

ALL IN



INCLUSION NOW!

Recommendations for adult
learners with disabilities

Content

Introduction	4
Country reports	5
Germany	5
Greece	6
Slovenia	7
Spain	8
Austria	9
Ireland	10
Inclusion: the common challenges	11
Professionalization of educators	13
Learner opportunities	14
Policy recommendations	15
Recommendations for learners	15
Recommendations for organisations	17
Recommendations for policymakers	23
Literature	27
Consortium	30

INTRODUCTION

Inclusion has become a cornerstone principle in education, advocating for equal access and opportunities for all learners, including those with disabilities. Recognizing the transformative power of education, countries worldwide have been striving to create inclusive educational systems that cater to the diverse needs of their populations. Specifically, the inclusion of adult learners with disabilities into non-formal education systems has emerged as a crucial focus area to ensure that these individuals have the opportunity to develop their skills, knowledge, and talents.

The concept of non-formal education encompasses a broad range of learning activities outside the traditional formal education system, such as vocational training, personal development programs, community-based workshops, and lifelong learning initiatives. These informal and semi-structured educational programs offer unique benefits, including flexibility, practical skills development, and personalized learning paths. However, the full realization of these benefits can only be achieved when these programs are designed to be inclusive, ensuring that individuals with disabilities are not left behind.

The inclusion of adult learners with disabilities into non-formal education systems carries significant implications for individuals and society as a whole. By providing equal access to non-formal education opportunities, countries can empower individuals with disabilities to enhance their capabilities, achieve personal growth, and improve their quality of life. Moreover, inclusive non-formal education systems foster a more inclusive and tolerant society, promoting social cohesion and breaking down barriers and prejudices.

This document focuses on Spain, Slovenia, Ireland, Germany, Austria, Greece, and Hungary as we explored the efforts and policies related to the inclusion of adult learners with disabilities into non-formal education systems. Together with the consortium partners, we prepared a set of recommendations and corresponding good practices, collected all over the European learning space. We hope that by promoting inclusion, we can create a more equitable and just society that values and embraces the contributions of all individuals, regardless of their abilities.

COUNTRY REPORTS

GERMANY

Population*:

84.358.845 persons

Physical and sensory

functional limitations**:

49,2%

National strategies addressing learners with disabilities

- Article 21 par. 6 of the Greek Constitution: “People with disabilities have the right to benefit from measures ensuring their self-sufficiency, professional integration and participation in the social, economic, and political life of the Country». Article 7 of the Greek Constitution also clarifies that no person with disabilities is excluded from the working process. On the contrary, should the employees be capable of completing their duties and tasks, especially when there is the appropriate technical support, they are not allowed to get fired.
- Law 4074/12, ratifying the UN’s CRPD (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities), recognizes the right of persons with disabilities to “live in the community, with choices equal to others”, and the “full enjoyment by persons with disabilities of this right and their full inclusion and participation in the community” on an equal basis.
- The right to equal treatment in the work environment (both for the public and private sector) is recognized by Law N. 4443/2016. Direct or indirect discrimination due to disability or chronic disease is prohibited and accessibility at work, the hiring criteria and requirements about professional development are governed by the provisions of the aforementioned Law. It also safeguards work conditions, such as benefits, health and insurance, dismissal rights, inclusion in case of unemployment, as well as access to all levels of education, professional orientation and training or internships on an equal basis. Non-discriminating participation in union movements is also ensured. This law ensures that private companies and organizations should cover 8% of their personnel with employees with disabilities; for the public sector, the percentage is 5%.
- As mentioned in the Strategic Plan for Vocational Education, Training, Lifelong Learning and Youth 2022-2024, one of the main responsibilities of the Central Council of Vocational Education and Training (CCVET) is to combat discrimination against people with disabilities and chronic diseases.
- Labour Employment Organization (DYPA) operates two Special Education training structures, which aim at the professional specialization and socialization of unemployed people with disabilities and consequently at their employment in various sectors of the economy (The Vocational Training School for the Disabled People of Athens (DYPA) and The Vocational Training Centre for Disabled people of Thessaloniki (VTCD).)

*According to Eurostat (link: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/TPS00001/default/table?lang=en, 2023>)

**According to Eurostat (link: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/HLTH_EHIS_PL1E/default/table?lang=en, 2019)

GREECE

Population*:
10.394.055 persons

Physical and sensory
functional limitations**:
28,9%

National strategies addressing learners with disabilities

- Article 21 par. 6 of the Greek Constitution: “People with disabilities have the right to benefit from measures ensuring their self-sufficiency, professional integration and participation in the social, economic, and political life of the Country». Article 7 of the Greek Constitution also clarifies that no person with disabilities is excluded from the working process. On the contrary, should the employees be capable of completing their duties and tasks, especially when there is the appropriate technical support, they are not allowed to get fired.
- Law 4074/12, ratifying the UN’s CRPD (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities), recognizes the right of persons with disabilities to “live in the community, with choices equal to others”, and the “full enjoyment by persons with disabilities of this right and their full inclusion and participation in the community” on an equal basis.
- The right to equal treatment in the work environment (both for the public and private sector) is recognized by Law N. 4443/2016. Direct or indirect discrimination due to disability or chronic disease is prohibited and accessibility at work, the hiring criteria and requirements about professional development are governed by the provisions of the aforementioned Law. It also safeguards work conditions, such as benefits, health and insurance, dismissal rights, inclusion in case of unemployment, as well as access to all levels of education, professional orientation and training or internships on an equal basis. Non-discriminating participation in union movements is also ensured. This law ensures that private companies and organizations should cover 8% of their personnel with employees with disabilities; for the public sector, the percentage is 5%.
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SLOVENIA

Population*:
2.116.792 persons

Physical and sensory
functional limitations**:
49,9%

National strategies addressing learners with disabilities

- Act on Protection Against Discrimination in Article 1 protects every individual against discrimination regardless of gender, nationality, race or ethnic origin, language, religion or belief, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, social position, property status, education or any other personal circumstance in various areas of social life, in the exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms, in the exercise of rights and obligations and other legal relationships in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or other areas. Article 2 binds state bodies, local communities, holders of public authority and legal and natural persons, who must ensure protection against discrimination or equal treatment of all in all areas of official decision-making, activity in legal transactions and their other activities or conduct with third parties persons.
- Act on Social Inclusion of Disabled Persons in Article 1 regulates the rights and the procedure for obtaining the status of a disabled person for persons with permanent congenital or acquired impairments who, due to their disability, cannot be socially integrated into the community without the provision of social integration services and who cannot independently carry out most or all of life needs and ensure means of subsistence, the right to monetary benefits and the opportunities provided by the state for their equal integration into society.
- Act on Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities prevents and eliminates discrimination against disabled people based on disability. The aim is to create equal opportunities for disabled people in all areas of life. Article 11 is addressing access to inclusive education - disabled people must be guaranteed inclusion in education programs at all levels and lifelong learning in the environment in which they live, as is the case for other citizens.
- Adult Education Act in Article 5 specifies that the realization of the public interest in the field of adult education pursues different goals, among them to reduce structural and individual barriers to the inclusion of residents in education and learning and to encourage the less educated and other vulnerable groups for education and learning.

