



LEAP

Local Adult Education Policy

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Intellectual Output 2

Trends & Dynamics in AE Local Policy Making

Country Snapshot – SPAIN

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Introduction

Please provide an overall snapshot about relevant trends and social dynamics pertaining to AE and LLL in your country. Make sure to highlight:

- Has there been any changes recently in AE policies on a national level? Has the focus changed, for example? (due to for example population ageing, automatisisation, digitalisation, unemployment, migration, crime/safety, COVID etc?) Has there been more / less interest from policy makers? Has there been more / less demand from users; growing / declining interest in specific topics;
- The currently adopted national Recovery and Resilience Plans may give some indication on the focus
- Qualitative Indicators (i.e. the range of training services provided by local AE programmes – what kind of skills gap do they address?)
- Quantitative Indicators (i.e. the participation rate of Adults to education and training programmes planned and implemented at local level)
- Funding Means (Has there been more / less funding ?)

Please comment on the desk research and interviews made.

Adult training in Spain is mainly focused on employment and therefore qualifies or re-qualifies in new management techniques that improve their skills. Digital skills is a recurring theme in which knowledge can always be improved or updated. It's been seen how the grants and calls for young adults focus a lot on job placement, leaving aside that necessary support to reduce educational dropouts and promote other models that help return in cases of young people who have left without a holder.

In Spain, the provision of employment related training is regulated by the Department of Employment and Social Security, through the State Public Employment Service (SEPE). Nevertheless, there are many institutions (Adult Education Centers, University for Adults, Associations, NGOs, Foundations, etc.) providing formal and non-formal education for employment to national adults, migrants and refugees (filling the system gaps). The current migration crisis in Spain (specially in the Canary Islands) has increased the number of training courses given the high demand.

The Autonomous Governments are responsible for the implementation of these training initiatives, in the framework of State regulations. There are other Education Acts such as Andalusia's (2007) and Catalonia's (2009) that regulate adult education in the formal sector. Nevertheless, tensions between regional/national governments and the State means that some policy developments have not been implemented in some territories – as is the case with some parts of the Organic Act on the Improvement of the Quality of Education. Certain elements of the educational system exemplify these tensions: the teaching of co-official languages in some territories of the State, the teaching of religion reinstated by the Government in the above mentioned Act, the loss of a discipline about citizenship, among others.

Now, education policies promote lifelong education, for life, in all aspects, thanks to the fact that the EU strategies propose a comprehensive and competency education of people: working with emotions, social competences, as well as the training for globalization, that is, for the growth of mobility thanks to the trends of population globality.

The crisis situation of 2008 and the subsequent crises that emanated from it, caused many adults to join education. The construction/building boom caused many adolescents to focus on construction, but after the crisis these same people were pushed to join education again to have new social and labor opportunities.

When the EU establishes work guidelines and policies, this often has advantages and disadvantages. The advantage is that it establishes a horizon (public policies for positive coexistence, see the constructive approach to migration, digitization...) with which to work from all institutions. Nevertheless, European projects are also strict at times when focusing on one profile and that sometimes also creates differences between these profiles, for example projects always aimed at women or newcomers (migrants). For example, when it comes to training and working with migration, it is not the same to do it from Galicia (North Spain) than from Andalusia (South Spain), or policies that promote the training of people under 30, and there are no training resources for people over 45, or the crisis of the Covid that has affected those migrants who had already passed the accompaniment process, and who are more vulnerable after the crisis.

Unquestionably, COVID 19 has made us advance in digitization. When face-to-face training came to a standstill, people who followed some line of training have had to learn new modes of communication that have allowed them to continue with their training. In addition, there are sectors that with the PANDEMIC have been doomed to unemployment and have had to reconvert, for example the hotel and leisure industry.

According to the Recovery and Resilience Plan, it's said that "measures to support the digitization of education and training institutions (such as investments in ICT infrastructure), including vocational education and training and adult learning" will be taken.

