

# Review of the 2006 Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning

May 2017



**The IARS  
International Institute**

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Community-led solutions for a fairer society

## Independent Academic Research Studies (IARS) Publications

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IARS is a leading, international think-tank with a charitable **mission to give everyone a chance to forge a safer, fairer and more inclusive society**. IARS achieves its mission by producing **evidence-based** solutions to **current** social problems, sharing best practice and by supporting **young people** to shape decision making. IARS is an international expert in restorative justice, human rights and inclusion, citizenship and user-led research.

IARS' vision is a society where everyone is given a choice to actively participate in social problem solving. The organisation is known for its robust, independent evidence-based approach to solving current social problems, and is considered to be a pioneer in user-involvement and the application of user-led research methods

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On behalf of the IARS International Institute, we are pleased to submit our response to review of the 2006 Framework on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning. Our submission is complementary to the survey response and is based on evidence collected from our existing and past youth-led research and educational projects in the UK and across Europe. More specifically, the response draws on evidence collected through the implementation of the Erasmus+ funded programme “Abused No More: Empowering Professionals and Safeguarding Youth”. This is a 3-year project that aims to bridge the knowledge, education and training gap in Europe in the area of legal literacy of young people and professionals working with young people at risk of exclusion and discrimination. The project focuses on young people who tend to be marginalised due gender based abuse, their cultural differences (e.g. migrant, refugee) or ethnicity. The findings of the first phase of the project were published in a comparative report entitled “[My Voice – My Rights: Young, Marginalised and Empowered by the law](#)”.

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## About the IARS International Institute

The IARS International Institute is a user-led charity with a mission to give everyone a chance to forge a safer, fairer and more inclusive society. Led by its founder and Director, Professor Dr. Theo Gavrielides, and staffed with an expert and dedicated team of researchers, interns and volunteers, IARS achieves its charitable aims by producing evidence-based solutions to current social problems, sharing best practice and by supporting young people and the community to shape decision making. IARS is an international expert in user-led research, evaluation, human rights and inclusion, citizenship, criminal justice and restorative justice. We deliver our charitable mission:

- By carrying out action research and evaluation that is independent, credible, focused and current.
- By acting as a network that brings people and ideas together, communicates best practice and encourages debates on current social problems.
- By supporting the individual (with an emphasis on young people) to carry out their own initiatives to shape decision-making.
- By being an authoritative, independent and evidence-based voice on current social policy matters
- By thorough, high quality user-led (youth-led) evaluations, increasing the effectiveness of how organisations work and deliver.

IARS was set up by volunteers as a user-led and user-focused think tank with an emphasis on changing society from the bottom up through evidence.

## About the Framework on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning

Currently, and supported by the European Commission and Erasmus+, the Institute delivers a range of youth-led research and educational programmes that reach and benefit hundreds of young people across Europe. Since the introduction of the Framework on Key Competence for Lifelong Learning in 2006, it has been an integral tool in the design, development and implementation of our [youth-led](#)

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<sup>1</sup> More information about the project can be found at [www.abusednomore.org.uk](http://www.abusednomore.org.uk)

[projects](#) outlining the key outcomes, skills and competences that young people should acquire or enhance through their engagement in alternative youth-led educational provision. Its broad coverage of competences that are relevant to education and training can be easily incorporated in all aspects of our work.

However, Europe experiences its biggest refugee and migrant wave since the World War II. According to the UN Refugee Council (UNHCR), just in 2015, over 1.1 million individuals arrived in the region mainly coming from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq and the rate of new arrivals is almost 60,000 per month with over 50% of them being children and young people. These young people / new arrivals experience multiple challenges and an intersection of barriers including economic, cultural, language and disability, mental health and many others. There is also evidence to suggest that these groups are far more exposed to abuse at the individual and state level. From our viewpoint, it becomes evident that the current political, economic, cultural and social landscape is radically changed compared to the last decade for almost all member states.

### ***Social and Civic Competences***

Since the Framework provides a common European reference on key competences for policy makers, education and training providers and learners, it should take into consideration the changes in the European landscape. Appreciating the broadness of the framework and the definitions of key competences outlined in the current framework, we propose the expansion of the definition of civic competences to incorporate explicit reference to the concept of “**legal literacy**” as a key competence.

Legal capability/literacy’ is not in our everyday vocabulary, and this is especially true for young people, it refers to the basic ingredients that make an active citizen who is able to fully participate in everyday life. Being legally capable simply means to be able to perform our role as equal members of society while being aware of our basic rights and responsibilities. It is not about complex legal concepts; it is about empowerment and proper education.

Our research has highlighted significant gaps in the ability of Europeans to understand their basic rights and the justice process. Marginalised youth tend to be mostly affected by these gaps as evidence suggest that they can result in entrenched social exclusion and increased risk of rights’ violations and discrimination. At present, school education in the law and basic rights that would allow young people to lead their lives equally in modern European societies is almost non-existent.

For young people, a legal problem – let that be crime or debt related, domestic violence or employment – will have a bigger impact. Starting out in life presents young people with enormous new challenges. Marginalised youth are even less likely to receive help or want to engage with the system and that which is available to the mainstream population.

Evidence also suggests a lack of coordinated support and knowledge-sharing on effective mechanisms to improve learning and information that encompasses the full range of capabilities that individuals need to demand fundamental rights, especially the needs of vulnerable and minority groups. However, communicating law related information to marginalised youth and those servicing them through formal education or training is not an easy task. International projects (e.g. Street Law, PLENET, Youth Empowerment Project) have shown that to achieve legal literacy, education must be carried out organically, informally, flexibly.

Our youth-led ethos and multi-year experience in engaging with marginalised groups have shown us that top down educational material will most likely fail to achieve their objectives. Youth led models of empowerment and education have more chances in reaching young people particularly those from marginalised groups (including migrants and refugees).

## **Recommendations**

- Explicit reference to the concept of “legal literacy” as a key competence for Lifelong Learning.
- Address knowledge gap in relation to youth empowerment through public legal education for socially excluded groups of migrant background, especially youth through youth-led educational models.
- Increase awareness of the key competences for Lifelong Learning to employers.

The IARS International Institute is at your disposal should you require clarifications and further evidence. As a membership organisation we also aim to share this submission with our members and database subscribers. We would also be happy to share any response that you might have to what we have proposed.

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