



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR
THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS

ACTIVITY REPORT 2015

Publisher: European Association for the Education of Adults – EAEA

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Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

This publication is produced with the financial support of the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture.

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

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EAEA General Assembly was held in Porto, Portugal in June 2015.

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2015

This EAEA Activity Report refers to the period from January to December 2015 and presents a general overview of the work of EAEA performed throughout this time. It is based on the application for core funding for 2015 and follows the Work Plan for 2015, which was approved by the General Assembly 2014 in Brussels, Belgium.

ADVOCACY

- Interest Group on Lifelong Learning
- Participation in EC working group on adult learning
- Policy Lunch during the Lifelong Learning Week
- Presentations and inputs at a number of conferences
- Regular meetings with policy-makers

STATEMENTS

- EAEA statement on TTIP: Education is a public good and has to be excluded from the TTIP negotiations, January 2015
- EAEA statement to the Paris Declaration of the European Education Ministers, April 2015
- EAEA statement: Adult education can play a key role in the current refugee crisis (EN, NL), September 2015
- EAEA statement on the Draft Joint Report on ET 2020, October 2015
- EAEA Policy Paper: Adult Education and Health (EN, FR, RU), October 2015
- EAEA Feedback on Erasmus+, December 2015

EVENTS

- EAEA General Assembly
- EAEA Annual Conference on Adult Education and Health
- EAEA Grundtvig Award ceremony
- Workshop on adult education and development cooperation
- Workshop on “Financing adult education”
- EAEA Younger Staff Training
- European Year for Adult Learning

PUBLICATIONS

- EAEA Grundtvig Award Brochure
- Country reports: *Adult Education in Europe 2015: a civil society view*
- *Manifesto for adult education in the 21st century*

PROJECTS

Coordinated projects:

- AE-PRO
- AVA

Partner projects:

- AEMA
- EDU-FIN
- ELINET
- Know your lifestyle
- InfoNet III
- RENEWAL
- ROM-ACT



Photo: Ulla-Alexandra Matti

From left to right: Secretary General Gina Ebner (EAEA), Chair of The Interest Group MEP Sirpa Pietikäinen (EPP, FI), Director Audrey Frith (EUCIS-LLL) and Consultant John Hamer (Council of Europe) at the second meeting of the Interest Group on Lifelong Learning in Brussels in September 2015.

INFLUENCING PUBLIC POLICY

2015 was a year of strong advocacy for adult education through various EAEA initiatives, also thanks to the regular contacts with the European Institutions. In particular, the collaboration with the European Parliament was enhanced with the creation of the Interest Group for Lifelong Learning.

The internal campaign for a European Year for Adult Learning sparked a lot of interest amongst stakeholders and partners. Overall, the various policy initiatives EAEA undertook in 2015 underlined the strong role it plays in the field of advocacy on the European level.

2.1 MAINTAINING CONTACTS WITH THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND OTHER EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS

EAEA has had frequent contacts with the adult education unit in the Directorate-General Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion (DG EMPL) and also with the team in the DG for Education and Culture (DG EAC). Regular exchanges about plans and opinions took place through informal meetings. After the move of the adult education unit to DG EMPL end of 2014 / beginning of 2015, the same persons remained in charge of adult education and EAEA continued its close collaboration with them.

EAEA was part of the European Commission Working Group on adult learning. President Per Paludan Hansen is the main representative, the Secretary General Gina Ebner the substitute.

Concerning the European Parliament, EAEA was successful at identifying politicians that care for adult education and to engage them in collaboration with EAEA, such as MEP Sirpa Pietikäinen (FI, EPP) or MEP Julie Ward (UK, S&D). In collaboration with EUCIS-LLL, EAEA successfully created an Interest group on Lifelong Learning at the European Parliament. The group is chaired by MEP Pietikäinen, President of one of

EAEA's member organisations, The Finnish Lifelong learning Foundation – KVS, a strong national umbrella organisation in Finland. Julie Ward (UK, S&D) and Krystyna Lybacka (PL, S&D) are the group's Vice-Chairs, which means that the various political parties are represented. The group counts already over 10 members and has its own website (lll-interestgroup.eu), which presents all its activities since the creation. 2015 was marked by two successful meetings. The first one was the launch of the group and took place in April. The second one focused on "What should Europe do to better promote tolerance and its fundamental values?" and took place in September. The group's role is to be a watchdog toward European Commission initiatives in the field of lifelong learning. Touching upon transversal issues in education, the group is welcoming towards MEPs from all Committees.

MEP Julie Ward also represented the European Parliament at EAEA's Annual Conference on adult education and health. She gave a vibrant speech on the importance of adult education and the role it plays for health. She also explained the link between EAEA's work and her own work at the European Parliament and how she can strengthen the place adult education gets in European poli-

cies through her role as MEP. At the Younger Staff Training in December, Mr. Paul Holdsworth represented the European Commission to present the European policies and programmes in adult education. Martina Ni Chellaigh took the same role in the online training AE-PRO, where participants from all over Europe listened to her presentation.

Via the European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning (EUCIS-LLL), the relationship with other units in DG EAC was reinforced and EAEA was very active in the stakeholder initiatives (see chapter 2.3).

2.2 LOBBYING FOR LIFELONG LEARNING, ADULT EDUCATION AND CIVIL SOCIETY

Lobbying for adult education was a key piece of EAEA's activity in 2015, through various initiatives as well as the contacts with European Institutions.

EAEA also worked on the idea of a European campaign for adult education. Four meetings with other civil society organisations opened a lively discussion about the specifics of such a campaign, with many organisations expressing their strong support.

EAEA was equally involved in advocacy for adult education on the European level concerning the Erasmus+

programme. Having gathered feedback from its members, EAEA addressed recommendations to the European Commission that could effectively improve the programme, already in its second year. EAEA and EUCIS-LLL worked closely together to create the feedback in order to bring the programme closer to the education reality and support each other's work.

2015 was also the year when the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) negotiations received a lot of attention from policy-makers, from the media and from civil society organisations. After several meetings and position papers, EAEA and other organisations dealing with education were successful in convincing European policy-makers that education had to be left out of the TTIP agreements.

Advocacy also took place through EAEA members at national level. Members meet with policy-makers and use EAEA's papers and work in their own advocacy work.

2.3 PLATFORM MEMBERSHIPS

EAEA continued to play an active role in the EUCIS-LLL, Social Platform (as associate member) as well as the International Council of Adult Education (ICAE) and CONCORD.



MEP and Shadow Minister for Education and Employment Therese Comodini Cachia (EPP, MT) and EAEA President Per Paludan Hansen at EAEA Policy Lunch in Brussels in December 2015.

In 2015, EAEA became an associate member of CONCORD, the European Platform for Development. The membership allowed the EAEA network to broaden its policy scope and strengthen its focus on adult education and development as well as Global Citizenship Education. EAEA was involved especially in Hub 4 of CONCORD that merged the former DARE Forum (Development Awareness Raising and Education) with other organisations of the CONCORD network active in formal, non-formal and informal education.

Via the EUCIS-LLL, EAEA continues to be represented in the Civil Society

Liaison Group of the Economic and Social Committee; whenever education and training are on the agenda, adult education is one of the themes that are being discussed. EAEA changed its representative in EUCIS-LLL: the Secretary General Gina Ebner has replaced Gerhard Bisovsky as a Board Member for a year, until the mandate finishes. EAEA participated in the meeting of two working groups, the one on validation and the one on well-being.

EAEA was also very present at EUCIS-LLL's Lifelong Learning Week. It organised its Policy Lunch during that week where it showcased the main products

of its work: the *Manifesto for Adult Learning in the 21st century* and the EAEA Policy Paper *Adult Education & Health*. Throughout the week, EAEA participated in the exhibition dedicated to EUCIS-LLL member's work.

Additionally, EAEA is an associate member of the Social Platform. The close cooperation with the organisation on the TTIP advocacy campaigns allowed EAEA to receive continuous updates. EAEA was considered as Social Platform's partner for the education sector, with its arguments on education quoted by Social Platform in its advocacy papers.

2.4 STATEMENTS AND OPINIONS

In order to be recognised as a policy actor and significant representative of a civil society sector, an organisation in Brussels needs to take position, present opinions on policies, offer clear perspectives of strategies and produce convincing policy recommendations.

EAEA contributed to EU policies with the following papers, recommendations and responses in 2015:

- *Feedback on Erasmus+*, December 2015
- *Adult Education and Health* (EN, FR, RU), October 2015
- *Statement on the Draft Joint*

Report on ET2020, October 2015

- *Adult education can play a key role in the current refugee crisis* (EN, NL), September 2015
- *Statement to the Paris Declaration of the European Education Ministers*, April 2015
- *Education is a public good and has to be excluded from the TTIP negotiations*, January 2015

For key advocacy activities, EAEA presents the topic online to its readers and sends letters to European policy-makers to discuss the issue directly with them. This was the case of the Erasmus+ statement that led to meetings with European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion (DG EMPL); the topic is now presented in detail on the EAEA website. The TTIP is also presented on the EAEA website and a letter to Commissioner for Trade Cecilia Malmström was sent by EAEA with its arguments. It received an answer guaranteeing that education would not be part of the TTIP. As the topic of refugees became so central in Europe in 2015, EAEA first published a statement on adult education and refugees and subsequently made it its theme for 2016. Find the full texts of the statements and opinions in chapter 9 of this report.

2.5 EUCIS-LLL – THE EUROPEAN CIVIL SOCIETY PLATFORM ON LIFELONG LEARNING

In 2015, EUCIS-LLL continued to receive core funding from the European Commission and was therefore able to maintain its office in Brussels and organise various activities. The following overview presents the main events organised by EUCIS-LLL in 2015:

January

- Position Paper: Europe 2020 strategy: from political will to

implementation

- General Assembly in Brussels

February

- Position Paper: Why Education should be excluded from the TTIP
- Statement: the revision of the visa directive
- Press Release: Education Matters!
- Working Group on Transversal Skills

March

- Position Paper: Investment Plan, why investing in education matters
- Statement: Gender equality,

10th Anniversary of the EUCIS-LLL: Director Audrey Frith (on the left), Martine Reicherts (Director General of European Commission's DG EAC, MEP Julie Ward (S&D, UK), President David Lopez, former EAEA Secretary General Elinor Haase and two founding members of the platform: Jean-Marc Roirant (La Ligue de l'Enseignement) and Conny Reuters (SOLIDAR).





