself offers financial support for further training, for example the "Bildungsförderung". There is also a lot of funding options for different training types and target groups (both employed and unemployed).
- Train-the-trainer programmes exist in Austria, Slovenia and Switzerland.
- In Slovenia a research was conducted on basic skills at work as well as national evaluation of the existing provision.
- In Germany, there are a number of stakeholders in charge of specifically work based basic skills programmes.
- There is the role of the door opener (GO-programme in Switzerland; Gruwe-project Germany) and "framework competences" for trainers and teachers.
- In Greece, there has been a high demand for work-based basic skills training in time of economic crisis. This situation is still pertinent to current times.

Key Challenges for Professionals

Work based basic skills learning can be a very volatile topic due to its ever-changing nature. Work based basic skills learning is still an emerging field with some blind spots that have not yet been tackled. In this section, we identify and expand on the key challenges being faced by the contributors to this report.

The following section is the result of the reports gathered from the partners and reflect findings accordingly. Partner countries involved in this specialist report do not all have the same legal structure that would permit the execution of certain work based basic skills programmes that are carried out in some of the countries mentioned. In addition, human capacity, the different economic situations and diverse demographics also play an influential role in the possible execution of work based basic skills learning systems in each partner country. One of the neglected challenges for professionals is also taking into account the career interests and paths of those who are involved in basic skills at work provision. A recurring element in these reports is that the concept of work based basic skills training is a necessity for all partner countries in order to drive upskilling and reskilling and the possible development of work place structures to facilitate basic skills training at work.

Legal Framework and Funding Opportunities

In the past years, the drive for adult learning witnessed a stable increase. The financial crisis of 2008 spurred more intense measures and better frameworks to be set forth for adult learning.¹ Member states across the European Union felt the need to propose a “set of common priorities to be addressed in the adult-learning sector” which would later become known as the action plan to increase participation in adult learning.

Notwithstanding this, the country reports hint at the fact that although the framework for adult learning systems do exist in some of the countries, work based basic skills training or provision of such concept have not yet been included or given priority in this framework. Partner countries like Malta, Germany and Slovenia mentioned that no formalized structures have been set up that would promote access of work based basic skills and a more coordinated approach to the delivery and responsibility of work based basic skills learning. SIAE put forward that small scale provision of basic skills at work has been developed, and a national evaluation study was conducted of the ‘basic skills at work’ that included participants, teachers, providers, programme developers, social partners and policy makers in order to established whether the program

¹ http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2011.372.01.0001.01.ENG

aims and goals had been achieved. The recent promising achievement is the OECD Skills Strategy for Slovenia² that pointed out three important aspects of skills development: empowering active citizens with the right skills for the future, building a culture of lifelong learning, and working together to strengthen skills. ERGANI more specifically mentioned that there is no specific policy framework in Greece for adult literacy and basic skills.³

Because of the lack of a targeted framework, no regular or sufficient funding for work based basic skills training is available. Project partners from Germany, Slovenia, Malta, Czech Republic and Greece all referred to this point as one of the key challenges for establishing any effective work based basic skills learning endeavour. The adult learning national framework would allow literacy courses to be available but these would not specifically target work based basic skills learning. The fact that there would be no government mainframe scheme that is fully integrated into national policy allows work based basic skills training to depend solely on irregular funding schemes thus not allowing for the continuity in the work and motivation of the learners, trainers and companies involved.

It is important to add that although Greece do not have a policy framework for adult literacy, ERGANI mentioned in their report that there are some public funding programmes that support adults in acquiring basic skills, such as 'second chance schools', Lifelong Learning Centres and continuing vocational training courses.

Training and Professionalization / Role of Trainers

The lack of a legal regulatory layer does not only pose a barrier for the allocation of funds targeting specifically programmes in this context but also fuels the insecurities tied to the professions of the educators/trainers. The majority of the country reports (MEDE, bbb, ERUDICIO, SIAE and ERGANI) all put forward that lack of training and professionalization is a key determining challenge that adds to the complexities of the topic.

