

Manifesto for
Adult Learning
in the 21st century:

The Power and Joy of Learning



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR
THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS



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The European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) proposes, with this manifesto, to create a Learning Europe: a Europe that is able to tackle the future positively and with all necessary skills, knowledge and competences. We propose a Europe-wide effort to go one step up, to develop a knowledge society that can deal with the challenges of our time. This demands sustainable investments now – on the European, national, regional and local levels in adult education. This will pay off in the long term from many perspectives: in competitiveness, well-being, healthy populations, growth, equality, sustainability and more.

Adult education helps change lives and transform societies – it is a human right and common good. EAEA believes that adult learning and education need to be strengthened at the European level. This manifesto outlines how

adult education contributes to the positive development of Europe. However, in order to do so, solid public investments in adult education organisations and adult learners need to be made. Adult education also needs to be clearly framed within an overall lifelong learning strategy that takes into account and gives equal importance to all sectors and all forms of learning (formal, non-formal and informal).

With this manifesto, we want to underline the transformative possibilities of adult education on the one hand and, on the other hand, the positive experience of learning. The value of learning is not always seen, for instance, because of bad school experiences or lack of money or time. EAEA wants to underline the positive effects and benefits. We know that this is the best way to attract those furthest away from learning.

Challenges and answers

Adult education is a key for tackling some of the main challenges in Europe today. Europe faces growing inequalities, not only between people but also between regions and countries within Europe. More and more European citizens seem to question European values and liberal democracy by voting for xenophobic and anti-European parties. It is of high importance to engage people in deliberative democracy through adult learning.

Demographic change sees shifting populations in Europe – people get older and therefore want to be active and healthy for longer. In many regions and countries where there have been significant changes in employment opportunities and few options to retrain, unemployment is very high, especially among the youngest and oldest adults. Growing digitalisation demands new skills and competences of employees, citizens and consumers. Europe has faced a high level of migration, which poses huge challenges to

European governments and coherence. This has led to a wave of support from European citizens on the one hand but also to a defensive or hateful reaction by critics, on the other hand. Climate change and other environmental challenges continue to pose threats to (not only) Europe's future and to necessitate more sustainable economies, societies and lifestyles¹.

Adult education holds the positive answer to many of these issues. It benefits the individual but also societies and economies. Do we want an innovative, more equal, sustainable Europe in which the citizens participate democratically and actively, where people have the skills and knowledge to live and work healthily and productively and take part in cultural and civic activities from a very young age to a very old age? Below EAEA presents arguments, studies, examples and learners' stories that illustrate our position (themes are not listed in any specific order).



Key principles of (non-formal) adult education

- Adult education is a common and public good and transforms lives and societies
- Everyone should have the right and opportunity to access high-quality adult education
- Anyone can learn irrespective of age and background
- Participation of all learners and especially those with low basic skills is encouraged
- A key task for adult education is to reach out to disadvantaged learners in order to combat the 'Matthew' effect²
- The learner is at the centre of the development, methodology, process and outcomes of learning offers
- Empowering non-formal methods and methodologies apply the creativity, existing knowledge and skills of learners and provide inspiring learning experiences
- Professional trainers, teachers and staff are necessary for applying the appropriate methods and achieving high-quality provision and a successful learner experience
- Capacity-building and innovation in adult education organisations are necessary to adapt and anticipate changes in learning, teaching and learners' needs, but also societal and economic development.
- Cooperation (regional, European, global and institutional) is crucial for the visibility of adult education but also for peer-learning and innovation transfer



1) We do not want to rank these challenges according to importance – we see them as equally crucial and the order that has been given to them in this paper does not imply any preference.

2) This refers to the fact that people with lower levels of education tend to have fewer opportunities to participate in adult learning.

Active citizenship and democracy



EAEA and its members stand for a strong commitment to Europe and European values. We believe that democracy, intercultural dialogue, social justice and cooperation are key for a Europe of respect, participation and cohesion. Democracy and European adult education have common roots and a common history. Adult education significantly influenced the development of democratic societies in Europe, but at the same time, democratic movements influenced the development of adult education institutions. Many adult education organisations were established as the result of emancipatory movements (workers, women, religious organisations, etc.).

Adult education is the tool for the development of critical thinking and empowerment, a lively and inspired civil society, and knowledge and know-how. Adult education also provides

the space to develop active citizenship. We need adult education to reflect on societal situations and challenges, in order to learn from prevailing European issues such as increasing radicalisation, migration and social inequalities. These issues have shown that democratic attitudes, tolerance and respect need to be reinforced. Critical thinking is also at the heart of understanding a digital world, which demands a high level of media literacy.

