













Mapping frame for improvements of low skilled adults learning.

### **FOCUS GROUP REPORT**



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### Introduction

This Focus Group is conducted as part of the Erasmus+ Programme "**LAB-ADA**". This Guide for the Focus Group is addressed to LSA experts and practitioners and aims to collect information about related competence frameworks, best practices, opportunities, initiatives and challenges in LSA education.

Focus groups will be further conducted to gather qualitative data related to: validating the survey findings (triggers, supports, skill set), gaining deeper insights into the problem; brainstorming suggestions for LSA interest in relevant learning opportunities and better possibilities to be involved in non-formal learning.

The guide includes indicative semi-structured questions at the following **five parts**:

- A. Experts Profile
- B. Motivation and engagement on personal development of a LSA
- C. Comments about LAB-ADA COMPETENCE FRAMEWORK
- D. Educational Resources
- E. Initiatives, Practices, Researches, Challenges

Each of the five partners interviewed five experts, **25 experts** in total, the duration of the each Focus Group was about 1.5 - 2 hours and it was conducted between September to November 2022.

### **Experts Profiles**

Each country interviewed experts in adult education, with different profiles and backgrounds.

Most of the experts agree that one of the main tasks of an educator is to disseminate his or her philosophy of education and teaching. Educators base their philosophy on theories learned in their formal education, but most agree that they start with this type of teaching philosophy and adjust it over time. These adjustments to one's teaching philosophy are largely based on personal experience and the best practices that may emerge in their specific teaching area. Each educator must consider all aspects when choosing and using a teaching strategy based on self-directed learning. Not all adult learners are autonomous, so an instructional philosophy should be based on different educational philosophies so that learners can be considered regardless of their level of self-direction. In addition, it is important to communicate the teaching philosophy to learners to avoid misunderstandings and uncomfortable situations.

Particularly, the experts who took part in the focus group are:

- professors/directors of CPIAs (Provincial Centres for Adult Education)
- collaborators of associations engaged in adult education activities
- professors of Mathematics, Informatics, Italian Language, Music
- authors of EU projects
- researchers and educators



The 25 experts are working in private industry or in public organizations, in evaluation or in training.

Some of the experts have not received proper and specific training to teach adults, so their ideas and methodologies have risen from the on-field job and the experience acquired during their experience and research. On one hand, the educators are already used to "build" and "create" a non-conventional educational path based on the concrete necessity of the situation; on the other hand, it leads to a methodological and didactical fragmentation (in an educational system that does not encourage the interdisciplinary and the proactive collaboration among the educators, at least in the public institutions).

An interesting aspect of the adult educators' profile is that they all believe that adult education and lifelong learning is an important aspect of every person's life. Upgrading your know-how and skills doesn't only help you in acquiring new knowledge and information, but also in raising your quality of life, socially and culturally. The continuous educational development of any person, especially today in the 21st century, is something they consider to be a vital activity for any individual, both old and young.

# Motivation and engagement in the personal development of an LSA

Most educators agree that one of the main issues posed as a problem for the LSA is the low level of their motivation to get engaged in specific programs which will not only bring them new personal qualities through experience, but also new professional qualities. The motivation sometimes rises from external factors, such as some recognition or a possibility for getting a job abroad, more points in their professional CV etc. Maybe some of LSA's issues is that they've lost the habit of constant education during their years of professional engagement. Some even mention that there should be a unified strategy by the public bodies, that can outline clear goals and criteria for adult education.

For LSA's to be more motivated there are few possibilities that can be marked. Some believe that micro-factors, such as the education should be more personal and the student should be able to see the benefit from taking part in it, but also macro-factors like the economy, the labor market, and other things. Our social environment isn't inductive, it doesn't give many opportunities to use those skills, so motivation is low, and outcomes are limited. We should have in mind that in countries that are not well developed, the labor market also plays an important role as an incentive, and the economy in general.

Can you suggest situations that bring to the surface basic ideas, and methodologies? Can you give us some ideas?

- All materials for LSA should be prepared in an easy-to-understand and user-friendly manner.
- Curiosity to realize activities useful for the daily life
- Emotional involvement



What do you perceive as the main issues affecting the effective development of the competences of a SLA?

- Lack of SLA's motivation
- SLA's negative attitude towards the subjects
- The lack of forward planning
- A lack of funding for resources and equipment
- A lack of well-equipped spaces, lack of science lab assistants make it more difficult

What are the LSAs' greatest barriers to participate in educational programs for adults?

Elements that negatively affect the actual participation and development of a LSA are:

- Personal issues (family, work, lack of motivation, health)
- Organizational issues (lack of time, class schedule, composition of the classes, goals of the education)
- Low educational level / Lack of communication skills / Low self-confidence or interest / Lack of ability to learn
- Lack of funding for resources and equipment / Insufficient technical infrastructure (unstable internet connection, old equipment, etc.) / Lack of well-equipped spaces, lack of science lab assistants
- Culture, different lifestyle for older people
- The use of digital tools is "forced", in a static/behavioral way.
- Overuse/persistence of modern tools and practices, instead of training in simple skills that can be used in everyday life (health/communication etc.)
- Lack of forward planning / well-conceived programs with clear goals with good teams of educators
- Fear to fail, fear to be not up, feeling incapable, fear to damage utilities.
- It is not supported by employers.

# What strategies have you implemented/ are you going to implement that serve to overcome issues/barriers?

Considering the "persona issues", it is fundamental to develop different strategies of recognition, engagement, and motivation of the adult students. The building of a network of associations connected to the adults might be useful to get this goal. Moreover, even the "goals" of the lessons are considered a problem. They need to understand and be convinced that what they are doing is concretely useful for achieving their work and personal goals. The programs that the teachers must follow are too rigid and based on a classic, formal, and face-to-face methodology. Adult students need a more practical, useful, and problem-solving approach to participate actively in the courses. An example of teaching method is the inductive methodology, from the particular case to the general rule (a well-constructed mind is better than a mind full of concepts).

To increase the participation of adults to this kind of education, indicative difficulties and challenges are:







- Scheduling courses or classes properly and constantly, especially considering the working and family duties of adults
- Availability of buildings in the late hours
- Proper assessment of students' competences before the start of the educational period
- Creation of a personalized course or path to achieve each student's specific goals and forces
- Interactions in groups that face the same problems and has the same goals
- Creation of heterogeneous classes that follow a standardized syllabus.
- Build homogeneous classes in terms of level and objectives
- Working in groups to increase the positive elements of the educational path
- Sustain effort and the creation of new perspectives for each student.
- Soft skills training that may enable students to continue improving their competences, even after the end of the specific course.

To achieve all of this, it is necessary to act on two different levels:

- Pedagogical level: the educational institutions/organizations must increase their level of flexibility, in terms of scheduling possibilities, internal organization, offering educational activities that are very different compared to the younger ones, based on attractive and interactive methodologies and content.
- Professional level: the educational program they follow should be as personalized as possible and constructed in such a way to maximise their working and professional goals and possibilities, without the feeling of "waste" time.

Moreover, the training should also allow the trainer to increase his level of adaptability to the different adult students' situations and requests, improve his ability to be able to work together and in coordination with other trainers, and creating so something not standardized but adequate to the goals and needs of the adult learners.

The last element to consider is the creation of a network with realities/associations connected to the world of the adults. This may foster the connection and the engagement of adults, thus creating the necessary premises for a successful educational path. Moreover, these realities may give useful input to improve the educational offer to the monitoring of the performance of the educational process.