To begin with, the lack of a properly defined concept of work based basic skills which includes a list of the procedures for the professionalization of trainers is somewhat of an overarching and imposing obstruction for the development of the notion of work based learning and the new learning culture in enterprises and institutions. Malta highlighted that standardised training for adult basic skills educators is currently non-existent in Malta. This is also the case in Germany and Greece. bbb pointed out that few people have expertise in delivering work based related basic skills training. Slovenia further contributed by saying that indeed this could stem out of the fact that no

² See Skills Strategy Diagnostic Report for Slovenia:

<http://www.oecd.org/skills/nationalskillsstrategies/Skills-Strategy-Diagnostic-report-Slovenia.pdf>.

³ Country specific

undergraduate study programme includes topics related to basic skills at work teaching; as is the case in most of the other countries involved in this report. In Slovenia the basic skills at work training program was developed alongside the basic skills at work program, but only a couple of dozens of teachers were trained because of low and irregular funding of the provision. The no-specialisation context further demotivates the educator/trainer into choosing work based basic skills training as a full time profession. bbb has noted that "professionals in the field of work related basic skills training, in particular in company contexts, have to play substantially different roles, such as networkers, developers, consultants, supporters, guides, pedagogues and motivators."⁴ These trainers could in fact be the intermediaries between the employees and the employers. All these different demanding roles need to come into focus

As bbb observed, the no specialisation context and the different roles that a trainer need to take on would spill into the fact that the profession of a basic skills trainer is not pegged to any institution who would offer full time employment. Rather, these would be mostly fee-based freelancers and not permanently employed. This leads to the lack of incentive to choose this path as a professional career and, if chosen as a professional path, there would be a lack of commitment due to its informal nature. The resilience in managing to bridge the business world with the pedagogic culture associated with learning is therefore quite lacking in this context. Personal challenges stemming from the lack of professionalization, recognition and training of the basic skills trainers themselves would end up to wear down the resilience and vigour that the tutor/educator/trainer might have built up as his own support system.

While Slovenia would not be partial to this problem, the new law issued in 2017 on adult education indicated that no specialisation would be required for those who would have shown an interest in specialising in the field of work based basic skills training. This would mean that the legal framework would be ignoring the good practices achieved so far and that trainers/educators and tutors will not be getting the required and necessary training to understand and exert influence with both policy makers and enterprises to further put forward on the agenda the notion of work based basic skills training.

One size does not fit all

Partner countries have all concurred with the idea that there is a need for more professionalization and training for the tutors/trainers/educators who would be enabling this work based learning approach to the employees. That challenge has another challenge in itself. There is great difficulty in individualising each training according to the particular professional. The labour market, the specific demands and challenges of the different sectors, the logic of businesses and the pedagogical background and ap-

⁴ BBB, Country Specific Report 2018, Profi-Train project pg. 6

proaches needed would all differ from one professional to another. Country reports from Germany, Austria, Greece, Czech and Malta all mention that there is a need for less of standardized curriculum and more of need-oriented, individualized and tailor made curricula where professionals can use modules which would appeal more to their situations.

We are not just talking about professionalization in terms of pedagogical approaches to teaching work based basic skills concepts at work, but also equipping professionals on how to involve, convince and attract enterprises to invest in their employees basic skills. Equipped with knowledge on how to include successful approaches to enterprises, one must however not forget that with every different enterprise/institution approached the professional would be dealing with different culture and backgrounds of the employees being trained. Trainers of WBBS in Germany talk about: "Each company needs to be treated as an individual". The different working environment, the heterogeneity of the target groups in mind⁵, different communication strategies of the enterprises/institutions, different counselling networks made available by the organisation and the different learning environments made available for the employee. In addition, experience in different countries has shown that it is most important to respectively monitor and evaluate workplace skills provision processes. To address this challenge, Profi-train intends to develop a multi-modular training guide which monitors and reflects the working requirements of each particular sector on the basis of the country-specific reports provided by the partner countries involved. Further to this, Germany, Malta and the Czech Republic also emphasize in their report that to develop a training 'course', one needs to constantly monitor and reflect the ever-changing work requirements. The multi-modular training will constantly need to be upgraded to reflect the new demands and interests generated by business and employees. This means that one single investigation, such as this report, cannot meet all the current methodological and didactic approaches in the world of work.

