



ADULT EDUCATION IN EUROPE 2018
A Civil Society View

Adult Education in Europe 2018 – A Civil Society View

European Association for the Education of Adults

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Dear Reader,

We are excited to share with you this year's edition of EAEA's country reports. For the fifth consecutive year EAEA has produced its annual country reports in order to provide a civil society insight into the situation of adult education across the continent. The publication in accordance with its previous editions encourages the comparison of the developments in the area of adult education in the countries presented, while at the same moment it acts as a useful tool for influencing policies at national at European level.

The report is based on a survey sent to EAEA's members, through which civil society organizations and adult education providers have expressed their views on topics related to adult education developments and challenges in their countries. As a consequence, it should be pointed out that as with the previous editions this publication does not constitute a scientific analysis. Members' views may vary significantly based on their context of operation and their unique features.

This year's country reports focus among others on the presentation of developments and initiatives that are currently running all over Europe and are aligned to the Upskilling Pathways agenda. EAEA with the aid of its members explores all the recent developments regarding the implementation of the Upskilling Pathways in the continent. How are organizations and ministries, national agencies or authorities interacting towards the implementation of the Upskilling Pathways? How has the Upskilling Pathways initiative affected the work of member organizations? These issues are being addressed in the publication. Moreover, the reports' publication coincidences with the European Semester and thus can act as a "shadow report" of what has been done on the European level during the past year in the field of adult education.

We would like to thank all our members who contributed to the production of this edition of EAEA's country reports and we hope that readers will gain a useful insight on the annual developments in the field of adult education across Europe through this publication.

Per Paludan Hansen, EAEA President

Gina Ebner, EAEA Secretary General



A summary of the situation of non-formal adult education in Europe

European overview

For the fifth consecutive year the country reports publication provides an overview of the state of adult education across Europe. EAEA members once more contributed to this cause by answering a survey, which aimed at investigating the state of art of the sector in each country. EAEA members provided valuable input on recent developments, challenges, the impact of European and international policies while expressing their own concerns and suggestions. Given the diversity of the status, context (from umbrella organisations to

adult education providers) and the geographical reach in which each member is operating, the variety of the views and information shared is a given.

Several tendencies within the sector of non-formal adult education, in regard to the aforementioned areas, can be traced based on the information provided by 37 countries across the continent. These tendencies are mirrored in this year's country reports.

The policy level: Impact of European and international adult education policies

On policy level, the impact of the Upskilling Pathways initiative as well as that of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were topics highlighted among members' reports.

Regarding the uptake of Upskilling Pathways, it is becoming clear from the input provided that not all countries are on the same page. Some countries, such as Austria, already have a national Upskilling Pathways strategy in place while others are still lagging behind. It should be noted though that even in the countries where there is not yet a concrete strategy regarding the implementation of the Upskilling Pathways, elements of the initiative are being integrated in existing policies. The need for upskilling is receiving

attention in countries like Croatia and Finland while others, such as Hungary, incorporate the guidelines of Upskilling Pathways into their educational and research programmes.

As for the uptake of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a large number of European countries are already paying special attention to the promotion of the SDGs, especially of the 4th SDG which concerns education and as a consequence is of special importance for the adult education sector. The 4th SDG was actively promoted in campaigns and conferences in Romania, Belarus and Hungary among others while in Denmark and Spain (Catalonia) specific activities have been organized by EAEA members with the focus on SDGs.

Key topics: Digitalization and refugees at the centre of attention

According to the input received by EAEA members all over Europe, refugees remain a main focus of work for many organizations across the continent. In many cases the participation of refugees in adult education courses is seen as a key factor in their inclusion in society. Although in some countries there has been a decrease in the number of incoming refugees more recently, the provision of adult education courses (language, vocational etc.) to those already settled is still high on the agenda of adult education for the majority of our members.

Another topic which emerged through the answers of EAEA members is that of digitalization and the related provision for digital literacy among adult learners. The improvement of digital skills of the citizens was an issue addressed, within the framework of adult education provision, in quite a lot of countries including Austria, Estonia, France, Greece and Switzerland.

Last but not least, validation is being highlighted as an important issue that needs to be tackled in more effective ways.

A glance to the future: a call for funding and state support

Reflecting on the future of non-formal adult education in their countries EAEA members almost unanimously agree that the sector, in order to thrive, is in need of further state support and funding. Although close cooperation between the relevant ministries and the adult education sector is being observed in some countries, there is still need for greater support from the state and a clear definition of the government's role in adult education.

In countries such as Croatia, Cyprus and Lithuania the lack of funding has been highlighted as a persistent problem over the years while in others there has been witnessed a decrease in the allocated funding during the past year. For example, in Denmark the funding of Danish courses for self-sufficient migrants has been

taken away, while in Hungary non-vocational adult education witnessed reduction in funding, especially in the areas of basic adult education, literacy programmes and cultural events. On the other hand, in a few cases such as those of Finland and Switzerland, more budget was allocated in certain areas of adult education (literacy/language learning and VET respectively).

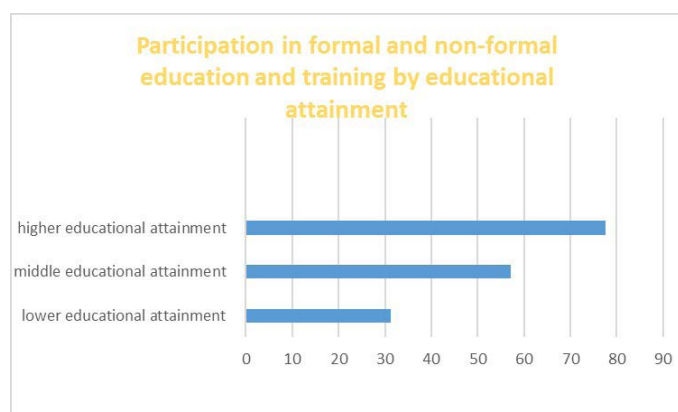
Undeniably, adequate financing is significant for the development of the sector and the increased provision of training courses, which will enable adults to cope with social challenges. There is a widespread belief among our members that in order for adult education to reach its full potential, it should receive the same recognition as primary, secondary and tertiary education and as a consequence receive more funding.

Austria

Even though Austria tends to achieve high participation rates in adult education, there is still a greater need for parts of its population, such as refugees, to undertake adult education courses in order to be integrated into the society. This is the reason why, for some years now, more programmes have been focused on the issue of migrants' integration.

Recent developments

The Adult Education Survey 2016 shows an increase in participation of 11.7 percent points in formal and non-formal education and training. Participation rates though differ significantly according to the educational attainment of the participants.



Graph1: Participation in formal and non-formal learning in relation to educational attainment in Austria.

In general, this performance is based on policy measures such as the Adult Education Initiative, which provides free courses for basic education, and second chance education programmes like the General Higher Education Entrance Exam (*Berufsreifeprüfung*) and the Public Employment Service, which provides programmes and courses for unemployed people and refugees. All these measures are carried out within a highly institutionalised Austrian adult education landscape.

The performance in participant rates and number of courses and events is still very high: more than half a million of Austrians participated in the courses of the Austrian Adult Education Centres (VHS). Together with short courses there were more than 700 000 participants, measured by enrolments.

The pre-dominant theme in Austria's adult education is still how to handle the qualification and integration

of refugees and migrants. Besides German language courses, courses for basic education have been financed by the state. Moreover, train-the-trainer courses are run for teaching refugees. At the moment, adult education providers are in a clearing phase in regard to whether basic education for young refugees should take place in schools or in adult education structures.

Furthermore, the second Adult Education MOOC ran in spring 2018. Together with the first MOOC, the courses were attended by 6,000 adult educators in total. Digitalisation is also the main topic within the Conference of the Austrian Adult Education Association (KEBÖ). The 2017 conference focused on this topic and the 2018 conference will continue with in the same direction.

The qualification framework of the Austrian Academy for Continuing Education (wba) has been revised and media literacy is now a prominent topic. The Academy validates the qualifications of adult educators and is a product of the Co-operative System of Austrian Adult Education.

VOEV, as the umbrella organization, is coordinating the work of the Austrian Adult Education Centres (VHS). They have federal working groups on basic education and on access courses to higher education. Our members are highly concerned with basic education and the VHS are the biggest and most important provider of basic education in Austria. However, they are aware that adult education is not only seen as an institution for basic education. General education and active citizenship education are at the same level of importance.

For the next year, VOEV, one of our Austrian members, will emphasise on the topics of validation, active citizenship and digitalisation as the main focus of their work.

Links to EU and international policy

Austria has a strategy for the Sustainable Development Goals. Inclusive and quality education for all are at the core of the Austrian Adult Education Centres and other organisations. Sustainability is a main theme in the Austrian-wide core programme of the Adult Education Centres within the Key Competences for Lifelong Learning.

Concerning EU policies, Upskilling Pathways was implemented throughout different strategies such as the Adult Education Initiative, which offers free basic education and compulsory education, the General Higher Education Entrance Exam (Berufsreifeprüfung) and also the Training Obligations Act (Ausbildungspflichtgesetz), which regulates a compulsory education until the age of 18.

Moreover, adult education organisations were consulted on the implementation of Upskilling Pathways during the Vocational Skills Week 2017 where it was discussed in an Austrian working group with people from adult education institutions and representatives of the Ministry of Education. VOEV is also involved in strategic works with the National Agency.

Finally, the European Key Competences Framework is very important for EAEA members. It gives the basis of the core programme which has been worked out by VOEV and its members. Key competence 1 (mother tongue) and competence 2 (foreign languages) have been merged to a single linguistic competence. The core programme includes concrete courses and seminars; they are described by learning outcomes and can be used by all adult education centres.

Challenges and recommendations

The recently prolonged Adult Education Initiative is a very important part of the Austrian Upskilling Pathways strategy, but to cover the needs more course places have to be financed. Our members recommend that the funding should be at least tripled from its current level. The basic education programme within the Initiative will be revised in terms of a curriculum and of success evidence.

Another challenge is the decline of the acceptance of democracy as a form of governance and a form of living. People with low educational attainment and people with low literacy competence doubt democratic processes, feel insecure and helpless. Thus, our member recommends focusing more on this issue. Active citizenship education and democracy education are more than necessary nowadays.

Relevant data

- Percentage of the population that participate in formal and/or non-formal education (PIAAC 2012): 48%
- Women participation in formal and/or non-formal education (PIAAC 2012): 47%
- Percentage of unemployed adults in lifelong learning (CEDEFOP 2016): 16,3%
- Percentage of older adults in lifelong learning (CEDEFOP 2016): 9%

Armenia

The Velvet Revolution has given the Armenian people a glimpse of positivity towards democratisation and progress in areas such as education. The adult education field is expected to adapt to many changes and there is hope that more support will then be provided by the government to enhance the development of adult education in Armenia.

Recent developments

Our member of the Armenian Lifelong Learning League stated that, unfortunately, in the past few years, there has been stagnation in the policies taken by the government in education including the adult education sector. However, they also declared that, as a result of a number of initiatives supported by the European Union, a number of important provisions concerning adult education have been included in the draft of the new Law on Higher Education. The new law is expected to be adopted sometime this autumn. Moreover, new developments have been made by our members. Since 2016, with financial support of DVV International, the

Armenian Lifelong Learning League has proceeded with the development of an online eLearning platform aimed at providing different courses for adult learners. This is a successful initiative that gathers, since 2017, five courses on the platform with more than 100 learners participating in the courses.

For the following year, the Armenian Lifelong Learning League will focus on the further development of the created on-line learning platform that aimed at reaching more adult learners in regions of Armenia, and provide methodological support to the rapidly developing University Continuing Education sector.

Links to EU and international policy

Armenia is not part of the European Union, and therefore is not entitled to apply the European initiatives and recommendations. However, in Armenia, our members use the EU's Upskilling Pathways as a strategic document and its activities will be used to disseminate the documents among stakeholders and to open a dialogue with the Ministry of Education. There are some initiatives aiming at the development of the vocational education and training sector. In

particular, these initiatives focus in the building of a connection with some regional Adult Education centres. A related project just started in 2018. It aims at building a sustainable dialogue between the government and local and regional authorities on the Partnership for Education Progress Network and elaborating a well-grounded public policy aimed at combining the efforts of the Civil Society organisations sector in education and promoting participation.

Challenges and recommendations

In the coming year, the main positive change that adult education will experience in Armenia is determined by the radical changes in the Armenian political system following the Velvet Revolution that took place in April and May 2018. The new government and its general political strategy completely shifted and put more emphasis on democratisation of all spheres of social-economic system, and education is one of the main directions of this process. In this sense, alongside with necessary changes in all levels of formal education,

many changes in the Adult Education sector are expected, such as recognition prior learning outcomes, inclusion of non-formal programmes outcomes in the National Qualifications Framework, permeability of qualification levels, etc. Even though the country is going through positive changes within its governments, our member organisation strongly recommends the government to support more effectively the civil society organisations working in this field.

Belarus

Adult education providers in Belarus highlight the improvement of their interaction with the national government but regret the lack of initiatives that would lead to the creation of state and non-state funded adult education centres in the regions of Belarus. Moreover, they would like to expand the scope of adult education and to gain sufficient funds.

Recent developments

The educational sector in Belarus is undergoing some changes. The profession of an andragogue was officially recognized. Moreover, through an international technical assistance project “Modernization of the VET system in the Republic of Belarus”, the National Qualifications Framework and the National Strategy for Lifelong Learning are developing. Additionally, the “learning city” concept was included in the priorities

of the work of the National Commission for UNESCO of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus. Two recent documents were developed in Belarus: “The position of the Association on Civil education in the Republic of Belarus” and “Promotion of civil activity through non-formal education: recommendations for Belarusian-Ukrainian projects” with the active participation of ALLLE in 2018.

