

DISCOVERING

COMPETENCES:

Tools for your future

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Discovering Competences: Tools for your future

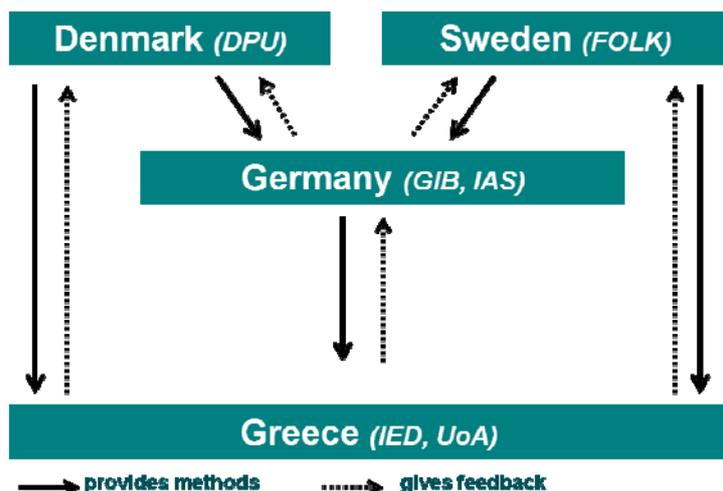
In many countries young people face problems when they enter the labour market. Especially young people with migration background or with insufficient educational records experience these problems. Competence assessment can be helpful for the integration into adequate support and training or into the labor market, but:

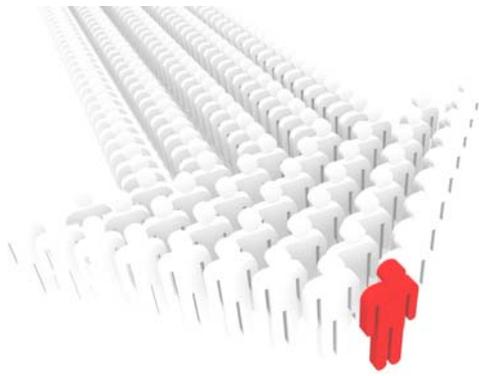
- ◇ Measurement of soft skills and intercultural competence is problematic
- ◇ Many procedures are language sensitive
- ◇ Wide range of competence assessment methods exists and almost no standardization or classification

Main Aims and Objectives of the Project

- ◇ Improving vocational and integration opportunities for disadvantaged young people, especially for those with a migration background
- ◇ Systematization of existing concepts of competence assessment
- ◇ Formulation of requirements for a suitable methodology
- ◇ Combination of different approaches into a holistic and transferable concept
- ◇ Creation of awareness of key players in education policy for implementation

Innovation Transfer and Partners





COMPETENCE: What is it?

'The capacity to use effectively experience, knowledge and qualifications'

(European Commission, 2001, Making a European area of lifelong learning a reality)

'the "proven/demonstrated" – and individual – capacity to use know-how, skills, qualifications or knowledge in order to meet usual – and changing – occupational situations and requirements'

(Cedefop, Björnavold and Tissot, 2000)



What caused the European Commission to focus on the **'COMPETENCE ASSESSMENT'**;

...relates to a list of facts and real problems which were more or less common to all EU countries:

- ◇ the traditional underevaluation of practical experience (due to the hegemony of knowledge dating from a time when formal knowledge, especially academic knowledge, was rare),
- ◇ growing scarcity of experience within the companies workforce (due to mass dismissals of elder workforce in the last years and growing percentages of young workforce coming from schools/universities),
- ◇ tendencies of erosion of existing workforce categories and of their classical biographies (due to accelerated technical and organisational change making traditional qualifications obsolete as well as to economic crisis creating growing employment problems).

SOFT SKILLS

sometimes known as "people skills," are personal attributes that enhance an individual's interactions, job performance and career prospects. Unlike hard skills, which tend to be specific to a certain type of task or activity, soft skills are broadly applicable.

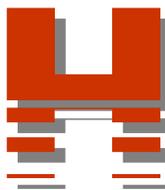
HARD SKILLS

are specific, teachable abilities that may be required in a given context, such as a job or university application. It's often said that hard skills will get you an interview but you need soft job.



