Report on Life Skills Approach in Europe

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December 2017

The Life Skills for Europe project partners:

European Association for the Education of Adults – EAEA (Europe)

Dansk Folkeoplysnings Samråd – DAEA (Denmark)

The Learning and Work Institute – L&W (UK)

Dafni Kentro Epaggelmatikis Katartitis – DAFNI KEK (Greece)

Slovenian Institute for Adult Education – SIAE (Slovenia)

Executive Summary

The PIAAC results have shown an alarming lack of basic skills across Europe, one in five has problems with basic reading and numeracy; one in four has very low digital skills. There is a need across Europe to provide adequate and appropriate courses for this target group and to the increasing numbers of newcomers to Europe. In order to empower disadvantaged groups of adults to escape from the low skills trap, a more comprehensive approach to learning should be adopted. It has been generally acknowledged that the majority of them need a diverse range of skills to engage with and participate in learning as families, in their communities and workplaces. In some countries, adult education providers have started initiatives to broaden the concept and have adopted a more holistic approach to basic skills provision.

The project Life Skills for Europe (LSE) is a two-year KA2 Erasmus + project consisting of a consortium of five project partners (the EAEA, Denmark, Greece, Slovenia and the United Kingdom) that strives at theorizing this methodology and up-scaling it to the European level. Its main objective is, among others, to improve basic skills provision in Europe but at the same time to prove that the concept of life skills exceeds the basic skills concept, since it promotes more than just a basis for survival. The LSE project has shown that obtaining life skills enables a variety of benefits for an individual and for society.

This Report on Life Skills Approach in Europe represents the result of work in the first phase of the LSE project, which includes work on the definition, investigation of the understanding of life skills in the partner countries and at the European level, and discovering the practices and tools already used in the partner countries.

In the first chapter of the report, terminological analysis and research of the scope of the life skills concept in European practice is being described, followed by a review of existing information and data on life skills that link to the field of life skills from various perspectives (work, every-day life, etc.) and levels (local, national, global, etc.). At the end of this chapter, the glossary of selected key terms is included in order to clarify the common understanding of life skills.

The second chapter is based on interviews with professionals in the field of adult education from European and more global perspectives. The enquiry into the life skills landscape presents the understanding, comparisons and practical experiences on life skills that have already been successful in diverse environments in Europe.

The next two chapters of the report involve collections of the cases of good practices and innovative tools contributed by project partners and that are already implemented in Europe and beyond. They are highlighted by some important notions of practising life skills approaches. For example, learner-centred approaches that focus on the current needs of adults and impacts the self-esteem and motivation of learners, attention to the positive learning experience and change, the practitioners' attitudes and their engagement to teaching, etc.

The chapter on the main findings in the Report summarises the project's understanding of life skills, extrapolates the key findings from collections of good practices and innovative tools, and clearly states the benefits of obtaining life skills. It links better life skills with social and civic engagement, self-efficacy, and employability for an individual. And from a wider perspective, it assures coexistence in democratic society, inclusion for all and active citizenship in a multicultural society.

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General introduction

This report is a result of the work in the first phase of the project Life Skills for Europe (LSE). The project aims to improve the basic skills provision in Europe by explaining, further developing and upscaling the life skills approach. It fosters a common understanding of the benefits of life skills for adult education across Europe. Through a conceptually coherent approach, the project aims to clarify the understanding of life skills among readers in the professional field. By encouraging the understanding and practical use of the definition of life skills, inspiringly described in this report, our aim is to provide an insight and vision of life skills as building blocks for individuals' empowerment and society transformation to individuals, providers, researchers and policy-makers.

The creation of a definition and common understanding of the concept of life skills was a joint journey of project partnership and began at the first project meeting in February 2017 in Copenhagen. The partners were invited to share their own visions and understanding of life skills in their theory and practice. The list of key terms on life skills was composed on the basis of discussion among project professionals and also as a result of a small-scale survey among professionals outside the LSE project group. However, it was agreed that a small-scale survey would be conducted in partner countries among researchers, policymakers and adult education practitioners, and that desk research through a literature review would complement the data analysis from the survey.

The enquiry on the understanding of life skills in the partners' countries was carried out in the spring of 2017 using the instrument 'Guideline questions for terminology analysis'. The instrument was presented to respondents in the form of an interview or questionnaire. There were altogether 24 responses to the guideline questions for the life skills terminology analysis; partners from Greece, the United Kingdom, Denmark and Slovenia provided responses from carefully selected and experienced researchers and practitioners working in the area of adult education, however the EAEA collected responses from individual professionals and researchers working in adult education on a European level. In this way, the analysis and conclusions embraced not only national but also European perspectives on life skills. The questionnaire enabled some unique and in-depth qualitative analysis of the present state of life skills in the partner's countries from European and even more global perspectives (Hanemann, Popović). The responses to the questions were studied using multistage qualitative analysis in order to identify any common characteristics that were used, which were elaborated for the construction of the life skills model.

In this report, we summarize the terminological analysis and research into the scope of the life skills concept in European practice. We also briefly illustrate the relevant literature, where important parts regarding life skills are being described.

In the chapter Enquiry into the life skills landscape, we have deepened into comparisons and experiences that have already been successful in diverse environments across Europe, and thus can be a baseline for further research and development of the concept. We mention some of the key principles that have been observed through analysis of good practice and that are constituent parts of the LSE concept: taking into account the current needs of adults, attention to the positive learning experience and change, and improved self-esteem leading to greater motivation for change.

An important contribution to this report is the set and description of good practices and tools, which should have practical value for all those who want to work in the field of life skills, and to develop them.

This report, through descriptions of good practices and tools, also points out the potential and the important role of well-equipped educators in the process of providing life-skills to learners. Thus, the report represents the knowledge base to recognize the importance of the development of life skills in teachers, educational experts and others in the field of adult education and professional training.

1 Terminological analysis of the definition of 'life skills' and a review of the relevant literature

One of the main missions of the LSE project has been the creation of a common and clear definition of life skills in the European context to be used in the adult education community in Europe. The intention was to provide such an understanding of the concept of life skills that will be open to constant and inevitable changes in social, cultural and environmental milieus, and easy to understand and implement among adult education practitioners, policymakers and learners. And also to be used for explanatory purposes for the indicative framework for life skills provision. It is clear that creating such a definition is a challenging and ambitious task in a given timeframe; therefore, we proposed and implemented a comprehensive but manageable qualitative research methodology that enabled the step by step collection of the relevant data on the rich and promising concept of life skills. The process of distilling the understanding the life skills concept within the LSE project is also outlined in this chapter.

The inputs from the small-scale survey on terminology analysis are included in this and the following chapters of this report as operationalisations of the concepts of life skills in different contexts and for different purposes. They are very valuable because they represent perspectives on the present living concepts of life skills in adult education theory and practice and present new insights into the theoretical basis for the definition in the partners' countries that paved the grounds for the project final proposal of the definition of life skills for Europe.

1.1 Explaining the term 'life skills for Europe'

Qualitative analysis of the guideline questions and the literature review completed within the LSE project revealed that there is a plethora of understanding and concepts of life skills. The most

common features of different definitions of the term life skills are the attempts to define it through various sets of skills and knowledge that adults have to obtain during their lifetime in order to be able to live and work in contemporary societies. In addition, many definitions include lists of necessary personal characteristics, behaviours and attitudes. Based on the meticulous revision of different available sources, the following project definition of life skills has been proposed:

Life skills are a constituent part of capabilities for life and work in a particular social, cultural and environmental context. The types of life skills emerge as a response to the needs of the individual in real life situations.

However, a simple and common definition may also open grounds to many different interpretations and may also mislead the potential user. This is why the LSE project genuinely attempted to describe the landscape of life skills in Europe, which will hopefully enable deeper insights and understanding of the concept and the potential value for adult education in Europe as well. In doing so, it is believed and hoped that many new understandings and meanings of life skills will emerge.

Life skills are building blocks of independence and self-efficacy. They are combinations of different capabilities that in general enable adults to become lifelong learners, to solve problems, to manage their lives and to participate in the community. This means, for example, taking care of their physical and mental health, actively contributing to their wellbeing, mastering financial matters and coping with the digital environment. When skills are defined in this way, it became clear that competences embrace not only the needs of the individuals but also their knowledge and values.

Life skills are indispensable for an individual to act in a specific environment in accordance with the basic principles of democracy and living together in a multicultural society. Life skills are closely related to the key challenges adults are faced with in the modern world, and this opens questions of how well adults cope in different societies and why some adults cope better than others. Figure 1 is a reflection of the challenges and the abilities adults are expected to have that are central to the LSE project's understanding of life skills.

Figure 1: Key terms extracted from the official project definition of LSE1

For adults, life skills provide tools to face new challenges and to provide practical and emotional support to those around them. Life skills are useful for the learners themselves, for people and communities around them and for communicating and transmitting experiences among generations. Life skills are not always learned through education but are often acquired through experience and practice in daily life. Life skills are one of the principal gains of adult learning and education alongside literacy and numeracy, practical skills (ICT) and cultural learning. Life skills are regarded as individual learning gains that, together with other gains, provide considerable 'spillover' benefits for their work, families and communities (active citizenship, political voice, social cohesion, diversity and tolerance).

Life skills are related to the educational system: they are a key concept that could help educational system to achieve and measure impact. Lifelong learning shall lead to autonomy, self-efficacy and engagement. The aim of adult education and learning is to achieve life skills that enable long-term benefits. The key motivation for acquiring life skills are the essential needs of the individual. The essential needs of the individual are crucial for the combination and list of life skills that a person needs to acquire. The accomplishment of the essential needs through life skills education and learning enables engagement and stimulates new educational need. A positive learning experience that individuals obtain during life skills adult education and learning stimulates engagement. This, in turn, is a long-term benefit, expressed in greater autonomy, engagement and understanding of the challenges, and finally in new educational needs.

1 1 The figure was created on the basis of the 115 words used in the definition of life skills using the 'Worditout' application.

1.2 Understanding the term 'life skills' in partner countries

What is the theoretical basis for the definition of the term life skills in your country, if any? That was one of the questions in the project's small-scale survey of 24 researchers and practitioners. The analysis of the answers showed that in most countries, there are no explicit definitions of the concept of life skills as such in those explicit terms. Nevertheless, most respondents were able to relate the presented concept of life skills to the ideas and theories in the area of adult education in their countries. This section summarises different theoretical perspectives of life skills concepts in the partners' countries. It is important to notice that answers collected by respondents from different project partners do not reflect the view of life skills in general in the specific country; they are illustrations of the recognised implementation of life skills on a national basis based on the understanding, knowledge and experience of selected researchers and practitioners.

In Denmark for example, it was stated that there are no theoretical frameworks for life skills, but there are perspectives related to resilience, coping, resistance and life capability. As one of the closely related concepts, the work of Claus Holm, Danish School of Education, Aarhus University, was pointed out. According to an interpretation of Holm, life capability is about being good at – or at least good enough at– managing and coping with life. The Danish psychologist Jan Tønnesvang determines 4 essential perspectives for the development of qualified self-determination: understood as the ability to take control of life in a qualified way. Yet another example of the theoretical basis is the theory of thrive (PERMA) by Martin Seligman, an American psychologist. His model in the field of positive psychology is about 'flourishing': it follows the phases from suffering, languishing, coping, performing and, at the end, there is flourishing, meaning that the higher you get the more resilient you are. It was also pointed out that there are several relevant studies to life skills on social inheritance, resilience and the development of competences in child care by professor Bente Jensen, Danish School of Education, Aarhus University. Also Jesper Juul's book on the competent child is an important contribution to the understanding of the concept of life and skills.

The work of The Danish professor Knud Illeris and his understanding and definition of competences is also an important contribution to the field as he not only defines competences as knowledge, skills and attitudes, but also includes elements such as: estimation, making qualified decisions, being able to develop apprehension structures and having an overview of complex situations/challenges, autonomy, self-insight and self-confidence, a profile of personal dispositions, creativity, empathy, intuition, the ability to make combinations, flexibility, the ability to question, critical thinking, resilience, and being able to exhibit a critical attitude (Illeris 2012).

Slovenian researchers invited to contribute to the LSE survey on terminology analysis have no difficulties relating the ideas of life skills to those in adult education in Slovenia. In one case, the concept of life skills was related to the theory of governing the commons by Elinor Ostrom, where gathered commons represented a more powerful resource for success and sustainable development than any kind of governmental or economics practices or/and legislation. There were also other examples pointed out where the theoretical background for conceptualisation is to be found, e.g. in the community practices by Vengner, Kolb's cycle of learning and in the works of Brazilian adult educator Paolo Freire, especially in his views that developing skills of reflection and analysis enables students to take social action to improve conditions for themselves and their communities.

Slovenian respondents pointed out activities in Slovenia in the area of adult literacy where, in cooperation and exchanging the ideas of national (Ana Krajnc from University of Ljubljana and others) and international experts (Brian Street, King's College London and others) and practitioners in the field of adult education, the understanding of the concepts of literacy has been evolving, from functional literacy concepts, to the concepts of key competences and life skills.

As reference sources for the definition of life skills, where the question of life skills in general or in particular contexts has been raised, the reports from several international studies and European projects in which Slovenia was involved were mentioned (the OECD international literacy survey from 2000, and the PIAAC survey on adult skills from 2016, and the projects TRAIN, KEYPaLL, BELL, Know your lifestyle and others). It was also pointed out that in the national context, several strategic documents already incorporate a perspective of life skills (such as the White Paper on Education and Training from 2011, and the Lifelong Learning Strategy in Slovenia from 2007); as regards the international context, the significant documents are presented in the context of the definition of key competences that has been established by the EU Commission. Slovenian researchers are also familiar with various UNICEF documents and other documents, where is it possible to tackle the theoretical basis for the definition of the term life skills like UNESCO's recommendations on adult literacy development and the Manifesto for Adult Learning in the 21st Century with explicit reference to 'Life Skills for Individuals'.

One of the researchers selected by the EAEA finds a relevant theoretical basis for the definition of life skills in political debates and policies in the 90s, held in Germany. Above others, the case of Norway was also mentioned in this respect, and policies regarding migrant training, where migrants learn about the norms/rules of Norwegian society (e.g. about family relations, taxes, etc.) and about the attitudes that they should have in society. This 50-hour training is explanatory, not normative, and done in a language they can understand. It was also pointed out that the concept of life skills should be defined broader and should not be limited only to the education of migrants. Another case was mentioned by the International Council for Adult Education and their practices of virtual seminars on skills. In this sense, the OECD and UNESCO definitions were pointed out as relevant for the understanding of life skills for adults; however, special attention has to be devoted to those approaches, concerning the issue of measurable and unmeasurable competences, from the point of view what can or cannot be measured.

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There were quite a few relevant sources and documents mentioned by EAEA respondents regarding the research field of life skills. To mention only a few: De Greef and others published a paper in 2012 in the International Journal of Lifelong Education on Evaluation of the outcome of lifelong learning programmes for social inclusion: a phenomenographic research; the SDG 4 from 2015 stands for Sustainable and Development Goals concerning quality education, and within it there are different targets, with target number 7 being especially interesting in the light of life skills: 'By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and the appreciation of cultural diversity and culture's contribution to sustainable development'; for the life skills concept, the EFA Goal 3 by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning is also very relevant since it deals with 'ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes'.

In Greece, the theoretical basis for the definition of the term life skills goes hand in hand with Gestalt theory, where the individual should become capable of understanding himself/herself and the surrounding environment, knows the potential of change, and their capability to make choices, which leads to an authentic, meaningful life.

Greek philosophical and religious views (like Christianity) can also be applicable (in a careful manner) to the field of life skills through their philosophies of the meaning of life and the values and concept of the active citizen from the Athenians later appeared under the concept of 'idiot' (someone, who takes care only of their own) in the English language. It goes back to Aristotle who described the capability to 'reach the meaning' as essential - the happiness (eudaimonia). Aristotle also mentioned that each action undertaken throughout a person's life should have a 'telos', meaning an aim, a purpose. To reach the 'telos' (aim) of happiness, citizens should learn to be kind and to do good, not by nature but based on their willingness and consciousness of what is good. Moreover, this action (praxis) is not only for personal evolution but also for the evolution of society, which is encompassed in the LSE definition. The respondent from Greece also mentioned the theory of Transformative Learning by Jack Mezirow, Paulo Freire's method of 'learning circles' and John Dewey's basic principles – self-reflection and critical thought of perceptions for knowledge acquisition.

