


The report maps the competence needs experienced by the individual adult educator and approach to joint Nordic education initiatives and competence development.

A large, dark blue circular graphic that serves as a background for the title text.

The Adult Educator's Competences and Competence Development



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Preface



The Nordic countries all have a well-established and broad-based adult education system aimed at developing, adapting and strengthening adult competences to a rapidly changing society and labour market.

Historically, the Nordic education systems have turned out to be adaptable, but in recent years they are experiencing an increasing pressure to grasp and adapt to the new requirements and needs that arise, among other reasons, in the wake of globalisation. Digitisation, demographic displacements and changes in labour supply are just some of the conditions that directly affect both content and organisation of the education systems.

It places great demand on the educational institutions, but not least on the individual teacher, as it is in the specific learning situation that the quality and effect of education and learning is achieved.

Although the educator plays a decisive role in ensuring quality in education, numerous Nordic reports show that at system level there is a lack of attention to and support of adult educators, with regards to competence development, qualifications and professionalisation. This applies whether at basic level or continuing education level.

While the reports primarily address competence development from a systemic perspective, the specific skills needs that the individual educator may require or experience in his or her work have not previously been subject of research in a Nordic context.

The purpose of this report is to supplement the findings and conclusions of previous reports by mapping the competence needs that the adult educator has experienced him or herself.

At the same time, the report should clarify the adult educator's approach to joint Nordic education initiatives within adult learning to provide basis for recommendations for further work on the competence development of Nordic adult educators.

The report summarises the results of a quantitative questionnaire survey conducted in the autumn of 2016 and spring 2017. The survey has been initiated and financed by the Nordic Network for Adult Learning (NVL) and Nordplus Adult, under the Nordic Council of Ministers, and prepared in collaboration with Jonas Sprogøe, Bedre Praksis ApS.

The results of the report will be presented at the joint Nordplus / NVL conference entitled "The Adult Educator and Innovation" in Lund, September 2017.

The authors would like to thank all respondents from all the Nordic countries for their answers and, not least, personal views on competence development and competence development needs.

Enjoy the reading.

Malene Vangdrup,
Main Administrator of Nordplus Adult

Maria Marquard,
Danish Coordinator of Nordic Network
for Adult Learning (NVL)

Introduction



The Nordic Council of Ministers, NMR, has a vision of the Nordic region as a strong knowledgeable region, with well-functioning education, research and innovation environments across borders.

NMR works with education at all levels. In the field of adult learning, NMR supports and develops the work through two programs – Nordplus Adult and NVL, the Nordic Network for Adult Learning. Both programs include all parts of adult learning, whether formal, non-formal or informal learning, and whether general or vocational adult learning, non-formal adult education (folkeoplysning) or voluntary association work.

The programs are part of NMR's efforts to strengthen and develop Nordic cooperation in adult learning through the systematic exchange of experience and best practice, but each program with its focus and purpose, complementary to one another.

Nordplus Adult offers financial support for educational cooperation in the five Nordic and three Baltic countries, as well as the autonomous territories of Greenland, the Faroe Islands and Åland.

Specifically, the programme supports transnational mobility, network collaboration and project collaboration. The main idea is that through collaboration between different types of stakeholders from different countries with different experience, knowledge and tradition, new inspiration can be created and ideas can be developed that can strengthen development in the field. Nordplus Adult should, to a great

extent, operate bottom-up, and the institutions themselves decide which themes and topics they will address within the overall objectives of the programme.

NVL aims to promote lifelong learning through a particular focus on adult learning. NVL's task is to bridge the gap between research, education and policy and to create a link between needs and interests in Nordic adult learning environments as well as implementation of NMR's priority themes.

In practice, NVL works through thematic, transnational and cross-sectoral networks. There are currently ten active networks in NVL, all of which work with specific themes relating to NMR's priorities¹.

Nordplus Adult and NVL cooperate, among other areas, on connecting adult learning environments, dissemination of results, information dissemination and concrete projects. When relevant, contact and cooperation between Nordplus mobility and co-operation projects and NVL's thematic network work is created.

Competence development of the adult educator, as a way to ensure quality in adult learning, is an increasingly relevant theme in the work of both Nordplus Adult and NVL.

At an overall level, Nordplus Adult should be a catalyst for development and innovation in adult learning, whether developing education



NVL's work is based on NMR's strategic plan "Quality and Relevance in Education and Research" from 2015.

¹ See NVL's current network: nvl.org/Natverk/Alle-natverk



This report describes the results of a survey conducted in the autumn of 2016 and spring 2017. The study focused on what the Nordic adult educator considers important competences for working with adult education; the adult educators' own experiences regarding needs for competence development; and the adult educators' view on potential Nordic education initiatives in the adult education field.

With this focus on the practitioners' experience of their own competence needs, the report aims to complement the results of previous reports and provide a basis for further work on competence development of Nordic adult educators.

opportunities for adult educators, meeting new needs among course participants or testing new organisational forms and educational methods. The projects will often address the specific challenges that each educator experiences, for example, an educational situation. In other cases, the aim is to create system-level development.

In a concrete project context, the different types of activity support the competence development of the adult educator in different ways. Nordplus Adult provides financial support for educators and education staff to participate in continuing education courses, self-organised study stays or educational visits to partner institutions. This enables them to develop their professional skills and gain insight into other cultures and learning traditions. The program also supports development projects that, among other things, aim at the development of courses for adult educators, adult counsellors and other educators.

In almost all NVL's networks, the adult educator is pointed out as being particularly important for the quality and effect of education and learning. The need for special didactic and pedagogical competences is expressed in relation to areas such as guidance, assessment of prior learning, literacy, intercultural target groups, entrepreneurial and innova-

tive learning processes, prison education and learning at work.

Immersion in more specific themes and the desire to professionalise adult educators within defined areas can also be seen in formal education, e.g. Master's degrees in guidance, secondary language education, special education, etc.

In NVL, we discuss continuously how to promote the competences of adult educators, both at the general adult education level and at the academic didactic level, within each network and if necessary, as an overall effort.

Both NVL and Nordplus Adult work flexibly and network oriented and have experience with working methods that can be a starting point for innovative ways to create continuous competence development for adult educators at a Nordic level.

BACKGROUND FOR RESEARCH

Adult learning and competence development take place in educational institutions, professional organisations, private and public workplaces as well as civil society.

The term "adult educator" should therefore be understood broadly and covers several roles, e.g. teacher, facilitator, consultant, advisor and volunteer coordinator.

As mentioned above, both Nordplus Adult and NVL have been focusing on the importance of the adult

educator for the quality of education of adults and in the organisation and implementation of adult learning processes, which has resulted in the following reports:

NVL’s development project about adult education “Innovative Learning Processes in Practice” (Marquard 2009), in which a central recommendation is to “establish Nordic and cross-sectoral opportunities for continuing and further education in the form of more process and experience-based courses that can complement existing education”.

The Nordplus Adult Project “BABAR” (Milana et al. 2010a) describes education systems and opportunities for basic adult education in Denmark, Estonia and Sweden. An important conclusion is that adult educators are generally not described in policy papers and that there are no formal adult education competence requirements for the education of adult educators in the three countries.

In the project “BAEA – Becoming Adult Educator in the European Area (Milana et al. 2010b) under the EU’s former Grundtvig programme, a key conclusion is that, in spite of the general focus on adult education, very little attention is given to the qualification of adult educators. The report recommends establishing basic adult education and qualifying continuing and further education opportunities to strengthen professional adult educator competences.

The study “Teaching Adults – Just a matter of talent” (Rønning & Grepperud 2009) also shows the discrepancy between the adult educator’s importance for the quality, impact and benefit of teaching and the lack of attention to competence development and professionalisation of the adult educator.

The report “IVEU – Integration Through Adult and Continuing Education” (Nordic Council of Ministers

2010) emphasises the importance of the adult educator for successful integration strategies, and points to the need for systematic competence development of adult educators within specific subjects such as Nordic languages as a second language and assessment of prior learning.

“The Nordic Adult Educator – A mapping of competence requirements for adult educators and education opportunities within the adult education area in the Nordic countries” (Marquard & Sørensen 2011). The report states, among other things, that formal requirements are laid down for the adult educator’s academic competences, and, to some extent, general educational competences, but generally no formal requirements for the teachers’ adult education skills. However, interviews show that it requires special adult didactic skills to work with adult education. The survey showed that there are major national and sectoral differences in content and scope in the adult education offered. The report also points out that, despite differences in the area, there are many similarities between the Nordic countries, which make it relevant to recommend joint Nordic efforts in adult education.

The purpose of the Nordplus Adult project “Competence profiles and competence development for those who work with validation” (Aagaard et al. 2015) (coordinated by the National Knowledge Centre for Validation of Prior Learning, VIA UC) from 2014–2015 was to provide an overview of which competences the different validation practitioners need in order to provide high quality service. The project has resulted in a mapping of tasks for education advisors and others working with validation in practice as well as identification of their competence needs and recommendations for initiatives at Nordic and national level.

Briefly about the Survey



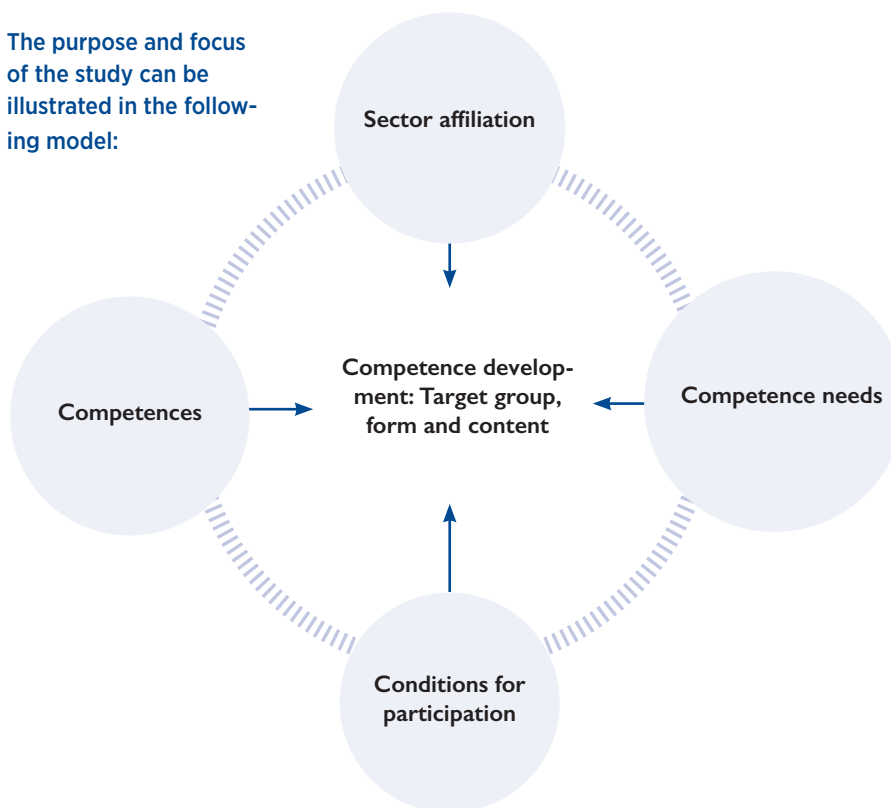
The study is in line with previously mentioned reports on the themes of adult educator, competences and competence development.

The special feature of this study is that we ask about the practitioners' own experiences and needs. The survey is a tendency analysis that provides a number of perspectives on the adult educator's competences and competence needs, as well as posing new questions that may be subject to further investigation or be subject to more research and further discussions in the Nordic region.

The study focuses on four themes:

- 1) The respondents' experience of the importance of different competences for working with adult learning
- 2) Their own competence needs
- 3) Competence needs in relation to sector affiliation
- 4) Conditions for participation, including the respondents' experiences with Nordic cooperation on competence development.

The purpose and focus of the study can be illustrated in the following model:



In order to target future competence development activities, it is investigated whether there are different views on the importance of competences and own competence needs depending on where you work with adult learning. The need for Nordic cooperation according to the respondents is also investigated.

The four corners of the model are important for how to organise competence development and constitute the key points on which the report is based. The four key points of the model consist of: *A competence dimension* that highlights the competences considered important and the extent a need exists for them to be developed, and: *A target group dimension* that explores whether there are differences in competence needs within different target groups, as well as exploring the experiences with and factors that are important for the ability or the wish to participate in Nordic competence development.

The questionnaire has been sent to a wide range of adult educators within private, public and civil society frameworks through already known Nordic networks in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland and Finland, as well as the autonomous territories with an invitation to forward the questionnaire to other relevant persons in the respondents' own networks. The advantage of this approach is that we have, relatively easily, been able to reach a large number of people – especially in countries where we do not have an overview of, or knowledge of, all relevant stakeholders.

”

The report should thus be seen as a contribution to the ongoing discussion of the need for Nordic cooperation on competence development of the adult educator.

The disadvantage is that we risk getting a distorted respondent basis if the questionnaire is sent to friends' friends or people who resemble oneself. The questionnaire is available in a Danish and English version and has not been translated into the mother tongue in the countries partaking in the survey, which may have kept someone from answering the questionnaire, and/or forwarding it in their own network. Finally, it has not been technically possible to clean up data for any double answers, so there may be a distorted weighting in some of the answers. As this report is only a tendency analysis we have not corrected for these possible data distortions.

The report describes the results of the study and provides some tentative recommendations for further work in NVL, Nordplus and other relevant bodies with an interest in Nordic competence development and adult education. The report should thus be seen as a contribution to the ongoing discussion of the need for Nordic cooperation on competence development of the adult educator.

The Structure of the Report

The first part describes the general distribution of the respondents' answers in relation to their gender, sector affiliation, educational level, employment (part-time or full-time), and if the person works with short or long-term education.

The second part, the competence dimension, describes the competences respondents that find important for working with adult learning, and what competences the respondents consider will strengthen their own work with adult learning. This section also describes the respondents' answers to the question: *Is there anything else you would like to become better at or know more about?*, which can clarify the quantitative answers.

