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EUROPEAN INDUCTION SUPPORT FOR ADULT LEARNING PROFESSIONALS TO THE
CORRECTIONAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM - EISALP

Partners:



INNOVATIVE
PRISON SYSTEMS



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Research report „Profile of Adult Learning Professionals in Correctional Criminal Justice System”

Findings from the research regarding competence identification, modelling and assessment,
conducted during the EIS-ALP project 539414-LLP-1-2013-1-RO-GRUNDTVIG-GMP.



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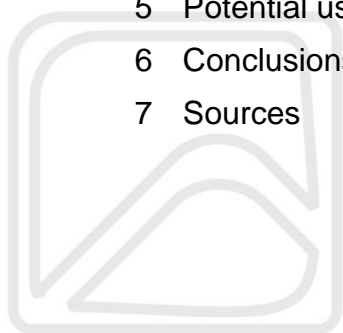


Project partners contributing to this report:

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- *The Prison Officers Training Centre, Arad Penitentiary – Romania – work package coordinator;*
- *European Network for the Promotion of a Responsible Economy – REPER 21 (Romania);*
- *The European Prison Education Association – Malta Branch (Malta);*
- *Malta Corradino Correctional Facility (Malta);*
- *I Qualify Just – IT Solutions and Consulting, LTD (IPS_Innovative Prison Systems (Portugal);*
- *National Association for Family Action – ANJAF (Portugal);*
- *EuroCoop - Institute for European Research and Development (Slovenia);*
- *Center Za Izobraževanje In Kulturo Trebnje - Cik Trebnje (Slovenia);*
- *User Voice (UK)*
- *Learning Initiatives For Employment CIC – LIFE (UK).*

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1 Executive summary

In a constantly changing environment, lifelong learning is essential for the understanding of the world, for accessing more and better opportunities and for improving the quality of life. In this context, learning is no longer limited to formal education in a certain period of time, but it is a continuous process, which helps people to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes throughout their entire lifespan.

Although lifelong learning is a voluntary and deliberate act and its responsibility is attributed to the person, the complex nature of this process can't be denied, and several European studies have acknowledged the diversity of the adult learning domain.

The wide variety of aspects involved underline the importance of well prepared professionals in the field of adult learning, capable to adapt to new and challenging learning situations, as well as to different learners, with specific learning needs, styles, levels of competence, skills, understanding and motivation.

This is particularly true for the adult learning process in the correctional systems and learning professionals face the need to upgrade and adapt their competences regarding adult learning to better suite the specific characteristics of the prison environment and of the inmate learners.

The learning environment in a correctional setting is unique and challenging, incorporating also the custodial and the practical aspects of incarceration of offenders. The adult learners have first and foremost the statute of offenders, with all the attached rules and restrictions this statute brings. Their motivation of engaging in learning experiences is also altered by their status, as well as by their previous experience with education. The adult learning professionals working inside a prison have the task to create a positive and stimulating learning environment, to balance creativity and education with custodial and security procedures, while addressing an extremely wide range of individual needs (educational and psychological).

This underlines the need for developing and constantly enhancing the set of key competences for adult learning professionals working in a correctional setting, as an essential stage in the development of initial and continuous training programmes, available at a national and European level.

Built on the experience and results of previous European projects and research, EIS ALP partnership brings together public and private institutions involved in prison education. The partners have practical experience in research, development of programs and training courses, in the delivery of trainings for adult learners and in working inside a correctional setting. Within the project, the concept "*adult learning professionals*" encompasses not only teachers, but also educators, psychologists, social workers and volunteers of different professions, thus the competence profile will target generic and specific competences for all this professionals. Through this, the project aims towards an enhanced diversity and complexity of competences regarding adult learning professionals and addresses a wider variety of professionals.



Also, the proposed activities are developed and coordinated in accordance with societal responsibility and quality principles, in order to maximize the societal contribution of the project and to guarantee that the results are timely, relevant, and feasible, reach the planned objectives, thus contributing to the sustainability of the project.

The aim of the project is to improve the content and delivery of adult education in a prison setting, as well as enhancing the learning dimension of the correctional criminal justice system in partner countries. In order to attain this objectives, the project is structured in 8 work packages, focused on management, research, development of learning content, piloting of materials, implementation and dissemination of results.

The development of the competence profile for adult learning professionals is associated with work package 2 – research and is coordinated by the partners from *Prison Officers Training Centre - Arad Penitentiary*. Within this package, the main cluster of activities are *competence identification*, *competence modelling* and *competence assessment*. Competence identification includes compiling national available information about the duties, tasks, responsibilities, roles and work environments related to the job and identifying the relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes required by adult learning professionals in correctional criminal justice system. In the stage of competence modelling, the gathered data are used in the development of a consistent competence profile of adult learning professionals in correctional criminal justice system, while competence assessment refers to checking with stakeholders that the identified set of competences making up the profile is complete, consistent and real.

The set of competences, although developed on the basis of data compiled from all partners, it will not be applied equally in all countries, taking into consideration that in some cases policy directions are already in place, while for others they may be less relevant due to different learning cultures, government structures or regulations.

