

EAEA CONFERENCE REPORT

DECEMBER 2008

THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S
ACTION PLAN ON ADULT LEARNING



EAEA

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS



**EAEA conference - The Implementation of the European
Commission's Action Plan on Adult Learning
Budapest, 2nd of December 2008**



With the support of the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Union

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Foreword



In October 2006 the European Commission published the Communication on Adult Learning entitled "It's never too late to learn!" This was followed up in 2007 by the Communication "It's always a good time to learn", outlining a work plan to implement the 2006 Communication, which was adopted by the European Council in May 2008. EAEA was involved in the hearing process leading up to the 2006 Communication, and suggested a number of actions to be included. Also EAEA was the leader of the study on "Adult education trends and issues", which contributed to the debate. The EAEA has also been a regular participant in the European Commission's Working Group on the implementation of the Action Plan.

In fact, we are very excited about the Action Plan – it promises to be the first European-wide push for a better, more coherent and stronger adult education and learning sector. EAEA wants to inform and update its members about the Action Plan so that they can monitor and lobby the implementation on the national levels. We are also keen to present good practice examples to the European Commission or to provide information when our members have the impression that the implementation is not going in the right direction.

The conference on 2 December 2008 provided the opportunity to bring as many EAEA members together as possible and to discuss the five key actions in detail. We saw this conference as the place where the 'top-down' meets the 'bottom-up' while working together. We are grateful that Marta Ferreira and Marijke Dashorst could join us and present the Action Plan, its implementation and related policy developments. A big thank you is also due to the representatives of the Focus Groups who were prepared to join our workshops. Each working group was moderated by an EAEA and an EC representative, to ensure that the feedback would go in both directions. The timing of the conference was also significant – it took place just before the European CONFINTEA VI preparatory conference, and most of the EAEA participants stayed on for the CONFINTEA preparation.

We hope that the recommendations and conclusions of the Action Plan conference will also contribute to the contents and strategy of CONFINTEA VI. We will of course continue to monitor and accompany the implementation of the Action Plan – this conference was just one of the many stepping stones to a stronger and better adult education and learning sector in Europe and beyond.

Gina Ebner
Secretary General EAEA



EAEA conference - The Implementation of the European Commission's Action Plan on Adult Learning

Budapest, 2nd of December 2008

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Speech Mrs. Marijke Dashorst (European Commission)

Implementation adult learning Action Plan

Proposed actions

- Analysis of national reforms on adult learning
- Improving the quality of provision
- Increasing the possibility for adults to achieve a qualification one level higher than before
- Validation and recognition of skills and competences
- A better and transparent monitoring of the sector

Working Group

- Clear mandate
- « active » participation
- 3 annual meetings
- 32 countries
- European Social Partner Associations
- EAEA
- European Association of Universities
- CEDEFOP, ETF and Eurydice

5 Focus Groups

- Analysing national reforms affecting adult learning
- Validation of prior learning
- “One step up”: strategies to enhance qualification levels in the adult population
- Key competences of adult education staff
- Improved monitoring of the adult learning sector

Tasks of the focus group

- Each group: 5 external experts and + 3 internal experts
- Advisory role
- Helping in all kind of preparatory work: analysis, development questionnaires and networks, studies, Peer learning activities

Activities in 2008

- Establishment Working Group and 5 focus groups
- PLA on literacy in Ireland
- Final report: Adult learning professions in Europe
- Updated report on policy development
- Ongoing development on network literacy and research
- Identification of good practices: two inventories
- Conclusions of the Council, Resolution EP, Opinion Committee of the Regions and Socio-economic Committee
- Integration of adult learning in new policy developments
- Questionnaire on monitoring



4 studies launched

- Study on European terminology in adult education for a common language and common understanding and monitoring of the sector
- Study on key competences for adult learning staff
- Inventory of outreach strategies to enable people to go one step up (i.e. to obtain a qualification at least one step above their present qualification level)
- Assessment of the impact of ongoing reforms in education and training on adult learning

Working programme 2009

- 4 studies to be followed and finalized
- 2 studies to be launched:
 - o development quality standards for providers
 - o updating the European inventory of good practices of validation of non-formal learning
- Production of the glossary

Peer Learning Activities

- on monitoring in March in Slovakia
- on one step up in April in UK
- on validation on non formal learning in June in CZ
- on learning at the workplace in January 2010 in Norway
- on provision of adult learning service in Greece

4 Regional meetings in October/November in Norway, Spain, Germany and Slovenia
1 study visit:

- Regional approach in The Netherlands
- Ongoing work on the networks
- Development of campaign's: how to outreach people
- Ongoing work on identification of good practices
- Rolling agenda policy developments
- Integration adult learning in other policies
- Start of the preparation of the final conference



Picture 1: Speech Mrs. Marijke Dashorst (European Commission)



Speech Mrs. Marta Ferreira

European Commission, Head of Unit EAC-B4 – Adult Learning; Grundtvig

Update on adult learning policy developments

Overview

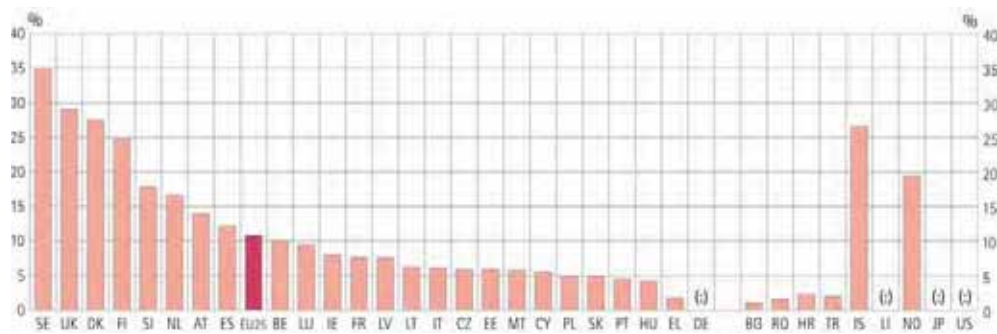
- Memorandum on LLL (2000)
- Making the European area of LLL a reality (2001)
- but 5 more years before specific policy on adult learning:
- 2006: It's never too late to learn
- 2007: It's always a good time to learn: Action Plan
- EP resolution and Council Conclusions

The context

- Rapid economic development in other regions of the world
- 80 million low-skilled workers
- Nearly 7 million early school leavers
- Demographic trends – ageing population
- Poverty and social exclusion
- High percentage of people with low basic skills

Decreasing participation Adult education and training

Percentage of population aged 25-64 participating in education and training, 2005, ISCED 0-6



Adult learning

- All forms of learning undertaken by adults after having left initial education and training, however far this process may have gone.
- The sector embraces formal, non-formal and informal learning.



« It is never too late to learn »
Communication on Adult Learning

Adopted 23 October 2006

Overall message

Member States must have an efficient adult learning system integrated into a lifelong learning strategy, which provides:

- increased labour market access
- better social integration
- better preparation for active ageing

5 Key messages

- Increasing and more equitable participation
- Foster a 'culture of quality'
- Recognition and validation of learning outcomes
- Particular attention to migrants, older people, early school leavers, women and people with a disability
- Measuring the progress

« It is always a good time to learn »
Communication on an Adult learning Action Plan

Adopted 27 September 2007

Overall objective

To implement the key messages of the 2006 Communication and to improve/develop an efficient adult learning sector

Efficient adult learning sector

- Policy: meet the needs of economy and society
- Governance: quality, efficiency and accountability
- Delivery: flexible access, recognition and validation, learning closer to the learner, financial support

Focus of the Action Plan

Those who are disadvantaged because of their:

- Low literacy skills
- Inadequate work skills
- Insufficient skills for successful integration into society

Proposed actions

- Analysis of national reforms on adult learning
- Improving the quality of provision
- Increasing the possibility for adults to achieve a qualification one level higher than before
- Validation and recognition of skills and competences
- A better and transparent monitoring of the sector

Follow up of the Adult learning Action Plan

- Conclusions of the Council 22 May 2008
- European Parliament resolution
- Opinion of the Committee of the Regions
- Opinion of the Socio-Economic Committee



Council conclusions

- Strong consensus around key issues
- Mandate to the Commission
- Mandate to the Member States

Mandate to Commission

- Analysing national qualifications
- Analysing distribution of funding across sectors
- Enhancing the professions in adult learning
- Developing quality criteria for providers
- Good practice regarding outreach to marginalised groups
- Concrete approaches to validation of competences
- Towards an agreed terminology for adult learning
- Reinforcing the role of adult learning within national strategies for LLL
- Supporting campaigns to stimulate demand

