

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICYMAKERS

Streamline digital competences in the training of adult educators. Teaching and learning in a digital environment has become a reality. As the COVID-19 pandemic has shown, adult educators need a variety of skills to deliver quality teaching online, and need to be supported in the endeavour. Both entry-level and in-service training of adult educators need to include digital competence while looking at learning holistically, for example using a life skills perspective.



Offer a self-assessment tool for adult educators. A self-assessment tool could support adult learning professionals in reflecting on their digital competences, learning objectives and process in achieving them. The DigitALAD project has developed such a tool that is available on its e-learning platform free of charge.

Use one reference framework for digital competence to ensure transferability and transparency. The use of reference frameworks across one country can differ, depending on the needs and preferences of adult learning providers. The use of European frameworks - such as DigCompEdu - can make the acquisition and assessment of competences more transparent within the country and across borders.



Offer incentives to join in-service training. Many adult educators would be interested in joining more training opportunities, but lack the time to participate in them. Some incentives should be available to encourage adult education staff to update their competences. These could include time benefits, such as training during working hours, course subsidies, job promotion for the training of trainers.

Focus on equity, analyse the local context and barriers to access, and provide a relevant offer. Broadband connectivity, equipment, financial issues, lack of adequate offers are all important factors that might discourage adult educators from attending in-service training. In-service training of adult educators should be available in diverse locations and on a variety of topics, taking into account current demands as well as the fact that the work of adult educators is context-bound.



Recognize adult learning and education as a policy field and provide adequate funding to support acquisition of digital competences. Adult learning has an important role to play in equipping adults with competences that they need to be learners and citizens in a digital environment. Without funding for adult learning structures, as well as equipment, reaching the targets foreseen in the recent EU strategies will not be possible. That said, funding cannot stop at infrastructure: investment in people is one that has the most potential to pay off long term, as technology should not be an end in itself.

Foster partnerships and create an ecosystem in which adult learning is supported. Digital transformation is a complex topic: it requires cooperation between different stakeholders: AE providers, NGOs, SMEs, start-ups, public services, the tech industry... The policy environment in which adult learning functions needs to encourage collaborative partnerships between diverse stakeholders instead of competition. Broadly speaking, adult learning needs an ecosystem to support it, including employers, social partners, municipalities, giving adult learners better access to learning and adult learning professionals an opportunity to grow professionally.