Other proposed strategies for overcome issues/barriers are the following:

- Encouraging information and invitations
- Personal calls or contact via social media
- Offering guaranteed employment once finished
- Offering paid travel expenses and meals during the trainings, as well as consistent supervising support during the trainings
- Unified strategy by the relevant government bodies (like the Center for adult education in Macedonia, that outline clear goals and criteria)
- Technological and communicative barriers
- To be always close to the learners and their needs



- Something useful in the daily life in order to make it easier
- To have a tutor or a coach close to them

Do trainers of SLAs make use of activities and techniques to ensure that all learners are engaged in an educational program?

- It depends a lot on the activity and the group or learners, but at least the Experts are trying
- Teachers try to get involved in the learning procedure
- Educators offer more time to learners with specific difficulties

#### What support does an SLA have/need to develop their competences?

- Technological and communicative skills
- Competent people who can support those in need in a simple and constant manner.
- Patience and availability
- To know they can ask to an expert without feeling themselves unuseful
- To have constant supervising support during the trainings and after once the candidates have started working. It helps facilitate their newly acquired competences
- To be available to all persons over 18 years of age. Informal adult education may be provided by anyone through an education provider recognised under each country's law.
- In Lithuania, non-formal adult education is usually understood as learning, training, and study tailored to the interests of the individual and society, for the completion of which no state-recognised document is issued

#### What factors can contribute to motivate LSAs participation in education programs?

A strong negative stigma still involves the idea of the adult education, especially if not highly qualified. Indeed, nowadays the "adult education" world is viewed as connected to the one of the immigrants (to learn the Italian language) or as an "easy" way to get some certification by those who have left prematurely the educational path (such as the NEETs).

Other than that, many other elements affect positively the actual participation and development of an LSA are:

- Advancement / professional development is an important motivation for participation in educational / training programs
- A recognized certificate, a new career opportunity (that will offer a promotion or higher pay)
- Direct / visible benefit (e.g. the tablet makes reading easier)
- Communication Facilitation (social media)
- Curiosity to realise activities useful for the daily life
- Emotional involvement & more personal education
- Tracking what the labor market needs in regards to professions and competencies (programs which answer those needs in a clear way)



- Free of charge educational programs
- To be supported by the employers (a more positive attitude of employers

### Material, Tools, Resources and Practices

In the training of an LSA it is fundamental to be very practical and concrete, and less theoretical, and the use of every day and specific materials might be very useful. The material has to have some kind of link with the external/work environment and the professor should be able to guide the students in a process of understanding how the practical exercises carried out might be useful outside of the class. The material that can be used can be very different:

- 1. Audio/image/video materials
- 2. Storytelling, mind mapping, language application
- 3. Personalised learning resources
- 4. Workshops
- 5. Objects of everyday use
- 6. Online/offline collaborative tools

Every adult educator uses a different style in their programme and that involves usage of different materials, but the general materials are used almost all. The non-formal learning offers development of different skills for the LSA and while some pinpoint their technical skills other pinpoint the intellectual. However, they both involve practical as well as theoretical assignments and knowledge. It was mentioned that "collaboration is a key concept to all these elements".

When it comes to the approaches, techniques, materials, etc. used to promote learner's critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills, adult educators differentiate more in their programmes. As mentioned before, some use gamification such as self-evaluation tools (quizes) which upgrades their critical thinking. Some other more complex activities also take part in their programme such as the case studies, that need more creativity and hands on approach, as well as critical and analytical thinking. They need more time and effort to be developed but on the other hand they offer a direct, practical approach.

The online tools cannot be used on all the occasions. Indeed, the adult learners, who are the target group of this specific training, are not digital natives, thus a proper training should be provided for students, in order to be as much productive as possible and give them a conscious use of the didactical instrument.

The way the teaching is provided must not be a traditional face-to-face approach but should be based on a more participatory and problem solving oriented one. Students should be guided into the creation of their own knowledge just providing them with the tools useful to do that. An example would be the use an object, an event, a resource that all the students face in their daily life as staring point, and from there build a path for students to increase their skills. Another useful teaching tool could be the creation of interactive stories (something ancestral in every individual's mind) that involve and encourage the students in the teaching path by keeping their attention.



An interaction with the European platforms (such as EPALE) might be crucial to increase the dissemination of courses, but also to get important feedback from professionals from all over Europe.

Which attractive and important resources and materials can you suggest for training SLAs?

- Clear and easy information
- Human resources and handbooks very easy
- Laptops / notebooks, easy software and wide screens
- Humane resouces and labs
- Opportunity for online participation.
- Various inclusive activities, such as quizzes, brainstorming, problem solving and other activities.
- Discussions (Useful when you want to think about something in depth and for issues that affect attitudes and awareness, and debates are very useful to find out the understanding of alternative points of view)

*Can you give us example(s) of learning opportunities and better possibilities to be involved in non-formal learning?* 

- Learning by imitating, observation
- Imitating or trying to imitate friends who are practicing something that adults like and that can catch their attention
- Learning the use of internet to buy at the lowest price, and software as a help for the daily activities as for the family budget, and so on.
- Relaxed and funny environment, focus groups involving users producing tools that can be shared
- It can be adapted to everyone's level of development or learning
- It is always relevant and can be adapted to the needs of each person
- It is participatory in the sense that those involved are actively learning by working as a team
- It is a learning style that promotes inclusion and diversity

# Can you share with us any approaches, techniques, materials, etc. used to promote learner's critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills?

- Easy conversation on real problems close to the interests of them, movies, readings, guided conversations, manipulation of real materials, use of different materials for the realisation of crafts
- Sharing with friends, colleagues and consequently the reflection
- Conversations in groups
- Coding, problem solving, relaxed environment allowing sharing and debating, cooperative learning, working with peers groups
- LSAs may have little or no knowledge of English

Additional Initiatives, Practices, Researches and Challenges are the following:



Important national and governmental strategies initiatives/existing research studies/policy recommendations/EU projects promoting LSA:

- The initiatives of the Chamber of Commerce of Macedonia.
- The programs in Macedonia, at Humanost are based on the principle of giving individuals with a low educational level opportunity, the notion of adaptability in programs for different target groups, and basing the credits and skills system on real needs of the labor market. All these programs are standardized and certified, recognized both nationally and internationally.

Projects supporting the national policy and/or national initiative, promoting inclusive education and/or focus on the empowerment of LSAs with opportunities

- There are some projects run by some of the municipalities, as well as the Employment Agency of North Macedonia.
- Humanost from Macedonia, InterAktion from Austria, SerGED from Turkey, USB from Greece.

Learners engagement in educational programs:

• A participative approach and opportunities for the participant to be at the center of attention and encouraged to think and express themselves freely.

Training programs, projects and/or other national initiatives focusing on building the capacity of LSAs:

• The most successful types of trainings for adults have been the programs for starting your own social entreprise model, as well as the programs for reskiling and upskilling within a specific workplace.

Important data from academic studies, national statistics, or other statistical sources:

• The EPALE platform I mentioned is the primary and only good source on this topic that we use.

### LAB-ADA Competence Framework

The new integrated <u>DigComp 2.2 Framework</u> "focuses on examples of the knowledge, skills and attitudes applicable to each digital competence". LAB-ADA Project adopted the DigComp Framework, for which it asked the opinion of the experts.

