



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR  
THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS

# Upskilling Pathways EAEA activities and member feedback

Gina Ebner, EAEA

# What is EAEA?

- It works with **adult education** and **lifelong learning**
- It concentrates on the **non-formal sector**
- It is an association with **120 members**, from **43 countries** (of the Council of Europe), representing **5000 associations**
- Advocacy (The Voice of ALE) and service
- Represent civil society in adult learning and education



# Recommendation on Upskilling Pathways (2016)

- It aims to help adults acquire a **minimum level of literacy, numeracy and digital skills** and/or acquire a **broader set of skills** by progressing towards an upper secondary qualification or equivalent (level 3 or 4 in the [European Qualifications Framework \(EQF\)](#) depending on national circumstances).
- Member states define the main target groups
- Member States are asked to work with existing strategies, initiatives and structures in order to provide UP
- FLEXIBLE LEARNING PATHWAYS



# The 3 Steps

- To boost access to and take up of quality learning opportunities, adults with low levels of skills should have access to Upskilling pathways in three **key steps**.
- **Step 1 – Skills assessment**
  - This is to enable adults to identify their existing skills and any needs for upskilling. It may take the form of a "skills audit": a statement of the individual's skills that can be the basis for planning a tailored offer of learning.
- **Step 2 – Learning offer**
  - The beneficiary will receive an offer of education and training meeting the needs identified by the skills assessment. The offer should aim to boost literacy, numeracy or digital skills or allow progress towards higher qualifications aligned to labour market needs.
- **Step 3 – Validation and recognition**
  - The beneficiary will have the opportunity to have the skills she or he has acquired validated and recognised.



# EAEA's reaction

- Statements
- Capacity building (mainly UP-AEpro project)
- Monitoring
- Participation in the consultation
- Feedback from our members
- and most of it with lots of recommendations...



# Members consultation – key findings

- **Upskilling Pathways has prompted national strategies to focus on basic skills and validation of skills acquired through non-formal and informal learning;** Upskilling Pathways strategy has raised awareness of ALE in their respective countries and has increased and improved cooperation between ministries of education and labour.
- In certain member states, learning programmes and activities that contribute to the implementation of Upskilling Pathways are now **(partly) funded by the Recovery and Resilience Fund.**
- A majority of EAEA members indicate that **funding for ALE programmes has stagnated or slightly decreased in 2020-2021.**
- The implementation of Upskilling Pathways has not only shifted the focus of ALE policy towards the validation of skills and the promotion of basic skills, but has also **narrowed the focus of ALE** in general, especially towards employability.



# Members consultation – key findings

- Upskilling Pathways **do not always seem to reach the most vulnerable target groups**, for instance women who are inactive in the labour market and older workers (e.g. in Hungary).
- A number of countries, for instance Germany and Slovakia, note that there is a **lack of infrastructure** to implement the Upskilling Pathways. Guidance measures are not sufficiently available everywhere.
- There is a **need for better cooperation between non-formal and formal adult learning** to increase the flexibility of learning programmes and facilitate easier entry into learning.
- What emerges is that those countries that have **integrated Upskilling Pathways into a broader lifelong learning strategy** are most likely to reach the target groups and build innovative upskilling programmes.



# Recommendations

- **Financing:**

- **Prioritise and invest in ALE, basic skills, and outreach.** Public investment is crucial for the successful implementation of ALE, basic skills, and outreach.
- **Quality requires sufficient funding.** In order to provide quality adult education, education providers need to invest in their infrastructure, recruit well-trained teachers and be able to offer further training.
- **The Recovery and Resilience Fund must be an additional source of funding** and should not replace pre-existing financial supports.
- **Provide funding and support learning within communities, cities and regions.** This is especially true for remote and rural areas, where ALE must be provided to engage isolated and marginalised people.



# Recommendations

- **Governance:**
  - **Strengthen the governance of adult education and basic skills through national lifelong learning strategies.** A comprehensive lifelong learning strategy will help link learning pathways.
  - **Ensure adult education and basic skills are linked to existing social inclusion and outreach strategies.** By integrating ALE into existing initiatives and policies, these will be improved, and learning will become mainstreamed.
  - **Strengthen non-formal education and learning structures.** Better infrastructure for non-formal ALE must be provided through legislation, institutional development and continuous and secure financial support.
  - **Provide incentives and support for the professional development of adult educators** in cooperation with relevant higher and further education institutions.



# Recommendations

- **Cooperation:**
  - **Reinforce cooperation between ministries, sectors, institutions and services of different fields.** A successful strategy needs strong cooperation between different levels of policy-making, sectors and institutions.
  - **Ensure cooperation between civil society and non-formal learning providers.** In order to implement the strategy effectively, non-formal learning providers and civil society organisations must be recognised and valued as key stakeholders.
  - **Put learners at the centre, involving them in consultation and decision-making processes.** ALE providers should give learners the opportunity to co-design their tailored offer of learning and their upskilling journey.



# Recommendations

- **Inclusion:**

- **Analyse and remove barriers.** Barriers that hinder people from participating, especially from disadvantaged groups, need to be examined in depth.
- **Ensure that priority target groups can access learning opportunities free of charge** as part of the Upskilling Pathways Recommendation.

- **Skills addressed:**

- **Ensure that Upskilling Pathways include skills that help learners thrive not only as workers, but also as active citizen.**
- **Provide language learning and mobility opportunities to everyone in the EU, including migrants and refugees.**





EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR  
THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS

Questions? 😊



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR  
THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS

THANK YOU!