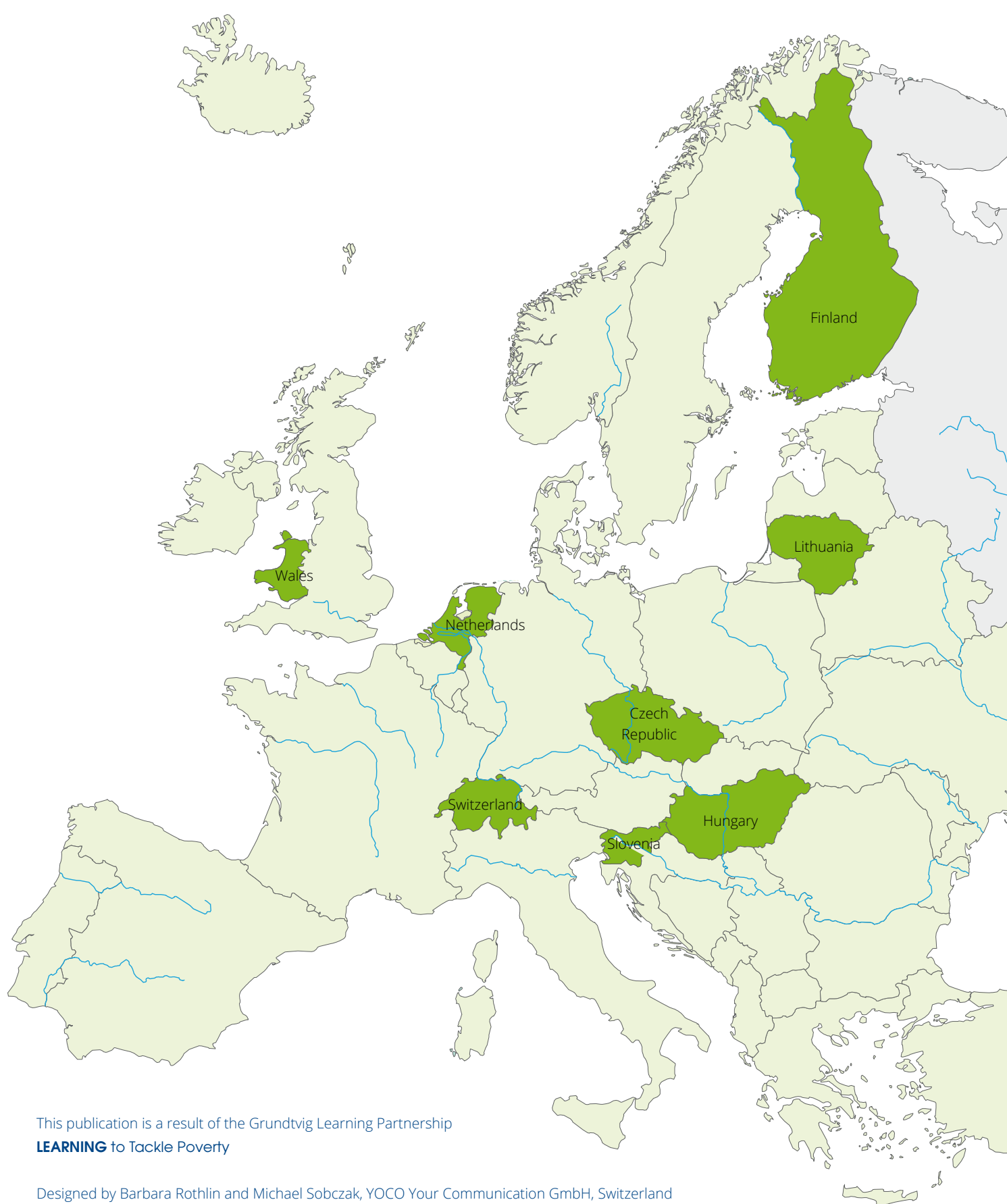


This report is the outcome of a Grundtvig Learning Partnership project which brought together eight partners to enable the sharing of practice on education, training and skills as a means to tackle poverty.



Czech Republic  
Finland  
Hungary  
Lithuania  
Netherlands  
Slovenia  
Switzerland  
Wales



This publication is a result of the Grundtvig Learning Partnership  
**LEARNING** to Tackle Poverty

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This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

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# Introduction to the Learning to Tackle Poverty partnership

The Learning to Tackle Poverty Project worked across Europe to bring together partners representing adult education and training at a national, regional and local level. The project – funded by the Grundtvig Learning Partnership – ran from June 2013 to July 2015, with project partners from Lithuania, Hungary, Wales, Czech Republic, Finland, Netherlands, Slovenia and Switzerland. This report highlights the outcomes of the project, with contributions from each partner, demonstrating examples of the good practice, research and policy shared in the project, together with recommendations for other practitioners working in adult education and training.

The Learning to Tackle Poverty project provided participants with an insight into the approach each country takes in delivering adult learning. There was a particular focus on understanding the measures in place to offer learning opportunities for adults with low levels of skills and qualifications. The project explored the approaches to widening access and participation through four related themes:

1. Skills for work – unemployment and worklessness
2. Reaching parents through family learning
3. Engaging older people, men and minority ethnic communities
4. The impact of learning on health & well-being

Evidence shows that adults with low skills and few qualifications are more likely to live in poverty and experience unemployment, have higher incidences of poor health and are more likely to have children with lower attainment in literacy, language and numeracy.





Lifelong learning can make a major contribution to sustaining economic and social well-being. However, those who could benefit most from engaging in adult learning generally participate in lower numbers.

Around 1 in 5 adults across Europe have low literacy and numeracy skills, and nearly one in three have very low or no ICT skills. Those who are outside of the workforce are less likely to be learning, and once in work, those with higher level jobs are more likely to have access to job related training.<sup>1</sup>

Those who have had more access to education tend to experience: higher earnings, less unemployment, better health, better access to technology, lower crime rates, higher civic participation and longer lives.<sup>2</sup>

The case studies included in this report represent practice and approaches to address specific issues around participation within one of the four themes, recognising the links between poverty and inequality. In addition the project provided the opportunity to review the promotional and outreach campaigns and festivals of project partners in Switzerland, Slovenia and Wales and to share ideas and innovation in engaging and increasing the participation of target groups.



<sup>1</sup> [www.oecd.org/site/piaac/PIAAC%20EU%20Analysis%2008%2010%202013%20-%20WEB%20version.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/site/piaac/PIAAC%20EU%20Analysis%2008%2010%202013%20-%20WEB%20version.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/2015/0210-adult-edu-train\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/2015/0210-adult-edu-train_en.htm)

# THEME 1

## Skills for work

Many adults take part in learning in order to help them access work or to progress in work. Having access to a range of high quality opportunities to learn for and in work is vitally important for creating a society in which all adults can benefit from learning at every stage of their lives. The project has looked at the relationship between poverty, low-levels of skills and unemployment.

