

ADULT EDUCATION IN EUROPE 2019
A Civil Society View

Adult Education in Europe 2019 – A Civil Society View
European Association for the Education of Adults

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Dear reader,

We are proud to present to you the sixth edition of our country reports. Since 2014 we have been collecting outlooks from across our members in Europe on the adult education sector: recent developments, strengths, challenges and how policy in their country reflecting international policies and initiatives relating to adult learning at present.

It is important that we begin by making clear– this is a civil society perspective; the country reports are not a scientific analysis of data. The information we present is collected through surveys sent to all EAEA members which they use to express their views about the sector in their country. The views represented, therefore, may vary dependent on our member's focus group, geographical position, the level on which they operate, and the extent of consultation they conducted before they responded to the survey.

This report offers professionals in adult education across Europe an opportunity to express their perspectives, relay learner's views, and look to the future: providing recommendations, predicting future challenges, and expressing their plans for the upcoming year. It bridges the gap between citizens involved in adult education at a grassroots level, governing bodies, and institutions writing policy.

Many of our contributors noted this year that in the future they hoped their governing structures would put less of an emphasis on adult learning from employment, or vocational training as the most important forms of adult education, also giving recognition (and vitally, funding) to learning programmes for citizenship, personal development and well-being.

Another challenge facing many of the civil society representatives in Europe is encouraging participation from those without a strong background in education. Outreach is difficult, and breaking down the stigmas they may attach to lifelong learning is a complex process.

This will be the last paper edition of the country reports, as, from here on in, we are going digital. The 2020 edition, and each one following on from that will instead be added to our country reports database. There are a number of benefits to our new digital system, you will be able to effortlessly compare situations and initiatives from multiple different countries, instead of having to flip between pages of our physical copies, and you will be able to explore the changes in adult education over the last number of years, in one country, or many. The data will remain much the same: a civil society view, but now presented in a more innovative and accessible way.

Uwe Gartenschlaeger, EAEA President

Gina Ebner, EAEA Secretary General



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Summary of the situation of non-formal adult education in Europe

A European View

The following report is based on a survey sent to EAEA's members, asking them about the state of adult education in their country. The views expressed are thus dependent upon our members' contexts, outlooks and focus: many of our members are umbrella organisation for example, representing providers, others may engage in research or policy advocacy and some work on a local level as adult education providers. As such their survey responses can provide a very specific view, or experience, of adult education's status and role in their area or country.

Our members can use the survey as an opportunity to share their experience throughout their work in the field, as well as this they are able to consult providers and organisations within their networks to gather and reflect their views. Some country reports are based upon one member: this can mean that their report reflects the geographic reach of their work, dependent on the level on which they operate (as a national institution, NGO umbrella organisation, or as a regional or local provider for example), and the extent of consultation they conducted in order to formulate their response to the survey.

The impact of European and international adult education policies and recommendations

European Agenda

While only two of our participating members (Greece and Georgia¹) explicitly mentioned using the European Agenda for Adult Learning as a guideline for changes in the sector there is evidence of its influence in a number of countries. For example, a vast majority of our members noted the importance

of flexibility in adult education provision, and many noted examples of policy makers or governing bodies beginning to recognise this as well. Innovative approaches to provision and engagement were also noted by a number of respondents.

Sustainable Development Goals, United Nations

Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is occurring, albeit in varying degrees, across Europe. Our survey encouraged members to discuss their country's relationship with the goals. Despite some members relaying that their policy makers were designing strategies that responded to the goals, but that it was not directly mentioned, most responses noted that the SDGs were reflected

in their country. Some countries even went beyond goal 4 (providing inclusive and quality education for all). Our Croatian member, for example, is working to promote the SDGs on a wider scale. In Slovenia our members are working to implement goal 10 (reducing inequalities) through adult education for vulnerable groups. In Switzerland there is a Strategy in place directly relating to all 17 of the goals.

Upskilling Pathways

The Upskilling Pathways initiative had a mixed uptake: some of our members reported that it formed the basis of most of their country's policy at present, while others noted that it was not being explicitly implemented at all. A number of members did

mention the presence of the 'values' of the initiative being present in their local adult education sphere, through the work of civil society organisations or our members themselves.

Involvement of civil society

Our Norwegian and Irish members noted that civil society organisations (CSOs) in their respective countries were being provided with the opportunity to involve themselves in the designing of policy and strategies relating to adult education. This is excellent for CSOs in these contexts, however, other members called for greater civil society engagement,

recognising the extent to which these organisations can play a role in advocating for adult learners. In the Netherlands, Erasmus + funding has allowed civil society's capacity to increase. Our member also notes how collaboration between civil society organisations from different contexts can help further develop effective systems of support for vulnerable learners.

Validation

Especially when working with vulnerable adults, validation of learning was clearly a priority for many of our members. Vocational Education and Training (VET) was mentioned explicitly by a number of members who feel that without appropriate certification for VET learners moving back into

employment (or seeking better employment opportunities) is less likely. However, recognition for trainers in the sector (professionalization) was also recognised as a key issue in adult education at present.

Engaging new learners

It is recognised within the adult education sector that those who need it most, often have very limited access to learning. The European Commission has coined the term 'low-skilled trap': where those with low-skills or low levels of qualification are often in jobs where they are not provided with training. They are also less likely to seek out or participate in

learning opportunities outside the workplace due to negative experiences and stigma. Our members are developing a number of innovative approaches to dealing with the difficulties involved in encouraging worse-represented groups to participate in adult education. However, many of them still saw it as a major challenge facing the field.

¹Although the European Agenda is not official policy for countries outside the EU and EFTA, it does serve as an inspiration for many of the European Neighbourhood countries, such as Georgia.



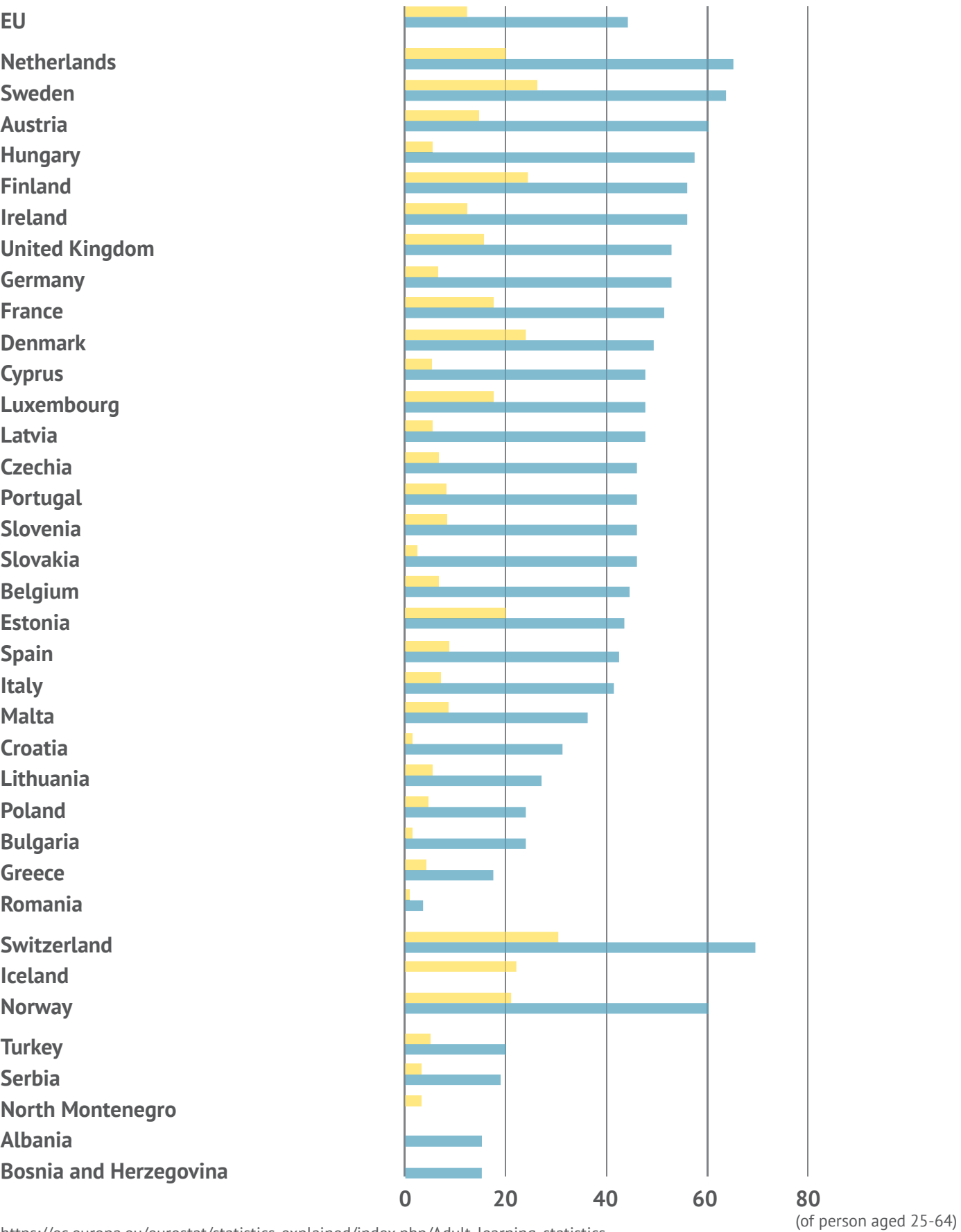
A holistic approach to adult education

EAEA notes that many of our members were concerned that adult education provision, policy and/or funding in their country was very much focused towards an employability approach to adult education. Aspects such as social interaction, inclusion, and active citizenship as benefits to

education in later life were rarely recognised (or rarely recognised enough) by governing bodies. Many of our members also recommended this change in the future, especially if we are to see more innovation in outreach and provision for adult learners in the years to come.

Participation rate in education and training

(last 4 weeks - 2018 - and last 12 months 2016)



https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Adult_learning_statistics

Austria

Recently, the Austrian government has introduced a number of new policies; their main objective is to boost digital competencies, particularly in enterprise and the adult education sector. In the past year, adult education organisations have set up several events to increase awareness of learning opportunities for adults. They are now working to create more education offers that focus on upskilling. Even though there is funding allocated to different areas of the educational system, some priorities have to be revised to ensure the effectiveness of educational strategies.

Recent developments

At the moment the educational sphere is focusing mostly on digitalisation. The Pact for Digital Competence, created using the Digital Competence Framework, is aiming to involve many different actors in developing a wider Austrian strategy on adult education. The pact considers structure implementation, qualifications and validation, certification of grades and competence levels, creating relationships between adult education institutions and private enterprise, and the ongoing updating and evaluating digital competences.

Opening dialogue on adult education in Austria, the first BarCamp for adult education took place at the Federal Institute in December 2018, where such questions as digitalisation and its effects on adult education structures, open educational resources (OER), and the promotion of opportunities for disadvantaged people were discussed.

Several initiatives were launched in the past year in the field of non-formal adult education. In March 2019, the Democracy MOOC, consisting of ten modules, was launched. It aims to increase the accessibility of available civic education for Austrian citizens. The course is run by EAEA member, the

Association of Austrian Adult Education Centres, in partnership with the Democracy Centre Vienna, using funds from several governmental bodies. Annual Conference 2019 of the Austrian Conference of Adult Education also considered education for democratic citizenship. In addition to this, a new curriculum was put together, concerning basic education for adults, which intends to create wider access to the labour market and German integration courses.

“There needs to be stronger empirical evidence for increasing adult education funding, based on better reporting systems of the non-formal education sector”

However, the past year has brought some new challenges to the Austrian adult education sector too. The Labour Market Service has changed its political priorities, greatly reducing the number of available training courses, instead focusing on counselling and coaching.

Due to this, a high number of trainers were dismissed. In terms of financing adult education, the amount of funding allocated by the Ministry of Education has not changed since 2012, which runs the risk of losses in the scale or quality of provision due to rising personnel costs. There needs to be stronger empirical evidence for increasing their funding, based on better reporting systems of the impact of the non-formal education sector.

Links to EU and international policy

The Sustainable Development Goals are at the core of many Austrian national political strategies concerning inclusive and quality education for all. Sustainability is the main theme within the nation-wide programme for adult education centres. While this seems positive for non-formal, or informal, education in Austria, the Austrian government is primarily focusing on formal education; and this issue is being addressed by EAEA members in the country through advocacy work.

At the moment, the Association of Austrian Adult Education Centres, an EAEA member, is working on the development of teaching and learning methods of the Democracy MOOC (described in the previous section). The online course is designed to enhance democratic citizenship, support people in transition

phases, and build their capacity to deal with climate change issues.

The Upskilling Pathways initiative is implemented in some areas, especially regarding basic education for adults, vocational training, and higher education. In addition, the EAEA members support the concept that adult learning should be part of the declaration of human rights.

The Austrian Agenda for Adult Learning emphasizes the importance of high quality of formal and non-formal education and training for adults, however, it does not explicitly mention the necessity of structures in adult education. It is believed that governance should be a focus of the future agenda and adult education organisations must have well-functioning structures.

Challenges and recommendations

Working on digitalisation and democratic education will continue to be the main challenge, and thus focus, for all stakeholders involved.

Meanwhile, EAEA members in Austria underline the necessity to ensure public support for adult education, and a need to strengthen the existing structures.