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**According to Eurostat (link: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/HLTH_EHIS_PL1E/default/table?lang=en 2019)

SPAIN

Population*:
48.059.777 persons

Physical and sensory
functional limitations**:
28,1%

National strategies addressing learners with disabilities

- In the Survey on Disability, Personal Autonomy, and Situations of Dependency, a total of 4.38 million people declared to have some kind of disability in Spain. The most common type of disability reported was mobility, with 34.3 % (INE,2020).
- In 2013 the Ministry of Social Rights approved the General Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and their social inclusion. The objective of this law is to guarantee the right to equal opportunities and treatment, as well as the real and effective exercise of rights by persons with disabilities on equal terms with other citizens, through the promotion of personal autonomy, universal accessibility, access to employment, inclusion in the community and independent living, and the eradication of all forms of discrimination
- The Spanish Strategy on Disability 2022-2030 is an initiative designed by the Ministry of Social Rights and the 2030 Agenda. The Spanish government's ministry is responsible for implementing social policies and enforcing what the 2030 Agenda states. The main objective of the national strategy is to ensure that the rights of people with disabilities are respected through public policies.
- Adult education in Spain is regulated by the Education Acts (LOGSE, LOCE and LOE). These Acts aim to recognize the increasing importance of lifelong learning as a means towards social cohesion and social development. Since 2006, state education legislation (LOE, 2006; LOMCE, 2013) establishes that the organization of education for students with special educational needs is governed by the principles of normalization and inclusion. In addition, LOE was modified by LOMLOE passed in 2020. The implementation will end in the academic year 2023/24.
- The Royal Board on Disability is a public institution that belongs to the Ministry of Social Rights and the 2030 Agenda. Its objective is to protect the rights of people with disabilities to ensure social inclusion, taking into account the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the General Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and their Social Inclusion.
- The National Disability Council was created by the government in 2004 so that people with disabilities and their families can participate in the creation and planning of public policies that affect them.

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**According to Eurostat (link: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/HLTH_EHIS_PL1E/default/table?lang=en 2019)

AUSTRIA

Population*:
9.104.772 persons

Physical and sensory
functional limitations**:
36,7%

National strategies addressing learners with disabilities

- Federal Disability Equality Act of 2006 guarantees the right to education for people with disabilities and requires that all educational institutions provide reasonable accommodation to support the inclusion of people with disabilities.,
- The Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science, and Research has developed a national strategy for inclusive education, which aims to ensure that all learners, including those with disabilities, have equal opportunities to access and succeed in education and training. The strategy includes several measures to support the inclusion of learners with disabilities, such as the provision of specialized training for teachers and the development of accessible teaching materials. In terms of the professional development of educators and learners, Austria also places a high priority on this area.
- The Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science, and Research provides funding for the professional development of educators in adult education and lifelong learning through a range of initiatives, including the "Adult Education Professionalization Offensive." This program provides funding for the professional development of educators in adult education and training, including courses on inclusive education, digital learning, and intercultural education.
- Adult learners with disabilities are specifically mentioned as one of the target groups in Austria's adult education and lifelong learning strategy. The national strategy for inclusive education recognizes that people with disabilities often face significant barriers to accessing and participating in education and training, and outlines several measures to support their inclusion.

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**According to Eurostat (link: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/HLTH_EHIS_PL1E/default/table?lang=en 2019)

IRELAND

Population*:
5.194.336 persons

Physical and sensory
functional limitations**:
28,4%

National strategies addressing learners with disabilities

- In the Survey on Disability, Personal Autonomy, and Situations of Dependency, a total of 4.38 million people declared to have some kind of disability in Spain. The most common type of disability reported was mobility, with 34.3 % (INE,2020).
- In 2013 the Ministry of Social Rights approved the General Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and their social inclusion. The objective of this law is to guarantee the right to equal opportunities and treatment, as well as the real and effective exercise of rights by persons with disabilities on equal terms with other citizens, through the promotion of personal autonomy, universal accessibility, access to employment, inclusion in the community and independent living, and the eradication of all forms of discrimination
- The Spanish Strategy on Disability 2022-2030 is an initiative designed by the Ministry of Social Rights and the 2030 Agenda. The Spanish government's ministry is responsible for implementing social policies and enforcing what the 2030 Agenda states. The main objective of the national strategy is to ensure that the rights of people with disabilities are respected through public policies.
- Adult education in Spain is regulated by the Education Acts (LOGSE, LOCE and LOE). These Acts aim to recognize the increasing importance of lifelong learning as a means towards social cohesion and social development. Since 2006, state education legislation (LOE, 2006; LOMCE, 2013) establishes that the organization of education for students with special educational needs is governed by the principles of normalization and inclusion. In addition, LOE was modified by LOMLOE passed in 2020. The implementation will end in the academic year 2023/24.
- The Royal Board on Disability is a public institution that belongs to the Ministry of Social Rights and the 2030 Agenda. Its objective is to protect the rights of people with disabilities to ensure social inclusion, taking into account the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the General Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and their Social Inclusion.
- The National Disability Council was created by the government in 2004 so that people with disabilities and their families can participate in the creation and planning of public policies that affect them.

