



5P Competences is a European partnership that develops a competence framework for sustainable development tailored to the needs of adult education. The project brings together education & training providers, non-governmental organisations and municipalities from 5 European countries.



Basic Ideas

A competence framework is a coherent model describing effective behaviour. It consists of competences and their operational definitions as a cognitive basis for such behaviour. In organisations, competence frameworks are often used to systematically define skills that should be achieved by their employees or specific groups of them.

Concerning Sustainable Development, several competence frameworks have been published (e.g. UNESCO, 2017 or EU, 2022).

Starting from the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) defined by the United Nations, those frameworks are asking for the learning objectives that can be deduced from them, such as understanding of concepts of poverty and critical discussion of their normative and cultural assumptions, or for competences that are relevant with regard to advocating sustainable development, such as respect of sustainability and critical discussions with it.

From the perspective of lifelong learning or adult education – which is bound to focus primarily on non-formal and informal learning, and which is the basis of this project – such an argumentation has some problems for at least two reasons:

- The competences mentioned are very general. This means that the justification of their relevance does not necessarily require a reference to the concept of sustainability, such as “systems-thinking competency”, “strategic competency” or “self-awareness competency” (UNESCO, 2017). This can lead to the claim that educational innovations are not necessary, since these objectives have ‘always been taught’.

- The educational objectives are primarily connected to formal learning at schools and universities. Although they can be integrated well into a catalogue describing skills and competences that are generally important, this catalogue cannot refer to problems and concrete situations out of everyday life. But it's everyday life that is the primary reason for informal and non-formal learning.

From a perspective of lifelong learning, it is therefore necessary to expand the existing competence frameworks (or lists of educational objectives) with a concept that is more strongly orientated towards everyday situations and on a professional perspective. This makes it possible to

- expand an existing course (e.g. in the field of adult education) so that it meets some of the SDGs,
- help enterprises or institutions that ask for learning courses on the one hand and persons or institutions offering such courses to conceptualize their adult learning programs to meet the SDG objectives,
- help persons who offer informal learning opportunities (e.g. in the internet) or just want to share their knowledge on themes and topics related to SDGs,
- act as a reference for formal and informal learning activities for sustainable development.

The partnership in the first project phase has developed a conceptual framework, which gives an overview of the theoretical assumptions, the research design and findings from field research conducted in the participating countries.

The research report is available from the project homepage: www.5pcomp.eu

References

European Union (2022): GreenComp – The European sustainability competence framework.

UNESCO (2017): Education for Sustainable Development Goals: Learning Objectives.



Disclaimer: This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This communication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.