Toward a collaborative based approach to Transversal Competences: Policy Implications

TABLE

INTRODUCTION

This policy document was produced as part of the ERASMUS+ Project ED-EN Hub whose dual aim is to contribute to the development of Transversal Competences and to foster collaboration between education and enterprises. It takes place in the framework of the Intellectual Output number5, which aim is to determine political implications and to draw up recommendations. It is based both on the insights of the eight project's partners exchanges from five countries (four European members- Italy, France, Belgium, and Portugal and one extra-European member- United Kingdom) and on debates and organized consultations involving policymakers, decision-makers and stakeholders from enterprises, training organisations and guidance actors.

This document first summarises the approach adopted by the consortium, mainly concerning Transversal Competences and the methodology used to develop resources, tools and guides for individuals, companies, and guidance and training organisations. It goes on to explain the many political issues and drivers of the project, considering not only economic, but also social, societal, technological, and environmental aspects. It highlights the various challenges and numerous policy areas involved in the development of Transversal Competences and education-enterprise collaborations. Beyond the policy recommendations, the main added-value of this document is to propose a specific grid designed to analyse public policies in the domain and to position the recommendations in relation to each other.

IUT Lumière- Université Lumière Lyon 2, in collaboration with CIS, coordinated this document and the ED-EN Hub Intellectual Output number 5 (IO5) as a whole. All the partners were involved, each making a specific contribution. For example, the City of London (CoL) was been particularly active in the political arena, mobilising a large network of decision-makers in the economic and educational worlds, at national, European, and international level, organising more than 7 000 participation taking part in various meetings, workshops, and conferences. The various exchanges organised by the partners resulted in two modelling outputs from the consortium: a mapping of policy challenges and areas, and a figure modelling political support for the collaborative development of Transversal Competences.

This process of formulating policy recommendations was developed between October 2022 and August 2023. It is based on consultations of stakeholders and on observations made during training and awareness sessions. The recommendations cover a wide range of policy areas, including education, vocational training, guidance policy, employment, and labour policy, as well as industrial and innovation policy. They take account of both structural and cyclical issues. Recommendations are made at different levels: national, European but also local - through the development of local ED-EN Hubs.

This report makes policy recommendations at a level rarely mentioned in public policy, that of individual competences, considering debates held in other contexts such as the European Year of Competences or the National Productivity Boards in Europe.

ED-EN HUB TRANSVERSAL COMPETENCE APPROACH

Before addressing the issues, challenges, areas and policy recommendations, this section first summarises the ED-EN Hub's Transversal Competence approach.

From Soft Skills To Transversal Competences

Over the last 10 years, there has been a growing need for very special skills: (1) skills that are not specialised - that can be used in diverse professional situations, and (2) skills that are not technical - that are based on cognitive, behavioural, organisational, and social dimensions. This requirement can be seen at work and is increasingly reflected in recruitment.

To express this increasingly crucial need, an unstable vocabulary has been developed: Soft skills, power skills, common skills, core skills, interpersonal skills, fusion skills, social skills, personal skills, personal quality, ability to deal with people, character traits, personal traits, personal behaviour, social intelligence, emotional intelligence, accepted behaviour, rules of conduct and so on..

To characterize this new requirement, the term Soft Skills is the most used - with varying definitions and numerous debates on terminology (Touloumakos, 2020). The ensuing ambiguity cause much debate on the risk of opposing Soft Skills and Hard Skills (Parlamis & Monnot, 2019), whereas these are skills categories that fertilise each other. The proximity of Soft Skills with character traits implies subjectivity and a risk of non-robustness in training and assessment. Given that the need for soft skills cannot be ignored, and that their development and assessment must be made operational, we use the term of Transversal Competence.

Among the different notions, Transversal Competence has the advantage of not inducing value judgement, of being rather generic, encompassing and involving a positioning in relation to a repository of competences[1]. Transversal Competences are defined as generic competences that can be used in different professional situations, but not necessarily in all (Lainé, 2011). Widely used at European level, they are made up of Basic Competences essential to many professions (language, writing, arithmetic, office automation), but also of cognitive, behavioural, and organisational competences or general knowledge common to different jobs or professional contexts. Transversal Competences have seen strong progress in Europe with the European Framework of Key Competences for Lifelong Learning adopted by the European Parliament and Council in 2006[2].

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[1] The ED-EN hub project deals with competences, more than skills, because competences are defined as "a combination of skills, knowledge, and aptitude" (EU, 2019, p.5) and imply assessment and certification issues. In EQF system, the framework for defining Learning Outcomes precises that "skills are described in terms of what the learner is able to do" and "competences are described in terms of what the learner is ready to do" (Framework for Defining Learning Outcomes (Knowledge, Skills, Competence) - EURspace).

[2] It defines eight key competences: Communication in the mother tongue, Communication in a foreign language, Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology, Digital competence, Learning to learn, Social and civic competence, Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, Cultural awareness, and expression.

Given the elements provided in the "Toolkit for the joint development of Transversal Competences" of Ed-EN hub Project, the advantages, and specificities of using the Transversal Competence approach are:

- It includes basic skills, the lack of which creates real problems of economic inclusion but also social inclusion, and which are becoming increasingly important with the development of digital technologies;
- It implies a process of explication and objectification with regard to competency repositories;
- It implies a reflexivity process based on individual (professional and personal) experiences;
- It implies a process of recognition, or evaluation and, with certain caution, certification.