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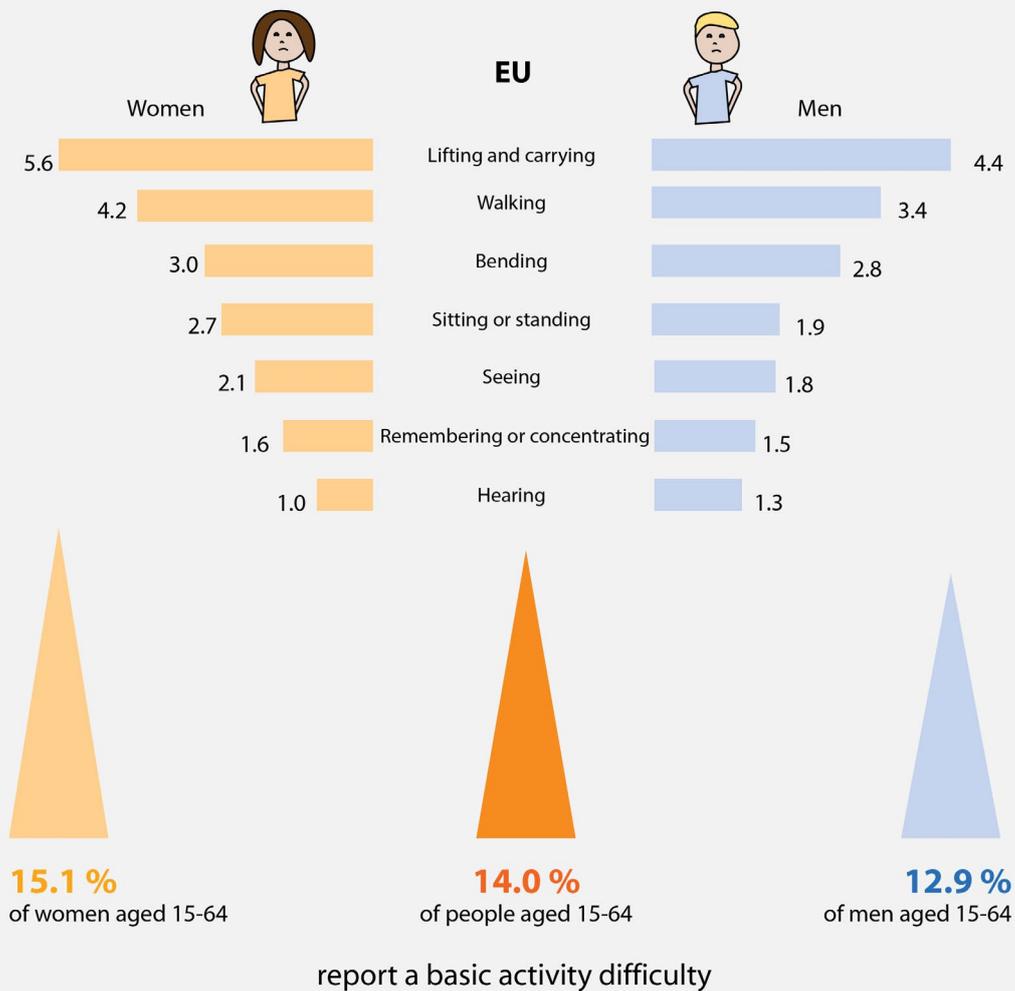
INCLUSION: THE COMMON CHALLENGES

Disabilities among the working age population

One person out of seven reports a basic activity difficulty

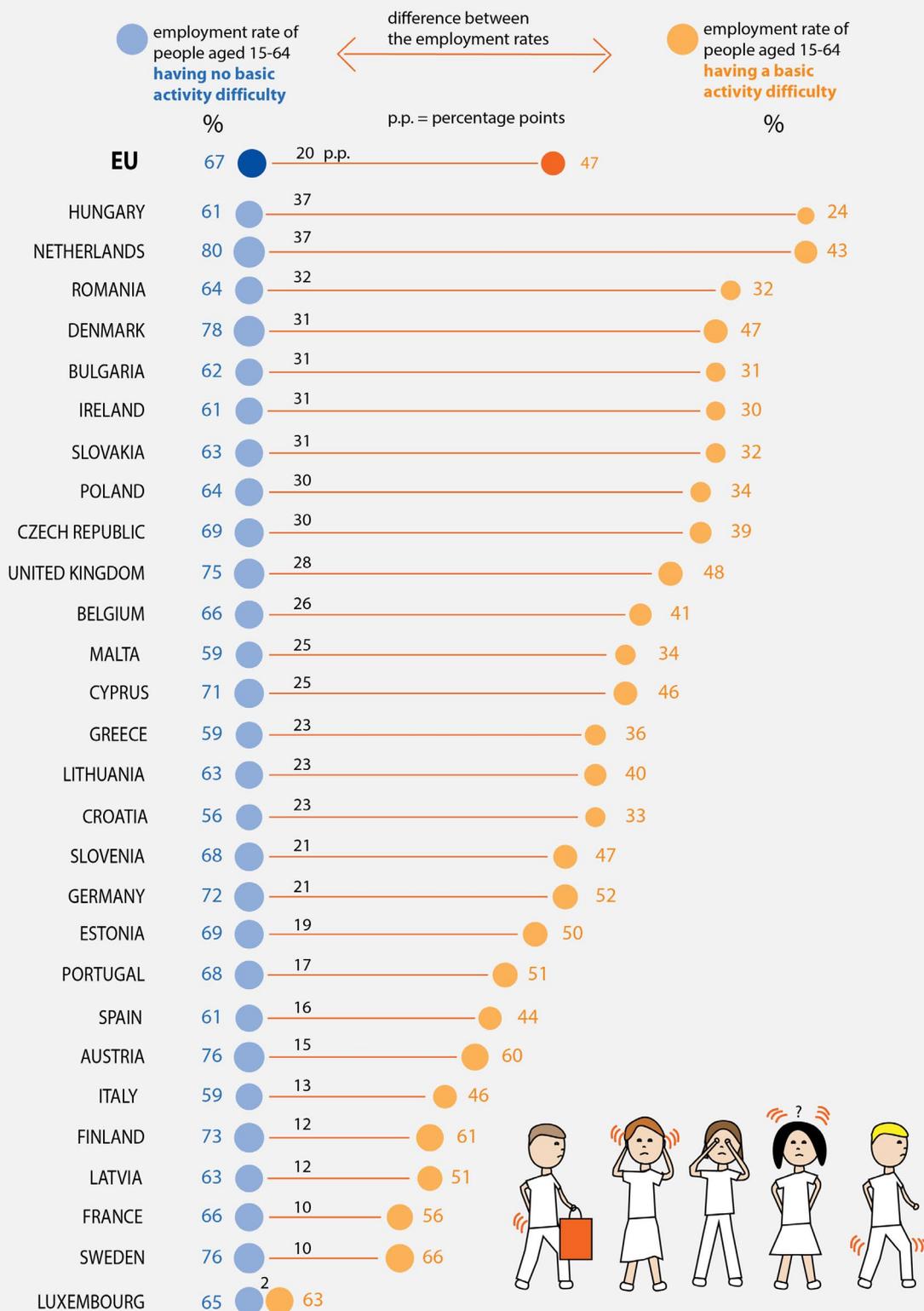
Lifting and carrying are the most frequently reported difficulties