2 Background of the study

Prison education in Europe has received quite an attention in the last years, being strongly supported by the European Commission through different programs. But in order to develop prison education, we must start with the most important aspect of the process: the adult learning professionals. Although their key role was acknowledged by several researches and in the Member States' National Reform Programs, there are still acute problems in regard to implementation, with limited progress being made in changing systems to reflect the need for lifelong learning in the case of lifelong learning professionals working in the correctional criminal justice system. The European Commission Communication 'Improving the Quality of Teacher Education' noted that, where they exist, support measures for new teachers are still relatively unsystematic and emerging rather than well embedded. Moreover, a systematic approach of the education of teachers activating in vulnerable domains,



such as prison adult education, would significantly contribute, even if indirectly, in tackling the smart and inclusive priorities of the Europe 2020 strategy.

Based on the European experience in prison education of the EIS ALP partners, we realized that the key for effective prison education is working on the competencies of teachers even before they enter the system, an idea that was explored from different angles in more generic projects CLAP, MyCompass, BRIDGE, TTIP. The EISALP partnership took into account these results, as well as other initiatives outside our partnership, which are nevertheless relevant: LOCNET Prison Education Project, Effective Induction for Prison Teachers Project and Key Competencies for Adult Learning Professionals, commissioned by the DG EAC of European Commission.

An exploration of the European Shared, the ADAM and EVE databases for “prison education” search criteria reflects a limited number of projects aimed towards this field, with even fewer stressing the problem of adult learning professionals training. In this context, the induction of adult learning professionals to correctional criminal justice system is a highly unresolved problem for most of the European countries and the need for common initiatives and collaboration becomes more and more stringent.

One recommended initiative, adopted by our project, is the development of a web-based tool for adult learning professionals to assess and further develop their key competencies in prison education. In order to increase the level of originality and to ensure the necessary coverage, the project involved relevant stakeholders in all the development activities, integrating their perspective and using their feedback in the validation of the profile.

2.1 Aim of the study

The work package 2 – research is aimed towards the development of a European key competency profile for the adult learning professionals working in correctional criminal justice system, based on key competences for adult learning professionals, national researches in partner countries conducted on relevant stakeholders and European analysis of available materials on topic developed in other LLP initiatives.

3 Methodology

The methodology used consists of three main clusters of activities:

- Competence identification
- Competence modelling
- Competence assessment

3.1 Competence identification was aimed towards compiling national available information about the duties, tasks, responsibilities, roles and work environments



related to the job and identifying the relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes required by adult learning professionals in correctional criminal justice system.

In the first phase of the research, the partners made an inventory of the activities specific for adult prison education and identified knowledge, skills and attitudes relevant for these activities, which they clustered into separate competences, divided into three categories: generic, specific and supportive.

For a common language and understanding, the concepts used were described using the following terms:

- **competence** - a complex combination of knowledge, skills and abilities/attitudes needed to carry out a specific activity, leading to results;
- **generic competence** - relevant for carrying out all activities in the adult learning sector;
- **specific competence** - directly linked to specific activities carried out by adult learning professionals in the learning process;
- **supportive competence** – necessary for carrying out activities supportive for the learning process, such as managing, administrative support and media use;
- **knowledge** - a body of facts, concepts, ideas, principles, theories and practices related to a field of practice, work or study;
- **skills** - a capacity learned or acquired through training in order to perform actions by applying knowledge;
- **attitudes** - the physical, mental or emotional capacity to perform a task.

In order to ensure the use of relevant information, the decision was made to gather the needed data by researching available literature and/or by interviewing the adult learning professionals working as staff or volunteers inside the prison. Also, this strategy was supported by the existing differences between partner countries, some of which had limited access to certain sources, but could compensate with other significant data.

The sources for collecting the data were:

- Academic and policy-related documents on competences for working in the adult learning sector (academic literature on competences and abilities of adult learning professionals, researches financed by the European Commission).
- Job descriptions, vacancy texts and competence profiles on a providers level, sector level and, if available, national level.
- Learning outcomes of educational programmes (describe the set of knowledge, skills and attitudes that an individual has acquired and is able to demonstrate after completing a learning process).

All the data was gathered and structured in a common manner by all partners, in order to facilitate the subsequent analysis.

This initial list contained competences, knowledge, skills, attitudes and behavioural descriptors and was the basis for step 2 – competence modelling.



3.2 Competence modelling

The aim of competence modelling was the development of a consistent competence profile of adult learning professionals in correctional criminal justice system.

The collected data was processed by using qualitative analysis methods. The coding process involved three members of the research team, who analyzed the materials received from each partner. The coding schema was developed in parallel with the coding process, in order to ensure that all relevant recurring themes were identified.

The analysis of the data revealed similar information, with little discrepancies existing between the partners. There were some differences when comparing the data collected from literature and research with data gathered through interviews with professionals involved in prison education. But the differences were mostly related to applicability: the interviews underlined the behavioural descriptors characteristic for professionals working in prison education, while literature reviews stressed the theoretical aspects (competences, knowledge, general descriptions of skills and attitudes).

