**Programmes**

**EN**

**YOUNG-3-2015 - Lifelong learning for young adults: better policies for growth and inclusion in Europe**

**Specific challenge:** It is obvious that investing appropriately in lifelong learning will contribute to overcoming the economic and social crisis and meeting the Europe 2020 targets on employment, poverty reduction, education, sustainability, innovation. The need and markets for adult education (after initial education and training) are thus likely to rise in the coming years. However, despite sustained attention over the years, adult education in Europe remains inadequate. Firstly, it is now well documented that those who are more in need of adult education, such as young, unemployed, low skilled, disabled and vulnerable workers, actually benefit less from adult education opportunities than other more advantaged groups. Secondly, the costs of adult education are footed largely by enterprises and individuals/families while the public resources invested are largely less than the private ones: this fragmentation actually shows the persistent weakness and ineffectiveness of adult education policies.

In this context, it is important to review thoroughly the situation of adult education in Europe and look for ways to take the most out of the numerous initiatives taken by a large number of often isolated actors. Such policy and programme learning should as a priority address young people, in particular those with low levels of basic and functional literacy, those not in education or training or those in situations of near social exclusion, who could be helped much more effectively if adequate adult education policies were designed.

**Scope:** The research will address adult education in general (for all ages), with a specific focus on young adults and vulnerable groups (from an indicative age of 18 and after leaving initial education and training) after entry into working life. It will consider the complementarity between public policies and dynamics of private markets in the EU market and will analyse actors, dynamics, trends, mismatches and overlaps. A historical perspective on lifelong learning (e.g. in the 19th century urban areas) will add to a comprehensive analysis.

The research will identify successful programmes which are demonstrating to improve learning outcomes, particularly those reaching out to young adults at risk of social exclusion and other vulnerable groups, and address their transferability to other countries/regions. Diversity issues (gender, culture, ethnicity, language etc.) should be considered as well.

The research will also address the learning potential and innovation ability in workplaces (organisational models that favour innovation ability and innovative oriented training) and the effectiveness of learning actions.

The action should help to set-up a cooperation mechanism between the various agencies doing research and collecting data at international and European level for developing synergies and avoiding overlaps. It will reflect on existing taxonomies and indicators and on their appropriateness to sustain European strategies. It will investigate the feasibility and possibly develop an Intelligent Decision Support System (policy making modelling) for simplifying the access to information and support policy making in the different phases of the policy cycle. It will develop a systematic impact analysis of adult and continuing education policies linking it to forecasts for demand of skills in the future.

The Commission considers that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU of between EUR 1.5 and 2.5 million would allow this specific challenge to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting other amounts.
**Expected impact:** The research will harvest the potential of existing and generate new scientific knowledge in order to create synergies and cooperation amongst the main international and European actors collecting data and doing research in the field in order to compare and analyse adult education across Europe.

An 'Intelligent Decision Information System' will facilitate the access to scientific evidence for policy making so to support them in correcting the distortion of the adult education and continuing training market, show how to reduce barriers that hamper access to opportunities for various levels of population and locations, identify appropriate financial measures for supporting individuals and companies, ensuring an effective and fair distribution of resources, reduce mismanagement and corruption. The analysis of the past and current policies impact will be linked to forecasts for demand of skills in the future.

The research will advance knowledge on specific aspects linked to adult education such as specific policies and programmes for young people that have demonstrated an improvement of their labour insertion and reduced their risk of social exclusion, organisational models encouraging innovation in the companies, application of various psychological and behavioural sciences outcomes to adult education, transmission of skills and knowledge between workers, informal learning and the efficiency of private markets. In essence knowledge gained will be useful to reduce the deprived situation of most vulnerable groups that are normally less involved in adult education.

**Type of action:** Research and innovation actions

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