

A manual for interpersonal skills development in  
adult education through non-formal learning practices



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# About this handbook



Europe requires its educators to be culturally and intellectually equipped in the appropriate ways for both their own present and their future. Only thus will they be able to lead meaningful and satisfying lives personally, socially, professionally, and collectively. Adult education institutions play a major role in the development of the appropriate strategies for adult learners and in preparing their educators in a lifelong learning perspective, for a productive career.

However, today adult education remains the weakest link in developing Lifelong Learning toward interpersonal skills development for both adult educators and adult learners, which impedes their expected productive career due to a lack of a set of useful skills towards their social, personal, and their professional development. Even though the importance of adult educators competences is at some extent understood, an understanding of the concept alone is insufficient.

Hence, the true importance lies in the implications a competences-based approach has on adult teaching, training, and learning. That is, appropriate methods for teaching and training, participatory learning activities as well as effective learning and performance assessment methods to foster the skills in terms of knowledge, understanding and attitudes. An approach which requires the educators to have a high level of interpersonal skills to meet the needs of adult learners, regardless of their backgrounds or their learning and performance abilities.

In this regard, this manual seeks to address the challenges to the lack or the low level of interpersonal skills in adult education and among the adult educators by fostering their empowerment through training and teaching activities based on evidence-based practical and dynamic approaches: planning, design and delivering participatory learning activities as means for capacity strengthening and for interpersonal skills development. The manual goal, is to strengthen the capacity of adult educators in face-to-face training process to facilitating the adult learners' empowerment by fostering their interpersonal skills development through adult education.

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# Handbook context

In our context and herein, interpersonal skills are defined as not only the ability to work in a group or to have effective leadership and problem-solving skills; an emphasis is placed on the nature of the adult educators' competences in the teaching-training-learning process. That is, when one considers aspects such as: listening and verbal, non-verbal communication skills; the ability to guide group discussions; the ability to deal in a gender-sensitive manner with adult learners from diverse backgrounds; and the ability to create interactive and participatory learning environments; adult educators who use the one-fit-all methodology lack or have low-levels of interpersonal skills which thus hinder their competences towards meeting adult learners needs based on the adult learners identities, rather, leave the learners frustrated, which is one of the most important factors forcing adult learners to leave or abandon the courses without completing them.

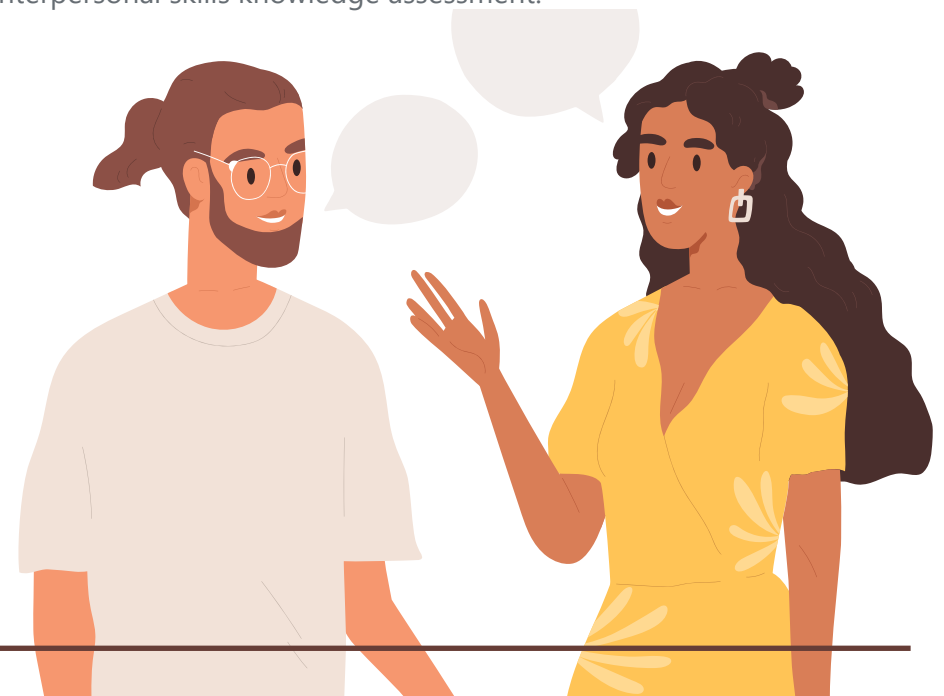
Even though various adult education institutions are increasingly realising that adult learners are moving targets; that their approaches for planning, elaborating and transmitting knowledge, skills, and attitudes require a new sensitivity towards adult learners personal, professional, and social development; and that adult education inspires progress within society as one can learn at any age, at the same time, they should realise that adult education should first respond to the adult educators' professional development such as preparing adequate training courses for educators to participate not only in the teaching processes but also in the learning process towards their interpersonal skills development to better engage and interact with different adult learners.

Through our research in the project countries, we aimed at defining basic competences and the interpersonal skills level considered as a priority by the adult educators and the other workers who are involved in the field of adult education. An attention was given to part-time adult educators and on developing training methods in adult education on the aspects such as: pedagogy, learning approaches, verbal and non-verbal communication skills, problem-solving skills, and transferable skills. It was observed that the validity and credibility of adult education is reflected in a great number by the type of learning approaches used by adult institutions as well as the adult educators' qualifications, experiences, and competences, and their interpersonal skills level which present a big

challenge to the development of adult learners' identity. That is, the adult educators working with adult learners, especially part-time adult educators, are often not offered any training programmes on the relevant aspects of interpersonal skills development that should enhance their professional, social, and psychological skills.

Moreover, it was observed that there are no support groups nor a common platform where the adult educators could share their experience and get support from their peers at the national level which furthermore challenge the very idea of integrating interpersonal skills development in their work or their practices as interpersonal skills receive less attention and reflection while designing adult education training programme in the context of non-formal learning. Thus, it is crucial to seek new pathways for developing adult education in a dynamic manner from a gender-sensitive and interpersonal skills perspective, by integrating evidenced-based practices and research-based methods into adult educators daily teaching and training activities to match together the professional development need for adult educators with the adult learners' learning needs and identities.

In addition, it was observed that a major problem in integrating interpersonal skills development in adult education is its lack of recognition in comparison with the formal education that can be quantified and described. That is, it is more difficult in adult education, which largely escapes formal structures of evaluation that makes it even more difficult to assess and understand how the adult educators integrate and transfer interpersonal skills to adult learners without integrated learning and performance evaluation methods on interpersonal skills knowledge assessment.



# Introduction

## i. About the project

Pathways to teaching identities project seeks to strengthening the capacity and the skills of adult educators, supplemented with mentorship components to develop teaching, training, and learning processes toward the integration of interpersonal skills development in adult education to meet the learning needs of both young and adult learners, regardless of their identity, and their learning or performance ability as a means for fostering their professional, personal, and social development for a productive career.

Thus, the project overall objective is to foster interpersonal skills development among adult educators and the implications a competence-based approach has on a teaching, training, and learning process, by designing and producing the appropriate training programmes with participatory learning activities and effective learning-performance evaluation with integrated interpersonal skills self-assessment tool to foster competences in terms of skills and attitudes and increase the likelihood for the application and transfer integrated interpersonal skills to their practices while working with adult learners.

Therefore, the project overall outputs are to produce a Pathways to Teaching Identities' Handbook from open-ended consultations on the challenges to interpersonal skills development in adult education; further, produce a guide to interpersonal skills evaluation supported by an integrated self-assessment tool for adult educators in line with a complete training programme to facilitate and evaluate adult educators interpersonal skills development; and finally create a guide to interpersonal skills advocacy through blogging.

At the level, the outcomes partners aim at sharing mechanisms for fostering interpersonal skills development in adult education by creating training opportunities for educators to practice, try and transfer developed outputs in an inclusive learning environment. Further, create opportunities for practicing and transfer outside partner institutions to further disseminate and exploit outputs through practical classes, seminars, or on field training programmes.

## ii. About Erasmus+ programme

Erasmus+ is the EU's programme to support education, training, youth, and sport in Europe. Its budget of €14.7 billion provides opportunities for over 4 million Europeans to study, train, gain experience, and volunteer abroad. The aim of Erasmus+ is to contribute to the Europe 2020 strategy for growth, jobs, social equity, and inclusion, as well as the aims of ET2020, the EU's strategic framework for education and training.

The European Union is supporting a large number of organisations, adult informal institutions and other entities that work specifically in the field of adult education and use formal or non-formal education tools. With the initiative and support of The European Commission, there was founded Erasmus+ programme, which supports education, training, adult, and sport in Europe, to give millions of Europeans to study, live, volunteer, gain new skills, experiences.

Erasmus+ comprises of formal educational programmes, like the exchange of students, academics, administrative staff, and also non-formal education programs, like youth exchanges, vocational training, European Voluntary Service, Internships and much more. The core idea of the initiative is to create common united European integrated society and support building of European Identity, Create peaceful democratic and tolerant environment.

Erasmus+ has 3 key actions areas, which focus on Mobility, cooperation for innovation and exchange of good practices and support for the policy.

1. **Key Action 1** focuses on mobility of individuals for the purpose of providing different opportunities for personal development, as well as, enhancing the employability by gaining new competences and improving soft and hard skills.
2. **Key Action 2** focuses on the cooperation of the organizations to share the best practices and innovate their tools and methods.
3. **Key Action 3** focuses on Policy reform and tries to support and facilitate modernization and innovation of educational systems.





### iii. About the project partners

#### P01. Denizli İl Afet ve Acil Durum Müdürlüğü – Turkey

Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD), an institution working to prevent disasters and minimize disaster-related damages, plan and coordinate post-disaster response, and promote cooperation among various government agencies. AFAD currently has 81 provincial branches across Turkey in addition to 11 search and rescue units.

#### P02. Neotalentway S.L. – Spain

Neotalentway is an educative consultancy specialized in new teaching methodological strategies and educational guidance, which is why it works with teachers to develop and improve their professional skills. Other areas of work of Neotalentway are entrepreneurship, key competencies and soft skills.

