

THE KEY COMPETENCE LIGHTHOUSE

**Key-competence-driven reforms in Ukraine
and Georgia**

Summary note

© European Training Foundation, 2021
Reproduction is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged.

This note presents the main findings of an ETF report which explores the development of key-competence-based education. It is based on lessons learned from education reforms in Ukraine and Georgia. These two countries are aligning their education systems with European approaches to key competence development, while modernising their curricula and teaching practice to support students' learning outcomes. With EU support and in partnership with the ETF and other agencies, they are embedding key competences in teaching and learning while tackling system-level challenges and barriers.

The report has been prepared within the framework of the ETF's [Creating New Learning](#) initiative. It aims to assist experts in the countries surrounding the EU to interpret and implement these instruments by offering insights collected in the most recent ETF-supported reforms in Ukraine and Georgia. In the reform scenarios of both these countries, the introduction of a competence-based approach in education plays an important role, and a focus on the entrepreneurship key competence links these two case studies. The proposed case studies offer policy-makers, education leaders and practitioners a picture of the inventory of actions taken to implement change. These actions are being implemented in the context of EU and global trends in education and training system development.

This context is dynamic, and the report has no universally applicable recipe for success. Rather, it intends to contribute to the current international discourse, share practical experience of the application of key competence instruments to the national reform process, and provide an overview of trends, lessons and observations on actions that have proved to be effective in Ukraine and Georgia.

The report consists of four chapters.

Chapter 1 describes the international context of mainstreaming the entrepreneurship and digital key competences into education and training. It describes the global background, trends, and insights into the detail of the entrepreneurship and digital key competence approaches in Europe, and how key competences are one pillar of the Small Business Act assessment process in pre-accession and EU partner countries. Finally, it explains why the ETF has invested so significantly in this.

Chapter 2 showcases the wide-ranging reforms taking place in Ukraine as part of the New Ukrainian School initiative. It presents actions being taken to embed the key competence approach, the current state of play and the next steps being planned to enhance the reach and quality of practical implementation in primary and secondary education and vocational education and training (VET). The ETF's support to Ukraine focuses mainly on entrepreneurship and digital key competences and so is the focus of this chapter.

Chapter 3 highlights the work being undertaken in Georgia under the aegis of the 2019 Georgian Action Plan for Lifelong Entrepreneurial Learning, focusing particularly on efforts to reform the VET system and support the development of entrepreneurial VET institutions. The analysis explores past initiatives that have laid the groundwork for newer initiatives that directly target the integration of the entrepreneurship and digital key competences into the leadership, culture, teaching and learning of VET institutions in Georgia. The ETF's support to Georgia featured in this chapter focused mostly on the entrepreneurship key competence.

Chapter 4 analyses how the lessons learned in Ukraine and Georgia can be applied in other countries. It focuses on the key ingredients of successful integration of key competences into an education system, using the example of entrepreneurship and digital key competences. It provides a guiding framework for actions and lists some of the key questions that must be answered before embarking on

full-scale education reform; the answers to these questions will guide the initial planning and reform design stages as a source of learning and inspiration.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the past two decades, key competence development has gradually moved up national education and training policy agendas, both in and around the EU. Key competences are a dynamic mix of knowledge, skills and attitudes that all people need for personal fulfilment and development, employability, social inclusion and active citizenship. Key competences help citizens to progress throughout their lives. Unlike occupational or technical competences linked to a specific profession, key competences are transversal, that is, they are relevant across all curriculum areas at all levels, both in formal education and in non-formal or informal learning.

To support the efforts made by policy-makers and practitioners dedicated to the development of key competences of citizens, in May 2018 the Council of the European Union adopted the revised [Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning](#). Furthermore, practical implementation of a competence-based approach in the EU and its neighbourhood over the past decade has been underpinned by a series of EU competence frameworks offering a more granular understanding of how the respective key competences can be understood and developed within a lifelong learning perspective. The competence frameworks are open instruments that leave much to individual interpretation. They represent both an opportunity and a challenge for policy-makers and educators who design policies or deploy reform actions.

The ETF has been cooperating with partner countries to support their reforms, with the aim of implementing a competence-based approach in education and using the most advanced EU policy instruments in the areas of entrepreneurship and digital key competences. Two of the EU competence frameworks – [EntreComp](#) and [DigComp](#) – were tested and applied in the contexts of national reforms in the EU neighbourhood with the ETF's support. These frameworks were applied to underpin the understanding, design and implementation of two transversal¹ key competences – entrepreneurship and digital, respectively – in lifelong learning and assessment. The EU's digital competence definition on which the DigComp framework is based goes beyond the narrow sphere of information and communication technologies and computers and embraces digitally enabled learning and safe participation in a digitalised world for citizens. For entrepreneurship, the definition underlying EntreComp covers the ability to be creative, develop ideas and put those ideas into action in all subjects – not just business or economics. Transversal skills that are considered a critically important element demanded by employers in the ETF partner countries are both the 'backbone' of and the common element cutting across the different key competence domains. Critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork, communication and negotiation skills, analytical skills, creativity and intercultural skills are embedded throughout the key competences (Council of the European Union, 2018) and represent a pervasive element cutting across the EU competence frameworks.

¹ For example, the EntreComp framework defines entrepreneurship as a 'transversal competence, which can be applied by citizens to all spheres of life from nurturing personal development, to actively participating in society, to (re)entering the job market as an employee or as a self-employed person, and to starting up ventures (cultural, social or commercial)'. For more information, see Bacigalupo (2016).

In the report we review in detail practical ways of supporting both digital and entrepreneurship key competences based on two case studies, namely national reform actions in Ukraine and Georgia. We illustrate how the EU conceptual approaches and related instruments have been applied and further advanced in the context of the EU partner countries, with the support of the ETF and the insightful reflections of its experts. Holding up the case studies from Ukraine and Georgia against each other, some important learning points emerge. We have collected these insights and grouped them into six action areas as the basis for analysis of the state of play in the two countries. The cases can also be held up against international evidence of key competence development in education and training. These lessons can be applied in other countries that are planning to embed the entrepreneurship and digital key competences.

The six action areas can provide inspiration and ideas for moving forward² and are as follows:

1. **framework for policy development** – creating a coherent policy ecosystem in which key competences are understood, valued, promoted and supported;
2. **support for educational institutions** – the enabling environment: structures and frameworks supporting the integration of key competences, institutional change, training for education leaders, etc.;
3. **support for teachers and trainers** – structural support and professional development for teachers whose role has changed with the introduction of key competences in learning and assessment;
4. **teaching and learning activities** – a mix of pedagogical approaches that develop key competences within subjects or through multi-disciplinary learning;
5. **building links and opening education to the outside world** – the development of regular real-life-based opportunities for interacting with the world outside the classroom;
6. **communication activities** – the need to maintain effective communication to build understanding and engagement, embracing all stakeholders, from parents to trade unions and different government agencies.

To integrate entrepreneurship and digital key competences into learning at the system level, it is necessary to develop mutually supportive actions across a whole education and training system. Specific actions that are common for the different parts of an education and training system can work together to create sustainable change for leaders, educators and students or learners.

² The six categories have been identified based on policy-level studies undertaken by the European Commission since 2006, drawing on high-level peer learning and exchange events, primarily the Oslo Agenda of 2006, the Progression Model developed in 2010 and the final report of the Thematic Working Group on Entrepreneurship Education in 2014.