



Adult education
made accessible.



Lifelong
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Programme

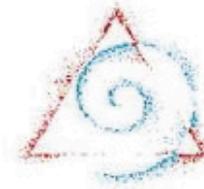
Competency Catalogue for Experts on Accessibility in European Countries

A summary of the outcomes of expert interviews and desk research led
by the participating partners

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Introduction

To adults with disabilities the accessible education is a key factor for full inclusion in society. It also represents a great challenge to the educational institutions. Educational institutions are facing the problem of accessible education for people with special needs on the basis of past experience, shared experiences and good practices. Persons with special needs have, due to their disability, major problems in integrating into education without adaptation and appropriate support during training.

Past experiences show that education is often inaccessible to people with disabilities or it is not completely adapted for specific types of disability. Comparative data from a number of European studies show that many people with disabilities still doesn't decide to continue their education at a higher level. Even in the labour market they often occupy lower paid jobs. The EU Action Plan for Adult Education defines disabled people and persons with disabilities as one of the most disadvantaged groups because they are reaching a lower level of education compared to the total population.

There are still present many obstacles in adult education that prevent people with disabilities quality education. What it is missing is a comprehensive approach and appropriate supportive environment for the integration of disabled people into education. In Slovenia for example persons with disabilities have right to regulate the status of a person with special needs, and with that the possibility to adjust the education under certain conditions to them.

With project AEMA we want to develop a "framework on accessibility of adult education for people with disabilities", which will provide and cover key information about accessible education on one place to interested educational institutions, disabled persons and persons with special needs. This framework will be focused on the needs of the disabled individual and also on the existing possibilities of adult education of the educational institutions. Based on desk top research and focus group discussions with people with disabilities, as well as adult education providers we have prepared an accessibility criteria list for adult education providers. The criteria define different levels of accessibility in sub-categories of accessibility domains. Based on desk research and functional analysis interviews with experts on accessibility (EOA) we developed a competency catalogue to assess the individual competences experts needed to support adult education providers achieve accessibility.

AEMA Network represents an important contribution to the EU Accessibility Agenda within Adult Education and is framed around the guiding question: "How can accessibility for people with disabilities be assured in mainstream adult educational settings on an equal basis with others?"

This Competence catalogue defines the knowledge, skills and competencies EOA need to support adult education providers to achieve their level of accessibility as best as possible.

1. Profile presentation – Expert on Accessibility (EOA) in the field of adult education for adults with disabilities

For the purposes of diverse projects authors define adult education differently. For example ETTAD for the purpose of their project 2007-2009 (www.ettad.eu) defined adult education as: 'non-vocational learning which may lead to enhanced employability but focuses on learning for personal, civic and social purposes. Adults are those aged 25 and over who have completed/left initial education and training.' In AEMA project we define adult education as any Vocational or Non-Vocational Learning for People of 16 which is not considered to be Higher Education'

For an EOA working in the field of disability it is crucial to have a clear picture what the term disability includes. The EU commission in the frames of social model defines disability 'as the result of the dynamic interaction between a person and their environment, including social constructions, which lead to discrimination and stigmatisation. It is therefore the environment that should be adapted to each individual person, including people with disabilities, by removing these barriers. (Goelen, 2005)'

Expert for accessible education for adults with special needs is an expert for removing the barriers on the side of educational institutions. With his/hers knowledge, skills and competences he/she helps adult education providers in the preparation of appropriate conditions for the inclusion of disabled individual or people with special needs into the "barrier-free" education.

This competence catalogue defines competencies as an observable or measurable knowledge, skill, ability or behavioural characteristic that contributes to successful job performance. It represents a set of competencies that EOA needs in order to support the vision and achieving the objectives of educational institutions to enable a potential disabled individual and people with disabilities equal inclusion in the program of education and provide support during the study process.

The catalogue defines the basic skills and knowledge that EOA for adults with disability needs to successfully advice to educational institutions. The catalogue is useful:

- as a support in identifying the knowledge, skills and abilities of EOA for people with disabilities through various accessibility fields
- to perform basic self-assessment of competence EOA of adults with special needs,
- for planning personal and professional development of each EOA,
- as a support for designing educational programs for the development of EOA for adults with special needs.

2. Presentation of development process of the Competency catalogue

Identification of the required competences and design of the competence catalogue of an EOA, was according to the strategy of the project a very challenging task, because during the preparation process was necessary to take into account many aspects and the development dimension role of an expert.