#### P03. Learning centre “EVA-93” – Latvia

As a long-established and experienced adult learning Centre (more than 18 000 adult students since 1996), EVA-93 take pleasure and pride from seeing their students develop new skills, enhance their knowledge or study a subject for pure enjoyment. Learning Centre “EVA-93” lines of action are adult formal, informal and non-formal learning. Learning Centre do all to promote their specialist.

#### P04. Jafnréttishús (Equality Centre) – Iceland

Equality Centre is a private NGO founded in April 2008 in Hafnarfjörður, Iceland. It is a non-profit adult education provider. It employs 5 staff members and has wide subcontracting-network with specialists in various fields. On average, it provides education to over 300 learners per year in various fields. The goals and activities are implemented through a variety of ways such as Integration activities for foreigners.

#### P05. Vilnius Adult Education Centre (VAEC) – Lithuania

Vilnius Adult Education Centre (VAEC) was established in 1993. Here adult students can acquire complete or partial upper secondary education. The Centre has already done its steps in applying the non-formal principles as the method of teaching and learning. At the Centre adult students can choose a single subject providing knowledge of a certain level and amount.

### iv. Engaging with targeted groups

It is of greatest importance to have a clear picture of the project’s target groups; otherwise, it is not feasible to evaluate and monitor the quality, sustainability and effectiveness of result dissemination and exploitation activities. To safeguard that all partners have the same understanding of the project’s dissemination objectives, the target groups are defined to ensure that partners are aware of each group’s needs and reason why it is being targeted. In Pathways to Teaching Identities project, we are engaging with:

1. **Adult learners:** here, we address learners by creating inclusive learning environments from a gender-sensitive and an interpersonal skills perspective to meet their learning needs by respecting their identities.
2. **Adult educators:** here, we address adult educators by calling them to integrate a gender-sensitive and an interpersonal skills perspective in their practices through inclusive and participatory training approaches.
3. **Adult institutions:** here, we address adult education institutions play their role in adapting interpersonal skills development in developing the appropriate approaches for adult learners and preparing their educators in a lifelong learning perspective for a productive career.

Thus, considering a broader dissemination strategy to lay the foundations for later result exploitation efforts, it is thus of greatest importance to start with dissemination activities early in the project, even if they took place on a more general layer, they are ensuring later activities to be successful:

1. Awareness is easily raised from the begging by providing information about the project and expected results, which are the most important aspects for sustainability.
2. Project goal and objectives are outlined on project website to provide constant information to different stakeholders, which enables them to be aware and follow project implementation processes much easier.
3. Exchange of information is fostered through social media, newsletters to build relationships with those carrying out similar activities.





# CHAPTER 1.

## Fundamentals of interpersonal skills

## 1.1. Understanding communication

Communication is a process of exchanging or sharing information or messages between adult educators and adult learners and among the adult learners. An inclusive communication requires the adult educators to communicate with their adult learners at their own level of understanding which can be difficult if each adult learner has a different level of learning and understanding.

Therefore, such an interpersonal communication is the process of transferring information from an adult educator to the adult learners in an inclusive, diverse and gender-sensitive environment and in which the transmitted information is understood and easily interpreted by both the educator and the learners, which further require interpersonal skills awareness:

1. participants should be in a close proximity and face to face.
2. there should be mutual exchange of information among the participants, but not one-way.
3. The information can be transmitted verbal and/or non-verbal.

Hence, interpersonal communication is divided into two forms:

### a) Verbal (Oral) Communication:

Verbal communications are divided into two sub-classes: linguistic and non-linguistic. Conversations and correspondence among people are accepted as communication with the language. In a such communication the involved persons express, interpret, and make sense of the information they produce by transmitting it to each other.

Translingual communication is concerned with the quality of the sound: the pitch of voice, speed of speech, the intensity of the voice, the words which are emphasised on, pauses, and similar features which are considered to be translational communication. Thus, what adult educators say with language communication and how they say it in the non-language communication to adult learners and how learners interpret the message are important.

### b) Non-verbal Communication:

Although some may think of communication through the spoken language, communication is also and often established non-verbally. People who interact a lot within the same environment, even if they do not speak at all, send messages to each other with their gaze, the posture of their body, or the distance they keep in between which establish non-verbal communication.

Hence, in order to understand each other correctly, adult educators when engaging with adult learners should develop interpersonal skills allowing them to pay attention to both the content of the verbal messages and the body language or the visual clues such as facial expressions, gestures, and body posture of their learners.

## 1.2. Understanding interpersonal skills

Interpersonal skills are the traits of self and social awareness that people rely on when interacting and communicating with each other. These traits involve one's ability to communicate and build the relationships with others in social situations. Often called people skills, they incorporate both one's innate personality traits of self-awareness and how one has learned and is aware of how their innate personality in social settings, develop the behaviours and attitudes a person uses to interact with others effectively and considerably.

Thus, to ensure adult learners are able to adapt to the changing economy, it is crucial that they are equipped with interpersonal skills through education and training. Yet there is no common framework for interpersonal skills. The language and the definitions used to describe these skills often varies, with references to employability, soft, vital, and transferable skills, among others. This results in a lack of a clear understanding of what skills adult learners need to succeed in the labour market and poses challenges to measure progress on the development of interpersonal skills in adult education. With this challenge in mind, this handbook looks at how the supply of interpersonal skills can be integrated in the education from early years to lifelong learning.

Preparing people for the labour market and productive career should begin in the early years. That is, the development of interpersonal skills should begin very early in life, and in early years education should have an impact on the ability to learn and develop interpersonal skills over the longer term. For this reason, intervention at this point is crucial in ensuring every child can develop the skills that are needed to fulfil their potential to meet the labour market requirements. However, formal educational system does not pay any attention on interpersonal skills development and the most governments put less emphasis on this policy area. Early years interventions played a central role in people's ability to have productive careers later in their adult years, and interpersonal skills need to sit at the core of education and training framework with a strong emphasis on communication language, personal traits, and emotional development.

Thus, the lack of such an education and training framework leaves most people with a huge knowledge gap which they carry on through their adult years, and when challenged with changing labour market in world of digital technologies, the very socially constructed idea of having a productive career at certain age in life leaves many adult frustrated as they are not fitting in today labour market or they are not able to adequately support their families, and hence, the only remaining choice for them is going back to learn in adult institutions. Yet this further, presents challenges when those set out to educate and training them went through the same education system that did not meet their interpersonal skills development, and thus, everyone finds themselves trapped in this loop.

1. Interpersonal skills help us interact with each other effectively, on different levels of both social and professional interactions and can be developed



and improved over time with practice, and at any age.

2. Expressing our needs assertively, and being considerate and appreciative of the others, resolving disputes in a gender-culturally-sensitive approach, and listening to others are interpersonal skills worth practicing.
3. Interpersonal skills allow us to read signals others send through non-verbal communication and interpret them accurately in order to form a response that reflect what the others are expressing.

## 1.3. Introduction to emotional intelligence

Emotional Intelligence is herein defined as the ability to recognise, understand, and manage one's own emotions and at the same time, recognise, perceive, and consider the emotions of others in social settings. In practical terms, this means:

- *Emotional intelligence is the level of one's own emotions awareness and one's ability to recognise, process, manage and deal with those emotions.*
- *Thanks to such self-knowledge and self-management abilities at the emotional level, we decide our actions and make decisions that yield positive results both on our health and well-being. Further, Emotional Intelligence is an individual's ability to identify, evaluate, and perceive the emotions of others and assertively express their thoughts by being considerate of the emotions of others in social interactions.*

Therefore, the adult educators with a high level of Emotional Intelligence make the great facilitators in the process of adult learners' empowerment because of their ability to understand, empathise, and connect with the learners' emotions which symbolises a sense of recognition and respect for the adult learners. Many adult literacy programmes often teach adult learners in the same way as children are taught. Thus, the level of Emotion Intelligence highlights the most important characteristics of adult educators as well as the qualities of a good instructor that must be borne within the mind while handling adult learners in education and training programmes.

## 1.4. Emotional Intelligence and interpersonal skills in adult education

Emotional Intelligence is one's ability to both recognise, perceive, and manage their own emotions and recognise, perceive, and consider the emotions of others in social interactions. Whereas Interpersonal skills are the traits of self and social awareness that one relies on when interacting and communicating with others.

In adult education, adult educators are responsible for making a choice of the methods to use in adult education and training depending on a number of factors that determine which method is suitable and which is not. It is thus useful for

an adult educator to be able to relate to each of the methods on how they would want the methods designed for themselves if it was them on the receiving side of the education or training process, which allows them to make an appropriate choice for every situation while interacting with adult learners. Hence, this is where Emotional Intelligence becomes more crucial. That is, when planning, designing, and delivering teaching and training interventions for adult learners, taking into account the social factors affecting the adult learners such as the language barriers and learning or performance abilities present among the learners.

The most important feature that makes adult education different from the formal education is that most of the time the adult learners depend on their own will. It is thus essential for adult educators to have an open and friendly relationship with themselves first and with the adult learners based on respect and equality. This brings about an atmosphere of respect, acceptance, and of encouragement where the adult learners feel free to express themselves. That is, in addition to having a considerable level of Emotional Intelligence, an adult educator needs to also have a considerable level of Interpersonal Skills in order to effectively take into account the factors affecting the learners such as age, gender, cultures, or social situation in order to create an environment that makes learning interesting and worthwhile, which encourage the adult learners to feel included in the learning process as the topics being discussed feel more relevant and useful to them.

## 1.5. Communication and interpersonal skills in adult education

To be effective, adult educators need to know the right information to pass on and the language, learning, performance, gender, cultural, and the social factors affecting their adult learners in their own social situations. But just as importantly, they also need to be able to communicate that information in the manner that the adult learner can understand, interpret, and reflect on it in their daily learning situations. That is, a good communication is a two-way sharing of information, which involves finding out the adult learners' views, listening carefully to what they say and understanding their situation for an effective adult education.

Moreover, communication skills in adult education are crucially important for the adult learners' career's development as well as the career as an adult educator, which constitute a central component of adult education since communication skills strengthen both the adult educators and the adult learners' verbal and non-verbal capabilities and their ability to work well with others. This skill set is so fundamental because successful communication helps to clearly convey one's ideas and thoughts, and prevents conflicts or breakdowns in communication to reach professional, and personal development which are the overall goal of adult education.

