# Portugal introduction

In recent years there have been important initiatives in the field of non-formal adult education that are striving to address such issues as low literacy level among adults and low levels of participation of adults in education. The new developments create a hopeful atmosphere for the future of adult education in Portugal.

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# Recent developments in Portugal

The Portuguese government, in collaboration with the European Commission, as well as Agncia Nacional para a Qualificao e o Ensino Profissional, I.P., and EAEA, have developed the new National Plan on Adult Literacy. The Plan aims to address the issue of high illiteracy in the country, where over half of the adult population has not attained upper-secondary level of education. The Plan suggests a series of strategies that would support the distribution of adult education ideas; provide guidance for adult education providers on how to work with adult learners in order to motivate and encourage them to participate in education; set action points to ensure sustainable and effective development of adult education.

At the moment, a lot of innovative initiatives in education are fostered by established in 2017 public policy INCoDe.2030, whose objective is to promote and enhance digital competences. The initiative calls for stronger presence of technologies in education and the workplace, however the primary zone of presence of the initiative is formal education.

# Links to EU and international policy in Portugal

There are a number of policies and initiatives that are working in accordance with the overall European and international agenda for promoting adult learning. For instance, there is a national programme that focuses on high-level qualifications and increasing the employability of adults, which, among others, is implemented in Qualifica educational centres. The programme targets different age groups and educational backgrounds, however, there is a stronger emphasis on vocational education.

Some of EAEAs members in Portugal are collaborating on promoting adult education and strengthening literacy growth among the adult population. The organizations are part of the bigger Literacy for Democracy project, which intends to "educate for citizenship and democratic literacy in order to develop the self-efficacy of communities."

# Challenges and recommendations in Portugal

One of the main challenges that adult education organisations are facing nowadays in Portugal is lack of steady and solid funding. Irregular and insufficient funding can affect the capacity of adult education institutions, weakening their outreach and ability to engage the adult population in learning.

The rate of adult participation in all forms of learning is another challenge that remains a focus in Portugal. There is a need to engage non-traditional students in learning and widen the spectrum of outreach from education providers, ensuring the inclusiveness and responsiveness of education regardless of learners age, nationality, or socioeconomic background.

Thus, a concise and cohesive national educational strategy, which would consider all social groups, is a must. Hopefully, the new National Plan for Adult Literacy will set foundations for the development of a broader action plan in adult education.