Awareness on 'Work Based Basic Skills'

Encouraging employer involvement and commitment to upskill workforce and to invest in employees has been seen as one of the key challenges by several partner countries in this report. The disposition of the employer to increase the learning profile of the entity/institution/business can be attributed to the lack of awareness on work based basic skills. The acquisition of basic skills at the workplace, especially for low qualified employees, is quite challenging in itself. According to the observations of trends in this field, employees who are working in precarious contracts and freelancers or engaged on a part time basis are often at an immediate disadvantage for further training than the rest of the permanent cohort of staff (Ward, Sanoussi, Kullander, Bilette, 2009).

⁵ Austria and Greece situation – social backgrounds, migrants, young age

According to CEDEFOP report, “permanent staff benefit more from employer-paid training than employees on fixed-term contract do”⁶. Bearing this in mind, the Austrian, Maltese and Czech reports argue that sometimes employers tend to focus more on the highly qualified employees (better revenue, with better training). Malta also made the distinction that at times a private employer would focus more on the highly qualified individual due to that person’s direct impact on sales/profit while government entities would mostly target low or medium skilled workers in a bid to help disadvantaged groups in the labour market. The challenge here remains; employers (private and public) need to be convinced about the importance of work based basic skills. The role of the WBBS champion is further perplexing in the sense that they would need to steer conversation with employers into making them see the advantages of training their low-skilled employees. Communication with the employer remains a major challenge. This is mentioned in the country reports by both those countries that already have a ‘train the trainer work based basic skills learning’ system present (Switzerland) and by those who aspire to have a work based basic skills learning programme (Malta). Furthermore it must also be noted that the WBBS experts must be able to reflect their basic understanding of basic education and their role in the enterprise system. This includes their respectful view of the employees as self-willed persons. Against this background work based basic skills training refers not to an exclusively instrumental basic education concept but to a concept of critical literacy.

Further to this point, Malta outlined that in its case, the labour market scenario would be a bit different in its composition hence employer communication is interpreted differently than in the rest of the partner countries. The Maltese ‘non-financial business economy’ is composed of small and medium sized enterprises (SME’s). It amounts to 99.8% of the economy employing more than 106,125 persons⁷. Malta’s country specific scenario remains problematic in its own nature. Although most SMEs are aware of work based basic skills training, most do not afford to release their staff for further training due to the entity being small in its nature. Employers, when contemplating to release employees for training, highlighted that the restrictions of getting cover from an already depleted employee pool are quite substantial.⁸ This is one of the major factors inhibiting engagement in addressing work based basic skills knowledge transfer in Malta.

The question remains though: How can we as stakeholders influence policy makers to allow for more funding opportunities and foster increased national awareness that would transmit both to the public and private sectors? The project Profi-Train in con-

⁶ ‘Learning while working’ 2011, <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news-and-press/news/learning-while-working-how-skills-development-can-be-supported-through-workplace>

⁷ 2016 SBA Fact Sheet Malta, European Commission, Ref:Ares(2017)1735504 - 31/03/2017
<https://ec.europa.eu/docsroom/documents/22382/attachments/23/translations/en/renditions/pdf>

⁸ ‘What works in work-place learning’, Margaret Timoney, EU Agenda for Adult Learning Malta

cept seeks to include both public entities and private companies to allow for a more balanced outlook on the concept of work based basic skills.

