



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR
THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS



MEETING THE CHALLENGE: LIFELONG LEARNING FOR ALL

In December 2012, representatives from the European Commission (DG EAC and DG ENLARG), the EESC, the European Parliament and European NGOs, initiated a dialogue among education and development stakeholders on the challenges and opportunities for non-formal adult education in the development sector.

Lifelong learning is a key for achieving social change and reducing poverty levels around the world. It has the capacity to positively affect many dimensions of poverty, peace, reconciliation as well as conflict prevention. Adult education creates change through enhancing employment prospects, improving health levels and financial literacy of poor people as well as giving better chances of acquiring the tools needed to run their own lives. However these benefits are often not understood outside of the educational discourse and there is a lack of recognition of the education sector when looking at development goals, in particular non-formal adult education. Policy makers and even civil society organisations often do not include education interests. As a result the respective UN Millennium Development Goals and “Education For All” targets for 2015 will mostly be missed, especially the EFA goals explicitly affecting adult learners.

For the Inclusion of Adult Education in Development Strategies

We can see that development strategies do not include the education sector so far. If so, then these initiatives are focused on primary education. However we believe that in particular adult education should be considered and taken into account because of various reasons.

And we call on you to support us in this work. Because: synergies among different actors are needed for tackling global challenges of adult education. These should support adult education and development through:

I. Promoting Adult Education at policy level

- Ensuring Lifelong and Lifewide Education for All, because: Education is a Human Right.
- Making the case for the wider impact of (non formal) adult learning at policy level (education and finance ministries)
- Embed adult education in (development) policies and strategies as a substantial part of key policy and strategy documents (planning, budgeting, monitoring)
- Increasing funding for the non-formal adult education sector
- Supporting the development of strong adult education strategies with structures and systems in developing countries

II. Engaging learners' voices

- Ensuring citizen participation and involvement
- Develop outreach activities and partnerships
- Listening to, involve and facilitate citizen's voices when planning, designing, offering and evaluating learning processes and development strategies
- Building and strengthening civil society alliances
- Sharing good practice experiences

III. One shoe does not fit all – context matters

- Recognizing different experiences and life situations of people
- Validating skills which in particular contribute to the personal and professional growth of individuals
- Using the concept of “life skills” for increased livelihoods rather than skills training for employment only
- Working pragmatically within existing structures

Each stakeholder has the responsibilities in the implementation of development policies, in inspiring support and engagement for education. Education is a tool towards equality, sustainability and human right. Also the public has to be made more aware of the importance of education for poverty reduction, because: “No development without Education.”