

Developments: The third inter-ministerial conference for adult literacy

According to Lire et Ecrire, the situation of adult learning and education (ALE) in Belgium has slightly improved since last year.

In June 2021, the third inter-ministerial conference for adult literacy took place, with the participation of all relevant ministries, including those of culture, social cohesion, social affairs, employment and immigration. The conference set the following priorities:

- To better understand the population in terms of literacy needs and strengthen analysis of current literacy provision
- Linking the different steps of learning pathways for low-literate people
- Reinforcing trainers training

Overall, the focus on digital learning grew in the last years in Belgium. In the field of literacy, Lire et Ecrire focuses its campaigns and actions on the accessibility of digital public services.

The Lire et Ecrire have been consulted for the inter-ministerial conference on literacy. Moreover, they are members of the "Conseil supérieur de l'Education permanente", the body that informs the government and the administration on issues related to informal adult education and culture. The Conseil takes place every month and the Lire et Ecrire has a permanent seat in this body.

Country reports of the European Commission

The Country Reports of the European Commission reflect the situation in Belgium to some extent. According to Lire et Ecrire, this is the case because the reports focus only on the relationship between ALE and employment and do not address the role of adult education in citizenship issues. Adult education programmes and projects aim to address issues indicated in the country reports and country-specific recommendations.

To some extent, the reports imply that the low rate of participation in ALE is due to inadequate provision. However, Lire et Ecrire believes that it is also related to the material conditions of people that are in need of literacy training; people must first have access to basic needs in order to participate in adult learning.

Financing of adult education

The funding situation for adult learning and education has stayed the same in Belgium compared to the previous year. ALE is mainly financed through project funding, programme funding, operating grants, fees and employer contributions.

Sustainability

Lire et Ecrire would like to develop a strategy to promote sustainability in their work procedures, but they do not know where to start. So far, only their literacy groups are working on sustainability issues at the operational level. However, they are promoting sustainability through specific classes on green skills.

CONFINTEA VII

According to Lire et Ecrire, civil society was involved in the preparatory process of the CONFINTEA VII, a global adult education conference organised by UNESCO. Though, they argue that the overall low participation of civil society and learners was disappointing.

