



Project "ADULATION - Adult Education for Social Change"

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# THE POLITICAL DIMENSION OF THE WORK OF ADULT EDUCATORS IN CYPRUS, BELGIUM, HUNGARY AND ITALY

Intellectual Output 1 – Research Study



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This research study was prepared within the framework of the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership "ADULATION – Adult Education for Social Change." The project's objective is to support adult educators' continuous professional development, especially considering competences that support the active civic and social engagement of adult learners. This report aims to gain a deeper understanding of the political dimension of adult educators' work in the partner countries, the extent to which the political dimension is integrated into the work of adult educators, looking at both contextual and individual factors, at the level of national policies as well as educators' competences. This report serves as a baseline for subsequent project activities – supporting the development of relevant educational material for adult educators in the partner countries.

The key research questions we aim to answer are the following:

- To what extent and in what way does the political dimension or citizenship education appear in adult education in the partner countries, and what are the opportunities to integrate or further strengthen the integration of the political dimension in the work of adult educators?
- What are the main skills, competences, or competence areas of adult educators that need to be developed to integrate the political dimension into their work?

This research activity is based on four selected methods: literature review, policy analysis, stakeholder consultation, and survey. Combining these four methods allows the project partners to gain a comprehensive understanding of prior research in this area, the policy context of adult education in project partner countries and the needs of adult educators for the development of their civic engagement competences.

In the first part of the report, we provide a conceptual background for the political dimension, followed by a brief overview of the relevant policy context of the European Union. In the second part, we present our research in the partner countries. Finally, we conclude with recommendations for the further steps and activities of this project.

## 2. WHAT IS THE POLITICAL DIMENSION OF ADULT EDUCATION?

We understand the political dimension of adult education based on one of the seven competence areas of the European Training Strategy (ETS) Competence Model for trainers (SALTO, 2014): 'being civically engaged'. This competence area encompasses four competences: connecting policies and educational programmes, integrating values and beliefs, supporting learners in developing critical thinking, and applying democracy and human rights principles. Therefore, the general framework in which we approach the political dimension is citizenship education and the different aspects of the competence area 'being civically engaged'.

With this starting point, this chapter aims to provide a conceptual background for the political dimension of adult education, focusing on the extensive literature on the concepts of citizenship and citizenship education. This chapter sets a contextual background for our research in the partner countries and the subsequent activities of the ADULATION project.

### 2.1 The notion of citizenship

The concept of citizenship is much debated in academic discourse – considering multiple disciplines, including philosophy, sociology, political science and education – primarily due to its dynamic, contested, contextual and multidimensional nature. This implies that the meaning of citizenship has changed over time; it has different interpretations as well as application in different contexts; the notion of citizenship, its meaning, what qualities are considered necessary for a 'good citizen', what characteristics are considered important for a good society are much-debated questions and have sparked disagreements; and the notion of citizenship has many dimensions in which it can be understood as well as integrated into education (Schugurensky 2006; Schugurensky & Myers, 2008).

Different typologies and conceptualisations of citizenship generally encompass various dimensions such as political and civic rights and responsibilities, cultural aspects, identity, participation, and are related to the notions of community, democracy, diversity, equality (or exclusion), and agency (see, e.g. Marshall, 1964; Gilbert, 1996; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004; Mutch, 2005; Schugurensky, 2006; Schugurensky & Myers, 2008; Banks, 2008; Castro & Knowles, 2017).

Schugurensky (2006) identifies four dimensions of citizenship: *status*, *identity*, *civic virtues*, and *agency*, where the "first relates to issues of membership, the second to issues of feelings of belonging, the third to dispositions, values, and behaviours, and the last one to issues of engagement and political

efficacy" (p. 1). In a similar typology with five categories, Mutch (2005) emphasises the notions of democracy, freedom and human rights as part of citizenship as a *democratic ideal* (similar to civic virtues in the previous typology) and further specifies agency as *public practice* and *participation*. Public practice refers to formal processes and legal aspects as well as cultural factors which influence the behaviour of citizens, while participation entails active engagement in and awareness of democratic issues at the community, local, national or global level.

Westheimer & Kahne (2004) offer a slightly different approach in the 'three kinds of citizens' framework on what responsible or active citizenship is. The *personally responsible citizen* entails responsibility within one's community, and the idea of a good citizen as an honest and law-abiding member of the community; the *participatory citizen* implies more emphasis on action, with more effort to make improvements, take leadership and organise community; while the *justice-oriented citizen* encompasses a critical assessment of existing established (social, political or economic) structures and proactiveness in addressing social injustice.

Banks (2008) further builds on the participatory aspect of citizenship by introducing a typology of the legal, minimal, active and transformative citizenship. *Legal citizenship* entails legal membership to the political community, with accompanying rights, but does not include any meaningful participation, while *minimal citizenship* applies to those who exercise their right to vote and participate in political processes. The category of *active citizenship* is similar to Westheimer and Kahne's participatory citizen, with an emphasis on civic action which does not challenge existing social and political structures, while *transformative citizenship* (in line with the idea of the justice-oriented citizen) entails taking "action to promote social justice even when their actions violate, challenge, or dismantle existing laws, conventions, or structures" (Banks, 2008, p.136).

## 2.2 Citizenship education

These approaches to citizenship strongly influence the approach to citizenship education, the concept itself, and what it should aim to achieve. There are various terms used in the field of citizenship education, such as civics, civic education, social studies, citizenship education, and while some propose differentiation between these terms, there is no consensus on terminology or the definitions of these concepts. The different definitions emphasise the preparatory role of citizenship education for democratic life (Castro & Knowles, 2017), for the roles and responsibilities as a citizen (Kerr, 1999), for becoming aware and "enlightened citizens" (EAEA, 2019a, p. 4, cites UNESCO, 1998), its socialisation role through educational norms and practices (Janmaat, 2007), as well as participation in

the communities of the society and decisions relevant for social and political life, "characterized by mutual respect and non-violence and in accordance with human rights and democracy" (Hoskins et al., 2012, p. 17, cites Hoskins, 2006).

There is a duality of citizenship education concerning whether its role is primarily affirmative or critical, in other words, whether it aims to create a common (national) identity and loyalty for the political community or to promote critical thinking (towards the state as well) and openness to other cultures (Janmaat, 2007; Kenner, 2020). Although Johnson (2010) argues that the evolution of citizenship education shifted its focus from nation-building and creating a common identity to a more complex role including a variety of elements, citizenship education in formal learning settings still have a strong purpose related to the prior aspect in many countries (see, e.g. Kenner, 2020). Many scholars from the past two decades argue for a more critical approach to citizenship education, focusing on active participation in local, regional, national or global communities, shared values, such as democracy and human rights, social justice, critical and reflective thinking – considering both one's identity and actions, as well as existing social, political processes and structures (see, e.g. Osler & Starkey, 2006; Banks, 2008; Johnson, 2010; Peterson et al., 2016). Kenner (2020) explicitly argues that citizenship education cannot be affirmative as it should aim to develop "citizens' ability to see through the given order, standards and norms, to reflect, to change, to criticize, and to shape it in ways that they consider adequate" (p. 120).

Citizenship education is "always a future-oriented process guided by visions of the desirable society" (Janmaat, 2007, p. 3), and as that vision, the content and the approach to citizenship education varies significantly in different social and political contexts – similarly to the concept of citizenship itself. According to Kerr (1999), the main contextual factors which influence the approach to citizenship education are historical tradition, geographical position, socio-political structure, economic system, and global trends.

Research in the field identifies three main approaches to citizenship education: education or learning *about* citizenship, *through* citizenship and *for* citizenship (Kerr, 1999; Kalekin-Fishman et al., 2007). Learning about citizenship is traditionally the task of formal education and places citizenship as status in focus. It entails providing learners with information and sufficient knowledge on cultural and historical understandings and social and political structures and processes. In contrast, learning through citizenship involves participatory and active experiences (learning by doing), which can occur both within formal education or everyday life. This type of learning focuses more on citizenship as practice (the active, participatory aspects discussed above) and includes "conscious reflection on and

discussion of different experiences of citizenship in everyday life" (Kalekin-Fishman et al., 2007, p.29). Education for citizenship combines the other two learning approaches and "involves equipping students with a set of tools (knowledge and understanding, skills and aptitudes, values and dispositions) which enable them to participate actively and sensibly in the roles and responsibilities they encounter in their adult lives" (Kerr, 1999, p.12). Kalekin-Fishman and colleagues (2007) argue that this type of citizenship education is especially appropriate for adult learning.

As for any other discipline, the pedagogical approaches to citizenship education can take various forms; however, the typology of Evans (2008, referenced in Castro & Knowles, 2017) provides a relevant reflection on the three types of citizens identified by Westheimer and Kahne (2004). The first pedagogical orientation for citizenship education is *transmission*, which entails the teaching of fundamental knowledge of citizenship and society; the second is a *transactional* approach, which goes beyond knowledge of civic life and integrates the development of skills and competences relevant for participation in democracy; while the third is *transformative* citizenship education which aims to prepare "citizens who will transform society through activism" (Castro & Knowles, 2017, p. 290).

### 2.3 Citizenship education and adult learning

Although most of the definitions and approaches described above understand citizenship education for students in formal learning settings (primary and secondary education), where in most cases, curriculum for citizenship (or civics) education is developed, they can be adapted to and understood for adult learning – considering both formal (regulated) and non-formal education.

Citizenship education is considered to be a relevant and important element of adult education (EAEA, 2019a). Many researchers see and understand citizenship education as a lifelong learning process (see, e.g. Golubeva, 2018; Zepke, 2013; Bagnall, 2010; Ebner, 2009), therefore, placing a strong emphasis not only on the element of active citizenship within adult learning but also of adult learning in citizenship education. Also, adult education is seen as playing a key role in raising awareness about and responding to the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, posed by growing inequalities, demographic changes, migration, unemployment, digitalisation and technological innovation, or climate change (EAEA, 2019b). As active citizenship is understood in a broad sense, encompassing knowledge, skills, competences, values, attitudes and behaviours, the relevance of citizenship education is highlighted for addressing these challenges.

In practice, citizenship education may be offered as a specific course (or subject) on its own in adult education institutions or organisations, while in other cases, it is seen and implemented as a transversal aim and principle of adult learning activities, with various aims, typically ranging from "developing capabilities to participate actively in society, to challenging and supporting learners in dealing with the continuous challenges and demands linked with being a citizen in contemporary society" (EAEA, 2019a, p.8). Citizenship education involves a broad set of competences and skills which are useful and relevant in workplaces or the world of work specifically (Schulz et al., 2018), further highlighting the importance and the potential of citizenship education in adult learning settings – even in continuous vocational education or generally in courses with a strong focus on employability.