Training Content

It can be quite challenging to understand that work based basic skills training is a process with different phases and roles. It is separate from the understanding of work based basic skills training as a strictly closed curriculum with no modifications or adaptations. Most of the reports attributed the fact that outdated training or irrelevant training for the specific jobs offered in the labour market demotivates employees. WBBS refers to work itself and an improvement of acting in the core competences of work. The leading idea is that the training does not prepare employees for a specific company or workplace only, but rather that the workplace is used as a place and opportunity to preserve or develop employability and to enhance the flexibility of workforce in the labour market. WBBS-Training thus contributes to the preservation or enhancement of employability and flexibility in the labour market. It implies the handling of learning objectives also in order to strengthen personalities and social behaviour as mentioned – according to the concept of education. Some partners pointed out that due to this, WBBS is more than imparting cultural techniques like reading, writing, and calculating and, not only in the case of migrants, also speaking. What WBBS actually means develops from each particular contextual analysis of demands and concerns of employees and companies, the subjects derive from the fields of work.

ERGANI accentuated on the importance of modern, up-to-date, non-conventional training methods and digital tools to be comparable to the ever changing, dynamic work places from which the employees would be. These training methods should work around the working environment to allow for flexible learning and competence development. This means that they should be demand driven rather than supply driven.

Required Competences for Trainers for Work based basic skills Training

In today's ever-changing world, the role of professional trainers is undoubtedly a highly challenging position since they deal with a diverse range of economic, technology, social and learning needs and complexities on a daily basis.

In view of this, and in relation to the required competences for trainers and to address the key challenges put forward, it is clear within all seven (7) country reports that the trainer's competences are crucial to the success of work based basic skills training. The trainer and her/his skills are at the core of teaching, learning, engaging and motivating the participant as well as the employer to make changes and adopt new skills. The importance of all other factors mentioned in this report seems trivial in comparison to the competences of the trainer.

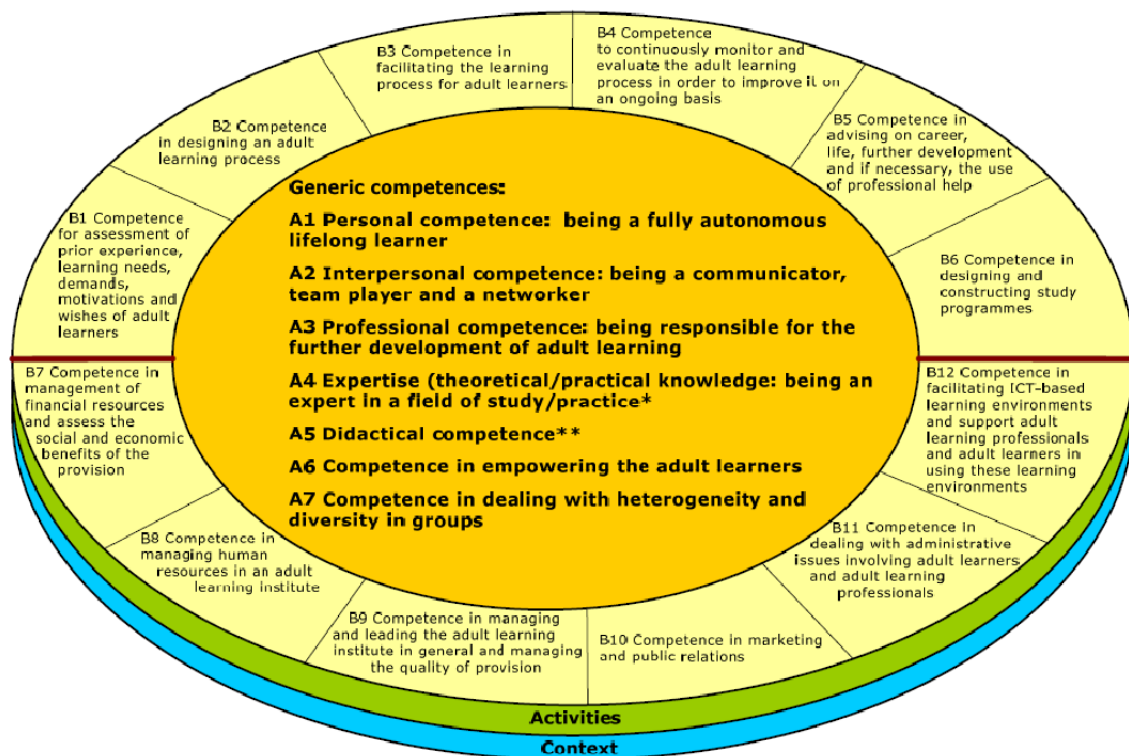
Competences required by work based basic skills trainers