Given the fact that the notion of Transversal Competences is still in its youth, the ED-EN hub project has endeavoured to develop a rigorous approach that is both operational (user-based approach) and scientific, first considering the complex nature of Transversal Competences to bring out the policy implications.

Transversal Competences: complex competences to be designed and to be assessed

Transversal Competence follows a complex dynamic, which is both totally representative of the dynamic of competences in general and, at the same time, very specific. It is an important element to consider when considering the political implications of their necessary development. This is a fundamental step in formulating recommendations that are adapted to these specificities.

Understanding the nature of Transversal Competence enables to understand how they are acquired and can be stimulated. This is at the heart of the ED-EN hub project[3] but some of the main features may be summarised here:

- Even if it implies a process of recognition, assessment, or even certification, Transversal Competence, like all competence, is not a status: it is a process in constant evolution. This implies that is not easy to capture and constantly changing.
- Transversal Competences have a strong human dimension and depend on the character traits of individuals. They are dependent on emotions and self-confidence. This is why any Transversal Competence assessment process deals with identity and intimacy and must be carried out with care. The development of Transversal Competence requires favourable personal conditions.
- Despite the importance of character traits, Transversal Competence is a combinatorial process that relies on the mobilisation of resources and can be improved.
- Considering different research studies[4] but also surveys and direct observations made by the ED-EN Hub consortium, Transversal Competence is necessarily situated, unfolds during an activity or task.. It is therefore highly contextualised, even if it is transferable to different contexts. According to the principle of "affordance", Transversal Competence expresses itself in context.

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[3] Specifically, the objective of Intellectual Output n°1 of the ED-EN hub project, which provides tools and guides for developing transversal competences, and Intellectual Output n°3, which provides tools and guides for training.
[4] Mainly in the field of psychology or education sciences, for example: Le Boterf, 2010.

From all these characteristics, it emerges that the best way of recognising and developing Transversal Competences is the experiential approach. Transversal Competences are not developed in an abstract way but are based on concrete experiences that require specific management to be integrated. In education, this means developing a new kind of engineering that enables experience to be developed and exploited in terms of both technical and transversal competences. Transversal Competences require time to work on cognitive, conative, and socio-emotional aspects. This means developing reflexivity and meta-competencies in education. In enterprise, the environment can be more or less enabling, and the culture, organisation, and management can be more or less encouraging for the development of Transversal Competences.

ED-EN hub Transversal Competence methodology

Given the complex nature of Transversal Competences, the ED-EN Hub methodology, described in ED-EN Hub Guide and tested in ED-EN Hub Training Sessions, has the following characteristics:

1. An experiential method

ED-EN Hub approach follows the ADVP principles (Activating Vocational and Personal Development)[5]. Development of Transversal Competences is based on the organisation or/and integration of experiences. These experiences could be real or fictitious, professional, or personal, present, or past. In addition, the development of Transversal Competences by experiences needs a process to integrate them.

2. A method that respects learner's agency

The aim of the approach is to enable each individual to learn to develop their Transversal Competences autonomously and to gain independence through this method.

3. A systemic approach

Transversal Competences are not antithetical to Technical Competences: on the contrary, they complement or even enhance them.

4. A collaborative approach

The project develops a stakeholder approach, considering not only the contribution of each stakeholder in the development of Transversal Competences but also the collective intelligence that emerges. Given the complexity of Transversal Competences and the role of interactions between the individual and his or her environment in their development, the ED-EN Hub approach is based on close collaboration between education and enterprise.

5. A responsible approach to evaluation

The challenge is therefore to recognise them, and even to certify them but cautiously.

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5 Activating Vocational and Personal Development invites the individuals to know how to become a professional through his or her experiences

The ED-EN Hub methodology is reflected in the tools developed for all stakeholders that has been validated by the various experiments and, above all, by the various discussions held as part of the policy workshops.

ED-EN hub vision of Education-Enterprise cooperation

Cooperation between the worlds of education and enterprise has come a long way. There are many opportunities for cooperation (vocational education and training, apprenticeships, research, etc.). The reasons for cooperation are even stronger in a context of uncertainty and change, where transversal competences are becoming a major issue.

Given their complex nature, transversal competences require a multiplicity of experiences, which the enterprise environment can provide, and an ability to step back and analyse them, which education offers.

This is why the ED-EN Hub project is proposing to move away from a matching approach towards a truly collaborative approach where the two parties are not only complementary but can actually develop a co-engineering of the experience

POLICY CHALLENGES, AREA, AND DRIVERS

The explosion in the use of the concept of Soft Skills has given rise to a worldwide interest in the issue of Transversal Competences. The fact that the notion of Soft Skills was first developed in professional circles, before becoming a notion discussed in research, shows the strength of the need. This need is protean. Therefore, it is important first to understand what are the policy challenges that refer to Transversal Competences and that implies collaboration between education and enterprises. Secondly, it is salient to understand the drivers that could motivate government to create and implement specific policies at different levels. Thirdly, it is important to understand the policy areas that are concerned and to make relevant recommendations.

The following section briefly outlines the context in which the subject takes place.

