

# *Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013*

## Leonardo da Vinci

### SINAPSI PROJECT

#### SINAPSI Needs Analysis D 2.1

*"This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication [communication] reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein."*

<b>Project Identification:</b>	LLP-LDV/TOI/08/IT/477
<b>Project Title:</b>	<b>SI</b> mulazioni <b>IN</b> terattive per l' <b>AP</b> prendimento di Skill Individuali
<b>Acronym:</b>	SINAPSI
<b>Document:</b>	Deliverable D 2.1
<b>Reference WP:</b>	1
<b>Author:</b>	
<b>Partner:</b>	PDCS
<b>Version:</b>	1.0
<b>Date:</b>	

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## 0 Introduction

This Needs analysis sets a stage for transferring existing educational software into new environments. There are three general lines of its transfer:

- software will be used in new countries (France, Slovakia)
- software will be adapted and tested in new fields (SMEs, public administration)
- software will be used as a tool within broader human resource management approach of Competence model.

In Chapter One we describe Model of Competences as a basic lens through which we will look at the use of software. This particular approach determines how and what the software will be used for. It determines overall design of trials and tutors' approach.

In Chapter Two we explore strengths and limits of existing software. We identify space for use of the software within given approach.

Chapter Three explores general competencies needed in the three settings main project settings: Italian universities, SMEs in France, and public administration in Slovakia.

In Chapter Four we propose to focus testing of the software to specific skills which have been demonstrated to be relevant for the use of the software for the three target groups in Italy, France, and Slovakia.

## 1 Model of Competences

Model of competences originated in the 70ies of 20<sup>th</sup> century in work of eminent psychologist David McClelland and others at consulting firm McBer and Company<sup>1</sup>. In last two decades it has become a major mainstream practice in human resource management. Many acknowledged methods (e.g. 360 feedback) are closely related to and used within this approach.

In early 90ies strategists started to speak of people as the main value of organizations. In a rapidly changing world there were not technological or economic assets that enabled organizations to compete in globalizing market. The main asset was identified in skilful and dedicated people bearing needed competences for outstanding performance. The reason for a shift to a paradigm of competency model in HR management was in an endeavour of HR specialists and consultants to distinguish those people and develop their desired personal features.

Model of competences differs from other models of HR management in:

- its focus on people as the main value and potential source of competitive advantage
- recognizing complex interaction of people, skills, and technologies that drives firm performance
- addressing importance of learning and developing organization-specific solutions.

### 1.1 Definition of Competence

In a course of decades many specific approaches and understandings of competence model were developed. This movement have led to the multiple and incoherent use of the terms. There is not a space to discuss these issues more extensively. We propose to base our work on a practical definition as follows.

Competence is 'an underlying characteristic of an individual, which is causally related to effective or superior performance in a job' which could be 'a motive, trait, skill, aspect of one's self image or social role, or a body of knowledge which he or she uses'.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mansfield, R.S., *Practical Questions for Building Competency Models*, Presented at Insight Information Company Conference Competency-Based Management for the Federal Public Service, Ottawa, November 6-7, 2000

<sup>2</sup> Boyatzis in Enthropy, *SINAPSI presentation*, PPT presentation delivered on a SINAPSI project Kick-off meeting in Rome in November 25-26, 2008

There are several typologies of competences. One of the holistic models of professional competence developed by Cheetham and Chivers<sup>3</sup> comprises five dimensions:

“- Cognitive competence, including underpinning theory and concepts, as well as informal tacit knowledge gained experientially...

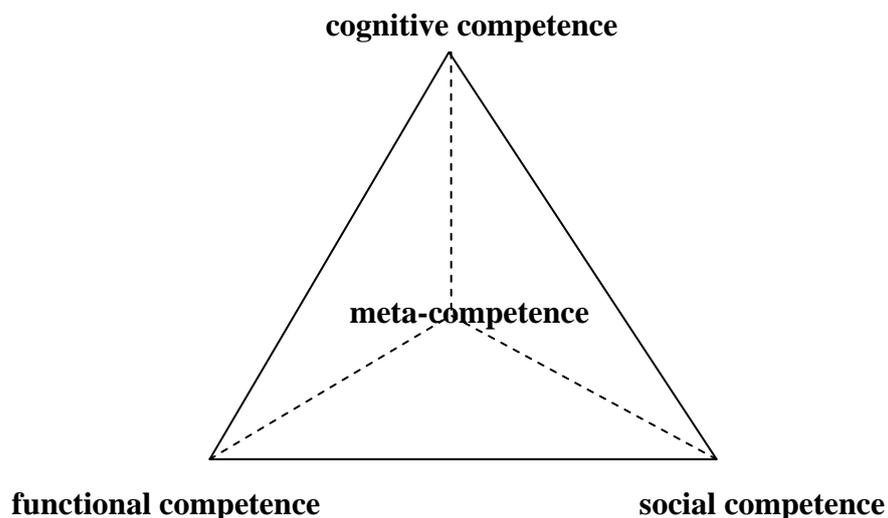
- Functional competences (skills or know-how), those things that ‘a person who works in a given occupational area should be able to do...[and] able to demonstrate’.

- Personal competency (behavioural competencies, ‘know how to behave’), defined as a ‘relatively enduring characteristic of a person... [leading to] a superior performance in a job’.

- Ethical competencies, defined as ‘ the possession of appropriate personal and professional values and the ability to make sound judgments based upon these in work-related situations’.

- Meta-competencies, concerned with the ability to cope with uncertainty, as well as with learning and reflection.”

Le Deist and Winterton<sup>4</sup> come to an integrated model of three basic dimensions: cognitive competences (knowledge and understanding), functional competences (skills and behaviour), and social competences (attitudes, relations). These are completed by the fourth dimension of meta-competences (ability to reflect and learn). They put these dimension into inter-related tetrahedron in order to show that successful superior performance contains aspects of all four dimensions.



It is important to stress that concept of competence cannot be reduced to a skill or a knowledge. Any skill or knowledge itself does not assure effective and efficient performance. It is

<sup>3</sup> in DELAMARE LE DEIST, F., WINTERTON, J., What Is Competence? in *Human Resource Development International*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 27-46, March 2005

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

skill/knowledge in interplay with certain approach of a person which can make an important difference. Under approach we may understand certain mind-set, motivation, attitude etc. For example, it is not only a set of selling skills, which enable sales manager to sell more products. His/her motivation, loyalty to a company, ability to adapt and learn from changing environment are crucial as well.

## 1.2 Model of Competences in the Consulting Processes

There are two general approaches in working with competences. First one tends to focus on generic competences, which are highly transferable and required in most of job roles. It is reasonable if we work with a broader target groups and/or with mixed groups of participants/trainees. Generic competences are applicable in diverse positions and jobs with just minor adaptation.

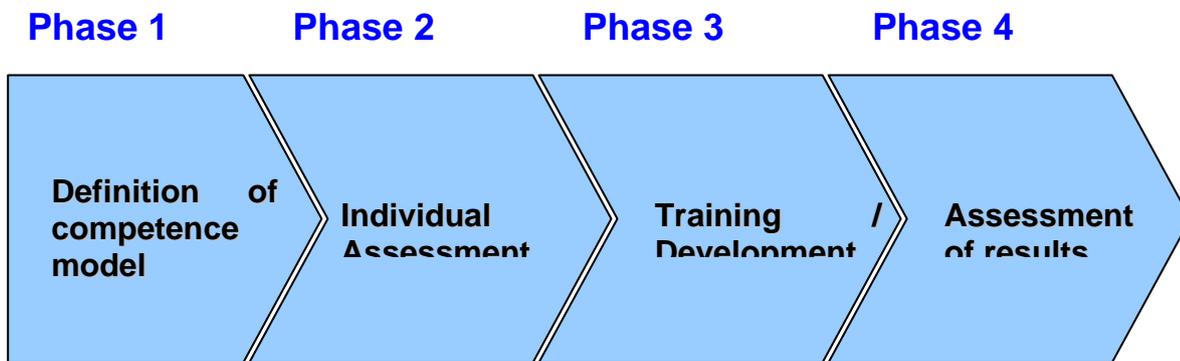
Second approach tends to stress importance of unique and organization-specific competences to provide a competitive advantage (or boost potential for fulfilling a mission) to a company/organization. In this case it is of crucial importance to identify these specific core competences for a concrete organization or its department and find out a way to strengthen them.

While first approach can rely on generic lists of competences which were defined in multiple researches or are given by specific public policies or are generally accepted by management theorists, second approach is based on a thorough analysis of concrete aspects of a given organization and best practices gained through previous experience. First approach is rather individual-centered with an aim to prepare an individual for performing of general tasks. Second approach involves in the process organization as a beneficiary and relates individual worker to a broader environment of an organization. It means that in this case consultant works with organization in order to identify core competences required to provide high performance and have a competitive advantage as a whole. Within the same process consultant works with individual performers (employees, managers) in order to enhance their competence in a way that supports better performance and achieving of organization's wanted results.

Consulting work on competence development consists of four basic phases<sup>5</sup>. Depending on a general approach particular phases are stressed or skipped.

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<sup>5</sup> Entropy, *SINAPSI presentation*, PPT presentation delivered on a SINAPSI project Kick-off meeting in Rome in November 25-26, 2008 (incl. graphical representation of four-stage model)



#### *Phase 1: Definition of a competence model*

First stage of a consulting aims to create a model of competences which are necessary to achieve superior performance in a particular organization or its unit. Such a model can be used for several purposes. Usually it is set for clarifying expectations from applicants within recruitment process or as a basis for setting strategy of HR Development.

Model of competences consists of a list naming all key competences required from employees. The list may differ for various positions. Each of competences is defined in a tangible and understandable way. It is further elaborated through identification of set of indicators for each competence. Indicators are observable manifestations of a particular competence. Based on a list and indicators individuals can be assessed whether they possess the competence and to what degree it is developed.