The most frequently reported basic activity difficulties by women and men aged 15-64 (number of cases per 100 people)



Less than one person out of two with basic activity difficulties is employed

Employment rate of people aged 15-64 with and without basic activity difficulty



All statistics presented in this article come from the European Union Labour Force Survey. This is a large sample survey of people living in private households in the EU, EFTA and the candidate countries. In 2002 and 2011, the survey included an ad-hoc module on the employment situation of people with disabilities.

PROFESSIONALIZATION OF EDUCATORS

The inclusion and support of adult learners with disabilities are of utmost importance. These individuals face unique challenges and require specialized educational and training programs to enhance their learning experience. Key to the success of such programs is the professionalization of educators who work with these learners.

Austria, known for its commitment to professional development, places a high priority on the professionalization of educators in adult education and lifelong learning. The Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science, and Research has established various initiatives to support this endeavor, such as the "Adult Education Professionalization Offensive." This program offers funding for the professional development of educators, covering topics like inclusive education, digital learning, and intercultural education. By investing in the training and upskilling of educators, Austria demonstrates a dedication to promoting accessible and inclusive adult education for individuals with disabilities.

Germany, too, recognizes the significance of cooperation in achieving effective inclusive adult education. The "Network for Inclusive Adult Education" in Hamburg is a prime example of successful collaboration. This network brings together providers of adult education, integration assistance, and self-help associations for people with disabilities to offer relevant further training for course instructors. Additionally, at the federal level, the Adult Education and Disability Society (Gesellschaft Erwachsenenbildung und Behinderung) plays an active role in supporting inclusive adult education. They organize conferences, publish a magazine addressing the topic, and provide practical tips and assistance for the implementation of inclusive educational practices.

Greece, through its Law of lifelong learning, is dedicated to incentivizing skills, competencies, and knowledge development. The law recognizes the value of non-formal education and emphasizes its integration with the formal education system. By providing accredited programs with corresponding professionalisation, Greece ensures recognition, accumulation, and transferability of credit points between both systems. This approach allows adult learners with disabilities to receive the necessary support through a system of accredited adult education professionals and acknowledgment for their educational achievements, thereby enhancing their opportunities for lifelong learning.

In Spain, the management of adult education policies is decentralized, with each autonomous community having the authority to shape their own future. To gain insight into the specific legislation pertaining to adult education in Spain, it is necessary to refer to the adult education department of each autonomous community. The general statutes on education in Spain consist of framework laws that establish general principles, which are then developed by each autonomous community according to their particular local needs.

In Slovenia, there is a growing awareness, particularly within professional circles, of the importance of lifelong learning. Individuals with special needs face difficulties in accessing further education and learning after completing primary and secondary education. Insufficient programs and trained professionals compound the issue. As a result, efforts in the education of adults with special needs are primarily driven by independent projects, receiving co-financing from national, international, and European sources. These initiatives are typically conducted within the framework of social welfare, educational, and work centres.

In Ireland, significant strides have been made in supporting people with disabilities in adult learning. The National Disability Authority has developed guidelines for accessible learning, and the Irish government has provided funding to ensure the provision of accessible education and training. The preparation of adult educators to effectively teach individuals with disabilities requires the acquisition of appropriate skills and attitudes to create an inclusive and tolerant learning environment. Unfortunately, the adult education sector pertaining to individuals with disabilities suffers from inadequate funding, leading to a drop in support once a person reaches adulthood. This lack of support discourages individuals with disabilities from pursuing further education.

LEARNER OPPORTUNITIES

Access to education and training opportunities is vital for adult learners with disabilities. They face different circumstances or are far away from having access to equal opportunities. These barriers include physical, cognitive, sensory, and mental health challenges that require tailored support and accommodations.

The main goal outlined in the Spanish Strategy on Disability is social inclusion and participation, particularly within the education sector. The strategy advocates for inclusive education where individuals with and without disabilities study together, receiving the necessary support. Additionally, the strategy aims to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities in inclusive work environments, promoting collaboration with individuals without disabilities rather than exclusively working in specialized centres.

Slovenian Article 2 of the law says that state bodies, local communities, public authorities, legal and natural persons bear the responsibility of ensuring protection against discrimination and equal treatment in various domains, including career guidance, vocational and professional education, training, and retraining opportunities, including work practice. The Act on Social Inclusion of Disabled Persons, regulated in Article 1, addresses the rights and procedures for obtaining disabled status for individuals with permanent congenital or acquired impairments. It acknowledges the need for social integration services, support for life needs, means of subsistence, monetary benefits, and equal integration opportunities provided by the state.

The Greek Strategic Plan for Vocational Education, Training, Lifelong Learning, and Youth 2022-2024 highlights the efforts of the Central Council of Vocational Education and Training (CCVET) to combat discrimination against individuals with disabilities and chronic diseases. The Labour Employment Organization (DYPA) operates two Special Education training structures aimed at providing professional specialization, socialization, and employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities in Athens and Thessaloniki.

The Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science, and Research's national strategy for inclusive education outlines several key objectives to promote the inclusion of all learners, including those with disabilities, in education and training. These objectives include ensuring that all learners have equal access to education and training, regardless of their abilities or background; providing support for learners with disabilities, including individualized accommodations and assistive technology; promoting inclusive teaching practices, such as differentiation and universal design for learning and increasing the participation of people with disabilities in vocational training and lifelong learning opportunities.