Many people are on out-of-work benefits and disjointed back-to-work and in-work support has resulted in too many people being stuck in a 'low pay, no pay' cycle. This has led to low productivity, limited career opportunities, inadequate living standards, and a lack of business prosperity.

**People with low levels of qualifications are particularly vulnerable** to dropping out of the modern labour market. They are significantly more likely to be unemployed than those with qualifications. They are also at risk of engaging less in society, which can have profound implications for their long-term health, salaries and wellbeing.

European studies have shown that **those out of employment, education and training are not homogenous**, even if individuals from certain backgrounds are more likely to fall into this category (those from migrant backgrounds, those with disabilities, young adults, those from households with a lower income, etc.). **The diversity of these groups requires a range of individualised, holistic responses.** For instance, whereas some individuals may require vocational guidance, others may be facing family issues and need the added support of national care organisations.

In general, setting up networks between schools, vocational education and training colleges, homes, libraries and the labour market was seen as vital tool. There is growing appreciation of the value of apprenticeships, internships and other training pathways. Innovative approaches are required to solve these problems, with a wide range of activities made available in different learning settings.

A range of programmes operates in each of the partner countries to support jobseekers and to develop employability skills. For example, creative environments in public libraries, Youth Guarantee initiatives for young adults, motivation enhancing programmes, internships in companies, voluntary activities in companies and NGOs, encouraging Start-ups and SME's in rural areas.<sup>3</sup>

Three case studies are explained in more detail: Innovative Youth Guarantee solutions in Finland, Creative meeting and learning space in Public Libraries in the Netherlands and Systematic Trainee programme in the Czech Republic.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=1989&furtherNews=yes>



# Developing skills for work in young adults with low skills (Finland)

In 2013, a three year Skills Programme was launched, aiming to reach 36,000 participants. The target group is young people between the age of 20–29 who lack secondary level education and qualifications.

Young adults are offered vocational education courses and degrees, which offer good employment opportunities either as a school-based education or as an apprenticeship. Also partial degrees are possible, if the whole degree seems to be too challenging at the beginning. Activity includes advice and guidance for the studies and working life. The aim is to encourage young adults to learn, improve the quality of their lives and prevent segregation.

There are a number of challenges within the programme as many of the students have multiple issues to address; learning disabilities, mental health problems, alcohol and drug abuse. Many students have had poor learning experiences previously, they lack the confidence in their ability to learn and some have poor basic skills.

The programme has found solutions to tackle some of these issues; guidance and counselling is put in place for each student individually, as well as in groups, specialised teachers are used and tutors support the students with homework. Service facilitators visit the target group, including home visits, there is close co-operation with public employment authorities and events for unemployed young people have mandatory participation. In addition there is a close partnership with businesses providing on-the-job training.

The marketing campaign for the programme developed new strategies to reach and motivate the target group; promoters reached out to youth and community centers, special sporting events and concerts with the aim of talking to people and sharing information. Brochures, posters, mobile apps, competitions and social media was used. Advertising was displayed in buses, trams and the metro, the local free press (with direct distribution to every household) and a radio campaign was designed and planned together with young people using their favourite channels.

## From foster home to a career in facility management

Janne Honkonen had a difficult start. He completed elementary school while living in a foster home and had a series of odd jobs and encounters with the law. He says; “My life was depressing and without purpose”.

The Skills Programme for Young Adults at Finnish VET School, Omnia brought him a new focus in life, new people, teachers and friends, as well as a network of professionals, guidance and learning possibilities. Most importantly he now has hope for a better future.

A manager of the company ISS Services interviewed students for on-the-job learning, Janne pointed out that he was interested in a permanent employment and aiming for a career in facility management. He was found to be a skilled and motivated employee during the practice period and was offered a permanent job.

Now Janne has a managerial position. He will complete his studies and get a degree in Spring 2015. He plans to gain more work experience and then apply for further studies.



# Reading, Learning and Meeting in Public Libraries (Netherlands)

Libraries are increasingly transforming into local centres of learning and development. They have become creative and innovative hubs in their communities – today they contribute significantly to the policy areas of digital inclusion, lifelong learning and social inclusion.

In the province of Limburg, in the Netherlands, a number of public library organisations collaborate, supported and monitored by Cubiss, in the development of the concept that a Language and Learning Centre is an integrated part of the public library. The public library functions as the local and easily accessible point of information and place for non-formal education, as well as a hub and a meeting place.

In the Language and Learning Centre, a number of activities and topics are clustered. Digital learning tools, sources of information and library services are adjusted to the target group(s) of the Centre.

Literacy related activities within the Centre include: Accessibility to digital training programmes on improving literacy skills, reading and learning materials, reading groups, visiting writers and temporary collections.

Work and meeting related activities within the centre, include **Walk & Talk**, free monthly network meetings for jobseekers to provide recognition and inspiration while looking for a new job, created by De Levende Sollicitatiegids (The Living Job Application Guide). Speed dates for jobseekers and local companies who offer jobs directly; workshops for labour market skills such as, writing a CV, the use of social media for finding a job and video training for acquiring a variation of skills for job seeking and computer courses for increasing digital skills.

Library specialists in the field of language and employment have participated in a learning programme by De Levende Sollicitatiegids, with special attention to literacy programmes on employment related topics and collaboration with organisations such as unemployment agencies and educational institutions.

**The project partners formulated a number of expected outcomes when the project was planned and the results of the project exceeded the original expectations:**

- Number of participants at the monthly Walk & Talk meetings: 50 participants on average
- Number of participants at the monthly Speed-dates: 80 participants on average
- The use of digital/online learning tools increased by 30-45%;
- Collaborating employment agencies concerning speed dates: 10 participating employment agencies on average



Cubiss, [www.cubiss.nl](http://www.cubiss.nl)  
De Levende Sollicitatiegids,  
[www.levendesollicitatiegids.nl/english](http://www.levendesollicitatiegids.nl/english)



[www.youtube.com/watch?v=OgkUZylvsP0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OgkUZylvsP0)



# Structured traineeships for administrative staff (Czech Republic)

A traineeship for young people without previous work experience and for people who want to make a career switch and have no experience in the new field. The traineeship is centrally structured and managed, in such a way that all participants receive the same training no matter which company they are placed in.

**ABS WYDA developed a Structured traineeships for administrative staff, consisting of the following steps:**

1. Prepare a List of Skills that an office worker must manage.
2. Approach employers willing to receive trainees.
3. Make an agreement between the education provider and the employer.
4. The employer ensures that the trainee will practice all the skills of the list.
5. Every two weeks, the trainer checks whether the trainee is practicing all the skills from the list.
6. In case of deficiencies the trainer asks the employer to adjust the training activities.
7. At the end of the practice, the employer evaluates the quality of the activities realised by the trainee.