A comprehensive review of UK literature on life skills was not undertaken as part of the project. However, the small-scale survey conducted in partner countries of researchers, policymakers and adult education practitioners asked about the participants understanding of the theoretical basis for the term life skills in their country. Respondents in the UK were not aware of any theoretical framework specifically for life skills, but identified a number of relevant programmes, strategic reports and other literature.

These included Skills for Life (2001), a national strategy that aimed to improve the literacy, language and numeracy skills of adults in England; NIACE's Learning Through Life Report (2009) on the future of lifelong learning in the UK, which included a recommendation for a common framework for citizens' capabilities; the Leitch Review (2006) on the UK's long-term skills needs; Learning and Work's Citizens' Curriculum programme, a holistic approach to ensure adults develop a core set of skills – the English, maths, digital, civic, health and financial capabilities needed for life and work, as well as Functional Skills, qualifications in English, maths and ICT which aim to provide individuals with practical skills to live, learn and work. Work by a number of academic authors on theories related to life skills was also cited by the respondents - Swan Malcolm (2005) Improving learning in mathematics: challenges and strategies, Wenger Etienne on social learning and communities of practice and Lave Jean on situated learning theory.

1.3 Review of relevant literature

The review of the relevant literature on life skills was one of the first steps at the very start of the project in 2017. The literature review served as a starting point for forming the more general project definition of the concept of life skills. The desktop enquiry and analytical work have been followed by the carefully planned collection of information and data on life skills in the field. It has to be pointed out that the collection of the literature on life skills has been an ongoing task within the LSE partnership, as a source we also extrapolate the question on relevant sources in the literature that was included in the guidelines questionnaire on terminology analysis.

Different resources were analysed in this chapter, from the UNESCO definition in The third Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (2016) to the UNICEF definition in Global Evaluation of Life skills Education Programmes (2012). The individual innovative approaches to understanding life skills (LS) were represented; from the Citizens' curriculum to a review of key theoreticians in this field, like Schuller (2009) or Hanemann (2016). Resources that focus more on life skills linking with the field of work, such as Skills for Life Source - Skills for Work (2015) and others, were also not avoided. Precisely this aspect - the connection between LS and work – is understood as a precondition that also enables other, softer aspects of this concept.

Several resources that relate life skills to development were examined – for example, physical abilities, health, various personality traits, appropriate forms of interpersonal communication, and the development of young people's skills etc. In the review, the agendas, recommendations, comparative studies, project reports, theoretical discussions and policy documents were included.

UNICEF emphasises three aspects and defines generic life skills including: the cognitive aspect in order to be able to think critically and solve problems; the personal aspect for mature self-management; and the interpersonal aspect, which encompasses perspectives of cooperation and teamwork, as well as the society perspective, where society is understood as a dynamic system.

fUNESCO's understanding of the LS is far more practically oriented and focuses on learning effects, as well as on literacy, numeracy, ICT and cultural learning, which is further supported and explained in the contribution of Ulrike Hanemann (2016). This definition, among other goals, emphasizes the self in self-efficacy – which is a precondition for an active and, most often, independent participation in LS development. Familiarity in understanding can also be found in the concept of the Citizens' Curriculum, which understands capabilities, e.g. skills, as a precondition for 'achieving well-being in the sense of human potential to be realised'. A special emphasis here is placed on change, as well as on meaning, constructive acceptance of it, and on the promotion of a change. The concept of the citizen and citizenship is included as an assumption of an independent adult, who owns a holistic basic 'set of skills for living and working in the 21st Century'.

As can be seen from the research by Sonja Belete (2016), the question of how to determine life skills for the 21st century is theoretically quite complicated. Belete argues that LS are always contextually dependent, and thus can only be developed for a specific period of time, space and individual, which is mentioned in a slightly different manner in some other resources (see Katarina Popović 2016). It is interesting that LS, in this case, are very briefly defined as 'a need to make the most of your life', highlighting that the most important ability is the willingness for constant learning.

Resources related to defining LS in connection with work point out the intertwining of both concepts: skills for life and skills for work. They also warn that they are indispensable when thinking of inclusion, sustainability, social justice and democracy.

The correlation between life skills and active citizenship can be understood in another way from the perspective of Maurice de Greef (2017), as he writes about a participatory society. This implies, therefore, a certain set of national policies.

Thus, the LS concept strongly involves social criticism, as can be seen from the source The road to employability through personal development: a critical analysis of the silences and ambiguities of the British Columbia (Canada) Life Skills Curriculum (2006) and questions on the individual's freedom in a way to 'be different from the social norm'.

A useful remark regarding the definition of LS from the Report of the Inter-Agency Working Group on Life Skills in EFA (2004) is the notion to draw attention to LS as a combination of psychosocial skills, acquired knowledge, attitudes and values, which always relate to a concrete learning field and specific sociocultural context. From this point of view, LS are a particularly sensitive area for educational systems. Therefore, in the report Youth and skills: Putting education to work (Unesco 2012) two specific aspects are emphasized: the preservation and protection of health and interpersonal competences such as self-esteem, negotiation, decision-making, etc.

The link between LS and the experience of sport was also pointed out, as sport has the task of integrating the mind and body. We also included sources that deal with the integration of refugees and its positive effects on society, and others.

The focus was above all on theoretical resources and on basic concepts. The work or a narrower selection of these concepts is also presented in the glossary, which is intended for practical use. There is a considerable amount of relevant literature in the subject area, but the concepts are very heterogeneous and difficult to compare. For example, in her integrative approach, Hanemann (2016) draws on the concept of literacy, which she extends beyond the boundaries of literacy and numeracy to 'lifelong' literacy, as it refers to life skills. On the other hand, de Greef (2017) discusses 'life skills' in terms of links between politics and the concept of social inclusion through the use of 4 key processes, which are activation, internalization, participation and connection.

1.4 Glossary of key terms

This Glossary aims to equip the reader with the agreed and unified definitions of key terms closely related to life skills. It has to be pointed out that from the very beginning, the attention is devoted to the differences between capabilities, skills and competences. For example, numeracy skills refer to knowledge used for specific purposes, whereas numeracy competence holds a broader notion that also incorporates the individuals' attitude towards maths, how it is used, not only numeracy skills.

Experts in the LSE project discussed key terms and definitions on several occasions. During the second LSE project partners meeting in September 2017, the partners explored different key terms most closely related to the common understanding of life skills so far. Key research question concerned the key terms related to the concept of life skills and the list of key terms on life skills was composed on the basis of discussion between the project professionals and as the result of a small-scale survey among professionals outside the LSE project group. It was decided to include the following key terms in this report followed by a short description:

• Capabilities: Capabilities do not depend on the context. Regardless of specific circumstances, they allow functional responses and actions in a wide range of different activities on the basis of critical judgement. They are transferable among various professions and, above all, they enable individual's participation in society and personal development.

• Competence: Competence is the ability of an individual to use acquired knowledge and skills in accordance with his/her values in complex, diverse and unpredictable situations. Competence consists of knowledge, attitude to knowledge, critical thinking and different skills.

• Skills: Skills are essential for integration and participation in the labour market, field of education and quality of life. Skills are a useful and measurable part of a competence. They are transferable, which is an important feature, since they are relevant in many social contexts and working situations. Thus having the capacity of being learned, skills are placed under the influence of the education system or policy. Skills are the basis for full-fledged actions of knowledge-based economies and societies in the 21st century. (PIAAC OECD 2016)

• Knowledge: Knowledge is the result of learning and conquering concepts, principles, theories and practices. Knowledge acquisition takes place in different surroundings: in the educational process, at work and in the context of personal and social life. (SQF 2013)

Scheme representing the relationships between the specific key terms:
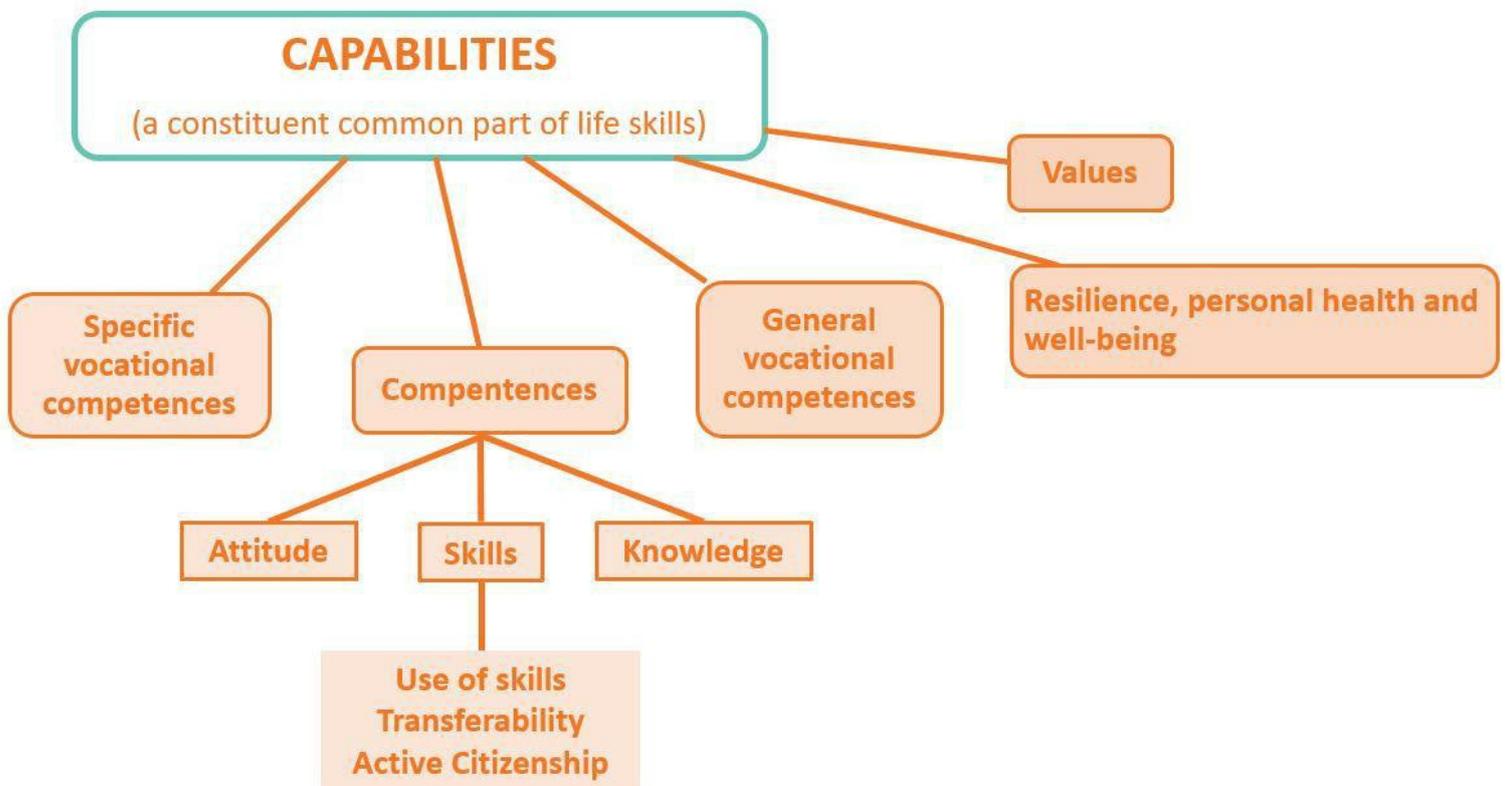
- ## Numeracy capabilities

Being able to recognise, engage with and use numerical information in everyday life. This involves a combination of practical skills, experience in identifying, using and working with numbers and a readiness to engage with maths. Numeracy means applying mathematics in different situations. Being numerate means being able to reason and use mathematical concepts, procedures, facts and tools to solve problems and to describe, explain and predict what will happen.

- ## Literacy capabilities (which include foreign language)

'Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute and use printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society.' (UNESCO 2004).
Literacy in the frame of LSE is seen as a means of emancipation, enabling people to control their lives, challenge injustice and become autonomous and critical, participating citizens in a democracy. It is also a set of functional skills that help people meet the demands that society puts on them, especially in terms of employment. Modern literacy describes a competence in a mode of behaviour for understanding printed information in daily use at home, at work and in the community, using it in order to reach self-set goals and to enhance one's own knowledge and the ability of action.

- ## Financial capabilities

'Financial capability is the internal capacity to act in one's best financial interest, given the socioeconomic environmental conditions. It therefore encompasses the knowledge, attitudes, skills and behaviours of consumers with regard to managing their resources and understanding, selecting and making use of financial services that fit their needs.' (World Bank)[2]
In the frame of the LSE, financial capabilities are a combination of skills, knowledge and understanding, concerning both managing money and the use of information and advice services that are required to effectively manage one's own finances.

Civic and democratic capabilities

The civic and democratic capabilities involve knowledge, understanding and critical reasoning on how democracy works in practice, participation in democratic processes, engagement and contribution to communities. It also involves intercultural competences such as understanding and respect of religious and cultural differences.

• Personal and interpersonal capabilities

Personal and interpersonal capabilities involve decision-making, problem-solving and self-management including abilities such as empathy, trust, self-esteem and critical judgement. It also involves being able to participate in social activities, to take on responsibility, to manage conflicts, to communicate with others in a respectful way and to collaborate with others across differences.

• Health capabilities

Health capabilities are the knowledge and competences necessary for an individual to take care of their own physical and mental well-being, as well as to care for the people around them. This includes being critical and understanding what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, how daily choices affect health, and an ability to make and maintain lifestyle choices that have a positive health impact. Health capabilities also include understanding basic health information (e.g. medication, food packaging) and knowing how to access and make use of healthcare services in the individual's living environment.

• ICT / Digital capabilities (including media literacy)

Digital capabilities involve accessing, managing, evaluating, integrating, creating and communicating information individually or collaboratively in a networked, computer supported, and web-based environment for learning, working or leisure.[3],[4] Media literacy[5] as part of ICT capabilities refers to a critical understanding of the nature, techniques and impact of media messages, thus media literacy encompasses not just critical thinking, but also communication and information management skills that reflect the realities of living in a digital world.

• Sustainability awareness / Environmental capabilities

Environmental capabilities include an understanding of the impact our everyday actions have on the environment and the adoption of behaviour with a positive environmental impact, in areas such as food

production/consumption, energy, recycling and waste reduction, as well as understanding the connections between the environmental, social and economic components of sustainable development.

Sustainability awareness as part of these capabilities calls for concerted efforts towards building an inclusive, sustainable and resilient future for people and planet through the harmonized connection of three core elements: economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection. Education for sustainable development is a lifelong learning endeavour that encourages individuals, institutions and societies to view the future as a time that will belong to all or to none of us.

2 http://responsiblefinance.worldbank.org/publications/financial-capability

3 http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002144/214485e.pdf

4 https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/digcomp/digital-competence-framework

5 http://www.medialiteracycouncil.sg/media-and-internet/Pages/media-and-digital-literacy.aspx
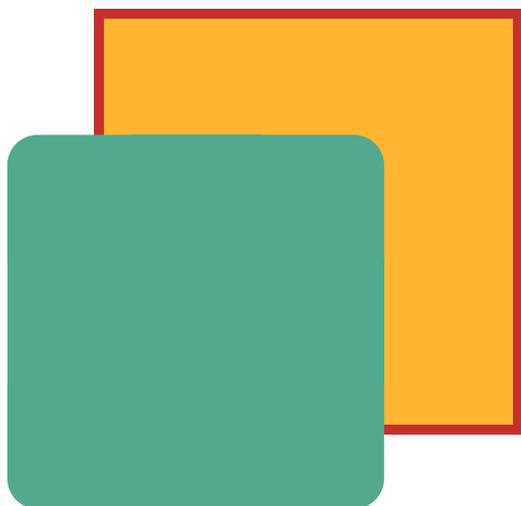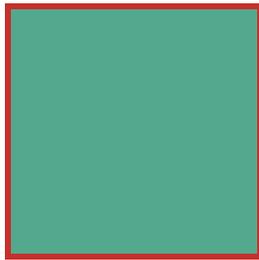
Summary

From the step-by-step analysis of interviews with experts in this field, policy makers and theorists, we can summarize the following key common points of understanding of the definition of Life skills for Europe:

1. The definition encompasses a set of necessary skills and capabilities that can lead to a qualified adult ('an adult who is capable').