## 2.4 The role and competences of adult educators

The role of educators working with adults, especially considering citizenship education, is informed by the theories of Andragogy, social change and transformative learning (Giannoukos et al., 2015). According to these theories, the educator has a guiding, encouraging, supporting and coordinating role in the learning process. In transformative learning, critical thinking has a key position, and the role of the educator expands to supporting the development of critical and reflective thinking of students (see, e.g. Mezirow, 2007), as well as to aiming towards a possible change, which can be achieved through "determining his goals and expectations from those of his students and [...] encouraging discussion and the participation of the trainees" (Giannoukos et al., 2015, p. 239). The focus on change and critical and reflective thinking makes the approach of transformative learning especially relevant for citizenship education in adult learning.

Adult educators' role evolves with the developments of these theories and approaches and the functions of adult education in society (Henczi, 2008). Many of these developments in adult education align with European and global educational trends, such as competence-oriented education, the development of '21<sup>st</sup>-century skills' – including critical thinking, problem-solving and creativity –, or student-centred learning (see, e.g. OECD, 2018; 2019). Considering adult education specifically, there is an increasing focus on skill development, the competence of learning to learn, and on cooperative and participation--or learning-centred teaching and learning strategies (see Maróti, 2016). As a result of these changes, the key agent of the teaching and learning process becomes the learner, transforming the role of the educator to mentor or tutor, supporting the learning process, without taking away the responsibilities of educators over the process. Cooperation and interaction become central in the learning process, leading to the deconstruction of the hierarchy between educator and

learner when it comes to adults, encouraging a relation based on partnership (Giannoukos et al., 2015; Maróti, 2016; Szelei & Malatyinszki, 2017).

### *Competences of adult educators*

Most skills and competences discussed in the literature as necessary for adult educators coincide with competences or elements of the political dimension of the ETS Competence Model. Knowles (1973) emphasises the necessity of communication skills, learning skills, making judgements, and applying transdisciplinary knowledge. Other sources further include skills and competences such as empathy, dedication, tolerance, analytical thinking, problem-solving, ability to motivate learners, competence to manage the teaching and learning process, as well as the ability to understand different values and beliefs (see: e.g. Szelei and Malatyinszki, 2017).

In the Erasmus+ project 'Extending and developing adult educators' competences' (EDEC)<sup>1</sup>, a list of competences was identified, which are needed by adult educators to work and respond to diverse issues which may appear in adult education in different EU countries. In summary, the identified skills and competences are the following:

- Communication skills
- Empathy
- Negotiation skills
- Teamwork
- Active listening
- Focus on learner-educator relationship
- Diversity management
- Assessing learning needs and creating learning paths for learners

## 2.5 The political dimension

It is evident from the literature that there is no single approach adapted to citizenship education, and similarly, there is no consensus either on the terminology that should be used or on what citizenship

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<sup>1</sup> See more information about the project at <https://en.danilodolci.org/project/edec/> (Accessed: 22.03.2021)

education entails. Therefore, we use the terms citizenship education and political dimension interchangeably throughout the report. We do not aim to provide our definition for this report: we adapt an approach with a broad understanding of what citizenship education and, therefore, the political dimension entails, taking into account the conceptual debate about citizenship education, as well as the objective of this project.

We understand the political dimension as highly contextual (and based on the values of a given society). Therefore the topics and skills or competences to be included in citizenship education should be relevant and adapted to a given social, cultural and political context. We consider the aspect of knowledge important; however, the emphasis lies rather on competence development and change. Thus, reflecting on the concepts and typologies discussed above, our approach to the political dimension is in line with the concept of *education for citizenship*, with an emphasis on the *transactional* and *transformative* educational orientations

Overall, in our understanding, citizenship education incorporates knowledge of rights and responsibilities and their practical application relevant for everyday life; understanding social and political processes, structures and how they function; critical and reflective thinking; and a focus on the agency of learners – active participation and engagement in one's community or society overall.

### 3. THE EU CONTEXT FOR CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION AND ADULT LEARNING

#### 3.1 Citizenship education

The promotion of citizenship education has been among the priorities of education and training in EU policies since the late 1990s (see European Commission, 1998; Commission of the European Communities, 2001). However, it gained significant attention in the last decade. The promotion of active citizenship is among the objectives of the Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training (ET 2020), highlighting the importance of citizenship education for the promotion of equity, inclusion and social cohesion (Council of the European Union, 2009). The growing interest and significance of citizenship in education were highlighted in the Paris Declaration (European Union, 2015), as well as the Council Recommendations on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching (Council of the European Union, 2018a), with a strong emphasis on common values and European identity.

According to key EU policy documents, citizenship education aims for young people and adults to think critically, become responsible citizens, aware of fundamental values, civic rights and obligations, as well as engage actively in society (Council of the European Union, 2011; European Union, 2015; European Commission, 2018). Further attention has been given to the link between education, democracy and citizenship by the Council of Europe (2010; 2017) and the common values of democracy, human rights, democracy, equality and the rule of law (European Commission, 2020a).

### *Skills and competences for active citizenship*

In the context of the European Union, citizenship education builds significantly on citizenship competence, which is one of the eight key competences for lifelong learning and is defined as "the ability to act as responsible citizens and to participate in civic and social life fully, based on an understanding of social, economic, legal and political concepts and structures, as well as global developments and sustainability" (Council of the European Union, 2018b, p. 10). The knowledge component of citizenship competence focuses on understanding common European values, critical understanding of national, European and world history, awareness of social and political movements, sustainable systems and climate change, and cultural and European identity. The skills include critical thinking, problem-solving, skills to participate in community activities constructively, and the ability to engage with traditional and new forms of media critically. The attitudes related to citizenship competence include willingness to participate in civic activities and decision-making at all levels, support for common values (e.g. cultural diversity, social cohesion and sustainability), promotion of non-violence, ensuring social justice and fairness, as well as interest in political and socioeconomic developments (pp. 10-11).

A report prepared in the "Europe for Citizens" Programme frames identifies civic competence, political literacy, and *intercultural competence* as the main competences in citizenship education (Hoskins et al., 2012). They differentiate between knowledge, skills, values and attitudes necessary for active citizenship (civic competence), for political participation (political literacy) and for "building relationships and cooperation with people from other cultures through mutual respect" (intercultural competence) (p. 17).

In addition, the Council of Europe (2016) has developed a competence model highlighting values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge and critical understanding deemed necessary "to participate effectively in a culture of democracy and live peacefully together with others in culturally diverse democratic societies" (p. 9).

### 3.2 The promotion of citizenship through adult education

The view that the role of adult education is vital for inclusion, social cohesion and active citizenship in the EU has been continuously supported and reinforced in European policies by focusing on citizenship and lifelong learning in general (European Commission, 1998; Commission of the European Communities, 2000; 2001), or adult learning specifically (European Commission, 2016; Council of the European Union, 2011; 2016). The key policy strategies regarding the approach of the European Union to adult learning are the European Agenda for Adult Learning (Council of the European Union, 2011), Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults (Council of the European Union, 2016) and the European Skills Agenda for Sustainable Competitiveness, Social Fairness and Resilience (European Commission, 2020b). While the two latter documents acknowledge the importance of adult and lifelong learning for active citizenship (or participation in society), citizenship education is not in their focus.

The European Agenda for Adult Learning defines the aim of adult education as "means of up-skilling or reskilling those affected by unemployment, restructuring and career transitions, as well as makes an important contribution to social inclusion, active citizenship, and personal development" (Council of the European Union, 2011, p. 1). The Agenda follows the strategic objectives of the ET2020 strategy in its priorities from 2012 to 2014, therefore includes the priority area of 'promoting of equity, social cohesion and active citizenship through adult education'. Within this priority area, the main focus is on the development of basic skills and different forms of literacy (e.g. digital, civic, cultural, political and media) necessary for active participation in the modern society, as well as improving the inclusiveness of adult learning opportunities and addressing specific learning needs (e.g. of people with disabilities). For the years 2015–2020, the defined priorities do not specifically include citizenship education. Nevertheless, it remains relevant for them as a horizontal principle<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> See the specific priorities at [https://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/eu-policy-in-the-field-of-adult-learning\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/eu-policy-in-the-field-of-adult-learning_en) (Accessed: 05.01.2021)

## 4. ADULT EDUCATION IN CYPRUS, BELGIUM, HUNGARY AND ITALY

There are two key indicators of adult learning which are considered at the EU level and in international comparisons: participation in lifelong learning and the level of basic skills of adults. The benchmark for adult participation in learning in the EU for 2020 reached at least 15% of adults participating in learning activities. Although there have been improvements in the last ten years, the EU average for adult participation in learning was 10.8% in 2019 (European Commission, 2020c). Participation of adults in education and training activities in all four partner countries are below the EU average. The participation rate was highest in Belgium at 8.2%, closely followed by Italy with 8.1%, then Cyprus and Hungary with 5.9% and 5.8%, respectively. Except for Cyprus, where the participation rate has decreased by 2.4 percentage points since 2009, in all other partner countries, adults' engagement in learning has increased during this period – the most in Hungary, where the rate nearly doubled since 2009 (European Commission, 2020d).

Based on the data collected by OECD's PIAAC survey (OECD, 2019b), out of the four partner countries, adults have the highest skill levels in Belgium<sup>3</sup>, considering both literacy and numeracy skills. In both cases, nearly two-thirds of the respondents reached basic proficiency<sup>4</sup>. In Cyprus, around 50% have reached basic proficiency in both literacy and numeracy; in Hungary, these numbers were somewhat more than 40% for literacy and around 50% for numeracy, while in Italy, around 70% of respondents have low skills both in literacy and in numeracy (below level three proficiency). For literacy skills, only Belgium, while for numeracy, both Belgium and Hungary performed above the OECD average (OECD, 2019b, p.44 and p.49).

### 4.1 National policy contexts for adult education

The level of development of the **overall policy framework** for adult education and the degree of regulation varies across partner countries. The framework is most developed in Hungary, where both specific legislation (Act LXXVII of 2013 on adult education) and a strategy (ITM, 2019; together with the strategy of vocational education and training) exist to define the main aims and implementation of adult learning activities. In Italy, several agreements and legislations exist to regulate specific aspects of lifelong learning and adult education (Ministerial Directive 305/1997; Ministerial Directive 22/2001; Act 53/2003; Ministerial Decree 25/10/2007; Act 92/2012), while there is no national

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<sup>3</sup> Data for the PIAAC survey is only available for Flanders in Belgium.