To achieve all of this, it's necessary to continue with the implementation and the validation strategy, in order to provide high-quality and professional services accessible for all. Meanwhile, the policies need to remain committed to education for democratic citizenship, social cohesion, and European consciousness.

Belgium - French speaking community

In the French-speaking part of Belgium the adult education sector is dedicating most of its efforts to several challenging areas, ranging from professional training to social inclusion issues. One of the themes on the agenda of local authorities and actors is literacy education for low-educated and illiterate adults.

Recent developments

The question of literacy is one of the most important issues for the French-speaking Belgian community.

In Belgium literacy for adults is fragmented and exists within the

frameworks of a number of policies (social integration, education, labour, culture, etc.), it is considered by many different governmental structures at many different several levels

(this is because Belgium has one state, and five federal governments, in addition to the European Commission) and is also coordinated by a steering committee. As a result, it is challenging to draw up a representative picture of the state of adult education and its new developments in Belgium in general.

On one hand, the fragmentation of the field brings positive effects: it is able to address the diversity

of needs that range from region to region, from organisation to organisation. It also brings together different sources of funding and ensures the sustainability of actions.

“Literacy education has been limited to increasing learners’ employability, leaving very little space for innovative pedagogy.”

On the other hand, however, the fragmentation creates an overweight administrative burden and prevents the creation of comprehensive

strategies.

Due to the fragmented structure of the Belgian administrative bodies, the policies in education also vary from region to region, which makes it difficult to construct an understanding of the sector as a whole. EAEA member, Lire et écrire, is focusing specifically on literacy issues in French-speaking Belgian communities.

There is a lack of data on literacy levels in Belgium which prevents reliable needs-assessments. EAEA member, Lire et écrire, is currently working on encouraging Belgian authorities and Eurostat to organise an appropriate survey in order to better implement adult education policies.

At the same time, sophisticated digital literacy training is needed. The digitalisation of public services is already considerable in many fields (health, school, banking, etc.). As a result, thousands of people are in danger of being left behind due to inadequate digital skills, a violation of their fundamental rights.

Links to EU and international policy

With their literacy initiatives and advocacy work for clearer and more efficient literacy policies,

Belgian EAEA member, Lire et écrire, supports the implementation of the Upskilling Pathways initiative.

Challenges and recommendations

In the field of literacy adult education, there are several challenges that need the attention of administrative bodies.

First of all, offers of learning opportunities have been shortened due to the bureaucratic burden linked to the ongoing assessment demands.

Secondly, literacy education has been limited to increasing learners’ employability, leaving very little space for innovative pedagogy, furthermore this programme is unlikely to ensure language proficiency (including mathematics) and basic digital skills.

In addition, current labour and social policies are struggling to support the most vulnerable groups.

Belarus

Adult education providers in Belarus noted that there were very few changes, positive or negative in the past year for the sector. However, they did provide an analysis of what the most important next steps were for addressing the gaps in the present system – from greater international communication, to improving accessibility and outreach for vulnerable groups.

Recent developments

In 2018/2019 there have been no major changes in the field of adult education in Belarus, according to our EAEA member. The main challenges are related to the accessibility of educational programmes for adults living in remote regions and rural areas, as well as for groups at risk of social exclusion. In this regard, the adult education system needs to develop institutional frameworks in each region, so that advanced the involvement of stakeholders can be advanced, primarily as local authorities. Higher support and recognition from the government would considerably

“Our EAEA member feels that adult education agendas should start to consider EU and non-EU countries collaborating.”

increase the amount of financial subsidies, and consequently the implementation of well-structured mechanisms. This, in turn stimulates the participation of social groups, vulnerable people, enhancing their awareness.

Our member in Belarus is currently focusing, and intends to continue to do so, on projects for young people and young adults, promoting critical thinking, responsible and sustainable attitudes

towards nature and the environment, historical and cultural heritage, and intercultural learning.

Links to EU and international policy

As Belarus is not an EU member they are not explicitly implementing EU policy into their adult education structures. However, our members do note the intention to begin to focus on climate change education for young people, which directly relates to

goal 13 of the Sustainable Development Goals. These are not initiatives or concrete plans yet, however, so we will see how Belarus approaches international education policy in the future.

Challenges and recommendations

Our EAEA member in Belarus hopes that their governing bodies will increase the responsibility of local authorities in adult education. While this will not necessarily increase funding there they hope that it will encourage local authorities to properly recognise the value of adult education: and as a result, will promote awareness of adult education.

Promotion and outreach on a regional level could be very valuable for the adult education system in Belarus. At present adult education providers in Belarus are struggling to reach those who need basic

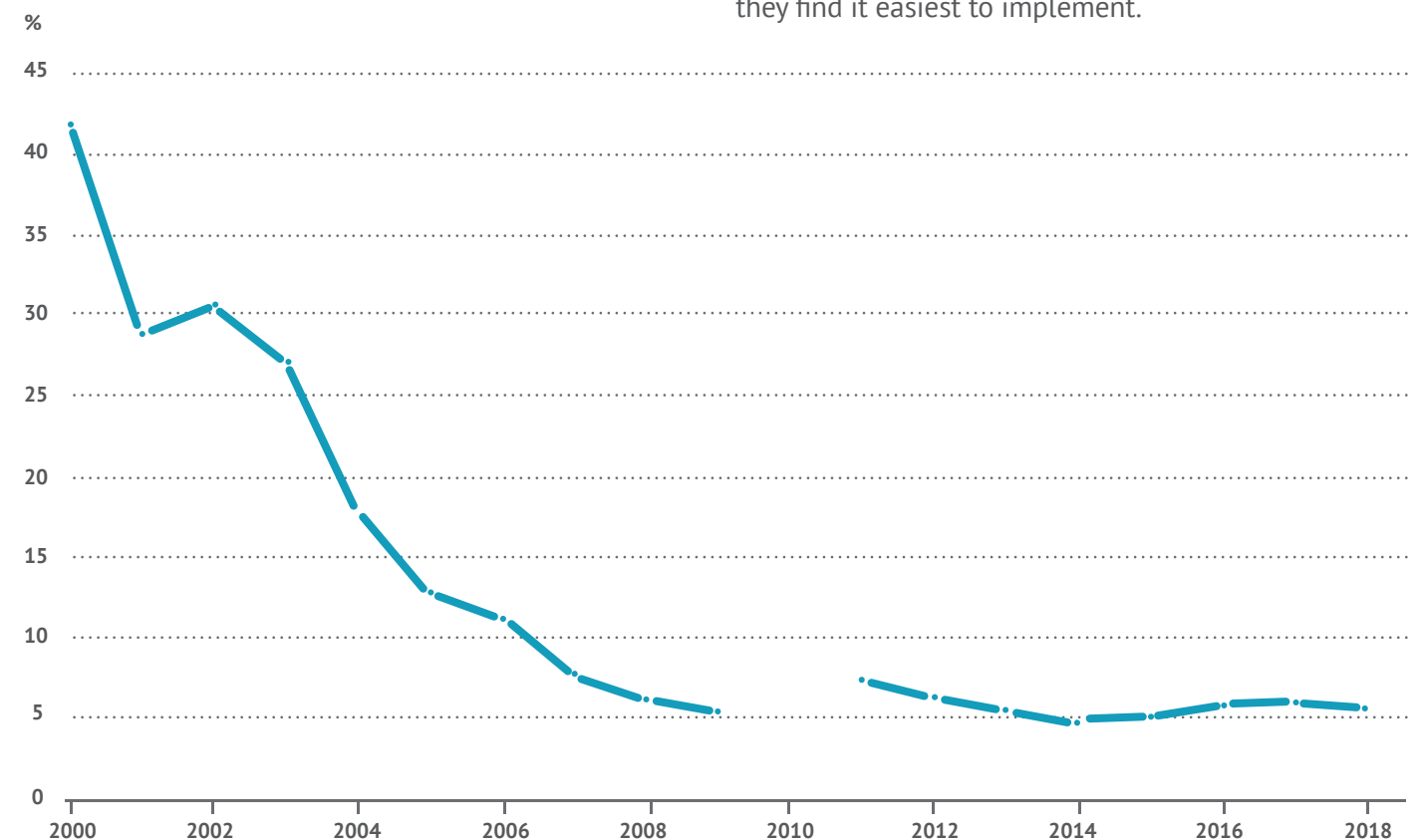
training the most, it is their hope that with regional responsibilities and control recruitment efforts for adult learners can be more focused and concerted.

Our member also notes that future adult education agendas should start to consider EU and non-EU countries collaborating, this is a priority because they imagine that it will improve communication and sharing of best practices.

Sharing experiences and recommendations from a wider cultural network could be especially valuable

for Belarus who is not presently a member state of the European Union, and thus, through increased communication, could begin to enlist practices that were developed by EU countries who are not presently engaging in discourse with Belarus directly. Finally,

due to the geographical location of Belarus may want to encourage Russian and EU collaboration. Belarus has a very strong political and economic relationship with Russia and so seeing communication between their closest neighbour and ally, as well as advice and experiences from their wider geographical and cultural community could provide them with practices they find it easiest to implement.



Growing poverty levels in Belarus – possibly a motivation for the increase in focus on AE for vulnerable groups
Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty lines (% of population) – Belarus

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.NAHC?locations=BY>

Bosnia and Herzegovina

In the past year, several regions of Bosnia and Herzegovina introduced new teaching strategies in adult education. However, the ultimate goal is to upgrade the adult education curricula training in the whole country, with a deeper focus on innovative methods, the needs of minorities, and improvement of social services. To achieve this stronger support from civil society is needed, as well as stable and sufficient funding.

Recent developments

Bosnia and Herzegovina is experiencing numerous positive changes in the field of adult education. Awareness of the importance of education for adults has been growing in the country in recent years, leading to new laws and regulations being adopted in different regions. Brčko district finally adopted a new law on adult education in October 2018. In other cantons, such as Sarajevo, Zeničko-Dobojski and Unsko-sanski, a new professional training curriculum was implemented, focusing on the principles of andragogy. The new curriculum is designed to

strengthen the capacity of adult educators to work in the field with up-to-date technologies and methods. Goražde canton has just started developing a new curriculum as well.

“Awareness of the importance of education for adults has been growing in Bosnia and Herzegovina in recent years.”

EAEA members in the country continue working with vulnerable adults and minorities, pushing for stronger education provision in the whole country, effective training

programmes for adult education professionals, as well as for the recognition of non-formal education by society as a whole.

Links to EU and international policy

Unfortunately, there have not been any nation-wide policies and strategies related to Sustainable Development Goals or other EU initiatives, such as Upskilling Pathways. Instead, the civil society representatives engage themselves in various

international and local projects funded through, for instance, Erasmus+, aiming to improve the quality of education, and opening up educational opportunities to those who need it most.

Challenges and recommendations

Raising awareness around adult education remains a challenge in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Such issues as promoting lifelong learning, identifying the locally-

relevant needs of adult education, and boosting adult educators' competences remain focused here.

Relevant data

Adult Education Principles and Standards and Strategic Platform for Adult Education in the Context of Lifelong Learning in BiH 2014-2020

were developed in the framework of the European Union project “Capacity Building for Human Resource Development in BiH (IPA 2009)”.

Bulgaria

Throughout the recent months, Bulgaria has increased its participation in international projects on adult education, much of which has been funded by the Erasmus+ programme. However, the national strategies on the quality of education need further development, as adult education structures are not supported, or not supported enough by the government, nor are they suitably widespread, as a result the learning adults cannot be met sufficiently by the present system. Adult education structures are not supported by the govt. or not enough support – so dependent on Erasmus funding for reforms, the learning needs of adults thus cannot be met sufficiently.

Recent developments

In the past year, a few initiatives in Bulgaria were organised, aiming to create strategies for the validation of skills obtained through non-formal education. In addition, the EAEA's members in the

country continue to work on strengthening the professional skills of adult educators, specifically focusing on their digital competences.

Links to EU and international policy

Implementation of goal 4 of the SDGs, although not being explicitly present in national regulations, is on the agenda of numerous different stakeholders affiliated with education in Bulgaria. Particularly, EAEA members in the country are working on Youth Education.

This year there has been an increase in Erasmus+ programme funds, which allowed the implementation of several adult education projects, giving our members more opportunities to work with adult educators on upgrading their competences.

“One of the main challenges of adult education in Bulgaria is to consolidate a national strategy on achievement of SDG 4.”

Challenges and recommendations

One of the main challenges of adult education in Bulgaria is to consolidate a national strategy on achievement of SDG 4. There is currently no clear and widely supported understanding of the strategy that

can be implemented. In addition, there is a need to improve career counselling services through non-governmental providers.

Relevant data

Public expenditures on education as a percentage of GDP: 4.1% in 2014 and 3.4% in 2017. In 2016, 49 % of school teachers were aged over 50 and 30 % were 55+. To make the profession more attractive, in May 2017

the government committed to doubling teacher salaries by 2021. Adult participation rate in education and training: 2.1% in 2014 and 2,5% in 2018¹.

¹Eurostat https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Adult_learning_statistics

Croatia

Croatia still faces the challenge of one of the lowest rates of participation in adult education. In order to deal with this, the government has focused its efforts into strengthening the provision of vocational and professional training for adults. At the same time, the country is working on a new agenda and strategies for adult education for the near future.

Recent developments

The Croatian Ministry of Education is currently continuing its work on drafting the new Adult Education Act. Croatian EAEA members are expecting the new act to increase regulation of non-formal adult education providers.

