

Fiorella Farinelli

BAEA

Becoming Adult Educators in the
European Area

Delphi report



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ISBN: 978-87-7430-158-5, printed edition
ISBN: 978-87-7430-159-2, electronic edition

Published by: Danish School of Education, Aarhus University, Copenhagen, 2010
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Foreword

Becoming Adult educators in the European Area (BAEA) is a collaborative project funded with support from the European Commission under the EU Lifelong Learning Programme (Grant No. 142405-LLP-1-2008-1-DK-GRUNDTVIG-GMP).

The BAEA project was launched with the scope of investigating ways in which prospective adult educators acquire professional competences and qualifications before entering the profession in four European countries: Denmark, Estonia, Italy and Sweden.

The project team was composed of researchers from several institutions (in alphabetical order):

- Brunnsvik Folk High School (Sweden): Per-Ola Jansson & Christina Gabergs-Gunn;
- Danish School of Education, Aarhus University (Denmark): Marcella Milana & Anne Larson;
- Estonian Non-Formal Adult Education Association (Estonia): Tiina Jääger & Maire Sander;
- Linköping University (Sweden): Per Andersson & Susanne Köpsén;
- Popular University of Rome (Italy): Andrea Ciantar, Stefano De Camillis, Fiorella Farinelli, Monica Griscioli;
- SUHR'S - Metropolitan University College (Denmark): Lise Søgård Lund;
- Tallinn University (Estonia): Marin Gross & Larissa Jõgi.

The project is to investigate:

- Which social and cultural factors influence the individual formation of initial competences and qualifications in the field of general adult education, vocationally oriented adult education and liberal education?
- Which factors influence the construction of a professional identity among adult educators-to-be?
- How may adult education policies and initial education and training practices affect professionalisation processes in the field of general, vocationally oriented and liberal education?

At first, document analysis was conducted with the purpose of compiling information on existing opportunities for initial education and training for adult educators-

to-be as well as policy shaping these opportunities. At a later stage, fifteen people undertaking specialised studies in the field of education were interviewed in each of the countries investigated, so that their perspectives could be added to the understanding of national situations. The results, which were presented in single country reports and discussed in a synthesis research report, constituted the basis for a Delphi research activity, which involved Denmark, Sweden, Estonia and Italy.

This report presents the process and the outcomes of the Delphi research activity. It reflects only the interpretation of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained herein.

This report and other project related documents are available for download at: www.dpu.dk/baea.

Executive summary

Within the project Becoming Adult educators in the European Area (BAEA), using the Delphi methodology of survey had been agreed upon in order to develop a comparison among the possible and expected training paths in relation to adult educators, which, beyond the national project teams, could involve some relevant privileged witnesses.

The interest, in this part of the work, consists in making an exchange of ideas possible among witnesses of national realities where adult education presents different stories and characteristics.

Countries which have a long tradition in the adult education field and countries which have developed this activity recently, have been involved in this project. A comparison is given by:

- (1) The presence, in all countries, of an adult education that is articulated in general, vocational and liberal adult education;
- (2) The increasing political attention for the quantitative and qualitative development, with particular reference to the new needs of the work market, points out, in the four countries, a distance between the shared need of a specific training for adult educators and the reality that the adult educator's professional profile is not yet defined – neither in terms of career, nor of access, nor of training path. This is also the case for Estonia, which, among the four countries, is the only one which has recently introduced a profile of adult educator among the formally recognised professional qualifications.

For this reason it is necessary to refer to the recommendations and proposals included in the BAEA synthesis research report (Milana, 2010) that we partially report on here.

- Adult education should be included among formally recognised professions at national and European levels.
- Professional qualification standards for adult educators should be easily understood by applicants and providers.
- Initial and continuing education and training of adult educators should be structured properly in order to attract young people to orient themselves towards this career, already at the upper secondary and tertiary school levels.
- New opportunities for participation in specialised studies and concrete or virtual communities for professional exchange and mutual enrichment should be created, especially in favour of those working in the field of adult education but lacking formal professional competences. Both are fundamen-

tal factors for the creation of a strong professional identity and a sense of belonging to the professional category.

- Universities should play an important role in the design of curricula that are capable of including the different competences characterising the adult educator's professional profile, in terms of theory and training in the field. It seems particularly relevant that universities organise clearly defined and functional internships to develop the necessary competences for carrying out concrete functions in the different spheres of adult education and learning.
- Job rules and agreements among social parts in the realm of adult education, i.e. including liberal adult education, should recognise the professional profile of adult educators, the necessity of specific formal, cultural and professional requisites for recruitment, the right to and duty of adult educators to in-service continuing training, as well as the same working conditions and treatments as those applied to in other professions in education.

Chapter 1: Definition of the Delphi research process

The partnership carrying out the project Becoming Adult educators in the European Area (BAEA) decided to use the Delphi method to conclude the investigation aiming at identifying professional training paths for adult education practitioners in order to facilitate internal communication and exchanges of experience within the consortium, to create common understanding, and to develop a shared approach in allowing for cross-national comparisons.

During the planning phase, it was nevertheless considered important to provide an opportunity for adult education practitioners to offer their testimonies, express their opinions and indicate prospects for the profession. Delphi seemed to be the methodology suited to gathering the opinions on a number of subjects and deemed by the national coordinators to be capable of making a contribution to the study while also broadening the perspectives that were opened with the desk research and interviews contained in the national reports.

An attempt was thus made to adapt a methodology – now somewhat dated and used prevalently in preliminary research of an exploratory nature regarding consumer and/or voter tendencies – in order to translate it into a sort of structured interview that would be conducted with a fairly large number of subjects with expert knowledge of the field, in order to focus on and define areas of agreement and disagreement.

1.1. Delphi in the context of BAEA

“Delphi can be described as a method which makes it possible to structure a communication process within a group; the process should function so that a group of individuals, considered as a whole, can deal with complex problems”. This is the definition Linstone and Turoff (2002) provided.

The Delphi method can be included among the qualitative methodologies insofar as: it deals with single individuals or small groups, it aims to analyse opinions and attitudes in-depth, normally the sample does not aim to be statistically representative of the collectivity to which it refers.

The approach is of the non-structured type, starting from an outline of the discussion which makes it possible to better define the focus during the investigation.

The aim of the questions and exchange of views among the experts is to obtain information regarding:

- What the interviewees think;
- Why they have certain opinions;
- The possibility of changing these opinions when compared to others.

Generally the Delphi method approaches the research topic in a number of (normally three) progressive rounds of questions addressed to the interviewed:

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- The aim of the first round is to collect general information and identification of the various aspects of the problem;
- The aim of the second round (after sending the interviewed a feedback containing the results of the first round) is to ponder the components indicated and to identify the points of agreement and disagreement within the panel (pondering results of the factor analysis – identification of clusters);
- The aim of the third round (after further feedback) is to ponder the indicators or each component and to validate the value assigned to each of the components.

The Delphi study carried out through the BAEA project was organised into two rounds of questioning national panels. Each national panel consisted of people having different opinions who, through their culture and professional position, are familiar with adult education problems, policies and practices and ensure a range of viewpoints.

The research activity was coordinated by the Popular University of Rome, who wrote this final report; material deemed useful for drafting national reports had been made available to each project partner who took part in the study.

Chapter 2: Delphi research and results

After the framework of this particular Delphi was established along general lines, the process leading to the identification of the first-round questions was then defined.

In this phase, the active subjects involved were the coordinators and user groups of the four countries, who were asked to give a definition of adult educator as well as identify the key questions which in their view characterise adult education today.

Each country provided a definition (see page 17), but not all identified key questions, because they had already indicated the most relevant problems related to adult education in their national reports, produced in the previous phase of the project.

Therefore, the key questions, as a starting point of this Delphi work, were:

1. Attention to the profession of adult educators and opportunities for professional development is quite weak in regulatory and educational policy documents in Estonia. The responsibility for professional growth and development falls on the adult educators themselves. How could adult educators' qualification be recognised, regulated and valued?
 - In society (macro level);
 - In the different fields of adult education;
 - In adult training institutions.
2. Becoming an adult educator in Estonia in the context of one's career is more a case of utilising the opportunities and suppositions that one comes across than a conscious and planned process.
 - What kind of work experience do initial and continuing education adult educators working in the field have?
 - What competences are needed for adult educators to work in the field of practise?
3. At some stage in their career, adult educators might undertake adult education studies, but the general tendency seems to be that the skills, knowledge and identity of the educator are developed through experience and reflection on practise. As a result, in terms of the content and outcomes of adult educators' initial training:

- What modules, subjects, and topics should initial training of adult educators cover?
 - What are the expected learning outcomes and aims of adult educators' initial training?
4. The adult educator as a profession has been recognised and regulated by the Professional Qualification Standard in Estonia since 2004.
 - How should the levels of qualification for adult educators be defined?
 5. No clear rules and/or procedures have been established for applying recognition of prior learning in accrediting adult educators.
 - What opportunities are there to recognise and value adult educators' prior learning and working experiences?
 6. Notwithstanding an increased political concern on creating more opportunities for adults to engage in intentional learning activities and on the quality of such provisions, equipping adult educators with the required qualifications before employment is seldom considered a necessity; hence, pre-service education and training of adult educators has received no attention.
 7. The official requirements for teaching adults often include having an education as a primary or upper secondary school teacher. In addition, subject-specific qualifications and professional experience can be requested. However no pedagogical qualifications in teaching adults are mandatory, with few exceptions, i.e. teaching adults with disabilities and/or immigrants.
 8. Working as an adult educator represents an opportunity for a career shift at a later stage in life, rather than a profession one qualifies for, before entering the labour market. This is the result of a lack, in the mainstream education system, of ad hoc courses and programmes that provide specialised knowledge in the field of adult education.
 9. The pathway to adult education is anything but linear, as becoming an adult educator is never the result of an intentional choice made at the outset of a professional career. It may represent an opportunity for progress in a different type of profession or, contrastingly, a suitable alternative when progression in a certain profession is no longer possible.
 10. By enrolling in specialised courses/programmes, adult educators aim, on the one hand, to gain a theoretical ground for what people do at work and, on

the other hand, to gain better recognition and acceptance among colleagues, not least through a formal acknowledgment of the pedagogical knowledge acquired in several years of working experience.

2.1. Organisation of the first round

On the basis of this material, the Popular University of Rome (Upter) formulated a proposal for the first-round questionnaire, agreed to by the partners in the Rome meeting on 14 January 2010. A definitive version was sent to the national panels, which perused and duly considered the coordinators' observations.