In order to test the intercoder reliability, the research team defined the coding and categorizing protocol and two specialists from Arad Prison (a psychologist and an educator) were properly trained and then were asked to code the entire material. The findings were compared and the results indicated a high degree of agreement between the two coders, which implies that the results of the content analysis are highly reliable and not the result of a purely subjective process.

Based on the analyzed data, a competence model comprising 13 competence domains emerged, structured into three main categories:

- generic - personal characteristics, communication and team work, autonomous lifelong learner, didactical and methodological domain, motivating learners, assessment and management of the learning process, good facilitator of the learning process;
- specific - representation and inter-institutional collaboration, management of groups in prison settings, prison legislation and regulations, managing adult learners with special learning needs, understanding the specific of a prison environment;
- supportive - related competences.

Each competence domain had several defining indicators (knowledge, skills and attitudes) and examples, which provided context for a better understanding of competences related to prison education professionals.

3.3 Competence assessment

This step was essential in the development of the competence profile, in order to ensure that it is complete, consistent and real. It consisted in a workshop organised with relevant stakeholders in April 2014, by partners P3 – CFSO (ROMANIA), P 5 – CCF (MALTA), P7 – ANJAF (PORTUGALIA), P9 – CIK (SLOVENIA) and P11 – LIFE (UK). The stakeholders ranged from professionals



involved in management and in prison education, teachers, volunteers, educators, social workers and psychologists.

In order to ease the testing process, the competence profile was structured as a questionnaire, with 13 competence domains, each being defined by several items representing the defining indicators. The relevance of each indicator was evaluated on scale from 1 to 5 (*1 – not at all important, 2 – less important, 3 – equally important, 4 – more important, 5 – very important*). Also, during the workshop, feedback was requested and the observations and suggestions of stakeholders were noted. The profile was revised based on their comments. The revised version was then sent to partners, for analysis and feedback.

The assessment indicated the need to restructure the placement of competences into the main categories, in order to better reflect their generic and specific character. Also, for a better description of the competences, the indicators were structured into knowledge, skills and attitudes. The domain “personal characteristics” was eliminated and the containing descriptors were integrated into the remaining competences, mainly due to the fact that the profile is the basis for the training modules developed in work package 4. This means that the learning material developed must address the content of the profile and the domain “personal characteristics” contains dimension that are difficult to train. By integrating them into competences, they can increase the understanding of the profile, without the need to be directly addressed.

3.4 Validity of the research findings

The research design was based on a qualitative methodology, which allowed us to take into consideration the differences between partner countries (legislation, prison regulations, practices regarding education and rehabilitation of inmates) and the experience of adult learning professionals in the development of a competence profile, allowing a better understanding of a complex and multi-faced domain.

By using a qualitative research design, we targeted the information gathered from a selected sample of sources, relevant for the inquired subject, rather than being preoccupied with the generalization of expected outcomes. The sampling plan included specific literature and documents review, as well as relevant stakeholders’ checks in competence identification and competence assessment, increasing the trustworthiness of the study. Also, the use of multiple data sources and collection procedures allowed the corroboration and converging of evidence, satisfying the principle of triangulation and increasing the validity of the studies’ conclusions.

The consistency of the identified competences with previous similar research findings, combined with the consensus of the experts which assessed the competence profile indicated an acceptable level of objectivity and the control of researchers’ bias.

The qualitative approach in data analysis allowed the research team to identify and extract relevant competence from the existing data, supported by examples and specific behavioural descriptors offered by experienced professionals. In this manner, we followed the research questions and thus the aim of the project, making sure not to impose explicit theories and force the data into pre-existing patterns.



All these strategies ensured the reliability and validity of the competence profile, essential in a qualitative research design.

4. Outcomes of the study

As mentioned before, the main objective of the research was to identify the set of core competences for the adult learning professionals working in a criminal correctional system.

The final version of the competence profile is structured into three categories: generic, specific and supportive.

4.1 Generic competences

4.1.1 Communication and team work

Knowledge

- be aware of relevant communications techniques
- knowledge of the tools and techniques of the communicational process
- technical knowledge at social and human skills level
- knowledge of team conflict management
- knowledge of training profile appropriate to the context. (physical posture, appropriateness of voice, use of examples for the target group, assertiveness towards trainees)

Skills

- ability to interact with inmates in an assertive manner
- ability to establish a relation of trust and respect within the prison setting
- ability to exchange experience and knowledge with inmates and other colleagues
- ability to give and receive feedback to and from adult learners, colleagues and stakeholders
- ability to cooperate and act as a team player

Attitudes

- an attitude of empathy and understanding towards the trainees
- be attentive to the questions and try to answer with practical examples

Descriptors

- It is important that each adult learning professional has the adequate communication skills (understand communication barriers, develop different styles of communication) to communicate with all learners and all offenders within this setting, including those who are disturbed. For example, if one teaches soft skills (e.g. cooking, art, math), patience and impeccable communication skills are required to initiate prisoners into a learning life.
- Being assertive with the learners in the correct context, but approachable and trustworthy is vital to a role in prison education.
- The adult learning professional should have an active/cooperative role in teams and the working groups in which they participate.
- The adult learning professional should share information and knowledge with colleagues and be available to support them when asked.
- The adult learning professional should contribute to the development or maintenance of a good working environment and strengthen the team spirit.
- The adult learning professional should be able to resolve potential conflicts assertively, using strategies that include good understanding and respect for others.
- The adult learning professional should be able to put oneself in the role of "other" and try to understand different perspectives on the same problem.