In the third section, the target group dimension, the respondents' evaluation of the importance of different competences for the work with adult learning and competence needs is linked to their type of employment. This section also describes the respondents' experiences with, their needs and their arguments for Nordic cooperation.

The analysis in the respective sections is rounded off with a number of questions that can be pursued and examined further. These questions are summarised in the fourth and final section of the report together with a number of general conclusions and perspectives that can be addressed in a subsequent discussion of the adult educator's competences and competence needs in a Nordic perspective.



Please note that some charts and tables are presented in the report's appendices.

Section 1: General facts about the Respondents



This section describes general facts about the respondents. A total of 820 respondents started the questionnaire. Five hundred and forty-four respondents answered the questionnaire until and including the competence questions, and their answers form the basis for the analyses of the competence dimension. Five hundred and twenty-seven respondents completed the entire questionnaire, which provides the basis for the analyses of the target group dimension.

Normal practice in questionnaire surveys is to remove those respondents who do not complete the survey. For technical reasons this has not been possible without also removing the respondents who completed the questionnaire with partial answers. However, a test run shows no significant differences in percentage distribution, if the incomplete answers are removed.

The general distribution of age, gender and employment is shown in Appendix 1 of the report.

The respondents were also asked at what qualification level they teach in relation to the European Qualifications Framework².

2 <http://ufm.dk/en/education-and-institutions/higher-education/degrees-and-qualifications>

IN SUMMARY, THE ANSWERS SHOW THAT:

The majority of respondents are above 41, and over half of respondents (a total of 63%) are between 41 and 60 years.

67% of respondents are women, whilst 32% are men – 1% indicates “otherwise”.

62% of respondents indicate that they are employed in the public sector: NGOs and public education with 16% and private employees with 12%. Self-employed make up 4% of the respondents and employees in professional organisations or elsewhere each consists of 3%.

50% of respondents indicate that they work with adult learning in public education institutions, 22% work with adult learning in NGOs and non-formal adult education and 20% in a workplace connection. Within this category it was possible to provide several answers if the respondent was working with adult learning in a variety of contexts.

81% of the respondents work full time with adult learning.

53% of the respondents indicate that they are working with adult learning during longer periods, meaning in long-term courses and education.

47% indicate that they work with adult learning during shorter periods, such as course days, theme days, meetings, etc.

THE RESPONDENTS COULD PROVIDE SEVERAL ANSWERS
IF THEY TEACH ON MULTIPLE LEVELS:

27%

Adult vocational
education and training
(up to and incl. EQF 4)

26%

General adult education up to
and incl. upper secondary
level (up to and incl. EQF 4)

20%

Language courses and
other courses for migrants
and refugees (up to and
incl. EQF 4)

11%

Further adult education
e.g. academy profession degrees
(up to and incl. EQF 5)

12%

Bachelor's degree,
professional bachelor's
degree, diploma degree
(up to and incl. EQF 6)

7%

Master's degrees
(up to and incl. EQF 7)

36%

In contexts not described in
the qualifications framework
e.g. non-formal adult educa-
tion, evening school, leisure
time education, NGO

13%

Other

152%

Total

If we look at the respondents based on the qualifications framework, we see that the majority of respondents works with adult learning up to and including level 4, but also that many respondents work with adult learning outside the qualifications framework, e.g. in non-formal adult education, evening school, NGOs, and several respondents work with adult learning in a variety of ways.

RECAPITULATION AND DERIVED QUESTIONS

As mentioned initially, the study is not conducted as a representative survey, and does not necessarily reflect a typical adult educator in the Nordic region. However, in this study, the typical respondent is:

- A woman between 41 and 60 years.
- She is employed in the public sector and teaches full time at public education institutions, but also at private or public workplaces.
- She works within the European Qualifications Framework through Level 4, and may work with non-formal adult education at the same time.
- Her target group is primarily course participants / adult students, i.e. people who do not teach or facilitate adult learning processes themselves.



THIS RAISES THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

To what extent can the study be said to represent a typical adult educator, both in a national and Nordic framework?

Are there different needs for competence development depending on whether you work in the public or private sector, full-time or part-time?

Are there different needs for competence development in relation to the level in the European Qualifications Framework at which the person teaches?

Section 2:

The Competence Dimension



The competence dimension shows the respondents' answers with regards to what competences they believe to be important for their work with adult learning processes.

The respondents were asked to evaluate a “battery” of 11 different competences, relative to the degree of importance. Subsequently, they were asked to assess the extent to which the development of individual competences would enhance their work with adult learning processes.

The competences are inspired by the list of general adult education competences, which was derived from the report the Nordic Adult Educator (Marquard & Sørensen 2011).

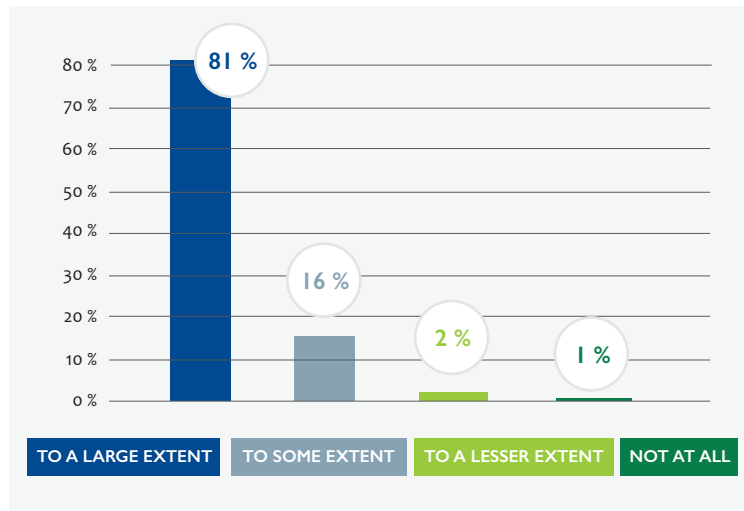
The report’s understanding of competence is inspired by Illeris (2011), which, based on a wide variety of competence definitions, defines competence as “being able to act in relation to certain known, unknown and unpredictable situations” (Illeris 2011: 33). The definition is appropriate in this context because it emphasises the action-oriented. Being able to act includes both to be *able* to do something and to *possess* something. In addition, the situations that the adult educator is in are at the same time known, unknown and unpredictable.

THE STUDY IS BASED ON THE FOLLOWING 11 COMPETENCES:

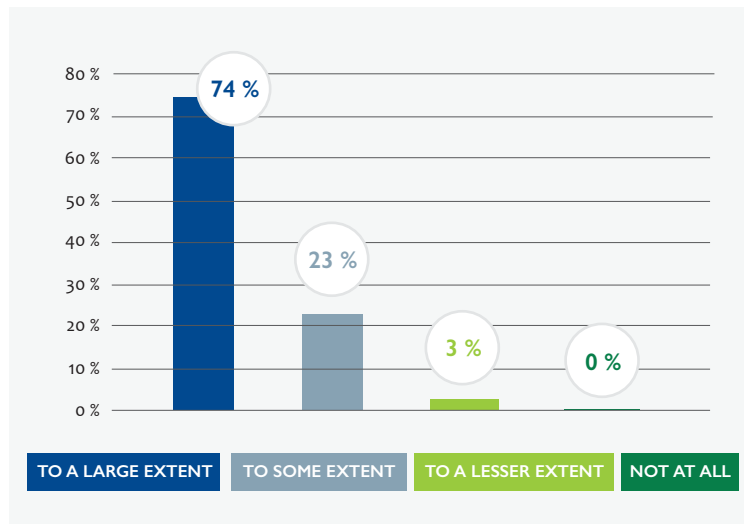
- Being able to treat adult participants as adults
- To have knowledge about adults’ learning and learning processes
- To have updated subject specific knowledge
- To have updated practice experiences
- Being able to communicate
- Being able to structure and plan
- Being able to use information and communication technology
- Being able to relate constructively to the resistance of adults
- Being able to use activating working methods
- Being able to give guidance to adults
- Being able to work in intercultural contexts

COMPETENCES THAT ARE IMPORTANT FOR WORKING WITH ADULT LEARNING PROCESSES

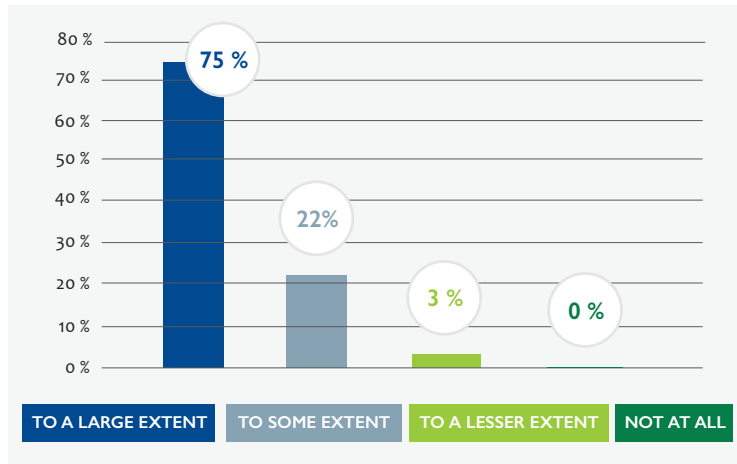
BEING ABLE TO TREAT ADULT PARTICIPANTS AS ADULTS



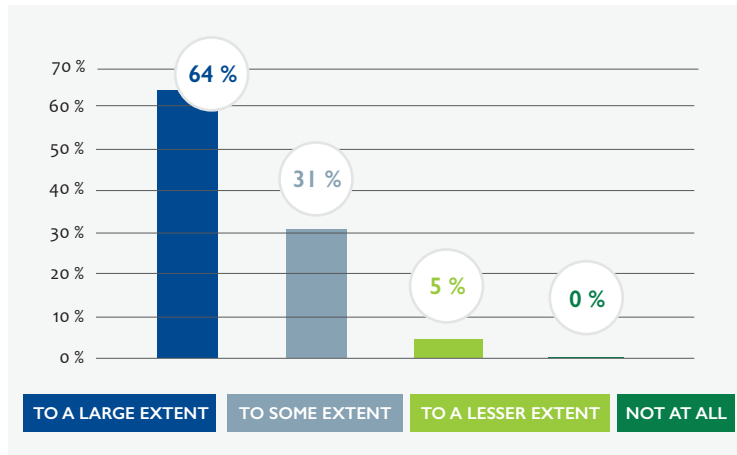
LEARNING AND LEARNING PROCESSES



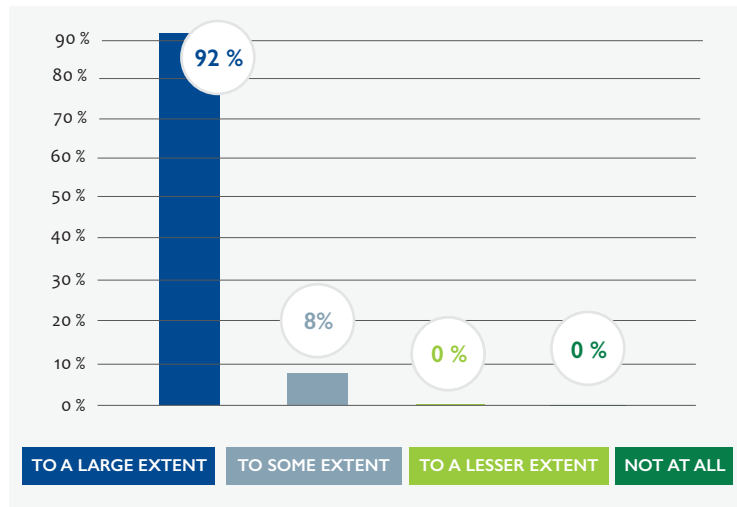
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SUBJECT SPECIFIC
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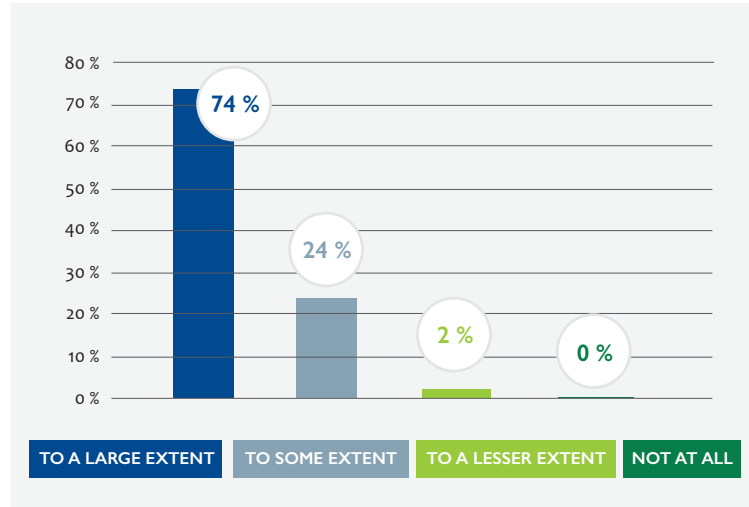
**UPDATED PRACTICE
EXPERIENCES**