2. The characteristics of 'an adult who is capable' include specific ways of acting, such as social and civic engagement, self-efficacy, employability and critical thinking.

3. There are some personality traits and care for physical and mental health that are also needed for being a capable adult.

4. A person with developed capabilities is aware of his/her own needs. This is only possible when one acquires a combination of different abilities and possesses willingness. On the other hand, this person is also aware of the needs of the local environment and the needs of his/her own family. This means that a person at the same time has a need for cultural engagement and expressions, as well as a desire and will for a successful life, which in the long-term can preserve health and well-being.

5. A special feature of the definition of the Life Skills for Europe is the emphasized notion of non-violent communication and the ability to live in a multicultural society.

We can claim that the learners' lead approach, content approach and the practitioners' attitudes towards learners are crucial for the presented concept of Life Skills for Europe. Life skills education can have an impact on people's lives. Often people do not see how education could fulfil their needs, but the provision of life skills could change this attitude. Learning can indeed stimulate a new educational need: if providers tackled the real needs of learners through life skills approaches, they would be able to build trust among learners that education was an important resource. In this way, life skills provision could also be a way to foster potential learners' interest in adult education.

So in conclusion, obtaining life skills should lead to social and civic engagement, self-efficacy and employability when looking from the perspective of an individual; and to democracy and coexistence, inclusion for all and active citizenship in the modern multicultural society.

2 Enquiry on the life skills landscape

This chapter lays out the data collected from the interviews with professionals in the field of adult education on analysis of the meaning, terminology and understanding of the concepts of life skills in the partner's countries. Alongside the literature review, the data on those aspects of life skills represent an additional and equally valuable source of information that complements the picture of life skills in practice.

The first part of the chapter includes the data collected on the extent and profundity of understanding of life skills (the key question was 'What are the key terms related to the concept of life skills? Please list and if possible define the key terms.'). The second part of the chapter describes practical experiences regarding the implementation of the life skills concepts in different contexts, as well as evidence of personal experiences and engagement with the development of life skills in adult education practice (the key questions were 'Are there any practical examples of the implementation of life skills in your country? Please think of one or more cases. If there are no practical examples in your country, explain where you learned about this concept (if you are not involved in practice)? Have you been personally involved in any practical examples, and if so, what is/was your role?').

Hereby the most relevant and interesting summaries from individual interviews are laid out based on the multistage qualitative analysis.

2.1 The extent and profundity of understanding of the concept of life skills

The question on the key terms related to the concept of life skills that was included in the instrument for terminology analysis stimulated respondents to think about the essence of the concept of life skills since they were expected to list closely related terms and to define them.

Most of the researchers agreed there is a foggy scope concerning the formation of a unique, precise, holistic and universal definition of 'life skills'. The meaning of life skills is often focused or at least should be identified in a concrete context or situation. The purpose furthermore depends on the goals one aims to achieve. It is focused upon the individual and refers to active participation in society; from this point of view, it can be related to the fundamental principles of democracy and social inclusion. Both areas have to be emphasized and practised in the field of life skills. The definition starts with a holistic view of getting a better daily life and a better position at work and should also refer more transparently to social inclusion (like UNESCO SDG goal 4). It should also use the 6-life domains (health, work, family, financial matters, daily life and ICT), which should be applied directly in the definition. Life skills (definition) include roles, purpose and also the process of learning.

According to the Slovenian respondent, the definition of life skills consists of basic skills, which an individual needs for living and working in a modern (European) society (learning, managing, cooperating, cohabitation and facing new challenges). In a similar way, the respondent form Denmark thought of life skills as 'a life-capable student is a student who has developed and challenged his/her professional, social, physical and academic skills. The student knows his/her own resources and limitations and knows how to take responsibility for his/her own life and knows how to be a part of a responsible community' (Linder, 2014, p. 68) (A translation of the Danish quote). And furthermore, life skills could be understood as practical skills to confront life challenges.

Life skills are also about how effective you are at dealing with daily life, such as 'facing life challenges, solving problems, engaging in further learning, joining the community and improving your own mental health and wellbeing'. However, the respondent from the UK says that life skills enable adults to achieve tasks, which the respondent from Denmark recognizes as life skills. Since life in the modern world is changing, life skills are global i.e. knowing how 'the world goes round'. /.../ These skills are not autonomous but differ according to the societal contexts and discourses in order to properly answer the question of 'What skills are needed to live a decent life in a particular community/culture/country?' as reported by the Slovenian respondent.

In the German language, there is the term 'Lebenkompetenzen' (life competences). According to the German Institute for Adult Learning (DIE), life skills can be considered as 'special competences' (mainly social and personal competences), developed in specific programs/courses of some German volkhochschulen. They are considered fundamental for people's lives and separate from 'basic skills' (like numeracy and literacy) and are often instrumental to developing other skills. For one of the Danish respondents, the term 'life skills' includes values, acceptance, courage, community, effort, joy, balance, patience, generosity, meaningfulness and to flourish.

A Danish researcher emphasises that like all competences, 'life skills' are also related to concrete contexts (settings) – they are developed and unfolded in work situations, in educational settings, private life and in the third sector (civil sector). And are not primarily related to production but they need to be applied in daily life. It is underpinned by the 10 key competences from the Danish National Competence Accounts, which are important when talking about life competences for adults. These are social competences, literacy, learning competence, communication competence, self-managing competence, democratic competence, nature and environment competences, cultural competences, creative and innovative competences, physical and health competences. (The Danish National Competence Accounts 2002).

The competences were originally defined in the OECD project DeSeCo (Definition and Selection of Competencies) and were considered to be the key competences for a successful life and a well-functioning society. In short, the competences are defined as: interaction in socially heterogeneous groups, using tools interactively and acting autonomously (DeSeCo). The categories mentioned in EU publications are also important (conceptual framework for competences): ICT, foreign language, entrepreneurship, to meet new technology and social skills.

In the Slovenian context, it was pointed out that the term includes three levels that are vital life skills and some kind of balance within and between them. The first level covers one's relationship to the self and self-management. The second level is to be affiliated with a community in order to contribute to and accept from the community and being satisfied. The third level points out the need for being connected with nature and environment and for constant experienced learning while in contact with nature. It is very difficult to list some terms because there would be many but it is possible to categorize them all into the three mentioned levels. Additionally, life skills as capabilities are always a result of some forms of learning, which means that it is more a process than a structural issue. And in this sense, life skills could also be understood as the widest range of life experiences that give you structure and help you with solving every task, even in new situations, by comparing the current challenge with already obtained life experiences. Therefore, life skills are a collection of abilities, capabilities and knowledge that enable us to

cope with, manage and solve daily life situations. The term life skills is wider, more complex and comprehensive than the separately defined skills or competences meant to be obtained and mastered by an individual today (basic skills – reading, writing, numeracy, social skills, organizational skills, financial skills, digital skills, etc.). It covers the basics of human existence and living in the world and goes beyond a person's individual life episodes. It actually derives from the basis of human existence, which is based on the ethics and responsibilities of every individual for themselves, society and the environment.

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Many of the respondents have attempted to define the term life skills in a holistic manner saying that the term includes all the skills that are needed for relatively independent life within and with society – i.e. ways, modes and means of communication (oral and written), reading, general education (i.e. knowing how things are organised in the community, what are the sources, the rights and duties of the citizens/workers/properties/consumer, i.e. different social rolls); key institutions and sources of help, i.e. all in all, it means to know and understand general and particular social discourses.

Life skills include various capabilities: to understand society and the environment that surround us, to detect changes in society and the environment, timely, correct and successful responses to changes in society and in the environment, adaptation, to implement past experiences in new situations, to understand the need for constant knowledge and behaviour upgrade, to build your own social network and protecting the environment

.There were quite a few respondents trying to define the relationship between different terms and concepts, e.g. skills and competences. For example, saying that life skills refer not only to mental but also to physical health. For another respondent, the term 'skills' is ok (because it is not as wide as competences) but it needs to be contextualised as it refers to a certain social situation; additionally, it is much more focused on the individual rather than on society. However, it is important to know that sometimes an individual cannot be blamed for their status quo. The concept of life skills concept is broader than the concept of basic skills. 'Basic skills' include literacy, numeracy, digital competences and the acquisition of another second language for migrants, all of which are very much linked with employability. The term 'life skills' includes the participation of an individual in society and working life. Life skills and basic skills are key competences for lifelong learning.

Several respondents from different countries referred to life skills from the point of view of personal traits and abilities, such as a full awareness of who someone is and his/her mission to be socialized and educated as a human being, or as a broader scope of skills such as equipping individuals with self-efficacy, capable of managing the daily challenges effectively. Also the term 'life skills' includes self-awareness and self-knowledge, willingness to learn, ability to judge conditions, a sense of context, adaptability in connection with critical reaction, giving, empathy, the ability to change, initiative taking, and sociality. The term includes the cognitive skills for analysis and valorisation of the information, personal skills (self-management and personal evolution) and skills for interpersonal communication, as well effective cooperation. Life skills should be looked at in terms of practical literacy activities that would lead to self-efficacy.

Life skills could also be related to 'civic competences', such as the capacity to learn by yourself how the specific society and political system in a country work, to be eager and willing to respect the rules of the society you live and to adapt to it. Furthermore, it is important to link basic skills to other issues (lack of job, housing, health, etc.) and to look broader, beyond education. And that is all about gaining 'life skills'. Life skills are learned, not taught and they do not coexist, they are interacting between themselves all the time.

The principles from the NIACE Inquiry and the Citizens Curriculum provide a sort of starting point for what life skills might be, since they include literacy, digital, financial and civic aspects. Other things could be added e.g. cultural competence. In addition to resilience and self-efficacy, this capacity to work with others, collaborate with others and maximise the collective competence is a really important life skill. If one takes both the workplace and civic life, it is not a matter of equipping individuals to have specific sets of skills, it is about saying how they make those skills available to others and enabling other people to make the best of their skills. These are skills about how you respond to other people, how you bring them on, how you enable a team to work as a team.

In some cases in the analysis, we have encountered the understanding of life skills as 'those social practices that people take part in'. Or that life skills are learning as an apprenticeship to a community of practice. It is really important to be specific about what those communities are, because during life and during everyday life, people tend to move from one community to another, if you count home and family as a community as well – sometimes it is important for learners to help their kids with homework. If they can gain confidence with that, it makes them feel better in the home environment and [gives them] higher self-esteem in that community. A lot of people might go from home to work, to college, to the doctors or to the hospital where you are having conversations that involve certain types of language and the skills needed to make sense of it. Some are really common among adults.

Life skills are not needed for one's personal wellbeing but for the entire community as they facilitate understanding and empathy. Life skills include the route (process) from the living ('zen') to 'eu zen' (good/happy life). The term refers to life in balance with his/herself and with the others around him/her. This balance refers to the physical, emotional and mental status, as well as the balance in relation to his/her environment (personal, family, workplace, professional relations).

2.2 Practical experiences regarding the implementation of life skills concepts in different contexts

In the instrument for terminology analysis, there was also a question of whether there are any known practical examples of the implementation of life skills in the respective country. The respondents were encouraged to think of more than one practical example. If the respondent was not involved in the practice and none of the practical examples were known, the respondent was encouraged to explain where he/she learnt about the concept. To begin with, a few experts mentioned the lack of coherent structures or policies regarding life skills programmes or particularly developed programmes only for learning life skills.

In the non-formal adult education sector in Denmark there are many ways of working with life skills. In some of the educational courses, there is an explicit focus on developing competences related to life skills. Especially at the Day Folk High Schools, where participants are often challenged in many different ways. A respondent describes the Day Folk High School as one big training camp in life skills. The teachers here try to create room for the development of life skills through teaching, guidance counselling, mentor conversations etc. At another Day Folk High School, they teach people with long-term stress and depression and they also work with building up the participants' life skills as they have been living in anxiety and narrow-mindedness for a long time. The different courses are characterized by the fact that the starting point for all learning is done by taking the participants situation in life into account.

There was a variety of practical examples of the implementation of life skills identified in Slovenia, for example: study circles, which differ according to their plots, goals and durations. They promote management of one's own life and setting a common goal in order to cohabitate individuals and in society; agrarian communities, which have a tradition in Slovene society. They continue representing overlooked old tradition, know the local environment action and keep responding to it; products prepared by Slovenian Institute for Adult Education like 'Zgodbe o nagrajencih' (eng. 'Stories about prize winners'); several programmes designed for the younger population, and examples of good practise in life skills implementation are adult literacy programmes (Programs for a successful life) developed by the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education. They are intended to increase the literacy level of adults. They involve strengthening the basic skills, but through their implementation, participants gain and strengthen their life skills as well. Examples of implementation can be found in the field of non-formal and informal learning, within other non-formal adult education programmes, as well as other forms of learning within various projects held and practised by non-governmental organizations in various fields (intercultural dialogue, ecology, sustainable development, etc.); several literacy programmes and programmes for the teachers who teach in these programmes, developed by the SIAE, such as project PUM-O (Project learning for young adults), which is aimed at young adults (NEET youth) who drop out of the school system (or are in danger of dropping out) and become unemployed where the question of life skills are crucial and very personally approached; so-called intergenerational integration - a project, where grandparents were taught basic computer skills by grandchildren. On this topic, the Simbioza project was later held and there are also many intergenerational centres where older people transfer knowledge to the younger population.

The respondent from the EAEA mentions German projects in implementing financial literacy (Finanzielgrundbildung): CurVe (4 year project) and CurVe II and the project on social competences (key qualification concept). There were two European projects: "Managing money" about financial literacy and "Breaking barriers", coordinated by the Ministry of Education of Malta, about basic skills but with a problem-solving orientation in a very practical approach.

The respondent from the EAEA lists a project aiming to provide second chance education (elementary school qualification) to disadvantaged adults (including Roma people). The curriculum of the project was focusing quite a lot on responsible living and therefore health and other life topics were taken into account. There are also other worldwide joint programmes mentioned, such as ones in Africa for the combination of health and literacy (literacy programme combined with knowledge of HIV); in Asia when it comes to nature and sustainability (as people in dangerous areas are taught about their living condition) and Eastern Europe and Latin America for projects on democracy / active citizenship.

According to the respondent from the EAEA, examples of good practice are available on the ELINET website, which is focused on literacy, and also the GUTS-project, which is about the impacts of the promotion of social inclusion in 10 learning areas. The Literacy and Numeracy Practices database by UNESCO, with a list of more than 200 education programmes all over the world, includes many more examples of good practice in promoting and dealing with life skills and meaningful basic skills.

Experts from Greece recognize several practical examples of the implementation of life skills in their country, such as: the project 'Together Within' with a prismatic understanding of skills acquired throughout the life of the involved individuals coming from diverse hard to reach environments – refugees, unaccompanied youth, long-term unemployed, migrants, people on social welfare, etc. in a way that would facilitate their coexistence habits; in the working field of the organizational psychologist and certified coach in the professional orientation of youth, the unemployed, life crisis, career change, etc.; in working with NEETs: unemployed young people seek to develop their competences: job seeking, self-presentation in interviews, time management, hierarchy and priorities settings; in the courses in Social entrepreneurship, which provide grounds for understanding teamwork, initiative taking, problem-solving, creativity, social activation, diversity, volunteering (giving) etc. The practice includes also cultural activities (film viewing and discussions, visiting museums and art exhibitions, as also participating actively in the theatrical masks creations. These activities contribute to the understanding of the common willingness to communicate needs in a broader context – making the personal to become a social and shared value.

Another Greek researcher puts down a holistic view of life skills concept implementation by stating that life skills are (or should be) implemented not only as part of academic knowledge but in all educational fields (including the academic).

