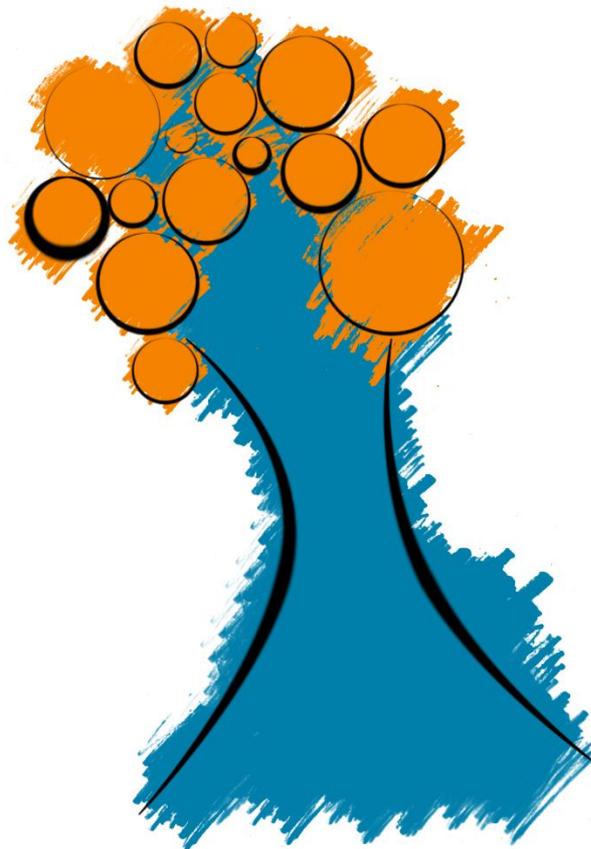

A Competency Framework for:
Staff who are working to address the
“culture clash” of expectations between
employers, young people and “street” culture



Lifelong
Learning
Programme

Foreword

This Competency Framework has been produced by the 'Big Bang' Partnership – a project funded by the Leonardo da Vinci initiative within the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Union. The Big Bang Partnership consists of a group of organisations from different countries in Europe - Austria, Iceland, Netherlands, Spain and the UK - which has been exploring the 'culture clash' between the norms of 'street culture' that young people encounter and the expectations that employers place on young people.

This clash is of particular concern at a time of high youth unemployment in many parts of Europe. The partners undertook a Comparative Research Study in the first project phase, and the results of this work demonstrated that while the overwhelming majority of young people are eager to work, employers struggle to find young people with the skills they need for their companies. The Big Bang project aimed at "building the bridge" between the work-based culture and the culture of social exclusion caused by the low ambition of young people, including those from marginalised groups in certain urban contexts, that are at risk of becoming involved in anti-social and negative peer-group behaviour. This can further result in "gang" culture and a risk of offending as a natural behaviour.

As part of its work, the Big Bang partnership has identified some essential competences needed to face these specific challenges. There are many reasons for the high levels of youth unemployment across Europe and the 'culture clash' is just one part of that. However, the cause and effect of high youth unemployment does include the different expectations that can exist between employers and young people. With this in mind, we hope that this Competency Framework for VET professionals and others working in this area can form a practical guide to the skills, knowledge and competences that are needed by those who are working to make effective interventions in this area.

Who is this Competency Framework for?

This Competency Framework is intended as a resource to support VET professionals when working with marginalised young people. It details knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours to be developed in the career continuum of a VET professional. Some training programmes equip VET professionals with technical competences and skills that they need to practice, but just as importantly, VET professionals also need to both understand and commit to continuing improvement of personal competences.

The target groups for this Competency Framework include anyone who is working to connect young unemployed people and employers, and in particular:

- Career Advisers,
- Human Resources Managers,
- Youth workers,
- Teachers,
- Coaches,
- VET and Training Practitioners.

The ultimate beneficiaries of this Competency Framework are those young people, many of who are marginalised, exposed to the culture of social exclusion and/or participating in anti-social and negative peer-group behaviour, who are increasingly finding themselves excluded from the labour market.

What is this Competency Framework based on?

In order to identify tools and methods for VET practitioners and EIAG two programmes have been taken as a groundwork for this project:

- the YES programme for Employers developed by die Berater® in Austria and
- the Dare2Achieve Programme developed by WoTs Associates in the United Kingdom.