The national coordinators identified the national panels and took responsibility for gathering the interviews.

The complete panel defined at the beginning consisted of 120 members (30 per country), consisting of:

- 40 policymakers;
- 40 experts;
- 40 educators-to-be.

2.2. The first round

In this preliminary phase, two problems emerged. These will be explained now because they influenced the work that ensued, but they did not hinder the development of the survey.

- (1) Gathering the responses took much more time than foreseen and this fact forced Upter to formulate the second-round questionnaire before receiving all the completed questionnaires from the first round, thus on the basis of only 75% of the effective first-round responses (only one partner returned all 30 questionnaires and of the 120 questionnaires foreseen, only 100 were returned at the end of the first round). The decision to proceed on the basis of the information available at that point was agreed upon by all the partners in order to maintain the established work timetable. The Delphi methodology however allows for this procedure because a number of different opinions had been collected at that stage of the work and that appeared to be sufficient enough to go in depth in the discussion within the four national panels.
- (2) The transnational panel, being the result of the national panels, was composed of very similar members, all of whom were very much involved in

adult education activities at various levels, with various types of responsibility and who, at the beginning, expressed widely shared “opinions” within which it was not always easy to identify and interpret differences. In analysing the composition of each national panel, it was found that in fact, all the selected members belonged to the educational milieu – as understood in a broad sense – with very few coming from the working world and sectors where adults were involved in learning experiences for the purposes of professional training, in training processes for career advancement or career change.

This in turn, focuses reflection on the profession and initial adult education training, both of the liberal and vocational types. At the same time, it was the sharing of a common point of departure which permitted an in-depth study within this perspective, but the outcome was possible because Upter proceeded with a kind of “forcing” of the Delphi methodology in order to make it applicable to the BAEA situation.

In describing the state of the art at the meeting at Tallinn on 7 May 2010, this forcing of the methodology was illustrated with the metaphor of one’s passage from the idea of a funnel to an amphora.

Generally, Delphi combines very different opinions in a few key concepts; by means of a successive series of questions and answers it encourages the convergence of consensus on these concepts, which were verified through the panel (*processo a imbuto*). The four definitions of adult educator proposed by the four coordinators were very similar: the need to involve subjects who were not professionals in the field of liberal adult education may not have been taken in account; for this reason, and as previously stated, the four definitions of adult educator proposed by the four coordinators were very similar.

Upter explains this fact with the hypothesis that adult education in Europe is a reality which, while involving many citizens, a significant level of resources and various responsibilities, does not have a uniformly-defined status, apart from the practitioners directly involved in the activities. The rationale assumed within the BAEA perspective for defining the “profile in general” is not only dealing with this reality, but is also strongly conditioned by it. This is the reason for the evident similarity of the opinions expressed in the four definitions.

A decision was thus made to discount this difficulty and delve more deeply into the opinions expressed, seeking to go beyond the definitions and re-launch some key concepts which, while similar in the definitions, might suggest perspectives that could be differentiated. This process, defined as the “belly” of the amphora (narrow neck, wide belly, narrowed base – the metaphor that replaces the traditional Delphi funnel) allowed the highlighting of sixteen key concepts which, after being presented to the panel for consideration, led to four aspects which more precisely illustrate the meaning of the initial definitions.

The criteria for this enlargement are mainly related to:

- Professional role and functions;
- Identity;
- Competences;
- Access to and recognition of profile.

On the basis of these criteria, Upter stressed four concepts within each of the four definitions and asked the panel to rank not only the four definitions in a line indicating the level of consensus (from 1 to 4), but also to identify, within the sixteen key concepts, the four concepts that appeared to be appropriate in order to have a more precise profile of the adult educator.

In the first phase, Upter made an analysis of this similarity in order to draw out its components and specificities. The interpretation of the responses of the first round records a variety of opinions and seeks to place them within a number of typologies coherent in themselves and in relation to the different contexts.

2.3. Panel profile

The returns of the first-round questionnaires indicated a certain imbalance in the composition of the panel members who effectively responded, both in terms of the number of experts involved and the typology of the respondents.

The BAEA panel included:

- 30 policymakers;
- 41 experts;
- 29 educators-to-be.

Table 1 - Panel composition by country (first round)

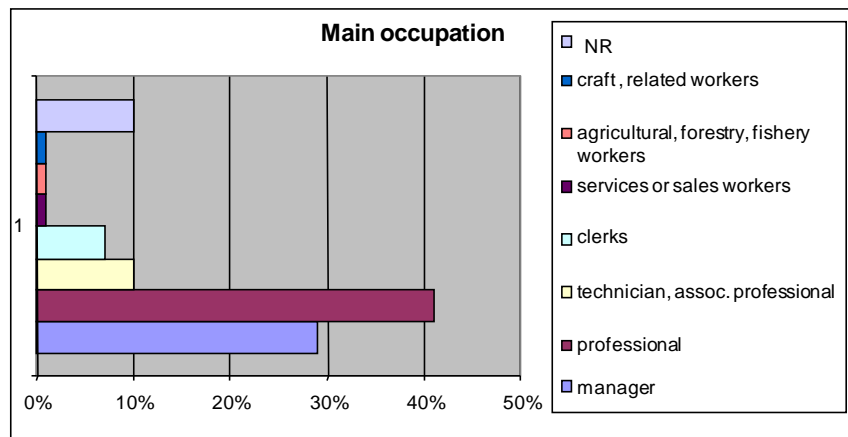
<i>Country</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Policymakers</i>	<i>Experts</i>	<i>Educators-to-be</i>
DK	75	10	10	10
EE	45	6	6	6
IT	72.5	9	10	10
SE	57.5	5	15	3

With regard to the question asking whether adult education is the main sphere of activity and interest of the panel, only 21% in fact responded *NO* to the first question (adult education and main sphere of interest or activity). In the next question,

when respondents were then asked to identify what the main sphere of interest is, again more than 10% indicated activities or interests connected to education while the others did not respond. It may thus be said that only 11% of the panel are witnesses external to the world of education.

About 70% of the panel declared that they were employed, while slightly more than 10% indicated that they were retired and less than 10% indicated that they were students or seeking employment.

Figure 1 - Members of the panel by main occupation



(24 people did not respond)

For the great majority of the panel, employment involves qualified professional activity (80% were within the category of managers, professionals and technical professionals, classification Isco-08) carried-out in public agencies (about 50%), the private sector (23%) and in non-profit and volunteer organisations (15%); 8% reported not working and the others did not respond.

Of the respondents, 60% were women, and the respondents' median age was rather high (70% were over the age of 45). There were only 6% of respondents below the age of 25.

The educational qualifications of respondents are high: 81% reported having a degree, 8% a PhD or post-graduate studies, 4% a high school diploma only, 3% a post-diploma non-academic educational qualification and only 1% reported a middle-school qualification (tables by country are in the Appendix).

2.4. Results of the first-round questionnaire

The first question asked respondents to place the four adult educator definitions on a scale, in which 1 represents the definition one would believe is most valid, and 4 would indicate the definition one considers least significant.

The four definitions are presented here in random order, reflecting the order in which they were submitted to Upter by the four coordinators.

- (1) The adult educator is a person involved in organised adult learning, who creates conditions for, organises situations for, gives input and feedback to, and is involved in interactions in learning processes.
- (2) An adult educator is a person who possesses knowledge of human nature and is attentive to the learner; hence, an adult educator is a person able to enter into a dialogical relation that allows the learner to give expression to prior experiences, so that these experiences can be integrated into the teaching-learning process.
- (3) An adult educator is a specialist intermediating skills and/or knowledge to adult people, directing their formation of comprehension and attitudes, and supporting their self-development in adult general education, job-related and/or continuing professional training, popular education courses, study circles and other circumstances related to a purposeful learning situation.
- (4) An adult educator is a professional who plans, organises and manages educational activities for adult learners aimed at acquiring basic functional/professional skills, increasing cultural knowledge, professional training, development of active citizenship and social inclusion, with particular reference to immigrants coming from foreign countries. His/her professional skills include a combination of polyvalent and specific competences, as well as didactic tools suitable for different contexts/users, training needs and achievement of diversified goals.

The proposed sequence – 4, 3, 2, 1 – was derived from panel responses.

The definition of adult educator the panel agreed with the most, was most complete and best articulated. The definition also contains two important features. In fact, it:

- (1) Lists all the types of activities which the adult educator must be capable of carrying out, from planning to organisation and management of the interventions;
- (2) Emphasises the support function for the acquisition of basic functional and professional skills, cultural knowledge, professional training, the development of active citizenship and social inclusion, with particular attention to foreign and migrant populations.

In this definition, the professional profile includes a combination of polyvalent and specific competences which are or can be adapted to different contexts and different users with different training needs for the achievement of diversified goals.

In order to facilitate the process of increasing agreement on the definition as a whole and on its individual components, as foreseen in the Delphi methodology,

and as it has been already indicated above, four key concepts were highlighted in each definition for a total of sixteen.

The sixteen concepts were submitted to the panel – which chose four – in order to identify the level of agreement on those deemed most significant/important.

- (1) The adult educator is a person involved in 1) organised adult learning, who 2) creates conditions for, organises situations for, 3) gives input and feedback to, and 4) is involved in interactions in learning processes.
- (2) An adult educator is a person 1) who possesses knowledge of human nature and is attentive to the learner; hence, an adult educator is a person 2) able to enter into a dialogical relation that 3) allows the learner to give expression to prior experiences, so that 4) these experiences can be integrated into the teaching-learning process.
- (3) An adult educator is a 1) specialist, 2) intermediating skills and/or knowledge to adult people, 3) directing their formation of comprehension and attitudes, and 4) supporting their self-development in adult general education, job-related and/or continuing professional training, popular education courses, study circles and other circumstances related to a purposeful learning situation.
- (4) An adult educator is a 1) professional who plans, organises and manages 2) educational activities for adult learners aimed at acquiring basic functional/professional skills, development of cultural knowledge, professional training, development of 3) active citizenship and social inclusion, with particular reference to immigrants coming from foreign countries. His/her professional skills include a combination of 4) polyvalent and specific competences, as well as didactic tools suitable for different contexts/users, training needs and achievement of diversified goals.

The four key concepts that achieved the highest level of consensus resulted in the following profile:

An adult educator is a person supporting self-development in adult general education, job- related and or continuing professional training, popular education courses, study circles and other circumstances related to a purposeful learning situation, able to enter into a dialogical relation, who creates conditions and organises situations for learning, involved in interactions in learning processes.