<sup>4</sup> Basic proficiency here means reaching level three proficiency on the proficiency scale of PIAAC.

strategy providing an overall framework. In Cyprus, the 2014–2020 Lifelong Learning Strategy<sup>5</sup> defines the key aims of adult learning (DGEPCD, 2014a); at the same time, there is no legislative framework specifically targeting adult learning in Cyprus. In Belgium, adult education is considered together with other policy and strategic areas (such as public education), and there are no legislative or strategic documents on the aims and implementation of adult learning. At the same time, it is important to highlight that the policy context overall is more complex in Belgium as the education and training policies (and thus adult education) fall under the jurisdiction of Regions and not the federal government. For the purposes of this report, the French-speaking context of Belgium is considered (the French Community, the regions of Wallonia and Brussels Capital).

Regardless of the level of regulation or centralisation, in all four partner countries, adult education, its policy context and its implementation are strongly interrelated with other forms of education: vocational education and training (HU, BE) or public (compulsory) education (CY, IT).

The **main aims and functions of adult education** in the partner countries relate to 1) *employability* – providing trainings for specific vocations or occupations, for example, in Hungary, one of the main objectives of adult education is to address the unemployed population in disadvantaged regions, who are seen as labour reserve (ITM, 2019) –; 2) *basic skill development* – for example, in Italy a key focus is to increase the educational level of the adult population and address functional illiteracy through adult learning (Eurydice, 2020a; Biondo et al., 2019); 3) *reskilling and upskilling* – as the Lifelong Learning Strategy of Cyprus states to allow individuals "to upgrade their skills, to adapt more easily to change, to move freely between different professions if needed by the circumstances" (DGEPCD, 2014b, p. 1). This latter can be realised in the form of continuous professional development (in the workplace) or outside the workplace, and in many cases, these trainings are a response to the challenges posed by the digital transformation. For example, in Belgium, there are various initiatives offering trainings related to Information-Communication Technologies and languages.

The system of adult education in all four partner countries can be divided into formal and non-formal sectors. The **formal sector** is the part of adult education, which is regulated by legislation or any adult learning opportunities provided by the public authorities, while the non-formal sector consists of trainings provided by private or non-governmental organisations.

In **Hungary**, the formal sector is strongly focused on employability and is further divided into two types of adult learning. In school-based learning, in which case institutions of Vocational Educational Centres

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<sup>5</sup> A new strategy for lifelong learning from 2021 is expected to be developed and published.

provide vocational courses, adults learn together with secondary education students, with a shortened schedule, adjusted to their previously acquired skills and experience. Labour-market trainings (which are not school-based) can be organised by any legal entity (adult education organisation), which is licensed or declared – depending on the type of training they aim to provide – and comply with the centrally-defined Programme Requirements<sup>6</sup> relevant for the vocation they aim to provide training on (ITM, 2020).

The formal sector of adult learning in **Italy** is based on a national system of 'school education for adults', which encompasses schools that offer courses for adults (former evening classes) and the Provincial Centres for School Education for Adults (CPIAs). The CPIAs are locally organised autonomous educational institutions. The system of schools and CPIAs provides training programmes for the development of basic competences (first-level courses), for obtaining certification for technical, vocational or artistic school (second-level courses), and language courses for foreigners (Biondo et al., 2019; Eurydice, 2020a).

In **Belgium**, formal adult education is organised in schools and training/education centres, which provide four types of training programmes. Social advancement education provides trainings for both employed and unemployed adults to acquire skills and qualifications they did not acquire through initial education, with the aims to complete initial training (e.g. for a career change), to upskill or reskill, or to develop skills for personal development (Decree 16/04/1991). French language courses are also provided for migrants. Part-time secondary art education is provided in 'académies' across the French community, and similarly to institutions of social advancement education, these institutions are largely decentralised (Eurydice, 2020b). Vocational trainings for job-seekers and workers are provided in continuous training centres and often include work placement (dual vocational training). These courses are offered by the public training networks of IFAMPE and EFPME (in the Wallon Region and the Brussels Capital Region, respectively) mostly for the self-employed and small and medium-sized enterprises, to provide basic professional theoretical and practical knowledge on management and entrepreneurship.

In **Cyprus**, the formal sector of adult education entails the operation of Lifelong Learning Centres, evening schools of technical and vocational education (MOEC, n.d.). There is also a training scheme

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<sup>6</sup> Programme Requirements for all vocations specified for adult learning within the sector of vocational trainings are available on the website of the Innovative Training Support Centre (<https://ikk.hu/>).

for the long-term unemployed, which was expanded in the last few years to include all registered unemployed (European Commission, 2019).

The opportunity of distance learning for formal adult education activities has been provided in most partner countries. However, this is expected to gain further ground and expand due to the school closers and lockdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The **non-formal sector** of adult education consists of private initiatives (market-based trainings) and adult education activities of NGOs (civic, cultural and volunteer organisations). Their role varies across the partner countries; they provide training that are not included in the formal sector (e.g. in Hungary). They realise trainings through projects – funded locally or by the EU (e.g. Erasmus+ projects), or even through CSR activities<sup>7</sup>. In Cyprus, the non-formal sector has had a consultative role, influencing the National Lifelong Learning Strategy. The target groups of the non-formal sector are more diverse compared to the formal sector, especially considering the training of specific vulnerable groups, such as disabled people or the elderly. For example, in Italy, the 'Università della terza età' (University of the third age) provided various courses for the elderly on cultural topics. Similar initiatives exist in Hungary as well, where the courses are offered by higher education institutions, non-profit organisations or, in some cases, even by local governments<sup>8</sup>.

In most partner countries, public authorities support adult education initiatives of the non-formal sector. In Cyprus, the public sector serves as a channel for these initiatives through oversight, funding, collaboration, acknowledgement and overall support. In other countries, such as Belgium and Hungary, NGOs can receive funding and acknowledgement based on specific conditions: they need to oblige with certain criteria or requirements. In Belgium, within the area of 'further education', organisations can receive funding and support from the French Community if they align their work and the offered training with the Decree 17/07/2003 of the Council of the French Community on associative action in the area of further education.

Adult education aims to respond to and address the following **challenges** in the partner countries: the overall low level of basic competences and skills of the adult population (especially in Italy, see the PIAAC data presented above), the low participation rate in lifelong learning activities, the available

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<sup>7</sup> See for example CSR activities in Cyprus: <https://www.csrcyprus.org.cy/el/who-we-are> (Accessed: 10.03.2021)

<sup>8</sup> The Hungarian initiatives include for example the Senior Academy of the Semmelweis University (see more at <https://semmelweis.hu/szeniorakademia/> (Accessed: 10.03.2021); or the University of the third age organised at multiple universities (see e.g. <https://www.ppk.elte.hu/harmadikkoregyeteme> (Accessed: 10.03.2021)

labour reserve, insufficient (work-based) continuous professional development courses, the dated skills of both employed and unemployed population and generally the challenges posed by technological innovations and the digital transformation (see European Commission, 2020b; 2020e).

In line with the main aims of adult education and lifelong learning in the partner countries – as well as the main challenges – the **key target groups** adult learning aims to address are the long-term unemployed (especially in Hungary), those with low levels of education or low (or dated) skill level, migrants and foreign citizens (especially in Italy and Belgium), and those who aim to reskill or upskill or learn for personal development.

## 5. THE POLITICAL DIMENSION OF ADULT EDUCATION IN CYPRUS, BELGIUM, HUNGARY AND ITALY

**The political dimension is not a priority** of adult education in any of the partner countries. This topic is not addressed in adult education policies (legislation or strategies) concerning the formal sector of adult education. The main reason for this is that the main strategic objectives of adult education systems are directed mainly towards increasing participation in educational activities and employability with a strong vocational focus. **In Hungary and Italy**, the political dimension is not addressed in policy documents, while in Cyprus, it is considered in relation to youth education. There is a shift in general education and training strategies towards emphasising active citizenship, which is expected to pour over and influence adult learning's strategic view. **In Belgium**, the political dimension is addressed in decree supporting the work of organisations in the non-formal sector of adult learning (Decree 17/07/2003). The main objective of this regulation is "the development of associative action in the area of further education, aiming at a critical analysis of society, the stimulation of democratic and collective initiatives, the development of active citizenship, and the exercise of cultural, social, environmental, and economic rights with a view to individual and collective emancipation by privileging the active participation of the target public and cultural expression" (Decree 17/07/2003, p. 1, quoted in English in Eurydice, 2020b).

The lack of focus on the political dimension of adult learning at the policy level hinders the opportunities for the integration of citizenship education into the work of adult educators. First of all, it implies that the issue is not acknowledged as a significant and important element of lifelong and adult learning; second, the lack of strategic attention to this suggests the lack of will to realise measures on this issue and consequently lack of funding and support for these types of initiatives

(whether in the formal or non-formal sector of adult education). Stakeholders from the sector of adult education consulted in the partner countries have emphasised the importance of policy decision and funding in relation to the possibilities for integrating the political dimension. Overall, the lack of such structural elements provides very minimal systematic incentives for adult education institutions, organisations, or educators to integrate this area into their work. Nevertheless, the political dimension remains relevant for the adult education contexts of the partner countries, despite the lack of structural and policy guidelines. In each context, there are relevant areas of adult learning and aspects of the political dimension which can be brought together.

Stakeholders consulted in the partner countries acknowledged the importance of citizenship education for adult education and considered the political dimension a fundamental asset in the work of adult educators. At the same time, most stakeholders offered a rather pessimistic view on the possibilities to integrate the political dimension into the work of adult educators without the proper systematic incentives. They emphasised that the political dimension has no room in the current employment-oriented vocational trainings, only if this issue itself is the intended theme of an adult learning programme. However, suppose the political dimension is approached with a broad sense of understanding, even without the ideal policy context. In that case, there are opportunities for incorporating the political dimension into adult education and training.

Based on the research of the partner organisations in all four countries, we identified three types of adult learning **opportunities for the integration of the political dimension**. These opportunities correspond with certain key challenges of adult education described above and presented briefly with examples in the following.

**Training programmes for basic skill or competence development.** One of the main areas where the opportunity is provided to integrate the different elements of citizenship education is basic competence development initiatives. In Italy, CPIAs, by definition, have a strong political dimension, as they are meant to help adults in recovering their cultural and educational gaps. Especially in adults with low educational levels, adult learning opportunities and the courses offered by CPIAs play a key role in increasing or maintaining competences. In Hungary, the two key platforms for basic competence development are the 'Stepping programme' and labour-market integration programmes for adults with low levels of education. The 'Stepping programme' was established within school-based adult education (in institutions of Vocational Educational Centres) for persons above 16 years of age who have not completed primary education to mitigate the impact of early school leaving. This one-year programme focuses on basic competence development and career orientation. Participants

of this programme are usually adults with a disadvantaged socio-economic background. After completing the Stepping Programme, adults need to complete the so-called 'Workshop', which provides them with a partial vocation and a certificate for completion of primary education (ITM, 2019).