Adult education is the process on interaction by the face-to-face communications with particular prosody, facial expression, silence, and rhythmical patterns of

behaviour between adult educators and adult learners. Research on Interpersonal skills development in adult education states that learners receive comprehensible input when they interact with adult educators with a high level of interpersonal skills. That is, in a language class for non-native adult learners, the adult educators who tend to modify their speech in various ways to make themselves understandable by speaking slowly, enunciating more clearly, or using grammatical constructions or vocabulary words different from those they used earlier that did not appear to have been understood, are the great educators in the eyes of the learners.

Our research examined both educator-learner interactions and peer interactions as both types of classroom and training-room interactions offer a great deal of benefits to adult learners. Thus, the development of oral interaction skills is paramount for adult learners. Speaking and listening skills are essential to their ability to participate effectively in the workplace and community initiatives. Oral interaction skills are also important for interpersonal skills literacy because they form the basis for interpersonal skills development.

## 1.6. The need for improving Interpersonal Skills in adult education

Scientific research in the field of adult education starting from the end of the 60s in Europe have established the conceptual structure of adult education and efforts have been directed towards ensuring that adult learners benefit from education in line with their interests and needs. However, this idea presents a flaw when adult education is most of the time practiced in non-formal learning setting which escape the structure of the formal education system. Thus, in order to increase the quality of adult education programmes, it is crucial to improve the narrative characteristics of adult educators together with the level and the quality of education and training programmes they provide. In other words, interpersonal skills development is at the core of the plan, design, and delivery of such an education and training framework.

This handbook which aims to contribute to the much needed development in the field of adult education, is the result of research in project countries that examined both adult learners' interactions and positive effects of classroom or training-room interactions that places the learners at the core of the foreseen learning outcomes. It thus describes areas of focus for the adult educators who want to deliver successful and participatory teaching-learning activities by integrating interpersonal skills development in adult education. Moreover, it provides examples of research method that can be used to structure interactive discussions on interpersonal skills development.

One of the most important aspect of interpersonal skills is the adult educator's ability to prevent, solve or reduce the issue of cultural differences in a diverse group of adult learners. Different cultural groups have their preferred ways of

interaction that they value, but all learners who are accustomed to teacher-directed lectures and do not interact through classroom discussion or dialogue as part of a learning process, think that the educator is being lazy and that the activities are a waste of time, compared to the learners who interact through dialogue, discussions, and small-group work in adult education. That is:

1. the adult educators should explain the rationale for the different types of activities they assign to learners and how these activities are structured and centred on the learners' needs and how they intend to meet them.
2. the adult educators should create learners-centred discussions on how to address each-other as the learners feel more comfortable with interactions if they know the culturally appropriate ways to address their peers.
3. the adult educators should be able to create guidelines for communication which values confidentiality, and cultural and gender diversity in order to facilitate a comfortable space for inclusive classroom interactions.

Further, evaluation of how adult education contributes to the adult learners social and professional development with interpersonal skills to achieve a productive career, is a complex undertaking in adult education, as this type of education, whose ultimate goal is the empowerment of the adult learners for a productive career, is difficult to measure in isolation from adult educators communication skills, Emotional Intelligence level, and social interactions skills, as it requires an evaluation that should focus on an adult educator's self-assessment on their knowledge from an interpersonal skills centred training before engaging with the adult learners. That is, a lack of interpersonal skills knowledge assessment are common challenges for adult educators to be accountable for integrating and fostering interpersonal skills development in adult education.

Hence, strengthening evaluation practices among adult educators could increase their accountability, enabling them to measure and demonstrate how interpersonal skills development brings about career-oriented skills among adult learners.





## 2.1. National research: the context and the targeted groups

The adult education institutions undertake a wide range of teaching, learning, and training interventions to empower the adult learners and prepare them for a productive career and for a better social, health, cultural and economic life in the lifelong learning milestone to make sure that Europe has literate and well equipped citizens. However, the rural and small adult education organisations with the part-time adult educators face particular difficulties both in developing and integrating most effective and participatory teaching, learning and training programmes that respond to the ever changing learning needs and knowledge gaps among adult learners owing to a lack of interpersonal skills necessary to understand the right information to pass on to them and the language, learning, performance, gender, cultural or social factors affecting their learners in social situations, and take them into account in the classroom interactions.

Therefore, this handbook makes the case for the critical role of interpersonal skills in contributing to adult learners social and professional development to achieve a productive career and a better social, health, cultural, and economic life by examining how adult education is attempting to bridge the gap between the need for adult learners' career, social, health, cultural, or economic development, and the lack of interpersonal skills knowledge among adult educators in project countries. Through a combination of national consultations and various workshop learning activities, we explored how adult educators understand interpersonal skills and the kind of training they desire to develop their interpersonal skills, and at the same time, be able to transfer these skills to their learners by integrating and fostering interpersonal skills in adult education.

## 2.2. Collecting and compiled the research data

Our research aimed at analysing how interpersonal skills can be integrated in adult education by examining adult educators learning needs, and knowledge gaps. Therefore, the goal was to gather the necessary information on the level of interpersonal skills among adult educators: their learning needs, knowledge gaps, and their desired training formats and training resources in designing and delivering inclusive and participatory learning activities for adult learners.

### 2.2.1. Research methodology

The research was conducted through the Open-Ended Consultations which are problem-solving and problem identification workshops to voice the priorities, concerns, opinions, perspectives, and ideas of adult educators on integrating interpersonal skills in adult education.

During Open-end Consultations, participants were provided with opportunities

to express their learning needs, and their knowledge gaps towards developing interpersonal skills through adult education. The consultations were conducted in face-to-face workshops within the six project countries (*Latvia, Lithuania, Iceland, Norway, Spain, & Turkey*) with 120 adult educators: 20 adult educators per country. The national data was compiled in a position paper by each partner, thus, later on all the data was merged into one position paper. We approached and structured the consultations around the following themes:

1. the needed knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competences to integrate interpersonal skills development in adult education.
2. existing challenges that limit adult educators' interpersonal skills while working with adult learners.
3. the desired competences that adult educators would like to develop to better transfer interpersonal skills to adult learners.
4. the knowledge gaps between what they know and what they need to know to integrate interpersonal skills development in adult education.
5. the goal, objective, and learning activities of a training that would meet their learning needs to effectively integrate interpersonal skills in adult education.
6. the types of training materials that should be developed or produced to facilitate the integration interpersonal skills in adult education.

These themes and questions were adapted to fit individual consultations within the scope of one day, where Open-End Consultations were conducted through three types of workshops learning activities. One of the things that struck us throughout the course of the consultations was just how much adult educators wanted to talk about the challenges they face while working with the adult learners due to the lack of recognition of and reflection on the crucially important role interpersonal skills plays in adult education which are both extraordinarily stressful and personally frustrating for many.

### 2.2.2. Interpersonal skills learning needs among adult educators

National open-ended consultations results on adult educators' desired knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competences to integrate interpersonal skills development in adult education are divided into four (4) categories of learning needs. Each partner consulted 20 adult educators, totally 120 adult educators answered the questions. Considering the opinions obtained from participants the learning needs reflect 4 categories as illustrated in Figure 1.

The consultations revealed the areas in which adult educators believe to have knowledge gaps while they are planning and designing gender-sensitive, inclusive, and participatory learning and training interventions for the adult learners. Hence, any attempt to close such knowledge gaps should focus on meeting their learning needs in planning and designing participatory learning and training interventions as presented in Figure-1, which are further divided into 4 sub-categories in Table-1.

Figure 1. Learning Needs category list expressed by participants

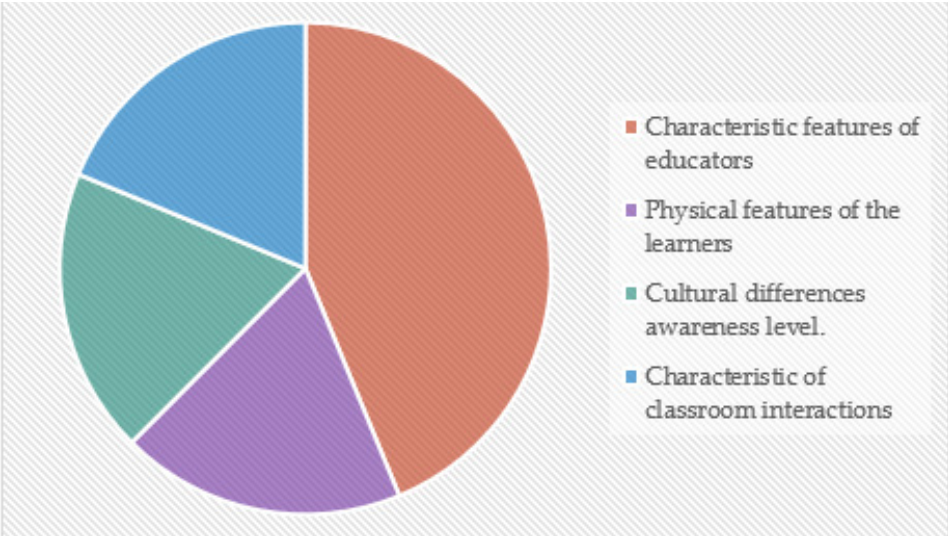


Table-1. Learning Needs sub-category list expressed by participants

LEARNING NEEDS CATEGORIES	LEARNING NEEDS SUB-CATEGORIES
Improving the characteristic features of adult educators	<p>In consultations, it was expressed that to meet adult educators learning needs to improve their characteristic features, the focus should be on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. classroom coordination skills</li><li>2. having empathy towards learners</li><li>3. communication and time management skills</li><li>4. Emotional Intelligence development skills.</li></ol>
Taking into consideration the physical features of adult learners	<p>In consultations, it was expressed that to meet adult educators learning needs to consider the physical features of learners, focus should be on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. arising issues in working with different age of adult learners</li><li>2. considering a gender-sensitive and a cultural perspective</li><li>3. considering the needs of adult learners with special needs.</li></ol>
Strengthening cultural differences awareness level of adult educators	<p>In consultations, it was expressed that to meet adult educators learning needs on cultural differences awareness, the focus should be on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. developing a positive approach for dealing with prejudices, or negative stereotypes in classroom.</li><li>2. developing appropriate presentation techniques on cultural differences.</li><li>3. considering cultural differences and other social barriers among the learners.</li></ol>

Improving adult educators' skills for preparing classroom interactions	<p>In consultations, it was expressed that to meet adult educators learning needs on preparing interactive classrooms, the focus should be on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. skills for creating a good atmosphere for learning</li><li>2. skills for creating opportunities to receive input or feedback learners</li><li>3. digital skills and creating methods which increase peer interaction and dialogue.</li></ol>
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2.2.3. Existing interpersonal skills knowledge among adult educators

Evidence from open-ended consultations with the adult educators shows that, at some extent, there is an existing knowledge in terms of interpersonal skills among adult educators, but the experience on how this knowledge is used and applied in adult education varies from country to country and from institution to institution. Though since our research is limited on only identifying the existing knowledge, therefore, our research did not have the objectives to compare the practices of this knowledge at the country or institutional level.

