



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR
THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS

Europe must invest in adult education

For immediate release

[The European Association for the Education of Adults \(EAEA\)](#) welcomes the launch of the [Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies \(PIAAC\)](#) results earlier today. They are a loud wake-up call to Europe to start immediate action.

The PIAAC results should lead to a European-wide debate on the skills and competences of adults and raise the awareness for and investment in adult learning. The assessment proves the requirement for continuous learning in Europe, underlining “a strong positive relationship between participation in adult education and skills proficiency”. We need a ‘Learning Europe’ where everyone can and wants to participate in learning. The PIAAC publication states that “While countries cannot change the past, policies designed to provide high-quality lifelong opportunities for learning can help to ensure that the adults of the future maintain their skills” (*Skilled for life? Key Findings from the Survey of Adult Skills*, p.13).

EAEA underlines the helpful role that adult education can have in times of crisis (both personal and social). Participating in learning activities can provide a stable time framework, a community, a chance for re-orientation, a safe place, a new challenge, social recognition, and end up being an important tool for empowerment.

Adult education is the key for more knowledge, skills, competences and participation in Europe. It has the potential to increase competitiveness and employability but also democracy, inclusion, health and well-being.

PIAAC clearly demonstrates the need to encourage disadvantaged learners and provide basic skills training. Literacy as a continuum is the most significant foundation for an active participation in a rapidly changing society, which is about comprehensive lifelong and life wide learning including numeracy, IT skills, civic and financial literacy. In order to tackle the Europe wide problem of adult illiteracy, EAEA demands close cooperation between governmental and civil society organisations in order to raise awareness and develop appropriate measures.

Background

The [OECD Survey of Adult Skills](#), also known as PIAAC, is an international survey carried out in 33 countries. PIAAC measures the key workplace and cognitive skills needed for individuals to participate successfully in society and for economies. The collected data assists governments in assessing, monitoring and analysing the level and distribution of skills among adults.

European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) is the voice of non-formal adult education in Europe. EAEA is a European NGO with 116 member organisations in 43 countries. It represents 40–60 million adult learners Europe wide.



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