In Germany, what can be observed are selective activities by adult education institutions, which include reduction of constructional barriers, improvement of accessibility, etc. It should be kept in mind that adult education institutions are often housed in older buildings that were not designed according to accessibility standards; strengthening inclusive communication, e.g. programme texts in easy-to-understand language, design of barrier-free online presences; development of offers for people with learning disabilities and intellectual disabilities, e.g. in the field of language learning, culture or political education; inclusive competence development in the context of further training. Especially in vocational and in-company training, there are offers and framework curricula (e.g. the rehabilitation-specific additional training) to improve the inclusive competence of employees and development of cooperative models between institutions for persons with disabilities and adult education.

The Irish National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2022 promotes the inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of Irish. The strategy aims to provide support and opportunities for people with disabilities to participate fully in society and reach their full potential. The strategy recognises that people with disabilities may face additional barriers in accessing education and training, and it is important to provide appropriate supports to overcome these barriers. In terms of further education for adult learners with disabilities, the strategy highlights the importance of ensuring that education and training programmes are accessible and inclusive.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LEARNERS

PROACTIVITY

- Demand your right to take an adult education class and enrol today.
- Engage in the available courses and request necessary adjustments to meet your needs.

Inklusiv Unterwegs

This is an initiative run by the Vienna Adult Education Centers (VHS) that provides support for adults with disabilities who wish to participate in adult education programs. The initiative includes a range of services, including accessible classrooms and materials, support from trained assistants, and customized learning plans that take into account learners' individual needs and abilities.

Link: https://www.vhs.at/de/s?_token=tuifboiFyMOKqyy0wqNpIDUFRbwWFSXd5ATBauqi&q=inklusiv+unterwegs

Location: Vienna, Austria

- Make sure your voice is heard. Promote inclusivity for yourself and others by participating in open decision-making forums at your education centre.
- Make the organizers aware of your disability, don't accept rejection and assert your right to participate.
- While attending a new programme or training may be intimidating, do not hesitate to discuss your concerns with the course organisers or trainers or support staff.

Society for the Culture of Inclusion

The Society for the Culture of Inclusion located in Ljubljana is involved in humanitarian activities to promote and actively develop an inclusive culture. The main goals of the association are upbringing, education, care for development and successful integration into organized education and wider social life, as well as the enforcement of the rights of children, adolescents and adults with special needs, as well as those with typical development. The regular activities of the association are: organization of inclusive events and festivals (International Festival Play with me), adapted sports training for children, adolescents and adults with special needs, holiday care for children (summer and autumn holidays), the Social inclusion program (for adults with disabilities who are permanently unemployable), individual support and companionship programs for people with special needs, programs to support families of children with special needs (Inclusive sports weekends, Diversity enriches us), implementation of leisure, sports, artistic activities and workshops for various target groups, organization of informal educational activities for volunteers, youth workers and professionals in education, implementation of international projects within the Erasmus+ programs and the European Solidarity Corps (youth exchanges, training of youth workers, long-term and short-term international volunteering...), promotion of inclusive culture and implementation of promotional activities of the association.

Link: <https://www.ljubljana.si/sl/moja-ljubljana/mladi-v-ljubljani/aktivnosti-za-mlade/mladinske-organizacije/drustvo-za-kulturo-inkluzije/>

Location: Ljubljana, Slovenia

ACCESSIBILITY

- Request a straightforward and easy-to-understand explanation of the course content. Many providers advocate for inclusion with simple language material.
- Reach out to schools and educational institutions to gather information about the various learning prospects they provide. Inform yourself about the accessibility of the building the programme takes place in.

AHEAD

AHEAD is an independent non-profit organisation in Ireland that aims to create inclusive environments in education and employment for people with disabilities. They provide a range of services and supports, such as training for educators and employers, advice and information for students and graduates with disabilities, and advocacy and policy work to promote inclusion and accessibility. They also collaborate with key partners to build networks and promote the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in all learning environments.

Link: <https://www.ahead.ie>

Location: Dublin, Ireland

ADVOCACY

- Establish contact with the local/regional authorities to obtain additional adult education options and explore alternative programs.
- Offer specific recommendations to the management of adult organizations proactively.
- Provide feedback on your experience in the program, and advocate to use this feedback to improve the program and ensure that it continues to meet your needs and the needs of all learners.

COMMUNICATION

- If you feel comfortable doing so, share more information about your disability - inform the trainers about your boundaries and capabilities.
- If you're having trouble comprehending something, express it clearly.

FLEXIBILITY

- Take classes online, adult learning institutions provide online or distance learning, self-directed learning, and opportunities to review or revisit content as needed.

FUNDING

- Explore options for funding - reach out to organizations and inquire about any available funding opportunities for yourself or additional aid.

Druga violina

Druga violina works within the framework of the service of management, protection and employment under special conditions, which is an organized form of protection with which the fundamental human rights of adults with disabilities established by the constitution and laws are fulfilled to a service that gives these persons, per their abilities, the possibility of active integration into social life and the working environment and performing useful work, but appropriate to their abilities. "The second violin in the orchestra is always only the second, the best is the first and has a more important role, nevertheless, no orchestra can play without the second violin, just as society cannot without different" (director of Dolfka

Boštjančič Center for Training, Work and Protection).

Link: <https://www.druga-violina.si/>

Location: Ljubljana, Slovenia

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ORGANISATIONS

ACCESSIBILITY

- Ensure that all facilities, materials, and technology are accessible and meet the needs of adult learners with disabilities. This includes making sure that classrooms, restrooms, and other common areas are physically accessible, providing alternative formats for learning materials, and ensuring that websites and other digital resources are accessible.

Retzhof

Retzhof became a pioneer in the field of barrier-free and inclusive adult education in Austria. Inclusive and barrier-free adult education is perceived as a cross-section task at the Retzhof for the conception of all educational measures. Furthermore, the Retzhof sees itself as the Austrian showcase project, pedagogical laboratory, and think tank in the field of inclusive and barrier-free adult (further) education.

The Retzhof follows the guiding principle of a humanistic idea of a man with an emancipatory, inclusive, barrier-free, international, and ecologic orientation. The educational work is shaped by party political independence, as well as socio-political, cultural, ethical, and confessional tolerance. The work is led by the idea of enlightenment. Furthermore, the work of the Retzhof seeks to enable people to emancipate themselves from involuntary dependencies of all kinds and to participate in social life.

