



ET 2020 Working Group on Adult Learning 2016-2018

Report of first meeting, 22 – 23 February 2016

Note: the meeting of the Working Group (WG) was preceded by a plenary information meeting for members of all six ET 2020 WGs. The opening by Commissioner Navracsics and the presentation by DG Education and Culture (EAC) Director Chiara Gariazzo set the wider policy context of the Groups. An interactive panel with representatives from Member States and the Commission (DG Education and Culture and DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (EMPL)) helped answer experts' questions about the status of the Groups, concrete examples of their contribution to EU policy-making, their support to Member States and working methods.

1. PARTICIPANTS

42 people took part in the meeting, representing 25 EU Member States, two EFTA countries, two candidate countries, three international organisations, six social partners, the European Commission and the external consultant. The full list of participants is attached as Annex 1.

2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the meeting were:

- Getting to know one another;
- Introducing the peer learning process and the communication tools available;
- Introducing the topic adult learning in the workplace;
- Presenting the landscape of adult workplace learning in Europe;
- Unpacking and understanding the Working Group's Mandate; and
- Defining the Working Group's programme of work.

3. WELCOME

Dana Bachmann, Head of Unit E3 (VET, Apprenticeships and Adult Learning) in DG EMPL, welcomed members of the WG. She explained the policy context for the work of the WG and referred to the results of previous working groups, upon which (if relevant) the WG could build. She also noted the need to take into account the work of the WG Vocational Education and Training 2016 – 2018. She introduced the main issues mentioned in the mandate of the WG and the main reasons for choosing adult learning in the workplace as the focus for this work.

4. WHAT IS LEARNING IN OR FOR THE WORKPLACE?

Paul Holdsworth briefly introduced the topic of learning, its complexity and some of the different theories of learning. The members, in small groups, discussed their own learning

experiences related with the workplace. They identified the following factors that had made that learning possible:

- responsible employer;
- good leadership;
- management responsibility to create a learning organisation;
- conducive environment;
- organisational resources;
- time for learning;
- financing;
- intergenerational exchange;
- team spirit;
- pressure to solve problems;
- having a job;
- educational and learning background;
- willingness to learn, internal motivation;
- key competences, learning to learn; and
- professional development.

Other aspects of workplace learning that the Group wished to bear in mind were:

- learning = transformation;
- emotional aspect of learning;
- learning means risk taking;
- central role of enterprise in workplace learning;
- the market.

The session was rounded off by Simon Broek who underlined that learning is a broad concept having different intensities, ranging from 'adding bits of new knowledge' to one's body of knowledge, to overthrowing everything that one once understood as being true. He explained that learning can have different purposes, for instance: being able to answer a question, to carry out a task, or using one's knowledge and understanding to develop new knowledge and start innovations. To stimulate further reflection by the WG, Simon presented a number of frameworks to highlight the many ways to present the complexity of adult learning in the workplace.

5. PEER LEARNING

Paul Holdsworth presented the concept of peer learning, employed in the ET 2020 programme as one of the ways to help Member States to meet common policy challenges. He explained that peer learning involved national experts learning together and creating new knowledge about policy, based on evidence and experience, through a cumulative, iterative and collegial approach.

Paul presented the main characteristics of the peer learning method used by previous WGs, and identified the main roles of WG members before, during and after WG meetings or learning events. A key role for WG members would be to build up a network of contacts within their country (in other ministries, agencies and relevant organisations) both in order to gather information to feed into peer learning and to disseminate the results of peer learning within the country.

Members who had served on previous WGs added that peer learning activities such as country workshops or seminars allowed them to better understand national contexts and identify the key transferrable factors for policy success.

6. WORKING TOOLS FOR THE GROUP

Anna Nikowska presented Yammer to the WG; it is a private social network that will be used as the main communication tool between WG members, and between members and the European Commission (EC). Members of the WG would receive by 29 February an invitation to join the

Yammer 2016-18 adult learning group. All materials from meetings will be uploaded on Yammer.

Some members asked for access to all working groups' Yammer pages. Anna agreed to check if this was possible.

WG members were invited to suggest a protocol for file names on Yammer.

A list of WG members with e-mail addresses will be published on Yammer.

Anna explained that e-mail will not be used, except for reimbursement and registration matters, for which members should use this e-mail address: EMPL-ET2020-WG-AL-MEETINGS@ec.europa.eu.

Anna also referred to the possibility of organising webinars and teleconferences to support the work of the WG.

7. EXPECTATIONS

The group discussed what their Member States' or organisations' expected the WG to achieve. They intended to examine evidence and share policy practice – good and bad - about what policies exist in the field of adult workplace learning, and what factors make for successful policies in this field.