According to Mansfield<sup>6</sup> there are three widely used sources of data for competency models:

1. resource panels or focus groups with subject matter experts
2. critical event interviews with superior performers, and
3. generic competency dictionaries.

Focus groups give an opportunity to gather information from experts about precise requirements that particular job poses. Critical event interviews focus on superior performers and try to identify competences that helped them to achieve good results in concrete situations/events. Generic competency dictionaries were identified in numerous researches and are available in literature or

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<sup>6</sup> Mansfield, R.S., *Practical Questions for Building Competency Models*, Presented at Insight Information Company Conference Competency-Based Management for the Federal Public Service, Ottawa, November 6-7, 2000



in the internet. There are also other methods that can help in analysis (e.g. questionnaires, studying of organizational documents, interviews with clients etc.).

### *Phase 2: Individual Assessment*

If a model of competences is used for the purpose of HR development the next stage is assessment of individual compliance with a model. Through variety of methods and instruments employees' 'competency profiles' are constructed. Usually a mix of questionnaires, self-assessment tools, boss' and peers' feedbacks, and expert assessments are utilised.

Competency profile of an employee identifies his/her strengths and weaknesses in particular competences. Thus it helps to draw a path to reaching better performance through development of those competences that need further improvement. These individual profiles help also to define educational strategy of an organization.

### *Phase 3: Training/Development*

In a third phase a training/educational program is developed and conducted based on individual assessments and identified needs. Concrete form of a program depends on specific requirements given by competences that have to be improved.

### *Phase 4: Assessment of Results*

Last phase is similar to the second phase. Again a mix of methods is used for assessing individual performance and level of competences of employees. Individual profile created in this assessment is compared to individual profile set up before training phase. Based on this comparison we can track the changes and improvements of individuals and thus we can assess effectiveness of Training/Development phase.

This general process will be applied within specific conditions of SINAPSI project. The Needs analysis is a first phase where we try to identify generic list of competencies needed in particular fields of our interest in countries of SINAPSI trials. Since we are going to use a specific tool – serious game, we have to assess the list of identified competences also through lens of software limits and potentials. Then in next phases software will be used and tested as a tool for individual assessment of chosen competences as well as a tool helping to improve them in Training phase.

## 2 Use of SISINE in Competency Development

EUTOPIA software, SISINE software evolution, was produced as a serious game. “A serious game is a game in which education (in its various forms) is the primary goal, rather than entertainment.”<sup>7</sup> From the very beginning it was intended as a Massive Multiplayer On-line Role Playing Game. A difference to majority of serious games on a market is that EUTOPIA is a tool for tutors for facilitating learning process in e-learning environment. It means that it requires presence of a tutor and offers a package of specific tools that help tutor manage learning process. The main advantage of the software is that it enables tutors to create brand new simulation exercises quickly and in a simple way and use them immediately.

EUTOPIA kit is made up of three parts of the software with different functions:<sup>8</sup>

1. *Editor* - Creation of group sessions and of the elements needed for the training. Editor is used by tutors.
2. *Client* - Interaction with other users inside the group sessions.

Client is divided into:

- Master for tutors
- Player for users
- *Viewer* - Visualizing previously recorded group sessions, record editing and adding personal comments. Viewer can be used by users.

The tutor can create a storyboard in the Editor, upload it on a server, launch the session for chosen participants, watch and influence the development of session interaction through prepared tools for interaction (sending messages, launching special events within an exercise etc.). He/she can record the session and edit the recording in Viewer by cutting it, adding comments etc.

### 2.1 Strengths and Limits of the Software

The existing software has significant strengths:

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<sup>7</sup> MICHAEL, D., CHEN, S., *Serious Games: Games That Educate, Train, and Inform*, Thomson Course Technology PTR, Boston 2006, p. 17

<sup>8</sup> after *Master and Player Manual*, [on-line] available at [http://eutopia.unina.it/eutopia\\_mt/index.php](http://eutopia.unina.it/eutopia_mt/index.php)

1. *It is flexible.* From tutors' point of view it can be adapted easily for new exercises. It allows using other tools for communication while running on a computer (e.g. commenting in various internet forums, watching additional education materials – films, texts etc.).
2. *It provides multiple tools for tutoring.* It acknowledges the importance of tutor's role in learning process and gives him/her possibilities to work in virtual environment.
3. It does not provide direct educational content but *strengthens learning through reflection* over an experience made in an exercise. It completes experiential learning loop in virtual environment.

When using the software in a real education setting it is important to understand its limits:

1. *Expression limits.* Software does not allow for full range of expressions in interaction that real life communication provides. Especially nonverbal communication is rather limited to a small number of gestures and postures and some paraverbal features (graphical expression of tone of voice). Real life communication is far too difficult to be simulated fully in virtual environment both technologically and also due to reasons of limited ability of users to control and manage such complex behaviour consciously through keyboard and mouse that are main tools for user's communication.
2. *Limited use of environment.* Virtual environments offered in the software are just a background that can help user's imagination to be drowned in the simulation. However, nowadays version of the software does not allow any interaction of avatars with the environment. It makes sometimes environment redundant and even boring if a storyboard of simulation does not involve and/or explain it creatively.
3. *Changing communication patterns and behaviour.* In virtual environment users have different setting and tools for their communication, which change their way of behaviour and communication patterns. It does not pose a direct obstacle to learning. If it is reflected properly it can even help user to understand certain principles of communication and practice broader repertoire of communication styles. It poses a challenge in using the software as a tool for assessment. Probably sets of indicators observed to assess the competences should be adapted to a changed style and setting.

4. *Designed for role-playing simulations.* Software allows creating and playing role-playing simulations that are important but only one of many methods used in education. Thus it cannot be used for developing all competences and all their aspects. It is suitable just as a part of complex educational program and/or for selected appropriate competences.

Taking into consideration strengths and limits of the software it can be most suitable in following situations:

1. As a follow-up to training course intended for practicing competences.
2. As additional innovative broadening of traditional e-learning programs.
3. As an educational tool for developing competences NOT related directly to a communication abilities in nonverbal communication and “micro-skills” in communication.

It is suitable for learning more complex competences and meta-competences (e.g. strategising, decision-making, process thinking, reflection and learning from experience etc.).

Moreover, it is very valuable when there are limited opportunities to meet personally.

## 2.2 Use of Software in Competency Development

As we have mentioned earlier due to natural limits the software can be used just for development of selected appropriate competences. One of the aims of this innovation transfer within SINAPSI project is not only to use software for learning new contents but also testing use of the software in different phases of consulting process leading to competence development.

We have described the four phases of consulting process in chapter 1.2. Having in mind certain limits of the software, it can be wisely used in all of them.

**In Phase 1:** Definition of a competence model it can be used as an additional method of exploring superior performance in pre-defined situations. This can be done through observation and evaluation of behaviour of acknowledged superior performers in simulations prepared by consultants in the software. This observation may help to define inevitable competencies for reaching desired results in a job.

**In Phase 2:** Individual Assessment the simulation exercises can be used as the situations in which participants' competences are assessed. This can be done by independent assessor who observes the interactions of participants or it can be done also through self-assessment by participant watching a record of his/her interactions within the simulation exercise.

**In Phase 3:** Training/Development the software provides broad range of opportunities to practice and reflect on competences in exercises created by a tutor. The reflection and debriefing after exercise is inevitable part of learning process. It should be conducted/structured by a tutor with use of tools provided by software and also broader tools that could be found on internet (e.g. internet forums, social networks, uploading additional materials such as films, texts etc.). Parts of previously recorded sessions can be used as “trailers” and/or examples that can be discussed with participants.

**In Phase 4:** Assessment of results the software can be used in a similar way as in Phase 2.

One of the aims of SINAPSI project is to test the software within competency model approach. While doing it we have to keep in mind main strengths and limits of the software and possibly to propose new features that could be developed and added to it in the future.

### 3 General Competencies

This chapter inspects more closely what competencies are generally required in the three target groups in this project – students and staff at Italian universities, SMEs in France, and public administration employees in Slovakia.

#### 3.1 Competencies Needed in Italian Universities

The following analysis of competencies in Italian universities has been carried out by the Department of Relational Sciences at the University of Naples.

##### 3.1.1 Introduction

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A noteworthy number of experiences have been developed within Psychology academic world with the aim to train young professionals/psychologists to manage group dynamics and people’s life process. Among them, adolescence management training had always been stressed as important and crucial in psychologists’ curricula.

Moreover, as technological ages proceed, innovative and unexpected methodologies have been introduced in the training process.



EUTOPIA represents a good chance to promote lifelong learning process to those young professionals who look for a different way to update their knowledge and skills. Moreover the project provides an interesting tool to involve adolescents in activities related to group support.

### 3.1.2 SINAPSI and the University Department of Relational Sciences

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The Department of Relational Sciences was founded in 1983 by Prof. Iacono together with a heterogeneous scientific community made up by Psychologists, Psycho-analysts, Pedagogists, Philosophers and Psychiatrists. The objective was to create an interdisciplinary research centre to study the multidimensional characteristics of Human Psychology. The initial project, after two decades, has become a solid reality and goes on to face new intellectual challenges. The intellectual eclecticism has converged in common research lines and in a wide range of university program degrees. Research activity spans several areas of Psychology and Pedagogy including Cognitive Sciences, Developmental Psychology, Social Psychology, Dynamic Psychology, Clinical Psychology, General Pedagogy, and Psychiatry.

The Department coordinates the following laboratories: 1) laboratory of Multimedia applied to Vocational Learning; 2) laboratory of Natural and Artificial Cognition ([www.nac.unina.it](http://www.nac.unina.it)); 3) laboratory of Psychological Methodologies and Didactic Techniques.