**Training programmes for the unemployed and low-skilled.** Education and training of adults for employability and updating outdated skills (especially considering technological developments) is another key area where the political dimension could be integrated into adult education in the partner countries. These trainings are in line with the overall labour-market integration and employability focus of the adult education systems of these countries and are especially relevant as in most countries, one of the main aims of adult learning has been to respond to the challenges posed by the economic crisis – and they are likely to have a similar focus in the coming years due to the social and economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Hungary, labour-market integration programmes include specific courses for basic competence development (usually organised by employment authorities). Those focusing on vocational training may include additional elements incorporating aspects of the political dimension, such as skills related to employment and learning learn<sup>9</sup>. The main strategic focus of adult learning in Cyprus is to address unemployment. Thus there is a strong focus on the unemployed population, especially youth, and long-term unemployment (DGEPCD, 2014a). The various training and integration initiatives implemented by the authorities of Regions in Belgium addressing the low-skilled population also fit into this category and the courses provided by training centres for job-seekers. Despite their clear focus on labour-market integration, in these types of adult education programmes, the following aspects of the political dimension can be relevant:

- Knowledge, skills and competences related to the world of work and employment specifically (e.g. what to expect in an employment contract, what are the rights of an employee, what authorities and public institutions are relevant for various issues related to working, or even more specifically how to write a CV).
- Life skills, which are "constituent part of capabilities for life and work in a particular social, cultural and environmental context [...and...] emerge as a response to the needs of the individual in real-life situations" (Javrh & Mozina, 2018, p. 4). According to the Life Skills for Europe Projectreport, life skills incorporate eight types of capabilities: literacy, numeracy,

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<sup>9</sup> See for example the good practice of a complementary training course in the Annex (p. 39).

digital, financial, health, civic, environmental and personal and interpersonal capabilities (Javrh & Mozina, 2018).

- Learning to learn competence, critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- Active participation and proactive attitude – in the workplace and local communities.

**The non-formal sector of adult learning.** The non-formal sector of adult education is the least regulated form of adult learning in the partner countries. Therefore, even if citizenship education would be a strategic priority in these countries, it would affect this sector the least. Accordingly, it is the most independent type of adult learning. The diverse topics and aims of education and training activities offered in private (market-based) or non-governmental organisations provide an opportunity for the integration of the political dimension.

Despite the non-formal sector not being part of the official system of adult education, one of the main measures of public authorities in Cyprus for lifelong learning and adult education is to support non-formal (or non-public) initiatives through the means of funding, collaboration and acknowledgement. In Belgium, as mentioned before, there is specific legislation ensuring support for organisations that provide education and training activities for adults with specific aims, including the promotion of active citizenship (Decree 17/07/2003). This shows that in the French Community, the integration of citizenship education in adult learning is seen as the responsibility of the non-formal sector (mainly NGOs). However, the public authorities recognise the importance of this issue and provide financial support. In Hungary, several initiatives in the non-formal sector offer training courses on issues related to the political dimension, such as life skills or civic engagement, and its various elements<sup>10</sup>. In many cases, NGOs addressing citizenship education target specific vulnerable groups (based on the socio-economic or migrant background), and in many cases, incorporate elements in the trainings such as community organisation or advocacy<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> See for example the training of NYITOK, called 'The aware citizen of the 21st century' at [https://nyitok.hu/tudatos\\_allampolgar\\_a\\_21\\_szazadban\\_munkaero-piaci\\_kulcskompetenciak\\_fejlesztese](https://nyitok.hu/tudatos_allampolgar_a_21_szazadban_munkaero-piaci_kulcskompetenciak_fejlesztese) (Accessed: 18.01.2021)

<sup>11</sup> See for example the work of the NGO 'School of public life' at <http://www.kozeletiskolaja.hu/> (Accessed: 18.01.2021)

## 6. CITIZENSHIP COMPETENCES OF ADULT EDUCATORS IN CYPRUS, BELGIUM, HUNGARY AND ITALY

### 6.1 The profession of adult educator in the partner countries

**The profession of the adult educator is not defined** in partner countries. The lack of defined professional identity of adult educators in Cyprus is one of the main challenges of adult learning according to the Education and Training Monitor (European Commission, 2019), while in Belgium, it is said that it does not exist as a profession. In Hungary, one of the main reasons behind the unclarity around the adult educator profession is that the educator role in this sector remains overwhelmingly a complementary role to the profession or vocation most adult educators are teaching (Henczi, 2008). Similarly, the role of adult educators is not addressed by policy documents. However, the emphasis on quality and efficiency of education and training activities and the links to the labour market in national strategies (e.g. in Cyprus or Hungary) imply the crucial role of educators.

The qualification requirements are also generally undefined; there is **no single framework for the training of adult educators** in any of the partner countries. Consequently, the educational paths to become an adult educator and the educational backgrounds of educators are diverse. Three types of educational paths were identified in the partner countries: trained by experience, training course, and higher education. In the first case, educators are professionals in their field and usually have qualifications in a specific vocation they teach. Becoming an adult educator through a training course is typical in Cyprus, where a short (14 hours), medium-length or long (around 77 hours) training course provides a 'Trainer of vocational training' certificate (European Commission, 2019). Higher education programmes for adult education exist in most partner countries in the form of Master's degrees<sup>12</sup> (the Bachelor programmes are usually focusing generally on Education Science, Pedagogy or Community Coordination). It is important to note that many adult educators – especially those teaching adult learning courses in secondary schools – have higher education degrees in Pedagogy or teaching in general. Belgium does not have a specific higher education programme focusing on adult education.

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<sup>12</sup> See for example the Adult Education Master's Programme of the Open University of Cyprus (<http://www.ouc.ac.cy>) or the Andragogy MA programme in Hungary, which is offered by multiple universities (for more information on the programme see [https://www.felvi.hu/felveteli/szakok\\_kepzesek/szakeirasok/!Szakeirasok/index.php/szak/215/szakeiras](https://www.felvi.hu/felveteli/szakok_kepzesek/szakeirasok/!Szakeirasok/index.php/szak/215/szakeiras)). (Accessed: 22.02.2021)

As an illustration of the diversity of the educational background of adult educators, see the distribution of these educational paths in our sample of adult educators in Figure 1.

Overall, there are critical challenges to the training and educational paths of adult educators in partner countries. First, the lack of a unified system of qualifications and training for becoming an educator hinders the structural training of adult educators and quality assurance. This allows lack of appropriate qualifications for supporting adult learning. In Cyprus, for example, the insufficient supply of qualified labour force in adult education is a key challenge to the development of adult learning, despite the high demand for adult educators (European Commission, 2019). Second, most educators with qualifications in pedagogy (teacher degrees) are not trained to work with adult learners, which require different educational approaches for and perspective on the teacher-learner relation and the learning process overall, as well as somewhat different skills and competences (Bajusz, 2011) – see more on this in Chapter 2.4. Third, many adult educators teaching vocations or vocational subjects have no training background in education. These are challenges the adult education systems of the partner countries and the profession itself need to face and respond to (Henczi, 2008).

## 6.2 Competences of adult educators for the political dimension: survey results

We conducted a survey among adult educators in the partner countries to understand educators' competence level and needs related to the political dimension. The survey aimed to collect information that will support subsequent activities of the project, and more specifically, to provide focus points for the development of educational materials for adult educators. The survey was conducted between January and March 2021 and collected 130 responses from adult educators in the four partner countries: 23 from Cyprus, 30 from Belgium, 35 from Italy and 42 from Hungary.

The data collected is not representative overall or separately to any of the four countries. Based on the research design (as well as sample size), the survey does not intend to provide generalisable conclusions for the background or competences of adult educators in the partner countries. The main aim of the survey is to provide indications of the needs of adult educators in the area of citizenship education and to gather relevant input for the further activities of the project. Therefore, the results and conclusions should be interpreted having these aims in mind.

### *Background information*

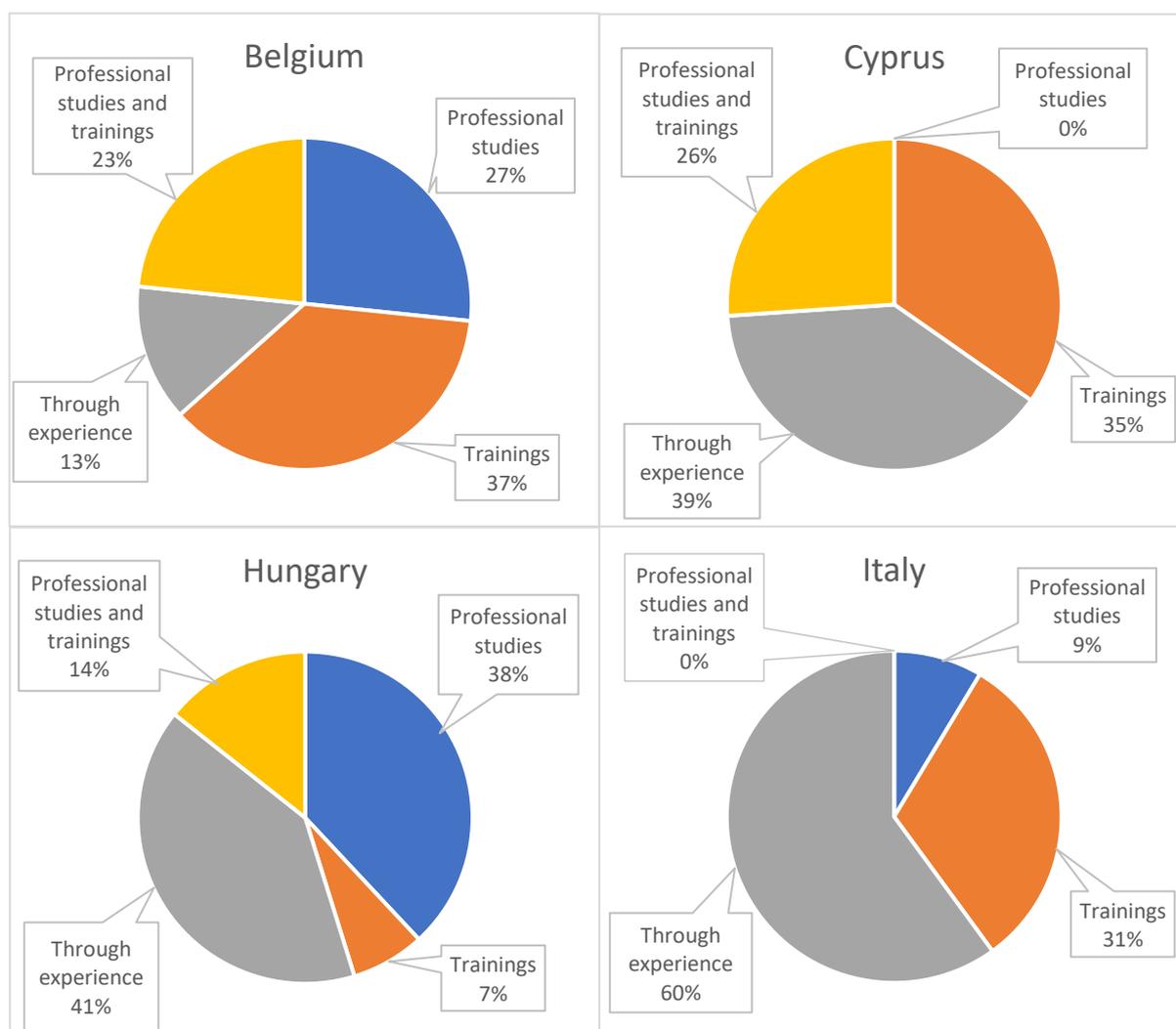
More than half of the respondents are women (55%), with the highest share of women respondents in Hungary (60%). Although the educational background of the respondents varies from the