CONTEXTUAL ELEMENTS

Beyond a structural trend, more than a fashion phenomenon, current contextual elements explain the need of Transversal Competences. Three contextual factors were highlighted during the various exchanges organised by the ED-EN Hub consortium.

1. **The influence of current technical and socio-economic changes**
   Two types of current technical, social, and economic change influence the need to develop Transversal Competences. The first one is changes linked to digital technologies. Firstly, through the "*platformisation*" of economy, which has profoundly changed the way to produce, work and innovate, while at the same time reveal individuals' aspirations for greater participation, sharing and sociability, as well as the development of more precarious forms of employment. Secondly,

through the current development of Artificial Intelligence (AI), which represents a source of transformation that is still largely uncertain. It involves not only technical skills, but also behavioural, metacognitive, and socio-emotional skills.

The third change is the climate crisis and its effects. This crisis calls for new competences to accompany the necessary transformations, which are not only technical but also economic and social.

2. The influence of an economy of shortages

In the current economic context, characterised by tensions affecting both resource markets, particularly energy, and the labour market, the production of competence is changing. Revealed by the COVID crisis, the 'economy of shortages' is causing tensions on the labour market, forcing us to think differently about the role of training in the production of competence. Difficulties in recruitment, and sometimes shortages of human resources, are leading to increased mobility and professional retraining, which require stronger and faster mobilisation of Transversal Competences. In this context, Transversal Competences are a lever both for securing career paths and for redeploying human resources.

3. Changing personal aspirations

COVID-19 has disrupted the labour market. Many people who lost their jobs during the pandemic found it difficult to re-enter the labour market, but beyond that the pandemic had an impact on labour market participation. This has been reflected in the phenomenon of the great "reset" of the international labour market (Lazarova *et al.*, 2023), or even the "great resignation" (Gault, 2022) This phenomenon has led to a rethinking of the way we work and of assumptions about employees' commitment and behaviour. Since the pandemic, there has been a marked change in people's aspirations at work, which also means that the Transversal Competences of individuals need to be nurtured and renewed.

POLICY CHALLENGES

Policy challenges are the specific problems or issues that policies aim to address. In order to identify the policy challenges linked to the development of Transversal Competences, we need to identify the problems raised by these special competences.

To do this, the ED-EN hub consortium has identified the various problematic professional situations faced by those are concerned by Transversal Competences. The Figure n°1 summarises them by category of stakeholder involved. They do not imply the same challenges.

PROFESSIONAL SITUATIONS MOBILIZING TRANSVERSAL COMPETENCES

Individuals
- Job seeking
- Internal + external mobility
- Certification: Initial training and long life training
- Guidance
- Reconnect to the market (pay attention to include the NEETs)
- Self-assesment
- Self-development
- Social recognition

Organisations
- Job and skill planning
- Retention of HR
- Labor shortage
- Internal Mobility (professional and geographical)
- Recruitment
- Out placement (exit strategies for HR)
- Minimizing the gap between expectations and reality / Onboarding, especially for new generations
- Developing corporate / culture
- Planning internships
- Share a vision with training and education actors
- Co-training
- Develop partnerships

Education
- Planning internships
- Skills foresight
- Meet societal and employment actual and future needs
- Share a vision with companies
- Co-training
- Develop partnerships
- Understand, prepare and initiate the corporate culture / code of conduct
- Integrate TC in the practices of teachers
- Train teams of diverse teachers to train including TC
- How to assess TC
- Attract and keep the students

Professionnals of guidance
- Teenagers faced with a choice of orientation - looking for the right path
- Young people in need for school reorientation
- Professionnals in need for reorientation
- Adults looking for a new job
- Professionnals willing to develop new skills - in a lifelong learning process
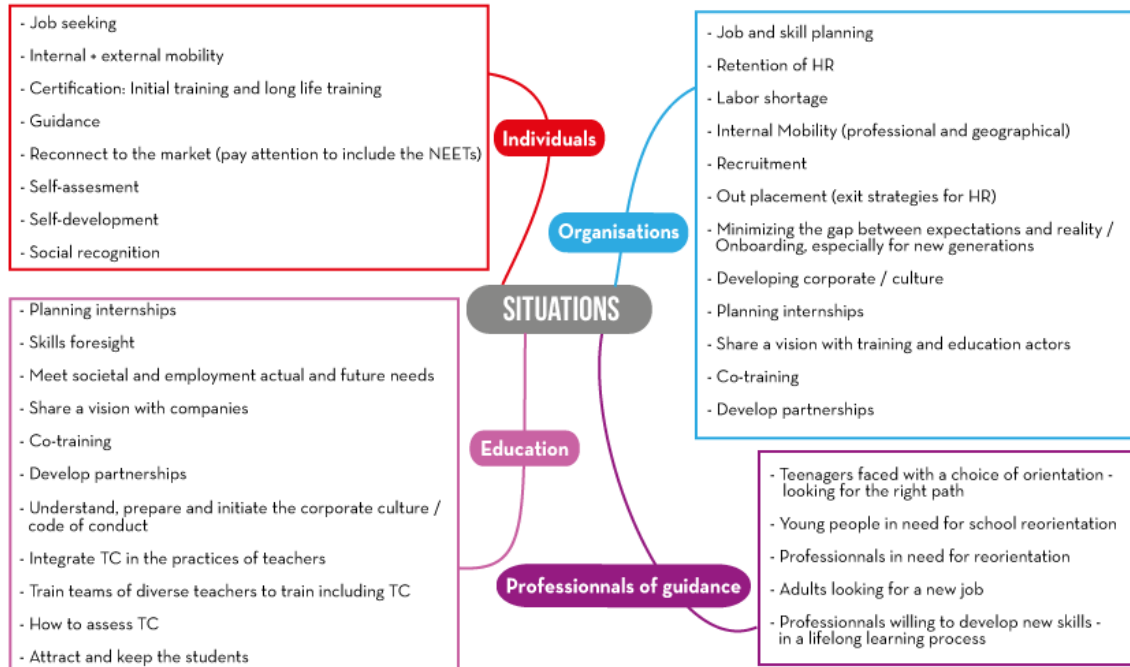
SITUATIONS