This is the passage through which our panel reached agreement on the complex nature of the role of the adult educator, identifying it as a point of reference to construct a professional profile and correlated training path. The definition lists the spheres within which the adult educator works and perceives the characteristic trait of adult education in the support function to the adult learners' self development.

The questionnaire then proceeded (questions 3, 4, 5) in asking respondents to give an evaluation of adult education policies in the different countries.

Respondents were asked to express their opinion with regard to quantity (question 3a) and quality (question 3b) of interventions.

These questions presented scales of agreement and the responses are below, given in aggregate form since the project deals with the European area; tables for the individual countries appear in the Appendix.

Figure 2 - Question 3a: Attention to quantitative development

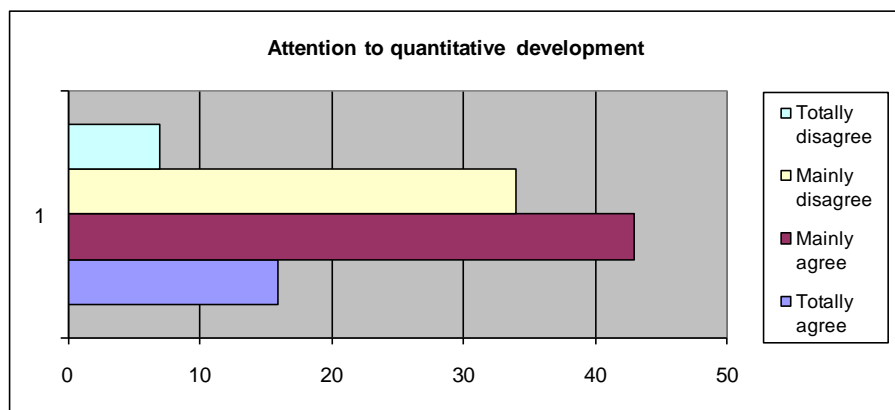
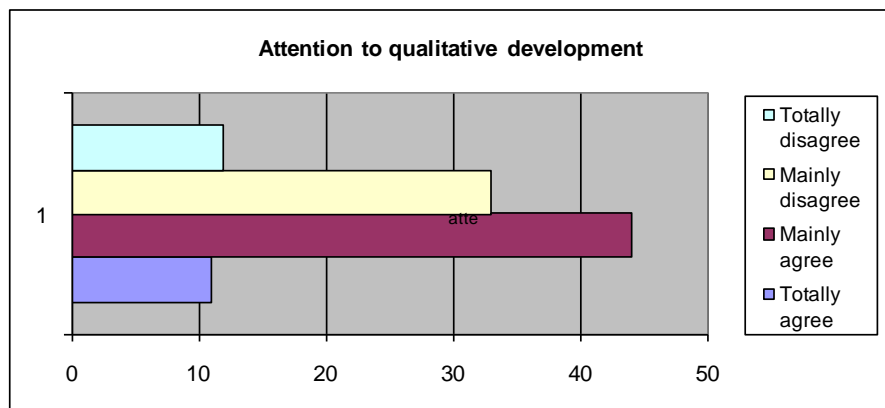
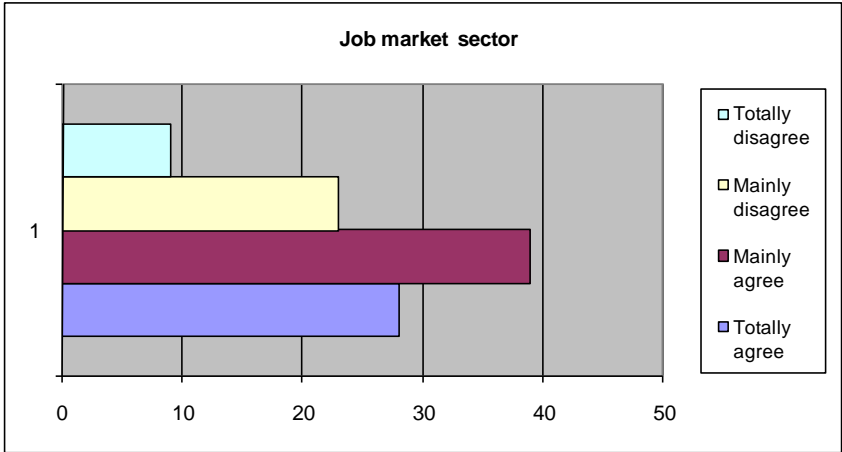


Figure 3 - Question 3b: Attention to qualitative development



Question 4 asked whether a specific sector has developed in the job market in which adult educators are or can be placed.

Figure 4 - Question 4: Job market sector



Question 5, again with reference to the situation in each country, asked whether training courses preparing for this type of work have been developed and whether these are theoretical or practical in nature.

Figure 5 - Question 5-1: Theoretical training

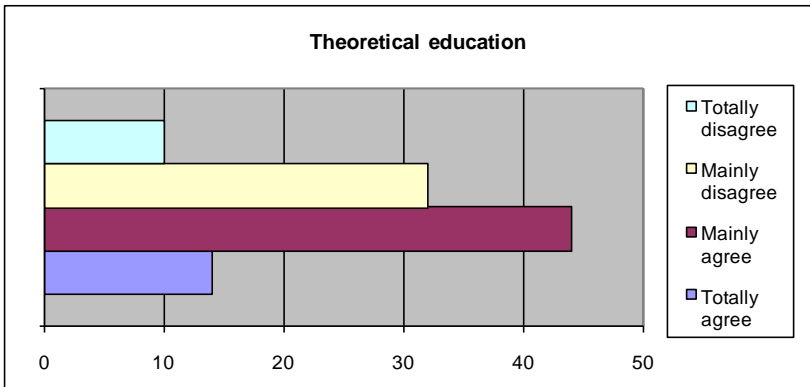
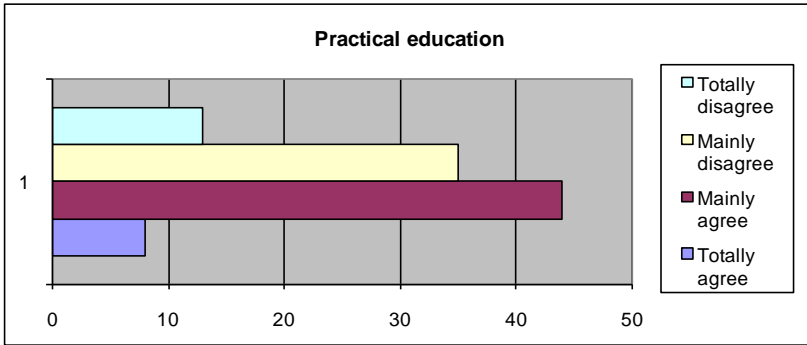


Figure 6 - Question 5-2: Practical education



In summarising the responses overall, the situation outlined by our panel permits us to state that policies developed to increase adult education opportunities and their quality can be considered sufficient (the two options register over 50% total or partial agreement with the statements proposed), that a specific sector of the job market can now be identified for adult education (more than 60% agree) and that there has been an increase in attention to promoting interventions in training for adult education activities both of the theoretical and practical types (here as well, agreement reaches 50%). This “pass” mark, however, is not the case in every country, but if we analyse the data of some of the countries, it nevertheless permits us to state that the adult educator practitioner is no longer an invisible figure in the educational systems of European nations and that the time has come to define a profile of the adult educator, including his/her characteristics and the conditions in which he or she works, within the framework of lifelong learning development in the European area.

When Upter examined the conditions of access to this profession, not from the point of view of career development but in terms of acquiring the necessary skills, our panel decidedly (89% agreement) chose the option which required both theoretical and practical training, preparatory to the practice of the profession, while only 9% indicated that the adult educator could be trained in schools for children and teenagers.

At this point, an open question was asked related to the reasons for choosing one of the two options. The BAEA panel was not particularly generous in their responses which were few and very general in nature. They were catalogued nevertheless because the Delphi method delves into the variety of opinions and not only into the frequency of responses.

- The need for preliminary theoretical training, including practice, clearly recalls the distinction between andragogical and pedagogical procedures and methods;
- Practice in the schools leads to better preparation for teaching adults;
- Specific training makes it possible to define a professional association with a registry of professionals in the field;
- The need for preparatory training in a specific professional milieu appears as a distinctive trait of the activity of the adult educator.

The responses to this question appeared interesting when placed in relation to the next one which investigated the motivations for becoming an adult educator and asked whether qualifying for and remaining in this field was the result of a decisive choice in terms of vocation. The question delved into the issue by asking whether:

- (1) The difficulties of this vocational decision derive from a lack of recognition of the specific nature of this professional figure, with a consequent lack of dedicated professional training,

or

- (2) All this derives instead from the fact that since the vocational nature of the decision is the essential characteristic of this profession, the lack of professional recognition is a consequence: a vocation in fact cannot be either learned or taught.

In the responses, 49% opted for the first hypothesis, 36% for the second (the others did not respond). One might thus deduce that the strong connotation in vocational terms may have a compensatory function with regard to the lack of social recognition.

It should nevertheless be pointed out that the transition from teaching in schools to children and teenagers to teaching adults, concerned over half the cases, according to our panel (this however occurred to different extents in the various countries; in fact, in Denmark this was the situation for only 25% of adult educators, half in Estonia and for 69% of respondents in Italy and Switzerland).

Three possible explanations for this fact are presented:

- (1) Limited career development for teachers in general;
- (2) Need/desire to learn about the teaching profession first with young people before working with adults;
- (3) Increasing difficulty/hardship in working with children and teenagers.

The responses were concentrated around the first two options, while the stress derived from teaching youngsters seemed almost absent as a motivation for turning to the field of adult education.

The panel was then asked to express an opinion regarding the “components” of the professional profile of the adult educator. A list of ten components was drawn up of which eight items were chosen in order to assign the panel the task of adding at least two others or deleting and replacing some of those suggested.

Here is the proposed list:

- 1) General knowledge;
- 2) Basic skills;
- 3) Technical-specialist competences, problem solving ability;
- 4) Capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge;
- 5) Social, interpersonal and communication skills;
- 6) Organisational skills and initiative;

- 7) Work-oriented personality;
- 8) Social ethic, value system;
- 9);
- 10).....

The next question asked the panel to build a new list of elements by taking into account the new additions and establishing them in an order of priority from 1 to 10. None of the eight original elements were removed, while others were added (understanding of the local situation, understanding of user needs, definition of competences characteristic of teaching and intellectual activity in general, for example creativity and competences within the field of certification).