Mandate to Member States

- Exchanging good practice between stakeholders
- Removing barriers to adult learning
- Improving the quality of provision
- Reinforcing the role of HE and VET in adult learning
- Facilitating access, increasing participation
- Using LLP and ESF to boost adult learning
- Promoting lifelong guidance
- Examining the cost-benefit ratio of using adult learning to promote social cohesion
- Improving methods to promote and validate key skills and competences
- « Endeavour to ensure an adequate share of funding » for adult learning
- Promoting active involvement of social partners and NGO, including the improved use of ICT
- Reinforcing cooperation with CEDEFOP and the Unesco Institute for Lifelong Learning, and exploiting the research capacity of international organisations
- Consider possible further action beyond 2010, in accordance with the follow-on from Education & Training 2010

More information

Adult Learning Policy:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/adult/index_en.html

http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc58_en.htm



Picture 2: Speech Mrs. Marta Ferreira (European Commission)



Key Action 1:
Analysing the effects of reforms in all sectors of education and training in Member States on adult learning

Working Group Report:

Chair: Balázs Németh and Katarina Popovic

Good practice example: Hungary - Zsafia Fesztbaum and Juli Szabo

Notetaker: Zsafia Fesztbaum and Juli Szabo

First of all, it is important to indicate that the first round of the workshop started with a general debate upon the Action Plan (abbreviated as AP!) after a short introduction to the AP, its structure. In the second round, the Hungarian good practice example was presented and the discussion was continued.

A general view upon the Action Plan (AP) was that it is closed, and it is not related to changes in the world, or in other words, it does not openly refer to recent regional and global changes and challenges, which influence the environment it would be implemented in! This remark indicates the *missing vision* of the AP. Ms. Riva AVAD indicated the importance of a vision in such document to point out the necessity of making peace, developing intercultural understanding and openness, and citizenship! The Communication mentioned such thing, but the AP left out such issues!

Ms. Katarina POPOVIC pointed out some other missing segments, such as *migration*, her remark brought up the issue of geographic implication, whether the AP is for the EU or for a broader Europe, referring, for example, to the problem of migrants. Mr. Timote VAIOLETI also mentioned the *global problem of migration* according the Pacific region pointing out the contradiction that governments are trying to improve human capital and social cohesion, whilst capital resources come from somewhere else! This point raised the question whether the AP could be more openly reflect to global trends and changes and to have a modified AP put into action in consensus with CONFINTEA VI from 2009 and onwards!

Mr. Levan KVATCHADZE from Georgia raised the *problem of balance* and reflected the economic orientation of the document! Also, Mr. Levan Kvatchadze talked of the difficulty of measuring the development and success of the actions of the AP!

Ms. Renate HAAS-BECK form Liechtenstein reflected to the issue of collection of documents instead of making and generating partnerships! Therefore, *social partnership* should be developed through governments, internal/external and in intersectoral forms (education, social affairs, labour market, health, family affairs, etc.) in order to develop formulating relevant questions and gathering answers in the field of ALE (adult education and learning)!

Most workshop participants agreed that the AP should be an *instrument* of developing ALE in EU and in non-EU member countries and indicated the key role for the governments, the European Commission, the European Parliament, and the Council of Ministers having to work for a more consensus-based implementation of such Action Plans and common goals in education and learning!

I do believe that the Hungarian good practice example was an excellent effort to generate national interest towards the Action Plan on adult education and learning and to promote changes int he national adult education and learning environment! Not only the working methods, but also each activities (e.g. Step2 with regional conferences on



the AP and the collection of good practices!; the Step3-connected collection of practices of CEE countries in ALE!) reflected a more directed focus on exploring and promoting non-formal adult education! The recommendations of the Hungarian complex project were very mind-breaking according to validation of new working methods, to a changing focus to non-formal adult education, to a need for a renewed legislation, to the impact of work-experience and knowledge! (Ms. Júlia SZABÓ and Ms. Zsófia FESZTBAUM presented PPT-file slides!)

How to influence policy-makers from NGOs to researchers? This issue was raised by Ms. Renate HAAS-BECK who indicated that *AP is a tool to see what is going on in a country!* Ms. FESZTBAUM underlined that the conclusion of the Hungarian nation-wide good practice project work and discussion series reflected AP to become a tool to promote new legal frame of ALE and to strengthen the role of non-formal adult learning, networking, language learning as part of developing key competencies and to foster the overall financing of ALE!

Participants debated over the necessity of a Law on ALE and pointed out the importance of networking and the need for renewing the systems of provision of ALE. Critical issues of financing non-formal adult education, language learning and of the development of key competencies also occurred! Or Georgian colleague questioned an ideal role of law, but our Israeli colleague defended the role and need for law in ALE. Ms. POPOVIC from Serbia argued that a law in ALE can only be regulatory, and may help confidence to grow, however it might be contra-productive in quantity and in quality too!

Still, the main question remained to *create, foster and to support channels for exchange and dialogue!* It needs, participants thought and agreed upon, concrete forms in conferences, seminars, common trainings, initiatives, INTERNET-based networking, etc.

Another issue which emerged was *decentralisation*, which workshop participants recognised as an essential approach and practice in ALE to *continue with good practices*, like learning regions/cities, Socrates and LLL-integrated programmes and to promote research in ALE by better/effective financing and/or supporting taxation methods, with a more practical legislation and needs-oriented provision!

Therefore, it is essential that not only researchers, practitioners, but also adult learners *make the best use of existing practices/projects, experience* and transform them into *sustainable forms of ALE!* *The European Commission should*, for that purpose, consult not only the member states, but also candidate countries and their sub-national levels, as *regions, cities*, considering a more international influence in social, political and economic structures!



Picture 3: Working Group to Key Action 1, Chair: Balázs Németh and Katarina Popovic



Good Practice Example Key Action 1:

"Acceptance of expectations" The Hungarian Folk High School Society (Zsofia Fesztbaum and Juli Szabo)

- Started in November 2007
- The aim is to familiarise Hungarian professional institutions, decision-makers and governmental bodies with the action plan on adult learning
- Collecting good adult education practices from Hungary
- Inform the Hungarian professionals about the development work by regular newsletters

STEP 1.

A 2 day training in Balatonszepezd for Hungarian adult education professionals

- To discuss of the planning process of the national action plan
- To guide the collection of good practices
- Participants: 14 people, adult education professionals representing every region of the country

STEP 2.

- Organising 7 regional professional meetings, for the introduction and discussion of the action plan in order to identify tasks
- Target group: 100 people by region
- 7x1 day forum
- Introduction of the regional collection of Good-Practices
- Possibility to meet with learners and trainers of the good practices

STEP 3.

International specialised training and workshop in Hungary

Aim: practice of CEE countries' adult competency training and familiarising with the action plan, Hungarian practice, encouraging the process of planning

Target groups: experts and representatives of CEE countries, representatives of the EAEA

Outcomes until now:

- 5 newsletter provided to 1200 addresses
- Publication on the good practices collection
- Collection of books specialized in AE



Picture 4: Sue Waddington (President EAEA) and Marta Ferreira (European Commission)



Key Action 2:

“Improving the quality of provisions in the Adult Learning sector”

Working Group Report:

Chair: Helen Keogh and Eeva-Inkeri Sirelius

Good practice example: Switzerland - Ruth Jermann (SVEB)

Note taker: Valentina Chanina

The working group was lead by Ms. Helen Keogh, Member of the Action Plan Focus Group, Ireland and Ms. Eeva-Inkeri Sirelius, Secretary General of the Finnish Adult Education Association, Finland

A few important focus points from the group:

Step 1: Definition of Key action 2 and feedback from organisational, national, regional point of view

The discussion was centred on the European Commission Action Plan and on the exchange of experiences between EU- and non EU-countries:

The countries Armenia, Croatia and Serbia reported that they usually receive support from International Training Association in Adult Education rather from the governments. It was reported that in Switzerland the Adult Education Sector is rather poorly developed as for example the four official languages representatives are working separately. In Hungary a special Adult Education legal regulation authorises the government to specify accreditation rules for institutions dealing with Adult Education and training programmes, in particular regarding financial support for Adult Education projects. The Ministry of labour has set up an Accreditation Board for Adult Education as an independent body consisting of members commissioned by the Minister. Adult education activities may only be carried out by registered institutions or associations. Although adult education in Croatia and Serbia is formally part of the education system, Adult Education institutions are not definitive. Therefore experts and professional associations have taken on the task of non - formal education. The Action Plan in Croatia was adopted in 2005 and 2006.