Peer learning at the EUCIS-LLL General Assembly 2015.

success factor for lifelong learning strategies

- Policy Debate: Intergenerational learning for inclusive societies
- Working Group: Learning for Well-being

April

- First Meeting of the Lifelong Learning Interest Group

June

- Annual Conference: Paving the way for learning and qualifications
- General Assembly, Luxembourg

July

- Policy Debate: Validation of learning outcomes: opportunities and threats for non-formal education

- Launch of the Erasmus+ Implementation Survey 2015
- Working group Validation

September

- Press Release: The new ET2020 priorities
- 10th Anniversary Celebration
- LLL Interest Group Meeting on Education in promoting EU fundamental values
- EU Guidebook to Education and Training
- General Assembly, Brussels

October

- Statement: Overcoming the refugee crisis, the fundamental role of education

- Statement: Language Learning
- Education and Training Forum 2015
- DEEEP Final Conference on Global Education

December

- Manifesto: Building the future of Learning in Europe
- When competences become occupational opportunities, coedited with the Bertelsmann Stiftung
- Lifelong Learning Week 2015
- Civil Society Day: Follow-up to the Paris Declaration

EUCIS-LLL supported the European Commission in the organisation of the fourth edition of the European Education, Training and Youth Forum in October 2015 in Brussels. The event aims to bring together various stakeholders once per year in order to discuss key policy developments linked to the Europe 2020 strategy, the strategic framework for European cooperation in Education and Training (ET2020) and the European Youth strategy.

2.6 RAISING VISIBILITY

In addition to the meetings with policy-makers, EAEA tries to be present at other meetings and / or receives invitations to conferences. These are all opportunities to present EAEA and its viewpoints. EAEA, i.e. the president, vice-presidents, board members and secretariat, were invited

to participate and / or do presentations in thematic working groups, conferences and meetings:

January

- Participation in Thematic Working Group on Adult Education at the European Commission, 20/1, Brussels
- Editorial board, Adult Education and Development Magazine, 26-28/1, Hamburg
- Participation in General Assembly of EUCIS-LLL, 27/1, Brussels
- Participation in meeting of the Social Platform Taskforce on TTIP, 27/1, Brussels
- Meeting on TTIP with Ombudsman, 29/1, Brussels
- Lecture at Winterschool Würzburg, 30/1, Würzburg

February

- Meeting with representatives of EAEA partner Public Libraries 2020, 11/2, Brussels
- National seminar European issues for Belarusian members, 12-14/2, Minsk
- Participation in presentation of the EAEA Grundtvig Award 2014, 13/2, Minsk

March

- Meeting with representatives of EAEA partner Public Libraries 2020, 13/3, Brussels



EAEA's President Per Paludan Hansen speaking at a seminar organised at the permanent representation of the EU in Helsinki in October 2015.

- Meeting with Nordic and Baltic members, 16-17/3, Oslo
- Participation in event "10th meeting of the EU Stakeholders Dialogue of the European Platform Against Poverty and Social Exclusion", 18/3, Brussels
- Participation in Thematic Working Group on Well-being, 31/3, Brussels

April

- Participation in EPALE Conference, 15-16/4, Brussels
- Participation in Thematic Working Group on Adult Education at the European Commission, 21/4,

Brussels

- Presentation in seminar of the Finnish Adult Education Association (VST), 27/4, Helsinki

May

- Participation in Library Conference, 8/5, Riga

June

- Participation in European Development Days, 3/6, Brussels
- Participation in General Assembly of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), 11-14/6, Montreal
- Presentation at General Assembly

- of CONCORD Europe, 10/6, Brussels
- ET2020 Working group on Adult Education, EC, 16-17/6, Brussels
- Participation in Civil Society Day at EESC, 16-17/6, Brussels
- Input at event of Eastern Partnership, 17/6, Brussels

September

- Participation in event “Does Dialogue Matter? EU migration dialogues with partner countries” organised by DG DEVCO Infopoint, 15/9, Brussels
- ET2020 Working group on Adult Education, EU Commission, 16-17/9, Brussels
- Participation in General Assembly of EUCIS-LLL, 22/9, Brussels

October

- Participation in Annual Colloquium on Fundamental Rights, 1-3/10
- Participation in EC Education, Training and Youth Forum, 19-20/10, Brussels
- Participation in Europe 2020 Working Group of EUCIS-LLL, 21/10, Brussels
- Presentation in seminar “Adult Education in a Global Context”, 21/10, Helsinki
- Participation in Family Learning Conference, 22-24/10, Brussels
- Participation in CONCORD DARE-Forum meeting, 27-28/10, Brussels
- Participation in Conference “The

Best of Global Learning”, 28-29/10, Brussels

November

- Participation in BIFEB webinar, 5/11, Brussels
- Participation in Working Group on Well-being from EUCIS-LLL, 10/11, Brussels
- Participation and input at IROHLA conference, 17 November, Brussels
- Participation in CONCORD Civil Society Summit, 24-25/11, Brussels

December

- Participation in Lifelong Learning Week at the European Parliament, 1-3/12, Brussels
- Input to webinar of Green Foundation, 2/12, Brussels
- Participation in Validation task for of EUCIS-LLL, 2/12, Brussels
- Participation in meetings with stakeholders and politicians, 2/12, Brussels
- Participation in event of Social Platform, 8/12, Brussels
- Input to BIFEB webinar, 10/12, Brussels
- Meetings with members of national/regional governments: Austria (Styria), Portugal (Lisbon), Germany (Saarland, Bremen) with local politicians
- Meetings with representatives of Permanent Representations of EU countries



Participants of the workshop at the European Development Days.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

3.1 COOPERATION WITH ICAE AND ASPBAE

EAEA established a close cooperation with ICAE (International Council of Adult Education) and ASPBAE (Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education) in order to work together on common policy issues as well as projects,

regarding for example climate development cooperation, validation, change, migration, to name but a few.

Katarina Popovic, Board member of EAEA from 2008 to 2014, was appointed Secretary General of ICAE (International Council of Adult Education) in 2014. Uwe

Gartenschlaeger from Germany represents EAEA and the European region on the board of the ICAE as Vice-President.

3.2 DEVELOPMENT

2015 was marked not only by the European Year of Development, but also by the end of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development and the last year of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The global goals for education were redefined in the negotiations around the Post-2015 Agenda and stipulated in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that were approved in September 2015.

Goal 4 of the SDGs is highly relevant for adult education as it aims to “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” – “for all” meaning all citizens in the Global North and South. Target 4.7 of the SDGs specifies that “By 2030, all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through [...] promotion of [...] global citizenship.”

Two workshops in 2015 – one on the Post-2015 Agenda, and another one on Global Citizenship Education – aimed

to raise awareness about the connection between adult education and development issues.

3.3 MEETING OF THE ADVISORY GROUP ON ADULT EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Representatives of civil society organisations, EU institutions and research institutes met to discuss the topic “Adult Education in the Post-2015 Process” at a workshop organised by EAEA and DVV International on 30 January 2015 in Brussels.

Timothy Ireland from the University of Paraíba, Brazil, one of the speakers invited to the workshop, explained that the Post-2015 Agenda was organised around three strategies, each with its own objectives: the MDGs, the SDGs, and UN’s Education for All goals (EFA). The post-2015 debate served to evaluate what had been achieved with regard to the established goals and to discuss what should follow with regard to development and education.

The participants of the workshop agreed that there was a need to overcome old paradigms of development. A new understanding of development perceived it as social change everywhere in the world, in Europe and other regions of the Global North as well as the Global South.

The advisory group on “Adult Education and Development: Lifelong Learning for all”, formed in 2012 by EAEA and DVV International, continued to be active in 2015. The group, composed of representatives of civil society organisations, EU institutions and research institutes, aims to establish a dialogue among education and development stakeholders on the challenges and opportunities for non-formal adult education in the development sector.

3.4 WORKSHOP AT THE DEVELOPMENT DAYS

Stakeholders of the development sector debated the issue of “Global Citizenship and education in a developing world” in a brainstorming workshop at the European Development Days on 3 June 2015 in Brussels. The workshop was organised by EAEA and DVV International in cooperation with the University of Nottingham Trent and CONCORD.

One of the main outcomes of the workshop was the message that ‘Global citizens’ are more involved in their communities and are aware of the global ties of their actions. Lifelong learning can play a crucial role in Global Citizenship Education to raise awareness of global inequalities.

The speakers in the workshop, Katarina Popovic, Secretary General of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), Rilli Lappalainen, Board member of CONCORD, Lucie Belikova and Roy Smith, both University of Nottingham Trent, highlighted different aspects of Global Citizenship Education and the importance of including non-formal adult education in it. The speakers agreed that non-formal adult education can foster democratic change and empower citizens worldwide.



Photo: Aura Vuorenrinne

EAEA Secretary General Gina Ebner speaking at the EAEA General Assembly in Porto, Portugal in June 2015.

CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

4.1 EAEA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

See chapter 8.1

4.2 EAEA GRUNDTVIG AWARD

See chapter 8.2

4.3 WORKSHOP ON ADULT EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

See chapter 3.2



Participants of the EAEA Younger Staff Training 2015.

4.4 YOUNGER STAFF TRAINING

Young professionals in adult learning from different parts of Europe gathered in Brussels between 1 and 4 December 2015 for the fifth EAEA Younger Staff Training. Seven participants were united by their keen interest in European adult education and desire to learn from one another.

During the four-day training, the participants of the training were offered a number of meetings and presentations to attain a better understanding of the European decision-making procedures, as well as the civil society's response at the European level.

As an introduction into the policy work of the European civil society, the participants were familiarized with the advocacy and lobbying work of not only EAEA, but also EUCIS-LLL, the umbrella organisation for the European networks active in the field of education and training.

During a meeting with Mr. Paul Holdsworth representing the Unit for Adult Education at the European Commission, the younger staff learned more about the structure of the European institutions and EU policy processes in education and training.

To make the training more practice-oriented, the participants were invited to the Policy Lunch at the European Parliament, where the EAEA Policy Paper *Adult Education & Health* and the *Manifesto on Adult Learning in the 21st Century* were presented.

Together with the participants from the trainings from 2011 to 2014, EAEA has built a network of about 60 young adult educators who continue to stay in contact with each other.

4.5 STUDY VISITS

In 2014, EAEA welcomed several study groups from member organisations in Brussels.

- Study Group from Germany, 23 January
- Study Group from Germany, 12 March
- Meeting with Study Group from France, 19 March
- Study Group from Switzerland, 20 March
- Study Group from Germany, 12 May
- Study Group from Bulgaria, 27 July
- Study Group from Austria, 14 October
- Study Group from Germany, 16 October
- Study Group from Norway, 13 November



EAEA President Per Paludan Hansen (on the left) and SIAE Director Andrej Sotošek (on the right) handed the Manifesto for Adult Learning in the 21st Century to Maja Makovec Brenčič, the Slovenian Minister of Education, in Bratislava in February 2016.

PUBLICATIONS

5.1 EAEA GRUNDTVIG AWARD BROCHURE

EAEA published a summary of all the submissions received for the Grundtvig award 2015 on “Adult education and health”, thereby providing an outstanding collection of good prac-

tice examples across Europe and elsewhere.