Link: www.retzhof.at

Location: Wagna, Austria

- Hire staff with specific knowledge and experience in disability services. These professionals can provide valuable insights on how to make your courses more accessible and inclusive, as well as offer guidance on accommodations and assistive technologies that can help individuals with disabilities succeed in your courses. By having staff with expertise in disability services, you can ensure that your courses are designed with the needs of all learners in mind.
- Provide a range of flexible learning options to accommodate diverse needs and preferences. This can include:
 - Online learning: Offer courses or programs that can be accessed remotely through online platforms. Provide recorded lectures, interactive modules, and discussion forums to facilitate learning at a flexible pace and location. Ensure that the participants can build an online community to prevent the potential sense of loneliness and exclusion.
 - Blended learning: Combine online and in-person elements to create a blended learning experience. This allows learners to benefit from both face-to-face interactions and the convenience of online materials.
 - Modular courses: Break down courses into smaller modules or units, allowing learners to choose

specific topics or skills they want to focus on. This modular approach provides flexibility in selecting and completing learning components.

- Self-paced learning: Allow learners to progress through the material at their own pace. Provide resources, such as video tutorials, e-books, or interactive quizzes, that learners can access and engage with at their convenience.
- Alternative assessment methods: Consider diverse assessment methods that go beyond traditional exams or papers. Include options such as projects, presentations, portfolios, or practical demonstrations, enabling learners to showcase their knowledge and skills in ways that suit their strengths.
- Flexible scheduling: Provide multiple scheduling options for classes, workshops, or training sessions to accommodate learners' different time commitments and availability. This may include offering morning, evening, or weekend sessions.
- Personalized learning paths: Offer personalized learning paths or individualized coaching to tailor the learning experience to each learner's goals, interests, and learning style.

The "AGAPI" Association

The "AGAPI" Association was founded in 1989 on the initiative of parents, guardians, and friends of children with disabilities (mental retardation and mild disabilities) and they offer the following educational programs to people with impairments:

- Sessions with psychologists and psychiatrists
- Educational programs for the members' memory reinforcement
- Dance lessons
- Product Procurement Skills Acquisition Programme
- Body Diagnosis Program - Physical and Oral Hygiene
- Book clubs
- Theatrical Game / Enlightenment Programme
- Song Interpretation Group
- Occupational Therapy Programme
- Free Activity Programme (singing - painting - discussion)
- Socialisation Programme (getting to know the local community)
- Sports Program

The main purpose of the "AGAPI" Association is to contribute substantially to the improvement of the quality of life of the people with disabilities served by the daily care centre for People with Disabilities, Mental Retardation, and their families. That is why the whole structure of the programs focuses on making use of the abilities and potential of everyone.

Link: <https://www.syllogosagapi.gr/en/association-agapi/>

Location: Crete, Greece

CAPACITY BUILDING

- Train all staff, including instructors and support personnel, on disability awareness, best practices for teaching adult learners with disabilities, and accommodations that can be made to ensure a fully inclusive learning environment.
- Utilize the current staff training programs to equip them with the skills needed for inclusive teaching.
- Ensure that the training sessions incorporate scientific evidence.

In recent years the Andragogic Society of Slovenia, in cooperation with a group of experts who work with persons with special needs, prepared a special, content-integrated educational program, which is intended for adult educators, therapists, facilitators: to all those who, in their work, encounter the learning and education of persons with special needs. The programme »Inclusive Implementation of Education for Adults with special needs« had six content modules. Each was intended for one of the target groups of people with special needs, knowledge of peculiarities, characteristics, adaptations and learning abilities. They have also added a special andragogic module. The purpose of the program is awareness, understanding and adapt learning and education to the different needs of adult participants and offer additional basic knowledge, methods and forms of work to practitioners or teachers, about educational needs, methods, approaches, contents, etc., required by the education of adult participants with special needs (Andragoško društvo Slovenije).

Link: <https://www.andragosko-drustvo.si>

Location: Ljubljana, Slovenia

- Organize and manage inclusive training sessions regularly.
- Create and implement teaching methods that foster inclusivity.
- Implement inclusive recruitment programmes and hire staff with disabilities.
- Ensure that all invited experts base their conferences and training on scientific evidence with social impact, rather than solely relying on personal professional experience or opinions.

Most of the literature in this field is related to children and adolescents, but recently one of the few works for adults was published - the monograph **»Challenges of Inclusion in lifelong learning and Education of Adults with special needs«**. The 350-page book, with slightly larger letters and illustrations, was published by the Andragogic Society of Slovenia. The monograph describes approaches on how to work and communicate with people with special needs, so it can be used by anyone who has any contact with a person with special needs. It is primarily intended for educators, and teachers at secondary schools, colleges and universities. Given that we also meet people with special needs in cultural institutions, libraries, restaurants, fitness clubs and other sports institutions, it is also very useful for all employees in these areas. It is also indispensable for all employees of administrative units, courts, social institutions, centres for social work, protective work centres, etc. The monograph presents eight groups of people with special needs who are often included in programs of lifelong learning and adult education, but are often ignored and too often socially excluded. Treats adults with acquired brain defects or injuries, persons with specific learning difficulties and with attention disorders or hyperactivity. Also included are people with mobility impairments, deafness and hard of hearing, blindness and low vision, as well as people with deafblindness, autistic disorders and intellectual disabilities. Chapters on adult learning and education and the brain have also been added. In each chapter, the authors present peculiarities, characteristics, adaptations, aids and incentives that are good to know and take into account when guiding, learning and educating adults with special needs (Žibret, 2022).

Link: <https://www.delo.si/magazin/generacija-plus/vsezivljenjsko-ucenje-tudi-za-odrasle-z-ovirami/>

Location: Ljubljana, Slovenia

ACCOMMODATIONS

- Provide accommodations and support services to help adult learners with disabilities succeed. This could include providing assistive technology, such as screen readers or speech recognition software, and ensuring that communication supports are available, such as sign language interpreters or real-time captioning.

IDA project

The IDA project, (Inclusive Digital Academy), supported by the European Union in the frame of the Erasmus+ program, aims to reduce the digital divide for people with disabilities by facilitating access to ICTs.

This project complements the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy and in particular those of the Agenda for new skills and jobs. The majority of the partners, in a previous project (STELLA - 2017-1- DE02-KA204-004167) had already carried out work on the basic skills of people with disabilities, which led to the creation of a guide for professionals who want to pass on these skills to their audience.

