

Developments: New adult education curricula are planned

According to the Catalan Association for Education, Training and Research (ACEFIR), the situation of Adult Learning and Education (ALE) in Spain has stayed the same in comparison to last year.

In Spain, there are different autonomous communities. Some of them have an influence on educational policies, while others do not. Thus, the situation cannot be extrapolated from region to region. However, thanks to the coordination between adult education organisations and EPALE, ACEFIR is being informed about developments in the sector.

Spanish adult education organisations are more active in comparison to last year. A national adult education congress was organised, and ALE organisations held preparation meetings for CONFINTEA VII. In this context, ACEFIR has been in contact with the Spanish Education Ministry.

New curricula for digital and basic skills

In Catalonia, an educational foundation, Fundació Bofill, has published a study that could serve as a basic document to restructure the ALE at the regional level. In addition, there have been some changes in the curricula of Digital and Basic skills in Catalonia. In Spain, a new curriculum is planned for formal adult education.

In Catalonia, there is a new curriculum for literacy courses, which will be enlarged to four

courses or levels instead of three. Moreover, the digital competency course has been restructured according to the Digital Competence recommendations.

Overall, ACEFIR generally sees some changes being prepared in Spain, but neither any results nor new laws are foreseeable yet.

Participation in policymaking

Last year, ACEFIR participated in regional, national and international consultations, especially related to CONFINTEA VII. In addition, ACEFIR participated in the consultations that were part of adult education studies or research.

Some ACEFIR members advocated defending the rights of Adult School learners when a political decision in Catalonia affected their enrolment to further studies.

Learners voice

The legislation does not currently require adult learners to be included in decision-making processes in Spain. The learners voice is represented by adult learning associations, based on their experience with the needs of their target groups. Learners can also form learner councils within their adult education learning centres. However, few learners have been invited to the national ALE conference.

Financing of adult education

According to ACEFIR, the funding situation for adult education has slightly improved in Spain. Adult education is mainly financed through programme funding, operating grants and fees paid by individuals.

Sustainability

ACEFIR provides support to other ALE providers and organisations who can have an impact on issues related to sustainability. For instance, ACEFIR collaborates with the "UNESCO Friends", organisations that have a Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) programme.

In Spain, the implementation of the SDGs varies in the ALE sector. Each organisation decides what goals and objectives they want to achieve or consider in their programmes. Some organisations already have specific programmes on sustainability and others do it in a less deliberate way.

CONFINTEA VII

ACEFIR has participated in CONFINTEA VII as part of the Spanish delegation, representing civil society. However, they note that they were surprised that nobody from UNESCO was present in the national preparation process in Spain. UNESCO did talk to the Spanish Ministry of Education, but UNESCO did not take a proactive stance on a possible meeting with civil society representatives.

Challenges and future plans: Raising awareness about the importance of adult education

In Spain, the digital gap has increased during the Covid-19 pandemic and ALE

organisations have lost groups of learners. However, the learning provision will not remain hybrid, and the ALE providers have not downsized to smaller premises.

Future plans

ACEFIR has planned a dissemination campaign to raise awareness about the importance of adult learning and education. The campaign will be based on interviews and videos of the personal experiences of adults explaining how adult education has positively affected their lives.