5.2 ADULT EDUCATION IN EUROPE: A CIVIL SOCIETY VIEW

EAEA’s members wrote a shadow report of the situation of adult education in

Europe. It describes, country by country, recent developments and future focus in the field of adult education and members' outlook.

5.3 MANIFESTO FOR ADULT LEARNING IN THE 21ST CENTURY

As a tool for change, EAEA published *Manifesto for Adult Learning in the 21st Century* in December 2015. It sets objectives for creating a Learning Europe: a Europe that is able to tackle the future

positively and with all necessary skills, knowledge and competences.

The Manifesto is targeted at European, national and regional policy makers to learn about the benefits of adult learning. It can also be useful for European education providers in advocacy work.

The Manifesto has been translated into more than 10 languages.

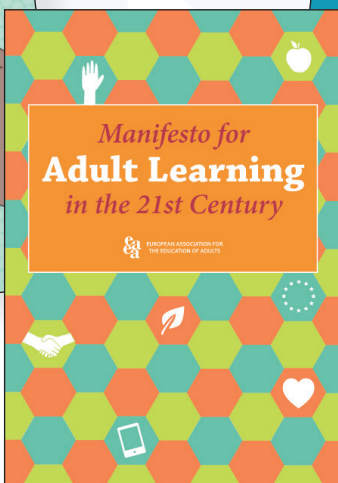
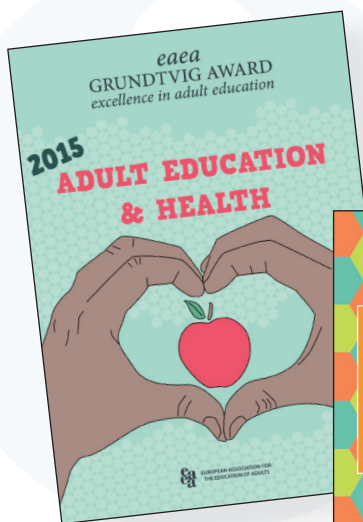




Photo: Flemming Gjedde

AE-PRO project consortium in a meeting in Lisbon, Portugal, in November 2015.

PROJECTS

The aim of EAEA is to be present in European projects of strategic importance with regard to advocacy policy in adult education and life-long learning. EAEA is requested as a partner in European projects with

an increasing tendency. An important role that the association takes over in these projects is disseminating projects in development and project results as well as disseminating good practice examples.

PROJECTS IN WHICH EAEA WAS INVOLVED AS A COORDINATOR:

6.1 AE-PRO

In 2014, EAEA started the three-year project AE-PRO, the European Adult Education (Young) Professionals Learning Platform. The project builds on the Younger Staff Training EAEA has organised since 2011. The objective is to allow more young staff in adult education to benefit from the course by providing it online and for free.

The first online training took place from April to December 2015. It had been designed in the following way: a first compulsory part explored adult education at a European level with around six sessions on it. Then, participants had optional courses. Four modules were available:

- Adult education practice in Europe;
- Adult Education policies;
- Pedagogical approaches/
Non-formal education methods;
- Working with specific target groups.

Participants had to choose two sessions from each module. They were strongly encouraged to take part in the “live sessions” but the sessions were available also later on for those who could not attend the course. The training was very successful with over 1200 regis-

tered participants, almost 400 participants that completed at least one session and 40 who finalised the whole course. A second training will take place in 2016 from March to July with assignments over the summer.

The project partners include: Kerigma (Portugal), Danish Adult Education Association – DAEA (Denmark), The Interest Organization for Popular Movement Folk High Schools – RIO (Sweden), Learning & Work Institute – LWI (UK), Adult Education Society – AES (Serbia), The Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation – KVS (Finland), Der Verband der Volkshochschulen des Saarlandes – VHS Saar (Germany) and ICAE (Uruguay).

6.2 AVA

Often being the implementing bodies, adult education providers and stakeholders can play a major role in supporting Member States in developing their national validation systems.

By analysing tools and existing methodologies as well as proposing solutions from the civil society perspective, the Action Plan for Validation and Non-Formal Adult Education (AVA) project is intended as a contribution to increasing the permeability and inclusiveness of validation systems in the EU.

Believing that validation is crucial to enable people to move vertically and horizontally in their personal lives and careers, the consortium has focused on the extent to which disadvantaged groups can access the validation systems, to their level of awareness of validation opportunities and the way in which providers and key actors can support them.

In 2015 the AVA consortium:

- drafted research on the basis of the results of a survey that addressed adult education providers;
- organised a jour fixe for

presenting the preliminary results (Vienna, October 2015);

- produced articles on relevant issues related to the project's values and aims;
- developed an appropriate methodology for the expert seminar.

The next steps of the project include:

- organising an expert seminar for debating the main themes of the survey (Oslo, Norway, February 2016);
- drafting an Action Plan providing key messages and actions targeted at both policy makers and adult education organisations;

AVA project consortium and participants in a seminar in Oslo in February 2016.



- organising a policy debate in Brussels.

The AVA project is funded with the support of the Erasmus+ programme. It was officially launched in September 2014 and will run for two years. Find out more on: www.eaea.org/en/projects/eaea-coordinated-projects/ava.html

PROJECTS IN WHICH EAEA WAS INVOLVED AS A PARTNER:

6.3 AEMA

Access to adult education is a key factor for inclusion. However, not everyone has got equal access to adult education. The existing comparative data shows that people with disabilities are the group with the lowest rates of participation in post- and upper secondary educational settings, with the evident consequences on employment. The Adult Education Made Accessible – AEMA Network aims to change this, by developing a shared network and quality framework on accessibility issues in adult education provision.

In 2015 the AEMA Network:

- created a list of Accessibility Criteria based on the perspectives of people with disabilities and the achievements of adult education providers;
- drafted a Competency Catalogue that suggests how Experts on Accessibility could support accessibility;
- constantly updated the One-Stop Information portal;
- launched the AEMA Accessibility Award, open to initiatives which contribute to increase the accessibility of adult education in Europe. The winner, Retzhof Castle from Austria, was awarded in Porto, Portugal in June.

The next steps will be:

- finalising and promoting a system for the Recognition of Achievements and Competencies through the Issuing of Accessibility Quality and Competency Badges, to build the organisational structure for a One-Stop Accreditation and Support Service, backed up by sustainable national Trust Networks;
- finalising and promoting a qualitative and comprehensive “Accessibility Framework”, which includes Self-Assessment Tools and corresponding Online Applications for Adult Education Providers and Experts on Accessibility.

The network consists of 12 organisations from 11 European countries and it's co-funded with support from the Lifelong Learning programme. Find



Photo: Aura Vuorenrinne

Director Joachim Gruber (Retzhof Castle), President Per Paludan Hansen (EAEA), Julia Fernandes, responsible for education and social affairs in the municipality of Vila Verde, Portugal, and MEP Nuno Melo (EPP, PT) at AEMA Accessibility Award gala.

more information on the AEMA online portal: www.aemanet.eu.

participation in education and training in a lifelong learning perspective.

6.4 DIMA

The aim of A Toolkit for Developing, Implementing and Monitoring Adult Education – DIMA project is to create a practical and innovative toolkit for developing, implementing and monitoring coherent and participative adult education strategies.

This, in turn, will allow adult education providers and local authorities to actively contribute to national and EU adult education policies, increasing adult

The project outcomes will be:

- State of the art report on existing adult education strategies, policies and tools in partner countries and at the European level;
- Comparative study of needs assessment at national and EU level;
- Practical toolkit to facilitate the development, monitoring and assessment of adult education;
- Training curriculum and material to be used by policy makers and

- adult education providers;
- E-learning portal with an innovative training package;
- National seminars and a European final conference.

The project officially started in October 2015 and will run for two years. In the first months of the project, the consortium has worked on the preparation of the first two intellectual outputs, the state of the art report and the comparative study.

The project consortium is coordinated by the Ministry of Education and Culture in Cyprus and financed with the support of the Erasmus+ programme of the European Commission. More information at: dima-project.eu.

6.5 ELINET

The European Literacy Policy Network – ELINET is a union for organisations engaged in literacy policy-making and promotion in Europe. It aims at improving literacy policies in its members' countries in order to reduce the number of children, young people and adults with low literacy skills in Europe.

The network was established in February 2014 and received a 3 million Euro grant from the European Commission to complete a two-year work programme.

This is targeted to develop evidence-based tools for all actors in the diverse field of literacy locally, regionally, nationally and transnationally, as well as support existing and initiate new activities. ELINET is made up of 79 partner organisations from 28 countries (of which 24 are EU Member States). The ELINET partners comprise existing literacy networks and national literacy associations, education ministries and national agencies, international organisations (as UNESCO), foundations and NGO's, universities, research centres and teacher training institutions, volunteer organizations and other stakeholder groups working in the field of literacy. The network is coordinated by the University of Cologne (Universität Köln).

ELINET follows the European Union High Level Group of Experts on Literacy which was established by the European Commission in January 2011 and reported in September 2012. This group examined how to support literacy throughout life-long learning, identified common success factors of literacy programmes and policy initiatives, and came up with proposals for improving literacy.

ELINET intends to further expand and deepen the knowledge base of this report by developing:

- separate Literacy Reports for all 28

- countries involved;
- a common European framework of Good Practice in Literacy Policies across all age groups;
- mechanisms to identify and exchange good practice examples based on this framework.

A major task of the network will consist of developing a strategic concept and corresponding tools for raising awareness about the importance of literacy issues among stakeholders, including policy makers, based on research of best practice examples throughout Europe. Additionally, ELINET will develop and pilot indicators for measuring the impact of awareness raising activities and will investigate funding sources for literacy promotion in order to develop tools and strategies for effective fundraising.

EAEA was one of the numerous partners in this project, in the “adult education” team. Best practise examples from the field of basic skills and adult education can be found on the ELINET webpage. EAEA participated in the main project meetings and advised the ELINET team on how to eventually continue the network.

6.6 EDU-FIN

Financial literacy is especially low among certain demographic groups.

One of these collectives is young adults at risk. Most young adults are ill-equipped to deal with ever-increasing financial responsibility. Their lack of financial education is probably one of the causes that reduces their opportunities of being competitive and access to learning and training opportunities.

Financial Literacy for Young Adults at Risk – EDU-FIN aims to establish a learning curriculum on financial education based on the contribution of young adults at risk which will allow meeting their real needs on financial literacy.

In 2015 the EDU-FIN project worked on:

- a comparative study on financial education programmes in the partnership countries;
- a methodology which promotes participative processes with young adults on the elaboration of educational curriculums;
- national events for the recruitment of young adults for the national work teams.