In general, except in a few cases, these additional elements did not appear in the new list which in the end, presented the following order:

- 1) Capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge;
- 2) Social, interpersonal and communication skills;
- 3) Basic skills;
- 4) Technical-specialist competences, problem solving ability;
- 5) Social ethic, value system;
- 6) Organisational skills and initiative;
- 7) Work-oriented personality;
- 8) General knowledge;
- 9) 84 mentions of understanding the local territory, understanding user needs, definition of competences characteristic of teaching and of intellectual activity in general, e.g. creativity;
- 10) 94 mentions of competence in the certification field.

Among the problems connected to the definition of the profession of adult educator, the partner country coordinators indicated the need to establish standards, as required by all professional association registers, and in particular to indicate the type of expertise to be used as criteria for selecting people for this profession.

The following list was submitted to the panel who were asked to indicate not more than three criteria:

- a) Competence in the planning and management of courses for recovering and/or increasing general professional work skills;
- b) Competence in the planning and management of courses for recovering and increasing specific professional skills;
- c) Accurate and specific competence in sectors of the job market requiring an ability to perform non-routine tasks (contextualisation of knowledge and creative ability);

- d) Expertise in teaching;
- e) Expertise in assessing skills;
- f) Expertise in assessing orientation;
- g) Expertise in assessing supervision;
- h) Competence in the use of methodologies such as life-storytelling, cooperative learning, etc.;
- i) Knowledge of methodology and teaching tools.

The most frequently chosen criteria were the following:

- a) Competence in the planning and management of courses for recovering and/or increasing general professional work skills, and competence in the planning and management of courses for recovering and increasing specific professional skills;
- b) Expertise in teaching;
- c) Knowledge of methodology and teaching tools.

The criteria which have to do with expertise relating to assessment procedures (e, f, g) were almost entirely absent in the responses.

In these responses the profession is identified by means of learning support functions.

Investigation into the issue of standards addresses the question related to the experience the adult educator should have and which ought to be recognised as a distinctive element for a potential career.

Choices ranged from teaching experience, indicated by 44% of the panel; experience in the world of work and professions, 30%; experience in activities related to social interventions, 14%; a further 7% reported other things and simply expressed the proposed options in other ways, thus adding nothing to the list; the rest did not respond.

The indications furnished by these responses introduce an important element. There are two experiences which come together to qualify the professional commitment of the adult educator: 1) teaching experience; 2) working and professional experience. The latter type of experience is valid not only for those who work in continuing education, but for all adult educators, because work is a fundamental dimension in the life of an adult.

The panel was then asked to explain these responses and here, but almost half did not respond.

Of those that did respond, 26% explained their choice of (a) teaching experience, with the need to valorise the capacity to respond to specific educational needs and to be able to establish positive relations and relationships, abilities which characterise those who have already taught, and that above all, it is this which must be recognised; 23% indicated that experience in specific professional fields must be valorised because the adult educator practises a hybrid profession which blends

pedagogical competences with professional competences typical of the working world.

In the next questions, the profession of adult educator was included among the teaching professions by 69%, contrasting the 23% who included it in the professions related to the development of welfare policy, while the remaining panel members indicated that they could not make a choice between the two options.

The first-round questionnaire ended by asking the panel to express an opinion regarding a possible model for a training path that would lead to the qualification of adult educators.

The majority indicated that a university degree course lasting at least three years is necessary, while only 10% reported that a high school diploma would be sufficient and 15% considered different paths (professional training and/or volunteer work).

In our panel's opinion, the initial training path should be structured differently for those who come into adult education from a study experience and those who come into the field from other careers.

In the first case, training must take place in the university as well as professional training centres or agencies; in the second case, scarcely anyone suggested university, suggesting professional training centres and institutions created by local bodies instead.

2.5. First-round conclusions

The level of questionnaire response frequency in the first round provided a rich array of opinions and indications from the group of European experts in adult education, working in the field and reflecting on issues related to it (this in fact was what characterised all the BAEA panel members), comparing points of view on a series of questions which lead them to reflect not so much on adult education, but on the necessary skills and competences needed by those working in this field and thus, on a path leading to the profession. The composition of our panel presented a problem: the panel almost totally lacked members looking to adult learning in the workplace, or in continuing education in general, nor were there any intermediate figures included on the panel, for example, tutors who often play the role of mediator between specific professional skills and the learning needs and modalities of adults.

Perhaps this is the reason why DELPHI BAEA did not manage to resolve the basic problem, which also appears in the responses of our panel: the dual nature of the professional figure of adult educator and thus of his/her training needs:

- (1) The profession of adult educator can be a “first choice”;

- (2) One becomes an adult educator “afterwards” because one is or one has been a teacher in schools or because one is professionally expert in a specific job sector and thus can teach others.

Initial training programmes can certainly be foreseen for those who choose this field as their first job; it was realised that European society already offers this opportunity. However, what could be conceived for those who support adult learning because they have acquired and exercised a specific professional competence, necessary to the adults they teach? Must this person be trained as an adult educator? For how long? Must he/she delegate mediation to the tutor? And who then trains the tutor? And even before that, what type of professional competences must the tutor have?

Delphi poses the question again, precisely because it has remained open and the issue has not been resolved.

Thus, it is possible to conclude, at least for now, that the panel reflected and made suggestions above all with regard to those who choose the profession for the first time and/or those who work in liberal adult education. This being said, the panel did not succeed in designating the specific professional competences of those who enter the profession, in continuing education programmes.

Question: in defining a professional profile, is it possible to leave out a very large chunk of those who nevertheless conduct this activity in contexts that can be classified under the definition of work contexts?

2.6. What is suggested by the factor analysis of the responses in the first round?

There are five factors that can be identified by applying the most common method which considers only the factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 (the Guttman-Kaiser criterion).

However, considering the low number of observations (69), it appears more prudent to apply the Cattell method, in which the eigenvalues are represented graphically on a Cartesian plane (in columns) in relation to the order of extraction (in rows). If the “spezzata” (cut-off) that connects the various points shows a strong incline, and then levels-off, becoming almost parallel to the axis of the row, the extraction of the factor can be halted. This second interpretation suggests prudence and therefore only two factors are considered. It is necessary to remember that factor analysis highlights typologies of relationships among responses and does not offer an interpretation of the opinions prevailing, but only of the structure of the coherences among the opinions expressed.

The first factor identifies the characteristics of the adult educator as indicated by the panel: a professional profile within a context in which qualitative and

quantitative development of adult learning activities are being determined, requiring practitioners with teaching experience and experience in the working and professional world.

The second factor identifies the relationship between practical training and theoretical/pedagogical training of the educator-to-be; on one side, the responses which identify “national contexts where there is a propensity for practical education of adult educators with a view to preparing them to practise their profession” are placed. On the other hand, there are responses which affirm that the profession must be recognised within the pedagogical professions (and those ones also specify that the access to qualification, for those who wish to enter a programme for the profession of adult educator, represents a necessary step). The uncertainties pointed out above are found here as well.

There is also a third factor which suggests that experience with children and teenagers ought to come before working in adult education and that opportunities in teaching adults should be preceded by a period of teaching in schools.

On the base of the correlation between variables and components, the first factor seems to be more clearly characterised by a connection with the values of the variables quest._3_1, quest._3_2, quest._4, and quest._5_1 and quest._5_2; the second by the connection with quest._7, quest._11_3 and quest._3_2.

Table 2 - Factor analysis: correlation between variables and components¹
(see Appendix 3 for questions)

Variable	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Uniqueness
Quest._1	0.350	-0.137	0.386	-0.279	-0.482	0.400
Quest._3_1	0.831	0.255	0.096	0.061	-0.085	0.224
Quest._3_2	0.678	0.440	0.132	0.161	-0.086	0.296
Quest._4	0.792	0.005	0.050	0.039	0.108	0.356
Quest._5_1	0.680	-0.394	-0.158	0.206	-0.006	0.315
Quest._5_2	0.676	-0.368	-0.248	-0.017	-0.167	0.317
Quest._6	-0.074	-0.393	0.235	-0.127	0.626	0.377
Quest._7	-0.089	0.677	0.062	-0.091	-0.091	0.514
Quest._8	-0.424	-0.181	0.340	0.472	-0.074	0.444
Quest._11_1	-0.116	0.214	-0.521	0.365	0.085	0.529
Quest._11_2	0.371	0.536	-0.236	-0.070	0.473	0.291
Quest._11_3	0.212	-0.140	0.431	-0.336	0.155	0.612
Quest._12	0.294	0.084	0.616	0.082	0.298	0.431
Quest._13	0.268	-0.312	-0.602	-0.369	0.095	0.324
Quest._14	0.293	-0.271	0.046	0.599	0.082	0.473

¹ The factorial analysis was edited by Dr. Gianna Barbieri of the Department of Statistics of the Ministry of Education, University and Research of Italy.

2.7. The second round

Thirteen per cent of the original members were no longer on the panel and the lack of precision in responding to the questions became even more evident (the files were cleansed by the coordinators, who did not always provide Upter with the information needed to proceed). Upter nevertheless attempted to identify the opinions expressed by the panel and interpret them.

The second-round panel consisted of:

- 26 policymakers
- 37 experts
- 25 educators-to-be

Table 3 - Panel composition by country (second round)

<i>Country</i>	<i>Policymakers</i>	<i>Experts</i>	<i>Educators-to-be</i>
DK	9	10	10
EE	6	6	6
IT	6	8	7
SE	5	13	2

The first question, as is the norm with Delphi, seeks to establish whether the respondent agrees with the choices which emerged in the first round: to identify numbers (2) and (4) of the four definitions² – which garnered most agreement – as valid definitions for adult educators.

² The following, as indicated in the paragraph, serves as a reminder of the four definitions for adult educators:

- *number (2)* an adult educator is a person who possesses knowledge of human nature and is attentive to the learner; hence an adult educator is a person able to enter into a dialogical relation that allows the learner to give expression to prior experiences, so that these experiences can be integrated into the teaching-learning process;
- *number (4)* an adult educator is a professional who plans, organizes and manages educational activities for adult learners aimed at acquiring basic functional/professional skills, increasing cultural knowledge, professional training, development of active citizenship and social inclusion, with particular reference to immigrants coming from foreign countries. His/Her professional skills include a combination of polyvalent and specific competences, as well as didactic tools suitable for different contexts/users, training needs and achievement of diversified goals;
- *number (3)* an adult educator is a specialist intermediating skills and/or knowledge to adult people, directing their formation of comprehension and attitudes, and supporting their self-development in adult general education, job-related and/or continuing

A little less than half the respondents agreed with the choices which emerged in the first round. In responses to the second part of the first question, uncertainties and contradictions appeared. In fact, the other half of respondents who did not agree with the first-round choice, having chosen the number (3) response, confirmed their response in almost two-thirds of the cases, while the rest stated their agreement with the first-round majority.