It is possible that there is a change in attitude or trends, but the difficulties are in the concretion of these measures and the procedures that must be carried out for their implementation. This causes that, sometimes, the strategies arrive late. Regarding migration, we detected a great incongruity between the current policies and legislation on immigration matters with the reality and needs, leaving many people outside the training, employment, social security, etc. system.

Changes in the last 2-3 years in learning needs continue to be increasingly related to digital training, digitization of the learning process, which has accelerated after the pandemic. In recent years, and after this pandemic year it is even more accentuated, people do not have the training tools to face a digitalized society in all aspects. For all this, adaptation to digitization and technification are a real need. The curricular contents needs to be adapted to the learning styles, rhythms, capacities and personal situation (schedules), through more accessible methodologies and resources, overcoming face-to-face, the master class, and rigid evaluation schedules and forms / global.

Dual training is considered as a great option to promote, especially among people at risk of social exclusion who receive scholarships so that they can attend training and sustain themselves while they are training.

Investments have had limited impact on the inclusion of low skilled adults in the labour market. Finally, there is a lack of official information about the use of the VET funds, and therefore a lack of transparency clouds the question of whether investments are being prioritised in an appropriate way.

If there were more budget, many aspects could be improved, for example, a more individualized attention and consultations to students and better training for adult trainers. The training offer must be accompanied by individualized guidance, especially for those who have been out of work for a long period of time. Also Development of significant experiences in adult education and methodological update of language learning.

Quantitative aspects:

Most developed projects meet the objectives required by the EU in terms of profile, number of participants, etc. but in many cases the political calendar of the Public Administrations means that the projects have a short-term perspective.

Part of the evaluation of results is based on the quantification of results: mainly the number of training actions carried out, the number of people trained, nº of people that make up the technical team, the number of women/men, the achievement of training or objectives achieved. Also, it's very important the time (hours) in which each activity will be developed, taking into account not only the intervention and teaching, but also the coordination and implementation, the evaluation, creation of materials, innovation in activity, the systematization of the information, etc. Finally, the infrastructure to deliver adult education should be different to those for primary and secondary education to motivate the adults and empower their self-confidence.

Concerning qualitative aspects of the training actions, it starts from the design of the initiatives because it allows one to identify the nature of reality to adapt the training to the real needs. Then, the implementation of the training actions is based on the impact on the environment: how it will benefit family units, the community, the business fabric. Many educational programmes offered by civil society entities work from the defense of Human Rights, and gender, ethnic minorities, LGBTBI rights, with the aim of improving their social and human conditions.

How are AE policies defined at the local level in Your Country?

Please describe dynamics and process that happens before the definition and implementation of AE policies in your national ecosystem; how are they designed? What kind of inputs local AE policy makers rely on to structure the plans?

If there is no specific AE policy, where can the AE elements be found? (social policies, employment policies, economic policies – skills development, digitisation policy, cultural policies...?)

Please also check the plans for use of European Structural Funds, they can contain chapters on adult education. From another perspective, make sure to highlight how EU agendas in the domain of AE have been (or have not been) reflected by local AE authorities in your country.

First of all, there is no specific national plan aimed at adults acquiring basic skills, in a flexible way, outside the regulated educational system. The second peculiarity is related to financing. Almost all of the funds for training is transferred to training providers and employers. This is in contrast to the situation in the countries with the highest participation rates in adult education, in which a substantial portion of the funds are transferred to the workers.

In Spain, the distribution of adult learning responsibilities is across three different levels:

-State level: The Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports is responsible for the general regulatory framework. The last legislative measures have seen a shift in some regulatory powers to a more centralised organisation;

-Second level: Departments of Education – or similar - in the different Autonomous Government that are responsible for implementing specific policies of adult education and learning;

-Finally, local authorities – municipalities – are responsible for the maintenance of buildings. They also organise some training actions mostly related to leisure activities: dance, painting, sewing, sports, etc.

