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EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR  
THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS

# Regional review: Europe and North America

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# Key accomplishments and lessons learnt

- 36 countries in the region have enacted new policies in ALE, at different levels of governance (decentralized in the US and Canada and some countries in Europe)
- 36 countries in Europe are implementing the European Agenda for Adult Learning, adopted by the Council of the European Union in 2011, whose priorities are to a certain extent aligned to those of the BFA
- Significant progress has been achieved in the area of recognition, validation and accreditation of prior learning- in the EU, 32 countries have linked their National Qualifications Framework to the European Qualifications Framework



# Key accomplishments and lessons learnt

- There is a growing tendency of stakeholder consultation, but it usually remains limited to needs stage
- Participation levels in ALE have increased since 2009, but large fragmentation remains – very different pictures across countries
- International cooperation has been growing stronger especially in Europe, where new thematic networks have been established and EU funding programmes have enabled mobilities and transnational partnerships



# Challenges

- Stop-and-go policies (also and especially linked to funding)
- ‘Matthew-effect’ persistent, more outreach strategies needed
- Recognition of (non-formal) adult education as an equal sector to other education sectors
- (Shifting) Focus on particular areas of ALE



# Enabling factors

- A number of strategies and initiatives that have developed and are pushing the agenda in parallel: Belem Framework, PIAAC, European Agenda for adult learning, New Skills Agenda, SDGs
- Benchmarking and the Open Method of Coordination
- Comparison
- Legal frameworks that enable funding and give recognition



# Enabling factors

- European Agenda on adult learning: policy focus
- Diversity and building on existing traditions
- Governance with civil society
- Qualification frameworks if and when they take non-formal learning seriously
- LLL strategies



# Key recommendations

- The value and role of non-formal adult learning in providing quality education needs more recognition. Non-formal adult learning can encourage dialogue and safe learning environments.
- Stable and predictable funding is necessary. Structural support for non-formal adult learning is still needed, not just project-funding.



# Key recommendations

- All key stakeholders in ALE need to be included in the development, implementation and monitoring of ALE policies and programmes. While various stakeholders are consulted on ALE policies, consultations are frequently limited to the first stages of a policy cycle.
- Build resources for good policy-making in AE





# Key recommendations

- There is an urgent need to increase investment in ALE. Without sufficient funding from public sources, many ALE providers are underfunded, leaving behind especially the most underprivileged learners.
- It is necessary to collect comprehensive data on ALE spending beyond formal AE.
- Pay more attention to outreach as well as specific target groups: returning soldiers, prisoners, families, people with disabilities, people / children concerned by migration (also left behind, also inner-country) ....



# Key recommendations

- Use RVA as a key tool to promote ALE, putting learners in the centre of the process, encouraging more flexible learning and creating a more comprehensive understanding of competences.
- Better coordination and dialogue between sectors of ALE, as well as more comprehensive approaches



# Key recommendations

- More efforts are needed to improve employment conditions of ALE staff and their professionalization (!).
- More training of AE staff
- There is a growing need to look at ICT and OER as a way of delivering quality ALE, one that is flexible and accessible for all.
- Consider new forms of learning (self-directed, peer learning etc), digital tools etc esp. in order to reach new groups (go beyond BFA with its focus on literacy)
- Consider new pathways of learning and many ways of knowing
- Democracy and media literacy, peace-building and conflict-resolution are key topics
- Prepare for the future and the new roles of adult education

