

EUROPEAN REPORT



Training Access

PROJECT INFORMATION

PROJECT:

TRAINING ACCESS

PROJECT NO.:

2018-1-ES01-KA204-050989

PROJECT COORDINATOR:

Fundación de Trabajadores de la Siderurgia Integral (FTSi)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of contents

INTRODUCTION	2
General information – EUROPEAN BACKGROUND	2
EUROPEAN CONTEXT.....	4
Exploring strategies.....	4
Survey Results:.....	5
Unemployed people.....	5
Educators.....	7
Directors of Educational Centres	8
CONCLUSION.....	9

EUROPEAN REPORT

INTRODUCTION

GENERAL INFORMATION – EUROPEAN BACKGROUND

Literacy (considered as made of reading, writing, calculating and digital skills) is fundamental to human development because it enables people to lead full and meaningful lives and to contribute to their communities and society. Literacy is also essential for learning, as much of the learning is done through text. More than 796 million people worldwide have literacy difficulties. In Europe, one in five 15-year-olds and one in five 15-year-olds aged 16 to 65 have low reading skills. In Europe, it is estimated that 13 million children under 15 years of age and 55 million adults aged 15 to 65 have literacy difficulties.

People with literacy difficulties can best read simple texts, extract simple facts or draw direct conclusions; they are unable to work with longer or more complex texts and interpret them beyond what is needed. Not only are they struggling to find or keep a job, but they are also at increased risk of poverty and social poverty. Exclusion limits opportunities for cultural and political participation, lifelong learning and personal growth. Literacy is also an important prerequisite for all types of learning.

The spread of new technologies and an ever-changing working environment, education is no longer limited to childhood and adolescence, but must be seen as a concept of life and lifelong learning.

PIAAC (Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies) scores for European adults are examined by several indicators: gender, migration status (country of origin), age, sex and gender, etc.), employment status, and level of education. For these factors, the average values for all 17 European countries participating in PIAAC are examined, as well as by country. For each of them, the factors that make it possible to establish a link to literacy.

The literacy rate of European men is slightly higher than that of European women. Significantly, the highest scores among men compared to women are recorded in Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Italy, and the Netherlands; in Poland, women have higher scores than men.

People with literacy difficulties are ashamed of their shortcomings, hide them, think they are too old to learn, and consider impossible to improve or fear failure.

Highly skilled adults are more likely to trust others and believe that an individual can have an impact on the political process; they participate more often in voluntary and associative activities and are healthier than adults with low literacy skills. In contrast, adults with low literacy skills are half as likely to trust others as highly skilled adults and believe that they have little impact on the political process. They are less likely to volunteer and report poor health than adults with higher literacy levels. Among adults with literacy difficulties, there is a higher percentage of poor practices and non-use (not using government information). In addition, literacy is linked to family income and therefore to poverty.

Hourly wages are strongly associated with reading skills in England and Northern Ireland. The median hourly wage of workers with high literacy scores (level 4 or 5) is 94% higher than that of workers with low literacy scores (level 1 or lower). In addition, higher-paid workers (75th percentile) with high literacy scores earn more than twice as much as higher-paid workers with low literacy levels²¹. By linking information from the IALP database to income information, literacy difficulties can be linked to poverty. It also has an impact on the next generation, as poor parents are less likely to support their children in their studies because of their low level of education.

the context. Better literacy, on the other hand, reduces social inequalities and improves family life and situation: the most literate people report greater autonomy and contact with family members and are better equipped to complete forms. Increased literacy contributes to improved self-confidence and social inclusion.

Literacy difficulties limit individual capacities, reduce productivity and hinder innovation. People with literacy difficulties are more likely to have precarious and irregular employment. Adults (aged 16 to 65) with literacy difficulties are more likely to be unemployed and to receive social benefits. In the Netherlands, for example, 43% of people with literacy difficulties are inactive or unemployed, which is much higher than for literate adults (14%). Adults who lose their jobs tend to gradually lose their basic skills. 25% of the long-term unemployed have low literacy skills.