Adult education strengthens and regenerates civil society by building responsibilities and a feeling of belonging to Europe and to a democratic tradition. Participatory democracy is only made possible through broad participation and meaningful contributions to decision-making and critical evaluation of political and societal issues by all stakeholders.





Research evidence

Preston (2004)³ analysed the impact of adult education on participants' civic lives and on the formation of values, particularly tolerance. Individual engagement in education is a predictor of engagement in public life because 'the more students are engaged in their education, the more willing they are, on average, to play a positive role in public life'. Adult education leads moreover to an increase in racial tolerance and a greater likelihood of voting. Preston found that learning has an impact on informal and formal civic participation. It helps individuals to build, maintain, dismantle, reconstruct and enrich their social networks. Additionally, the formation of values is influenced by learning. For example, changes in tolerance, understanding and respect were reported by respondents. Civic and social engagement (CSE) as a learning outcome has also been analysed by the OECD (2007)⁴.



Good practice

In the framework of the Ukrainian project Regional Voices for Democracy: Instruments for dialogue in local community, the Club for Sustainable Development from the Mykolaiv region initiated an exchange of ideas addressing issues of energy consumption in the community. Community activists, representatives of the local self-government and the local media took part. This exchange was done through an educational programme and several training courses on ecological and energy-saving factors for local development with the involvement of various stakeholders. The awareness of the value of adult education among citizens has led to the inclusion of educational components in a broader territorial Community Strategy (2018 – 2026). This is the first case of a community support Adult Education Centre, and therefore the first inclusion of adult education in a plan of action, in the Ukraine.

3) <http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/10015019/>

4) <http://www.oecd.org/education/ceri/39097376.pdf>

Health and well-being



There are considerable inequalities in health and consequently life expectancy. Even in the most equitable countries, this is the case. It is just that the gap is narrower. Health and education are linked: to take care of our health and well-being over our lifespan requires knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes developed throughout life. The health of our societies depends upon lifelong learning.

Learning makes people more self-confident, self-efficacious and aware of their own capacities and skills, which translates to a greater ability to manage their own lives and health. Adult learning courses provide opportunities to bring people together in person and therefore strengthen their social

networks, which is crucial for well-being. These benefits contribute not only to their personal development and fulfilment, but also have a very positive impact on their work life.

Health education has high outputs in terms of increased health level of the population and lower costs for public health systems, as well as financial revenues, as a healthier population works better and longer. Therefore, health education concerns everybody, not only on the recipients' side (e.g. patients or learners), but also the providers' side (e.g. health professionals, educational staff). It does not stand alone per se but is an issue that cuts across other policy fields and needs to be recognized as such.



Research evidence

The Third UNESCO Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE, 2016⁵) notes that people with more education are more likely to have a greater understanding of their health, a better understanding of treatments available to them, and more skills to manage their health. People with more education also report spending fewer days in bed and miss fewer days of work due to illness. International studies have linked education to determinants of health such as healthy behaviour and the use of preventive services. Better educated people are less likely to smoke, drink a lot or use illegal drugs. They are also more likely to exercise more, use seat belts in the car, get vaccinated and participate in screening programmes (GRALE, 2016).



Good practice

The Austrian Alpha-Power project (national winner of the EAEA Grundtvig Award 2015) addressed health care workers from various health institutions. In specifically developed workshops, the awareness level of staff in care, medical-technical, medical and administration personnel was raised concerning the difficult (health) status of people with low basic education.

Besides this sensitisation of health professionals to the connection between basic education and health, further aims of the project were:

- development of information material for multipliers and a guide for recognition;
- lowering barriers of access concerning the topic of health;
- strengthening the health competences of persons with a low education level.

In all cooperating institutions, health personnel of various professions were trained to become multipliers.



Research evidence

Adult education is not only a complementary method to develop more knowledge but also a proactive approach in terms of empowerment and mental well-being. Adult education is a way for people to lead a more fulfilled and happier, thus healthier, life, as research shows. In the BeLL study⁶, 84% of the respondents had experienced positive changes in mental well-being, and 83% had experienced positive changes in their sense of purpose in life when learning as adults.

5) UNESCO (2016). Third Global Report on Adult Learning and Education. [online] Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning. Available at: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002459/245913e.pdf>.