The next steps will be:

- developing a curriculum on financial education addressed to young adults;
- organising a transnational seminar for the dissemination of the meth-



EDU-FIN project consortium in a steering committee meeting in Barcelona, Spain.

- odology and curriculum;
- national seminars for the dissemination of the methodology and curriculum.

EDU-FIN is coordinated by Asociacion de Personas Participantes Agora (ES) and funded with support from the Erasmus+ programme of the European Commission. The project was officially launched in September 2014 and lasted two years.

More information:

www.eaea.org/en/projects/partner-projects/edu-fin.html

6.7 KYL

The Know Your Lifestyle – KYL project has the purpose to introduce global education in the second chance courses, to create an innovative pedagogical approach for discussing sustainable consumption and globalisation with second chance students and to establish a strong thematic network among Adult Education Centres and NGOs about development education. Thanks to the KYL project, young people have the opportunity to look critically at their own consumption and to develop alternative courses of action.



Photo: KYL project

Natalija Žalec from SIAE, Slovenia and Mariella Ciani, Università Senza Età di Campoformio, Italy at the KYL workshop in Brussels in February 2015.

In 2015 the project consortium finalised and widely promoted the innovative teaching materials on sustainable consumption which provide second-chance teachers (and not only) with the capacity to offer development education and globalisation lessons and courses.

KYL is led by DVV International and has the following partners: Estonian Non-Formal Adult Education Association, Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (SIAE) and the Carinthian folk high schools. As dissemination partner, EAEA developed the valorisation plan and supported the coordinator in the development of the dissemination tools. Furthermore, EAEA supported the project coordinator with the organ-

isational aspects of the dissemination workshop which took place in Brussels in February 2015 and organised two promotion events in the autumn 2015. KYL is a three-year project funded by the EuropeAid programme. More information: www.knowyourlifestyle.eu.

6.8 INFONET III

InfoNet III (2013 – 2015) is a follow-up project of InfoNet I and II. It aims at:

- providing a comprehensive, constantly growing database (InfoService) with reports (news, articles, background articles, interviews, etc.) related to adult education (currently around 600 articles);
- providing a thematic information

letter (InfoLetter), issued every two months as a PDF file with links to the InfoService database;

- having a network of correspondents (journalists/experts) all across Europe;
- cooperating with important organisations and networks.

Around 40 correspondents from all over Europe, working in the field of adult education, created reports about various topics for InfoNet in accordance with high quality criteria, which could also be republished in other media. The product of their work is freely available via an online database in English.

Furthermore, InfoNet distributed a digital newsletter (InfoLetter), focusing on one main theme. In 2013 a close cooperation with the LLine quarterly Magazine (now known as European Lifelong Learning Magazine – Elm) was established that continued all along 2014. As a result, themes of the newsletters were agreed on as well as correspondents contributed to each other's publications and articles. Each InfoLetter reached about 7500 readers. It covered almost every European country by partnership and some freelance partners. Also innovative elements like a new quality management system, Web

2.0 elements and cross area country reports about developments outside Europe were included.

EAEA was a member of the steering committee, editorial board and sustainable working group of InfoNet III as well as contributed with articles on adult education on the European level and led a work package on European Networking. Find more information on www.infonet-ae.eu

6.9 LEK-AE

The main objective for the Let Europe Know about Adult Education – LEK-AE project is to increase the professionalisation and quality of information work of adult education staff. In seminars, webinars and simulation games that are developed and designed in the project, adult education staff will learn more about public relations and journalistic writing. Furthermore, they will acquire skills to pass on this knowledge to their colleagues and peers in adult education.

The foundation and starting point of this strategic partnership is the European InfoNet Adult Education Grundtvig network, which has developed since 2005 and is now a comprehensive information portal on adult education in Europe, based on professional jour-

nalistic contributions from correspondents all over Europe. Based on this experience, the consortium believes that disseminating information and reporting on trends, project/research results, developments, best practice and news in the area of adult education all around Europe is needed.

The partnership consists of ten organisations from the field of lifelong learning and adult education. Katholische Erwachsenenbildung Deutschland e.V. (Germany) coordinates the project, and the partners are Akademie Klausenhof GmbH (Germany), Dansk Folkeoplysnings Samråd (Denmark), The Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation – KVS (Finland), Caixa de Mitos Lda (Portugal), Asociatia EUROED (Romania), CONEDU – Verein für Bildungsforschung und -medien (Austria), Nordic Network for Adult Learning (Norway), Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Belgium), and EAEA.

The project kicked-off successfully with a first meeting of the project partners in Copenhagen on 23 October.

6.10 LIVE AND LEARN

Live and Learn is inspired by two observations, shared by most European education policy documents and relevant

studies. Firstly, there is a clear need to increase participation in adult education across Europe; and secondly, new ways of sharing best practices among European adult educators must be found.

The project wants to address these needs in an innovative way. The project partners will produce videos about adult learners and educators with the purpose to raise awareness about adult education and increase the participation in adult learning. The learners that are portrayed in the videos tell the stories about their individual learning pathways. The videos about the adult educators aim to present best practices of innovative teaching methods in non-formal adult education. The videos will be disseminated widely through European networks of EAEA and the partners.

The partnership is formed by seven organisations with a wide knowledge and experience in the field of lifelong learning and adult education. The Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation – KVS is the project coordinator, and the partners are Deutscher Volkshochschulverband – DVV (Germany), Learning and Work Institute – LWI (UK), Danish Adult Education Association – DAEA (Denmark), Kerigma (Portugal), and the EAEA.

At the kick-off meeting in January 2015 in Helsinki, the partners discussed the first steps of creating short films that tell informative and entertaining stories about adult learning. The videos will be launched at the final project event in June 2016 in Brussels.

6.11 VNFIL EXTENDED

The Transnational Peer Review for quality assurance in Validation of Non Formal and Informal Learning – VNFIL project aims to transfer the current European Peer Review for Recognition, Validation and Certification methodology to more European countries,

establishing Peer Review to complement and enhance the usual quality assurance systems in Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning.

Building upon the results of a series of previous European projects, the project seeks to increase the transparency, market relevance, consistency and transferability of VNFIL across Europe. It provides different VNFIL providers with a common framework and tools to improve and evaluate their national/institutional quality assurance policies and practices. Through transnational Peer Reviews, providers

Video shooting of the Live & Learn project.



Photo: Karoliina Knuuti



ROM-ACT final conference in Brussels, Belgium in April 2015.

in the participating countries will:

- discover the good practices of a fellow VNFIL provider abroad;
- give feedback and advice to a fellow VNFIL provider abroad to improve the quality of their VNFIL process;
- gain insight in the transferability of the various VNFIL systems in Europe;
- exchange information regarding the different VNFIL systems;
- engage in mutual learning with transnational peers for professional development;
- establish networks and cooperation with other European VNFIL

providers;

- facilitate the VNFIL and its permeability with education pathways.

The project consortium is led by Erik Kaemingk (NL) and is composed by 15 partners from 7 countries. It is funded with the support of the Erasmus+ programme and will run until June 2018.

6.12 ROM-ACT

Widening Roma Women's Access to non-formal and informal Learning Validation Systems – ROM-ACT aims to widen recognition of the skills and competences that the Roma and Travellers communities have acquired in

formal and non-formal settings and to encourage centres for adult education and civil society organisations to support them in their validation process. The project involved Roma women and invited them to make concrete recommendations in order to improve the accessibility of validation systems in the EU.

In 2015 the ROM-ACT consortium:

- published a policy paper on how to make validation in Europe more inclusive for the Roma community;
- drafted and disseminated guidelines for providers and civil society organisations;
- created a DVD which collects Roma and Traveller women insights on validation processes;
- supported the validation the prior learning of 50 non-academic Roma women;
- carried out awareness raising campaigns to sensitize public opinion on the potential of validation in relation to disadvantaged groups;
- implemented lobbying campaigns for national governments with the aim to incorporate the contributions of the project in the non-formal and informal learning validation systems.

ROM-ACT is coordinated by the Romani Association of Women Drom Kotar Mestipen (Spain). ROM-ACT was financed with the support of the Lifelong Learning Programme and ran until June 2015. Learn more about the project and download its results at the website: www.rom-act.eu.



INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION

7.1 INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture continues to support the EAEA Communication Officer (through The Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation –

KVS), and EAEA is very grateful for this help. In 2015, the EAEA Communication Strategy was updated and subsequently accepted by the Executive Board in April. The updated strategy included minor adjustments as well as an annex

defining a strategy for the association's presence in social media. The social media presence was further strengthened in 2015 with a consistent way and pace of publishing.

EAEA continued producing and distributing electronic and printed materials such as the policy statements, press releases, newsletters, the key policy publications (*Manifesto for Adult Learning in the 21st Century* and *Adult Education in Europe 2015 – A Civil Society View*) and the EAEA Grundtvig Award brochure to the membership as well as to stakeholders and policy makers interested in adult education. Daily news updates were provided through social media channels Facebook and Twitter in order to keep a wide audience informed. The EAEA General Assembly, the Annual Conference, study visits and the policy events were all documented and disseminated through the EAEA website, and the results were also disseminated at all our events and beyond.

7.2 CONTACTS WITH EAEA MEMBERS

In 2015, EAEA continued to focus on contacts with the members as well as on increasing the membership, in particular in currently less-represented European regions and countries. At the beginning of the year EAEA launched a member-

ship survey to measure the satisfaction of its members with its work and to look for areas for improvement. The membership leaflet was translated into more languages to reach out to potential new members in further countries.

Based on a membership workshop at the GA, an action plan for the EAEA membership was developed with the objective to create stronger synergies between members and a stronger awareness of other member's activities by:

- facilitating member's knowledge of each other,
- making more use of the knowledge that is available in the network,
- better underlining the benefits of being an EAEA member.

Among other things, the communication with and among members was further improved and better structured.

As every year, several delegations and staff members from EAEA members and affiliated organisations visited the main office and received information on EAEA's activities, its role at the European level and possibilities for members to get involved. The EAEA Secretary General continued to regularly send internal e-mail information to the members, explaining what is going on at the secretariat in Brussels and in

terms of policy developments at the European level ("News from Brussels").

Members of the Executive Board, the President, Vice-Presidents, and Secretary General have been invited to a

number of events, conferences, seminars, meetings and discussions. All representatives of EAEA contributed to making adult education more visible and to promoting the association at different levels.





Photo: Aura Vuorenrinne

EAEA Grundtvig Award 2015.

ACTIVITIES IN THE ORGANISATION AND THE OFFICES

8.1 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The EAEA members gathered for the General Assembly held in Porto, Portugal, on the 23rd of June 2015, to

discuss adult education, health and the future actions of EAEA. Around 100 persons were present. A new EAEA Board was elected during the event.