In the UK, local authority adult learning services include elements of life skills in their learning programmes, for example family learning, in which adults might use learning from literacy and numeracy programmes to help their children with homework. Activity to implement the Citizens' Curriculum model was mentioned by the respondent from the UK. The Citizens Curriculum approach can be adapted to address different learners' needs, and delivery contexts and models have been developed for use with, amongst others, recent migrants, homeless or vulnerably housed adults, young adults in disadvantaged areas, adults experiencing or recovering from alcohol and/or substance misuse, and offenders/ex-offenders. Another researcher from the UK was involved in developing online resources for adult skills classes to support the Skills for Life programme and subsequently Functional Skills, as well as more informal learning programmes. And one of UK's respondents had developed a learning through leisure programme for adults with learning disabilities, which helps people with a learning disability develop transferable skills such as teamwork, improved communication and the ability to travel independently. The charity has also developed a person-centred practice framework, 'What Matters Most', which includes the development of life skills.

Summary

It is clear from conversations and interviews that the definition of life skills is always associated with concrete circumstances and needs. 'Life skills are learned, not taught and they don't coexist, they are in interaction between themselves all the time.' The majority of informants agreed that the concept of competences includes values, knowledge and the ability to act and think critically. The informants have placed different emphases on different life skills components. According to their answers, life skills are not primarily associated with productivity or production, although they need to be applied to everyday life, as well as work.

The concept of life skills can be understood as a multilayer concept: the first level includes the individual's attitude to him/herself; the second level comprises the attitude towards others; and the third, the attitude towards nature and the environment (the planet) as a whole. The concept understood in this manner ensures a balance between the constituent parts of it. It is equally important that life skills are to be seen as capabilities that are always the result of some kind of learning, which in turn means that we prefer to see life skills more as a process than as a structure.

The term life skills is broader and more complex than any individual descriptions of specific skills or competences and, therefore, the term capabilities can be conditionally used in association with it. The term relates to the fundamentals of human living and life, and in fact goes beyond the individual's life cycle. The fundamental principles of the term are ethics and responsibility to oneself, to society and to the environment. This is also the reason why the concept must include all skills that allow an individual to lead a relatively independent life with and within modern society. The definition not only encompasses psychological, but physical health, since in the current world, this area is becoming a serious cause for concern.

Likewise, life skills is a concept that exceeds basic skills. While basic skills provide only the basics, life skills presume a whole set of skills for successful day-to-day operation in everyday circumstances. One of the respondents emphasized that life skills and basic skills represent the concept of key competences for lifelong learning, which is well known and elaborated in research and specialized literature.

Some respondents highlighted the social or political aspects of life skills. 'Life skills are related to 'civic competences' as the capacity to learn by yourself how the specific society and political system in a country work, to be eager and willing to respect the rules of the society you live in and to adapt to it.' They find it important that the life skills concept is also linked to other issues regarding not only education. Examples of such issues, for example, include cultural competence or political participation.

The second part of our landscape life skills research included consideration of issues and solutions of the implementation of the concept in various environments. The respondents described the specific circumstances that seemed to appropriate for the development of life skills in a particular environment.

Thus, for example, respondents from the UK and Denmark described practical examples of the implementation of life skills approaches for disadvantaged groups. Respondents also highlighted various forms of assistance for adults, from counselling to group work, where the concept of life skills is at least partially included. The main form of implemented life skills in the UK is the Citizens' Curriculum, which suits very different target groups. In addition, UK respondents reported on the implementation of the concept in the workplace, for example MacDonald's. In Slovenia, the concept of life skills was suitable for people who wanted to enrich their everyday life so they undertook the organized forms of learning in a group, so-called study circles. In addition, similar to the UK, the Slovenian concept also worked well for young dropouts who experienced complete failure and aimlessness. Greeks mentioned a similar example of implementation in their county.

In Germany, the implementation of life skills is linked to financial literacy and social competences, thus the literacy program for the Roma gains interest as well. The Greeks have also highlighted the coexistence of vulnerable groups, and of special interest is their example of implementation in the field of social entrepreneurship.

Analysis of various implementations shows two key common features, although the environments of the research were very different:

• life skills can be implemented wherever there is a need to master practical skills for survival or to improve functioning in a modern society.

• life skills depend on the context – those constituent elements that best correspond to the actual needs of the target group will always arrive at the centre when implemented. Precisely due to this legality, it seems that life skills is a diffuse concept, since this diversity colours it every time.

According to the empirical data, our respondents were highly experienced practitioners with many years of experiences in testing different concepts and approaches. It is not surprising that life skills give a concrete answer to their efforts to find an answer to the different needs of those adults who have had problems with 'finding themselves' in everyday life, at work or in education; as well as to those adults who had a determined need to change their lives 'for the better'. Among our respondents were also international experts who did not have direct experience with implementation, but they significantly improved the understanding of problems by viewing life skills from the perspective of international initiatives.

We can conclude that all of our respondents from individual partner countries were highly experienced with the practical implementation of the good practices and innovative tools described in the report. In addition, we had several outstanding international experts and researchers in the area of adult education among the informants, who have leading roles do not only on the national but also at the European level.

They have also been involved in international research projects, or took part in numerous national and regional projects and initiatives. In this way, the analysis and conclusions embraced not only national but also European and even wider perspectives on life skills. This interesting and relevant aspect helps us with a better understanding of the importance of the opinions on the life skills concept by our respondents.

3 The collection and analysis of good practices

Good practices for developing life skills were defined as examples of teaching and learning approaches that contribute to the development of life skills. Examples of good practices can be educational programs, specially developed learning and teaching didactics or methods, curricula, methodological instruments, etc.

The methodology for the collection of good practices was elaborated in order to collect specific practices in adult education that represent the most relevant examples of teaching and learning approaches that contribute to the development of life skills. The instrument contained several sections that provide valuable information and ideas about good practice for potential users and also for analytical purposes. Special emphasis in the instrument was also placed on the description of innovative characteristics and the main benefits of good practice for learners, where the description is supported when possible by authentic quotations, photos, videos and products of adult learners. The potential of transferability and the universal character of good practice were also included in the instrument. The data collection of good practices was a collaborative task of LSE partners during the summer months in 2017.

The LSE partnership collected cases of good practices, which are presented in more detail on the project website. For illustration, each of these good practice examples is briefly described in this chapter from the point of view of its transferable elements.

3.1 Project Learning for Young Adults

Project Learning for Young Adults (PLYA) is a non-formal educational program from Slovenia with defined scopes and goals. The program is designed to help young dropouts take creative and active part in social and working life, it enables them to discover their interests and talents, motivates them to return to school, and it also equips them to be more competitive in the labour market and thus increase their employability.

Through individual work, project work and various activities of interest, youngsters gain motivation, self-independence, new skills for life and work, working habits that encompass well-being and employability.

Picture 1: PLYA from Novo Mesto

Picture 2: PLYA from Radovljica – The right to

The core goals of the PLYA program as a holistic approach are the educational and social integration of young people. The project methodology consists of a highly flexible learning curriculum, which leans on detailed the familiarity of the teacher with social and psychosocial context and/or situations of learners. When youngsters need some other professional help, mentors help them to get such help. Young people are treated as individuals and their individual life situation is entirely taken into account. The programme's effects significantly depend on those who carry it out, that is – on the mentors. The evaluation group attributes the quality of implementation to the following factors: the mentors must, besides the required basic education, undergo training within a more extensive programme, which helps them familiarise with the social and psychosocial causes and characteristics of dropouts, modern curricular principles and implementation, as well as with initial assessment.

The clear structure of the day and the basic rules of the programme help young dropouts meaningfully organise their learning and social activities throughout the day. This is important, because after they left school, their whole life was torn apart and they had no goals or structure. Because more activities and programs run at the same time, youngsters can be included in PLYA and also do exams in the school, attend lessons in the school or follow other activities.

As a basic project work, its most important characteristic is sensibility to the interests and abilities of participants who also participate in planning the work. Participants choose a theme for the project, learning sources, methods and procedures, while mentors help them in doing this. Because participants themselves actively participate and make decisions about the programme's implementation, their motivation for participating in the programme increases, and thus also their motivation to learn and continue their education.

An important part of an individual approach is where the mentor and the participant together create the individual plan for the participant, which is being realised during the programme. This plan is the foundation for all his or her activities in the programme. The individual plan is a plan of the participant's progress in all fields, not only those pertaining to schooling but also in the social, motivational and personal field. It represents the basis on which all project activities in the programme are chosen, since the rationale for these activities are the goals set by the participants.

3.2 Learning for a successful life

Slovenian non-formal educational training programs are systematically focused on gaining basic skills, which are based on eight key competences, developing general literacy and re-evaluating the meaning of learning and education by adult learners, especially those in vulnerable or marginalised groups of adults (with lower levels of education, mostly unemployed and inactive on the labour market or excluded from the processes of decision-making at the local levels).
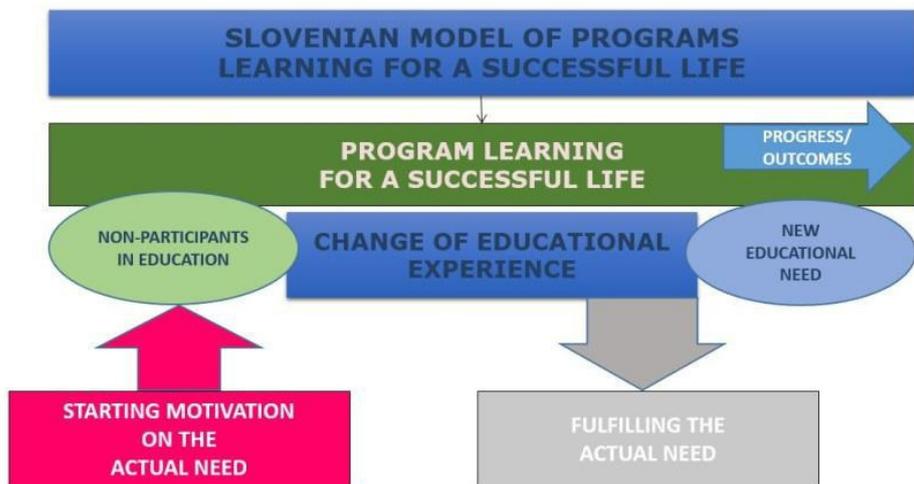
Picture 3: An example of the basic building blocks for the Slovenian Model of the Programs Learning for a Successful Life

Didactically, they are designed in such way that the educator chooses from the model of the program which is most appropriate and adjusts the program to the needs of participants. The current needs of the participants are the key, as the response to their needs ensures motivation. When a key change is caused by the education and active participation of a participant, a new educational need arises. The educator can choose a new program to continue working with participants who have strengthened their need to continue their education or, if they met for the first time, according to their desire for continued education. This continuation can lead to empowerment for independent action and learning.

The programs consist of basic building blocks. Learning is considered successful if the learners actively participate in all the phases of learning – from the selection of topics to planning, carrying out the project, monitoring and evaluation of learning. As a result, variegated and multi-layered learning is embedded throughout the project work, which encourages people to cooperate with each other, take responsibility and identify with the rural community. Participants therefore learn to define problems by themselves and search for appropriate solutions to upcoming issues during the learning process, while reflecting on the decisions made. Teachers help them with their activities and individually support their development in numeracy, literacy and ICT skills.
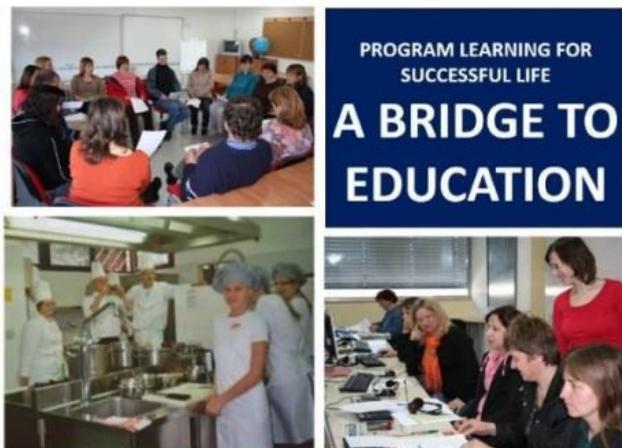
Picture 5: Examples of workshops in the program Reading and Writing Together

Picture 4: Examples of workshops in the program A Bridge to Education

fLiteracy teachers in the programs are trained and must have a 'licence' in order to teach in those programs. In each group of mostly 12 participants, two pair-teachers teach at a time. The main method of work is project work, which emphasizes the learners' needs and interests and does not follow the subject-organization of a formal school curriculum. The whole curriculum is learner centred and negotiated. As citizenship education is an integral part of the literacy programs in Slovenia, literacy teachers are trained to incorporate citizenship education in the programs according to the participants' needs.

3.3 Study Circles

Study Circles in Slovenia are a form of cooperative learning (experiencing, summarizing) with a typical group
structure (heterogenous in form and homogeneous in interest) in which a positive symbiosis between responsible individuals is established and cooperative skills are developed. The Slovenian Study Circles model is at the same time a method and a tool for adult education, and a lifelong learning incentive in the broadest sense. They have two main goals: to learn something new (educational goals) and to transmit this new knowledge to the community (action goals).

The most important aspect in a methodology and forms of learning in studying circles are: freedom of adult learners to learn about topics they choose, nationally supported model, and operating on a local level through network of different institutions with highly motivated and well-trained mentors. They are feasible in the context of economic development policies centred on the innovative potential of the territories, and are valid and sustainable in an economic and social environment that is constantly changing. Study circles are considered social innovations because they satisfy collective aspirations. By opening a discourse on this issue – and adult education seems to be a more than appropriate place for this – the question of 'what are they' is raised and addressed to the broad public. In this way, not only decision makers (at any level) but also the public is addressed. This enables innovation and the identification of needs in a certain territorial community at certain moment.

Picture 6: The Study Circle: Between History and Modern times (Tolmin, 2013)

Picture 7: The Study Circle: Quiet from

Study circles may be accounted as key (educational) contributors to local community development as they develop and contribute the following main benefits:

learners search for, improve and exchange knowledge, skills and values;

strengthen the interpersonal relations;

raise aspirations and self-confidence;

open space for the acquisition of new knowledge and skills;

reinforce and generate creativity because learners are free to learn;

contribute to a higher quality of life within the local communities and higher social cohesion.

Picture 8: Study Circle in Piran by the Anbot Association for preserving natural and cultural heritage from Piran (2009)

3.4 Citizens' Curriculum

The Citizens' Curriculum, used in the United Kingdom, is an approach to adult learning provision for disadvantaged learners to ensure that everyone can improve their English, maths and other 'life skills' resulting in better progression, outcomes and aspirations – into and at work, in learning and in personal, family and community life. The model promotes locally-led learning, involves learners in shaping its content and interlinks basic skills in English (or English for Speakers of Other Languages), literacy and numeracy with digital, financial, health and civic capabilities.

The crucial element of this program is interlinking as many of the skills and capabilities as are relevant in the context, and in the light of the learners' needs. The model, according to its flexibility in terms of content, can be adapted and used across neighbourhoods with different levels and types of needs, and in different delivery contexts. The participatory approach to curriculum design and delivery increases the engagement and motivation of learners.

The approach of the Citizens' Curriculum puts learners at the centre and actively involves them in designing the content of the learning to meet their needs and interests. The flexibility of the model allows learning provisions to be tailored to reflect the local needs and circumstances. Interlinking of basic skills with wider skills and capabilities leads to positive outcomes for learners, including changes in their employability, improvements in their attitudes towards learning, increased social and civic engagement and improved self-efficacy as reported by evaluations of the pilots.

3.5 Lifeworks

The British programme Lifeworks, delivered by the Royal British Legion Industries (RBLI), a national charity supporting the Armed Forces, people with disabilities and people who are unemployed, helps ex-Armed Forces personnel struggling to find work by offering tailored employability and resettlement support to veterans.

The course consists of three core elements: Vocational Assessment, Employability Skills and Coaching4Change in order to equip ex-Armed Forces personnel with the skills and confidence to find and maintain an appropriate civilian job. It helps them identify appropriate work and helps them to overcome the practical and emotional barriers that prevent movement towards work.