completion of secondary education to PhD, overall, the educational level was high: more than 90% of respondents completed at least a Bachelor's degree, with more than half of all respondents completing a Master's degree. Considering the respondents' experience as adult educators, nearly half of them have worked as adult educators for more than ten years, and less than 20% had less than four years of experience. Nearly two-thirds of all respondents work as adult educators part-time. This ratio remains for Hungary and Italy, while in Belgium, the situation is reversed as 63% of respondents are full-time adult educators. In Cyprus, more than 90% of respondents are part-time adult educators. A quarter of all respondents work as adult educators at the international level. When looking at the responses by country, we can see that in Cyprus, 60% works at an international level, while this is the case for 21% in Belgium and 17% in Italy, and only 12% in Hungary.

As discussed in the above chapters, there are no overarching frameworks in the partner countries for becoming an adult educator, which is reflected in the survey responses. The **educational paths for becoming an adult educator** are rather diverse: for 21% of the respondents, it was a part of their professional studies, 25% completed a training of trainers (or in some cases multiple trainings) to become an adult educator, while 39% of respondents learned the profession through experience without any specific training. In addition, 15% of respondents completed both professional studies and relevant trainings to become adult educators.

When looking at the educational paths by country, we can see clear patterns of the dominating educational paths for the adult educators who have completed the survey (see Figure 1). In Belgium, most respondents completed trainings (37%) or professional studies (27%) – or both (23%) – and only 13% have become adult educators through experience. In all other partner countries, the latter is the most dominant path: in Cyprus 39%, in Hungary 41%, in Italy 60% of respondents learned the profession through experience. Similarly to Belgium, the path of trainings was notable in Cyprus and Italy (35% and 31%, respectively). While trainings had the lowest percentage in Hungary (7%) among the partner countries, nearly 40% of respondents in Hungary completed a professional study programme for adult education, which is the highest ratio among the four countries. This educational path of professional studies was the least reported in Italy (9%) and in Cyprus, where none of the respondents learned the profession this way.

Figure 1 – Educational paths of respondents by country



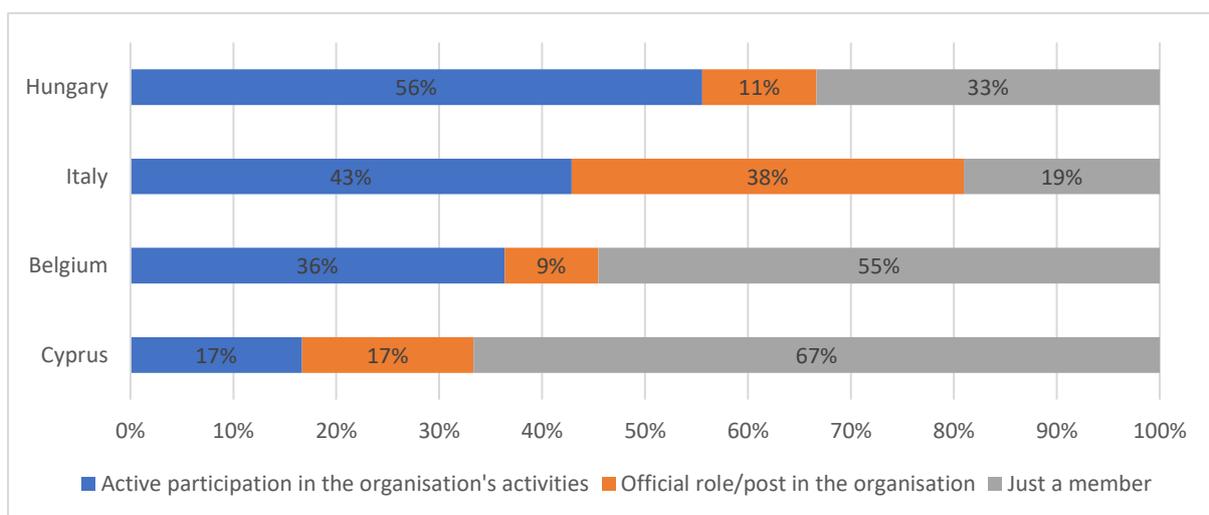
### Political or civic engagement

The political engagement was measured by asking about the affiliation of respondents to a political or civic organisation in the form of membership and further asking for specification of the type of engagement they have.<sup>13</sup> Less than half of the respondents (44%) reported that they are members of a political or civic organisation. Among them, 36% are just members without active engagement, 21% have any type of official role within the organisation, and 43% actively participate in the organisation's activities. Respondents' political or civic engagement as membership is highest in Italy (62%) and

<sup>13</sup> As political engagement is a sensitive question in some countries, both questions were optional. Nevertheless, only three respondents did not answer the question on membership.

lowest in Cyprus (26%). Among those who are members of political or civic organisations, more than half of the respondents participate actively in activities in Hungary (56%), 43% in Italy, 36% in Belgium and only 17% in Cyprus. Holding an official role in these organisations is the least common engagement of respondents in Belgium (9%), Hungary (11%) and Cyprus (17%), while 38% of respondents in Italy hold such positions. This also entails that less than 20% of respondents in Italy are just members, while this is the case for one-third of respondents in Hungary who are members in a political or civic organisation, for more than half in Belgium (55%) and two-thirds of respondents in Cyprus (see Figure 2).

Figure 2 – Types of political or civic engagement by country



### Competences of the political dimension

The main section of the survey focused on the competences of the political dimension, based on the competence area of 'being civically engaged' of the ETS Competence Model for Trainers (SALTO, 2014). This area includes four competences: connecting policies and educational programmes, integrating values and beliefs, supporting learners in developing critical thinking, and applying democracy and human rights principles. Adapted from the Self-assessment Form<sup>14</sup> of the ETS Competence Model developed for adult educators, respondents were asked to rate the relevance of the four competences to their work, as well as to assess their own level of competences regarding the 39 indicators<sup>15</sup> of these competences.

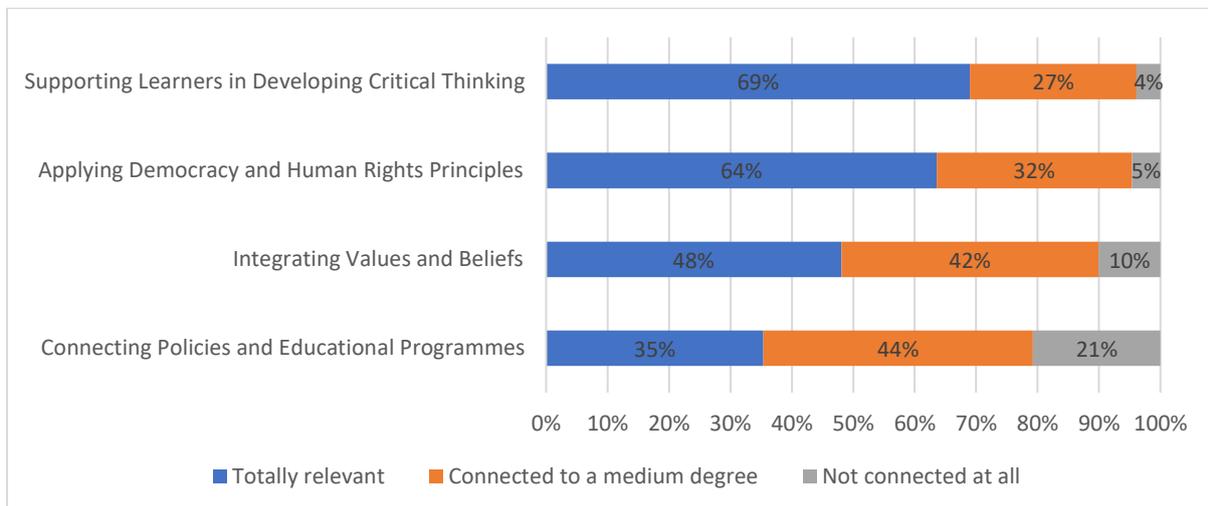
<sup>14</sup> The self-assessment form is accessible from <https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/training-and-cooperation/trainercompetencedevelopment/trainercompetences/> (Accessed: 22.02.2021)

<sup>15</sup> The full list of indicators is included in the latest version of the ETS Competence Model, see SALTO, 2014, pp. 25-28.

### Relevance of the competences for adult educators

The data shows a clear pattern regarding the relevance or connectedness of the competences to the respondents' work as adult educators (see Figure 3). The most relevant competence for the respondents' work is supporting learners in developing critical thinking as 69% of all respondents considered it relevant (and only 4% said it is not connected to their work at all). It is closely followed by the competence of applying democracy and human rights principles with 63% (with only 5% stating that it is not relevant). 48% of respondents considered the competence integrating values and beliefs relevant for their work, while 10% stated that it is not at all relevant for them. The least relevant competence is connecting policies and educational programmes, which was considered not at all connected to their work by 21% of respondents, while only 35% reported that it is relevant for their work as adult educators.