A study in the Netherlands showed that literacy problems entail high costs due to lower tax revenues, productivity, additional social security expenditure, productivity and additional social costs. In addition, companies face additional costs due to increased absenteeism and unnecessary errors, as well as problems in reading safety instructions.

The share of low-skilled jobs is expected to decrease by 30% in 2020 compared to 2010²⁵. Only 15% of jobs will be available for people with basic education, while 50% of net additional jobs will require higher education. For example, the need to read and write accident reports using a computer increases the need to be able to read and write. By 2025, low-skilled workers are expected to face a number of problems related to the wage gap, reduced job security and an increased risk of poverty (CPB/SCP, 2015) or poverty (CPB/SCP, 2015).

EUROPEAN CONTEXT

EXPLORING STRATEGIES

According to the OECD, low-skilled adults may be stuck in a situation where they rarely benefit from "normal" adult learning, leading to a weakening or even deterioration of skills over time. This makes it even more difficult to enrol in such programs⁴⁸. For example, in England and Northern Ireland, 75.3% of adults with good literacy scores participated in adult education in the 12 months preceding the survey, compared to 40.0% of adults with low literacy skills (level 1) and only 29.6% of those with low scores (lower level). This is a formidable political challenge for countries with a high proportion of adults with low literacy skills. It is very important to help adults with low literacy skills to break this vicious circle.

A solution can be found in funded adult literacy programmes specifically designed for the target group. In addition, policies can specifically aim to increase the participation of the target group in regular adult learning. PIAAC results show that several countries, such as Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Norway and the Netherlands, have been successful in expanding adult education opportunities with low literacy outcomes.

Investing in literacy improves the stock of human capital⁴⁹ and makes economic sense. A study in the Netherlands found that every euro invested in literacy interventions returns 1.79 euros. With the costs of courses at 1,690 euros on average and benefits at 3,025 euros (from increased labour productivity and decreased healthcare costs), the profit per person is 1,335 euros on average⁵⁰. In Ireland similar results were found: the annual income gain per person per level increase on the National Qualifications Framework being 3,810 euros and the gain to the Exchequer (in terms of reduced social welfare transfers and increased tax payments) being 1,531 euros per year. The Irish study concludes that the economic benefits outweigh the costs within two years, and solely from the Exchequer's perspective, costs are repaid within five years.

Action helpful in achieving a fully literate Europe:

- **Across society**

Create partnerships for literacy development between education and societal players such as municipalities, businesses, trade unions and NGOs.

- **Across age groups**

Literacy policies should have a lifelong time-span, stretching from early childhood to adulthood.

- **Across government**

Ministries of Education should develop a joint literacy approach, actively involving other ministries such as Culture, Health, Employment and Finance. The same joint policy approach is needed at the EU level.

SURVEY RESULTS:

The surveys have been made and addressed accordingly to 3 different target groups: unemployed people (120), educators (40) and educational centres directors (40).

Here follows the most relevant information collected:

UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE

AGE:

- Average : 37 years

SEX:

- Male: 37%
- Female : 62%

EDUCATIVE LEVEL:

- Without education: 4%
- Primary school: 14%
- Secondary school: 52%
- Other: 29%

UNEMPLOYED SINCE:

- <6m: 24%
- 6-12m: 28%
- >12m: 43%

2. WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO IMPROVE YOUR BASIC COMPETENCES?

- To earn more money
- New job opportunities
- Personal growth

4. USUALLY, I LEARN MORE WHEN:

- I take something to practice myself : 4.1/5
- I see demonstrations about what I want to learn : 4.3/5

9. WHICH KIND OF TEXTS DO YOU READ?

- Instructional texts (recipes, instructions)
- Journalistic texts (news, articles of opinion, reports)
- Advertising texts (comparisons, announcements, product review)