**4.1.2 Autonomous lifelong learner****Knowledge**

- knowledge of his role within the context of the criminal justice system
- knowledge of relevant recent developments in (academic) literature/ recent studies and research

Skills

- ability of critical thinking towards his/her own professional practice
- ability to be self-reflective
- ability to manage his/her own learning process

Attitudes

- be interested in using the existing opportunities for personal and professional development
- be self-reflective

Descriptors

- The adult learning professional systematically reflects on his/her own practices, learning and personal development.
- The adult learning professional integrates the findings of his reflection into his own professional practice, seeing his own practice within the larger context of the institute, sector, the wider profession and society.
- The adult learning professional is preoccupied with his own development, is willing to further develop and improve himself/herself and sees himself/herself as an autonomous lifelong learner.

4.1.3 Didactical and methodological competences**Knowledge**

- knowledge and abilities regarding the area of teaching and related disciplines (social pedagogy as an interdisciplinary field; similarities and differences with related fields, methods, strategies and models of social pedagogical work)
- knowledge of learning methods (didactics) relevant for the learning processes of adult learners
- knowledge of the different learning styles (approaches) of inmates

Skills

- ability to identify and use the best learning resources tailored to inmates' needs and capacities
- ability to integrate the learning material within the social and cultural background of the inmates
- ability to use various learning techniques (ICT, new media and social networks)
- ability to use adult learning theory in teaching

Attitudes

- be critical and reflective towards available information
- assumes responsibility for the way he/she uses information in a prison setting

Descriptors

- The adult learning professional should be knowledgeable about multiple intelligences (Visual-Spatial, Bodily-kinesthetic, Musical, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, Linguistic, and Logical – Mathematical) and take them into consideration when working with inmates.
- The adult learning professional should be able to plan (in general) and prepare internally organised (coherent) curricula that ensure continuity and progress, bearing in mind the national, regional and school curriculum policy.
- The adult learning professional should be able to justify the curriculum based on knowledge and understanding of the learning process and curriculum matters.
- The adult learning professional should have the necessary qualifications to a level consistent with



the kind of course he/she wants to deliver.

- The adult learning professional should develop lesson delivery strategies that are based on the makeup of each class (students come from different cultural and social backgrounds and have different prejudices and attitudes toward authority, which must be considered and addressed).
- The adult learning professional should have the ability to teach creatively, adapting to the needs of a variety of learners and willing to explore new teaching and learning strategies.
- The adult learning professional should promote the access of inmates to the media in order to keep them informed about relevant events in social life, with the due security.
- The adult learning professional should be able to choose appropriate learning materials, e.g. from radio or television shows.
- The adult learner professional should collect experiences in everyday moments, that can be displayed and shared in training practice (use of film clips, documentaries, music, smells, etc.).
- The adult learning professional should be skilled in and use opportunities for embedding language, reading, writing and numeracy whenever possible (examples of embedded teaching: numbers, scale and proportion in art, writing for prison radio programmes where they exist, discussion around speech such as 'back slang' and other prison languages for speaking and listening, supporting your child's reading and writing in Family Learning where such a programme is applied).

4.1.4 Motivating learners

Knowledge

- knowledge on methods and techniques to stimulate, motivate and empower inmates and develop themselves

Skills

- ability to use methods and techniques to stimulate, motivate and empower adult learners
- ability to create a stimulating learning environment for adult learners
- ability to underline the relevance of the subject-matter for real life situations
- ability to use the learners' strengths and resources within the learning process
- ability to stimulate learners' confidence
- ability to structure the learning process in accordance with adult learners' needs

Attitudes

- an attitude of empathy and understanding towards the trainees.

Descriptors

- Adult learning professionals should be aware of and preferably conversant with the theory of Emotional Intelligence (self awareness, mood management, self motivation, empathy and managing relationships).
- The adult learning professional should be imaginative enough to organise the 'learning' room as different from classrooms as possible (A good number of prisoners have negative school experiences, so it does not help to recreate the same context that they feel failed them when they were younger).
- Adult learning professionals should have patience with learners and be compassionate to the needs, concerns and experiences of each learner.
- Education in such a context can be challenging as prisoners may struggle with the identity to become learners and may associate education with negative experiences of mainstream education for example. Therefore, the adult learning professional should possess an innovative way of motivating learners and persistent with learner's lack of confidence or lack of motivation to learn.
- Inmates can be hard to motivate and make inspired with education so it is so important that an adult learning professional can show resilience and persistence within such a context.