The President Per Paludan Hansen was elected for a second term. Several Board members were re-elected as well for a second term.

At the event, EAEA welcomed 22 new member organisations, resulting in a total of 137 members in 44 countries. At the General Assembly, the new members introduced themselves and received a “welcome package” including their membership certificates. A panel session with the workshop rapporteurs, Katarina Popovic, ICAE’s Secretary General and a Member of the Portuguese Parliament, Nuno Reis, concluded the conference.

8.2 EAEA GRUNDTVIG AWARD WINNER 2015

In 2015 EAEA looked for excellent projects and initiatives that focused on adult education and health for its Grundtvig Award Prize. The Grundtvig Award brochures presents these best practice examples from all around Europe and beyond, as a category for international projects was also open.

The EAEA Board chose the winners of the EAEA Grundtvig Award 2015. These were:

- National category: “Alpha-Power” in the Health Sector
- European category: Intervention Research Into Health Literacy of

the Ageing in Europe (IROHLA)

- International category: Comprehensive Abortion Care

The Award ceremony was held in the evening of the 22nd of June in Casa de Musica in Porto, Portugal, with the presence of MEP Nuno Melo and Julia Fernandes, responsible for education and social affairs in the municipality of Vila Verde, Portugal.

8.3 MEMBERSHIP

In 2015, the EAEA membership strategy was renewed and improved based on the members’ feedback. It increased and strengthened the contact with current members and developed new ways to involve them and support their commitment. EAEA continued to map potential contacts and members and implemented outreach and recruitment strategies, focusing especially on Southern and Central-Eastern Europe in order to strengthen European adult education in these regions. EAEA identified three target countries (Poland, Turkey and Luxembourg) for which specific strategies were developed.

As a result of the membership strategy, EAEA welcomed 22 new members in 2015, two of them from Turkey, one of the target countries. This also means that the aim of increasing the member-

ship by 10% was fully achieved. In order to better involve new members and to facilitate their engagement in EAEA, a “buddy system” was developed and implemented, in which each of the EAEA Board Members guides two or three new members as a “buddy”.

The longstanding members of EAEA were more actively involved in the work of EAEA through direct mails and consultations. Furthermore, the communication with the EAEA members was improved by further developing the bi-weekly member newsletter in terms of layout and contents (internal information, policy news, project news, funding

opportunities, partner searches for European projects, publications, events etc.).

EAEA membership survey shows high satisfaction rate with member services. From mid-January to mid-February 2016, EAEA carried out its annual membership survey. This year, EAEA has collected 35 answers (from 137 members), a slight increase compared to 2015, when only 27 members filled in the survey. The purpose of the survey was to examine the overall satisfaction of EAEA members with the services provided and the work done by EAEA in 2015. The questionnaire also included a new part on EAEA's communication work, the use of EAEA

EAEA members at General Assembly in Porto, Portugal in June 2015.



Photo: Aura Vuorenmaa

of the EAEA members, and the satisfaction of new members, i.e. those that joined EAEA in 2014 and 2015.

The overall satisfaction with the work and services of EAEA was again very high. The overall satisfaction rate increased by 2 percent compared to the survey results in 2015, and by 4 percent compared to 2014 – 94 percent of the members stated to be “satisfied” or “very satisfied” in the questionnaire in 2016. Especially noteworthy is the percentage of “very satisfied” members that increased to 60 percent in 2016 from 33 percent in 2015. In a longer-term perspective, the percentage of “very satisfied” members has increased significantly since the first membership survey in 2013, when 21 percent said to be “very satisfied” with EAEA’s work and services.

According to the results of the survey, the most important services in 2015 were the provision of up-to-date information on EU policy developments about adult education and the advocacy of EAEA on the European level for non-formal adult education and lifelong learning. When asked about the importance of specific activities of EAEA in 2015, the advocacy work on Erasmus+, the policy work on adult education and development and the country

report *Adult Education in Europe - A Civil Society View* received the highest scores. Regarding EAEA publications, the EAEA members perceived the Statement *Adult Education can play a key role in the current refugee crisis* and the *Manifesto on Adult Education in the 21st Century* as the most relevant.

With regard to the level of impact of EAEA’s work, the European level was again, as in the previous surveys, mentioned as the most important level. The impact of EAEA’s work at the organisation’s level remained unchanged, rated “very strong” and “strong” by 63 percent of the respondents. As for the national and regional level of impact, most of the respondents had a neutral opinion. 61 percent of the new members, i.e. organisations that joined in 2014 and 2015, said that their membership with EAEA had a great impact on their work, with 68 percent perceiving strong changes in their information work. 55 percent stated that their expectations were “fully” or “mostly” met, and 81 percent use EAEA’s information services on a weekly or monthly basis.

The satisfaction with EAEA’s communication services in 2015 received high scores with 91 percent of the members being “very satisfied” or “satisfied”



President Per Paludan Hansen welcomed new members to EAEA at the General Assembly held in Porto in June.

with this part of EAEA’s work. The most important communication tools were EAEA’s general newsletter, the Member News and targeted e-mails such as “News from Brussels”. The EAEA members are mainly interested in policy news but also value information about projects and internal news of EAEA.

When asked about their use of EPALE, Commission’s new platform for adult education, 85 percent of the EAEA members stated to know it; however, only 59 percent said to be using it on a regular basis, ranging from more than weekly to every second month. About half of the

members had a neutral opinion about the platform, 9 percent were “very satisfied” and 38 percent were “satisfied” with it.

As a result of the membership strategy, the EAEA General Assembly received and approved many new applications for membership in 2014, resulting in a total of 137 members in 44 countries.

The following organisations have become ordinary members of the association in 2015 (approved by the General Assembly):

- ARGE Working Group of Austrian Educational Centres – Austria
- Association for Adult Learning

Lifelong Learning Center - Skopje – Macedonia

- Association of Life-Long Learning and Enlightenment (ALLLE) – Belarus
- Association of Slovenian Adult Education Centres (ZLUS) – Slovenia
- Georgian Adult Education Network (GAEN) – Georgia
- International Lifelong Learning Association (ILLLA) – Turkey
- Portuguese Association for Culture and Lifelong Education (APCEP) – Portugal

The following organisations have become associate members of the association in 2015 (approved by the General Assembly):

- Association for promotion and development of lifelong education (PAR) – Croatia
- Association Philotechnique de Paris – France
- Center for Promoting Lifelong Learning (CPIP) – Romania
- Center for Vocational Education and Training (CSO) – Montenegro
- Cerebral Palsy Association of Coimbra (APCC) – Portugal
- Community Education Facilitators Association (CEFA) – Ireland
- Escola Profissional Amar Terra Verde (EPATV) – Portugal
- Inducar (CRL) – Portugal
- Narodni Univerzitet Nis – Republic

of Serbia

- NGO "Pro-Business Nord" (PBN) – Republic of Moldova
- Non-Governmental Organisation for Solidarity and Promotion (SOPRO) – Portugal
- PER FORMARE – Italy
- Vlaamse dienst van het katholiek volwassenenonderwijs (VDKVO) – Belgium
- Yuva Association (YUVA) – Turkey
- Università Senza Età - Città del Trattato (USE) – Italy

The following members were excluded, according to internal rules:

- Agro-Meslehet Non-Governmental Organisation – Azerbaijan
- Association for the Development of Life Skills – Cyprus
- Association for Adult Education – Greece
- Higher School of Management and Social Work 'Attistiba' – Latvia
- Akademia Vzdělávání – Slovakia

The following members left:

- Bond Van Nederlandse Volksuniversiteiten (BNVU) – The Netherlands
- COMENES – Belgium
- Get to know the World Association – Finland
- Association of Popular Universities (VSV-AUPS) – Switzerland



The EAEA executive Board after the elections in the General Assembly in Porto, Portugal.

8.4 EXECUTIVE BOARD AND PRESIDENT

The Executive Board and its preparatory body the Bureau (President, Vice-presidents and Secretary General) supervise the work carried out in the association. Primarily the Board works on policy level, leaving the running of the association to the secretary general. The role division is clearly defined in the constitution of the association. The Board aims at supporting adult education issues at transnational as well as country levels: The Board is rotating its meetings in order to liaise with adult education and lifelong learning institutions in various host countries.

Board meeting in Brussels, Belgium on 25–26 February 2015

The first Board meeting of the year was dedicated to the preparation of the activities for 2015: preparation of the advocacy strategy, discussion on the financial situation, update on latest projects. The Board met with two representatives of the European Commission and with MEP Sirpa Pietikäinen.

Board meeting in Helsinki, Finland on 28–29 April 2015

The meeting focused on the preparation of the upcoming General Assembly. The Board followed up on the action

plan for advocacy activities as the European Year, TTIP, the topic of adult education and health, the development topic, the preparation of the Manifesto. Updates on projects and a discussion on EPALE also took place. The Board met with the Finnish Minister for Education and presented its arguments for adult education.

Board meeting in Porto, Portugal on 23 June 2015

A first meeting after the election of the Board was held right after the General Assembly: the presentation of the new members of the Board and a discussion on the work plan and its follow-up took place.

Board meeting in Brussels, Belgium on 23–24 September 2015

This meeting was the opportunity for an in-depth presentation of the collaboration between the Board and the staff based in Brussels. Discussions on the advocacy plan with the Interest group, the European Year, the Manifesto, the health topic, and more were continued. Updates on projects and a renewed membership strategy were presented.

The Board met with the Adult education Unit at the European Commission and with a member of Commissioner Thyssen's Cabinet.

Board meeting in Brussels, Belgium on 9 December 2015

The last Board meeting of the year allowed for a review of the Year 2015. The Board met with the Secretary General of the European Movement International and with a representative of CONCORD. Advocacy plans for 2016 were discussed.

8.5 FINANCES

In 2015, EAEA has successfully applied for the three-year framework contract with the EACEA. This means that the basis for a relatively stable financial situation has been secured for the next three years – under the condition that annual working plans are accepted.

Unfortunately, EfVET also decided to first reduce sub-contract with the EAEA and then, in mid-2015, to open their own office. This meant that they ended the subcontract in early November, at the same time that Valentina Chanina left to start working for them. This means the loss of a regular income source which currently needs to be compensated by project work.

We also lost some income because a lower number of participants in the Younger Staff Training (still due to the changes in Erasmus+ / Grundtvig, but also the Brussels lockdown) and no paid study visits.

On the other hand, EAEA has won the projects imPLOED and FinALE which means substantial income through project work.

8.6 STAFF

The EAEA staff was relatively stable in 2015. However, there was a big change with Valentina Chanina leaving EAEA to start working full-time for EfVet, our sister organisation working on VET issues on the European level. We'd like to thank Valentina Chanina for her dedication to EAEA and her great work along so many years! We will stay in close contact as EfVet's offices are just a few streets away from EAEA's offices

and the link is close through EUCIS-LLL and project work.

