

Resource Kit

2020: what a Year!

Challenges and innovations from the EPALE platform



ABOUT THE KIT

“Challenging” is probably among the most used attributes to describe 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic has overturned many of our certainties and has forced us to reinvent our lives, our careers and – in the end – ourselves. The Adult Education community has been strongly affected by these changes, but has also shown a high degree of resilience, responding to the challenges with an extraordinary creativity. And this **power of reinvention**, is reflected by the incredibly valuable, deep and diversified contents that have enriched our EPAL platform in 2020.

This Resource kit will try and sum up the main trajectories taken by the platform, suggesting some highlights among the wide range of very interesting content it contains. The **four thematic focuses** which have punctuated our year will guide us through this journey.

2020 started with a focus on **Environmental awareness and protection**, where EPAL explored and fostered the role of a vibrant adult learning and education systems in creating a more sustainable world. Climate change, circular economy, grassroots initiatives and sustainable societies are among the topics that you will find in the resources we have selected. The second quarter of the year, strongly affected by the pandemic outbreak, was characterised by a reflection on **Digital skills as a way of accessing learning opportunities**, a theme which has become increasingly relevant. Our selection includes an interview on digital exclusion, a series of webinars, a podcast on AI and an online discussion on blended learning. **Basic skills learning provision** has been the third thematic focus for 2020: the pandemic has shown as never before that the large number of adults with poor basic skills represents a major obstacle to an inclusive society. Among the many resources offered by the EPAL to tackle this issue, we have chosen a OER and MOOC on numeracy, blogposts on literacy and lifelong guidance and a paper on participation and motivation.

The last months of the year, finally, were dedicated to the **Social inclusion of the ageing population and intergenerational learning**, showing that it is key to provide high quality learning opportunities for older people. An OER on intergenerational learning, a community story, a toolbox to fight ageism and a blogpost on active ageing are our choice for a first glance on the many resources on this topic.



ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AND PROTECTION



Adults for Future!

[<https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/blog/adults-future>]

In this inspiring article, Jana Ahlers (Policy Assistant at the European Association for Adult Education – EAEA) urges adults to **take the streets and advocate for a social, economic and ecological transformation**. If it is true that the young people across Europe and globally are building a powerful movement through the “Fridays for future” actions, it is important that they are accompanied and complemented by their parents, grandparents and, more in general, by adult members of society, who are, in the author’s words “the critical mass, the main consumers and decision makers of today”.

Adult Education can be a driver for this change, helping adults to be critical thinkers and to be able to pave the way for generations to come. The author refers first of all to the so-called “Green Skills”, an important step for up- and reskilling the economy to build transferrable competences to encounter any crisis, including the threats posed by climate change. However, maintains the author, these skills will not be sufficient to realize the holistic and just transition the EU anticipates: **sustainable literacy, environmental competences, adapting to changing environmental conditions** in one’s personal life and developing tools to cope with the future’s uncertainty are examples of attitudes, skills and knowledge required to build a society where sustainability is on the minds and hands of many. Moreover, as underlined by the author, we must not forget that European adults belong to the most privileged adults and hence, carry a certain (historical) **responsibility in paving the path for change**.





Adult Education grassroots initiatives to support the EU's long-term climate strategy

[<https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/blog/towards-zero-carbon-eu-2050-how-support-eus-long-term-climate-strategy-adult-education>]

This article offers an introduction to the European Union plans and actions towards sustainability, with a special focus on the role of Adult Education to attain the ambitious EU's long-term climate goals. After presenting the **European framework**, including key milestones and objectives, the author provides an overview of some **good practices** that have already helped to achieve the current and prospective priorities of the European Union in relation to the environment.



Adult Education for circular economy

[<https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/blog/nachhaltigkeit-durch-grenzuberschreitende-kreislaufwirtschaft-scrce-projektseite>]

In this page, you will find the links to a series of 8 blogposts, within the framework of the Erasmus+ project *Sustainability through Cross Border Circular Economy (SCRCE)*, aimed at developing an **educational approach to foster a circular economical lifestyle**, through the exchange of good practices. The articles provide valuable reflections on what circular economy is, on how participation and community activity can work in this process, with a special focus on the role of education, both formal and non-formal.



Lifelong Learning for Sustainable Societies

[<https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/resource-centre/content/lll-platform-position-paper-lifelong-learning-sustainable-societies>]

This position paper, issued by the Lifelong Learning Platform, seeks to encourage a debate and provides recommendations on the **strategic role of education, training and lifelong learning in paving the way towards a sustainable future for Europe and beyond**, including how this may be reflected in the implementation of the European Skills Agenda, European Education Area, Digital Education Action Plan, European Research Area, European Green Deal, EU Recovery Plan and other EU strategies.

