



Work Package 3

Needs Analysis

Synthesis Transnational Report



**WP3 Needs analysis
Synthesis Transnational Report**

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1. Aims

This research seeks to:

- Identify the key competences in life skills training needs of vocational teachers across partner member countries to meet learner (particularly disadvantaged groups) and employer needs
- Identify the appropriate delivery models to suit the target groups
- Build on and update the research conducted by EUCIS

At Work Meeting 1, partners discussed the EUCIS research document (2004*) and the EC Basic Skills Working Group Skills for Life competences. Based on these discussions, definitions of the eight key competences were clarified and needs in each partner country started to be identified (Appendix 1 & 2). Partners also wanted to use the research to see how the key competences could be applied in the current economic and educational contexts, thereby updating the EUCIS research.

The following report builds on the EUCIS research, summarises the results of research in the five partner countries; identifies common strands and individual country needs and puts forward recommendations for developing the train the trainer resource pack (Work Package 4). Individual country reports were written after consultation between VET partners and social partners. Appendix 3 includes an overall summary of survey responses. Individual country reports and survey summaries can be found in Appendix 4. Finally, links with other work packages and next steps are stated.

*'Guide to Good Practice in Basic Skills in Lifelong Learning'

The European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning 2004, www.eucis.net

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2. Update from EUCIS research

The recent downturn in the global economy and its impact on employment levels, demonstrates the need for educational organisations to work closely with employers to meet changing needs. As the jobs market becomes more competitive, it will be even more important for individuals to demonstrate their competences in life skills to gain or retain employment. Attracting the unemployed to learning and retraining will require innovative techniques.

Increased levels of mobility and migration across Europe have resulted in a need for training and support for migrants to help them to be included in the society in which they live. Vocational teachers can use the defined key competences in courses to help meet the needs of these groups.

Rapid changes in technology and the way ICT is used for communication need to be taken into account by VET colleges when embedding key competences into vocational courses. Up to date resources and close employer links, for example, will be essential to be in tune with changes and requirements

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3. Questionnaire sample and research methodology

A total of 97 individuals from Italy, Spain, Lithuania, Cyprus and the UK responded with each country achieving the minimum quota of 15. The majority (75%) worked for vocational colleges, with 11% working for private training institutions and 9% universities (predominantly in Cyprus).

The majority of respondents (64%) were vocational teachers with 14% trainers of teachers and 11% specialist key skills teachers, in line with the project target teacher groups. The respondents worked in a wide range of vocational and some specialist areas.

The needs of the target learner groups (learners, the unemployed, employees and employers) identified in the project application document (page 27) were also sought through the responses.

VET partners used a range of research methods to write the country reports in addition to the questionnaire including desk research, telephone interviews, focus group discussions and consultations with social partners and other relevant organisations.

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4. Summary of research findings. Common training needs & best means of delivery to target groups.

4.1 Training needs

55% of respondents felt that all learners should be targeted with training in the defined key competences. The reason behind this was that everyone, whatever their current level or ability, can improve their key competences in life skills. Respondents also selected learners with specific needs (16%), people not in employment or training (13%) and employees (12%).

A variety of learner needs emerged (see Appendix 4 - individual country survey summaries for more detail) including the need to raise skill levels to gain vocational qualifications, build confidence and obtain work. The need for individual competences varied across partner countries and vocational courses.

49% of respondents felt that employer needs were taken into account, 33% did not and 18% did not know. The need for practical competence in the workplace was also identified to narrow the gap between employer needs and what is currently delivered.

Some respondents identified that teachers need to raise their skill levels in order to support learners and meet employer needs. It was also noted that teachers need training in identifying and managing a diverse range of learner needs. Learners may feel embarrassed about their level of competence and teachers need to identify individual learner needs and assess competence levels.

