

# Setting the agenda

The impact of adult learning and  
what a lifelong learning approach  
could offer

# European Agenda for Adult Learning

2015-17 UK work programme coordinated by L&W Institute  
funded by European Commission and UK government

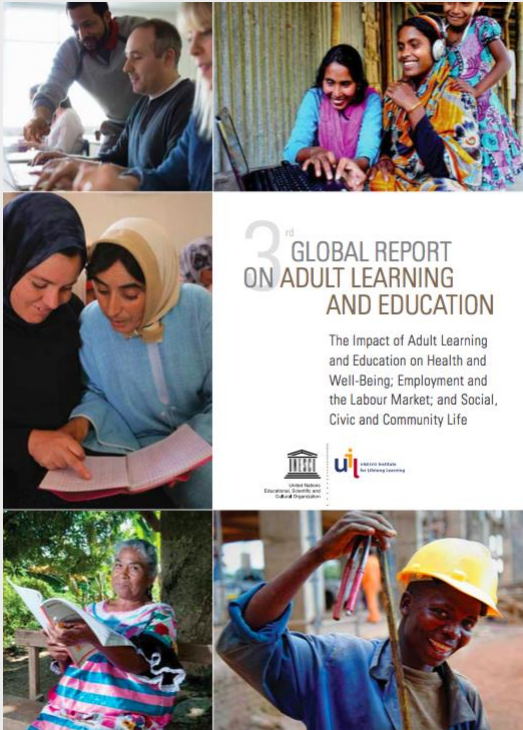
## **Development strands:**

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

## **Research strands** – the impact of adult learning on:

- health and well-being
- work and employment
- communities

## GRALE (2016)

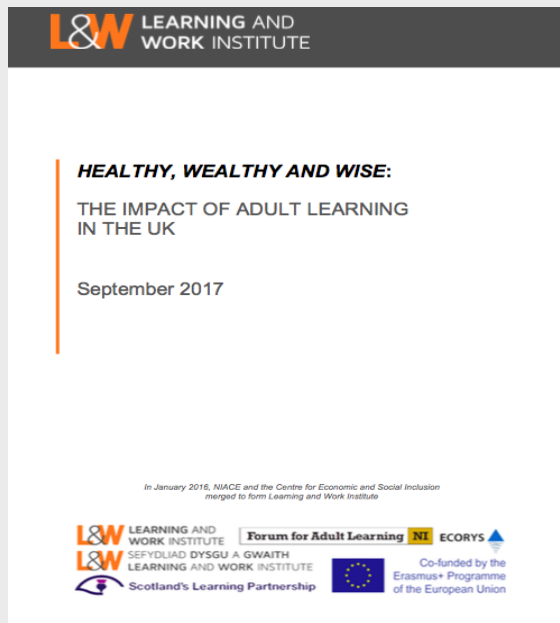


- 139 UNESCO member states responded to a monitoring survey
- Identifies trends in adult learning and how it responds to a changing world
- Looks at the impact of adult learning in 3 areas

- There are so many policies and strategies out there:
  - The Industrial Strategy
  - The UK Digital Strategy
  - Devolved education, training and employment policies across the UK
  - The New Skills Agenda for Europe
  - (Draft) Programmes for Government

- Instead of adult learning *responding* to all these other agendas...
- Isn't it time for us to be *setting the agenda*?

## Healthy, Wealthy and Wise: the impact of adult learning in the UK



- The impact on: **health, work, and communities**
- The final report will have sections on **England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales** written by the Impact Forums
- Part of an **on-going discussion** over the coming months on EPAL

# GRALE III (2016)

**Figure 0.1**  
**The overlapping benefits of ALE**



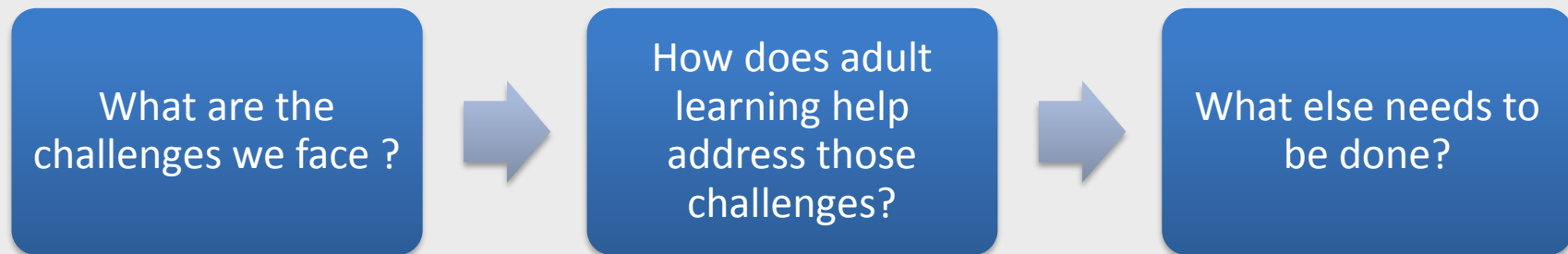
## The “overlapping benefits” of ALE

“...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)



## The narrative is simple...



## 9 challenges we identified



1. **An ageing-population**
2. **Lifestyle factors**  
impact on our  
health
3. **Mental health**  
and well-being



1. **Fair work**
2. **Skills**  
mismatches
3. **Productivity**



1. **Poverty of place**
2. **Engagement,**  
involvement and  
empowerment
3. **Community safety and**  
security

## How adult learning helps...



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



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



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

Source: UNESCO GRALE III (2016)

## What other countries believe...



HEALTH &  
WELL-BEING

**89% of countries agree** that adult learning contributes “a great deal” to personal health and wellbeing



LABOUR MARKET &  
EMPLOYMENT

**More than 50% of countries agree** that adult learning has a positive effect on employability and labour markets



SOCIAL, CIVIC &  
COMMUNITY LIFE

**Two thirds of countries** say that literacy programmes help develop democratic values, peaceful co-existence and community solidarity

Source GRALE III (2016)

## Implications for policy and practice

- At our recent conference we presented the evidence from UNESCO, and across the UK
- We asked policy-makers, researchers and practitioners what the implications were for policy and practice across the UK

## What needs to be done?

### Policy

- A coherent “lifelong learning” approach needs to be adopted across government departments / devolved administrations (and funding siloes)
- Building on the sound evidence bases already developed through UNESCO and UK Government Foresight Team

### Practice

- Education and employment funding agencies (across the UK) need to adopt more flexible approaches resourcing adult learning (with less dependence on qualifications as units of sale)
- Practitioners need support to work in different ways / across a wider curriculum

## What next?

- *Impact of Adult Learning* report to include chapters on health, work, and communities; as well as public policy in England, NI, Scotland and Wales
- Revised report and call for action by end of November 2017
- From November 2017 a new UK work programme supported by the EC until 2020, including an Impact Forum here in NI

# Thank you