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## Empowering vulnerable adults to tackle labour-market challenges

### Glossary of key terms

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#### Introduction

The working definitions presented in this glossary are not necessarily comprehensive, complete, accurate or up to date; they have been compiled by Cedefop to facilitate the communication among the participants in the seminar.

#### adult learning

Any learning activity, whether formal or non-formal, general or vocational, undertaken by an individual between 25 and 64.

#### adult education

General or vocational education provided for adults after initial education and training for professional and/or personal purposes, to:

- provide general education for adults in topics of particular interest to them (e. g. in open universities);
- provide compensatory learning in basic skills which individuals may not have acquired earlier in their initial education or training (such as literacy, numeracy) and thus to;
- give access to qualifications not gained, for various reasons, in the initial education and training system); acquire, improve or update knowledge, skills or competences in a specific field: this is continuing education and training.

*Source: Cedefop, 2008.*

#### basic skills

The skills needed to live in contemporary society, e.g. listening, speaking, reading, writing and mathematics.

*Source: Cedefop, 2008.*

#### disadvantaged group

see **group at risk**

## **employability**

The combination of factors which enable individuals to progress towards or get into employment, to stay in employment and to progress during career.

*Source: Cedefop, 2008, based on Scottish executive, 2007; the institute for employment studies, 2007.*

## **group at risk**

In the European policy agenda, a group belonging to one of the following categories:

- poor people;
- one-parent/single income families;
- migrants and minorities, including Roma;
- young people, in particular young women;
- elderly people;
- people with disabilities;
- homeless;
- alcohol and drug abusers;
- early school leavers and lower-skilled;
- long-term unemployed;
- prisoners;
- victims of violence.

*Source: Cedefop; European Parliament and Council of the European Union (2008).*

## **ethnic minority**

A national or racial group living in a country or area which contains a larger group of people of a different race or nationality.

Comment: there is no universally accepted definition of this term at EU level.

*Source: Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (definition); Cedefop.*

## **low-skilled person**

Individuals whose level of educational attainment is lower than a predetermined standard.

Comments:

- standard level below which an individual is considered as low skilled depends for example on the general level of education in a society, or on the level of qualifications within an occupation;
- the actual level of qualification of individuals encompasses non formal learning outcomes acquired through continuing (re)training / upskilling, work experience, or personal development;
- in the European Union, an individual is considered as low skilled when the educational attainment is below the upper secondary educational level defined in ISCED

*Source: Cedefop.*

**migrant**

Any person who lives temporarily or permanently in a country where he or she was not born, and has acquired some significant social ties to this country.

*Source: Unesco.*

**older worker**

A worker over the age of 55.

*Source: Cedefop.*

**refugee**

Any person who has left her or his country or is unable to return to it owing to a well founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of particular social group or political opinion.

*Source: Human Rights Education Associates.*

**skill needs**

The demand for particular types of knowledge, abilities and competences on the labour market (total demand within a country or within a region, economic sector, etc.).

Comments:

- skills needs analysis (also referred to as identification of skills needs) aims at identifying skills gaps and shortages, anticipate future skills needs, and assess the capacity of the qualification system (education and training provision, funding schemes, etc.) to meet the needs of the economy;
- anticipation of skills needs is the process of identifying future skills required by the economy in a short, medium or longer term);
- skills forecasting estimates the skill demand (jobs) and/or skill supply (labour force) that will be available at short, mid or long term.
- skill needs is close to but not synonym with skill demand, which may refer to
  - a) the skills required to carry out a job properly.
  - or
  - b) the skills required by the economy or by the society as a whole.

*Source: Cedefop; Cedefop, 2010.*

**skill gap**

A situation in which the level of skills of the currently employed is less than that required to perform the job adequately or the type of skill does not match the requirements of the job.

*Source: Cedefop, 2010.*

**skill mismatch**

A situation of imbalance in which the level or the type of skills available does not corresponds to the needs of the labour market.

Comments:

- c) skills mismatch can be a surplus or lack of knowledge, abilities and competences;
- d) skill mismatch can be analysed at different levels (individual, enterprise, sectoral, economy);
- e) experts distinguish between vertical mismatch (a situation in which the level of education or skills is less or more than the required level of education or skills) and horizontal mismatch (a situation in which the level of education or skills matches job requirements, but the type of education or skills is inappropriate for the current job).

*Source: Cedefop, 2010.*

**skill supply**

The skills possessed by the population 15 + who are economically active, i.e. the labour force includes employed and registered unemployed persons.

*Source: Cedefop.*

**upskilling**

Short-term targeted training typically provided following initial education or training, and aimed at supplementing, improving or updating knowledge, skills and/or competences acquire during previous training.

*Source: Cedefop, 2008.*

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