

Germany introduction

The current German government is addressing several topics related to adult education, including family issues, vocational training, strategies for continuing education, and digital skills. Even though the coalition agreement has not yet been passed, important tax reforms are expected which might affect the adult education sector. Overall, German EAEA members are working on tackling educational priorities, such as social cohesion, sustainability, and digitalisation.

Recent developments in Germany

At the moment, the state is in the process of developing a new coalition agreement. The new agreement is expected to extend the National Decade for Literacy and put a stronger focus on family and workplace-centred basic skills. The government has also initiated the National Strategy for Continuing Education, which focuses largely on digital transformation and workplace learning. An investigation commission (Enquete-Kommission) has been set up in the parliament to approach the Strengthening of vocational training to secure a qualified workforce in the future. The coalition agreement is also expected to support the establishment of a new National Education Council, which would increase awareness of educational barriers at a national level, bringing representatives of different regions together. It is supposed to transform the existing system of land-level educational regulations, although the process of deciding its structure and functionality could be lengthy, not to mention challenging.

Links to EU and international policy in Germany

In Germany the economic support for projects and initiatives in adult education is still well guaranteed, which allows both state and non-governmental organizations to concentrate on their future priorities. Germany's focus is now education for sustainable development, digitalisation, and social cohesion in both Germany and Europe. Even though the Upskilling Pathways initiative is not evident in national or local strategies, basic and civic skills are high up on the agenda of local organizations. For instance, EAEA member, German Adult Education Association (DVA), is encouraging its members to work with basic skills and literacy projects. The funding for Global Learning project is allocated to DVAs members, community-based adult centres, to work on high-quality education provision and supply accessible educational offers for learners.

Furthermore, DVA is a member of the National Platform on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), hosted by the Ministry of Education. Within the National Action Plan, DVA made a commitment to support German Adult Education Centres (VHS) in implementing ESD in their organisations. The association is currently working on promoting the adaptation of the "whole institution approach" for VHS in implementing ESD. In addition to that, DVAs biennial national conference in 2020 on active citizenship education will focus on ESD.

The Sustainable Development Goals are also tackled through the prioritisation of digitalisation in Germany. DVA along with its members has an agenda to upgrade institutional digital skills, as well as offer digital solutions to adult learners.

Challenges and recommendations in Germany

There could be significant consequences for adult education providers as a result of the implementation of a tax reform, which could cause an increase in the cost of educational offers for participants by almost 20%, as some adult education offers will no longer be VAT-exempt.

Promoting non-formal adult education, pushing education as a means for improvement of digitalisation and social issues will remain challenging as well.