Furthermore, this document has been based on academic research carried out by Ilias El Hadiou of Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands.

Apart from the above mentioned influential references, the project team drew on:

- A comparative and analysis study in the Big Bang project,
- A review of the literature on Competency Framework in the VET environment,
- Consultation with Public Employment Service employees,
- Semi-structured interviews,
- Advice from the project partners,
- Advice from focus and reference groups,
- Feedback from focus groups,
- Review of key documents produced in the project,
- The European Reference Framework for Lifelong Learning.

How should this Competency Framework be used?

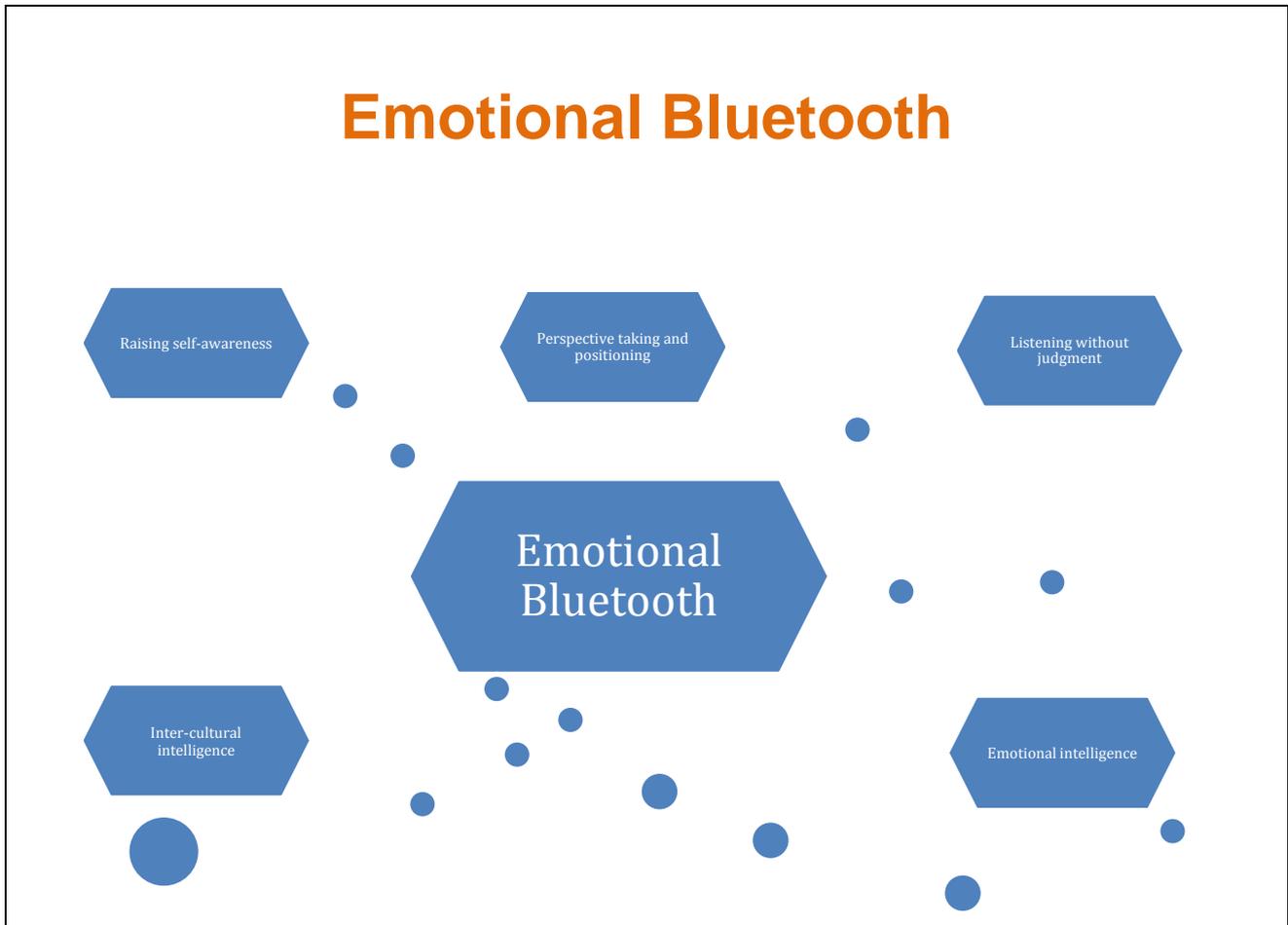
The Competency Framework is divided into two sections: the “Emotional Bluetooth” and the “World of Work”. Each section consists of concrete competences which are further being divided into knowledge, skills and attitudes required. According to the European Reference Framework for Lifelong Learning competences are defined as “a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the context” and it is this format that we have following in this Framework too.