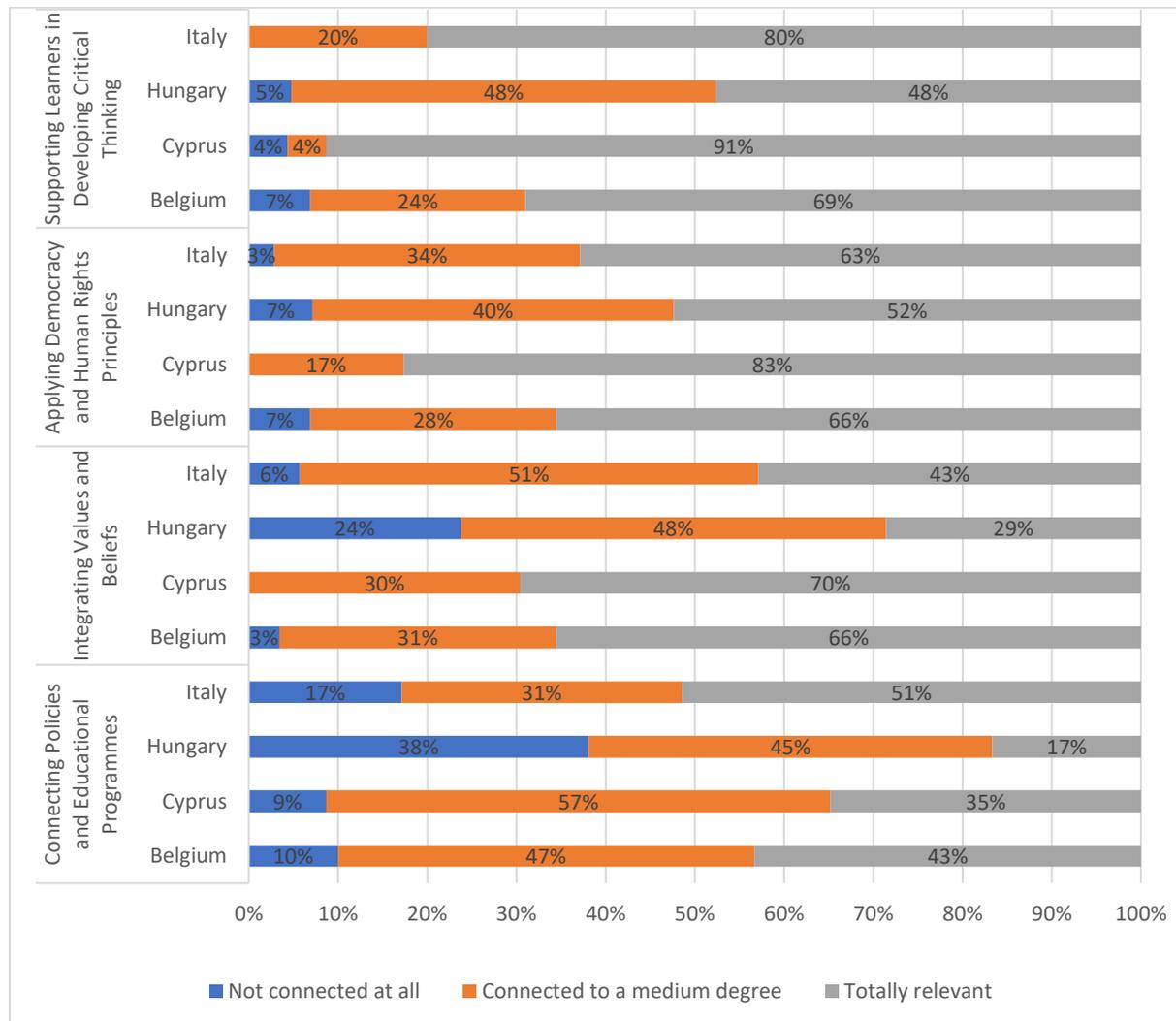
Figure 3 – Relevance of the competences of the political dimension



Supporting learners in developing critical thinking is most connected to the respondents' work in Cyprus, with 91% considering it relevant, and least connected in Hungary with less than half of the respondents reporting the same. Similarly, the competences of applying democracy and human rights principles and integrating values and beliefs are most relevant for the work of respondents in Cyprus (83% and 70%) and least relevant in Hungary (52% and 29%). The competence of connecting policies and educational programmes is also least connected to the respondents' work from Hungary (17%), while it is most relevant for the respondents from Italy (51%). These results indicate that the political

dimension – and the competences necessary for its integration to adult learning – is less relevant for respondents in Hungary, while they carry more relevance for the respondents in Cyprus<sup>16</sup>.

Figure 4 - Relevance of the competences of the political dimension by country



### Level of competences for the political dimension: self-assessment

Educators completing the survey were asked to assess their level of competences based on the indicators of the ETS competence model on a four-item scale, where the higher number indicates a higher level of competence. Generally, we can say that the self-evaluations were overwhelmingly positive. For nearly all indicators, at least 40% – and in many cases, at least 50% – of respondents reported that they have an okay level of competence (score three on the scale), and on the other end of the scale, the share of respondents who said they did not have a given competence or needed

<sup>16</sup> At the same time, it is important to keep in mind methodological biases as well, which might have an impact on the responses.

improvement (scores 1 and 2 on the scale) was altogether below 20% for most indicators (with the maximum of 5% for score 1 for all indicators). The mean level of competence<sup>17</sup> of the respondents for the competences of connecting policies and educational programmes and applying democracy and human rights principles is 3.2, and for integrating values and beliefs and supporting learners in developing critical thinking, it is 3.3. The variation of the mean competence levels by country is small (between 3.0 to 3.5). However, the scores indicate a generally higher reported competence level in Cyprus (all competences vary from 3.4 to 3.5).

In the following, we highlight the indicators for which respondents reported the highest as well as the lowest levels of competences within each of the four competences of the 'being civically engaged' competence area. The lowest levels of self-assessed competences (based on the indicators) are summarised in Figure 5, Figure 6, Figure 7, and Figure 8. These results will inform the later activities of the project the most, as these indicate potential areas where adult educators need to improve further.

Within the competence of **Supporting Learners in Developing Critical Thinking** – which was the competence most connected to the work of the respondents – more than half of adult educators completing the survey considered themselves equipped with the skills to *enable learners to use their values and beliefs to feed the exchanges in the group, to generate space for reflection and exchange, encouraging self-exploration and connections to learners' work and daily life and to be empathetic and truthful in providing space for learners to explore their values and beliefs related thoughts*. In these cases, the share of respondents rating their skill-level low was less than 10% (this was the situation with four further indicators as well, although a lower share of respondents marked the highest rates).

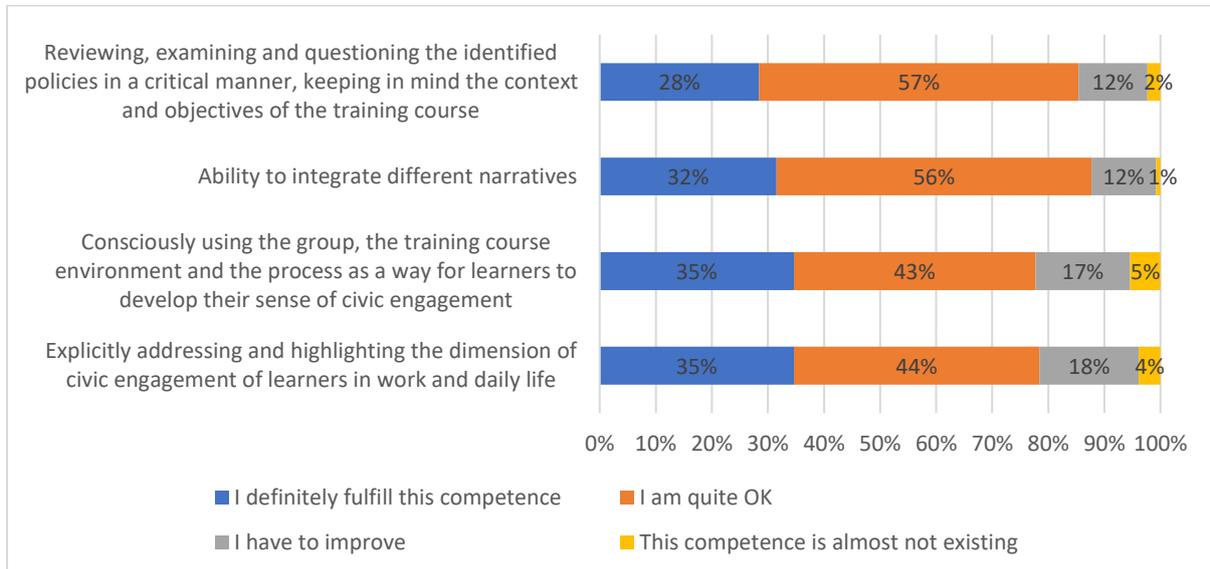
The indicators which showed the most self-reported need for improvement were *explicitly addressing and highlighting the dimension of civic engagement of learners in work and daily life by using different elements and situations in the training course and consciously using the group, the training course environment and the process as a way for learners to develop their sense of civic engagement*, with more than 20% of respondents considering these skills non-existent or in need for improvement. For both of these elements, 35% of respondents considered their competence-level high, while for the indicator, *ability to integrate different narratives* 32% and *reviewing, examining and critically*

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<sup>17</sup> The mean level of competence was calculated by creating an index for each competence based on the scores (responses) to all their indicators.

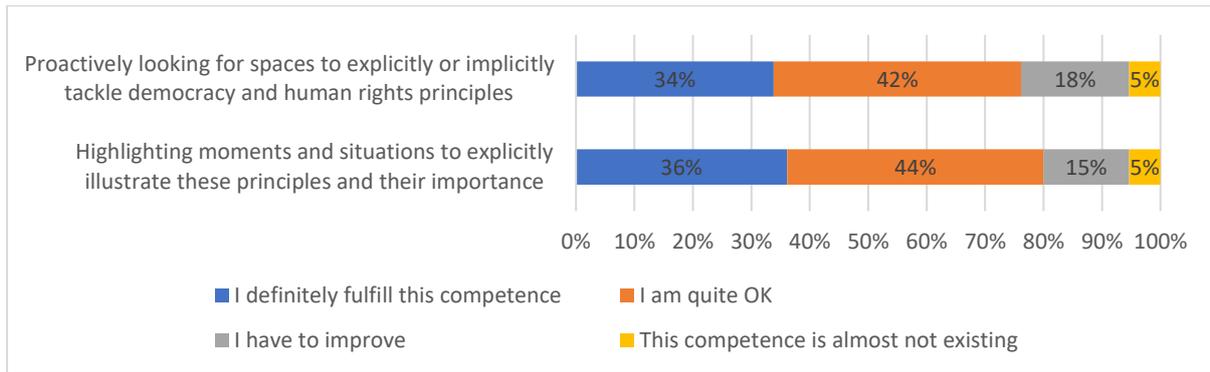
questioning the identified policies, keeping in mind the context and objectives of the training course only 28%.