In this way, trainees gain experience in all necessary competences for administrative staff. The trainee receives a certificate from the employer with the mastered skills and a certificate from education provider with appropriate theoretical knowledge. Both employer and trainee benefit from this traineeship: the employer has a temporary low cost labour force and the trainee gets a useful certificate. Outcomes have shown that job seekers who completed this traineeship were more successful in finding work.

## **Success factors:**

*A close cooperation between the education provider and employer is key, preferably with a longer term commitment, to ensure a fluid learning process for the successive trainees. Furthermore good learning conditions in the workplace are important, allowing the trainee to practice all the agreed skills, including an adequate mentor linked to the trainee and common trust between both. Regular monitoring of the learning process by the education provider and a quick solution of problems that occur particularly contribute to a successful traineeship.*



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www.wyda.cz  
www.wyda.cz/content/text/cz



# THEME 2

## Developing literacy, language, numeracy skills through Family Learning

Family learning and parental engagement is gaining recognition as a powerful tool to raise the attainment of children while providing an opportunity and a hook to engage parents who are motivated in the first instance to want to better support their children.

Family learning refers to any learning activity that involves both children and adult family members, where learning outcomes are intended for both. It is recognised as a valuable tool to give children greater confidence and self-belief in their own learning, with measurable benefits to their literacy, language and numeracy skills.

Research has demonstrated that there is a persistent gap in the attainment of children from poorer backgrounds. Family learning programmes enable parents to develop the skills, knowledge and enjoyment in learning to support their children and progress in their own lives.

The benefits of such programmes have been well-documented, not least in engaging and empowering families to learn together. For the parents themselves, it can lead to an increased involvement in school life and the local community, improved social networks, as well as enhanced parenting skills. The educational gains are also clear, such as an increased interest in further learning, as well as higher educational aspirations for both parents and their children.

A study published by OfSTED (England) found that where family learning was most effective it was characterised by outstanding teaching, a planned approach to learner development (i.e. through the use of individual learning plans), provision offered throughout the year and at various venues in the community, and opportunities for intergenerational learning, together with a clear and appropriately defined proportion of learning that was adult focused.



Research by Aaron Rajania at Ecorys UK has identified three key issues;

**1. Greater focus on the benefits for participating parents:** The majority of evaluations tend to focus heavily on with the outcomes for the child, rather than the benefits for the parents as well as wider society, as outlined by this recent report into the wider benefits. In particular, an increased level of research on the quantifiable outcomes of parents' skills development is required ([www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/34671/12-1243-review-wider-benefits-of-adult-learning.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/34671/12-1243-review-wider-benefits-of-adult-learning.pdf)).

**2. The frequency and spread of benefits:** Whilst research has indicated a wide variety of benefits of family learning, more work needs to be undertaken on how widespread these benefits are, how transferable these findings are across different contexts and for different groups involved, and finally whether these wider benefits are greater than would occur without the family learning interventions.

**3. Sustainability:** Whilst previous studies have examined the durability of such programmes (such as the study conducted by the Institute of Education for DG EAC), coordinated, multi-country initiatives examining issues such as funding, the development of partnerships, and programme quality are becoming increasingly important ([http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/school/doc/family-literacy\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/school/doc/family-literacy_en.pdf)).

Two case studies are explained in more detail: Family learning in Wales (UK) and Reading: for knowledge and fun in Slovenia.

# West Wales Family Learning Programme (Wales, UK)

During the Project Meeting in Wales, NIACE Cymru shared the outcomes of the Family Learning Inquiry, commissioned in 2012. The Inquiry endorsed the approach of programmes in raising the participation of parents in literacy and numeracy programmes and sought to influence policy across England and Wales.<sup>4</sup>

A range of family learning activities are delivered across Wales. In Swansea (West Wales) the Family Learning programme is highly successful and recognised as a key programme in the Tackling Poverty Agenda. The programme delivers multiple outcomes, it provides a link between parents' understanding of how children learn and their ability to support their children; promotes the basic skills of numeracy, reading, writing, speaking and listening of both children and parents; builds closer links with schools and teachers and encourages parents to take a more active part in their children's education; gives increases parental confidence and encourages progression to other learning opportunities.

The delivery team are trained teachers and also have essential skills teaching qualifications and experience of working with adults and children. The Programme has been delivered in over 30 primary schools - Tutors liaise with Head teachers and class teachers to invite parents and children to participate in the programmes, frequently targeting specific parents and their children. The workshop enables parents and children to sample learning activities. Following this initial engagement, participants are encouraged to progress to short courses (12 hours) and long courses, (48 hours) as appropriate to the needs of participants.

The session is delivered in two parts. During the first part of the session, the adults work with the Family Learning tutor, developing their own essential skills and activities to work with their child. The children are either withdrawn to work with the Family Learning Teacher or remain in class with their class teacher.

The second part of the session is also led by the Family Learning tutor. The children join their parent, grandparent or carer to participate in the activities discussed, developed and modelled during the adult session.

During 2013/14 the team worked with over 300 families in over 30 schools. 94% of parents improved their basic skills. 88% of parents progressed to other learning. 251 individuals gained a qualification.



<sup>4</sup> Family Learning Inquiry: <http://www.niace.org.uk/our-work/life-and-society/family-and-community-learning/family-learning>



NIACE Cymru, [www.niacecymru.org.uk](http://www.niacecymru.org.uk)  
City and County of Swansea Lifelong  
Learning and Employment Training,  
[www.twitter.com/familylearning5](https://twitter.com/familylearning5)



[www.youtube.com/watch?v=cBGv7Sgk8Bg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cBGv7Sgk8Bg)



## Reading: For knowledge and fun (Slovenia)

In Slovenia the term family literacy encompasses all the activities that take place within the family and are related to reading and language skills, for the children, it provides pre-school preparation. Research shows that the effects of the home environment are important and that the frequency and quality of activities related to literacy strongly reflect on the child's performance in literacy and language development.

The programme is designed for preschool children (aged four to six) and their parents or grandparents who for various reasons have not had the opportunity to develop their own literacy and for those who are motivated to help their children develop literacy but are have low levels of skills.

The programme enables adults to develop their own literacy skills and strategies to encourage their children to read. Aiming to build confidence and enjoyment of reading, through games and by offering the opportunity to access cultural institutions and to learn more about where they live. Parents learn about various forms of active leisure time with children while encouraging children's emerging literacy. They become aware that reading books represents pleasure and entertainment and is a source of knowledge and values. Alongside this their confidence is developed and they learn about the importance of lifelong learning.