Links to EU and international policy

Belarus has implemented the Sustainable Development Goals through the National Strategy for Sustainable Social and Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus for the period up to 2030, which concerns strategic prospects for different types of institutions of formal education. In addition, the process of developing the National Strategy for Sustainable Development of the Republic of Belarus for the period until 2035 was

launched in May 2018. The document will include a separate block presenting the role and opportunities of education, including adult education, in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Moreover, SDG 4 will be promoted in the public campaign “Caravan – Learn to act”, which will be organized by ALLLE and partners and will take place on 21-30 October 2018.

Challenges and recommendations

Challenges in Belarus in the field of adult education are to be found at different levels. At national level there is still no strategy for formal and informal adult education that would be clearly defined and shared by a large number of stakeholders. At local level there is a lack of responsibility for the development of adult education and consequently no funds at the local level to finance adult education.

On a positive note, there is a growth of professionalism among adult education providers, but the financial

situation acts as a barrier for further development. One EAEA member underlines the need to provide state and non-state non formal education organizations with equal conditions of activity in terms of access to budgetary funds, access to target groups, removing of prohibitions and obstacles to cooperation of state educational institutions with NGOs, and unification of the legislative regulation of the activities of organizations of the non-formal education.

Belgium

In Flanders adult education is undergoing some changes but nothing is set yet. EAEA members are currently in the middle of a transition and are lobbying for the recognition of the significance of adult education in a new decree.

Recent developments

Non-formal education in Flanders is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Culture. Currently a new decree that will affect the organisations working in the field of adult education is about to be implemented. The procedure of its implementation is still ongoing. In particular, the ministry has yet to negotiate with

organisations and the Flemish government has yet to give the final approval. One of EAEA members is currently in negotiation with the Ministry of Culture in order to clarify the future of adult education in Flanders.

Links to EU and international policy

This period for adult education in Flanders is transitional, with nothing set in stone. The situation will be clearer in 2019. Unfortunately, in Flanders adult education depends on the Ministry of Culture and adult education is not among its priorities.

Flanders is also trying to follow-up the evaluation and changes in Erasmus + but the different points of view and priorities between Flanders and Wallonia are a challenge.

Challenges and recommendations

At the moment the main challenge is the ongoing negotiations with regard to the new decree. In order to ensure new subsidies the organisation will be asked to prove the impact of its work. Currently most organisations are waiting for the decree to get implemented in order to plan for the future. EAEA

members point out the fact that the importance of non-formal adult education should be further recognised in order to have access to an increased budget and more means of lobbying for adult education on the national level.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

As non-EU member, Bosnia and Herzegovina does not need to comply with the EU regulations and policies regarding adult education, but it can participate in European funded projects such as the Erasmus+. In 2017 one of EAEA members participated in an Erasmus+ project on adult education, marking a first for the country. Despite recent developments, the adult education sector still lags behind in terms of national policies, recognition and resources available.

Recent developments

The Law on Adult Education of Herzegovina-Neretva Canton was adopted in March at the 31st meeting of the Assembly of Herzegovina-Neretva Canton. This canton is now the ninth canton in the Federation of B&H that has recognised a need for regulation in the field of adult education and has officially started with that process by adopting a law. The first working meeting of the project “Implementation of the EU Adult Education Programme” was held on June 11 and 12 of 2018. The meeting brought together 30 representatives of various institutions and organizations dealing with adult education in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including our member the Socio-Educational Centre (SEC). This project cycle will focus on promoting the concept of basic skills and developing a model for adult training

in basic skills. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, there has already been work on creating such models, but they are neglected. The concept of basic skills focuses on adult life skills and skills in basic literacy, social, civic and entrepreneurial skills. Regarding further development, our member SEC is now part of an Erasmus+ project for adult education. This is the first participation of an organisation from Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Erasmus+ programme related to adult education through strategic partnerships. Other than that, the organisation plans to invest continuously in the quality of the educational process, in working on the development of a new curricula and keeps on targeting special groups of people that are socially vulnerable.

Links to EU and international policy

Most developments related to international policy are linked to initiatives launched by civil society and adult education providers in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Our member states that they are trying their best to work on the Sustainable Development Goals in Bosnia and Herzegovina. For example, in order to contribute to the reduction of poverty, the organisation targets people from disadvantaged backgrounds and provide them quality education to help them enter the labour market. To provide access to education, they are planning to apply for project calls to provide funds for the education of disadvantaged people. Moreover, the organisation, on a regular basis, engages their trainers in trainings and will continue to do so in the future through andragogy training. In addition to working on meeting the Goal 4 for a quality and inclusive

education for all, the organisation is also contributing in the good health and well-being goal by developing training to help people stay healthy. For example, they have developed many curricula that are intended for both healthcare workers and the public, for the development of health competencies. Those include trainings for caregivers, personal assistants and on emergency conditions in health such as dementia and Alzheimer. Another goal is the promotion of affordable clean energy. The organisation works on curricula for an energy efficiency manager which aim at creating a new profession in Bosnia and Herzegovina to meet this goal. A person completing this training could further promote the importance of renewable sources and advise companies and individuals on how to become energy-efficient.

Challenges and recommendations

Our member confirms that the issues are recurrent over the years: lack of resources and support to the adult education field are the main challenges. The organization emphasizes the fact that support doesn't only mean funding, but also recognizing the benefits of adult education and providing information about this sector. To assure quality and increased participation in adult learning, EAEA members in Bosnia and Herzegovina call for clear legislation on adult education that would define responsibilities and action areas, as well for a state level qualification framework and an increase in public funding for adult education.

Lobbying with international donors, especially at the European Union level, could be a way to

provide sufficient funds for the development and implementation of different forms of adult education in Bosnia and Herzegovina. What could also be interesting would be to link education and the labour market, with the aim of providing adequate information to employers, educational institutions and adults on the opportunities and potentials offers on the market. As an essential resource, in the context of increasing overall capacities for quality education and lifelong learning, our member aims to encourage the establishment of new specialized adult education institutions and to involve all relevant partners in the process of planning education policies. Finally, it is more than necessary to define the quality system of adult education to avoid corruption in this sector.

Croatia

Adult education organisations and providers are very active in Croatia nowadays. They organise many events and conferences on topics related to adult education. This sector is hoping to grow even more by targeting new kinds of organisations to take part in adult education. However, they also wish that adult education's importance will be recognized as much as that of the traditional youth education.

Recent developments

In 2018, as mentioned in the EC's Education and Training monitor, the government adopted the Adult Education Act in order to address one of lowest rates of adult participation in learning in the EU (2.3% in 2017). Right now, more projects, which aim at helping adults to enter the labour market, are being financed by the European Social Funds, with more than 4 million of euros of funds allocated to those. 24 new projects on adult education were launched. Last year, the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education has published its "Strategic Framework for Promotion of Lifelong Learning in the Republic of Croatia 2017-2021" but also the "Adult Education in Croatia 2017 – Research Results". Along with these publications, many events are organized by adult education providers such as the 11th Lifelong Learning Week titled "Train your Brain" organized and promoted in the whole country in October 2017.

The Adult Education Institution Dante, an EAEA member, has been recently working on expanding their activities to include the organization of international scientific conferences in order to bring together researchers, expert practitioners in adult education, representatives of government agencies and/or ministries, professional associations, and other interested stakeholders from Croatia and abroad. The member organisation is also developing online courses for vocational teachers and a curriculum for raising the competences of adult educators at the international level as part Erasmus+ KA2 projects.

This institution will aim, for the period of 2018/2019, to continue carrying out their existing Erasmus+ projects and start new projects with other European adult education institutions. They will be focusing further on working with migrants, developing e-learning and start implementing training programs for vocational education and professional development of teachers.

Links to EU and international policy

Since 2009, Croatia has in place the Strategy of the Sustainable Development of the Republic of Croatia and since 2011, the Action Plan for Education for Sustainable Development. The main goal of the latter is to achieve an understanding and acceptance of the concept of the sustainable development among all stakeholders and to empower the capacity for sustainable development. The main areas of action involve lifelong learning, learning through action and participation, cooperation and partnership, integration of the SDG topics in the education system in Croatia, to only name a few. In these strategies, adult education is seen as an integral part of the educational system and there are no specific sub-goals targeting adult

education.

For example, one of our members, the Adult Education Institution Dante, co-organised the 10th ESREA Conference of the Between Global and Local: Adult Learning and Communities (BGL-ALC) Network named "Education 2030 & Adult Learning: Global Perspectives and Local Communities - Bridges or Gaps?". The Conference examined and promoted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its goal for inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels, emphasizing the vital and beneficial role of learning and education in communities and societies. Our member believes that this conference was an ideal opportunity to exchange experiences, knowledge, and

examples of good practice about sustainable adult learning as well as contributing to the understanding of issues and challenges of adult learning on the national and international level. Concerning the EU's Upskilling Pathways, there are no existing national strategies to implement the

programme. However, upskilling of low-qualified youth and adults is one of the main activities of the Croatian Employment Service. It is often financed by different European Social Funds and Erasmus + project and initiatives.

Challenges and recommendations

According to our members, Croatia has still many challenges that will need to be faced. First, Croatia has to raise awareness, information and motivation for participation in adult education as well as motivate the scientific community to participate more in different professional international adult education bodies and in national research on andragogy. Moreover, adult education needs to promote its vision and values so that this field can be one of the drivers of individual and community development in the Republic of Croatia. Another challenge is to get more attention and support from the Ministry of Education and Science as well as the Ministry of Labour. Moreover, in order to align vocational, higher and adult education with the labour market needs, it requires developing qualification standards in cooperation with social partners. Developing a quality management system

is also needed through the establishment of a database that would gather providers and services in adult education. Finally, a recurrent problem is the lack of public funding that prevents the sector from increasing its participation. Our members wish that adult education would be treated equally to all other education sectors and that it would become acknowledged that the development of the today's society depends primarily on the education of adults and not only of children and youth. This, in turn, would lead to a sincere promotion and financial support of adult education programmes. Real developments, support and partnerships with different stakeholders could be driven by increasing the number of employees at the Department for Adult Education.

Relevant data

- Percentage of unemployed adults in lifelong learning (CEDEFOP 2016): 3%
- Percentage of older adults in lifelong learning (CEDEFOP 2016): 0,4%

- Adult participation in lifelong learning (EC 2016) in 2015: 3,1%

Cyprus

Like many Eastern European countries, adult education in Cyprus faces inadequate funding and low participation rates. EAEA members are hoping though for a better cooperation between the organisations and the government that will highlight the importance and the benefits of adult education in the society.

Recent developments

In the past years, the EAEA member Cyprus Adult Education Association has focused on enhancing learners' skills in non-formal education and on reducing unemployment of young people.

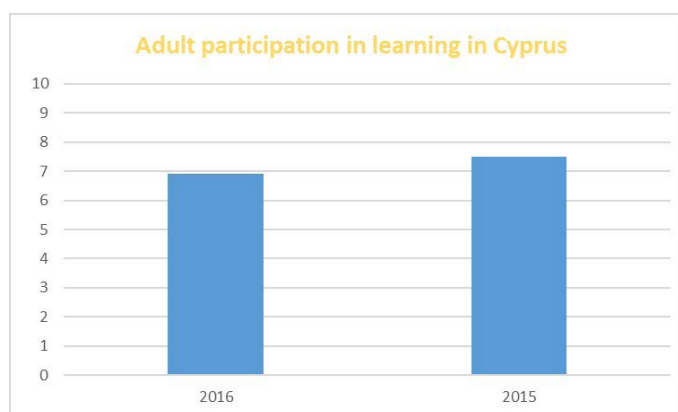
Links to EU and international policy

Our member contributes to the Upskilling Pathways and the European Agenda for Adult Learning by updating the skills of trainers for the purpose of providing suitable learning services. In line with Upskilling Pathways, Cyprus has adopted measures to strengthen the adult learning

system including the initiation of a validation system for informal and non-formal training, the development of additional professional standards and the strengthening of the capacity of PSIVET schools and second-chance schools.

Challenges and recommendations

The main challenge of 2018-2019 is the increase of participation in adult education, which is at the moment at around 7%. Adult participation in learning in Cyprus remains low and continued efforts are necessary to upgrade adults' skills. In addition, the participation of low-skilled people in adult learning is one of the lowest in the EU.



Graph 2: Comparison of adult participation in learning in Cyprus in 2015 and 2016.

To systematise adult training, the Human Resource Development Authority will develop 80 new professional qualifications standards and revise the 72 existing ones. A public consultation was carried out to determine which professions will develop new professional qualifications standards based on the priorities of the economy. In 2017 the National Qualification Framework of Cyprus was referenced to the European Qualifications Framework.

Another challenge is the lack of necessary funding that would allow our member to undertake more projects in the non-formal education sector. One of the subjects the member wants to focus more on in the future is the innovation and active entrepreneurship for young people.

Our member concludes that there is a need to strengthen the cooperation with the governmental organizations and help in providing qualified trainers in the field of non-formal education. Adult participation in non-formal education should be encouraged and adult education needs to get more recognition at the national level.