The intellectual nature of the Department makes it possible to hold SINAPSI project for different reasons. First of all, soft skills development is considered an area close to Psychology field; the importance of communication quality, empathy, creativity as well as of team working and leadership process belongs to themes strictly related to social and group dynamics. Psychologists believe that soft skills do not exist as absolute entities. Soft skills are related to relationships and to contexts; they are also linked to our knowledge in a specific field. Usually they are also named “cross skills”: we talk about skills that could be useful to people if suitable to situations and easily transferred, not to indicate an absolute quality to adapt to every situation. Soft skills are not “strategies” that could be used by everyone on workplace. The “cross” quality of a skill does not entail the opportunity to be used by different subjects in similar situation, but to be used by the same subject in different situations. A “cross/soft skill” is an intentional way of acting in situations different from the ones where we have learnt it.

That’s the reason why a Department of Relational Sciences is deeply interested in soft-skills development. Our aim is to promote the aware and responsible use of soft-skills in a specific field: teenagers’ group dynamics management.

The aim is to train young professional with Psychology Degree (three-year degree) to work with adolescents groups in relation to several unease areas: school drop-out, bullying, peer relationships, parents-sons relationships, and sexual orientation. It’s important to consider adolescence as a period of life full of potential, where it could be possible to help people to empower themselves while to live without any goal.

To reach this goal, it's basic to train psychologists involved in developmental psychology to face young adolescents, group dynamics, problem solving, quality communication and to develop soft skills.

EUTOPIA seems to be close to our project. It represents a new way of training people; moreover, if we consider that learners will be young psychologists (age range between 20 and 25), this new tool could be considered attractive and interesting. The software can give the opportunity to find a problem area and to involve a specific number of players/adolescents to help in finding a solution, a way to go out, and a new empowerment.

### 3.1.3 Adolescence and Teenagers' uneasiness

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Adolescence is a time of confusion about the outcome, lifestyle experimentation, and sexual awakening. There are certain freedoms afforded to the teenager, but there are also pressures from others. In numerous ways, a teenager is a blank slate, with no destination written on them yet and every possibility available to them.

Peer pressure is when a group of populace, or even just one or two friends, are trying to make someone do something to 'fit in.' Pressure from peers could range from trying a drug, to stealing, to having sexual intercourse. Teenagers might not be mature enough to be able to say no to something they don't wish to do. They may go along with a bad idea just so they are accepted and fit into the group they require to please. Peer pressure starts at a young age and could continue into adulthood. Unfortunately, as teenagers typically hunger for to fit in with their friends, they may make bad choices in trying to do so.

Adults typically don't realize how extreme bullying is in teenagers. They might hear stories of school shootings or bullying, but not realize just how serious a trouble the teens' experience. Any change or deviation from the norm makes the teen fodder for bullying. Bullying occurs when one character or a group of humans ridicules and teases another individual relentlessly for an extended period. The bully may mock the human for their clothing, behaviour, or anything else they view as wrong. Teenagers are not only the ones bullied by others, but also the ones doing the bullying.

Bullying is an issue that is prevalent in every one of parts of the world and for most age levels. Bullying can lead off early on in life, and continue into the teen years. For teenagers desiring to be accepted by their peers, bullying can in truth damage their selfhood-esteem. Bullying better generally occurs because a human is deemed disparate in some guise to another person, and therefore becomes picked on. Bullying should always be dealt with in a swift manner to minimize the effects it can demonstrate on a young teen.

As with every one of periods of change in a individual's life, teenage years are ambiguous and uncertain. With so numerous pitfalls possible, from sorrow to angst to anomie, the utmost that members of public around the teenager may do is to offer their stuffed, patient support. Parents would do well to remember that whatever happens in youth is not immutable; mistakes made may always be rectified later in life with the benefit of wisdom accrued through greater experience of life and the world.

The teenage years are a hard time and something that folk remember for the rest of their life. Whether they are a well known athlete or a less standard teen, those years in truth form their basis for the destiny. This is the time when they grow and develop, both emotionally and physically. Emotionally, the teenagers learn how to handle the little things that life throws at them. In terms of fleshly advance, they grow taller and gain weight as well as deal with their bodies changing. All these growths change the teen in divergent ways.

Along with bullying, peer pressure is one of the main challenges facing teenagers. They experience peer pressure from their friends and others in their age group, who need them to do something they don't require to do. This includes drinking, drug use, and other forms of reckless behaviour. Teens feel the need to fit in with others in their peer group, which is why they have a hard time saying no. They might agree to do something wrong because they yearn to fit in with their group. They worry that if they say no, their friends will ostracise them.

Children grow up being what their parents demand them to be. This most often includes being a certain religion, liking certain music, and so forth. Teenagers must deal with the need to break free of the mould that they might encounter they are in and become an individual. They open to realize that they have their own identity, their own beliefs and wants, and that they do not demonstrate to be like their parents or anyone else. Yet, teenagers are not mature and still need their parents, which myriads times cause emotional turmoil within. Expressions of individualism are as is usual harmless, such as ear piercing or a certain style of draping.

The ancient information for dealing with bullies used to be to simply strike back at them. Because they are mostly cowards, they tend not to take that reaction very well and leave their prey alone. Nowadays, schools and other educational establishments present support systems in neighbourhood to tackle the causes of teenage bullying. The aim here is to foster a habit where bullying is frowned upon as being fundamentally wrong. Sadly, in a society that is stratified along the lines of power relationships, bullying - or at minimal certain degrees of it - exists in almost every demesne of life.

Puberty could be a scary and challenging period of one's life, when new unprecedented urges and emotions are coming to the fore. There are all kinds of associated problems these as melancholy, little-esteem, sheepishness, and irrationality.

Studies suggest that teenagers who are able to speak honestly about the events they are having with puberty to parents, peers, and teachers will cope that much preferable with the phase than those who appear they must repress themselves. Sadly, conservative and religious sectors of our societies have tended to regard puberty as problematical and therefore not worth discussing properly. The important thing to remember is that puberty is a completely natural process that must be dealt with.

Within the Relational Sciences Department there are several projects focusing on adolescence and teenagers' uneasiness. The idea is that working on adolescence could facilitate people's life journey. Moreover this issue could empower psychologists' training: using EUTOPIA software could mean training young professionals both in ICT technology and in adolescence management.

We consider important also an orientation and assessment process in students and young's path, as a way to understand their knowledge level and their improvements, both in cultural and psychological development.

#### 3.1.4 Department's needs analysis

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After a long discussion among people involved in the project and in Department's activities, our group has lead SINAPSI needs analysis on the basis of a group of young psychologists who have already got a three year degree in Psychology. This because they are, more or less, still involved in an university curriculum; in fact at the moment in Italy you have the chance to earn this kind of degree, or to go on and get a five-year degree / Bachelor in Psychology, adding a two-year study cycle.

We asked to 15 students attending Developmental Psychology class to join a one-day workshop on SINAPSI project, organised with the aim of disseminating our activities and to understand the interest level of these young professionals. Here you'll find our agenda, as to understand the workshop organization.

#### **Agenda**

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<b>9:00 - 9:05</b>	<b>Opening</b>
<b>9:05 - 9:30</b>	<b>SINAPSI project and its impact on Department's activities</b>
<b>9:30 - 10:00</b>	<b>Discussion</b>
<b>10:00 - 10:30</b>	<b>SINAPSI and Group Dynamic: adolescents and their uneasiness</b>

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- 10:30 - 10:40 EUTOPIA software: a description of a new training tool**
- 10:40 - 11:00 Discussion**
- 11:00 - 11:15 Coffee break**
- 11:15 - 12:15 Questionnaire administration**
- 12:15 - 13:00 Discussion**
- 13:00 - 14:30 Lunch**
- 14:30 - 15:30 Students' ideas and suggestions**
- 15:30 - 16:00 Summing up - Closing of the meeting**
- 

After a project description, students were asked to fill a questionnaire to explore their potential involvement and their ideas on using EUTOPIA in training group management. The aim was to point out a specific field of action in order to define a training programme on the basis of this group's needs analysis.

Here follows the questionnaire and the answers tables.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Indicate on a scale from 1 [not at all] to 5 [very much] your agreement with the following statements.

- I am interested in the training approach  
that will be used in this training course [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- The course will improve my management skills [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- The course will familiarize me with new tools [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- The course will allow me to meet new people [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- The course will provide me with training tools [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- I know how to use computers and the Internet [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- I have experience with participating in  
adolescents' group management [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- I have experience with conducting  
adolescents' group management [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- I have experience with adolescents' group  
management training [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

2. Have you ever participated in (or planned/conducted/coordinated) adolescents' group management activities in the following environments?

- Family mediation [YES] [NO]
- School mediation [YES] [NO]
- Peer mediation [YES] [NO]

3. In what role?

- Psychologist [YES] [NO]
- Teacher [YES] [NO]
- Participant Observer [YES] [NO]
- Else..... [YES] [NO]

4. Have you ever participated in online adolescents' group management?  
[YES] [NO]

5. Which do you feel are the qualities that a group facilitator should develop in training:

- Quality communication [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- Active listening [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- Assertiveness [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- Empathy [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- The ability to remain neutral [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

- Emotional disengagement [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- Knowing how to distinguish people from problems [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- Firmness [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- Ability to evaluate the context and identify critical issues [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- Giving and gaining confidence [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- Creativity [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- Mental flexibility [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- Self control [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- Authority [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

6. Of the abovementioned skills, which do you feel you need to develop further?

- Quality communication [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- Active listening [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- Assertiveness [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- Empathy [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- The ability to remain neutral [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- Emotional disengagement [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- Knowing how to distinguish people from problems [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- Firmness [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- Ability to evaluate the context and identify critical issues [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- Giving and gaining confidence [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- Creativity [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- Mental flexibility [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- Self control [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
- Authority [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

7. Do you think that simulation could be a good way to involve adolescents? [YES] [NO]

Why? .....

