**COMPILED EUROPEAN REPORT ON
THE STATE OF ART OF LOW EDUCATED AND LOW SKILLED ADULTS'
EDUCATION IN SELECTED EUROPEAN COUNTRIES**

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Introduction

LearnersMot Erasmus+ Project has united five partners: from four countries.

Edensol Danmarc, Spain

Eurocrea Merchant, Italy

UPI –Ljudska univerza Žalec Slovenia

SUTŽO, Slovenia

Eurosuccess Consulting, Cyprus

Prior to dealing with the issue of intrinsic or primary motivation of low educated and skilled workers aged over 45 for learning, prior to discussing how to animate and motivate these adults to enrol in education and stay there, partners in LearnersMot Erasmus+ project thought that gaining a deeper insight into education of low educated and low skilled learners in their own countries was crucial.

Project partners studied issues of *functional literacy* and *motivation* for learning by studying international literature. Project partners then developed a questionnaire based on Lickert's scale, thus testing their assumptions regarding functional literacy and low educated and low skilled learners.

Motivating older learners to join literacy programmes requires deep understanding of adult education, motivation of older workers and methods supporting motivating such learners.

We consider that deeper knowledge about this field of adult education and being familiar with characteristics of low educated and low skilled learners are crucial. We simply felt that skipping this part of the project would jeopardize our enterprise.

1. Why LearnersMot project »How to Trigger Primary Motivation for Learning in Low Educated Adults Using ICT Tools« is needed

The rationale

➢ **Ageing labour force as well as ageing population are among major demographic changes in EU countrie**s. Moreover, silver economy is developing which is to include older people not only as end users but also as producers. (Memorandum on Silver Economy, Ljubljana, 2016). Nevertheless, a great number of older people and older workers are low educated and low skilled and need to be attracted to /remain in adult education.

➢ **According to ISCED educational attainment is the visible output of education systems** and a measure of their success. For individuals, achievement levels have a major impact, both personally and professionally, on the quality of their life and job opportunities, while EUROSTAT data concerning educational attainment are concerned with the age group 55-74 and are not favourable: low educational attainment 37.4%, medium educational attainment 42.6%, high educational attainment only 20.0 % (EUROSTAT, Statistical data on educational attainment, 2015) which is far from the level projected by the Lisbon Treaty.

The level of education attainment is important but in itself it does not prevent adults from becoming and staying functionally illiterate, with reading, writing, numerical, cognitive and cultural competencies below the level enabling them to successfully carry out every day personal or professional tasks (UNESCO) and to learn on their own from environment.

The French Agency INSEE and the National Agency for Combating Illiteracy joined to conduct the survey *Information et vie quotidienne, 2015*. It has been found that in 2015 there were 7% of illiterates though born and schooled in France. Half of them were 45+. 51% of illiterate people were employed, 10% of them were unemployed.

➢ **Low literacy connected, though not exclusively, to low education attainment**, has a direct impact on work and productivity of the company. Workers who can not read safety instructions are more at risk at work. Functional illiteracy of the labour force may lead to low quality products or services. A worker may change labels by mistake thinking that colours of the labels are not important, or may follow wrongly written instructions, because he/she cannot check if they are right or wrong. A low educated and low literate worker does not know what his/her role is in a chain of operations. Therefore, any change makes such workers feel uncomfortable and anxious. Low literate workers cannot be expected to produce customized products or services. Low literates want to stay where they are, even if they may loose their job since their work station is threatened by computerisation and robotisation.

➢ **While most *adult educators* are rather versatile dealing with students with higher levels of education attainment,** they may not know what to expect and how to proceed when they have low literates as students. Adult educators and various practitioners may not be familiar with the phenomenon of low literacy and characteristics of low literate and low educated students (functional illiteracy). They may lack knowledge and skills about motivation and motivating strategies etc. They may not know how low educated learners learn. They may not know about how to collect and interpret students' life histories due to which the students have ended up as functionally illiterate. They might not know how to gain their students confidence. If low educated students become more confident, they forget about their aversion towards changes and can stay in education and keep their job.

➢ **Motivation of adult students has several levels**. (1) Success; a student learns what is necessary, (2) volition; a student has a choice in what is learned and how, (3) value; a student sees what is valuable for him//her personally and professionally and (4) enjoyment, a student experiences the learning as pleasurable. Students enjoy the experience of coming to the study group and do the learning. In order to achieve the four levels of motivation in low educated and low literate older workers, different motivational strategies (approaches, face to face and online methods and techniques) are to be used by adult educators. (Wlodkovski, Krajnc) While for most adult students the first three levels may suffice in the case of low educated older workers much more is needed, and enjoyment is a very important factor. (Wlodkovski, Krajnc),

For this reason, the ultimate goal of this project is to elaborate available learning and teaching strategies: knowledge, approaches, face -to -face and on-line methods and formats. techniques helping adult educators to train low educated 45+ workers, trigger and maintain their primary motivation for learning.

2. About literacy education and motivation for learning

Adult educators are aware that adult learners are diverse requiring an approach that is as much as possible individual. Their experiential knowledge tells them what to do, how to go about educating the low educated and low skilled older individuals. They know how the low educated and low skilled learners differ from other students,
but rarely are they equipped enough to talk about their diversity. Do they really understand their difference and, do they know their life stories due to which they have become "functionally illiterate"?

Educating of the low educated and low skilled learners means educating them to improve their functional literacy.

Such education may take place in wide range of settings where learners get engaged with most different texts and tasks. It is necessary that in such education room be given to diversity; diversity of individuals, texts, methods, motivating approaches.

