



IREA

***Flexi-Path: Flexible professionalisation
pathways for adult educator between the 6th
and 7th level of EQF***

***Lifelong Learning Programme - Leonardo da Vinci: Transfer of Innovation
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***WP2 - Analysis of existing qualification frameworks and/ or
systems for adult educator in the partner countries***

National report - Romania

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Foreword

The present report aims at bringing into light the Romanian professionalisation framework for adult educators with competence profiles corresponsive for the 6th and the 7th level of EQF, by describing the national field of adult education and the concern for adult educators' professionalisation, the institutional frame and training and educational pathways, the professional profiles and their analysis.

1. Introduction

Adult Education in Romania is defined by an increasing demand and continuing development, as a result of both national fundamental socio-economic and political changes and dynamics at European and world levels.

Due to labour market dynamics – new occupational patterns, important economical and social changes – the most important part of adult education was taken over by the professional training. Nevertheless, adult education is not resuming only to professional training, but it also means basic education, personal development, active citizenship and social inclusion (S.Sava, 2008).

The institutional frame of adult education in Romania is highly differentiated, consisting of a puzzle of different legal basis, addressability/ target group, activity field and organisational structure of the institutions in adult education field. Adult education in Romanian is roughly split into

- professional training/ education (initial and continuous) and
- general adult education (adult basic education, personal development, education for active citizenship and education for leisure).

The sector of professional training, both initial and continuous, is the most regulated in Romania due to the existence of a legal frame ensuring the formal learning context which, furthermore, means recognition and certification of acquired competences/ skills/knowledge and thus easier insertion on the labour market.

General adult education is mainly tributary to the non-formal learning context and, unfortunately, it does not represent a focus in the educational system: no functional laws, limited financing, inarticulate implementation and organisation strategies etc.

2. Professional profiles in Adult Learning

The growing importance of adult education in our societies and the whole amount of investments in adult learning field at European level made a great difference in the way the quality of adult education supply is understood. The National Adult Training Board (NATB), being the regulating body for the professional training of adults in Romania, has consistent preoccupations for elaborating and implementing quality assurance systems and standards for adult learning offers.

NATB is accrediting the providers for professional training on the basis of national quality criteria and is also elaborating occupational standards for occupations in the different professional domains.

As the quality of adult educators is an important premise when discussing the quality of a adult learning offer, it was set up by law (Govern Ordinance no. 129 / 31.08.2000) that the vocational training providers will be authorized by the National Adult Training Board if they rule vocational training programmes with trainers having similar profile or specialisation with the training programme they are in charge of. From 1st of January 2010, the vocational training providers will have to meet another requirement in order to be authorized: trainers have to have not only this similar specialisation with the training programme but also certified skills specific for dealing with adults in a didactical way (VINEPAC, 2007).

Although an initiative with great potential of enhancing the quality of adult learning professionals, it encompasses only the professional training providers and the trainers delivering professional training programmes. Trainers providing general adult education and the other categories of adult educators (beside trainer) still constitute a mix of professionals with an uncertain status and different backgrounds

and qualifications, due to the fact that there are no formal requirements for entering the labour market.

As result of a recent (2006) research within the AduEdu European project in which Romanian Institute for Adult Education act as partner, there were established the following roles of adult learning professionals:

Managerial roles

One very significant role in organizing and implementing adult education efforts is that of manager. In this role the adult educator must administer the programs, be in charge of teacher and student recruitment, work with the board or council, develop a suitable budget, and give the basic program leadership, provide general adult education leadership to local communities.

Teaching roles

By far the largest category of adult educator is that of teacher or trainer. These positions range from full-time Adult Basic Education teachers, to teachers of noncredit evening classes such as quilting, oil painting, or wills and estate planning, to vocational teachers in a trade or proprietary school, to trainer in a large company. However, many adult education teachers do not earn their primary incomes in such roles.

Consequently, one of the problems is how to distinguish between a teacher who simply has the adult as student and a teacher who is trained specifically to facilitate learning for the adult as student. Because the field of adult education is in an evolving stage compared to most other professions, probably the largest share of adult education teachers or trainers have had very little specific training related to the adult as learner. Hopefully, as the field matures, as it gains better financial support, and as adult teacher-training programs are more fully developed, this situation can be reversed.