8. Do you think that this tool could facilitate your training as a psychologist? [YES] [NO]

## ANSWERS TABLES

1. Indicate on a scale from 1 [not at all] to 5 [very much] your agreement with the following statements.

Subjects	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	average
I am interested in the training approach that will be used in this training course	3	4	3	2	4	4	4	3	5	2	2	3	3	2	5	3,2

The course will improve my management skills	3	3	4	4	3	4	2	3	4	3	3	4	4	4	3	<b>3,4</b>
The course will familiarize me with new tools	4	4	5	4	4	3	4	5	5	4	4	5	5	4	5	<b>4,3</b>
The course will allow me to meet new people	3	3	3	4	4	3	5	3	4	5	4	4	3	3	4	<b>3,7</b>
The course will provide me with training tools	4	4	5	4	4	4	5	5	4	3	2	3	4	4	5	<b>4</b>
I know how to use computers and the Internet	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	5	4	5	4	4	<b>4,5</b>
I have experience with participating in adolescents' group management	3	2	3	2	1	2	3	3	1	4	5	5	3	4	3	<b>2,9</b>
I have experience with conducting adolescents' group management	2	2	1	3	1	2	2	2	1	2	3	2	2	2	1	<b>1,9</b>
I have experience with adolescents' group management training	3	3	1	2	2	3	3	4	1	3	5	5	4	3	3	<b>3</b>

## 2. Have you ever participated in (or planned/conducted/coordinated) adolescents' group management activities in the following environments?

Answers	YES	NO	YES (%)	NO (%)
Family mediation	3	12	20%	80%
School mediation	6	9	40%	60%
Peer mediation	6	9	40%	60%

## 3. In what role?

Answers	YES	NO	YES (%)	NO (%)
Psychologist	6	9	40%	60%
Teacher	0	15	0%	100%
Participant Observer	9	6	60%	40%
Else	/	/	/	/

#### 4. Have you ever participated in online adolescents' group management?

Answers	YES	NO	YES (%)	NO (%)
Subjects	3	12	20%	80%

#### 5. Which do you feel are the qualities that a group facilitator should develop in training?

Subjects	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	average
Quality communication	4	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	5	3	4	4	3	4	5	<b>4,2</b>
Active listening	4	4	5	4	3	4	4	5	4	3	5	4	4	4	4	<b>4,1</b>
Assertiveness	3	4	4	4	4	3	4	5	5	4	4	5	3	4	5	<b>4,1</b>
Empathy	5	5	5	4	4	4	5	4	4	5	4	4	5	4	4	<b>4,4</b>
The ability to remain neutral	4	4	5	4	5	4	5	5	4	3	4	4	4	4	5	<b>4,1</b>
Emotional disengagement	5	4	5	5	5	4	5	4	4	4	5	4	5	4	5	<b>4,5</b>
Knowing how to distinguish people from problems	3	4	3	4	4	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	4	4	3	<b>3,7</b>
Firmness	4	4	3	4	3	4	4	4	3	4	3	2	4	2	4	<b>3,5</b>
Ability to evaluate the context and identify critical issues	5	4	4	4	5	4	3	4	3	4	5	5	4	3	3	<b>4</b>
Giving and gaining confidence	5	5	4	4	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	4	4	5	4	<b>4,5</b>
Creativity	3	4	3	5	5	4	3	4	5	5	4	3	4	5	4	<b>4,1</b>
Mental flexibility	4	4	5	5	4	3	4	4	5	3	5	4	4	3	5	<b>4,1</b>
Self control	5	5	4	4	5	5	5	5	3	4	4	5	4	3	4	<b>4,3</b>
Authority	3	2	2	3	3	4	2	3	2	3	4	5	4	4	3	<b>3,1</b>

**6. Of the abovementioned skills, which do you feel you need to develop further?**

Subjects	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	average
Quality communication	3	5	5	5	4	3	4	4	5	3	4	3	3	4	4	<b>3,9</b>
Active listening	5	4	5	4	5	4	4	5	4	5	5	4	4	4	5	<b>4,5</b>
Assertiveness	3	4	3	4	4	3	4	4	5	4	4	5	3	4	3	<b>3,8</b>
Empathy	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	4	4	5	5	4	5	4	5	<b>4,6</b>
The ability to remain neutral	2	4	3	4	5	4	3	5	4	3	3	4	4	3	5	<b>3,7</b>
Emotional disengagement	3	4	4	4	3	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	<b>3,7</b>
Knowing how to distinguish people from problems	4	4	5	4	5	4	3	3	5	4	4	5	4	4	5	<b>3,9</b>
Firmness	2	4	4	3	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	4	3	2	<b>3,3</b>
Ability to evaluate the context and identify critical issues	4	3	4	4	3	4	4	4	2	4	4	5	4	4	3	<b>3,7</b>
Giving and gaining confidence	5	5	4	4	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	4	<b>4,6</b>
Creativity	4	5	4	5	5	5	4	4	5	5	4	3	5	5	4	<b>4,5</b>
Mental flexibility	3	4	5	4	4	3	4	4	4	3	5	4	3	4	4	<b>3,9</b>
Self control	3	4	4	3	4	5	3	4	3	4	5	5	4	3	2	<b>3,7</b>
Authority	4	4	3	4	5	2	2	3	2	4	4	5	5	3	2	<b>3,5</b>

**7. Do you think that simulation could be a good way to involve adolescents?**

Answers	YES	NO	YES (%)	NO (%)
Subjects	15	0	100%	0%

**8. Do you think that this tool could facilitate your training as a psychologist?**

Answers	YES	NO	YES (%)	NO (%)
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Subjects	15	0	100%	0%
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### 3.1.5 Conclusion

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The meeting with our group of students was interesting. They were fascinated by the idea of using EUTOPIA software to be trained in managing group dynamics. Only few of them had joined before an online training session, while the most part of them had never used it. The idea to work with adolescence issues has been considered interesting and, as many of them are involved in Department's project of teenagers' uneasiness, it has been defined as a good way to act on society.

There was perception that there was a great deal of interest and demand in participating in further forms of group management training.

Few interviewees had any experience of online training but there was a general expression of interest in exploring the possibilities of the proposed methodology and of participating in the trial programme. There was also a feeling that young people might be an appropriate target group for such training. They consider also that an on-line tool could be useful in group dynamics as a "filter" in direct interactions, in the sense that it can be considered a soft way to act in situations where usually strong emotions arise.

However, interviewees also identified some potential limitations with the on-line approach, in particular they emphasised:

- The lack of direct contact between people and thus an inability in registering people's reactions or body language, which was regarded by many as a crucial element in practical group management training and skill development;
- The possibility of misunderstandings arising through the on-line process and the need for interaction outside of the computer animated environment; and
- Technical issues such as shortage of equipment and a belief that a need for some level of computer literacy and access to computers might limit participation.

Meeting young psychologists interested in adolescence group dynamics management helped us to highlight their specific needs.

Here follows a list of the most important findings achieved by our needs analysis:

- 1) Young professionals look for new methodologies to be trained in their lifelong learning;

- 2) Young psychologists look for new methodologies to involve adolescents in group training;
- 3) The group seemed interested in developing such “cross skills” related to relationship management (active listening, empathy, giving and gaining confidence, creativity).

## 3.2 Competencies Needed in SMEs in France

The following analysis of competencies in SMEs in France has been carried out by MF & Partners Consulting.

### 3.2.1 State of art of continuing vocational training in France compared with Europe

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In France, continuing vocational training (CVT) has a lot in common with similar training programs offered in other industrialized countries and their specific approaches for to political, cultural and economical reasons.

Economical development that occurred in France in the period from the early fifties up to the seventies named “Les Trente Glorieuses” in France, and development of technical processes of production made most advanced countries realize that continuing vocational training is a necessity and it should be included in contractual negotiations between workers and companies.

In 1965, the B.I.T. in its 49 th Conference, took a resolution to give workers special paid vacations to be used for training.

During the eighties, the unemployed people were more and more involved in continuing vocational training and a financial participation has become obligatory for companies (i.e. France, Italy, Belgium, Spain...). Additionally annual plans of lifelong learning programs were elaborated (i.e. France, Austria, Finland...).

In Europe, continuing vocational training is based on the all activities which focus on planned training which is totally or partially covered by employers. This training includes:

- stages inside the company
- stages outside the company
- training for professional situations
- participation in seminars, conferences related to training
- other professional experience in other department/jobs of the company - self-training (i.e. e-learning...)

In France, the most significant percentage of the total amount of the salaries in Europe is dedicated to the continuing vocational training based, overall, on training for professional situations (like in Germany), while in South Europe internships are more common (i.e. Italy, Spain etc.) and North Europe, (as Germany, Holland, Luxembourg...) conferences are privileged.

This approach to the situation of continuing vocational training can be divided in two main axes:

**1°) training with initiative of the employers** (strong in France and in Scandinavia, spread In Holland and UK, medium in Germany, Austria, Belgium, Luxembourg and Ireland, weak in Greece, Portugal, Italy, Spain)

**2°) training with initiative of the workers** (strong in Scandinavia, spread in Holland and UK, medium I France, weak in Greece, Portugal, Italy, Spain and Ireland)

According a methodological point of view, we have two main criteria for knowing the importance of CVT in a country.

**1°) the number of trained people** (note that we are considering the CVT actions paid by enterprises regarding the number of trained people)

In France, the number of workers who have benefited from a CVT action was one million per year in 1970 and it increased up to about ten millions thirty years later, in 2000.

However, it is often difficult to really know what the true number is because enterprises declare actions not always connected to CVT, even the real number of CVT actions is high (between 8 and 10 millions).

**2°) the number of hours dedicated to CVT**

In 1970, an average medium duration of a CVT action was 74 hours corresponding to 78 000 000 hours for 1 000 000 trained people by enterprises.

In 2000, this duration was 40 hours corresponding to 150 000 000 hours for nearly 4 000 000 trained people by enterprises.