During the last year the Croatian government has started developing a new curriculum for adult education. The new curriculum focuses on basic

skills and their provision. The basic skills include literacy, numeracy, and digital capabilities and will be integrated into elementary education for adults.

The local actors have an important role in fostering adult education in the country, largely by engaging in projects funded by the European Commission, especially Erasmus+.

Links to EU and international policy

Recent policies on education are largely based on the Sustainable Development Goals and the Upskilling Pathways initiative. As was mentioned before, the government is focusing on strengthening the provision of basic skills. In addition to that the

Strategy on Education, Science, and Technology, adopted in 2014, sets several goals related to adult education:

Goal 1: Provide preconditions for increasing adult involvement into lifelong learning and education processes;

Goal 2: Improve and expand learning, education, training and refining skills;

Goal 3: Establish a quality assurance system in adult education;

Goal 4: Improve organisation, funding and the management processes of adult education.

“Following the adaptation of the new Adult Education Act, the education providers in Croatia may find complying with new regulations challenging.”

The EAEA member, Institute for Development of Lifelong Learning (PAR), is working on promoting SDG by organising events, promoting

lifelong learning, and promoting learning for entrepreneurship. Among the organization’s activities are: PAR International Leadership Conference in Opatija, Entrepreneurial Camp (for start-ups and young entrepreneurs) and “Women with no excuses” in Rijeka.

Challenges and recommendations

Following the adaptation of the new Adult Education Act, the education providers in Croatia may find complying with new regulations challenging. However, it is still not clear how the new Act will change the status quo for non-formal adult education.

The EAEA’s members in Croatia recommend that the state places a stronger focus on creating a culture of

lifelong learning amongst its citizens, and promoting continuing education to adults from all walks of life. At the moment, there are relatively few opportunities for adults with higher qualifications or currently in employment who want to participate in non-formal education. Therefore, there is a need to create more incentives for private companies and non-formal education providers to offer all individuals learning opportunities.

Relevant data

Adult participation in learning: 2014: 2.8% and 2.9% in 2018.

Denmark

At present Denmark is experiencing a lot of positive changes in the sector of adult education – this means that plans for the implementation of more projects and funding are being brought in by the new government. In order to raise awareness about adult education, more learning opportunities must be provided, and to do this the political agenda must continue to adopt solid schemes.

Recent developments

This year, a new government was elected in Denmark, and as a result the public is expecting new policies, including educational reforms. The actors and organisations in adult education have positive expectations as the new minister of Culture and Education has

expressed his support for non-formal learning, particularly regarding digital education and young adults' mental health. More specifically, the new minister has set up a plan to review the funding plans for so-called "free schools" in order to make them more "socially responsible".

The civic community is increasing its presence and working on advocating for adult education.

Both the study associations and EAEA member, the Danish Adult Education Association, have increased their campaigning activities in order to make adult learning more visible to both policy makers and the broader population. This has been done through

campaigns on social media and a public award ceremony.

The concept of life skills has also been on the agenda of the Danish Adult Education Association and its

member organisations. The Association and its members are working on providing wider learning opportunities for adults, as well as raising awareness about the purpose and value of non-formal adult learning, especially in terms of life skills.

"DAEA encourages the state authorities to adopt funding schemes and allocate at least 1/3 of the capital to adult education."

Links to EU and international policy

The implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is one of the objectives of EAEA member, Danish Adult Education Association (DAEA).

To support the goal 4 of the SDGs, DAEA will continue funding projects of its member organisations on quality education. In order to ensure quality education, DAEA is considering setting up a network of member organisations for them to discuss and

learn from one another.

Despite the fact that the Upskilling Pathways initiative is not being officially implemented in the country, some of its values are present in the work of our EAEA members. For instance, DAEA is going to focus on digital education, young people's mental health, and life skills, in addition to its work on SDGs and adequate funding initiatives.

Challenges and recommendations

As indicated by DAEA, the main challenge for adult education in Denmark is staying present and relevant to the political agenda. This is where the work and responsibilities will be divided between adult

education providers and larger associations. Being part of state policies is essential for the financing of adult education sector. DAEA encourages the state authorities to adopt funding schemes and allocate at least 1/3 of the capital to adult education.

Estonia

Adult education providers in Estonia continue to focus their efforts on making learning accessible and appealing to all adults, from all backgrounds. Current policies support the idea of increasing adult participation in education; however certain challenges still need to be addressed.

Recent developments

As the current Lifelong Learning strategy in Estonia is only active until 2020, there is a need for a new and relevant national strategy for the development of the education sector. The Ministry of Education & Research and its partners have started planning a long-term strategy under the name "Smart & Active Estonia 2035". Among others, the strategy will include guidelines for adult education, science, language, and youth for years 2021 - 2035. It is the beginning of a long process but discussion has

begun, and stakeholders in adult education have had done vital advocacy work to protect the interests of the sector.

"Estonia is developing strategies to encourage equal access to high-quality education for all different social groups, in order to foster the functionality of an information-society."

In addition, debates between local authorities and adult education stakeholders have started. The aim of the debates is to raise awareness of the minimal input local municipalities have in the development of

adult education, and to involve them in promoting adult education.

Links to EU and international policy

The Estonian state established its commitment to Goal 4 of the SDG through the Estonian National Strategy on Sustainable Development "Sustainable development 21".

The strategy encourages the development of educational system in Estonia to ensure equal access to high-quality education for all different social groups in order to foster the functionality of an information-society. The strategy

emphasizes Estonia's potential to develop a strong adult education structure, and in doing so points out the value of lifelong learning, soft skills and teacher capacity, and how important it is to improve the present system.

However, according to our members, Estonia must still work to raise the awareness of the benefits of life-long learning among its population.

Challenges and recommendations

According to our members, the biggest focus for the near future is achieving the desired results concerning adult education through discussions of the "Smart & Active Estonia 2035" strategy.

The main focus of EAEA's members in Estonia will be to increase participation in adult education among its residents and working to make it more accessible and inclusive. To deal with the issue of

attracting adults to education, one of our partners will concentrate on improving the Quality Assurance System in continuing education and in non-formal adult education network. The issue of young people dropping out of high-schools and universities remains very topical and various actions and regulations need to be adopted in order to reduce drop-out rates.

Finland

Finland is addressing new issues in the adult education sector, now aiming to create individual learning pathways and to tackle the challenge of changes to working life. To cope with this, several reforms plan to raise the funding capacity, and implement new strategies. Finland is still making efforts in carrying out the SDGs, especially goal number 4. Sustainable development, environmental-social education and transformative learning for liberal education will also be at the centre of educational policies and initiatives there.

Recent developments

In 2019 Finland experienced positive changes in the sphere of adult education which have raised hopes for the future of the field. To start with, following the parliamentary elections in April 2019, the new leftist-central-liberal government declared in June 2019 that there will be a “redeeming of honour of education” with an increase in funding. For two years before that, in 2016-2017, the public funds had been reduced by the previous government.

Meanwhile, the Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra has been working on developing recommendations for cross-sectional policies in lifelong learning. In 2018 and 2019 the fund published reports on future lifelong learning policy making and public-private finance guidelines.

The aim of this project is to speed up the transition to a lifelong learning policy in which competences and work are seen as the building blocks of well-being. In the publication “Towards lifelong learning – the shared mind-set, funding principles and challenges” representatives of 30 key organizations shared a common vision on future directions, and identified eight challenges that are currently impeding the required reforms.

Following the Sitra fund work, the Ministry of Education and Culture launched a working group

on continuous learning, with a mission to reform educational efforts to meet the challenges of the labour market. In particular, the working group is concerned with questions of upskilling, competence assessment and flexible arrangements for creating individual learning paths as a response to the big learning challenges and changes in working life.

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. The strategy should at least include the following objectives:

1. Explore the possibility of adopting skills-mapping for people of working age.
2. Modernise and bring together guidance, including digital services and individual study, and career guidance.
3. Increase the visibility of competences acquired in working life and elsewhere.
4. Create a proactive restructuring model.
5. Increase public awareness of the benefits and opportunities of continuous learning. Develop concepts for study opportunities that target different audiences.

Links to EU and international policy

Finland actively participates in the implementation of SDGs in its internal and external policies. Within the country, Finland is putting to use society’s commitment to sustainability to ensure the involvement of all stakeholders in the commitment to Agenda 2030.

EAEA’s member, the Finnish Adult Education Association (FAEA), is focusing on implementing goal 4 of the SDGs. In the autumn of 2019, the association considered themes from Agenda 4.7, with special focus on global citizenship education (GCE).

In collaboration with the Finnish development NGO, Fingo, the association is arranging a round-table discussion on GCE as a part of the UNESCO Terms of Reference Case Study: Adult Learning and Education

for Global Citizenship in Finland. The data from the round table will be collected in September 2019 and FAEA will host a seminar in November 2019 where the results will be presented and discussed together with Fingo experts. The topic of global citizenship education will also be at the focus of attention during the seminar with International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) and Fingo, which will be held during the Finnish EU-presidency period.

In 2019/2020 sustainable development, environmental-social education and transformative learning for liberal education will also be in the centre of educational policies and initiatives in Finland. In accordance to this, special attention will be paid to the development of professional qualifications of teaching staff and leaders.

Challenges and recommendations

The Sitra Fund identified some challenges that the Finnish lifelong learning policy may face in the near future.

One of the challenges is the changes to the job market and the current inability to predict the skills required by employers in the future.

The main requirement of new policies is identifying the relevant stakeholders who must attempt to guess how to deal with these upcoming changes. The sector must also track the allocation of funding to different players in the field of competence-building of adults and make sure the distribution is done in a fair way.

Moreover, the issue of increasing funding needs and necessity of finding new sources remains topical.

In general, adult education in Finland is facing such issues as the demographic changes related to the ageing society, low birth rates and labour shortages in some sectors. The goal of the Finnish government is to reach 75% employment rate and find effective tools and measures to face the challenges of continuous learning. Therefore, implementing Agenda 2030, not only in education but other areas as well, remains a goal for society as a whole

France

Vocational training has been a focus point for the French government for several years now. The state continues to develop the field of VET with the aim to widen employment opportunities for the public.

Recent developments

In the beginning of 2019, a new governmental unit, *France Compétences*, responsible for the regulation and financing of vocational training and apprenticeship was established. The unit is in charge of the distribution of funds to different actors in the field of vocational training and apprenticeship; regulation of the quality of educational activities in the field; establishing guidelines for VET providers; ensuring the validation of vocational education certifications, including updating the National Register of Professional Certifications (RNCP); and ensuring the proper implementation of the reform on vocational training. The establishment of *France Compétences* is expected to bring changes to the field of vocational training in the country, both strengthening quality

control, ensuring more efficient strategies, and putting pressure on VET providers to comply with new regulations.

“Ideological changes in France have been an important step in the process of validation of different forms of education and professional development.”

In addition to the changes in governmental structures, a more ideological shift took place in the last quarter of 2018. The definition of “training action” was broadened and modified. A bigger stress is now put on the importance

of non-formal and informal learning (self-directed training, seminars, social learning, learning in the workplace etc.) and distance learning. The shift means an important step in the process of validation of different forms of education and professional development.

Links to EU and international policy

France has been part of broader European policies for decades now. The French government joined several European initiatives, such as Europe 2020 and Education and Training 2020. Being part of the European regulations led France to improving its educational system and putting more emphasis on developing vocational training in the adult education sector.

French policies aim to address several of Sustainable Development Goals. In recent years there have been

a number of initiatives that target environmental challenges, including the national strategy on ecological transition towards a sustainable development 2015-2020 and a newly passed law, ‘the energy transition law’. As part of the initiatives, the importance of education and training on environmental awareness has been emphasized. To ensure the functionality and effectiveness of the national strategies and initiatives, each ministry developed and adopted an action plan for the years 2015-2020.

Challenges and recommendations

Due to the changes in the government, adult education providers and training centres will have to adapt to the new regulations. The new VET standards pose a bigger threat to smaller organisations whose audience and funding are already limited.

The agenda of non-formal adult education in France is to address various forms of inequalities in society,

including gender inequalities, digital divide, issues of inclusion, etc. At the same time, training of adult education professionals is important to provide quality education. Our members in France will be working on addressing the challenges identified above.

Georgia

The development of the education sector is an interesting issue in the light of shifting social and economic tendencies in Georgia, and lifelong learning is considered to play a crucial role in how the country is going to progress. Adult education has a part to play in overcoming social problems there. Currently, adult education policies aim to reinforce the professional growth of individuals, along with building incentives for companies to offer more, or improved educational opportunities. An increase in funding would undoubtedly improve the development of non-formal and informal adult education.

Recent developments

Development of a system of adult education as an integral part of lifelong learning has been identified as one of the key priorities of Georgia's education policy.

Continuous education for adults has been discussed in the context of social and economic issues including unemployment, economic challenges, ageing population, etc. Adult education is mostly associated with

vocational education and professional training. Since 2018/2019 Georgia has been focusing its efforts on three main issues:

1) The establishment of a legal framework for formal professional training and retraining system for adults. Introduced authorization standards and procedures aiming to extend participation from formal/non-formal education providers and the private sector in continuing VET provision for adults (including short courses).

2) The establishment of Adult Education Division within the Vocational Education and Training

Development Department of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport (MESCS) in 2018.