Partners mentioned a wide range of skills needed by the professional work based basic skills trainer. Whereas most skills were common to all countries, some were specific to one partner. For example, it is interesting that ERGANI mentioned counselling skills as part of the skills set work based basic skills trainers should have. This would help trainers have a more holistic approach to training of individuals.

Many partners choose to illustrate the key competences for adult learning professionals through graphical representation and by referring to different models. These include Malta and Germany.

Malta presented the 'Key competences for adult learning professionals' reference framework which was created by Research voor Beleid in a study commissioned by the European Commission in 2010.

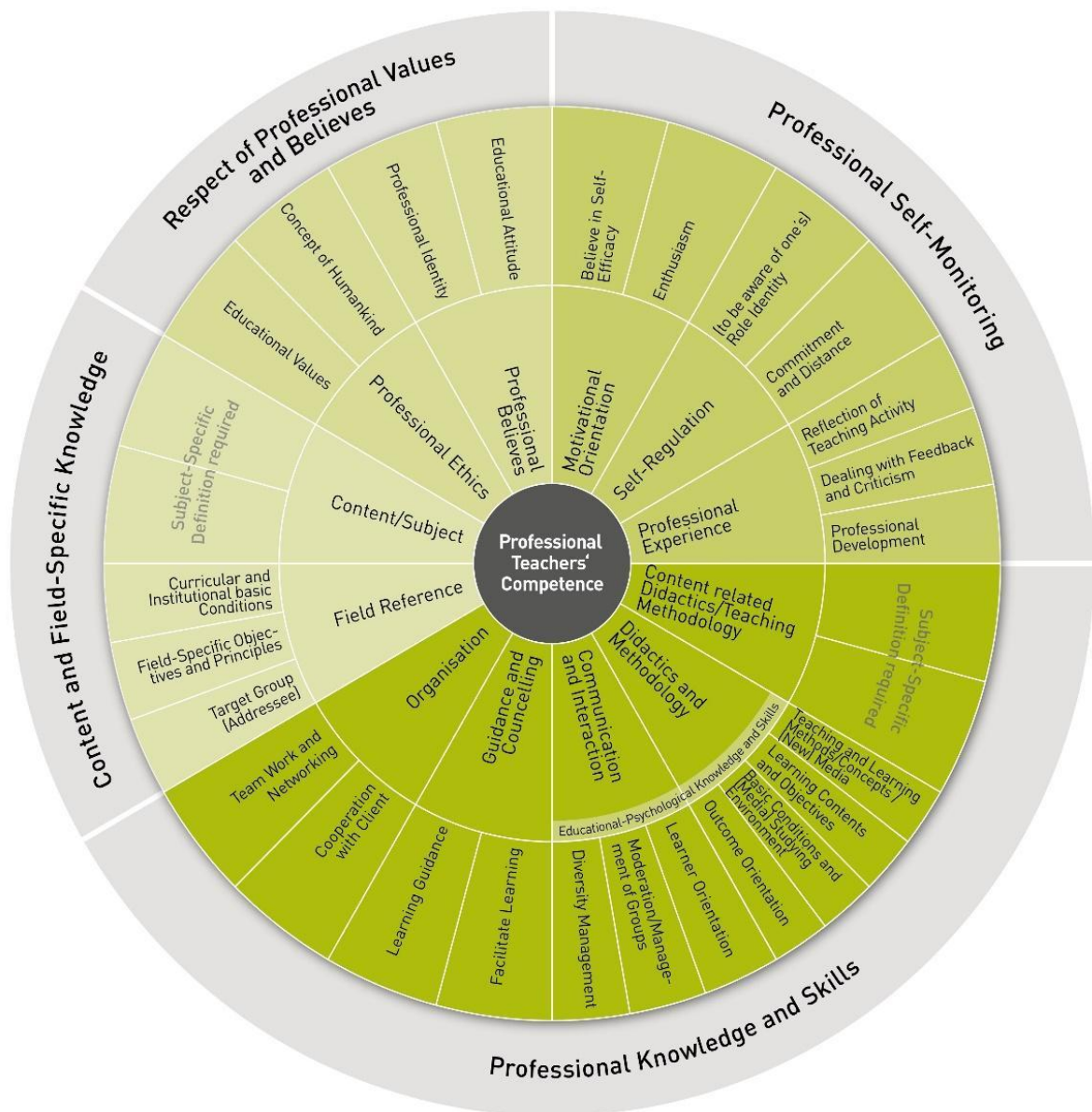
Figure 1.1 Graphic representation of the set of key competences of adult learning professionals