Miscellaneous roles

There are several other recognizable roles that do not fall neatly into any of the above categories. A rapidly developing area of interest, for example, is that of counsellor for adult education students. An adult education counsellor or career advisory no doubt needs many of the skills required for any of the other roles described above; in addition, such a person needs to be able to adapt general counselling and testing techniques to adult learners.

Another role somehow different from the others described to date is that of learning resource facilitator. Such individuals need teaching skills, counselling skills, and administrative skills; however, they also need to be skilled at directing individualized learning, discovering various resources for learning outside the normal classroom setting, establishing technology-based learning efforts, and coordinating the learning efforts of several learners progressing at various rates.

Somewhat related to several of the roles already described but still different enough to require explanation is that of the non-traditional "mentor." The continuing involvement of non-traditional forms of learning and distance education programs has created the need for a new kind of leadership, different from what has been typical. These can be mentors who work with learners primarily on a one-to-one basis, on-line teachers who use computer mediated communication techniques, or instructional designers who develop individualized learning materials. Such individuals must serve as teachers, helpers, designers, and advisors, as well as being a contributor to program-planning effort and a developer of learning resources. Such a person not only needs to thoroughly understand how to work with the adult learner, but also how to discover and coordinate a variety of resources for learning that are available in most communities or through electronic means.

"Consultant" Roles

The professional role to be discussed in this section is one that cannot be described easily by a recognizable title. Consequently, for lack of a better term "consultant" will be used. Consultants often serve in program planning, evaluation, or research positions, frequently on a part-time or short-term basis, and increasingly in federally

funded projects. A person in a consultant role might also provide leadership for workshops or conferences. Increasingly, individuals earn their entire income through consulting activities. There is a fairly recognizable pattern to the nature of training received in adult education. One or more courses built around each of the following competency expectations usually serve as a base for the training effort:

- Understanding learning theory as it applies to the adult
- Understanding the adult personality and adult psychology
- Skill in administering adult education programming efforts.
- Skill in planning and evaluating adult education programs
- Knowledge of technology, especially as it impacts on or supports adult learning
- Understanding emerging and evolving theory that is related specifically to adult education
- Knowledge of the various philosophical adult education underpinnings
- Understanding the institutions and forms of adult education
- Knowledge of the societal issues important to adult education
- Ability to carry out research in adult education

Evaluator/ Assessor

An emerging field in adult education is the one of recognition and validation of learning outcomes no matter whether these learning outcomes were acquired in formal, non-formal or informal contexts. Romania is one of the few European countries having set up a national system for validation of professional competences related to occupations and qualifications in different activity fields. On 15th March 2006 there were registered in the National Register of Competences Assessment and Certification Centres 28 authorized centres, for 20 qualifications and 40 occupations in the fields such as: social assistance, agriculture, education and vocational training, culture, constructions, administration and public services, informational technology and communications, tourism, hotels and restaurants, retail trade, food industry, forestry and wood processing, welding. The number of the certified assessors of vocational competencies was 182.

3. Training and professionalisation pathways

As all around Europe, the staff in adult and continuing education from Romania is a heterogeneous category: different working fields, diversity of qualifications or maybe no qualification at all, different contractual employments etc.

The situation is even more unclear when taking into consideration the adult educators having competences corresponding to the 6th and the 7th level of EQF.

Even if it is still a controversial discussion (especially in the countries that did not adopt the Bologna process), there is a correspondence between the upper EQF levels and the Bologna process, as follows: 6th EQF level corresponds to the Bachelor diploma level, 7th EQF level – Master diploma level, and 8th EQF level - PhD. level.

In Romania, the National Agency for Qualifications in Higher Education and Partnership with the Economic and Social Environment (ACPART) aims to elaborate, implement, and update the national qualification framework for higher education (NQFHE) concerning the development, recognition and certification of qualifications based on the knowledge, abilities, and competences acquired by beneficiaries of the higher education system; NQFHE will be structured on **three levels** (in line with EQF), including **levels 6, 7 and 8**, each level having its own set of indicators/descriptors.

For clear presentation and structuring purposes, the present report will take into consideration the above mentioned correspondence between the European Qualification Framework and the Bologna Process, and thus, the professionalisation pathways for adult educator within higher education will be associated with the corresponding EQF level. Existing adult educator professionalisation pathways in Romania will be presented for the 6th and the 7th EQF levels.

