

# Developments: Emergency corona policies for educators

In 2019 a political agreement on upskilling the labor force was published. The agreement includes basic skills, English language and digital learning as key elements. A major change was that the program was made accessible to unemployed people. There is also a learning program for adults above 25 called ' Preparatory Adult Education' that fosters basic skills in Danish, Math, English and digital competences.

The global COVID-19 pandemic led to an emergency policy that allowed adult educators to move their practice online, which was not possible in the previous law. Since March and the start of the pandemic many adult education courses were cancelled but they took up again over the summer. The funding situation for the Danish Adult Education Association (DAEA) has slightly deteriorated. In 2019 they did not receive external funding from private funds. In contact with the Ministries of Culture and Education, they ensured that civil society would receive proper aid following the COVID-19 crisis.

In Denmark civil society is consulted in policy making to a certain extent. The European Pillar of Social Rights has been implemented in some areas but DAEA is not aware of a civil society consultation process.

## Sustainability is a priority in Denmark

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are high on the agenda for adult learning and education providers in Denmark. Many organizations focus on the involvement of the local community to make real changes. Initiatives are innovative and try to do things differently in order to create engagement. The national project, our goal seeks to create sub-goals and indicators for the implementation of the SDGs in the Danish context. The

project is a collaboration between researchers, statisticians and the Danish parliament.

Danish Adult Education Association (DAEA) has also taken the sustainability path and launched their new strategy: sustainable folkbildning for 2020-2022. The SDGs are integral to the strategic work of the DAEA, focusing on the goals 3, 4, 11, 12, 13 and 16. The strategy highlights the role of non-formal adult education, promotes sustainability for the existing network of education providers and sets up a research project. DAEA has established a network on sustainability in adult education, and SDGs are a focus for funding of development projects. A lot of initiatives are going on in order to inspire and support DAEAs members to work with sustainable development.

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## Challenges: COVID and the folkbildning law

The adult education sector has been significantly affected by COVID-19, but DAEA only faced minor issues. DAEAs work program changed, as they were to document the consequences of the lock down of their member organizations and report it back to the ministry. Adjusting programs and providing education during the lockdown and restrictions was one of the major challenges for the last year. Some people are scared to sign up for adult education, especially the elderly. Many member organisations experienced a big loss in income due to cancelled events.

One of the priorities of DAEA for the next will be changing the folkbildning law. At the moment municipalities subsidise a maximum of one third of the costs for teacher and manager salaries. In order to minimize the local differences and hence the differences in participant fees, DAEA wants to change the law, so that the municipalities are obliged to

give a subsidy corresponding to a minimum of one third of the costs, with the possibility to support even more.

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