**4.1.5 Assessment and management of the learning process competences****Knowledge**

- knowledge of assessment techniques
- knowledge of a wide range of learning styles and didactical methods to be used in the learning process
- knowledge of how to design a curriculum
- knowledge of different monitoring and evaluation techniques
- knowledge of the ways that outcomes can be used to improve the learning process, learning strategies and his/her own practice

Skills

- be able to use different evaluation and monitoring techniques
- be able to develop learning objectives in accordance with identified needs
- be able to design and deliver programs, using different curriculum designs, adult learning theory, adequate resources and methods
- be able to use various methods and curriculum designs in accordance with the learning styles and objectives
- be able to assess and integrate outcomes within the complex frame of the learning process
- be able to integrate the training programs into the ongoing rehabilitation process of inmates

Attitudes

- is self-reflective
- is willing to improve the learning process and the strategy used

Descriptors

- Adult learning professionals need to have quite a lot of creativity and diversity in teaching, resources and ideas, due to the fact that prison restrictions are sometimes very high.
- Adult learning professionals should be very clear about the difference between formative and summative assessments and when to use them.
- Adult learning professionals prepare, teach and mark as required, using data to set challenging targets.
- Adult learning professionals set and monitor SMART learner targets and use ILPs effectively.
- Adult learning professionals play a full part in the Prison's quality assurance procedures and to promote high quality teaching and learning, maintaining and developing a variety of learning materials which meet the needs of an equal opportunities prison.
- The adult learning professional takes into consideration the needs, interests and expectations of adult learners in accordance with the curriculum.
- When planning the lessons, the adult learning professional tries to anticipate various situations in the learning process.
- When planning the lessons, the adult learning professional takes into consideration the limitations adult learners encounter in the learning process.

4.1.6 Good facilitator of the learning process**Knowledge**

- knowledge regarding human development and the stages of adult development
- knowledge of different learning and teaching styles (approaches)

Skills

- ability to identify and use the learning resources of learners
- ability to encourages inmates' self-directed learning
- ability to create a positive learning environment in which adult learners feel free to give their judgment or opinion on the learning process
- ability to guide adult learners in their learning process and in further development toward, or as,



fully autonomous lifelong learners

- ability to support the adult learner in reaching the objectives of the learning process and in following the defined learning strategy
- ability to provide relevant and contextualized tasks and activities and also assess the outcomes
- ability to change the learning strategy when necessary

Attitudes

- is aware of differences between inmates (cultural, economic, ethnic)
- adopts a flexible attitude towards the learning process

Descriptors

- Adult learning professionals should get to know their students - it is important to find out as much as one can about the learners, if a prison education and training programme is to bear fruit. It does not make sense to create a curriculum, write detailed syllabi and devise teaching methods without first knowing who the beneficiaries of this project are going to be.
- Learners, particularly prisoners, many of whom have acquired a low level of education, believe that the only thing they can do is ask questions since the teacher has all the answers. Adult learning professionals who give learners creative initiatives have a greater chance of seeing their students succeed.
- One of the factors that differentiate prison education and mainstream education is the emotional state of the prisoner. This is directly linked with the ability to understand the impact of incarceration on each prisoner. Each adult learning professional has a caring responsibility to all learners and recognizes whether anything may compromise their safety or health. The needs, issues and abilities of each learner will be differing and communication and relationship skills are needed to be successful as an adult learning professional in a prison setting.
- The adult learning professional takes into consideration and accepts the diversity of adult learners in the learning process (cultural, social and behavioural).
- The adult learning professional is able to recognise reluctant learners in the group and choose appropriate problem solving techniques.
- The adult learning professional is able to base the communication on the structure of the group of adult learners (inmates, the Roma, foreigners).
- The adult learning professional is able to take into account adult learners' prior knowledge and experience.
- The adult learning professional enables active learner participation in the learning process and encourages inmates to gradually adopt responsibility for their own education.

4.2 Specific competences

4.2.1. Prison legislation and regulations

Knowledge

- good knowledge of prison legislation

Skills

- ability to understand the principles of inspection, review of best practice reports and the self - evaluation process in prison education
- ability to understand prison rules on security and the adult learning professionals' obligations and responsibilities in the use of ICT, Health and Safety, as well as professional conduct
- ability to provide the directions of establishment's technical assistance needed to implement the plan of treatment of detainees

Attitudes

- be responsible
- be honest and a "fair person"

**Descriptors**

- If knowledge is limited regarding other organizations or aspects of the criminal justice system, it is important that one has the ability to research accurately and learn new information in order to make them better informed.
- The adult learning professional needs to understand the range of roles and responsibilities of the prison officer and possess an understanding of how all prison staff can support and assist the learning of prisoners in this context.
- The adult learning professional should have an understanding of the use of resources, interaction with prisoners, his/her rights and responsibilities, access to prisons for staff, visitors and volunteers, correspondence with inmates, confidentiality of one's personal world in the classroom context.
- The adult learning professional should respect the learners' right to confidentiality/privacy and not discuss prisoners' lives outside of prison (should be responsible and trustworthy as a key holder).
- The adult learning professional should provide technical assistance to the Courts' and parole boards' enforcement of penalties by preparing reports, issuing opinions on the individual development of detainees, during the execution of the sentence, so as to enable the respective judges to assess the hazard and the viability of their social reintegration.