Raffaela Kihrer has taken over her administrative and financial tasks and is now employed full-time by EAEA.

The staff list for 2015 looks as follows:

- Gina Ebner, Secretary General
- Tania Berman, Policy Officer
- Francesca Operti, Project Officer
- Raffaella Kihrer, Membership and Events Officer
- Valentina Chanina, Office Manager
- Aura Vuorenrinne, Communications Officer

EAEA staff in June 2015 from left to right: Felix Meyer (trainee), Raffaella Kihrer, Tania Berman, Valentina Chanina, Francesca Operti and Gina Ebner.



9

ANNEX – POSITION PAPERS, OPINIONS, STATEMENTS

9.1 EAEA STATEMENT TO THE PARIS DECLARATION OF THE EUROPEAN EDUCATION MINISTERS

The European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) welcomes the Paris 'Declaration on Promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimina-

tion through education'. EAEA strongly agrees with the key contribution that education makes to personal development, social inclusion and participation, by imparting the fundamental values and principles which constitute the foundation of our societies. We believe that this aspect of education and learning has taken a backseat in the poli-

cies and strategies of the last few years and are delighted that the ministers now recognise its importance. We agree that this aspect is crucial for children and young people in the formal system, but want to underline that non-formal learning and adult education can make a big contribution to promoting citizenship and common values among adults, too. All the competences that the Paris declaration mentions, such as:

- understanding and accepting differences of opinion, of conviction, of belief and of lifestyle, while respecting the rule of law, diversity and gender equality;
- the ability to think critically and exercise judgement so that, particularly in the context of the Internet and social media, they are able to grasp realities, to distinguish fact from opinion, to recognise propaganda and to resist all forms of indoctrination and hate speech;
- a sense of initiative and engagement in order to strengthen social ties as well as generate a sense of belonging

are important for adults as well.

EAEA therefore proposes:

- To strengthen non-formal learning for both adults and young people across Europe
- To strengthen outreach to disadvantaged groups
- To strengthen Adult Education institutions as meeting places and safe environments for debate.

9.2 ADULT EDUCATION CAN PLAY A KEY ROLE IN THE CURRENT REFUGEE CRISIS

Europe is facing a humanitarian catastrophe. European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) asks political leaders to show solidarity and strong leadership to respond to the current refugee crisis. The Association points out that adult education providers and civil society organisations provide fundamental support to respond to the arrival of refugees and to their long-term inclusion in their host countries.

The current refugee crisis in Europe brings to the light the fact that more solidarity is necessary among Member States of the European Union. EAEA calls for more political courage from all EU Member States to welcome refugees and provide them with the appropriate help upon arrival. Also the cooperation between the EU Member States and Non-EU countries that are affected, like Macedonia and Serbia.

EAEA stresses that adult learning is a part of the solution both for the refu-

gees and for the host countries. It can help refugees integrate into their host countries. Adult education institutions provide e.g. language and citizenship courses that support refugees upon arrival. They can also play an important role in providing refugees information on their options and rights. Adult education institutions also organise intercultural meetings for new arrivals and locals. It is important that the original population understands who the refugees are, where they come from, why they have fled, what their status as refugees means and entails and what it means for the society to welcome new inhabitants. On the other hand, these meetings allow refugees to understand the local culture better.

EAEA stresses that education for tolerance and respect is very much needed at a time in which messages and acts of xenophobia are increasing all over Europe. Here again, non-formal adult education plays a crucial role. It promotes active citizenship, intercultural competences and fundamental values, and enables people to engage in a social change of society that leads to more solidarity, e.g. by forming civil society alliances and platforms.

Also civil society organisations have played a major role in the crisis. They

have managed to support the refugees with food, with shelter, with linguistic and administrative support and with activities, where state support has been lacking. EAEA underlines that their work needs to be better recognised and supported.

9.3 EAEA STATEMENT ON THE DRAFT JOINT REPORT ON ET2020

The European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) welcomes the draft joint report and the new priorities. EAEA welcomes the renewed focus on life-long learning systems and the fact that adult learning remains a key part of the ET2020 strategic framework.

We agree that the stronger focus on civic competences and active citizenship is a timely and necessary development and would like to underline that this is not only crucial for children and young people, but also for adults, who are, for example, currently faced with large numbers of refugees coming to Europe. We believe that adult education is key in welcoming and integrating people as well as working with the host populations in order to reduce negative myths and fears of the Other.

While EAEA concurs that adult learning is the basis for upskilling and re-skilling,

we would like to underline that adult learning is much more – adult learning is not only the bridge into more formal and/or vocational learning for many, but also a meeting space, the space for personal development, health and well-being, active aging, democratic participation and much more.

EAEA therefore proposes that adult learning remains a key part in all the priorities and that the cooperation between the DG EAC and DG EMPL are strengthened to ensure the implementation of these priorities. Adult education will be an important part of the upcoming skills agenda but has to remain a key component of ET 2020 in all the priorities.

Concerning the specific adult learning priorities laid out in Annex II, EAEA generally agrees but would like to extend them. It is true that workplace learning is a good strategy to reach out to potential learners, but it is only one part. Community and family learning have proven to be very successful in attracting new learners, and should therefore be mentioned as potential ways for access. Additionally, EAEA believes that, in many countries, the need to strengthen the infrastructure for adult learning, through and in cooperation with providers, is necessary.

Whilst the notion of sustainable investment in adult education systems is welcomed, we would caution against relying on private investment, or an increasing privatisation of education. Adult education for the most part reaches the most disadvantaged people, this requires time and is resource intensive but is vital for social cohesion. To equate the outcomes of adult education to other parts of the education system, where the learner cohort is more advantaged, will further undermine the poorly funded adult education system. The likelihood of non-formal education attracting private funds for socially orientated programmes is unlikely. Non-formal education needs sustainable funding in order to deliver on the proposed role of education in “promoting equity and non-discrimination and in imparting fundamental values, intercultural competences and active citizenship” (p.3). Non-formal education is key to achieving this goal and accordingly, should be publicly funded.

9.4 EAEA POLICY PAPER ON ADULT EDUCATION AND HEALTH

This paper will highlight the connection between adult education and health, focusing on three main topics: health literacy, adult education and health

and well-being and health courses in adult education. EAEA believes that adult education can play a key role in improving health systems but also people's individual health and wants to provide recommendations for policy-makers but also adult education and health providers in order to achieve this.

INTRODUCTION

The topic of health concerns both individuals and society as a whole: everyone will want to be healthy; the rising costs of health care, including for diseases that could actually be prevented or better managed, such as diabetes, mean that societies and economies have an interest in health. To be and to stay physically and mentally healthy is linked to knowledge about living a healthy life at all stages of life, having access to health care and understanding health information. Non-formal adult education plays a key role in equipping people with health competences. Adult education is linked with health prevention, healthy lifestyles, and health literacy. Learning itself is a great source of personal empowerment and increases one's sense of well-being, mental health and personal happiness¹.

A number of studies show that wealthier people are also healthier. Adult education

can help to equalize this situation and empower people with lower incomes and lower educational levels. Many people do not have access to health education and/or information. Policy-makers have a key role to play in ensuring access to health education for everyone. Health literacy is the first step to preventing illness and taking care of one's health.

Adult education offers a fantastically diverse provision of courses in the field of health education, for individuals but also for practitioners. Health education on a global level is also essential and there again, adult education can do a lot. Learning is also a creator of well-being as such: research proves that learning is beneficial for one's well-being and personal happiness.

This paper is based on a consultation of EAEA members in Europe and on some further research and project sources, especially the projects that were submitted for the EAEA Grundtvig Award 2015 (see www.eaea.org/en/eaea/eaea-grundtvig-award.html).

HEALTH LITERACY

Health literacy in Europe

Health literacy is the capacity of people to access, understand and apply information related to health, so that they can make informed choices related to

¹ www.bell-project.eu

their health. It means that they understand the explanations of a doctor, instruction leaflets on medication, information leaflets on illnesses, etc. and also know how to apply them. It relates to decisions taken in everyday life concerning healthcare and health prevention to maintain or improve quality of life. Health literacy is at the very centre of being and remaining healthy, preventing illnesses and diseases, and giving information about potential health risks and preventive behaviour.

According to a recent study, an alarming “47% of the population in eight European countries is estimated to have insufficient levels of health literacy”²; “some 43% had difficulties grasping the notion of disease prevention and 51% struggled with health promotion – or the ability to advance one’s own health.”³

A CONFINTEA report⁴ said already in 1997 that “developing countries are also experiencing an increase in lifestyle-

related health problems, on top of their already high incidence of infectious diseases. Lifestyle-related diseases are responsible for 70–80% of deaths in developed countries and for about 40% in the developing world.”

There is a strong need to improve health literacy levels in Europe (and beyond), so that individuals can take care of their health in an appropriate way. Health literacy is a basic competency and needs to be recognised as such by including it in official mentions of basic competencies of all citizens.

Health literacy benefits society

Health literacy levels have an impact on the efficiency of healthcare systems. People that have low health literacy tend to go to the doctor more often, to be hospitalized more often or to take inappropriate treatment or prescriptions. Furthermore, they are less inclined to take preventative measures. Fostering health literacy of all citizens is beneficial for society at large as it reduces costs for public health systems which can, then, work more efficiently for those really in need of it. In order to emphasise the benefits of health education more strongly, more research related to health and adult education is needed that documents good practices and presents new theories.

2 Report by the European Health Forum in Gastein, Austria, 2014: www.euractiv.com/specialreport-resilient-innovati/campaigners-low-health-literacy-news-530933

3 www.euractiv.com/specialreport-resilient-innovati/campaigners-low-health-literacy-news-530933

4 www.unesco.org/education/uie/confintea/pdf/6b.pdf

Tackling the health literacy issue also means fighting poverty, social exclusion, racism and discrimination, and promoting social justice and gender equality. It provides a very strong basis to improve the socio-economic situation of many people as a healthier population in all stages of life can contribute better to the social, cultural and economic development of its community and country. Thus, it is not only about educating people in health issues but about empowering them to attain a better life for themselves and society as a whole. When working on these issues, policy-makers need to keep in mind that adult education and health literacy provide solutions with low input costs on the one hand and very high efficiency and therefore a big output on the other hand that is beneficial to all parties involved. It is crucial that the support for adult education on health courses increases in Europe so that more courses are offered and better access is ensured.

Learning about health

Knowledge and information about health are essential to take care of one's health and prevent diseases. It starts with taking care of the basics as sleep, nutrition, movement and mental health. Providing and disseminating information about the importance of

healthy lifestyles is the first way to empower individuals to take care of their own health.