The following table presents the 5 Pillars of the Framework, related with their skillsets, according to the average level of agreement of the 25 experts (5 per each partner):









Pillar 1: Information and Data Literacy	CSCI	PROMETEO	ECOKTIMA	ECO LOGIC	LIBA
1.1 Browsing, searching and filtering	5	4	5	4	4
1.2 Evaluating info and content	5	4	5	4	5
1.3 Managing info and content	5	3	3	5	5
1.4 Data analysis and information engagement			3		
Pillar 2: Communication and Collaboration					
2.1 Interacting	5	4	5	4	4
2.2 Sharing	5	4	5	4	4
2.3 Engaging in Citizenship	3	3	3	3	5
2.4 Collaborating	3	4	5	5	4
2.5 Netiquette	3	4	4	4	5
2.6 Managing Digital Identity	2	3	1	3	3
Pillar 3: Digital Content Creation					
3.1 Developing content	5	3	5	5	4
3.2 Integrating and re-elaborating	3	3	4	5	5
3.3 Copyright and licenses	3	2	4	4	5
3.4 Programming	1	1	1	1	1
Pillar 4: Safety and Ethics					
4.1 Protecting devices	5	2	2	4	5
4.2 Protecting personal data and Privacy	5	3	4	5	5
4.3 Protecting health and Well-being	2	4	3	4	5
4.4 Protecting the Environment	2	4	4	4	5
Pillar 5: Problem-Solving					
5.1 Solving technical problems	2	2	2	4	5
5.2 Identifying Needs and Responses	2	2	2	5	5
5.3 Creatively using digital technologies	2	3	3	4	4
5.4 Identifying digital competence gaps	2	2	1	2	3

Rubric: Experts' average level of agreement from lowest 1 to highest 5

### Annex

CSCI

#### **Experts Profiles**

All the experts who took part in the focus group are professors/directors of CPIAs (Provincial Centres for Adult Education), and collaborators of associations engaged in adult education activities. They are professors of Math, the Italian language, Music, educators, and writers of EU projects. All of them have very different professional backgrounds: in private industry, in volunteer work, in evaluation and training. However, all of them share a common element: they have not received proper and specific training to teach adults. It means that the ideas and methodologies they use to teach adults have risen from the on-field job and the experience acquired during their many years of work (and the research they have done independently). So, there are some positive and negative consequences. On one hand, the educators are already used to "building" and "creating" a non-conventional educational path based on the concrete necessity of the situation; on the other hand, it leads to a methodological and didactical fragmentation (in an educational system that does not



encourage the interdisciplinary and the proactive collaboration among the educators, at least in the public institutions).

#### Motivation and engagement on the personal development of an LSA

<u>A strong negative stigma still involves the idea of adult education</u>, especially if not highly qualified. Indeed, nowadays the "adult education" world is viewed as connected to the one of the immigrants (to learn the Italian language) or as an "easy" way to get some certification by those who have left prematurely the educational path (such as the NEETs).

Other than that, many other elements affect the actual participation and development of an LSA:

- Personal issues (time, family, work, lack of motivation)
- Organizational issues (class schedule, composition of the classes, goals of the education)

Considering the "**personal issues**", it is fundamental to develop a strategy of <u>recognition</u>, <u>engagement</u>, and motivation of the adult students (the building of a <u>network of associations</u> <u>connected to the adults</u> might be useful to get this goal); otherwise, it might be somehow difficult to enlarge the participation of the adults to this kind of education, relegating the adult education only to immigrants and for those who need a "diploma", instead of acting in the field of a normal and necessary "life-long" education.

Regarding the "**organizational issue**", the institutions involved in adult education, especially the public ones, have many problems in offering properly a service that can match the personal needs of adults (very different from those of a young person). In fact, there are <u>strong limitations</u> (buildings not available in the late hours, it is not possible to have in the same building both adults and young students, heating available only until half afternoon) in terms of scheduling that make it difficult for an adult to attend the classes properly and constantly, especially considering the working and family duties that they still have.

Moreover, even the "goals" of the lessons are considered a problem. The programs that the teachers must follow are too rigid and based on a classic, formal, and face-to-face methodology. However, this is not the best methodology to keep adult students' attention and interest high. They need a more practical and "useful" approach to participate actively in the courses. The students need to understand and be convinced that what they are doing is concretely useful for achieving their work and personal goals. Therefore, it is very useful to make it clear to the students why something is being done (this is fundamental to create a trustful relationship with student-teacher) and to use an approach that puts aside the face-to-face lessons and replaces them with a more practical, problem-solving-oriented approach. As a teaching method, an <u>inductive methodology</u> should be applied, from the case to the general rule (a well-constructed mind is better than a mind full of concepts). In addition to the practical element of the educational path, it is also important to train the adult learner's <u>soft skills</u> that may enable the student to continue improving his skills and knowledge, even after the end of the specific course.











Connected to the point just mentioned is the composition of the classes. Before the start of the educational period, no proper assessment of students' competencies is carried out. This makes it impossible to think of and create a personalized path to achieve each student's specific goals and forces the creation of heterogeneous classes that follow a standardized syllabus. To avoid this, a proper assessment of each student's skills and (vocational) objectives should be carried out before the start of the training course, to design a personalized course for each student and build homogeneous classes in terms of level and objectives (something similar to what happens in the universities). Moreover, it is important for adult learners to work in groups, since it may increase work as a multiplier for the positive elements of the educational path. In fact, the horizontal and mutual support and interactions in a group that faces the same problems and has the same goals make it possible to create a supportive environment that can sustain effort and the creation of new perspectives for each student.

To achieve all of this, it is necessary to act on two different levels: didactical and professional. Considering the first element, the educational institutions/organizations must increase their level of flexibility, in terms of scheduling possibilities, internal organization, and educational offers. It should be allowed for adult learners not to sacrifice their personal and working life to attend the classes. Being forced to decide between education and personal life would declare the failure (already before the beginning of the activities) of any educational activities that involve adult students. Moreover, the educational program they follow should be as personalized as possible and constructed in such a way as to maximize their working and professional goals and possibilities. It should be problem solving-oriented and very practical.

To achieve that, teachers should receive proper training for teaching adult learners. The training should give them the proper methodological and practical instruments to face the specific issues of this activity that are very different compared to the younger ones (while the young students may focus their attention mostly on getting new information, the adults need to improve their ability to use the information and being able to positively solve the problems they face in their daily personal and working life). Moreover, the training should also allow the professor to increase his level of adaptability to the different students' situations and requests and improve his ability to be able to work together and in coordination with other professors and creating so something not standardized but adequate to the goals and needs of the adult learners.

The last element to consider is the creation of a network with realities/associations connected to the world of adults. This may foster the connection and the judgment of adults, thus creating the necessary premises for a successful educational path. Moreover, these realities may give useful input to improve the educational offer in the constant process of monitoring the performance of the same. Finally, they may also give some useful resources or may integrate the missing elements of the educational course, making it more flexible and goal-oriented.







#### LAB-ADA COMPETENCE FRAMEWORK

(Average level of agreement for the 5 pillars and 21 competencies)

Generally speaking, it has been difficult to receive plain feedback on the elements of the framework, because all the sub-elements (with the exception of Pillar 5, which seems to be too technical and not directly related to the daily use a person may experience, at least at a basic level) are in a way important and are part of the preparation that is guaranteed to the students. Only a matter of temporality (the element considered "high" are temporally prioritized compared to the ones with a lower degree) distinguishes the different sub-elements.