The most crucial task is not attracting low educated and low skilled adults to education. Much more difficult it is to maintain or retain them in education.

Deficit approaches where learners are assumed to have something wrong with them should by all means be avoided. A variety of outcomes of literacy education and training should be valued.

Education of the low educated and low skilled learners definitely embraces a variety of goals. By no means can it be solely profession or job oriented. On the contrary, literacy programmes should ideally be a life changing experience going beyond mere professional goals.

Being highly aligned around values and everyday use of knowledge and skills, successful education of the low educated and low skilled learners is not close to school-based education, . Skills and social practices perspectives are to be brought together as much as possible.

There are a number of theoretical assumptions about how people actually use literacies. There are narrow definitions of reading, writing, and calculating that ignore aspects of learning that cannot be dealt with at the individual or cognitive level. They exclude issues that are important for understanding learner responses. All too often can they support a deficit view of literacy, where those with limited literacy engagement are seen to be lacking in some way, whether in ability or in education.

One approach has moved away from the individually focused cognitive skills model to include the social practices associated with numeracy, reading, and writing (Hamilton et al., 2006). In this view literacy is not seen as a purely individual activity – instead, it sees literacy and numeracy as being historically and socially situated and part of wider cultural and media engagement. The focus of the social-practices approach shifts away from literacy as something learners lack toward the many different ways that people engage with literacy.

Social-practices approaches recognize difference and diversity, and challenge how these differences are valued within our society. Street (1995) describes this as a shift from seeing literacy as an autonomous gift to be given to people to an ideological view of literacy that places it in the wider context of institutional purposes and power relationships.

From this perspective adult literacy is part of a range of social practices that are observable in events or moments and are patterned by social institutions and power relationships.

Attention is focused on the cultural practices within which written and spoken words are embedded. Not just reading but also speaking and writing, as well as the use of new technologies become central to the definition of literacy. The social-practices view requires that connections are made between the classroom and the community in which learners lead their lives; with a notion of situated learning; between learning and institutional power; and between print literacy and other media.

There is not just one social-practices theory of adult literacy, numeracy, and language, but a number of different versions. The social-practice approach that has characterized the new literacy studies (NLS) draws mainly on ideas and methodologies from sociology, sociolinguistics, and anthropology rather than the more psychological approach of active problem-solving theory rooted in the work of Vygotsky and others.

The NLS involves looking beyond formal educational settings to informal learning, and to the other official settings in which literacies play a key role. Learning does not just take place in classrooms but in everyday life, with meanings, values, and purposes located within a broader literacy framework than the texts themselves. There are two important principles underlying the implementation of a social-practice approach to literacy.

First, a two-way dialog and movement between formal learning and the everyday world is essential. Every day, situated cultures and practices cannot simply be acknowledged and imported into classroom settings. The boundaries between in and out of education must be blurred so that contexts become permeable.

Second, active learning is assumed by this approach. It characterizes the process of becoming literate as one of taking hold of the tools of writing and language. This has important implications for relationships within the learning process and for reflective and questioning activity on the part of both learners and teachers (Hamilton et al., 2006). The ways in which teachers and learners participate in decision making and the governance of the organization in which learning takes place are crucial, whether through management committees, consultative bodies, and research and development activities. Citizenship is modelled and enacted within such arenas.

The social-practices approach recognizes the importance of learners' motivations, goals, and purposes; every literacy task is done for a reason and in specific contexts, hence the challenge to concepts of universal sets of literacy skills.

Skills and knowledge acquisition are, however, intrinsic to learners' purposes and enhance many different aspects of their lives. For example, improving skills for employment may not appear to serve social practices, but skills that are gained in the pursuit of employment or promotion can be applied in other domains of people's lives, such as helping children with homework, managing the household, or pursuing further learning. Both enhancing skills and recognizing their role within learners' lives are important and both aspects should be developed in good teaching.

How far might it be possible to reconcile the functional skills approach and the social-practices approach within policy and practice? Could social practices be seen as encompassing and extending the narrower focus of skills? The idea of two opposing broad approaches is an oversimplification and there are other ways of characterizing the guiding philosophies people bring to literacy, particularly in everyday cultural settings (see Barton et al., 2000). Freebody and Lo Bianco suggest (1997: 26) that effective literacy tuition draws on a repertoire of resources that allow learners to: break the code; actively interpret the meaning of the text; use texts functionally; analyse texts critically. This is a dynamic process that is an attempt to

acknowledge that both skills and critical practices are enmeshed in working with texts. In the middle circle is the process of actually understanding the words as they are written on the page and interpreting the meaning. The outer ring represents the social uses of that meaning, which can range from functional to critical. A literacy process that is missing any of these components can be considered as only a partial engagement with the text.

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

3. Adult education, functional illiteracy, low educated and low skilled adult learners' characteristics and stimulating their motivation for learning

3.1. Significance and goals of national research studies

This compiled report on the results of the national research studies and reporting on the state of art of the education of low educated and low skilled adults is basically meant to provide scientific ground for developing a European handbook for adult educators engaged in the field of low literacy or functional illiteracy. The results contained in this report will serve adult educators, providers of adult education, social workers, specialists in the field of social inclusion, experts dealing with social marginalization and characteristics of socially marginalized groups, experts in the field of dyslexia, employers, personal managers etc. Since functional illiteracy is a well spread phenomenon the results of this study may be useful for many different professionals or those who are interested in the issue of low literacy or functional illiteracy.