Figure 1: Problematic Professional Situations mobilizing Transversal Competences

Numerous consultations with the world of business and politics, policy recommendation workshops and discussions with stakeholders have shown that the challenges linked to the development of transversal skills are numerous and particularly relevant today.

To sum up, transversal competences are both :
- competences for **professional integration**, necessary for access to the labour market,
- competences that can create profound **inequalities** if their role is denied and if education does not help to develop them,
- competences that **enhance** technical skills,
- competences that make career paths more **secure**,
- competences that **transform** not only individuals and their personal lives, but also sectors of activity and economies as a whole.

POLICY DRIVERS

Policy drivers are the factors and motivations that influence the creation and implementation of policies. We have identified three main drivers before identifying the main obstacles. They are based on the various policy recommendation workshops organised as part of the ED-EN Hub project.

Main policy drivers that explain why governments has a core role to play in competence agenda:

1. **Transversal Competences contribute to the economic and social development of countries**
   At first glance, the development of individual Transversal Competences does not appear to be a direct reason for political intervention, at either European or national level. However, there is growing interest in competence development in many countries, as skills have an impact on economic and social success, as well as on the personal development of individuals.

   Encouraging the development of talent by the way of Transversal Competences can have an impact on the productivity and competitiveness of enterprises, as is widely emphasised in the national productivity councils of member countries. For example, in its first conference on skills and competencies organised as part of France 2030, France Stratégie drew a link between the slowdown in French productivity and human capital. This also makes it possible to contribute to a more inclusive development, as proclaimed at the Gothenburg Summit in 2017 in favour of a fairer and more inclusive European Union. In addition to inclusion, the aim is to help people to flourish.

   This is all the more important to support given the growing trend for people to withdraw from the labour market (young workers, older workers, people not currently in education or employment (NEET), people with disabilities, disadvantaged groups, and workers in the informal economy) and the development of odd jobs to accompany the "gig" economy.

2. **Transversal Competences contribute to the accompaniment of technical, social, and economic change**
   In the current period, characterised by a variety of technical, social, and economic changes, technical competences are not enough to rise to the ever-increasing challenges. Strengthening Transversal Competences is also becoming a necessity in a context of changes in companies, work, and jobs.

   > In its fourth "Future of Jobs Report", the World Economic Forum (2023) underlines: (1). Transversal Competences are essential in a context where emerging technologies such as AI and Big Data are being adopted. In this context, creativity, collaboration, communication, problem-solving and even empathy are becoming essential, and it is a question of "equipping" employees with socio-emotional competences in the face of the major changes that these adoptions will create in organisations; (2). In this changing context, Transversal Competences are also becoming a means of coping with change, with competences such as problem-solving, decision-making, and critical thinking, essentially cognitive competences (3). Transversal Competences are also a source of satisfaction for employees. Against this backdrop of change, the WEF estimates that 44% of skills will be disrupted over the next 5 years and identifies 10 crucial soft skills

3. **Transversal Competences as a way to secure career path**
   In the uncertain, complex, and changing environment described above, Transversal Competences can be a lever for securing individual career paths. The number of career transitions is increasing all the time, to the point of becoming a public policy issue.

> For example, in its February 2018 summary note, France Stratégie highlights the challenge posed by the increase in job mobility in France and the importance of Transversal Competences in supporting this mobility. Based on the DARES working conditions survey, the aim is to classify occupations according to their use of Transversal Competences. This note shows the extent to which Transversal Competences are a vector of mobility between certain professions (flows between cashiers and hotel and catering employees, between commercial attachés and communication professionals, etc.). The study also compares 16 work situations with Transversal Competences (reading or drafting documents/ skills in written expression and comprehension; contact with the public/ ability to communicate, listening skills, customer relations, acting in a service relationship; rapid response to demand/ responsiveness etc.).
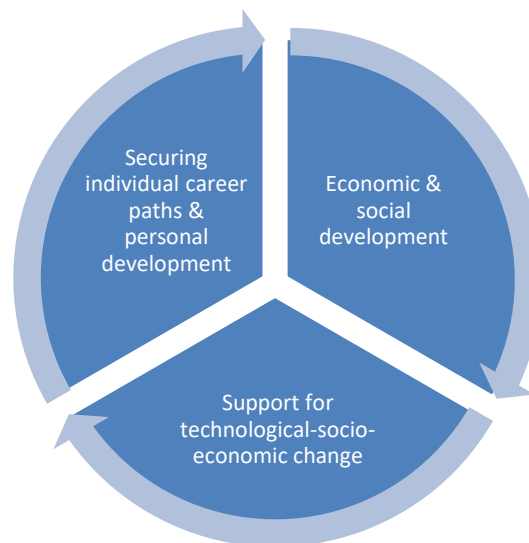