“The biggest challenges faced by the adult education sector in Georgia at the moment is the lack of awareness amongst the general public and administrative bodies on the importance of continuing formal and non-formal education as an adult.”

3) Launching a financial mechanism for the provision of adult education programmes by the MESCS in 2019.

Under the umbrella of the “Professional training and retraining subprogram”, the MESCS provides funds educational institutions

and private sector organisations to implement formal professional training/retraining programmes for adults. New policies aim at reducing the skills deficit in the workplace, by investing in professional, technical and employable skills, and by initiating short-term upskilling programmes. It is regulated through mechanisms that analyse the needs of the private sector and by giving companies the opportunity to implement formal adult education programmes funded by the government. Finally, the learning outcomes are certified by a recognized diploma.

Links to EU and international policy

The general line of education development in Georgia is in parallel with the goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals. The regulations are stated in Georgia 2020 strategy and Unified Strategy on Education and Science 2017-2021. The emphasis is on accessible, high quality education and training, meaning varied and updated approaches to current professional trends in vocational training for adults. The strategies state the importance of the involvement of a range of different stakeholders in the process of widening the scope of education, science, and innovation activities.

To continue work on developmental strategy, IDFI (The Institute for the Development of Freedom of Information), with the support of UNDP and the Government of Sweden, started a new project titled “Facilitate the Landing of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the National Level”.

The project's objective is to strengthen data collection and coordination, and the capabilities of leading national SDG mechanisms, along with the capacity development of civil servants to effectively monitor SDG implementation and apply newly-acquired skills in the development of the first progress report on SDGs implementation in Georgia.

In addition, the work of local adult education providers is inspired by and aligned with the European Agenda for Adult Learning. Mostly, the organizations are focusing on training of their staff in order to support the quality of education and their institutional development. In that regard, EAEA member, Georgian Adult Education Network (GAEN), is working on upskilling the staff of its member centres, systematizing experiences of adult education practitioners and making information sharing more sustainable, developing professional standards.

Challenges and recommendations

The biggest challenges faced by the adult education sector in Georgia at the moment is the lack of awareness amongst the general public and administrative bodies on the importance of continuing formal and non-formal education as an adult.

The EAEA member in Georgia, GAEN, identifies the need to develop national regulations and strategies to make non-formal adult education a stronger and more present part of the educational system as a whole. The organization is working on promoting adult education on national level (ministries and

policy makers), regional (local and international organisations and donors) and local level (supporting information sharing, awareness raising of community members). At the same time, the private sector could also have a bigger role in adult education, in which case there would need to be a consistency between labour market demands and educational offers.

And last, but not least, a sophisticated assessment and evaluation system is needed in order to strengthen the positions of adult education. GAEN is tackling the issue at the moment by supporting the process of recognition of non-formal adult education courses offered by the association's members.

Germany

The current German government is addressing several topics related to adult education, including family issues, vocational training, strategies for continuing education, and digital skills. Even though the coalition agreement has not yet been passed, important tax reforms are expected which might affect the adult education sector. Overall, German EAEA members are working on tackling educational priorities, such as social cohesion, sustainability, and digitalisation.

Recent developments

At the moment, the state is in the process of developing a new coalition agreement. The new agreement is expected to extend the National Decade for Literacy and put a stronger focus on family and workplace-centred basic skills. The government has also initiated the “National Strategy for Continuing Education”, which focuses largely on digital transformation and workplace learning.

An investigation commission (Enquete-Kommission) has been set up in the parliament to approach the “Strengthening of

vocational training to secure a qualified workforce in the future”. The coalition agreement is also expected to support the establishment of a new

“Economic support for projects and initiatives in adult education is still well guaranteed, which allows both state and non-governmental organizations to concentrate on their future priorities.”

“National Education Council”, which would increase awareness of educational barriers at a national level, bringing representatives of different regions together. It is supposed to transform the existing system of land-level educational regulations, although the process

of deciding its structure and functionality could be lengthy, not to mention challenging.

Links to EU and international policy

In Germany the economic support for projects and initiatives in adult education is still well guaranteed, which allows both state and non-governmental organizations to concentrate on their future priorities.

Germany’s focus is now education for sustainable development, digitalisation, and social cohesion in both Germany and Europe. Even though the “Upskilling Pathways” initiative is not evident in national or local strategies, basic and civic skills are high up on the agenda of local organizations. For instance, EAEA member, German Adult Education Association (DVV), is encouraging its members to work with basic skills and literacy projects. The funding for “Global Learning” project is allocated to DVV’s members, community-based adult centres, to work on high-quality education provision and supply accessible educational offers for learners.

Furthermore, DVV is a member of the National Platform on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), hosted by the Ministry of Education. Within the National Action Plan, DVV made a commitment to support German Adult Education Centres (VHS) in implementing ESD in their organisations. The association is currently working on promoting the adaptation of the “whole institution approach” for VHS in implementing ESD. In addition to that, DVV’s biennial national conference in 2020 on active citizenship education will focus on ESD.

The Sustainable Development Goals are also tackled through the prioritisation of digitalisation in Germany. DVV along with its members has an agenda to upgrade institutional digital skills, as well as offer digital solutions to adult learners.

Challenges and recommendations

There could be significant consequences for adult education providers as a result of the implementation of a tax reform, which could cause an increase in the cost of educational offers for participants by almost 20%, as some adult education offers will no longer be VAT-exempt.

Promoting non-formal adult education, pushing education as a means for improvement of digitalisation and social issues will remain challenging as well.

Greece

The adult education sector has been allotted new funding by the new government, and thanks to Erasmus+ projects, Greece's organizations are addressing several adult learning strategies to enhance the level of awareness of the citizens. Moreover, the purpose of implementing "Learning for Life Centres" would increase the opportunities available for, and the participation from a range of different social groups.

Recent developments

The past couple of years have been rather challenging for the Greek educational sector due to lack of well-organized state strategies. For more than two years there was no appointed Secretary General for Lifelong Learning.

Furthermore, in the past year the situation slightly deteriorated as a result of the change in the government: the newly elected conservative government decided to rename the Secretariat for Lifelong Learning to General Secretariat for Vocational Training and Lifelong Learning. The seemingly small change could make

general adult education less of a priority, shifting focus to vocational training, but the results are yet to have been observed.

"DAFNI KEK's Learning for Life initiative aims to encourage vulnerable social groups, such as the Roma and migrant population, to participate in learning."

Even though there have not been any major government initiatives in the past year, our Greek EAEA members anticipate some positive changes: in the near future it is expected that the Municipal Lifelong Learning Centres will be

re-opened. Another achievement is the launch of the Greek EPALE platform in March 2019. The platform is expected to support professional development of adult educators.

Links to EU and international policy

The Greek government made a commitment to the implementation of the goal 4 of the SDGs by setting the "promotion of high quality, inclusive education" as a priority in the educational field. Therefore, the EAEA members in the country are working on creating affordable and accessible learning opportunities for a range of different groups of adults, especially concerning vital life skills, such as critical and creative thinking.

The state agenda and local educational organisations focus on work with migrants and people outside of education, training and employment (NEETs). A lot of initiatives in the field of education are supported by the Erasmus+ programme, which gives organisations a source of funding autonomy, but also makes projects aligned with the European Agenda for Adult Learning. In particular, EAEA member, Vocational Training Centre DAFNI KEK in collaboration with an NGO Cyclis is

working in promoting Education for All. Their work focuses on special needs education within the sphere of adult learning. Another initiative, proposed by DAFNI KEK, is Learning for Life, its goal is to increase motivation and encourage vulnerable social groups, such as the Roma and migrant population, to participate in learning.

The initiative offers 'One Stop Shops' with educational opportunities designed to reach the underrepresented groups of adult learners. Every adult educator can participate and everyone is invited to take part as facilitator of the initiative through basic volunteering. Another topic on the state agenda is the validation of non-formal learning and quality education in VET. EAEA members in the country are also working on promoting ICT-based learning and strengthening the capacities of adult educators.

Challenges and recommendations

As identified by EAEA members in Greece, promotion of lifelong learning needs to be in the centre of attention of the government and adult education providers. In that regard, several areas need to be considered:

- Inclusion of socially disadvantaged people into learning;
- Support Community Learning Centres and encourage locals to play a role in developing them;
- Needs assessments to help understand the challenges that adults face when it comes to education

Iceland

Iceland centres its priorities in adult education around a range of social changes and societal issues the country is facing at the moment.

Because of this, learning providers try to offer opportunities that would allow learners to adapt to current trends, such as digitalisation and new working requirements.

Recent developments

During this last year, Iceland has seen small changes in the adult education sector. More emphasis is now placed on education and training for the tourist industry and instruction on intercultural awareness.

For the future, state and non-governmental institutions have suggested that the sector should focus on such challenges as the issue of the fourth

industrial revolution, workplaces for adult education, intercultural dialogue, promotion of the importance of active citizenship, all of which are, in part, linked to the environment, sustainability, and global heating.

“Global media, public relations, and political awareness have presented new challenges for Iceland.”

In addition to this, the topics of global media, public relations, and political awareness have presented new challenges for Iceland.

On an organisational level, EAEA member, Association for Adult Learning in Iceland (LEIKN), has witnessed a recent increase in their capacity. This has occurred as a result of more focused

work and the increased duties of the board team. As a result, there has been more cooperation with EPALE, Erasmus+ and the Ministries of Welfare and Education.

Links to EU and international policy

Iceland is fully committed to implementing the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development Goals, both nationally and internationally. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been integrated into state policies on social, economic and environmental affairs, with a particular emphasis on building a peaceful and fair society, free from aggression and violence. The main goals in order to implement SDG 4 are:

- The promotion of literacy and preservation of the Icelandic language;
- To increase the number of teachers;
- To enhance the number of students in technical and

vocational studies;

- Actions to reduce drop-out rates in upper secondary schools;
- The education of pupils with a foreign mother tongue;

EAEA member, the Association for Adult Learning in Iceland (LEIKN) plans to give trainers and teachers the opportunity to participate in study events abroad in the field of adult education. In addition, the organisation has plans to promote adult education and to introduce the Manifesto on Adult Learning to the public sector.

Challenges and recommendations

LEIKN recommends higher investment of capital in adult education in order to strengthen its voice. Funding for LEIKN could also improve outreach and

awareness from the public on adult education, how to access learning opportunities and their benefits.

Ireland

While the macro policy framework for adult education in Ireland remains focused on education for employability, there have been important developments that may impact future policy and progress development in late 2019/2020.

Recent developments

In the past year, two significant state strategies were released and a third has begun development.

First of all, the Department of Education and Skills (DES) released a new ‘Action Plan for Education 2019’ early on in the year. This followed the appointment

of a new Minister of Education, Joe McHugh, in October 2018. The new plan restated its commitment to existing strategies and regulations, supporting the EU Upskilling Pathways initiative, and to a programme called ‘Skills to advance’, which was launched in April 2019 and is meant to support retraining and upskilling of employees in low-skilled or economically vulnerable spheres of work.

Secondly, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), an independent State agency responsible for promoting quality and accountability in education and training services, launched their new strategy in 2019. The new strategy continues the traditions of QQI and highlights that in 2019-2021 the organisation will be working on

1) Authorising the use of the International Education Mark by providers of higher education and English language education to international learners. As part of the new strategy, QQI created a new learner-protection fund. This new fund requires contributions from non-state education providers into a fund which can be used to compensate learners in the event that a provider stops operation and a learner is left unable to complete their education. This fund was created in response to English language schools who charge large fees and have often stopped operations, leaving students with large costs and no certification for their

efforts. However, AONTAS, EAEA member in Ireland, is concerned about the impact this new fund could have on non-formal/not-for-profit education providers who do not charge for their courses but may otherwise be required to pay into the fund. The Department of Education and Skills has made a public commitment

“A recent report in Ireland recommends focusing not just on education for employment, but more broadly on education for social well-being, health, and issues like addiction recovery and reduction of homelessness.”

that organisations like this will not have to pay into the fund however until implementation begins the true impact will be unknown.

2) Developing a new regulation that would allow bodies other than QQI and state funded higher education institutions to access

the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). The reasoning behind this initiative is rooted in the existing gap between the qualifications that people obtain in most cases from educational organisations, such as City and Guilds (an organisation that offers professional and personal development training) and the recognition of the qualifications by the NFQ.

This year the government also started the development of the New Further Education and Training Strategy 2020-2024. In Ireland, state-funded and organised adult education is principally separated into two categories, Further Education and Training (FET) and Higher Education (Third Level). FET is planned and coordinated by SOLAS, an agency of the Department of Education and Skills. The civil society is invited to have a say on the new strategy: SOLAS has developed a consultation document to be commented on as well as held a public consultation with members of our EAEA member in Ireland, AONTAS – the National Adult Learning Organisation.

Important political changes also happened last year.



County elections were held across the state, which may influence the creation of new Boards of Directors for the sixteen Education and Training Boards across the country. This is the first election to impact the structure of Education and Training Boards since they were first created in 2014 as County Councillors make-up slightly more than half of the members of the Education and Training Boards.

In May 2019, the Joint Education and Skills Committee of the Oireachtas (national parliament) published a report titled “Report on Education Inequality and Disadvantage and Barriers to

Education”. This report recommends that education opportunities are made more widely available throughout the country and focus not just on education for employment, but more broadly on education for social well-being, health, and issues like addiction recovery and reduction of homelessness. The report was drafted and supported by all members of the Committee which includes representation from every major political party in the parliament, both from governing and opposition parties. The report will act as a valuable reference source for the upcoming general election in Ireland.

