

Norway introduction

With the changes that are happening in the government, there is a lot of space for dialogue and hope for the future policies. At the moment, the new strategic plan for education is being designed and civil society has its say in it. Regional development is becoming stronger and brings in new opportunities, as well as challenges.

Recent developments in Norway

In recent years, there have been several strategic steps in Norwegian policies concerning adult education. In 2017 the current Norwegian Strategy for Skills Policy was adopted and will be active until the year 2021. Therefore, the government of Norway is now working on a new strategic plan and will present it to the Parliament in 2020. The new strategy will keep in focus the need to promote lifelong learning and widen learning opportunities for all social groups. The civic society has had its impact on the development of the new strategy. In particular, the Norwegian Association for Adult Learning (NAAL), an EAEA member, has been able to incorporate the perspective of adult education into the process of implementation of the current plan and is working on strengthening the position of adult education in the next one. The Associations participation in the writing of skills strategies has led to a more efficient acknowledgement of adult learning in the non-formal sector among key audiences at the national and government levels. Through active participation, NAAL managed to increase the awareness of the need to apply a broader perspective on adult learning and skills, for example life skills, participation, and inclusion to ensure a sustainable strategy in the

field of education.

On June 4th, an expert committee appointed by the government, presented their report on Sustainable Skills development with a number of proposals for new policies. The work from the committee is an important contribution to the Skills reform work currently going on in the government.

In 2017, the government also presented the white paper Skilled Workers for the Future - Vocational college education. The paper's aim was to promote vocational education among students, improve its quality by strengthening professional development of educators, and making it more relevant and job-market oriented. As part of the implementation of the strategy several new programmes have been launched.

At the same time, the Norwegian government is going through the process of major structural change, aimed at enhancing the responsibilities of the middle governing level: the new regions. Starting from January 2020, the new regions will have a much stronger responsibility for regional skills policies. As a result of these processes, NAAL, as well as other educational associations, are strengthening their regional presence.

Links to EU and international policy in Norway

Even though the EU Upskilling Pathways are not formally adopted by Norway, the national strategies of the Norwegian government are closely related to its ideas.

Challenges and recommendations in Norway

The main challenge for the field of adult education in Norway at present is finding funds to finance governmental, and local, initiatives to strengthen the development and outreach of Skills policies. There is a need to widen the scope of educational opportunities, involving various stake-holders and educational providers to ensure a broader outreach and more sustainable results. Non-formal and informal learning needs to be part of government strategies and planning, requiring not only the provision of support to the sector, but also recognition of the value of non-formal learning.