In the light of the information gathered from consultations consisting of 120 participants who responded to the question on the existing interpersonal skills knowledge among adult educators, their responses were compiled and divided into the below categories and sub-categories:

- 1. Theoretical knowledge of the subjects
- 2. Presentation techniques and skills:
- 3. Communication skills
- 4. Digital and media literacy skills



Table-2. Existing Knowledge sub-category list expressed by participants

EXISTING KNOWLEDGE CATEGORIES	EXISTING KNOWLEDGE SUB-CATEGORIES
Theoretical knowledge in the subjects	<p>In consultations, it was expressed that adult educators have theoretical knowledge in the subjects they give to adult learners such as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. creating the content of a training programme</li><li>2. being able to explain the content to learners</li><li>3. ability to reflect on or respond to class questions.</li></ol>
Presentation techniques and skills	<p>In consultations, it was expressed that adult educators have techniques and skills to present the subjects to adult learners such as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. creating interactive educational tools</li><li>2. organising training in line with learners’ needs</li><li>3. time management skills in training activities.</li></ol>
Communication skills	<p>In consultations, it was expressed that adult educators have communication skills to engage and interact with adult learners such as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. using verbal and non-verbal communication, and visual materials to present the current subject</li><li>2. creating a good atmosphere for learning</li><li>3. selecting topics for classroom interactions.</li></ol>
Digital and media literacy skills	<p>In consultations, it was expressed that adult educators have digital and media literacy skills to transfer to adult learners such as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. using blended learning</li><li>2. using gamification in learning activities</li><li>3. using digital tools, interactive presentations, and virtual learning.</li></ol>



2.2.4. Interpersonal skills knowledge gaps among adult educators

Since we set to carry out field research with the aim to assess and identify how interpersonal skills can be integrated in the overall adult education, it was crucial for us to understand the knowledge gaps between what adult educators know and their learning needs toward improving, strengthening, and evaluating their own interpersonal skills; and further, explore the knowledge gaps between what adult educators know and their learning needs to integrate interpersonal skills development in overall adult education by applying or transferring interpersonal skills to the adult learners through non-formal learning practices in their work.

We reached out to a wide range of adult educators in project countries in order to consult them on their needs and gaps at front-line of the implementation of adult education programmes and interpersonal skills educational programmes in their work or practices. Our sample consists of consultations with full-time and part-time adult educators in Latvia, Lithuania, Iceland, Norway, Spain, and Turkey. We consulted 20 adult educators from each country, who are educators with at least 5 years of experience in adult education that we asked about their experiences in integrating interpersonal skills in their adult education work.

Evidence from consultations revealed that the whole adult education spectrum does not consider nor reflect on the crucial role interpersonal skills play in the career, social, personal, cultural, and professional development of both adult educators and adult learners. Though consultations participants expressed to having a high level of communication skills, and theoretical knowledge about the subjects they teach, or they train about, there were not any indications on how interpersonal skills are integrated in and connected to other aspects of inclusive classroom interactions such as adult educators’ communication skills, Emotional Intelligence level and theoretical knowledge about the subjects.



**Table-3. Interpersonal skills knowledge gaps among adult educators**

EXISTING KNOWLEDGE	KNOWLEDGE GAPS	LEARNING NEEDS
<b>Theoretical knowledge in the subjects:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. creating the content of a training programme.</li> <li>2. being able to explain the content to learners.</li> <li>3. ability to reflect on or respond to class questions</li> </ol>	<b>Characteristic features of adult educators:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. having empathy towards learners</li> <li>2. Emotional Intelligence development skills</li> </ol>	<b>Improving the characteristic features of adult educators:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. classroom coordination</li> <li>2. being empathy towards learners</li> <li>3. communication and time management skills</li> <li>4. Emotional Intelligence development skills.</li> </ol>
<b>Presentation techniques and skills:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. creating interactive educational tools.</li> <li>2. organising training in line with learners' needs</li> <li>3. time management skills during training activities.</li> </ol>	<b>Physical features of adult learners:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. dealing with arising issues while working with different age of the learners</li> <li>2. considering gender-sensitive and a cultural perspective</li> </ol>	<b>Consideration of physical features of adult learners:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. dealing with conflicts while working with different age of learners</li> <li>2. considering a gender-sensitive and a cultural perspective</li> <li>3. considering their needs on special needs.</li> </ol>
<b>Communication skills:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. using verbal and non-verbal communication, and visual materials to present the current subject</li> <li>2. creating a good atmosphere for learning</li> <li>3. selecting topics for classroom interactions.</li> </ol>	<b>Cultural differences awareness level:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. developing appropriate presentation techniques on cultural differences</li> <li>2. considering cultural differences and other social barriers among the learners.</li> </ol>	<b>Strengthening cultural differences awareness level:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. developing a positive approach for dealing with prejudices, or stereotypes in class</li> <li>2. developing appropriate presentation techniques on cultural differences</li> <li>3. considering cultural differences, or social barriers among learners.</li> </ol>
<b>Digital and media literacy skills:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. using blended learning</li> <li>2. using gamification in learning activities</li> <li>3. using the digital tools, interactive presentations, or virtual learning.</li> </ol>	<b>Characteristic of classroom interactions:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. skills for creating opportunities to receive input and feedback from adult learners.</li> </ol>	<b>Improving skills to prepare classroom interactions:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. skills for creating good atmosphere for learning</li> <li>2. skills for creating opportunities to receive input and feedback from learners</li> <li>3. digital skills and creating methods which increase peer interaction, dialogue.</li> </ol>

From Table-3, the middle column presents the interpersonal skills knowledge gaps identified among adult educators in project countries based on existing knowledge against lacking knowledge. This reveals that while adult educators' knowledge rate in interpersonal skills continues to grow at exponential rates; there is a big gap that has never been reflected on and taken into consideration in the overall adult education. As adult education institutions continue to put efforts in strengthening adult educators' theoretical knowledge of the subjects and improving classroom dynamic through digital education to interact with adult learners, there remains uncertainty in how interpersonal skills are integrated in adult education if the adult educators themselves lack such skills.

As such, it is the adult education institutions that should play a central role in determining the outcomes of the different adult education interventions, with significant implications of interpersonal skills. That is, the adult institutions must focus on preliminary analysis of the implications of interpersonal skills in adult education as the starting point of creating learning and training interventions for adult educators to improve their interpersonal skills of these aspects:

**1. Improving the characteristic features of adult educators:**

- having empathy towards learners.
- Emotional Intelligence development skills.

**2. Taking into consideration the physical features of adult learners:**

- dealing with arising issues while working with different age among adult learners.
- considering a gender and cultural-sensitive perspective.

**3. Strengthening cultural differences awareness level of adult educators:**

- developing appropriate presentation techniques on cultural differences.
- considering cultural differences and other social barriers among the learners.

**4. Improving adult educators' skills for preparing classroom interactions:**

- skills for creating opportunities to receive input and feedback from adult learners.

**2.2.5. What builds an effective training on Interpersonal skills?**

To begin with, our research observed a high level of uncertainty inherent in the planning, designing, and delivering of training interventions in adult education for which context analysis and training needs assessment policy does not yet exist among adult education institutions operating in non-formal learning settings.

There is clearly a great deal of uncertainty concerning how training programme aspects on interpersonal skills development are taken into consideration at the planning and designing level of such a training. Yet the ways that the outputs of

such a training contribute to the outcomes and substantially to impact, is equally unclear as there is a lack of information on how such training results are evaluated from an Impact Pathway perspective. One issue that this research has brought to the fore is that only the experiences of adult educators is not enough to integrate interpersonal skills in education if they themselves are not empowered to facilitate adult learners' interpersonal skills development.

That is, the decision to develop a training should be prompted by the perception that it can contribute to overcoming the problem or challenges to interpersonal skills in adult education and among adult educators. The training needs assessment should substantiate this perception with consultation, which is a methodologically, research sound process which supports the analysis of the situation with the aim to gather the necessary information to build an adequate picture of the problem context; develop the profile on the characteristics of potential learners; and identify the capacity, knowledge gaps and learning needs of potential learners in relation to addressing the existing problem of interpersonal skills.

Hence, with the information gathered from the training needs assessment, one can proceed with designing and organising the training manual, which addresses and responds to the knowledge gaps and learning needs expressed by potential learners during the consultations. This designing process of a training focuses on the development of the training results (Outputs, Outcomes, and Impacts), goals, and learning objectives. It furthermore identifies appropriate training methodology with related learning activities, session plans, and end-of training evaluation.

While exhaustive evaluations are still lacking within adult education, as it is difficult to assess whether and to which extent adult education initiatives are successful in responding to the problem of interpersonal skills development or is affecting behavioural change among adult educators who are most likely to integrate and transfer these skills to adult learners. The focus must be on developing the material for training and dissemination, but with clear information on how such material is to be used by the training participants. Furthermore, provide clear guidelines on how to evaluate and report the impact made by the participants and implementing organisations after the training to understand how, through impact and transfer evaluations they are integrating interpersonal skills in their adult education work or practices and the impact this is having on adult learners.