Link: <https://sites.google.com/view/inclusivedigitalacademy/home>

Location: The EU

- Clarify organisational steps to work effectively with people with disabilities.
- Incorporate volunteers into the classroom to facilitate inclusive interactions and ensure equal participation for everyone.

COLLABORATION

- Work collaboratively with adult learners with disabilities to identify and address any barriers to participation, and ensure that they are involved in decision-making processes related to their own learning experiences.

Myrtillo Cafe

Myrtillo Cafe is a cafe based in Athens, Greece. Its main innovative action is that people with and without disabilities work there. Apart from job possibilities, educational and training possibilities are also offered. The staff organizes daily all kinds of events, such as educational seminars, conferences, book presentations, theatrical performances, musical concerts, exhibitions, anniversaries, bazaars, small festivals (outside and inside the park), etc.

The main goals of the Myrtillo café are:

- The support of the underprivileged people, not in the form of 'sheltered - meaningless - employment', but a dynamic exit to real life and work.
- The remainder of the values stem from the universal ontological basis that the deep structure of the soul does not differ from person to person.
- The partnership of the most privileged with the most socially disadvantaged can bring great benefit to both, as the gifts of both sides complement each other.
- Social awakening in terms of practical support for people with disabilities in life.

Myrtillo has developed an induction process for new employees which includes training them in the typical requirements of each position, as well as issues of work behaviour and cooperation. The company, therefore, expects to give its employees the necessary skills and work experience to enable them to work in other similar catering businesses with minor adjustments. Initially, the major arts were utilized in the transition stage to the work itself by music and drama therapists and then follows the process of work integration with special educators. At the same time, in the context of practical training, various students from public and private higher and higher schools (e.g., Department of Pedagogy and Special Education, Psychology of the University of Athens, Occupational Therapy from VET schools, etc.) can contribute to their educational work by acquiring educational experience.

Link: <https://myrtillocafe.gr/en/home/>

Location: Athens, Greece

- Creating inclusive spaces for student participation in decision-making is crucial to promote diversity, especially for individuals with disabilities. By involving students in the design and evaluation of course materials, it can ensure that the needs and perspectives of all learners are taken into account, resulting in a more accessible and inclusive learning environment.
- Develop strong relationships with local disability organizations to enhance collaboration and support for individuals with disabilities.

The VHS and Lebenshilfe Bamberg started to implement inclusive courses in which people with learning disabilities can participate in 2013. A VHS council for people with disabilities was created, corresponding courses were designed and, above all, the boundaries between the institutions of adult education and disability assistance, which until then had each planned and implemented offers "exclusively" for their clientele, were broken down.

Link: <https://www.lebenshilfe-bamberg.de/angebote/freizeit/inklusive-volks-hoch-schule>

Location: Bamberg, Germany

- Reach out to counselling centres or support groups specifically for people with disabilities. They may be able to provide valuable insights and feedback on any challenges or barriers that individuals with disabilities may face when attending courses. This information can then be used to improve the accessibility and inclusivity of the courses you offer.

ONCE Foundation

The ONCE Foundation for the Cooperation and Social Inclusion of People with Disabilities was founded in 1988 and is committed to an inclusive labour market that, from the paradigm of equal opportunities and non-discrimination, addresses the employment of people with disabilities as an opportunity for everyone. The objective is to provide people with disabilities of working age with professional qualifications and the necessary job skills to access the job market, through the implementation of training programs; promote the creation of employment opportunities for people with disabilities, using the different paths and formulas available in Spanish legislation; support the creation of job positions in collaboration with entities in the association movement for people with disabilities and their families

Link: <https://www.fundaciononce.es/es>

INSERTA Empleo is the organization for training and employment under the ONCE Foundation. Its activities are aimed at people with disabilities who are seeking employment and/or want to enhance their skills or acquire new ones.

Link: <https://www.insertaempleo.es/>

Location: Spain

- Establish meaningful networks and collaborations with other practitioners to foster the development of joint and/or complementary inclusive programs.

OUTREACH

- Develop outreach strategies to reach out to adult learners with disabilities, and encourage their participation in learning opportunities. This could include developing relationships with community-based organizations that serve individuals with disabilities or developing marketing materials that are inclusive and accessible.
- Promote courses using plain and straightforward language. Many countries use “simple language” to provide inclusion.

SELSI stands for Spoken Easy Language for Social Inclusion.

The SELSI project will take place from 2022 to 2024. It is led by Zavod Risa (Slovenia).

Until now, Easy Language has been mostly researched as a writing technique. SELSI will deliver a model of communication in spoken Easy Language.

At the start of the project, SELSI will research what has been done in the field of spoken Easy Language in Europe.

SELSI will develop recommendations and strategies for spoken Easy language.

At the end of the project, SELSI will introduce an online tool in different languages.

Link: <https://selsi.eu/en/homepage-eng/project/>

Location: The EU

- To increase the reach of your courses/programs, you should develop social media, TV, and radio campaigns.
- Promote inclusive courses, explicitly highlighting their inclusive nature.
- Take an active and proactive role as a party involved in national or local processes that address inclusive adult education. Express your voice and actively participate in working groups or other relevant bodies, whenever possible.
- Promote the use of inclusive language and ensure that communication does not promote any kind of stigma, prejudices or stereotypes.

EVALUATION

- Conduct regular evaluations of program effectiveness and accessibility to ensure that the needs of adult learners with disabilities are being met. This could include collecting feedback from learners with disabilities, tracking outcomes, and making adjustments as needed.
- Identify any organizational barriers that may hinder individuals with disabilities from attending your courses.
- Get an external review and consultation from accessibility experts as it is crucial to ensure that your courses are inclusive and accessible for learners with diverse needs.

FUNDING

- Actively search for and explore available funding opportunities. This can be done by conducting research, networking with relevant organizations or individuals, and regularly monitoring funding sources such as grants, sponsorships, or funding programs specific to working with learners with disabilities. Keep an eye out for announcements, deadlines, and eligibility criteria, and proactively submit funding proposals or applications as appropriate. Additionally, consider engaging with funding

agencies or foundations to learn more about their priorities and funding guidelines. Persistence and a proactive approach are key when seeking out funding opportunities.

Quality of Life for All (QoL4ALL) was an Erasmus + project that aimed to improve the education of adults with disabilities through the provision of educational strategies that promote their quality of life. The project aimed to improve the skills of adult education professionals working with people with profound and severe disabilities in the promotion of their quality of life.