Whilst there is some training for new teachers in life skills predominantly in numeracy, literacy and ICT, the majority (53%) stated that no training was offered. Where there is training, it is often infrequent and at the discretion of teachers and colleges. Structured training was suggested as an integral part of initial teacher training and continuing professional development (CPD). 65% of respondents stated that there was a CPD system in all partner countries except Cyprus.

4.2 Delivery

Methods of delivery varied in partner countries. The UK and Lithuania, for example, have used specialists to deliver key competences in life skills, which has led to some vocational teachers feeling that these skills are an add-on and that they should be delivered by specialists. In Cyprus and Spain, on the other hand, the perception is that these skills are mainly delivered by vocational teachers. Both methods of delivery are used in Italy.

Teamwork between vocational teachers and specialists was seen as important in order to embed key competences effectively into vocational courses. Teamwork with employers was also seen as important to build a business and life skills culture, help learners relate to real life examples and meet employer needs more closely.

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Embedding key competences into vocational courses so that learners feel that the skills are relevant is felt to be an effective approach. Group tutorials for the 16-19 age group can be used effectively for embedding 'softer' competences. Training & refresher courses for teachers in the 'softer' skills such as communication and learning to learn were seen by some as a requirement. There was a feeling that the emphasis on particular competences will vary depending on the vocational course.

Problems around the delivery included lack of funding, time and skills to deliver key competences.

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5. Specific country needs

Vocational training in the Basque country is well developed and supported. Government sponsored training in 'emotional intelligence' was seen as particularly helpful to the development of key competences. There was a focus on learners with specific needs e.g. unqualified school leavers and sub tertiary students who were felt to be the target group. Migrants, with qualifications not officially recognised who need to adjust their competences to those required in their country of residence, were also mentioned. It was felt that there was an imbalance between qualifications and professional needs as key competences are not included in curriculum design. Clear direction and strategies were also needed to help teachers to adapt to their changing role.

In Lithuania, more modern equipment and materials, motivation and training systems for teachers were needed to enable key competences to be embedded into vocational teaching. The importance of foreign languages and the concept of lifelong learning were well accepted.

In Cyprus, links to local culture and real life examples were seen to be effective although there is no coordination for integrating life skills into the curriculum. There is no specific life skills training for new teachers nor is there a system for continuing professional development. The majority of respondents did not feel that employer needs were taken into account and that closer links are required

In Italy, there is a need to develop a business and life skills culture. More planning to help learners relate to employers' needs, more funding for apprenticeships and the inclusion of non profit and social organisations in vocational training schools were recommended.

In the UK, a national strategy for delivering and assessing functional skills will be introduced in 2009 as part of the core curriculum for 14-16 year olds. These include the 'harder' key competences i.e. numeracy, literacy, communications and ICT. This may impact on the potential for implementation of the 'softer' key competences in life skills.

The use of foreign languages is generally not seen as a requirement in the UK. This is because respondents believe that English is widely spoken. Learning a foreign language is no longer compulsory in secondary education from the age of 14. The need to learn English as a second language has seen a growth in demand due to increased mobility trends.

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6. Recommendations

- **Motivate and support teachers and learners**

We need to find ways to motivate teachers to see the benefits of embedding *all* key competences in life skills both for their learners and themselves. Support needs to be provided in terms of time and training for new and existing teachers. Key competences need to be explained in the broader context e.g. global economy, need for closer links with employers, migrants and rapid change in technology, so that teachers and learners can see their relevance and feel motivated to work towards achieving them. Learners should see the relevance of key competences within their courses and be given recognition for progress. Teachers should be willing to be assessed and encouraged to improve and update their own skills and use new teaching methods.

- **Focus on the individual learner**

Whilst all learners can benefit from improving key competences, teachers need training and support to identify and meet diverse learner needs. Teachers need to understand the social and cultural backgrounds of learners and find the most effective way to help them build key competences. Innovative teaching methods and resources to encourage learner participation should be included in all courses as well as ways of assessing learner progress.