Through individual discussions with parents, which were conducted by the councillors in the kindergartens, the programme reached those for whom it was primarily intended. About half of them were motivated and involved in the programme. It was more difficult to reach and motivate those parents whose children are not engaged in the kindergarten programmes, because we do not have their data. The programme has been delivered to five groups across the region (consisting of 12 parents and children) with activities delivered over 24 hours.

The added value of the project is a continuation of the training for the parents of the school children in the programme "Let's write and read together".



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# THEME 3

## Engaging men, older people and minority ethnic communities

**Europe is generally characterised by an ageing population and most of the EU member states by ethnic diversity. Studies also show that in many countries participation in lifelong learning is generally lower amongst men.**

The total number of national minority populations in Europe is estimated at 105 million people, or 14% of Europeans. The member states of the Council of Europe in 1995 signed the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. The broad aims of the Convention are among others to ensure that the signatory states respect the rights of national minorities, undertaking to combat discrimination, promote equality, preserve and develop the culture and identity of national minorities, guarantee certain freedoms in relation to access to education. Despite this Convention, in some countries ethnic minorities tend to participate less in education due to various barriers.

Data on participation in learning demonstrates that there is a sharp decline in activity for older people and that the learning intensity declines by age, especially in isolated groups at risk of poverty. Participation in lifelong learning beyond the age of 64+ is not satisfactorily or systematically measured once they leave the labour market, however we know that digital literacy provides a significant challenge for many people in later life.

Not quite so obvious, but also shown by experience and statistics is the fact that fewer men in the 25-64 age group participate in adult community learning.<sup>5</sup> The project looked at what the barriers are and how they might be overcome through good practice examples from the participating countries.

Three case studies are explained in more detail: Learning Romani and strengthening intercultural dialogue (SI), Strikers (UK) and Reaching Older People (LT).

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<sup>5</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Lifelong\\_learning\\_statistics](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Lifelong_learning_statistics)

## Learning Romani and strengthening intercultural dialogue (Slovenia)

The target group of this programme are adult educators, who develop and organise educational programmes for the Roma community, adult tutors from programmes, in which the Romani population is included and front-line staff who deal with the Roma community.

In the programme participants receive in-depth knowledge of the Romani culture (traditions, language), Romani history and learn the basics of the Romani language. By using examples of good practice and fieldwork they develop a wider understanding of cooperation with the Romani community and possibilities for more successful engagement of Roma into education.

The last population census in 2002, indicated that there were 3,246 Roma in Slovenia, however data from the Centre for Social Work, estimate that the community is closer to 10,000. The Romani people have their own culture (language, norms, values, behaviour patterns, material culture), which is significantly different from the culture of the majority.

According to the research and professional experience in working with Roma we observed that previous approaches were not working. Despite efforts to include more Roma people in education and consequently open up new job opportunities and settled living conditions, we noticed that the situation of the Romani community in Slovenia was deteriorating. Research entitled Career Information and Advice for Roma, showed that in the last fifteen years, 30% of interviewees ceased to work because for them it is better to receive social support and child benefit than to work.

The programme has improved the understanding and ability of professionals to engage with the members the Roma community, developing a greater understanding about the Romani culture and learning the basics of the Romani language will enable improved provision which is sensitive to cultural needs.

Four new training materials have been created for professionals as a result of the programme: Learning about the history and culture of the Roma, Intercultural dialogue between the members of the Roma community and the majority, Guiding principles of Adult Education of the Roma, The Romani language of the Prekmurje region for everyday use / The Romani language of the Bela krajina and Dolenjska region for everyday use.



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## Strikers – Employability Skills & Football in the Community (Wales, UK)

**Strikers** is a project developed by Rhyl Football Club in the Community in partnership with adult community learning provider, WEA Cymru. The initiative recruits, supports and mentors learners from the area of Rhyl in North Wales – an area of high deprivation with high levels of unemployment, low skills and poverty.

The programme aims to improve learners essential life skills (literacy, numeracy and ICT), as well as increasing their employability skills. The learners develop team work skills, how to apply for jobs, interview skills, presentation skills and more. The learners have a weekly individual learning plan, meetings with the tutor, where their progress is monitored and future goals are set. The learners have essential skills tests at the start & end of the course, so their level can be established, then throughout the duration of the course their level can be improved upon. Individuals will also have a minimum of an hour a day time set specifically to job search (min 3 hours a week).

However, the Strikers courses are not just about gaining awards, the course aims to increase individuals' motivation and self-esteem. The programme looks to get the learners into a routine and enhance their chances of gaining employment, not only through gaining awards and credits, but by changing their outlook and providing them with any help they may need. The participants learn in a relaxed atmosphere so it is completely different from a school environment. In addition learners have the opportunity to volunteer at the football club.

An interest and passion in football is used as an engagement tool – learners follow a programme to improve their employability and job-finding skills however learning activities are based around their interest in football and participants mix skills development with the opportunity to develop their football skills. Although an interest in football is not essential for participating on the course.

The Strikers project recruits learners (mostly men) from Rhyl and surrounding areas onto courses that combine, health, nutrition and fitness with employability skills. The tutors are trusted Strikers staff who deliver accredited training. The project has had significant impact with hundreds of participants gaining qualifications, moving onto further learning opportunities and gaining work. Latest figures show that over the last couple of years 183 learners have engaged on the programme, with 121 individuals going onto part time or full time employment.



NIACE Cymru, [www.niacecymru.org](http://www.niacecymru.org)  
WEA Cymru, [www.weacymru.org.uk](http://www.weacymru.org.uk)  
Rhyl Football in the Community



Facebook: Strikers Rhyl FC ITC



## Reaching older people: Universities of the Third Age (Lithuania)

The concept of establishing the University of the Third Age evolved naturally with the ageing society and the demand for learning for older people in non-formal and informal ways. The first university was established 20 years ago. Now the universities function as independent organisations and NGO's all over the country.

The concept of the University of the 3rd Age (U3A) is not new, and operates in many countries across the world. However in Lithuania, the U3A model was adopted in 1995. The **University of the Third Age** is an organisation whose aims are the education and stimulation of mainly retired members of the community – those in their third age of life, the students are aged 50+ are able to join the universities.

Interest in the idea and take up of courses has been very positive and it is now firmly established across the country, in 2012 there were 24 and currently there are 40 Universities established in Lithuania having more than 8,000 students. Learners come from a variety of backgrounds – those whose formal education stopped at secondary level, to those with doctorates. With a population of over 700,000 people aged over sixty in Lithuania, the U3A is responding to a large demand.

Typical courses include, Art, IT, Languages, Music, Health, Dancing, including lectures, workshops, tours, trips, meetings with famous people (actors, writers, artists). The U3A is organised on a voluntary, self-directed basis, generating their income by participating in various projects. The Lithuanian Government is currently legislating to support the U3A.