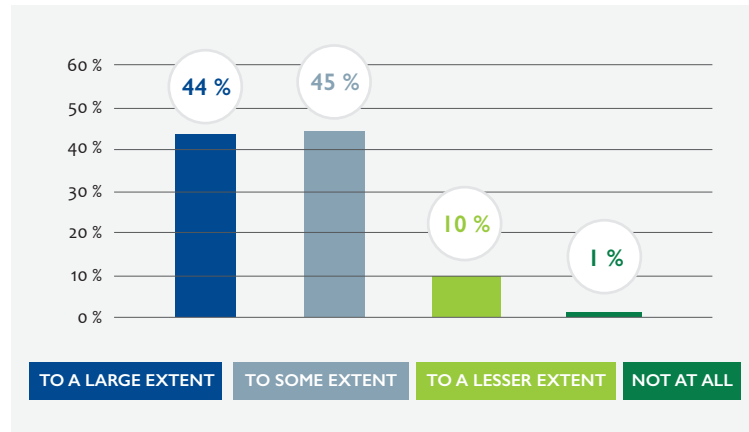
**BEING ABLE
TO COMMUNICATE**



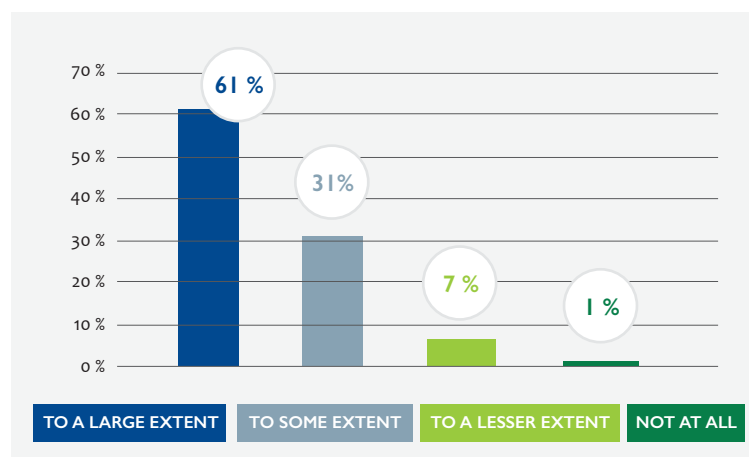
**BEING ABLE
TO STRUCTURE
AND PLAN**



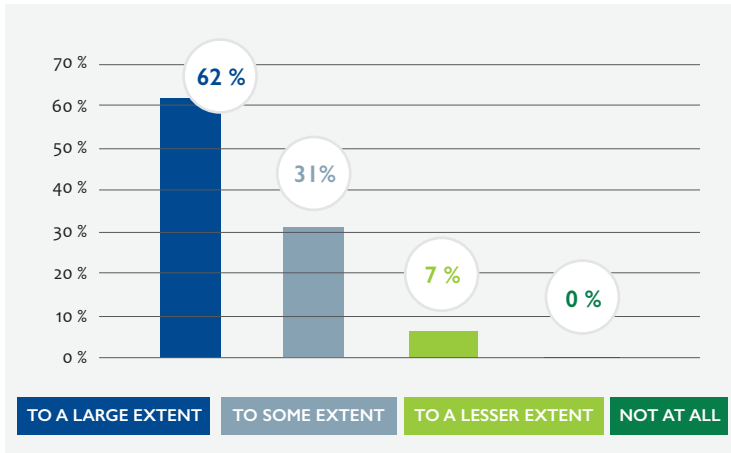
**BEING ABLE TO USE
INFORMATION AND
COMMUNICATION
TECHNOLOGY**



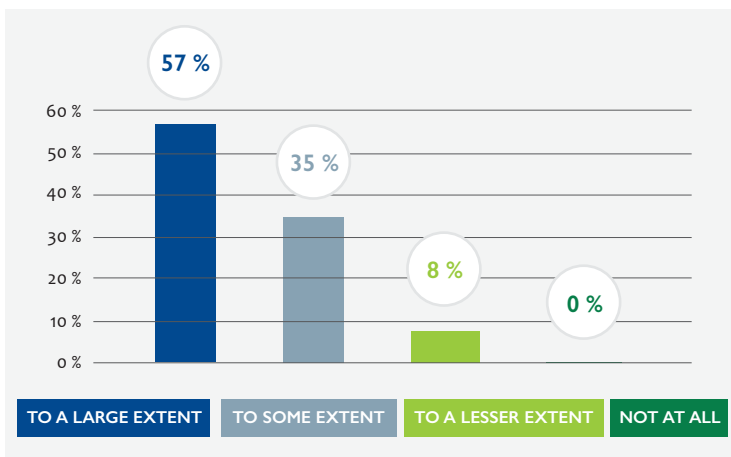
**BEING ABLE TO RELATE
CONSTRUCTIVELY
TO THE RESISTANCE
OF ADULTS**



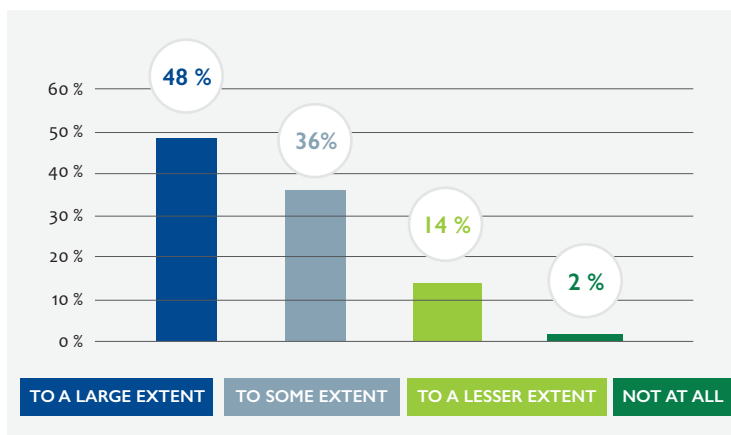
**BEING ABLE TO
USE ACTIVATING
WORKING METHODS**



**BEING ABLE TO
GIVE GUIDANCE
TO ADULTS**



**BEING ABLE TO WORK
IN INTERCULTURAL
CONTEXTS**





The respondents' answers support the outcome of the report the Nordic Adult Educator (Marquard & Sørensen 2011, p. 29), which shows that employment managers within adult education prioritise the following eight features in relation to recruitment of adult educators:

- Recognise and use adult participant's experiences and dialogical skills
- Understanding conditions of life and backgrounds of adults
- Dissemination skills
- Relational skills
- Dialogical skills such as listening, understanding, engaging and converse
- Personal impact
- Structure and ability to plan
- Updated practice experiences

RECAPITULATION AND DERIVED QUESTIONS

The answers show that most people consider all competences important for their work. For each competences there are at least 44% who consider them 'to a large extent' important for their work with adult learning processes. The answers do not reflect whether the respondents themselves possess the individual competences or how important the competences are relative to one another, but merely that the respondents consider them important.

In particular, the respondents attach importance to adult educational and didactic skills, such as being able to use activating working methods, being able to disseminate, being able to relate to the resistance of adults and having knowledge about adult learning and learning processes. Also, relational skills such as being able to treat adults as adults and to give guidance to adults are considered important.

Despite some different terminologies, the study shows that the individual adult educators are basically consider the same competences important.

Most surprisingly, 45% of respondents answer 'to some extent' to the question outlining the importance of using information and communication technology. This indicates that ICT competences are considered less important than several of the other competences. A possible explanation can be the respondents' high average age for whom ICT is not perceived a natural tool in teaching. Alternatively, it may reflect that people experience that traditional pedagogical and didactic skills such as using

activating working methods, having updated proficiency and dissemination skills are more central to teaching than being able to use 'tools' such as ICT.

Being able to work in intercultural contexts is given a relatively low importance. 36% say that it is 'to some extent' important and as much as 14% that it is 'to a lesser extent' important. One explanation may be that most respondents work in relatively culturally homogeneous contexts, and thus do not consider it an important competence. It can also be due to the fact that culture is considered an important factor in relation to adult learning processes, and the competence to cope with cultural diversity is therefore not considered valuable.

COMPETENCES THAT WILL STRENGTHEN THE WORK WITH ADULT LEARNING

The following question addresses the respondents' assessment of what they themselves feel may strengthen their work with adult learning processes, thus qualifying them further as adult educators. The answers highlight the respondents' experience of their own competence needs. The answers do not say whether or to what extent the individual respondent possesses that competence already, but only whether the respondents consider that the individual competences will make them better at doing their work.

Below you will find the respondents' assessment of which competences could enhance their work with adult learning processes.



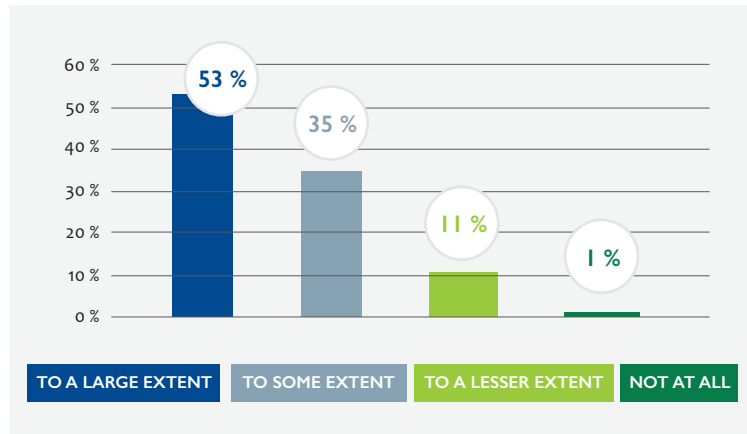
THIS RAISES THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

Are the selected competences covering all the skills necessary to work with adult learning processes?

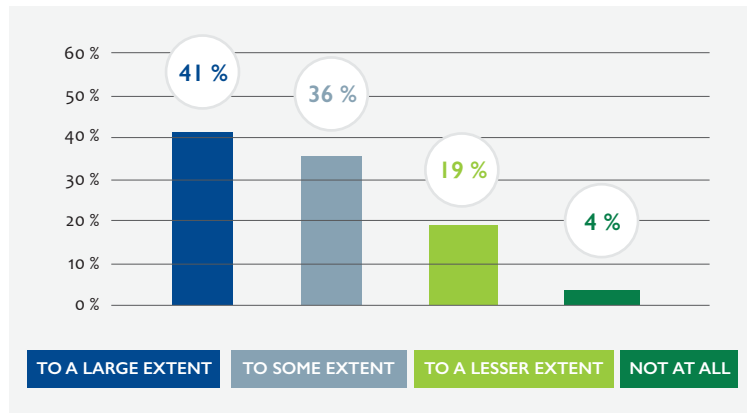
Why is the competence to use ICT valued so relatively low by respondents?

To what extent does the adult educator work in intercultural contexts and how important is culture considered in the teaching situation – and does it require special skills to teach in intercultural contexts?

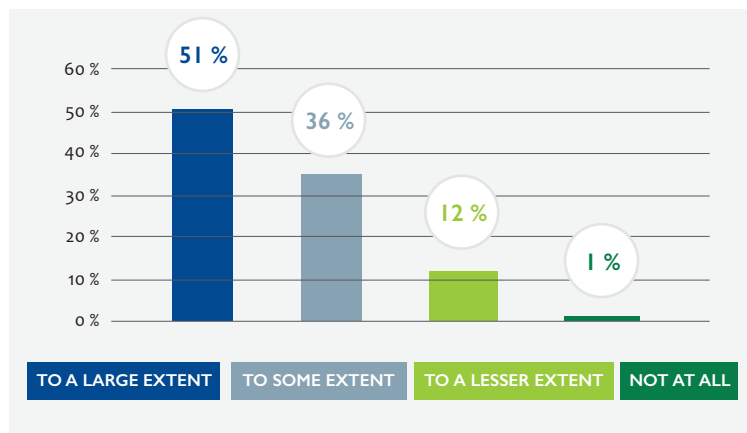
UPDATED SUBJECT SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE



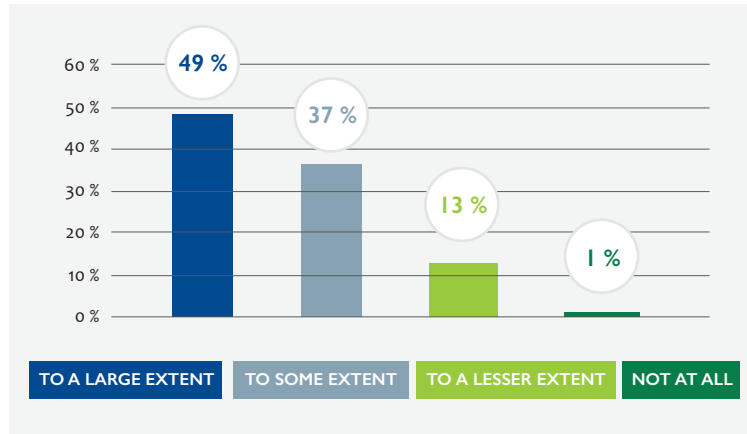
BEING ABLE TO TREAT ADULT PARTICIPANTS AS ADULTS



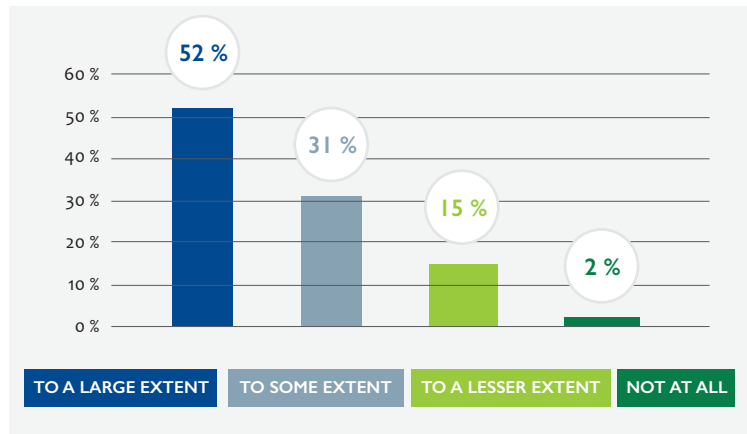
LEARNING AND LEARNING PROCESSES



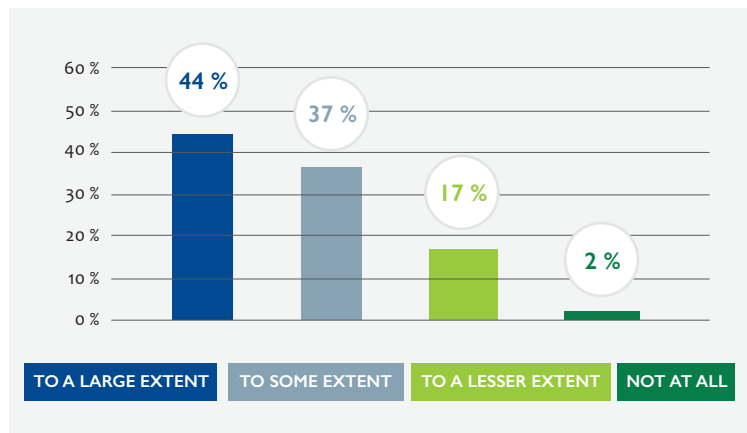
UPDATED PRACTICE EXPERIENCES



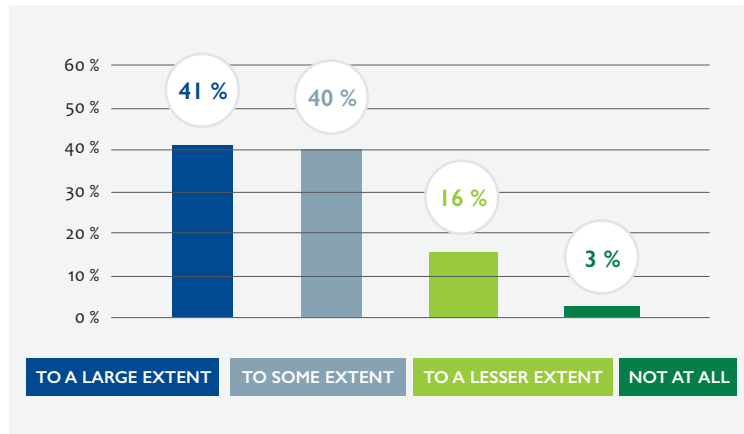
BEING ABLE TO COMMUNICATE



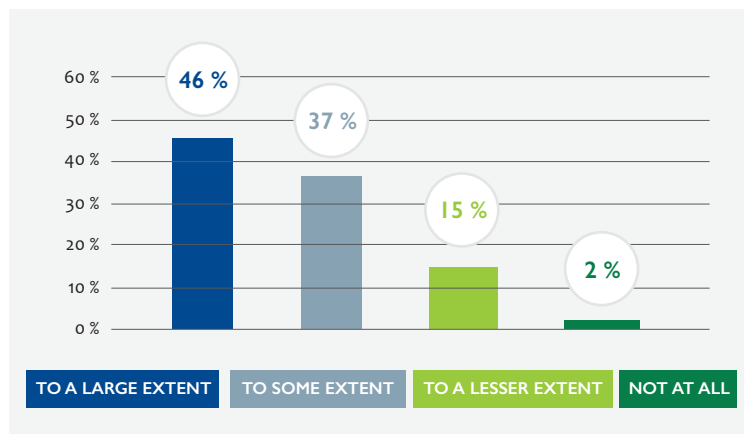
BEING ABLE TO STRUCTURE AND PLAN



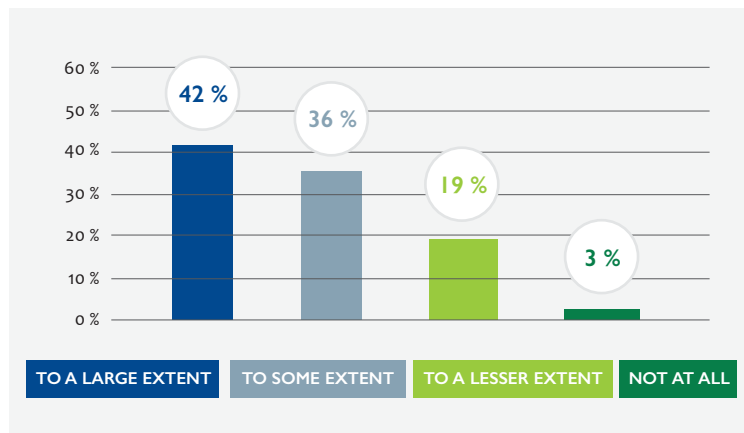
**BEING ABLE TO USE
INFORMATION AND
COMMUNICATION
TECHNOLOGY**



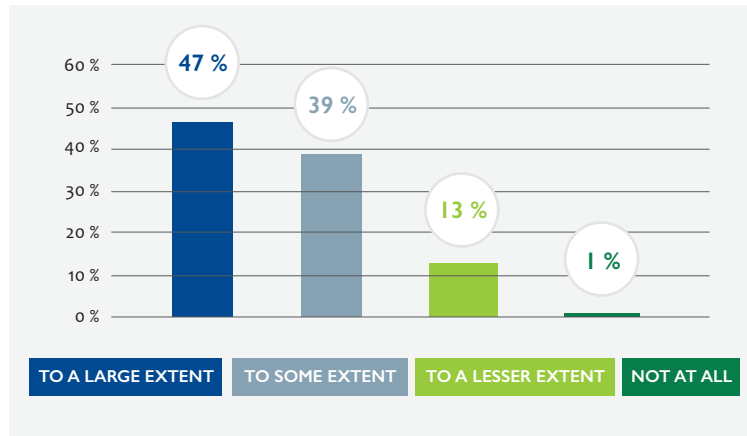
**BEING ABLE TO RELATE
CONSTRUCTIVELY TO
THE RESISTANCE
OF ADULTS**



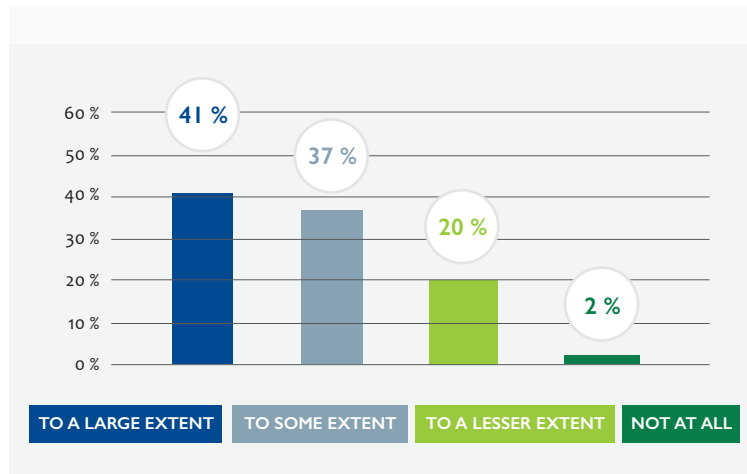
**BEING ABLE TO WORK
IN INTERCULTURAL
CONTEXTS**



**BEING ABLE TO USE
ACTIVATING
WORKING METHODS**



**BEING ABLE TO GIVE
GUIDANCE TO ADULTS**





THIS RAISES THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

What specific subject specific knowledge and what practical experiences will strengthen the adult teacher's work with adult learning?

Is the high importance given to adult education and didactics an expression of a low competence level of the adult educator and what does it mean for organising competence development?

Is the corresponding low importance given to the ability to work within intercultural contexts an indication that the adult educator possesses this competence sufficiently?

RECAPITULATION AND DERIVED QUESTIONS

Across the competences, respondents consider that it will 'to a large extent' or 'to some extent' strengthen their work with adult learning processes if they become more skilled, which indicate that there is a potential for competence development.

More than 50% of the respondents state that it 'to a large extent' will strengthen their work if they gain more knowledge about adult learning and learning processes. Dissemination skills and being able to apply activating working methods, are also considered important. The same competences were considered highly important among the respondents, which indicate that competence development in adult education and didactics is in demand.

Also, up-to-date subject specific knowledge and practice experiences are 'to a large extent' considered to enhance the work with adult learning processes. In this case, it is the more specific competences that are in demand.

It is considered less important to be able to work in intercultural contexts, to give guidance to adults, to be able to structure and plan education and to treat adults as adults. This may indicate that respondents experience having sufficient skills in these areas. Or, it may be that they consider that the competence in question is not particularly relevant to their work.

That relatively few respond that it 'to a large extent' will improve their work if they are able to work in intercultural contexts seems surprising, as a large proportion of respondents indicate that they work in language schools and with refugees and immigrants. It may be that the respondents feel sufficiently competent or that respondents consider that it does not require special skills to work in intercultural contexts.

The topics are divided into the following categories:

Overall category

METHODOLOGY, PEDAGOGY, DIDACTICS

Examples of statements:

- How to be stimulating and transform people's self- and professional identity
- Coaching
- To create an understanding of the benefit of learning as an adult
- Knowledge about learning in general
- I would like sparring and / or education to better integrate the life world of the adults into my education

Overall category

METHODICAL TOOLS

Examples of statements:

- The latest updates in IT in teaching and working with information.
- Practical approaches that can be adapted to different end-users.
- New technology. I do use smart phone and WhatsApp possibilities every day but more TVT would be good.
- ICT
- Digital tools in adult learning

Overall category

TARGET GROUP

Examples of statements:

- I would like to be better at working with students in need of support.
- Different learners (special education), such as dyslexia, etc.
- How we can be better at supporting the learning process of people with disabilities?
- Diagnoses and understanding of accompanying behaviour

Overall category

MANAGEMENT, ORGANISATION AND PLANNING OF EDUCATION

Examples of statements:

- How the benefits for adult learning can improve by learning more about how the teachers work in the school organisation
- Financing, we are under severe political pressure
- Planning / education in a politically managed organisation
- Strategic management of educational processes
- Plan new programmes that can be implemented or be an add-on to existing ones

Overall category

SUBJECT SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE

Examples of statements:

- Conflict management / resolution
- Mediation
- Arab and Eritrean culture
- Second Language Teaching

Overall category

TRANSFER AND LABOUR MARKET

Examples of statements:

- Better contact with businesses
- On the job learning
- Transfer
- Education and employment policies

THE QUALITATIVE ANSWERS

The respondents have been given the opportunity to describe whether there are other areas or competences they would like to become better at or know more about. As optional qualitative statements, the answers themselves are of course not representative, but they can provide an indication of some of the needs and wishes of adult educators in the Nordic region, and may be considered as content in future competence development activities.

RECAPITULATION AND DERIVED QUESTIONS

From the answers given, it appears that respondents want to know more about or improve on *Adult Education, didactics and the facilitation of learning processes* (27 statements). Short statements such as: “How to be stimulating and transform people’s self and professional identity”, “Coaching” and “Knowledge about learning in general” show that respondents want knowledge about facilitating learning processes that are also personally developing. This is categorised as method oriented because the statements focus on methodical competences.

Statements such as: “I would like to be better at working with students in need of support”, “Different learners (special edu-

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There are a number of statements that point to cooperation with businesses and relationship between education and work life

cation), such as dyslexia, etc.” and “How can we improve to support the learning process of people with disabilities?” point to a wish or need to improve or get more knowledge about *People with special needs* (17 statements). This is categorised as target group oriented because the statements are targeted specific groups.

Conflict management, language and culture, etc. (21 statements) is another area that respondents want more knowledge about or become better at. The category contains statements such as: “Conflict Management / Solution”, “Mediation”, and “Arab and Eritrean Culture”, but also concrete subjects such as “welding” and “mindfulness”. This is categorised as subject-specific oriented because the statements focus on specific professional subjects.

IT and communication appeared as an option in the quantitative part of the question, but was not considered very important. Nevertheless, the qualitative statements indicate that several respondents want more competences in IT and

digital learning (14 statements): “New technology. I do use smart phone and WhatsApp possibilities every day but more TVT would be good”, “ICT” and “Digital tools in adult learning”.

In statements such as: “How the benefits for adult learning can improve by learning more about how the teachers work in the school organisation”, “Financing, we are under severe political pressure” and “Planning / education in a politically managed organisation” the respondents indicate that they want to know more or to improve in the category *Management, organisation and planning of education* (20 statements).

Finally, there are a number of statements that point to cooperation with businesses and relationship between education and work life, for example: “Better contact with businesses”, “On the job learning” and “Transfer” (12 statements).

The answers given clarify and contextualise the 11 predefined areas of competence. They point to both general adult education skills such as conflict management, facilitation, didactics, etc. and the need for more specialised skills and subject specific knowledge within concrete areas. These areas are directed towards qualification of the individual educator in terms of method, target group and subject specific knowledge, while other statements point to more structural circumstances regarding adult learning processes, such as management, organisation and planning of education.



THIS RAISES THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

Information and communication technology is not considered highly important as a competence that will strengthen the respondents' work with adult learning. Nevertheless, several respondents mention the need for knowledge about and experience with specific digital tools. What can explain this discrepancy?

Can and should we, within a joint Nordic competence development framework, work to develop the competences that are inward-targeted to the teaching situation as well as competences related to structural and relational matters?

Section 3: The Target Group Dimension



The target group dimension shows the respondents' assessment of content and conditions for competence development in relation to their employment. This can contribute to a discussion of how a joint Nordic competence development should be targeted and organised and what elements and subject specific content should be included.

EMPLOYMENT, SECTOR AFFILIATION AND COMPETENCE REQUIREMENTS

The following section illustrates the relationship between the respondents' employment and sector affiliation and the skills they consider will enhance their work with adult learning processes. The individual tables are shown in Appendix 2 of the report.

In relation to the competence *'to treat the adult participants as adults'*, 45% of public sector employees consider that it will 'to large extent' strengthen their work with adult learning to possess or develop this competence, whereas only 25% of the self-employed consider the same.

Employees in the private sector, public sector employees and employees in professional organisations consider *'gaining more knowledge about adult learning and learning processes'* more important than self-employed and employees in NGOs and non-formal adult education.

Across employment groups, respondents agree that it 'to a large extent' will strengthen the work *'having updated subject specific knowledge'*, although self-employed respondents find up-to-date subject specific knowledge less important than other respondent groups.

All respondents consider *'updated practical experience'* highly important, except for employees in professional organisations, where the majority considers that it will only 'to some extent' strengthen their work with adult learning processes.

Across employment groups, respondents agree that it 'to a large extent' will enhance the work to become *"better at disseminating"*. However, private sector employees consider dissemination skills more important than other respondent groups.

Private employees and public employees attach the greatest importance to *'structuring and planning'*, while a larger percentage of employees in professional organisations, NGOs and self-employed people consider that it will only 'to some extent' strengthen their work.

'Using information and communication technology' is attributed less value by all groups – the least by the self-employed, where only 15% believe that it will 'to a large extent' strengthen their work using infor-

mation and communication technology and 10% of this group that it will 'not at all' strengthen their work. By comparison, 48% of public employees consider that it will 'to a large extent' strengthen their work and 3% that it will 'not at all' strengthen their work to possess this competence.