- ◇ optimism
- ◇ common sense
- ◇ responsibility
- ◇ a sense humor
- ◇ integrity

- ◇ time-management
- ◇ motivation
- ◇ empathy
- ◇ leadership
- ◇ communication
- ◇ good manners
- ◇ sociability
- ◇ the ability to teach



- ◇ facility with spreadsheets
- ◇ typing
- ◇ mathematical ability
- ◇ proficiency with software applications

- ◇ operating machinery
- ◇ software development
- ◇ speaking a foreign language
- ◇ calculus



Principal **CHALLENGES** concerning the assessment of non-formal competences

...there are principal challenges concerning the assessment of non-formal competences, such as the validity and reliability of the related methodologies but it is time to come to some satisfactory solutions. Many researchers have already started this debate. According to Wolf (1995, 1998) four features are affiliated with competence-based measurement and assessment:

(a) the emphasis on outcomes, specifically, multiple outcomes, each distinctive and

separately considered;

(b) the belief that these can and should be specified to the point where they are clear and transparent; that assessors, assessees and third parties should be able to understand what is being assessed, and what should be achieved;

(c) the decoupling of assessment from particular institutions or learning programmes;

(d) the idea of real-life performance essentially in non-academic fields.

Uses of Competence Assessment

The professional competence accreditation processes offer potential benefits in the following areas (CCOO PV, 2005a):

- getting a job: the formal recognition of competences should facilitate the search for work, since it provides an objective indicator of an individual's professional skills and abilities;
- promotion at work: as an open mechanism this system facilitates the ongoing acquisition of competences and ever greater recognition of qualifications;
- ongoing training: creating a system which incorporates within itself a comprehensive training system fosters, guides and allows workers constantly to be in an active state of ongoing training;
- formal recognition of informal learning: this point is crucial especially for people with low qualification levels (low and semi-skilled workers), for (long-term) unemployed people, for disadvantaged social groups or for migrants, who could be the greatest beneficiaries, as it paves the way for the recognition of competences developed in the workplace and/or via other non-formal and informal routes.

The situation in GREECE

A large number of adults in Greece have, through practising a profession, gained a variety of professional abilities and competences (knowledge, skills and behaviour) equivalent to, or greater than, the abilities that graduates from formal training and education levels/schools have obtained. These adults do not have formal training titles to accredit the level of their competences.

MOTIVES: why recognize non-formal competences?

- ◇ To reduce unemployment (14.3% in 2011, OECD) , increase flexibility and work supply.
- ◇ Social justice: those with non-formal skills should be equal to those who have recognised degrees in the contexts of employment and access to further training.
- ◇ Better absorption of those with non-formal learning by the labour market.
- ◇ Increase in productivity and the potential of the labour force.
- ◇ Specialisation.
- ◇ Establishment of a professional licence system.

RESULTS: what expected outcomes?

- ◇ Structured dynamic link between training provision and labour market needs.
- ◇ New job openings and greater job prospects.
- ◇ Recognition of abilities according to needs of the specific sectors/jobs with the participation of relevant social partner bodies.
- ◇ Opportunities for development of the person (human resources) inside the enterprise according to their effectiveness.
- ◇ Motivation (individuals) to self-improvement through continuous learning.
- ◇ Prosperity in society, the economy and business.

Agreement and CONFLICT

..the current accreditation system in Greece – concerning the recognition of “vocational” competences- is still far behind many other EU countries.

Greece so far has focused only on “hard skills” which apply to technically based branches and professional areas and concern the workplace context. There are many more professions and horizontal skill areas (transsectoral), including a range of tacit competences, where non-formal learning and experience needs to be recognised.

To date, there is no coordinated, overt strategy for the development of a system of identification, assessment and recognition of non-formal competences in Greece. It is

becoming more and more understood that competences have to be recognised in a broader way in the framework of global, organizational changes in order to benefit both the employers and the employees -especially in this country where unemployment under the age of 30 has risen to the percentage of 28,29% (OAED,2011).

The employability of young people in Greece could be enhanced through ‘competence assessment’ –a good reason for raising political awareness towards the ‘competence’ concept that already preoccupies many EU countries.



◇ GIB - Society for Innovation Research and Consulting (Germany)

◇ Danmarks Pædagogiske Universitetsskole, Aarhus Universitet (DPU, Denmark)

◇ Institute of Entrepreneurship Development (Greece)

◇ Folkuniversitetet vid Lunds Universitetet (Sweden)

◇ University of the Aegean (Greece)

◇ Senate of Berlin, Department for Integration, Labour and Social Affairs



The Institute of Entrepreneurship Development aims to strengthen and promote entrepreneurial spirit and mindset to all countries and citizens, especially youth. Our vision is to create an environment that promotes entrepreneurship, research and the entrepreneurial spirit of businesses, creating long-lasting and fundamental relations with society and the overall academic community. Our vision is anthropocentric one of our primary concerns so to provide assistance to citizens and disadvantaged groups to improve their place in society, promoting social inclusion and cohesion.

The brochure was created by the Institute of Entrepreneurship Development for the needs of the project «Discovering Competences: Tools for your future».

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