This evolution is explained by the fact that enterprises finance shorter CVT actions focused on “maintenance and improvement of knowledge” (66% in 1970 and 82% in 2000), while the State is financing much longer CVT actions (medium duration: 190 hours in 1970 and 275 hours in 2000 for a CVT focused on basic knowledge and social promotion).

In 2005 EUR 25.9 billion was spent on continuing vocational training and apprenticeships. This expenditure has been rising steadily. 40% of this sum (EUR 10 billion) was spent by companies on training their employees and 15% was spent on training of jobseekers. The nation does make a substantial investment in training (1.5% of GNP) and the overall rate of access to continuing training has grown constantly since 1974. There has, however, also been a lot of criticism in recent years for the system being too complex, unequal and inefficient. Thirty years after the Delors Act of 1971, on which the French training system is based, vocational training faces the challenge of globalisation, which requires developing the skills of labour force and adapting it to new challenges. It is confronted also with a new demand to protect occupational paths. A reform was introduced in 2003 (the National Intersectoral Agreement, ANI, incorporated into the law of 4 May 2004 on lifelong learning) to address these challenges.

In 2005, 4.5 million adults took part in lifelong training, of which 700,000 were jobseekers and about 3,800,000 employees.

The rate of access of employees to vocational training grew until 1998 (37.7%), then fell by 2003, when it stood at 35.2%, but has since undergone a sustained growth, reaching 41.5% in 2005.

However, this rise in the rate of access masks some variations and inequalities in accessing the training, particularly by economic sector and by socio-economical category and company size:

- 1°) by economic sector, there is a very high rate of access to training among the employees in highly capital-intensive sectors, e.g. in aerospace (88.9%), banking (73.1%) and the nuclear industries (61%), whereas the rate of access is lower in the traditional sectors such as woodworking (19.2%), and clothing and textiles (20.6%).

- 2°) by socio-professional category and company size, the rate of access of a manual worker in a company with fewer than 20 employees is 7.9%, as against 64% for a manager in a company of 2,000 employees and more.

**Rate of access to training by social category, depending on company size, in 2004 (%)**

Size of company	Manual workers	Clerical workers	Technical and supervisory staff	Engineers and managers	TOTAL
10-19	7.9	11.5	24.1	20.1	12.5
20-49	14.5	12.0	30.8	29.8	19.7
50-249	26.1	29.4	46.6	47.3	33.9
250-499	31.8	35.7	54.5	57.6	42.1
500-1999	35.7	43.3	60.4	63.0	49.2
2000 +	41.7	39.8	65.7	64.1	50.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>29.0</b>	<b>29.3</b>	<b>55.0</b>	<b>53.2</b>	<b>39.0</b>

Source: Tax declarations, no. 2483 – Statistics produced by CEREQ

**Rate of access to training by the level of qualifications**

Qualification Level	No qualifications	CAP/BEP	Brevet (GCSE equivalent)	Baccalaureate	Higher education
<b>Rate of access to training (employees)</b>	<b>13.6%</b>	<b>23.4%</b>	<b>25.2%</b>	<b>33.7%</b>	<b>44.3%</b>

Source: French Senate Report 2007 and CEREQ

**In short:**

- companies tend to favour employees in the highest level positions or those best integrated into the company
- these people tend to benefit from longer periods of training,
- this situation has a limited Impact of continuing training on careers
- the outcomes of continuing training initiatives do not seem so prominent as the results of initial training
- the qualification obtained through initial education remains, therefore, key to a career within a company, and to the speed of the return to employment
- France has the highest proportion of hours out of the total number of external participation hours according to providers of continuing training
- In France, only 24% of enterprises are not carrying out either training courses or any other forms of CVT
- Public institutions (State, Regions...) finances VET actions for unemployed people when enterprises pay VET actions for their own workers.

### **Evolution:**

- the Law on Social Modernisation of 2002 established the principle of the validation of work-based experience (Validation des Acquis de l'Expérience / VEA), based on the idea of validating by certification the skills acquired during work and not solely from training
- the 2004 Law introduced the Individual Training Right (or DIF) 59 and the Professional Development Contract
- the 2008 Law intended to put users in the heart of the CVT reducing inequalities which we described according three orientations concerning the suitability between CVT actions and users, the suitability between cost and quality of CVT actions and the simplification of VAE

### **3.2.2 Analysis of SME Needs in CVT in France – Based on Three Surveys**

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For as best as possible evaluation of the needs of enterprises and more particularly SMEs in France, we include a survey made by French Chambers of Commerce, in 2008, a survey made by The Region of Centre of France concerning CVT in enterprises in 2005 and our survey of our own clients over the last few years.

#### **A) Survey by The Region of Centre**

It is a test panel as an example of a region in France for comparing the results of this survey with the national one and our own survey.

#### ***Goals***

The survey made from businessmen, managing directors and human resources managers was focused on three main objectives:

1. To analyze the practices of the companies regarding CVT
2. To analyze the understanding the companies have about the role of CVT and to evaluate their level of receptivity compared to the current stakes
3. To determine expectations and needs of the companies

#### ***Methodology***

The survey was performed directly via a telephone interview with a panel representing 800 businessmen and managing directors (also human resources managers when the top management was not available).

A sample was created in order to obtain the best representative of companies of the area according to the sizes of the companies, professional sector and geographical establishments.

The continuing professional training sector is often perceived by companies like complex, even constraining. A questionnaire was created according to these particularities: popularization of the vocabulary, definition of certain terms or concepts. The questionnaire brought certain managers of undertaking (especially in SEMs) to wonder for the first time about certain aspects of training: its bond with the productivity, the perpetuation of young companies, its role in the development of the territories, his relationship with social and professional advancement of workers.

From this point of view, the questionnaire also played a “teaching” role and a sensitization role with the stakes of the CVT.

This synthesis aims to put stress on some of the results of the survey at the same time distinguishing analysis of the practices of training in companies and the analysis of the opinions and expectations of the managers.

## **B. Survey by French Chambers of Commerce throughout France**

### *Goals*

In order to answer as well as possible the new stakes of the economy and the society, the Chambers of Commerce undertook, these last years, a great movement of modernization. They set up the States General to engage a territorial and multisector reflection through all France for better knowing the needs and expectations of the companies.

The ACFCI (Assembly of the French Chambers of Commerce), in partnership with the agency Image et Stratégie, wished to interrogate businessmen in order to learn about to know their expectations and requirements for management of competences.

### *Methodology*

For the realization of this survey were questioned a national sample representative of 500 businessmen of SMEs from 20 to 500 workers. The representative of the sample is ensured by the method of the quotas (branches of industry, size of the company and area).The Interview was made by telephone on the workplace.

### 3.2.3 Results and Analysis of the Surveys on Needs of French Companies

### *Preliminary Methodological Remarks*

The amount of the total percentage could not be 100% because we excluded all the irrelevant answers regarding our analysis (i.e. for instance, questions directly pertaining to the role of the Chambers of Commerce).

Manager(s) is a keyword which corresponds to businessmen, company heads, managing directors, and human resources directors who participated in the surveys

### *Practices and Role of the Companies in regard to CVT*

#### *Main Points*

- the CVT is extensively apprehended as a tool of workers' adaptation to the methods and the working station (for 86,90% of managers)
- surveys confirm the trend of the state of art that we mentioned concerning the practices of training in the companies: the rate of resort to the CVT increases proportionally with the size of the company
- The system penalizes the employees of SMEs. Workers of very small enterprises are almost excluded from the existing devices
- The younger the company, the less training it offers to its employees.
- companies tend to favour employees of the highest level positions or those best integrated into the company and having the best qualification obtained through initial education (directors, engineers and the middle management consume 69% of the CVT actions; Highly skilled workers have a significantly better opportunity of access to CVT actions; Chances of access to CVT actions of unskilled workers are five times less than for managers)
- the companies seek above all the very operational profiles;

It should be emphasized that management and commercial schools profiles (25%) as well as schools of engineers' profiles (23%) are also appraised by the companies

- the companies mainly distinguish VCT actions as experience
- the companies translate their needs concerning CVT in top with their sector
- and their trade

### *Needs of French Companies*

63% of businessmen perceive CVT actions as an investment but 37% still regard CVT as a legal obligation.

According to most managers, the CVT actions are too general and not enough adapted to companies' needs (53,29% of answers). The two most common reasons given by managers for explaining their opinion are the following:

- The CVT actions do not integrate enough the self-training and the support of trainees (tutoring, tools): 30.24% of the answers
- The difficulty of measuring the contributions of the CVT in the development of the company: 23.05% of the answers. The company has difficulties with to include CVT in a long-term strategy of acquisition and development of competences.

*The managers express three priority needs:*

1. "To evaluate the effects of the CVT" (32,45% of the answers).
2. "To select a training centre" (32,05% of the answers).
3. "To build the plan of CVT" - i.e. to identify the requirements in CVT, to define the contents and the adapted modes of CVT - (26,60% of the answers).

*To improve the effectiveness of the training "en alternance" (i.e. training given partly in an educational institution and partly in the workplace), managers express four axes of progress:*

1. To allow a young person to spend more time in company and less in a CVT centre (23.70% of the answers).
1. To organize trainings for tutors (22.40% of the answers).
2. To encourage trainers to spend more time in a company (17.21% of answers).
3. To remunerate the company's tutors (16.88% of the answers).

*All in all, managers would like to see prioritized the following three directives pertaining to CVT:*

1. To better adapt a school to the world of the company: 52.53% of the answers.
2. To better adapt an offer of CVT to new companies' needs: 28.50 of the answers.
3. To allow employees to advance in their career: 10.90% of the answers.

***Competences Management:***

The management of competences is a true priority in the development of companies. It is understood as a principal priority for the majority of companies and then the innovation and evolutions of ICT systems.

Only half of the companies set up a policy of management of competences. These companies are based initially on their professional federations to set up this policy.