Across employment groups, respondents more or less agree that it 'to a large extent' will strengthen the work of adult learning processes '*being able to relate constructively to the resistance of adults*'. Employees in NGOs, non-formal adult education and in the private sector attach a little less value to this competence.

'*Being able to apply activating working methods*' is highly valued by all groups although 19% of the private employees estimate that it will only 'to a lesser extent' strengthen their work with adult learning.

Public employees and employees in professional organisations attach greater importance to '*being able to give guidance to adults*' than other professional groups. 27% of the private employees estimate that it 'to a lesser extent' will strengthen their work to be better at advising adults.

Employees of professional organisations attach greater importance to '*being able to work in intercultural contexts*' than other professional groups. 1 out of 5 employees in NGOs, non-formal adult education

and the public sector consider that it 'to a lesser extent' will strengthen their work, and 10% of self-employed respondents believe that it will 'not at all' strengthen their work to be better at working in intercultural contexts.

RECAPITULATION AND DERIVED QUESTIONS

The figures do not give information about the respondents' current level of competence, but the answers show that the majority of all professional groups find that it 'to a large extent' or 'to some extent' will strengthen their work with adult learning if they improve within the areas surveyed. This indicates a general desire for competence development within the 11 competence areas across professional groups.

Especially dissemination skills and more up-to-date subject specific knowledge are assessed fairly uniformly across the various types of employment.

There are also differences in the perception of the importance of competences between the respective respondent groups. For example, only 15% of the self-employed consider that it 'to a large extent' will strengthen their work with adult learning if they become better at using information and communication technology, and 10% in this group indicates that it only 'to a lesser extent' is important.

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Especially dissemination skills and more up-to-date subject specific knowledge are assessed fairly uniformly across the various types of employment.

Apparently, the need for competence development in ICT is less for self-employed people compared to e.g. public employees, where 48% believe that it ‘to a large extent’ will strengthen their work to be better at using information and communication technology and only 3% that it will ‘not at all’ strengthen their work.

The same tendency shows in relation to being able to give guidance to adults. Here, there is a relatively small percentage of self-employed, who believe that it will strengthen their work to improve this competence, and a relatively large percentage of the same group, who believes that it will “not at all” strengthen their work.

In terms of using activating working methods, the figures indicate that employees in professional organisations and self-employed experience the greatest need.

It is also significant that 20% of employees in NGOs and non-formal adult education estimate that it will only ‘to a lesser extent’ strengthen their work if they become better at working in intercultural contexts.



THIS RAISES THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

Would it be an advantage to create subject specific courses or competence development courses tailored to specific professional groups?

What are the variations within the individual employment groups an evidence of?

What is the current competence level of the individual employment groups and what does this mean for the organisation of competence development?

Section 4:

Nordic Cooperation



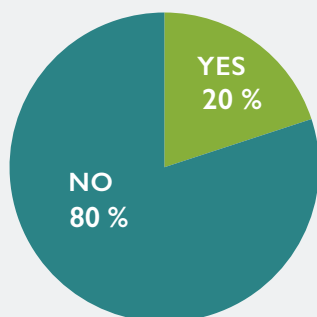
The respondents have been able to provide input to what particular benefit they believe Nordic competence development can provide.

In order to illustrate what form a potential common Nordic competence development should assume, the respondents have been asked about experiences, wishes and needs in relation to Nordic competence development. The respondents have been able to provide input to what particular benefit they believe Nordic competence development can provide. They have also been asked for any barriers to their participation.

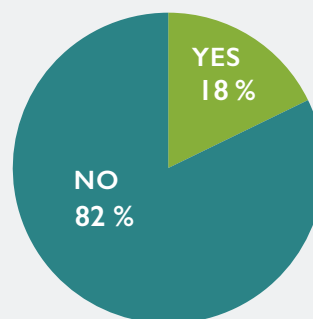
EXPERIENCES WITH PARTICIPATION IN A NORDIC FRAMEWORK

In relation to the respondents' experiences of participation in Nordic competence development and education activities in the context of the Nordic Network for Adult Learning (NVL) and Nordplus Adult, the answers are distributed as follows:

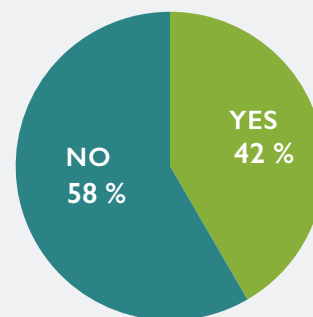
Have you previously participated in Nordic education activities in the context of Nordplus Adult?



Have you previously participated in Nordic education activities in the context of NVL?



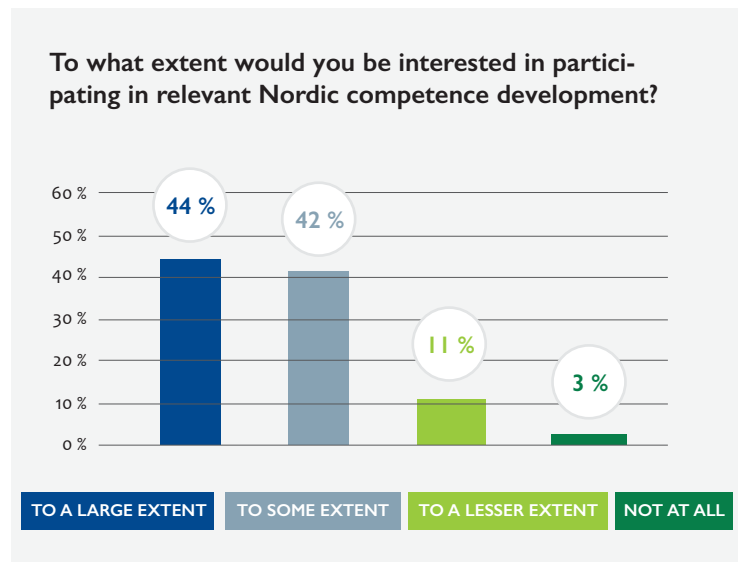
Have you previously participated in other (non-NVL / Nordplus Adult) Nordic educational activities?



Only 38 respondents have participated in NVL, Nordplus Adult as well as other Nordic activities.

INTEREST IN PARTICIPATION

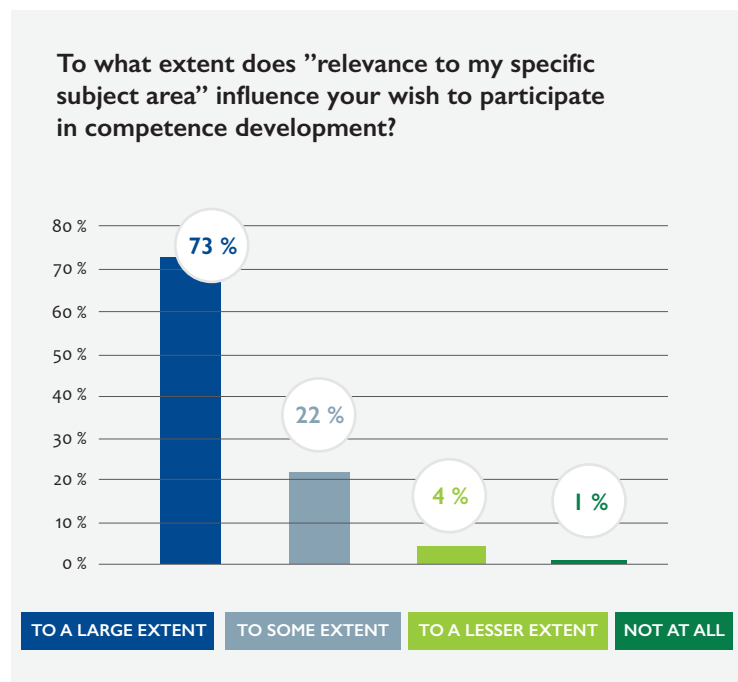
In order to assess if it is relevant to develop joint Nordic competence development, respondents have been asked about their interest in participating in relevant Nordic competence development, and the answers are as follows:



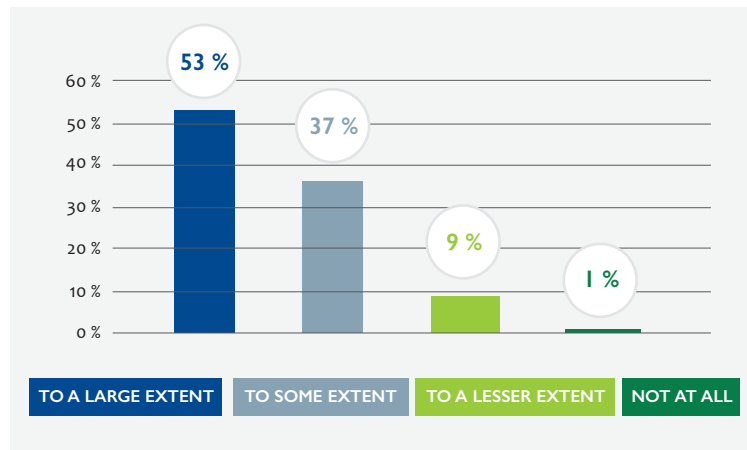
POSSIBLE BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

In order to investigate possible barriers to participation in Nordic competence development, respondents have been asked about a number of contingent factors in relation to participation, including subject-specific relevance, adult educational relevance, the workplace considering it relevant, price, duration and geographical location.

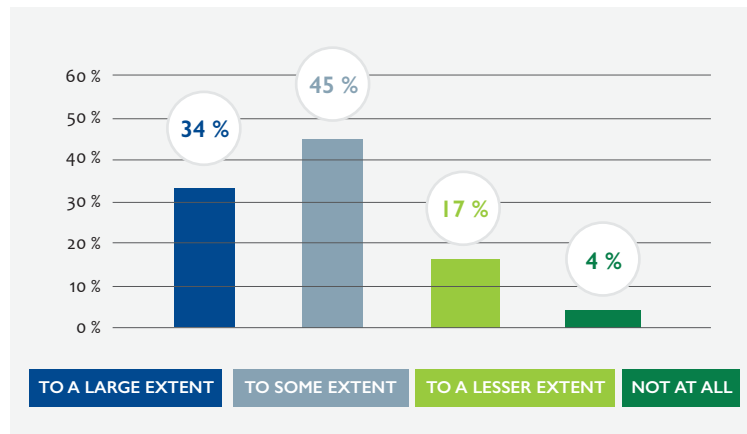
The answers are as follows:



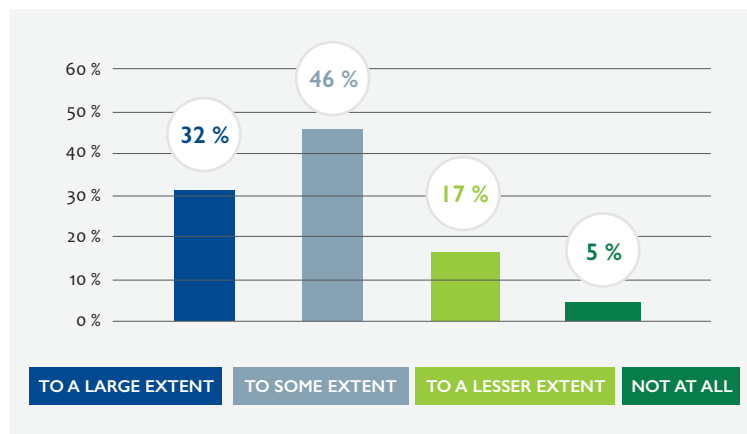
To what extent does "adult educational relevance" influence your wish to participate in competence development?



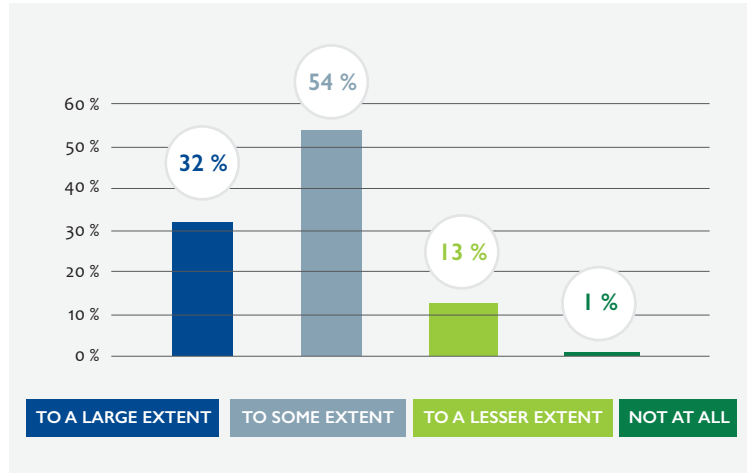
To what extent does "that my workplace finds it relevant" influence your wish to participate in competence development?



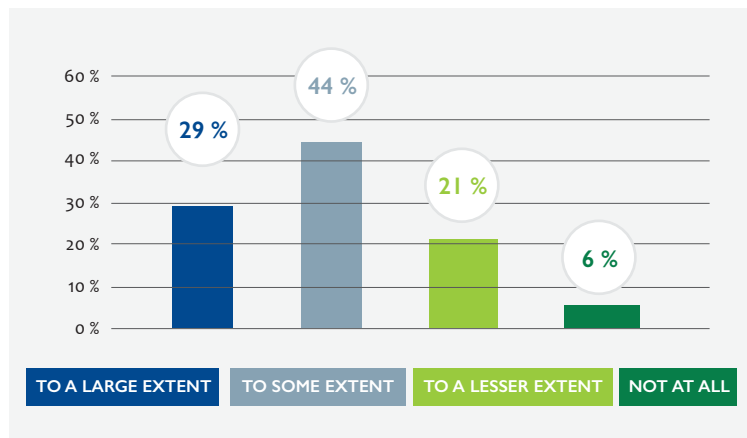
To what extent does "the price of competence development" influence your wish to participate in competence development?



To what extent does "the duration of competence development" influence your wish to participate in competence development ?