6) <http://www.bell-project.eu/cms/>

Life skills for individuals



It is right and proper that everyone has the essential skills and capabilities that they need for life and work in the 21st century. This certainly includes basic skills such as literacy and numeracy but also the key competences as defined in the revised European Reference Framework of Key Competences for Lifelong Learning and adopted by the Council of the European Union in 2018. Adult education provides skills and learning experiences that have a number of benefits and purposes and offers many ways that will support individuals throughout their careers and lives.

EAEA, together with members and partners, has developed a 'framework of life skills', which demonstrates the need for lifelong and life-wide learning for everyone. Based on new economic, technological and societal developments, we will all have to update our life skills.

Adult education transforms lives and provides new opportunities. It opens up new job opportunities, provides the pathway to learning, helps early school leavers return to education, activates people's artistic and cultural passions and leads to health and well-being.



Research evidence

It is not only the direct learning outcomes that are important for people: research data (BeLL study)⁷ show that adult learners experience numerous benefits from non-formal adult education. They feel healthier and appear to lead healthier lifestyles; they build new social networks and experience improved well-being. Moreover, adults who participate in liberal adult education appear to feel more motivated to engage in lifelong learning and view it as an opportunity to improve their lives. These benefits were reported by learners across all course areas, ranging from languages and the arts to sport and civic education. People with a low level of education benefit particularly from adult education.

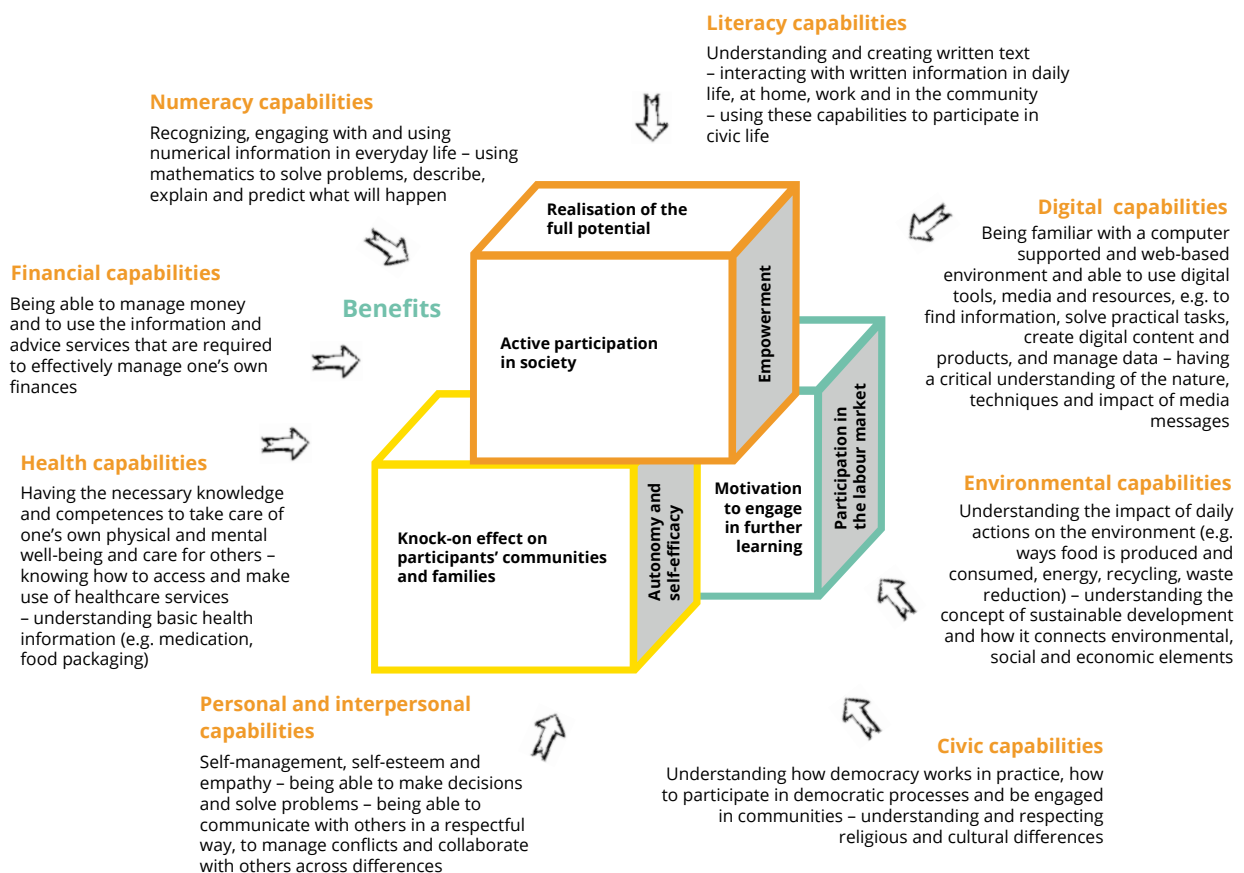
7) http://www.bell-project.eu/cms/?page_id=10