After the initial discussion the group focused on the following points:

- middle classes
- social partners
- technical frame

Step 2 of the Working Group session was a presentation of good practice examples from Switzerland by Ms. Ruth Jermann “EduQua- Quality Transparency Comparability in Adult Education”.

Step 3 Ms. Jermann’s presentation of the EduQua Project was inspiring and afterwards there was time for comments and questions by participants. It followed a short report of thee concrete ideas from this working group presented by Ms. Maria Matheidesz from the European Association for Quality Languages Services (EAQUALS):

After a brief introduction of EAQUALS, which is the European Accreditation Association for language training services at a European level, the discussion focused on concrete action recommendations to the European Commission’s Action Plan.



The key concept was promoting **transparency** in Adult Education and to centre activities around the following three main areas, all having direct relevance to the action points for 2010 in the Action Plan:

- Carry out a comprehensive survey of existing quality assurance and quality control systems in European countries at local and regional level and identify further examples of good practice.
- Adopt a learner centred approach and instead of focussing on identifying criteria of quality for the providers, focus on formulating criteria of quality for the learners and learning communities in a transparent and user friendly way in order to promote transparency of quality and to understand real values in adult education.
- Seek co-operation with other European and national organisation to develop the above criteria, e.g. UNESCO, Council of Europe.



Picture 5: Working Group to Key Action 2, Chair: Helen Keogh and Eeva-Inkeri Sirelius



Good Practice Example Key Action 2:

eduQua – Quality assurance for providers in Adult Education / Best practice in Quality assurance for providers (Ms. Ruth Jermann)



Schweizerisches Qualitätszertifikat für Weiterbildungsinstitutionen
Certificat suisse de qualité pour les institutions de formation continue
Certificato svizzero di qualità per istituzioni di formazione continua

eduQua was created in 2000 and defines 6 minimal criterias for Providers offering Adult Education. This were the three goals why eduQua was implemented:

- Improve upon transparency for customers
- Secure and develop the quality of adult continuing education institutions in terms of minimum standards
- Establish a basis for governmental decisions (requests for subsidies)

eduQua defines **six quality criteria** that are key in determining the quality of an institution:

- Course/training offers, which satisfy the education requirement and education needs of customers
- Sustainable learning success for the participants
- Transparency of the course / training offers and the mission statement
- Customer-oriented, economical, efficient and effective service provisions
- Involved trainers, who are technically, methodically and didactically up-to-date
- Awareness of quality assurance and development

The certification procedure builds on these six quality criteria and formulates the minimum standards that are to be fulfilled. An eduQua certificate is valid for three years. One and two years after the certification there will be intermediate audits carried out by the certification office. The price of an eduQua certification is CHF 3050.-.

By now, approximately 880 institutions in Switzerland were certified. Additionally, there are several institutions in Austria, Germany, Liechtenstein and France. In Austria there is even an eduQua certification that is used as a basis for subsidies. eduQua is gaining increasingly more importance and acceptance in European countries.

At the beginning, eduQua was indorsed by two Ministries, now eduQua works as an Agency in close relationship with the certifying bodies who are responsible fort he certification. In addition, there is a sounding board with all the important players in AE (ministries, certifying bodies, cantons and SVEB as the umbrella organisation fort the providers.

eduQua Agency, Oerlikonerstrasse 38, CH-8057 Zürich
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Key Action 3:

Increase the possibilities for adult to go "one step up" – to achieve a qualification at least one level higher than before

Working Group Report:

Chair: Marijke Dashorst and Björn Garefelt

Good practice example: Belgium - Nadia Baragiola, Sweden - Björn Garefelt

Notetaker: Gina Ebner

Representatives from Sweden, the Netherlands, Hungary, Israel, Lithuania, Moldova, Serbia, Latvia and Belgium were present. Marijke Dashorst explains that this workshop will be a concrete approach, with a focus on implementation, which is the crucial.

First question: Is there a national action plan on adult learning and who are the main stakeholders? Are you aware that this EU action exists?

Israel: There has been a national action plan since 1948; many immigrants who range from very qualified to illiterate; due to the economic crunch, there are plans to abolish the adult education section and hopefully this will not happen.

Netherlands: There are discussions about the combination of a national and the European action plans, but the gap between what the European ambition is and the real situation is too big. Expert meeting on researchers; gap between what happens on policy level and how the providers / stakeholders know / perceive; more pressure on national governments to provide information and implantation.

Belgium: There is a so-called inter-ministerial conference which is responsible for adult learning; the Ministry of Culture and Education is very supportive; the conference meets once a year in order to discuss the state of the art concerning literacy; lacking policy in migrant learning.

Serbia: The reforms started late; the action plan is the responsibility of the Ministry of Finance; the strategy paper takes into account the action plan: for the next 5 years: national council for Adult Education will be established; certification and licensing, creating the state body; new educational institution was established – formal education but also continuing vocational and adult education, stakeholders are discussing the issues, financing etc. There is a competition between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Employment; the new body has been created to coordinate the situation between the ministries

Latvia: The Ministries of Education, Finance and Welfare are responsible, and there is a national plan in place.

Lithuania has an action plan and implementation strategy.

Moldova: Migration is a big problem – brain drain situation – there is no plan, only for professional training.

Sweden: There are good plans with implementation and financing

Hungary: There is a national action plan – competition between ministries which is sometimes problematic, looks good on paper but the implementation is somewhat lacking



- An integrated stakeholder approach is crucial; Balance of different objectives – and different sectors and orientations within the lifelong learning.
- One step up should be a right and to achieve a one level higher qualification
- Adapting skills is also important; focus is on low-skilled workers: being employable, find their way, feel better; validation is important;

Second Question: What are you doing / offering in your organization?

Belgium: A holistic approach is necessary, very comprehensive – people need more skills than just reading and writing

Serbia: There is the council on vocational and adult education; improvement of economic situation is often the only aim; changing the curriculum in adult basic education for Roma;

Lithuania: Volunteering can provide skills for young people; they also provide training to volunteers

Israel: vocational training can also provide other skills such as social ones

Belgium: 4 main areas: literacy, tutors and staff training, surveys and research, raising awareness about illiteracy; they now have independent groups of learners who are now working; comic strip about how they became literate – sent to schools where this is discussed, CD with rap and slams for universities and secondary schools. Basic skills network – governments to nominate a provider that is well-linked to the national network. Training, monitoring etc. are essential

Netherlands: working with learners as ambassadors – raising awareness

Hungary: project that aims to create local learning centres in remote areas; e.g. to help people directly –farmers who need to fill in forms on the internet – courses to be organized close to people; research on local development plans and their connection to AE.

Topics in different groups:

- Education through dancing and games – participants find out that they are open for other things – not only theory
- The two main points are to address the needs of different groups at grassroots level. Educational programmes should be organized as a goods and values should be part of the education programmes. These values have been linked to Adult Education and the needs of the individual are to be in the centre of these programmes.
- Differences should be seen as assets rather than challenges
- There is evidence that Adult Education has a real impact on economics, employment, social, individual etc welfare.
- It is recommended to collect life stories from learners, who explain how the learning / training improved their lives.
- Learner centred approach and the roles that learners can bring, eg as ambassadors.



Good Practice Example Key Action 3:

Experiences of working in mixed groups – Observation and Advice Belgium

(Nadia Baragiola)

Over the last few years, 'Lire et Ecrire' has organized workshops in which literate and illiterate persons were working together.

Lire et Ecrire Communauté Française brought together groups of people which became involved in these workshops.

Indeed, the time has come to draw some conclusions from these experiences and summarize in order to reflect the aims of the workshops.

These experiences have in common:

- Dealing carefully with a democratic approach;
- Thoughts of development of Basic Education and Further Education;
- Focus on the transformations of oneself, the other, the living environment, the society;
- Rich contributions by artists (writing, plastic arts, theatre, etc.).

The purpose of the following text is to disclose the principles, the modes and the implications of these experiences.

The observations and remarks expressed below are indeed to be found in groups in general. However, 'mixed groups' in particular can act as eye-openers and can reveal new perspectives.

1. Experiences of working in mixed groups

- 1.1 "Quality criteria" of working groups
- 1.2 "Reflect Action"
- 1.3 Writing workshops

2. Understanding the term of "mixed groups"

3. Observations and advice: thematic sheets

3.1. Questioning oneself

Before working in a mixed group, it is recommended to question oneself. Why and in which sense is a mixed group useful? For whom? How? What does everyone expect from it and what does he/ she can contribute towards it?

