

## STRENGTHENING BASIC SKILLS IN VET: SUPPORTING LEARNERS FOR THE FUTURE

Building on previous EVTA Community MeetUps implemented in past work programmes, this format continues to provide a space for exchange and engagement among EVTA members, partners, and other VET stakeholders. Within the EVTA-NExT annual work programme, the Community MeetUps are organised as a series of eight online sessions throughout the year, addressing topics of interest to EVTA members and the wider VET community and combining expert input with interactive discussion.

Across Europe, concerns about declining levels of basic skills – particularly in literacy, numeracy, and digital competence – have gained increasing policy attention. Strong foundational skills are essential not only for employability but also for lifelong learning, social inclusion, and active participation in society. For learners in vocational education and training, these competences are critical for successfully navigating both initial training and future upskilling pathways.

Recent European initiatives have emphasised the urgency of strengthening basic skills across education and training systems. In particular, within the framework of the Union of Skills flagship initiative, strengthening basic skills is identified as a core pillar for building quality lives and jobs, with a specific focus on ensuring that all learners acquire strong reading, mathematics, science, and digital competences. In this context, the European Commission's Action Plan on Basic Skills (2025) and the proposed Basic Skills Support Scheme aim to support Member States in tackling low achievement in foundational competences and reinforcing their development across education and training pathways.

These efforts are closely linked to broader priorities under the Union of Skills, including improving STEM skills and promoting STEM careers, attracting more women, and preparing learners for digital and clean-tech transitions — notably through the STEM Education Strategic Plan —, as well as introducing a new EU VET strategy to make vocational education and training more attractive, innovative, and inclusive. Together, these initiatives highlight the need to equip learners with strong foundational competences alongside technical and vocational expertise.

Within VET, providers and training organisations face the challenge of integrating the development of basic skills within vocational programmes while ensuring relevance to occupational contexts and labour market needs. Approaches vary widely across countries and institutions, and many practitioners are seeking effective methods to support learners who may struggle with foundational competences.

The EVTA Community MeetUp on Basic Skills aims to provide a space for VET practitioners and stakeholders to exchange experiences, initiatives, and project-based approaches that support the strengthening of basic skills within VET systems and programmes. In this second session, EVTA will also present its first 2026 Policy Brief on the Basic Skills Support Scheme under the Union of Skills and introduce the related EU Visibility Campaign launched on LinkedIn. The specific objectives of the Community MeetUp are to:

- Enable the sharing of experiences and initiatives that support the development of basic skills within VET.
- Exchange practical approaches to integrating literacy, numeracy, and digital competences into vocational learning environments.
- Highlight projects, tools, and practices that help VET providers support learners with diverse learning needs.
- Encourage collaboration among participants and stimulate ideas for future initiatives and projects addressing basic skills in VET.

European Commission. (2020). European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience.

European Commission. (2024). Union of Skills.

European Commission. (2025). Action Plan on Basic Skills.

European Commission. (2024). Basic Skills Support Scheme.



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## **STRENGTHENING BASIC SKILLS IN VET: SUPPORTING LEARNERS FOR THE FUTURE**

**April 21st, 11:00-12:15 CET, online via Zoom**

### **AGENDA**

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<b>11:00–11:10</b>	<b>Welcome and introduction</b> <b>Setting the Scene: needs and expectations</b> Sergio Expósito Cabrera – EU Communication & Project Officer
<b>11:10 – 12:05</b>	<b>Advancing Basic Skills in Europe: Policy, Practice and Impact</b> Zoltán Várkonyi, Secretary General at the European Basic Skills Network
	<b>Advancing Digital Skills in African VET Systems</b> Vasco Gaião, Senior Partner at Mindshift
	<b>H<sub>2</sub>Excellence Training Pathways and Skills Gaps Analysis</b> Dr. Karna Dahal, EU Project Manager and Lecturer at VAMK
<b>12:05–12:15</b>	<b>Q&amp;A</b> <b>Wrap Up &amp; Final Conclusions</b> Sergio Expósito Cabrera – EU Communication & Project Officer