Although there are no formal requirements for adult educators to enter the labour market, in Romania exist three main professionalisation and training pathways:

- the academic one (higher education)
- through the professional training system
- the validation of prior learning and experiences (assessment centres)

A. Professionalisation of adult educator in higher education

Bachelor level – 6th EQF level

There are 6 Romanian universities having in their structure Educational Sciences Department. This department is usually included in the structure of Faculty of Psychology and Pedagogy/ Educational Sciences/ Sociology. The students studying Pedagogy specialisation within the Educational sciences Department are provided with an Adult Education course. It's a one semester course with 5 ECTS points (corresponding to a total of 125 workload hours), an introduction in the AE topic, having the aim to offer students a general view on this field: concepts; the relevance of AE in nowadays society; action domains in AE; the specific of teaching, learning and evaluation in AE; the structure of AE system in Romania. At the end of this study programme, the students are awarded with a Bachelor diploma in Educational Sciences.

This AE course is not a singular offer for the students learning for the Bachelor degree. Universities' departments responsible for initial and continuing teacher training offer an optional course of AE to their students. This is also a one semester course providing the students with an overview on what adult education means.

No specific academic degree in adult education can be found within the Universities' studying offer for Bachelor level.

The academic offers for a degree in adult education are far more abundant for Master level.

Four important Universities in Romania provide Master degree study programmes in adult education:

a. West University of Timisoara, Faculty of Sociology and Psychology, Educational Sciences Department offers the European Master in Adult Education (EMAE) since 2006/2007 academic year. The EMAE has been jointly developed by a network of eight universities from seven European countries:

- University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany (coordinator)
- University of Ostrava, Czech Republic
- Danish University of Education, Denmark
- University of Helsinki, Finland
- University of Kaiserslautern, Germany
- University of Florence, Italy
- West University of Timisoara, Romania
- University of Barcelona, Spain

At three European universities, the implementation has already been accomplished (The West University of Timisoara/Romania since winter 2006/07, University of Duisburg-Essen/Germany since winter 2007/08 and the University of Florence/Italy since winter 2008/09). Several other European universities in Italy, Finland, Denmark, Spain, Hungary, Serbia and the Czech Republic intend to implement the European core curriculum.

The EMAE study programme has a structure of four semesters and 120 ECTS points.

The curriculum of the EMAE study programme offered by the West University of Timisoara consists of common core curriculum (courses offered online and in English, 70 ECTS points) and individual courses (offered on campus according to the main focus of the West University of Timisoara, 50 ECTS points).

European Master in Adult Education 2007 - 2009		
First year of study 2007/2008		
Winter semester 2007/2008		
No.crt.	Courses	ECTS points
Trasnational common compulsory courses		
1.	Essentials and theories in European adult education	6
2.	Teaching roles and European teaching theories	6
3.	European strategies of lifelong learning	5
4.	Management of adult education institutions	7
Compulsory courses offered on campus		
5.	Comparative adult education – theories and methods	6
	Total	30

Summer semester 2007/2008		
No. crt.	Courses	ECTS points
Trasnational common compulsory courses		
6.	Needs analysis and programme planning	5
7.	Educational research methods	8
Compulsory courses offered on campus		
8.	Learning in adulthood	5
9.	Methods in adult education	4
Optional courses offered on campus¹		
APPLIED DIDACTICS MODULE		
10.	Adult basic education	4
11.	Educational and career counselling	4
12.	Work based and organisational learning	4
MANAGEMENT MODULE		
13.	Management of public relations, networking and partnership in adult education	4
14.	Management of quality in adult education	4
15.	Project management	4
	Total	30

¹ Note: the students will choose 2 out of 3 courses included in the preferred module.

Second year of study 2008/2009		
Winter semester 2008/2009		
No.crt.	Courses	ECTS points
Discipline obligatorii, comune, transnationale		
1.	Development and validation of competences	5
2.	Adult learning and consumption of educational goods	3
3.	State and market in lifelong learning	2
4.	Transnational project	10
Compulsory courses offered on campus		
5.	Human resources management	5
6.	New learning environments	5
	Total	30

Summer semester 2008/2009		
	Master thesis	30

b. “Al. I Cuza” University of Iasi, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences also organises a European Master in Adult Education Management. This master study programme has a 3 semester structure with a total of 90 ECTS points.