Goals of the national research studies were clear:

- to examine the awareness of the existence, meaning and nature of functional illiteracy in the selected countries;

- to examine to what extent adult educators, understand education of low literates as specific and different from the rest of adult education;

- to examine to what extent functional illiteracy in selected European countries is being dealt with through specific educational formats for adult educators;

- to get an insight into partners' identified core needs in the field;

- to find out the characteristics of the low literate participants;

- to examine the existing strategies for motivating low literates;

- to find out about the types of educational processes applied;

- to get an insight into the methods used in this type of education;

3.2. Methodology

The questionnaire applied in partners' countries   contains 67 questions in 5 main sections and applied that in 5 different educational centres from Slovenia, Italy, Cyprus, and Spain.

The questionnaire was conducted based on a small-N accidental sample of approximately respondents chosen on their relative ease of access. The respondents were adult educators from various adult educational organisations or organisations dealing with social inclusion where adult education is an additional, though crucial activity.

In this report, we report the results obtained in Cyprus, Italy, Slovenia and Spain. The number of respondents was not the same in each country. In some countries there have been difficulties attracting respondents which in itself shows that

consciousness about functional illiteracy and situation of low educated and low skilled learners is not explicit.

3.3. Description of research sample

This report is on the state of art of low educated and low skilled adults' education in selected European countries.

National results of the purposively developed survey *questionnaire on adult education, functional illiteracy, low educated and low skilled adult students' characteristics and stimulating their motivation for learning* were incorporated in this Compiled European Report.

The national surveys were conducted based on a smaller-N accidental sample of respondents chosen on their relative ease of access.

The respondents were mostly adult educators from various adult educational organisations or organisations dealing with social inclusion where adult education is an additional, though crucial activity.

In Cyprus, Slovenia and Spain the majority of the respondents were female while in Italy the majority of them were male. The vast majority of the respondents in all partners' countries belonged to the age group 26 to 45.

The majority of respondents work in educational institutions, some of them in voluntary organisations. The vast majority of the respondents have been in adult education from 5-10 years.

3.4. Research questions

(1) What is the current status of adult education in Slovenia?

(2) What is functional illiteracy (usually the state of low educated and low skilled adults) and what are the characteristics of low educated and low skilled adults?

(3). How to motivate adults to enrol and stay in educational/ training programmes?

(4) How to design/organize low educated students' learning process?

(5) Which methods should be used while educating low educated and low skilled students?

3.5. Questionnaire on Adult education, functional illiteracy, low educated and low skilled adult students' characteristics and stimulating their motivation for learning

In all partner countries respondents were approached through their educational institutions.

3.5.1. What is the current status of adult education in your country?

The European Commission has repeatedly stressed the importance of lifelong learning as a key mechanism for fostering economic growth in the European Union. Lifelong learning was incorporated into the objectives of the Lisbon Agenda (2010) and was also set among the strategic objectives for the year 2020. In particular, by then, all member countries must reach *a participation rate of adults in education and training of 15%.*

Data provided in national reports on the state of art of adult education in their countries are rarely comparable with the exception of some of them.

P a r t i c i p a t i o n

There are no data for Italy while in Spain 5% of adults are included in adult education, in Cyprus 6,9% and in Slovenia 11,6%. In comparison with previous years the share of adults in all these countries has been shrinking. Though Slovenia's

share is above the average European level, its share has been shrinking too from being exceptionally high over 14% it fell down to 11,6 % of included adults.

In Spain the results of the survey confirm that low skilled people do not participate in adult education while in Slovenia low skilled older workers with lower proficiency do not participate in adult education as they should. These adults should be encouraged and motivated to continue participating in the educational processes, however, they usually show a very low level of interest and motivation for learning activities. This highlights the need to take measures to make education more affordable and more attractive for this target group.

In Slovenia one third of 16-to 65 year olds in Slovenia almost 400 000 adults have low levels of literacy and/or numeracy.

In both Cyprus and Italy, the legal framework aims at building *an integrated system between* Formal Education (school and university), Vocational Training and Non-Formal Education (associations and universities). Increasing the qualification of work force is the main goal of national policies to the exclusion of education for living. Functional literacy cannot be oriented exclusively to the work.

Only in Slovenian report there is mention of older people and older workers and their proficiency. Variations in adult skills levels are wide, with *older people having the lowest proficiency*. Especially problematic is the very low participation of low-qualified women aged 50-64 in adult education.

S o l u t I o n s

Different countries have different solutions as concerns democratisation of adult education and including *all* adults.

In Italy there is an interesting territorial attempt in the field of adult education. *Permanent Territorial Centres* were established to provide literacy training to the

population, meeting mostly cultural needs, especially with the spread of best practices.

Moreover, in this country the right to knowledge and lifelong learning was included into the right to citizenship[1]. Through Fornero law (Presidential Decree no. 263/2012) was introduced a new form of adult education institution: District education centre. CPIA will be up to the challenge of reducing the educational deficit of adults in Italy, in addition to meeting the new demands of knowledge, expertise and skill posed by the "learning society".

Slovenia also offers programmes targeted to raising the basic skills or education levels of low-skilled adults. For example, "Education programmes for success in life" (Usposabljanje za življenjsko uspešnost) includes several sub-programmes targeted to the most vulnerable groups of adults with low educational attainment. Such programmes have sought to raise adults' skill levels in the context of workplaces, families, rural areas, second-chance education and special needs education. However, only about 1 000 adults participated in Slovenia's "Education for success in life" programmes, which aimed to raise the basic skill levels of Slovenia's most disadvantaged adults in 2012, while just over 1 000 adult learners participated in a programme to acquire a basic school qualification in 2013/14 (European

Slovenia also offers programmes targeted to raising the basic skills or education levels of low-skilled adults. For example, "Education programmes for success in life" (Usposabljanje za življenjsko uspešnost) includes several sub-programmes targeted to the most vulnerable groups of adults with low educational attainment.