The person-centred nature of the program allows individuals to understand and address specific needs within their situation and circumstances. The three mentioned core elements of the course allow the learner and assessor to explore the individual's career preferences and the identification of appropriate career goals. The second part regarding Employability Skills includes CV writing, completing job application forms, interview and communication skills and helps to identify transferable skills. The module Coaching4Change focuses on understanding the effects of the imposed and chosen change, the effects of perceptions, beliefs and values on actions and understanding the value of communication. The individual and group activities enable learners to develop confidence and self-esteem.

The Lifeworks programme uses an integrated way of working by using a delivery team that combines a range of professionals. The course has already been further adapted to provide support to partners of ex-service personnel and ex-offenders by focusing more on employability and underlying issues that obstruct employability than any other specialist veteran support programs.

3.6 St Mungo's Broadway Citizens' Curriculum pilot

St Mungo's Broadway Citizens' Curriculum from the United Kingdom used the Citizens' Curriculum to develop a weekly programme of activities for their residential college that supports homeless adults in improving their basic and independent living skills. Later on, the programme to work with learners who were homeless and engaged in part-time college was developed.

Consisting of 2 phases, the Phase 1 programme consists of a full-time educational programme including a variety of activities and lessons spread across the week, which cover many of the interlinked capabilities of the Citizens' Curriculum: literacy, numeracy, health, digital, financial and civic, which together act as a package of holistic support for learners. In Phase 2, the Citizens' Curriculum is implemented in a part-time day college. In Phase 2 especially, every aspect of the provision is meant to be shaped and led by the learners e.g. learners choose local places of interest for the walking group, learners write the script, manage the stage and perform the college's annual theatre performance at the local community theatre.

The programme promotes the holistic aspect of the learning, while all support services are being embedded within the learning. The programme provides learner involvement in determining the curriculum to meet their needs and interests. Learners develop wider life skills through their experience of residential college e.g. developing social relationships, communication skills. Thus, the residential nature of the learning represents a great learning opportunity, especially for vulnerably housed learners.

It represents the flexible model that can be adapted for use in different delivery contexts, including other socially isolated groups. It aims at interlinking as many of the skills and capabilities as are relevant in the context, and suiting the needs of learners.

3.7 Take Care Project

The project, contributed to by the EAEA, aims to help migrants improve their language skills and knowledge about healthcare matters in the country they have moved to in order to feel more empowered and more integrated into the country. Addressing these issues, researchers on a project created a Healthcare Language Guide for migrants (HLGM), facilitating communication between migrants and healthcare providers. The HLGM includes a Phrase Book, a Word Fan, a Medical Route and a Basic Language Emergency Kit with an Interactive Language Learning Book (iBook) that is accessible via the iBooks Store.

The creation of these materials can be done in each country by gathering information about the health system in that country. When that information has been collected, the methodology is suitable for any country.

The Take Care Healthcare Language Guide provides innovative methods for language learning based on the needs and experiences of the target group. Language knowledge on medical matters (health literacy) is presented in diverse forms: a paper-based illustrated phrasebook, a medical glossary to be used as a learning tool in 17 languages, an interactive language learning book and a website offering a self-study tool. Available products are as well designed according to the latest technological developments.

As mentioned, some of the language tools of the Take Care products are translated into other languages (that are most frequently spoken by migrants) and uploaded onto the website, therefore could be easily transferred to other European countries. This enables migrants and other target groups as foreign students, business people and their family members, the general public etc. from other European countries to take advantage of them.

3.8 Taat voor het Leven/Language for Life

The EAEA mentioned a programme named Language for Life, created as a collaboration between municipalities and organizers of Dutch language courses. The program represents and creates regional networks and infrastructure for educating people with stated deficits (for example, the group of migrants and elderly migrant societies). This network consists of healthcare, welfare and language organisations, as well as libraries, Regional Training Centres (ROCs), companies etc. Its purpose is oriented towards increasing literacy, numeracy and digital skills, improving mental and physical health and increasing social inclusion, opportunities for meeting new people and looking for a job, likewise to achieve better job incomes for individuals.

The Language directors and coaches in those programmes can be easily trained in each region to support individuals with a lack of basic skills. A combination of teachers, trained volunteers and good teaching materials generates the most effect of the program.

The methodological concept of Literacy hubs is easily adaptable to other European countries, as well as the fact that trainings need to be held in the learners' own environment. A Literacy hub is a low-threshold facility in the neighbourhood that provides information to people with literacy problems, volunteers and teachers. The Hubs are located in public libraries, within companies, employment agencies and hospitals.

The Literacy Screener as part of the programme is an online tool that can identify possible literacy problems in 12 minutes. The instrument is valid, objective and reliable, and designed for organisations that want a quick indication of the literacy level of their customers, clients or employees. In five years, over 40,000 people have completed the Literacy Screener and, thanks to the screener, approximately 40% of people with low literacy skills have begun training. More than 200 organisations in The Netherlands use the screener, including employment services, municipalities and companies. Following translation and adaptation to the local context, the screening instruments can be used in any European country (it is already available online as free a demo version in English, Turkish and Romanian). In addition, anyone can easily use the developed Numeracy & Digi Screener to quickly check their calculation skills and identify digital skills.

3.9 Letters for Life

The Portuguese adult literacy project Letters for life, contributed by the EAEA, develops workshops to promote literacy, family literacy, empowerment, civic education, self-esteem, self-efficacy and social inclusion, targeting people who never went to school or left school without completing basic education. Letters for Life also promotes social participation through digital literacy: for example, it provides older learners with knowledge and skills on how to use smartphones, computers, internet and social media. The program does not just work for the community, it includes working with the community and values the role of the (potential) partners.

The courses of the program are tailor-made in line with the learner's needs. The learners are authors of their own education as they can choose the goals they want to achieve and contribute to defining the learning strategies. It is beneficial and important that different groups of learners meet in the same environment and support each other while they obtain 'literacy with the heart', and thus the affections are at the centre of all andragogic dynamics.

The innovative aspect of the program Letters for Life is that anyone can use the methodology anywhere in the form of workshops with a small group of local participants. The approach of 'Paulo Freire's methodology in a friendly environment' can be easily applied by anyone (participants learn in an enriched environment with books around the walls, dictionaries and other auxiliary materials, flowers, and local and national newspapers on the table, which can be combined anywhere). The learning offers a starting point for the participants and thus is not linked to a particular context/educational system. It includes a multidisciplinary team alongside specific training in adult education and emancipatory literacy.
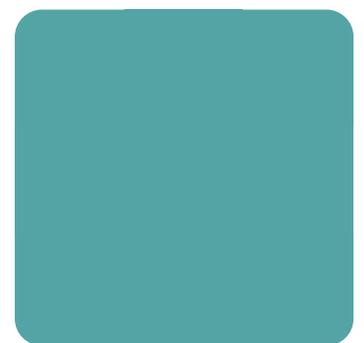
3.10 Mallettes pédagogiques 'Bienvenue en Belgique' ('Welcome to Belgium' Pedagogical Kits)

The EAEA also contributed the project 'Lire et Écrire' for adult education practitioners who work on improving migrants' literacy skills, consisting of training to use pedagogical kits on different themes relevant to everyday life in Belgium: Living together, Housing, Health, Education, Employment and social security, Everyday life, Residency statuses and migration, and Institutions. These kits give migrants a broad overview of social, cultural and environmental aspects of life in their new host country, thus giving them capabilities to integrate into their new setting more quickly. These pedagogical kits can also be used to teach basic skills to a native Belgian audience (including young people) or used as part of a broader reflection on society. Through its use, a critical reflection on the society in which the participants live is fostered, and this is transferable to various audiences.

Using photos instead of other types of pictures to work on life skills and social issues with people lacking basic literacy skills decreases the impact of a specific culture, whereas the interpretation of photos are less dependent on the culture of the participants and enable people to communicate more easily in spite of cultural differences. All the proposed activities in the program are designed to be fun and playful, which improves learning, and are based on the participants exchanging their knowledge rather than on top-down information. A team of several people always designs these kits and that is crucial as it improves creativity in the conception of the activities. Users of the kits have the possibility to send ideas and examples of new activities they have come up with and used successfully in their groups. The kits are thus a living process and this collective dimension of the tool is highly important as people can take part in its further elaboration by proposing new activities.

Mallettes pédagogiques 'Bienvenue en Belgique' is the first kit of its kind as prior to this there was no educational material specifically designed for newly arrived migrants in Belgium lacking basic skills.

3.11 The Second Chance – the Systemic Development of Functional Elementary Education of Adults

The main goal of this FEEA program is to establish a system of functional elementary education for adults, that is accessible and responsive to learners' and labour market needs in line with the lifelong learning concept, and focused on improving life skills and competences. Addressing adults above 15 years of age with incomplete elementary education or without vocational qualifications, its priority is being given to socially vulnerable target groups. The curriculum is organised in 3 cycles, each lasting one school year: the first cycle (I-IV grades), the second cycle (V-VI grades), and the third cycle (VII-VIII grades and training for 35 vocational profiles). During the third year, students attend one of the Vocational and Educational Training (VET) programs from among 35 offered vocational profiles (low qualified ones) e.g. hairdresser, chef assistant etc. All of those who successfully complete the FEEA curriculum receive an elementary school diploma and a certificate of vocational competence.

The aim of this program was to renovate old basic education schools for adults in order to be sustainable in the future and to be fully funded by the government, nationally recognized and valued. As the project was carried out in cooperation with the ministry and a large number of stakeholders, the policies on the issue were also modified and adapted in order to benefit the project's purposes and impact.

The new school team position 'andragogical assistant' was introduced within regular elementary schools, with the aim of helping teachers, participants and their families in the learning and wider integration process. In order to promote schooling and societal integration, due to this program, better integration of the community, families and schools was established. The project took into consideration the learners' needs in curriculum development and in the organizational aspects of the courses. The project included an awareness-raising campaign about the importance of second-chance education addressed to the general public, whereby the support of the national and local media was crucial in the promotion of the culture of learning at a senior age.

Positive examples of practice as stated by the contributor of the practice, the EAEA, were used to highlight the positive benefits of the project for potential participants and for the whole of society. This vast project demanded a restructuring and renovation of the old basic education schools for adults, as well as pointed out the requirement for new classes for adults to be established in 80 regular elementary and 75 vocational secondary schools across Serbia. It was also used to draw lessons and recommendations for the recently drafted Serbian law on adult education.

3.12 Pratto apo koinou / Together within

The Greeks mentioned the program Together within, which covers a range of different needs related to the participants' social and job integration. It aims for the social and personal empowerment of participants coming from low socio-economical backgrounds. It consists of various workshops on language and communication, peer learning and peer counselling, ICT and communication and social entrepreneurship in order to advance the self-awareness and self-estimation of these participants.

Despite the initial planning on paper, the Prato apo koinou is flexible in time and modes of delivering, based on identifying the needs of the participants/learners. Participants are learners and tutors. Through artistic and cultural workshops, with no pressure on results, the participants manage to meet in a common place without prejudice (for example, Theatrical Mask creation where refugees, volunteers and unemployed citizens learn about the face expressions – anger, laughter, pain, etc.) and are given time for conscious understanding and for changing attitudes.

This project appealed to people in a way that is not that common among prior practices. The various workshops comprise people that know each other so people do not easily feel like joining them. But this project offers language lessons, cultural activities and counselling for free to everyone living in the city regardless their nationality or the place they are coming from. The project team focused on establishing the connection to the target groups and did not expect them to find this connection by themselves. This notion served as prevention method regarding the immediate exclusion of people that are less informed and less included in activities at the local level.

3.13 Public Second Chance Schools

The Institution of Second Chance Schools (Public Adult Education Schools) is a European programme within the framework of fighting against social exclusion. These Schools in Greece engage in developing skills in the Greek language, mathematics, social sciences, the English language and communication through ICT, developing skills in the domain of science and the environment, basic training and preparation for professional life in cooperation with local authorities, the personal interests of the people being educated such as music, theatre etc., delivering workshops and projects, and counselling on psychology and job matters. The program is aimed at dropouts and adults who have not completed the compulsory secondary education.

Prior to the course beginning, there is always a needs diagnosis, which puts the learner at the centre of the learning process. The curriculum is flexible, designed in accordance with each SCS profile of the learners. It offers constant support for the learners in order to face their difficulties and interlinks with other environments and contexts like public agencies, work environments, etc. for social activation and familiarisation with the functions. Second chance schools provide counselling services for career and psychological purposes. Students acquire basic skills and develop their personal competences, learn to use new technologies, learn foreign languages (mainly English, but there is also the provision for other languages as well) and improved employability. The basic pivot of the holistic literacy methodology consists of learning to learn.

3.14 Lifelong Learning Centres (KeDiViM)

Lifelong Learning Centres (Greek K. .B.M.) in Greece are established and function in municipalities upon request, implementing educational programmes of General Adult Education, as well as activities at the National and Local Level. Centres are available to all adults, unemployed and employed, irrespective of gender, educational level, country of origin, religion, place of residence, young people, students, etc., with only the desire for knowledge and active participation.

The program aims at promoting a positive attitude to learning, ensure equal access to education, using leisure time in a creative way, enhancing access to the labour market and finally, to integrate or re-integrate into the education process any adult who for any reason has not completed the compulsory education cycle. The independent learning classes for socially vulnerable groups (Roma, prisoners, migrants-repatriated immigrants, people with disabilities, Muslim minority) promote their equal integration into the contemporary society.

A repository of learning material in each of the disciplines that boosts social activation, active involvement, put on practice (project-based learning) and self-learning (via educational material provided with activities, scenarios, etc., available online). Regarding this way of sharing information, a problem-posing approach is being activated.

The substantive differentiation of KeDiViM is that the Municipality has the ability to decide on and organise the educational and training programs that it wishes to implement in its region. This enables the process of selecting educational programs to be reversed, as it is possible to first investigate the educational needs of citizens and then 'translate' the needs into learning programs.

3.15 Danish language and Culture

The course called the Danish language and Culture program was established for young refugees between the age of 18–30 to learn the Danish language and to get deeper into the history and culture of the country while being a student at a Danish Folk High School. The course takes place at Jyderup Højskole, where the young refugees live together (it is a boarding school) with young Danish students for 5-6 months.

The course consists of language classes, cultural classes, social studies and study trips together with the entire school to cultural and historic sites in Denmark. The interaction of refugees with Danish students, during study trips and visiting historical places (seeing them with their own eyes) gives them historical knowledge and cultural awareness.

In the last part of the course, they do an internship in a local company one day a week. This internship in the local community provides practice and improves language skills, as well as gaining experience of the labour market. Learners can also choose additional classes (such as Songwriting, Folk-music, Electronic Music, Environmental politics / Permaculture and Art) where they interact with Danish students (in the first part of the course) and participate in everyday life (dining, morning assemblies with songs and lectures, evening talks, music concerts and student groups at the Folk High School).

The language classes are of high quality, which gives the students a necessary tool for participating in everyday life at the Danish Folk High School and in society in general. Learning a language is hard work and they have to fight for it. Regarding cultural focus, this aspect gives the young refugees a way to understand the new country, habits, history, politics, song tradition etc. The mixture of young Danes and young refugees at a Folk High School by living together for a time helps mutual cultural understanding, knowledge and insight into each other's lives.

Picture 9: A picture from the Folk High School language and culture course

Picture 10: A picture from the Folk High School language and culture course

3.16 Recycling Design

A non-formal adult Education Association, DoF Allerød Fritidsskole, has developed a course called Recycling Design, where refugee women and Danish women meet to share their interest in handicrafts/needlework once or twice a week. They engage in learning handicrafts/recycling design, participate in a community, learn a language and use it in practice, share knowledge concerning everyday life and establish networking with Danish women. The course contributes to the integration of refugee woman by making a handicraft course for both Danish and refugee woman.

Creating a community around a shared interest in an informal and safe learning environment, where trust and shared responsibility are present, supports the creation of new networks, dialogue-based conversations, the sharing of experiences and the issues raised during the course. The women in the course are learning to cooperate by depending on each other, working together to find materials, cleaning up after the classes etc.

Picture 11: An example of social integration in the program Recycling Design

Picture 12: An example of cooperation of women in the program Recycling Design

The initiative of good practice has evolved into a network where they use their different competences for activities that do not involve needlework. For instance, shared dining and field trips to Parliament, which means that alongside the handicraft course, the maintained network is actively used in a wider scope.