European Master in Adult Education Management 2007/2008		
First semester		
Crt. no.	Courses	ECTS points
1.	Educational Policies and Legislation	30
2.	Learning Theories	
3.	Self-Learning and Learning Counselling	
4.	Adult Psychology	
5.	Lifelong Learning and Adult Education	

Second semester		
6.	Strategies and Techniques of Argumentation	30
7.	Adult Education in European context	
8.	Project management	
9.	Institutions of Adult Educations in Romania	
10.	Hermeneutics, Interpretation of the Cultural Fact	
Third semester		
11.	Organisation theories	30
12.	Strategies of Communication	
13.	Human resource management	
14.	Semiotics and special semiotics	
15.	Active Learning methods for adults	
Master thesis		

c. University of Bucharest, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences runs a Training of Trainers master programme starting from 2008/2009 academic year. It is a four semester master programme with 120 ECTS points. The curricular offer is the following:

- Adult learning theories and practices
- Intercultural communication and negotiation
- Career management and development
- Project management
- Blended learning
- Training programme design and evaluation
- Train the trainers: methods and techniques
- Team building and leadership
- Risk management
- Occupations and qualifications analysis

- Coaching and mentoring
- Leadership for knowledge based economy
- Performance management

Besides studying the subjects mentioned above, the students benefit also of a practical training and have the opportunity to attend workshops facilitated by experts in the field of Project management and Human resources development.

d. „Transilvania” University of Brasov, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences runs a very similar programme master: *Adult training. Trainer’s abilities* starting from 2008/2009 academic year.

B. Professionalisation of adult educator within the professional training system

There is a legal and procedural national framework put in place for several years now for the continuing professional training which is realised through training programmes (initiation, qualification/ re-qualification, improvement/ updating, specialisation) and ensures the acquirement of all or some of the competences included in the nationally recognized occupational standards or vocational training standards. The programmes are organised for occupations included in the *Romanian Classification of Occupations* or for qualifications included in the *List of Qualifications*.

The continuing professional system is offering qualification routes for adult learning professionals. More exactly, it is the case of three occupations:

- trainer (trainer of trainers) and
- evaluator of professional competences
- project manager

a. Trainer/ Trainer of Trainers

At the moment (April 2009), there are 211 authorised training providers which develop training programmes for the occupation of trainer/ trainer of trainers, as follows:

- 3 initiation training programmes for the trainer/ trainer of trainers occupation
- 154 training programmes for the improvement/ updating of trainers/ trainer of trainers competences
- 54 training programmes for the specialisation of trainer/ trainer of trainers competences

All 211 training programmes for the occupation of trainer/ trainer of trainers were designed on the basis of the trainer's occupational standard which is a reference for the trainers' competence profile:

Competence categories	Crt. no.	Competence unit
Specific competences of trainer: Professional development of staff	1.	Preparation of training
	2.	Realization/ implementation of training
	3.	Assessment of learners' acquisitions/ competences
	4.	Applying the specific adult training methods and techniques
Optional competences of trainer: Training programme management	5.	Training programme marketing
	6.	Training programme planning
	7.	Organisation of programme training
	8.	Evaluation, review and quality assurance of training programme

Each of the competence units mentioned above is further detailed in the trainer occupational standard through competence elements and performance criteria. This

occupational standard offers a preview to the competence profile of learners at the end of any programme training for trainer/ trainer of trainers occupation. The difference between a training programme for trainer and one for trainer of trainers lies in the fact that the first will facilitate the transfer and acquisition of the compulsory competence category from the trainer occupational standard, namely *Professional development of staff* (with the corresponsive competence units), while the second one will ensure the development of all competence units, including the optional ones from the trainer occupational standard.

b. Evaluator/ assessor of professional competences

The evaluator/ assessor of professional competences is a person having recent significant experience related to the occupation he is assigned to perform the assessment for, within a assessment centre authorized for that specific occupation. There are currently (April 2009) running 19 training programmes for qualifying professional competence assessors/ evaluators and all of them were designed by taking into consideration the occupational standard for professional competence assessors:

Competence category	Crt. no.	Competence unit
<i>Planning and organisation</i>	1.	Planning and organisation of evaluation
	2.	Recording and reporting of evaluation outcomes
<i>Evaluation/ Assessment</i>	3.	Designing the assessment instruments
	4.	Developing of effective assessment/ evaluation
	5.	Analysis of evaluation data and decision making on the level of competence
<i>Control/ Inspection</i>	6.	Internal control of assessment processes
	7.	External control of assessment processes

An evaluator of professional competences is qualified to run assessments only if he/ she has acquired the compulsory competence units of the occupational standard overviewed above, namely:

- Planning and organisation of evaluation
- Recording and reporting of evaluation outcomes
- Developing of effective assessment/ evaluation
- Analysis of evaluation data and decision making on the level of competence

The other three competence units from the occupational standard are optional, but their acquisition enables the assessors to:

- design assessment instruments;
- coordinate, monitor and assess the activity of the other assessors within their assessment centre („Internal control of assessment processes”);
- evaluate and monitor the activity of other assessment centres (“External control of assessment processes”).