Most low skilled adults, however, are not interested in adult learning and do not choose to participate in it. Though in our opinion real reasons for non-participation

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[1] International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, The Formal System of Adult Education in Italy from CTPs (1997) to CPIAs (2013/2014): An Inside View of the Situation Professor Elena Marescotti University of Ferrara Department of Humanities Ferrara

are to be sought in their life histories, family environment, school induced marginalisation, bad school memories, family situation and social stigmatisation.[2]

3.5.2. What are functional illiteracy (usually the state of low educated and low skilled adults) and characteristics of low educated and low skilled adults

D e f i n I t i o n s

Basing themselves on the definitions of UNESCO, most of the definitions provided in national reports deal with functional illiteracy exclusively related to writing, reading and counting.

In Spain functional illiteracy refers to the level of reading, writing, understanding and numeracy that is not sufficient for functioning in today's society.

In Cyprus functional illiteracy is when people have difficulties reading, writing and or accessing written and digital information as a result of which their skills are inadequate for functioning independently. Functional illiteracy is different from illiteracy.

In Slovenia UNESCO definitions have been accepted as well but functional illiteracy is also seen as a "by product" of development. What was enough in industrial times is not enough in post-modern fluid society. Moreover, functional illiteracy in various regions and states may be quite different". Thus, functional illiteracy is not a general concept but dependent on the cultural and social context, space and time.

In Slovenia functional illiteracy is qualified as a phenomenon affecting both personal and working life as well as companies, local communities and nation.

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[2] Source: OECD Skills Strategy Diagnostic Report Slovenia 2017

Basically, in all partners' countries functional illiteracy is associated with those who are not qualified enough to manage well their life and work as they are supposed to do in a given environment. And in everyday life.

But literacy is not only important for the labour market, it is important for personal or social aspects of a person's life is a conclusion from the Spanish report.

Functional illIterates

In Spain it is believed that not everyone who is classified as functionally illiterate perceives that they have a problem with reading, writing, numeracy or accessing information, and the majority of people who are classified as functionally illiterate participate in the labour market. However, according to the Survey of Adult Skills

People who are functionally illiterate are more often unemployed, are less often socially active, have a lower level of income and more often have health problems.

The requirement for higher levels of qualifications from employers, digitalization and automation mean that functional illiterates are at greater risk of long-term unemployment and exclusion from the labour market.

According to survey respondent respondents in Spain argue that functional illiteracy has other consequences, such as lack of confidence and a feeling of shame or guilt.

In Italy it is believed that illiterates are mostly among the unemployed, people who have not completed their formal education at the primary, secondary and higher diploma levels, employees regarded as 'at risk', and immigrants.

The obstacles are many, not least *the existence of a strong 'underground economy'* that absorbs people either being classified as 'inactive' and those registering for

employment who therefore find no incentive to follow courses in order to improve their situation.

Why they do not stay in education

In Italy *Poor rates of retention of illiterate adults in education* are often the result of a lack of a stimulating post-literacy environment for those who are judged to have attained functional literacy. The newly literate can suffer because of a lack of opportunities for continuing education or employment, both of which can create a literacy-rich environment[3].

Other obstacles that stand in the way of participation include the existence of people who have given up on registering and *who have little faith in the welfare system* and its provisions (amortizzatori sociali), including its sporadic retraining programmes.

One other obstacle is *the lack of decent employment opportunities* especially in the industrially underdeveloped South. The situation varies from region to region.

In Italy an obstacle for further participation *is recurring illiteracy* retention (alfabetizazione di ritorno) dealt with in policy reports and other documents, as constituting one of the greatest challenges for adult education.

Basically, being literate means having cognitive and cultural competencies, reading and writing and cognitive skills to read, write and understand written messages in everyday life. It also means being able to learn on one's own.

Low-literate adults who attended school but who, for a variety of reasons, either did not complete their education or else did complete it without attaining the expected level of reading skill are referred to as functional illiterates. Functional

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[3] Country report on the action plan on adult learning: Italy. Carried out, on behalf of the European Commission, by GHK in cooperation with Research voor Beleid

illiteracy is present if the level of literacy of a person is not adequate for fully effective participation in society. (Baydar, Brooks-Gunn, & Furstenberg, 1993; Eme, 2011; Kirsch et al., 1993). Thus, it corresponds to a failure to acquire functional reading skills, i.e. it describes individuals who have been taught to read and write at school but either subsequently lost this ability for reasons other than medical or who inade-quately acquired reading and writing competencies in the first place (Eme, 2010).

Constituting elements of literacy (speech, language, cognitive processes, reading, writing, numeracy) are individual and social phenomenon. Literacy being to a great extent   result of interactions within community, literate environment is to be created and supported as to alleviate functional illiteracy.

3.5.3. How to motivate adults to enrol and stay in educational/ training programmes?

In Cyprus focus is *on individual profile and psychological profile of low educated and low skill learners.*

They argue that low-educated and low-skilled adult learners have different learning experiences, needs and expectations, it becomes very demanding and challenging to design educational programmes which will attract their attention and interest. An encouraging, supportive, motivating and dynamic environment which will incorporate several learning techniques (digital and non-digital) is significant for achieving the maximum participation and engagement of that target group in continuous learning.

In Italy priority is being given to a modular approach to adult learning so that the learners can build their educational profile gradually.

