

## **Intellectual Output 2**

### **Intercultural competence modular programme for VET providers and VET organisations**

### **Cultural Competence Framework**

**This document was prepared by:**



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## Introduction

The “Intellectual Output - 02 Intercultural Competence Modular Program for VET Providers and VET Organisations” is produced by the partners collaborating on the Erasmus+ Interculturality-Mobility project, as part of partnership’s objective to explore the Vocational Education and Training (VET) dimension and inter-cultural mobility area of the occupational figure of the Intercultural VET Practitioner in the European Union.

In order to develop the Intercultural Competence Modular Program, partners have mobilised a Cultural Competency Framework template, to ensure the development of 3 modules:

1. *Develop effective cultural awareness*
2. *Develop and manage VET intercultural mobility programmes*
3. *Utilise appropriate strategies and tools to recognise and validate participants’ learning through VET intercultural mobility experiences*

The 3 modules identified and the Occupational Profile of the Intercultural VET Practitioner in the Cultural Competency Framework has been constructed from the information collected during the in-depth research activities carried out through Intellectual Output 1 Transnational Research Study Baseline comparative research and it defines the common competencies, essential for a successful Intercultural VET Practitioner.

The result is a comprehensive Occupational Profile and of comprehensive and identifiable skills set (both practical and soft skills set), through which the skills, knowledge and competencies of the successful Intercultural VET Practitioner’s role/job are clearly defined. The Occupational Profile is aligned to National Qualification Frameworks and the European Qualification Framework. The Occupational Profile comprise of 1) a mutually agreed Occupational Profile which defines the purpose and function of the Intercultural VET Practitioner, which ensure that the Cultural Competency framework is current and relevant to the European context; 2) outlines the skills, knowledge, aptitudes and experience required to be competent as an effective and competent Intercultural VET Practitioner through **three key “Modules”** which were explored and highlighted as relevant in the National Reports for the successful development of the occupational profile.

The three Modules, as identified, follows some basic concepts in the design: a) modular or thematic in their orientation (b) designed as standards that will lend themselves to being aligned to learning outcomes of the rest of “Intellectual Output - 02 Intercultural Competence Modular Program for VET Providers and VET Organisations” and therefore to be demonstrated, assessed or validated flexibly, whether through non formal or formal education or prior experience and achievement. In this sense,

the Cultural Competency Framework, as defined, provides a reference point for training Curricula and development areas which can then be incorporated into the established Intercultural VET Practitioner continual professional development and training.

## The Intercultural Mobility Project

### Erasmus+ Intercultural Mobility Project

Intercultural competences are becoming more important as EU Member States become increasingly diverse and EU citizens more mobile.

In 2008, the Council of Europe's White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue: Living Together as Equals in Dignity identified intercultural education as one of several key areas where action is required to enhance intercultural dialogue to safeguard and develop human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The White Paper viewed intercultural competence as a crucial capability, which needs to be developed by every individual to enable them to participate in intercultural dialogue. Intercultural competence is not acquired automatically, but instead needs to be learned, practiced and maintained throughout life.

In a multilingual EU with an increasing demand of free movement of labour and students, the notion of cultural competence in the VET system can be seen to come from very divergent sources. The current economic situation, characterized by high levels of unemployment and still persistent job vacancies in some sectors, highlights the major skill challenges Europe is facing in terms of labour mobility — both geographical and occupational.

***Intercultural competence is a continuous process of assessing and broadening our knowledge and respect for differences, as well as better understanding, experiencing and exploring our own.*** It is a set of congruent behaviours, attitudes, and policies that come together in a labour system, VET agencies or among professionals and enables them to work effectively in cross-cultural situations.

An underlying assumption of this project is that no single individual or institution can claim comprehensive knowledge of all cultural practices and competencies across the EU. What we can do, however, is enable VET providers to acquire understanding of how their own cultural competence works in a way that opens their minds to their cultural competences. In other words, both the pedagogical model and the general model of cultural competence lead to learners' up-skilling each other.