Figure 2: Main policy drivers in favour of Transversal Competences

There are many obstacles to the development of Transversal Competences. At an individual level, brakes can be cognitive, socio-emotional, economic, and social. The term Soft Skills refers to the difficulty: "Soft Skills" are skills that have more to do with "who we are than what we know" (Robles, 2012), they are highly associated with individual traits (Hurrell, 2016) but it's possible to work on (Harness et al., 2021). It's possible to work on in education and in entreprises but there are in both environments.

While education has evolved considerably over the last few decades, becoming increasingly professional, with the adoption of competence approaches, and developing more and more collaborations with the enterprises, it is not necessarily directly equipped to develop Transversal Competences. While there is a long-standing idea of transversality in the world of teaching and training (Tardif & Dubois, 2013), the learning model of Transversal Competences that is still being understood.

There are different limits of teaching as a framework for developing Transversal Competences:
- A lack of time,
- A limitation in lived experiences,
- A limitation in taking learners' opinions into account and a difficulty of letting "capabilities become visible" (Eronen *et al.*, 2019),
- Not easy to learn,
- Not easy to evaluate and certify,

- Implies complex multidisciplinary.

These obstacles, therefore, lies in the development of professional practices in education, which require changes that will broaden the competence approach and the vision of the learner. This is why it is often EdTech start-ups that are currently developing innovations in the domain.

The Transversal Competences approach developed in the ED-EN Hub project shows that the world of education is not the only one that can act: enterprises can also be empowering in this area. As has already been pointed out in studies (Bryant & Jaworski, 2011; Hurrell, 2021), an environment that is not conducive to the development of Transversal Competencies can lead to their withdrawal, underlining the role of motivation in their expression.

POLICY AREA

Policy area are the policy domains in which public authorities have a responsibility. Here we consider the main areas of political responsibility defined at European level, bearing in mind that the fields of intervention may evolve according to the needs of the Member States.

Although it does not imply direct intervention, the public authorities can nevertheless encourage the conditions for the development of Transversal Competences, at the very least by making them more visible, or at best by taking decisions that promote their development in different contexts.

ED-EN Hub project identified different Transversal Competence based policy area:
- **Education policies**: From a very early age, developing an education that go beyond technical and academic qualifications, which encourages reflection on self-knowledge and promises to develop learners' autonomy by developing programs that include Transversal Competences such as communication, teamwork, adaptability, leadership, problem-solving and emotional intelligence. This would raise everyone's awareness of the importance of Transversal Competences, but it would also help to strengthen community life at school, with the development of empathy being a key factor in the fight against school harassment.

- **Training policies**: Encouraging the integration of transversal competences into the skills repositories of professional qualifications, train academic tutors and company tutors in the development and assessment of Transversal Competences; encouraging their development the context of retraining and professional mobility.

- **Higher education policies**: Developing empowering experiences, critical perspective, multidisciplinary approaches, meta-cognition, and reflexivity.

- **Professional integration and employment policy**: Helping individuals gaining or enhancing Transversal Competences needed for employment, and situations of redeployment, such as self-awareness, self-regulation, and interpersonal skills.

- **Social policies**: Development, in social services, of the importance of Transversal Competences such as self-awareness, self-regulation, and interpersonal skills.

- **Industrial and innovation policy**: Systematise programmes to develop a Fusion Skills approach conducive to creativity and innovation.

- **Research policy**: Promote programmes that enable a detailed, scientific analysis of Transversal Competences and a better understanding of the mechanisms involved in their development.

A SPECIFIC FRAMEWORK FOR POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The ED-EN Hub project addresses two crucial issues of the current employment and human resources political debate: 1. The rise of Transversal Competences as the determinant for people's autonomy, capacity to get employed, and to change and progress, and 2. The importance of a close collaboration between education and enterprises to develop these complex competences and to cope with uncertain labour market conditions.

In order to make coherent policy recommendations that take account of the ED-EN Hub approach, we have represented them systemically in the figure below. This is a model of the dynamics of Transversal Competences and the conditions for their development at policy level. Rather than categories of stakeholders and juxtaposed axes, this diagram shows interactions and, beyond that, the prospects for shared responsibility in the development of transversal skills.

