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*STANDO CYPRUS*

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**Proj project partners:** University of Paderborn (P0), Coordinator

 Ingenious Knowledge GmbH (P1)

RUTIS-Associação Rede de Universidades da Terceira Idade (P2)

TIR Consulting Group j.d.o.o., Croatia (P3)

Esquare, France (P4)

STANDO LTD Cyprus (P5)

This report discusses Adult Education (AE) and what trainers, teachers, and educators think for the case of Cyprus. It is part of the research conducted for the project EUCERT Ref number 2021-1-DE02-KA220-ADU-000033541. For the whole EUCERT consortium of 5 partners across 4 countries (Germany, Croatia, Portugal and Cyprus), each partner approached 5 experts in the field of AE to ask them questions related to their experiences and the current state of AE in each country. Interviewees were asked qualitative and quantitative questions.

The inquiries were answered by five experts in the field. Each of them has worked in adult education for over ten years and has held various positions in various programs. In terms of the advantages of an adult education program, participants shared similar responses, such as that it enhances confidence and empowers the individual. Moreover, they provide more professional opportunities, allow for the exchange of ideas and the opportunity for international socialization. As they stated, everyone, regardless of their role in the programme, has the opportunity to participate in this program as a form of lifelong learning. Among the negative aspects of the different forms of adult education, it was that not everyone could participate.

The participants had to agree or disagree and express their thoughts on the statements below.

Statement a) Adult education programs should not focus on the training of basic skills of the participants but should rather improve their knowledge and competencies in specific areas of expertise.

Participants did not agree entirely. Three of them indicated that they would prefer to be able to train specific skills. It was also agreed by others that this is an era of expertise and it is essential to develop certain soft skills. Among participants, one stated that it would be ideal if they could do both, and it should be assumed that all adults possess basic skills, which is why adult education is intended to give adults lacking basic skills a second chance at employment, and thereafter, at success.

Statement b) Adult education programs should be internationally oriented which can be achieved by cooperations of adult education institutions and international companies.

Various opinions were expressed here, stating that neither of them could completely agree nor disagree with each other. Taking into account their responses, AEPs should be recognized at the European/international level; however, the programs should be flexible enough to adapt to the needs of participants and to account for the specificities of each country.

Statement c) Adult education programs need to focus on the individual needs of the participants and adequate content with connection to their work-life. International or European issues should not be discussed during the AEPs.

They all disagree with this statement. As a result of globalization, they do not believe that locally based solutions can provide effective solutions in the modern world

Statement d) The educators of adult education programs need to have various competences in different fields of adult education and should not be specifically trained in one AE area or program.

One of the responses to the survey was that adult education is nested within the field of educational sciences, which is purposefully used in plural form (educational sciences). In light of this, an adult educator should be proficient in an array of disciplines including educational design, assessment, psychology, sociology, philosophy, and many more. The world is ever changing and updating one's skills is an inevitability. Others, however, stated that specific/specialized expertise should be transferred in terms of knowledge and skills. Additionally, not having specialized training in a particular area may result in a lack of depth.

In response to the question of how important adult education will be in five years from now, all the respondents agree that it will be extremely important. In the current era of specialization, the more skills you possess, the greater your chance of success.

Below there are some answers to the question on the different target groups addressed within adult education programs:

* VET (upskilling and reskilling education)
* Basic literacy education
* SDGs/ESD education
* Civic and community education
* Digital education

In response to the question of how far do AEPs focus on different types of learners and also adapt their course design to accommodate disabled learners and participants, the answers were also similar. Although it depends on the program, the AEPs are not always inclusive of marginalized groups, the working class is not always included, and people with disabilities are not always given the opportunity to participate. According to one participant, disabled trainers are also excluded.

To the question, which aspects of adult education should be expanded in the near future, and which factors of adult education need to be improved, digital learning and literacy have all been rated as important. The SDG competencies were also among the answers, explaining that without digital literacy, an adult is illiterate. Without the SDGs, communities cannot function sustainably. One participant suggested that technology-tailored applications and generic skills should be considered. There was also a suggestion for education for the third age group, which is a very neglected segment of the population. A further suggestion was the reference to general programs for professional development, as well as skills that will assist in reentering the workforce.

In response to the question of which aspects of adult education should no longer be implemented as extensively as they are in the current measure, several responses were provided. A participant stated that it has been argued that adult education does not reach those who are most in need of it. In their view, adult education should move beyond its 'one-size-fits-all' approach and implement tailored programs designed to target diverse populations and be truly inclusive.

According to another participant, no aspect is considered redundant. However, a common area for post-compulsory education should be clearly defined, indicating clearly the agencies responsible for different types of education in order to avoid overlaps. There should be a framework for validating, accrediting, and recognising educational qualifications across formal, non-formal, and informal educational settings.

They also have stated different criteria which show a high or excellent quality of adult education programs. These are:

* Meeting the objectives
* Added value to the participants
* Added value to the organization and society
* Transference, application and retention of knowledge and skills acquired
* Breadth of impact
* Depth of impact on individuals
* Depth of impact on the targeted group as a whole
* Impact on the community as a whole

In response to the question of how far adult education programmes should be supported, they all expressed a desire for better financial support during their implementation. It is also important that they receive better financial support; however, a participant noted that increased funding does not necessarily translate into improved quality. According to another participant, investments in AEP should be intensified.

Regarding the last question on which terms they would like to emphasize regarding adult education in general, each of them stated that they believe that stricter evaluation criteria will lead to a higher standard of education. Ideally, they should be more diagnostic and designed so as to be inclusive and target certain groups. In order to achieve these goals, they should establish certain standards and criteria, and ensure that experts are prepared to deliver them