

Overview: adult education in Israel

In Israel Adult Education is provided by the Ministry of Education, alongside public and private institutions. While vocational education is provided by the Ministry of Labor, Popular Universities and civil society actors offer non-formal education across the country. Literacy and numeracy are lower than on the OECD average (PIACC). Nevertheless, according to the PIACC 2015 adults in Israel have very high problem-solving skills. It is important to mention that Israel has a large dispersion of proficiency scores, meaning that the gap between highest and lowest achiever is very high.

Adult education in Israel focuses on improving literacy and basic skills and the provision of Hebrew language courses. The language priority can be traced back to the history of Israel, working towards including a diverse group of (Jewish) immigrants into the newly founded education system. Today, older learners and especially recent immigrants remain underrepresented in adult education. The association between low performance and parents attainment is particularly strong in Israel, especially recognizing the inequalities between Israelis and Palestinians. The Palestinian population is dramatically underrepresented in adult learning; while an array of scholarship argues for the transformative potential of adult education in conflict zones.

According to civil society actors (members), lifelong learning is often disregarded by the government. Some of the challenges are a lack of funding and recognition of non-formal learning across society. In a growing knowledge and tech economy, the outcomes of adult education and learning for life skills are often not recognized as profitable. Furthermore, participants need to cover a significant amount of the costs themselves, which hinders access for socioeconomically disadvantaged parts of the population. In

Israel, making life-long learning a reality across all sectors of society requires continuous effort, civil society perseverance and a more strategic commitment from the government

***Note: statistical data is supplied by the Israeli authorities. OECD acknowledged that the use of such data is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank/ under terms of international law