This figure is a synthetic representation of the main policy issues that have been discussed during the many policy-oriented workshops and session held in the second half of the ED-EN Hub project's lifespan. It shows where innovation and progress can be made in this new area. It can also be used as a framework to plan new policies, programmes, initiatives that may contribute to a better functioning of the labour market, combined with a higher quality of education achievements.
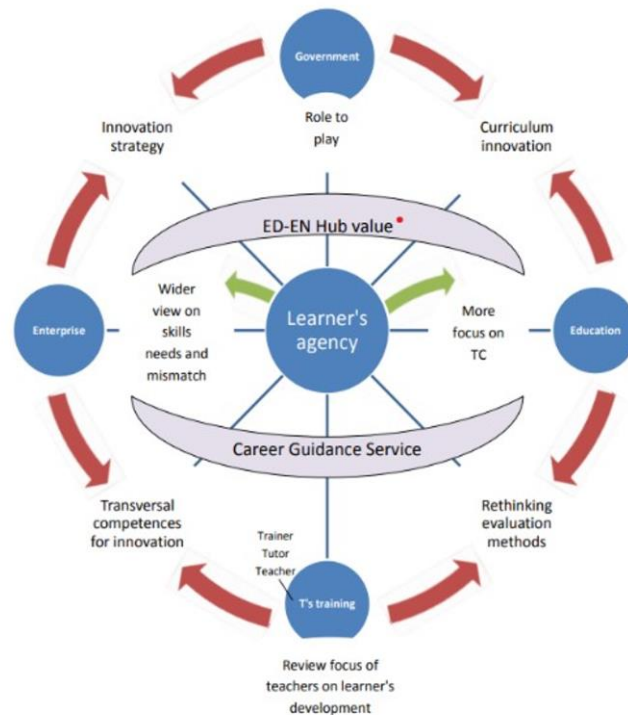
Figure 3: Dynamic of policy implications concerning the development of Transversal Competences

This figure says that the development of Transversal Competences is a shared responsibility of government, employers, education and training institutions, individual teachers/trainers, and individual learners themselves.

At the centre of the diagram is the individual as learner, and their autonomy, which represents an ultimate goal of this approach.

The vertical axe corresponds to the concept of implementation, from major policy decisions to the capacity to make them happen in local contexts, though the capacity of educators and trainers.

The horizontal axe represents the partnership between the world of enterprises and the world of education and training. Taking into account with the main messages elaborated by the ED-EN Hub project to re-design their collaboration, keeping at the concept of learner's agency (awareness, intentionality, initiative) and the common interest in high quality education and training provision. Agency is expected to be exercised towards the education system and towards the employers, making clear that every individual is expected to have a legitimate ambition to continuing lifelong learning and human and professional growth.

In the upper part of the scheme, it can be read that Ed-En partnership - and focus on Transversal Competences- should become part of **governments' innovation policy**, supporting enterprises in these direction, but also part of **education policies,** by encouraging a review of existing curricula to make room for Transversal Competences,

including not so much new contents, new programs, but mostly new methods to support learning of these competences, in collaboration with the enterprises.

In the central part of the scheme, there is encouragement directed to enterprise to look further than immediate Technical Competence gaps when expressing their needs and the importance of developing a capacity to learn and to progress in every learner or employee. The importance of a **permanent coordination and a clear visibility of the partnership** (the ED-EN Hub value) and the **centrality of career guidance** to pass the message to young people, families and adult workers in transition is also represented there.

In the lower part of the scheme more detailed, but still indispensable aspects of the policy opportunities are mentioned: trainers and teachers' understanding, supported by enterprises, of how **Transversal Competences are key to face the current uncertainty and instability of labour markets**, and how the full range of collaborations, starting from internships/apprenticeship and the related evaluation methods, should be rethought.

Finally, the issue of how to **renew teachers' initial education** to get future teachers and trainers more prepared to identify, **develop and evaluate Transversal Competences** is mentioned at the bottom of the scheme; it also applies to finding new forms of **continuing professional development for in-service teachers** and represents the contact point with the Project methodological Outputs (cf. ED-EN Hub Guidebook for Trainers and ED-EN hub Guidebook for Guidance actors).

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the Policy Challenges, identified Issues, concerned Policy Area, and considering the systemic approach of Transversal Competences, recommendations are made.

These recommendations are the result of several events in all countries where partners are active and usually started with two major concerns: 1. the present skills mismatch and 2. The quickly changing conditions in the global, European, and regional industrial labour markets, showing growing difficulty to recruit not only technicians with high qualification (that was the classic "skill mismatch" well known for several decades), but also generic workforce for relatively simple jobs.

Although Transversal Competences were seldom the starting point of policy debates, they soon became a *leitmotiv* in all countries, since all parties recognize how important they are to face uncertainty and change and to guarantee personal balance in challenging situations. The same was true for education-enterprise partnership: when the labour market is uncertain and quickly changing, a solid collaboration framework pays more than foresight studies, which may, in these conditions, be substantially wrong.

At European level, there are already many initiatives and policies that favour the development of transversal competences - and that encourage the development of non-technical competences. For example, the ERASMUS+ programmes promote mobility and abroad experiences that are fertile ground for interpersonal, linguistic, and cultural competences. The European Framework of Key Competences is already a reference framework that promotes employability, personal fulfilment, and social inclusion. In each country member, noteworthy initiatives. In France, there is the vast entrepreneurship development programme known as PEPITE, which enables not only new businesses to be spun off but also the transversal skills associated with entrepreneurship. In Italy, various reforms to the education system have encouraged the development of transversal competences such as communication, problem-solving and critical thinking. These are all initiatives that concern the political area, but the important thing here is to do it on a larger scale, and in a more systemic way. Because these recommendations are not just about developing individual competences, but also about creating the conditions for the development of dynamic & collective competences.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EDUCATION POLICIES

While one of the aims of Transversal Competence development is employability, it is also about improving personal flourishing. The role of education is to prepare people for life in society, and Transversal Competence is not only a competence for work but also competence for life. In addition to these issues, which have already been identified in the ED-EN Hub project, there is also the issue of improving success at school: Transversal Competences are also skills for better learning. This is an important element in promoting this type of policy. Among the Transversal Competences that are useful for greater success at school – and the fight against school harassment such as the development of empathy, perseverance, and collective problem solving.