Relevant data

- Percentage of unemployed adults in lifelong learning (CEDEFOP 2016): 5,5%
- Percentage of older adults in lifelong learning (CEDEFOP 2016): 3,3%
- Adult participation in lifelong learning (EC 2016) in 2016: 6,9%

Denmark

Denmark is known to have well-established adult education structures and high participation rates. The country has met its requirements for the SDGs but even more emphasis will be put on adult education thanks to the commitment of EAEA members. However, the sector is constantly facing funding cuts and adult education has yet to become a priority.

Recent developments

In Denmark, adult education is currently undergoing reforms. In the area of basic skills, free literacy and numeracy courses will be expanded to include IT and English, and online guidance for formal adult education will be established for adults. Moreover, adult education in Denmark will try to also tackle mental health issues (which is a topic high on the public agenda), but mainly targeting young people.

Life skills are also another focus for different projects. This approach aims at improving the basic skills provision by broadening the notion of basic skills to the one of life skills. One of EAEA's Danish members is planning a campaign and events to promote the term and thereby adult education ("folkeoplysning"). EAEA members

will also continue to lobby for political resonance and interests and for the inclusion of ethnic minorities and other vulnerable groups through partnerships with the state and municipalities.

One of EAEA members was put in charge of administering and distributing funds for projects on the subject of informing and debating paternity leave and is also leading a new project focusing on mapping relevant research and researchers of folkbildning in the Nordic countries of Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland, with the hopes of supporting and developing a growing research interest in the field of liberal adult education (folkeoplysning).

Links to EU and international policy

The Danish government has launched a national strategy to implement the Sustainable Development Goals in Denmark. According to the action plan, Denmark has already met the Goal 4 requirement of ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education for all, and the goal is

only addressed in a new strategy of the Danish National Commission for UNESCO EAEA members in Denmark and their member organisations have organised a number of activities focusing on the SDGs.

Challenges and recommendations

Funding and getting the proper facilities is still a main issue, especially for adult education schools. The same is true for the inclusion of vulnerable groups, especially individuals with disabilities. Funding of Danish courses for self-sufficient migrants has been scrapped. These migrants now have to pay the language training with their own financial resources.

Another challenge is to ensure the relevant political recognition. Furthermore, EAEA members recommend to change the laws of financing the liberal adult education (folkeoplysende voksenundervisning). Also, Denmark needs to have more political attention and national strategies for actively using adult education in different areas.

Relevant data

- Percentage of the population that participate in formal and/or non-formal education (PIAAC 2012): 66%
- Participation in non-formal education only (PIAAC 2012): 52%
- Women participation in formal and/or non-formal education (PIAAC 2012): 69%
- Percentage of unemployed adults in lifelong learning (CEDEFOP 2016): 34,4%
- Percentage of older adults in lifelong learning (CEDEFOP 2016): 21,3%

Estonia

The main focus of adult education in Estonia remains on disadvantaged adult learners. With the Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020 in place, the country aims at an effective implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Recent developments

Recently, the main initiatives taken by Estonia concentrated mainly on informing target groups about the learning possibilities, ensuring that the groups have access to trainings and that the sector provides high

quality and flexible learning opportunities for skills and work and the development of key competences. As in previous years, the adult education providers' main focus remains on the disadvantaged adult learners.

Links to EU and international policy

To implement the Sustainable Development Goals, Estonia has the Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020 in place. The general goal is to provide people in Estonia with learning opportunities that are tailored to their needs and capabilities throughout their wide lifespan, in order for them to maximize opportunities for dignified self-

actualization within society, as well as in their professional and personal life. Upskilling is supported by European Social fund. In particular, there are projects with the aim to support the development of key competences such as digital skills, language skills, social skills and personal development for person with disabilities.

Challenges and recommendations

One of the most important challenges in adult education is the elaboration of the Estonian long-term

(2021-2035) development framework for education and research, as the current strategy ends in 2020.

Relevant data

- Percentage of the population that participate in formal and/or non-formal education (PIAAC 2012): 53%
- Participation in non-formal education only (PIAAC 2012): 44%
- Women participation in formal and/or non-formal education (PIAAC 2012): 57%

- Percentage of unemployed adults in lifelong learning (CEDEFOP 2016): 10,2%
- Percentage of older adults in lifelong learning (CEDEFOP 2016): 10,7%
- Adult participating in learning (EC 2016) in 2016: 15,7%

Finland

Finland is promoting reforms in the field of adult education. The reforms aim for better access to vocational education. Moreover, more investment has been made in the education of migrants, the development of digital skills of citizens and the development of basic skills for those lacking basic education. Finland is also involved in the promotion and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Recent developments

The educational sector in Finland is undergoing some changes. Three important reforms have been made in 2017 and 2018 concerning adult education. The biggest one was the reform concerning the upper secondary vocational education and training, implemented in 2018. As a result, upper secondary vocational education and training is no longer limited by age but has become increasingly connected to workplace learning and is evaluated by competence-based qualifications. This, in turn, has led to vocational education and training becoming more learner-centred. The reform is important for non-formal adult education as many of the non-formal adult education providers also provide vocational education and training.

Secondly, in recent years, investments have been made in the education of migrants and especially in the integration courses of immigrants. The main focus has been on reading and writing skills as well as in language learning (Finnish or Swedish). Non-formal adult education institutions have had a major role in providing such courses, with specific funding allocated by the government.

More funding has also been provided for improving digital skills of citizens and the basic skills of those lacking basic education. The government has allocated funding for non-formal adult education institutions to also provide relevant courses, which would start in the autumn of 2018.

Links to EU and international policy

Regarding the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee of Sustainable Development, led by the Finnish Prime Minister, is in charge of incorporating them in the national policy. For the period of 2016-2019, the main task of the committee is the promotion of the implementation of the Agenda 2030 and its connection to the national policy on sustainable development in Finland. The committee follows and assesses the implementation of the Agenda in Finland.

The second main task of the committee is the promotion of the national commitment to sustainable development ("The Finland We Want 2050 initiative") as well as its monitoring, assessment and communication of its results. This commitment is a Finnish policy to promote

sustainable development and a tool to ensure that all institutions and entities take part in the promotion of sustainable development. Many national non-formal adult education institutions and adult education centres have joined the commitment and are implementing it in their activities.

Although there is no specific national strategy to implement the EU's Upskilling Pathways, the Ministry of Education and Culture established a working group in 2017 to investigate the needs concerning lifelong learning and suggested the basic skills of citizens be strengthened through specific actions.

Challenges and recommendations

In 2018/19, adult education and non-formal adult education institutions will focus especially on improving the quality of education as the expectations of the learners grow rapidly. Special attention will be given to the digitalisation of teaching. One EAEA member will implement a specific project to systematically improve the readiness of

non-formal adult education institutions to take on the challenge of digitalisation. Moreover, EAEA members will focus on advocacy to ensure that non-formal adult education institutions have good legislative and financial opportunities to work in an efficient and productive way.

France

In France adult education is currently undergoing some changes. In particular, the government is focusing its efforts on the sector of VET and the provision of adult education to migrants..

Recent developments

In France recent developments are related to VET and employability. In particular, the reform of VET provides an investment plan of 15 billion euros in the skills area. Concerning employability, a reform of unemployment

insurance will allow people to manage their own training courses, independently, without intermediaries, such as training centres.

Links to EU and international policy

With regard to the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals, France has set up an evaluation system (INSEE) with precise criteria to monitor and achieve Goal 4. While most of the criteria focus on children and youth, for example the number of sustainable development projects in schools, colleges and high schools, some target adults, for example by monitoring their literacy and numeracy skills.

Regarding strategies to implement the EU's Upskilling

Pathways, in France the training offer is supported by the regions. The training offers include courses specifically reserved for people who face difficulties with reading, writing and basic skills and are co-funded by the European Social Fund. One EAEA member underlines that Upskilling Pathways has had an impact on their work by giving a new opportunity for training centres to expand their target audience and to welcome more people in skills development trainings.

Challenges and recommendations

The main challenge of adult education in France regarding training centres is that they will now deal directly with the participants who will enrol in the courses with their personal training account. Before, there was an established connection between the training centres and intermediary structures such as the employment agencies that referred people to the training centre on systems set up by the state or the regions.

Another challenge concerns migrants, as there has been a reform for the reception and training of migrants. To apply for a residence permit, migrants still need to enrol in French language courses, and the duration has been increased from 200 hours to 600 hours.

Additionally, an EAEA member argues that competence development training offers should not be subject to markets and basic training should be a universal right.

Germany

2019 will be a year of celebration for the adult education sector in Germany, as German Volkshochschule (vhs) will celebrate the 100th anniversary. Despite the many successes of vhs, there are still challenges and issues that Germany will need to overcome in the next years.

Recent developments

One recent development is the launch of the VHS Cloud in February 2018. It is the first online learning platform and networking tool for participants, trainers, pedagogical staff and association staff of German adult education centres. So far, this cloud has been implemented in more than 500 vhs.

In the coalition contract of the German government, adult continuing education is mentioned much more often than in any other past legislative periods, and EAEA member vhs are keen to see the implementation of the proposals and ideas of this agreement.

The focus of the vhs in 2019 will be on the area of civil/political education in the context of the 100-year anniversary of vhs. Europe will be the focus topic in autumn 2018: vhs are partners of the governments' citizen dialogue on Europe and in early 2019 in the preparations of the European election.

In terms of target groups, EAEA members state that they will continue to focus their work on refugees, migrants who want to return to their home countries, people with low digital skills, to only name a few.

Links to EU and international policy

Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals has been high on the agenda of EAEA member DVV. In addition to that, DVV participates in the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development of the Education Ministry which seeks to generate and scale-up concrete action in Education for Sustainable Development. That makes a substantial contribution to the Agenda 2030 process.

Moreover, DVV is also involved in several projects funded within the framework Ministry's National Decade of Literacy and Basic Skills. This decade intends to raise basic education levels and to improve adults' reading and writing skills. During this decade, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research will provide 180 million euros to the funding of projects.

Challenges and recommendations

A few years ago, a number of adult education centres worked hard to build structures for the refugees who came in 2015/2016. As there are fewer new refugees coming in, the question becomes how to make the existing structures sustainable. Another challenge is to provide more educational offers that combine language education and vocational training for refugees.

An additional problem concerns the rise of extremism

and populism in Germany, giving adult education a new challenge to reflect on.

Finally, EAEA members in Germany recommend that adult education should be treated as an equal part of the four pillars of the education system (primary/school education, secondary school education and apprenticeships, higher education, lifelong learning) and not as less important than school or higher education.

Relevant data

- Percentage of the population that participate in formal and/or non-formal education (PIAAC 2012): 53%
- Participation in non-formal education only (PIAAC 2012): 46%
- Women participation in formal and/or non-formal education (PIAAC 2012): 49%
- Percentage of unemployed adults in lifelong learning (CEDEFOP 2016): 6.9%
- Percentage of older adults in lifelong learning (CEDEFOP 2016): 4%

Greece

In order to resolve the ongoing consequences of the financial crisis, adult education providers are still trying hard to tackle the high unemployment by providing and promoting adult education for all. In addition to that, adult education is essential to integrate migrants into the Greek society.

Recent developments

EAEA member DAFNI KEK states they recently put an emphasis on online educational courses and on improving communication with local authorities to enhance cooperation with the formal VET sector. The future focus will therefore be securing the cooperation between formal and non-formal education. Media and

digitalization will also be at the centre of activities such as the promotion of e-services, volunteering, ICT skills courses and media literacy courses (film education, reading newspapers articles, understanding relevant news, for example agricultural/tax issues) to low-qualified learners

Links to EU and international policy

Regarding international policy, a recent reform took on the Sustainable Development Goal 4 on providing inclusive and qualitative education for all, replacing environmental education with sustainability committees and centres with an emphasis on cultural, environmental and citizenship issues. EAEA members

in Greece also state that there is currently no national strategy to implement Upskilling Pathways. However, reforms on Higher Education have been announced which include lifelong learning circles that will be accessible to anyone, independent of their background.

Challenges and recommendations

Ten years after the worldwide financial crisis, Greece is still struggling to recover. Austerity and unemployment are the daily routine of the Greek population. High unemployment is an issue that adult education providers and organizations are trying to tackle. The challenge is also to increase the participation of unemployed individuals in adult learning to help them enter the labour market. Moreover, the integration

of migrants is another challenge among the adult education sector. Adult education must be used as a means to help the integration of migrants in Greece (through language and culture for example): to do that, EAEA members recommend broadening the scope of adult education and encouraging citizens to take part in education courses.

Relevant data

- Percentage of the population that participate in formal and/or non-formal education (PIAAC 2015): 20%
- Participation in non-formal education only (PIAAC 2015): 15%
- Women participation in formal and/or non-formal education (PIAAC 2015): 19%

- Percentage of unemployed adults in lifelong learning (CEDEFOP 2016): 3,3%
- Percentage of older adults in lifelong learning (CEDEFOP 2016): 1,3%
- Adult participating in training (lifelong learning) (Eurostat 2016) in 2016: 6,4%

Hungary

The sector of adult education in Hungary is undergoing some changes. In particular, the field of adult education is focusing on the development of the concept of a “learning city” in Hungary as well as on the development of VET.

Recent developments

Several events and conferences on adult education took place in 2017. The main topics discussed were the “learning city”, the “skills related to VET” as well as SDGs and specifically the SDG 4 on adult and lifelong learning. The key changes included the end of Adult Education

Bachelor’s degree programmes at public universities as they have been incorporated into community organised BA programmes. The Hungarian government continued to focus on VET through mainly non-formal as well as formal programmes.

Links to EU and international policy

While there is no national strategy on the implementation of SDGs, some adult education stakeholders have been working on the topic: for example, the Hungarian Universities LLL Network -MELLearn published its 2017 e-book on lifelong learning and SDGs. Lifelong learning and the implementation of SDGs were also the topic of the annual conference of MELLearn in 2017.