What is the Big Bang Competency Framework?

This is a list of competences produced by the Big Bang Partnership, which has been exploring the “culture clash” between the norms of “street culture” and the expectations that employers place on young people. It is developed to master complex situations and tasks successfully when working with the factors behind the “culture clash” of expectations between young people and employers. The Competency Framework refers to diversity and the need to be culturally competent. Competences are set according to the needs of marginalised young people with fewer opportunities. The competences have been designed to recognise that the practitioners are working in efficient and effective ways, to ‘build a bridge’ between young people who accessing initial Vocational Education Training (VET), Educational, Information, Advice and Guidance (EIAG) and employment. Using effective employability programmes and the vocational and professional development of methodologies and material, the outcome has been to explore the factors that contribute to producing a holistic solution to this culture clash and to equip VET and EIAG professionals to more effectively assist these young, marginalised people. When taking the behaviour and beliefs of marginalised groups of young people into consideration many differences occur that need to be addressed in order to increase the chance of employment and to give an answer to employer’ expectations and the vocational, educational and training work force. Young marginalised people are influenced very much by their culture which shapes their priorities, actions and behaviours in different environments. The Big Bang recognises the difference in assumptions, cultural values and norms and encourages those young people and employers to open up to each other and close what can be a chasm between young people who want to enter the job market and employers.

Competences needed to face the “culture clash”?

We have identified a number of competences which make a big difference when integrated into the daily approach of the practitioner. Here are the two main overall sections identified in the Big Bang Partnership to be able to cope with the challenges when working with young marginalised people and facing “culture clash”. Within these sections we have identified competences that are needed to address those challenges.



Emotional Bluetooth

VET professionals working with marginalised young people and facing “culture clash” need to draw upon their values, strengths and abilities to deliver high standards of quality in teaching.

This requires VET professionals to demonstrate competence in the areas of:

- Self-awareness by being able to learn from experiences and of assumption, values and principles,
- Engaging with young people from a range of backgrounds,
- Respect young person’s values combined with ability to challenge negative attitudes and values constructively,
- Managing themselves and managing emotions of others while considering the needs and priorities of others,
- Inspiring and motivating young people,
- Acting with integrity in an open, honest and ethical way.

Emotional Bluetooth is the ability to connect and engage with young people. Teachers, advisers and trainers respond directly to the way the young person acts and behaves. The ability to connect with their minds in a deeply personal way. An emotional link must be established between the young person and the mentor/teacher that show in a professional way an interest in the young person’s life and perspectives. Authenticity and respect enhance interaction and connection with the young person and enables to step outside their ‘comfort zone’ and change their approach and perspectives with regards to their skills, knowledge and attitudes towards employment and career planning and development. Emotional Bluetooth competence results from the individual’s cognitive ability to challenge, to motivate and to direct the young person while demonstrating authority and boundaries in the world of work with obligations and rights connected. Acting as role models with appropriate positioning and offering and commanding respect.

Perspective taking and positioning

Competences

1. The ability to maintain a professional objectivity "distance from their own role"
2. The ability to show empathy and to act in different settings and situations
3. The ability to be understanding

Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
Demonstrate knowledge of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity to reflect upon culture clash situations Capacity to take actions in critical situations Capacity to adopt appropriate perspectives 	Demonstrate the ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Act in an objective way Deal with different ways of thinking and speaking 	Demonstrate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ability to interpret behaviour from young marginalised people Acceptance of uncertainty Respect for the widest variety of people

Listening without judgement

Competence

1. Able to listen effectively to marginalised young people
2. Able to interact effectively with marginalised young people

Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
Demonstrate knowledge of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicative awareness The perspectives and practices of interaction 	Demonstrate the ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn from listening Interact with young people facing the culture clash Interpreting cultures and relating to different cultures 	Demonstrate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Willingness to suspend judgment Willingness to value diversity and different point of views Willingness to learn about other cultures