3.2. Principles' assertion

Right from the start, the assertion of principles valid for everyone, is essential. This is the basis of the group's work and the principles will regularly be discussed in connection with the implemented practices.

3.3. Evaluating, giving a meaning

To think about evaluation at the beginning, during and after the mixed group work, makes this experience meaningful.

3.4. Taking the time to analyse, to regulate

The evaluation can be an oral or written feedback of the work, in order to draw conclusions, name difficulties, plan the future use, etc



3.5. Making the work clear

Without any framework, any goodwill, without any collectively formulated indicators, there is neither action nor evaluations possible.

All actors work within this framework in separate ways.

3.6. Keeping the track, transmitting cultural inheritance, thinking of the consequences

Transmitting cultural inheritance means to identify, to preserve, to file and to organize what will offer a production likely to be transmitted.

3.7. Experiencing processes, producing

The purpose of working in mixed groups is to reach solidarity, because of and in spite of the differences, to feel able to encourage each other in both individual as well as collective transformations.

3.8. External or internal assistance?

To be able to work in a trustful working environment, it is important to create conditions in which each member is enabled and is recognized as individual.

4. The work in mixed groups: two perspectives

1. The work in mixed groups is only meaningful if it brings to the participants a change of point of view and perspective.
2. Aims and plan of action, two main notions / the “production” phase / the cultural dimension / preparing the work within mixed groups / the notion of choice.



Picture 6: Panel: Marijke Dashorst (EC), Marta Ferreira (EC), Sue Waddington (EAEA), Gina Ebner (EAEA)



Good Practice Example Key Action 3:

The Adult Education Initiative ('Kunskapslyftet') Sweden (Mr. Björn Garefelt)

The five-year Adult Education Initiative (1997-2002) was the largest ever investment in adult education in Sweden. The initiative has had four vital perspectives – the renewal of labour market and education policies, more equitable distribution and increased economic growth. The initiative has mainly applied to municipal adult education, but folk high schools have also been affected. During the years of the Adult Education Initiative, the Government annually financed an average of 100 000 places in municipal adult education and 10 000 places at folk high schools. In addition the municipalities have used their own funds to finance some 37 000 places per year.

The Adult Education Initiative has primarily been targeted at unemployed people who completely or partly lack three-year upper secondary school qualifications. The aim was to provide those in greatest need with an opportunity to gain new skills and knowledge. The Adult Education Initiative was concluded as a specific project at the turn of the year 2002/2003. Around 800 000 people had by then raised their educational level to an average level corresponding to one year of upper secondary level.

Aims of the Adult Education Initiative

- Background: Government plan to reduce unemployment by half until 2000
- An overall boost in adult learning, providing people with low education the opportunity to continue learning and get a job
- A renewal of adult learning and labour market policy, more equal access to education and increased growth

Putting the individual in the centre, flexible solution

- Individual demands, needs and preconditions to improve job and study opportunities
- Active recruitment, improving accessibility
- Validation, guidance, individual study plans
- Study financing. Different possibilities. Special education grant was introduced. Study grants and loans.
- Variations content/level/form, different providers, theoretical/vocational emphasis etc

Analysis of the Adult Education Initiative by international researchers

- An overall success story (adult learning policy, target groups, new local initiatives...)
- A Lifelong learning concept
- The AEI as a means to improve the infrastructure for Lifelong learning
- More focus on the local and regional level
- From education to learning

The role of Folk High Schools in AEI

- Established non-formal parallel adult learning pathway in the Swedish educational system ('folkbildning')
- Participation in AEI based on its existing pedagogical models
- Research study on folk high schools in AEI: positive results
- Balance for FHS between independent free and voluntary activities and state initiatives
- Outcome: increased general state grants



Some aspects of the concept of the AEI

Increase the possibilities for adults to go "one step up" – the AEI as an example with specific features:

- AEI included both formal and non-formal learning
- Holistic approach to adult learning
- AEI took advantage of and developed the existing infrastructure for Lifelong learning on local, regional and national level
- Adult learning seen as an investment rather than a cost. Long-term benefits for individuals and society.
- Priority for participants with short formal education, particularly unemployed. Active recruitment measures e.g. through trade unions. Removing economic barriers by providing student grants.
- Relevance for other countries?

Folkbildningsrådet, Swedish National Council of Adult Education,
www.folkbildning.se
Björn Garefelt, bjorn.garefelt@folkbildning.net
+4684124809



Picture 7: Audience EAEA Conference - The EC's Action Plan on Adult Learning



Key Action 4:

Speeding up the process of assessment of skills and social competences and have them validated and recognized in terms of learning outcomes

Working Group Report:

Chair: Marta Ferreira and Sue Waddington

Good practice example: Portugal - Carlos Ribeiro

Notetaker: Johanni Larjanko

- -1 and -2 are needed in EQF, today too much focus on university level, too much needed before you today get to level 1 (of 8 levels). Too much has been focused on (and reflect) the current system, elitist and top level. We can foresee a future when we have a working EQF and NQF. The current apprenticeship system will remain, but the skills and knowledge might today not be recognised, and should be so. In other words several systems can coexist, and should not be limited to a formal grid/system. But all systems need (or will need) some sort of certification.
 - Formal recognition does not guarantee quality. Watch out.
 - All have citizenship right today, also migrants, we need a system to integrate them and provide all with the same access and learning opportunities.
 - Europass: we missed out on a notary or commonly accepted quality check/approval of skills listed in the Europass. Marta: mapping exercise now the main task not only describing different systems but what is behind, and how it works.
 - Certification is not an aim in itself. The worst is a false certification, to make something look good. Behind the idea of certification must be a possible use, a possible profit for someone.
 - Making these systems are slow work. People today are more mobile, and nepotism is lessening. Chance is a system that will recognise your abilities regardless of your background, look at what you can and measure you from that. Certification can work as a carrot, push you to learning.
 - New problems in the Portugese system (now being built up), for example to give accreditation. ANOP fights for quality in the system.
 - The base is self assessment, that the learner recognises him/herself.
-
1. We start from the competences, not from knowledge. Different starting point.
 2. Validation therefore means to validate something that was acquired in singular fashion, not as a result of a blanket policy. Should therefore be flexible
 3. System created to allow entrance to formal diplomas
 4. This new thing "New opportunities" started in Portugal 8 years ago (framework by law), with 6 centers. Today 424 centers, aiming at 500 by the end of 2010. supported by the state, big machine to improve learning levels. Certain liberties in validation systems. Different focus in different centers. According to marta f this is a stiff system mostly aimed at academia.
 5. System developing. Towards scholarship and wider levels of qualifications, started with only a few.
 6. Aim 500 000 certified by 2010.



ANOP model

- Meet the learner
- Make the learner participate
- Translate the language and make it understandable
- Teach/coach people in self assessment, only people themselves know what they need. This is not enough though, accreditation demands more. Evidence based addition. Coaching is done by a counselling professional. Elaborates on a portfolio (including the evidence).
- The ikea syndrome - the feeling of success (which is a fake). Build a IKEA furniture, you feel successful, like you accomplished something, and you are a great builder. But you are not. You are being cheated. Likewise with learning, making portfolios, etc. it can be false empowerment.
- Stocktaking of learners knowledge/competence levels done using balance de competence-method.
- The standard to reach is given by the national framework.
- JURY social validation. Scientific validation.
- Develop confidence in learners about their abilities to learn, and validation to help people be employable.

Concrete ideas from the WG:

1. EAEA to form a committee for validation. Examine the portugese example, and give an assessment of the usefulness of the system. EAEA to accredit systems.
2. Project: operation of peer learning. What is the specificity of Portugal that must remain, and what can be changed? End result a product.
3. Certification agency/institution in Europe the long term goal.
4. EAEA is setting up thematic groups in the beginning of 2009. Some interest from EAEA members to join a discussion group on this.
5. Study visits to Portugal using LLP 2009 mobility money.



Picture 8: World Café Session



Good Practice Example Key Action 4:

National System for the Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences: Academic process (Mr. Carlos Ribeiro)

The ANOP - Oficinas de Projecto, Desenvolvimento & Educação's experience

ANOP is an organization which main objective is to promote the development through education, especially education of adult. The Association develops educational and training actions in several localities of the country – in the Northern, Central and Alentejo regions – and promotes partnerships to support “Learning Communities” projects locally. It works, therefore, in formal and informal education and acts in favour of the valorisation, for the adult, of the informal learning.