As a first step, when planning an AE intervention, initiative or policies, tools such as checklists that encompass planning and evaluation of results, the results of studies of emerging markets, new professions, trends in the labor market, study cases and best practices, among others, are used, especially at the national level (depending on the funds origin though). AE stakeholders also use documents related to measuring the impact and evaluation of training actions such as productivity indicators, common immediate result indicators or *Participa1420* questionnaires used by European funds. Especially relevant is the white paper on education on Second Chance Schools for young people up to 29 years of age.

The Incheon Declaration for the 2030 Agenda offers a fundamental instrument with its Sustainable Development Goals. More specifically, Goal 4 provides an initiative closely linked to the development of lifelong learning: to ensure inclusive education for all.

For the design of training for employment, the system of vocational training for employment as a reference is used: national catalog of qualifications, certificates of professionalism, etc.

The most known European AE policies for the Spanish interviewed entities are the European Social Fund (Operational Program for Social Inclusion and Social Economy, Youth Employment Operational Program and Operational Program for Employment, Training and Education), Erasmus+, Europe 2020, Next Generation and AMIF, Pathways to Skill Enhancement: New Opportunities for Adults Key competences for lifelong learning.

National and regional plans as well, the regional strategy for economic and social development. National Digitization Plan, also in Spain it is essential how it is developed at the level of each Autonomous Community, since the competences are decentralized at that level.

European funding has allowed many AE stakeholders to launch experimental actions (pilot projects) that try to respond to the needs of vulnerable adult groups (the Roma population, for example). In this sense, one of the interviewed stakeholders carried out a series of periodic studies of employment and the Roma population (2008, 2011, 2018) and they have a network of prospecting technicians in more than 60 cities that collect the needs of companies.

In Spain, many AE institutions have used the study of good practices at the European level by visiting training experiences with young people and exchanging experiences with other international entities.

In order to support the development of adult education policies, the use of tools related to the initial assessment that promote a real analysis of the needs of the target population is needed: Knowing the needs of students and being able to support them with training activities, as well as policies that promote their growth, based on their expectations. Taking into consideration the real needs of adult society.

Many AE entities exercise political and social influence. Program planning is based on the results of previous projects and their background.

How AE policies are implemented at local level?

Please describe the process in which local AE programmes are implemented. Guiding questions might be: who is in charge of deploying AE programmes? Are there training needs analyses made? Are the programmes designed according to the demand? Is there any non-formal supporting network relevant to mention? Is there a database of training providers and/or training programmes available?

Who are the key relevant stakeholders on the local level?

It is very probable that there are no specific policies on AE at the local level. Then we are interested to learn about individual activities like festivals, education activities of museums and libraries, courses for migrants, training for unemployed, awareness raising about separation of waste or climate change, courses for seniors, training in digital skills, career counselling and guidance...

We are specifically interested in topics or areas such as Digital Skills, Climate Change (Sustainability issues), Civic Education (Citizenship education) and Health education (in relation to COVID). We are looking for examples of good practices - something that the local authorities did, do or supported.

Entities of the Third Sector and Civil Society seem to play a key role in adult education training. Most entities interviewed agree that the policies would have to start from a consultation with the Third Sector, since the training needs are detected from the field work. Also the contribution of a third party that collects all the information of the needs and publishes it in a study, as is the case of this LEAP project, helps to make known all the needs of the population with whom we work. For social entities, the policy strategy is appreciated in the approach and assessment of the calls, derived from European funds, related to the training of inclusion of people, for example.

In general, AE entities adopt EU policies and strategies in their AE policies and initiatives indirectly due to lack of knowledge. Some got instructions or were inspired by some EU programs or documents such as the EU White Paper where the methodology of Second Chance Schools is included.

AE policies are adapted according to the users, their profiles and their needs. The procedures that are previously established are followed and it is about adapting to the reality of our entity, adapting the implementation and the justification. It adapts at the level of scope, it adapts in terms of the type of profiles of participating people and it is about adapting to the impact that it is intended to achieve. This last section being the one that we are having the most difficulties in reaching.