At the local level, the City of Pécs organised its 2017 Learning Festival in association with UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning around sustainable

development and received the 2017 Award of UNESCO Global Learning City. Moreover, the National Office for Vocational and Adult Training organised its EPALE National Conference on Adult Learning for Hungary around the theme of UN SDGs and skills development. The EU’s Upskilling Pathways has had an impact on educational and research programmes, with relevant courses integrating the guidelines of the Upskilling Pathways strategy, and research projects including skills development, recognition, validation and accreditation of non-formal and informal learning.

Challenges and recommendations

A major challenge in Hungarian adult education is how to tackle early school-leaving and its impact on adult illiteracy and, moreover, on functional illiteracy. Another challenge is the relatively low participation in adult learning and education due to the limited number of accessible grass-

roots programmes in local and regional environments. The third challenge is a reduced funding for adult learning programmes in non-vocational adult education, especially in the areas of basic adult education, literacy programmes and cultural events.

Iceland

Thanks to recent policy developments in adult education, more adult education courses have been provided in Iceland. However, during the last elections, a new government was instituted, and the laws of adult education are being revised in the year 2018.

Recent developments

In the last two years, the Icelandic National Qualifications Framework was launched and put in practice. It enables the general public to make connections between formal and non-formal learning and aims at increasing the transparency of the Icelandic educational system. As a result of this new framework, more learning opportunities have been provided. However, the laws of adult education are being revised

lately as a consequence of the previous elections in October 2017 that brought a new Minister of Education. The work of EAEA's Icelandic member will be focused on advocating for adult education to the Members of the Parliament and on making the association grow by adding more members and by regularly updating their communication channels.

Links to EU and international policy

To meet the Upskilling Pathways goals set by European Union, a number of strategies have been undertaken in Iceland, such as the Training Service, targeting low-qualified adults. These strategies support the

implementation of the Upskilling Pathways, which provide enhanced opportunities of learning to specific individuals.

Challenges and recommendations

EAEA member in Iceland reports that the government and society need to recognise the importance of adult education in order for the sector to get more funding, which is especially needed by adult education centres. The key target group for the adult education sector in Iceland are migrants. Our member also underlines the need for

developing digital skills, for raising awareness of the fourth industrial revolution as well as developing career counselling for the adults who need it the most. Moreover, like in many EU countries, validation of competences is still a challenge that needs to be tackled.

Relevant data

- Percentage of unemployed adults in lifelong learning (CEDEFOP 2016): 28,9%
- Percentage of older adults in lifelong learning (CEDEFOP 2016): 18,9%

- Adult participation in lifelong learning (Statistics Iceland 2017) in 2015: 27.5% (45,700 persons).

Ireland

Our Irish members put a strong emphasis on equitable access to adult education, and they believe that more efforts are needed for the inclusion of disadvantaged groups in the Irish adult education system, which still benefits employed people more than others. Facing financial difficulties, the community education sector is still struggling to develop further.

Recent developments

In Ireland, there have been numerous changes in adult education in the past few years. SOLAS was established as a National Further Education and Training (FET) authority to implement the 2014-2019 Further Education Strategy. Their current strategic document runs until the end of 2019. Along with this, the Qualifications and Quality Ireland (QQI), also created significant change being in charge of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). The impact that the engagement with this new body (QQI) is having on the Irish community education sector is positive.

For our Irish member AONTAS, the establishment of the National Further Education and Training (FET) as part

of the FET Strategy, and the appointment of AONTAS as the National Coordinator for the European Agenda for Adult Learning was very significant. While these changes have all occurred in the past 6 to 7 years, their impact is now starting to be felt and seen across the country also to the citizens themselves.

In 2018, the Higher Education Authority is reviewing its current strategic principles. The main focus of this work is the ongoing development of its access plan, which seeks to create greater opportunities for access to higher education for students from disadvantaged communities.

Links to EU and international policy

The Irish government developed a specific plan to implement Upskilling Pathways in 2018. Our member AONTAS is involved by leading the EAAL (the European Agenda for Adult Learning) project in Ireland, as well as by participating as a consultative member

with the Department of Education and Skills in the implementation process.

AONTAS also reports that they will work towards supporting implementation of the Goal 4 of the SDGs on achieving inclusive and quality education.

Challenges and recommendations

It is important that the focus in Ireland extends beyond Further Education and Training into the realm of lifelong learning. Lifelong learning should be truly life-long and take into account the wider benefits that learning has on health, personal development, social engagement and community development. However, this acknowledgment of the wider benefits is a positive step after more than a decade of focusing almost exclusively on the skills agenda. Like many non-formal adult education organizations across Europe, community education organizations in Ireland are funded through a variety of sources. A research in 2011 based on 48 members of the AONTAS Community Education Network found that 10 government departments and over 70 funding streams were accessed by community education providers. However, in recent times, these funding streams have been reduced.

Also, the QQI re-engagement fee of about 5,000 euros for community education providers will limit equal opportunities for educating disadvantaged groups. The imposition of fees will result in many groups no longer having the ability to provide accredited programmes, to the detriment of community education learners and their communities. There is great uncertainty regarding the future of accredited provision by community education groups, with the proposed QQI re-engagement fee. These fees will have a detrimental effect on the ability of community education organizations across Ireland in their efforts to reach the most

underserved segments of Irish society. Therefore, specifically for 2018, AONTAS will be ramping up its efforts to seek fee waivers for reengagement and program validation fees charged by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) for the purpose of providing accredited programming.

Another challenge is that education providers continue to struggle with new ways of working, collecting data and dealing with the different cultural aspects and ethos of adult education and training since the greater labour market agenda focus. Education providers are not receiving the support they require to be effective in this new environment. In order to improve equity of access to learning for all, funding for learning opportunities for disadvantaged adults is required. It is also important to ensure that all guidance support is tailored to individual learners' needs and motivations and to recognize the importance of non-formal and informal learning (NFIL) and embed basic skills development in learning programmes for low-skilled people (who are also likely to be members of disadvantaged groups).

Therefore, our members will continue to argue that all adult education policies must ensure that access to education is open and available to all citizens. If government truly intends to create an accessible offering of education to adult learners, then it must focus on making that offering available to all learners regardless of the socio-economic standing.

Relevant data

- Percentage of the population that participate in formal and/or non-formal education (PIAAC 2012): 51%
- Participation in non-formal education only (PIAAC 2012): 36%
- Women participation in formal and/or non-formal education (PIAAC 2012): 49%
- Percentage of unemployed adults in lifelong learning (CEDEFOP 2016): 8,4%
- Percentage of older adults in lifelong learning (CEDEFOP 2016): 3,2%
- Ireland ranked 20th out of 28 EU countries in lifelong learning participation in 2016 (SOLAS, Lifelong Learning Report 2017): A lifelong learning participation rate of just under 7%.

Italy

Unfortunately, in Italy there is a lack of political interest in the field of adult education, but a lot of organizations are advocating for reforms in adult education.

Recent developments

In Italy the sector of adult education is undergoing some changes. Over the last year there was a growing focus on adult education policies. The reform of the schools for adults called CPIA is underway, which match better the demand and offers of training in formal and non-formal education. In Italy the field of adult education is characterised by numerous civil society organizations that deal with the non-formal education of specific target groups such as the elderly and migrants and by numerous

Italian universities and training organizations that offer lifelong guidance counselling to the sector of adult education. One of the most important developments is the National Qualifications Frameworks adopted in January 2018. It provides the basis for ESF funding to the PIAAC online tool to Public Employment Services to assess the basic skills of job-seekers. Centres of adult education offer personalised pathways and at the end they provide a certificate.

Links to EU and international policy

One of EAEA's members states that, at national level, although there is a lack of a framework policy on the issue of lifelong learning, there are important stakeholders (national agencies, universities, national voluntary bodies, etc.) for whom these issues are important. The strategy EAEA members intend to implement consists of the continuous awareness raising of local administrations and national agencies (INAPP and INDIRE) on issues related to lifelong learning. The construction and strengthening of knowledge on the topics of lifelong learning by politicians and operators involved in this sector is seen

as an effective strategy within a framework of fragmented and often non-coherent interventions.

As regards to Upskilling Pathways there are numerous publications in Italy on this subject, supported and produced mostly by universities and National Agencies such as INAPP (National Institute for Public Policy Analysis) and INDIRE (National Institute for Documentation, Innovation and Educational Research), but it is difficult to say if the theoretical and practical guidelines have already had repercussions on national lifelong learning policies.

Challenges and recommendations

In Italy there are some challenges in the field of adult education. There is a need to encourage a greater involvement of target groups of adults in lifelong learning, to increase adult education provision and to develop intervention policies financed and supported by the politics of the regions and the national government, which would train professionals in lifelong learning with a stable system of trainings.

One EAEA member will focus its work on strengthening local networks for the defence of the rights of adults, especially of migrant adults, to lifelong learning. It is necessary to reactivate a discussion with local and regional

administrations in order to have access to specific funds for lifelong learning. EAEA members also believe that it is necessary to raise awareness among local and national policymakers about the social exclusion of vulnerable adults, who for various reasons are leaving the path of lifelong learning. In particular, one of EAEA members is facing challenges in their work with migrants, who in Italy are a source of political conflict. Unfortunately, in the coming months the political situation will become more difficult and there will be many obstacles in asserting the rights to learning opportunities and the recognition of the skills of migrant adults.

Latvia

Latvia has recently put a focus on strategies and policies on the professionalization of adult educators. The promotion of Adult Education in Latvia remains a challenge due to the relatively small awareness of the public about learning opportunities.

Recent developments

An International Conference and a brochure entitled “Challenges for High Quality of Adult Education” gave an important impetus to adult education in Latvia. Organised by the Ministry of Education and Science of Latvia, the conference brought together representatives of a number of national bodies and authorities such as the national education and development agency and the service for education quality, alongside other adult education institutions. Topics covered included criteria for quality assurance in non-formal education, pedagogic and andragogic competence of non-formal adult educators as well as adult education and learning. The publication on “Challenges for High Quality

of Adult Education” was the result of another international conference on adult education organized by the consortium of the Erasmus+ project of the “National Coordinators for the Implementation of the European Agenda in Adult Education”. The conference proceedings contain scientific articles on adult teacher development, on education management, on adult learners’ characteristics and many other issues related to adult education. The recommendations for quality criteria in non-formal education coming out of the project have been undergoing a wide consultation process and a public discussion.

Links to EU and international policy

In the period from 2016 to 2020, the Latvian government aims to implement a national adult education governance structure to meet European and international targets and goals such as the Sustainable Development Goals. As part of the plan for the implementation of an adult education governance, two recruitment stages of both adult education course providers and learners have been carried out so far. Courses and trainings proposed by employers

and other stakeholders are currently undergoing an approval process through the adult education governance committee. Furthermore, the Latvian Ministry of Education is working on implementing the EU’s Upskilling Pathways strategy. Latvia is also active in EPALE: One of the Latvian EAEA members regularly publishes news and updates on different adult education issues on the platform.

Challenges and recommendations

One of the most important challenges in Latvia is to promote basic competences to adults through VET institutions because they are not widespread enough. An EAEA member states that it would be very important

for Latvia to develop a system of adult education and to define clearly the local government's role in adult education while providing adequate financial support.

Relevant data

- Percentage of unemployed adults in lifelong learning (CEDEFOP 2016): 8,2%
- Percentage of older adults in lifelong learning (CEDEFOP 2016): 4,4%
- Adult participating in training (lifelong learning) (Eurostat 2016) in 2016: 7,3%

Liechtenstein

The Adult Education Foundation in Liechtenstein promotes life-long learning and the benefits of adult education in the country. In recent years, the association has focused its work on engaging new learners, especially on those with a lower level of formal education and those coming from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Recent developments

In November 2017, Liechtenstein Adult Education Foundation started a project funded by the Erasmus+ programme on the theme of engaging new learners. The aim is to motivate low-qualified and socially disadvantaged groups of the population to participate in adult education by offering them new forms of

individualized educational counselling. This came as an addition to the already successful voucher system provided by the government that facilitates the access to courses for targeted learners. Another key issue is the improvement of the reputation and standing of the adult education in the country.

Links to EU and international policy

EAEA's member in Liechtenstein focuses on boosting the access to quality learning opportunities for adults with low levels of formal qualification. The EU's Upskilling Pathways strategy informed the development of a national project. Liechtenstein Adult Education Foundation has taken the recommendations

of the EU's Upskilling Pathways as a reference for its work to fight unemployment, poverty and social exclusion. Furthermore, the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is used for to align national educational programmes and levels to the EU.

Challenges and recommendations

Even though the association receives financial state support, the challenges for the implementation of projects are related to budgetary restrictions. The EAEA member in Liechtenstein tries to involve all

stakeholders and wants to raise awareness of adult education not only in society but also in the national parliament as there is a need to strengthen the cooperation in all sectors of education.

Lithuania

Recent highlights in Lithuanian adult education include conferences and seminars where adult education providers could share their experience and create a community of practice aiming to raise awareness about the issues that they are tackling. The main challenge for the adult education sector in Lithuania is the strengthening of skills for the labour market. The general structure of adult education in the country is another challenge due to its fragmented nature.

Recent developments

In 2017, the 18th Adult Learning Week entitled “The power and joy of learning” was organised by the Lithuanian Association of Adult Education.

