

EAEA policy paper on Literacy

October 2008

EAEA and Literacy

How do youth and adult literacy fit into EAEA's work and programmes?

Many of EAEA's member organisations provide adult literacy courses, some of them (e.g. Belgium's Lire et Ecrire) even concentrating almost exclusively on this issue. EAEA's member organisations deal with early school leavers, e.g. in second chance schools, prisoners, migrants etc. Many of these people need basic literacy skills, which we provide.

EAEA is currently building up a system of working groups and thematic networks, of which adult literacy will be one. EAEA is also involved in the DOLCETA project, which provides online resources for consumer education. Some of these resources are directly targeted at adult literacy teachers.

After a period of neglect, literacy is now on the European agenda and there is a growing concern among Governments and adult education providers to address the need to raise literacy levels among adults.

In connection and cooperation with the European Commission, EAEA is working on the Action Plan on Adult Learning, where tackling the issue of adult literacy is one of the underlying themes, and in which EAEA will strongly participate.

EAEA has also made a strong commitment to working internationally, and literacy is one of the main topics.

How does EAEA expect to contribute to one or more of the three priority areas, and any of their sub-points, from now to 2012?

The EAEA executive board will discuss this issue in one of its next meetings and agree on a plan. We are aware that this topic needs stronger commitment to tackle policy changes and investments, which are all of interest to the EAEA. We can assure a stronger commitment to advocacy for literacy on the European level, reaching the most important stakeholders in Brussels and as part of our contribution to the regional CONFINTEA process. We will also work with the European Commission on benchmarks, pedagogy, assessment and evaluation of literacy. We will support grassroots efforts (especially of our members) on different levels to develop a common vision.

We strongly support the capacity development, initial training and continued professional development of literacy actors - we are already supporting the development of our staff; this will also be the topic of our annual conference next year, and we will put an emphasis on staff working in the literacy and numeracy area. We do see the need for more investment in literacy programmes and better support of our member organisations in its delivery. We strongly support better and more research (also the better coordination of existing research) and its transfer to policy makers for better decision-making. We have already encouraged the exchange of good practice but will increase our efforts.

We will advocate more funding and better and more information about literacy programmes. Additionally, we have the possibility to raise awareness and encourage exchange through specific events (EAEA Grundtvig award, policy breakfasts etc.), but we will have to accommodate this in our annual work programmes. As the period you are indicating goes until 2012, we can assure you that at least one of our events will be dedicated to literacy, numeracy and basic skills within a key competences framework.