ANOP participates in Leonardo, Grundvig and Equal projects with public organizations, universities and other associations. ANOP has received several national awards related to the education of adult.

www.anop.eu

CONTEXT / GOOD PRATICE

Key actions

Speed up the process of assessment of skills and social competences and have them validated and recognized in terms of learning outcomes.

General context

The “New Opportunities” Programme marks the government strategy for adult education and training and involves more than 500,000 Portuguese citizens with limited academic and professional qualifications. Schools and training centres of the public education and professional training system have begun incorporating into their normal activities the actions of Recognition, Validation and Skills Certification [Reconhecimento, Validação e Certificação de Competências (RVCC.)] More than 450 New Opportunities Centres in operation (result of a network expansion completed in 2008)

More than 500,000 Portuguese citizens involved in the New Opportunities Initiative – Adult Division (through 31 August 2008).

Availability of the National Qualifications Catalogue as a reference tool for training and recognition of skills (academic and professional) – includes references to key skills and training references for EFA Courses and modular training programmes

Regulation of EFA courses and secondary level RVCC procedures

Launch of procedures for acknowledging professional skills in the New Opportunities Centres system.

This is an unprecedented movement in the recent history of adult training and education systems in Portugal, which has revealed enormous potential and is therefore of great value. Half a million workers, unemployed individuals, non-working and marginalised women, young people without qualifications and senior citizens are heading to New Opportunities Centres [Centros Novas Oportunidades (CNO)] to find a path towards their professional future. The point of departure is the possibility these



centres (CNOs) offer to all Portuguese citizens of being able to complete the 9th and 12th school years through the Recognition, Validation and Skills Certification (RVCC) programme, and consequently the improved circumstances under which they can then access employment or training activities which had previously been out of reach for them.

However, this is not the only solution offered to adults with limited qualifications, as explained by the National Qualification Agency [Agência Nacional para a Qualificação], the inter-ministerial public organisation, which coordinates and guides the strategy for qualification on a national level: the experience of each and every adult is valuable and counts towards the certification. Furthermore, continuing to learn pays for itself; that is, it translates into earnings.

In the more than 450 New Opportunities Centres spanning the four corners of the country, adults who have been awarded an RVCC may even be guided towards other activities for assessment or the development of new skills.

During guidance at the New Opportunities Centres, other training programmes available in the region may also be advised upon, and pre-professional activities such as internships at companies or volunteer work in organisations of a civic and social nature may even be suggested, in order to create an incentive for professional experience that supports the individual process of professional reintegration.

Further alternatives may be explored by the adult by completing the Skills Assessments and exploring the potential for creating self-employment through small business initiatives.

The potential of this guidance system, run by specially-trained professionals, lies in partnerships and in the cooperation between local people involved in education training and the other participants in the region, whether they are from the business world or even from charitable organisations

National System for the Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences: Academic process

The National System for the Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences - Academic process aims to improve the scholar certification levels to adults with more than 18 years that doesn't have the basic or the secondary school level, by a lifelong learning perspective.

To whom

The National System for the Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences - Academic process can be the right answer for you, in case you don't have the basic or the secondary education level and if you have acquired the know-how and the skills during your lifelong experience.

You may have access to the basic education level (4th, 6th or 9th scholar year), if:

- you are 18 years old or more;
- you haven't concluded the 4th, 6th or 9th scholar year.

You may access to the secondary education level (12th scholar year), if you have 18 years or more, and if you fulfil the following requirement:

- if you have less than 23 years, and at least 3 years of proved professional experience.



The goal

The RVCC National System allows you to acknowledge, to validate and to certificate the know-how and the capabilities resulting from the acquired experience, within different contexts during your life. The achieved certification by this system allows not only your personal social and professional appreciation, but also the pursuance of the studies/training.

What is it?

The National System for the Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences - Academic process is developed by a process that runs in a New Opportunities Center, with the support from specialized and duly prepared professionals. These processes are respectively based, for the basic and secondary level at the:

- Key Competencies in Adult Education and Training Reference Framework (basic level);
- Key Competencies in Adult Education and Training Reference Framework (secondary level).

And it is organized by three basic elements:

- Capabilities' acknowledgement;
- Capabilities' Validation;
- Capabilities' Certification.

What is the certification?

The National System for the Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences - Academic process confers you a basic level certification (a qualification certificate correspondent to the 1st, 2nd or 3rd cycle of basic education and a basic education diploma), or a secondary level certification (a qualification certificate correspondent to the secondary education level and a diploma of the secondary education level).

In case the certification process does not lead to the issuing of a certificate or diploma, regarding the conclusion of the process, it will always be issued

Where

There are currently 456 New Opportunities Centers, located in different places, from the North to the South of the Country, foreseeing its continuous growing until 2010.

The New Opportunities Centers can operate in:

- any basic or secondary schools;
- Professional Training Centers of the Instituto do Emprego e Formação Profissional (IEFP);
- Autarchies, companies, associations;
- Other accredited training entities.

The New Opportunities Centers constitute a chartered tool to answer the adult population qualification needs, disposing of qualified and specialized teams to develop the work in the following intervention stages:



- Reception – Adults' attending and enrolment, clarification concerning the mission of the New Opportunities Centers, the different working process stages to be made, the directing possibility to educational and training, or to the offers of qualification's acknowledgement, validation and certification.
- Diagnosis – Adult profile analysis, resorting namely to clarifying sessions, curriculum analysis, proper individual and collective or strategic interviews; identification of the best available answers, facing the executed analysis.
- Directing – To disclose information to the adult that will allow the directing to the most proper qualification answer, including the directing to the development of educational and training routes that are external to the New Opportunities Center, or to a process of recognition, validation and certification. The directing results from an agreement between the center team and the adult, performed based in the analysis of his characteristics, his education and training route and life experience, motivations, needs and expectations identified by the diagnosis activities.
- Qualifications acknowledgement – Identification by the adult of the obtained know-how and qualifications during his life, by an activity set, based on the methodology and the qualification balance and by the use of several evaluation tools, by which the adult proofs his know-how, starting the construction of a learning reflexive portfolio.
- Qualification Validation – Qualification Evaluation lifelong acquired by the confrontation with the basic qualifications. The validation comprises the learning reflexive portfolio self-evaluation, in articulation with the hetero-evaluation of the RVC professionals and of the trainers from the respective basic qualification areas.
- Qualification Certification – The adult is presented before a certification jury, aiming the certification of the validated qualification.

Some criteria for good practice examples set out by the European Commission are:

- **Sustainable**

The activity is supported by two Ministries, Education and Labour and social affairs. The action is based on the National Catalogue of Qualifications (CNQ) an instrument for the strategic management of lower level qualifications. It is an integral part of the National Qualifications System (Decree-Law 396/2007 of 31 December).

This instrument is available on the following site: www.catalogo.anq.gov.pt. At this stage, it covers 229 vocational qualifications from 37 educational and training areas.

The National Catalogue of Qualifications is organised according to education and training areas, in accordance with the National Classification of Education and Training Areas (Ministerial Order 256/2005 of 16 March). The following references are defined for each qualification:

- Professional profile;
- Training reference;
- Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences Reference Framework (basic and technological components).

The National Catalogue of Qualifications is established in compliance with the implementation of the European Qualifications Framework - EQF [Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the EQF for Lifelong Learning (2008/C 111/01)] and with the National Qualifications Framework.



- **Documented impact**

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has praised the emphasis on vocational teaching and on valorisation of the teaching career currently undertaken in Portugal in the field of education. This recognition appears in the OECD's Economic Study regarding Portugal, which Angel Gurría, the organisation's secretary-general, recently presented, in Lisbon.

During the presentation of the aforementioned document, Angel Gurría stated that there were interesting reforms carried out in education and emphasised the "New Opportunities" Initiative as a good measure, as it "provides new learning opportunities for young people who risk dropping out of school, while providing opportunities for adults with a low level of academic education. The results achieved so far are promising." In this regard, Gurría also pointed out that "there are several OECD countries that could benefit right away from Portugal's experience in this field."

This study, which the OECD disclosed on 25 June, lists several programs undertaken by the Government in the field of Education, in order to strengthen the qualifications of young people and adults. The document highlights particularly positive initiatives undertaken in professionally qualifying education as well as the valorisation and qualification of the teaching career. The document points out the importance of the "New Opportunities" initiative, namely the development of the network of "new opportunities" centres, the diversification of courses being provided (especially courses with dual certification) for young people, and the recognition, validation and certification of competencies for adults.