Pillar 1: Information and Data Literacy	low	 	 high
1.1 Browsing, searching and filtering			$\boxtimes$
1.2 Evaluating info and content			$\boxtimes$
1.3 Managing info and content			$\boxtimes$

Pillar 2: Communication and Collaboration	low		••••	 high
2.1 Interacting				$\boxtimes$
2.2 Sharing				$\boxtimes$
2.3 Engaging in Citizenship			$\boxtimes$	
2.4 Collaborating			$\boxtimes$	
2.5 Netiquette			$\boxtimes$	
2.6 Managing Digital Identity		$\boxtimes$		

Pillar 3: Digital Content Creation	low	 	 high
3.1 Developing content			$\boxtimes$
3.2 Integrating and re-elaborating		$\boxtimes$	
3.3 Copyright and licenses		$\boxtimes$	
3.4 Programming	$\square$		

Pillar 4: Safety and Ethics	low		 	high
4.1 Protecting devices				$\boxtimes$
4.2 Protecting personal data and Privacy				$\boxtimes$
4.3 Protecting health and Well-being		$\mathbf{X}$		
4.4 Protecting the Environment		$\mathbf{X}$		
	1			high
Pillar 5: Problem-Solving	low			iligii
5.1 Solving technical problems	Iow		 	
		_	····	
5.1 Solving technical problems		$\square$		

#### Rubric: Experts' Level of agreement from lowest $\Box \Box \Box \Box \Box$ to highest

#### Material, Tools, Resources

In the training of an LSA, it is fundamental to be very practical and concrete, and less theoretical, and the use of everyday and specific materials might be very useful. The material







should have some kind of link with the external/work environment and the professor should be able to guide the students in a process of understanding how the practical exercises carried out might be useful outside of the class. The material that can be used can be very different:

- 1. Audio/image/video materials
- 2. Storytelling, mind mapping, language application
- 3. Personalised learning resources
- 4. Workshops
- 5. Objects of everyday use
- 6. Online/offline collaborative tools

The online tools cannot be used on all occasions. Indeed, the adult learners, who are the target group of this specific training, are not digital natives, thus proper training should be provided for students, to be as much productive as possible and give them a conscious use of the didactical instrument.

The way the teaching is provided must not be a traditional face-to-face approach but should be based on a more participatory and problem-solving-oriented one. Students should be guided into the creation of their own knowledge just providing them with the tools useful to do that. An example would be the use of an object, an event, or a resource that all the students face in their daily life as a starting point, and from there build a path for students to increase their skills. Another useful teaching tool could be the creation of interactive stories (something ancestral in every individual's mind) that involve and encourage the students in the teaching path by keeping their attention.

An interaction with the European platforms (such as EPALE) might be crucial to increase the dissemination of courses, but also to get important feedback from professionals from all over Europe.







#### PROMETEO

#### A. Experts Profile

#### Short Presentation of each Expert

What is your expertise about LSA (indicative ideas of the following or other):

- What is your philosophy on LSA Education?
- Adults must get used to learning technology
- Adult should keep up with the times
- To prepare specific courses linked with clear tools and videos with
- practical examples
- We need specific courses for adults
- What specific skills do you process?
- To know how to use technological tools
- Very practical courses about the use of Apps and programs
- To know the English language for using the typical language of developers
- Word and basic programs, email, use of Apple, and programs linked with the profession made by each one;
- What degree of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics integration is possible/actually applied to your state's educational framework?
- N/A
- N/A
- A medium-high degree
- N/A
- Which skills are needed to land a job?
- Communication technology and use of emails
- Use of easy programs, emails (contacts in general), but overall, the capacity to adapt and learn
- English language and the basic of Ms-Office
- Basic competence in the use of programs (Office), writing and sending emails
- What are some qualities that make up a good LSA program/project?
- Simplicity







- Simplicity and instinctiveness
- Simplicity
- Gradualness, display subjects with coaching, short lessons,

practical exercises

- How do I know if an activity is a good LSA activity?
- N/A
- Simply verifying if they're able to sort it
- If they understand easily what they should do
- Tutor or technological coach
- What kind of support (e.g. methodology, resources) do you think that educators need?
- Technological and methodological support
- To be coached by people that, with patience, can explain want is not possible to do because too few qualified
- Patience and availability
- What your career involves (e.g., career milestones, motivation, barriers, changes, profession)
- Motivation
- Motivation and satisfaction, and this will lead to a
- professional improvement
- A better and wider way to teach
- It can be motivating

#### Other important information

#### B. Motivation and engagement on personal development of a LSA

- Can you suggest situations that bring into the surface basic ideas, and methodologies? Can you give us some ideas?
  - Curiosity to realize activities useful for the daily life
  - Emotional involvement
- What do you perceive as the main issues affecting the effective development of the competencies of an SLA?
  - Lack of SLA motivation
  - SLA's negative attitude towards the subjects
  - The lack of forward planning



- A lack of funding for resources and equipment
- A lack of well-equipped spaces, lack of science lab assistants makes it more difficult

- What are the LSAs' greatest barriers to participating in educational programs for adults?

• The shame of not showing their own insecurities and the lack of communication skills

- The fear of not being up to standard, lack of self-esteem
- The lack of time and the fear of not being standard
- The fear to fail, the fear of being incapable, the fear to damage utilities
- What strategies have you implemented/ are you going to implement that serve to overcome issues/barriers?
- Technological and communicative barriers
- To be always close to the learners and their needs
- Something useful in daily life to make it easier
- To have a tutor or a coach close to them
- Do trainers of SLAs make use of activities and techniques to ensure that all learners are engaged in an educational program?
- Yes, they provide more training
- Teachers try to be always on the wave, get involved
- More time for learners which problems in learning
- N/A
- What support does an SLA have/need to develop their competencies?
- Technological and communicative skills
- Competent people who can support those in need in a simple and constant manner
- Patience and availability
- To know they can ask an expert without feeling not useful

- What factors can contribute to motivating LSA's participation in education programs?

- Economic factors and
- benefits in the future
- Economic factors
- Economic factors and useful
- things to learn
- Perspectives of future
- benefits







#### C. Comments about LAB-ADA COMPETENCE FRAMEWORK (with the 5 pillars)

(Average level of agreement for the 5 pillars and 21 competences)

Pillar 1: Information and Data Literacy	low	 		high
1.1 Browsing, searching and filtering			$\boxtimes$	
1.2 Evaluating info and content			$\boxtimes$	
1.3 Managing info and content		$\boxtimes$		

Pillar 2: Communication and Collaboration	low	 		high
2.1 Interacting			$\boxtimes$	
2.2 Sharing			$\boxtimes$	
2.3 Engaging in Citizenship		$\boxtimes$		
2.4 Collaborating			$\boxtimes$	
2.5 Netiquette			$\boxtimes$	
2.6 Managing Digital Identity		$\boxtimes$		

Pillar 3: Digital Content Creation	low			 high
3.1 Developing content			$\boxtimes$	
3.2 Integrating and re-elaborating			$\boxtimes$	
3.3 Copyright and licenses		$\boxtimes$		
3.4 Programming	$\square$			

Pillar 4: Safety and Ethics	low				high
4.1 Protecting devices		$\mathbf{X}$			
4.2 Protecting personal Data and Privacy			$\boxtimes$		
4.3 Protecting health and Well-being				$\boxtimes$	
4.4 Protecting the Environment				$\boxtimes$	

Pillar 5: Problem-Solving	low			 high
5.1 Solving technical problems		$\boxtimes$		
5.2 Identifying Needs and Responses		$\boxtimes$		
5.3 Creatively using Digital Technologies			$\boxtimes$	
5.4 Identifying digital competence gaps		$\boxtimes$		

#### D. Material, Tools, Resources

- Which attractive and important resources and materials can you suggest for training SLAs?
  - Clear and easy information
  - Human resources and handbooks very easy
  - Laptops/notebooks, easy software, and wide screens
  - Humane resources and labs

- Can you give us an example(s) of learning opportunities and better possibilities to be involved in non-formal learning?

