Developments: Non-formal education is still not recognised as specific field in adult education

According to the Associacao Portuguesa para a Cultura e Educacao Permanente (APCEP), the situation of adult learning and education (ALE) in Portugal has stayed the same in comparison to last year.

In Portugal, there is a formal system of adult education offers. Ministries and government departments are responsible for developing public policy on adult education. There are also several occupations, projects and offers in adult education, characterised by a diversity of tasks and activities. However, APCEP states that non-formal education is not recognised as a specific field in adult education policy.

In Portugal, several new policies/strategies on adult education have been implemented over the past year:

- A qualifica Accelerator
- A new standard of key-competences
- A Quality Charter of Qualifica centres
- Portuguese courses for migrants

APCEP activities in 2022

APCEP planned some activities in Portugal around EAEAs annual theme 2022,

transformative learning. They organised an online event on CONFINTEA VII and a national meeting on transformative learning and the education of adults.

In addition, APCEP has focused on three specific themes:

- Celebrating 40 years anniversary of APCEP
- Literacy and democracy projects for older learners, following on from what has been developed in recent years
- Development of a citizenship education project.

Consultations/campaigning

APCEP is member of the general counsel of the national agency for qualification and vocational education and training (Agencia Nacional para a Qualificacao e Ensino Profissional). Moreover, the Portuguese organisation engaged in different campaigning and advocacy activities from meetings and online events to social media campaigns and policy letters.

Financing adult education

Adult education is mainly financed through project funding, programme funding, operating grants, fees and employer contribution. The funding situation of ALE in Portugal has slightly improved in comparison to last year.

APCEP mentions as Important development that there was funding given to adult learners who attend courses in formal education. It hasnt been available in Portugal before. Furthermore, the EU recovery and resilience plan for Portugal was approved and now there is specific funding to promote education offers to adult learners.

Country reports by the European Commission

According to APCEP, the country reports of the European Commission reflect the Portuguese situation to some extent. However, the reports reflect only the formal education system, not non-formal education activities and projects under development. The adult education programmes aim to address the issues in the country reports.

Learners voice

The legislation does not currently require the adult learners to be included in decision-making processes in Portugal. Adult learners are represented by adult learning associations and the learners voice is made visible through communication activities.

Impact of Covid-19

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic ALE providers in Portugal have downsized to smaller premises as some of the learning offers will remain online. However, the funding for ALE has increased to mitigate the effects of Covid-19 on the economy.

Sustainability

APCEP is currently developing a strategy to promote sustainability in their work procedures. Within their organisation, sustainability is promoted through specific classes on green skills.

Overall, the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) varies in Portugal. According to APCEP, it depends on the organisation developing activities and projects.

CONFINTEA

In Portugal there has been a consultation on CONFINTEA VII between the national UNESCO commission, the national ministries and civil society. However, APCEP states that Portuguese civil society did not have the opportunity to participate in CONFINTEA conference in Marrakech.

According to APCEP, the Marrakech Framework for Action, the outcome document of CONFINTEA VII, might be a guiding document for countries with weaker adult education systems, but ALE policies and strategies in their country or region are actually stronger.

Policy recommendation

If APCEP could make a recommendation to the Portuguese government, it would be:

- To include the non-formal education sector in the national public policy (legal regulations and funding)
- To create a specific funding to develop a national adult literacy plan that goes beyond qualification purposes
- To develop a specific plan for older learners in non-formal education.