#### **Project's Main Objectives:**

- to foster social inclusion and integration of young adult people/ethnic communities/migrants/marginalized groups through mobility programmes;
- to up-skill the development of cultural competence skills among VET professionals responsible for organizing VET Mobility programmes across EU;

- to develop and test a programme in cultural competency in line with the European Reference Framework (ECVET) to have qualified Intercultural VET Providers;
- to explore the development of an intercultural competency framework with links to NQF and EQF;
- to increase the quality and experience of mobility across the EU by embedding cultural competency in VET programmes for the benefit of the learners/workers and the wider economy.

**Target Groups:**

The main target group is staff/VET practitioners/providers who are responsible for Mobility Programmes in VET organisations. Beneficiaries of the results of the project will be young people and adults (mainly migrants, ethnic minority people and communities with a migrant background) involved in VET mobility programmes. Stakeholders and other participants will be involved in local promotional events and the finale seminar.

### Context and definition of Interculturality-Mobility services in Europe

Intercultural VET Practitioner is a fairly underdeveloped job role and a relatively under-researched activity in some of the EU Countries, particularly in the Mediterranean area as highlighted in the IO1 – Interculturality-Mobility Transnational Research Study – baseline comparative research carried out by the Intercultural Mobility partnership in the first part of this project. The occupational figure of an Intercultural VET Practitioner exists in all the partner countries, even if other countries use different job titles to identify this role. A key part of the Intercultural Mobility partnership objective is to deepen the understanding of the professional profile, while developing a robust Intercultural VET Practitioner training programme. Intercultural VET Mobility programmes are broadly described as transnational intercultural learning activities that promote cultural awareness and understanding that links people from different cultural backgrounds while developing the necessary competences in intercultural communication; mutual respect; social skills; self-reflection to prepare young people to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes to be active, responsible and global citizens and be ready to integrate into a multicultural society.

There is no requirement for Intercultural VET Practitioner to work under license or be required to register with a professional body in the EU to do their job role. Neither does Intercultural VET Practitioner require a specific professional qualification to deliver intercultural mobility activities, although many do hold qualifications in education and training. In most partner countries for example, they can become Intercultural VET Practitioners without a teaching or training qualification, this is specifically the case in the UK, where many youth workers working on mobility programmes hold no formal teaching or cultural-themed qualification. The Transnational Research Study highlights many definitions that include a wide range of activities and delivery methods in the role of Intercultural VET Practitioners.

Typically, Intercultural VET Practitioner work in VET settings such as schools, youth centres, Higher Education Institutes, training providers, as well as specific industries. Example mobility programmes

include: Youth Exchanges; Sector-focused Training; VET Traineeships; European Voluntary Service; High Educational Study programmes; Job Shadowing; and Transnational Master qualifications.

Although intercultural transnational learning programmes have been around for decades, as a job role the Intercultural VET Practitioner is an emerging occupation, and the context in which it operates varies across Europe. Often an Intercultural VET Practitioner may also be specialised in wider learning areas, where in most cases these will be their main profession (i.e. teachers; non-cognitive skills trainers; youth workers etc.)

To prepare the new Intercultural VET Practitioners' role requires wider knowledge of facilitation and inter-cultural themes, specifically intercultural communication and cultural awareness and an increasing set of non-cognitive skills including inter-personal skills; general communication; organisation and project management; conflict resolution skills; financial management; partnership and collaborative working skills; effective negotiation etc. to operate successfully.

As the Intercultural VET Practitioner is increasingly regarded as an emerging occupation within the VET sector, the necessity to develop an official training programme, while also describing a common occupational profile across the EU, defining a recognised professional role entitled "Intercultural VET Practitioner" is becoming more and more important.

Another reason is also that through the description of common job profile key competencies and modular learning programme, we are trying to better define the professional contents and role of an Intercultural VET Practitioner whose function can interface with other occupations such as skills trainer, guidance practitioner, youth worker and teacher. However, the role requires the post holder to have the skills and competence that goes way beyond simply intercultural learning facilitation.