The results achieved through this initiative are also valued, namely the increased demand for technical high school-level courses, as well as the expansion of the network of "New Opportunities" Centres and an increase in the number of adults affected by this initiative. The OECD's recommendation is for Portugal to continue bringing about policies aimed at increasing the qualification levels of the Portuguese, by placing emphasis on monitoring and strict evaluation of the results obtained.

For more information, visit the OECD website at:

http://www.oecd.org/document/19/0,3343,en_2649_201185_40857491_1_1_1_1,00.html

- **Holistic approach (guidance, quality of staff)**

The Quality Charter of the New Opportunities Centres guarantees a quality system and an holistic approach.

The New Opportunities Centres (CNO) are central agents, which have taken up the challenge to improve adult qualifications in the frame of the New Opportunities Initiative.

The aim is to turn the secondary level of schooling into the minimum level of qualification for the Portuguese population, by making new learning opportunities of learning, qualification and certification possibilities available on a wide scale. It is a policy, which requires results, rigor and transparency. Reaching this goal is a social necessity and a collective responsibility, which requires the valorisation of the System of Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competencies in the field of access to qualification and certification, the mobilisation of training capacities, institutional cooperation, the sharing of knowledge and the participation of public and private actors in the education and training sectors.



In this sense, the insertion of CNOs in an institutionally diversified territorial network, their role in the development and mobilisation of varied solutions in accordance with the adults' profiles and curricula, as well as their complementary and articulated character with schools, professional training centres, training entities, and economic, social and cultural actors are all decisive factors in the strive towards the set aims in respect of the defined requirements.

In this context, the National Agency for Qualification has published the Quality Charter for New Opportunities Centres. The ANQ is conscious of its responsibility in the production of guidelines and instruments, which give value to and promote more and better responses in the field of Portuguese people's qualifications. The Charter is the result of these ambitions. The Charter is an instrument, which sets high standards, and which explains strategies of action and service levels, thus contributing to the valorisation of work processes, the mobilisation of teams and the efficiency of financing.

- **Transferable: how to do it**

- "Resources and Dynamics" Collection
- *Support instruments for the establishment of a vocational project in New Opportunities Centres "*
- "Reflections and Perspectives" Collection
- "Practice and Projects" Collection

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Picture 9: Working Group to Key Action 3, Chair: Marijke Dashorst and Björn Garefelt



Key Action 5:

Improving the monitoring of the adult learning sector

Working Group Report:

Chair: Ingrida Mikisko (LAEA)

Good practice examples: Slovenia - Vida Mohorcic Spolar; UK – Alan Tuckett

Notetaker: Marta Lottes

Key areas for monitoring, identified during the discussion

- Participation
- Providers
- Access
- Financing
- Progression / achievements
- Data on literacy
- Government promises
- Labour market impact

Recommendations for the future:

1. Access to current research on European level, including EU survey (comparable and learner oriented)
2. Developing the skills how to use and interpret the data and to fit it into the current political discourse
3. Financial support



Picture 10: Working Group to Key Action 2, Chair: Helen Keogh and Eeva-Inkeri Sirelius



Good Practice Example Key Action 5:

Improving the monitoring of adult learning: UK experience (Mr. Alan Tuckett)

Government monitoring

Government monitors provision through:

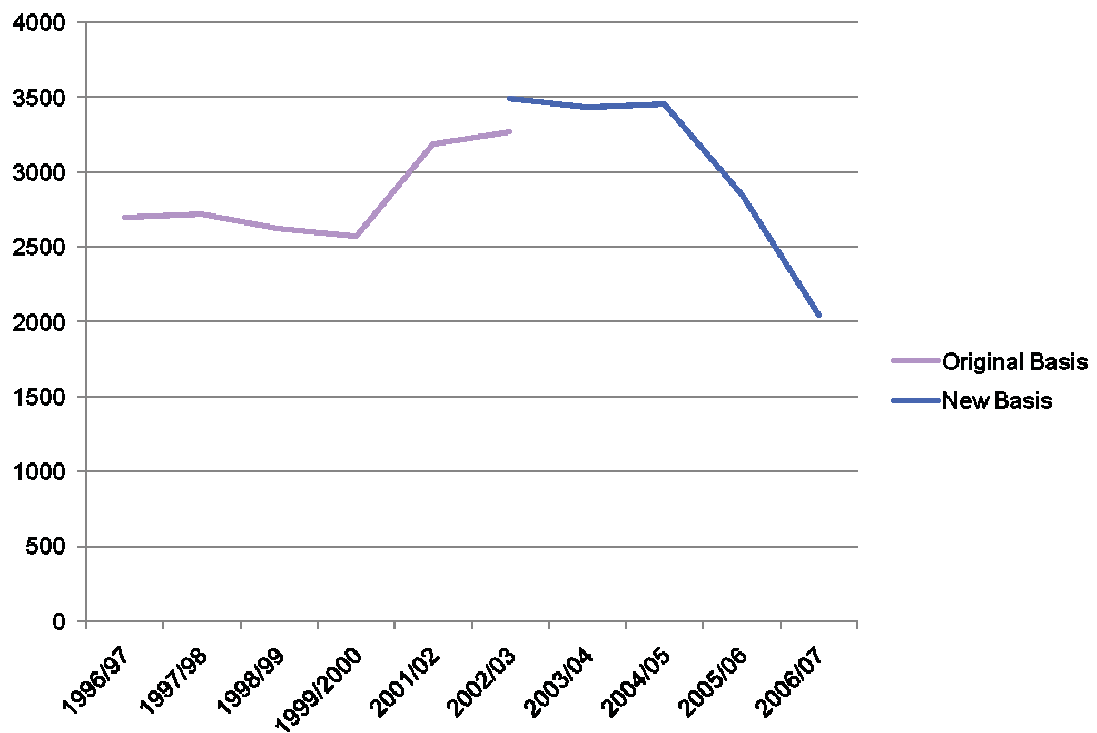
- data collection on student participation and achievement
- regular inspection of provision

NGOs

One key task for NGOs is to analyse public data and to publicise the impact on adult learning opportunities

Participation in Adult Learning: Longitudinal monitoring

Adult Learners on LSC-funded further education provision 1996-2007 (England)

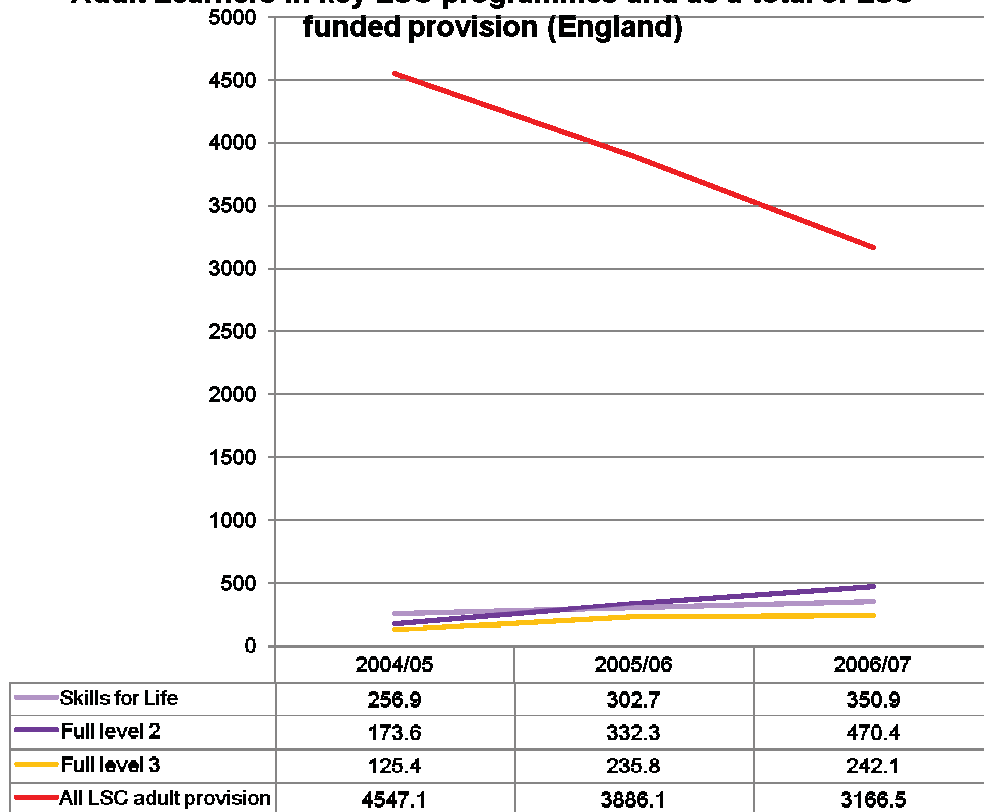


Source: Statistical First Release, Learning and Skills Council

Due to changes in the data collection system of the SFR, data for 2003/04 and earlier years is not comparable with later years.