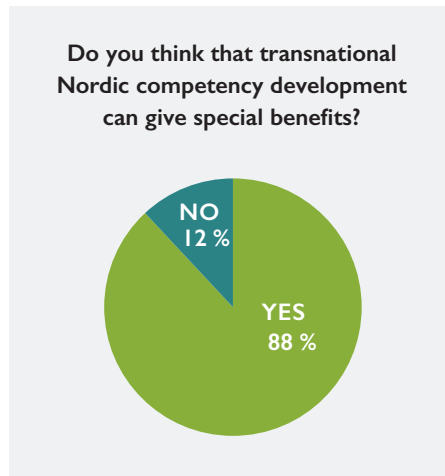


To what extent does "geographical location" influence your wish to participate in competence development?



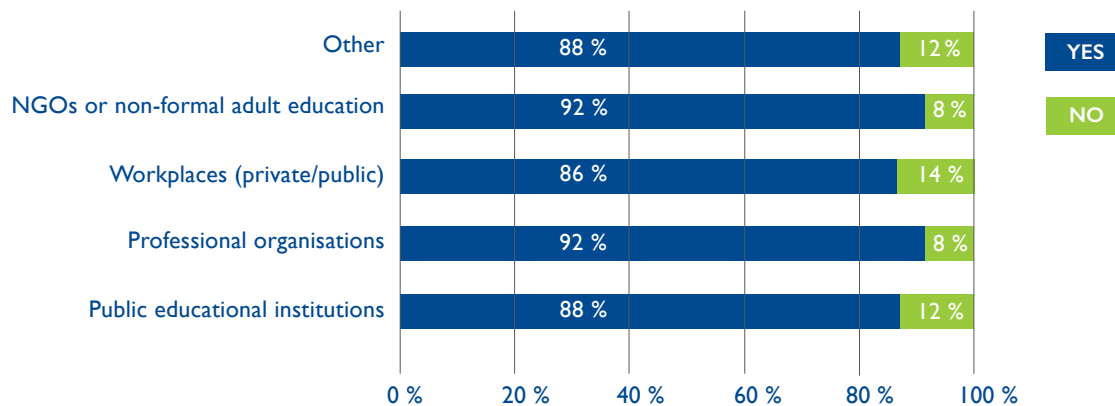
**BENEFIT FROM
COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT**

To the question of whether Nordic competence development gives a special benefit, the answers are distributed as follows:

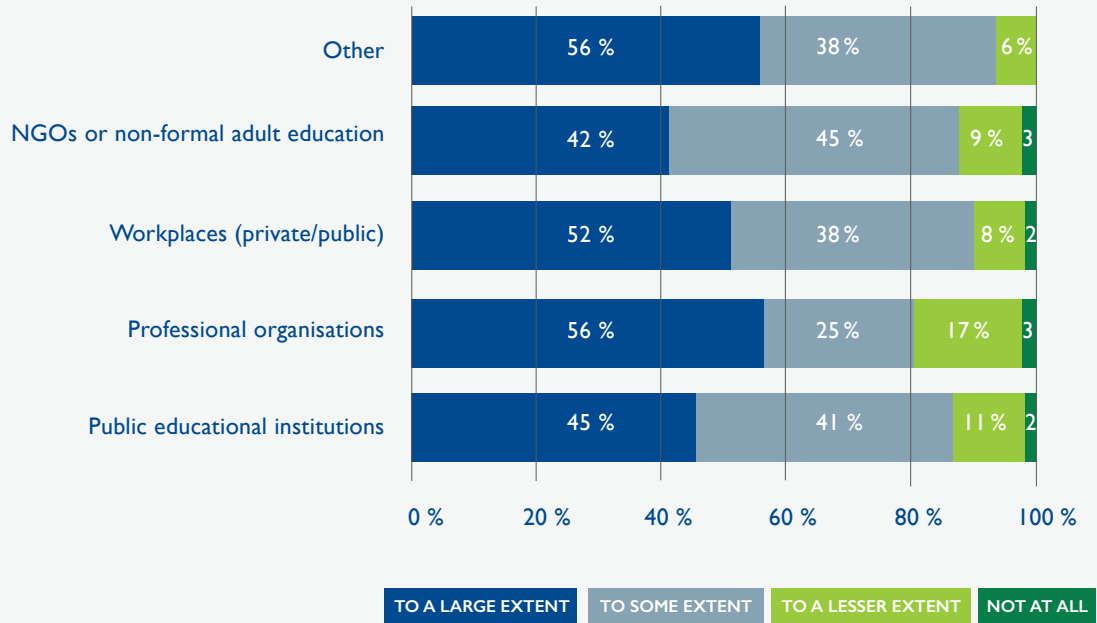


Distributed by sector affiliation, the answers show that especially employees in professional organisations and at private or public workplaces are interested in participating in relevant Nordic competence development:

DO YOU THINK THAT TRANSNATIONAL NORDIC COMPETENCY DEVELOPMENT CAN GIVE SPECIAL BENEFITS?



TO WHAT EXTEND WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING IN RELEVANT NORDIC COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT WITHIN ADULT LEARNING?



The respondents were subsequently given the opportunity to elaborate on the issue of Nordic competence development. Their answers are grouped below:

Overall category

**EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCES:
“We are alike” as the reason**

Examples of statements:

- It's a good platform to share ideas and good practice between countries that have same or similar cultural background and history.
- We share quite similar humanistic values and thinking concerning adult learning.
- I think that the Scandinavian and Nordic countries have some common cultural characteristics that make it likely that there will be some common pedagogical and didactic traditions and themes, frames of reference that can be taken advantage of and synergies from. And such work is always interesting.

Overall category

EXPERIENCE SHARING AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING MORE GENERALLY

Examples of statements:

- Fertile learning environment because of our similarities and differences.
- Broadens ones view and implementing new ideas.
- Profit from each other's experiences, build networks, support each other.
- Good network, exchange and discussion of pedagogy and didactics. Exchange of relevant material for use in teaching and feedback on material.

Overall category

KNOWLEDGE ABOUT STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION IN OTHER COUNTRIES

Examples of statements:

- To compare different competence, laws, rules and traditions that affect learning.
- In terms of knowledge sharing, it will be relevant to know which parameters are measured in the countries we compare with.
- Network. Knowledge about opportunities and organisation of teaching in other countries. New or shared technological solutions.

Overall category

**EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCES:
“We are different” as the reason**

Examples of statements:

- Get the opportunity to learn from other countries' practices and an exchange of experience.
- Understanding different cultures and learning environments.
- Another approach / perspective than what we usually see as the 'philosopher's stone' in Denmark. You can always learn something from other peoples' way of seeing the world if you meet up with an open mind.
- Diversity gives new perspectives.
- The Nordic transnational cooperation means increased diversity and thus greater reflection on own practice. It gives a disruption when people outside one's own sphere are given the opportunity to provide input and ask critical questions.

Overall category

PROFESSIONAL BENEFITS FROM CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

Examples of statements:

- New networks and contacts in one's own field of teaching.
- Transnational projects in sustainable development.
- International projects, more discussion about adults' learning in different situations.

Overall category

DEVELOP AND APPLY RESEARCH

Examples of statements:

- Easy achieved new knowledge about the latest research. Valuable network of interesting people with high skills within my working field.
- More research in the field since the other Nordic countries may have research results we can use.

RECAPITULATION AND DERIVED QUESTIONS

The answers indicate that there is quite some potential for joint transnational and Nordic competence development activities, despite the fact that relatively few have experience with Nordic competence development. 44% of the respondents indicate that they 'to a large extent' will be interested in relevant Nordic competence development, while 88% of the respondents estimate that joint Nordic competence development activities will be beneficial.

The responses also show that competence development should be relevant to one's specific field of study, but also adult educational relevance is stated as particularly important for participation in competence development. Precisely, subject-specific and adult educational skills are considered important in strengthening the work with adult learning.

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44% of the respondents indicate that they 'to a large extent' will be interested in relevant Nordic competence development

Price, geographical location, duration and relevance to the workplace are less important in terms of participation in competence development, but still indicate that these factors play a certain role and should therefore be clarified, in connection with an eventual development of joint Nordic competence development.

Less respondents in private / public workplaces find that a transnational Nordic cooperation can give a special benefit, despite the fact that these respondents answer relatively affirmative to the question of being interested in participating in such activities.

In the qualitative responses, the benefits of joint Nordic competence development are mostly justified in general terms, e.g. in terms of increased exchange of experience, knowledge sharing, more nuances and perspectives between participants, etc., while certain statements have more concrete content, e.g. increased networking and access to research.

It is also interesting that the respondents refer to the uniformity of the Nordic countries as well as the diversity, as a reason for the fact that joint, transnational competence development has value. 'Nordic', understood as something that originates in common values, common approaches, common culture and history, is used as an argument to say that cooperation on common competence development makes sense, while the identity and uniqueness of the individual countries is also used as argument.

In relation to the inclusion of 'the Nordic aspect' in a common competence development, both uniformity and diversity can be used actively in marketing, organising, selection of content, structure, etc.

The respondents also point to other forms of benefits of joint Nordic competence development, including inter-country exchanges, transnational project development and international networks, e.g. with research as a focus area, which points to competence development as being something more than concrete course activities. Networking, exchange of material and people, as well as joint projects can also contribute to an increased cross-border competence development.



THIS RAISES THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

How important is price, geographical location and duration in comparison to the desire to participate in joint Nordic competence development?

How should the relationship between subject-specific relevance and more general adult educational relevance be balanced?

Should there be special competence development courses for different professional groups, or could it make sense to make common Nordic courses?

In what does the specific Nordic characteristic consist of? And how can it be used as the basis for organisation, implementation and marketing of joint transnational, competence development activities?

Section 5:

Recapitulation



The report also provides a number of questions that may be used in further studies on the development of joint, transnational Nordic competency development.

IN RELATION
TO THE COMPETENCE
DIMENSION, THE FOLLOWING POINTS
ARE EMPHASISED:

The answers reflect the practitioners' own experiences and assessments of important competences, competence development needs, experiences with Nordic cooperation, etc. This offers a different perspective than previous reports focusing on formal requirements, the elaboration of possibilities for further and continuing education, the status of adult education in policy papers, lack of qualification, etc.

The report forms part of the preparation for the Nordplus / NVL conference 'Adult Educator and Innovation' in 2017. It should be seen as a discussion paper that highlights some elements of the adult teacher's practice and as such it may leave more questions than answers.

In the following, the series of points and questions presented throughout the report are summarised. Please note that these points are derived with the reservations outlined in the report's introductory section.

The study of the competence dimension therefore points to a number of content dimensions that can be incorporated into joint Nordic competence development.

- Adult educators, i.e. practitioners, who teach adults themselves, generally consider all selected 11 competencies important, which confirms the outcome of the 'Nordic Adult Educator'. This can therefore give inspiration for focus areas for joint Nordic competence development.
- Especially subject specific competences, adult educational and didactic skills are considered highly important, but also relational skills such as being able to treat adults as adults, as well as being able to give guidance to adults, is given high importance.
- The majority believes that it will 'to a large extent' or 'to some extent' strengthen their work if they improve at the specified competences, which indicates a general developmental need.
- In particular, to gain more knowledge about adult learning and learning processes, the ability to disseminate and use activating learning methods is considered very important.
- More updated subject specific knowledge and updated practice experience is also considered relatively important.
- Less important is being able to work in intercultural contexts, which is surprising, as a large number of respondents indicate that they work in language schools and with refugees and immigrants.
- The study also points to supplementary areas of competence that are worth considering in establishing Nordic competence development, namely: knowledge about people with special needs, conflict management, language and culture, management and organisation of education, as well as cooperation, transfer and labour market.

IN RELATION TO
THE TARGET GROUP
DIMENSION, THE FOLLOWING POINTS
ARE HIGHLIGHTED:

- Across employment groups responses show that competence development within the 11 areas of competence 'to a large extent' or 'to some extent' could enhance one's work with adult learning processes.
- There are differences between the employment groups, which could call for a differentiation.
- Respondents are predominantly positive toward joint Nordic competence development activities, despite the fact that relatively few respondents have experience with Nordic competence development.
- Subject-specific relevance and adult educational relevance are stated to be of particular importance for participation in competence development, whereas price, geographical location and relevance to the workplace are weighted relatively lower.
- The uniformity of the Nordic countries as well as the diversity of the countries is used as a reason for the value of joint transnational competence development.
- Other forms of benefits are also indicated as valuable in joint transnational competence development, including inter-country exchanges, transnational project development and international networks, for example with research as a focus area. This can point towards competence development understood more broadly and as more than concrete course activities.

The target group dimension thus points to a number of points of attention regarding the conditions for participation and the inclusion and benefits of 'the Nordic aspect'.

The report also provides a number of questions that may be used in further studies on the development of joint, transnational Nordic competence development:

- **Are there** different needs for competence development depending on whether you work in the public or private sector, full-time or part-time?
- **Are there** different needs for competence development depending on the level in the European Qualifications Framework at which the person teaches?
- **Do the selected** competences cover all the skills necessary to work with adult learning processes?
- **Why** is the competence to use ICT valued so relatively low by respondents?
- **To what extent** does the adult educator work in intercultural contexts and how important is culture considered in the teaching situation – and does it require special skills to teach in intercultural contexts?
- **What subject** specific knowledge and what practical experiences will strengthen the adult teacher's work with adult learning, and does it make sense to work with both elements under a common Nordic framework?
- **Is the high importance** given to adult education and didactics an expression of a low competence level of the adult educator and what does it mean for organising competence development?
- **Does the correspondingly low importance** given to the ability to work in intercultural contexts indicate that the adult educator possesses this competence sufficiently?
- **Several respondents** mention the need for knowledge about and experience with specific digital tools, even though ICT is not considered highly important as a competence that will strengthen the respondents' work. What can explain this discrepancy?
- **Can and should we**, within a joint Nordic competence development framework, work to develop the competences that are inward-targeted to the teaching situation as well as competences related to structural and relational matters?
- **Would it be** an advantage to create subject specific courses or competence development courses tailored to specific professional groups?
- **What are** the variations within the individual employment groups an evidence of?
- **What is** the current competence level of the individual employment groups and what does this mean for the organisation of competence development?
- **How important** is price, geographical location and duration in comparison to the desire to participate in joint Nordic competence development?
- **How should** the relation between subject-specific relevance and more general adult educational relevance be balanced?
- **What does** the specific Nordic characteristic consist of? And how can it be used as the basis for organisation, implementation and marketing of joint transnational competence development activities?