The project visited Kėdainiai, where around 80 students attend the University every year. The most popular areas are Healthy Lifestyle, Culture and Arts and music.

Evaluation of the impact of the U3A has shown that activities alleviate social isolation, develop individuals skills and self-confidence and learners have become more active members of society.



Kėdainiai Adult and Youth Centre



[www.smc.kedainiai.lm.lt/index.php/kedainiu-tau/fakultetai-programos](http://www.smc.kedainiai.lm.lt/index.php/kedainiu-tau/fakultetai-programos)

# THEME 4

## The impact of learning on health and wellbeing

Recent research has demonstrated the wider benefits of adult learning, including its impact on health and well-being and the findings from research on the pan-European BeLL project confirm this.<sup>7</sup>

People who are disadvantaged socially, educationally and/or economically are particularly vulnerable. Low skills, correlate with poverty, unemployment and poor health and there is a growing body of evidence to demonstrate the role of education and learning in aiding treatment of both physical and mental ill health.

In 2015 the theme for the work of the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA), concentrated on Adult Education and Health.

1. Health and well-being: the benefits of adult education in terms of health (personal development, well-being, increased self-confidence);
2. Health literacy: the capacity of people to understand how to deal with their health (indications of a doctor, instruction leaflets on medicines, information leaflets on illnesses);
3. Promotion of healthy lifestyles: courses on nutrition or cooking but also yoga and gym classes.

In the UK, Sir Michael Marmot's review <sup>8</sup>of health inequalities is pertinent to the project. The Inquiry not only found that people with a higher socioeconomic position have a great array of life chances and more opportunities to lead a flourishing life, they also had better health. Marmot concluded that the two are linked. Key to Marmot's approach to addressing health inequalities is to create the conditions for people to take control of their own lives. It places a renewed emphasis on a joined up approach across government, the voluntary and private sectors. Clearly adult learning has a role to play in working alongside health and social care professionals.





Alongside this, research by the Mental Health Foundation (UK) found that people suffering from mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety benefited from adult learning classes; the research found that symptoms of their condition were reduced through participation, and they felt less isolated by taking part in the classes.<sup>9</sup>

The project shared knowledge and research relating to healthcare interventions and reviewed some of the practical projects and knowledge of partners. Four case studies are explained in more detail: The National Day of Wellbeing (CH), For a Healthy Way of Life (HU), Developing Partnerships across health and learning (UK) and Promotion of Food Self Sufficiency (SL).

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<sup>7</sup> [www.eaea.org/media/policy-advocacy/ae-and-health/manninen\\_porto\\_ae-and-health.pptx](http://www.eaea.org/media/policy-advocacy/ae-and-health/manninen_porto_ae-and-health.pptx)

<sup>8</sup> [www.local.gov.uk/health/-/journal\\_content/56/10180/3510094/ARTICLE](http://www.local.gov.uk/health/-/journal_content/56/10180/3510094/ARTICLE)

<sup>9</sup> [www.mentalhealth.org.uk/content/assets/PDF/publications/learning-for-life.pdf](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/content/assets/PDF/publications/learning-for-life.pdf)

# The National Day of Wellbeing (Switzerland)

The Höhere Fachschule für Gesundheit und Soziales (a higher technical school) encourages their students and teachers to participate in an annual day for learning activities that are focused on health and well-being.

The project aims to tackle the stress of students and teachers, coping with pressures of workload and exams. The Day of Well-being is devoted to this theme, it is mandatory, and its goal is to develop team work, to develop reliance on others to take control of mental health and well-being. The idea is to take time out of normal working/student activities, to do something new and different and to have fun.

## Special activities were developed for this day – these include;

- Climbing skills (building confidence, achievement)
- Jazzdance (coordination and bodywork)
- A good sleep (how to relax and to overcome a sleep disorder)
- Chill-out with music (getting from a bad to a good mood)
- How to quit smoking and improve the own skin by a selfmade cream
- relax with special wrappings (rejuvenating)
- express yourself through paintings (confidence)
- photo shooting (to see life through different angles)
- Yoga (deep relaxing, cooling down)

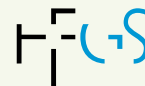
The students become more relaxed and learn how to deal with stress and disappointment (bad grades). They gain more self-confidence, can deal with sleep disorder and receive new inputs to connect and rely on their colleagues. In addition they build up a different relationship with staff and peer groups.

This project is transferable to all institutions and firms as it helps to improve the mental health or self-esteem. It can easily be adapted to all ages. It is fun to do together, to overcome cultural barriers and so to get to know each other in a more relaxing way.



Höhere Fachschule für Gesundheit und Soziales, Aarau  
[www.hfgs.ch](http://www.hfgs.ch)

Höhere Fachschule  
Gesundheit und Soziales  
Aarau



## For a Healthy Way of Life (Hungary)

The involvement of locally well-known contributors and sessions offered free of charge locally ensured high-participation rates of the elderly in a small village. The key circle of participants involved their family members, neighbours and friends in learning activities, medical check-ups or study trips.

The Balatonszepezd Folk High School delivered a series of sessions on health and life style. The programme was advertised by word of mouth, e-mail lists and posters placed in local shops and community places. The involvement of the local family doctor was one of the contributors to increased interest in the initiative.

The programme covered the relationship between everyday life and health. The presentations held by doctors, psychologists, experts of different professions related to health and well-being. There were practical advisory sessions and shows, exercises such as demonstration of first aid, measuring blood pressure, herbal cooking.

In the programme organisers offered Health Days which meant, for example, a joint biking tour, an excursion to a biofarm to see the production of healthy food. The course allowed for a lot of conversation and interactivity, which was supplemented by group or individual guidance. The participants contributed to the design of the programme, which covered almost all aspects of everyday life and health problems and challenges.

### Outcome:

Participation in the programme was higher than normal and had an impact on recruitment to other adult learning courses and self organised initiatives.

Key success factors included the local delivery, close to the homes of the elderly participants. The theme of everyday living and health mobilised ageing people, who are not normally so active in engaging with adult learning programmes in small villages.

The participants articulated their wish to continue with the programme and they defined their interests, identifying issues in the area of mental health. The programme was completed in 2014, but it continued in 2015 with contributors working on a voluntary basis.