In the second round, the number (1) response – which was the most schematic – was clearly excluded, while the more complex definitions all continued to be taken in consideration.

The second question proposed the four key concepts of the proposed definitions of adult educator which had emerged in the first round, and respondents were asked to rank them from 1 to 4, starting from the one which appeared to be most valid and ending with the one which seemed the least interesting.

In the first round, the profile delineated on the basis of the four, pre-selected key concepts was: An adult educator is a person supporting [learners'] self-development in adult general education, job-related and or continuing professional training, popular education courses, study circles and other circumstances related to a purposeful learning situation, able to enter into a dialogical relation, who creates conditions and organises situations for learning, involved in interactions in learning processes.

In the second round, the order of the key characteristics described a person who acts so that the experiences of the learner can be integrated into the teaching-learning processes, who supports self-development (autonomous development) in general adult education, who is involved in interactions in learning processes and is a professional figure who plans, organises and manages, a definition which reverses the first-round ranking. Since, however, the NO response rate was very high (from 37% to 48%), any consideration would have a purely speculative value.

With regard to the next question which, starting from the results of the first round, asked whether the characteristic of being a person capable of supporting the autonomous development of learners, may be considered a specific characteristic of the adult educator, or whether this characteristic is proper to any educational activity (a question which remains significant beyond the opinions expressed by the second-round panel), almost 60% of the second-round respondents sustained that this competence must be present in any educational activity (as was the case for other

professional training, popular education courses, study circles and other circumstances related to a purposeful learning situation;

- *number (1)* the adult educator is a person involved in organised adult learning, who creates conditions for, organises situations for, gives input and feedback to, and is involved in interaction in learning processes.

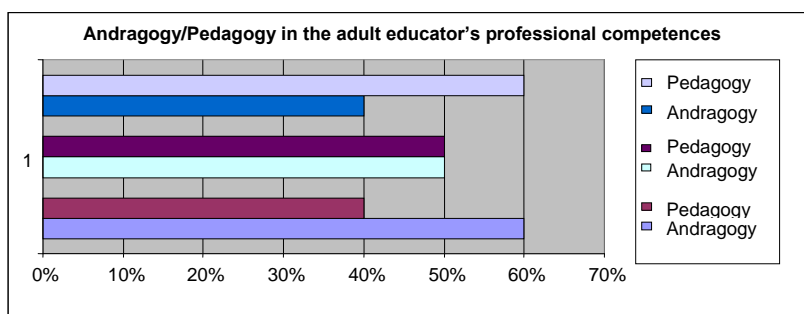
parts of the Delphi however, there were a great number of *NO* responses; touching on 30%).

Thus, indirect confirmation was provided regarding the choice already made by our panel in the first round, when the question was asked whether adult education belongs to the pedagogical professions or to the sectors of social intervention. Almost 70% responded that the adult educator is a professional belonging to the pedagogical professions.

The investigation then focused on the question of the specifically “andragogical” component of the adult educator’s set of professional competences (here the attention of the panel was directed to one of the most important achievements in the culture of adult education, contained in the thoughts of Knowles, 1980), with the respondents being asked to establish in percentage terms (for a total of 100%) the share of pedagogical theory in general and the more specifically andragogical competences indispensable to the adult educator.

The combination which the greatest number (about 40%) of our respondents found most convincing was 60% andragogy + 40% pedagogy, while a little less than 20% subscribed to a 50/50 composition and 3% indicated 80% andragogy + 20% pedagogy. However, there were also those (a little less than 15%) who turned the 60%-40% rapport in favour of pedagogy in general.

Figure 7 – Andragogy/Pedagogy in the adult educator’s professional competences



The *NO* response rate fell to less than 4%, with a high dispersion rate given by the fact that there were other solutions proposed by two or three respondents: some sustained that andragogy should comprise 100% of a curriculum, while others assigned 75% to pedagogy and 25% to andragogy, etc. Nevertheless, on this point, the second round resolved a difficulty which had remained unresolved at the end of the first round and permits the conclusion that a curriculum for an adult educator must have a consistent level of theoretical content, which distinguishes it among the pedagogical disciplines.

The second round was concluded with two questions seeking to define the career path of the adult educator.

Since in the first round, before the question posed in these terms: “which type of prior experience should receive recognition: a) teaching experience b) experience in the world of work and professions c) experience in activities of social intervention”, a consistent number of respondents had sustained that the three options could not be considered exclusively. As a result, the question was re-phrased to ask respondents to rank the three options on a scale of 1 to 10 (with the points assigned, adding up to a total of 10 points). Only about 45% of the panel responded accurately, while the others presented scales of their own which went over the 10-point scale and thus, could not be interpreted.

The two scales that had the highest consensus included one that gave 5 points to a) teaching experience, 3 points to b) experience in the world of work and professions, and 2 points to c) experience in activities of social intervention. The second assigned 4 points to a) teaching experience, 3 points to b) experience in the world of work and professions, and 3 points to c) experience in activities of social intervention. In general, all the combinations assigned the highest number of points to teaching experience and the lowest to activities of social intervention.

The questionnaire then asked respondents to consider the importance of experience in the world of work and professions, along with the issue of experience of teaching and social interventions, as qualifying elements of the adult educator profession.

Among the prior experiences to be recognised in the adult educator, in the first round, Question 12 listed work and professional experience in addition to teaching and social experiences. Responses which give priority to this third type of experience were numerous, probably in consideration of the importance of the aim of employability in European lifelong learning strategies.

Respondents were asked to indicate the response they had given in the first round and whether they could confirm it again, in the second round. The questionnaire concluded by asking whether: “*Apart from your response, do you think that this type of experience – and the resulting competences – belongs to the adult educator’s profile only when the educational activity is aimed at professional skills training and requalification (A) or that it is always a part of it (B)?*”

- 40% stated that in the first round they had indicated a) teaching experience;
- 20% reported they had answered b) experience in the world of work and professions;
- 2% indicated they had answered c) experience in activities of social intervention;

[it must be kept in mind that in the second round, the panel declined in numbers by 10% and that in many cases, there were no responses].

Over 90% of the panel declared that they confirmed their first response, but it is interesting to note that in the last response, by choosing option B, over 80% acknowledged that experience in the world of work is nevertheless **always** important for the adult educator, not only for those working in re-training and professional training courses.

2.8. Observations at the conclusion of the second round

The professional profile has been delineated quite clearly: pedagogical training, but with consistent reflection on and study of the andragogical disciplines, capable of developing abilities in supporting autonomous learning and encouraging socio-educational interaction. The issue of who ought to work in continuing education, however, remains unresolved, even though there is recognition of the importance of some level of experience in the world of work and professions for those who carry out educational activities addressed to adults.

Chapter 3: The BAEA Delphi study, a conclusion and an unanswered question

The level of questionnaire response frequency in the first round provided a rich array of opinions and indications from a group of European experts in adult education, working in the field and reflecting on issues related to it (this in fact was what characterised all BAEA panel members), comparing points of view on a series of questions which lead them to reflect not so much on adult education, but on the necessary skills and competences needed by those working in this field and thus on a path leading to the profession. The composition of the BAEA panel presented a problem: the panel almost totally lacked members looking to adult learning in the workplace, or in continuing education in general, nor were there any intermediate figures included on the panel, for example, tutors who often play the role of mediator between specific professional skills and the learning needs and modalities of adults.

Perhaps this is the reason why DELPHI BAEA did not manage to resolve the basic problem, the dual nature of the professional figure of adult educator and thus of his/her training needs:

- (1) The profession of adult educator can be a “first choice”;
- (2) One becomes an adult educator “afterwards” because one is or one has been a teacher in schools or because one is professionally expert in a specific job sector and thus can teach others.

Initial training programmes can certainly be foreseen for those who choose this field as their first job; it was realised that European society already offers this opportunity. However, what could be conceived for those who support adult learning because they have acquired and exercised a specific professional competence, necessary to the adults they teach? Must this person be trained as an adult educator? For how long? Must he/she delegate mediation to the tutor? And who then trains the tutor? And even before that, what type of professional competences must the tutor have?

Delphi poses the question again, precisely because it has remained open and the issue has not been resolved.

BAEA can thus conclude that the panel reflected and made suggestions above all with regard to those who choose the profession for the first time and/or those who work in liberal adult education. That being said, the panel did not succeed in designating the specific professional competences of those who enter the profession, in continuing education programmes.

Question: in defining a professional profile is it possible to leave out a very large chunk of those who nevertheless conduct this activity in contexts that can be classified under the definition of work contexts?

The professional profile has been clearly delineated: pedagogical training, plus a consistent reflection on and study of the andragogical disciplines, capable of developing abilities in supporting autonomous learning and encouraging socio-educational interaction.

The issue of who ought to work in continuing education, however, remains unresolved, even though there is recognition of the importance of some level of experience in the world of work and professions for those who carry out educational activities addressed to adults.

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Appendix 1: Partner profiles

Tab 4 - Is adult education/training your main field of activity or interest?

	<i>DK</i>	<i>EE</i>	<i>IT</i>	<i>SE</i>
YES	90%	33.3%	37.9%	95.7%
NO	10%	66.7%	62.1%	4.3%

Tab 5 - What is your occupational status?

	<i>DK</i>	<i>EE</i>	<i>IT</i>	<i>SE</i>
Student	16.7%	5.5%	10.3%	
Seeking employment		5.5%	10.3%	
Employed	73.3%	89%	51.8%	69.6%
Retired	3.3%		17.3%	
Other	6.7		10.3%	30.4%?

Tab 6 - What is your main occupation?

	<i>DK</i>	<i>EE</i>	<i>IT</i>	<i>SE</i>
Manager	26.7%	16.7%	20.7%	52.2%
Professional	63.4%	33.3%	20.7%	43.5%
Technician/assoc. professional		44.4%	6.9%	
Clerk	3.3%	5.6%	13.8%	4.3%
Skilled agricultural, forestry, fisheries worker				
Crafts or related trade worker	3.3%		3.4%	
Plant or machine operator/assembler				
Other			34.5%	
No response	3.3%			

Tab 7 - In what kind of organisation you work?