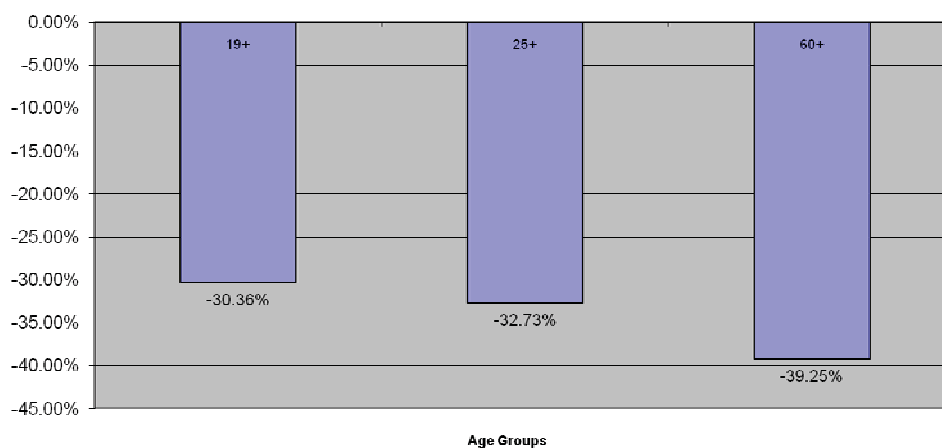
Adult Learners in key LSC programmes and as a total of LSC funded provision (England)



Source: Statistical First Release, Learning and Skills Council

Participation in Adult Learning: Age groups

Percentage change in total LSC learner numbers: 2004/05 - 2006/07



Source: Statistical First Release, Learning and Skills Council



Participation in Adult Learning: Longitudinal monitoring



Source: Labour Force Survey

NIACE has long been convinced that a key measure of the effectiveness of the system is to map participation in order to ask who isn't benefiting.

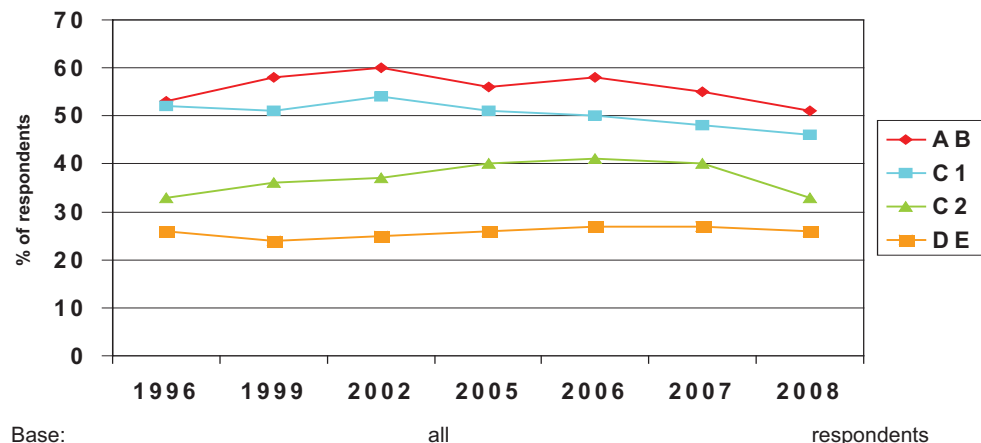
NIACE undertakes annual representative sample surveys of the whole adult population

The surveys ask about engagement with learning of all sorts – formal, informal and non-formal, publicly funded and self-organised

The question we ask

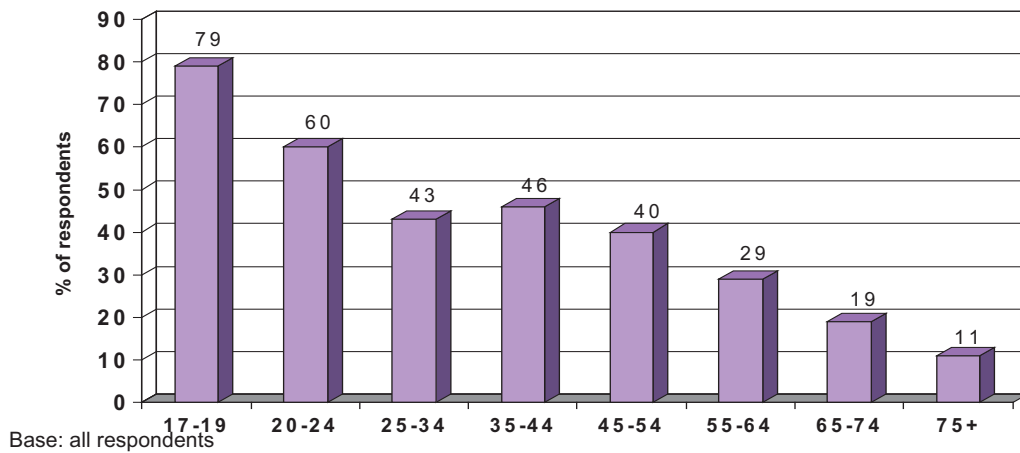
Learning can mean practising, studying or reading about something. It can also mean being taught, instructed or coached. This is so you can develop skills, knowledge, abilities or understanding of something. Learning can also be called education or training. You can do it regularly (each day or month) or you can do it for a short period of time. It can be full time, or part time, done at home, at work, or in another place like a college. Learning does not have to lead to a qualification. We are interested in any learning you have done, whether or not it was finished.

Current or recent participation by socio-economic class – 1999, 2002, 2005, 2006 2007 and 2008 compared

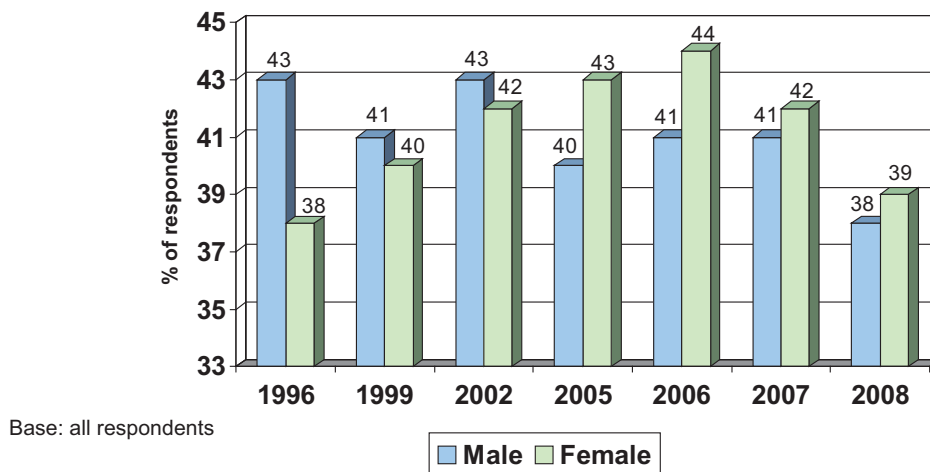




Current and recent participation in learning by age, 2008



Current or recent participation in learning by gender, 1996-2008 compared



Future intentions to take up learning, 2002 – 2008 compared

	2006 %	2007 %	2008 %
Very likely	22	25	19
Fairly likely	22	18	17
Total likely	45	43	36
Fairly unlikely	14	12	14
Very unlikely	38	43	46
Total unlikely	52	55	61
Don't know	3	2	3
Weighted base	4,690	4,669	4,691



Participation in learning by specific groups, 2006, 2007 and 2008 compared

	2006 %	2007 %	2008 %
All adults	42	41	38
Men	41	41	38
Women	44	42	39
Socio-economic C2	41	40	33
Socio-economic group DE	27	27	26
25-34 age group	49	50	43
65-74 age group	19	21	19
Full-time workers	51	49	45
Part-time workers	55	47	48