Balatonszepezd Folk High School  
[www.szepezd.hu](http://www.szepezd.hu)



Videos of the contributions (in Hungarian):  
[www.szepezd.hu/index.php?seo=eloadasok\\_videoanyagai&content=news&id=83](http://www.szepezd.hu/index.php?seo=eloadasok_videoanyagai&content=news&id=83)

## Developing partnerships across health and adult learning (Wales, UK)

Around a quarter of British adults will experience a mental health problem in any one year, of which anxiety and depression are most common. Mental health problems seriously affect people's wellbeing and may lead to physical illness, problems at work, unemployment and a breakdown in relationships. Learning and education can have a positive effect on wellbeing and this is now well evidenced in numerous research studies<sup>11</sup>. The Centre for Mental Health estimated the wider economic costs of mental health problems in England and Wales at £105bn per year in 2009/10.

NIACE Cymru has been developing partnerships with the healthcare sector, including a joint briefing paper with the Welsh NHS Confederation to highlight the role that adult learning can play in a preventative approach, supporting mental health and well-being<sup>12</sup>.

Social Prescribing has been piloted by NIACE across Wales and England – this programme demonstrated the role that healthcare professionals can play by signposting patients to information, advice and mentor support for them to access learning as an alternative to medication.

The project was piloted in North, West and South Wales. It allowed healthcare staff to refer individuals to a Learning Adviser based in Health Centres. Patients referred were suffering from mild to moderate depression, socially isolated and vulnerable. In North Wales, economically inactive patients were targeted, within twelve months 111 patients were referred. 54 got involved in a learning activity arranged by the adviser another 16 patients moved onto voluntary or paid work. The majority of patients had not accessed any form of learning since leaving school.

Evaluation demonstrated the impact of placing an Adviser in the health centres and building valuable relationships between health and learning practitioners to reach adults with poor health and low skills. Participants involved in all of the pilots took part in a huge variety of courses, moving onto second or third courses, often progressing through various levels of education following their initial referral. 63% of those referred had taken no part in formal education since school, while 65% did not have any qualifications prior to their referral. Other good practice examples can be found at the **"What Works Centre for Wellbeing"**<sup>13</sup> and the Mental Health and FE website. <http://www.mhfe.org.uk/>

<sup>11</sup> [www.mentalhealth.org.uk/content/assets/PDF/publications/learning-for-life.pdf](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/content/assets/PDF/publications/learning-for-life.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> [www.niacecymru.org.uk/en/our-thinking/news/rhetoric-reality-nhs-wales-10-years%E2%80%99time-health-education](http://www.niacecymru.org.uk/en/our-thinking/news/rhetoric-reality-nhs-wales-10-years%E2%80%99time-health-education)

<sup>13</sup> <http://whatworkswellbeing.org/pioneers/community-wellbeing-practices-in-halton/>

**Lynda Sullivan** was suffering from agoraphobia and depression when an advertising leaflet for adult classes in a local Learning Centre was delivered to her home. Lynda was determined to do something with her life rather than sit at home terrified to go out. *"For 3 years I barely left the house,"* says Lynda, *"I found it hard to be around people and crowded places caused me to have panic attacks. The booklet was advertising courses for adult learning. I remember reading it and started to cry. I thought to myself that I could never do any of them. I kept the booklet for about 2 months and one day I got dressed and walked to the Centre. I was shaking so much I could barely talk to the staff."* Lynda signed up for a computer course and has never looked back. She has used the skills and confidence she has developed to campaign on local issues in her community, saving community areas from development. *"Going to adult learning changed my life,"* says Lynda. Lynda was awarded the NIACE Cymru Inspire Award as part of Adult Learners' Week in 2013.



NIACE Cymru  
[www.niacecymru.org.uk](http://www.niacecymru.org.uk)



Watch Lynda: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wo4POQmUv6A](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wo4POQmUv6A)



## Promotion of food self-sufficiency (Slovenia)

Due to the closure of businesses the unemployment rate is growing in the region of Bela krajina in Slovenia. A high unemployment rate means lower purchasing power of the population, and it was felt that the best intervention would be to support the local population with the skills to develop food self-sufficiency to reduce unemployment and contribute to health and wellbeing.

The region of Bela krajina has a lot of uncultivated land, which represented opportunities for the development and return to agriculture.

The programme provides access to education for the rural population and motivates participants to establish food self-sufficiency as well as engaging them in learning more about other farming activities. Promoting food self-sufficiency, rational exploitation of natural resources and getting an income from the agricultural activity programme have also an indirect impact on the local development. Most importantly, healthy food, personal income and development of the local environment have an impact on personal and general wellbeing.

The participants in the programme first become acquainted with the current state of food self-sufficiency in Slovenia and in the local environment and become familiar with the harmful effects of the use of pesticides and other hazardous additives. They are encouraged to embark on food self-sufficiency together with the benefits of seasonal, local and traditional food. They learn also about the different methods of management with an emphasis on the bio-dynamic method of management in the field of agriculture, gardening, fruit growing, livestock and beekeeping. In the programme they also gain knowledge about the possibilities for the development of the local environment and entrepreneurship in the rural areas.

The programme was delivered three times in different parts of Bela krajina. Each delivery comprised 50 hours. A total of 50 people have been involved in the programme. It is estimated that 30% of participants decided to develop an independent activity in the rural areas. Some of the ex-participants are now connected with public institutions in the local community who have organised the purchase of vegetables from local producers. For a majority of them participation in the programme has resulted in new knowledge, so they can supply food for their households and that certainly contributes to the well-being of families.



ZIK Črnomelj  
[www.zik-crnomelj.eu](http://www.zik-crnomelj.eu)



ZAVOD ZA IZOBRAŽEVANJE  
IN KULTURO ČRNO MELJ



# OUTREACH AND PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGNS:

## International Adult Learners' Week

The project brought together partners who have had experience in delivering Learning Festivals and outreach campaigns. Three project meetings were co-ordinated so that participants could experience and learn from the delivery of Adult Learners' Week/Lernfestival in Wales, Switzerland and Slovenia.

The project provided an opportunity to review the network of outreach/promotional campaigns established following the adoption of an International Adult Learners' Week by UNESCO at the World Adult Education Conference (CONFINTEA V)<sup>14</sup> in July 1997.

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<sup>14</sup> [www.unesco.org/education/uie/InternationalALW/](http://www.unesco.org/education/uie/InternationalALW/)

## Wales Adult Learners' Week June 2014

The project meeting hosted in North Wales enabled partners to attend the National Inspire Awards, presented on the eve of Adult Learners' Week 2014.

The national awards provide an opportunity to tell the stories of a range of adult learners, who have transformed their lives by engaging in formal and informal learning opportunities. The awards generate a range of press and media coverage and illustrate the value and impact of learning.

Local activity for Adult Learners' Week in Wales is driven by 22 local learning festival groups, representing adult learning providers across each county area.

Using national and local press, publications, adverts and word of mouth, NIACE Cymru and local Learning Festival partnerships promote these events to current and potential adult learners.