	<i>DK</i>	<i>EE</i>	<i>IT</i>	<i>SE</i>
I don't work	10%		17.2%	
Public	80%	50%	44.8%	26.1%
Private	6.7%	22.2%	10.3%	60.9%
Social non-profit sector, social org.		27.8%	20.7%	13%
No response	3.3%		7%	

Tab 8 - Gender

	<i>DK</i>	<i>EE</i>	<i>IT</i>	<i>SE</i>
F	60%	88.9%	58.6%	34.8%
M	40%	11.1%	41.4%	65.2%

Tab 9 - Educational qualifications

	<i>DK</i>	<i>EE</i>	<i>IT</i>	<i>SE</i>
0-Isced 2	3.3%			
Isced 2c	6.7%			4.2%
Isced 3	3.3%		10.3%	
Isced 4	3.3%	5.6%		4.3%
Isced 5	66.7%	94.4%	89.7%	78.5%
Spec. Isced 5				
Master Isced 5				
PhD Isced 6				13%
No response	16.7%			

Tab 10 - Age

	<i>DK</i>	<i>EE</i>	<i>IT</i>	<i>SE</i>
25 or under		16.7%	10.3%	
26-35	10%	33.3%	20.7%	4.3%
36-45	33.3%	11.1%	6.9%	13%
46-55	30%	22.2%	3.5%	8.7%
56-65	26.7%	5.6%	5.7%	74%
Over 65		11.1%	6.9%	
No response				

Tab 11 - Question 3: In consideration of the challenges posed by knowledge societies and economies: n.1 there is increasing political attention being paid in my country to increase the opportunities for continuing education.

	<i>DK</i>	<i>EE</i>	<i>IT</i>	<i>SE</i>
Totally agree	20%	38.9%	3.4%	4.3%
Mainly agree	66.6%	44.4%	20.7%	39.2%
Mainly disagree	6.7%	16.7%	51.7%	56.5%
Totally disagree			24.2%	
No response	6.7%			

Tab 12 - Question 3: In consideration of the challenges posed by knowledge societies and economies: n.2 there is increasing political attention being paid in my country to qualify the opportunities for continuing education.

	<i>DK</i>	<i>EE</i>	<i>IT</i>	<i>SE</i>
Totally agree	20%	11.1%	3.5%	4.3%
Mainly agree	56.7%	50%	17.2%	56.6%
Mainly disagree	20%	33.3%	44.8%	34.8%
Totally disagree		5.6%	34.5%	4.3%
No response	3.3%			

Tab 13 - Question 4: A specific sector of adult education professionals has developed within your county's job market.

	<i>DK</i>	<i>EE</i>	<i>IT</i>	<i>SE</i>
Totally agree	56.7%	16.7%	13.8%	13%
Mainly agree	26.7%	61.1%	31%	52.2%
Mainly disagree	16.6%	22.2%	27.6%	30.5%
Totally disagree			27.6%	4.3%

Tab 14 - Question 5a: In keeping with the increasing need to develop adult education, particular attention has developed in your country towards the theoretical education of adult educators with a view of preparing them to practice their profession.

	<i>DK</i>	<i>EE</i>	<i>IT</i>	<i>SE</i>
Totally agree	3.3%	44.4%	13.8%	
Mainly agree	50%	44.4%	34.5%	52.2%
Mainly disagree	40%	11.2%	24.1%	47.8%
Totally disagree	6.7%		27.6%	
No response				

Tab 15 - Question 5b: In keeping with the increasing need to develop adult education, particular attention has developed in your country towards the practical education of adult educators with a view of preparing them to practice their profession.

	<i>DK</i>	<i>EE</i>	<i>IT</i>	<i>SE</i>
Totally agree	3.3	22.2	6.9	
Mainly agree	50	50	31	52.2
Mainly disagree	36.7	27.8	27.6	47.8
Totally disagree	10		34.5	
No response				

Appendix 2: Delphi guidelines

Shared development of a training path for the adult education operator

**Upter BAEA Project*

“What training and professional qualification paths are necessary for teachers/trainers in the field of Adult Education?”

Guidelines for carrying out an investigation using the Delphi method

- These guidelines are presented in the form of a set of thirty slides which, after a brief presentation of the objectives and methodology chosen, give instructions on the actions to be carried out, on the tasks of the transnational coordinator and those of the national coordinators.
- Following the guidelines, the transnational coordinator will provide the national coordinators with the questionnaires (for the first and, subsequently, second round), the grille for inserting the responses to the questionnaires and the forms for the definition of the panel of experts and for collecting the open responses.

Within a transnational perspective, the BAEA European Project aims to define the teaching/training path to becoming a teacher/trainer/operator in the field of Adult Education

- This aim is in keeping with the Lisbon objectives which affirm that better qualification of teachers/trainers operating in the field of adult education can be an essential tool for transforming Europe into an effective common area of lifelong learning.
- The current situation shows that this aim is far from having been achieved because:
 - those who work in this sector – strategic, both for the individual and for society as a whole – **rarely** find specific professional recognition in their countries, **almost never** come from training paths dedicated to the field, **always** have such different work backgrounds that it is impossible to describe them in homogenous and comparable terms.

3

European documents of reference for the qualification of operators in the field of Adult Education

- 2002 Education and Training of Teachers and Trainers defined as a key objective, improving Adult Education systems in Europe.
- 2006 Memorandum on Adult Learning states that it is no longer possible to sustain LLL systems without qualifying those who work in the field.
- 2007 Action Plan on Adult Learning deplores the lack of attention given to initial and continuing training paths for operators in the field.

4

From an analysis of the current situation to possible solutions

- In the first phase of the project, the surveys and reports developed in the four partner countries highlighted the extent to which the path followed by those who carry out adult education teaching and training activities is complex and diversified.
- The next step thus involves further reflection and comparison in order to better analyse and reach a shared definition of the aspects which qualify the profession of Adult Education operator/teacher/trainer and to furnish indications to those who have the task/responsibility of defining it in terms of access and career path.
- This part of the work is a study conducted in the four countries involved in the project, according to a methodology inspired by the Delphi method.

5

Why the Delphi method?

“Delphi can be described as a method which makes it possible to structure a communication process within a group; the process should function so that a group of individuals, considered as a whole, can deal with complex problems”
(Linstone, H. A. & Turloff, M. (Eds.). (1975). *The Delphi method: Techniques and applications*. Reading: Addison-Wesley).

The Delphi method can be included among qualitative methodologies insofar as it:

- Deals with single individuals or small groups;
- Aims to analyse opinions and attitudes in depth;
- Normally the sample does not aim to be statistically representative of the collectivity to which it refers;
- The approach is of the non-structured type, starting from an outline of the discussion which makes it possible to better define the focus during the investigation.

The aim of the questions and exchange of views among the experts is to obtain information regarding:

- What interviewees think;
- Why they have certain opinions;
- The possibility of changing these opinions when compared to others.

6

The study must analyse:

1. What social and cultural factors influence individual formation of initial competences and the qualification of those who work in the different sectors of Adult Education (general, vocational and liberal education).
2. What factors influence the construction of a professional identity.
3. What the training policies and practices for Adult Education operators are.
4. What should/could be initial training for those who choose a profession in the Adult Education field and what the admission criteria should be.

7

The Delphi method for gathering information

The Delphi method approaches the research topic in progressive rounds:

- **First round:** general information, identification of the various aspects of the problem;
- **Second round** (after feedback): pondering of the components indicated and identification of points of agreement and disagreement within the panel (pondering results of the factor analysis – identification of clusters);
- **Third round** (after further feedback): pondering of the indicators or each component and validation of the value assigned to each of the components.

8

The Delphi process in relation to the BAEA objectives

The research topic is approached in progressive rounds:

- **First round:** general information, definition of professional profiles and components of training path;
- **Second round** (after feedback): pondering of the components indicated and identification of points of agreement and disagreement within the panel (pondering of factor analysis results – identification of common clusters);
- **Third round** (after further feedback): pondering of indicators of each component and validation of value attributed to the single components.

9

The Delphi method within the BAEA project (1)

- The Delphi method offers the opportunity to **analyse** a problem presenting elements of ambiguity from different points of view, to **establish** possible levels of agreement among peoples representative of different opinions and experiences and to **formulate** proposals to be brought to the attention of those who have the responsibility of making decisions.
- The first phase of the BAEA project **analysed** the problem of “Becoming an Adult Educator” in the four partner countries and collected the points of view of the four User Groups (Denmark, Sweden, Estonia, Italy).
- The analysis and identification of the different aspects of the problem were summarised by the four coordinators in 4 documents which, for each country, indicate the five most important conceptual cores they intend to propose in the Delphi discussion and give a contextual definition of Adult Educator.

10

The Delphi method within the BAEA project (2)

- The Delphi-BAEA study will thus be organised into two rounds of questioning the national panels, to be preceded and followed by initial and final reflection and evaluation by the four User Groups, which, according to project indications, represent the technical-scientific support structures.
- The final report will be written by the transnational coordinator (Upter); material useful for drafting a national report will be made available to each of the four partners.

11

Experts consulted on the Delphi-BAEA panel

- The experts are the people having different opinions who, through their culture and professional position, are familiar with adult education problems, policies and practices and ensure a range of viewpoints. Each national panel will consist of 30 members distributed as follows:
 - 10 policymakers, managers and organisers of educational activities for adults;
 - 10 expert scholars, teachers, trainers, etc.;
 - 10 aspiring to be adult education trainers, teachers, operators (adult-educators-to-be).

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The three groups in the Delphi-BAEA panel

Components	1. Policymakers	2. Experts/ trainers	3. Educators-to-be
30 people in each country for a total of 120	Managers, organisers, political decision-makers, etc.	Experts/ researchers/ andragogy & pedagogy scholars/adult education trainers/ teachers	Aspiring to professional qualification and recognition as teachers/trainers

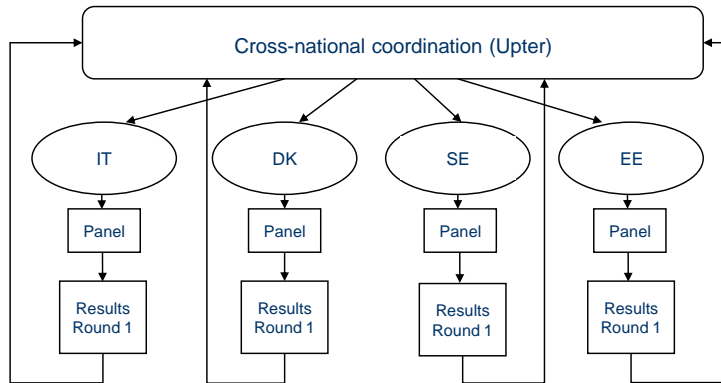
13

Information gathering process (see below files illustrating workflow)

- Each national partner forms a panel, receives the questionnaire from the transnational coordinating partner (Upter), translates it (the questionnaire is in English) and submits it to the national panel, who in turn, fills it. Then, each national partner collects the completed questionnaires and forwards them to Upter.
- After each round, Upter processes the responses and sends them back to the national coordinators who submit new questionnaire to the national panel members.
- After the restitution of the information relating to the second round, the User Group in each country will reflect on the results. Upter writes the transnational report and the recommendations for European decision-makers.

