



ERASMUS+ IMPACTS ADULT EDUCATION FAR BEYOND THE MEASURED

Reaction to the Erasmus+ mid-term evaluation

EAEA Statement

February 2018

[The European Association for the Education of Adults \(EAEA\)](#) is deeply concerned about the presentation of the results for adult education in the [Erasmus+ mid-term evaluation](#).

We would like to highlight that adult education is confronted with great societal challenges, from 70 million Europeans with low basic skills to the increasing need for the integration of migrants and refugees to digitalisation. We firmly believe that adult education can make a real difference for all these challenges. Adult education plays a key role in the promotion of European values, the empowerment of citizens, the development of skills and competences, and it contributes to open, democratic and inclusive societies.

Adult education reaches large target group

The midterm evaluation states: ‘the impact on the adult learning sector, which currently targets a wide population, is diluted due to the fragmented and diverse nature of the sector.’ ([Report of the Commission](#), p. 5)

We acknowledge that the *measurable* impact on adult education is, due to this fact, less evident. However, the diversity of the sector is also one of the strengths of adult education: it reaches out to a large number of groups in society with specific learning needs. The potential target group of adult education is significantly larger than for any other educational sector. At the same time, adult education receives the smallest share of the Erasmus+ budget, with only 5% of the total budget.

Successful projects

With reference to dissemination of projects through the [Erasmus+ project results platform](#), the evaluation says, ‘[c]ontent-wise, the main limitation is the lack of complementary external reference materials that could inspire users and a lack of success stories in certain sectors (e.g. adult learning) due to the insufficient quality of reports.’ ([Staff Working Document](#), p. 43)

We would like to stress that the project results platform lists 7 strategic partnerships in adult education as success stories, out of a total of 51 strategic partnerships in Erasmus+. This is a share of almost 14% of all educational sectors. As we have pointed out on several occasions, the usability of the platform for project dissemination is limited as it does not allow any modifications of the information or the addition of resources.



Notwithstanding, according to the feedback of the [EAEA members](#), Erasmus+ (and its predecessor Grundtvig) have had an enormous impact on the adult education sector in Europe, particularly on transnational cooperation, innovation and capacity-building in the sector.

Measuring impact of adult education

In the assessment of the impact of the sector, the following factors need to be taken into consideration:

- The small budget for adult learning means that smaller countries only get a few hundred thousand Euros for the whole adult education sector, which comprises both mobilities for adult education staff and strategic partnerships.
- The midterm evaluation refers to the systemic impact of adult education. Considering the small budget and the small size of the projects that can be implemented with the funding available, it is very difficult for adult education to achieve measurable systemic impact. Nevertheless, earlier evaluations and reports from large countries such as Germany have clearly demonstrated that the Erasmus+ programme has had policy impact and an enormous organisational impact, which then builds up to a systemic impact.
- In the current Erasmus+ programme, there are no large-scale project types for adult education such as the sector skills or knowledge alliances. Furthermore, the programme does not foresee any KA1 mobilities for adult learners.

Under these circumstances, we do not find it comprehensible that the same results as for other sectors should be expected of adult learning.

Budget increase needed

The future Erasmus+ programme could help increase participation levels in adult learning, especially of learners from more diverse backgrounds. The European Education Area sets out a participation rate in adult learning and training of 25% by 2025; however, without drastically increased financial support for the sector, adult education will not be able to reach the lower ET2020 benchmark of 15% (current participation rates are at 10.8%). This may have implications on several EU goals, such as the implementation of the Skills Agenda, particularly Upskilling Pathways, and the Key Competences Framework.

We therefore propose that the budget of adult education is increased from currently 5% to 20% in the future programme. This should then include

- the possibility for some target groups among adult learners to participate in KA1 mobilities;
- adult education alliances that can tackle key challenges through adult learning across Europe;
- more small-scale strategic partnerships that make the programme more accessible for smaller adult education organisations; but also
- more large-scale strategic partnerships for the development of innovation.



More information

Contact: Gina Ebner, EAEA Secretary-General, +32 02 893 25 24, gina.ebner@eaea.org.

The European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) is the voice of non-formal adult education in Europe. EAEA is a European NGO with 142 member organisations in 44 countries and represents more than 60 million learners Europe-wide.