Both Ministry of Education and Ministry of Labour recognise the qualifications of trainers/ trainer of trainers and evaluator of professional competences obtained through vocational training programmes provided by the national authorized suppliers.

c. Project manager

The project manager occupational standard was designed for the majority of the socio-economical sectors where the activity is project-based, no matter the size and complexity of those projects.

If we think about the adult educator as a person managing a whole training programme and training programme as a project, than the adult educator can also have the role (occupation) of project manager. Usually it is the case of the training programme organisers who are responsible for the whole organisation of one

programme: contractual issues, resources, programme curriculum, support services for the learners and teachers/ trainers/ speakers etc.

There are 172 authorised training programmes for the project manager occupation, all of them being designed on the basis of the occupational standard for project manager:

Competence category	Crt. no.	Competence unit
Management		Ensuring the keeping to contractual agreement/ articles
		Coordination of project implementation
		Identifying and analysing the risks and establishing control and monitoring actions
		Coordination of teams and individuals for achieving project objectives
Organisation		Ensuring the necessary resources
		Developing work plans and timetables for the project implementation
		Outlining the project requirements

C. Professionalisation of adult educator through validation of prior learning and experiences

Recognition and validation of vocational competencies acquired in non-informal and informal contexts are performed by the assessment centres authorised by the National Adult Training Board (NATB) in accordance with the *Procedure of the assessment and certification of the competences acquired in non-formal and informal contexts (Procedure)*, approved through the Joint Order no. 4543/468/2004 of the Minister of Education and Research and of the Minister of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family, with subsequent modifications and completions.

The individuals who would like to be assessed in the view of recognising of vocational competencies acquired through non-informal and informal ways should address to an assessment centre authorised for such occupation/qualification.

Assessment could be done for all the competences units from the occupational standard/ vocational training standard or for one or more competences units, depending on the candidate's request.

In order to assess competences related to a specific occupation, for each candidate a certified assessor is assigned, who is responsible for the whole assessment process. Before the start of the assessment process, the candidate assisted by the assessor, should perform the self-assessment, based on the standard. When asked, the assessor explains in detail the content of the standard and the assessment procedure.

Based on the result of the self-assessment, the assessor will recommend the candidate to begin the assessment process for the whole standard, for a part of it, or not to start the assessment process at all. The candidate will decide to begin the assessment or not. He will specify on his written request for which units of competences of the standards does he want to be assessed.

The assessment methods used in this process are: self-assessment, direct observation, simulation, oral questions, written tests, project, other persons' reports, and portfolio.

The assessor will present to the candidate the assessment methods to be used and the schedule of the assessment process, which will be agreed by both parts.

Each assessment centre will chose the appropriate assessment methods to get the evidences to prove the overall competency. Every combination of assessment methods must have at least a written test and a practical test.

Each assessment centre will establish the necessary time for assessment process, depending on the complexity of the occupation, but not longer than 30 days.

The evidences of competency produced by the candidate in the assessment process will be analysed and appreciated by the assessor, based on the occupational standard/ vocational training standard. The decision regarding the candidate's competency will be established for each unit of competence.

The candidate will receive a competence certificate for all the units of competences for which he/she was declared "*competent*".

The competences **certificates** have the same value as the nationally recognized graduation or qualification certificates issued in the authorized formal system.

The assessment process of the competences acquired through non-informal and informal ways has the following characteristics: is voluntarily, reports itself to the occupational standard or vocational training standard, is performed in time and space, is independent from the vocational training process, and is finalised for each competences unit having as a result “*competent*” or “*not yet competent*”.

On 19th of March 2009, there were registered in the *National Register of Competences Assessment and Certification Centres* 11 authorized assessment centres for trainer/ trainer of trainers’ occupation. Between 2004 and 2008, as a result of these assessment centres activity, 590 persons have been declared “competent” and received professional competence certificates for the trainer/ trainer of trainers occupation.

In the same period (2004 – 2008), a number of 9 authorised assessment centres for the occupation of project manager certified the competences of 190 project managers.

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