*Main conclusions of this survey:*

The management of competences arises like an element determining the development of companies for their company manager. For as much, only a small part of companies included it in their practice (more the large companies that the small ones).

The professional federations are the “natural” council of the companies wishing to obtain a policy of management of competences.

For the basic education, company heads seek before all those providing them very operational profiles.

For the CVT, they prioritize those in top with their sector and their trade (organizations and schools of the professional branches...).

The image of a company (the mark, the environment of the company and more largely the quality of life to work) is the major argument of approximately 6 companies out of 10 to attract young people.

The companies following a policy of competences management are also based, in addition to the image of their company, on “the professional prospects evolution” to recruit.

*The main courses offered:*

- English (11% of the total activity of training, in France of which 77% for common English, 9% for business English and 7% for technical English according to Place de la Formation)
- computing and office automation (11% of the total activity of training, in France)
- soft skills as personal development (time/planning management, stress management, to speak in public/ during a conference)
- commercial training
- safety, prevention

### 3.2.4 Training Needs Analysis According to a Survey by MF & Partners Consulting

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#### *Methodology*

This analysis of training needs of trainees and companies comes out of a 3-year survey conducted in France in 2006-2008. It is based on the analysis of the questionnaires on we sent to companies directions in order to assess their needs, on the reports on our meetings with the directions of some companies and on the feedback from training sessions and training department managers.

Year	Number of training courses	Courses designed for big groups and SMBs <sup>1</sup>	Number of trainees by course	Total number of trainees
2006	24	24	8	192
2007	23	23	8	184
2008	25	25	8	200
Total :	72	72		576

#### *Main Points*

##### *a) Companies needs are frequently expressed in an informal way*

It often happens that, for an educator and a trainee to meet, a whole chain of gobetweens have to intervene.

The training manager is in charge of the training needs assessment inside a company. He or she introduces the need to a Client Relationship Manager of a training service company, who in his/her turn conveys the demand to the final service provider, an independent educator or a training centre.

This process is often informal. According to the AFNOR (French Association for Normalization), the demand in vocational training should be expressed as follows: "I wish the trainees who have finished the course to be capable of..."

In reality this request is often sounds like "I want a training course in project management." If this situation suites the service providers quite good, as thus they have a certain breathing space for their commercial offer, it often creates a risk of incompliance of a training course to the expectations of its participants, and educators often face the situation where they have to adapt

their courses to trainees` needs in real time in order to diminish the gap between what they meant to present initially and what was really demanded by the participants.

***b) SMBs frequently express their training needs in an informal way***

In small and middle-sized businesses it is often the top managers who express themselves the training need. Their approach is generally practical: « to be able to do this and that...”.

Most frequently small companies have low budgets for training needs and want the best quality-price ratio. So, it is random for them to accept a training course whose benefice is unlikely to be immediate.

They are generally interested in short-termed courses strictly suited to their work scope: one day or a half a day. Due to the small workforce, the absence of one person has a strong impact and, consequently, training needs are secondary compared to production imperatives.

The demand of training is most often made orally. The main advantage in such situations is that the actual educator is generally the direct interlocutor of the company top manager. Thus, he receives first-hand information and can make the client give him the necessary precisions right away.

The inconvenient is that it may happen that the trainees are less motivated by the training as the greatest part of its contents has been defined by their employer.

***c) Big companies express their training needs formally***

Only public authorities and big companies “with organizational restraints” usually develop training management procedures in control and, sometimes, guaranty-ofengagement purposes.

Such procedures comprise training needs analysis, preparation of scoping statements, assessment of trainees` and their superiors` implication during training sessions, definition of training goals and progress plan, specific demands for individual follow-up, assessment of starting and resulting levels of trainees competence, immediate and delayed assessment of training achievements, etc.

These procedures essentially aim to verify that training service providers` activity complies with “the best practices”, which is often quite useful.

Unfortunately, we noticed that training needs analysis turned out to be quite vague and was limited to making a choice of training courses out of a catalogue, even in big groups with professionals employed for that purpose.

Said procedures may also aim to guarantee trainees and their superiors implication in vocational training process, in the hope to assure better assimilation of new knowledge (see page 24, e.g., preliminary questionnaire filled in before training session).

#### *d) Demand for post-training follow-up is inexistent*

A request for the setting up of a progress plan happens once in a while. The demand for post-training follow-up is much more unusual, insomuch that today we outline this service in our training offers, and in ten years we rendered this service only two or three times, usually for the benefice of our best trainees.

#### *e) Insufficient assimilation of resulting knowledge*

We esteem that the need in post-training follow-up is practically non existent due to the insufficient assimilation by clients-companies of the resulting knowledge and competence of the trainees.

Indeed, when a trainee returns back to work, he or she is rarely asked to make a compte-rendu of training achievements. Some of the superiors judiciously ask the trainees to outline the keystones of the training course for their colleagues in a discovery report or during a knowledge-share session.

In our opinion, these practices are good ways to fix the training achievements, but they are extremely rarely used.

Another factor of said bad assimilation of training results is the fact that, for a progress plan of a training course to be useful, it should be set by the trainee's immediate supervisor.

Unfortunately, the latter is frequently very busy and not anxious to add this task to his agenda, especially when he or she is not expressly asked to do so by the general direction.

When such practices exist, they usually are subject-matter of long formal procedures and how-to-do instructions. In other words, the resulting competence of a trainee turns out to be not so important, when the follow-up practices are too formal.

#### *f) Satisfying a training need*

What is the right training course? How to define if your expectations with regard to the training session are satisfied? It is not as easy as that to give answers to these questions. It is true that if define the success of a training session in terms like “after the training course I shall be able capable of...”, to assess the satisfaction level means to test that capacity. “Are you capable of...?” and also: “How can I determine if the trainee is capable of...?”.

#### *g) Issues related to satisfaction assessment*

Companies who pay for their employees’ continuing training are interested to know if this is a good investment by means of trainees’ satisfaction assessment. The latter often takes form of various questionnaires. But is this solution really efficient? Certain factorial analyses of training questionnaires, made several years ago, show that approximately 80% of answers were given in accordance with global level of satisfaction of the trainees.

Thus, we can say that, either a trainee would be globally satisfied with everything, including with things which have no direct connection to the training course itself, like restaurant, either a trainee is unsatisfied in some respect, but this will have a negative impact on his assessment of other features of the training course, such as contents, even if it has nothing to do with the actual reason for his annoyance.

The recent surveys regarding services’ consumers affirm this phenomenon. There is a halo effect in consumers answers, consequently, very detailed questionnaires turns out to be of no use. The challenge of the survey was to find out which most important question is to be asked in order to have useful feedback and take into account personal attitude of the service consumer. This question is “Would you recommend this training to your colleagues? Please answer in the form of percentage from 0 to 100 %”.

The interpretation of the answers is as follows. If the note is situated between 90 and 100 %, the trainee will recommend the course; if the note ranges between 70 and 90%, the trainee won’t recommend the course, but will remain neutral; if the note is inferior to 70%, the trainee is likely to denigrate the course (see page 27, e.g., evaluation form filled in after training session).

### 3.2.5 Synthesis

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Vocational training needs are still too frequently expressed in general « topic » terms. Best practices that exist in this respect are still far from being in general use.

In reality, companies-clients as well as trainees have great difficulty in defining their training needs, and a whole range of absolutely different training offers may be made in answer to one and the same demand and considered as satisfying by the trainees, although the courses suggested do not develop the same competences.

In the same manner, the needs satisfaction analysis shows that one of the main features of a successful training session is trainee's active participation in the definition of training goals.

It is possible to conduct a precise assessment of one's individual capacities and competences, but, being expensive, such an assessment is rarely made. It is generally replaced by self-assessment tests which are not at all reliable, but much less expensive.

### 3.2.6 Conclusion

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Strangely enough, even if SMBs, having considerable money, staff and time-related restraints, resort less than big companies to vocational training, however, their need in said training is not less important.

Nevertheless, this need has to be directly defined with the top manager. For that reason, we recommend to favour interviewing techniques instead of written questionnaires that are very often ignored by the companies, either small or big.

In Europe, as much as in France, companies look for vocational trainings which are practical, that is, those which are closely related to the scope of trainee's professional functions.

The process of educational system harmonisation in Europe, for example, the LMD2 reform, also implies the harmonisation of continuing vocational training system, which means certain amelioration of the latter, in order to favour successful integration and continuing vocational education of the European workers and citizens.

The functional approach to this issue helps to establish an accurate list of jobs and functions and to define necessary qualifications and competences requested for each management position, including middle-management, at any levels (secretary, administration, commercial, technical positions, etc.) and for any activity field. Such professional competences are closely related to

personal skills of an individual, which may be extrapolated from professional skills and improved as well, independently of each individual personality, but in the manner which takes into account each one's personal and cultural background.

The seriousness of this challenge is of the kind to allow facilitating, almost "automating" of companies' training selection, with the help of a range of possible scenarios, taking into consideration various situations the employees of different levels have to deal with. This approach should also help to speed up training results assessment and to better define their impact.

The French approach draws on knowledge (*savoir*), skills (*savoir-faire*) and social competences (*savoir-être*). Individual competences relate to each other and are difficult to disassociate from the overall occupational profile. Competences can be understood as dynamic processes of learning, developing and passing on knowledge. France has a competence-based qualifications framework. Competences have been derived from job content analysis and serve as a basis for both curriculum development and assessment (e.g., French model competence by CEDEFOP).

### 3.3 Competencies Needed in Public Administration in Slovakia

The following analysis of competencies in the public administration in Slovakia has been carried out by PDCS.

#### 3.3.1 Context of further education in public administration in Slovakia

The public administration in Slovakia has undergone major transformation over the last approximately ten years, with periods defined by major developments such as decentralization, accession to EU, and most recently use of EU structural and cohesion funds.