The members intend to produce outputs that support Member States' policy actions and to ensure that good use is made of them at national, regional and local levels.

It was agreed that the WG should undertake an ongoing evaluation of its work against its mandate and work programme.

8. KEY ASPECTS OF POLICY ON ADULT WORKPLACE LEARNING

The mandate of the WG, which had been agreed by the meeting of Directors-General for VET and Adult Learning, had been previously circulated to the WG.

Some members sought clarification about the terms used in the mandate, notably “workplace learning for adults”, and suggested using the term “work-based learning” (WBL) for various reasons (e.g. broader concept that might better capture the issues covered in the mandate; common practice / current academic and political discourse; being in line with policy documents such as the Riga conclusions which refer to WBL). The Commission noted that the term ‘work-based learning’ had not been used in the mandate; in many contexts this term is interpreted narrowly to apply to those elements of initial training courses that take part in enterprise. The mandate of the WG, in contrast, takes as its starting point any learning – by adults – that takes place in or in relation to a workplace. It was agreed that a pragmatic approach would be for the WG to start by looking at examples of the many kinds of learning that do take place in the workplace or in relation to the workplace. Discussions on terminology might be continued on Yammer or in a dedicated webinar, if needed.

During a brainstorming session on *possible aspects of policy to be the subject of peer learning in the WG*, the WG identified a wide range of potential policy issues to be considered. After presenting all ideas to the whole group, the members ‘voted’ for the issues that in their opinion were the most important for their country/organisation. The result was the following first draft list; it is to be further developed as work progresses.

(In brackets: number of ‘votes’)

- (a) Adult learning of **basic skills** in the workplace (20), including:
- connecting basic skills with VET (2),
 - improving basic skills re workplace (1),

- the low skills trap (1),
 - how to identify and target people with low basic skills in the workplace (1)
- (b) **Recognition and validation** of prior learning (19), including:
- linking adult learning to national qualification frameworks (1)
- (c) **Inclusion** and adult learning in the workplace (18), including:
- migration (7),
 - unemployed people (1),
 - access and flexibility (2)
- (d) **Quality** of adult learning in the workplace (10)
- (e) **Funding** of adult learning in the workplace (9) including:
- shared funding arrangements (1)
 - taxation policy (1)
- (f) **Involving SMEs** in adult workplace learning (7)
- (g) **Legal and other frameworks** (7) including:
- legislation (1),
 - collective agreements (1)
 - cooperation between ministries / with social partners (2)
- (h) **Data** for policy making on adult learning in the workplace (3)
- (i) **Upskilling** more generally, including **medium-skilled people** (3)
- (j) The **learning-conducive workplace** (1)
- (k) Preparing for **the workplace of the future** (3)
- (l) **Awareness** raising about learning in the workplace (1)
- (m) Workplace at centre of policy on **learning regions**, cities (1).

The Commission encouraged the members to suggest other aspects of policy via Yammer and discuss them with colleagues in their countries.

9. POSSIBLE FUTURE LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Based on the group's initial discussions, the representatives of the following countries offered to consider hosting a learning activity on the policy topics mentioned:

- Denmark: the workplace and the upskilling of medium-skilled adults
- Germany: the workplace, basic skills and inclusion
- Greece: the workplace, inclusion and refugees / migrants
- Hungary: funding adult learning in the workplace, or involvement of SMEs in adult workplace learning
- Ireland and UK: gathering policy data on adult workplace learning
- Netherlands: the workplace and basic skills for employed and unemployed adults
- Poland: the workplace as a place of learning
- Slovakia: the workplace, adult learning and ICT.

10. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

The group agreed that the next meeting should:

- (a) receive brief presentations, by relevant WG members, from the perspective of adult workplace learning, of the findings of the previous working groups that dealt with: financing, quality, basic skills, digital environments and policy effectiveness;
- (b) brief presentations by a handful of different countries, outlining their policy approach to adult workplace learning (AT, DK, CH, HU, PL, SI offered to do this);
- (c) discuss and adopt the WG's work programme and outputs.

11. NEXT STEPS

The group agreed that before the next meeting it would be useful to collect information from each country specifically about policy on adult workplace learning; as a first step, the Commission would assess the country information currently available, identify gaps, and circulate a brief template to enable WG members to provide the information on their country.

As a preparation for the next WG meeting webinars on subjects suggested by the members or the consultant will take place. The members will be informed about them through Yammer.

The Commission informed the WG that the next WG meeting is tentatively planned for 15 and 16 June 2016 in Brussels.

In response to suggestions from WG members, the Commission agreed to consider how to keep records of meetings as succinct as possible and to send them to the WG for comments as soon as possible after each meeting.

The Commission invited the WG to give feedback (through Yammer) on the process of each WG meeting.

