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### **Qualification frameworks/qualification standards for teachers in adult education/continuing education**

Together with representatives of associations, people working in the field of continuing education and schools of higher learning, the German Institute for Adult Education (DIE) is currently working on developing and implementing a modular qualification framework generalisable to different sponsors and to devise qualification standards for teachers in continuing education. The qualification framework and the qualification standards are to be binding and be jointly supported and promoted by the various actors involved in the field of continuing education, but by the same token be so open that specific profiles can be formulated. A qualification framework moreover makes it possible to determine different levels and stages of qualification, thus tying in with European efforts to make training programmes and qualifications comparable throughout Europe.

#### *Quality development in continuing education*

After initial hesitation, the topic of quality development and assurance has become accepted in the area of continuing education. Quality issues in adult/continuing education are always closely linked to the qualification and competencies of continuing education staff, however. All current quality-management strategies for this reason aim at improving the organisational *and* the educational processes in continuing education facilities. The “quality of teaching staff” is emphasised in all of these strategies. In none of this is it clearly specified, however, what qualifications/competencies are expected here. One generally recognised system of qualification of teachers in the field of adult education/continuing education can contribute to quality development and to an enhanced status for adult education.

#### *Disparate degrees of teachers working in the field of continuing education*

Teachers and lecturers working in the field of continuing education have very different educational training backgrounds. There are a host of educational training pathways for continuing education teachers existing parallel to one another in an unsystematic, non-uniform manner. There are no generally recognised standards for the qualification of continuing education teachers, i.e. in principle, anyone can work in the field of continuing education and there are a large number of “certificates” with different market values. The widely varying quality and the lack of or absence of comparability presents a problem both for the sponsors as well as the (free-lance) teachers: it is difficult to assess what this evidence is worth and it is hard to show what individuals can do.

### **Benefits of a qualification framework**

The project is reacting to a perceived need in the field of continuing education practice and holds out benefits for

- Teachers working in the field of adult education because their existing competencies can be demonstrated and because they receive access to a systematic qualification and

training strategy. This contributes both to professionalisation and to a greater profile for teachers.

- Institutions working in the field of adult education because they are able to expand their quality-development strategies at a very crucial point and because they receive very concrete, reliable foundations for the assessment of the qualification of their teachers and
- The entire system of adult education/continuing education because generally accepted “standards” contribute to a higher status being assigned to the area of continuing education and its professionalism.