The shift of competencies and responsibilities to more local levels of public administration before EU accession and then the need to bring the functioning of Slovak public administration system closer to that of other EU countries brought its challenges. Overcoming some of those challenges has required that thousands of civil servants had to be trained or retrained in areas ranging from cooperation with foreign partners, through EU project management, to the use of foreign languages.

Some educational efforts were assigned high priority and foreign institutions provided funding as part of various bilateral cooperation programs. While historically most education in public administration was delivered in the form of **lectures** or **seminars**, a much greater variety of educational formats became available: **training courses**, **study trips**, **internships**, **distance**



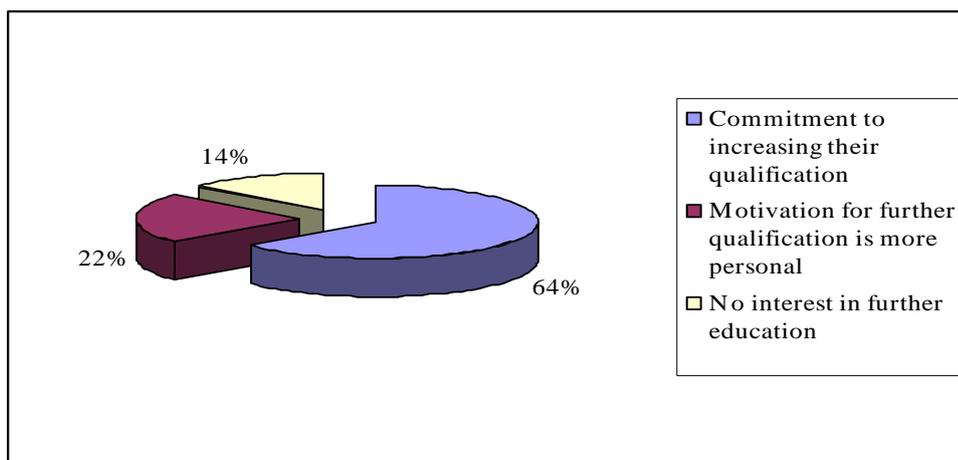
### 3.3.2 Analysis by the Union of Cities in Slovakia

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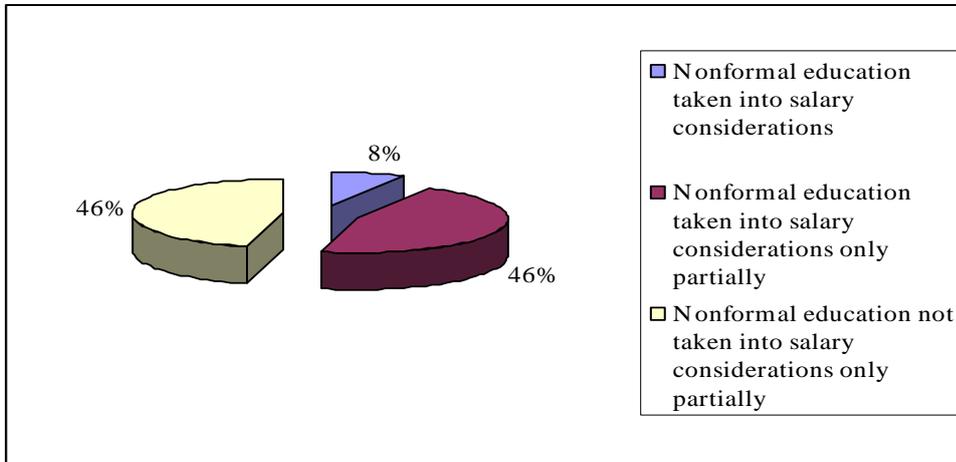
The analysis by the Union of Cities in Slovakia was conducted in 2007 in the administrative region of Bratislava to map issues connected to provision of lifelong learning over the period 2003-2007 to civil servants and employees of various city and town authorities. The analysis was based on questionnaires distributed to city district and local town governments in the region of Bratislava. The pool of respondents included representatives of the capital city Bratislava as well as smaller cities or towns such as Pezinok and Malacky.

#### Commitment to Life-Long Learning among Local Administration Staff

To map the status of life-long learning of local administration staff, their own commitment and motivation for further education needs to be taken into account as one of the factors. The survey has shown that about two thirds (64 per cent) of local administration staff show commitment to increasing their qualification through education. For further 22 per cent, motivation for further qualification is more personal rather than work-related and 14 per cent of staff of the responding subjects indicated no interest in further education to increase their qualification.

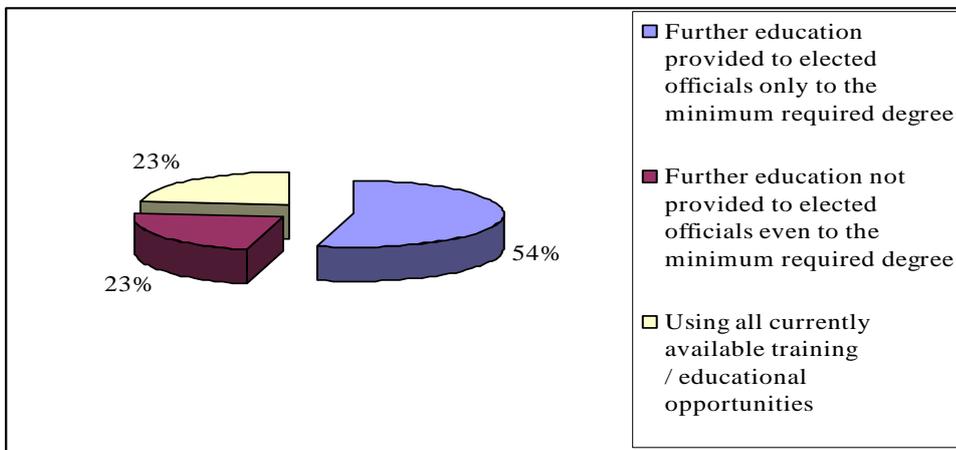


When speaking about education beyond formal schooling, only 8 per cent of local self governments indicated they took such education of their staff into salary considerations. As many as 46 per cent of local self governments stated further education beyond formal schooling was not taken into account as a factor in deciding on salaries of their staff.



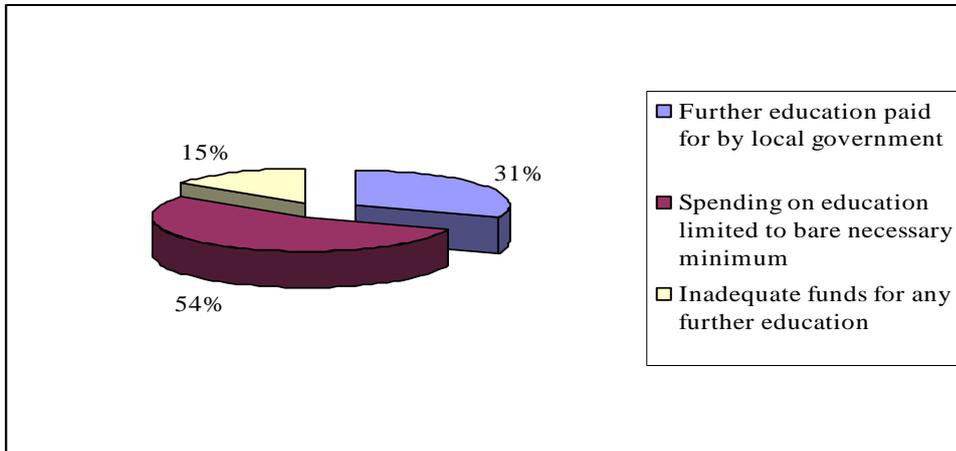
### Education of elected officials of local governments

As a special category, further education/training is provided by local governments to elected officials. More than half of local governments (54 per cent) provides further education to elected officials only to the minimum degree required for their work and 23 per cent of local governments does not meet even this standard. On the other hand, the final 23 per cent local governments tries to make the best use of all currently available training /educational opportunities.



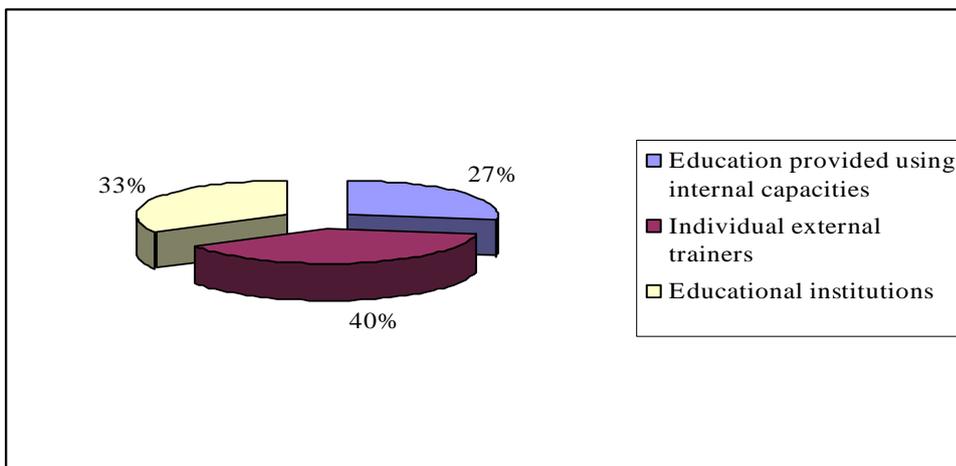
### Financing of further education of local government staff

To increase their effectiveness, 31 per cent of local governments pays for further education of their staff. Yet, as many as 54 per cent limit their spending on education to a bare necessary minimum and 15 per cent reported inadequate funds for any further education.