Figure 5 – The indicators with the lowest level of reported competences within the Supporting Learners in Developing Critical Thinking competence



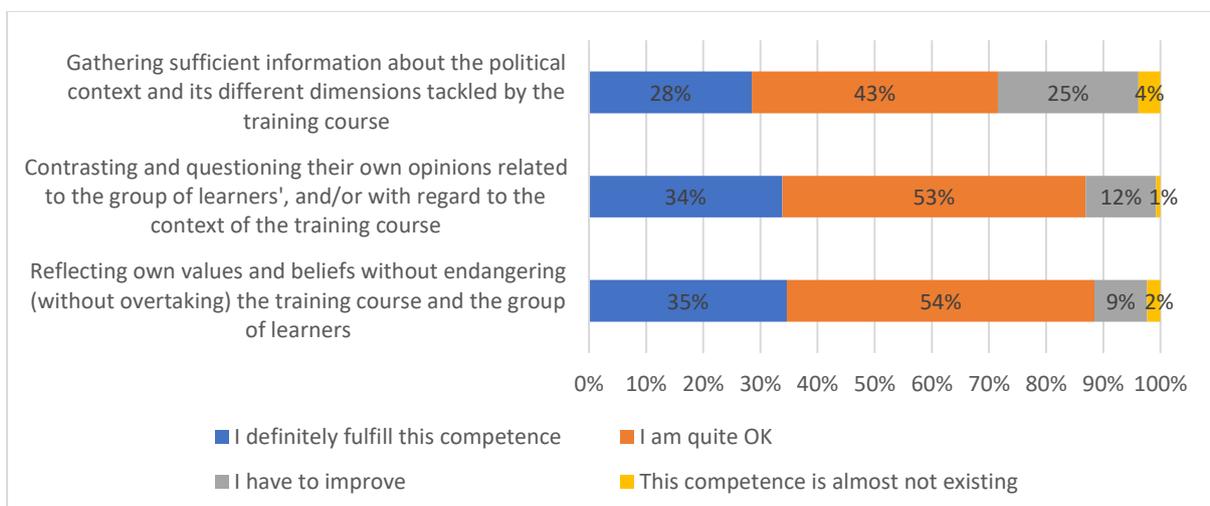
Regarding the competence of **Applying Democracy and Human Rights Principles**, the reported level of competences does not vary as much as in other areas. There are no very high- or very low-assessed indicators. This means that high assessment (fulfilling the given skill/competence) does not reach 50% for any of the indicators. Nevertheless, the indicator with the highest share of respondents considering their skill-level high is *allowing participants to experience a democratic learning community in the context of the course* (46%), while the one with the lowest rating is *proactively looking for spaces to explicitly or implicitly tackle democracy and human rights principles (especially with regard to the educational approach when designing programmes and in the attitude of the team towards the group)*. Considering the latter, more than 20% of respondents see this skill to be developed or improved, and only 34% consider themselves equipped with it (fulfilling the skill).

Figure 6 – The indicators with the lowest level of reported competences within the Applying Democracy and Human Rights Principles competence



Within the competence of **Integrating Values and Beliefs**, respondents are most equipped with the skills represented by the indicators of *showing interest in and is sensitive to the values and beliefs held by the group of learners* and *seeing the added value of openness to values and beliefs held by others for their own personal and professional growth*. In both cases, at least half of the respondents fulfil these competences, while only 4% and 6% of them stated that their skill level for these indicators is low (does not exist or needs improvement). In contrast, only 28% of respondents consider that they fulfil the indicator of *gathering sufficient information about the political context and its different dimensions tackled by the training course*. Nearly 30% of them assessed their skill level related to this indicator low. Another area where lower levels of skills were reported is the ability to *contrast and question their own opinions related to the group of learners' and/or with regard to the context of the training course*. Although only 13% of respondents considered they need to improve in this area, and only 34% reported that they are equipped with this skill.

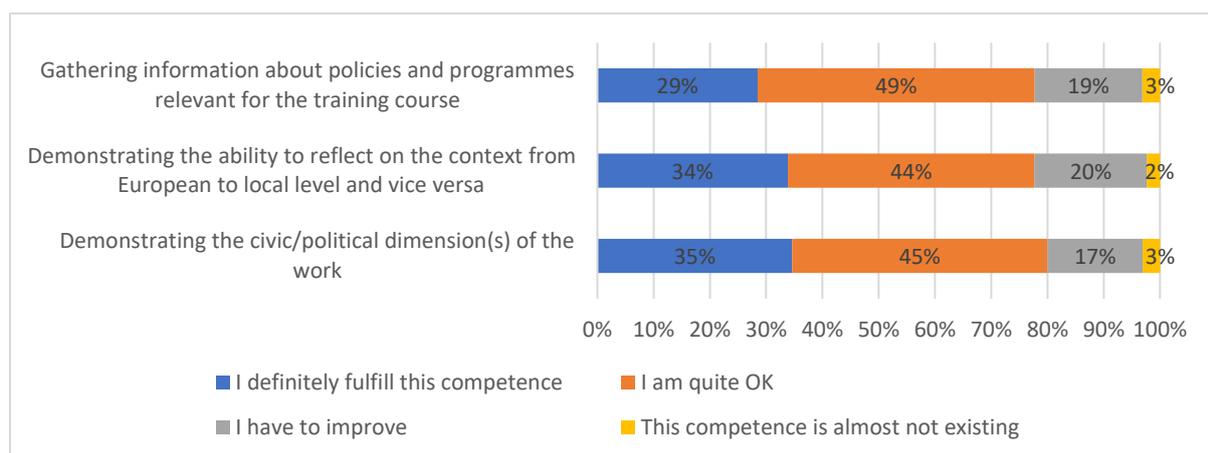
Figure 7 – The indicators with the lowest level of reported competences within the Integrating Values and Beliefs competence



Within the competence of **Connecting Policies and Educational Programmes**, respondents assessed their competences highest considering the ability to *take distance from one's own beliefs when necessary* and the ability to *acknowledge and assert the fact that working as a trainer is an engaged civic act*. At least 90% of respondents said they are either okay in these areas or definitely fulfil them in both cases. In the prior case, 35% assessed their competence level the highest on the scale, while regarding the latter indicator, this was the case for 58% of respondents. In addition, *identifying diverse and independent sources of information and contrasting them in the context of the training course* and *comprehending other political perspectives* were also among the more highly rated indicators with 49% and 40%.

The skills rated the lowest within this competence were the following three indicators: *gathering information about policies and programmes relevant for the training course*; *demonstrating the civic/political dimension(s) of the work* [relevant in the given training course]; and *demonstrating the ability to reflect on the policy context from European to a local level and vice versa*. In each of these cases, more than 20% of respondents reported that they either do not have such skills or have to improve them and only around one-third – in the case of the first-mentioned indicator, only 29% – rated their skills okay or very good. However, it is important to keep in mind that the competence of connecting policies and educational programmes was the least connected competence to the work of the respondents.

Figure 8 – The indicators with the lowest level of reported competences within the Connecting Policies and Educational Programmes competence



Overall, the indicators which were assessed the lowest by the respondents generally reflect skills and competences related to explicitly addressing an aspect of citizenship education (such as the civic dimension of work or the principles of democracy and human rights), reflecting on and integrating

different contexts and narratives – individual, wider European, political. Therefore, the survey indicates these skills as the key needs of adult educators (who have completed the survey) in the partner countries for competence development in the area of the political dimension.

## 7. CONCLUSION

The national contexts of adult education in the four partner countries differ significantly. At the same time, all of them have a more or less clearly defined focus on employability as the main objective of adult learning. The political dimension is not a priority for adult education in any of the partner countries; it is not addressed in policy or strategic documents. While the lack of systematic incentives for integrating the political dimension into the work of adult educators creates challenges, citizenship education remains an important dimension of adult learning whether it is implemented as a horizontal principle or addressed explicitly. Three types of adult learning forms were identified. There are opportunities for integrating the political dimension: basic competence development training, training programmes for the unemployed and low-skilled, and training offered in the non-formal sector of adult learning.

The survey analysis for adult educators showed an overall positive outlook on the existing competences of adult educators in this area of the political dimension. The competence of supporting learners in developing critical thinking was the most connected and relevant for the respondents' work. The competence of connecting policies and education programmes was the least relevant for them. Based on the self-assessment of respondents' competences, the main need for competence development is related to skills of the two following aspects: looking for the opportunities and explicitly addressing aspects of the political dimension in the frames of the training; and understanding, reflecting and integrating different levels and types of contexts and narratives.

Based on the results of the research activities, the educational materials to be developed to support the continuous development of adult educators in the political dimension, under the ADULATION project, need to

- increase the relevance of the political dimension for and within adult education;
- maintain the broad understanding of the political dimension for increasing the relevance of the materials for all partner countries;

- adapt to the potential opportunities for the integration of the political dimension into adult education in each of the partner countries, meaning:
  - training programmes for basic skill or competence development
  - training programmes for the unemployed and low-skilled
  - training courses provided in the non-formal sector of adult learning;
- focus on disadvantaged learners as end beneficiaries (in line with the project's aims), taking into account national contexts of the four partner countries;
- address the competences of supporting learners in developing critical thinking and applying democracy and human rights principles, as the indicated areas most connected to the work of adult educators in the partner countries;
- focus on skills relevant for contextualisation, understanding of different narratives;
- provide tools for addressing different aspects of the political dimension explicitly in the frames of the training course as well as for finding the opportunity and space to do so; and
- be as practical as possible, taking into account the characteristics of the types of training where the integration of the political dimension is possible and the needs of the main target groups.

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## ANNEX – GOOD PRACTICES

Each project partner has collected good practices within adult education that focus on or incorporate the element of the political dimension. These good practices provide relevant examples for the project on which we can build when developing educational materials for adult educators. They showcase relevant areas of adult education for the integration of the political dimension, specific target groups or innovative educational methods to inspire our further work.

