

# Shaping the Identity of Adult Educators: Greece and Europe

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**George K. Zarifis**  
*Prof. of Continuing Education | A.U.TH*



ARISTOTLE  
UNIVERSITY OF  
THESSALONIKI

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# Professionalisation of adult educators in Europe

- Across Europe the articulation of the field differs considerably
- The spectrum of adult education staff is extremely broad both in terms of provision and employment conditions
- Intense discussion on the competences and skills needed



# WHAT WE NEED IS...



A **common framework** for identifying the various sets of competences that adult educators in Europe need in order to develop their professional capacity and status in the field



## BEING (AND BECOMING) A PROFESSIONAL ADULT EDUCATOR



**entails mastery**  
of a certain array  
of **skills and**  
**competences**  
(including psycho-  
pedagogical ones)



it is essentially a  
**social process** by  
which **any occupation**  
**transforms itself into**  
**a profession** of the  
highest integrity and  
competence



# 'Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality'



**proposals** for innovative pedagogy in adult education, address the shift in emphasis from knowledge acquisition to competence development, and the new roles for 'learning facilitators'



- multi-cultural competences,
- ready and motivated to face the new challenges,
- promote tolerance and democratic values



## The current debate

Your professionalism  
Making you stand out from the crowd

If “**professionalism**” in adult education is discussed at all, then the debate usually refers to one particular sector within adult education (i.e. vocational education and training) rather than to the whole picture







Although this debate has been erratic over the European nations and perhaps more intense in some areas it has a notable

**contradiction**



**adult educators in  
Europe are **labeled** as  
professionals**



*Employment conditions* of adult education staff in general are more or less insecure everywhere in Europe

Many adult education staff members *do not even consider themselves as adult educators*, but rather as belonging to a certain social or business context

**Intense debate on the *competences and skills* needed by people working in certain jobs in the field of adult education**



# CONTRADICTION IN THE PROFESSIONALISATION AGENDA

**descriptive and analytical accounts**  
of the field in which  
people earn their  
living as adult  
educators

ongoing processes of  
professional  
**validation and  
quality assurance**



# Reframing the current debate under the light of the European agenda

Conceptualising **adult education as a distinct professional field** is of little use when discussing professionalism, as there are several occupations that exist in the field



It may be fruitful to focus on the ***needs*** of adult educators performing specific roles



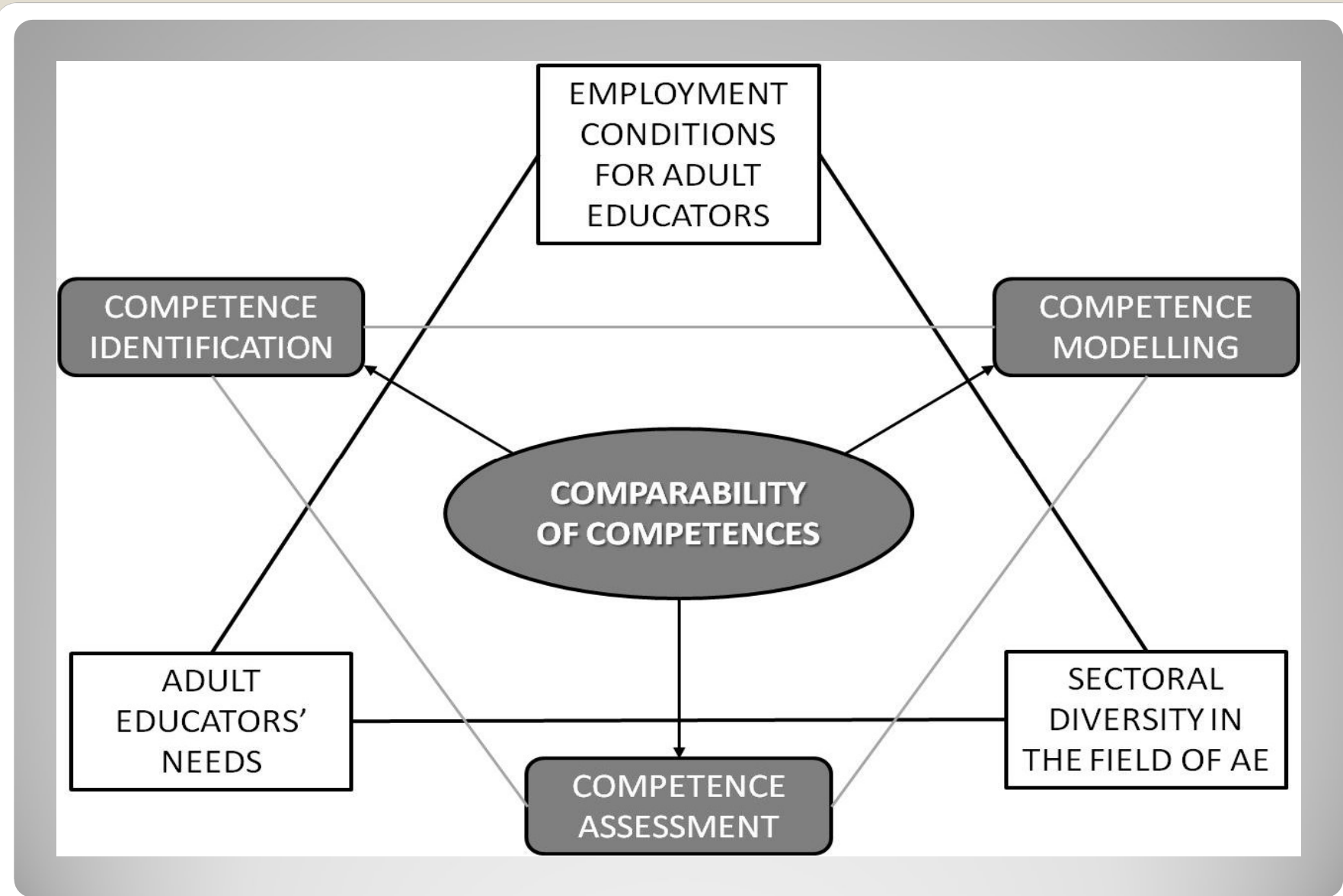
This will justify to a large extent the necessity to examine ***ways on how to identify and frame the required skills and competences*** for adult educators