Good practice

The Citizens' Curriculum in the UK is an approach to adult learning provision for disadvantaged learners to ensure that everyone can improve their English, maths and other 'life skills' resulting in better progression, outcomes and aspirations – into and at work, in learning, and in personal, family and community life. The model promotes locally led learning and involves learners in shaping its content. It interlinks basic skills in English (or English for Speakers of Other Languages), literacy and numeracy with digital, financial, health and civic capabilities.

The crucial element of this program is interlinking as many skills and capabilities as are relevant in the context and in the light of the learners' needs. The flexible model can be adapted and used across neighbourhoods and in different delivery contexts. The participatory approach to curriculum design and delivery increases the engagement and motivation of the learners. Interlinking of basic skills with wider skills and capabilities leads to positive outcomes for learners, including changes in their employability, improvements in their attitudes towards learning, increased social and civic engagement and improved self-efficacy as reported by evaluations of the pilots.



Social cohesion, equity and equality



Individual levels of education have a huge impact on people's opportunities in life, ranging from the kind of jobs they can attain to life expectancy. There is a lot of international research, which highlights that those who have done better from their initial education and with higher levels of qualifications are more likely to continue to learn.

Adult education furthers greater social mobility. Adult education supports both those who have not been able to take full advantage of initial education and those who have but want to pursue further learning as an adult. From basic skills training to second chance schools and language learning – adult education provides many opportunities to

improve individuals' lives but also to equalise societies on a larger scale and to create fairer societies as well as more economic growth.

Outreach to groups that are not participating in learning is necessary in order to achieve more social inclusion. With the right methodologies, people will be able to participate more – in society, democracy, economy, arts and culture.

Adult learning is particularly powerful in bringing together people from different walks and stages of life, in developing mutual understanding and respect, and in contributing to active citizenship, personal development and well-being. This benefits society, democracy and social peace.





Research evidence

Research has shown that the less people are able to successfully shape their lives, an ability which is built and rebuilt throughout the course of their lives, the greater they are at risk of exclusion. This is why adult learning and education are given a key value. Wider benefits of adult education – in addition to the acquired skills and qualifications – are achieved through two mechanisms:

1. Personal characteristics and abilities: adult education and learning strengthens the development of key skills, abilities and personal resources as well as reinforces belief in the individual's ability to deal with disadvantageous situations.
2. Social interaction: adult education enables access to individuals and groups with a similar and heterogeneous socio-economic background, encourages social cohesion and provides possibility of social involvement.



Good practice

In Sweden the Study motivating folk high courses, encouraging young job-seekers to continue their studies, has seen very good results. After the course, some 40% of participants continued to either studies or work, and over two-thirds felt motivated to study and believed that education is a route into work. All over Sweden special folk high school courses are organised for immigrants to support their settling in Swedish society, as well as study circles for asylum seekers. These successful special efforts are possible because they are based on existing competences and run by state-funded organisations within a national structure of adult learning.

At the Spanish adult education centre La Verneda – Sant Martí, welcoming people who come to the school for the first time is considered an important task that must be done individually. Time is taken for each person who arrives at the school. Participants from previous years play a crucial role in the reception, registration and assignment of groups, as they have the communication skills and an understanding of what it is like to attend for the first time. The decision of which level a new participant is assigned to is based on dialogue and consensus. Attention is paid to making sure each person understands the process he or she is in and is placed in the group and level where they will learn the most. Staff and volunteers are careful to avoid making participants feel they are being tested.