Raising Self-Awareness

Competence

1. Able to encourage self-discipline and willingness in young people to cope with daily tasks, changing requirements and stressful situations
2. Able to encourage young people to recognise situations and take remedial action to pre-empt any situation where it is likely to get out of control
3. Able to take appropriate actions

Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
Demonstrate knowledge of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A stressful situation: why does it occur and to what extent Learn from stressful situations Minimise impact of stressful situations in the future Balance and priorities Working under stress 	Demonstrate the ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify actions to reduce stress Communicate openly and honestly Share responsibilities Delegate tasks Organise and display appropriate behaviours Empower others 	Demonstrate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyse working behaviours and understand why a stressful situation occurs Which personal interests cannot and won't be served Respect for diversity amongst others Seek feedback from others Correct attitude towards work

Emotional intelligence

Competence

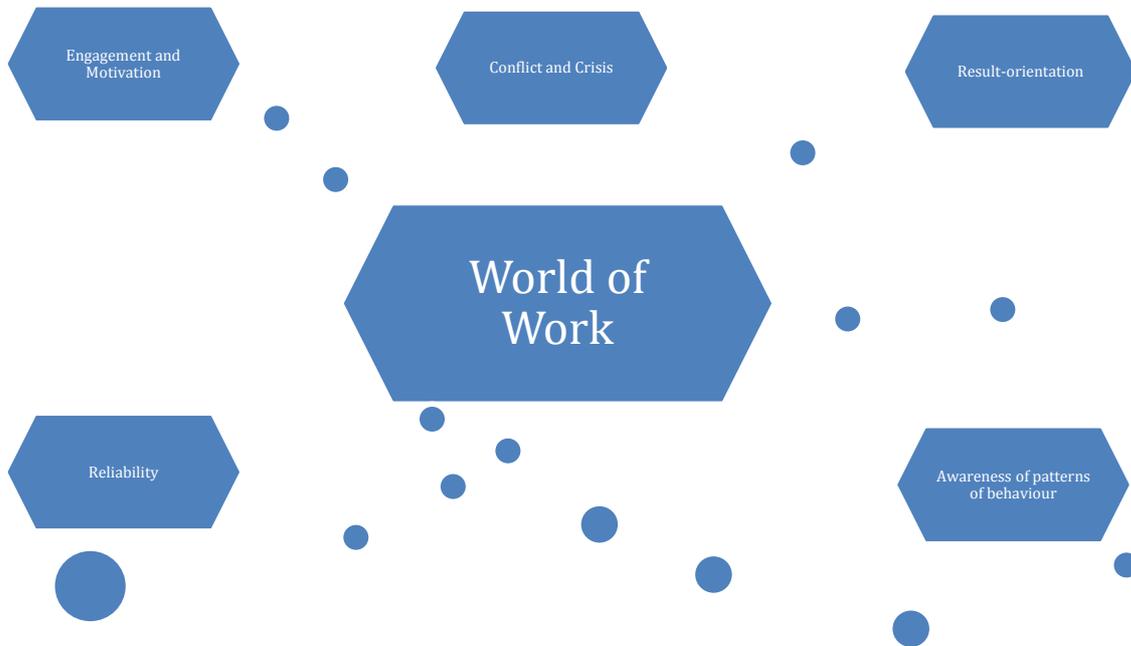
1. The ability to perceive, control and evaluate emotions
2. The ability to engage young people effectively
3. The ability to perceive, reason, understand and manage emotions

Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
Demonstrate knowledge of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decoding unspoken feelings Enhancing self-awareness Appreciating needs and values of young people Understanding the world of work 	Demonstrate the ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceive emotions Manage emotions 	Demonstrate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding Openness Share emotions

▪ Understanding the cultural clash		
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(Inter)Cultural intelligence		
Competence		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ability of cultural self-awareness and culture-specific knowledge and curiosity about other cultures 2. The ability to understand the cultural norms and patterns of behaviour that influence young people from minority communities 3. The ability to relate directly or indirectly to male and female roles in the family or different traditions 4. The ability to connect on a personal level with young people 		
Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
Demonstrate knowledge of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cultural awareness ▪ Communication ▪ Decoding unspoken feelings ▪ Enhancing self-awareness ▪ Appreciating needs and values of young people ▪ Handling conflicts ▪ Adaptability ▪ Flexibility 	Demonstrate the ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Listen ▪ Interact ▪ Withhold judgment ▪ Show empathy ▪ Adopt a tolerant perspective ▪ Negotiate ▪ Negotiation skills ▪ Demonstrate cultural skills, values and norms 	Demonstrate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Respect ▪ Willingness to learn from other cultures ▪ Curiosity ▪ Cultural mindfulness