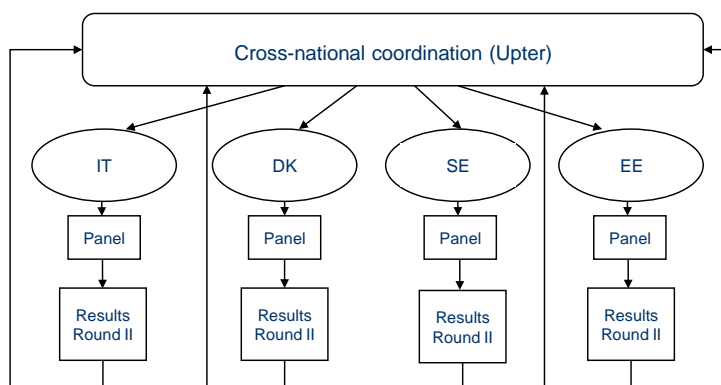
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The first round of questions



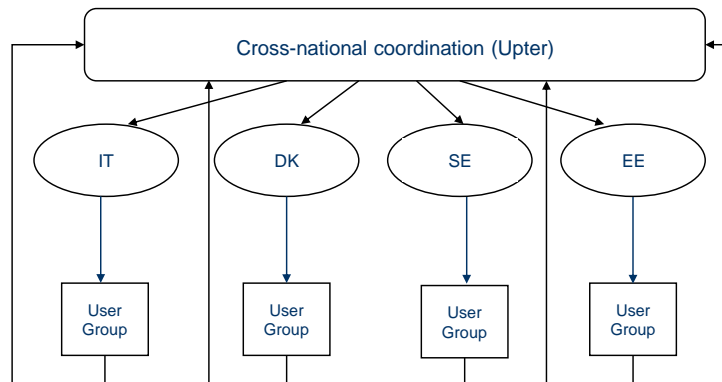
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Round II after feedback from round I



16

Cross-national coordination (Upter) Drafted report – after feedback from round II



17

First round questionnaire structure

- Six questions [letters A-F] define respondent's profile
- Questions [numbers 1-2] focussing on the definition of adult educator
- Questions [numbers 3-4-5] asking respondents to express and indicate level of agreement with some statements regarding adult education
- Questions [numbers 6-7] relating to the development of the adult educator profession as the outcome of prior teaching activity
- Questions [numbers 8-9] relating to professional profile components
- Questions [numbers 10-14] relating to professional recognition and criteria for access to the profession
- Questions [numbers 15-16] relating to the content of the training path

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Two open questions

- Two questions, 6b and 11b, ask respondents to explain the reasons for their answers (not more than three lines).
- The national coordinator has to fill-in the form furnished by the transnational coordinator for each respondent, and send back the responses in English, so that they can be processed.

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Form for collecting responses to open questions

- Identification code of respondent ---**Xxx**---

6b _____

11b _____

- The national coordinator will produce 30 copies of this form in order to collect the answers to open questions.

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Identification of respondents

- Respondent's identification code: a letter indicating country, a number from 1 to 3 [1 Policymakers, 2 Experts/teachers/trainers, 3 Adult educators-to-be] which indicates which of the three groups composing the panel the respondent belongs to + a number from 1 to 10 ----
- **ATTENTION: the IDENTIFICATION CODE IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT WILL BE NEEDED TO SEND THE QUESTIONNAIRES FOR THE SECOND ROUND AND TO PROCESS THE INFORMATION**

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How the preferences expressed will be measured

1. Express a ranking of variable relevance (between 1 and K) of the statements of a general nature and between 1 and k (or between 1 and k) of the elements organised within each component ("ranking method").
2. Distribute 100 points of a hypothetical total hour for training among the activities considered essential for training ("budget distribution method").

22

Ranking from 1 to k

Criteria of direct *ranking*

- The data gathering requires the sample to present a variety of opinions.
- It is possible to transform a ranking into a series of points on a real axis (one-dimensional).

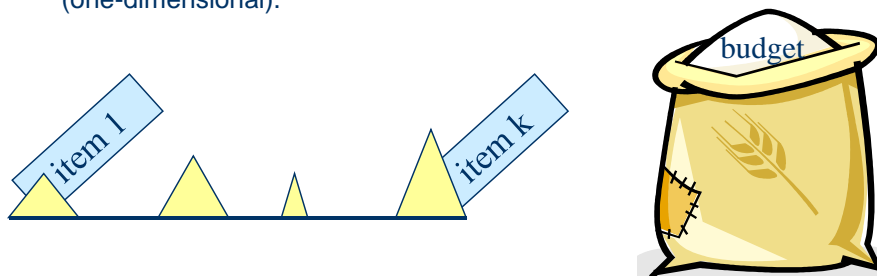


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Distributing 100 points among alternative k

Criteria of direct *scoring*

- Usually points out the best and worst alternative, a few problems fall within the intermediate positions.
- Ranking can be transformed into a series of points on a real axis (one-dimensional).



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Weight of profile components



Component	%
General knowledge	
Basic skills	
Technical-specialistic competences, problem solving ability	
Capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge	
Social, interpersonal and communication skills	
Organisational skills and initiative	
Work-oriented personality	
Social ethics, value system	

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Differences among methods for gathering preferences (example)

	Ranking	Budget
General knowledge		
Basic skills		
Technical-specialistic competences, problem solving ability		
Capacity for learning/transmitting knowledge		
Social, interpersonal, communications skills		
Organisational skills and initiative		
Work-oriented personality		
Social ethics, value system		

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The transnational coordinator's tasks – Upter

The transnational coordinator (Upter) will provide:

- a Guide to using the Delphi method, consisting of a set of files;
- the questionnaire for the first and second round (in English);
- a spreadsheet in Microsoft Excel, in which panel members have to insert their responses;
- the draft after the second round of Delphi.

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The national coordinator's tasks

The national coordinator will:

- Share study content, tools and timetable in the January 14, 2010 meeting;
- Choose national panel members, making it clear that after the first round, the same people are to answer a second questionnaire;
- Make every effort to prevent “defection” of panel members between the first and second rounds;
- Translate the questionnaire into the national language and insert it into the Microsoft Excel spreadsheet;
- Send the final spreadsheet in each country's language to the transnational coordinator, in order to check and validate the final questionnaire that will be presented in each country;
- E-mail the questionnaire to panel members and send the files to the transnational coordinator, within the deadline, making sure the answers to the two open questions are translated and forwarded to the transnational coordinator;
- Discuss results with the User Group;
- Send feedback regarding the results of the second round to the transnational coordinator.

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Recommendations

- Information-gathering should be completed within a reasonable period of time for the 2 Delphi rounds + reflection on the part of the Users Groups and gathering of their opinions;
- National coordinators are to follow the instructions contained in the guidelines as presented in the tasks table;
- The transnational coordinator (Upter) must guarantee technical support and consultancy to national coordinators.

Appendix 3: Delphi questionnaires – First round

Identification Code

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Respondent Profile

A) Is adult education/training your main field of activity or interest?

- a1) YES
- a2) NO

If not, what is your main field of activity/interest? _____

B) What is your occupational status?

- b1) Student
- b2) Seeking employment
- b3) Businessperson, self-employed, professional, teacher, trainer, volunteer worker
- b4) Retired
- b5) _____

C) What is your main occupation?

- c1) Manager
- c2) Professional
- c3) Technician or associate professional
- c4) Clerical support worker
- c5) Service or sales worker
- c6) Skilled agricultural, forestry or fisheries worker
- c7) Crafts or related trade worker
- c8) Plant or machine operator, or assembler
- c9) Armed forces occupation

(The classification above follows the ISCO-08 classification by ILO:
<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/isco/docs/resol08.pdf>)

D) In what kind of organisation do you work?

- d1) I don't work
- d2) Public
- d3) Private
- d4) Social non-profit sector, social organisation

E) Gender

- e1) F
- e2) M

F) Age

- f1) 25 or under
- f2) 26-35
- f3) 36-45
- f4) 46-55
- f5) 56-65
- f6) over 65

G) Educational qualifications

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------|
| g1) Lower secondary school | Isced 2 |
| g2) Vocational training | Isced 2 C |
| g3) Secondary school diploma | Isced 3 |
| g4) Post-diploma non-academic | Isced 4 |
| g5) University degree | Isced 5 |
| g6) Specialisation in _____ | |
| g7) Master's degree in _____ | |
| g8) PhD | Isced 6 |

(The classification above follows the ISCED levels:

http://www.unesco.org/education/information/nfsunesco/doc/isced_1997.htm)

Question 1

Below are four definitions of adult educator. Please rank them from 1 (definition you most agree with) to 4 (the definition you least agree with):

1) The adult educator is a person involved in organised adult learning, who creates conditions for, organises situations for, gives input and feedback to, and is involved in interactions in learning processes.

2) An adult educator is a person who possesses knowledge of human nature and is attentive to the learner; hence, an adult educator is a person able to enter into a dialogical relation that allows the learner to give expression to prior experiences, so that these experiences can be integrated into the teaching-learning process.

3) An adult educator is a specialist intermediating skills and/or knowledge to adult people, directing their formation of comprehension and attitudes, and supporting their self-development in adult general education, job-related and/or continuing professional training, popular education courses, study circles and other circumstances related to a purposeful learning situation.

4) An adult educator is a professional who plans, organises and manages educational activities for adult learners aimed at acquiring basic functional/professional skills, increasing cultural knowledge, professional training, development of active citizenship and social inclusion, with particular reference to immigrants coming from foreign countries.

His/her professional skills include a combination of polyvalent and specific competences, as well as didactic tools suitable for different contexts/users, training needs and achievement of diversified goals.

Question 2 *key concepts*

Below are the same definitions; in each, four key concepts have been highlighted. Within each definition, please rank them from 1 (the concept you think best describes the function of the adult educator) to 4 (the least pertinent).