What people want to study

All subjects of current/recent learning – Top Ten, by age cohort					
17-44	%	All 45+	%	All 55+	%
Computer skills	19.3	Computer skills	31.8	Computer skills	40.6
Business studies	9.1	Foreign languages	8.1	Foreign languages	10.2
Health and medicine	8.4	Business studies	6.5	Arts	7.2
Foreign languages	4.3	Health and medicine	6.3	History	4.7
Social sciences	4.2	Arts	5.0	Religion	4.5
English language/ literature	3.8	History	3.9	Health and medicine	4.0
Engineering	3.7	Social work	3.9	Music	3.2
Science and maths	3.7	Religion	3.8	Business studies	3.1
Social work	3.2	Occupational health and safety	2.8	Social work	2.5
Communications	2.8	Communication	2.6	English language/literature	2.3

Base: all current/recent learners

How people like to study at work

Sources of learning to improve job performance, 2007			
	Very or quite helpful %	Of some help %	Of little or no help %
Learning as acquisition			
Training courses paid for by your employer or yourself	54	20	24
Using skills and abilities acquired outside of work	42	29	28
Drawing on the skills you picked up while studying for a qualification	45	21	31
Reading books, manuals and work-related magazines	39	24	50
Using the Internet	29	18	50
Learning as participation			
Doing your job on a regular basis	82	13	5
Being shown by others how to do certain activities or tasks	62	23	13
Watching and listening to others while they carry out their work	56	26	16
Reflecting on your performance	53	30	15
Using trial and error on the job	38	27	33



How people like to study for life outside work

Forms of learning and skills development outside of work, 2008				
	Very or quite helpful %	Of some help %	Of little or no help %	Don't know %
Learning as acquisition				
Reading books, manuals and magazines	57	25	13	9
Drawing on the skills you picked up while studying for a qualification	53	26	13	9
Training courses paid for by your employer or yourself	53	21	14	12
Using skills and abilities acquired elsewhere	52	29	12	7
Using the Internet	44	20	25	12
Learning as participation				
Being shown by others how to do activities or tasks	64	22	9	6
Undertaking an activity on a regular basis	60	23	10	7
Watching and listening to others while they carry out activities	57	26	11	6
Reflecting on your performance	49	31	12	7
Using trial and error	46	30	17	7

Base: all respondents (4,932)

Wider benefits

- prolongs active citizenship
- delays impact of Alzheimer's
- learners 13% more likely to give up smoking
- learners 34% increase in racial tolerance
- learners much less likely to be politically cynical
- learners less dissatisfied with their lives

Learning has these impacts

- whatever your prior education
- whatever your social class

<http://www.learningbenefits.net/>



Picture 11: World Café Session



Good Practice Example Key Action 5: Action Plan on Adult Learning in Slovenia (Dr. Vida A. Mohorčič Špolar)

The new educational legislative passed in 1996 included also the Law on Adult Education. The 22nd article speaks about the public interest in adult education, which is determined by the Adult Education Plan, which is to be proposed by the Government, and adopted by the Parliament. The 23rd article defines what the National Adult Education Plan should consist of: goals, priorities, activities to carry it through and the required amount of public money.

Global aims and priority fields in Adult Education Plan

Global Aims

Adult Education Plan defines four global aims and three priority fields. All the four global aims are considered equal.

They are as follows:

- Improve the level of general adult education.
- Raise the level of educational attainment whereas at least 12 years of successfully finished schooling is the basic educational standard.
- Increase the employment possibilities
- Increase learning possibilities and participation.

Priority fields

1. General adult education and learning
2. Raising the level of educational attainment
3. Education and training for the labour market.

Ad 1) First priority field - General adult education and learning

Adults will be assured various forms and possibilities to participate in programmes of:

- raising the level of general and cultural
- education, personal development and social inclusion,
- active citizenship,
- healthy lifestyle,
- environment protection,
- retaining cultural tradition and national identity, developing literacy skills,
- acquiring new basic skills,
- decreasing social neglect,
- motivating and stimulating learning and abandoned schooling.

To achieve these aims the share of population participating in various forms of general education will reach 6% by 2010. Target groups are younger adults, less educated, unemployed, marginalised groups, and population in less developed regions, migrants.

Ad 2) Second priority field - Raising the level of educational attainment

Adults will be assured various forms and possibilities to acquire or finish:

- primary education,
- lower or upper secondary vocational and general education,
- higher vocational education.

At least 50% of adults without compulsory primary education will achieve this level, at least 25% of those without finished upper secondary education will achieve either lower or upper secondary vocational or general education, and at least one tenth of those with finished upper secondary education will achieve higher vocational education. The



needs of the labour market will be taken into consideration in this respect, while the target group are adults without a level of education and unemployed. Priority will be given to the natural-technical field.

Ad 3) The third priority field - education and training for the labour market

Adults will be assured various forms and possibilities to:

- participate in programmes raising the level of literacy in order to retain, modernise and update the knowledge and skills necessary to increase the employment possibilities and,
- acquire National Vocational Qualifications through the certificate system.

To achieve this aim 50% of the unemployed will participate in programmes aimed at increasing the employment possibilities. Those whose workplace is threatened because of low educational attainment will be included as well. 10% of the unemployed and employed without vocational or other education will acquire National Vocational Qualification by the certificate system. They are also the priority group.

In order to achieve all the aims of Adult Education Plan various activities are envisaged dealing with:

- teachers and other professional staff in adult education,
- programme provision,
- information and guidance in adult education,
- research and development activities,
- information relating to provision and demand,
- organisational structure,
- promotion.

According to the law the global amount of public funds necessary to realise the goals of Adult Education Master Plan had to be set up as well. It was. Looking into the distribution of public funds the situation is as follows:

Priority field	%
I General adult education and learning	27,19
II Raising the level of educational attainment	39,19
III Education and training for the labour market	17,43
Infrastructure	16.19
Total	100.00



By realising the goals of Adult Education Plan in 2010:

- the share of adults aged 25-64 years with upper secondary education will reach at least 85% (Eurostat 2005 – 80,5%)
- the level of participation in lifelong learning of the same age group at least 15% (Eurostat 2005 – 15%)

Adult Education Plan - adopted by the Parliament in June 2004. Funds assured from the national budget and the European Social Fund. According to the law there is a need to report on the realisation of the Plan annually to the Government and biannually to the Parliament. The monitoring is done by the Ministries contributing to the realisation of the Plan (education and labour). Both of them are also in charge of ESS funds for their respective fields. Adults in the National Plan are understood as defined in the Law on Adult Education – learners who have “completed the mandatory primary schooling and who wish to acquire, refresh, expand and deepen their knowledge without having formal pupil or student status” (1996, article 1).

On the national level, data on adult learning is gathered by the Statistical Office and gives insight on the following:

- number of adults enrolled in learning (formal, non-formal) by fields of study, level of education, gender, age, type of institution, municipality
- number of adults finishing their learning activities (formal, non-formal) by fields of study, level of education, gender, age, type of institution, municipality,
- number and educational structure (attainment) of teachers in adult education (permanently employed, part time, external collaborators) – quality of staff,
- quality of premises (buildings, equipment – every 10 years),
- graduates (adults, students) by fields of study and country of birth,
- continuing education by fields of study, institutions, gender, age (data on age available by special request),
- population by activity, educational attainment, age, gender, employment status, occupation, country of birth (annually),
- unemployed by the country of birth,
- population by country of birth enrolled in higher education,
- employed by level of professional attainment by activity and gender.

Problems:

- no data on expenditure on adult education in GDP. Last one in 1995,
- no data on NVQs,
- sometimes incompatible age groups,
- only recently data on participation in various kinds of learning (LFS),
- no data on reasons for non-participating except for occasional research (participation, AES, literacy),
- no statistical data on participation of the employed in LLL,
- no statistical data on adults in continuing education (non-formal).



Conclusions

The conference provided an excellent opportunity for EAEA members to learn about the Action Plan; show case examples of good and interesting practice relating to the key actions; and make recommendations and suggestions for further developments.

The event demonstrated how Commission and Civil Society can work together to share expertise in the field of adult learning. In sharing their knowledge, attention was paid to how work at the grass roots can inform the development of policy and how policy can reflect the concerns of adult educators and learners for greater opportunities and influence within the EU and beyond.

The EAEA will continue to highlight examples of good practice particularly from the non-formal sector, provide opportunities for lessons to be shared and for members to address and influence the development of policies covered by the Action Plan and the strategic framework for European co-operation in adult education.

This conference was part of the EAEA work plan that includes further events relating to the key actions of the Action Plan, and co-operation with the Commission. In addition the EAEA and its members will be initiating work on a wider range of themes such as active citizenship and international development in the coming months.

Sue Waddington
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