NIACE Cymru has developed a reputable online presence with increasing page views and followers on social media platforms. This has been utilised to its full advantage as an alternative source for advertising and promotion and has proven very successful over the last two years, both as a way of engaging partners and promoting positive stories to potential learners.

A number of local Learning Festival groups run their own local **facebook** page which has proved very successful. These pages are ideal platforms to promote free local learning events as this social media site in particular, is familiar and accessible for potential learners.

The campaign is supported by focus days to highlight – Learning for or at Work, Digital Inclusion and Digital Skills and Family Learning.

The delivery of the campaign has become more focused at raising participation levels of those without formal qualifications and currently not accessing education or training. This has been enhanced following the work programme implemented as part of NIACE's role as co-ordinator of the European Agenda for Adult Learning in the UK, together with NIACE Cymru's work in developing partnerships **with Communities First Clusters** across Wales. The Clusters deliver activities associated with learning, health and employability in 52 of the most deprived areas.

Over **22,266** participants across took part in Adult Learners' Week 2014 and in the last 7 years, **164,726** participants in Wales have engaged in activities during Adult Learners' Week.

In 2014, **over 85%** of participants attended an Adult Learners' Week event to enhance their job prospects or learn a skill, **46.1%** of those attending Adult Learners' Week activities had done little or no learning within the last three years.



## Swiss Lernfestival September 2014

The Swiss Lernfestival took on a fresh approach in 2014, with SVEB deciding to link the festival with the Swiss Skills Show, the major vehicle for promoting skills to young people, hosting competitions for 77 professional occupations.

SwissSkills attracts major sponsorship and blanket advertising coverage across the country and on the first day of competitions there were 1,100 schools visiting the Expo site. Given the focus on the initiative on the achievement of young people up to 25, the Lernfestival may have been lost, however the design of the adult learning showcase within the framework of a learning city/Bildungsstadt overcame this brilliantly.

The city streets were planned to show the learning journeys pursued by six different adults in pursuit of career progression. The providers of study opportunities were represented in different shops in the City. At the heart of the City, a kiosk- helps to explain the multiplicity of routes to qualifications available in the Swiss system.

Locating the learning city and the Lernfestival launch within the Skills Show reinforced the key message of adult learning – that vocational and liberal education are a seamless whole.

In Luzern the festival offered a mix of activities – a one hour policy conference, combined with learning stalls and taster activities. Two of the stalls were hosted by Migros Klubshule, the largest single provider of adult learning in the country, but also its largest supermarket. The company commits 1% of its turnover to education and cultural engagement – study centres are located above its shops, with advisers to support people in making study choices.

The project meeting in Switzerland benefited from the participation of Alan Tuckett, Former President of the International Council for the Adult Education and founder of Adult Learners' Week (UK), who joined the meeting in Bern. Alan commented, "By demonstrating the range of adult professional development on offer, the Bildungsstadt helped reinforce the message that vocational learning is for people of all ages, a message that World Skills needs to address."





# Slovenia Lifelong Learning Week May 2015

Lifelong Learning Week has been established for 20 years in Slovenia and is the most prominent promotional activity for adult education. The Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (SIAE), national coordinator of LLW, has aimed at attracting partners who are active not only in adult education but also in lifelong learning, thus covering all walks of life.

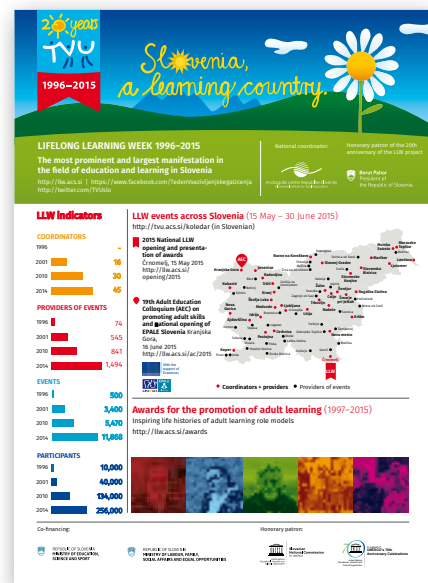


The vision of the four pillars of learning (1996, by Delors et al.), i.e. learning to know (related to formal schooling), to do (training for work), to be (personal development) and to live together (community learning) has been the underlying principle of delivery. Through this approach, a wide network of partners and providers of LLW events has been established. Numbers have grown from 74 (1996) to nearly 1,700 (2015). Among them, regional and thematic LLW coordinators (mainly local adult education centres such as ZIK Črnomelj, associations and others) are valuable partners. They are familiar with the demand and supply of learning in their area and have become major drivers for mobilising a variety of LLW providers and developing campaign themes relevant to life-long and life-wide learning in their locality. As a result, the number of LLW events grew from 500 (1996) to nearly 11,000 (2015) and the festival was extended from one week (in May) to two months (May and June). This has enabled organisers to enrich the variety of educational, promotional, social and cultural activities as well as information and counselling events scattered throughout the country, involving urban and rural areas.

Gradually, the LLW has become an indispensable part of a strategy for increased motivation and participation in all forms of learning throughout the year. The LLW is a constituent part of the Slovenian Adult Education Master Plan (2013–2020) and its subsequent Annual Adult Education Plans, thus enjoying financial and strategic support from the state. <http://llw.acs.si>.

In 2013, the LLW gained impetus through the implementation of the renewed **European Agenda for Adult Learning (EAAL)**. The SIAE decided, as national coordinator for EAAL, to invest efforts in increased awareness raising. As a result, in the last three years the LLW has been enriched by the **Learning Parade (LP)**. Working in partnership with experienced local LLW coordinators, seven Learning Parades are delivered each year. They are one-day learning festivals in town squares or markets and involve a multitude of lifelong learning providers, performers on stage, local and national policy-makers, learners and the general public, media and many others. In addition to the general concept of the Learning Parade, each coordinator has implemented a specific approach relevant for their local area, all twenty-one of them form a very colourful mosaic and a pool of new ideas to develop for the future. More: <http://llw.acs.si/learningparade>.

Included in the programme of activities for the project meeting, was the presentation on the approach to PIAAC presented by the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education. PIAAC results are expected to be a major asset for research and evidence-based policy-making in Slovenia which may mean major reform of the education system. Slovenia is among the second round countries of PIAAC (<http://piaac.acs.si/index.html>) and complements the empirical component of PIAAC with an array of thematic reports which is unique to the country. Results are due in 2016.





## Netherlands Literacy Ambassadors

In the Netherlands, a network of Literacy Ambassadors is being used to engage the local community and raise the issue of literacy needs. Ambassadors are individuals who have tackled their low levels of basic skills and are able to relate their personal stories as a way of inspiring others to take a step back into learning.

Ambassadors organise meetings in education centres, at local markets, in primary schools and community centres where they tell their stories and provide information on literacy training and support.