- Learning by imitating, observation
- Imitating or trying to imitate friends who are practicing something that adults







like and that can catch their attention

- Learning the use of the internet to buy at the lowest price, and software as a help for the daily activities for the family budget, and so on.
- Relaxed and funny environment, focus groups involving users producing tools that can be shared
- Can you share with us any approaches, techniques, materials, etc. used to promote learners' critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills?
  - Easy conversation on real problems close to the interests of them, movies, readings, guided conversations, manipulation of real materials, use of different materials for the realisation of crafts.
  - Sharing with friends, and colleagues and consequently the reflection
  - Conversations in groups
  - Coding, problem-solving, relaxed environment allowing sharing and debating, cooperative learning, working with peers groups

#### Indicative categories of Resources and Tools...

- 1. Audio/image/video materials
- 2. Storytelling, mind mapping, language application
- 3. Office general tools (editors, presentations, spreadsheets etc)
- 4. Online collaborative tools (online boards, quizzes, documents)
- 5. Simulations, experimental lab
- 6. Mobile apps
- 7. Specific software
- 8. Sensors, data loggers
- 9. Resources for personalized learning
- 10. Evaluation and assessment tools
- 11. Social media
- 12. Other (please specify): .....

#### E. Initiatives, Practices, Research, Challenges

- Do you know important national and governmental strategies initiatives/existing research studies/policy recommendations/EU projects promoting LSA?
- Is there any research study supporting the national policy and/or national initiative, including for example EU projects?
- Are there initiatives, research, and/or projects specifically promoting inclusive education and/or focusings on the empowerment of LSAs with opportunities?



- Do you know best practices being applied to teach LSAs? What is currently being applied to engage learners in educational programs?
- Can you describe any training programs, projects and/or other national initiatives being carried out in your country focusing on building the capacity of LSAs?
- If any, inform us shortly of pre-existing research that has been carried out in your country into the relation between LSA's employment in later stages of their life.

- Can you share with us important data from academic studies, national statistics, or other statistical sources?





#### **ECOKTIMA**

#### Προφίλ Συμμετεχόντων

· PhD Candidate, Masters Νέες Τεχνολογίες στην Εκπαίδευση, Εκπαίδευση Ενηλίκων, Σύμβουλος,

ΟΑΕΔ

- Σχολικές Επιτροπές, Τοπική Αυτοδιοίκηση, Δημοτικοί Φορείς
- · Επιμορφώτρια Εκπαιδευτικών για τις Νέες Τεχνολογίες στην Εκπαίδευση, Παιδαγωγική Αξιοποίηση Ψηφιακών Εργαλείων
- · Πληροφορική στην Εκπαίδευση, Προγραμματισμός, Ρομποτική

· PhD Candidate, Εκπαιδευτικός – Μαθηματικός, Έρευνα στην Τεχνητή Νοημοσύνη, Ψηφιακά εκπαιδευτικά εργαλεία ανάκτησης μουσικής πληροφορίας

#### Κίνητρα

· Αρκετοί LSA's που απευθύνονται στους δημοτικούς φορείς παρουσιάζουν μεγάλο ενδιαφέρον

για εκπαίδευση / εκμάθηση / εξοικείωση με τις νέες τεχνολογίες

- · Η διάθεση για ανέλιξη / επαγγελματική εξέλιξη αποτελεί σημαντικό κίνητρο για τη συμμετοχή σε εκπαιδευτικά / επιμορφωτικά προγράμματα
- · Υπαρξη άμεσου / ορατού οφέλους (πχ. Το tablet διευκολύνει την ανάγνωση)
- · Εργαλεία που διευκολύνουν την επικοινωνία (social media)

#### Ανασταλτικοί παράγοντες

• ελλιπείς τεχνικές υποδομές για τους μεγαλύτερους σε ηλικία ανθρώπους (μη σταθερή σύνδεση

με το internet, απουσία σύγχρονου εξοπλισμού κ.α.)

• αδράνεια, κουλτούρα, διαφορετικός τρόπος ζωής για τους μεγαλύτερους σε ηλικία ανθρώπους

· Ακόμα και η αξιοποίηση των ψηφιακών εργαλείων γίνεται «καταναγκαστικά», με τρόπο στατικό / συμπεριφοριστικό

· Βομβαρδισμός, αντί για επιμόρφωση σε απλές δεξιότητες που μπορούν να αξιοποιηθούν στην καθημερινότητα (υγεία / επικοινωνία κ.α.)

#### Σημαντικά Εργαλεία

- · Communication & Collaboration
- Social Media
- Ψηφιακά Εργαλεία / Προσομοιώσεις
- · Story telling / Εννοιολογικοί χάρτες
- Εύχρηστα / Απλά εργαλεία / Κουλτούρα χρήστη παρά δημιουργού







#### LAB-ADA COMPETENCE FRAMEWORK

(average level of agreement for the 5 pillars and 22 competences)

Pillar 1: Information and Data Literacy	low		 	high
1.1 Browsing, searching and filtering				$\boxtimes$
1.2 Evaluating info and content				$\boxtimes$
1.3 Managing info and content			$\boxtimes$	
1.4 Data Analysis and information engagement		$\boxtimes$		

Pillar 2: Communication and Collaboration	low	 		high
2.1 Interacting				$\boxtimes$
2.2 Sharing				$\boxtimes$
2.3 Engaging in Citizenship		$\boxtimes$		
2.4 Collaborating				$\boxtimes$
2.5 Netiquette			$\boxtimes$	
2.6 Managing Digital Identity	$\square$			

Pillar 3: Digital Content Creation	low	 		high
3.1 Developing content				$\boxtimes$
3.2 Integrating and re-elaborating			$\boxtimes$	
3.3 Copyright and licenses			$\boxtimes$	
3.4 Programming	$\square$			

Pillar 4: Safety and Ethics	low				high
4.1 Protecting devices		$\boxtimes$			
4.2 Protecting personal data and Privacy				$\boxtimes$	
4.3 Protecting health and Well-being			$\boxtimes$		
4.4 Protecting the Environment				$\boxtimes$	

Pillar 5: Problem-Solving	low			 high
5.1 Solving technical problems		$\boxtimes$		
5.2 Identifying Needs and Responses		$\boxtimes$		
5.3 Creatively using digital technologies			$\boxtimes$	
5.4 Identifying digital competence gaps	$\boxtimes$			

Rubric: Experts' Level of agreement from lowest  $\Box \Box \Box \Box \Box$  to highest





### A. Experts Profile

The experts interviewed for this purpose have many years of experience in their field. However, not all of them gained all their training skills through official training programs. Most of them learn through their years of experience, even those which are part of some public institutions. However, there are training offers in their field that they have accomplished, mostly in the beginning of their professional journey. In the past, when they started acquiring knowledge, the pieces of training offered to the experts were more theoretically based, and nowadays, future experts have more practical assignments that they need to accomplish. Having this in mind they also have to offer their trainees to gain practical experience by accomplishing the tasks.

We have to keep in mind that adult education differs from the education of youngsters, and the experts need to have a specific attitude and provide different know-how techniques while working with participants and using different methods and tools. They don't have only experience working with individuals but also with whole enterprises which probably gives them additional professional expertise as adult educators.