Adult education provides a safe environment in which individuals can learn about health with someone who knows the right answers and is available to respond to any questions or concerns. Research proves that adult education influences positively individual's behavior: according to the BeLL study⁵, 76% of the respondents have experienced positive changes in their health behavior after attending adult education courses. This is why health education needs to be mainstreamed in the adult education course provision. Health education needs to be accessible, affordable and of high quality. Policy-makers on both the national and the European level have a big role to play there so that more people get access to the courses and can become health literate.

Access to health and health literacy

It is important to underline here that equal access to quality health provision in Europe is important for everyone. Access to health provision, as access to information about nutrition, health, exercise must be strengthened for all, as this is the best way to prevent

5 www.bell-project.eu

diseases and illnesses. Adult education is, here again, a very low-cost and efficient solution.

Also, as PIAAC's⁶ results on literacy levels in Europe underlined, on average, 20 % of the EU adult population has low literacy and numeracy skills. This is another challenge for health literacy, as so much information is given in writing – and often in a complicated language. The CONFINTEA report⁷ on adult education and health says that “It is well known that those who are most likely to suffer from ill health are not only the poorest, but also those with the lowest level of education. What is more, experience in both developing and developed countries shows that literacy and non-formal education programmes can lead to significant improvements in health and general well-being.”

Specific methods need to be adopted in order to reach out to marginalised and disadvantaged groups. The IROHLA research project⁸ (European winner of the EAEA Grundtvig Award 2015) underlines that: “Within the European Union, there is a large heterogeneity of

cultures, ethnic groups, socio-economic conditions and health care systems. Migrants often find it difficult to find their way in health services. To be effective, health literacy policies have to take this diversity into account. Evidence-based interventions, tested locally, should be given priority in the array of possible activities”. The OED project (Outreach, Empowerment, Diversity)⁹ presents methods for adult educators to reach out to these people.

E-literacy: the need for critical thinking

Nowadays, the internet provides not only a vast array of health related websites, but increasingly also becomes the first information point for health issues. It eventually leads to self-diagnoses of illnesses and diseases based on this information. However, the information provided in fora and on online consultation websites has to be dealt with carefully, as not all information on diseases, illnesses, their symptoms or their treatment is correct and

corresponds to the scientific state of the art in medicine. There is also a lot of esoteric and/or commercially driven information that can cost a lot of money or possibly even harm people.

6 The OECD Survey on Adult Skills:
www.oecd.org/site/piaac

7 www.unesco.org/education/uie/confintea/pdf/6b.pdf

8 www.irohla.eu

9 www.oed-network.eu

Therefore, there is a need for learning to develop a critical eye on the information related to health that is present on the Internet and to put this information in perspective. Developing a critical understanding of information, learning to compare and analyse information is a basic skill acquired not only through specific courses but through non-formal adult education in general. Some adult education courses on this subject already exist as pilot courses in order to develop critical thinking on digital health information.

Policy-makers could adopt a regulation on wrong advertisements on health issues on the Internet, or, as the IROHLA project suggests, “introduce quality seals for reliable websites”. It is their role to protect the consumers in the area of health.

ADULT EDUCATION AND HEALTH

Course provision on health in adult education

Adult education provides many different courses on health. Cooking courses, for example, are excellent ways to learn how to eat and cook in a healthy way. These courses can be very basic and aim to encourage healthy eating as with “basics for cooking” or deal more specifically with health issues as “how to cook without gluten”. Other courses as yoga courses or fitness courses also

allow adults to deal better with their physical and also mental health.

Adult education courses can also provide information on diseases that might appear at some stage of life, as for example diabetes. There are some measures patients can take to reduce the chance of developing diabetes, as doing sports regularly, eating in a healthy way, etc. Furthermore, information provision on diabetes helps patients deal with the disease and its effects every day. Courses translate health information into a language that is easy to understand and presents the information in a pedagogical way. Courses also target people that accompany patients, and help them learn how to deal with a family member that has Alzheimer, for example, and thereby also help to develop networks of concerned people.

Providers of non-formal education on health

Many adult education centres provide non-formal education on health. There are also other providers of health education, such as employers, patient associations, health professionals, organisations dealing with migrants, trade unions (for the quality of the work place), schools and also families. A cross-sectorial collaboration between these providers is crucial to ensure and

constantly improve the quality of provision. Working together and sharing experiences between providers is an effective way to improve the quality of the courses offered. Collaboration improves the efficiency of the work.

Adult education enables partnerships with diverse sectors and has bridging functions. It also enables and promotes a cross-sectorial approach on all levels of policy-making, the local, regional, national, and European level. This cross-sectorial approach is also needed as further skills are needed to understand health information, as the IROHLA project underlines: “Organisations and institutions in the welfare, education or the commercial sector can enhance health literacy of older people, for example by improving reading and writing skills, by introducing computer skills or by providing access to understandable information.”

Adult education on health happens in many various places. However, not all these providers call the courses they give “adult education” – although it is evident that it actually is adult education. Hospitals and other healthcare providers organise for example courses on how to manage chronic diseases. We would like to raise awareness about the fact that there are many different

places where and methods how health education happens.

Community learning

Community learning is one of the best methods used in adult education for health issues. Indeed, it is easier for people with low levels of (health) literacy to open up and share their concerns with a group of persons that share their experience and feelings. Working with the target group in a bottom-up approach and creating small communities to talk about health issues is therefore an efficient and low-threshold way of learning. Peer-learning groups offer mutual support and learning. In these groups, patients and their families can hear stories from other patients and learn more about their diseases or illnesses and successful treatments. Embedding health literacy and education in other courses within community learning is also a successful way of reaching out to more disadvantaged learners.¹⁰

There is little time during a doctor’s appointment to talk about fears and get the answers to all the questions. Community learning can help a lot in that regard. Having someone that can explain more about some diseases,

¹⁰ See, for example, NIACE’s citizens curriculum: www.niace.org.uk/our-work/life-and-society/citizens-curriculum

answer questions, take the time, having a group that shares the same experience is very useful. This is also the case when it comes to accompanying a person and their family in learning how to deal with a disease - as for example learning to live with someone who has Alzheimer or dementia. The CONFINTEA report¹¹ on adult education and health underlined as well that “It is considered extremely important to build on local initiatives and people’s own experience, e.g. by involving local health specialists and community committees. The role of the health educator or the adult educator is to be a facilitator, a resource, a catalyst for action and sometimes a link for communities to approach other structures, such as government services.”

Adult education for health practitioners

Sometimes patients cannot read or understand properly medical indications and it is important that they know how to respond in an appropriate way. The IROHLA project states: “Health literacy activities should be part of a quality system in health institutions.

Professionals should have profound knowledge of health literacy issues and should maintain their competencies through institutional arrangements

and networks. There should be regular follow-up and refresher courses. Training in effective communication has to be part of pre-service and in-service human resources development.” The need for jobs in the field of health will increase in the upcoming years, also as the European population ages, and provision in adult education needs to be strengthened to respond to these needs.

Professionals, in particular doctors, need to be available for the patients and take the time to explain the health situation of their patients well and in an appropriate language. Speaking to the patients also requires profound empathetic skills from health professionals, as health issues often create strong emotions. A better relation with health professionals would also empower the patient and increase their trust in the health care system. The IROHLA project suggests using teaching material which simulates interviews between patients and professionals to improve the communication between both parties. The Austrian Alpha-Power project¹² (national winner of the EAEA Grundtvig Award 2015) provided workshops for health professionals in order for them to detect people with low basic skills and to work with them in an appropriate way.

11 www.unesco.org/education/uie/confintea/pdf/6b.pdf

12 www.vhsktn.at/projekte/detail/C34/alpha-power-die-kaerntner-volkshochschulen-starten-projekt-im-bereich-gesun

There are many people working in the health sector, in many cases support personnel, whose training is not a regulated profession such as doctors or nurses, and very often, their training or professional development is organised by adult education centres. Adult education therefore contributes to the further professionalization in the health sector.

Health education on the global level

On the global level, strategies for health education vary very much depending on the national context. Health education – that is free from political and religious ideologies – is crucial to fight the spread of diseases as AIDS, tuberculosis or malaria, epidemics as Ebola, and diseases that could easily be prevented by vaccinations, a healthier lifestyle or other prevention strategies that lead to behavioural change. Informing people about how diseases are transmitted, how they can be treated, cured or prevented and providing the tools to give this information further to families and peers is at the centre of health education strategies.

Girls and women are very often left in charge with the reproductive health of themselves and their families, but in many countries there is a lack of access to adequate reproductive, child and maternal health services, underlines

UNICEF.¹³ Empowering them by increasing their access to education contributes to improving the health of their families and society. The project Comprehensive Abortion Care¹⁴ (international winner EAEA Grundtvig Award 2015) gives young women sexual and reproductive education, informing them about safe and unsafe abortion methods – it emerged to fill in a gap in health education.

The need for improved health education strategies as well as universal and better access to health education and healthcare is addressed in the draft papers for the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations. However, building up and implementing non-formal adult education courses in health need adequate financing by the public sector. In order to put into practice all the benefits of health education outlined in this paper, more public funding is essential.

On the global level, strategies for health education have to be improved. In various policy fields such as poverty alleviation, social justice, gender equality, combatting racism, and many more, health education is a key issue and needs to be elaborated as such.

13 www.unicef.org/esaro/7310_Gender_and_health.html

14 www.hffg.org/index.php/comprehensive-abortion-care-cac

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Health and well-being as benefits of adult learning

Adult education is not only a complementary method to develop more knowledge but also a proactive approach in terms of empowerment and mental well-being. Adult education is a way for people to lead a more fulfilled and happier, thus healthier life, as research shows. In the BeLL study¹⁵, 84% of the respondents have experienced positive changes in mental well-being, and 83% have experienced positive changes in their sense of purpose in life when learning in adult life.

Learning, especially in non-formal adult education that uses participative and innovative methods, makes people more self-confident and aware of their own capacities and skills. Courses also get people out of the house, bring them together with other people and therefore strengthen their social networks, which is crucial for well-being. These benefits not only contribute to their personal development and fulfilment, but also have a very positive impact on their work life. Employers play a crucial role in fostering non-formal learning of their employees and therefore improve their well-being. In some countries adult education centres offer courses

during lunch breaks, so that employees can join.

Adult education helps people with mental health issues

Adult education has also a big role to play in mental health issues. Several projects, as NIACE's project "Mental Health in Further Education (MHFE) e-network"¹⁶ underline that community learning can help people with mental health issues. With this project, community learning has proven to be an efficient treatment for people with mental health issues. This method is not a therapy method as such but a learning activity. Head of the project Catina Barrett from NIACE explains that it leads to a feeling that can be expressed as in "I make me feel better" whereas therapy is seen as "The therapist makes me feel better". Adult education is therefore a great way to avoid or reduce medication and counselling for mental health problems and should be considered more systematically by practitioners to cure their patients.