The Second Chance programmes on offer are held in *settings tailored to the participants' learning needs* and are carried out *in a manner that accommodates the adult learners' life and family commitments*.

In Slovenia they believe that major challenge is to convince adults with low skills in that they would benefit from raising their skills through adult learning. *Reaching out to low-skilled adults with high-quality information and tailored guidance* is necessary to demonstrate the benefits of adult learning.

Given the fact that low educated and low skilled workers are not in favour of adult education, avoiding it and pretending that they do not have the time, do not have resources to get involved (which at times is true) and knowing that they experience important psychological and social barriers to their involvement, adult educators have to understand the characteristics of low educated and low skilled workers who are anxious and therefore resist change that constitutes learning.

They have to get to know their life histories that have made them functional illiterate. They have to understand the difficulties of eventually being a dyslectic, the social pressure put on students with low educational attainment. Low educated adults feel guilty and ashamed, and adult educators task is to make the burden of guilt and shame less heavy. The motivating of low educated adults starts by animating them and their environment for learning and education.

In Spain they argue that low skilled and low qualified adults have *most diverse needs and often not expressed need*s.

Therefore, one of the biggest challenges is *to convince low skilled and low qualified adults that to acquire certain knowledge will be beneficial for them.* That's why motivation is so important when teaching functional illiterate adults.

Adults, unlike other students, have a lot of things on their minds and learning is probably the last of them. In addition, *adult learners don't see the rewards of their efforts as soon as they would expect and they may also lack studying habits*. For this reason, when teaching low-educated and low-skilled adults it is very important *to provide an encouraging atmosphere to make them feel confident, to teach them practical things that they can apply in their everyday life and to give them constant support.*

How to design / organise learning processes

In Italy *teaching methods and approaches even in formal education should be based on school* autonomy and teaching freedom provisions.

Flexibility and individualisation are at the basis of course planning, *supported by technologie*s able to stimulate interest and participation: the reception, listening and guidance phases may allow for a modular structure for every enrolled learner, through the so called 'training pact'. A modular educational offer is therefore favored and the use of laboratories and new ICT is fundamental.

In Slovenia it is believed that *needs analysis, individual interviews with future participants in the course as well as members of the personnel department of a company is followed by devising a special draft programme with contents meeting the participant's needs, interests and aspirations*.

During the learning process *adult educators are responsive* to what happens in the study group, and the needs for different contents that might emerge. The sequence

of single contents is less important that participant's already existing knowledge and wishes.

3.5.4. What methods should be used to educate low educated and low skilled learners

<u>In Italy</u> Courses in this category can be organised freely in terms of timetables, methods and learner evaluation criteria.

Permanent Territorial Centres and evening course providers issue attendance certificates for language courses for foreign nationals and/or short modular courses and/or functional literacy courses.

Certificates reflect the types of courses attended. Certificates issued at the end of short modular courses – a very diverse category – range from participation or attendance statements to certification within an official skills framework, as in the case of ICT or language courses.

Methods depend on what educators want to achieve. They depend on whether they primarily want to produce *a transformative change in their students* and their relationships, *build a community of learn*ers, *transmit knowledge*.

It is important that digital learning be included since digital abilities are widely appreciated and thus giving value to low educated participants. Educational games are highly appreciated, skills like learning to learn are to be targeted through the course. Since low educated and low skilled workers feel more at ease in learning by doing, learning by doing is to be largely used.

<u>In Spain</u> methods should be basically chosen in accordance with the objectives and contents and the characteristics of the learning group. The approach should be mainly student- centered.

Group exercises and pair work are not recommended at the begining, they can be introduced later on the course. Educators think that adult students would probably not feel confident when working in groups or pairs. This might be the reason why the majority of the educator's thing that stimulating group dynamics and creating a learning community would be advisable. The majority of the educators also agree that educational games are beneficial.

The activities that educators think is more appropriate to teach low skilled and low educated adults are learning by doing and, as low skilled and low qualified adults need constant support, face-to-face sessions. It should also be advisable to devote some sessions to "learning how to learn".

3.5-6- Summarized results

The share of the low educated Italy, Slovenia, and Spain is high according to the respondents. In Cyprus however, they think it is low. In Italy educators think that there is a large group of low- educated and low -skilled adults.

In Slovenia half of the respondents think that attention and programmes are focused on tertiary educated learners.

In Italy on the contrary 30% are convinced that educational programmes for low educated and socially marginalised prevail-

From all national reports it can be deduced that companies do not invest money in continuous education for all their workers (85% in Italy)

It is generally believed that educational programmes are mostly designed to meet company's expectations, but they do not meet personal and social needs, though social needs were not understood as needs of society /community.

73% respondents Italian believe that educational programmes can be the same for everybody

Most of the respondents think that adult educators are not specially trained to teach functional illiterates. This is only a limited case in Slovenia.

Most of the respondents think that programmes for employers to understand functionally literacy do not exist

71% of the respondents think that the gap between family and school literacy may lead to functional illiteracy.

The 65% of respondents think that functional illiteracy can be the result of non-recognized dyslexia and the 20% strongly agree with the statement.

The majority of respondents 80% agree that functional illiteracy is the result of cultural inequalities.

55% of the respondents think that one of the causes of functional illiteracy is that adults don't have used the acquired skills for a long time, so they have lost them.

As we can infer from these graphs, the causes of functional illiteracy are mainly bad schooling (73%), inadequate policies (73%), social and cultural inequalities (82%), and non-recognized and non-addressed disorders that involve difficulty in learning, such as dyslexia (55%).

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Functional illiteracy is a state of adults, not young people.