DIGITAL SKILLS AS A WAY OF ACCESSING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES



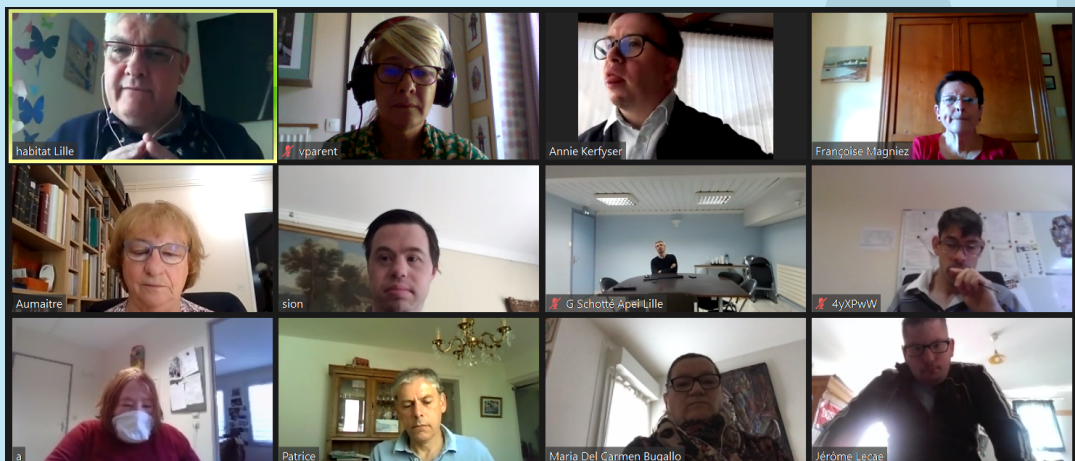
An interview with Régis Alvin on the digital exclusion of learners with intellectual disabilities

[<https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/blog/interview-regis-alvin-digital-exclusion-learners-intellectual-disabilities>]

In this interview for EPAL, Régis Alvin, project manager for the association Les Papillons Blancs of Lille (France), tells about the project he coordinates **Inclusive Digital Academy (IDA)**, which addresses digital exclusion of learners with intellectual disabilities, and the lessons learnt from the COVID-19 crisis.

Alvin underlines that it is very important to **work not for, but with people with disabilities**, identifying the needs and trying to meet them with digital solutions – working together at every stage of the project. Through this constant sharing practice, it has been possible to come to some interesting conclusions about the concept itself of **digital divide**, which concerns many aspects, from the lack of knowledge, to the lack of equipment, but also the difficulty to understand the digital vocabulary.

The experience gathered through this and similar process, allowed Alvin and Les Papillons Blancs to better deal with the **difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic**. Starting from the acknowledgment of the **vulnerability** of their learners, Les Papillons Blancs, together with other partners, put together a series of resources to fully support their needs. Videos and easy-to-understand information to provide correct information about the pandemic; one-to-one sessions to explain how to use Zoom; implementation of routines with tasks to do, which is key for physical and mental health: these are among the inspiring ideas and processes that are really worth a full reading!





Distance learning during the Covid-19 era: a webinar series

[<https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/blog/epale-webinar-series-malta-during-covid-19-era>]

This series of five webinars, developed by EPAL Malta and held by EPAL Ambassadors, aims at supporting educators and adult learning professionals to harness **the potential of education, training and technology**. The webinars explore the many facets of this relation: from the basics of Internet-based teaching and learning, to more specific topics, such as the use of time and personal development planning, or peer and online mentoring for sustainable development.



The challenges of artificial intelligence for Adult Education: an EPAL podcast

[<https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/blog/epale-podcast-artificial-intelligence-adult-learning-and-education>]

When looking at AI and adult learning, the link between them is still blurry and its capitalization remains unexplored ground for many adult educators and ALE providers. During this EPAL podcast, EPAL Thematic Expert Gina Ebner and her guests reflect on **the opportunities of AI for Adult Education, from validation of prior learning to transformative learning**. They also discuss why AI still feels like a sci-fi movie, even though it has already become part of our lives, and how adult learning can demystify it.



Online discussion on Blended learning in Adult Education

[<https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/discussions/epale-discussion-blended-learning-adult-education>]

The opportunities and the challenges of blended learning were at the heart of this stimulating and lively online discussion, featuring two **live presentations delivered by Lauri Tuomi**, the CEO of The Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation (Kvs), and a board member of the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA). The videos of the streaming sessions, as well as the discussion of the community, remain visible on EPAL.

BASIC SKILLS LEARNING PROVISION



Introduction to Numeracy Training: OER and MOOC

[OER: <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/blog/oer-introduction-adult-numeracy-training-landing-page>

MOOC: <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/blog/forthcoming-online-course-epale-introduction-adult-numeracy-training>]

Although numeracy has always been an essential element in basic skills training programs, it is often not in the forefront for basic skills policies and practice. This collection of open educational resources (OERs) and the respective online course (MOOC), made in collaboration with the European Basic Skills Network (EBSN), aim precisely at providing **an introduction to adult numeracy training**, presenting a starting point for policy-makers, staff of educational institutions and other partners having a stake in implementing the European Council's recommendation on Upskilling Pathways.

The objective of these units are: to present **the need for a more elaborate view and practice on numeracy** in adult basic skill programs; to give an introductory overview on the **concept of numeracy** and how it has changed over time; to provide some fundamental **tools to addressing numeracy in basic skills policies and initiatives**.