Also in 2017, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania organised the conference “National Coordinators for the Implementation of the European Agenda for Adult Learning: Lithuania”, where participants had the chance to share their experiences and difficulties. Aside from that, the ministry organised a conference on “Open Professional Cooperation for Open Learning”. The conference aimed to foster synergies between national, regional and European initiatives and programmes, as well as to promote education and business partnerships for open learning.

The Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania presented important internet platforms and explained how to use them and to implement them into adult learning, including EPAL, SMIS (Informational System for Adult Learners: created to

develop non-formal adult education and useful for improving general competences) and AIKOS (an open information, consulting and orientation system that was created to inform Lithuanians about studying and learning opportunities). Moreover, 19 articles were published on how to raise qualification levels and increase competences, as well as how to promote migrant inclusion through adult learning.

The Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania financed and participated in the organisation of workshops for seniors from the Kaunas region to improve their ICT and writing skills.

On top of this, a large number of seminars were organised by different NGO's and non-formal adult education institutions, for instance on innovative methods to raise people's qualifications levels, promoting entrepreneurship, volunteering and improving social skills. Some of the events were online, so more people could participate in them.

Links to EU and international policy

Lithuania strives to include the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in national strategies and policies.

One of EAEA's members is implementing the two-year project “Study and volunteer. New skills for professional development and volunteering”, which aims to increase the social activity of older working-age people and strengthen their position in the labour market.

Another important topic for EAEA members in the country is the implementation and coordination of several Erasmus+ projects on migrant inclusion and the smooth cooperation between local communities and newcomers.

Many projects and activities in Lithuania support the implementation of the EU's Upskilling Pathways and encourage people to participate in lifelong learning while receiving information about the situation in

other countries or about what is going on in Lithuania. The participation in projects for adult learners gives them a chance to try something new and to improve different competences and raise their qualifications.

Moreover, the Europass platform organises different types of events in Lithuania to help people to fill in their Curriculum Vitae, to prepare them to enter the labour market or to give advice on how to fill in other relevant documents.

Challenges and recommendations

An EAEA member states that the biggest challenge for adult education in Lithuania at the moment is the lack of funding. In fact, adult education receives very little financial support by the government, so it is difficult for adult education institutions, especially those providing non-formal education and training, to implement professional and high quality services.

Besides, as with many other EU countries, Lithuania is facing the challenge of organising adult education

for migrants: many adult education and language learning institutions are working on the development of different language learning and country orientation programmes and are participating in EU projects that promote the social inclusion of migrants.

There is a demand by adult education organisations in the country to treat adult education in the same way as secondary and tertiary education and to allocate more funding to the sector.

Montenegro

The adult education sector in Montenegro has become more and more dynamic throughout the past few years, with an emphasis particularly on the promotion of this sector and on the implementation of international and European policy strategies.

Recent developments

Nowadays, the main focus of adult education in Montenegro is its promotion on both national and international level. Work has been done on the creation of documents which presented an analysis of the adult education system and provided specific recommendations for the improvement of this area, in compliance with European guidelines. Moreover, a particular emphasis was put on the improvement of competences of teachers active in elementary education of adults. They were provided support via the development of andragogic manuals for working with adult learners lacking elementary education. In addition to this, particular attention was dedicated to the cooperation with NGO sector with the aim of creating

a publication on NGOs engaged in adult education as an incentive for other NGOs to further engage in adult education. In 2017 and 2018, the approach to adult education changed significantly, since it was not seen as a fill-in for the formal education system anymore. Hence, the benefits of adult education and its impact are today more recognised in Montenegro. The Centre for Vocational Education and Training, an adult education provider and member of EAEA, will focus further on the development of procedures for trainers, andragogic training of the teaching staff, enhance the cooperation on regional and international level as well as the inter-sector cooperation and continue to promote the perks of adult education.

Links to EU and international policy

The Adult Education Strategy (2015-2025) is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals. Moreover, next year, in compliance with national laws and the strategy, a four-year adult education plan will be launched where particular attention will be granted to operationalisation of the Strategy goals and application of European measures in this area, on the national level. To promote the implementation of the SDGs, the Centre for Vocational Education and Training took part in the EPAL project “Annual manifestation -

Days of Adult Learning European Skills Week”.

Regarding European policies, the recommendations from the EU Upskilling Pathways will be taken into account during the creation of the Adult Education Plan and specific measures will be created to achieve particular goals of this Initiative. The implementation of the Upskilling Pathways is expected to raise awareness of policy makers on the importance of strengthening adult education providers, staff and adult learners.

Challenges and recommendations

EAEA member mentioned a few significant challenges that need to be tackled in the months and years to come such as adhering fully to European standards and implementing correctly laws and bylaws in Montenegro. There is also a greater need of inter-

sectorial cooperation according to our member. However, the main issue is the allocation of funds to the adult education sector. Therefore, the main recommendation would be to increase the funding of this sector so that the field could be developed further.

Norway

The government has recently signed on a national policy that determined the national strategy for skills policy for the following year. However, with the changes of government, a reform of this policy, previously executed in 2017 will be considered nowadays. Adult education providers are very sceptical towards the new changes to come and are trying to anticipate and plan the adjustments and the possible reduction of funding.

Recent developments

The National Strategy for Skills Policy entered into force in 2017. The government, social partners and voluntary sector including the EAEA member Norwegian Association for Adult Learning (NAAL) have been partners in this strategy. The aim of this policy is to ensure that individuals and businesses have the skills for developing a competitive business sector in Norway, an efficient and sound public sector, and an inclusive labour market. The government focuses entirely on the labour market, and all initiatives in adult education are in this area. Norway has a law on vocational education, an area that has been strengthened recently. The EAEA member stated that they managed to stop a proposal that would make it difficult for Study Associations to run these schools. Moreover, in their political platform, the new government has said that they will strengthen the voluntary, open and non-bureaucratic education provision in the voluntary sector, directed by the study

associations. This is one of nine instruments the new government will utilise to ensure lifelong learning for all. Folk high schools are also prioritised in the platform as an important part of the diversity of education opportunities. Despite of this, the government tried to reduce the financial support to the study associations in this year's budget (as in the previous year). However, the commitment of adult education organisations managed – again – to stop it, with a large mobilisation. NAAL, an EAEA member, is a democratic association whose purpose it is to give a stronger voice to members towards regional politicians. It works now more on political issues and advocacy than in the past. For this ongoing year, their main focus will be on the possible changes of the Law of Adult Learning that the government will present in the autumn, and any changes that this may bring for study associations.

Links to EU and international policy

Concerning the Sustainable Goal Development, the Norwegian government stated that the Agenda 2030 goals will be implemented as a part of a national strategy. Moreover, the EU Upskilling Pathways will

not be directly implemented in Norway; however, the national strategies of the government are very much focusing on the same issues as this key strategy. The study associations are already working on these issues.

Challenges and recommendations

The government is currently working on a new skills reform which will be implemented in 2018. The Government is on the verge of making major changes in the public sectors' regional structure and is now discussing what kind of national task should go to the new regions. One of the proposals is the reduction of funds to the study associations. If this goes through, the national study associations will struggle, unless they continue to receive earmarked national funds. The EAEA member's concerns are also that funds will no longer be available in the regions, and that there will be no more project funds for "folkbildning". Another proposal is to decentralise Skills Norway

which is the directorate of Adult Education. The Ministry of Education and Research has evaluated the study associations and how they use the funds from the government. The evaluation has also presented a proposal of changes, such as a change of the Law for Adult Learning and a change of the eligibility criteria for the funds. Moreover, the government aims to strengthen the focus on the labour market and to reduce the financial support of "folkbildning" activities. EAEA members in Norway also raise awareness about adult learning in the voluntary sector that motivates people to continue their learning career and includes them in society as well as the labour market.

Relevant data

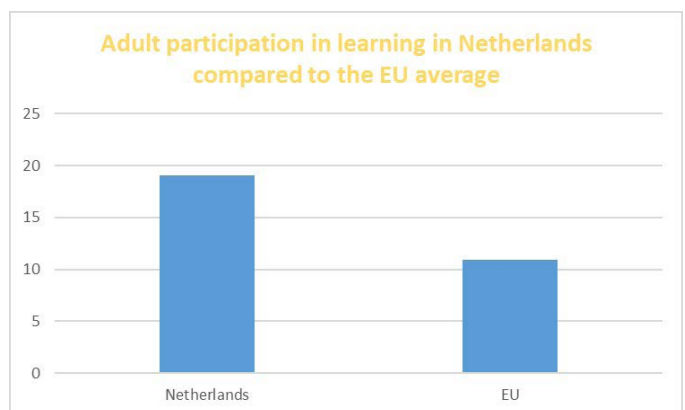
- Percentage of the population that participate in formal and/or non-formal education (PIAAC 2012): 64%
- Participation in non-formal education only (PIAAC 2012): 49%
- Women participation in formal and/or non-formal education (PIAAC 2012): 66%
- Percentage of unemployed adults in lifelong learning (CEDEFOP 2016): 19,3%
- Percentage of older adults in lifelong learning (CEDEFOP 2016): 13,3%

The Netherlands

In the Netherlands, the field of adult education has received very limited attention by political decision-makers. Despite this, there have been positive developments at the political level, in particular in connection to the Upskilling Pathways initiative. This strategy can give momentum to progress in the sectors of vocational training and non-formal adult learning.

Recent developments

One of the EAEA members in the Netherlands has recently published a document entitled “Adult learning requires attention” about a new structure for adult education. However, there were fewer responses from members of the parliament than expected. The ministerial task force on Lifelong Learning worked on the development of a new programme to support courses for people with a low literacy level called “Tel Mee met Taal”. Furthermore, the task force did an evaluation of the law for education and vocational training and drafted a proposal for Integration Programmes 2020. In any case adult participation in learning is above the European average and as regard basic digital skills Netherlands has the second highest share (79%) in EU.



Graph 3: Adult participation in learning in Netherlands compared to the EU average (2017)

Links to EU and international policy

As regards EU international policies, a national sustainability agreement between several partners is in development but it is not clear if the sustainable development goal 4 will be included.

To facilitate the implementation of Upskilling Pathways, national strategies in Netherlands promote a higher flexibility of vocational education, a stronger learning

culture, and more responsibility for social partners. The EAEA states that the impact of this EU strategy is a more focused approach to adult education and integration of people with low formal qualifications on the labour market. Upskilling Pathways is also contributing to an increased collaboration between the ministries of education and social affairs.

Challenges and recommendations

The main challenges in adult education in the Netherlands are related to the improvement of local education policy, the regional collaboration between education providers, the need for a stronger visibility of the impact of adult education and a follow-up of the National Skills Strategy in order to effectively apply

the OECD Skills Strategy Framework and build more effective national skills strategies. The EAEA member recommends that the decentralisation process should be better coordinated and that more attention should be focused on adult learning.

Poland

Adult education in Poland includes the Adult Education Forum, which is dedicated to people that work in this field. Moreover, Poland is currently working on the Sustainable Development Goals through a strategy that would empower adults with relevant skills, including vocational skills, entrepreneurship and skills related to employability.

Recent developments

In Poland, a series of events related to adult education took place in 2017. In November, the Foundation for the Development of the Education System and the National Office of EPALÉ organised the “II Adult Education Forum”, which brought together adult education professionals and persons interested in this issue. In February 2018, the “Nationwide Information Day” of the Erasmus+ Programme took place, again organised by the Foundation for the Development of the Education System. The main issues covered were non-vocational

adult education, challenges and specificities of the sector, Erasmus+ adult education, mobility of adult education staff, as well as good practice examples of projects. Unfortunately, the participation in adult learning is among the lowest in EU countries but the Ministry of Education initiated an ESF project “Chance – new opportunities for adults” in order to identify innovative ways to support innovative ways to support low-skilled adults.

Links to EU and international policy

Poland is currently working on an “Integrated Skills Strategy” (Zintegrowana Strategia Umiejętności) that will define priorities in the area of skills development in Poland, including solutions related to key challenges, as well as ways to implement them with the support of relevant stakeholders. ISS (ZSU) is a document integrating European and international strategic documents, including: The New Skills Agenda for Europe, adopted by the Commission on 10 June 2016 and EU documents setting directions for works on the creation of a European Area of Education until 2025. It also takes into account the results of the work of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, in particular the OECD Education 2030 programme. Furthermore, the “Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030” of the United Nations (UN) will help to increase the number of young people and adults

with relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, jobs and entrepreneurship by 2030.

One EAEA member in Poland is promoting the Sustainable Development Goals through an Erasmus+ K2 project that aims to develop and disseminate new methodologies for adult education, particularly for adults with low levels of formal qualification.

To implement the EU strategy on Upskilling Pathways, an EAEA member will start a project entitled “CHANCE – New opportunities for adults” in 2018. The main objective of the project is to develop and to test in practice innovative models of educational support for selected groups of adults with low basic skills, according to the 3 steps scheme of the Upskilling Pathways.

Challenges and recommendations

The main challenges are to increase the participation of adults in learning and improve achievements in the field of adult learning (these indicators in Poland are lower than the European average) and to develop forms of lifelong learning which include learning out of the classroom. An additional challenge is related to the plan to replace free education programmes that

are currently financed by EU funds through paid ones, which is a problem concerning especially the public and NGO sectors. One EAEA member in Poland asks for more flexibility in how public money can be used by adult education providers to allow for a stronger focus on quality of education provision rather than administration.

Portugal

Recently, Portugal has seen many changes in the adult education sector, and the country is working hard towards implementing European programmes such as the Upskilling Pathways and meeting the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals set by the United Nations. However, Portugal is still struggling to involve disadvantaged people in adult education trainings and programmes and to involve civil society to strengthen advocating and lobbying endeavours.