Employment and work

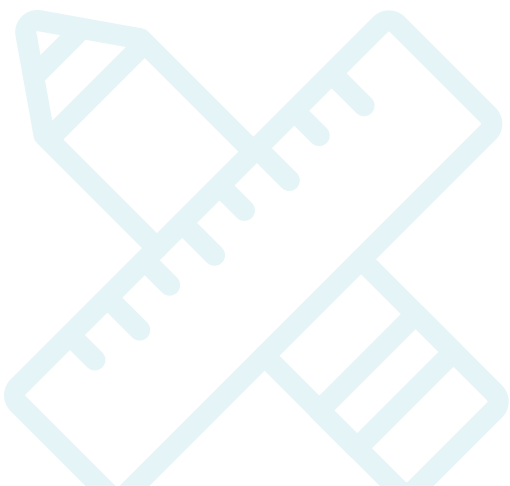


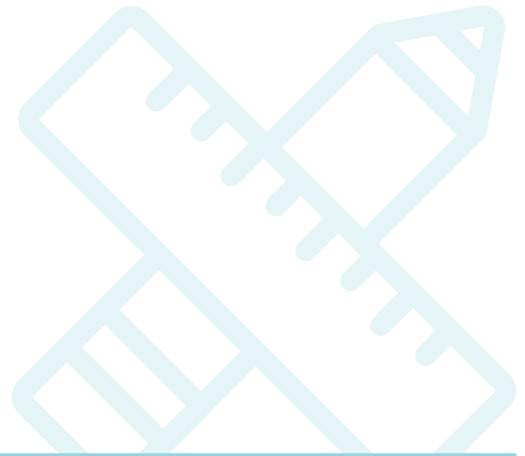
The positive link between learning and work is obvious: Learning workers, employees, entrepreneurs and volunteers are more innovative and productive – this makes companies more competitive and successful. Digitalisation, internationalisation, service orientation, flexibilisation: all these mega-trends on the labour market have one thing in common: they raise and change the requirements for competencies of employees. This is not a new development. What is new is that the demands are changing and increasing faster than ever.

These trends increase in parallel the pace at which employees have to adapt to the constant change and to gain new competencies. Professional competencies need to be updated regularly and meta-competencies such as social

and communications competencies become essential. It is therefore logical that almost every study on labour market developments and the future of work comes to the same conclusion: in order to master the ongoing transformation, continuous training and workplace learning is simply indispensable – not only for low-skilled employees but for all employees. Equally, for those out of work, adult learning increases resilience and reduces the effects of loss of confidence associated with unemployment of over three months.

People without the right skills are highly vulnerable to labour market changes. This calls for continued investments in education and training. EAEA therefore highlights the importance of up- and reskilling and underlines that all learning is good for employment.





Research evidence

The Cedefop research paper on (2012), Future skills supply and demand in Europe – Forecast, concludes that consequently (..) there is a need to maintain, or even increase investment in education and training by governments, enterprises and individuals, despite the current pressures of austerity. It is mostly adult workers who will need to cope with changes in the future and who need to be kept in the labour force. Opportunities need to be provided to enable them to learn and qualify for different jobs at any stage of working life. If these opportunities are not forthcoming, the risk of low-qualified people today becoming long-term unemployed is increasing. (http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/5526_en.pdf)



Good practice

In Switzerland, a state programme to promote workplace basic skills learning was launched in 2018. The program supports businesses that invest in basic skills training of their employees so that they can better cope with the transformation in the labour market. The program is based on the positive experiences made with the GO project in Switzerland. The project demonstrated that workplace basic skills learning is highly beneficial for both the employees and the employers. (<https://www.sbf.admin.ch/sbf/de/home.html>)

Digitalisation



Today's society is in the process of responding to the fourth industrial revolution: digitalisation. It is disrupting labour markets and fundamentally altering the nature and future of work and education and training. Understanding the opportunities, challenges and impact of digitalisation on work and learning is important for every adult engaged in lifelong learning. It is key to supporting personal fulfilment and development, employability, social inclusion and active citizenship. Everyone now needs to have a sufficient level of digital competence in order to play an active part in society.

EAEA is deeply concerned that 43% of the European adult population do not have basic digital skills. Adults who do not possess a sufficient level of such skills face a high risk of social exclusion. By 2024, roles requiring digital skills will grow by 12%. The ability to manipulate digital tools will become critically important in the next 5 years.⁸ The ability to seize the opportunities provided by digitalisation, however, is not evenly distributed. Vulnerable and marginalized

adults could face a double disadvantage in the future, due to a lack of awareness of, or the means to adapt to, these changes. EAEA recognises the importance of ensuring all adults have access to education and training for both basic and intermediate digital skills.

Technology is also altering the future of teaching and learning, providing a myriad of tools to enhance the way we educate, teach and learn. It is important that educators utilise these tools to improve their work, creating communities of practice, sharing knowledge and skills. What is needed therefore is improved access to infrastructure and training.