* For professionals not directly involved in the learning process, the expertise concerns not subject knowledge, but specific (for example managerial, administrative or ICT) expertise.

** For professionals not directly involved in the learning process or supportive in a managerial, administrative way, the didactical competence is less relevant.

In their country report regarding the German scenario, bbb presented the GRETA Model, which was developed amongst others by the German Institute for Adult Education (DIE), between 2014-2017 during the project "Foundations for the development of a cross-provider recognition procedure for the competences of teachers in adult education and continuing training".



GRETA Kompetenzmodell (German: Änderung, L. (2018). GRETA. English: <https://www.die-bonn.de/institut/forschung/professionaltaet/greta.aspx?lang=en; cc-by-sa 3.0>)

According to bbb, even though this model is extremely valuable in order to meet the needs of work based basic skills training; it needs to be expanded to include competences required in a non-pedagogical environment.

BEST present a model of their own and list the competences required under five main categories but clearly state that this is in no way a comprehensive one since numerous context specific factors need to be considered. The five categories are Professional Competences (Subject Specific/Industry Specific), Methodological Competences (Ped-

agogy), Social and Communicative Competences, Intercultural Competences and Personal Competences.

SVEB describe how the GO Training Concept for work based training has been developed in Switzerland. GO targets low-skilled employees by providing in-company training. This process involves four different roles, namely: the door openers, process developers, Analysts and Trainers. Each role implies a number of tasks and responsibilities and the competences needed are described in a 'Grundlagenpapier'.

Two Broad Competence Categories

It transpired that most partners including MEDE, ERUDICIO, ERGANI and bbb mentioned two broad categories of skills; the generic skills/pedagogical skills and the industry specific/work based skills. Trainers having an educational background and coming from the formal education institutions have more of the former whereas, trainers from industry and professions other than teaching, had more of the latter.

The general competences and skills are those skills required by all trainers/educators in any environment and mostly cover pedagogy, programme development, creation of teaching materials, motivation theories, teaching methodologies and techniques. The specific competences and skills are directly related to the world of work and include labour market knowledge, business, company culture, training concepts, continuous professional development and working environment. Alongside others, in their country report SVEB commented that this as a key challenge and that 'Qualified basic skills trainers/teachers are often not used or willing to act in a company environment. Experienced trainers in a company environment often lack specific skills in basic skills teaching' (P. 3).