Recent developments

In 2017, the new “Programa Qualifica” was launched, and nowadays there are around 300 centres doing guidance, recognition and validation of prior learning in Portugal. As it is a Programme and not a long-term strategy, organisations and adult learners do not know when it will end.

In 2018, another national initiative called “A National Plan for Adult Literacy”, was launched with the support of the European Union. As Portugal was not part of the countries analysed in the PIAAC study of the OECD, there are no specific data available on adult education; however, when observing the population, a large proportion of the adult population appears to have very low levels of literacy. EAEA was appointed to provide technical support to the Portuguese Ministry of Education to develop the national literacy plan. The plan, which will be concluded by mid-2019, will include a component of research and a grassroots level approach.

Moreover, Portugal recently concluded a long process of diagnoses of skills and competences needed by the country, in particular by the adult population. An extensive report and a skills strategy framework

launched in May 2018 will support most of the programmes that are currently being developed.

The Portuguese Lifelong Learning Week 2017 ran from 20 to 24 November, in parallel to the Lifelong Learning Week 2017 at the European level as well as to the European Vocational Skills Week. It was organised by the “Right to Learn” Association (Associação Direito de Aprender) with the involvement of many private and public stakeholders. As it was organised for the second consecutive year, a continuity and embedding of this initiative at the national level seem possible.

The 2018 edition of the LLL Week will run from 22 to 26 October. The LLL Week is directed mainly to professionals who work in the area of adult education and training. In the future, more efforts will be made to involve people who usually do not have the opportunity to participate in adult learning and to highlight the main theme of 2018, cultural heritage. This theme was chosen because of the European Year of Cultural Heritage in 2018, but also because cultural heritage is used in numerous adult education projects as a powerful learning environment and backdrop for the development of various linguistic or social skills.

Links to EU and international policy

Portugal has been strongly supporting the efforts undertaken by international bodies to implement the Sustainable Development Goals by aligning national policies and instruments to this framework. The newly created contact network of the “Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa” (Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries) aims at promoting the sharing of experience and building of partnerships for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and, in doing so, achieving the SDGs.

According to the National report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was responsible for coordinating the national position for the drafting of the 2030 Agenda. However, its implementation at the national level brings new challenges which require some reshaping of institutional models to reflect and meet the inherent cross-sectorial coordination requirements. It should also be noted that the local authorities have played a significant role in

implementing the 2030 Agenda within their territory. They did it through a set of initiatives that, while respectful of their respective autonomies, undoubtedly contributed to the implementation at the national level, as a result of proximity and concrete action. The incorporation of the 2030 Agenda into national strategies, plans and policies is organized around the thematic areas identified as 5Ps: People, Prosperity, Planet, Peace, and Partnership.

The National Report mentions that Portugal embodies its strategic priorities for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the SDG 4, 5, 9, 10, 13 and 14. As set out in the National Reform Programme, Portugal attaches great importance to education, training and skills throughout life. In so doing, Portugal seeks to reverse historical lags and exclusions having a direct impact on people's well-being, on economic performance, on the fight against

poverty, the promotion of equality and social cohesion, citizenship and environment. This objective is, therefore, regarded as a priority area and cross-cutting issue for other Sustainable Development Goals, the SDG4 – Quality Education.

Regarding policy developments at the European level, the Portuguese Qualifica Programme is fully aligned with the Upskilling Pathways initiative of the European Union. The programme includes a set of initiatives and tools and follows most of the steps proposed by this initiative by providing tailored made learning offers, recognition of prior learning and even a passport for the registration of competences and training courses acquired. The EAEA members EPATV and APCEP have been working with it, and its impact is visible through the large number of people that have achieved level 4 of the European Qualifications Framework through VET courses and programmes for recognition of prior learning.

Challenges and recommendations

According to EAEA members in Portugal, outreach to people furthest away from learning has been one the biggest challenges for adult education in Portugal for many years. Another, more recent challenge for both policy makers and civil society will be the implementation of the National Plan for Adult Literacy. The future of the Qualifica Centres is still unknown, and, in addition to that, as most of the funding is coming from the European Social Fund, providers are struggling to secure the financial resources necessary for sustaining the work of the centres. Moreover, many

providers have financial issues due to late payments and reimbursements of costs.

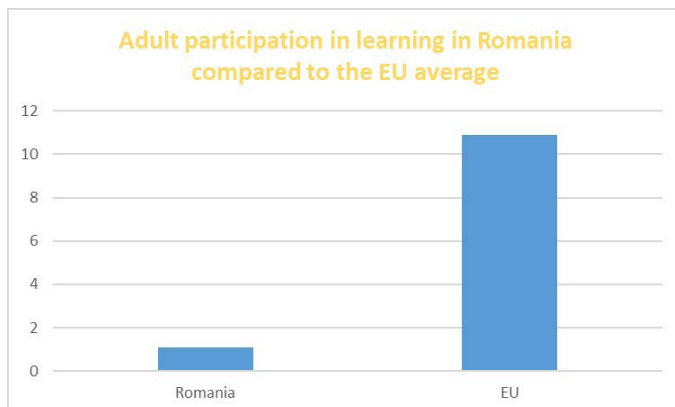
It will be essential for Portugal to strengthen its civil society movement for adult education in order to help the national umbrella organisation APCEP to improve its lobbying and advocacy work and to raise awareness about the benefits of adult education for society. The EAEA member also mentioned that it would be beneficial to develop long term strategies for adult education based on funding to grassroots initiatives and local development.

Romania

EU funding enables Romania to further develop the adult education sector by implementing new projects and focusing on concrete objectives. Conferences and workshops organised around different topics in the field of adult education help Romanian adult education organisations to establish strategies in relation to international and European policies.

Recent developments

In Romania, new initiatives in the field of adult education have been implemented recently. In 2017, a national report on the implementation of the Erasmus+ programme and its predecessors, in particular the Lifelong Learning Programme and Youth in Action, was drafted by the Institute of Education Sciences, a research institute appointed by the Ministry of National Education to coordinate this study. The methodology used consisted of collecting qualitative and quantitative data by using surveys for the programme beneficiaries and by conducting individual and group interviews with the beneficiaries and key stakeholders. However, in Romania participation in adult education in 2017 remained well below the EU average.



Graph 4: Adult participation in learning in Romania compared to the EU average (2017)

As in previous years, Romania organised the traditional Festival of Your Chances – Adult Learners’ Week in 2017. This learners’ festival forms part of a broader movement to make Europe a common area of learning as well as to promote intercultural dialogue and raise awareness of cultural diversity. Based on the idea of lifelong learning, the event encourages and celebrates learning in adulthood.

Moreover, the Romanian EAEA member Euro Adult Education Association notes that NGOs have developed and implemented a multitude of projects in Romania under the European Social Fund and the Erasmus+ programme. Recently, the Euro Adult Education Association decided that they will focus on Romanians living abroad, to give them the opportunity to apply for a grant to start up an enterprise in Romania. As a partner, this organisation implements the project Romanian Home Diaspora Start Up within the framework of the European Social Fund Programme, co-financed through the Operational Programme Human Capital. After a selection process, 26 people will receive a grant of 30 769 euros per business for the development and the sustainability of the enterprises. The aim is to develop entrepreneurial skills of 200 people in order to promote entrepreneurship and self-employment in the country. Along with establishing new companies, it is expected to create around 50 new jobs.

Links to EU and international policy

Romania has developed the current Voluntary National Review on the occasion of celebrating 100 years from the Great Unio (a national holiday which marks the unification of the country), providing information about the implementation process of Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals. The Review presents the progress accomplished so far and the aims for 2030 based on the analysis of SDGs indicators from multiple sectors. From here on it will represent a reference line for the further development of Romania, in the spirit of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Romania presented this review during a conference last July organised by the UN High Level Policy Forum on Sustainable Development at the United Nations in New York. In the next years, a number of Romanian

adult education associations plan to promote the SDGs in Romania through workshops in order to increase awareness about these issues, especially the goal on ensuring quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Regarding EU policies and strategies, the implementation of Upskilling Pathways is a top priority in Romania. For this reason, a mutual learning workshop was held in Bucharest in November 2017, bringing together seven countries to explore policy actions and practical levers that can support the implementation of the EU's Upskilling Pathways. A second workshop took place in Rome in April 2018 to discuss the early implementation of the Upskilling Pathways.

Challenges and recommendations

Our member noted that an important challenge for 2018 and 2019 is the implementation of the Romanian Lifelong Learning Strategy as well as the Sustainable Development Goals. Also, for the upcoming period, there are three immediate priorities in Romania: to strengthen the linkages between the three Upskilling Pathways steps by adjusting the legislation and changing methodology, to reinforce the coordination between stakeholders, including funding associations and finally, to gather data and evidence on the current

landscape as well as exploring the feasibility of participating in the next PIAAC survey.

The Euro Adult Education Association recommends a board for adult education in Romania to be formed by academics and practitioners in order to develop this sector further. There is also a need for the development of a data base with all courses/seminars on participation in lifelong learning which will be particularly useful for population living in rural areas. The cultural houses and libraries could collect that information.

The Russian Federation

Russia is undergoing some changes in the field of adult education, with an increasing focus on employability and transition of young people to the labour market.

Recent developments

One of the main recent developments is the introduction of mentoring in vocational education and training, with events held at different levels to share the experiences in mentoring for VET and workplace learning. The sector of non-formal youth education is actively developing, as reflected by a number of forums concerning different subject areas that are held in different regions of the Russian Federation. Furthermore, new initiatives aimed at organizing a retraining system for people of pre-

retirement age have been presented by the President of the Russian Federation.

Moreover, there have been changes in the structure of public administration of the education system. The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education have been established to replace the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation as a result of this reorganization.

Links to EU and international policy

The Strategy of Sustainable Development of the Russian Federation (Strategy 2020) was adopted in 2008. The report of the Government Analytical Centre (2016) analyses the current situation in the Russian Federation, including the area of education. It also forecasts changes in the socioeconomic sphere. It is expected to ensure by 2030 that all students will have acquired the knowledge and skills necessary to promote sustainable development (including through

education on sustainable development and lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, the citizenship of the world and the value of cultural diversity and the contribution of culture to sustainable development). The resulting strategy aims to equip citizens with skills for the 21st century, but targets mainly the youth. One EAEA member is working to implement SDGs by organising a set of cultural and educational forums.

Challenges and recommendations

One of EAEA members points out the existing lack of support to the general cultural sphere of adult education, non-formal education and the need to rebuild vocational education and training systems to

reform the pension scheme. The member recommends prioritizing culture in adult education in the work of the Ministry of Education.

Serbia

Serbia remains a country with one of the lowest participation rates in adult e learning in Europe. The lack of interest from the state, mirrored in the lack of funding, is the greatest challenge that the sector is facing right now.

Recent developments

Our members in Serbia state that the sector of adult education is stagnating. There have neither been significant changes nor innovation, and the participation of Serbians in adult learning remains among the lowest in Europe. Adult education organisations have seen their financial capacity reduced to zero and are therefore

not developing any projects. This is due to the fact that Serbia is no longer eligible for the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) and cannot participate in Erasmus+ partnerships. To fill the systemic gaps, one of our members in Serbia will try to focus this year on supporting professionalization in adult education.

Links to EU and international policy

As Serbia is not an EU member, the impact of EU policies is very limited. However, there is cooperation with some programmes such as the Erasmus+. As predicted, there are no activities on achieving Goal 4 of the SDGs and no provision to implement the Upskilling

Pathways agenda. Serbia is currently waiting for the launch of Erasmus+ strategic partnerships which would enable adult education organisations to plan new projects.

Challenges and recommendations

The biggest challenge that adult education faces in Serbia is the lack of interest shown by the state. The system of functional basic adult education, put in place in 2014, is officially not working anymore, although even when functioning, it only targeted early school leavers. Lack of funding is another challenge. In the previous years, only 0,2% of the education budget has

been allocated to adult education. EAEA members in Serbia see adult education as a sector that needs to be developed from scratch, adding that a wakeup call is necessary.

Another challenge linked to the previous one is the support of local learning centres in local communities.

Relevant data

- Share of adults in some type of formal or non - formal education or training amounted to 19.8% (2016, Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia).
- More women participated in education/ training (21.4%) than men (18%) (2016, Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia).

- Participation rate was the greatest in population aged 25-34, amounting to 29.2% (2016, Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia)

Slovakia

In Slovakia, adult education is characterised by new initiatives in support of lifelong learning. The aim is to create a framework for lifelong learning to set a direction that adult education providers can use as an operational base. Slovakia is working on three main issues: the development of a system of further education in the framework of lifelong learning, the integration and inclusion of marginalised Roma communities and learners from a socially disadvantaged background, and the interconnection of the education and training system with the needs of the labour market in order to enable people to work in the most developed sectors of their region (i.e. farming, viticulture, eco-tourism).

Recent developments

In Slovakia, a new strategy for lifelong learning has triggered recent developments in adult education; however, the Lifelong Learning Act from 2009 remains a key policy. The first round-table on the topic of “The Power and Joy of Learning” was held on 15 May 2018 in Bratislava. It was organised by AIVD in cooperation with the Department of Lifelong Learning of the Ministry of Education and the State Institute of Vocational Education. The Manifesto for Adult Learning for the 21st Century was presented at the event and all adult

learning stakeholders gathered agreed on the need to address educational terminology issues, missing data on adult learning, recognition of non-formal education and funding for further education within the framework of the new strategy on lifelong learning. The Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic confirmed the renewed support for adult education and presented the ministry’s award to successful initiatives in lifelong learning.