Digitalisation has already changed and will continue to change our living circumstances, mobility, environments, communication and most other areas of life. This will also alter the life skills necessary to manage these changes and the needs of learners to participate in society. Adult education provides the necessary life skills but also anticipates and shapes future developments.

8) Accenture Skills of the Future Survey 2017



Research evidence

The World Economic Forum publication (2016) Global Challenge Insight Report: The Future of Jobs – Employment, Skills and Workforce Strategy for the Fourth Industrial Revolution concludes that it is simply not possible to weather the current technological revolution by waiting for the next generation's workforce to become better prepared. Instead it is critical that businesses take an active role in supporting their current workforce through re-training, that individuals take a proactive approach to their own lifelong learning and that governments create the enabling environment, rapidly and creatively, to assist these efforts (http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Future_of_Jobs.pdf).



Good practice

HackYourFuture is an educational programme that helps refugees in the Netherlands learn computer programming and become full-stack web developers. The programme is focused on quickly teaching students how to program and develop in-demand skills for the job market and connects students with companies that hire programmers. In other words, the programme works with project-based learning, where students are challenged to develop their own ideas, build things together and learn while doing. Most of the learning in the programme is being done online via an educational website but there are meetings every weekend in Amsterdam. Within months of their first lessons, refugees start building their own projects. So far, 20 of the graduates have been placed in jobs and internships with multiple companies all over the Netherlands. <http://www.HackYourFuture.net/#/>

Migration & demographic change



Adult education plays a vital role in the current migration and refugee situation in Europe. What is missing from the debate is a focus on public policies (including education) to maximise the benefits of migration, to support people to integrate into society and to tackle the local pressures on services and infrastructure.

The implementation of (inter-)cultural dialogue fosters an exchange between the indigenous and new citizens. It helps migrants to understand the cultures and social contracts of their new home countries and gives the host citizens the chance to appreciate different habits and develop their countries into deliberative democracies.

We need to ensure accessible and affordable learning opportunities, recognise and validate prior learning, as well as provide language training for migrants, to enable them to become active citizens in their new home countries. The role of adult education is essential in ensuring that individuals and the wider society are able to harness the capabilities of highly skilled migrants to everyone's advantage, while also supporting individuals and communities that feel displaced by migration to get the skills they need to be part of society.

We see great demographic shifts across Europe, with an ageing population which is living and working longer. Older people are a



Learner's story

Fatima arrived in Ireland in November 2013 with her mother and two brothers. She lived in Dublin for three months and then moved to Tullamore with her family. Fatima is a refugee and she is originally from Afghanistan. She travelled through Iran and then on to Syria, where she lived for three years. She was supported by the Department of Justice with language classes when she arrived in Ireland. She found the classes too segregated and wanted to integrate with Irish people. She was then told about a Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) option and has just finished her first year. The VTOS course is a two-year course and although students typically take Junior Cert in year one and Leaving Cert in year two, Fatima felt that she was capable of sitting two Leaving Cert subjects at once and was supported by the Tullamore Further Education Centre to take Physics and Chemistry. She also availed herself of facilities in Athlone IT for her practical work. Fatima is very ambitious and has excellent English, she feels that she has been greatly supported by the Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board, and she has high hopes for her future.

large and growing part of the population and this is changing our societies in important and fundamental ways. In order to tackle demographic changes, Europe needs citizens that stay healthy and active as long as possible.

EAEA is committed to active ageing and encourages a common vision on the active participation of older people. Learning provides many of these opportunities and active ageing will only be guaranteed if learning in later life is provided for. Research shows that learning seniors are more active, have more social contacts, volunteer

more, work longer and are healthier. It is therefore necessary to provide high quality learning opportunities for all older people, which, in turn, will need the necessary framework of policies, funding, structures and access. Even at a very old age, learning has positive impacts.

Additionally, intergenerational learning enables both older, experienced people and the young to profit from each other's knowledge; and on the other hand, the joint measures strengthen intergenerational solidarity within the European societies.



Research evidence

One of the greatest challenges of our time is how society cares for persons with dementia, how they can and want to keep their independence and stay active. There are already initiatives and institutions (such as Hogewey in the Netherlands and Aigburth Care Homes in Leicester UK) dealing with that challenge. They have developed innovative, humane ways of caring for people with dementia. Learning at an advanced age is always a central concept of these institutions and initiatives, and learners report positive emotional or mental health benefits. It is speculated that mentally stimulating activities have positive and lasting impact on cognition and may even prevent or delay dementia and Alzheimer's disease (Snowden, 2001 in Simone and Scullini, 2006).



