

BASIC SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES - SELECTED EXAMPLES

UPSKILLING PATHWAYS

In 2015, there were 64 million people, more than a quarter of the EU population aged 25-64, who had left initial education and training with at most a lower secondary education qualification. Furthermore, one fifth of adult Europeans struggle with basic reading and writing, calculation and the use of digital tools in everyday life. Therefore, as part of the Skills Agenda for Europe, the European Council adopted the [Recommendation on Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults](#) in 2016. It aims at enhancing basic skills in the adult population in the EU, thus providing opportunities for adults and help them acquire a minimum level of literacy, numeracy and digital skills and/or to acquire a broader set of skills by progressing towards an upper secondary qualification or equivalent. The three principles underpinning the [Upskilling Pathways](#) initiative are: outreach, cooperation and guidance.

OUTREACH

ACTION PLAN FOR EDUCATION IN IRELAND

CUMASÚ - EMPOWERING THROUGH LEARNING

The Irish Department of Education and Skills (DES) released a new '[Action Plan for Education 2019](#)', supporting the EU Upskilling Pathways initiative. Among its strategic goals, the plan sets out to reach especially learners at risk of educational disadvantage and to build closer links between education and the wider community. Education and trainings services are considered instruments to "break the cycle of disadvantage", e.g. by exploring innovative approaches to improve the outcomes for learners that are at greatest risk of educational disadvantage.

COOPERATION

WORKING GROUP ON CONTINUOUS LEARNING IN FINLAND

JATKUVA OPPIMINEN

The Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture launched a working group on continuous learning in 2019, aiming to reform educational efforts to meet the challenges of the labour market. Moreover, the working group is concerned with questions of upskilling, competence assessment and flexible arrangements for creating individual learning paths. In a mid-term report published in April 2019, the group proposed a [national reform of continuous learning](#). The report suggests that a national strategy on continuous learning, extended until 2030, should be drawn up, which would offer reform implementation schemes and measures.

GUIDANCE

ADULT TRAINING IN FLANDERS, BELGIUM

LEERWINKEL & DE STAP

Adult training in Flanders is defined as a broader concept than adult education and provides, besides programmes of formal learning, all forms of non-formal and informal learning by adults. In each of the Flemish provinces, adults can receive advice and guidance on learning opportunities in a [Leerwinkel](#) ('learning shop'). Furthermore, in the province of East-Flanders, young people and adults in their search for education or training can receive guidance at [De Stap](#) - a partnership between the CLB centres in the city of Ghent.

UPSKILLING PATHWAYS - 3 STEPS

The Upskilling pathways initiative features three consecutive steps that are essential for quality learning opportunities for adults with low skills levels.

- **Step 1 Skills assessment:** Identification of existing skills and needs for upskilling. Basis for planning a tailored offer of learning.
- **Step 2 Tailor-made learning offer:** Offer of education and training meeting the previously identified needs. Aims to boost literacy, numeracy or digital skills or allow progress towards higher qualifications.
- **Step 3 Validation and recognition:** Opportunity to have the acquired skills validated and recognised.

SKILLS ASSESSMENT

INDIVIDUAL COMPETENCE ASSESSMENT IN DENMARK

INDIVIDUEL KOMPETENCE VURDERING

All adults in Denmark are eligible for an individual competence assessment. Besides, adults may obtain financial compensation from a job centre for the time spent in this process. Upon the completion of competence assessment, learners receive an individual plan for education and a competence document listing formal qualifications, the individual's prior experiences and learning equivalents, or a course certificate depending on the relevance and validity of his or her former experiences. Moreover, it is compulsory for learners to have prior learning and experiences assessed before enrolling in vocational education.

TAILOR-MADE OFFERS

INITIATIVE FOR ADULT EDUCATION IN AUSTRIA

INITIATIVE ERWACHSENENBILDUNG

The Austrian Adult Education Initiative was introduced in 2012 aimed at two areas: enabling adults who lack basic skills and those who never graduated from a lower secondary school to continue and finish their education, free of charge. The program area concerning basic skills addresses adults who didn't have the opportunity to gain skills like literacy and numeracy. The program's quality guidelines focus on the individualisation of the courses and the adaption to the needs of adults. As part of the initiative, a framework directive for the adult's training of basic skills has been developed.

VALIDATION

CERTIFICATE OF EXPERTISE & VALIDATION PORTFOLIO IN THE NETHERLANDS

ERVARINGSCERTIFICAAT & ERVARINGSPROFIEL

Dutch employers making redundancies can offer employees a procedure for a certificate of expertise or a validation portfolio. The scheme targets unemployed people and employed people at risk of losing their jobs. The cost of this procedure is subsidised by the Dutch employment agencies (Uitvoeringsinstituut Werknemersverzekeringen). Half of the costs are subsidised for companies with more than 25 employees, and all costs are subsidised in the case of companies with fewer than 25 employees.

B | L | U | E | S | S

BLUEPRINTS FOR BASIC SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN SLOVAKIA

BLUESS is financed by the EaSI programme – Support for the deployment of skills assessment in the implementation of “Upskilling Pathways”. The goal of the project is to support development and implementation of the national strategy in basic skills of adults in Slovakia.