



# **Equipping adults for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – Joining Forces for Action on Skills and Competences**

**Joint conference  
to implement the Renewed European Agenda for Adult Learning  
and follow-up on CONFINTEA VI**

**Vilnius (Lithuania), 9 – 10 December 2013**

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## **THEMATIC WORKING GROUPS**

**Quality in adult  
learning**

**Financing adult  
learning**

## **STUDIES**

**Quality in the adult  
learning sector**

**Financing the adult  
learning sector**

## **STUDY ON QUALITY IN ADULT LEARNING - Main findings**

**All countries have quality assurance systems in place for formal adult learning.**

**Three groups of countries are identified according to quality assurance systems in place for non-formal adult learning.**

## QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS FOR **NON FORMAL** ADULT LEARNING

AT, BE, CH, DK,  
EE, FI, HU, IE, LU,  
LV, NO, SE

ELABORATE  
QUALITY  
SYSTEMS

DE, EL, ES, CZ,  
IS, MT, NL, PL,  
PT, SI, UK

FRAGMENTED  
QUALITY  
SYSTEMS

BG, CY, FR,  
HR, IT, LT,  
RO, SK, TK

NO OR LIMITED  
QUALITY  
SYSTEMS



**Countries in the first group with comprehensive quality systems for adult learning (formal and non-formal) perform better:**

- Higher participation in lifelong learning**
- Higher educational achievement**

High **diversity** of responsible bodies and monitoring systems, but **similarity** in quality criteria and descriptors.

Need for **comparable data** on adult learning provision

Plea for an **integrated approach to quality** in lifelong learning - building upon EQAVET can provide the basis for action in the short/medium term

# HOW CAN THIS STUDY HELP?

**Most countries are currently  
developing or revising  
their legislative framework for adult learning.**

**The rich and detailed analysis of experiences  
in all countries can provide a useful reference  
for national reforms.**

# **TWG ON QUALITY REPORT**

**Three main policy messages**  
**Suggestions for action**  
**Draft operational instruments**



## 3 KEY MESSAGES:

- Quality in adult learning – quality of the **outcomes** achieved by adult learners – can only be pursued through **an approach that crosses all education and training sectors;**
- Systematic **evaluation** of quality tools and systems developed at national and regional level is needed to support further development;
- The best way forward is to organise action into **three strands**, taking advantage of existing resources.

## 3 STRANDS OF ACTION

- **Improving** (national) systems and tools, based on evaluation and exchange of good practices;
- **Developing and extending EQAVET**  
– also based on its evaluation – to better promote quality in adult learning (which includes continuing VET);
- The long term objective should be **developing principles, standards and guidelines valid across all sectors of education and training.**

## OPERATIONAL INSTRUMENTS:

- A draft framework for the **accreditation of adult learning providers**;
- a **checklist and a profiling grid** to promote staff quality;
- **indicators** to monitor quality in adult learning.

# FOLLOW UP

- The TWG and the study have provided
  - an important **information base**
  - valuable **suggestions for policy action**, upon which we are building.
- Consultation follow-up for cross-sectoral principles and guidelines for quality assurance and conditions to safeguard specificities proper to sub-systems proposed in both the **first report on EQAVET** and the **second report on quality assurance in higher education**.

## FOLLOW UP CONT.

- The **first report on EQAVET** envisages the development of descriptors, indicators and guidelines to better address the quality of **non-formal learning, continuing VET** and work-based learning.
- The coordination among sectoral developments in quality assurance is part of the wider effort to streamline all instruments and initiatives related to **transparency, recognition, quality pursuing a European area of skills and qualifications.**

# **STUDY ON FINANCING ADULT LEARNING**

# Challenges:

- Research on funding in VET and Adult Learning is limited by complex situations and **varying definitions** regarding data sources and estimations on funding volumes in countries.
- Getting **evidence on the wider benefits** of investments in Adult Learning, such as health and social inclusions, and translate these benefits into economic terms, is still challenging;
- This suggests to consider the findings in this study as (first) indications about **correlations**, rather than causalities.

## (Some) KEY FINDINGS:

- Strong correlations have been identified between **adult learning and innovation** performance indicators / economic growth;
- Countries with higher **growth** rates show higher adult learning **participation** rates;
- In all countries where participation rates increase, **mean hours decrease**
- Countries with **higher participation rates spend more** than countries with lower participation rates.



## (Some more) KEY FINDINGS:

- Substantial public and private monetary rates of **return** exist for second chance education as well as for higher education later in life;
- Participation of **older learners** is higher when funding is open to all age groups and the share of older workers is higher.
- In **higher education**, the share of non-traditional students is low in countries where funding is restricted to initial higher education

# **TWG ON FINANCING ADULT LEARNING**

## **REPORT**

## **REPORT FOCUSED ON 5 KEY TOPICS:**

- **Why investing in adult learning is necessary?**
- **How can investment in adult learning be made smarter?**
- **Who should pay for what in adult learning?**
- **How should funding be prioritised?**
- **Which funding instruments should be used for specific investments?**

## SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTIONS:

- Providing an **appropriate policy environment, legal framework and incentives to encourage** and enable employers, individuals and civil society organisations;
- Reviewing the **investment required to achieve the ET 2020;**
- Adapting **funding policies to ensure appropriate levels of support for priority groups** (addressing gender gaps, supporting the low skilled and the re-engagement of non-learners);

## SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTIONS:

- Investing in the **adult learning staff and infrastructure to make greater use of ICT;**
- **Make best use of initial education and VET infrastructure for AL**
- Establishing **guidelines for the roles of key stakeholders to support efficient investment in adult learning.**