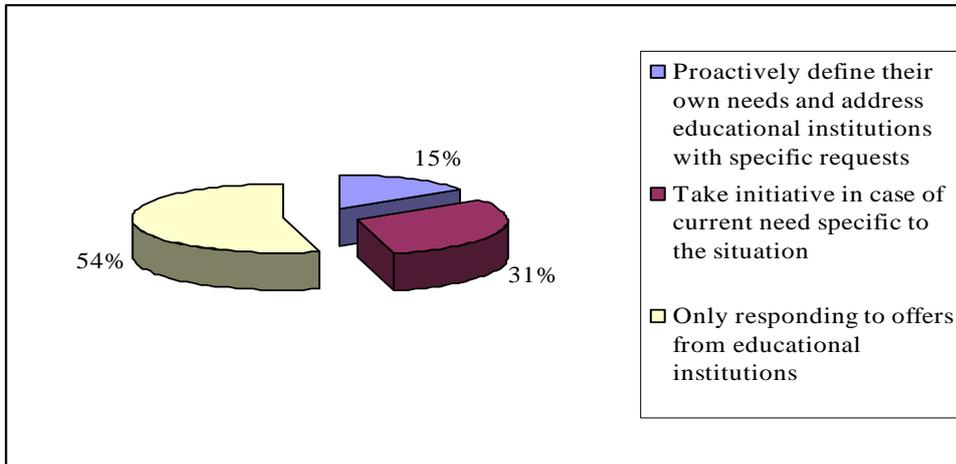
### Delivery of education mandatory by law

Of the education prescribed by law (e.g. training on safety in the workplace), 27 per cent of local governments provide them using internal capacities. Another 40 per cent hire individual external trainers and 33 per cent work with educational institutions.



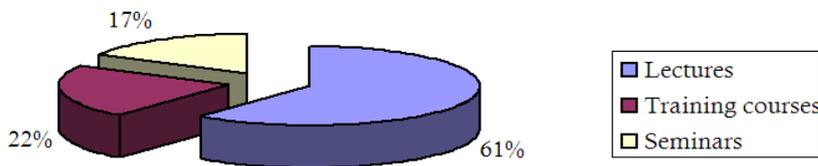
### Initiative taken by local governments in providing further education opportunities

In terms of initiative taken by local governments to provide further education, 15 per cent actively define their own needs and address educational institutions with specific requests. Another 31 per cent take initiative in case of current need specific to the situation. The highest proportion – as many as 54 per cent do not take any initiative beyond possibly responding to offers delivered to them by educational institutions.



### Educational events organized by local administration

Close to two thirds (61 per cent) of all educational events organized by local administration are lectures, followed by 22 per cent of training courses and 17 per cent of seminars.



## Survey conclusions

Civil servants working in local public administration are less motivated to increase their qualification through life-long education, partly because of the cultural custom in Slovakia to demonstrate one's education only by diplomas and certificates from formal schooling and partly because additional nonformal education brings no direct work-related benefits to person and mostly brings just personal satisfaction. It is still common in Slovakia to see schooling and work as two separate periods in life.

The collected data indicate local public administration often provides only necessary further education required by law to their staff. This may be due to insufficient funding but also due to the opinion common in this sector that training and education is something that a person should already bring to the job, in addition to work experience. It would appear it is still a rare strategy for local public administration to recruit employees with high potential and invest in their professional development. However, this is hardly a problem limited to local administration.

### 3.3.3 Knowledge and competences in demand by public administration in Slovakia

The Institute for Public Administration offers seminars, training course and language courses to a variety of target groups inside public administration. Analysis of topics of these educational opportunities gives us an idea of the range of topics in demand by public administration institutions.

#### **Select topics delivered to public administration institutions**

- Working with confidential information
- Structure of state administration in the country
- Legislative issues related to inspection in public administration
- Document and archives management
- Data protection legislation
- Public procurement
- State property administration
- Legislation dealing with state educational system
- Presentation skills – in Slovak and foreign languages (English, German, French)
- Project (cycle) management
- EU project proposal development
- Strategic planning
- Team work
- Partnership building
- Communication with public
- Mediation and conflict resolution skills
- Negotiation skills

- Communication skills
- Human resources development
- Leadership
- Effective management
- Training for first-point-of-contact employees
- Official correspondence
- Training for trainers
- Guidelines for using state language in official setting
- Computer and internet usage skills
- General overview of legislation for labor office staff
- Budgeting guidelines within public administration
- Accounting
- Financial control
- Tax legislation
- Crime prevention
- Time management
- Burn-out syndrome prevention
- Social competencies for specialized state institutions, Police, courts, etc.
- Assertiveness
- Facilitation of virtual meetings
- Diplomatic protocol
- Appearance in the media
- Handling complaints in public administration
- Out-of-court settlement in public administration
- Structure and relations of EU institutions
- Coordination of EU issues in Slovakia
- Implementation of EU legislation

It is evident that performance of the various functions of public administration requires wide range of technical knowledge and professional skills: from expert knowledge of legislation, through good communication skills in points of first contact with citizens, to presentation and language skills.

While there is much demand for expert knowledge best delivered in the form of lectures and seminars, there is also need for further skills development best done in the form of training courses.

## 4 Recommendations for Pilot Studies

This chapter brings some recommendations on the use of EUTOPIA software in the development of specific competencies in the pilot studies in Italy, France, and Slovakia.

### 4.1 Italy

<p><b>Description of the intended pilot study</b></p>	<p>The idea is to involve young professionals with Psychology Degree in a group study/research. People will face teenagers' uneasiness (every scenario will develop a different teenagers' problem, such as school drop-out, parents-sons' relationships, sexual orientation, violence, bulyn, ecc.) in order to train them in helping teenagers in trying to solve their own difficulties.</p>
<p>- <i>Primary users</i> (learners)</p>	<p>Young professionals with Psychology Degree (three-year degree) involved in projects related to teenagers' uneasiness.</p>
<p>- <i>Estimated number of primary users</i> in trials</p>	<p>40 (20 for each trial) subjects will be recruited within the University Department of Relational Scieinces through a public notice. Required features will be: 1) three-year Psychology Degree, 2) interest in teenagers' uneasiness, 3) computer knowledge.</p>
<p>- <i>Secondary users</i> (tutors/trainers) involved in trials</p>	<p>Trainers, e-tutors, university departments interested in using an on-line tool to train young professional in assessing and orientate people in the process of developping soft skills, such as communication abilities, teamworking, leadership. The aim is to shape professionals able to manage teen-agers' group dynamics.</p>
<p>- <i>Number of secondary users</i> involved in trials</p>	<p>We foresee a potential number of 40 subjects (among trainers, e-tutors, university professors, school teachers,</p>

	associations, ecc.).
<b>Specific key competencies required</b>	
- Competencies matching EUTOPIA methodological opportunities	ITC practice/experience, psychology degree, interest in group dynamics, soft skills, involvement in projects related to teen-agers' uneasiness and school drop-out.  Soft skills training: quality communication, active listening, empathy, creativity, mental flexibility, self control, authority, problem solving.
<b>Expected benefits</b> - for learners (participants of the trials)	Learners will develop their soft skills to face and interven in group dynamic situation, such as teen-agers' ones.
- Expected benefits for organizations employing learners	University department of Relational Sciences will benefit from this new kind of training in relation to its deep interest in group dynamics projects involving teen-agers.

### Required competencies:

Soft skills:

- quality communication
- active listening
- empathy
- creativity
- mental flexibility
- self control
- authority
- problem solving

### Competencies that can be tested in EUTOPIA:

- ITC practice/experience
- psychology degree

- interest in group dynamics
- soft skills
- involvement in projects related to teen-agers' uneasiness and school drop-out.

## 4.2 France

### Required competencies:

- Partnerships establishment
- Contract negotiations
- Recruitment
- Staff management
- Team work management
- Work instructions
- Organization of meetings
- Presentation of expositions and shows
- Team work supervision
- Conflict resolution
- Efficient listening
- Team working
- Networking
- Network management
- Stress and stressing environment management
- Meeting running
- Public speeches
- Report and minutes drafting
- Interviewing
- Project defending
- Workshop conception
- Running a workshop
- Knowledge of a team functioning
- Practice of group dynamics
- Generating feedback from team-members
- Teamwork continuity management
- Volunteers' management
- Working with amateurs
- Mediation situation analysis
- Open-house day organization
- Conception of assessment tools
- Coordination between different stages of an event
- Teamwork leading
- Rules enforcement

### 4.3 Slovakia

Competencies with a potential to be developed using EUTOPIA software in Slovakia include:

- Self-Presentation skills
- Team work
- Partnership building
- Communication with public via electronic communication channels
- Communication skills for electronic communication among offices
- Leadership
- Training for first-point-of-contact employees
- Time management
- Assertiveness
- Handling complaints in public administration
- Facilitation of virtual meetings

<p><b>Description of the intended pilot study</b></p>	<p>The intended pilot study will seek to introduce and further develop e-moderation as one of the tools for facilitating communication online. With the trend of strengthening use of internet, e-mail, chat and skype, leaders of teams are ever more often faced with the task of collecting, processing, and distributing information from their team members via electronic means. The skill of moderating discussions and facilitating decision-making processes using tools of electronic communication will become increasingly important. Also, responding to requests of citizens via e-mail becomes much more frequent of first-point-of-contact civil servants.</p>
<p>- <i>Primary users</i> (learners)</p>	<p>Public administration officials, civil servants responsible for first point of contact with citizens, leaders of teams</p>
<p>- <i>Estimated number of primary users</i> in trials</p>	<p>4 groups of five users in one trial</p>
<p>- <i>Secondary users</i> (tutors/trainers) involved in trials</p>	<p>Trainers, e-tutors, possibly colleagues of users</p>
<p>- <i>Number of secondary</i></p>	

users involved in trials	
<b>Specific key competencies required</b>	
- Competencies matching EUTOPIA methodological opportunities	Self-presentation skills, team work, electronic communication, handling of complaints in public administration, facilitation of virtual meetings
<b>Expected benefits for learners</b> (participants of the trials)	Learners will develop their communication skills in the online space and e-mail communication