From secondary school, the objective would be to develop an education that go beyond academic qualifications, which encourages reflection on self-knowledge and promises to develop more learners' agency. This would be a prerequisite for the further development of transversal competences.

Recommendation n°1: To incorporate an awareness for Transversal Competences from lower and upper secondary school.

With the learning objective to identify and recognise its own Transversal Competences. The tools provided in the ED-EN Hub "Guidebook for Trainers" would make it possible. To go further than the tools proposed by ED-EN Hub, it would be necessary to identify the necessary pedagogical progression, by identifying the priority transversal competences to be developed according to age.

Recommendation n°2: To develop the self-identification of Transversal Competences in experiential approaches such as portfolios.

Learning to assess one's Transversal Competences during tutored projects or learning and assessment situations can help to develop them, particularly in the case of group work.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LABOUR MARKET, AND VOCATIONAL & EDUCATIONAL TRAINING POLICIES

Transversal Competences are an important means of enhancing the employability of individuals. Companies therefore need to be encouraged to be explicit regarding their expectations in terms of Transversal Competences. As formal education is not enough to acquire constantly evolving Transversal Competences, it is important to consider the role of Lifelong Learning and Vocational Education and Training, more specifically apprenticeships.

Recommendation n°3: To enhance the identification of Transversal Competences needs of enterprises and to identify areas of talent shortages in terms of Transversal Competences

It is important that these needs, which are often identified in job advertisements and job profiles, actually correspond to the competences that can be developed within companies. Observatories and other tools used by professional associations can be a way of identifying them in a sector-based approach. A collaborative approach between education and business would help to identify where there are shortages of Transversal Competences.

Recommendation n°4: To integrate Transversal Competences as pedagogical objectives in apprenticeship training programmes.

It is still too often technical competences that are recognised, to the disadvantage of Transversal Competences that are more easily transferable.

Recommendation n°5: To develop innovative methods for developing Transversal Competences.

Developing an experiential approach, recognising personal experience and not just professional experience.

Recommendation n°6: To develop co-development and co-assessment of Transversal Competences in apprenticeships.

To develop joint training to train company and academic tutors to identification, development, and assessment of Transversal Competences

Recommendation n°7: Train teachers and involve them in designing tools.

There are many tools available, many reference frameworks and many digital tools. It is not necessary to have the same tool for a sensitive subject such as Transversal Competences, but to have an approach that makes it possible to start from what already

exists and bring the tools together. Care needs to be taken when making assessments of Transversal Competences.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INNOVATION POLICIES

Among the obstacles to innovation in economies, there is a lack of financial resources, but also a lack of competence. Transversal Competences are a valuable means of developing creativity and innovation in companies, by improving the capacity for innovation of individuals and for creating a collective context favourable to creativity and collaborative work.

Recommendation n°8: Develop Fusion Skills approaches, bringing together technical/engineering, creative and artistic staff with support staff.

In the same way that European countries have developed entrepreneurial programmes in higher education, develop innovation development programmes bringing together a variety of profiles.

Recommendation n°9: Always include Transversal Competences in any capacity building action to support innovation projects/programmes in industry, education or policy making.

A Specific policy recommendations: Focus on local ED-EN hubs

The ED-EN Hub project proposes a strategic approach to foster the use and development of transversal competences within the relationship between the world of education and training and the economical world. To this end, it offers resources, tools, guidebooks and guidelines. The ED-EN hub project provides also a technological resource (a digital platform) and organisational resources (local hubs) for learners, training organisations, enterprises and political decision-makers.