Links to EU and international policy

The state regulations reflect the country-specific recommendations for SDG and Upskilling Pathways initiative. AONTAS is working on strengthening the initiatives, and in 2019 the organisation created a new strategic plan for 2019-2022 that will focus on:

1. Learner Voice for Action: Creating an inclusive lifelong learning society
2. A Thriving Community Education Sector
3. Lifelong Learning for Sustainability

Challenges and recommendations

AONTAS, an EAEA member from Ireland, suggests that the government addresses the need to create a recognised and accepted system for measuring

the outcomes of non-formal education, specifically community education in Ireland

Liechtenstein

The Adult Education Foundation in Liechtenstein sets its goals on promoting adult education provision focusing on widening educational opportunities for under-represented, low-skilled adults coming from disadvantaged social and economic backgrounds.

Recent developments

In recent years, the Adult Education Foundation has successfully implemented the project which aim is to reach out to underrepresented learners in adult education and open up learning opportunities for those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The idea of the project is to offer low-skilled and socially disadvantaged adults vouchers to participate in various learning activities and courses. In 2018 the foundation reached out to

different stakeholders, including government offices, trade unions, and NGOs.

“The Adult Education Foundation has developed a project to reach out to underrepresented learners in adult education and open up learning opportunities for those from disadvantaged backgrounds.”

In addition to financial incentives in the form of educational vouchers, learners also have access to improved individual educational consulting services. In order to ensure the broadest and most diverse range of services possible,

non-formal adult education in Liechtenstein is presently subsidised. This is done by means of service agreements with accredited educational institutions.

Links to EU and international policy

The Foundation has already created a preliminary guideline to take the action forward, e.g. making a “Counselling landscape of Liechtenstein” to find the gaps in existing coaching offers and strengthen the cooperation among all stakeholders. To address the gaps the Foundation is going to test its new coaching and counselling approach in 2021. Furthermore, the

Foundation stressed the need to strengthen the links between adult education policies in Liechtenstein and the EU’s strategies and recommendations, such as Upskilling Pathways, Life Skills approach with a focus on Basic Skills, as well as continuing to advocate for equal rights and access to quality adult education.

Challenges and recommendations

The foundation’s main challenge is ensuring that activities are accessed by those who need it most. Adult learning opportunities offered by the Foundation are mostly used by well-educated adults.

The foundation has set a goal to develop a subject-oriented education subsidy to be elaborated and

implemented in cooperation with all responsible authorities, ministries, interest groups, organizations, and experts. In addition, it is important that the Foundation works to develop a systematic approach to assessing the needs of underrepresented adult learners in order to improve consulting and coaching services.

Lithuania

Lithuania keeps fighting the low levels of adult participation in learning by working on re-structuring its educational system and offering more opportunities in professional development for adults.

Recent developments

Current goals and standards for adult education in Lithuania are set in development strategy Lithuania 2030 and National Education Strategy 2013-2022.

The focus of both documents is to develop a well-functioning educational system that allows and encourages growth and prosperity of a new information-society.

The challenge that the strategies are addressing is the low participation of adults in non-formal adult education. As reported by Eurostat, Lithuania has one of the lowest indicators of adults involved in some sort of learning. In 2016 the Programme for strengthening non-formal adult education and continuing training for 2016-23 was adopted. The programme describes strategies to develop

a cohesive adult education system that responds to the needs of learners and society as a whole.

The programme suggested developing a system of

incentives (financial, organizational, and legal) to attract more adults to learning, especially in non-urban areas.

Lifelong learning remains on the agenda of state authorities, educational providers and civic agents. In

2019 the EAEA member in Lithuania, Lithuanian Association of Adult Education (LAAE), organized Baltic Summer School, whose objective was to establish a platform for adult education providers in the Baltic countries for dialogue and cooperation to strengthen adult education provision.

“Recent programmes in Lithuania have recognised the importance of developing a system of incentives (financial, organizational, and legal) to attract more adults to learning, especially in non-urban areas.”

Challenges and recommendations

The programme for strengthening non-formal adult education and continuing training for 2016-2023 set a goal of achieving 12% of the adult population involved in learning by 2023. For the following years, shifting the remaining 6% to 12% will continue

to be the main focus. Therefore, LAAE will focus their work on promoting lifelong learning through providing opportunities in education with the focus on strengthening adults' life skills.

Links to EU and international policy

The strategies, developed by Lithuanian state, reflect the general stream of policies in education in the EU and the world.

As mentioned in the previous section, Lithuania is focusing on promoting lifelong learning, and thus it established several goals for the education sector:

1. To ensure accessibility of different-level education;
2. To create a continuously learning society and to provide life-long learning opportunities to persons wishing to change or improve their qualifications (there are re-qualification programmes for different specialists as well as various projects funded by the EU);
3. To promote innovation on all levels of education;
4. To ensure systematic development of science and technologies that would allow building an

information-society;

5. To implement the action plan for the Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) in addition to the Strategy's Vilnius Framework (CEP/AC.13/2005/3/Rev.1);

6. To carry out inter-branch and interdisciplinary research covering social and natural sciences, to stimulate their interaction with the policy-making process, and to make sure the decision-making is based on research findings and on the integration of economic, social and environmental objectives and tasks;

7. To increase the efficiency and international competitiveness of research and to slow down the “brain drain”.

Montenegro

New policies in Montenegro enable organisations to plan innovative adult education initiatives. Indeed, there have been significant changes which enabled several actors to play a central role in strengthening VET training and other practices. Nonetheless, there is still insufficient funding of adult education from the national authorities.

Recent developments

This year Montenegro's government adopted a new Adult Education Plan for 2019/2022 period, which is based on the guidelines, recommendations and resolutions of the EU council. In the new plan, adult education becomes integrated in the national database of the Montenegrin education and information system for the first time. The database contains data on accredited AE providers, available training programmes, active courses, issued certificates, trainees, tracing of learners upon the

“The national budget in Montenegro still does not allocate separate funds for the adult education sector.”

completion of courses and other data useful for statistical analysis and assessment of the situation in adult education sector.

The database allows the country to concentrate on the implementation of new funds. It also leaves Montenegro better prepared to deal

with the challenge of validating and recognizing prior learning. These aims are also helped by the application of European guidelines and contemporary learning models in national practice.

Links to EU and international policy

Concerning the implementation of SDGs, the Montenegrin state provided a new VET Strategy, which needs to be promoted and strengthened considerably, along with the AE Strategy and the Sustainable Development Strategy. To implement these strategies several initiatives have been planned, such as the organization of EuroSkills competitions during the

EuroSkills Week, likewise the organization of skills competitions for people with disabilities or the annual manifestation of “Adult Education in Montenegro”.

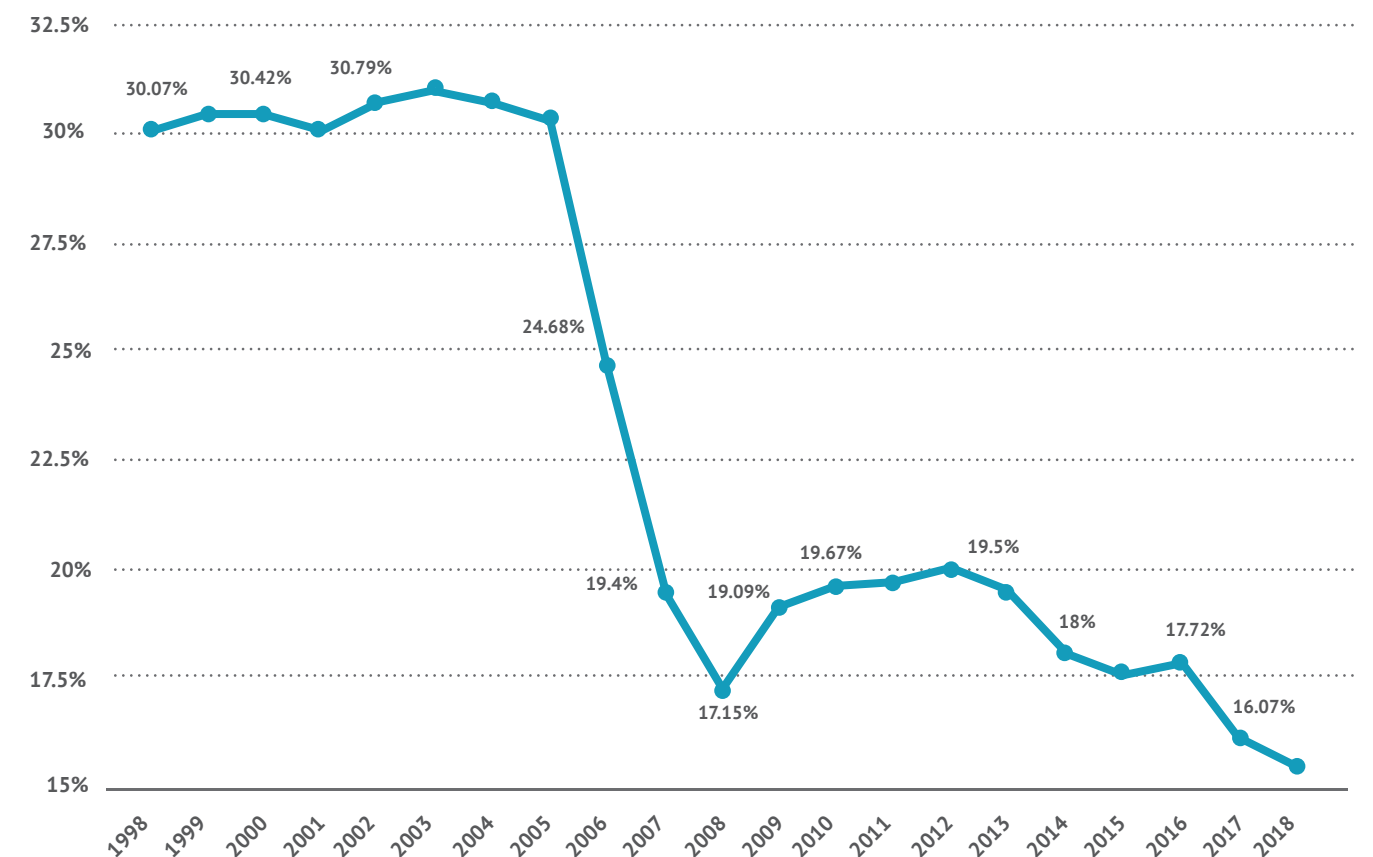
The necessity to improve funding opportunities and the sustainability of the system always needs to be emphasized, yet the capacity building would play a key role in the AE sector.

Challenges and recommendations

Since 2016, the system for adult education has been financially supported by Erasmus + projects (EPALE and Adult Learning Agenda), no significant changes have taken place recently on the national level – the national budget still does not allocate separate funds for the adult education sector. Nevertheless, the EAEA member in Montenegro, Centre for Vocational Education and Training, is still endeavouring to

address the issues concerning low-skilled and marginalized groups of adults, in particular, providing skills training of the unemployed and developing professional development learning for employed people.

Another challenge for the EAEA member in Montenegro is advocating for the importance of adult education among the professional public.



Unemployment continuing to decrease consistently – Montenegro AE continues to focus on AE support for underqualified unemployed persons, soon, will they need to focus funding on leisure and citizenship based education.

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/808795/unemployment-rate-in-montenegro/>

Norway

With the changes that are happening in the government, there is a lot of space for dialogue and hope for the future policies. At the moment, the new strategic plan for education is being designed and civil society has its say in it. Regional development is becoming stronger and brings in new opportunities, as well as challenges.

Recent developments

In recent years, there have been several strategic steps in Norwegian policies concerning adult education. In 2017 the current Norwegian Strategy for Skills Policy was adopted and will be active until the year 2021. Therefore, the government of Norway is now working on a new strategic plan and will present it to the Parliament in 2020. The new strategy will keep in focus the need to promote lifelong learning and widen learning opportunities for all social groups.

The civic society has had its impact on the development of the new strategy. In particular, the Norwegian Association for Adult Learning (NAAL), an EAEA member, has been able to incorporate the perspective of adult education into the process of implementation of the current plan and is working on strengthening the position of adult education in the next one.

The Association's participation in the writing of skills strategies has led to a more efficient acknowledgement of adult learning in the non-formal sector among key audiences at the national and government levels. Through active participation, NAAL managed to increase the awareness of the need to apply a broader perspective on adult learning and skills, for example life skills, participation, and

inclusion to ensure a sustainable strategy in the field of education.

On June 4th, an expert committee appointed by the government, presented their report on Sustainable Skills development with a number of proposals for new policies. The work from the committee is an important contribution to the Skills reform work currently going on in the government.

In 2017, the government also presented the white paper "Skilled Workers for the Future – Vocational college education". The paper's aim was to promote vocational education

among students, improve its quality by strengthening professional development of educators, and making it more relevant and job-market oriented. As part of the implementation of the strategy several new programmes have been launched.

At the same time, the Norwegian government is going through the process of major structural change, aimed at enhancing the responsibilities of the middle governing level: the new regions. Starting from January 2020, the new regions will have a much stronger responsibility for regional skills policies. As a result of these processes, NAAL, as well as other educational associations, are strengthening their regional presence.