The interesting aspect of the adult educators' professional life is that they all believe that adult education and lifelong learning is an important aspect of every person's life. This is of additional importance having in mind that it is the 21st century and that professional and educational life is more dynamic. Upgrading your know-how and skills doesn't only help you in acquiring new knowledge and information, but also in raising your quality of life, socially and culturally.

During their educational sessions, adult educators emphasize the role of the motivational aspects, while sharing positive experiences, problem solving etc.

#### - What is your philosophy on LSA Education?

I1 – The continuous educational development of any person, especially today in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, is something I consider to be a vital activity for any individual, both old and young. Upgrading your know-how and skills doesn't only help you in acquiring new knowledge and information, but also in raising your quality of life, socially and culturally.

I2 – "Wake up the child inside them", lower their inhibitions and the feeling that they aren't capable of learning after taking a break, accentuate the utility and the benefits to personal growth that later life education can afford them.



**I3** – A man learns as long as he is alive only if he knows and sees the importance of what he is learning.

**I4** – People can learn as long as they live.

#### - What are some qualities that make up a good LSA program/project?

I1 – A trainer that possesses good oral and presentation skills, in addition to having practical skills in order to present practical exercises, assignments and studies.

**I2** – Simplicity, graduality, relevance to the participants, individuality, and localization.

**I3** – It should be clear, structured, and applicable and it has to contain practical experiences on the subject.

**I4** – A clearly defined target group, a clearly defined methodology and approach for said target group, and the specific modules that will be used for knowledge transfer.

#### - How do I know if an activity is a good LSA activity?

**I1** – If it has pre-prepared material for the basic theoretical know-how on the topic. Having a large database of facts and references, adequate literature books, brochures, and research papers. Technical literature for technical topics. It's important to have the theory covered thoroughly and then some, before you even start.

#### - What kind of support (e.g., methodology, resources) do you think that educators need?

**I1** – Access to information databases online. Number one most important thing.

**12** – Know-how, experience, logistical and institutional support, technical equipment and so on and so on.

**I3** – I think that depends on the training being undertaken. In our trainings we find medical equipment and orthopedic appliances necessary, as is a setting that is adaptable and adequate for this specific equipment.

I4 – Sharing of positive experiences and lessons learned, motivation of participants, quick thinking when problem-solving, process management, and appropriate communication. The best methodologies for activating the group and the success of the program are participative education and design thinking.



# - What your career involves (e.g., career milestones, motivation, barriers, changes, profession)?

I1 – I have a 30-year experience in both theoretical and practical teaching at the Faculty of technology and metallurgy in Skopje, more than 30 presentations and trainings at international conferences, more than 10 workshops with individuals and enteprises and 3 training programs for students and adults (Waste management, Mechanisms for clean development, Sustainability advisors).

**I4** – As an educator for adults, most of the skills I gained by taking a year-long course for trainer training where I acquired the necessary know-how, skills, and competencies for organizing and delivering training for adults and youth. This course taught me everything about the peculiarities of adult education, following the dynamics, working with participants, and using different methods and tools.

#### B. Motivation and engagement in the personal development of an LSA

All educators agree that the main issue posed as a problem for the LSA is the low level of their motivation to get engaged in specific programs which will not only bring them new personal qualities through experience but also new professional qualities.

The motivation sometimes rises from external factors, such as some recognition or a possibility of getting a job abroad, more points in their professional CV, etc.. Maybe some of LSA's issues is that they've lost the habit of constant education during their years of professional engagement.

Others put the blame not only on the motivation but also on the inadequacy of the target group, but having in mind that the adults are low-skilled it may be a little harder for them to take part in more specific professional programs.

Some even pinpoint that there should be a unified strategy by the public bodies, that can outline clear goals and criteria for adult education.

One of the incentives mentioned is that for some types of educational activities, adult educators offer guaranteed employment once finished.

For LSA's to be more motivated there are few possibilities that can be marked. Some believe that micro-factors, such as education should be more personal and the student should be able to see the benefit from taking part in it, but also macro-factors like the economy, the labor market, and other things. Our social environment isn't inductive, it doesn't give many opportunities to use those skills, so motivation is low, and outcomes are limited.

We should have in mind that in countries that are not well developed, the labor market also plays an important role as an incentive, and the economy in general.



# - What do you perceive as the main issues affecting the effective development of the competences of a LSA?

**I1** – Low motivation among the populace.

**I3** – In regards to our trainings, the main barrier is that a majority of applicants have low educational level, are further in age, or are only applying to get the internationally recognized certificate so they can get a job abroad, or people who only apply to receive their welfare. These types of people are not motivated enough to properly put in the effort needed to develop their competencies.

**I4** – Low motivation among participants, low attendance of participants – mostly due to being chosen from an inadequate target group for the programme.

#### - What are the LSAs' greatest barriers to participate in educational programs for adults?

**I1** – Low interest among adults for personal development in Macedonia.

**I2** – I work with students and professors mostly, in regard to competences, I assume digital, I would say it's technical possibilities at the top, and then personal motivation – those are the two barriers.

**I3** – It is hard to find truly motivated individuals who would like to pursue a career in the fields for which we hold pieces of training – personal assistants and medical caretakers.

**I4** – The lack of well-conceived programs with clear goals with good teams of educators. Also lack of motivation among prospective participants.

### - What strategies have you implemented/are you going to implement that serve to overcome issues/barriers?

**I1** – Haven't really thought about it.

**I3** – Yes, our courses offer guaranteed employment once finished. We have also started offering paid travel expenses and meals during the training, as well as consistent supervising support during the training.

**I4** – What is necessary is a unified strategy by the relevant government bodies, like the Center for adult education here in Macedonia, that outlines clear goals and criteria.

#### - What support does an LSA have/need to develop their competencies?

**I3** – We offer constant supervising support during the training and after once the candidates have started working. It helps facilitate their newly acquired competencies.







#### - What factors can contribute to motivating LSA's participation in education programs?

I1 – If there was a way to make adults sure that it will help with some personal problem, especially a work-related problem – promotion or higher pay, maybe? But they need the assurance that it will be worth it.

**12** – It is mostly micro-factors – education should be more personal and the student should be able to see the benefit from taking part in it), but also macro-factors like the economy, the labor market, and other things. Our social environment isn't inductive, it doesn't give many opportunities to use those skills, so motivation is low and outcomes are limited.

**I3** – A certificate that is recognized in Macedonian and abroad, a new career opportunity. Some take our classes because they need the relevant capacity building that they offer so they can use their newly acquired skills and know-how in their personal lives.

I4 – Tracking what the labor market needs in regards to professions and competencies, programs that answer those needs in a clear way and can offer good employment, and having the programs be free of charge.