4.2.2. Specific literature regarding prison education and corrective theories**Knowledge**

- knowledge regarding the important role of education, training and learning as part of the rehabilitation process of inmates
- knowledge of social exclusion domain (theory, historical context, ontological assumptions and justifications - cultural uneasiness, universal handicap, social identity)
- basic knowledge of the postmodern paradigm shift: from the concept of poverty to the concept of new poverty or social exclusion; from emphasizing causality, individual reasons, and responsibility, to systematic understanding of the responsibility for poverty/exclusion
- knowledge of the meaning and the symbolism of the social edge
- knowledge of selected socially excluded groups,
- knowledge of extreme social exclusion: accumulation of exclusion and levels and forms of compensation
- knowledge of the identity strategy of the socially excluded – from individual to collective: subcultures, male culture, etc.
- knowledge of desistance theory
- knowledge of theories regarding crime and rehabilitation

Skills

- ability to differentiate between behavior and person
- ability to understand the complex phenomenon of education and rehabilitation
- ability to adapt learning content to recent advances in the field of prison education and rehabilitation

Attitudes

- be non-judgmental
- adopt an attitude of tolerance and acceptance
- respect and protect rights of inmates, as well as the rights of the community

Descriptors

- It would be vital for one to understand the impact of incarceration especially regarding how this may affect individual's ability and willingness to learn and be involved in educational opportunities. It is also important for one to understand key characteristics of prison and prisoners, especially if anything was to be of concern.
- The adult learning professional should be constantly preoccupied with the recent developments in



the field of prison education and rehabilitation and integrate them into his/her own practice.

- The adult learning professional should be able to understand the complex interplay of factors involved in criminal behavior and prison education.
- The adult learning professional should understand that the main aim of prison education is the behavioral and cognitive change of inmates, in accordance with the best interest of the community.

4.2.3. Understanding the specific of a prison environment

Knowledge

- knowledge regarding the organizational constraints associated with closed institutions
- knowledge of strategies for preventing and/or managing risk situations

Skills

- ability to deal with enclosed spaces and with teaching settings within a prison
- ability to cope with and understand the organizational constraints of working within a context where security is paramount and in which fragmentation and discontinuity in learning can seriously affect planning and delivery of educational courses
- ability to work positively within the inherent restraints

Attitudes

- understand the limits of support and the boundaries of their role in relation with inmates
- understand the limitations of learning technologies in prison
- be aware of appropriate dress code within a prison setting, regardless of prisoner group being taught
- be sensitive to the complexities of prisons or closed institutions

Descriptors

- Teaching settings are enormously different from mainstream education settings, therefore one should have to be able to get used to dealing with feelings of restrictions once entering the setting.
- The adult learning professional should possess knowledge of how to prevent threatening situations. One needs to understand his/her position (techniques, strategies and educational procedures) and to recognize manipulation in the classroom.
- The adult learning professional should understand and have knowledge of the correct behavior in a correctional setting (outline of key negotiating skills; to avert danger, ways of speaking, negotiating in order to reduce pressure i.e. conflict, privacy and respect, physical positioning, intervention and protection and conflict management). He/she should also have knowledge of how to manage violent situations (implement the operating procedure following an incident, use the alarm system, training in use of keys) and to understand every prison's guidelines (to understand the different alarm systems and how they work, the process for reporting incidents, how to give evidence against prisoners and prison officers following a possible incident).
- Often due to security incidents that delay or prevent the unlocking of prisoners, adult learning professionals should have an element of patience and understanding in the role. The prison regime and the safety of all prisoners are of paramount importance so the adult learning professionals working inside a prison should be adaptable to all scenarios.
- Although caring responsibilities are part of the role in this context, it is also vital that one understands the limits of this support and the barriers of this support. For example, it is important that no prison tutor is over familiar with any learner which would compromise any level of professionalism. The individual must remain at all times professional with work within the remit of the job allowance to be emotionally supportive and caring. An opportunity for manipulation by a learner must always be recognized and avoided.

4.2.4. Representation and inter-institutional collaboration

Knowledge

- knowledge of the role of adult education in prison and the mission of the institution, within the



broader judicial and criminal context

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Skills

- ability to represents the institution in working groups, meetings or events related to adult education
- ability to understand the relation between different institutions and organizations involved in the rehabilitation of inmates

Attitudes

- be preoccupied with improving adult education within the prison, in correspondence with the changes and needs of the society.

Descriptors

- It is important for the adult learning professional to have a thorough understanding of the interplay between organizations within this context (it is vitally important that one has an understanding of all elements of the criminal justice system and the organizations that play a part in each prisoner's journey e.g. Probation service, prison service, court systems, health and drug misuse services etc.).
- The adult learning professional should be able to use networking skills with other teachers and professionals - it is important that communication skills and the ability to network are part of the role as an adult learning professional.
- In order to assist learners in how they can progress in their education and rehabilitative process, the adult learning professional should have an understanding and a level of knowledge of other agencies that can assist in the rehabilitative progression of each learner.
- An adult learning professional working in prisons should have expertise that stretch beyond the prison education curriculum.