What is related to the generation and measurement of impact is complicated in actions of lifelong learning and adult education, without falling into the risk of evaluating only the achievement or not of knowledge, when the impact should be measured in the person, in its immediate environment (family, social) and in what it reverts and contributes at the social level (economic growth, employment options, social participation, etc.). Collaborative and networked work facilitates the realization and implementation of this type of actions. Nevertheless, no supporting network or database of providers or training programmes have been found. There are in the case of primary, secondary and higher formal education though.

Managing adequate information collection systems, objective, qualitative and quantitative, which collects the precise indicators for measuring the achievement of objectives and impact, is essential. Learn from good practices that have been implemented elsewhere, etc. to be able to put in common.

What is necessary is to know the needs, interests and characteristics that lead adults to their studies, in this way significant actions could be motivated that would motivate citizens to get involved in adult education and / or learning throughout their life.

Training policies are being derived to training within the construction sector and it is not being seen if this has an adaptation with the real demand of the labor market. Only companies are those that are adapting to the labor market by training internally.

Regarding best practices, there are many examples of Civil Society Organisations filling gaps in adult education and learning provision. For example, in the city of Seville important work in relation to literacy with migrant people is being taken forward by Hermandades (Fraternities) or in the city of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, where Radio ECCA (Canarian Foundation) provides Spanish courses for migrants or an online course on Adaptation to Climate Change and Effective Use of Water for adults.

Furthermore, there are examples of strong collaboration between the public sector, workers and employers in the field of adult training. The Tripartite Foundation for Training in Employment in particular is a private foundation that provides training for employed workers. The Foundation is jointly governed by trade unions, employers, and the State Public Employment Service.

An adult center in Valencia, a network of municipalities has implemented a course on “Twinning for development: Sustainable Development Goals” in order to integrate education for development in a participatory, comprehensive and holistic way in twinning strategies with the developing countries of the Valencian municipalities. This initiative is executed by the MUSOL Foundation with the financial support of the Generalitat Valenciana.

Conclusions and Takeaways

Please provide conclusive remarks with specific reference to gaps and mismatches that might represent a strategic field of intervention for the LEAP’s OER platform and its training module. A guiding question might be: how can we empower local authorities responsible for AE (and/or AE related policies) to be more efficient and effective in their strategic planning? What information do they need? What guidance do they need? What specific actions can be triggered?

Adult participation in education and training remains limited. Obstacles to people participating can be related, on the one hand, to the requirements of access, cost, degree of support to learning, nature of learning outcomes, etc.; and, on the other hand, with the life situation, the extent to which the family and the adult's social environment support the participation and the self-esteem and confidence that the adult has in himself to learn, which are often linked to failure in educational experiences previously.

In general terms, local authorities need and want to be more efficient and effective in their strategic planning. Practitioners need to understand better the importance of adult education and the needs. For this, a wide analysis needs to be done and the results will support a more effective and efficient strategic planning.

In many cases, the political calendar of the Public Administrations means that the projects have a short-term perspective.

There are some efforts to link educational authorities’ lifelong learning policies at either the State level or regional/national level with employment authorities at the same levels.

No supporting network or database of training providers or training programmes have been found. Coordination is a significant challenge – due to the political tensions referred to above between the diverse levels of the administration: state level, regions/nations or local level. This lack of coordination, for the reason already mentioned, leads to the duplication of some initiatives as well as gaps in the delivery of others.

Moreover, there is very little coordination at the local level amongst libraries, businesses, community centres, schools, Civil Society Organisations, etc. This lack of coordination impedes the creation of a learning culture outside the walls of the school.

There is a lack of training focused on specific teaching approaches for adults. The psychology of the adult, or specific teaching methodologies used in adult learning are not seen as an important element of teacher training in the majority of Faculties of Education.

There is a lack of political consensus about the fundamental building blocks of the educational system in Spain. First of all, there is no specific national plan aimed at adults acquiring basic skills, in a flexible way, outside the regulated educational system. The second peculiarity is related to financing. Almost all of the funds for training is transferred to training providers and employers. This is in contrast to the situation in the countries with the highest participation rates in adult education, in which a part of the Substantial of the funds are transferred to the workers.

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Insert here all your references and the sources you used to compile the Country Profile

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