1) The adult educator is a person involved in 1) organised adult learning, who 2) creates conditions for, organises situations for, 3) gives input and feedback to, and 4) is involved in interaction in learning processes.

2) An adult educator is a person 1) who possesses knowledge of human nature and is attentive to the learner; hence, an adult educator is a person 2) able to enter into a dialogical relation that 3) allows the learner to give expression to prior experiences, so that 4) these experiences can be integrated into the teaching-learning process.

3) An adult educator is a 1) specialist 2) intermediating skills and/or knowledge to adult people, 3) directing their formation of comprehension and attitudes, and 4) supporting their self-development in adult general education, job-related and/or

continuing professional training, popular education courses, study circles and other circumstances related to a purposeful learning situation.

4) An adult educator is a 1) professional who plans, organises and manages 2) educational activities for adult learners aimed at acquiring basic functional/professional skills, development of cultural knowledge, professional training, development of 3) active citizenship and social inclusion, with particular reference to immigrants coming from foreign countries.

His/her professional skills include a combination of 4) polyvalent and specific competences, as well as didactic tools suitable for different contexts/users, training needs and achievement of diversified goals.

In the three following questions please indicate your level of agreement with a number of statements relating to adult education.

Question 3

In consideration of the challenges posed by knowledge societies and economies:

1) There is increasing political attention being paid in my country to increase the opportunities for continuing education.

Say if you:

- 1) Totally agree
- 2) Mainly agree
- 3) Mainly disagree
- 4) Totally disagree

2) There is increasing political attention being paid in my country to qualify the opportunities for continuing education.

Say if you:

- 1) Totally agree
- 2) Mainly agree
- 3) Mainly disagree
- 4) Totally disagree

Question 4

A specific sector of adult education professionals has developed within your country's job market.

Say if you:

- 1) Totally agree
- 2) Mainly agree
- 3) Mainly disagree
- 4) Totally disagree

Question 5

1) In keeping with the increasing need to develop adult education, particular attention has developed in your country towards theoretical education of adult educators with a view to preparing them to practise their profession.

Say if you:

- 1) Totally agree
- 2) Mainly agree
- 3) Mainly disagree
- 4) Totally disagree

2) In keeping with the increasing need to develop adult education, particular attention has developed in your country towards practical education of adult educators with a view to preparing them to practise their profession.

Say if you:

- 1) Totally agree
- 2) Mainly agree
- 3) Mainly disagree
- 4) Totally disagree

Question 6a

In your opinion, the specific professional competences of these adult educator specialists should be developed through:

a) Theoretical and practical training to prepare them for practising their profession in adult education.

b) The development of professional teaching competences by teaching at the high school level, to children and adolescents or in other educational situations.

Question 6b

Explain in no more than three lines the reasons for your response.

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Question 7

In choosing to become adult educators, and to remain and qualify in this field, the existence and development of an approach meant as a “calling”, often proves to be of great importance.

In your opinion this fact is:

- a) A consequence of a lack of recognition for the specific professional nature of this figure and the absence of training courses for the purpose of building the profession.
- b) A reason for the lack of professional recognition, because the approach meant as "calling" is seen as a constitutional element that cannot be taught or learned.

Question 8

Teaching adults sometimes comes about after having taught adolescents/children. Is this the case of your country?

- YES
- NO

If yes, it could be related to:

- a) The fact that opportunities for development of the teaching career are very limited and that one of the possible changes consists of teaching to different types of students.
- b) The fact that one must first have teaching experience in schools for young people, adolescents and children in order to learn the fundamental aspects of the teaching profession before tackling the complex nature of adult education.

c) Increasing acuteness of difficulties on the interpersonal, planning and organisational levels in teaching adolescents and children is a determining factor in choosing to teach to adult students.

Please rank the three options from 1 (the one which best describes the adult educator function) to 3 (the one which in your opinion is least pertinent).

Question 9

Below is a list containing the Professional Profile Components of the Adult Educator, as they emerged during a study carried out in four European countries in 2008.

Please annul those which you do not consider pertinent and, if you wish, add components which in your view are lacking.

- 1) General knowledge
- 2) Basic skills
- 3) Technical-specialist competences, problem solving ability
- 4) Capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge
- 5) Social, interpersonal and communication skills
- 6) Organisational skills and initiative
- 7) Work-oriented personality
- 8) Social ethic, value system
- 9) _____
- 10) _____

Question 10

Reproduce the list above ranking the components according to the importance you attribute to each one (starting with the one you think is most important followed by the others in order of importance).

Question 11

In some countries in recent years, the adult educator as a profession has been recognised within the Professional Qualification Standard. If you were asked to indicate at least three different levels of expertise, which selection criteria would you follow, keeping in mind that the types of expertise considered to be on a higher level should have greater social and economic recognition:

- a) Competence in the planning and management of courses for recovering and/or increasing general professional work skills
- b) Competence in the planning and management of courses for recovering and increasing specific professional skills

- c) Accurate and specific competence in sectors of the job market requiring an ability to perform non-routine tasks (contextualisation of knowledge and creative ability)
- d) Expertise in teaching
- e) Expertise in assessing skills
- f) Expertise in assessing orientation
- g) Expertise in assessing supervision
- h) Competence in the use of methodologies such as life-storytelling, cooperative learning, etc.
- i) Knowledge of methodology and teaching tools

Indicate not more than three criteria

Question 12a

Prior experience which should be recognised in the adult educator, in your opinion, should be related to:

- a) Teaching experience
- b) Experience in the world of work and professions
- c) Experience in activities of social intervention
- d) Other

One response only

Question 12b

Explain the reasons for your response (not more than three lines)

Question 13

In your view, the adult educator's profession should be recognised in the sphere of:

- a) The pedagogical professions
- b) The professions relating to welfare policy development

Indicate which option appears most pertinent to you

Question 14

Which educational qualification should be required for admission to a training course for adult educators?

- a) Secondary school diploma
- b) Three-year university degree
- c) Other

Question 15

The last questions ask you to imagine what the training path for the adult educator should be:

- a) An initial, preparatory training path to working in the field
- b) On-the-job training for those who come into the field through another career

The training path in case a) should consist of:

Number of _____ years + a practical training period of _____.

The training path in case b) should consist of:

Recurring intervention over a period of a number of _____ years.

Question 16

In your opinion, who or what kind of structures should take on responsibility for the training?

Case a) _____
Case b) _____

Appendix 4: Delphi questionnaires – Second round

Identification Code

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While the first-round responses of the four panels do not present great variations, they will make it possible to subsequently better define some significant issues.

Question [delphi_2] - 1

Question 1 of the first-round questionnaire asked respondents to rank level of agreement with the four definitions of “adult educator” provided by the four national coordinators.

The two definitions which received most consensus were definition number 2 and definition number 4;

Does your response in the first-round questionnaire confirm this choice?

- YES
- NO

If NO:

B1) do you consider your original response, which was number, (Insert number) to be nevertheless more useful for defining the adult educator?

Or

B2) at this point, do you agree with the majority?

Question [delphi_2] - 2

The second question in the first round required identification of the concept which in each definition seemed most significant.

The following four concepts received the greatest consensus:

- 1) Person involved in interactions in learning processes
- 2) Person who acts so that the experiences of the learner can be integrated into the teaching-learning processes
- 3) Person who supports self-development (autonomous development) in general adult education
- 4) is a professional figure who plans, organises and manages

Apart from your response in the first round, which of these four seems to you the most significant concept?

- 1) 2) 3) 4)

Question [delphi_2] - 3

Supporting self-development (autonomous development) of learners seems to you:

- a) The specific characteristic of adult an educator
- b) A characteristic of any educational action

Indicate one response

Question [delphi_2] - 4

Question 12 dealt with the problem of the career path of the adult educator, and in this respect, asked respondents to indicate which type of prior experience should receive recognition:

- a) Teaching experience
- b) Experience in the world of work and professions
- c) Experience in activities of social intervention

The majority of respondents indicated that these three options are not exclusive of one another; please indicate the specific weight of each one on a scale of 1 to 10 points (out of a total of 10).

Question [delphi_2] - 5

In more than one case it became clear that respondents did not recognise the specific nature of Androgogy as compared to Pedagogy.

Please indicate on a percentage basis, out of a total of 100, the weight of andragogical competences as compared to pedagogical competences in the profile of an adult educator.

Andragogical Competences _____ %
Pedagogical Competences _____ %

Question [delphi_2] - 6

Among the prior experiences to be recognised in the adult educator, in the first round, Question 12 listed work and professional experience in addition to teaching and social experiences. Responses which give priority to this third type of experience were numerous, probably in consideration of the importance of the aim of employability in European lifelong learning strategies.

In the first round, you responded _____ (Indicate the response given in the first round).

6a) Do you confirm the response you gave in the first round?

- YES
- NO

6b) Apart from your response, do you think that this type of experience – and the resulting competences – belongs to the adult educator's profile only when the educational activity is aimed at professional skills training and requalification (A) or that it is always a part of it (B)?

This report presents the results from a Delphi study that was carried out within the European project, Becoming Adult Educators in the European Area (BAEA). BAEA aimed at comparing possible and expected training paths in relation to adult educator practitioners in four European countries: Denmark, Estonia, Italy and Sweden. Providing a wide stratum from which varied perspectives could be gathered, an expert panel for the Delphi study was created from BAEA members and associates, comprised of policymakers, experts and educators-to-be. The research carried out in the Delphi study centred on comparing expert points of view on a series of questions which lead to reflections on adult education, and more so on the necessary skills and competences needed by those working in this field; thus, on a path leading to the profession.

The Delphi study did not manage to resolve the basic problem – the dual nature of the professional figure of adult educator and thus of his/her training needs. The profession of adult educator can be a “first choice” and/or one becomes an adult educator “afterwards” because one is or one has been a teacher in schools or because one is professionally expert in a specific job sector and thus can teach others. The professional profile has been clearly delineated in the Delphi study as: pedagogical training, plus a consistent reflection on and study of the andragogical disciplines, capable of developing abilities in supporting autonomous learning and encouraging socio-educational interaction. The issue of who ought to work in continuing education, however, remains unresolved, even though there is recognition of the importance of some level of experience in the world of work and professions for those who carry out educational activities addressed to adults. Drawing on this, the report informs policymakers, researchers and practitioners on the current challenges of defining the profession of adult educator and calls them to take new steps towards more clearly defining the professional profile, in order to improve the conditions for current and prospective adult educators.