Functional illiteracy is mostly seen as inability to read, write and count in everyday life.

Functional illiteracy is not only the state of insufficient cognitive development that does not allow autonomous learning from environment and good enough functioning in everyday life. It is also characterised by lack of cultural competencies due to social and cultural inequalities.

Functional illiteracy affects all areas of life.

Functional illiteracy is an individual and a social issue.

Functional illiteracy is a process and a result of:

There is an agreement that bad schooling produces functional illiteracy. _School teachers should be trained as concerns functional illiteracy_.

Majority of low educated workers had bad emotional experience in school. _Accent should be put on psychological aspects of the education for low educated adult learners._

Respondents stated that low educated people had bad experience of education in their past.

There can be an important gap between family and school literacy. If the gap is too wide learners and teachers are less motivated to overcome, it.

Dyslexia is possible cause of functional illiteracy. _The planned handbook will have to contain a unit on characteristics of dyslexia and dyslectic learners._

The majority of respondents think that adults may become functional illiterates if they don't use their skills for long time

An accent should be put on _the necessity for the learners and workers to continuously gain, activate and use their skills._

 Inadequate policies based on inadequate concepts and terminology can be harmful and may lead to inadequate solutions. When policies are inadequate, investing public money in functional literacy education is meaningless.

The majority of respondents (75 % in Italy) thinks that inadequate policies can cause functional illiteracy

The majority of respondents agree that low educated adopt strategies to hide their state.

The handbook should contain a discussion on policies.

A unit in the handbook should deal with them

Functionally illiterate workers may have common characteristics:

They do everything to hide their state.

Case studies illustrating resistance to autonomous problem solving should be contained in the handbook.

Not understanding the wider frame of one's work prevents thinking and taking autonomous decisions.

Low educated and low skilled workers may cause damage to themselves and the company, not understanding safety instructions, not being able to take autonomous decisions when facing clients etc.

Employees have to evolute with their company. They have to be informed on what their job represents in the wider picture of the company performance.

It is true that not all low educated adults are functionally illiterate, however, those who are, normally do not have the knowledge that is normally acquired by the completion of elementary schooling.

In given contexts low educated and low skilled adults function and they may manage what is needed to survive in their job, but not in life. *The planned handbook should comprise exercises of this type (the type of notes to be posted on fridge door* etc. Though there should not be many written exercises!

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The results to the question what the best way is **to reach the target group**s are not clear. The company level and the regional level seem to be the right reaching out

method for 45% of the respondents, but a large percentage of respondents have no opinion.

The easiest way to reach the target group is within companies and organised structures. Their co-operation is needed in the animating process of the learners.

Attracting learners on the level of the region is possible if companies and organisations perform the animation since written information and impersonal massive animation are due to fail. Personal contact is recommended.

Written information does not reach functionally illiterate people.

Needs as well as experiential knowledge of the learners should be "detected throughout the whole educational process. As to **foster their motivation for learning.**

Adult educators should keep testing the usefulness of the contents.

The learning culture of low educated learners differs immensely.

They have difficulties measuring the time needed for and the complexity of learning tasks, they do not possess paradigms (i.e. verbal paradigms in language learning) that normally help educated learners, **they need to learn how to learn**.

They need to do things first and then they use cognitive processes and not vice versa.

In today's neoliberal society companies "pamper" those who have specific knowledge companies need, while the low educated workers seem to be easily replaced.

***

Identifying the needs is a first step into **motivating adult learners.**

Relaxed learning atmosphere should be carefully built step by step. It is an important part of the motivating process. *A strong accent should be put in the planned handbook on describing methods and techniques of the animation process before, during and after the course as well as public campaigning.*

All adult learners and especially vulnerable ones need to be accepted as they are. This is one of the most complex educators' tasks. These should forget about their personal preferences. <u>*A unit in the planned handbook should be about the different ways of giving positive, but real,feedback to the learners.*</u>

Human Resources department should be the first to increase their understanding of functional illiteracy/lirwecy and the ways to motivate learners to participate in education.

Learners should understand education as a privilege, personal advancement and reward and not as an additional obligation.

The task of the educators is **to approach each student,** before, during and after the course, **as an individual.**

Individual interviews *are not only needed but they are an important part of understanding the functionally illiterate students' life history, interests, aspirations and educational needs. Templates for personal interviews are to be developed.*

Educators should make an effort to understand how should acceptance of each student look like. They should observe and understand their "psychology", their defence mechanisms. <u>*A chapter in the handbook should be devoted to invdividual psychology transactional analysis.*</u>

 It is important that educators and the staff of the adult education institution and especially the headmaster, the president of the organisation or manager pay special attention to the low educated learners. This contributes to the learners general feeling of being accepted. Rituals are important showing recognition in public.

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 Learning opportunities should be in relation with learners' life.

 Pedagogy of fault favours paraphrasing (giving a correct version of what student said) in a conversational way. Errors, faults have to be addressed, but educators should search together with the learners for more accurate responses, rather than

the educator giving the right answer right away. Giving the right answer does not help correcting errors and understanding the nature of an error. <u>Pedagogy of fault is to be dealt with in the handbook.</u>

Changes do not occur without learners' effort., which may lead to occasional loosing confidence.

It is generally understood that **adult educators are only one source of** knowledge, information in the learning group. **They are learning facilitators and not teachers.**

<u>A unit in the handbook should be devoted to the "teachers" and their qualities.</u>

Courses should be designed based on **situational analysis.** *Situations should be identified for each target group.*

Ideally programmes should be designed for each target group. E*xamples contributed by the learners and if possible, their names should appear in the programme.*

According to the survey respondents, **educators should identify their students' past, present and eventual future situations** and their ideal situation when designing or organizing a course for low skilled and low qualified adult learners-

Educators should implement an initial analysis of **the learners' personal, work, social, and educational needs**.