The **OER** is structured in three thematic sections: “Why”, which presents the rationale behind addressing numeracy in basic skills programs.; “What”, about the conceptual considerations in a retrospect.; “How”, which addresses enabling elements in numeracy programs e.g. outreach, frameworks, key actors.

The **MOOC** programme ended in December 2020, but all the materials, including recorded webinars, are still fully accessible and give the opportunity for participants to go deeper into the materials of the respective OER.





Reading, writing and speaking skills: the basis for literacy

[Writing: <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/blog/importance-writing-skills>

Reading: <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/blog/reading-becomes-you>

Speaking: <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/blog/speak-yourself>]

Functional literacy is a basis for Adult Learning, but somehow it seems that when we discuss literacy we forget it has to do with connected skills i.e. reading, writing and speaking. In this blog series Satya Brink explores in depth these three skills: the first one explains to learners why they need to focus on their **writing skills**, providing tips for improvement; the following one discusses how **reading can help growing socially and professionally**; the last one, finally, concentrates on how **speaking skills can foster confidence**, critical thinking and personality.



Lifelong guidance, an essential factor in basic skills policies

[<https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/blog/lifelong-guidance-essential-factor-basic-skills-policies>]

This blogpost deals with **guidance measures, a vital part of successful basic skills policies**, as they enable learners access, choose, engage and persist in the type of learning provision that is most adequate to their needs. After providing an introduction to this concept, as an important factor in current European policy regarding basic skills for adults, the article provides concrete examples that can be used as models to be adapted and replicated.



Improving Basic Skills in Adulthood: Participation and Motivation

[<https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/resource-centre/content/improving-basic-skills-adulthood-participation-and-motivation-0>]

This paper provides an overview of **key academic research** on the participation of adults in basic skills programmes, including both classroom-based activities and more general policy initiatives. In particular, the article focuses on: **motivation and participation** (“getting learners through the door”); **retention and persistence**, i.e. keeping learners coming back to courses they have enrolled on, or maintaining their learning journey over a number of years; relationship between **basic skills proficiencies and basic skills practices**.

SOCIAL INCLUSION OF THE AGEING POPULATION AND INTERGENERATIONAL LEARNING



OER Intergenerational learning

[<https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/blog/oer-role-intergenerational-learning-adult-education>]

This Open Education Resource, developed by Alison Clyde and Bella Kerr (Generations Working Together), includes **an article, a video and a quiz** and provides a comprehensive overview of the topic of intergenerational learning.

First of all, the OER provides an articulate **definition of the concept**, drawing both on academic discussion and on European networks and projects working concretely on this issue. The second chapter then passes to explain why it is important to implement intergenerational learning programmes: they work well to **combat stereotypes** such as ageism (targeted towards young and old) and can assist to address demographic changes and **bring solidarity across the life cycle**, breaking down barriers and working towards an intergenerational world, contributing to build inclusive and safer communities. The third chapter deals with **the main challenges** that can arise when implementing this kind of learning and suggests how to overcome them.

The last two chapter, finally, provide very concrete resources to adult educators who want to embark on this kind of work. More in detail, the fourth chapter lists the **practical steps required to make a successful intergenerational learning programme**, including a checklist of questions to consider before starting, tips for the evaluation and inspiring good practices. The last chapter, finally, underlines the important role of **training on intergenerational learning** and features a list of organisations and resources to go in-depth this topic.





Juhani Pörfors and Matti Sarviranta, a Community Story from Finland

[<https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/blog/juhani-portfors-and-matti-sarviranta-community-story-finland>]

In this Community Story, Juhani and Matti tell their experience as **volunteer workers as digi-guides in a retiree association** in Turku (Finland). After providing ICT support to seniors by organising weekly support pop-ups across their city for three years, during Spring 2020 they had to face the lockdown and the difficulties linked to it. In their story, they share the process they went through, to rethink and re-organise their activities, including very interesting details on the selection of the tools and the careful organisation of online meetings.



Toolbox to fight ageism

[<https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/resource-centre/content/invisible-talents-toolbox>]

This toolbox is created as part of the Erasmus+ project *invisible talents*, which aims to promote the **participation of older men and women (especially 80+)** and to make their talents, experience and contributions to their communities visible. In particular, the toolbox provides **concrete activities to reflect on stereotypes** regarding older people and **helpful tools** to support organisations and older people in (re-)detecting their “talents”, resources and dreams. The project also features a set of inspiring stories, an online self-reflection tool and further informative materials.



The six key competencies for life learning in later life and active ageing

[<https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/blog/six-key-competencies-life-learning-later-life-and-active-ageing>]

This blogpost identifies and analyses the **most relevant competencies for active ageing**: taking part in learning in later life; being an active older citizen; maintain well-being in older age (physically, mentally and socially); maintaining autonomy and dignity in older age; having financial competencies; having access to technology. For each competence, **success stories and good practices** within the framework of the Erasmus+ programme are presented.