These questions cannot be answered based on this study, but hopefully they can form the basis for further discussion about establishing cooperation on competence development of adult educators in the Nordic region.

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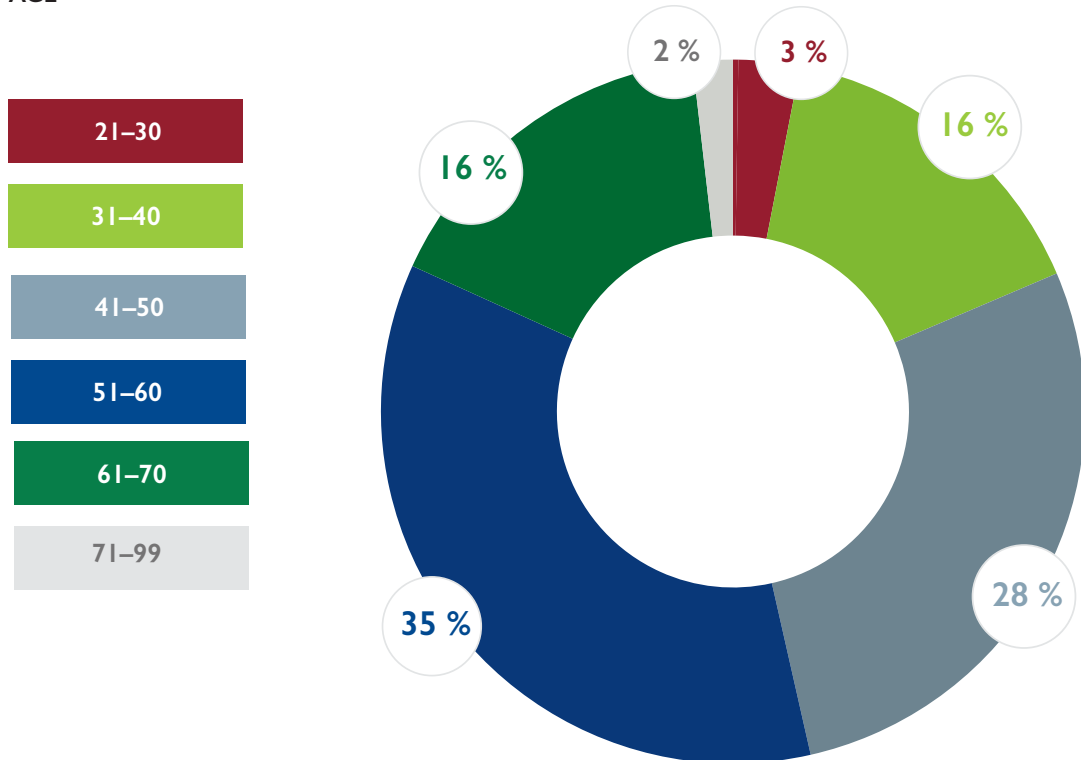
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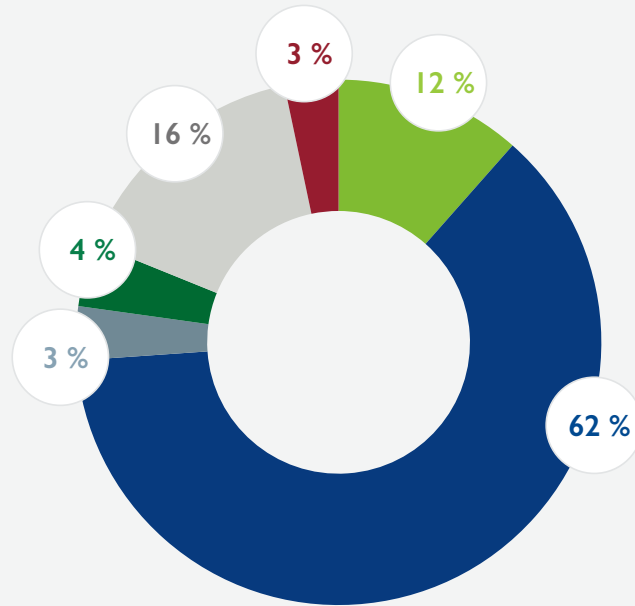
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General facts about the Respondents

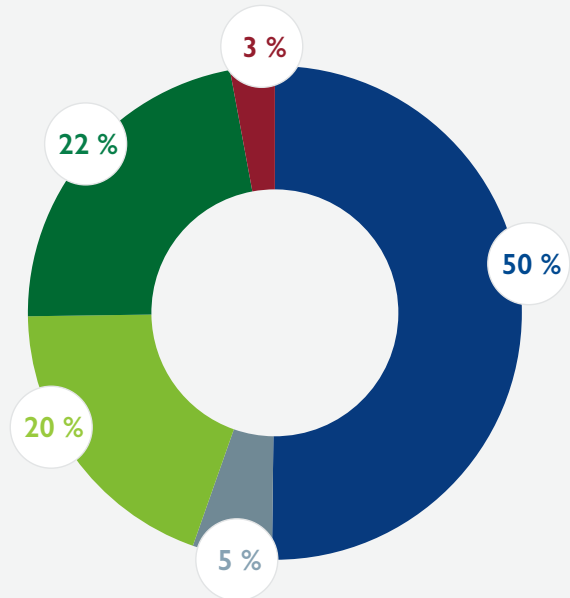
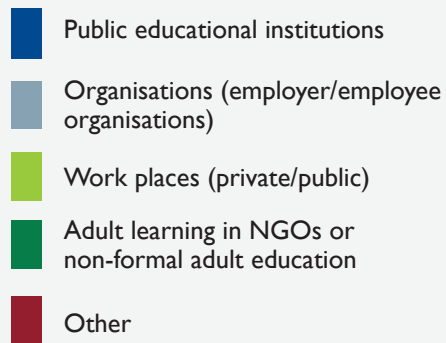
AGE



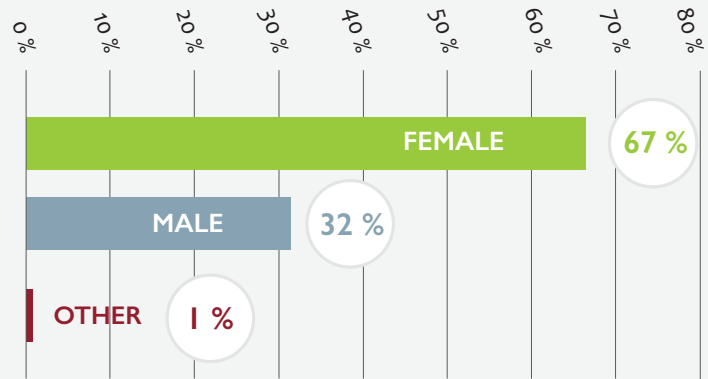
EMPLOYMENT



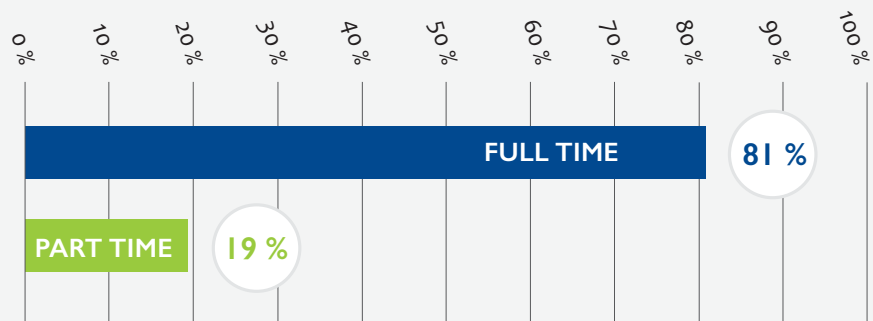
WHERE DO THE RESPONDENTS WORK WITH ADULT LEARNING?



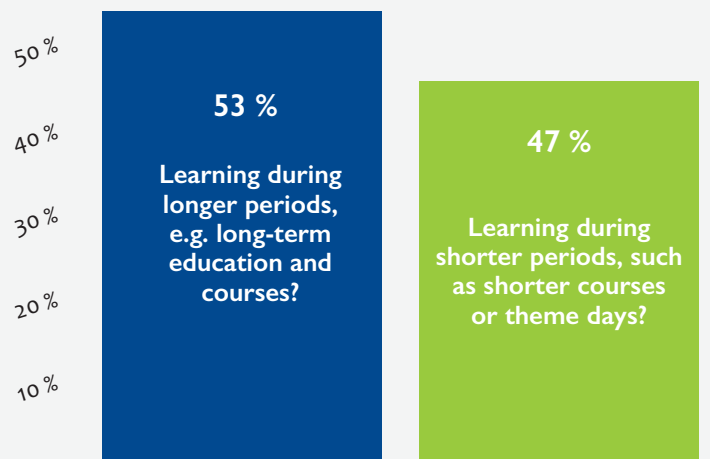
GENDER DISTRIBUTION



THE NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS WORKING FULL TIME OR PART TIME

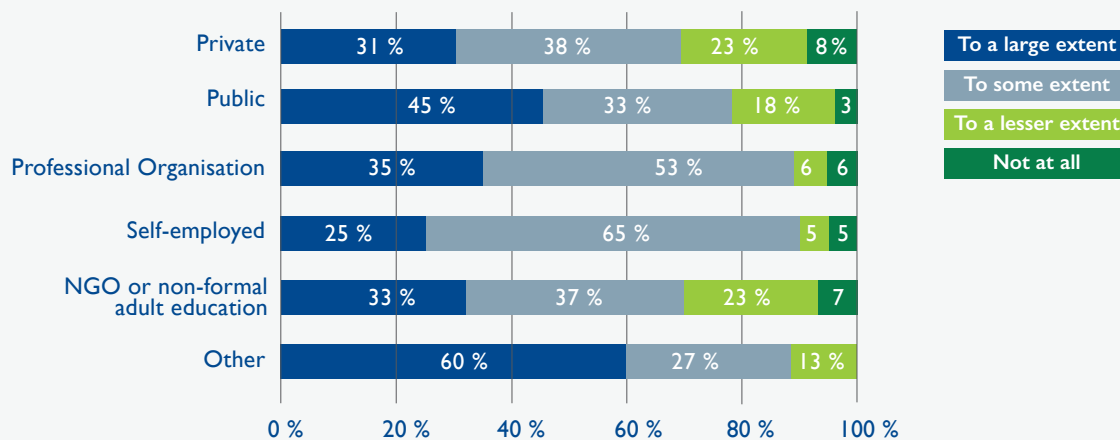


DO YOU WORK WITH?

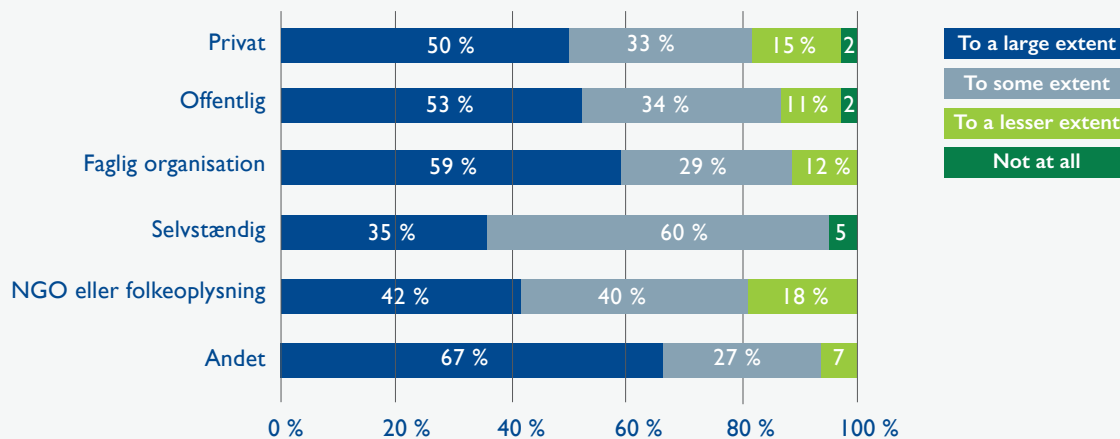


Competence assessment by target group

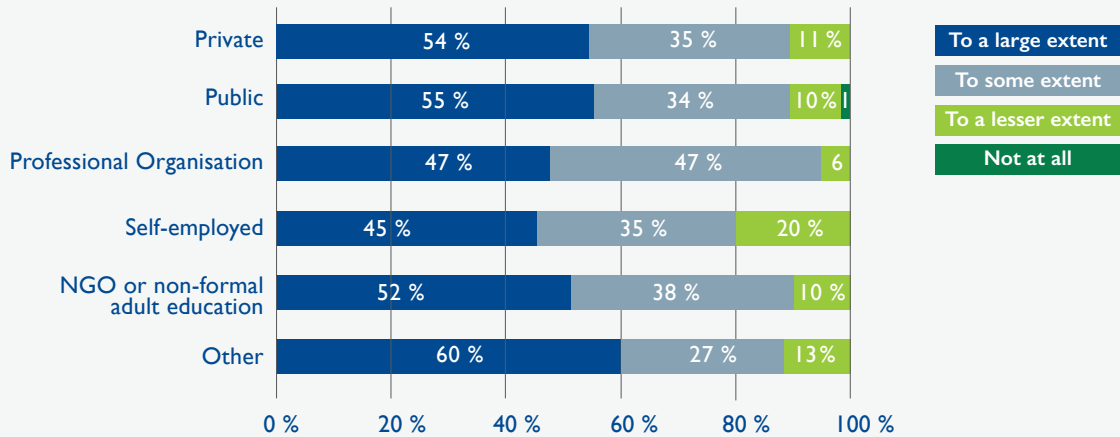
BEING ABLE TO TREAT ADULT PARTICIPANTS AS ADULTS



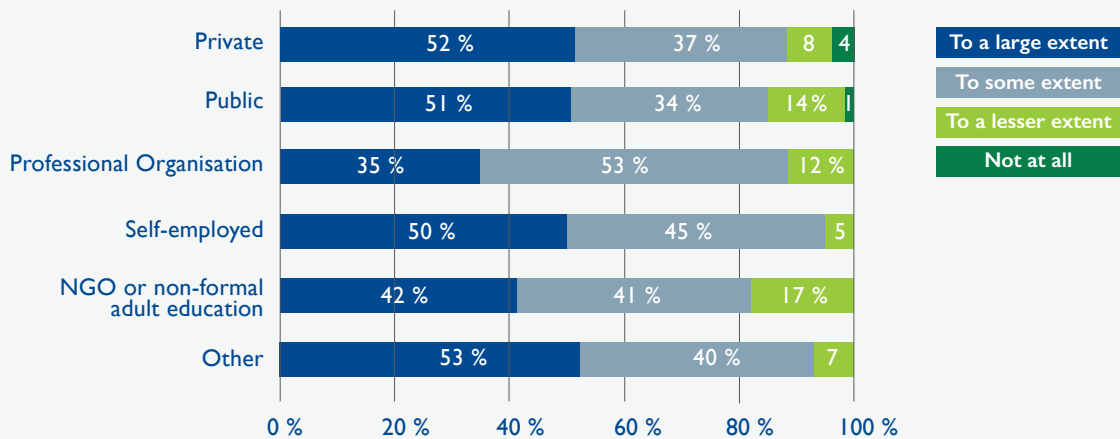
TO HAVE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT ADULTS' LEARNING AND LEARNING PROCESSES