17. WHEN I WRITE TEXTS:

- I don't like writing because it is very difficult : 3.8/5
- I don't understand some grammatical rules for write correctly : 3.6/5
- I focus my attention on spelling and writing correctly : 3.9/5
- I have problems to understand the meaning of some words : 3.6/5

21. WHAT KIND OF THESE CALCULATIONS DO YOU USUALLY USE IN YOUR DAILY ACTIVITIES?

From the most to the least used:

- Sums :
- Subtractions
- Multiplications
- Divisions
- Proportion

22. WHICH OF THESE SITUATIONS, WHICH INVOLVE MATHEMATICAL OPERATIONS, ARE EASIER FOR YOU TO PERFORM?

- Buy at the supermarket and choose products that fit the budget: 4.4/5
- Compare the price between two products: 4.3/5
- Control the bank account by calculating incomes and expenses 3.8/5

24. HOW DO YOU THINK YOUR DOMAIN OF DIGITAL TOOLS IS?

- Average score : 3.2/5

26. WHAT KIND OF ACTIVITIES DO YOU USUALLY USE THE INTERNET FOR?

- Communicate with others : 3.8/5
- Keep me informed of the news: 3.7/5
- To use social networks : 3.5/5

EDUCATORS

YEARS OF MANAGEMENT/ DIRECTION EXPERIENCE:

- Average: 14 years

TYPE OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION:

- Secondary School: 10%
- Further and higher education: 10%
- Vocational Education and Training: 29%
- Adult education Centre: 51%

5. WHICH CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TEACHING PROCESS DO YOU THINK HAS MORE INFLUENCE ON THE MOTIVATION OF THE STUDENTS?

- The enthusiasm of the teacher: 4.4/5
- The connection between the teacher and the students: 4.2/5
- The active participation of students: 4.2/5

10. WHAT KIND OF TEACHING TOOLS DO YOU USE USUALLY?

- Demonstration
- Discussion in class
- Gamification activities

15. HOW OFTEN YOUR FEEDBACKS, AFTER EVALUATION...

- Call for reflection on the process followed in the realization: 4.4/5
- Call attention to the learning achieved: 4.3/5
- Signal progress although, overall, the work is not well: 4.4/5

18. HOW THE FOLLOWING DIGITAL TOOLS ARE USED IN YOUR TEACHING?

- Webinars: 4.0/5
- Digital presentation tool: 4,5/5

DIRECTORS OF EDUCATIONAL CENTRES

YEARS OF MANAGEMENT/ DIRECTION EXPERIENCE:

- Average: 10 years

TYPE OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION:

- Secondary School: 16%
- Further and higher education: 20%
- Vocational Education and Training: 25%
- Adult education Centre: 33%

4. WHAT LEVEL OF INFLUENCE DO THE FOLLOWING ITEMS HAVE ON THE DIFFICULTIES OF ACCESS TO THE TRAINING OF DISADVANTAGED GROUPS?

- Not have time for training : 4/5
- Not recognize the importance of training : 3.7/5
- Not have money for training : 3.9/5
- Due to foreign language-related problems : 3.6/5

CONCLUSION

According to what has been exposed in this report, what seems to be needed by unemployed people is the chance to change their lives improving, step by step, their literacy level specifically in those skills used every day as reading, writing, calculating and digital-related ones.

The results of the analysis and the comparison of the information collected at national level in Spain, Germany, Austria and Italy highlight two main critical aspects related to low literacy levels:

- National Scenarios are very difficult to compare and to merge due to the different level of alphabetisation reached by the target groups in each of the Countries in which the surveys have been submitted; National Policies on education have not been produced according to the common European Identity, for this reason:
- Teaching methodologies, even if specifically tuned for specific socio-cultural contexts need to be standardised at a higher level to reduce the gap between the northern & central Europe and Mediterranean countries.

Data collected should be useful in projecting a specific tool for basic skill self-assessment, in order to promote and capitalise lifelong and adult learning paths among those who have not benefited from traditional education systems.