Links to EU and international policy

Initiatives to implement Upskilling Pathways include projects submitted to the European Social Fund Call with the aim of supporting lifelong learning. Furthermore, there is a national Action Plan for Lagging Regions in Slovakia 2015-2020 (the plan may be extended beyond this period), which aims to tackle unemployment. The Law on Support of Lagging Regions was adopted in 2015. As a result, regional councils cooperate with experts to prepare action plans for the development of their districts. An action plan selects priorities in the district, outlines specific goals and proposes measures to achieve them. Action plans also outline pilot projects that aim to have a long-term impact on the sustainable development of lagging regions. The projects seek to build on local

resources and to create employment in the sectors in which lagging regions have a comparative advantage. Such sectors include family farming and viticulture, combined with processing of agricultural products, eco-tourism and traditional crafts. Most projects target long-term unemployed individuals with little or no formal qualifications. Social enterprises supported by municipalities are created for this target audience in order to help individuals to develop skills and working methods and thus enabling them to move smoothly into the labour market. Action plans give particular attention to Roma communities, which are often socially and economically excluded due to various types of discrimination and / or low levels of education or work experience

Challenges and recommendations

In Slovakia, the main challenge is to continue the development of the new national Strategy on Lifelong Learning. At the current stage, stakeholders are invited for discussions. Previous strategies failed because of a lack of transparency and communication in relation with national projects. The Slovak government approved the National Programme for Development of Education and Training, which determines the direction of Slovak education for the next ten years. The document consists of twelve partial objectives and 106 measures.

The measures are elaborated in an implementation plan, which consists of five two-year follow-up action plans. The document puts special attention on three cross-cutting themes: the development of a system of further education in the framework of lifelong learning, the integration and inclusion of marginalised Roma communities and learners from a socially disadvantaged background, and the interconnection of the education and training system with the needs of the economy and the labour market.

Slovenia

Many policies were recently adopted by the Slovenian government, which now need to be implemented effectively so that the adult education sector can achieve higher participation rates, especially of people with low levels of formal education.

Recent developments

Recently, the national Education Act, which specified the structure and public funding of adult education, was amended. The new Adult Education Act, adopted in January 2018, defines the public financial support for activities such as guidance, counselling, validation of non-formal and informal learning as well as the provision of certified non-formal adult education programmes by providers belonging to the public network. Moreover, the adoption of the Slovenian Development Strategy 2030 propels lifelong learning

as one of the most important strategic directions. The Slovenian Institute for Adult Education, an EAEA member, focuses on improving the recognition and validation of skills and competences for the labour market through the development of the “Skills on-line” application. Also, the institute contributes to the further development of a national system for the recognition and validation of prior learning and puts an emphasis on reaching out to vulnerable target groups and to motivate them to participate in learning activities.

Links to EU and international policy

In December 2017, the Slovenian Development Strategy 2030 was adopted by the government. This policy addresses all main Sustainable Development Goals, including goal 4 on lifelong learning. Adult education organisation like the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education are currently waiting for a national action plan in order to be able to start developing

projects and plans to implement these goals. The Slovenian Institute for Adult Education is planning to work very closely with all other stakeholders involved to develop new non-formal learning programmes as well as a national validation and recognition system, and to implement outreach and learning activities for active citizenship.

Challenges and recommendations

One of the challenges in adult education in Slovenia is to create an action plan with defined roles, tasks and responsibilities for the implementation of the Slovenian Development Strategy 2020. Another challenge is to put into effect a well-functioning system of public

provision as defined through the new Organisation and Financing of Education Act.

What is more, a recurrent problem is to address the issue of low participation rates in adult education of citizens with low levels of formal education.

Relevant data

- Percentage of the population that participate in formal and/or non-formal education (Republic of Slovenia – Statistical Office 2016): 46,1%
- Women participation in formal and non-formal education (Republic of Slovenia – Statistical Office 2016) : 48,3%
- Percentage of unemployed adults in adult education

- (Republic of Slovenia – Statistical Office 2016): 23,5%
- Percentage of older adults – 55 to 64 year olds - in formal and non-formal education (Republic of Slovenia – Statistical Office 2016): 27,3%
- A lifelong learning participation rate of 11.6% (Eurostat 2016).

Spain (Catalonia)

In Catalonia, EAEA members perceive a need for a wider reflection on the concept of adult education and the recognition of its non-formal and informal aspects. European initiatives impact the work of adult education organisations, but there is no government guidance for their implementation.

Recent developments

The focus of the sector revolves around a discussion on the kind of adult education that is needed to face the challenges of the 21st century. In particular, activities in the field of adult literacy stress the role of immigrant women in the training of families in rural areas.

Regarding the operation of the Catalan Adult Education centres during the period of 2017/18, an EAEA member, ACEFIR, highlights the fact that they

have received a great number of new contacts from different Spanish regions and that teachers from all over Spain have expressed their interest in working together at a European and international level. ACEFIR points out that during the same period, there has been a wide dissemination of their role in the promotion of new ways of dealing with adult education.

Links to EU and international policy

Although there is no concrete evidence of any type of strategies or initiatives being developed at a national level for the implementation of goal 4 or any other sub goal of the SDGs targeting adult education, the EAEA member in Catalonia notes that activities related to the SDGs are organised within the framework of adult learning events, for instance during the Adult Learners' Day on the 21st of September and the Educational Cities Week in November 2018.

No guidelines have been provided yet for the implementation of Upskilling Pathways as Catalonia is waiting for the formation of a new government at the time of writing this report. However, adult education organisations are aware that this EU strategy will determine the future direction of adult education in the region by setting the guidelines for their actions and programmes.

Challenges and recommendations

ACEFIR, the EAEA member in Catalonia, emphasises that there needs to be a reflection at a national level about the concept of and philosophy behind non-formal adult education. Currently, only formal adult education is

recognised; however, adult education organisations are working towards a change of attitude at the political level and for an equal recognition of non-formal and informal adult learning.

Switzerland

Major progress has been made in Switzerland in this past year. New regulations that came into force in 2017 will allow for more funding to be given to continuing education and VET in the upcoming years. As a non-EU country, Switzerland is under no obligation to comply with European policies and strategies. However, the challenges faced by the country are similar to those of many EU countries, in particular regarding low participation rates in adult education of some target groups and lack of national policies. For this reason, Switzerland refers to EU policies and strategies in the development of its own action plans for tackling these issues.

Recent developments

At the beginning of 2017, the first national law on continuing education entered into force: The Federal Act on Continuing Education and Training defines goals, principles and responsibilities for the promotion of adult education in Switzerland. The Federal Act earmarks funding for two key areas, firstly, the promotion of adult basic skills, and secondly, the provision of services at a more systemic level, such as information, coordination, quality assurance and further development of the adult education sector. 6,4 million CHF have been made available on a national level per year. The five principles of the Federal Act on Continuing Education and Training are: responsibility of the individuals, employers and the public sector; quality assurance and development; validation of prior learning; improvement of equality of opportunity; and prevention of competitive distortions by public funding. Moreover, in addition to the funding through the Federal Act, in November 2017 the national government decided to allocate 13 million CHF to the promotion of basic skills at the workplace until 2020, i.e. for a 3-year period. Finally, a vision and basic principles

guide on Vocational Education and Training 2030 was adopted by the government, social partners and civil society representatives at the beginning of 2018. In a lifelong learning perspective, VET shall increasingly be promoted also as a qualification option for adults – currently, young people are the main beneficiaries and target group of vocational education and training.

EAEA's member SVEB, the Swiss Federation for Adult Learning, continues to focus on professionalization in the adult education sector by running a national 'train the trainers'-programme. The further development of the training modules, for example the creation of a new module on digitalisation, and quality assurance of the programme will be the main tasks. Furthermore, SVEB is strengthening its advocacy work by providing structural support for the promotion of basic skills in companies. SVEB acts as a coordinator and expert in this field, supporting further education providers and public bodies. Moreover, SVEB lobbies for quality assurance of publicly financed adult education offers.

Links to EU and international policy

Even though Switzerland is not part of the EU and is therefore not concerned by EU policies, adult education organisations such as SVEB try to implement EU objectives in their work. Furthermore, international policies and strategies provide guidelines for the development of action plans and programmes, including the national Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016-2019. The Swiss organisation Education21 works as a competence centre and advocacy body for education for sustainable development (ESD) in the formal education system. In non-formal education, it

is a declared goal by the Swiss government to foster networks and programmes of providers in this field. However, concrete measures have not been planned yet. Moreover, networking events have been organised for the whole education sector (formal and non-formal, with both children and adults as target groups). The EAEA member SVEB has made efforts to put non-formal adult education on the political agenda of the stakeholders who implement the SDGs in Switzerland. SVEB has participated in national events organised by the government as well as organised events themselves

for setting the agenda and providing information to adult education providers. SVEB is also cooperating with the “Education Coalition NGO” (Bildungscoalition NGO) in order to ensure advocacy work in educational issues.

As a non-EU country, there are no plans to implement

Upskilling Pathways in Switzerland. However, the strategy serves as a source of inspiration and support for SVEB. In its function as an advocacy organisation, SVEB uses existing strategies in the EU in order to point out which measures need to be taken in Switzerland in order to promote adults’ basic skills.

Challenges and recommendations

The main challenge remains the access to and the participation in lifelong learning and therefore equity. Participation heavily depends on qualification, employment status, age and social background. People with a tertiary degree participate twice as much (80%) in adult education as graduates of upper secondary education (40%) (Source: Bundesamt für Statistik, Mikrozensus Aus- und Weiterbildung, 2017). Public initiatives are necessary to tackle this challenge. Another challenge in the field of adult education provision is quality assurance of the education offers. Providers of further education have to keep up with the newest trends, such as digitalisation, and adapt their offers accordingly. In the field of basic skills promotion, which is regulated by the Federal Act on Continuing Education and Training, the challenge consists in a nationwide implementation of the act. The regional governments - the cantons - are challenged to develop specific programmes to promote basic skills of adults. Currently, the policies implemented in the cantons

vary vastly: Some cantons adopted comprehensive measures to promote adults’ basic skills in a lifelong perspective, while others have not foreseen any change in policy at all. In this regard, it is a challenge for the federal government to assume the role of a national coordinating and guiding body. Yet another challenge is generating data on adult education in Switzerland. In order to ensure a data-based policy, it is crucial to know more about key figures in adult education: who participates in it, who finances it and which offers exist already? General data is available, but more detailed information is missing.

Promoting participation in basic skills education is a central issue. Even though the political will to support these education offers has increased, reaching the target group remains a challenge. Information campaigns could help to show the benefit and need for basic skills education not only to the target group but also to employers and the wider public.

Relevant data

- Percentage of unemployed adults in lifelong learning (CEDEFOP 2016): 26.5%
- Percentage of older adults in lifelong learning (CEDEFOP 2016): 28,3%

- Percentage of the population that participated in lifelong learning in 2016: 63% (bfs, Formation continue 2015/2016)

Sweden

In Sweden, “Folkbildning” refers to non-formal adult education. The government promotes adult education and acknowledges the benefits that adult education can bring to the Swedish citizens, especially persons from disadvantaged groups such as migrants or people with low formal qualification. However, the upcoming elections in Sweden and the future political direction will determine how much attention will be given to adult education, and how many resources will be allocated to it in the following years.

Recent developments

The Swedish government continues to consider adult education as a very important field, and a relatively large amount of funding is invested into this field at the national level. During 2017, additional funding for 5000 folk high school participants was allocated, although the request from the national council was more modest as it asked for funding for only 2000 additional learners. This shows the strong commitment from the government. The government acknowledges particularly the successful work of folk high schools and study associations with migrants, individuals with special needs and people with low formal education. The number of migrants arriving in Sweden has dropped significantly since the end of 2016 and 2017, but the need for support and training of those who are already in the country remains very present. The focus of educational programmes is now less on immediate needs such as the introduction to culture and language but is shifting towards integrating migrants into society and the labour market.

Apart from being highlighted as a key measure for integration into the labour market, “folkbildning” in Sweden is increasingly recognised as the country’s largest platform for the promotion of amateur culture and art of all kinds. Folkbildning provides a diversified and nation-wide arena where culture can survive and develop outside of the main cultural institutions and contexts. Another development is that the Folk High Schools in Sweden are actively advocating for folkbildning to become an integral part of Swedish development aid again. According to the Swedish

International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), there is now what might be called a “window of opportunity” for education: adult education has been reinserted into the foreign ministry’s policy framework for development aid. The Swedish government has also launched a plan of action for the Agenda 2030 in Sweden, recognising folkbildning as one of the key players and platforms for implementing the agenda. The plan does not, however, earmark any new funds for folkbildning and the Agenda 2030.

The government, regardless of its political direction, seems unlikely to increase the general funding for adult education, but rather stick to earmarked funding. Through its member organisations, the National Council of Adult Education will try to broaden the scope of its work to strengthen the inclusion of people from socially disadvantaged areas and backgrounds such as migrants. With the support from the government, organisations are reaching out to those target groups. The work on rural development and regional strategies for employment is not a new focus but one that might grow as a focus area within the coming years. Sweden is rapidly urbanising, leading to a policy that aims to balance the urban-rural gap and create job opportunities in rural areas with a regional focus. The potential for folkbildning to contribute to this work, not least from a labour training and lifelong learning perspective, is far from being utilised. Much depends on the will and resources that are made available for building a true regional presence of folk high schools and study associations.