The developer of the course emphasised the use of a key person as a 'cultural and language interpreter' in the course as one of the success factors of the Recycling Design program. That person works as a mediator, translator and motivator, thus she is able to solve problems in a comprehensive way. The use of key persons is important for creating and maintaining the motivation for participation and succeeding in involving a new target group in the context of non-formal adult education and keeping them involved.

In order to support the needs of the new target group, the flexibility of the program is being emphasized, for example by accepting cakes, drinks or food as a participant fee because some refugees could not afford the fee, organising transportation and allowing children to come in order to make sure the women are able to participate. Thus the children do not disturb the purpose of doing needlework, and it even creates a stronger community among the participants when they know each other's families. By using recycled materials in the making of the designs/handicrafts, the expenses for the materials are reduced (or materials are even received for free) which makes the program accessible even to women with lower incomes.

3.17 Fitness-a healthy body

Picture 13: An example of a health and exercise class

The non-formal adult education course is provided by a Day Folk High School in Aalborg called FOKUS Folkeoplysning. The overall purpose of the Danish program called Fitness - a healthy body is to get the group of young people up to 30 years old with physical or mental challenges, mostly without education, into jobs, education or internships by developing new competences and motivation for further development. The course encompasses teaching in basic skills (Danish, mathematics, classes for dyslexic, when those are in the target group) and classes in:

active citizenship/social science (like visiting the city council and talks with persons from the local government);

health and exercise for physical and mental health;

jobs, education and internship (by working with clarification and guidance counselling);

mindfulness, etc. classes in 'Own responsibility' are intended for participants to get help from teachers/guidance counsellors to solve various issues, such as contacting the bank etc.

Participants can obtain nutritional lessons in theory and practice with an introduction on how to make healthy, sustainable food within a budget, as well as attend group talks on psychological issues and learn how to handle pain, attend classes in sustainability and, nevertheless, can dine together.

The focus is on citizenship and responsibility by making 'citizenship' into a subject. As a part of society, an individual needs to understand what that means according to his/her rights and duties as a citizen.

Participants are personally involved in the content of the course as they can suggest subjects they would like to know more about. In this way, participants become actively involved in creating the community. The notion of the scheduled time meant for the subject called 'Own responsibility' is important as participants have the chance to fix some everyday life challenges with the help of the teachers/guidance counsellors.

Since there are new participants entering the course continually, they make use of 'culture bearers'. Although the teachers do their best, they encourage and support the culture bearers in getting the new people integrated into the community as they see them as the most effective.

Picture 14: An example of teacher/guidance counsellor guidance

4 Tools – collection and analysis

Tools are a variety of didactic accessory that can be used within teaching and learning approaches. This includes multimedia tools such as videos, computer games and applications, as well as literacy and sports activities, real-life materials, handcraft and other workshops, etc. Within this chapter, partners in the LSE project contributed numerous different innovative tools from their countries with the intent and careful belief that these tools could be used across Europe in order to promote and enhance life skills and intercultural understanding.

This collection of innovative tools represents relevant examples of tools that contribute to the development of life skills. The instrument for collection included several sections, which provide valuable information and ideas about the tools for potential users and also for analytical purposes. Special emphasis in the instrument was also placed on the description of applicability and the main benefits of the tools for learners, where the description is supported when possible by authentic quotations, photos, videos and products of adult learners. The data collection of good practices was conducted by the LSE partners during the summer months of 2017.

This selection of tools is designed to be of immediate use for informal learning providers and can be used as a basis for the development of further tools. The collection could also be used as a guideline for further research (i.e. on common transversal principles to be used in the EU for renovating adult education in the area of life skills) and as a concrete and immediately usable database of applicable and transferable ideas.

The LSE partnership collected cases of innovative tools, which are presented more in detail on the project website. For illustration, each of innovative tools is briefly described in this chapter from the point of view of its applicability for the development of life skills.

4.1 Educational movies about key competences

The user-friendly presentations Educational movies about key competences from the Slovenian partner provide basic information on key competences in short movies (one movie per key competence) – responses to the real-life needs of individuals in real life situations, for example, in the case of a retired couple, an unemployed man, a young female migrant, a young dropout, etc. The main focus in the video is on the personal experience of an individual and the development of the particular key competence through some sort of a change the protagonist has undertaken.

Educational movies are practical tools for animation and gaining the motivation of learners from various vulnerable groups. They have a motivational character and address learners through role models that have everyday problems but solve them through learning. Introducing a personal story causes the identification of participants in the field of adult education, and learning as the act of a protagonist in a video makes them think: 'I can do it too, I have to do something.' Emotional personal stories, therefore, engage learners in decisions to take individual actions, for example, they visit educational institutions and get information on learning programs. The educational part of the video is structured in such a way that spectators learn about all the main characteristics of the chosen key competence in a relaxed and humorous way.

Picture 15: The case of a retired couple from the Educational movie on the 'Mathematical, scientific and technological' competence

Picture 16: The case of an unemployed man from a movie on the "Learning to Learn" competence

Picture 17: The case of a young migrant woman from the Educational movie on the 'Communicating in a mother tongue' competence

Movies are multimedia tools, especially useful for those adults who have more problems with written texts and therefore easily accept information through video. The main characteristic of the movies is that they involve personal stories of narrators, which are presented in a way that reveal universal/transferable experiences that different adults can easily identify with. The enthusiasm shown by the main narrators regarding changes that have happened to them is transferable to other learners. Every movie includes concrete guidelines on how to take the first step in order to develop a selected competence. The didactic form of the movie is adapted to vulnerable groups of adults, so the educational content is presented in a very clear and simple way. Movies can be used either for the independent individual learning or as a tool for group work and learning, as warm-up motivation and/or as a summary for repetition.

4.2 BBC Skillswise

BBC Skillswise from the UK is a resource to support adult learners in the development of essential skills in numeracy and literacy (English), to gain a qualification, to refresh skills for daily life and/or work, to help children with learning or just for fun. It enables them to improve reading, writing and number skills.

The applicability of the innovative tool for the development of Life Skills

Since the tool is available online, BBC Skillswise offers tutors and students of English and maths easy available resources (including worksheets, quizzes and videos) to use either in the classroom or at home. By allowing free access to basic skills teaching and learning resources, a large number of adult learners can obtain information and materials for teaching and learning.

4.3 Citizens' Curriculum resources

Citizens' Curriculum resources, used in the UK, is a tool, designed to support providers and practitioners in developing and implementing their own Citizens' Curriculum model of ensuring everyone has the language, maths, digital, civic, health and financial capabilities needed for life and work in todays' society. The Citizens' Curriculum model in its basis has been developed to be used with recent migrants, homeless or vulnerably housed adults, young adults in disadvantaged areas, adults experiencing or recovering from alcohol, substance misuse, and offenders/ex-offenders.

Picture 18: An example of a Civic Capability Framework as part of Citizens' Curriculum

The resources support organisations in adapting and implementing the Citizens' Curriculum model in a way that suits the learners' needs (for example, the Capability Frameworks have been used effectively in work in the project, which developed and trialled language-based interventions for ex/offenders or those working with them, to help ex/offenders with English as a second language in order to better access education, employment and re-settlement support).

The applicability of the innovative tool for the development of Life Skills

Each framework provides information and guidance on what tasks need to be completed to develop the Citizens' Curriculum model, which includes representative showcasing examples of Citizens' Curriculum delivery models, for example a variety of previous and current Citizens' Curriculum pilots with the option of downloadable podcasts alongside. The tool also offers information and guidance on how to evidence and evaluate the outcomes achieved by the Citizens' Curriculum programmes, and highlights effective practice and the critical success factors.

4.4 Value My Skills for Young Adult Careers

Value My Skills for Young Adult Careers, a tool from the United Kingdom, is an interactive card game designed to help young adult carers (aged approximately 16–25) to think about their current skills, future career aspirations and potential skills gaps. A set of 46 skill cards on People, Ideas, Data, Things, Practical and Emotional with instructions is included with the packs.

Cards can be used as a starting point for a discussion and for beginning working with a young person to plan the future. They are practical and useful in order to help youngsters gain confidence and recognise the wider and transferable skills they have developed as carers and in their lives as young adults, and to think about wider alternative career opportunities that they had previously been unaware of. The UnionLearn cards can invoke young adult carers to talk more openly about the pressures they face as carers and about the impact of it, regarding their confidence and career aspirations. By the end of the pilots, many participants had made progress including starting traineeships or employment, and securing job interviews or volunteering opportunities.

The applicability of the innovative tool for the development of Life Skills

The tool is developed in a game format and formed to match the specific needs of the target group. The tool can be used with the help of a support worker, online, face to face and in both one-to-one and group sessions, facilitating career mentoring and support.

Despite being designed and applied mostly in the UK with young adult carers, the tool can be used with young adult carers in other countries, or tailored to support career guidance for other target groups.

Picture 19: An example of one set of Value My
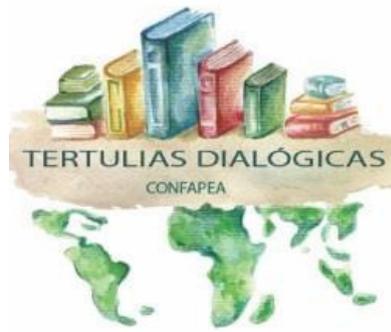
4.5 Dialogic Literary Gatherings

The EAEA contributed the tool Dialogic Literary Gatherings, which have their origin in the 1980s at the Adult's School from La Verneda-Sant Martí, Barcelona. They consist of meetings around literature in which participants read and discuss classics of Universal Literature.

Participating in Dialogic Literary Gatherings improves the learners' reading and speaking skills. Learners do and feel better when expressing themselves. They stop being passive receptors of knowledge because they actively participate in the process of building knowledge. The tool empowers participants to acquire a broader and richer knowledge of universal topics of society while improving their basic skills. Open discussions offer sharing values like solidarity, respect, coexistence, acknowledging different and new points of view. Adults, mainly coming from initial levels of basic education, gain more self-confidence, which encourages them to participate in other public spaces. Participants' engagement in gatherings contributes to a deeper social transformation of their environment and personal lives.

Picture 20: Dialogic Literary Gathering

The applicability of the innovative tool for the development of Life Skills

A study conducted by Llopis et al. (2016) showed the influence of the situated genre (Dialogic Literary Gatherings) over status in the prevalence of politeness and how the participants use polite mitigation strategies that favour dialogue in the conversation, regardless of the participants' position. Based on an egalitarian dialogue among learners, as well as between learners and Picture 20: Dialogic Literary Gathering facilitators, provokes relationships and communication.

Dialogic Literary Gatherings are addressed to a variety of target groups and can be used for mixed groups of learners (for example, people with no university qualifications who take part in adult education centres or associations, children, teenagers, families, adults and elderly people with different backgrounds, imprisoned etc.). The tool is easily transferable as it can take place anywhere there is a comfortable place to meet, thus the knowledge can be transferred from the literary background to many other life dimensions.

4.6 Voices In Pictures project - picture databank

The pictures databank of the VIP project is a tool, contributed by the EAEA, to teach a foreign language using original photos and creating different activities that can be adapted for different levels and languages. By using the tool, learners improve their skills in understanding a foreign language.

Voices in Pictures

Using pictures as a frame provides support for people with low levels in basic skills and newcomers in a country when the local alphabet and cultural habits are unknown to them. During the process, participants improve or deepen their cultural understanding of the country they have moved into, and learn values such as tolerance and coexistence. They learn to deal with their new environment and new language.

As the photos show elements from the real life, using them is a great way to invoke interaction with each other; indeed, pictures represent a common language and communication is made easier by using them.

The applicability of the innovative tool for the development of Life Skills

At a time when people take plenty of photos using their mobile phones, this should to be taken into account. Interesting pictures, taken by learners and based on different topics, can be used in teaching because they all represent various different cultures and reflect their interests/points of view. They are organised based on themes, which makes it easier for learners to navigate and communicate. As the topics cover quite a range of situations and subjects to be taught (e.g. colours, weather, buildings, markets, food, etc.), the tool is regularly used and belongs among the favourite teaching aids. The tool is easily transferable as the pictures come from a wide range of countries. Thus, many of the pictures are accompanied by ideas for ready-made activities and lesson plans regardless of the level of learning.

Picture 21: Small House in Lower Bavaria-Germany (Pictures of Windows)

Picture 22: Result of a brainstorming related to one of the pictures

4.7 I want to learn (Ich-will-lernen.de)

A tool produced in Germany by Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband e.V. (DVV) in order to support the development of numeracy and literacy capabilities among low socioeconomic background and low-skilled adult. It is an autonomous learning tool for individuals, but can also be used as part of a course. It was developed back in 2004 and it is available in German. More information can be obtained through the website: www.ich-will-lernen.de.

The EAEA's Ich-will-lernen is Germany's tool – it presents the largest free open learning portal with thousands of exercises for literacy and basic education, for preparing for school-leaving qualification, and for a basic economics education, aimed at adult literacy learners and adult learners in the field of basic education.

By using the tool, learners can improve their literacy, numeracy and occupation-related skills. Learning places, learning periods and learning time are designed according to one's own wishes, which means that learners have the opportunity to learn for free regardless of the time and place. An online grading test ensures that the right level is learned from the beginning, and tutorial guidance ensures effectiveness and better outcomes for the learners.

Picture 23: Examples of learning screens in the portal

By using the tool, learners can improve their literacy, numeracy and occupation-related skills. Learning places, learning periods and learning time are designed according to one's own wishes, which means that learners have the opportunity to learn for free regardless of the time and place. An online grading test ensures that the right level is learned from the beginning, and tutorial guidance ensures effectiveness and better outcomes for the learners.

The applicability of the innovative tool for the development of Life Skills

The learning portal offers exercises to promote the learners' employability and ability to obtain a school leaving certificate. It is suitable for beginners/advanced beginners in reading and writing. All exercises are audio-supported and interactive, and tasks are often scenario based and personally designed to suit the individual. Users can register anonymously online and are guided by online tutors. Therefore, the tool represents an option to learn independently at home or using the portal while working on a course (for example, in an adult education centre), which also makes it applicable to people who work shifts, who are not sufficiently mobile or who live in regions where there are no attendance courses. And on a national level, the portal can be used by institutions for adult education as a blended learning instrument for setting up online courses to support their own classes.

4.8 I want to learn German (Ich-will-Deutsch-lernen.de)

A tool developed between 2011-13 in Germany by Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband e.V. (DVV) in order to support the development of Personal & interpersonal as well as literacy capabilities among adult learners (immigrants and refugees). It is an autonomous learning tool for individuals, but can also be used as part of a course. The tool is available in German.

Ich-will-deutsch-lernen.de, a tool contributed by the EAEA, is a free of charge online learning portal with more than 11,500 exercises available. It provides German language courses from level A1 to B1, as well as a wide range of exercises for literacy training and learning the Roman script in order to increase the users' linguistic competence and literacy skills in German as a second language. The 'vocational training' section includes 30 scenarios with a range of practice material for job-related communication up to level B2. All the exercises are scenario based.

Learners improve their language skills in German without taking a class from any place in the world. From a tutor who helps, gives feedback on the learning process and provides correction of sent-in exercises and texts, learners in the portal are encouraged to collect knowledge and skills.

The applicability of the innovative tool for the development of Life Skills
The portal is suitable for beginners and advanced learners. It can be used either in language classes or independently by learners. Materials and tools can be used for differentiated learning in heterogeneous German language classes and/or for self-directed learning everywhere in the world, in this case, supported by DVV-tutors (tutors from the German Adult Education Association). Institutions for adult education can use the portal as a blended learning instrument and set up online courses to support their own

The tool provides the first and only digital 'German integration course' (A1-B1), funded by the state and used as a controlled pillar in the field of the integration of immigrants. In addition, 'Ich will Deutsch lernen' is the only officially accredited digital learning material in 'integration courses'.

Picture 24: Intergration course in Bingen

Picture 1: Intergration course in Bingen

4.9 The Real Game

This tool, contributed by DAFNI KEK, represents a gaming environment on Life and Career Skills for adolescents aged 12-18 years. It is an innovative and widely applicable interactive online 'game' for life skills and career development. It was first released in Canada (created by Bill Barry of St. John's, Newfoundland) and is used today in ten countries worldwide.

