

EBSN Conference Declaration

Berlin, June 2018

We welcome the current European Agenda for Adult Learning, and particularly the Upskilling Pathways initiative's (UP)¹ focus on the central role of national basic skills² policies in helping adults increase their level of training and qualifications.

The European Basic Skills Network, EBSN, has been working at policy level since 2010 to assist national and regional stakeholders in the creation and implementation of consistent, efficient and sustainable policies for the provision of basic skills learning.

We recommend that policy makers develop coherent, cohesive and adequately financed national policies to implement the UP initiative. In addressing this challenge, they should involve stakeholders with responsibility for policy in health and employment, as well as education.

In order to create flexible learning pathways to cater for the highly heterogeneous group of adults who need to improve their basic skills, policy makers will need to ensure cohesion and collaboration between a number of different elements of the basic skills system.

- Policymakers should ensure that their plans identify and account for the learning needs of a wide range of adults and support them in accessing available learning pathways.
- Learners should be involved in the development, and ongoing quality assurance, of learning programmes and policies.
- Learning should be supported in formal, non-formal and informal settings, and in different domains of adults' lives, such as family, community, faith, and work.
- Both access to the workplace and learning in the workplace should play a prominent part in any national strategy, but this should not be at the expense of learning in other settings, or learning designed to support other learning goals.
- Specific diagnostic tools and systems of validation / accreditation should be developed.
- There should also be fully-financed provision for specific, compulsory and quality assured initial and continuing teacher, and trainer, education.
- Outreach systems, awareness raising schemes, and information and guidance provision, to identify and engage adult learners, should also be developed.
- Learning pathways for adult migrants should fully embrace the existing language skills and cultural identities of migrants and enable them to both validate existing skills and knowledge and acquire those that their new situations demand.
- The development of basic digital competences should have a central place in any strategy, both as a goal of learning and as a tool to support that learning. Learning about, and with, mobile devices, apps, and social media can act as a strong motivational tool to attract and retain adults in learning.

We commit to the development and promotion of the EBSN Capacity Building Series, a set of EPAL-based Open Education Resources, initiated in the autumn of 2017. This aims to contribute to current European policy developments by offering to all relevant stakeholders, inside and outside the education sector, the information and knowledge they need, in order to develop appropriate basic skills policies.

¹ Council Recommendation of 19 December 2016 on Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults (2016/C 484/01).

² www.basicsskills.eu/glossary