Ambassadors play an important role in lobbying on a national, regional and local level for an improved literacy policy and funding. They are organised in a national organisation, ABC, which acts as a “union” for literacy and literacy learners.

Those who want to become ambassadors receive specific training. This training consists of six modules, ranging from boosting self-confidence to telling your story to media training. Follow-up training is done annually at the ABC national and the provincial training events for ambassadors.

ABC keeps a national database of ambassadors with records of their activities and performances. 250 ambassadors are registered and about 150 of them are regularly active.

Ambassadors are increasingly being invited by welfare organisations and organisations in the health sector to provide experience based information on literacy and to motivate the clientele of these organisations to address their basic skills issues.

Annually the ABC organises a meeting for all learners in literacy classes in the country. Around 300 people participate and the annual ABC trophy is presented to an organisation or a company who makes an outstanding effort to communicate effectively with people with limited literacy skills.

Internationally this approach receives growing interest. The Attract and Retain project, a co-operation between several EU countries (see <http://www.attractandretain.eu>) is an example. In 2011/2012 ABC had a joint project with German, Austrian and Danish colleagues to promote and broaden the ambassador concept in these 3 countries. Belgium has plans to translate the training material into French.



# WHAT WE HAVE LEARNT:

## HINTS, TIPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Project partners pooled their experiences throughout meetings and study visits and came up with the following hints and tips.

### Engaging those most in need of learning and gaining new skills

- Opportunities must be relevant, meaningful and accessible.
- Provision that is flexible, bite-sized and based in community settings can be successful.
- Informal, “hook” courses can engage those who lack the confidence and have fears of returning to learn, but pathways should be in place to support progression for those individuals.
- Opportunities need to be promoted to individuals and communities in a way that they are able to understand the value and relevance.
- Promotional campaigns like the Learning Festivals are most successful when they have clear government backing and leadership and work at many levels at the same time – national promotion with local action.

### Evaluation of the Learning Festival campaigns provides some insights into good practice

- Personal contact makes a difference. Individuals are motivated to attend taster activities/information and advice sessions, because of word of mouth. Conversations with family, friends or a trusted intermediary are a powerful way of making that first step.
- Local publicity – posters, flyers and stories in the local press are important sources of information.
- Stories of learners, describing their personal circumstances and their pathways into learning provide powerful tools to increase engagement and to lobby politicians and policy makers.

### Suggestions for increasing the effectiveness of campaigns and outreach

The involvement **of learners as volunteers** – research has shown that it can be a powerful tool to increase effectiveness. It will foster greater engagement of learners and provide additional resources from individuals who have lived experience.

Sparkling **conversations** – research into the impact of Learning Festivals has demonstrated the importance of conversations with family and friends in stimulating people to return to learning. It builds their confidence in accessing provision, raises awareness of what is available locally and increases their preparedness to try something new.

At times of **major change** – individuals appear to be particularly disposed to return to learning in certain phases of life or life situations. Greater awareness of these moments and developing partnerships with a range of agencies could prove beneficial in increasing participation rates.

### Developing as a parent

All parents want the best for their child and for many and this can be a key time to engage adults who need to improve their essential skills or boost their confidence in their ability to learn. Reaching children through play-groups, training clinic staff and health visitors can be beneficial, as well developing family & intergenerational programmes in schools.

A key challenge with this approach is not to miss the chance to engage with fathers, through sport, outdoor or skills based activities. Short term opportunities a half day course or weekend activities may appear more effective than weekly sessions. Male tutors can mean that men are more at ease with attending and paying attention to marketing materials to ensure they appeal.

### Changing health, bereavement, redundancy and other crises

A wide range of life changes both positive and negative can lead to social isolation, loneliness and reduced well-being and can be a turning point in the lives of individuals. Evidence suggests that adult learning can provide a route to improve well-being and an opportunity for learners to take control of their lives.

Recruit practitioners as **signposters** from a range of professions as they may have a trusted relationship with target groups. Link with health and social care professionals to promote or jointly deliver services. Deliver **flexible** provision, providing small steps into learning for the most vulnerable groups achieves a large return in terms of economic and social well-being.

### Engagement in the Workplace

Employers have an unparalleled opportunity to engage their workforce with learning and skills development. However all too often evidence suggests that it is those individuals with lower levels of skills who have fewer opportunities to learn and develop at work. The project explored the specific promotion of **Learning at Work Day** within Adult Learners' Week and the mobilisation of workplace learning reps to act as brokers to encourage participation in learning and procure or develop appropriate training opportunities.

### The project participants made a number of suggestions for further work, research and collaboration

**International Adult Learners' Week** – partners valued the opportunity to learn and update each other on developments associated with their promotional campaigns. It was felt that more effort should be made through the International Council for Adult Education, UNESCO and the European Association for the Education of Adults, to reconnect festivals across Europe and Internationally.

**Festival of Dangerous Ideas** – this Festival was piloted by NIACE Cymru in 2014/15 with the aim of stimulating debate, conversations and consultation about the future delivery of education and adult learning. Partners were interested in the concept and the opportunity to further discuss a pan-European project with this theme.

Research around the incidence of **older people (50 plus) not in education, employment or training**, was discussed briefly during project meetings. Project partners felt that there was scope for further work in this area to develop a coherent response for those 50 plus to re-skill, review their careers and to return or maintain their place in the labour market.

# PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

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# PARTNERS

The opportunities offered by European transnational programmes are valuable and the content of this report demonstrates the value of building relationships across borders, challenging our practice, taking time to reflect and celebrate good practice and using the opportunities to innovate.

Project partners would like to thank those who have contributed case study materials for this report and a range of organisations who hosted participants as part of the programme of meetings and visits.

**Czech Republic:**

WYDA s.r.o.  
[www.wyda.cz](http://www.wyda.cz)

**Finland:**

AMKE Ltd  
[www.amke.fi](http://www.amke.fi)

**Hungary:**

Magyary Zoltán Folk High  
School Society  
[www.szepezd.hu](http://www.szepezd.hu)

**Lithuania:**

Kedainiai Adult and  
Youth Education Centre  
[www.smc.kedainiai.lm.lt](http://www.smc.kedainiai.lm.lt)

**Netherlands:**

Learn for Life, Dutch Platform  
for International Adult Education  
[www.lflplatform.net](http://www.lflplatform.net)

**Slovenia:**

ZIK Črnomelj  
[www.zik-crnomelj.eu](http://www.zik-crnomelj.eu)

**Switzerland:**

SVEB – The Swiss national Umbrella  
Organisation for Adult Education  
[www.alice.ch](http://www.alice.ch)

**Wales:**

NIACE Cymru  
[www.niacecymru.org.uk](http://www.niacecymru.org.uk)