One of the reasons for this occurrence is that, historically, these two competence categories were always separate. For example, both Malta and Greece comment that in their respective countries there has always been a divide between education within schools and training at the workplace.

Table 1: Pedagogical Competences

Heading	Details
Pedagogical Theory and Approaches	Learning theory frameworks including Behaviourism, Cognitivism and Constructionism. Active Learning, Problem Based Learning, Flipped Learning and Team Based Learning. Special emphasis on theories of adult learning and approaches for WBBS

Learning Outcomes and Objectives	Creating clear, achievable outcomes and objectives depending on needs
Course Design and Lesson Planning	Achieving learning outcomes through effective course design, creating course outlines, schemes of work and the components of an effective lesson plan
Didactics Methodologies and Techniques for WBBS	Including whole-group and structured group work, guided learning and individual activity
Creating Resources and Materials	Research and identifying suitable resources, new media, age appropriate activities and resources
Assessment for Learning	Identification of prior learning, continuous assessment, Bloom's Taxonomy, Questioning techniques, formative and summative assessment
Communication and Interaction	Including motivating and engaging learners, learning styles, dealing with diversity, managing groups in learning environments

Table 2: Work based Competences

Heading	Details
Labour Market and Industry Specific Knowledge	Including European and global trends, supply and demand in different industry sectors, skills gaps, future needs and developments
Work Based Basic Skills	How this affects productivity and bottom line of the organisation
Organisational Set-Up and Terminology	Including different organisational structures, service versus product focus businesses, the workplace environment, different business functions and their interdependencies (finance/operations/marketing etc), processes and procedures, work place jargon and terminology
Human Resources, Training and Development	Including Roles and Responsibilities, Job descriptions and requirements, talent management, recruitment, training needs analysis and gap analysis, learn-

	<p>ing on the job, Attitudes and soft skills, Transfer of Competences into concrete work action, Evaluation - Return on Investment.</p>
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Training for Trainers

In most countries, different forms of teacher training courses are in place however, few have a 'train the trainer' course, which specifically deals with giving trainers the competences required in work based basic skills training. In Malta, for example, various 'train the trainer' courses exist which are normally between 20 to 80-hours in duration, but none are specific to work based basic skills. In their country report, SVEB also state that there are various training courses for those who would like to become professional trainers. The only one focusing on work based basic skills is the Go training that resulted from the GO projects (P.5).

Slovenia seems to be one of the exceptions since it has a 'basic skills at work' teacher training program of 100 hours in duration. Teachers in this program are expected to develop competences in three inter-related professional fields: knowledge and understanding, skills and abilities and values/personal commitment. This programme includes three dimensions: a theoretical part, a practical part and action research. Those who complete this course can deliver the basic skills at work program (Training for successful life / Me and my workplace) aimed at low skilled workers and vulnerable groups.

Conclusion

The elements outlined in the report allows professionals in the field to understand that improving skills sets, knowledge and competences is a common need for all countries involved in this project, and also possibly all of Europe. Report findings show that each country is aware of the importance of work-based basic skills and that at present not every country has a proper formalised structure to accommodate such notion. It is clear that professional work based basic skills trainers require a wide range of competences to successfully conduct their role. These mainly fall within two categories: the general pedagogical competences and the specific work based ones. To date, it seems that few trainers have both sets of competences however; it is now high time that they do not remain mutually exclusive.

Profi-Train will help to close this gap by bringing these two sets of competences closer together. Although the trainers remain the key target of the Profi-Train project, responsibility will also be given to teachers, coaches, project managers, department

managers and other key persons in the institutions who play an important role in the WBBS process. They will also be involved and consulted to ensure that the life cycle of the implementation of such system is monitored. The cradle to the grave approach to such a process is indeed necessary to enhance the positive impacts. This process will also ensure that the skills and competences of adults will significantly be raised and can contribute to the Europe 2020 goals. This allows Profi-Train to be on board of the upskilling 'wave' and ensure long-term sustainability.

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