- **Develop closer links with employers**

To meet the needs of employers, work placements for teachers and learners should be considered to ensure skills are up to date and practised. Closer links between vocational colleges and employers should be encouraged including course design and relevant practical content. Assessment of key competences should take place in the workplace wherever possible. Closer matching of needs and transferable skills should help to improve the employability of learners.

- **Lifelong learning**

The concept of an open and extended education in a learning society fits well with developing key competences. As the research has shown, all learners and teachers should be targeted as there is always scope to improve and develop.

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7. Links with other work packages and next steps

A comparison between the recommendations from this report and the draft standards developed in WP2 (Appendix 5) showed that there was a good match with the needs identified.

The need for a coordinated programme of training to help teachers to understand how each of the competences can be embedded into vocational courses comes across in the findings.

In developing the train the trainer pack (WP4), training guides (WP6) and examples of good practice (WP7), the needs from this report will be taken into account. We will also use the piloting phase (WP6) to help teachers find ways to meet diverse learner needs and the changing needs of employers.

There is a variance in approaches to teacher training across partner countries and the opportunities for incorporating key competences need further exploration in WP2 and WP9.

By contacting a range of vocational and specialist teachers across partner countries and raising awareness of this project's aims, we have started to work towards WP8 dissemination objectives.

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Appendix 1 Definitions of key competences in life skills

To understand what we mean by key competencies in life skills, we built on the work conducted by the EC Basic Skills Working Group and the European Civil Society Platform. The eight key competences were defined as:

- **Numeracy:** ability to use number skills at the level necessary to function socially and at work and to access education/training. Using mental and written maths to solve a range of problems in everyday situations. The emphasis is on process and activity as well as knowledge. Competence involves the ability and willingness to use mathematical modes of thought (logical and spatial thinking) and presentation (formulas, models, constructs, graphs/charts) at the relevant level.
- **Literacy:** ability to communicate through listening, speaking, reading and writing in one's own language. This ranges from the ability to recognise letters and read very simple items to 'functional literacy', the ability to communicate at the level necessary to function socially and at work and to access education and training.
- **ICT:** ability to use technology confidently and critically for work, leisure and communication. This includes the use of computers to retrieve, assess, store, produce, present and exchange information and to communicate and participate in collaborative networks such as the Internet.
- **Communication:** in the official or dominant language of the country in which one is a long term resident, for those for whom this is not the first language.
- **Interpersonal:** ability to participate in an effective and constructive way in social, education and working life. This includes teamwork and cultural awareness.
- **Use of foreign languages:** ability to communicate through listening, speaking, reading and writing in another language in an appropriate range of contexts (work, home, leisure, education and training) according to needs. Also includes skills such as intercultural understanding.
- **Work related:** job seeking (including CV writing, interview skills, evaluation of one's cultural and employment background and ability to consider it in different contexts), motivation and skills related to specific areas of employment. Also includes entrepreneurship e.g. ability to turn ideas into action, creativity, innovation, risk taking, planning and project management.
- **Learning to learn:** skills related to coping with everyday life, citizenship and participation in civil society leading to the capacity to attain personal fulfilment and social inclusion. This includes the ability to pursue and persist in lifelong learning, manage time for oneself and in groups, be aware of one's learning



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process and needs, solve problems, build on prior learning and life experiences, and apply knowledge and skills in a variety of contexts.

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Appendix 2 Extract from Work Meeting 1

WP3 group discussions needs analysis LIFE meeting 14.11.08 From research so far, what are the training needs of vocational teachers and the best means of delivery?

Group A

The key competences in life skills were discussed as:

- Application of numeracy
- Literacy
- Use of technology
- Communication with others
- Interpersonal: teamwork
- Use of foreign languages
- Work related
- Learning to learn

It was felt that more detailed definitions of each competence should be produced to incorporate the European reference framework with the EUCIS recommendations. The group focused on the best means of delivery of these key competences as follows:

- To new teachers via teacher training courses linking to the national and European qualification frameworks
- To new and existing teachers via regional authorities working to minimum requirements through short courses, for example
- To existing teachers via continuing professional development to develop their own key competences and keep them up to date with employer needs

It was felt that within each country the key decision and policy makers should be defined and then a dialogue established.

