

Developments: Lack of terminology and recognition for adult education

In the last year, many organisations left the umbrella organisation The Association of Adult Education Institutions in Slovakia (AIVD) in Slovakia, because of the COVID-19 crisis. AIVD faced several challenges in the last year and their funding situation deteriorated. Many of their main events had to be cancelled because of the pandemic.

There are no new adult education policy reforms in Slovakia. Civil society advocates for a new lifelong learning strategy, as the old one is outdated (2011). AIVD wants a new strategy and legislation to respond to the challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Adoption of relevant terminology would be a first step to recognition of adult learning and education in Slovakia. In the long run it would help to collect the relevant information, set up and enable validation, introduce individual learning accounts and set up a financial support system for adult education.

In Slovakia civil society is included in policy making to a certain extent. There are some policies/strategies for the implementation of Upskilling Pathways and some new initiatives to implement the Sustainable Development Goals. AIVD would like to highlight the importance of regional cooperation. The European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) has been implemented in some areas, but civil society has not been part of a consultation process. The EPSR plays an important role in promoting new national/regional policies

and frameworks in Slovakia and the reports by the European Semester mirror the experience of AIVD.

Challenges: Closure of the department of lifelong learning

The lack of terminology and recognition of adult education limits financing opportunities and the validation of learning. On the European level, Slovakia commits itself to adult education policies, but on a national level the term "vzdelvanie dospelch" (adult education) is not used in legislation. The ministry is called ministry of schooling, not ministry of education.

This example shows the contradictory nature of Slovakian adult learning and education policies. The lack of vocabulary makes it cumbersome to implement educational policies. Not having the necessary collection of data makes it difficult to report or set strategies for adult education.

The European adult learning and education brand could be helpful to communicate the importance to Slovak citizens. Defining adult education in legislation would open new pathways of recognition. In 2020 the ministry of schooling closed the Department of Lifelong learning and assigned the area to the Section of Secondary Schools and Lifelong Learning. AIVD fears, alongside other civil society actors, that without a dedicated department to adult education strategies and policies will not be implemented.

