

Little funding for holistic adult learning in Poland

While NGOs in Poland actively reach out to groups that are at risk of exclusion, most of the funding remains limited to labour market interventions, with a focus on upskilling and reskilling.

More needs to be done to encourage holistic and learner-centred approaches and foster a culture of learning. Additionally, civil society and learners have little say in policy-making processes.

According to EAEAs Polish member, much still needs to be done to strengthen learners' voices: adult learners do not have sufficient opportunities to express their views and concerns to policymakers, which means that they are not taken into account in policy-making processes. The situation is similar for civil society organisations. One example is the implementation of the Marrakech Framework for Action: while civil society would like to get involved in the process, there has been no support from national policymakers to include them.

Green transition and social justice at the heart of Polish member STOP

Green skills are an important focus of the work of the Polish member NGO Trainers Association STOP, which is promoting the green Code of Conduct for trainers, which was developed under an Erasmus+ KA2 project Eco-active for Planet. Among other activities, STOP has offered green workshops for young adults under the PolnRock Festival in

August 2023. The green transition will be further addressed by a possible Erasmus+ project focusing also on social justice and the doughnut economy within the context of local learning centres.

Funding for adult learning: focus on upskilling and reskilling

According to one of the Polish members of EAEA, structured funding for adult learning and education remains limited to the labour market, focusing on upskilling and reskilling. Most adult learning courses are offered by private companies (usually for professionals who are looking to upskill) or NGOs which target groups at risk of exclusion.

The Ministry of Labour finances a programme open to NGOs; a few regional programmes are also available with the support of EU funds which target specific groups of adults, such as the unemployed, or mothers coming back to work. Additionally, an agency under the Ministry of Development supports small and medium enterprises in adult learning for upskilling.

The implementation of the European Education Area is visible through various programmes such as Erasmus+, which are visible but might be out of reach for organisations without the resources, skills or time to apply for EU funding.

Main sources of funding for adult learning in Poland are:

- Project funding
- Programme funding
- Operating grants/structural funding

While different sources of funding exist, EAEAs Polish member indicates that funding from the EU, public sources and private sources remains insufficient, and most people cannot afford to participate in ALE:

"There is a need to open a regular funding line for ALE institutions at different levels, with a perspective of projects rolled out in a 10-15 year perspective, fostering a learning culture."

Top three recommendations to advance adult learning in Poland

- Open a regular funding line for ALE institutions at different levels, with a perspective of projects rolled out in a 10-15 year perspective, fostering a learning culture.
 - Extend adult learning beyond the labour market, with a more learner-centred and holistic perspective.
 - Recognise adult learning as an important sector also in country recommendations of the European Semester.
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