Individuals are invited to make an adult character with a particular business, and not only a profile in the game. In this way, they are confronted with situations, challenges and opportunities faced by all adults. Through playing the game, the learner is led to improve and understand:

• their personal skills, abilities and positive self-esteem configurations and connections between educational/extracurricular experiences and career choice;
• the importance of acquiring educational and other qualifications to find work;
• the decision-making processes, problem-solving, working within a team, etc.;
• the search procedures, critical reading and utilization of information on educational and professional opportunities;
• the effect of career choices on personal life;
• the need to balance work and personal life and the multiple roles and responsibilities of being an adult.
• The applicability of the innovative tool for the development of Life Skills
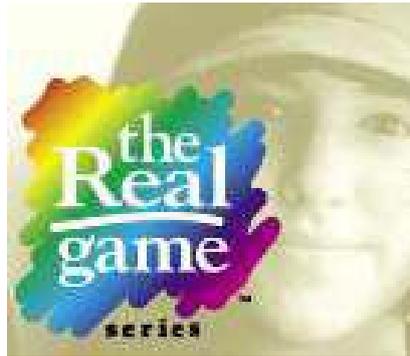
The central element of this friendly and easy to use game, which does not require specialized knowledge, is role-playing. With graphics and pictures from modern social and business life, the game is designed to support the planning of educational and vocational courses and one's transition into the adult world.

The tool provides several activities as self-diagnostic tools and forms a picture of an individuals' abilities, skills, interests, professional values, etc. in order to facilitate the design of education and career. The process of learning in the program is meant to be guided by an educational/career guidance counsellor in a group environment (referred to in the program as the 'Facilitator'). Parents may also play the role of the 'Facilitator', not only to ensure in the teenager's access to the program but to help utilize the potential of the game to the fullest extent possible. The real game tools are provided online (http://berealgame.eoppep.gr/) by EOPPEP (National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications & Vocational Guidance).

4.10 e-Reflect (e-Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques)

The e-Reflect project, mentioned by the Greeks, seeks to develop and implement a high-quality continuing professional development e-course on active citizenship education for teachers and young children's education professionals. The e-Reflect course supports digital literacy, and it stimulates active citizenship and social entrepreneurship. It strengthens the educator's professional profile, improves using Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in teaching and learning by educators and learners, fosters reflective thinking and entrepreneurship and empowers schoolchildren to fully participate in societal change initiatives.

The applicability of the innovative tool for the development of Life SkillsTaking advantage of contemporary digital technology (course authoring and web2.0 tools), the tool cultivates democratic spaces for communication, collaboration and action, and encourage discussion so that people can develop their own learning materials, basing their analysis on the systematization of their own knowledge.

4.11 NESSIE

NESSIE was a tool developed by the NESSIE project consortium back in 2012-2014. It was the output of the transnational cooperation between Germany, Greece, Italy, The Netherlands, Romania, Sweden and the United Kingdom and aimed at the development of personal and interpersonal capabilities among vulnerable & marginalised groups. The tool though is no longer available.

The NESSIE (Network for Soft Skills Innovation for Employment) is an European project, mentioned by the Greeks, designed to help the learner gain an understanding of what soft skills are and how they can develop their own to enhance their career prospects. The Project Consortium is made up of training providers, employers, employer representatives and labour market actors, providing a broad spectrum of cultural references due to the variety of people working with them.

nessie
Network for Soft Skills Innovation
for Employment

Designed to be online, the NESSIE programme can be worked on at the learner's own pace and accessed from anywhere they have an internet connection. The training and assessment methods are based on an innovative approach that is proven to work with disadvantaged learners to provide essential soft skills and improve employment prospects. Following the training, learners identified improvements in their job performances, improved CVs and recognized some areas where their lives (especially on a professional basis) have improved. Mentors in the project reported that they have improved their professional relationships with their trainees/mentees and gain new competences.

The applicability of the innovative tool for the development of Life Skills
Paper-based learning materials were transferred into an online learning course and translated into each partner language (from English into Dutch, German, Greek, Italian, Romanian and Swedish, taking into account the circumstances in all these countries), then uploaded to an e-learning platform. Participants, employers and trainers measure their progress made after using it effectively. The developed range of online interactive training tools assists people in the workplace and job seekers to develop their soft skills.

4.12 Us & Them

DAFNI KEK contributed the tool Us&Them, a project aiming to train educators who work with adults to promote tolerance and understanding of the 'others' in a multicultural world. The project is made up of eight participating countries encompassing various traditions, cultures and religions, and valorises experiences that belong to the representative cultures: Christian, Muslims, Jewish, Hindu. Due to the diversity in Europe, it became necessary to know and understand different traditions, religions and cultures.

The applicability of the innovative tool for the development of Life Skills

This tool will improve multicultural skills of educators in the field of Adult Education by offering high-quality learning opportunities for learners living in multicultural and mixed communities. As an e-learning system, the tool is free to use once the individual is logged in, and provides a whole spectrum of resources. Through non-formal and informal education and training, learners will gain tolerance, acceptance, openness, understanding and reciprocal knowledge concerning different religious background and cultural traditions, affiliation to different ethnicities or social clusters, etc.

4.13 The Competence Game

The Competence Game is developed by the Danish Adult Education Association, the Association for Day Folk High Schools in Denmark, the National Knowledge Centre for the Validation of Prior Learning and a professional game developer in 2014. The main target group of users is the non-formal adult education sector. The tool consists of 80 competence cards, 100 job cards and 20 empty job cards. When playing, the player must consider which competence best matches a specific job.

Picture 26: The tool The Competence Game
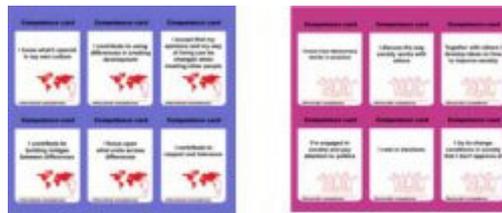
Picture 27: Examples of competence cards in the Game

Meanwhile, the learner gets knowledge and understanding of the eight different competence categories in the game (democratic, intercultural, communications, creative-innovative, learning, organizational, self-management and social competences). In the process of playing, an individual gains awareness of how prior learning can be used in relation to specific job functions. Accompanied, the learners develop a language for talking about prior learning and key competences.

The applicability of the innovative tool for the development of Life Skills
As the Game is connected to an electronic tool, everyone who works with guidance counselling and clarification of prior learning can be addressed and, in this case, it can be used as an introduction to this field. Everyone else can play it for the amusement, since many of the job titles in the game are a bit unusual, which turns out to be fun. The tool encompasses learning and playing.

4.14 Board of Overview

The Board of overview is used at The Danish Folk High School FOKUS. It consists of a table with a number of columns with different categories. These categories, with the last column containing effects achieved through the activities (such as self-insight, new perspectives and motivation etc.), represent a field for creating an overview of a development process in a community focusing on different aspects such as activity, competences and effects.

Picture 28: Examples of filled Board of overview from the Day Folk High School FOKUS

During conversations and reflections, while filling out the board, the participants become aware of competences developed through different projects. The process supports motivation for further learning and engagement in the community. The goal is to practise communication/collaboration through projects with their starting points in the participants' ideas. The real values of the tool are the conversations and reflections among the participants, as well as the realization of learning.

The applicability of the innovative tool for the development of Life Skills

The use of the tool is meant at the time for a teacher/guidance counsellor and all the participants who are actively contributing. It is done in an appreciative way with respect and understanding of each other's input and situation. It is a common, open and easily accessible overview/document, as well as a constant visual reminder of the common learning. The form is very flexible as different categories can be used depending on the goal. The form is simple, low-tech and effective. Since the tool is a framework for conversations, it requires some language skills and is facilitated by a teacher.

Picture 29: An example of a drawing

4.15 Value-cards and drawings

The value-cards and drawings are used at The Danish Folk High School Kursustrappen. They are aimed at discovering individuals' values and beginning a process of re-establishing a connection with lost competences. During the process of working with drawings and/or value-cards, participants are becoming aware of their own values and how they can be transferred into new settings. The method creates engagement in society as the participants are becoming aware of new opportunities and actions. The reflection and mirroring of experiences concerning challenges in life contribute to the development of motivation for lifelong learning whether on a physical or a mental level. By using it, individuals gain skills in participating in the community, managing their own life, taking care of their own physical and mental health, actively contributing to their own well-being, and improving living together in a multicultural society, thus the tool provides practical and emotional support as well. The process of discovering new opportunities for action and engagement in society is motivating - especially for a group of people with different kinds of challenges in life.

Picture 30: An example of a picture

The applicability of the innovative tool for the development of Life Skills This method is a combination of using value cards and/or own drawings as a starting point for conversations in groups, thus does not require a high level of language skills. The conversation, led by a teacher, ensures that communication and reflection are heading in the right direction with complicated issues included in a simple way. Drawing and the visual approach is motivating, low-tech and easily available as regards using only paper and a pen. The tool is flexible and adjustable as it can be applied to conversations in groups or in a one-to-one relationship, always facilitated by a teacher/guidance counsellor to assure a useful process.
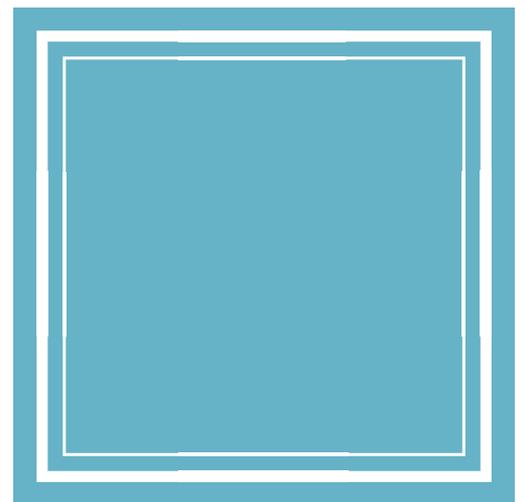
5 Main findings

After reviewing the concept of life skills in the relevant literature, the following authentic definition of life skills for Europe was formulated:

Life skills are a constituent part of capabilities for life and work in a particular social, cultural and environmental context. The types of life skills emerge as a response to the needs of the individual in real life situations.

In order to precisely understand the term 'life skills', it is necessary to define the meaning of the terms capabilities, skills and competences. The interpretation of the taxonomy and the relations among these terms is the authentic contribution of the LSE project (see the scheme on page 16 for more).

The analysis of theoretical sources and comparison with the data from the analysis of the understanding of life skills in practice led to the conviction that the definition should embrace eight key types of capabilities, namely: numeracy capabilities, financial capabilities, health capabilities, personal and interpersonal capabilities, literacy capabilities, digital capabilities, sustainability awareness / environmental capabilities and civic capabilities. The important conclusion of our project is also that there could be numerous combinations of these capabilities in real life. The combination of capabilities that an individual adult needs for a successful life depends on the concrete circumstances and real needs. The particular aspects of life skills that were stressed have been further elaborated in the analysis of different definitions and illustrated with statements by selected practitioners and researchers.

The benefits of well-developed LS are important for both the individual and society. The main advantages of the well-developed LS described in the literature and identified through interviews with practitioners and researchers are as follows:

• the autonomy and self-efficacy of an individual,

• the equipment of an individual with basic essential capabilities to face real-life challenges,

• the empowerment of an individual (with resilience and the individual's health and well-being condition),

• improving social inclusion and gaining civic competences (regarding the experience that an individual can contribute to society and the environment by engaging in civic issues and organizing common activities),

• the positive impact of well-developed LS on the local community - through knowledge sharing, teaching children and actual physical and emotional support for significant others and wider,

• The motivation of an individual to engage in further learning and a positive learning experience.

In general, LS enable adults to become life-long learners, to solve problems, to become critical thinkers, to manage their lives and to participate in the community. They are building blocks of independence and self-efficacy. The conclusion can be reached that an adult with well-developed LS will be 'the adult who is capable', a person who is not only aware of his/her own survival needs, but also the needs for cultural expression and his own well-being, which is often omitted in other similar concepts.

Societies that systematically support the development of the LS of their citizens can count on active citizens who will be willing to act in non-violent ways, will find themselves in multicultural societies and will be tolerant to cultural and other diversities – and at the same time they will be able to defend and fight for their rights. At this point, it could be stated that the concept of LSE is to some extent avant-garde, since it is socially critical. The successful implementation of the LSE concept largely depends on political decisions regarding social inclusion as the implementation of the concept proceeds in four key processes: activation, internalization, participation and connection. However, providers have a role to play in creating initiatives and projects ad hoc, embedding this concept into their teaching curriculum or raising awareness of the importance of this approach among policy-makers.

According to the analysis, LS are also highly important in the field of sustainability, since responsible and active concern regarding the environment and the planet is becoming increasingly important. These kinds of human survival skills are nowadays crucial for a participatory society. The analysis of the literature has shown that the LSE concept is suitable for the field of everyday life and for the field of work, for leisure, health, cultural and artistic expression. We can conclude that the basis of the LSE concept represents an ethical attitude and responsibility towards ourselves, society and the environment. This is one of the main reasons why this concept calls for obtaining necessary skills in order to live a relatively independent life as an individual and a collective life within society. From this point of view, the concept of LSE is broader than the basic skills concept, since it promotes more than just a basis for survival.

Good practices in the EU that already include LS

An important part of the project activities was the acquisition of a diverse set of good practices, which are presented in more in detail on the project website6, and partly in this report. Good practices were analysed and described using a unified methodology, allowing the reader to get a quick overview of the whole, or at least a better insight into the details of the particular case.

The collected examples of good practices are very diverse, ranging from models carried out across the entire network of organizations that are carrying out practices of acquisition life skills, to individual cases where each aspect of the implementation is described in detail.

Examples of good practices where we can already monitor the results of encouraging LS in Europe range from young refugees included in residential communities, where they cohabitate with other young people and learn about the culture and language of the new country, to common learning in study circles, which is not only intended for enriching the individual, but also for transferring knowledge among the local community. Cases of programs for the socially excluded that are completely free of charge for anyone living in a particular city and willing to obtain new knowledge, and programs where special attention is given to the notion of how to involve participants, are also presented as examples of good practices. Especially interesting among them is the Citizens' Curriculum with its learner-centred approach that encourages adults to actively contribute to the content of the programs, which gains their greater motivation and commitment to learning. A project for adults who have never attended school or left it early is also presented. The content of this practise is focused on the individual's needs in modern times and circumstances, such as the use of the smartphone or the Internet, and it features meetings of different learning groups in the same environment where they can encourage each other.

Among the fourteen collected good practices, we can recognize three target groups at which the programs are primarily aimed. First, there are young dropouts, then an important part of good practices targets migrants and excluded adults with low capabilities or those lacking in basic skills such as literacy, numeracy, etc. Among the good practices presented in this project, we also find those that focus on very specific target groups or the very specific needs of participants – for example, programs for the social activation of homosexuals, for strengthening health and for recruiting war veterans.

A small number of good practices are intended for less defined adult learners with a need for learning, gaining new knowledge or just getting together. In-depth analysis of good practices showed that every single practice very thoroughly meets the needs of the participant, which means that they initially address the participants' 'current needs'.

In fact, most good practices utilize current individual needs as a motivational factor, and thereby boost the interest of the learner to participate in the programs. By satisfying current needs, the adult participating in the program 'incidentally' receives plenty of other content that aims to reinforce the LS.

The crucial part of the presented good practices, as has been exposed, is the opportunity for participants to co-create the content of programs and create tailor-made programs for each group7. This adaptation towards the participant even goes so far that, for example, a baked cake is considered an entry fee for the program instead of a payment (since the participant cannot afford to pay it). This enables a positive experience regarding how participants value themselves and the importance of their current needs. It is seen that this will be crucial for the continued successful work of the participants among various European environments. Practically all the good practices encompassed here describe how and at what point the participants internalize a positive learning experience and thus open up to learning. This is the key to successful learning and education in vulnerable groups (Javrh 2011). The 'satisfied current need' therefore enables entry into a wider field of research into learning and coexisting with others, even for those adults who, at a certain moment, seemed completely unmotivated and would remain excluded.