ATTENDANCE

	Member/ Alternate	Title	Name	First Name	Administrative Function, Employer
EU Member States					
AT	Member	Mag. Dr.	Aschemann	Birgit	Research associate and educational editor at CONEDU, Association for Research and Media in Education
BE NL	Member	Ms	Vermandere	Liesbet	Flemish department for education and training
BE FR	Member	Mrs.	Schauwers	Myriam	Chargée de mission, Ministère de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, Direction des Relations internationales
	Member 2	Dr.	Lurz	Norbert	Ministerium für Kultus, Jugend und Sport des Landes Baden-Württemberg
DK	Member	Mr.	Jørgensen	Jan Reitz	Senior Adviser, Ministry for Children, Education and Gender Equality
EE	Member	Mrs	Haidak	Terje	Head of Adult Education Department, Ministry of Education and Research
EL	Member	Ms	Zacharaki	Sofia	Office of the Secretary General, Special Advisor
ES	Member	Mr	Valdecantos Campos	Jesús	Head of Service for Lifelong Learning. Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport.
FI	Member	Mr	Heinonen	Ville	Special Government Advisor, Ministry of Education and Culture
FR	Member	Mme	Ariston	Claire	Adjoint au chef du bureau de la formation professionnelle continue - Ministère de l'éducation nationale de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche – Direction générale de l'enseignement scolaire
HR	Member	Mr	Petranović	Matej	Senior Expert Adviser, Ministry of Science, Education and Sports
HU	Member	Ms	VUJKOV	Krisztina	Senior Advisor, Ministry for National Economy
IE	Member	Mr	Seery	Ken	Manager - SOLAS, Momentum Unit
IT	Member	Ms	Rozera	Marina	Head of Research - Italian Adult Learning Coordinator, ISFOL
LT	Member	Mr	Pūtys	Tomas	Head of Non-Formal Education Division, Department of Lifelong Learning, Ministry of Education and Science
LU	Member	Ms	Chantal	Fandel	Pédagogue –chef de service adjointe, Service de la formation des adultes - Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse
LV	Member	Ms	Kārklīņa	Silvija	Project Manager, Ministry of Education and Science
MT	Member	Mr	Cardona	Mario	Director, Directorate for Lifelong Learning and Early School Leavers, Ministry for Education and Employment
	Alternate	MSc	De Jong	Jessica	Policy Advisor, Ministry of Education, Culture and Science
PL	Member	Mr	Drzażdżewski	Stanislaw	General counsellor, Strategy and International Cooperation Department, Ministry of National Education
PT	Member	Dr. ^a	Alves	Maria João	Head of Unit, National Agency for Qualification and VET
RO	Member	Mrs.	DRAGAN	Gabriela	General Inspector for Pre-university education, Ministry of National

					Education and Scientific Research
SE	Member	Mr	Rehnstam	Jan	Senior Administrative Officer, Ministry of Education and Research, Division for Upper Secondary and Adult Education and Training
SI	Member	Ms	Perme	Ema	Secretary, Ministry of Education, Science and Sport
SK	Member	Mgr.	Deneš	Michal	Lifelong Learning Department, Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic
UK	Member	Ms	Black	Joyce	Assistant Director Research & Development, Learning and Work Institute
EU Candidate Countries					
AL	Member	Mr	Janaqi	Gerti	General Director of Institute of Educational Development, Ministry of Education and Sports, Albania
MK*	Member	Ms.	Stoimenova	Nada	Advisor in the NQF Unit, Ministry of Education and Science
EFTA Countries					
CH	Member	Ms.	Kuratli	Theres	SERI, project manager
AL	Alternate	Education counsellor	Jonsdottir	Adalheidur	Icelandic Mission to the EU
International Organisations					
ETF	Member	Ms	Watters	Elizabeth	Senior Specialist in VET Policies and Systems
CEDEFOP	Member	Ms	Dehmel	Alexandra	Expert
Eurydice	Member	Ms	Bonnafous	Laurence	EACEA
Social partners & European stakeholder/civil society organisations					
ETUC	Member	Ms	Porniece	Ruta	Free Trade union Confederation of Latvia
EAEA	Member	Ms	Ebner	Regina	European Association for the Education of Adults
ETUCE	Member	Ms	Benedetti	Rossella	ETUCE Brussels
Business Europe	Member	Ms	Saidi	Siham	MEDEF-French Business Confederation
EFEE	Member	Ms	Maloney	Fiona	
EVBB	Member	Ms	Segard	Margarida	Vice President EVBB, Deputy Director at ISQ Lisbon
UEAPME	Member	Ms	Beckers	Laetitia	Project Manager - Educational Adviser, Centre IFAPME