The analysis of the needs is imperative. In education of the low educated this is even more necessary than it is in other cases. The needs analysis may occur at any stage of the andragogic cycle.

Individual needs in an educational programme are regularly addressed when they prove to be part of the identified common needs.

Teaching low educated and low skilled adults, educators think that following issues should be taken into consideration: courses require and encouraging atmosphere, low skilled adult learners' have to be accepted for who they are, and **potential students should be interviewed for programming the courses.**

Reciprocal learning and mutual learning mean that the whole learning group, the educator included come together to learn together and exchange knowledge and information as to accomplish a learning task.

Educators should learn a lot about their students and their lives and should refer to the identified situations from their life. _How to learn about life histories should be a part of the Handboo_k.

Whatever adult educators do is in the function of development even more than it is in the function of recuperating lost competencies. **Developmental character of the educational process gives value and meaning to adult learners' learning**. It is a way for them to be integrated, paid attention to, etc.

The educational programme should be related to what is most valuable and actual in our cultures.

Contents and goals are both a matter of consensus in the learning group. Adult educators should also agree.

New contents should be introduced or eventually left out according to the wishes of the students or new issues arisen.

Adult learners need to structure their time, therefore stable schedules are welcome. In the case of low educated learners structured time is even more important.

Education of low skilled learners is meant primarily to produce changes in the attitude and values of the learners, therefore methods should not be subordinated solely to objectives and values but primary to the learners.

Adult educators are very much concerned with the characteristics of each learning group and their "teaching" differs in each group though attention should be simultaneously paid to the individual characteristics of the learners.

Methods

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The best teaching approach should be mainly student-centred approach where methods stimulating group dynamics and educational games should be introduced and abstract concepts should be explained through examples from low-educated adults' everyday life.

Methods are not always chosen according to the educators' beliefs about teaching and learning.

Spanish educators think that adult students would probably not feel confident when working in groups or pairs. This might be the reason why the majority of the educators (73%) think that stimulating group dynamics and creating a learning community would be very interesting. The majority of the educators (82%) also agree that educational games are beneficial.

The activities that educators think is more appropriate for teaching low skilled and low educated adults are learning by doing, face-to-face sessions,

Educators also think that **different learning approaches and methods should be combined** while educating low skilled adults.

Generally, learners are not aware of the immense stock of latent knowledge they have. This knowledge has to be recalled and structured and brought into the curriculum.

Writing is scary for functional illiterates *and adult educators should not insist on writing at the beginning of the course.*

Learning to learn should be either incorporated in the programme or separated from it. A unit of the planned handbook should be devoted to this topic.

Educators think that **learning instructions should be short, clear, simple, repetitive, illustrated and orally explained**.

Games are beneficial and should be used on condition they support the educational programme.

Discussion *is* a method that can be used when educating low educated adults according to the respondents' answers.

*Eclectic method*s, *skills using and skills* ***producing methods should alternate***.

Examples should be given about the learners' close people whom they can observe. Analysing their own experience is more difficult and can be done after their observing the others. The last step would be generalising. This finding is to be taken into account when preparing exercises for the handbook.

Educators think that examples that reflect their students' lives should be carefully chosen.

Low educated learners prefer learning by doing. Once they have done something they are able to speak about it but not vice versa. Instructions in the handbook should focus on this matter.

Role plays trigger emotions. *Functionally illiterate learners normally have difficulties managing their sudden emotions.*

Students should feel protected and praised which was not the case in their formal shooing. If they can get the sense of their proper value, it is fine. *Adult educators should learn techniques about how to trigger this feeling in their students.*

Educators also think that they should protect their students and give them the opportunity to be proud of themselves

Face-to-face sessions make low educated learners more stable and certain.

Majority of the respondents think that group exercises are not appropriate to teach low skilled and low educated adults and believe that pairs or small group activities should be introduced later on in the course, they should not be used from the beginning.

3.5.6. Recommendations

The handbook the partnership is going to prepare could contain the following major chapters

Definition of literacy and functional literacy and illiteracy

      Characteristics of functional illiterates

      Social and individual, political sources of functional illiteracy

Understanding dyslexia as a trigger of functional illiteracy

      Animating individuals and their communities for enrolling in education

      Triggering motivation for learning before, during and after the course

      Organising the learning process

      Learning how to learn sessions

      Methods of choice how, when and why to use them

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5.   ANNEX: QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear educators of adults,

In the European project Learners' Mot Erasmus+, we are focused *on motivation and methods in adult education* as well as knowledge needed to understand how adults get involved and what makes them stay in adult education. We would appreciate if you could take some time and answer the questions. The questionnary contains statements about how you understand and practice adult education.

You will be asked to express to what extent you agree with single statements. There are no "right "or "wrong" answers. *Your opinion is what matters.*

Mark the statement if you

1 strongly disagree with it

2. disagree with it

3. have no opinion about it

4. agree

5. strongly agree with it

Please, give answers to all questions! Some statements in this questionnaire are fairly similar. Do not worry about this! Simply give, please, your opinion about all statements.

Thank you.