In the first phase, the partners from Austria, Spain, Sweden, Great Britain, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Hungary and Slovenia have established a list of experts in the field of various accessibility fields, who are willing to participate in further stages of the project, which will become part of a network of experts available for accessible education.

For the needs of Competence catalogue was made a Desk research on existing Competency frameworks and Competency catalogues, which objective was to overview existing competency frameworks and competency criteria related to accessibility. The aim was also to identify related tools, methods, materials, guidelines and/or checklists and to identify sub-categories for the accessibility criteria. Existing research served as guidance for designing and conducting interviews with experts on accessibility which was the next phase of the process. Best practices in the themes of accessibility research and reviews was carried out in order to supplement the findings of the interviews and go into more depth regarding points raised from the interviews carried out with experts of accessibility.

Interviews with experts on accessibility helped defining problem areas, allowed access to studies for adults with special needs and determine what competencies professionals supporting organisations in the implementation of accessibility need, for an effective performance of their work. Analysis of interviews and prepared reports from individual countries, including the classification of competencies for accessibility fields, complementary to the Accessibility Criteria was important in shaping the final document – competency catalogue for EOA.

Partners in the project are at the identification of competencies took into account the working methodology.

3. Division of specific competencies according to the five key accessibility areas

A template was developed to record the findings of best practices according to the five key areas of accessibility. Those key areas were:

- a) **Attitudinal Competencies:** A strong sense of value and commitment to eliminating negative attitudes and discrimination. A working knowledge of and commitment to the national and or European legislation and guidelines regarding discrimination. Experience in the development of policy and strategies to promote positive attitudes and eliminate negative attitudes of disability discrimination and assumptions. Awareness of the barriers to education.
- b) **Environmental Competencies:** barrier-free buildings, facilities and/or technologies. Competencies specify the outcomes required to successfully remove physical barriers. Competencies include knowledge and abilities to assess techniques and methods of construction, as well as techniques required to prevent termites gaining concealed access to a completed construction. EOA is able to select appropriate equipment, materials and methods for efficient removing of the barriers.
- c) **Information and PR Competencies:** access to information, communication. Information competencies are ability to recognize the need for information, acquire and evaluate information, organize and maintain information, interpret and communicate information (Presentation of leaflets, websites, audio and video material, newsletters, journals etc.)
- d) **Technical Competencies:** competencies are defined as abilities to technical equipment (electronic and communication equipment, information technology, computer based technology)
- e) **Didactical Competencies:** trainers being able to accommodate didactical approaches to meet the needs of individual student with special needs. Competencies are skills that in appropriate way supplement or adapt the learning process of a disabled individual or person with special needs.