Link: <https://www.epr.eu/project/qol4all-quality-of-life-for-all-erasmus-ka2-project/>

Location: The EU

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICYMAKERS

FUNDING

- Provide funding for non-formal adult education programs that prioritize the inclusion of adult learners with disabilities. This could include funding for accessibility improvements, staff training, and support services for learners with disabilities.
- Provide consistent and ongoing funding for inclusive offerings regularly.

The Ability Programme is a government-funded initiative in Ireland that offers education and training opportunities for individuals with disabilities, with a focus on enhancing their employability and career prospects. The programme provides a variety of courses and training options, including vocational training, personal development, and employment supports such as job coaching and placement. The Ability Programme can also offer adult educators an opportunity to expand their knowledge and skills in working with individuals with disabilities. The programme's training courses and workshops are designed to assist educators in developing effective teaching strategies and understanding the needs of their learners. As an initiative that promotes inclusivity in education and employment, the Ability Programme can help break down barriers and provide a pathway to personal and professional growth.

Link: <https://www.pobal.ie/programmes/ability-programme/>

Location: Ireland

- Allocate funding specifically for research in the field of inclusive adult education, focusing on areas such as needs assessment, effective methods, and relevant topics.
- Allocate funding specifically for the hiring of "inclusion officers" in educational organizations.
- Establish a dedicated funding structure for offering courses to people with disabilities.

Inklusion für Alle

On behalf of the Austrian Ministry of Education, BIV Integrativ is currently executing a Project called 'Education for all'. Its goal is the practice-oriented development of cooperative models for sensitization, qualification and networking in inclusive adult education. To make offers of general adult education accessible without barriers and to sensitize the employees of adult education institutions (course instructors, management, pedagogical staff, administrative staff, ...) for the clientele of persons with disabilities.

The sensitization of the responsible bodies/persons (heads of educational institutions, trainers, education officers, ...) is supported by the following offers:

- a. Brochures
- b. Workshops
- c. Networking and information events
- d. Elaboration of methodological and didactic concepts for the practical implementation of inclusive programs.
- e. Reduction of barriers and reservations to make offers of general adult education accessible for people with disabilities.
- f. Raising awareness of the importance of inclusion in society and politics in the sense of strengthening people in their social, political and cultural competences.

Link: <https://www.biv-integrativ.at/projekte#c2462>

Location: Vienna, Austria

LEGISLATION

- Develop and implement legislation that promotes the inclusion of adult learners with disabilities in non-formal adult education programs. This could include requirements for accessibility and accommodations, as well as incentives for programs that demonstrate a commitment to inclusion.

Springboard+ is a national initiative that provides free higher education courses for people who are unemployed and looking to return to the workforce. The programme is government-funded and provides free or heavily subsidised courses at certificate, degree, and master's levels to help upskill and reskill adult learners. To avail of this initiative, you must receive a qualifying social welfare benefit, including Disability Allowance and the Blind Pension. Since its launch in 2011, the programme has supported over 75,000 learners.

Link: <https://www.gov.ie/en/service/find-out-about-the-springboard-initiative/>

Location: Ireland

- Mandate that funded actions must be grounded in evidence and demonstrate social impact.
- Create and enact inclusive policies in non-formal adult education.

PARTNERSHIPS

- Foster partnerships between non-formal adult education programs and disability organizations to ensure that the needs of adult learners with disabilities are being met, and to provide opportunities for collaboration and knowledge-sharing.

The Spanish Confederation of Persons with Physical and Organic Disabilities (COCEMFE) was founded in 1980. Its lines of action, among others, are employment, training, defence of the right to accessibility, legal advice, promotion of female equal opportunities and cooperation in the Caribbean and Latin America.

Link: <https://www.cocemfe.es/>

Location: Spain

- Encourage volunteering, social participation, and foster a sense of collective responsibility.
- Actively encourage and promote community participation in educational centres as volunteers to support teachers in the classroom.

Erasmus+ project MeTURA - Back to the Roots which was implemented from October 2018 to August 2021, is addressing therapeutic family gardening and therapeutic family cooking for a more independent life of adult family members with intellectual disabilities. Education Centre Geoss was the coordinator of the project with other partners from the UK, Croatia, Slovenia and Italy. Within the project different studies and materials were developed, including methodology MeTURA Family Education - Back to the Roots for Families with Adults with Mental Disabilities and andragogical material for the implementation of the Family Education MeTURA-Back to the Roots as well as the Andragogical Handbook for the Implementation of Family Education MeTURA - Back to the Roots is an innovative, freely accessible collection that provides information, guidance and advice for the implementation of lifelong learning in an innovative learning environment of home garden and kitchen. Partners also organized different training events and activities for the trainers and participants with disabilities.

Link: <https://www.erasmus-metura.eu/>

Location: The EU

- Provide support for educational projects and programs that focus on community sensitization and outreach.

AWARENESS

- Raise awareness among policymakers, the public, and adult learners with disabilities themselves about the importance of inclusion in non-formal adult education. This could involve developing public education campaigns, as well as incorporating disability issues into broader policy discussions related to education and workforce development.
- Promote or even author articles highlighting the importance of inclusive adult education.
- Increase the media exposure of inclusive adult education by promoting the topic through various channels.

At the German federal level, the Adult Education and Disability Society (Gesellschaft Erwachsenenbildung und Behinderung)" is active, among others. They offer conferences, a magazine on the topic as well as concrete tips and help for implementing inclusive adult education.

Link: <http://www.geseb.de/index.php/startseite.html>

Location: Germany

ADVOCACY

- Support advocacy efforts led by disability organizations and self-advocates to promote inclusion and access to non-formal adult education for individuals with disabilities.
- Implement a certification or labelling system for educational organizations that verify their commitment to inclusive education.
- Always unequivocally assert that inclusion is a fundamental human right that cannot be subject to negotiation.
- Emphasize the principle of equal opportunities as a fundamental aspect.

DATA COLLECTION

- Collect data on the participation and outcomes of adult learners with disabilities in non-formal adult education programs, and use this information to inform policy and funding decisions, as well as to identify areas where additional support may be needed.
- Collect successful examples of educational initiatives in inclusive education and facilitate knowledge exchange by promoting the sharing of experiences from these successful endeavours.

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