Links to EU and international policy

Since June 2018, Sweden has a national action plan for the Agenda 2030. In order to implement the Sustainable Development Goal 4 on providing quality education for all, sustainable development will be integrated into the national curriculum. The national school authority has also produced competence building modules for schools to raise awareness of the Agenda 2030. The action plan, however, does not propose any practical steps when it comes to the role of adult education or folkbildning for awareness raising, although there is a clear commitment to this educational field. The plan focuses mainly on the monitoring of and reporting on already existing initiatives. Folkbildning in Sweden will monitor the development closely and advocate

learning and capacity building as part of the process. The Folk High Schools are receiving training on the Agenda 2030, and there will be two national conferences, one on the Agenda 2030 and global challenges, and another on the impact of our production and consumption of food. Seminars will be held for adult educators on the global challenges and social inclusion as well as anti-racism. An international cooperation of Folk High Schools will be kicked-off with a conference in Tanzania, where adult education organisations from different sub-Saharan countries will gather. Moreover, in 2018, the “Global Day’s Work – Folk High Schools Contribute to Agenda 2030” will take place for the third time.

Challenges and recommendations

The political landscape and the outcomes of the national elections in September 2018 are a challenge for folkbildning. Education providers are aware that the current government is very committed to promoting adult education and folkbildning. A new government might mean significant changes, for instance reduced funding for participants. This is aggravated by the fact that conservative and anti-migrant movements and political parties are currently quite strong in Sweden. Another great challenge is the increasing need for

producing evidence of the impact and results of folkbildning. This concerns not only folkbildning as a promotor for democratic participation and inclusion of learners with disabilities or limited prior schooling. Non-formal adult education sector has to generate proof that it is making a change for society. To this end, learning providers are continuously trying to produce reports, evaluations and follow-up materials that highlight the impact of folkbildning.

Relevant data

- Percentage of the population that participate in formal and/or non-formal education (PIAAC 2012): 66%
- Participation in non-formal education only (PIAAC 2012): 53%
- Women participation in formal and/or non-formal education (PIAAC 2012): 68%
- Percentage of unemployed adults in lifelong learning (CEDEFOP 2016): 42.9%
- Percentage of older adults in lifelong learning (CEDEFOP 2016): 23%

Turkey

In Turkey, adult education providers continue to focus mainly on the inclusion of migrants in Turkish society. In line with Goal 3 of the Sustainable Development goals, another priority is to develop learning programmes for women in order to tackle issues such as unemployment of women and low quality of life. The country's candidate status in the European Union, in addition to international strategies and goals such as the SDGs, play a significant role for the development and implementation of education policies in Turkey.

Recent developments

A central target group for adult education providers are Syrian workers with a temporary protection status, with a view to support their integration in society and the social system, including education, healthcare, social and labour market services. The objectives of programmes focusing on women are to encourage lifelong learning and increase their employability through e-learning, aiming to help them raise their living standard, increase their skills and knowledge and strengthen their social status.

A literacy campaign was launched across Turkey by the First Lady of Turkey, Mrs. Emine Erdoğan, in early 2018 to promote literacy for all. All activities carried out in the campaign are coordinated by the General Directorate for Lifelong Learning and implemented by public education providers. Adult education staff also received trainings by the General Directorate for Lifelong Learning on financial literacy and knowledge about financial rights and obligations. National coordinators for the implementation of the European Agenda for Adult Learning in Turkey are making progress through organising and participating in workshops and events taking place in Turkey and abroad, as well as by preparing e-learning materials. Moreover, ministries, NGOs, universities and foundations are collaborating at the national level in order to promote access of

all adults to flexible, high-quality learning offers at any point in their lives. Furthermore, the partners in this national project are developing new approaches to adult education focusing on learning outcomes, awareness raising that learning is a lifelong endeavour, and developing effective lifelong guidance systems as well as systems for validating non-formal and informal learning. Finally, lifelong learning festivals continue to raise awareness of the importance of lifelong learning, with the aim to increase the participation rate in lifelong learning.

In early 2018, the EAEA member Uluslararası Hayat Boyu Öğrenme Derneği started to develop and implement a new work strategy in order to reach out to young adults from disadvantaged backgrounds and women. Non-formal learning programmes and second-chance education support these target groups in completing their compulsory education and developing their social and cultural skills. The organisation also created education programmes and projects to enable learners to gain economical skills related with their field of occupation. The empowerment of women is at the centre of all programmes and projects because it is perceived as a key component in the fight against poverty through adult education.

Links to EU and international policy

In Turkey, there are currently no specific strategies or initiatives to implement Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals to ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning. However, the Sustainable Development Goals are integrated into national plans, programmes and strategies. At the time of writing this report, Turkey is preparing a long-

term vision for its 11th National Development Plan, taking into account international and national trends in development and serving as the starting point for drafting the Plan itself. Turkey intends to make the SDGs one of the main pillars of the 11th Development Plan. However, more action needs to be taken for achieving Goal 3 of the SDGs: Promoting gender equality and

empower women. Even though, the participation of women in the labour force started to increase again after the global financial crisis hit Turkish economy in 2008, employment rates of women are still relatively low in Turkey due to the low labour force participation of women with low formal education in urban areas. To promote gender equality and empower women in Turkey, Turkey tries to align the objectives of the SDGs with national policies. To help achieve SDG 3, the UN provides support for the implementation of the two-year Action Plan on Women Employment that aims at creating decent jobs opportunities for women through the provision of gender-sensitive employment services

and institutional structures, in both urban and rural areas. A Gender Equality Commission was established at the national level to coordinate further steps for gender-mainstreaming activities.

Furthermore, the National Lifelong Learning Strategy was aligned to EU strategies with regard to national needs for developing the adult education sector. As a candidate country, Turkey needs to consider European policies when adopting national education strategies, for instance the Upskilling Pathways. A close cooperation with the European Union will offer new opportunities for projects and will promote new partnerships.

Challenges and recommendations

According to the Lifelong Learning Monitoring - an evaluation report that was prepared by the General Directorate for Lifelong Learning in 2017 - the main difficulties encountered in the adult education sector in Turkey are the lack of financial resources and the fact that lifelong learning promotion and information activities are not sufficient and successful. Another issue is the lack of qualified teaching staff in non-formal education institutions, alongside inadequate in-service training activities.

The EAEA member Uluslararası Hayat Boyu Öğrenme Derneği recommends that not only the public organisation takes part in providing adult education but also many more actors in education such as universities,

municipalities, NGOs and unions. Even though Turkey has an extensive education network, the quality and the nature of the educational services offered can be debated. The main actors of success and quality in education are teachers and managers. Efficiency is proportional to the competencies of these actors. However, evidence shows that adults have different learning characteristics, and well-qualified teachers and educators are one of the most important components of individuals' success. In order to improve the quality of adult education provision, learning providers should therefore put more emphasis on the recruitment of qualified staff as well as continuous in-service training.

Relevant data

- Adult participation in lifelong learning (EC 2016) in 2016: 5,8%
- Participation rate of adults in formal or non-formal education was 22.7% (Turkish statistical institute 2016)
- Participation in non-formal education only (Turkish statistical institute 2016): 16,8%

- Women participation in formal or non-formal education (Turkish statistical institute 2016): 18,9%
- Percentage of older adults over 55yo in formal or non-formal education (Turkish statistical institute 2016): 8%

The United Kingdom

Adult Learning in the UK now takes place within a devolved policy context. Decisions that affect the life chances of adult learners are made by the devolved administrations in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Recent developments

Adult Learning in England is primarily the responsibility of the Department for Education with the Department for Work and Pensions responsible for some employability programmes for welfare claimants. The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) is responsible for funding most adult learning outside Higher Education.

The devolution of adult education budgets (AEB) to local areas is one of five policy priorities in the ESFA Business Plan 2017-2018. It is only recently that steps have been taken to devolve adult learning policy and funding, with better links planned between policy silos.

Across the UK there have been significant cuts to the public funding adult learning provision, leading to calls for greater co-investment by employers and individuals. Employer investment in skills has long been an issue. Government and learning providers have struggled to convince employers to invest in education and training. The Government is therefore introducing an Apprenticeship Levy.

Adult learning policy in Scotland is led by the Scottish Government and administered and supported through Education Scotland's Community Learning and Development Team (CLD) Team. In 2014 Scotland published its Statement of Ambition for Adult Learning, and this year, the Strategic Forum for Adult Learning has been tasked in building a common understanding and coordinated approach to scope out the development of a strategy for adult learning in Scotland. It is currently still open for public consultation.

In Wales responsibility for adult learning policy, funding and commissioning is a function of the Welsh Government. The more specific policy context is being led by a new adult learning policy, which as well as a continued focus on ESOL (English as a Second Language) and Essential Skills (Basic Skills) now recognises the positive impact of learning on the health and well-being of older people and those furthest from the labour market. Together, these policies open up the prospect of better links between work, health and communities with the co-location of services to reduce barriers to participation for individuals.

Links to EU and international policy

The UK government is committed to the delivery of the SDGs and has identified that the most effective way to do this is by ensuring that the Goals are fully embedded in the planned activity of each Government department. It sees the departmental planning process as the most effective mechanism for coordinating implementation. It has produced a Cabinet Office report illustrating how this will be done. From the report it can be seen that there are specific initiatives to implement SDG4, but there are no specific stated initiatives targeting adult education.

Over the coming months, one EAEA member will be working with local partners to design and support

a range of outreach pilots. Each pilot will explore different approaches to engaging more adults in learning.

One of the national strategies to implement EU's Upskilling Pathways are the national Career Learning Pilots that are part of the national strategy to upskill the workforce as they are focused primarily on EQF Level 4 and above.

These are current pilots which are informing ongoing policy developments and are not due to report until 2019/20.

In particular L&W was appointed UK National Coordinator for the EAAL programme in 2012.

Upskilling Pathways forms the core of the 2017 – 2019 programme of development work. To this end they have designed a programme around an ‘Inclusive Learning Pathways’ approach. Its broad objectives are to achieve:

- Greater coherence in policy development & implementation in an increasingly devolved decision-making context;
- Improved adult learning provision through evidence-based approaches in three domains: entry pathways; progression pathways; engagement and support.

Challenges and recommendations

An EAEA member states that policy decisions are often made in isolation from each other, despite the fact that all parts of the UK face the same broad challenges: the continued squeeze on public finances, an older workforce and population, high levels of economic inactivity in some communities, demand from business for a workforce with higher level qualifications and how the learning system can provide the type of skills that will be needed in growth sectors such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) industries. Across the UK, 9 million adults have low literacy, numeracy or

both and approximately 12.6 million adults lack basic digital skills. The lack of these skills continues to limit the abilities of citizens to participate in society, support their families, communicate or retrieve information. Around 10m employees still do not access any training at work. Much of the funding for adult learning, particularly in the voluntary sector, is project based and short term. This work and many employability schemes are under-threat, given the continued uncertainty over the potential impact of Brexit, as they currently rely heavily on European funding.

Ukraine

Ukraine has seen a substantial growth of the adult education sector during the past months. For the government, adult education has become an important part of the political agenda. This is due to the significant commitment of educational providers.

Recent developments

Regarding recent developments, adult education providers underline the importance of the adoption of the Law on Higher Education. This law, for the first time in Ukraine's history, includes an article on adult education. In the autumn of 2017, a working group was created with the aim of working on the development of the Law on Adult Education. The working group includes

members of the Ukrainian Adult Education Association. Moreover, several members of the Ukrainian Adult Education Association have found mechanisms to cooperate with local self-government bodies and were commissioned to provide educational services for adults with financial support from local authorities.

Links to EU and international policy

The Government of Ukraine recently presented the National Report "The Objectives of Sustainable Development: Ukraine," which defines the basic indicators for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The report presents the results of the introduction of the 17 global SDGs into national policies while considering specific national developments. A strategy to promote quality education and equal access stresses educational vectors such as equity and engagement.

An EAEA member in Ukraine is currently working in two projects in cooperation with the German DVV. The first project, entitled "Regional Voices Civic Adult

Education for Community Empowerment in Ukraine and Belarus", has the goal to strengthen the processes of democratisation in Ukraine and Belarus through adult education programmes. The second project, "Legal support for the development of adult education in Ukraine", aims to develop legal support for adult education and lifelong learning in Ukraine, defining the objectives, principles and mechanisms of state support, the interaction between the main subjects of the educational process, their rights and responsibilities, ways of coordinating between different providers of educational services, as well as guidelines and schemes for fund-raising.

Challenges and recommendations

The current political architecture in Ukraine supports change and innovation in a variety of fields, including education. It is expected that the years 2018 and 2019 will become key years for the creation of a strong foundation for the promotion of social welfare, including health care, education, social services and other sectors. This is a pivotal point for providers of adult education to raise awareness about the value and benefits of adult education among the political élite as well as the public in order to develop civil society and improve the quality

of life, and to advocate the creation of a legal basis for the financial support of adult education providers for adults at local level. Another challenge in Ukraine is to study and analyse the educational needs of the adult population in the country in order to help providers of non-formal adult education to create innovative and relevant educational programmes. EAEA members in Ukraine recommend including lifelong learning and adult education in the development strategies at all levels: from the national to the regional and local level.

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EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR
THE EDUCATION OF 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 141 member organizations
in 45 countries and represents more than 60 million learners Europe-wide.

EAEA promotes adult learning and access to and participation
in non-formal adult education for all, particularly for groups currently under-represented.

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- Policy advocacy for lifelong learning at European level
- Development of practice through projects, publications and training
- Provision of information and services for our members
- International cooperation

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