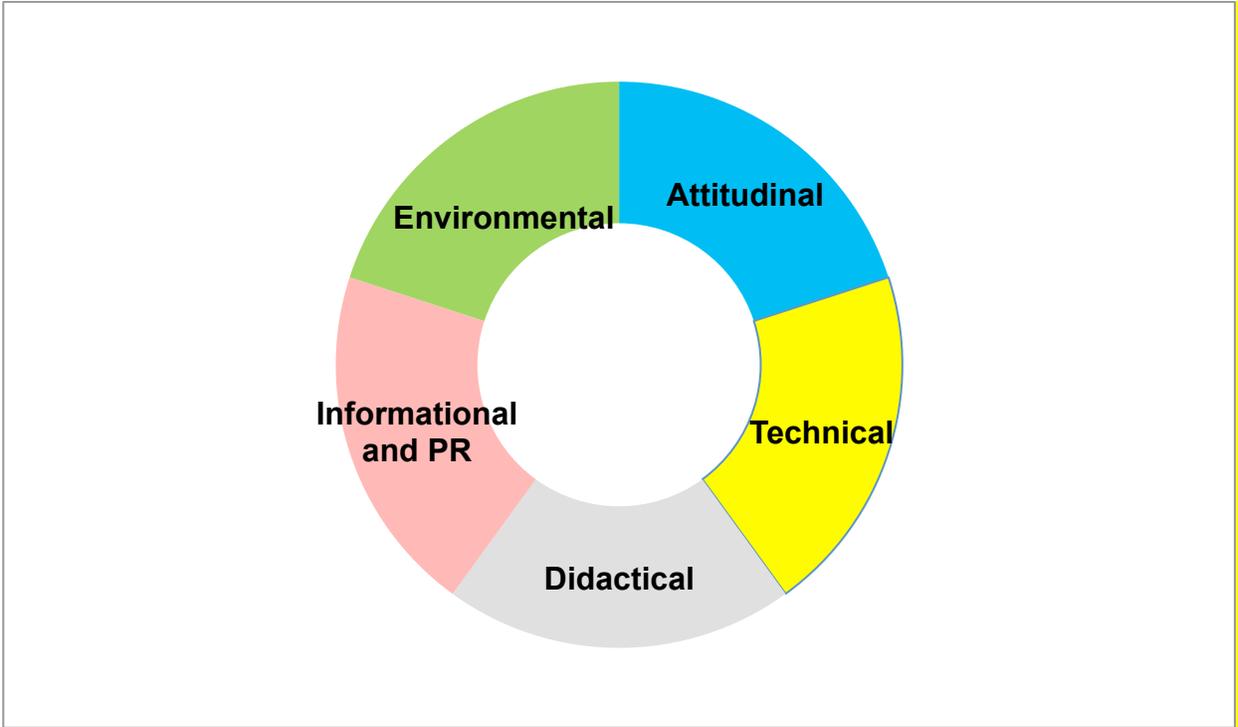


Table 1: Competency framework for Expert on Accessibility

4. Setting of professional competencies under accessibility domains

1. ATTITUDINAL COMPETENCIES	
Attitudinal Competences focus on experiences in the development of policy and strategies to promote positive attitudes and eliminate negative attitudes of disability discrimination and assumptions.	
KNOWLEDGE	
Individual needs of people with disabilities	The EOA knows about the individual needs of people with disabilities and about working with students with special needs.
Good working knowledge of legislation of international and national human rights and disability legislation	The EOA is able to draw upon recognized philosophies and values of international experts and activists in the field of human rights and values in line with the UN convention on the Rights of the Disabled Person and the UN Convention on Human Rights. Has good insight and understanding of the views of disabled people and the disabled people's movement.
SKILLS AND ABILITIES	
Orientation towards development	The EOA is able to have a positive orientation towards development.
Positive values	The EOA is experienced in identifying positive values and understands how those values are demonstrated in the educational and community settings.
Responses to negative attitude	The EOA is able to expose and respond to unacceptable attitudes and has zero tolerance toward it. He/she is able to use a range of strategies to engage people with negative attitudes to recognize the position of a person with disabilities as being a values member of society with equal value.
Being a person worthy of respect	The EOA is able to think rational, is independent, creative, self-initiative, accurate, reliable, responsible and adaptable.
Personal attitude toward people with disabilities	The EOA is able to put forward a sustained argument for the need for positive attitudes and is able to demonstrate required attitudes. EOA should be friendly, sympathetic, motivating and be able to inspire.

<p>Mediation and negotiation skills</p>	<p>The EOA has a collection of interpersonal and communication skills for good negotiation, but at the same time is concentrated on the content of questions under discussion. The EOA should promote a culture where all students support one another, as a part of daily life within the campus.</p>
<p>Empathy to people with special needs</p>	<p>The EOA has the ability to accept respect and understand disabled people and persons with special needs, their problems of integration in everyday life, understand their psychological well-being, diversity, etc.</p>
<p>Sense of solution finding toward the needs of people with disabilities</p>	<p>The EOA knows how support students with disabilities raises awareness among other students and teachers and seeks and offers creative solutions or alternative ways of thinking. The EOA helps to provide the same opportunities for students with disabilities to achieve their potential as any other student.</p>
<p>Respect for diversity</p>	<p>The EOA has the ability to take care for a respectful attitude towards persons with disabilities at all levels of the education system. On the basis of consultations and awareness in educational institutions, EOA takes care for the education of adults with special needs for respectful and sympathetic attitude towards people with disabilities, teaching staff and other participants meanwhile education.</p>

2. ENVIRONMENTAL COMPETENCIES

Environmental Competencies include design, adaptations and selection of appropriate equipment, materials and methods for efficient removing of the barriers.

KNOWLEDGE

Ergonomics	The EOA knows about ergonomic adaptation of the learning place depending on the specific needs of people with disabilities.
Equipment	The EOA has a good working knowledge of a range of equipment which may be used to meet the needs of people with different disabilities
The field of reasonable accommodations	The EOA knows about field sites that include accessible trail systems, restrooms, and buildings and make sure that accessible transportation is available.
Building environment and adoption for different disabilities	The EOA knows about building environment and adoption for different disabilities according to European standard. He has the ability to establish standards and recommendations that will influence the development and reconstruction. It includes open spaces and recreational areas, school roads and pathways, the immediate vicinity of buildings, building entrances and the interiors of building.

SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Identification of appropriate adjustments to educational and work environment (physical accessibility, assistive technology ...), including universal design	The EOA has the ability to identify appropriate adjustments and knows how to use it in practice regarding on different disabilities. Advises and always looks out for newest and better products.
Identification of the specific needs of the disabled	The EOA has the ability to define the specific needs of the disabled and the critical factors that may affect education process and learning, and knows the methods and techniques to deal with specific deficits and develop compensatory strategy.
Advise on the equipment	The EOA is able to advice on safe use of equipment and regulations about the use of equipment. Is able to advice on the most suitable equipment for individuals and where to purchase equipment.

3. INFORMATION AND P&R COMPETENCIES

Information and P&R Competencies are ability to recognize the need for information, acquire and evaluate information, organize and maintain information, interpret and communicate information which is clear and easy to use for people with a range of disabilities and also for general public.

KNOWLEDGE

Current legislation and regulations in the field of disability	<p>The EOA has good knowledge of regulations related to the United Nations Convention about the rights of people with disabilities and other regulations in the field of disability issues in the EU and the country. Also ensures and promotes activities for the realization of adopted conventions.</p> <p>Recalls about the violations in the environment and proposes measures or improvements during the violation of the Convention in the field of rights of disabled people about the accessible education.</p>
Best practices on different fields of disability	The EOA has good knowledge of best practice in presenting information on one or more fields of disability.
Adult learning system	The EOA knows about basic information about the nature of adult literacy and the bigger picture of what is happening. EOA should understand learning domains, learning styles, and how and why adults learn.
Accessible programs	The EOA has a basic knowledge about currently accessible courses and the information about what they are already doing to improve accessibility of all courses.

SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Interpersonal communication	The EOA has interpersonal communication skills to work in a team with different specialists (medical workers, workers from the education field, government institutions ...)
Simple and clear interpersonal communication with people with disabilities	<p>The EOA has the knowledge of the European guidelines on written and verbal communication.</p> <p>EOA has the ability and knowledge to communicate with disabled people in an easy, accessible way, regardless of the type of disability that affected person has.</p>

<p>Comprehensive treatment and motivating people with special needs for personal development</p>	<p>The EOA has the ability to treat persons with disabilities from the personal, psychological, medical, technical and physical aspects. Helps a disabled person or people with disabilities to overcome the mental brakes and help them find a way to include in the field of education in society.</p>
<p>Recognition of the needs of disabled people</p>	<p>The EOA has the ability to assess each disabled person, regardless of its physical, mental or sensory impairment. Based on the implementation of interviews with people with special needs, their immediate family members and special experts for specific areas of physical impairment (example: experts for the deaf), makes a catalogue of competences of a person with disabilities and individual educational plan about access to education.</p>
<p>Encouragement and promotion of the accessibility to education</p>	<p>The expert has the ability to promote access in the surrounding area (educational institutions, among disability organizations, people with disabilities, businesses ...) for persons with disabilities and actively engage to achieve equality about access to education.</p>
<p>Liaison and promotion</p>	<p>The EOA uses a range of opportunities to inform and support the enrolment of disabled students in adult education. Provides basic information about the curriculum in an accessible format (braille etc.).</p>

4. TECHNICAL COMPETENCIES

Technical Competencies are defined as the use and accommodation of technical, electronic and communication equipment.

KNOWLEDGE

Monitoring and understanding new technologies	The EOA knows about the latest research and development of new technologies, devices, equipment to overcome barriers with learning new skills for a variety of physical impairment (blind, deaf ...) and access to education.
Technical devices for specific target groups	The EOA knows about technical devices for specific target groups. Advises to people with disabilities and educational institutions about mobility aids, technical devices and assistive technologies, support services... (E.g. the use of technical aids in lessons like tablets or technical forms of visual communication).
Processes in the regulation of technical aids	The EOA understands the processes in the regulation of technical aids and is aware of the procedures for obtaining technical and ergonomic aids.
Specific needs of individual with disabilities and need for technical gadgets (tools)	The EOA knows about mobility impairments, blindness, low vision, hearing or speech impairments, specific learning disabilities... (E.g.: special software, Braille input devices, visual presentations, hearing aids...)
Accessible web design to make available learning materials for everyone accessible	The EOA knows about web design that is accessible to individuals with a wide range of disabilities.

SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Organizational and technical adaptation	The EOA has the ability to organize flexibility that is supported by an appropriate information infrastructure to create the right conditions.
Information communication technology and its use	The EOA is highly trained and skilled in information and communication technology. Is able to advise about the use and also install the right solutions regarding needs of individual person with disability.

5. DIDACTICAL COMPETENCIES	
Didactical Competencies are accommodating didactical approaches to meet the needs of individual student with special needs.	
KNOWLEDGE	
Course planning, analysing and preparing	The EOA knows how to present and manage the education process of people with disabilities.
Managing didactical methods of education for adults with special needs	The EOA is familiar with a variety of learning or teaching methods and forms of education regardless of the need of person with disabilities. EOA knows, through a continuous retraining and cooperation with educators who specialize in particular physical disability or intellectual disabilities, about different didactical methods by which they converge and facilitate the acquisition of new knowledge, and conquest to people with special requirements.
Use of sign language and supported communication	The EOA knows about different communications outcomes and ability to determine which one is best for individual student.
Area of disability and different types of barriers and their consequences	The EOA knows about different types of disability and barriers that students are facing. That means external barriers that exist at the school and individual obstacles that are specific to a student's life circumstances.
SKILLS AND ABILITIES	
Counselling, team coordination, curriculum planning, examination and systematic socialization of the person with special needs with teachers or lecturers	The EOA has the ability to help with counselling the teaching staff in the selection of didactical methods, advises in the material preparation that would be adapted and accessible to persons with disabilities, advises about the adjustment speed of knowledge transfer capabilities of persons with special needs, if necessary- help to include a professional sign language interpreters, material readers, Braille ... When it is appropriate (in team planning the lessons) also includes external experts for specific areas.
Develop learning and teaching process in accordance with the needs of each student with special	The EOA has the ability to develop learning and teaching process in accordance with the needs of each student with special needs. Learning

<p>needs</p>	<p>and teaching should be based on needs of each student with special needs and should be provided differentially through the continuum of support process.</p>
<p>Design personalized knowledge tests and instrumentation for monitoring the progress of students with special needs</p>	<p>The EOA has the ability to design personalized knowledge tests and instrumentation for monitoring the progress of students with special needs. Individualized learning targets should be set for each student in accordance with their abilities and needs.</p>
<p>Perform evaluation for education of the adults with special needs.</p>	<p>The EOA has the ability to perform evaluation for education of the adults with special needs. EOA for the education of adults with special needs knows the targets of evaluation (example: determine whether the educational institutions with customized didactical methods have been successful in transferring knowledge and access to knowledge to people with special needs), knows the methods of evaluation (data collection, surveys, data analysis) knows how to interpret the data and produce a final report with an action plan to improve in the future.</p>
<p>Linguistic skills (use of easy language)</p>	<p>The EOA has the ability to express themselves easily, both in written and oral form.</p>
<p>Adjust the speed of knowledge transfer</p>	<p>The EOA has the ability to adjust the speed of knowledge transfer and is sensitive to the differences between students.</p>

5. Conclusion

The concept of the Competency Catalogue for Experts on Accessibility is structured on five key competences areas/domains. For its development, we used desktop research and functional analysis interviews with experts on accessibility. Competency catalogue include the individual competences experts need to support adult education providers achieve accessibility.

According to this distinction we grouped the core competences into five competence-areas: attitudinal, environmental, information and PR, technical and didactical competencies. Those areas are crucial for an effective performance and possible transfer of Competencies and Accessibility criteria within educational system.

Finding show that majority of respondents find attitudinal area the information and PR area as a very important field. Namely, respondents see the major barriers in the attitudinal area particularly in the minds of the people.

Experts in Accessibility miss in their work practical experience to supported communication and knowledge about the technological developments that can help to convey information. Most of all experts rate the accessibility in their area as not advanced.

Experts try to enhance their skills by trainings or workshop related on accessibility and disability themes, often they have to rely on their own resourcefulness, since there are no developed standards of knowledge or standard of services that would meet their needs to support adult education offers more accessible.

In future, the Competency Catalogue can be used as foundation or starting point for development of specialized training programs that potential and existing experts on accessibility would need to gain advanced knowledge. It can also be used as base for development of self-assessment tool.