“Through active participation, NAAL managed to increase the awareness of the need to apply a broader perspective on adult learning and skills, for example life skills, participation, and inclusion to ensure a sustainable strategy in the field of education.”

Challenges and recommendations

The main challenge for the field of adult education in Norway at present is finding funds to finance governmental, and local, initiatives to strengthen the development and outreach of Skills policies.

There is a need to widen the scope of educational opportunities, involving various stake-holders

and educational providers to ensure a broader outreach and more sustainable results. Non-formal and informal learning needs to be part of government strategies and planning, requiring not only the provision of support to the sector, but also recognition of the value of non-formal learning.

Links to EU and international policy

Even though the EU Upskilling Pathways are not formally adopted by Norway, the national strategies of

the Norwegian government are closely related to its ideas.

The Republic of North Macedonia

In the past year, the financial stability of non-formal adult education providers in the Republic of North Macedonia has been shaken by budgetary cuts, which pose a threat to the quality, and quantity of learning opportunities. Nonetheless, adult learning organisations in the country keep working with vulnerable groups to ensure their inclusion into both society and the labour market.

Recent developments

Recently, North Macedonia set up a national database of providers of non-formal adult education, established by the Public Institution of Adult Education Centre. This database is public, and available on the centre’s official website: www.cov.gov.mk. The main objective of establishing the database is to mobilise various education providers by publishing their training programmes on the platform, to spread information to all potential adult citizens interested in non-formal education opportunities, and to develop Lifelong

“North Macedonia has recently set up a national database of providers of non-formal adult education, established by the Public Institution of Adult Education Centre.”

Learning Culture in the society. For the period 2016-2020, the main priority of North Macedonian’s Adult Education sector has been the establishment of a national system of validation of non-formal and informal learning. There have already been taken numerous steps on various levels in the past few years, including piloting the system in 2019. The system is expected to be introduced in 2020. However, financial challenges may pose threats to the system’s functionality and sustainability.

Links to EU and international policy

There are several legislations that regulate the implementation of goal 4 of SDG: National Education Strategy; Adult Education Strategy; and Lifelong

Learning Conception. However, our EAEA members are not currently implementing the Upskilling Pathways.

Challenges and recommendations

The adult education sector in North Macedonia is facing the challenges brought about by insufficient funding. Therefore, EAEA members in the country recommend that investment in adult education is increased through re-introducing funding by public institutions.

Another issue that can be addressed through adult education is high unemployment rates and inclusion of vulnerable young adults in learning, EAEA members set those areas as their priority for future work.

TABLE 1.1 MAIN EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES, 2012-17(%)

Category		2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Population aged 25-64 with at least upper secondary education							
EU-28		74.2	75.2	75.9	76.5	76.9	77.5
North Macedonia	Total	64.9	65.6	65.7	66.4	68.4	69.6
	Male	71.8	71.6	71.7	72.2	74.3	76
	Female	57.8	59.4	59.7	60.4	62.3	63.1

https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2019-07/Skills%20mismatch%20measurement_North%20Macedonia.pdf
steady increase in population with basic education in North Macedonia – in line with rate of increase for EU28 overall

The Netherlands

Developing a culture of learning in Dutch society and promoting lifelong learning are on the agendas of state and non-governmental institutions in the Netherlands. The current decentralised system of education in the country works in support of strengthening local actors and engaging more individuals in learning, however, the government and society in general keeps working to develop the field of non-formal adult education.

Recent developments

Even though the Netherlands has one of the highest percentages of adults involved in learning, increasing the participation of adults in education remains on the national and regional agenda. In 2019, the Dutch cabinet, in cooperation with social partners, sectoral training and development funds, educational institutions including VET schools, and other stakeholders passed a new policy programme that aims to strengthen lifelong learning in the country. The main objectives of the new initiative are:

- 1) to familiarise society with training and learning opportunities that are available, so that individuals become more independent in their educational choices;
- 2) encourage citizens to engage in learning, promoting an individualised approach and subsidies for everyone;
- 3) ensure adults' participation in education by providing support structures and flexible provision in education.

The government does this by encouraging good support, strengthening the learning culture in small

businesses and promoting a flexible educational offer.

In 2018 the departments of Education, Culture and Science (OCW), Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS), and Social Affairs and Employment (SZW) collaboratively launched the programme "Tel mee met Taal" (Count along with Language), which has been extended for the year of 2019. The focus of the programme is literacy education for low-educated adults.

The programme aims at strengthening cooperation between partners on local and regional levels in order to outreach a bigger public and engage both youth and adults in improving their

language, maths and digital skills.

As a follow up, a new strategy for 2020-2024 was presented in the beginning of 2019. The objectives of the new strategy are:

- To reach more people through a tailor-made approach;
- Knowing what works: more insight into quality and effectiveness;
- Strengthening collaboration on municipal level.

In the following years, the programme will put a stronger emphasis on digital inclusion and digital skills, in addition to language skills.

Links to EU and international policy

The implementation of the Upskilling Pathways initiative in the Netherlands is happening via the further development of vocational training sector. At the same time civil society organisations such as libraries, welfare organisations, and voluntary organisations play an increasingly important role,

especially with the financial support from the Erasmus+ programme. Collaborations are being set up and universities and colleges are also working to help adults with a lower level of education to survive, and thrive, in society.

Challenges and recommendations

There are several changes to the non-formal adult education sector in the Netherlands. However, improving the adult education provision and the image of lifelong learning by offering an individualised approach remains a focus. At the same time, it appears challenging to tailor financial solutions to adult learners by adjusting educational loans, tax schemes, as well as encouraging lifelong learning in smaller and medium-sized enterprises.

Decentralisation and autonomy of local municipalities also need to be further addressed and supported.

EAEA's members in the country also recommend the development and implementation of structural solutions to the system that would allow a stronger presence of learners' voice in the decision-making process. Our members are going to continue working on the implementation of UNESCO Learning cities, support the regionalization of Adult Learners Festival, as well as express their recommendations on public learning accounts.

Poland

Major progresses have been made in Polish adult education sector. In terms of financial support, there has been a recent increase, which allowed organisations to tackle several issues, and provide new opportunities for all, particularly in basic skills provisions. Although across the whole country, however, some implementation must be promoted more effectively. New strategies and models are going to be designed for wide participation, high quality, and centred around skills-validation.

Recent developments

In Poland, the Ministry of National Education is currently addressing a “National Skills Strategy for Poland”.

In February 2019, our member organisation took part in the OECD Strategy Assessment Workshop, this was a workshop designed for stakeholders of the Integrated Skills Strategy. At the workshop, the discussion centred around tackling education policy, and the need to raise participation in adult education of all forms, the improvement of the Education and

Training System, which hoped to reduce imbalances, developing systems for skills governance, and finally strengthening skills for the labour market skills. In that regard, in May 2019, a further workshop analysed new proposals and refined recommendations related to the skill development priority areas.

There were no major changes, or revelations, but the workshop recognised the important issue of raising participation in adult learning.

“Our EAEA member advocates further development of new mechanisms for ensuring education’s quality and regulation of centres for adult education.”

Links to EU and international policy

Although our member stated that, in Poland, the Upskilling Pathways initiative is not well implemented, it is assumed that in the project “CHANCE - New opportunities for adults” (2018-2021), there is practice of EU’s Upskilling Pathways. Its results and final recommendations will be used to coordinate national activities, to develop national strategies and innovative models, whose purpose is to improve adults’ basic skills, so to provide new opportunities for all.

The project is conducted by The Foundation for System Development in partnership with the Educational

Research Institute. New funding streams were obtained thanks to projects and activities realised at a European level. In addition to this, our member organisation led and partnered several Erasmus+ proposals. In accordance with this, financial support in education activities has increased, and so more training for educators can be provided.

Finally, through Erasmus+ project, “Education by the way”, educators can improve their contents skills to advance and achieve significant results while working in adult learning sector.

Challenges and recommendations

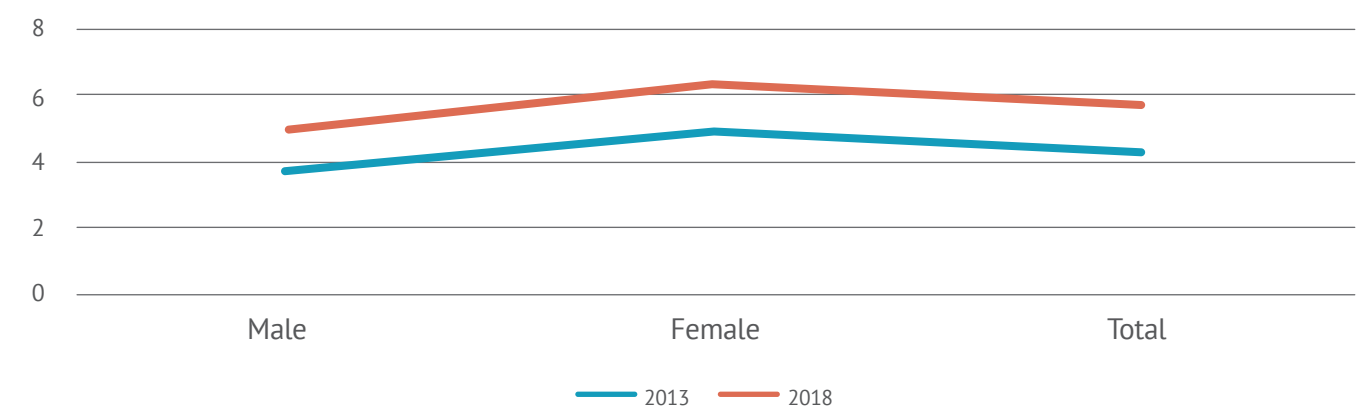
For the future, the organisation is addressing its focus on improving education’s quality and efficiency, along with attempting to enhance adult education based training and knowledge.

Additionally, our EAEA member advocates further development of new mechanisms for ensuring education’s quality and regulation of centres for adult education. Not only this but also it recommends more systemic activities (national projects) which determine how adult education should work, relating

to the promotion of lifelong learning approaches to the scholastic system and challenge stereotypes related to adult education.

This is one of the reasons why some individuals do not participate in adult educational activities. In order to do so, the visibility of these projects have to be widened, a challenge which could enhance the number of projects and transform them from occasional to more frequent.

Participation in adult learning (% of the population aged 25 to 64 participating in formal and non-formal education and training in the last 4 weeks) - Poland



https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Adult_learning_statistics

Portugal

In recent years there have been important initiatives in the field of non-formal adult education that are striving to address such issues as low literacy level among adults and low levels of participation of adults in education. The new developments create a hopeful atmosphere for the future of adult education in Portugal.

Recent developments

The Portuguese government, in collaboration with the European Commission, as well as Agência Nacional para a Qualificação e o Ensino Profissional, I.P., and EAEA, have

developed the new National Plan on Adult Literacy. The Plan aims to address the issue of high illiteracy in the country, where over half of the adult population has not attained upper-secondary level of

education. The Plan suggests a series of strategies that would support the distribution of adult education ideas; provide guidance for adult education providers on how to work with adult learners in order

to motivate and encourage them to participate in education; set action points to ensure sustainable and effective development of adult education.

“Irregular and insufficient funding can affect the capacity of adult education institutions, weakening their outreach and ability to engage the adult population in learning.”

At the moment, a lot of innovative initiatives in education are fostered by established in 2017 public policy INCoDe.2030, whose objective is to promote and enhance digital competences. The initiative calls for

stronger presence of technologies in education and the workplace, however the primary zone of presence of the initiative is formal education.

age, nationality, or socioeconomic background. Thus, a concise and cohesive national educational strategy, which would consider all social groups, is

a must. Hopefully, the new National Plan for Adult Literacy will set foundations for the development of a broader action plan in adult education.

Links to EU and international policy

There are a number of policies and initiatives that are working in accordance with the overall European and international agenda for promoting adult learning.

For instance, there is a national programme that focuses on high-level qualifications and increasing the employability of adults, which, among others, is implemented in Qualifica educational centres. The programme targets different age groups and educational backgrounds, however, there is a stronger

emphasis on vocational education.

Some of EAEA's members in Portugal are collaborating on promoting adult education and strengthening literacy growth among the adult population. The organizations are part of the bigger “Literacy for Democracy” project, which intends to “educate for citizenship and democratic literacy in order to develop the self-efficacy of communities.”

Challenges and recommendations

One of the main challenges that adult education organisations are facing nowadays in Portugal is lack of steady and solid funding. Irregular and insufficient funding can affect the capacity of adult education institutions, weakening their outreach and ability to engage the adult population in learning. The rate of

adult participation in all forms of learning is another challenge that remains a focus in Portugal. There is a need to engage non-traditional students in learning and widen the spectrum of outreach from education providers, ensuring the inclusiveness and responsiveness of education regardless of learners’

Romania

Romania still struggles to bring adults to education, and therefore education providers are looking for ways to make learning opportunities more attractive. They do so through developing new methodologies and working principles.

Recent developments

The EAEA members in Romania report a number of recent developments in the sphere of adult education, especially concerning prison education. In that regard, a new national strategy for the social reintegration of inmates has been implemented, this involved six ministries (Justice, Labour, Health, Education, Intern Affairs and Finance) as well as the Probation and the National Administration of Penitentiaries.

Innovative techniques, such as game-based learning and interactive learning have been introduced in prison education. In addition, other programmes

are being developed and implemented, particularly concerning motivating inmates and bringing them to learning, along with family projects that aim to reduce the gap between inmates and their families. According to Eurydice² Romania is currently in the adoption and implementation stage for both its National Qualification Framework and its National Strategy for Lifelong Learning, both of which are focused on validation of non-formal and informal skills in adult education.