Partnership of the LearnersMot project

Questionnaire on adult education, functional illiteracy, low educated and low skilled adult students' characteristics and stimulating their motivation for learning

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree

IDENTITY

Sex:

Age:

Duration of involvement in adult education (cross out appropriate)

1-2 years

2-5 years

5-10 years

10-15 years

15-20 years

More:

Currently   I work for:

+ an adult education institution

+ a voluntary organisation dealing with education

+a company

+ a formal education institution

+ other:

1.   What is the state of adult education in your country?

1.1.   The share of low educated adults in this country is low.

1.2.   Most of the adult education programmes are devoted to tertiary educated adults and individuals with higher social status.

1.3.   Companies generally invest money in education of all their workers.

1.4.   Educational programmes in this country are mostly for vulnerable target groups

1.5.   Educational programmes mostly meet work station and company needs while they less meet adults' personal and social needs.

1.6.   Educational programmes can be the same for everybody.

1.8.   Programmes have been developed in this country for employers to understand and motivate low educated/ functionally illiterate people for learning and staying in education.

1.9.   When adult educators teach low educated adults, they are   specifically trained for that matter.

2.   What is functional illiteracy and what are characteristics of functional illiterates?

2.1.   Functional illiteracy is about the level of reading, writing, understanding and numeracy that is not sufficient for functioning in today's society.

2.2.   Functional illiteracy can be traced only in some areas of individual life.

2.3.   Adult become functional illiterates a result between what they can learn in their families and what they learn in school.

2.4.   Functional illiteracy can not a result of non-recognized and non-addressed dyslexia.

2.5.   Functional illiteracy is a result of social and cultural inequalities.

2.6.   Functional illiteracy can be produced by bad schooling.

2.7.   Low educated adults who have not used their skills for a long time loose them and become functionally illiterate.

2.8.   Young adults are not functionally illiterate.

2.9.   Low educated adults had bad experience with formal education in the past.

2.10.   Functional illiteracy can be caused by inadequate policies.

2.11.   In today's companies, functional illiterates are eager to get a wider picture of the work processes.

2.12.   Functional illiterates use all sorts of strategies to hide their state.

2.13   Functional illiterates have a tendency to obey their boss.

2.14.   Functional illiterates get nervous if thinking and decision making is expected from them.

2.15.   Functional illiterates are not a target group like other target groups of adults.

2.16.   Companies do not know that functional illiterates are a threat to themselves and others.

2.17.   Functional illiterates do not develop together with their company.

2.18. Functional illiterate adults do not have the knowledge students normally get in elementary school.

2.19. Functional illiterates manage what they need to survive.

2.20. Functional illiterates have difficulties writing notes in everyday life.

3. How to motivate adults to enrol and stay in educational/ training programmes?

3.1. Adult education caters to very diverse and most often non-expressed needs, which makes motivating adults to participate even more challenging.

3.2. Compared to tertiary educated adults, low educated adults have a different learning culture.

3.3. Companies do not like investing money in the education of functional illiterates.

3.4. Courses for low educated adults require that encouraging atmosphere be

created in their environment before the course starts.

3.5. Motivating functional illiterates for learning starts by motivating Human Resources Department, employers and/or social environment.

3. 6 Low educated adult learners feel guilty about being low educated, that's why any educational process for them should start but taking away from them the burden of this guilt.

3.6. Personal interviews with potential students are motivating and fruitful for

programming the course.

3.7.   Functional illiterates have to feel accepted for who they are.

3.8.   Adult educators and staff of the educational providers are proud of their students and show it explicitly.

3.9.   Functional illiterates should be given learning opportunities that closely relate to their life.

3.10.   Correcting mistakes functional illiterates make is mostly about resuming what they say, but in a correct way.

3.11.   During the course, functional illiterates often loose confidence and need supporting.

3.12.   When delivering educational programmes adult educators should act both as learners and as a good, informed learning source

4.   How to programme low educated students' education?

4.1.   Adult educators design programmes for each target group separately.

4.2.   Programmes are based on situational analysis.

4.4.   Educators should perform situational analyses by identifying their students' past, present and eventual future situations, and their ideal situation.

4.5.   Acquiring missing competencies, however, is not seen only as a recuperative intervention, but also as a developmental one.

4.6.   New contents can be introduced during the course.

4.7.   Educators implement an initial analysis of needs (personal, work, social and educational needs).

4.8.   Programmed contents are based on the analysed individual but also common needs of the learning group.

4.9.   Goals are negotiated with the learning group.

5.   Which methods to use in education of low educated students?

5.1.   Functional illiterates should have a possibility to start by what they know and like best.

5.2.   Low educated adult learners are not aware of the knowledge they have from informal learning about phenomena and events.

5.3.   Adult educators guide the learners' thinking in the right direction

5.4.   Functional illiterates are afraid of writing.

5.5.   Sessions devoted to "learning to learn" are required when educating low educated adults.

5.6.   Learning instructions should be short, simple, repetitive, explained orally.

5.7.   When addressing low educated students exclusively learners focused methods are to be used.

5.8.   Most exercises should be whole group exercises.

5.9.   Working in pairs and threes and sub groups is to be used later on in the course.

5.10.   Methods stimulating group dynamics and creating learning community are welcome.

5.11.   Educational games are beneficial.

5.12.   Discussion is not a method of choice when working with low educated adults.

5.13.   When abstract concepts are to be introduced low educated adult, students should be first thinking about their friends, then themselves and finally in general.

5.14.   Low educated students prefer learning by doing.

5.15.   Role plays can be emotionally dangerous.

5.16.   Different learning approaches and methods combined are to be used in education of low educated adults.

5.17.   Educators should protect their students and give them opportunities to be proud of themselves.

5.18.   Educators should carefully choose their illustrations and examples as to reflect their students' life.

5.19.   Low educated students prefer face to face sessions.