It was also felt that key competences in life skills would be embedded within every course qualification and should not be treated separately.

Group B

- **Literacy and numeracy** were not seen as a big problem in Cyprus and Lithuania. Special classes were run in Spain & the UK taught by vocational teachers but were seen to be very passive
- **Broader skills:** in Spain there are special government run classes for teachers in emotional intelligence; being run as part of vocational teaching as a pilot in one group. In Cyprus, ICT is well covered. Foreign language courses are separate (optional after age 16). There is funding from the UN to NGOs, etc for active citizenship. This could be fed into the VET sector.

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Citizenship is sometimes seen as for immigrants only but it can be of benefit to everyone. In Lithuania, the inclusion of broader skills is optional but happening more. Foreign languages are seen as a separate subject. Social development and the civil society involvement is seen as very new.

Teacher training: in Lithuania, the focus is on teaching the vocational subject with some awareness of what key competences are but not how to teach them. In Cyprus, there is a perception that life skills are already included but the reality is that these competences are not embedded, teachers do not see it as their role and they don't know how to embed these competences.

Summary of discussions:

- Key competences in life skills need to be explained within the broader context (e.g. closer links with employers, migrants, rapid change of technology) so that teachers and learners can see their relevance and feel motivated to work towards them.
- The focus may be on lower levels of ability and it is important for teachers to understand the social background of students to be effective.
- Teachers should keep as close as possible to employers and understand their needs; assessing key competences can take place in the workplace.
- Students need to see the benefits of building key competences within their courses and should have recognition for their progress.

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Appendix 3 Overall summary of survey responses

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this survey which investigates the training needs of vocational teachers when including skills for life competencies in their teaching. The research will be carried out in five European countries (Italy, Lithuania, Spain, Cyprus and the UK) as part of the LIFE project which is supported by EU Leonardo funding. The results will contribute towards the development of a train the trainer pack for use across Europe.

In this project, we are defining key competencies in life skills as:

- **Numeracy:** number skills socially, at work and in education/training;
- **Literacy:** ability to communicate through reading and writing;
- **ICT:** use of technology and the internet
- **Communication:** in the official or dominant language of the country
- **Interpersonal:** teamwork, cultural awareness
- **Use of foreign languages**
- **Work related:** job seeking and employment skills
- **Learning to learn:** citizenship, social inclusion and personal fulfilment

You may find that it helps to refer to this definition when answering the following questionnaire which should take about 10 minutes.

All responses will remain confidential and used only by the LIFE research project team. For each section, please record your views on current practice in your organisation and country. For further information on the LIFE project, go to our website www.life-keyskills.info

Thank you in advance for your help.

The LIFE project team

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INFORMATION ABOUT YOU AND YOUR ORGANISATION

1. How would you describe your organisation?

	% of total
a) Vocational college	75
b) Private training organisation	11
c) University	9
d) Other, please, specify.....	5

2. Please state your position in the organisation

	% of total
a) Vocational teacher	64
b) Trainer of teachers	14
c) Specialist key skills teacher	11
d) Other, please, specify...	11

3. If applicable, please state the vocational area in which you teach.

- [See individual country summaries for range of vocational areas](#)

4. Please state your country.

UK 25 ES 16 LT 20 IT15 CY 21 Total 97

TARGET LEARNER GROUPS

5. Based on the definition of life skills (see first page) and from your experience, which groups of learners should be targeted (you may tick more than one box)?

	% of total
a) Learners with specific needs (please state)... *	16
b) People not in employment or training	13
c) Employees	12
d) All learners	55
e) Other (please state)	4

6. What do you see as the specific needs of the groups you mention in question 5 in terms of developing skills for life?

[Please see individual country reports and summaries for range of responses](#)

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7. In your country, are employer needs taken into account in developing learners' skills for life competencies?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Don't know

% of total

49
33
18

Any comments...