4.2.5. Management of groups in prison settings

Knowledge

- knowledge of social exclusion domain (theory, historical context, ontological assumptions and justifications - cultural uneasiness, universal handicap, social identity)
- knowledge regarding group dynamics
- knowledge regarding different strategies for managing conflict situations

Skills

- ability to identify and work with group dynamics
- ability to identify, value and respect diversity
- ability to promote equal opportunities and treatment of inmates
- ability to deal with possible conflict situations
- ability to create a safe learning environment, based on mutual respect and cooperation

Attitudes

- be aware of stigmatization, marginalization and social exclusion within inmate population
- respects and values diversity

Descriptors

- The adult learning professional should be aware that the context in which they are working is in most cases very different from any they had worked in before (a real effort must be made to be aware of the social and emotional needs the learners bring to the 'classroom').
- The adult learning professional should be knowledgeable about group dynamics, due to the fact that it can affect learning and in prisons this is particularly important within the interplay of complex relationships.
- It is important that a high level of understanding regarding the key features to deviant behavior is part of a role. This is directly linked with the ability of an adult learning professional to be non – judgmental and non – biased.



- It is important to understand or have an overview of classroom management skills and techniques for managing a variety of situations and group structures and dynamics.
- The adult learning professional should develop, adopt and/or implement methods and technical-scientific processes, consider being more suitable in the follow-up of the inmates during the execution of custodial measures, particularly with regard to the preparation and updating of individual rehabilitation plan and in the transmission of opinions legally required or requested superiorly.
- The adult learning professional should provide the directions of establishment's technical assistance needed to implement the plan of treatment of detainees, particularly with regard to labor placement, frequency of school courses and vocational training, application of disciplinary sanctions.
- The adult learning professional should be able to produce a learning environment that transcends ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural differences.
- The learning process takes place in an environment that promotes respect and cultural differences following values based on solidarity and dignity.
- When introducing the main topics of the curriculum, the adult learning professional makes use of examples from different cultures and groups.
- The adult learning professional gives lessons and activities that help adult learners develop positive attitude towards different racial, ethnic and cultural groups.
- The adult learning professional adapts the teaching to learning achievements of all adult learners from all social classes, cultures and of both genders.
- The adult learning professional should be able to use different teaching styles and approaches consistent with different teaching styles used by different cultural and ethnic groups.
- The adult learning professional should be able to understand and manage different forms of pedagogical work (preventive, educational, counselling, compensatory, social integration, etc.).
- He cooperates and works with families and other social groups important to the learner.
- The adult learning professional should be involved in the preparation, management and evaluation of special social pedagogy projects (e.g. volunteer or preventive social work, representation, self-help groups, etc.).

4.2.6. Managing adult learners with special learning needs

Knowledge

- knowledge regarding special characteristics of at-risk inmates
- knowledge regarding strategies for inmates with special learning needs

Skills

- ability to design and develop projects or activities at the level of specific groups in psycho-affective risk (drug addicts, patients with transmittable diseases, young adults and mentally ill)
- have experience of working with inmates who may have little experience of education and training
- ability to integrate learners' experience within the learning process
- ability to adapt the learning process to the special needs of learners
- be able to identify deviant behavior and mental disturbance signs

Attitudes

- open-minded
- stress-resistant
- patient
- creative

Descriptors

- The adult learning professional should play a significant role in the design, development and delivery of programs of learning which meet the needs of the learners and which satisfy internal and external quality assurance criteria; in line with the Prison's business plan and those of other key stakeholders.



- The adult learning professional should be able to produce strategies to engage all learners, build trust and deal with challenging behavior. For example, ground rules could be set or a group contract could be established which could be designed to enforce rules that every learner democratically contributed to.
- The adult learning professional should be able to illustrate or present practical cases related with the training contents.
- One should be able to be aware of which prisoners could carry out an ILP and understand to which groups things such as this would be applicable. Skills such as this would require good analytical skills and good judgment skills in relation to already acquired expertise and knowledge.
- The adult learning professional should consider the differences of gender, age and length of sentence. All these may impinge on the quality and kind of education as well as on the design of education for such inmates.

4.3 Supportive competences

4.3.1. IT skills for learning and administrative purposes

- Adult learning professional should have a good level of IT literacy which he/she uses in the collection, analysis, adaptation and transformation of information for the production of training instruments, objectified in the mission to make more appealing and pleasant the training moments.

4.3.2. Time management skills

- The adult learning professional plans tasks and work activities according to individual characteristics of group and of the subject matter.
- The adult learning professional should have the ability to work under pressure and meet deadlines.

4.3.3. Ability to deal with administrative issues, regarding the learning process

- The adult learning professional should have accuracy and precision in written presentation.
- The adult learning professional should have thinking ability: able to plan, communicate and solve problems effectively.

4.3.4. Basic knowledge of a foreign language

- The adult learning professional should understand the role of the language as a communication tool and a system for expressing meaning.
- The adult learning professional should understand that foreign language teaching and learning is a complex interactive process which encompasses the learning process, learning professional's intentions and personal and other traits of adult learners.

4.3.5. Ability to identify and efficiently use existing resources and tools

- The adult learning professional should use the resources, materials and equipment necessary to carry out the tasks in a properly way, ensuring their maintenance and respecting the safety conditions.

