



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR
THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS

Implementation of the Upskilling Pathways

EAEA Statement

December 2018

The European Council adopted the [Upskilling Pathways strategy](#) in December 2016. Two years later, the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) has collected feedback from its members on the state of the implementation and the impact of this strategy.

EAEA has very much welcomed Upskilling Pathways as it is an ambitious basic skills strategy that would enable many of the adults in Europe with low basic skills to have their skills assessed, receive tailored learning provision and have their learning outcomes validated. One year after the adoption of the Upskilling Pathways, the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#) presented as its first principle 'Education, Training and Lifelong Learning': *Everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and life-long learning in order to maintain and acquire skills that enable them to participate fully in society and manage successfully transitions in the labour market*¹.

The feedback of our members, based on the [Country Reports 2018](#)², present a very diverse picture of implementation. Some countries (e.g. Austria, Slovakia, Iceland) have consulted key stakeholders and civil society and linked the strategy with existing initiatives. Other countries do have basic skills strategies, but they are currently not linked with Upskilling Pathways (for example Croatia and Germany). In some countries, working groups (e.g. Finland) or projects (e.g. Portugal and Hungary) have been established in order to implement basic skills strategies. There are examples of countries where the strategies for Upskilling Pathways and the European Agenda for adult learning have been linked and support each other (see Liechtenstein, Ireland and the UK).

Some of EAEA's members also report that Upskilling Pathways has raised awareness for adult education (e.g. Lithuania) and has led to more and better cooperation between the ministries of education and labour (for example the Netherlands). There are also a number of Erasmus+ projects that are boosting the visibility, development and implementation of the strategy (e.g. in Poland and Portugal) as well as ESF projects (e.g. in Slovakia and Estonia). There have been a number of workshops (with the European Commission), for example in Bucharest, Rome and Bratislava, which have helped to make Upskilling Pathways a priority (for example in Romania). Further there are members outside the European Union, where the Upskilling Pathways are used as a strategic document and as advocacy tool (Switzerland, Armenia, Montenegro, etc).

The European Association for the Education of Adults is very pleased that Upskilling Pathways has already had an impact in quite a few member states, especially considering that it has only been adopted two years ago. Nevertheless, EAEA would like to highlight some key recommendations for the broader and better implementation of the Upskilling Pathways.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles_en

² https://eaea.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Country_Reports_2018_final.pdf



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Recommendations for the implementation of the Upskilling Pathways Strategy:

1. **Strengthen the governance of adult education and basic skills in the framework of lifelong learning.** A comprehensive lifelong learning strategy will help link learning pathways. Within the Upskilling Pathways strategy the responsibilities need to be clearly spelt out. Additionally benchmarking and target setting can help the monitoring of progress.
2. **Reinforce cooperation between ministries, sectors and institutions of different backgrounds.** A good strategy needs good cooperation between different sectors and institutions. Traditionally, many organisations, including ministries and funding sources, work in silos. Upskilling Pathways can be a real incentive to start building bridges.
3. **Cooperate with civil society and providers.** In order to implement the strategy effectively, providers and civil society organisations are key stakeholders. They will know about the needs on the ground but also the challenges and barriers. Including them from the early stages of implementation will ensure outreach, adequate provision and ownership.
4. **Analyse and remove barriers.** Barriers that hinder people from participating, especially from disadvantaged groups, need to be examined in depth. We urge member states to analyse their legal and financial frameworks in terms of promoting or hindering the participation of disadvantaged groups.
5. **Link adult education and basic skills to existing strategies.** In many countries, there are social inclusion strategies for disadvantaged groups, but they do not take adult education into account. By integrating adult education into existing initiatives and policies, these will be improved, and learning will become mainstreamed.
6. **Prioritise and invest in adult learning and basic skills.** Public investment in adult education and learning and basic skills is crucial for outreach, making the system work and enabling the participation of those who need it most.
7. **Fund and support learning in communities.** Communities are essential when wanting to support increased participation of potential learners who have had the least opportunities in the past. Adult learning providers, including the voluntary and community sectors, need more investment including support and funding. This will benefit both learners and communities – better skills, more participation, more active citizenship and more social cohesion are a win-win situation. This is especially true for remote and rural areas, where adult learning should be made possible.
8. **Strengthen non-formal structures.** Better infrastructure for non-formal adult education through legislation, institutional development and continuous financing is needed.

More information

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

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