Please see individual country reports and summaries for range of responses

8. How is skills for life teaching currently delivered in your country?

- a) by specialist skills for life teachers
- b) by subject specific vocational teachers
- c) other method of delivery (please state)

% of total

43
46
11

9. In your opinion, what are the problems around including skills for life in vocational teaching?

Please see individual country reports and summaries for range of responses

10. In your experience, what works well in terms of including skills for life in vocational teaching?

Please see individual country reports and summaries for range of responses

TEACHER TRAINING

11. How is vocational teacher training organised in your country?

- a) Course at vocational college
- b) University course
- c) Other (please state)

% of total

49
33
18

12. Do vocational teachers receive specific training in developing skills for life competencies?

- a) Yes (please state which skills)

% of total

43



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b)No	46
c)Don't know	11

13. Is there a system for continuing professional development for trained teachers?

	% of total
a) Yes	65
b) No	21
c) Don't know	14

14. Please use this space to write any other thoughts or ideas you have about how skills for life could be included in vocational teaching more effectively.

Please see individual country reports and summaries for range of responses

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Appendix 4 Country reports and survey summaries

Please see the LIFE website <http://www.life-keyskills.info/> for individual partner country reports and survey summaries under project progress – WP3 Needs analysis.

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Appendix 5

WP2 Draft standards

DRAFT VERSION 3 (6/12/08)

<p>PROFESSIONAL VALUES</p> <p>Vocational teachers:</p> <p>Appreciate the significance of embedding key competences for life skills into vocational courses from a global perspective, a national perspective, an organisational perspective and the perspective of the individual</p> <p>Recognise the need to update their own personal skills in these key competences on an ongoing basis</p> <p>Value the importance of lifelong learning and how this is underpinned by the key competences in life skills</p> <p>Appreciate the impact that continuous change has on the need for such key competences for both teachers and learners</p>

UNDERSTANDING AND KNOWLEDGE	PRACTICAL SKILLS
Understanding of the definition of the key competences in life skills	Be able to recognise the full range of life skills when teaching vocational subject
Awareness of a range of personal, social and cultural factors which affect how individuals gain key competences in life skills (including: attitudes in the wider society, emotional intelligence, inter cultural understanding, motivation, age, gender, socio-economic status, ethnicity and disability or learning difficulty).	Be aware of how individual personal factors may affect the achievement of life skills, and provide tailored support to assist in this process
Understanding of the barriers which learners may face in achieving these key competences and identify strategies to help them overcome these	Provide support to overcome barriers to achieving life skills
Understanding of the implications for the learner and the national economic status if they do not succeed in developing the key competences in life skills	Use this understanding to help motivate learners to develop life skills
Recognition of how and where key competences in life skills are an integral part of the vocational area.	Work with learners to ensure that they are aware of the significance of life skills in the vocational area

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Identification of how key competences in life skills are essential for the learner to achieve their qualification successfully	Work with colleagues with appropriate experience to ensure that life skills are addressed effectively
Ways in which individual learner needs and potential barriers can be identified in relation to key competences in life skills	Work with learners to identify individual needs and overcome identified barriers
The personal key competences in life skills required by the vocational teacher to teach that vocational area.	Ensure that personal key competences in life skills are of an appropriate level and regularly updated
The principles of assessment design in relation to key competences in life skills in the vocational area	Design and apply appropriate methods of assessment fairly and effectively to produce valid, reliable and sufficient evidence
Tools and methods for evaluating the effective use of activities which develop key competences in life skills in the vocational area	Evaluate the effectiveness of the delivery and assessment of key competences in life skills in the relevant vocational area.
Up to date knowledge of potential transferable skills and job opportunities in the vocational area through ongoing links with employers	Ensure that learners are aware of how transferable skills relate to employment opportunities, and that such transferable skills are identified clearly by the learners