#### C. LAB-ADA COMPETENCE FRAMEWORK

(Average level of agreement for the 5 pillars and 21 competencies)

Pillar 1: Information and Data Literacy	low	 		high
1.1 Browsing, searching and filtering			$\boxtimes$	
1.2 Evaluating info and content			$\boxtimes$	
1.3 Managing info and content				$\boxtimes$

Pillar 2: Communication and Collaboration	low	 		high
2.1 Interacting			$\mathbf{X}$	
2.2 Sharing			$\mathbf{X}$	
2.3 Engaging in citizenship		$\boxtimes$		
2.4 Collaborating				$\boxtimes$
2.5 Netiquette			$\boxtimes$	
2.6 Managing Digital Identity		$\ge$		

Pillar 3: Digital Content Creation	low	 		high
3.1 Developing content				$\boxtimes$
3.2 Integrating and re-elaborating				$\boxtimes$
3.3 Copyright and licenses			$\boxtimes$	
3.4 Programming	$\boxtimes$			

Pillar 4: Safety and Ethics	low	 		high
4.1 Protecting devices			$\boxtimes$	
4.2 Protecting personal data and Privacy				$\boxtimes$
4.3 Protecting health and Well-being			$\boxtimes$	
4.4 Protecting the Environment			$\boxtimes$	







Pillar 5: Problem Solving	low		 	high
5.1 Solving technical problems			$\boxtimes$	
5.2 Identifying needs and responses				$\mathbf{X}$
5.3 Creatively using digital technologies			$\boxtimes$	
5.4 Identifying digital competence gaps		$\boxtimes$		

#### D. Material, Tools, Resources

As for the materials used, the most common are mentioned, such as brochures and handbooks, technical equipment, videos, positive examples that serve as a motivation, and in some even gamification tools. Every adult educator uses a different style in their program and that involves the use of different materials, but the general materials are used almost all.

Nonformal learning offers the development of different skills for the LSA and while some pinpoint their technical skills others pinpoint their intellectual. However, they both involve practical as well as theoretical assignments and knowledge.

When it comes to the approaches, techniques, materials, etc. used to promote learners' critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills, adult educators differentiate more in their programs. As mentioned before, some use gamification such as self-evaluation tools (quizzes) which upgrade their critical thinking. Some other more complex activities also take part in their program such as case studies, that need more creativity and a hands-on approach, as well as critical and analytical thinking. They need more time and effort to be developed but on the other hand they offer a direct, practical approach.

Collaboration is a key concept to all these elements.

A platform for adult education mentioned by adult educators as an excellent example is EPALE (Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe) on which they regularly follow any updates and examples.

### - Which attractive and important resources and materials can you suggest for training SLAs?

**I1** – Brochures and handbooks on every topic of interest is the main resource for learning, followed by, I think, audio and video materials.

**I3** – Technical equipment for sure. But everything on this list can prove invaluable and sometimes even key while training adults.

I4 – Video materials, positive examples, gamification and monitoring tools.



# - Can you give us an example(s) of learning opportunities and better possibilities to be involved in non-formal learning?

**I1** – Experiments and softwares help when people are upgrading their technical skills, of course, but I don't find them as useful when the training is supposed to upgrade their intellectual skills.

**I3** – Practical exercises and the application of the theory taught within the training.

**I4** – [Our] verified programs at Humanost.

- Can you share with us any approaches, techniques, materials, etc. used to promote learners' critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills?

**I1** – Self-evaluation tools and quizzes, also games. They are all useful for a person to check their skills and capacities. Things that they can upgrade with critical thinking and outside directions.

I2 – Hands-on approach and collaboration are key. Specifically, a program on digital skills for adults should have a few focal points. It should show how digital technologies help solve problems, people can communicate better with their kids, communicate easier with their social surroundings, and with different social groups, it can help them with work and efficiency, of course. Case studies are a good option, mini-projects I find very useful too. No matter the topic and the format, it's good to enforce and apply the knowledge. The program needs to show how relevant and useful digital skills are. It should create and use the circumstances in which the students will use those skills and create the circumstances to expand and better those skills. All the tools you mentioned can be useful, it's down to the specific goals you want for the specific group of trainers. It can all work, for the right person. That's what I have learned in my experience, and that's what I would say here.

**I3** – Maybe the creation of board games and other creative activities that can be useful. For example, exercises that develop empathy.

**I4** – Design thinking, educational games, audio and video materials, and different tools and methods for reflection, feedback, and evaluation.

#### E. Initiatives, Practices, Research, Challenges

# - Do you know important national and governmental strategies initiatives/existing research studies/policy recommendations/EU projects promoting LSA?

**I1** – The initiatives of the Chamber of Commerce of Macedonia.

I4 – The programs [here] at Humanost are based on the principle of giving individuals with a low educational level opportunity, the notion of adaptability in programs for different target groups and basing the credits and skills system on the real needs of the



labor market. All our programs are standardized and certified, recognized both nationally and internationally.

# - Are there initiatives, research and/or projects specifically promoting inclusive education and/or focus on the empowerment of LSAs with opportunities?

I1 – There are some projects run by some of the municipalities, as well as the Employment Agency of North Macedonia.

**I4** – Humanost [from Macedonia], InterAktion from Austria, SerGED from Turkey, USB from Greece.

## - Do you know the best practices being applied to teach LSAs? What is currently being applied to engage learners in educational programs?

**I3** – While I can't name anything specific off the top of my head, as members of EPALE (Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe) we regularly follow any updates and examples on the platform.

**I4** – A participative approach and opportunities for the participant to be at the center of attention and encouraged to think and express themselves freely.

# - If any, inform us shortly of pre-existing research that has been carried out in your country into the relation between LSA's employment in later stages of their life.

**I1** − I am not aware of any such projects, and it is hard to get the results of these types of research.

**I4** – In my experience so far, the most successful types of trainings for adults have been the programs for starting your own social enterprise model, as well as the programs for reskilling and upskilling within a specific workplace.

### - Can you share with us important data from academic studies, national statistics, or other statistical sources?

**I3** – I think that the EPALE platform I mentioned is the primary and only good source on this topic that we use.



#### **A. Experts Profile**

LIBA

#### Short Presentation of each Expert

What is your expertise about LSA (indicative ideas of the following or other):

#### - What is your philosophy on LSA Education?

Experts agree that one of the main tasks of an educator is to disseminate his or her philosophy of education and teaching. Educators base their philosophy on theories learned in their formal education, but most agree that they start with this type of teaching philosophy and adjust it over time. These adjustments to one's teaching philosophy are largely based on personal experience and the best practices that may emerge in their specific teaching area.

Each educator must consider all aspects when choosing and using a teaching strategy based on self-directed learning. Not all adult learners are autonomous, so an instructional philosophy should be based on different educational philosophies so that learners can be considered regardless of their level of self-direction. In addition, it is important to communicate the teaching philosophy to learners to avoid misunderstandings and uncomfortable situations.

- What specific skills do you process?

All experts agree that LSA often have limited opportunities to develop their skills through education and training. Many LSAs find themselves in a low-skill trap, working in lowlevel positions with limited opportunities for on-the-job development and learning, and are frequently and sometimes long-term unemployed. Therefore, it is essential to address the specific barriers to training faced by low-skilled adults so that they can advance in the labor market and access better jobs.

- What degree of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics integration is possible/actually applied to your state's educational framework?

### *Non-formal adult education in Lithuanian can be organized for the unemployed and LSA* to acquire or improve:

- general competencies - according to non-formal adult education programs aimed at developing lifelong learning competencies: Mathematics, Science, Technology, and Engineering; digital competencies.

- Professional competencies - in line with non-formal adult education programs, including part of higher education studies (study module) aimed at developing specific professional (technical) competencies to flexibly engage in the changing labor market and/or in planning a professional career.



- Learning the national language (for foreigners). Also, for professionals (foreigners) to strengthen their integration into the labor market, non-formal adult education.

- Which skills are needed to land a job?

Successful work, as well as integration into the labor market, requires not only professional skills but also sufficiently developed general skills.

The most important development of these skills - of language, reading and writing, arithmetic, and IT. All these competencies are considered equally important, many of them are related and complementary - specific aspects of the same area reinforce the skills of another area. One of the most important points is also learning to learn and adapt in a rapidly changing world.