ED-EN Hub project propose a "phygital" model for facilitating the collaboration between education and enterprises through transversal competences (figure.
It's both a physical space, where meetings, trainings, workshops and discussion are held and a digital space are proposed. The digital space is materialised with a platform, that has been designed and developed for use in the ED-EN Hub ecosystem. It uses new, fast, and frequently changing digital technologies including services and user interfaces to streamline the hub operation processes and create value for the community. The platform also by developing the networked learning community can facilitate the collaboration, interactions, and transactions between its stakeholders. In practical terms, the output consists of a collaboration platform and a supporting technology platform through which the model for the participatory development of collaboration infrastructures (the ED-EN hubs) is made available.
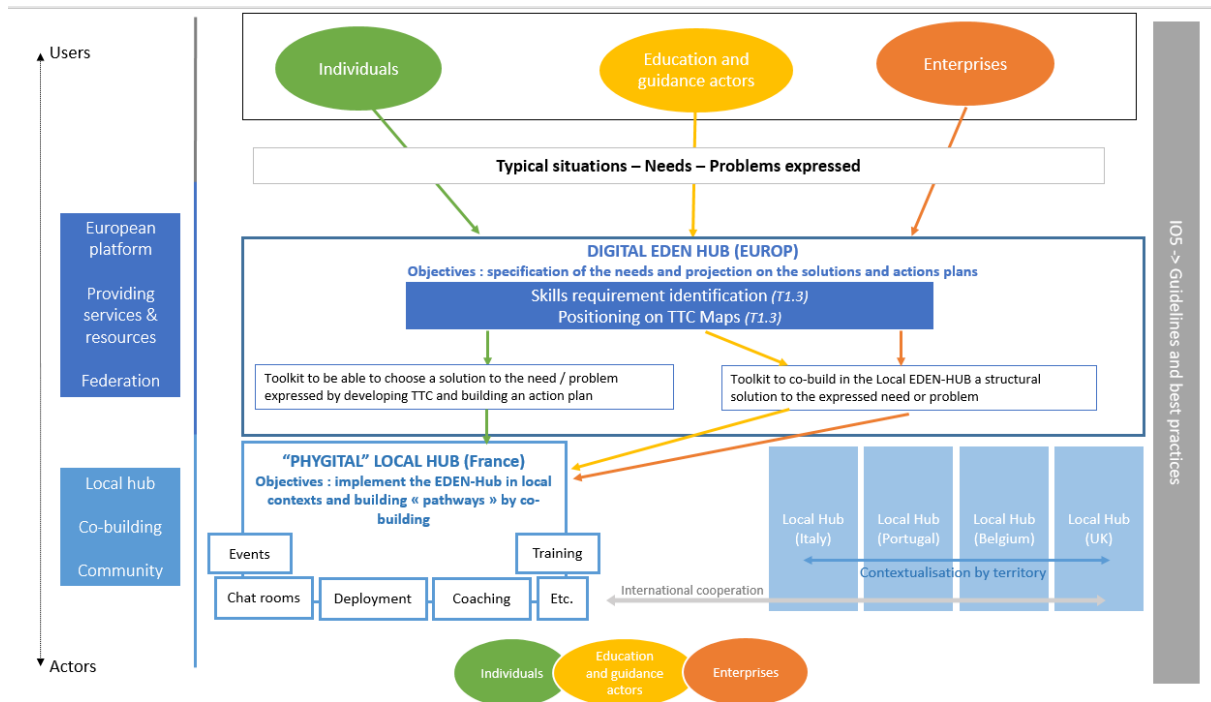
Figure 4: ED-EN Hub "Phygital" Model

The question of the balance to be struck between the digital and physical levels is still open. The ED-EN Hub project - which began during the conference - was an opportunity to realise just how special collaboration around transversal competences is: it involves competences with a human, cognitive and socio-emotional dimension that implies proximity between the actors. At the same time, this situation provided input for a research project devoted to identifying the resources needed to support MCL (Massive Collaborative Learning), which highlighted the difficulties involved in implementing an approach that is still in its infancy.

The ED-EN hub project is therefore proposing the prototype of a digital platform, which is set to expand, and local hubs. The local hubs vary in terms of maturity, stage of development and configuration. Some have pre-existing networks (United Kingdom and Belgium), others have an existing support structure (Portugal), or even a physical location (Italy and Belgium), while others have a more network-based configuration (France). As proposed, other regions have shown interest (Luxembourg, Brittany, Porto) or have even already launched a hub (North East of United Kingdom), but this aspect needs to be strengthened.

Physical proximity of the ED-EN Hubs promotes regular meetings that enable the education and enterprise sectors to get to know each other and develop combined ideas such as sharing a diagnosis, developing new projects, and experimenting solutions together. To organise these meetings, the ED-EN Hub project created local ED-EN Hub anchored in these regions in addition to the digital hub. These ED-EN Hubs are real and/or virtual space that serve to structure the link between enterprises and the world of education in order to offer resources, activities, functions or, more generally, to build a community. The aim of the hubs is to foster collaboration, coordination, and cooperation between the actors of the hub by enabling interactions

and, ultimately, the strengthening of a community of interest around Transversal Competences and, more generally, complex competences.

In numerous consultations with economic and political representatives, the following are the perceived benefits of these local hubs:

1. Information dissemination and sharing:
- Information and awareness-raising on the role and impact of Transversal Competences
- Information on the competence needs of companies in the local area
- Information on the area's training offer

2. Networking:
- Easier access to talent and "skills in tension".
- A means of facilitating ad hoc cooperation between enterprises and education and training

3. Partnership/Project:
- Greater involvement of enterprises in the development of training programmes
- Cooperation between competence development actors in national and European-scale projects
- More open and qualitative cooperation involving enterprises, employment agencies, charities, NGOs, and others
- Development of targeted training courses to meet the skills needs of identified groups and/or those facing a shortage of skills
- Training company trainers and academic trainers on the subject of complex competences.
- Developing research action projects
- Carrying out benchmarks

4. Experimentation:
- A place for experimenting on the dynamics of complex competences, Transversal Competences, the shortage of competences, and the fusion of competences.
- A place to exchange practices and grow together

Based on the comments from the regional hubs, enterprises see local hubs as an opportunity to:
"take a step back", "gain perspective", "better integrate the issue of soft skills into -to-day work", "work on complex issues", "respond to companies' skills needs in a different way", "respond more quickly to skills needs", "train", "learn as part of a network", "benefit from the results of academic research on the subject", "make prototypes", "carry out benchmarking", "make our needs better understood".

The obstacles are linked to governance (the need for transparency, representativeness of the actors, time, and commitment), the involvement of learners, and the risk of being disconnected from real needs.

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