# COMPRABILITY vs. DIVERSITY

*In order to readdress the issues discussed in the current debate on professionalisation of adult educators in Europe, we need to re-frame its major conditions that essentially prioritise the **comparability** of competences among adult educators*





## Some suggestions

# WHAT SHAPES OUR IDENTITIES?

KNOWLEDGE?

SKILLS?

SOCIAL  
DEMAND?

COMPETENCES?

WORKPLACE?

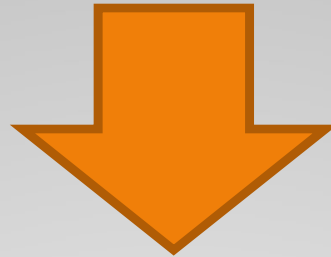
OTHERS?

VALUES?





# Policy rhetoric



Does not pursue the professionalisation aspects of adult educators *in a realistic manner*.

**It discusses the “label”**, but it does not orientate towards the “processes” that can create the conditions for adult educators to become professionals



*Common  
Characteristics of  
Professionalism*

Knowledge

Quality

Ethics

Accountability

Experience

Earns Living



# What shapes our (professional?) identities is also:

- 1. Making our practice visible**  
(communities of practice, networking)
- 2. Community relationships** (campaign educational programmes)
- 3. Shared professional development**  
(action research)
- 4. Core values** (beyond skills, attitudes and ethics)



## **The Core Values of Professionalism include:**

- **Honesty and Integrity**
- **Altruism**
- **Respect**
- **Responsibility and Accountability**
- **Compassion and Empathy**
- **Dedication and Self-improvement**



## The situation in Greece

- Adult teaching staff (seconded) from primary & secondary education (full-time)
- Teaching staff with a degree (part-time)
- Technical support staff (full & part-time)
- Managerial & administrative staff (full-time)
- Counselling & guidance staff (part-time)



- The **standard qualification** for those who wish to work in non-formal, non-vocational adult education is a degree in an area relevant to that they wish to work
- Working experience is not always necessary but is **desirable**
- **AE structure managers** are normally people with or without teaching experience, but with a degree in a relevant area or a degree in management (EOPPEP registry requirements)





- Holding a degree in education or a Masters in a like area is considered an advantage
- Managers and teaching staff are always appointed by the Ministry of Education after going through a formal selection procedure by EOPPEP or INEDIVIM

- Teaching staff is normally selected by a committee with representatives from EOPPEP or INEDIVIM
- Adult educators' profession is not very attractive and is low paid
- Working conditions are generally good
- Overstressing competences
- The economic crisis has affected the profession





All staff goes through an **induction period**. This means that **managerial and administrative staff** go through a period of compulsory training that lasts up to 6 weeks, whereas **educators and training staff** go through a 25 hours training programme not always under the best conditions and not always held by trained staff either. This raises many quality issues as well. **Payments are low** (up to €15 per teaching hour) and this makes the profession even less attractive. **Resources for the teachers are also low**.



## Numbers of people in staff positions in AE in Greece

Position	Number of persons
Teaching positions	3840
Management positions	56
Counselling and guidance positions	40
Programme planning positions	56
Support positions	56
Trainer of Adult Learning staff	90



## Percentage of staff's level of formal qualification

Level of qualification	Percentage
Higher education	84%
Secondary education	14%
A lower level of education	2%



## Percentage of staff by gender

Gender	Percentage
Male	48%
Female	52%

## Percentage of staff by age

Age	Percentage
Under 30 years old	12%
30-50 years old	80%
More than 50 years old	8%



## Percentage of staff on the basis of type of appointment

Type of appointment	Percentage
Permanent	4,1%
Temporary	95,9%

## Percentage of staff on the basis of type of employment status

Working hours	Percentage
100 % employed (full-time)	4%
60%- 100% employed (part-time)	96%





In terms of **career development paths** the only action towards this direction is the development of a programme under the auspices of the General Secretariat for Adult Education and the supervision of EOPPEP and INEDIVIM, that aim at the training of adult trainers and educators for all the structures sponsored by the Ministry of Education.



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Thank you  
for your attention

