

IMPACT OF ADULT LEARNING ON COMMUNITIES

European Agenda for Adult Learning 2015-2017

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Forum for Adult Learning

NI



Scotland's Learning Partnership



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European Agenda for Adult Learning

2015-17 UK work programme coordinated by Learning & Work Institute
funded by European Commission and UK government

Key work strands:

- adult basic skills (the Citizens' Curriculum),
- digital skills,
- and young adult employability

Research strands - adult learning and:

- health and well-being
- work
- communities

Final report in 2017 to include evidence of the **impact of adult learning** on three research themes

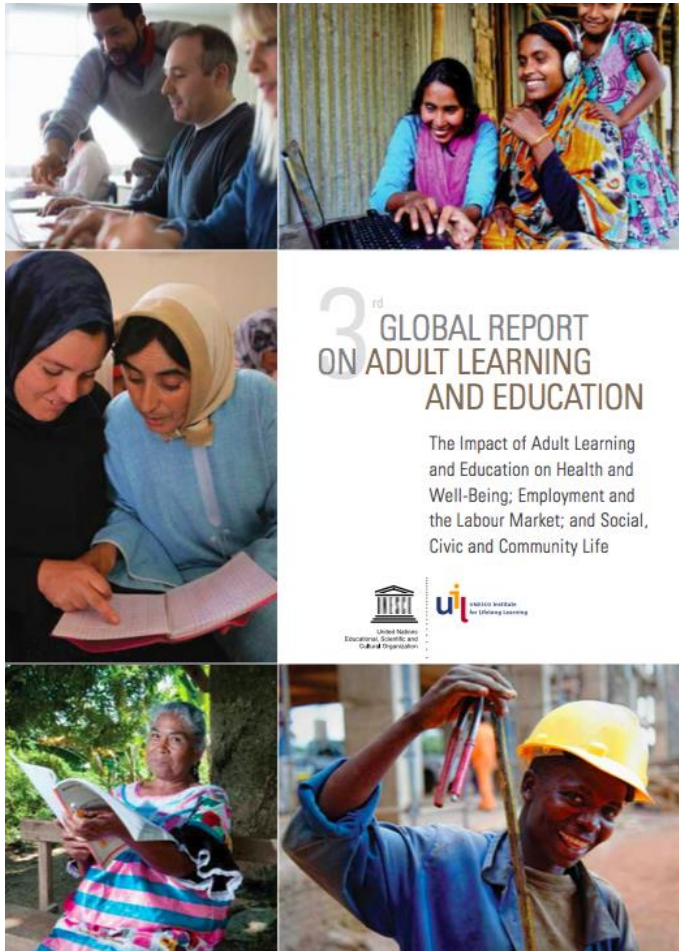
This presentation

1. Background, context, research questions, and terminology
2. How does adult learning support individual citizens and their families contribute to the communities they live in?
3. How does adult learning help citizens become more active in civil society and political life, more tolerant of diversity and more aware of environmental issues?

This presentation (cont.)

4. How does adult learning promote cultural development, from the arts to spirituality, helping citizens become well-rounded and resourceful in shaping their societies?
5. The implications for policy and practice in the UK, including the adult learning workforce.

GRALE (2016)



- 139 UNESCO member states responded to a monitoring survey
- Identifies trends in adult learning and how it responds to a changing world
- Looks at the impact of adult learning in 3 areas

GRALE III (2016)

Figure 0.1
The overlapping benefits of ALE



The “overlapping benefits” of ALE

“...no matter where in the world they live, adult learning and education [ALE] helps people become healthier, to improve their economic prospects, and to be more informed and active citizens.”

GRALE 3 (21)

Types of benefit in GRALE III



HEALTH &
WELL-BEING

- **Healthy behaviours & attitudes**
- **Longer life expectancy**
- **A reduction in lifestyle diseases**
- **Lower costs for acute healthcare**



LABOUR MARKET &
EMPLOYMENT

- **Skills & employability**
- **Higher wages**
- **Job satisfaction & commitment**
- **Greater productivity & entrepreneurship**
- **Tax revenues**



SOCIAL, CIVIC &
COMMUNITY LIFE

- **Literacy & numeracy**
- **Life skills such as resilience & self-confidence**
- **Tolerance of diversity**
- **Attention to the environment**
- **Social cohesion**
- **Political participation**

Social, civic, and community life

INDIVIDUAL LEARNING GAINS

- Literacy and numeracy
- Practical skills
- Life skills
- Cultural learning

BENEFITS TO COMMUNITIES AND SOCIETIES

- Social cohesion, integration and inclusion
- Social capital
- Participation in social, civic and community activities
- Learning Communities: Ethical Economies, Ecological Awareness and Environmental Sustainability

Does the type of learning matter?

