

## Welcome

Welcome to this first newsletter in which we aim to explain what the LIFE project is all about, update you on progress and invite you to become involved. We would like to involve as many people as possible in the project to make it have a lasting impact, so your views are most valuable.

### What is the LIFE project all about?

The 'key competences in life skills' project, or LIFE for short, is a partnership between ten vocational training organisations from six countries across Europe. The project is supported by the European Union through the Leonardo da Vinci programme, aimed at improving the vocational education systems of Europe.

The project aims to develop a train the trainer programme to provide vocational teachers with the necessary skills to integrate key skills for life competences into their vocational areas.

### What are the key competences in life skills?

We have built on the work conducted by the EC Basic Skills Working Group and the European Civil Society Platform to define the competences as:

- **Numeracy:** ability to use number skills at the level necessary to function socially and at work and to access education/training.
- **Literacy:** ability to communicate through listening, speaking, reading and writing in one's own language.

- **ICT:** ability to use technology confidently and critically for work, leisure and communication.
- **Communication:** in the official or dominant language of the country.
- **Interpersonal:** ability to participate in an effective and constructive way in social, education and working life. This includes teamwork and cultural awareness.
- **Use of foreign languages:** ability to communicate in another language in an appropriate range of contexts.
- **Work related:** job seeking and skills related to specific areas of employment.
- **Learning to learn:** skills related to coping with everyday life, citizenship and participation in civil society leading to the capacity to attain personal fulfilment and social inclusion.



## Who is involved?

The project team includes partners from Spain, Lithuania, Cyprus, Italy, Belgium and the UK. The train the trainer pack we develop will help:

- Vocational teachers and trainers
- Diverse learner groups including 16-19 year olds at initial vocational level, mature students, the unemployed, employees and employers.

## What progress has been made?

Since our first meeting in November 2008, we have developed draft standards for integrating the key competences which we hope will be included in training for new and existing vocational teachers. We are currently consulting with relevant organisations in partner countries about these standards. To view the standards, just go to the LIFE website

<http://www.life-keyskills.info/>  
- project progress.

You can let us know your views by taking part in the discussion forum there.

We have also completed research in partner countries to find out the training needs of vocational teachers for integrating key competences into their teaching. Key findings include:

- All learners can benefit from improving life skills.
- By building competence in these skills, the confidence and employability of learners should improve.
- We need to narrow the gap between employer needs and what is currently delivered particularly practical skills.
- Teachers need more training to identify diverse learner needs and assess competence.
- Teachers need to be willing to be assessed and improve in the key competences in order to support learners.
- Teachers need to build closer links with employers to update their skills and assess learners in the workplace wherever possible.

- Training needs to form part of a structured framework for new and existing teachers.
- Adequate funding and time for training needs to be given.
- Effective teamwork between vocational teachers and life skills specialists is required.

For more information on these results and individual country reports, just go to the LIFE website

[www.life-keyskills.info](http://www.life-keyskills.info)

## What happens next?

We are looking for activities and examples of best practice for embedding the key competences into vocational teaching which we will try out at our next meeting in April 2009. If you have any examples which have worked well for you, please let us know through the 'contact us' section of the website. We have started to put together the train the trainer pack and will be building on this over the coming months. You can keep up to date on progress by looking at our website.

## Contact us

If you are interested in hearing more about the project, feel free to contact us via the website. We look forward to hearing from you.

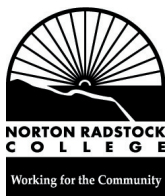
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Education and Culture DG

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