Good practice

The European NEET-U project combined two of the most important social and educational challenges in the 21-st century: how to re-activate the increasing number of experienced seniors with social and educational potential and make them key players in coping with the dramatic increase of NEETs and other socially excluded youths in Europe. They organised together a four-day marathon Hackathon for the development of a creative digital project. More than 70 seniors were mobilized and asked to bring family pictures or pictures of the past representing and containing important memories for them. The result was a public exhibition of large and medium format photographs, extracted from 'analog memories' and digitally projected on the walls, doors and corners of the city centre. Both NEETs and seniors learned many new skills, gained confidence and realised that they had many abilities, strengths, experiences and personal qualities. Seniors can act in a new way, as brokers, to make use of networks and contacts and to unlock these for the benefit of new social entrepreneurs (<http://www.neetu.eu>).

Sustainability

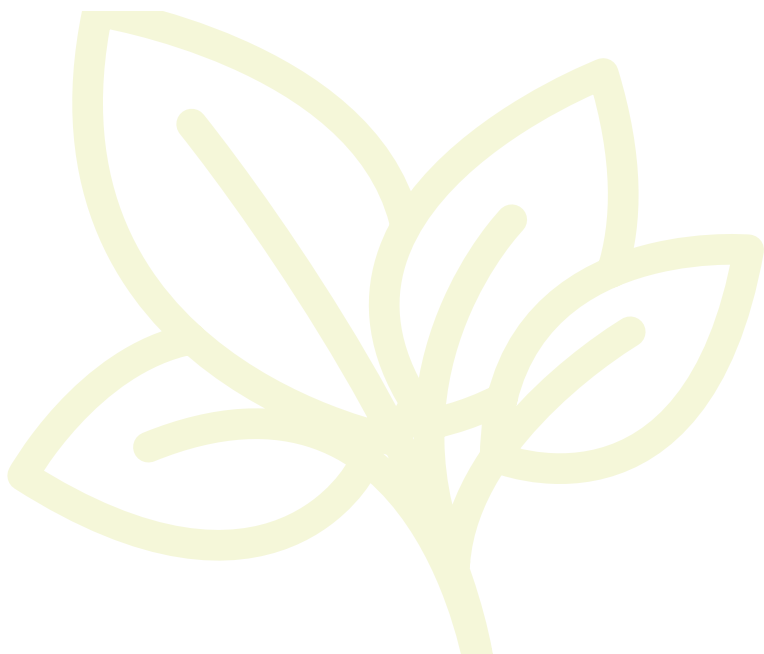


Today sustainability is a global challenge with economic, social and environmental dimensions. Adult education contributes to sustainability on all levels not only through the provision of skills, knowledge and competences. Social inclusion, active citizenship, health and personal well-being are also among the most prevalent objectives. Adult education provides information, debating spaces and creativity to develop new lifestyles, new projects, and new approaches necessary for sustainable development.

Looking at the global Agenda 2030 adult learning contributes to the achievement of all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by building the foundations of change in the social, political, economic, ecological and cultural spheres. In each of the 17 goals at least one target involves learning, training, education

or at the very least, awareness-raising for education. At the same time, adult education and lifelong learning are not only a transversal goal and method to achieving the SDGs, but also a specific goal. According to SDG4 inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities need to be ensured for all.

Adult education makes a huge contribution to the Lisbon agenda for sustainable, smart and inclusive growth. Adult education boosts jobs and growth and the digital single market. By supporting sustainability, adult education contributes to the energy union and a forward-looking climate change policy. Adult education strengthens the single market, for example, by providing the skills for the free movement of workers, as well as supports the European values and trust.





Research evidence

Studies on the interrelation between biodiversity and cultural diversity show that in as many as 95% of examples, there is a geographic overlap between high biological and cultural diversity (Alcorn, according to Clover et al. 2010). Yet valuable sources of traditional local knowledge are not fully appreciated or widely shared and improved within organized education programs – though they may have a strong influence on the resilience of a community in many ways, including prevention or reduction of the growing risks of natural disasters, often related to climate change effects. Another paradigm shift – from vulnerability towards joint development of ‘enabling community’ – is hard to achieve without the participation of adult citizens in education programs and activities (Orlovic Lovren and Pejatovic 2015)⁹.