5. Potential use of the set of key competences

In the framework of EIS ALP project, the profile of core competences regarding the adult learning professionals working in a correctional criminal justice system was designed as a necessary instrument for enhancing the quality of specialized training programmes, as well as a foundation for the development of the induction support assistant. At the same time, the final aim of EIS ALP is to ensure coordination with similar initiatives and provide future inputs for further projects, so the profile was developed in a manner that allows different possibilities of usage,



from an individual standpoint to an institutional one, integrated into national and European qualification frameworks.

At an individual level, the main applications of the profile concern self-evaluation and training opportunities. As a tool for self-evaluation, the competence profile establishes several key competences, representing standards of proficiency, essential for a professional working in a prison. Each interested learning professional can compare his/her competences to these standards and identify the strong points, as well as the areas that need further development. Also, they can establish the level of readiness they possess in regard to the demand of working in a prison environment, set clear and realistic goals and plan their further training accordingly. By describing the competences in terms of knowledge, skills, attitudes and behavioural descriptors, the profile allows a complex and multilayered self-evaluation, providing a more specific feedback, important for personal and professional development.

Associated with its role as an assessment tool, the competence profile can improve and facilitate the process of structuring the professional training plan, setting SMART goals, identifying and selecting recommended training programmes for adult learning professionals involved in prison education or who are interested in having a career in this domain.

From a broader perspective, the developed competence profile represents a step forward in the research regarding prison education and learning professionals. This study aimed towards identifying and modelling specific core competences by integrating previous results with the knowledge and experience of expert professionals already working in a correctional setting. Their approach allowed a better understanding of the phenomenon and created a bridge between theory and practice, enhancing the usefulness of the end product.

Although the policies regarding professional standards and qualification for adult learning in a correctional justice system are in place in some European countries, that's not the case for all states. Within the present policies frame, the competence profile can help to better define and understand this profession, thus contributing to the identity of adult learning professional.

Starting from the competence profile, the professional associations, as well as training providers can improve the existing programmes, by updating them and by aiming towards sensible areas for prison education. Also, the profile can represent a reference point for the development of new training courses, structured for certain specific competences and aimed towards knowledge and skills, thus enhancing the efficiency of learning.

The profile can be integrated into the personnel strategy of correctional institutions, in the process of recruitment and selection of staff, initial training, ongoing evaluation and training, for the development of human resources policies.



6. Conclusions and recommendations

The adult learning professionals working in a correctional criminal justice system must face a wide diversity of challenges, their capacity to adapt and perform being constantly put to the test. Although their role is essential for prison education and rehabilitation of inmates, European countries face a lack of adequate human resources policies regarding the professional status, profile and needs of these professionals, which frequently impact the efficiency of inmates learning.

The EIS ALP project addresses this problem and developed a core competences profile adapted to the context of prison institutions and to the special characteristics of inmate learners. Starting from literature, previous research and practical expertise of adult learning professionals and stakeholders, the research identified and modelled generic, specific and supportive competences, describing the defining indicator for each one of them.

The generic competences are similar with previous studies regarding adult learning professionals, underlying the importance of specific training for working with adult learners. They target communication, preoccupation with personal and professional development, interest in motivating and stimulating learners, expertise in assessment of learning needs, development and delivery of training programmes, assessment of results and progress.

However the prison environment possesses certain challenges and the competence must be refined and further developed, in order to accomplish the established goal. Knowledge regarding prison legislation and regulation is essential for understanding the context, the complex role of a correctional facility and the place of education within this setting. Also, it helps to better define the status and role of adult learning professionals in prisons and enhances their performance. The adult learning professionals have a great responsibility regarding what they develop and transfer to learners, due to the fact that the learning process goes beyond acquiring knowledge and skills, it aims also attitudinal and behavioural change. Knowledge regarding correctional education, psychology and sociology of crime, recent developments and literature are all important, regardless of the subject matter approached. In order to attain the objectives, the adult learning professional targets the educational, psychological and social need of learners and approaches them in an individualized manner. In the same logic, competences in managing inmates with special needs and group dynamics are fundamental for undertaking all the requested activities.

The supportive act as a facilitator, allowing professionals to work efficiently and with the scarce resources they have.

The research involved specialist and stakeholders from four European countries, with relevant expertise in the field of prison education and training of adult learning professionals. This ensured a better representation of the profile and facilitates its applicability across different correctional systems.

The developed competence profile can be used in a wide variety of activities and by different stakeholders. As a part of the web-based tool, it can be used as a self-assessment tool by individual adult learning professionals working/ intending to



work inside a prison setting, with adult inmates, in order to establish their level of proficiency in regard to the identified competences. From an institutional point of view, the competence profile represents an important tool for selecting and evaluating staff performance, as well as developing specialized training curricula accordingly.

To further support the development of prison education, EIS ALP partnership decided to subject the competence profile to an ongoing evaluation of stakeholders throughout the life of the project. This strategy allows debates on the competences and provides feedback for the validation of the profile. The results will be analyzed and integrated into an extensive research report delivered at the end of the project.

Also, the profile will be disseminated in partner countries, as a starting point for the development of revised policies concerning prison education. Regarding research in this area, the specific competences could be further explored and recent developments could be integrated, for a better representation at a national and European level.

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