“Our EAEA member in Romania recommends applying more creative teaching methods, especially the use of art, in learning.”

Links to EU and international policy

Romania has declared its commitment to Agenda 2030 of Sustainable Development Goals, as well as to

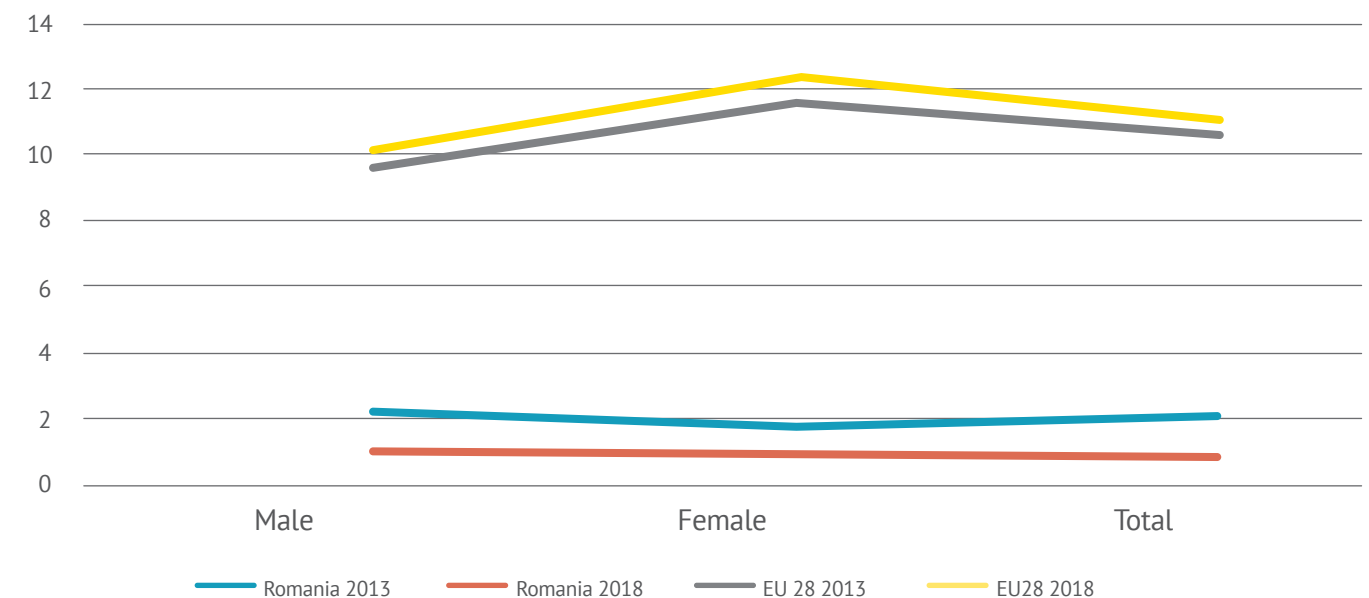
Upskilling Pathways initiative.

Challenges and recommendations

The main challenges faced by the adult education sector concern the adoption of new technology and interactive methods, and increasing involvement of mentors and coaches in training. EAEA member

in Romania recommends applying more creative teaching methods, especially the use of art, in learning.

Participation in adult learning. Comparison between Romania and the EU28 average (% of the population aged 25 to 64 participating in formal and non-formal education and training in the last 4 weeks)



https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Adult_learning_statistics

² Eurydice – European Commission. Adult Education - Developments and Current Policy Priorities, Romania. January 2019.

Slovenia

In recent years, the Slovenian government has adopted a number of policies that address adult education. While the new regulations and strategies set a supportive background, the policies still need to properly reflect the realities of target groups; this is where local institutions and adult education providers can play a significant role.

Recent developments

In January 2018, the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia adopted the new Adult Education Act. The Act came as a substitution to the one from 1996 and brought some important changes to the field of adult education in Slovenia. The Act sets guidelines for public services such as guidance, counselling, validation of non-formal and informal learning, provided by public adult education centres. The Act puts its focus on underrepresented groups in adult education and sets goals for adult education providers, as well as financing standards.

In December 2017 the Slovenian government adopted the Slovenian Development Strategy 2030, which, among other Sustainable Development Goals,

addresses goal 4 on Lifelong learning.

As a follow up to its implementation, the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education will engage in working on designing the new Adult Education Master Plan: the document that determines the aims, priority areas of work, educational programmes, scope, and types of activity funded by public funds and financial resources. The new Master Plan will

define adult education strategies for the years 2021-2030 and is scheduled to be adopted by the end of 2020. The main goal of the plan will be to keep the focus on how to persuade the most vulnerable groups to participate in learning activities and upgrading their skills and competences.

“The 2018 Adult Education Act sets guidelines for public services such as guidance, counselling, validation of non-formal and informal learning, provided by public adult education centres.”

Links to EU and international policy

As stated by our member in Slovenia, all legislative documents which regulate the education system in Slovenia define and guarantee the quality of education for all on all levels, targeting the satisfaction of goal 4 of Sustainable Development Goals. At the same time, the EAEA members in Slovenia are working on fulfilling the goal 10 of SDG, reduced

inequalities, by designing educational programmes that are focusing on vulnerable groups of adults (low-educated, marginalised, unemployed, migrants and older than 45.). In this respect, the main goal of those organizations is to reduce socially generated inequalities.

Challenges and recommendations

The areas that need to be addressed by future policies are:

- The involvement of the public network of providers in fostering the participation of vulnerable groups

in learning activities, implementing new approaches and tools.

- Further development of the validation of knowledge and skills acquired in non-formal learning

and training.

- Bringing the issues of adult education into Slovenian Development Strategy 2030.
- Designing a sustainable system for sharing the responsibility between the state governance (representing the society) and employers (representing the capital) for raising the level of key competencies of employees.
- Development of a bigger share of active employment policy programmes that are focused on older employees and their training on one hand, and provision of incentives for employers aiming at “older-workers-friendly” adaptations of jobs.
- Raising awareness of the threat of further

unlimited consumerism and wasteful use of natural sources.

- To make the attainment of 4-year secondary education level (ISCED 3A,B), as a “second chance” education, completely publicly financed once in a lifetime, with the obligation of employers to provide a reasonable amount of paid study leave.

At the same time, it is important to establish a sustainable and efficient coordination and collaboration structure for all stakeholders to be involved in the designing of the new Adult Education Master Plan.

DEVELOPING SKILLS

Table2. Low-skilled adults are far less interested in adult learning

Share of low-skilled and other adults participating in education and training over previous 12 months

	Adults less than or at Level 1	All other adults
Participated	31	56
Wanted to participate but did not because of barriers	12	22
Did not participate and did not want to participate ¹	57	22
Total	100	100

¹ Derived as a residual of other categories.

Note: Those described as “low skilled” have low proficiency in either numeracy or literacy.

Source: OECD calculations based on OECD Survey of Adult Skill database (PIAAC) (2012, 2015), www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/ (accessed March 2017)

Spain

After the general elections in April 2019, and a shift on the Spanish political scene, there have been some tensions and disagreements in the government, resulting in an unstable budget and undecided future track of development. Meanwhile, the local education providers keep working to address social issues, such as migration and unemployment.

Recent developments

Throughout the years, adult education has been receiving more and more attention from cultural institutions and the Labour Department. EAEA members in the country contribute the ongoing shift to immigration. Adult education is therefore seen as a solution to integrating foreigners into Spanish society and the job-market.

“Our EAEA member in Spain recommends establishing a well-functioning system of coordination between three departments of the ministries of Education, Labour, and Social Affairs and Culture.”

On the agenda of EAEA members is the promotion of lifelong learning, literacy education and the

professional development of adult educators. Spain has increased access to adult education for young people aged 16-18³ who attend work which otherwise prevents their access to traditional education programmes for students their age. This is a strong initiative for supporting vulnerable school drop-outs develop a more positive relationship with education and training.

Links to EU and international policy

The main barrier to the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals in Spain are the lack of initiatives for migrant learners, however, a lot of attention is paid to migrant children without families. In order to deliver Goal 4 Spain have focused their efforts in organisational and systemic initiatives. For instance,

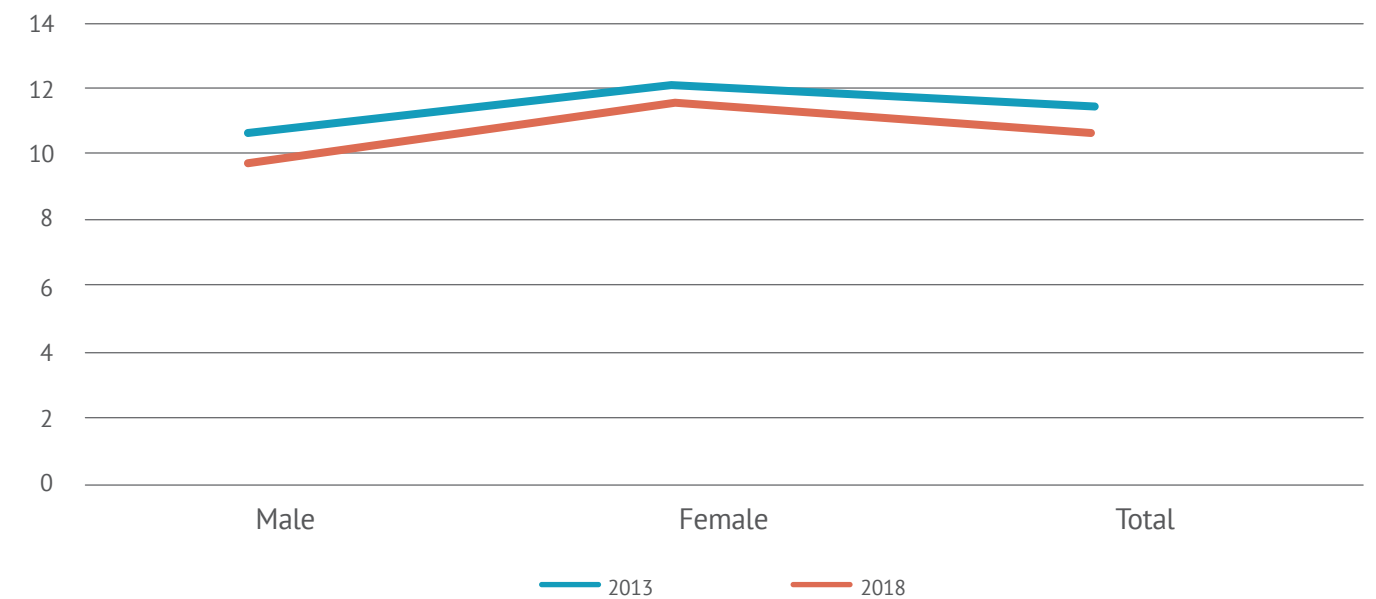
an EAEA member is participating in the European Vocational Skills Week. In addition to this, in September, an EAEA member is hosting the Adult Learners' Day to discuss learning for the pleasure of learning, and learning what you are interested in, not what you are being offered.

Challenges and recommendations

EAEA member in Spain recommends establishing a well-functioning system of coordination between three departments of the ministries of Education, Labour, and Social Affairs and Culture. The education provision in Spain is also in need of modification,

especially when it comes to innovation. Professionals need to be offered good development programmes and new methodologies need to be improved and applied. There is a significant gap between literacy and basic training that needs to be addressed as well.

Participation in adult learning (% of the population aged 25 to 64 participating in formal and non-formal education and training in the last 4 weeks) - Spain



https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Adult_learning_statistics

³ Eurydice – European Commission, Adult Education and Training – Spain. March 2019.

Switzerland

Over the last year much of the changes in adult education in Switzerland has been focused on basic skills however, these changes have had a limited impact, and despite promotion and outreach participation rates remain low, especially amongst those with more limited educational backgrounds. Our members in Switzerland are now focusing their efforts on skill validation and expanding awareness of non-formal, or non-employment focused learning for adults, for example citizenship education and social inclusion.

Recent developments

Recently, thanks to the enactment of the Federal Act on Continuing Education and Training, some Switzerland federal states have adapted existing and new policies, mainly in the field of basic skills promotion. According to a shadow report of civil society, under the lead of our EAEA member SVEB, the Federal Act has triggered positive changes in the field of basic skills in the majority of the cantons.

“Participation is heavily dependent on formal qualification, employment status, age, and migration/social background.”

However, the overall impact of the new Act is smaller than anticipated. The Swiss adult education sector’s main challenge remains the lack of participation in lifelong learning and which is affecting diversity of participants. In this regard, participation is heavily dependent on formal qualification, employment

status, age, and migration/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). Thus, more public initiatives should certainly focus on tackling this challenge.

Another challenge in the sphere of

adult education provision is the assurance and development of quality of the education offers. Providers of further education are also challenged to keep up with the newest trends, such as digitalisation or the flexibility of education offers, and adapt their provision accordingly.

Links to EU and international policy

In Switzerland the Strategy for Sustainable Development (2016-2019) has been brought in which specifically relates to all 17 of the SDGs. In addition to this there are a number of initiatives designed specifically to implement goal 4, for example, national networking events organised by the UNESCO-Commission for the whole education centre to create a more systemic attitude to lifelong learning. These networks are for providers in formal, and non-formal education as well as people working either children or adults as target groups. In addition to this, the Swiss

government has announced that it is working to better foster networks and programmes for specifically non-formal education providers, however, there have been no concrete measures planned so far.