World of Work



World of Work

This refers to the ability of VET professionals when working with young people to develop an awareness of the requirements of employers in specific sectors. It is the willingness and commitment to helping young people succeed in the world of work. A prime reason for young marginalised people being held back is a lack of skills relevant to employers in the workplace. In the world of work we focus on competences needed for VET professionals that can support young people to find the workplace they want, deserve and can fulfil employers' expectations. Experience of successfully engaging in the world of work and the ability to draw on that experience to inspire young people. It is also a relevant balance between 'comfort' and 'stretch' zones in young people. The ability of VET professionals to ask meaningful questions is essential to foster learning processes. It is also important to give feedback both in behavioural and technical context. Understanding employers in all shapes and sizes, small, medium and large from different sectors, private, public and industrial sectors and address their expectations is a big challenge for young people. Employers lack the skills needed for their business, in particular, in young people. VET professionals can fill the chasm in the culture clash and are able to prepare young people for the job or apprenticeships.

They are able to encourage young people and stress the importance of world of work for the future:

- Employers' expectations and requirements
- Employment readiness
- Shortage of skills faced by employers
- Possible obstacles that young people face on their journey to employment
- Spoken communication
- Predictable types of conflicts
- Approach to use to resolve conflicts
- Agreed solution
- Unspoken expectations
- Social responsibility
- Code of ethics and expectations at the workplace ethic
- Working environment
- Opportunity
- Job duties
- Difference between small and large enterprises and skills needed for the workplace

- Demand and supply

Engagement and Motivation

Competence

1. VET professionals who work with young people caught in the culture clash are able to make young people believe in what they are doing. Engagement and motivation occur on an honest basis and aim to create a good working environment. This results in increased productivity and discipline by young people.
2. Professionals are aware of the person's skills, knowledge and attitudes and cultural influences to be able to catch up with each individual.
3. Ability to encourage the expression of different points of view and develop active listening skills.

Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
Demonstrate knowledge of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The requirements, circumstances and interests of all parties involved ▪ The documentation of lessons learned ▪ Culture with pride and achievements ▪ The value of regular feedback ▪ Accountability ▪ Verbalisation ▪ Visualisation 	Demonstrate the ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Appreciate, communicate and document achievements ▪ Include the interests of all parties ▪ Define win-wins and incentives ▪ Work in a team ▪ Empower and engage 	Demonstrate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The ability to respect boundaries ▪ Respect for diversity amongst others ▪ Openness for feedback from others

Reliability

Competence

1. The ability of VET professionals to accept diversity as normal in young marginalised group and to speed them up
2. Guarantee to deliver what has been promised on time and to an agreed standard
3. The ability to demonstrate responsibility, confidence and openness

Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
Demonstrate knowledge of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adequate communication ▪ Closing agreements ▪ Time management ▪ Information management 	Demonstrate the ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify risks and opportunities ▪ Identify risks and opportunities 	Demonstrate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Respect for diversity ▪ Analytical perspectives ▪ Integrity and commitment to appropriate professional standards and norms

Conflict and Crisis

Competence

1. The ability to handle arising conflicts and crisis in particular in the world of work
2. The ability to develop strategies and solutions
3. The ability to predict possible problems and to develop a good risk analysis and scenario on how to handle any foreseeable crisis
4. The ability to develop a good working environment including collaboration, compromise and prevention of conflicts
5. The ability to define solution binding for all involved parties

Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
Demonstrate knowledge of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adequate and effective communication ▪ Communicate the agreed solution ▪ Avoiding prejudice and discrimination ▪ Handling predictable types of conflicts ▪ Time management ▪ Information management ▪ Listening without judging ▪ Positioning ▪ Decision making 	Demonstrate the ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Critical thinking ▪ Analyse beliefs and actions towards others ▪ Recognize the complexity of arguments ▪ View from different perspectives ▪ Review beliefs and understandings ▪ Analyse different expectations of employers and young people ▪ Identify risks and opportunities ▪ Interpersonal skills 	Demonstrate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Openness ▪ Understanding ▪ Willingness to solve the problem ▪ Approach to resolve the conflict

