# Developments: Additional funding for activities for Ukrainian refugees

According to the Swedish National Council of Adult Education, the situation for adult learning and education has slightly improved since the previous year. Last year, a supplementary one-time grant of 50 million SEK was introduced by the government to support study activities for Ukrainian war refugees. Many organisations took part in lobbying for extra funding. The Swedish National Council of Adult Education also received additional grants for activities aimed at Ukrainian refugees.

Additionally, the government launched a new push for activities aimed at strengthening minority languages and introduced funding for 3000 additional full-time participants at folk high schools in 2022. This meant the new programmes for vocational and professional training launched the previous year can continue (if the school so chooses). Other than the mentioned, the funding situation of adult learning and education has stayed the same as before.

Swedish folkbildning (general public education) is largely financed through funding from the state, county councils and municipalities. There is also funding for projects and programmes aimed to deliver certain learning objectives and earmarked funding for certain student groups and learning providers.

## Country reports by the European Commission

According to the Swedish National Council of Adult Education, country reports of the

European Commission reflect the situation in Sweden to some extent. Adult education programmes and projects aim to address issues indicated in the country reports and country-specific recommendations.

Civil society is consulted to some extent in the design and implementation of adult learning and education policies. The Swedish National Council of Adult Education actively participates in decision-making, as it is responsible for handling the government grants to study associations and folk high schools, The council regularly files reports and gives updates on developments and needs to government bodies.

## Financing of adult education

The funding situation of ALE in Sweden has stayed the same in comparison to last year. ALE is mainly financed by project funding, programme funding and operating grants.

## Learners voice

The learners voice in Sweden is represented by adult learning associations, based on their experience with the learning needs of their target groups. Learners are represented in the governance structure of regional/national adult education associations through their own representation bodies.

The Swedish National Council of Adult Education is a member organisation consisting of the stakeholders who in turn represent groups of learners through their own organisational structures, giving them influence in how the government grants are used.

## Sustainability

A lot of adult education providers in Sweden offer sustainability-focused activities. The

different associations and folk high schools have their own sustainability policies, often at ambitious levels.

The Swedish National Council of Adult Education has sustainability policies in place for travel and recycling, for example, but would like to develop a sustainability strategy at an operational level as well. They also promote sustainability through specific classes.

## Marrakech Framework for Action

Prior to the CONFINTEA VII, the global adult education conference in Morocco, there was a consultation between the Swedish UNESCO commission, the national ministries and civil society. Civil society organisations were also involved in CONFINTEA VII as part of the national delegation.

The Swedish National Council of Adult Education agrees that the Marrakech Framework for Action, the result of the CONFINTEA VII conference, is a concrete tool to develop adult education. However, in Sweden, the national adult education policies are stronger.

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# Challenges and future plans: Falling participation rates during Covid

Covids impact on participation in adult learning and education is still evident. In 2021 a total of 631 600 unique participants took part in study circles and long folk high school

courses. This means a drop of 208 000 participants compared to 2020, with a similar drop from 2019. This drop has been recorded mostly in study associations. At the same time, governmental funds have remained stable during the pandemic. For the coming year, the number of participants will be of extra importance.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, a number of irregularities were discovered in study circle activities. For example, in some cases activities have been reported, although they have not taken place. This, together with political tensions concerning support for our Muslim study association, is creating an uptick in media and political interest.

Before the summer of 2022, the government launched a special inquiry that will look at the whole structure for providing grants to study associations and folk high schools. The results are expected sometime next year.

## Plans for the year 2023

The Swedish National Council of Adult Education will continue providing insights into ALE through annual reports and statistics. The organisation continues to be responsible for the distribution and control of government grants to study associations and folk high schools.