Hence, to build effective training on interpersonal skills, it is important to clearly identify:

Table-4. Elements of effective training on interpersonal skills

1. CONTEXT ANALYSIS	2. TASK ANALYSIS
<p>Gathers information about learners' organisational or life environment. Whether the potential learners for the training are from a group, formal organisations, or institutions or from local community, the questions below help develop a picture of the context in which they work or live.</p> <p>Questions for the context analysis:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How is the learner's organisation or community structured?</li> <li>2. What factors within learners' organisation favour the increase of interpersonal skills?</li> <li>3. What factors within learners' organisation limit the efforts to interpersonal skills development?</li> </ol>	<p>Gathers information about learners' actual work, role or responsibilities in their organisations or community. The task analysis enables the determination of the interpersonal skills knowledge, attitudes, or behaviours which learners need to develop to better do their work.</p> <p>Questions for the task analysis:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What tasks do learners carry out in their organisations that require interpersonal skills knowledge, attitudes, or behaviours?</li> <li>2. What specific interpersonal skills, attitudes, or behaviours do learners need to carry out those tasks?</li> <li>3. What interactions or relationships do learners have with adult learners within their organisations?</li> </ol>
3. BROADER COMMUNITY CONTEXT	4. LEARNERS' CHARACTERISTICS
<p>Gathers information on the factors favouring or limiting the integration of interpersonal skills in adult education that have an impact on the learners work while working with adult learners.</p> <p>Questions for interpersonal skills context analysis:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are the main interpersonal skills issues or problems in adult education in the context of non-formal learning?</li> <li>2. What are the factors favouring the integration of interpersonal skills in adult education? (opportunities)</li> <li>3. What are the factors limiting the integration of interpersonal skills in adult education? (challenges)</li> <li>4. How are these interpersonal skills opportunities and challenges experienced by adult educators and adult learners?</li> </ol>	<p>Provides an idea about learners' life experiences, which influence the choice of methodology and learning activities.</p> <p>This enables the establishment of the personal or professional reasons for the learners' potential interest in the training, which helps while determining learners' expectations and desired change.</p> <p>Elements to consider for learners' characteristics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Age</li> <li>2. Gender</li> <li>3. Language level</li> <li>4. Disability</li> <li>5. Motivation</li> <li>6. Occupation</li> <li>7. Existing interpersonal skills knowledge, attitudes, or experiences.</li> <li>8. Cultural differences</li> <li>9. Digital or media literacy skills.</li> </ol>



## CHAPTER 3.

### Non formal learning and interpersonal skills

### 3.1. Interpersonal skills awareness through non-formal learning

Non-formal learning is an extensively used and intensely debated notion in the field of adult education. It stands for a range of experiential learning principles, methodologies, and approaches outside of formal education system, commonly emphasising on adult learners' career, social, cultural, personal, and professional development. It is acknowledged and recognised to providing unique learning opportunities to millions of Europeans on a daily basis by strengthening the European values such as volunteerism, participatory democracy, solidarity, and human rights.

The advantage of non-formal learning in the integration of interpersonal skills in adult education is its flexibility in teaching, training, and learning process where training learning activities are planned, designed, and structured around the learning needs and knowledge gaps of the learners or their desired change. This adds to the fact that, the formal education system falls short on the most skills that a person needs to live a content and fulfilled life. The school system no matter how far one can go, it never teaches students anything about listing skills, Emotional Intelligence, or Interpersonal Skills to name few. Yet once one is exposed to work or practices, they are expected to have somehow acquired and development such relevant skills which facilitate the way we work, interact, and perform, not only professionally, but also in any social interactions.

Evidence from consultations shows that the adult educators working with adult learners, especially part-time adult educators, are not offered any training on developing any of the above skills, which should enhance their professional, social, and pedagogical skills to facilitate their work with adult learners. Further, it was observed that there are not any common grounds where adult educators could share their experience and get support from peers on interpersonal skills development. Therefore, non-formal learning in line with the lifelong learning ideology, offers unique opportunities to integrate best practices and methods which accommodate interpersonal skills in adult education to meet the needs of both adult educators and adult learners.

### 3.2. Empowering adult learners with interpersonal skills knowledge

Empowerment is the process by which individuals gain control over the factors that shape their lives. It is the process by which individuals increase their skills, assets and attributes and build capacities to gain access and make their voice heard. This implies that individuals cannot be empowered by others. That is, individuals can only empower themselves to achieve their desired changes.

Therefore, adult learners are their own assets, our role as adult educators is to facilitate and/or accompany them by creating effective learning opportunities and favourable conditions, which allow them to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes towards their social, cultural, educational, and personal development. Hence, empowerment is a fundamental concept within the adult education, which emphasises the need for creating favourable conditions through an experiential learning that is built around adult learners' profiles and lived experiences.

Therefore, any adult education programme in non-formal educational settings, which acknowledges and draws upon the adult learners' expertise and practical experiences is the best investment in their learning, future. That is, consulting adult learners about their learning needs and knowledge gaps toward interpersonal skills development and then, take them in consideration in adult education work, plays a vital role in addressing the social, gender, cultural, health, economic, or employability barriers that negatively affect adult learners' well-being.

That is, any adult learners' empowerment interventions should be designed in a manner that facilitates adult learners to acquire the knowledge, skills, and competences they need to innovate and prosper. Thus, empowerment has an important role to play in recognising adult learners identity and developing their interpersonal skills by building on their common challenges, values, and cultures. Hence, adult education should seek to facilitate the adult learners to articulate, adapt, engage, participate, and shape their own future by offering them access to practical training that strengthen their interpersonal skills.





### 3.3. How to effectively transfer interpersonal skills to adult learners

Many adult education programmes in non-formal learning settings often teach and train adult learners in the same way as children are taught or trained, which left most learners frustrated, and thus, lose their interests in following up with classes or programme. Thus, an effective transfer of interpersonal skills to adult learners need to consider the most important characteristics of the adult learners which must be borne in the mind of an adult educator while handling adult learners in training, or teaching programmes, and at the same time, the adult educator should be aware of the implication those characteristics have on the overall learning and teaching process among adult learners. But how we as adult educators can identify those most important characteristics of adult learners?

Table-5. The Characteristics of Adult Learners

Characteristics related to adult learner as an individual	Characteristics related to adult learner experience
<div>1. slowness in learning.</div> <div>2. hate being blamed or ridiculed.</div> <div>3. forgets quickly.</div> <div>4. requires recognition and respect.</div> <div>5. tends to be shy.</div> <div>6. needs to be acknowledged.</div> <div>7. loses temper quickly,</div> <div>8. needs closer, personal attention</div>	<div>1. Has a lot of knowledge through past interactions.</div> <div>2. Prefers to be involved in the planning of activities.</div> <div>3. Prefers to share, exchange ideas and experiences.</div>
Characteristics related to what should be learned	Characteristics related to how different activities are performed
<div>1. Prefers to learn things related to key interests.</div> <div>2. Requires learning for quick results.</div> <div>3. Cannot sustain learning interests for longer time.</div> <div>4. Prefers to learn new areas and skills.</div>	<div>1. Prefers to learn things related to current concerns.</div> <div>2. Likes to learn those things that do not hinder current concerns.</div>

Further, to be able to facilitate adult learners’ empowerment with interpersonal skills, the necessary attitudes and training skills as a facilitator are vital, rather than as a teacher. It is thus essential for the adult educators to have an open and friendly relationship with themselves, and adult learners based on respect and equality and at the same time, facilitate the same among adult learners themselves. Such a comprehension of interpersonal skills by an adult educator brings about an atmosphere of respect, acceptance, and encouragement where adult learners feel free to ask questions and share ideas.

This creates an atmosphere that makes learning interesting and worthwhile for

the adult learners, and which, furthermore, encourages the learners to decide on some of the topics to discuss. In this way, the topics discussed are relevant and useful to the adult learners, which allows them to become more receptive to acquiring new knowledge and attitudes about interpersonal skills. But how we as adult educator can develop the Qualities of Good Facilitator.

Table-6. The Qualities of a Good Facilitator

Facilitation qualities	
<div>1. knowledgeable about the subject matter.</div> <div>2. able to set a conducive dynamic learning environment.</div> <div>3. audible and uses simple language.</div> <div>4. able to apply a cultural and gender-sensitive approach.</div> <div>5. conversant with the learners’ needs and problems.</div> <div>6. able to improvise learning materials and equipment.</div> <div>7. able to use participatory techniques of training.</div> <div>8. able to have positive attitude to development of classroom interactions.</div>	
Training qualities	
<div>1. Able to use lecture method:</div> <div><div>A straight talk without much interruption. Often used when introducing new subject matter. A lecture should be of 30-45 minutes long or less and it should be followed by any of the other techniques listed below.</div></div>	
<div>Advantages:</div> <div><div>• Less time consuming.</div><div>• Covers large audience.</div><div>• Good for introducing new subject.</div></div>	<div>Disadvantages:</div> <div><div>• Less participatory.</div><div>• Can be boring if long.</div><div>• Does not lead to discovery.</div></div>
<div>2. Able to us group discussion and brainstorming sessions:</div> <div><div>A face-to-face conversation or deliberation on a subject of mutual interest among the learners. Sharing or exchange of ideas and information is encouraged among the learners under the guidance of the educator, which emphasises the participation of learners and helps to digest the ideas introduced through the lecture technique.</div></div>	
<div>Advantages:</div> <div><div>• Participatory.</div><div>• Learning interesting.</div><div>• Generates ideas.</div></div>	<div>Disadvantages:</div> <div><div>• Time consuming.</div><div>• Requires more preparation.</div><div>• More resources/materials are used.</div></div>
<div>3. Able to use case study:</div> <div><div>A written or verbal presentation which is used to illustrate or make clearer theoretical points which are introduced to the learners during a lecture.</div></div>	
<div>Advantages:</div> <div><div>• Stimulates more examples.</div><div>• Strengthen discussion and dialogue</div><div>• Improve problem-solving skills.</div></div>	<div>Disadvantages:</div> <div><div>• Difficult to prepare cases.</div><div>• May offend learners unknowingly.</div><div>• Time consuming.</div></div>

## 3.4. Enhancing adult institutions capacity through social research

Our research evidence suggests that the first step in developing interpersonal skills in adult education, is to assess the interpersonal skills learning needs and knowledge gaps among adult educators to determine the type of training and training resources which are able to respond to those identified learning needs and knowledge gaps. It is therefore crucially important to assess gaps in current programmes to identify why existing approaches fail to integrate interpersonal skills in adult education. Furthermore, it is equally important to assess the adult education institutions' readiness to integrate and foster interpersonal skills development in their educational programmes.