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engagement ▪ Reflection 		
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Result orientation		
Competence		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ability to develop openness to change 2. The ability to support young people in overcoming barriers between the culture and work 3. The ability to motivate young people to work towards set goals 		
Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
Demonstrate knowledge of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Definition of results ▪ Continuous improvement ▪ Communication of good performance ▪ Efficiency and effectiveness ▪ Management of different expectations 	Demonstrate the ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reflect on own behaviour and its impact on others ▪ Improve on own behaviour and be a role model for others 	Demonstrate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Flexibility ▪ Engagement ▪ A willingness to seek out feedback

Awareness of patterns of behaviour		
Competence		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ability of VET professionals to develop mindfulness toward the emotional state of young people in order to avoid procrastination and unproductive or destructive habits 2. The ability to break old patterns and develop new ones that need time and effort 3. The ability to reflect with young people what they did in their past and why and try to change and develop action plans 4. The ability to recognise misunderstandings and destructive behaviour and to change it into the productiveness 5. The ability to be in the state they need to be can be reached with visualization techniques and anchoring successful moments filled with confidence 		
Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
Demonstrate knowledge of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identification of old limiting habits ▪ Identification of patterns to be replaced ▪ Analysis of the 'comfort' zone and why change can be seen as risky and scary 	Demonstrate the ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Take responsibility ▪ Risk taking ▪ Change 	Demonstrate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Change of old patterns ▪ Adaptation of new behaviour

Relation between the Big Bang Competency framework and European reference systems

The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) has been developed to make national qualifications more comparable and transferable between different European countries. It promotes mobility of professionals through better recognition of qualifications across Europe. Qualification profiles of a profession are described along a common European reference framework.

The system describes qualifications on the basis of learning outcomes along the key terms, knowledge, skills and competence. There are eight levels of qualification, ranging from basic (Level 1) to advanced (Level 8).

In due course, the EQF system will no doubt be applicable to the qualification profiles of the VET professionals addressed by Big Bang, i.e. career advisers, HR managers, youth workers, teachers, coaches, VET practitioners. It must, however, be noted that National Qualifications Framework (NQF) for these professions are only starting to emerge in some countries and are still far from being fully elaborated to be aligned at the EQF level. In most countries, these pedagogic professions do not have regular, uniform qualification pathways, and standardisation is only slowly

starting. Moreover, the application of EQF to most professional fields still struggles to incorporate non-formal and informally-acquired competencies, especially as far as personal and social competencies are concerned.

The Big Bang competency framework contains a number of personal and social competencies within professional fields not yet mapped by the EQF system. It is, however, designed to fit into an emerging EQF classification by largely following the EQF distinction between knowledge, skills and competence (“knowledge” – “skills” – “attitudes”).

The **European Reference Framework of Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (ERF)** describes eight competencies European citizens should strive to enhance for the sake of employability full participation in society and personal fulfilment.

The competencies described in the European Big Bang competency framework fit into several of the European key competencies, thus:

Big Bang competency framework	European Key Competences Framework
Perspective taking and positioning	Communication in the mother tongue
Listening without judgement	Communication in the mother tongue
Raising Self-Awareness	Communication in the mother tongue
Emotional intelligence	Communication in the mother tongue Social and civic competences
(Inter)Cultural intelligence	Cultural awareness and expression
Engagement and Motivation	Social and civic competences
Reliability	Social and civic competences
Conflict and Crisis	Social and civic competences
Result orientation	Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship
Awareness of patterns of behaviour	Communication in the mother tongue

Sources:

- IPMA Competences Baseline, https://www.p-m-a.at/pma-download/cat_view/71-icb-ocb-pm-baseline-und-pm-basic-syllabus.html
- Competenzia, www.competenzia.de
- Youth Partnership: Mapping of competences needed by youth workers to support young people in international learning mobility projects: http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/documents/EKCYP/Youth_Policy/docs/Mobility/Research/32_Mapping_competences_needed_by_youth_workers_to_support_young_people_in_international_learning_mobility_projects.pdf
- Comparative research study of the Big Bang Partnership
- Youth Employment Support (YES): <http://www.youth-employment-support.eu/>
- Dare2Achieve: <http://www.dare2achieve.co.uk/>
- Ilias El Hadioui, Erasmus University, Rotterdam, <http://www.eur.nl/fsw/staff/homepages/elhadioui/>

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