Social exclusion means not only lower levels of income, but also a lack of social affiliation and a sense of community, in short, the periphery. For example, in the case of dropouts, we can talk about exclusion from learning and education, which almost certainly causes exclusion from other parts of society as well (CREA 2009, Javrh 2009). One of the serious issues we are facing when we are trying to involve vulnerable adults in learning and education, especially those with the lowest levels of education, are their negative experiences from former schooling and learning. These experiences might strongly reinforce their beliefs that 'learning is not for me and I am not for learning.' The biggest problem nowadays is how to impress these adults in order to invoke their will to participate in education and learning, where they could get different, positive learning experiences and additionally change their beliefs on what this activity can offer to them. This change in learning experience – from negative, frustrating experiences during schooling to interesting, liberating and vision-filled experiences in a group of well-functioning adults – can be one of the fundamental steps away from the vicious circle.

The change in the learning experience is of great importance because positive experiences can make it possible to change beliefs concerning learning and education. These beliefs are, in the case of adults with a lack of LS, usually unfavourable against learning and education. As soon as positive experiences and changes in beliefs occur, we can observe adults gaining greater motivation, better achievements and confirmations in the learning and educational process. All this accumulates in the consolidation of self-image and self-esteem, which are usually very low in vulnerable groups. The rise of new wishes and plans for the future are gradually formed, which includes the desire for engagement with new learning or even involvement in some other pleasant forms of learning and education. Here is the key to the success of the good practices presented in this report.

Typical of all good practices is that they are based on an effort to achieve that change in the learning experience of adults. They are trying to create a comfortable and relaxed environment for socially stigmatized adults (migrants, homeless people, dropouts, etc.). Therefore, in different cases, we can find very imaginative and innovative ways of activating socially deprived adults and connecting them into vibrant learning groups. In addition, these circumstances generate a positive learning experience that assures positive outcomes from being included in the program.

An important part of the survey on the situation in Europe was also the enquiry regarding the tools that are already being implemented for developing LS and that could be transferred to other environments. The tools presented in this report are very heterogeneous, ranging from educational films, maps and images to a wide variety of e-tools.

In the special report (see the LSE website or the Working Compendium on Innovative tools), we have collected very detailed information on each of these tools so that everyone interested is able to approach the implementation of the tool for their own needs, or contact the authors.

In conclusion, we can see that researching various aspects of the Life Skills landscape brings encouraging results. Concrete approaches, good practices and tools that have the capacity and mission to develop LS in individuals have already been developing in different environments and circumstances in Europe for many years. Systematic analysis confirmed that good foundations and good experiences that are worth copying already exist. This report and the LSE project represent a comprehensive initiative for using and developing good experiences in the future.

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Appendix

As already stated, there are many more different definitions of life skills to be found in documents, reports and literature than are to be found in existing adult education practices. However, there are a few definitions that have been consolidated by a larger community of experts. Hereby, we include only the following most relevant definitions of life skills that were found in the lifetime of the LSE project.

UNICEF definition

The Unicef definition of life skills refers to a large group of psychosocial and interpersonal skills that can help people make informed decisions, communicate effectively, and develop coping and self-management skills that may help lead a healthy and productive life (Unicef 2012, p. 1). In its recent efforts to develop a guiding framework for life skills education, Unicef has consolidated the various sets of core life skills drawn up by United Nations agencies and other organizations, such as CASEL, into three broad categories of 'generic life skills':

• cognitive – critical thinking and problem-solving skills for responsible decision-making;

• personal – skills for awareness and drive and for self-management;

• interpersonal – skills for communication, negotiation, cooperation and teamwork, and for inclusion, empathy and advocacy (Unicef 2012, p. 8-10).

UNESCO definition

In the third Grale Report life skills are pointed out as one of the individual learning gains, alongside literacy and numeracy, practical skills (ICT) and cultural learning. Life skills refer to a sense of self-efficacy (resilience, confidence, self-esteem and problem-solving) that enable adults to face life difficulties, solve problems, engage in further learning, join the community and improve their mental health and wellbeing. For disadvantaged groups, life skills provide tools to take on new challenges and to provide practical and emotional support to those around them (Unesco 2016, p. 109.)

Learning Through Life, Inquiry into the Future for Lifelong Learning / The Citizens' Curriculum

The Citizens' Curriculum definition is an innovative, holistic approach to ensure that everyone has the English, maths, digital, civic, health and financial capabilities they need. Life skills are a constituent part of capabilities for life and work. The Citizens' Curriculum taps into what motivates adults to learn, through giving learners a voice in co-designing curriculum content and careful contextualization, ensuring that more people are learning skills that are relevant to their lives and work (see L&W website). The Citizens' Curriculum is based in A. Sen's notion of 'capabilities that constitute a capacity to achieve well-being' (in the sense of human potential to be mobilised). Furthermore, the Citizen's Curriculum also draw on Michael R. Williams' three ways in which learning helps people:

• to make sense of change, by acquiring information, ideas, knowledge and a critical and challenging mind.

• to adapt to change, by making the most of it, capturing and applying to knowledge

• to shape change, being authors of change rather than its victims, navigating risk and uncertainty as a part of a democratic project.

There are four principal capabilities: civic, financial, health and digital, which form a citizens' curriculum. Capabilities are combinations of doings and beings that enhance people's ability to exercise a degree of control over their own lives, to take part with others in decision-making that affects the context of their lives, and to envisage alternative futures for themselves and their families (Schuller and Watson 2009, p. 165-168). In a context of employability and cultural fulfilment, the combination of these three ways of learning is being applied to the so-called 'citizens' curriculum'.

The term 'citizenship' brings opportunities to individuals to take part in work, civic activity and cultural and community life. According to that, a citizens' curriculum consists of four capabilities: financial, civic, health and digital.8 It is an innovative approach to providing chances and possibilities for individuals in order to acquire the above-stated capabilities and obtain skills that are relevant to their fulfilling and meaningful lives and work. It focuses on increasing opportunities for people and society in jobs and career, their daily lives and, in general, in gaining social inclusion. In the sense of human potential and societal development, every citizen should possess the essential set of skills (included in the Citizens' curriculum) for living and working in the 21st Century.

Life skills for the 21st century – do we have what it takes?

Life skills for the 21st century – do we have what it takes is the question that Belete introduces (Belete 2016, p. 50–51). Life skills are the sum of the constructive processing of information, impressions, encounters and experiences of personal and social dimension as a part of one's daily life and work. We can name them social, individual and reflective skills, acquired in a very informal manner. They are contextual and not easy to be framed, thus they need to be developed specifically for a certain time, space and individual. Using the right combination can lead to a sustainable livelihood and withstand stresses and work or life trials. Life skills refer to the skills you need to make the most of your life (by Singh), and maybe the most important among them is the ability and willingness to constantly learn.

Knowledge, competencies and skills for life and work

Knowledge, competences and skills for life and work is the main message that Hinzen and Robak (2017, p. 30–34) stated. Skills are generated knowledge, competences, capabilities, qualifications, attitudes and values with a careful approach to the diverse areas of interests from which they are forged (like work, daily life etc.). In general, life skills encompass life in its totality. Life skills are acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning opportunities by gaining knowledge, by practising, by reflecting experiences and (self) evaluation and dialogue, which has a huge impact on the output of life skills. In the light of life skills, it is important to constantly revise the framework of the necessary and changing contemporary competences and to frequently respond to changing needs in modern societies. Equipping individuals with appropriate skills in order to be able to handle global economic, social and cultural questions moves towards satisfying work demands and the successful management of their daily lives.

Skills for Life – Skills for Work

Skills for life and work in the context of education are a human right and a means of personal, cultural, social and economic development although the definition of skills differs from country to country (which has to be taken into account when designing national policies) (UNESCO 2014, p. 1-11). Skills for life are closely interconnected and overlap with skills for work as both include values of respect for human dignity and diversity, enabling individuals to improve their capacity for full participation in society, to manage one's own life and to engage in lifelong learning. Through a wide range of providers, skills can be acquired through formal, non-formal and informal paths of learning with a cautious approach to its measurement and monitoring. According to the experts' opinions in this report, skills for life and skills for work are needed in a context of inclusion, sustainability, social justice and democracy.

Report of the Inter-Agency Working Group on Life Skills in the EFA

The Report of the Inter-Agency Working Group on Life Skills in the EFA (UNESCO 2004) states that life skills

are a combination of psychosocial skills, accumulating knowledge, attitudes, values, skills etc. related to specific learning domains and sociocultural contexts. Approaches to life skills education need to be developed due to time- and content-specific skills. A life skills approach, acknowledged by the Inter-Agency Working Group on Life Skills in EFA, is focused on six issues regarding life skills: from theoretical frames of life skills to assessments and monitoring the outcomes of life skills in education (and daily life as well).

According to the research group, a life skill approach to education is a process of cyclic and sustained individual development on a personal, social, cognitive and instrumental basis, thus strongly connected to a sustainable society and environmental development.

Youth and skills: Putting education to work

The life skills programmes, mentioned in the Unesco report on Youth and skills: Putting education to work (Unesco 2012), focus on the adoption of knowledge, attitudes and behaviour towards health preservation regarding HIV- and AIDS-related topics. They involve addressing psychosocial and interpersonal skills such as assertive communication, self-esteem, decision-making and negotiation. It is emphasized that life skills education needs to adopt an interactive, responsive and participatory methods in order to challenge young people to find new ways of relating to one another. Life skills education related to HIV and AIDS issues ensures that increased knowledge translates into an effective change in attitudes and behaviour. Those programmes are an example of a good implementation of life skills although a higher number of young people still remain at risk of HIV infection. Due to a large amount of it being extracurricular, voluntary and small-scale initiatives are in general still not fully or not at all recognised by governments and educational institutions.

Shaping the literacy agenda from a lifelong learning perspective

Being literate in the 21st century involves obtaining knowledge, skills, attitudes, dispositions, motivation and values in a way that effectively challenges life's demands (daily life, work etc.) (Hanemann 2016). It goes beyond a classical understanding of "literacy" and "numeracy" and it is more like a competence or a set of them than a skill. The notion of literacy as a lifelong learning continuum provides a better understanding of the expanded vision of literacy. Considering economic and social development, "lifelong literary" requires integrated approaches to teaching and learning throughout formal, non-formal and informal ways in the light of equipping an individual or society in general for performing daily tasks sufficiently and successfully.

Skills and competencies for life and work – magic recipe?

Popović asks the crucial question of whether there is a magic recipe for skills and competences for life and work (Popović 2016, p. 25)? The main purpose of the concept of life skills, recognized as a holistic and integrated approach, is to prepare individuals and societies in general for everything else: literacy and numeracy, basic education, ICT, environmental awareness, multicultural dialogue, science, communication, human relationships etc. In the light of 'life skills', all sorts of vocational skills are (or need to be) combined with abstract cognitive skills, metacognition, critical thinking, personal traits and human relationships in various and innovative ways in accordance with the individual and his/her need to master daily life, work and education coherently.

Basic skills for active citizenship

De Greef (2017) emphasises that a participative society and the concept of active citizenship require specific national policies regarding adult education as one of the significant factors impacting on the sustainable development of humanity and society. Besides promoting basic skills, social inclusion refers to incorporating functional and emotional perspectives. Introducing both to the concept of active citizenships leads us to four processes in constant overlap: activation, internalization, participation and connection, which are essentials when speaking of fundamentals for the future, lifelong learning and dissent-living of an individual. In other words, making people 'life-skilled'.

The road to employability through personal development: a critical analysis of the silences and ambiguities in the British Columbia (Canada) Life Skills Curriculum

Butterwick in Benjamin (2006, p. 75–86) wrote that the recognition of life skills, speaking in the context of work surroundings, is based on two premises:

• the significance of emotions in individuals' lives and the possibilities for individuals to learn from family, community and the wider society; and, on the other hand,

• having the 'right' attitude and making the right choices according to the dominant neo-liberal

ideology (as the employer demands).

The ESP (Employability Skills Profile) is a dominant Canadian framework with a list of generic or core skills each competent worker should obtain: academic skills (communicating, thinking and learning), personal management skills (responsibility and adaptability) and teamwork skills (working with others).

Personal development in terms of employability and life skills rather than employment, in recent years, turns out to be the major shift in the political economy of career and worker education. Referring to the ESP, Canadian schools are using the career education curriculum known as BCLSP (the British Columbia Life Skills Programme), which consists of six life skills, highly connected to students' employability: understanding oneself, communicating with and relating to others, accessing and using information, solving problems and making decisions, living with and initiating change and setting goals, making and enacting plans. The prior focus is aimed at understanding oneself in terms of dealing with ones' internal barriers and learning from models in order to adopt all the aforementioned skills. The goal of this national notion is to provide flexible, critical, educated, productive and adaptable individuals/workers in the changing post-industrial globalised capital society.

A Review of Life Skills Teaching in Sport and Physical Education, Prologue

In the Review of Life Skills Teaching in Sport and Physical Education, Prologue (Gaudas 2010, p. 241–258), it is scientifically proved that the experience of sport contributes to many positive outcomes in life. Life skills are learned in conjunction with explicit sport and physical participation/education and are explained as skills that integrate the mind and body. That is the key point of life skills – to be integrated and applicable in ways of living and working at once. Sport and physical activities induce the evolvement of life skills alongside sports skills through the same ways of gaining them in sports programmes: through demonstration, modelling and practising - but with a wider extent of usefulness, which Goudas calls the transferability of skills. A life skill is supposed to be a skill learned in one situation and re-used or applied in another situation with similar or different circumstances.

Literacy and Numeracy from Lifelong Learning Perspective

The UIL Policy Brief 7 (UIL 2017, p. 1-4), dealing with the literacy and numeracy from a lifelong learning perspective, recognizes a wide set of knowledge, skills and competences as essentials in today's fast-changing society. Literacy is explained as 'the (cap) ability to put knowledge, skills, attitudes and values effectively into action when dealing with text in the context of ever-changing demands' (p. 2). It requires sustained learning and frequent updating and evolvement. Like 'life skills', literacy is supposed to be linked to economic, social and cultural fields in order to meet a diversity of learning and living needs of individuals and society. Literacy demands institutionalised, flexible and supportive learning systems, which encompass integrated and multi-cultural approaches in all stages of a person's life and according to the diversity of life situations. The successful holistic implementation of literacy into not only the educational sphere but also to other development-relevant areas can influence poverty reduction, increase social inclusion and provide sustainable development on a personal and societal level.

Eléments du Hackathon / Migration[S] Autrement

Projects implemented by Belgium Le Monde des Possibles (CNAM 2016) engage in the democratic integration of refugees into national communities. The organization recognizes multiple opportunities such as sharing multicultural skills among and between hosts and refugees in order to gain benefits on both sides. Offering involvement in the daily lives of hosting societies to marginalised groups at different stages creates opportunities for them (in this particular case, refugees) to actively rebuild and improve their livelihood and job prospects. The important fact is that the individuals in these projects are being recognized as ones with talents and abilities – a variety of rich features, from which the hosted country or individuals at any level can benefit. As an example of a good practice, this kind of multicultural cooperation represents a useful tool for trading and sharing a variety of skills, competences and knowledge among individuals, cultures and communities, which in general can result in sustainable development, improved health, social inclusion and wellbeing.

The Asia-Pacific End of Decade Note on Education for All: Life Skills and Lifelong Learning. Goal 3

In the EFA Goal 3 from the CASEL life skills dimensions (Unesco 2013), UNICEF and some other definitions of life skills state that the life skills concept combines 'a wide and multi-dimensional range of competences and skills, including the possession of self-esteem and a sense of efficacy and aspirations – all of which

are vital determinants of future outcomes' (p. 8). Life skills can be promoted in two ways: as an application to a particular thematic issue or discipline or/and as an integration of life skills as a broad approach to education. Based on these two perspectives, the implementation of life skills across the Asia-Pacific region vary in three directions:

• as psychosocial skills, including social/emotional learning, leadership and self-regulation;

• as income-generation skills and livelihood development and;

• ways of learning about healthy behaviours and risk reductions for HIV prevention.

An important notice in the EFA Goal 3 is that the concept of life skills needs to be recognized, regardless of the learning domains, as an answer to the learning needs of young people and adults for their well-being and participation in work and society.