Mental health is also the area where the gender gap in health (education) becomes most obvious. Participants in health-related provision tend to be mainly women. Participants in non-formal adult education tend to

15 www.bell-project.eu/cms/?page_id=10

16 www.mhfe.org.uk

be more women. Women are also more likely to see a doctor, which are all reasons that contribute to the fact that women have a higher life expectancy than men. Adult education has created specific projects that target men who would otherwise not participate in learning, such as men's sheds (An objective of Men's Sheds¹⁷ is to enhance or maintain the well-being of the participating men). These initiatives deserve to be more widespread across Europe and need support.

CONCLUSION

Adult education has a key role to play in the field of health. Health education has high outputs in terms of increased health level of the population and lower costs for public health systems, as well as financial revenues as a healthier population works better and longer. Health education and literacy concern everybody, not only recipients' side (e.g. patients or learners), but also donors' side (e.g. health professionals, educational staff etc.). Health education and literacy don't stand alone per se but are cross-cutting issues and part of other policy fields and need to be recognised as such.

We need to do more in order to ensure that more people have access

to health literacy courses and can take care of their health. Health education must be accessible and affordable for everyone and of high quality. It is even more crucial in times of the Internet, with internet-based consultations that create tendencies to self-diagnoses.

Adult education needs to be supported so that more people can access it, as learning has been proven to create a sense of wellbeing and personal happiness for the learner. It is a great way to remain healthy and happy, but also to fight mental illness in a natural way.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR...

Policy-makers

Ensure a health education that is accessible, affordable and of high quality for all.

- Foster adult education courses on health and mainstream health education in the adult education provision;
- Improve health literacy levels in Europe;
- Make sure health information is accessible;
- Relate health education to cross-cutting issues as fighting poverty, social exclusion, racism and discrimination, and promoting social justice and

¹⁷ menssheds.ie

gender equality. Health education is not only about educating people in health issues but about empowering them to attain a better life for themselves and society as a whole;

- On the global level, improve strategies for health education;
- Encourage collaboration between stakeholders in the field of health education and health care;
- Support information and training for health staff and raise their awareness about patient's potentially low literacy levels;
- In the field of e-health:
 - Support the creation of courses developing critical thinking on e-health;
 - Adopt regulations on wrong advertisements on health issues on the Internet;
- Support non-formal adult education and its methods as they work best to address marginalised and disadvantaged groups that need the most support;
- Make health literacy a priority of the European Union and its Member States in the ambition to achieve sustainable health systems;
- Ensure better outcomes of health literacy interventions through a collaborative effort, especially also

by cooperation between different ministries and departments, such as health, education and social affairs;

- Addressing health literacy issues requires behavioural change of citizens, communities and professionals.

Education providers

Use non-formal education methods as the best approach to health education.

- Use participative and innovative methods that make people more self-confident and aware of their own capacities and skills;
- Encourage the involvement of the target group, with role models and peer-learning groups in a bottom-up approach;
- Use these methods in particular to address marginalised and disadvantaged groups that need the most support;
- Embed health literacy and education in other provision, especially basic skills provision.

Health providers

- Raise health staff's awareness about patients' potential low literacy levels;
- Make sure that doctors are able to simplify the language they use with patients and offer trainings for improved communication;

- Cooperate with adult education providers to improve teaching and outreach methodologies.

9.5 FEEDBACK ON ERASMUS+

Adult education and learning is vital for a properly functioning and democratic society. The European Association for the Education of Adults has recently issued a 'Manifesto on Adult Learning in the 21st Century', drawing attention to a whole range of ways in which adult learning contributes to meeting the policy challenges facing European societies today:

Active citizenship, democracy and participation

Participants in adult education have more trust in the political system and participate more actively in society, by voting, by volunteering and through a wide range of roles in the community.

Life skills for individuals

Adult learners feel healthier, lead healthier lifestyles, build new social networks and experience a greater sense of well-being than non-participants.

Social cohesion, equity and equality

Adult education provides a wealth of second chance opportunities and contributes strongly to creating a fairer and more equal society for all.

Employment and digitalization

Workplace learning is a key driver for adults' participation in lifelong learning, and adult learning a key contributor to generating greater economic growth. At the cusp of enormous digital changes, adult education can help in closing the digital gap.

Migration and demographic change

Civic education and intercultural learning help create a mind-set of active citizenship and hospitality conducive to an integration-friendly culture. Language and basic skills training enable migrants to become active citizens in their new home countries. Learning seniors are healthier, more active, volunteer more and work longer.

Sustainability

From environmentally friendly consumption and transport to energy efficiency, European citizens need a wealth of information and innovative spaces to develop new sustainable lifestyles, projects and approaches. Adult education can help provide the information, the spaces for debate and nurture the creativity.

European policies

Adult education contributes to front-line European strategies in fields such as growth, employment, innovation,

equity, social cohesion, active citizenship, poverty reduction, climate change, internal market, migration, peace and many more.

Despite the ever more apparent importance of adult education for a thriving society, the sector is still grossly undervalued and consequently under-funded compared with the other main parts of the education and training system. This is true at the level of the individual Member States, and it is no less true at the level of the EU. In the Erasmus+ Programme, under 4% of the total budget is assigned to adult learning, compared with 12%, 17% and 33% for schools, vocational training and higher education respectively.

Furthermore, the tiny overall budget allocation, combined with the new procedure for allocating funds for projects and the new formula for distributing funding across Member States, has led to a dramatic fall in the number of transnational cooperation projects (“Strategic Partnerships”) supported in the field of adult education. Taking into account the fact that only one grant per project is now awarded (to the coordinating partner), the number of partnership projects supported in the first two years of Erasmus+ has fallen in real terms by around 55% compared

with the last two years of the LLP (Grundtvig). In other words, less than half as many projects are now being supported than before. Furthermore, the method of distributing the budget has disproportionately penalised the smaller countries. In 2015, only six of the 28 Member States were able to support 10 projects or more with the budget allocated.

In the same period, the rejection rate during selection has vastly increased, only one project in five now being accepted. This is beginning to give rise to widespread disenchantment of the adult education community. It is therefore absolutely essential to increase the funds available to the adult education part of Erasmus+.

The Erasmus+ programme is a key European tool for adult learning to flourish. The following feedback is based on a survey among EAEA members.

KA1 – MOBILITIES

The fact that individual trainers cannot apply for a mobility remains a problem, especially in countries that work with freelancers. Due to the lack of resources, there are often two or three organisations that bundle all the mobilities of a country. This system works more effectively in countries where

trainers and staff have regular contracts and representation (i.e. the Nordic countries).

Additionally, we were told at the beginning of Erasmus+ that umbrella organisations would be able to apply on behalf of their member organisations and then administer the individual mobilities. Some of our members were told that they could only apply on behalf of a limited number of member organisations. As one of our members said, 'It is not possible for us to apply for some of our members only. Either we apply for all of them or none.'

It is also regrettable that the method of approving in-service trainings and then presenting them in a Catalogue has disappeared. Many courses have disappeared or had to be cancelled due to a lack of participants. The school sector has reintroduced the Catalogue, and the same should be done for adult education.

Another key issue concerns deadlines. The general consensus is that there should be two deadlines per year for mobilities; one is not sufficient and puts small organisations at a disadvantage.

Finally, some concerns were raised over the circulating information. Some of our members were informed by their

NAs that conferences are covered by mobility grants, others were not. EAEA therefore proposes that conferences are seen as learning activities and can be part of mobilities across Europe.

KA2 – STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Interestingly enough, the fact that adult education has been forced into a 'one size fits all' approach to the programme (aka 'simplification') has led to a lose-lose situation for applicants. The application guidelines and forms are too complicated for newcomers and inevitably lead to irrelevant questions. Simplification in this sense has not happened. Last year's results showed that almost no small partnerships/projects managed to be approved. So in 2015, it seems that many of the bigger projects that were approved received cuts in their budgets, some of them up to 50%. Despite the cuts, partnerships are still expected to do the full work plan. We have received a lot of feedback on this and a number of organisations have now given up on KA2 as a result. There is considerable anger and frustration in the adult education community. Learning partnerships have disappeared (and they were perfect for smaller organisations and partnerships), and now also larger projects are suffering. A lot of grassroots cooperation across Europe is now disappearing.

The fact that all projects are now approved and administered at the national level has led to the perception that there is less money available for adult education than before, especially in smaller countries. Additionally, there is now no more possibility to check the topics and approaches across Europe, so we assume that there is a considerable amount of parallel and overlapping work being done without the option to coordinate it.

The list of approved projects reveals a large range of topics and organisations, many of them coming from the vocational sector. As the funds in adult education are very limited, especially in comparison to Leonardo which has a much higher budget for strategic partnerships, a clear priority needs to be given to non-vocational priorities, topics and providers.

The fact that European organisations have to apply on the national level continues to pose problems for everyone concerned – another lose-lose situation that Erasmus+ has created. National evaluators tend to have little understanding for the work of European associations and some of the evaluations reflect that. National Agencies (mainly in Belgium, but also other countries) have to shoulder projects that would best be run at the European level, and

European associations have to compete for very scarce resources not only with each other, but also with national organisations. The issue of competition with Belgian projects and with other EU-wide networks remains unchanged. EAEA therefore proposes to increase the operating grant for European associations so that there is less pressure to apply for projects and to establish a separate pot to be administered by the EACEA which European associations only can apply to.

National agencies interpret the administrative rules very differently, and therefore there is considerable confusion over the actual rules. A cohesive approach with the same rules applying to all European countries would be highly welcome.

The management fee continues to be huge problem – it is difficult to comprehend how 500 euros are supposed to ensure the same quality of management and dissemination across Europe; from Turkey to Finland. Dissemination in particular needs to be included in a separate funding pot, as it is very different from the management fee.

Another problem involves intellectual outputs. As they are understood differently between agencies, applicants and external experts, it is very difficult to

write an application. The application in general has now become more complicated with the “one size fit all” approach, which is a step back. The same goes for “extraordinary costs” that are not defined in a clear way. Concerning travel costs, distances under 100km are not covered when they obviously also include costs that have no reason to be excluded.

It is also a pity that the participation of Partner Countries has been severely limited. Our non-EU members are very keen to participate and contribute but this programme excludes them. Especially organisations from the European Neighbourhood countries should have the opportunity to participate.

National Agencies also have the role to support applicant organisations, informing them about Erasmus+ opportunities and helping them to submit project proposals. This should especially be the case in countries with low participation rate in Erasmus+, where targeted information campaigns about its possibilities would be needed. The disappearance of preparatory visits is also a clear step back. These were the occasions when partners could get to know each other better, work out how to work together and how to best structure the project. This undermines the opportunity for smaller or less experienced organisations to apply for projects.









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