

Belarus introduction

Adult education providers in Belarus noted that there were very few changes, positive or negative in the past year for the sector. However, they did provide an analysis of what the most important next steps were for addressing the gaps in the present system - from greater international communication, to improving accessibility and outreach for vulnerable groups.

Recent developments in Belarus

In 2018/2019 there have been no major changes in the field of adult education in Belarus, according to our EAEA member. The main challenges are related to the accessibility of educational programmes for adults living in remote regions and rural areas, as well as for groups at risk of social exclusion. In this regard, the adult education system needs to develop institutional frameworks in each region, so that advanced the involvement of stakeholders can be advanced, primarily as local authorities. Higher support and recognition from the government would considerably increase the amount of financial subsidies, and consequently the implementation of well-structured mechanisms. This, in turn stimulates the participation of social groups, vulnerable people, enhancing their awareness.

Our member in Belarus is currently focusing, and intends to continue to do so, on projects for young people and young adults, promoting critical thinking, responsible and sustainable attitudes towards nature and the environment, historical and cultural heritage, and intercultural learning.

Links to EU and international policy in Belarus

As Belarus is not an EU member they are not explicitly implementing EU policy into their adult education structures. However, our members do note the intention to begin to focus on climate change education for young people, which directly relates to goal 13 of the Sustainable Development Goals. These are not initiatives or concrete plans yet, however, so we will see how Belarus approaches international education policy in the future.

Challenges and recommendations in Belarus

Our EAEA member in Belarus hopes that their governing bodies will increase the responsibility of local authorities in adult education. While this will not necessarily increase funding there they hope that it will encourage local authorities to properly recognise the value of adult education: and as a result, will promote awareness of adult education. Promotion and outreach on a regional level could be very valuable for the adult education system in Belarus. At present adult education providers in Belarus are struggling to reach those who need basic training the most, it is their hope that with regional responsibilities and control recruitment efforts for adult learners can be more focused and concerted.

Our member also notes that future adult education agendas should start to consider EU and non-EU countries collaborating, this is a priority because they imagine that it will improve communication and sharing of best practices. Sharing experiences and recommendations from a wider cultural network could be especially valuable for Belarus who is not presently a member state of the European Union, and thus, through increased communication, could begin to enlist practices that were developed by EU countries who are not presently engaging in discourse with Belarus directly. Finally, due to the geographical location of Belarus may want to encourage Russian and EU collaboration. Belarus has a very strong political and economic relationship with Russia and so seeing communication between their closest neighbour and ally, as well as advice and experiences from their wider geographical and cultural community could provide them with practices they find it easiest to implement.
