



European
Commission



ESF EVALUATIONS 2014-2018

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Investing in education and training for all is one of the European Union's **key priorities**. The ESF supports investments in education, vocational training, skills improvement and lifelong learning. It helps to reduce and prevent early school leaving and to improve both the quality and access to tertiary education. Moreover, the ESF enhances equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups. By the end of 2018, approximately **9.1 million** people had benefited from ESF support for education and training. Women made up 51% of all participations, with 69% being under 25. This support produced significant achievements: over **800,000 participants** engaged in education and training, with **3.15 million** participants achieving a qualification upon leaving. Total planned expenditure on this thematic objective, in the current programming period, is approximately EUR 39.2 billion (including EU and national co-financing). This corresponds to nearly one third of total ESF (32%). Operations are financed by 147 Operational Programmes (29 national OPs and 118 regional OPs), covering all Member States except the Netherlands.

The evaluation of European Social Fund support to education and training shows that:

- 1** **Education and training projects** make a significant difference to the lives of individuals across the EU – including young people;
- 2** Projects focusing on the **prevention of early school leaving** and supporting lifelong learning have shown particular success;
- 3** There is a diversity of **successful projects** – ranging from support for vulnerable learners and those teaching them to digital innovations in the classrooms and local action plans to address early school leaving;
- 4** **Intensive, tailored support** to individuals over a long-term period – particularly for early school leaving and lifelong learning – remains a key factor for a project's success;
- 5** In some cases, actions focus on **supporting skills of increasing importance** – such as digitalisation of learning. This emphasis should be strengthened in future ESF+ programs.

PROJECT EXAMPLE

Malta: Supporting pupils' education

Thanks to the European Social Fund, 11,500 smart tablets have been provided to pupils in Malta aged between 4 and 6, allowing them to effectively continue their education during the COVID-19 pandemic.

With a EUR 9.6 million budget, the “One Tablet Per Child” project is also training 2,000 educators across the country to ensure continuity in education activities during the pandemic.

The tablets became a critical tool for students and teachers to continue learning and teaching during the COVID-19 schools closure.

Learn more



More info



[Link to the Staff Working Document:](#)



[Link to study and country factsheets:](#)

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