### Cyprus

#### *DIGCIT - Strategic partnership to develop open educational resources for teaching digital citizenship*

<b>Description</b>	<p>The project's overall aim is to promote digital citizenship through youth workers who are also adult learners.</p> <p>The first objective of this project is to improve the pedagogical skills of 80 youth workers in using the MOOC innovative methodologies developed, especially for those who wish to harness the potential that digitalization represents for active citizenship of their 800 youth target group from partners countries, within 8 months. The second objective is to develop the civic competences while protecting the online safety of 400 young people from partner countries of which 20 young people with fewer opportunities, under the guidance of 80 youth workers with increased pedagogical skills, within 11 months. The project's third objective is to increase the awareness of 800 young people and 160 youth workers from partner countries about using innovative methodologies and MOOC citizenship education resources to promote quality developments in youth work in partner countries and Europe, within 12 months.</p> <p>A multi-disciplinary, complementary partnership consisting of 4 NGOs from Romania, Greece, Cyprus and Germany; 21 associated partners will reach the target groups and support the dissemination and sustainability of the projects.</p>
<b>Justification of good practice</b>	<p>Digital citizenship aims to provide the individual with the values, attitudes, skills and knowledge to use the digital tools of today and tomorrow to participate in shaping and creating the future. Digital citizenship skills are essential for social inclusion because they influence how information and communication technologies affect one capacity for active participation as a full member of society.</p>
<b>List of partners involved</b>	<p>Asociatia TEAM 4 Excellence, ATHENS LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE ASTIKI MI KERDOSKOPIKI ETAIRIA, CYPRUS ORGANIZATION FOR SUSTAINABLE EDUCATION AND ACTIVE LEARNING (S.E.A.L CYPRUS), Arbeitskreis Ostviertel e.V.</p>
<b>More information</b>	<p><a href="https://sealcyprus.org/partnerships/digcit/">https://sealcyprus.org/partnerships/digcit/</a></p>

## Adult Education Centres

<b>Description</b>	<p>The Adult Education Centres is a significant programme that provides general adult education in Cyprus within the framework of providing lifelong learning opportunities. The main objective of the Adult Education Centres is the general development of each adult's personality and the social, financial and cultural development of citizens and society in general. Their aims coincide with the state's developmental policy and the wider aims of the Ministry of Education and Culture regarding the provision of "Lifelong Learning" opportunities for all the citizens of the Republic of Cyprus and the combating of educational inequalities so that citizens may be successfully integrated and be enabled to act efficiently in a united Europe.</p> <p>The Adult Education Centres offer various interdisciplinary courses that focus mainly on the teaching of foreign languages, arts and crafts, cultural programmes, health and other issues of general interest and teaching professional and vocational skills.</p>
<b>Justification of good practice</b>	<p>The adult education centres provide many types of trainings. Beyond this, it also has an abundance of researchers and offers courses at very affordable prices. Though it does not provide specific courses to trainers on the political dimension of adult education, a partnership where this could be provided free of charge through the project could be beneficial.</p>
<b>List of partners involved</b>	Cyprus and Local stakeholder
<b>More information</b>	<a href="http://www.moec.gov.cy/epimorfotika/en/index.html">http://www.moec.gov.cy/epimorfotika/en/index.html</a>

## Italy

### *Penny Wirton school – Non-formal education for language teaching*

<p><b>Description</b></p>	<p>The Penny Wirton school is an Italian organisation founded in 2008 in Rome, with the aim of creating a network of non-formal language school based on volunteer teaching and the one-to-one relationship between the learner and the educator.</p> <p>The strong innovation of this teaching methodology is both the one-to-one relationship between the learner and the educator and the fact that the educator is a non-professional, native speaker volunteer willing to teach his/her own language to migrants.</p> <p>The school is not only addressed to migrants, but to any foreigner willing to learn Italian. Usually, classes are composed of people coming from any part of the world: Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, South and Central America. Lessons are available to any kind of language competence, from illiteracy to fluency. Learners come from almost any part of the world, but the majority are from African and central Asian countries. Their age includes people from five to eighty years old. However, the most common type of learner is represented by adult asylum seekers and refugees, willing to learn the Italian language or improve it, both to receive documents and live in Italy.</p> <p>Educators involved are non-professional, but citizens willing to help foreigners in learning Italian. The teaching methodology is based on the use of oral language, and the learning path is personalised, based on the language needs of the learners. A textbook is used as a source of material, but lessons are mainly on the educator's shoulders and are strongly targeted at the learner's needs. Lessons are conducted one to one or in small groups, one or two days a week, usually for a couple of hours, in the same room, where each educator-learner couple or group sit together. Usually, many different activities are conducted during lessons, like games and role-plays, employing different materials and focusing on themes that better involve learners. Each learner has a sheet where the educator writes all the themes and subjects discussed and all the progress made by the learners. It is forbidden for learners to choose an educator and attend only his/her lessons. Both educators and learners are forced to change periodically to enhance the exchange of knowledge and competences between people.</p> <p>Indeed, other than language teaching, the Penny Wirton methodology enhances social inclusion and integration through the meeting between migrants and foreigners with Italian citizens, creating many chances of cultural, professional and cultural reciprocal knowledge.</p> <p>Founded in 2008, the Penny Wirton organisation counts almost 50 schools spread all over Italy, all employing the same methodology, with hundreds of learners and educators.</p>
<p><b>Justification of good practice</b></p>	<p>The Penny Wirton methodology enhances social inclusion and integration through the meeting between migrants and foreigners with Italian citizens, creating many chances of cultural, professional and cultural reciprocal knowledge.</p>
<p><b>List of partners involved</b></p>	<p>It is a national organisation distributed in different cities in Italy; each local school has its own local partner.</p>
<p><b>More information</b></p>	<p><a href="http://www.scuolapennywirton.it/">http://www.scuolapennywirton.it/</a></p>

## Hungary

### *Citizenship education training for people in penitentiaries*

<b>Description</b>	<p>The NGO School of Public Life prepared a training on active citizenship for prison inmates. By attending classes, participants could learn more about jurisprudence, basic human rights, the constitution and our legal system. The aim of the training is to raise awareness about the opportunities for enforcement of basic, democratic and citizenship rights and equip participants with the necessary tools and knowledge to improve their well-being, social awareness, and reintegration into society by learning how to enforce their basic democratic rights.</p> <p>The training course consists of four main modules: 1) universal human rights; 2) citizenship, political and social rights; 3) constitutionality, the state's role, the rule of law and democracy; 4) structure of state institutions, a practical approach to citizenship rights. Other topics were self-determination, social contracts, democratic foundations, separation of powers. The courses included discussions and exercises based on readings and movies and interactive methods, such as debate or situational practices.</p> <p>The project has run in two consecutive years (2015 and 2016) and was discontinued due to a regulation banning civic organisations from prisons.</p>
<b>Justification of good practice</b>	<p>We consider this a best practice due to the application of innovative tools and pedagogical approach. The project successfully supported people in disadvantaged settings (in this case, prison inmates, however, they have training targeting a wider group of disadvantaged people) to learn about how society functions, what rights they have, and how they can enforce those rights. The project has not been evaluated; however, feedback from participants is available on the website, showing a positive impact.</p> <p>Overall the organisation targets the same groups of adults as our projects aim to reach; therefore, their trainings and the approach they take is highly relevant for the subsequent activities of the project. In addition, the organisation aims to support these groups to organise, form communities and help them in organisational development and working for issues within the social/political dimension.</p>
<b>List of partners involved</b>	<p>Közélet Iskolája (School of Public Life) Társaság a Szabadságjogokért (Society for Freedom Rights)</p>
<b>More information</b>	<p><a href="http://www.kozeletiskolaja.hu/post/nincs-minden-veszve-allampolgari-ismeretek-kepzes-a-budapesti-fegyhazi-es-borton-drogprevenacios-korleten">http://www.kozeletiskolaja.hu/post/nincs-minden-veszve-allampolgari-ismeretek-kepzes-a-budapesti-fegyhazi-es-borton-drogprevenacios-korleten</a> <a href="http://www.kozeletiskolaja.hu/post/sokat-tanultam-az-emberi-jogokrol-megismertem-hova-fordulhatok-jogorvoslatert">http://www.kozeletiskolaja.hu/post/sokat-tanultam-az-emberi-jogokrol-megismertem-hova-fordulhatok-jogorvoslatert</a></p>

*Complementary training course in the project' Training of people with low levels of education and those working in public employment.'*

<b>Description</b>	<p>The aim of the project (priority project, no: GINOP-6.1.1-15-2015-00001) itself is to encourage participation in education and training for adults with low educational level, especially those working in public employment and to enable them to acquire knowledge, skills and competences relevant for the labour market.</p> <p>The training course included here as a best practice is a complementary activity to the vocational trainings of the project. These additional courses take place before and after the vocational trainings (40 hours altogether). The first half of the course aims to improve the efficiency of the training by enabling adults to acquire learning techniques (learning to learn competence) and other skills such as how to motivate themselves or how to manage conflict.</p> <p>The second half of the course focuses on the labour market and skills and competences relevant for employment, such as legal relations of employment, writing a CV and communication skills. Both courses have their own syllabus, with details on different modules and what they aim to achieve.</p> <p>The methods used in this course are adapted to the group of learners and their professional experience. Adult learners can acquire new skills and competences while improving their intra- and interpersonal skills.</p>
<b>Justification of good practice</b>	<p>Skills and competences related to the labour market and employment are important elements of the competence area of 'being civically engaged. We consider this a best practice because it shows a very specific and practical area where the political dimension becomes relevant in adult education. These courses are linked to the vocational training; they can implement the learning techniques throughout the course, supporting them in later employment opportunities. The vocational training provides them with specific knowledge and skills for employment in a particular vocation or occupation, at the same time the political dimension, including, e.g. being aware of the content of a contract or knowing the rights and obligations as an employee, is a very important element for successful integration to the labour market.</p> <p>In addition, the course provides a good example of a setting in which the educational material to be prepared during this project could be used in Hungary. It also shows the level of practicality for which the material should aim to enable its use in programmes such as this one.</p>
<b>List of partners involved</b>	<p>Coordinated by the National Office of Vocational Education and Training and Adult Learning; Consortium members: Ministry of Internal Affairs and Government Offices of 18 Counties</p>
<b>More information</b>	<p><a href="https://www.nive.hu/index.php?option=com_content&amp;view=article&amp;id=746">https://www.nive.hu/index.php?option=com_content&amp;view=article&amp;id=746</a></p>

## Belgium

### *Lire et écrire – alphabetization for adults who cannot read or write*

<b>Description</b>	The initiative was born during the 1980s from four different associations aimed at providing workers with tools (reading, writing) whose lack was seriously limiting their abilities to exercise their rights. The initiative is organised in several different centres throughout the Wallonie Region - not less than six only in Brussels. The centres organise courses for the public (general audience), providing plenty of useful resources for learning basic French. Furthermore, the association has a strong interest in training the trainers, as it leads research and studies intended to improve the pedagogical framework of language training.
<b>List of partners involved</b>	Lire et écrire – Belgique
<b>Justification of good practice</b>	The value of the practice is not in being especially performative but in addressing a rather important social issue through extensive coordination by which it is able to reach a larger part of the population. In a country where immigration is very strong, especially considering that immigrants are often not Latin-derived language speakers, this service is great support for many workers and prospective citizens.
<b>More information</b>	<a href="https://lire-et-ecrire.be">https://lire-et-ecrire.be</a>