That is, only results from such research can be used to understand the nature and seriousness of the problem to guide the selection of best interpersonal skills educational programmes that reflect adult educators and adult learners' learning needs and knowledge gaps. Our research methodology introduces the necessity of adapting materials of Open-Ended Consultations to adult educators' learning needs while designing training or teaching activities, which furthermore provides a complete set of workshops learning activities to assess both adult educators and adult learners' interpersonal skills learning needs and knowledge gaps as the basis for planning, designing, and organising effective training-teaching activities for adult learners.

Open-Ended Consultations are problem-solving and problem identification workshops to voice the priorities, concerns, opinions, perspectives, and ideas of the research participants on integrating interpersonal skills development in adult education. The prepared facilitators lead workshops on various aspects of interpersonal skills in adult education. The participants are provided with the opportunities to express their learning needs and knowledge gaps on their strengths, potential problems, or challenges towards integrating interpersonal skills development in adult education.



ACTIVITY-1	REFLECTING ON EXPERIENCE WORKSHOP
Purpose	used to capture the motivation, imagination, and energy of a workshop audience, encouraging them to look on their professional behaviour in a way that prepares them for new learning. It is often used at the beginning of a workshop or at a transition from one topic to another.
Audience	A variety of audiences: adult educators, adult learners, or trainers, and other: civil society leaders, rights defenders, volunteers, etc.
Instructions	<p><b>TASK-1:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. issue blank 3X5 cards to each of the participant. Then, ask each to think and write down a sentence that describe interpersonal skills.</li> <li>2. divide the participants into small groups and ask each participant to share the reasons to why they chose that sentence with the group. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• aim is to provide groups opportunities to explore their thoughts, attitudes, experiences or understanding on interpersonal skills in their work to spark spontaneous conversations and feedback.</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p><b>TASK-2:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. After each group has finished discussing their sentences, ask each of the group to select 3 sentences that reflect the whole group.</li> <li>4. And then, handout follow up questions and ask them to explore these questions in the smaller groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are your learning needs: the knowledge, skills, attitudes, or competences needed to integrate interpersonal skills in adult education work or practices?</li> <li>• What are the existing challenges that limit your interpersonal skills while working with adult learners?</li> <li>• What are the desired professional competences that you would like to develop to transfer interpersonal skills to adult learners?</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
Debrief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start the debriefing by asking for a volunteer from each group to share points that highlight their discussions. Keep in mind that the next workshop is built based on the outputs from this activity.</li> <li>• Therefore, in the debriefing, invite questions and feedback about each group's presentation.</li> </ul>
Logistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flip-chart paper, large sticky notes, markers, and a tape.</li> <li>• A wall with enough space to attach several sheets of flip-chart paper for each group.</li> </ul>
Require time	<p><b>120 minutes:</b> as a facilitator, you should expect to spend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 minutes on giving instructions.</li> <li>• 70 minutes for group discussion and to have written the outcomes.</li> <li>• 35 minutes on the debriefing at the end of the activity.</li> </ul>

ACTIVITY-2	EXPERIMENTING & PRACTICING WORKSHOP
Purpose	used to encourage participants to use knowledge in a practical way, providing them with the opportunities to practice and involve in new behaviours and skills in safe environment in which to try out new things before putting them into practice in the real world.
Audience	A variety of audiences: adult educators, adult learners, or trainers, and other: civil society leaders, rights defenders, volunteers, etc.
Instructions	<p><b>TASK-1:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ask participants to go back to their small groups and then issue a blank flip chat to each group.</li> <li>2. Ask each group to think, by describing a learning approach that they use or used in integrating interpersonal skills development their adult education work or practices.</li> </ol> <p><b>TASK-2:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. After each group has finished discussing what they wrote, ask each group to discussion what the used or applied learning activities that reflects the above approach.</li> <li>4. Further, ask them to discuss what the link between their learning approach and learning activity, were the learning outcomes reached.</li> <li>5. And then, handout follow up questions and ask them to explore these questions in their smaller groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the appropriate learning activities that you would like to be involved in, to develop your knowledge, skills, attitudes, or competences to effectively integrate interpersonal skills in your adult education work or practices?</li> <li>• What are the appropriate learning activities that you would like to develop your knowledge, skills, attitudes, or competences about to effectively transfer and apply interpersonal skills to adult learners?</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
Debrief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start the debriefing by asking for a volunteer from each group to share points that highlight their discussions. Keep in mind that the next workshop is built based on the outputs from this activity.</li> <li>• Therefore, in the debriefing, invite questions and feedback about each group's presentation.</li> </ul>
Logistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flip-chart paper, large sticky notes, markers, and a tape.</li> <li>• A wall with enough space to attach several sheets of flip-chart paper for each group.</li> </ul>
Require time	<p><b>120 minutes:</b> as a facilitator, you should expect to spend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>15 minutes</b> on giving instructions.</li> <li>• <b>70 minutes</b> for group discussion and to have written the outcomes.</li> <li>• <b>35 minutes</b> on the debriefing at the end of the activity.</li> </ul>

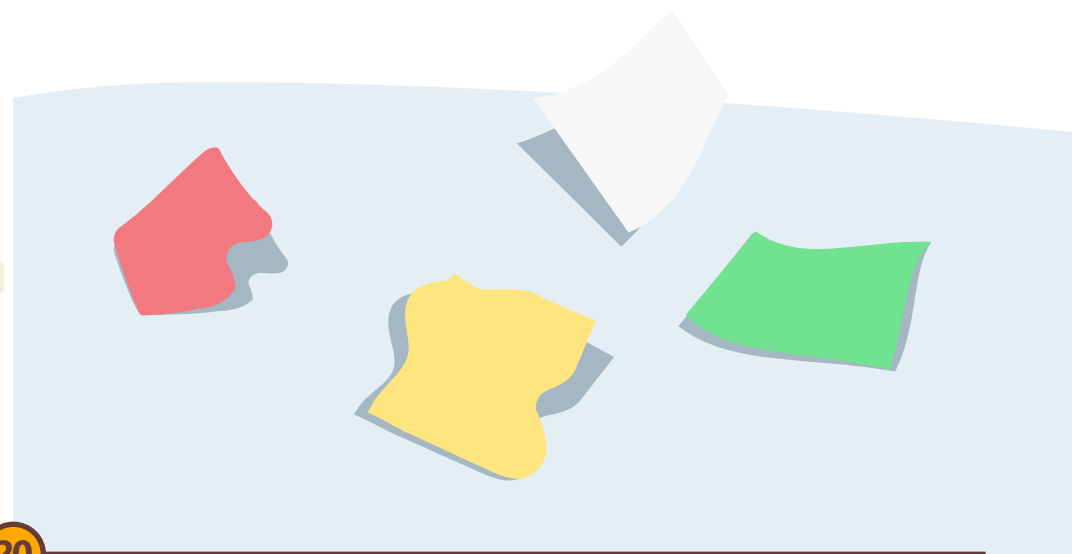
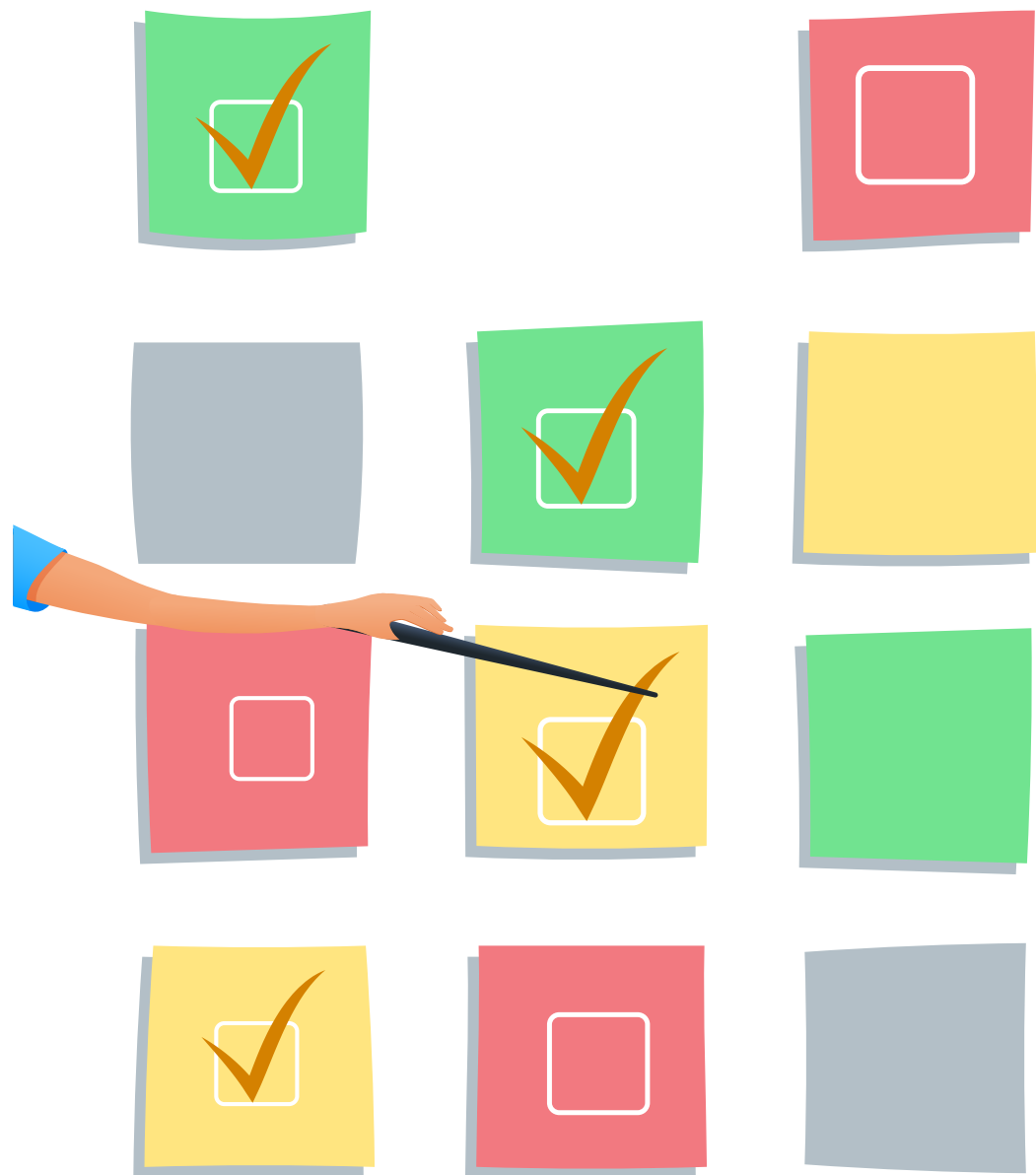
ACTIVITY-3	PLANNING FOR APPLICATION WORKSHOP
Purpose	used to provide a stimulus for implementing and utilising new learning outside the workshop context. Planning activities prepare participants for and increase the likelihood of transfer of learning. These activities are often used at the conclusion of a workshop or when the focus of the workshop is about to shift from one topic to another.
Audience	A variety of audiences: adult educators, adult learners, or trainers, and other: civil society leaders, rights defenders, volunteers, etc.
Instructions	<p><b>TASK-1:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ask participants to go back to their small groups and then issue a blank flip chat to each group.</li> <li>2. Ask them to describe the training resources, tools, or materials, etc. they use or used in their adult education work to develop interpersonal skills among adult learners.</li> </ol> <p><b>TASK-2:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. After each group has finished discussing what they wrote, ask each group to discussion what is or was the effectiveness of those resources on interpersonal skills development.</li> <li>4. Further, ask them to discuss what the link between the learning outcomes and impact made or reached at the community level while using those existing resources.</li> <li>5. And then, handout follow up questions and ask them to explore these questions in their smaller groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What kind of resources or materials that should be developed and produced to help you better integrate interpersonal skills in your adult work or practices?</li> <li>• What kind of resources or materials that should be developed and produced to help you better transfer interpersonal skills development to adult learners?</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
Debrief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What kind of resources or materials that should be developed and produced to help you better integrate interpersonal skills in your adult work or practices?</li> <li>• What kind of resources or materials that should be developed and produced to help you better transfer interpersonal skills development to adult learners?</li> </ul>
Logistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flip-chart paper, large sticky notes, markers, and a tape.</li> <li>• A wall with enough space to attach several sheets of flip-chart paper for each group.</li> </ul>
Require time	<p><b>120 minutes:</b> as a facilitator, you should expect to spend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>15 minutes</b> on giving instructions.</li> <li>• <b>70 minutes</b> for group discussion and to have written the outcomes.</li> <li>• <b>35 minutes</b> on the debriefing at the end of the activity.</li> </ul>