Good practice

In the framework of the DWV International’s grant program ‘Innovation in Adult Education’ the interactive museum ‘Shuqura’ implemented a project: ‘Solar Kitchen or paraboloidal Sunlight Cooker’. The aim of the project was to introduce the use of solar light energy as the one of most efficient natural resources and support popularisation of eco-friendly solar-cooking method in Georgia. With this aim the Shuqura Museum created five solar cookers and distributed them to five Adult Education Centers in Georgia. The project increases awareness on using natural resources efficiently and offers the local community an alternative way of energy use. The adult education centres are using the solar cooker for the benefits of community, culinary classes and during public outdoor events. In addition, all the involved centers created ecological counselling services and are working with local communities to disseminate information on ecological issues including sustainable buildings and materials as well as social and environmental development.

The Umweltberatung in Austria (eco-counseling) has developed the Energy Efficiency Driving License (EEDL). The EEDL is a tool for energy saving in private households, in small and middle-sized enterprises and in communities in order to meet the needs for climate protection and energy savings. Energy saving in everyday life contributes to the reduction of energy costs, which is particularly important for people and households at risk of poverty. A conscious use of energy and the development of energy-efficient lifestyles and behaviours is therefore also a contribution to the reduction of costs and helps combat poverty. The conscious use of energy in the work context contributes to increasing competitiveness through cost reduction. Enterprise-supported resource-handling can also encourage employees to contribute to sustainability in their own private lives (<http://www.umweltberatung.at/ueber-uns-international> and <https://energie-fuehrerschein.at/>).

9) Lovren, V. O., & Popović, K. (2018). Lifelong Learning for Sustainable Development—Is Adult Education Left Behind?. In Leal Filho, W., Mifsud, M., & Pace, P. (Eds.), *Handbook of Lifelong Learning for Sustainable Development* (pp. 1-17). Springer, Cham.

Adult education and European & international policies



As this manifesto demonstrates, adult education is necessary to implement most European and international policies:

- Adult education undertakes outreach and empowerment actions to reach out to and support those furthest from learning and work and those who have benefitted least from initial education.
- Adult education is necessary to reduce the high number of people with low basic skills in Europe.
- Adult education provides European citizens with the competences to think critically and be well-informed.
- Adult education provides opportunities to improve self-confidence, become more socially included and gain employment or progress in work.
- Adult education is raising Europe's employment rate by getting people (back) into work, by validating their skills and competences or upskilling them.
- Adult education is implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights, especially the first key principle of education, training and lifelong learning but also the other principles by putting the learner and his / her needs (e.g. work-life balance, social protection) at the centre.
- Adult education puts the values of the European strategy as equity, social cohesion, active citizenship, and also creativity and innovation in focus.
- Adult education makes progress on the Sustainable Development Goals and underlines that efforts of all people are necessary. Adult education ensures the necessary knowledge and attitudes.
- Adult education strengthens civil society and active citizens through promoting and providing social and civic skills and cooperating with other NGO stakeholders.



Policy Recommendations

EAEA recommends European and national policy makers

- Recognise the benefits and importance of non-formal adult learning – for the individual but also for democracy, society, labour markets, health systems and other areas of infrastructure.
- Recognise adult learning and education as a key strategy for Europe.
- Use the European Semester as key instrument to support and develop adult learning.
- Turn the European Education Area into a true European Lifelong Learning Area with all sectors having equal status and priority.
- Approach the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights from a citizen-centred perspective with a strong lifelong learning aspect.
- Promote the cooperation with and support for lifelong learning in the European Neighbourhood countries and other parts of the world.
- Strengthen (non-formal) adult learning structures, policies and initiatives at all levels – European, national, regional, local.
- Embed lifelong learning into other public policies and programmes (e.g. sustainability, health, employment, migration).
- Increase cooperation, collaboration and learning between policy, practice and research.
- Establish and / or increase civil dialogue for adult learning.
- Develop and implement adequate governance and funding systems, which are necessary to enable outreach, quality provision and increase participation in lifelong learning.
- Invest (financially) in (adult) education and see this as investment and not as expense.
- Establish coherent lifelong learning systems that enable progression, also through validation and recognition
- Fund and support learning in communities

From jobs and growth to the digital single market, from climate change to the internal market, from migration to global issues and democratic change, adult education improves the implementation of European and international strategies. In order to progress to a cohesive, prosperous, peaceful Europe that is able to deal with the challenges of the future in a positive way, adult education is essential.



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