Our member SVEB is very active in advocacy for adult education in Switzerland, communicating about public initiatives, events, international reports, and is participating and animating activities by civil society organisations.

Challenges and recommendations

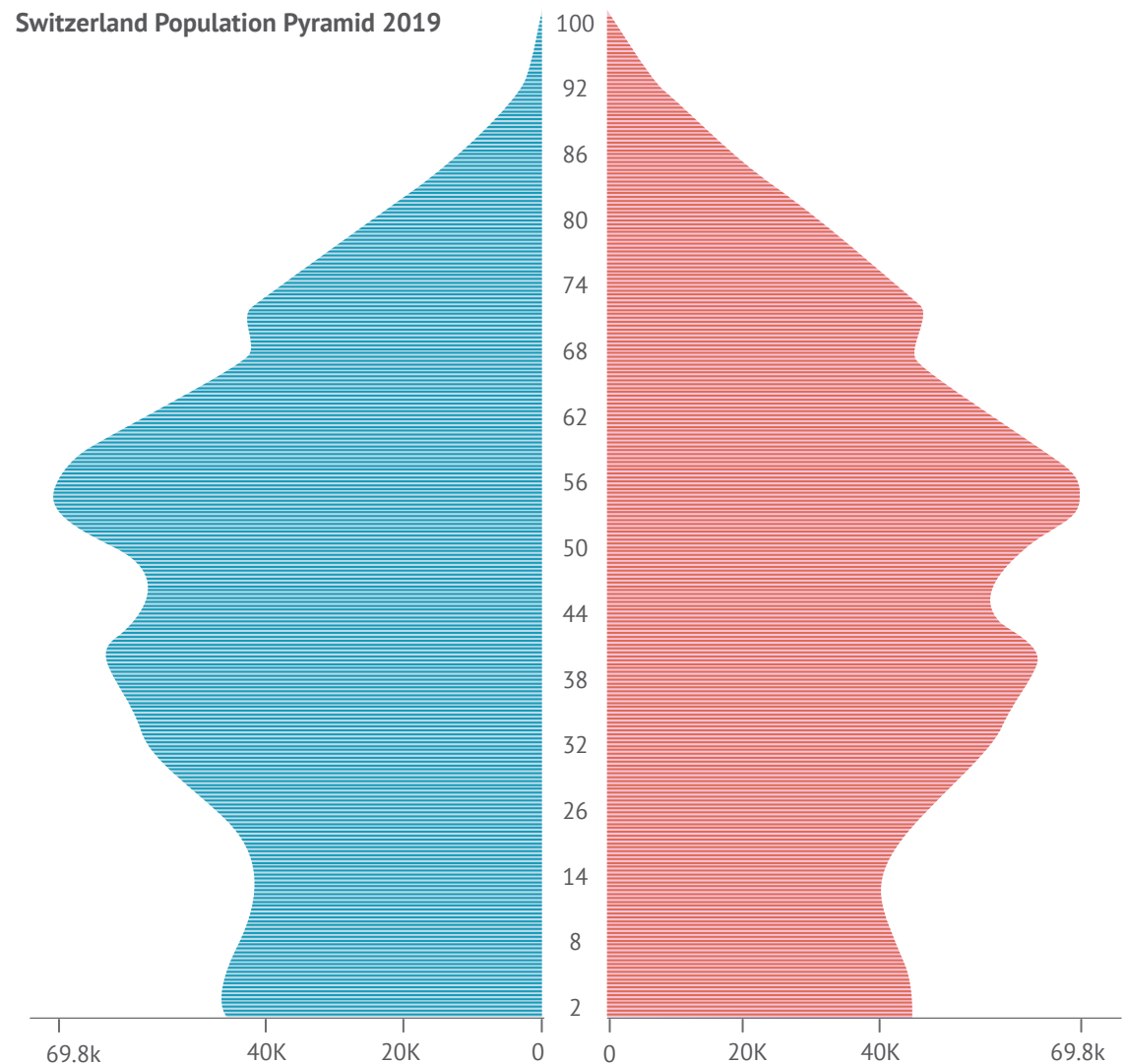
SVEB hopes that the future of adult education does not reduce adult learning to employability and job market integration, and that the Swiss government does more to recognise the value of skills and learning opportunities that are not employment specific – learning for the sake of learning, empowerment, and social inclusion, all of which are central to the real life impact of adult education.

While the economic impact of adult learning is important, especially for demonstrating a tangible impact of adult education provision they hope that policy starts to retire the idea of adult education as the economy’s ‘right hand man’. They also recommend

a focus on active citizenship, intercultural awareness and democratic engagement over the next year.

The overall funding for education and research was cut by 3%, and as a result our member SVEB has received a 3% drop in its state funding (state funding accounts for approximately one third of their overall revenue). This has made it more of a challenge for the SVEB to fill their responsibilities, especially as this comes in tandem with adult education needing advocates to broaden its recognisable impact – from improving employment, to improving life skills and empowerment.

Switzerland Population Pyramid 2019



Male Female

Swiss projects looking at older learners will be important in years to come – as shown by the large and growing older population, unbalanced population pyramid
<http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/switzerland-population/>

Sweden

Non-formal adult education in Sweden is currently facing challenges related to the changes to the country's political scene. Nevertheless, the EAEA members in Sweden are continuing their work strengthening their presence and improving outreach to marginalised and underrepresented groups of society.

Recent developments

Since the government elections in September 2018 Sweden has experienced some instability concerning its internal policies, and this has had an impact on the field of adult education as well. On one hand, no new major strategies have been yet developed, but on the other hand, the current government is going through the process of revising existing initiatives. Therefore, the course of development of adult education in Sweden for the near future is still yet to be determined.

“Keeping provision as responsive and accessible as possible while simultaneously demonstrating the significance of such learning opportunities following funding cuts will be challenging.”

Expectations are optimistic, most believe that new policies will expand the influence of adult education and become more inclusive. At the same time, unfortunately, some initiatives are being undercut. As reported by EAEA member, the Swedish National Council of Adult Education, study associations and folk high schools faced a major decrease in funding last year, coming up to 8 million Swedish Krona.

accessible as possible while simultaneously demonstrating the significance of such learning opportunities following funding cuts will be challenging. To address this issue, The Swedish National Council of Adult Education is launching several future reports and inquiries. The idea is to examine how adult education initiatives from the

Study Associations and folk high schools impact our society – and what we might need in order to face future challenges. In the coming year, the Council will focus on examining the benefits of study circles and how the Study Associations and folk high schools impact different parts of Swedish society.

Links to EU and international policy

The basic rules regarding compulsory education in Sweden are set out in the Education Act, adopted in 2010. The Act states that all Swedish citizens are entitled to a quality education, and that their access to education must not be affected by their background. Therefore, the Act complies with goal 4 of the Global Sustainable Development Goals.

However, there are still significant challenges to address when it comes to adult education. Participation in higher education in Sweden is significantly affected

by socioeconomic background, as well as health conditions. To decrease the gap between those in higher education and those out of it, folk high schools along with study associations, provide adults with comprehensive learning opportunities in both urban and rural environments. The initiatives taken by folk high schools and study associations reflect the need for learning for individuals out of formal education and thus correspond with the Upskilling Pathways initiative.

Challenges and recommendations

The biggest challenge for non-formal adult education in Sweden right now is funding. As mentioned before, the changes in the country's leadership are influencing the allocation of funds to adult education, and as a lot of priorities are yet to be established practitioners in the field have been left in limbo. The EAEA member,

the National Council for Adult Education reports that such areas as migrant work and parental involvement have experienced funding cuts.

Sustaining the work of non-formal adult education providers; keeping provision as responsive and

Turkey

Turkey is continuing its work attempting to make the educational sector more inclusive, encouraging people of different backgrounds to participate in learning. The following year is expected to bring changes as the education development plan will be adapted.

Recent developments

2019 has been an active year in the field of adult education in Turkey. İŞKUR General Directorate (Turkish Employment Office), which is responsible for the development of national occupational standards, has continued financing adult education providers and various projects in adult education to maintain their Active Labour Programmes.

Other governmental bodies, such as the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, etc. offer training activities and programmes, created with the cooperation of the Ministry of National Education and other relevant institutions. National Occupational Standards published courses and programmes, approved by the BOE Education Programmes in accordance with national and

international vocational training standards in the Official Gazette, and the activities are carried out within the scope of adult education in Turkey (GDoLLL 2017 Monitoring Report).

“Turkey’s adult education sector is still facing low participation rates, and struggling to bring adults from disadvantaged backgrounds into education.”

At the moment, a new strategy for education, Lifelong Learning Strategy Paper 2019-2023, is being drafted. The core focuses of the new strategy will be:

1. Strengthening human, financial, physical and technological capacities

- in the field of lifelong learning and improving the quality of education;
2. Increasing accessibility to lifelong learning opportunities and services, and providing valid and reliable certification;
3. Strengthening the lifelong learning monitoring and evaluation system.

Links to EU and international policy

In Turkey, sustainable development policies have been incorporated into numerous laws, legislations, regulations, policy documents and action plans in a variety of policy fields and sectors.

The National Development Plan (NDP), the highest-level national policy document in Turkey, sets out all macro-level national policies and priorities. Turkey first introduced the concept of sustainable development into the 7th Development Plan in 1996 after the 1992 Rio Conference. Until recently, the 10th Development Plan for 2014-2018 was in effect. The Plan reflected international trends in sustainable development and was indicated to be consistent with SDGs. One of the main principles of the 10th Development Plan

is sustainable development; the plan is based on a “human-centred development” approach. Ensuring full access to primary and secondary education, especially for disabled and female students is one of the main objectives of the plan. It illustrates the need to adapt education to the needs of students to ensure the inclusion of disadvantaged people. In addition to this, quality-oriented transformation in the education system, strengthening compliance with the labour market within the framework of lifelong learning and an equality-of-opportunity based perspective on education will be present in the following plan-implementation period.

Turkey is currently in the process of preparing a long-

term vision of the 11th NDP. The country intends to take SDGs as one of the main inputs of the vision that the 11th Development Plan will be based on. EAEA Member, Uluslararası Hayat Boyu Öğrenme Derneği, is currently working on two different projects aimed at increasing the employment of women encouraging them to work and helping them to access

information, orientation, and counselling with the aim to encourage engagement in the social enterprise context. The main aim of the project follows the UNDP Turkey core objectives and Common SDGs goal, aimed at ending all forms of discrimination against women and girls, and empowering women to help drive up economic growth and development.

Challenges and recommendations

Turkey’s adult education sector is still facing low participation rates, and struggling to bring adults from disadvantaged backgrounds into education. EAEA members in the country point out the importance of strengthening cooperation among stakeholders, and developing and implementing innovative teaching methods along with curricula relevant to learners in order to tackle the issue. EAEA member, Uluslararası

Hayat Boyu Öğrenme Derneği (UHBÖDER), will continue their work on widening learning opportunities for adults and reaching more potential learners. UHBÖDER will work on assessing education and learning needs of the population, to support youngsters and adults in terms of providing them with basic education and knowledge, and skills necessary for today’s world.

Ukraine

Ukraine is setting high goals for its educational system in order to comply with the European standards and provide quality education available, and accessible to everyone. Recently, the Ukrainian government introduced education and science reforms, aiming to enhance school and university level education with digital and methodological innovations. In 2019 the state and civil actors have continued working on adult education.

Recent developments

At the moment, the new “Conception of Development of Adult Education in Ukraine for 2020-2022” regulation is being drafted, our member, the Ukrainian Adult Education Association, has played an active role in its formation. The Ukrainian government recognises the importance of adult education for building a society of civil engagement, social cohesion and political awareness, and so the new document is expected

“At the moment, the new “Conception of Development of Adult Education in Ukraine for 2020-2022” regulation is being drafted, our member, the Ukrainian Adult Education Association, has played an active role in its formation.”

to unite the various actors in adult education, set a common agenda for all stakeholders, and provide adult education with a more stable place in Ukrainian education policy. The sector has already seen some positive changes, with more and more people showing their interest in learning as adults. In addition, the profession of andragogy has received national recognition, symbolising the shift in the status and value of adult educators.

Links to EU and international policy

Even though the political situation in the country makes it rather challenging to implement sustainable social changes, the Ukraine does address SDGs to some extent. Integration in the European Area is on the state’s agenda, as such they are likely to adopt the

European standards and regulations. EAEA member, the Ukrainian Adult Education Association, is working on the implementation of goal 4 through its projects and member support.

Challenges and recommendations

The Ukrainian Adult Education Association has put forward an important suggestion for the future development of adult education in Ukraine. They support the development of a national adult education policy. The cornerstone of this policy will be determined by the “Conception of Development of Adult Education in Ukraine for 2020-2022”, but further steps can be taken while drafting Ukrainian Adult

Education Act. On an organisational level, our EAEA member will be working on:

- Providing advanced support to its members, adult education providers, as they are at the core of the reformation of Ukrainian’s educational system;
- Taking part in the national decentralisation reform;
- Engaging in the “Euro-integration processes” in adult education.

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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 130 member organizations
in 43 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.

EAEA's MAIN ROLES

- 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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