### 3.5. The role of non-formal learning in interpersonal skills development

The characteristics of the current adult education do not support interpersonal skills development among adult learners, and yet they are expected to have such skills as they are deemed crucially important in the today labour market. Hence, the very idea and the core element of adult education in supporting a productive career development for adult learners are therefore not met. Adult education institutions' capacity to provide context-specific programmes toward interpersonal skills development for adult educators is perceived legitimate to carry out an adult education work and practice that are likely to be important in supporting adult learners' preparations for a productive career.

That is, the adult education institutions operating in the non-formal education settings and contexts are the ones that are able to easily integrate interpersonal skills development in their educational programmes with various, flexible teaching and training approaches based on experiential learning, with a higher degree of success for adult learners in delivering learner-centred and participatory learning activities. Hence, it is for this reason that the present handbook examined how adult educators' interpersonal skills are being put to use in their current teaching and training with adult learners.

While it is far too early to know how adult educators who participated in our research are able to further provide non-formal learning teaching and training activities that support interpersonal skills development in their adult education work or practices, our handbook provides a record of evidence on how the adult education institutions can start responding to present challenges of interpersonal skills among both the adult educators and adult learners, which may serve as a foundation for future studies and research into how adult education shapes long-term trajectories of adult learners' interpersonal skills development in the years to come. There is thus a great need for prioritising monitoring and evaluation of adult educators training to initiate trajectories towards assessing, how over time interpersonal skills development are integrated and fostered in adult education.





## CHAPTER 4.

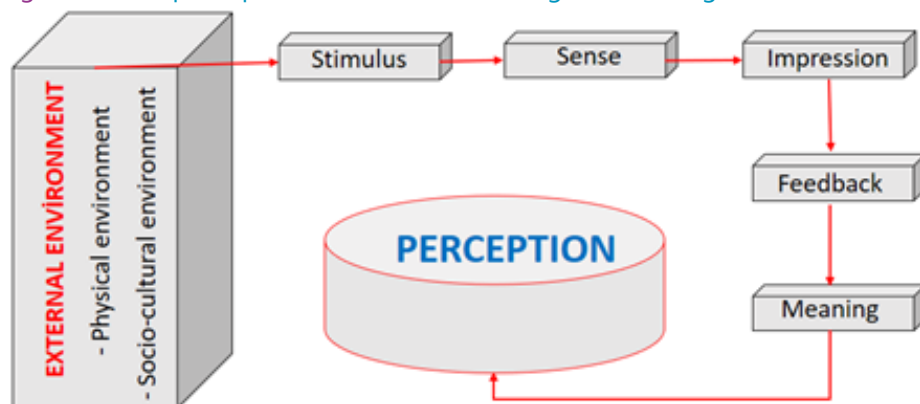
### Challenges to interpersonal skills among learners



## 4.1. Influence of perception to the training and learning process

Perception is the capability of our senses to capture, receive, and process an information, and actively makes sense of that information. It is the cognitive process that enables us to understand our surroundings with the stimulus that reach us through our sensory organs. This important cognitive ability is very important in adult learners' daily life because it makes it possible for them to participate in the training and learning process, and at the same time, capture, receive, and process learning information, and actively makes sense of it with regard to the present environment and atmosphere in the classroom.

Figure 2. Perception process in terms of training and learning



Perception is a process consists of five stages as seen in the figure above. Thus, the perception process may take a shorter or a longer time depending on the nature of the detected information and present environment and atmosphere in classroom. Therefore, the formation of the stages of perception is important in adult education and this is where the interpersonal skills knowledge comes in handy. That is, perception requires a conducive learning environment with good classroom atmosphere that takes into account the barriers that might hinder the learning process among adult learners such as cultural, gender, and age differences, as well as their communication skills and Emotion Intelligence level.

In terms of increasing and maintaining the quality of adult education, it means that, only theoretical knowledge in the subjects, presentation techniques and skills, communication skills or digital and media literacy skills of adult educators are not enough to create a classroom or training room's conducive learning environment with a good learning atmosphere if other important aspects of the teaching or training process such as the characteristics of adult learners, and the social barriers that might hinder the learning process are not assessed, identified and taken into consideration by paying attention to the framework of perceptual aspects of adult learning within learning environments designed to meet adult learners' desired social changes. In short, interpersonal skills level of an adult educator is a prerequisite to carefully consider each of the factors affecting the perception of the learning content, and the interests of the learners.

## 4.2. Impact of Emotional Intelligence to the training and learning process

Emotional Intelligence is an adult educator's ability to recognise, perceive, and manage their own emotions, and at the same, recognise, perceive, and consider the emotions of adult learners in the classroom or training room interactions.

This is crucially important for creating a conducive learning environment that values and respect adult learners' existing experiences when an adult educator is making the choice of the methods to use that should consider a number of factors to determine which methods are suitable or not, by relating to how each of their learning methodologies could facilitate the perception of the learning content among adult learners. Hence, this approach of planning and designing teaching and training activities allows adult educators to make the appropriate choices for their applied learning methods while interacting with adult learners. Therefore, here is where Emotional Intelligence become in and even more crucial in the delivering of teaching and training activities for adult learners, by being aware of and relating to the social factors affecting the learning process.

Further, such an experiential learning facilitates adult learners to develop their own Emotional Intelligence level, allowing the learners to be equipped with the skills that help them adapt to learning conditions and thus strengthening their perception of the learning contents with curiosity and passionate by adapting to different teaching and training structures through continued learning process with flexibility and critical thinking that support self-management, and positive interactions with the adult educator and the other adult learners.

That is, adult educators who have a higher level of Emotional Intelligence are able to knowingly or unknowingly transmit and facilitate Emotional Intelligence development among the adult learners who learn how to understand their own emotions, manage, and deal with them effectively, and consider those of others which help them to achieve a successful productive career in their adult years compared to adult learners taught or trained by adult educators with a lower-level of Emotional Intelligence.

On the other side, the adult educators might experience enormous amounts of negative emotions while interacting with the adult learners. Hence, the adult educators who are hardly aware of their own emotions and cannot manage and deal with them effectively tend to experience negative emotional experiences such as sadness, shame, or guilt if things do not go as planned. In particular, as an adult educator's mood in the classroom is of great importance for the positive interaction, if an adult educator is unable to manage their emotions and reflect on their behaviours, it can affect the learning process negatively.

### 4.3. Social and gender expectations' influence on the learning process

Beyond the communication skills, Emotional Intelligence, and Interpersonal skills of an adult educator, a successful training and teaching process within adult education is also largely dependent on social and gender expectations among the adult learners, which has a significant influence on the training and learning content perception as well as the creation of an interactive, participatory, and conducive learning environment.

In section 1.4, and section 3.3, we have established the crucially important role of considering the factors that affect the adult learners' learning process such as age, gender, culture, and social status as well as considering the characteristics of the adult learners play in the creation of conducive learning environment and good classroom atmosphere to make learning interesting and worthwhile, as the learners feel included in teaching, training, and learning process. In this section, from a gender perspective, we look at how those social factors, if not properly addressed negatively influence the learning process based on the assumptions and the expectations that they are so obvious and therefore, an adult educator should not put any efforts and time to assess and identify them at the planning and designing phase of a training or teaching activity.