“Different forms of ALE... may work better among different **age** groups and at different **stages** of people’s lives.”

Research cited on community-based approaches in China, and the music and arts curriculum in UK. But of course, these concepts overlap where learners are empowered to co-design...

GRALE III (72)

Recognised by governments

WG30154



PUBLICATION DATE:
21/10/2016

A review of Adult Community
Learning in Wales



Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.

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“ACL contributes to a wide range of Welsh Government strategic priorities and outcomes, including re-engaging hard-to-reach groups in learning, connecting communities, developing skills and supporting health and wellbeing.” (6)

Communities Research Questions

What is the role that adult learning (formal, non-formal, and informal) plays in social, civic and community life?

- How does it support individual citizens and their families contribute to the communities they live in?
- How does it help citizens become more active in civil society and political life, more tolerant of diversity and more aware of environmental issues?
- How does it promote cultural development, from the arts to spirituality, helping citizens become well-rounded and resourceful in shaping their societies?

Terminology

- How do we define adult learning and education?
- How do we define communities and learning for and with communities?
- Inexactness could be helpful in its diversity and breadth or a stumbling block to policy and practice advocacy and development

Capitals Model

- Schuller and Watson suggest adult learning builds human, social and identity capital
- Human – individual, skills, knowledge, capabilities
- Social – social life, relationships, networks, groups
- Identity – belonging, association, self-esteem

Stimulus Questions (1)

- Do the multiple understandings and definitions of adult learning and community learning help to reflect the range and diversity of learning opportunities or do they add to complexity and confusion?
- What descriptors or terminology should we use, especially when presenting our findings to wider audiences?

Supporting individual citizens / families contribute to communities

Evidenced outcomes of participation in adult learning:

- Supports passing on of knowledge and skills especially amongst older people
- Helps parents engage with children's learning
- Builds confidence in diverse arenas
- Often leads to volunteering and local involvement

Stimulus Questions (2)

- Why are outcomes relating to communities, social relationships and civic participation important?
- Should we identify these in more systematic ways and if so, how could we do this?
- Are these outcomes measurable?

Helping citizens be more active in civil society / political life, more tolerant of diversity and aware of environmental issues

- Adult learning helps to increase interest in local and national affairs, campaigns and politics
- Supports development of citizenship
- Contributes to bridging the gaps between different ethnic groups as well as ages; helps individuals to engage critically in community issues, including neighbourliness and community cohesion

Promoting cultural development, helping citizens become well-rounded and resourceful in shaping their societies

- Arts and cultural participation helps people to engage in learning, groups and communities
- Contributes to individual fulfilment and community transformation; can also support economic and financial outcomes
- Participation in arts, crafts, music and drama are linked to cross-cultural beliefs and values exchange and understanding, supporting community cohesion
- Health and well-being enhanced through cultural activities, especially for older people.

Stimulus Questions (3)

- Are there particular forms of learning, which seem to foster social and community outcomes?
- How might they be identified and advocated across the adult learning sectors?

The implications for policy and practice / adult learning workforce

- Identify the range and diversity of staff who contribute to adult learning – not just ALE facilitators
- Staff must be equipped to intentionally develop human, social and identity capital in teaching and learning
- Ways of systematically recording and measuring ‘capitals’ must be developed eg Wellbeing Valuation including outcomes-based success measures

Stimulus Questions (4)

- Where adult educators are aware of the social and community impact of learning:
 - What do practitioners do to help optimize social outcomes?
 - Are these practices formalized or ‘intuitive’?
 - Should these approaches be identified and shared widely?
 - What continuing professional development would help?

Feedback and ideas to:

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Chair

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or via EPALE