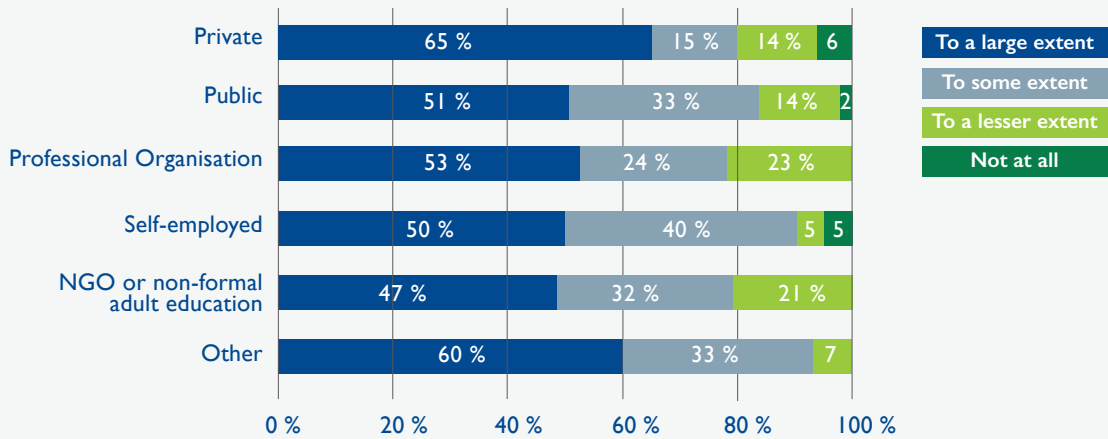
TO HAVE UPDATED SUBJECT SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE



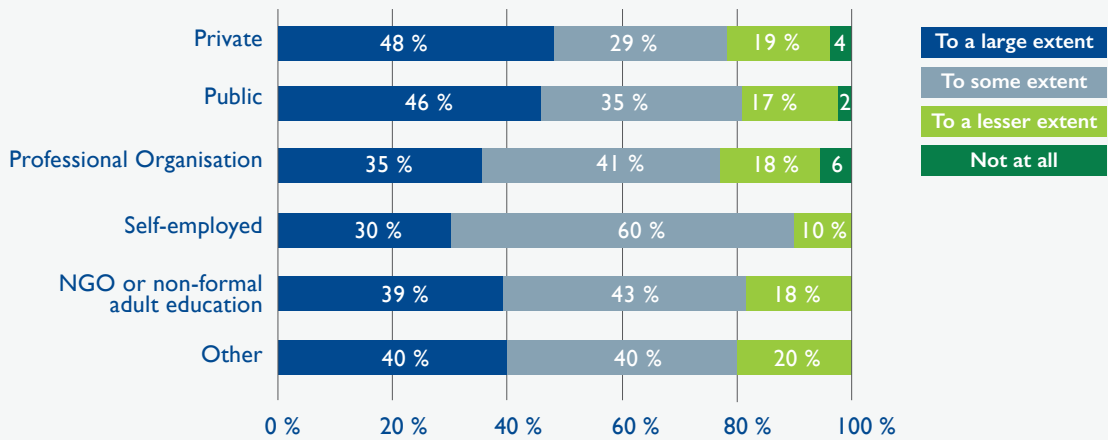
TO HAVE UPDATED PRACTICE EXPERIENCES



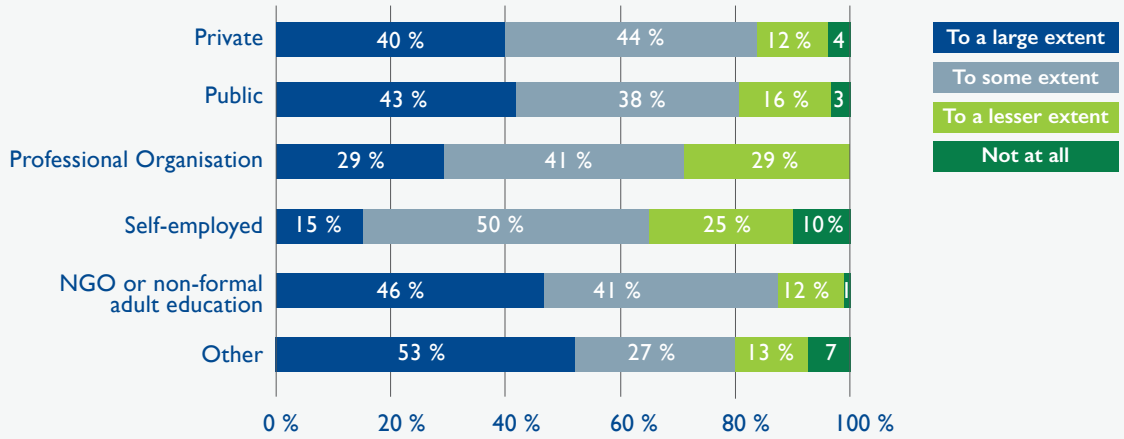
BEING ABLE TO COMMUNICATE



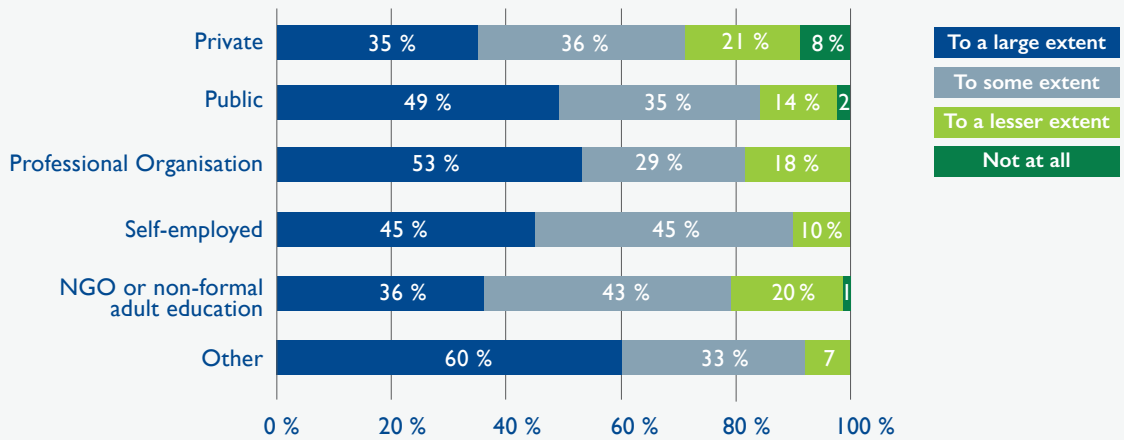
BEING ABLE TO STRUCTURE AND PLAN



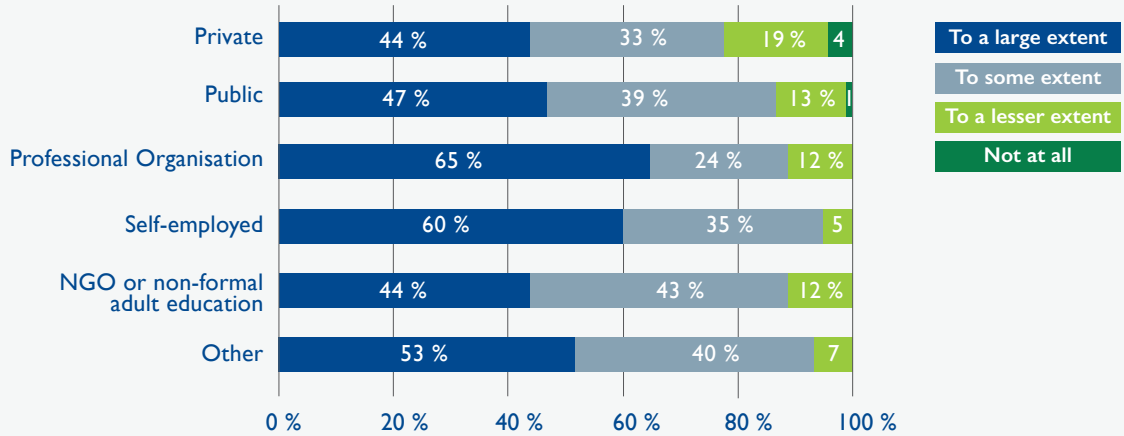
BEING ABLE TO USE INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY



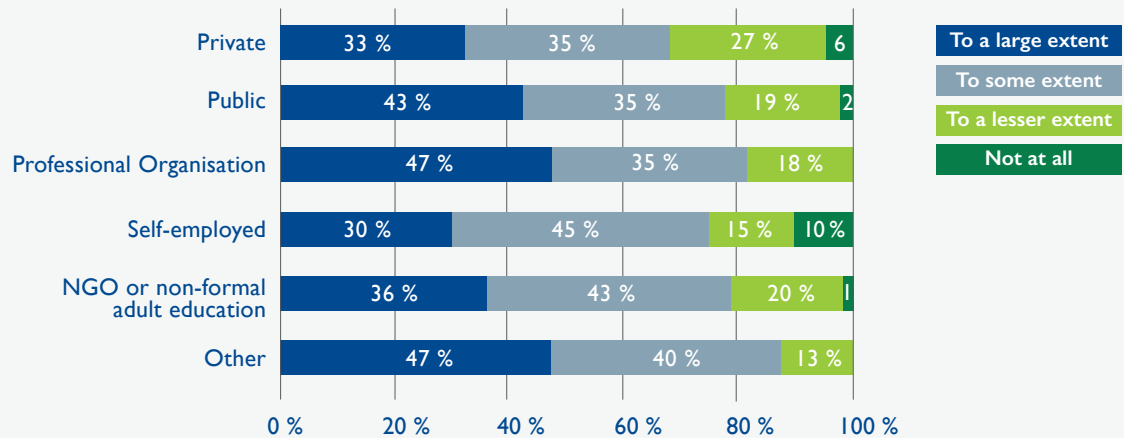
BEING ABLE TO RELATE CONSTRUCTIVELY TO THE RESISTANCE OF ADULTS



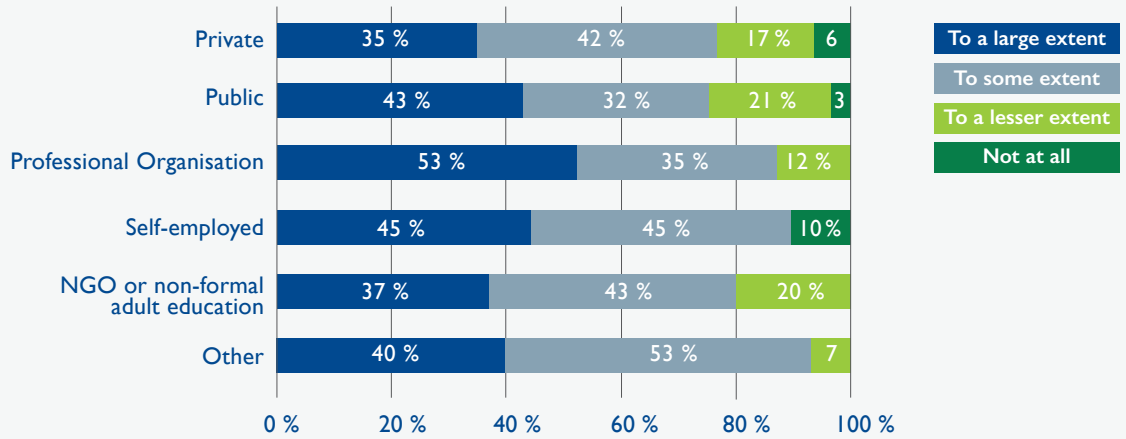
BEING ABLE TO USE ACTIVATING WORKING METHODS

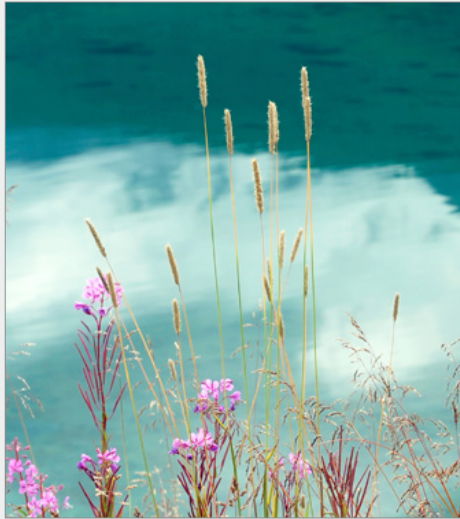


BEING ABLE TO GIVE GUIDANCE TO ADULTS



BEING ABLE TO WORK IN INTERCULTURAL CONTEXTS





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