Assumptions and expectations linked to gender influence people's actions and choices. Adult education settings often provide a unique and crucial safe space for the adult learners to discuss and share their thoughts and experiences on their gender identities and expressions. Someone may have direct or indirect experience of gender-based violence, either from their young age which they carried to their adulthood, or another might have been confused about their sexuality, or gender identities, or might have been bullied because their actual or perceived gender did/does not fit the socially accepted gender norms. Hence, this is what makes adult education challenging as an adult educator is dealing with learners with enormous lived experiences, and most might have found the ways to deal with those experiences, thus, being prepared on this reality as an adult educator is the key to create gender diversity in the classroom interactions where everyone feels welcome regardless of their gender and sexual identities or whether they belong to a sexual or gender minority group.

That is, gender glasses should be used in the planning, designing, delivery, and evaluation of adult education activities. Further, this requires critically thinking and intersectional criticism on the crucial role of interpersonal skills to consider and implement adult education programmes in a gender perspective.



### 4.4. The demands and rewards of interpersonal skills in diverse groups

Regardless of the level of training or the nature of subject, whether it is general knowledge or a preparation for a professional development, adult education has a common goal: that the learner can use their own developmental capacity effectively to improve their social and economic situations.

However, in the context of adult education, working with adult learners with different characteristics such as education level, socio-cultural level, profession, gender, age, etc. is not an easy challenge and the adult educators should be prepared well enough to appeal to and interact with all these groups. Because the demands of interpersonal skills for adult learners in their work, practices, or professions, create different groups of adult learners who need training on interpersonal skills development, and they should be met at an equal level and being satisfied with gain interpersonal skills to be able cope and adapt to their work, practices, or professional settings. Hence, the quality of a great adult educator is measured by their inclusive nature in their teaching or training process which is judged based on the level of their interpersonal skills.

That is, adult educators with high-level of interpersonal skills are able to create an inclusive, conducive learning environment in an atmosphere that facilitates classroom interactions and thus, they are able to solve encountered problems, and apply teaching methodologies which make educator-learner interactions more successfully, which comes as an added value because of their emotional intelligence competencies. Hence, for this purpose, adult educators should be emotionally and interpersonal skills literate so that they can both set an example for adult learners and at the same time, create positive learning environments.



## CHAPTER 5.

### Interpersonal skills and gender-sensitive practices

## 5.1. Felt emotions, displayed emotions and gender differences

The literature on classroom interactions points to three important areas for adult educators to consider when using interactive teaching-training activities in their classrooms or training-rooms: carefully selecting topics for interactions, helping adult learners understand diverse communication styles, and giving the learners specific tools for interacting successfully. That is, an adult educator's attention to these three areas will help adult learners who are unfamiliar with interaction in classrooms group work settings, and social situations to develop their interaction skills and thus, increase their communication and emotional awareness skills to connect with their emotions which helps them to easily express their thoughts.

In the classrooms' interactions or in any social interactions, it often happens that the emotions an adult learner is displaying are perceived differently by others from the learner's actual felt emotions or how the learner is feeling which affects group work interactions and productivity, which furthermore has more to do with the learners culture, and their actual or perceived gender; a social construct that limits many learners from expressing their emotions as emotion expression has been deemed by society as sign of weakness or a mental related problem. These assumptions limit the learners from effectively and assertively expressing their thoughts due to fear of retribution. On the other hand, the more learners develop interpersonal skills, the more they come to realise the importance of felt emotions expression as this allows them to be understood during groups interactions. That is, in classroom interactions it is impossible for the learners to read each other's minds and figure out the emotions each and every one of them is feeling, thus, assertively expressing their emotions allow them to relate to one another and openly communicate with each other.

Hence, it is important that learners have specific topics about which to converse that supports cultural differences explorations. This helps to put focus on their interactions and introduces a specific emotions expression space associated with their cultures, especially when working with adult learners with a migrant or a refugee background. With these adult learners, those topics are best taken from real-life situations in which the learners need to communicate, such as comparing their life in a new country, work, health, housing, relations, or community services and those of their home country. As part of a needs assessment, learners can be asked how the different genders in their cultures are expected to behave or act during groups work interactions, what topics they want to talk about, and how topics that are difficult to discuss in some cultures, such as gender and sexuality norms, and the topics that may create division in the class, such as religious or political topics, might best be approached.



## 5.2. Intersectionality and interpersonal skills in the learning process

The present lack of interpersonal skills among adult education institutions poses a particular challenge to train and teach adult learners with a migrant or refugee background compared to increasing demands of interpersonal skills that support adult learners' communication skills and Emotional Intelligence development as well as integrational skills to adapt to a new community, or have access to labour market. That is, it is not enough to assess the adult learners' communication skills and Emotional Intelligence in isolation of adult learners' interpersonal skills which overlap and are influenced by the learners' actual or perceived gender, and cultural differences. Hence, understanding this intersectionality and approaching it from an intersectional, cultural, and gender criticism plays a crucially important role in adult learners' learning process towards interpersonal skills development.

The challenges to social research in conducting training needs assessment in the context of adult education furthermore generate tensions between the training content, and adult learners' cultural or gender differences, tasks, functions, lived experiences, etc. For example, many adult education institutions have a one-fit-all training programmes for adult learners, which are planned and designed by adult educators without consulting the adult learners they intend to deliver the training to about their learning needs or their knowledge gaps, and assess or identify their characteristics, and the social, cultural and gender barriers which influence classroom interactions and the perception of learning information by the learners during the training delivery.

Hence, to meet interpersonal skills learning needs or knowledge gaps among the learners, the planning phase of each training programme should thus focus more on how such overlapping, intersecting elements are to be considered and built up on for successful training-teaching interventions.

### 5.3. How emotions differ across cultures affects the learning processes

Culture is a shared set of beliefs, attitudes, norms, values, behaviours organised around a central theme and found among people who communicate with the language(s) within the same geographic region of or in specific country. In other words, culture is the beliefs, values, behaviour, norms, habits, customs, traditions, and the material objects which constitute a people's way of life and which have a profound impact on how people display, perceive, and experience emotions as well as how they learn, interact, and communicate with other people of different cultures. The culture in which we live provides structure, guidelines, expectations, and rules to help us understand and interpret various emotions, and information.

Although how a learner perceives displayed emotions by another learner differ from culture to culture, the learner's ability to recognise and interpret associated facial expressions appears to be the most relevant skills to have in a world where felt emotions expression has been deemed a flaw, a weakness, a mental problem, and thus, it should be feared and ignored at all costs. Even though one's emotions operate independently of one's culture and language, expressing these emotions assertively and in considerate of the others do require one to have developed an adequate level of Emotional Intelligence and communication skills, and with an adequate level of interpersonal skills one can understand and relate to the fact that one's culture and language communication level heavily effect the emotions expression process, especially when in diverse group of adult learners.

That is, culture influences one's emotions in various ways. Culture constrains how emotions are felt and expressed in a given cultural context by shaping the ways people should feel in certain situations and the ways people should express their felt emotions. Therefore, introducing intercultural learning in adult education as a reflection of the multiculturalism and multilingualism in adult learners' learning process further facilitates both inner or outer communication and interaction in the classroom or training-room among adult learners who belong to the same or different languages, religions, customs, and traditions. However, it should be stressed enough that intercultural learning depends a lot on different non-verbal communication methods that vary from culture to culture and gender.

Thus, gender differences is also an important communication barrier to consider in intercultural learning activities, especially in the dominantly today's traditional societies in which adult education institutions operate. Even being aware of being of a different gender while interacting with learners is an invisible communication barrier which limits one to express their thoughts and ideas on the basis that a person of certain gender should not speak up or that the person is not intelligent enough to speak their minds or that the person should agree with the persons of the dominant gender at all times and in all social situations. That is, factors such as social and racial status, gender-sexual norms, power relations, dominance, or submission in communication, create prejudices and stereotypes-based barriers in intercultural learning that an adult educator should be aware about.



### 5.4. Safety & risk: working with hostility and deception in diverse groups

Today, reasons such as internal and external migration, deepening economic and employment issue constitute the basis for adult learners to have many learning needs towards developing different skills. Adult educational institutions are thus the most important learning environment where the adult learners from different places and cultures come together as individuals to learn. Thus, with differences in terms of characteristics and social barriers, it often happens that adult learners sometimes create disadvantage learning environment for the others and these differences can lead to conflicts and hostility that might affect class interactions.

This phenomenon has produced a group of disadvantaged adult learners at risk of exclusion on the basis of their ethnic, racial, gender, or sexual minority groups consisting of the adult learners at risk of poverty, social exclusion, discrimination, racism, and violence, such as immigrants, refugees, disabled persons, isolated elderly persons, etc. Hence, to ensure the success of these disadvantaged adult learners, it is crucial and necessary for adult educators and their institutions to prepare and to create safe in class learning environment, to include and support disadvantaged learners' active participation in classroom interactions, especially minority groups, and adult learners with an immigrants or refugee background who are often deceived by the adult education system that never consider their needs or lived experiences, but rather, try to make them fit in to new social and cultural norms that require them to erase their past, and build a new future.

Thus, the first step in working with hostility and deception in diverse groups is the ability of the adult educators to carry out training and teaching programmes that increase peer interaction. That is, as an adult educator comes to know adult learners and their interests, the topics that adult learners want to discuss can be selected easily. This can be as simple as creating interactive learning activities for peer interactions and feedback through experiential learning. Opportunities to interact can be included in all phases of the activity such as preview, presentation, practice, and evaluation. [Table-7](#) provides examples of activities.



Table-7. Activities to increase peer interaction

ACTIVITY STAGE	TYPE OF ACTIVITIES
<b>Preview:</b> Activate prior knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussion questions</li><li>• Conversation grids</li><li>• Peer interviews</li></ul>
<b>Presentation:</b> Introduce new content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• visual presentations</li><li>• media-based presentations</li><li>• focused listening tasks</li></ul>
<b>Practice:</b> Use new content to build the skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Experiential learning in workshops</li><li>• Problem-based learning in brainstorming sessions</li><li>• Game-based learning in groups-based tasks</li><li>• Collaborative learning in group's structured discussion selecting topics for classroom interactions.</li></ul>
<b>Evaluation:</b> Determine effectiveness of learning, determine next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• reflective journal's note cards</li><li>• forms for formative evaluation</li><li>• reflection on the activities</li></ul>

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