- What are some qualities that make up a good LSA program/project?

It must be specific (structure of the programme/project, objectives, benefits, milestones). It must provide a relevant benefit to the LSA.

- How do I know if an activity is a good LSA activity?

They are present. This is one of the biggest problems when it comes to an activity related to adult education.

They are actively involved in all activities.

Positive feedback from them.

- What kind of support (e.g. methodology, resources) do you think that educators need?

A considerable network of adult education services has been developed in Lithuania, but there are still untapped opportunities to develop more accessible forms of adult education - distance learning, the activities of vocational training institutions and higher schools, and partnerships of educational and cultural institutions. Good initiatives are also always welcome.

- What your career involves (e.g. career milestones, motivation, barriers, changes, profession)

Positive: lifelong learning; learning by doing; personal improvement; knowing you are doing the right thing.

Negative: constantly changing legislation, various force major and crises.



#### B. Motivation and engagement on personal development of a LSA

- Can you suggest situations that bring into the surface basic ideas, and methodologies? Can you give us some ideas?

All experts agreed that all materials for LSA should be prepared in an easy-to-understand and user-friendly manner.

- What do you perceive as the main issues affecting the effective development of the competences of a SLA?

In a row of relevance:

- 1. Lack of SLA's motivation
- 2. SLA's negative attitude towards the subjects
- 3. The lack of forward planning
- 4. A lack of funding for resources and equipment
- 5. A lack of well-equipped spaces, lack of science lab assistants make it more difficult
- What are the LSAs' greatest barriers to participate in educational programs for adults?
  - There is no time because of work. Age or health is an obstacle. Education is too expensive. It is not supported by employers. Lack of ability to learn. Lack of information about learning opportunities. Low self-confidence or interest. Lack of motivation.
- What strategies have you implemented/ are you going to implement that serve to overcome issues/barriers?

Encouraging information and invitations Personal calls or contact via social media.

- Do trainers of SLAs make use of activities and techniques to ensure that all learners are engaged in an educational program?

It depends a lot on the activity and the group or learners, but at least they (Experts) are trying.

- What support does an SLA have/need to develop their competences?







Non-formal education is one of the most popular and widely accepted methods of adult education.

In Lithuania, non-formal adult education is usually understood as learning, training, and study tailored to the interests of the individual and society, for the completion of which no state-recognized document is issued.

Non-formal adult education is available to all persons over 18 years of age. Informal adult education may be provided by anyone through an education provider recognized under Lithuanian law.

- What factors can contribute to motivating LSA's participation in education programs?

Most adults work somewhere, so their learning opportunities and attitudes are strongly influenced by the attitudes of their employers. That continuing education is necessary for their employees is answered positively by almost all employers. However, a much smaller proportion of employers support their employees' learning. Thus, a more positive attitude of employers could promote motivation to participate.







#### C. LAB-ADA COMPETENCE FRAMEWORK

(Average level of agreement for the 5 pillars and 21 competences)

Pillar 1: Information and Data Literacy	low	 		high
1.1 Browsing, searching and filtering			$\boxtimes$	
1.2 Evaluating info and content				$\boxtimes$
1.3 Managing info and content				$\boxtimes$
1.4 Data analysis and information engagement				

Pillar 2: Communication and Collaboration	low	•••			high
2.1 Interacting				$\boxtimes$	
2.2 Sharing				$\boxtimes$	
2.3 Engaging in Citizenship					$\boxtimes$
2.4 Collaborating				$\boxtimes$	
2.5 Netiquette					$\boxtimes$
2.6 Managing Digital Identity			$\boxtimes$		

Pillar 3: Digital Content Creation	low	 		high
3.1 Developing content			$\boxtimes$	
3.2 Integrating and re-elaborating				$\boxtimes$
3.3 Copyright and licenses				$\boxtimes$
3.4 Programming	$\boxtimes$			

Pillar 4: Safety and Ethics	low	 	 high
4.1 Protecting devices			$\boxtimes$
4.2 Protecting personal data and Privacy			$\boxtimes$
4.3 Protecting health and Well-being			$\boxtimes$
4.4 Protecting the Environment			$\boxtimes$

Pillar 5: Problem Solving	low	 		high
5.1 Solving technical problems			$\boxtimes$	
5.2 Identifying needs and responses			$\boxtimes$	
5.3 Creatively using digital technologies				$\mathbf{X}$
5.4 Identifying digital competence gaps		$\boxtimes$		

#### Rubric: Experts' Level of agreement from lowest $\Box \Box \Box \Box \Box$ to highest

#### D. Material, Tools, Resources

- Which attractive and important resources and materials can you suggest for training SLAs?

*Opportunity for online participation. Various inclusive activities, such as quizzes, brainstorming, problem solving and other activities.* 

Also: discussions. Useful when you want to think about something in depth and for issues that affect attitudes and awareness. And debates are very useful to find out the understanding of alternative points of view.



- Can you give us example(s) of learning opportunities and better possibilities to be involved in non-formal learning?

It can be adapted to everyone's level of development or learning. It is always relevant and can be adapted to the needs of each person It is participatory in the sense that those involved are actively learning by working as a team.

It is a learning style that promotes inclusion and diversity.

- Can you share with us any approaches, techniques, materials, etc. used to promote learner's critical thinking, creativity, and problem solving skills?

The problem is that most of the materials are in Lithuanian or Russian, as one of the main problems is that LSAs have little or no knowledge of English.

#### Indicative categories of Resourses and Tools...

- 1. Audio/image/video materials
- 2. Storytelling, mind mapping, language application
- 3. Office general tools (editors, presentations, spreadsheets etc)
- 4. Online collaborative tools (online boards, quizzes, documents)
- 5. Simulations, experimental lab
- 6. Mobile apps
- 7. Specific software
- 8. Sensors, data loggers
- 9. Resources for personalised learning
- 10. Evaluation and assessment tools
- 11. Social media
- 12. Other (please specify): .....

#### E. Initiatives, Practices, Researches, Challenges

Several links:

Law of the Republic of Lithuania on informal adult education: <u>https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/ce0399a00cd411e497f0ec0f2b563356</u>

Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania. Information about adult education on the website: <u>https://smsm.lrv.lt/web/lt/smm-svietimas/suaugusiuju-svietimas?lang=lt</u>

Employment Service Under the Ministry of Social Security and Labor of the Republic of Lithuania. Information on non-formal adult education: <u>https://uzt.lt/darbdaviui/profesinis-mokymas/neformalusis-suaugusiuju-svietimas/</u>



Adult education and vocational training of the employed (statistics): <u>https://osp.stat.gov.lt/suaugusiuju-svietimas-ir-dirbanciuju-profesinis-mokymas</u>

Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training Development Centre. Analysis of adult education (information in Lithuanian): <u>https://www.kpmpc.lt/kpmpc/suauqusiuju-svietimas-</u><u>3/suauqusiuju-svietimo-analize/</u>

The National Network of Education NGOs has been operating as an association since 2019. It brings together non-governmental educational organisations working in the fields of preschool and general education, higher education, and non-formal education of children and adults. Research on the implementation of non-formal adult education in Lithuanian regions: <a href="https://svietimotinklas.lt/tyrimas/neformaliojo-suaugusiuju-svietimo-igyvendinimas-lietuvos-regionuose/">https://svietimotinklas.lt/tyrimas/neformaliojo-suaugusiuju-svietimo-igyvendinimas-lietuvos-regionuose/</a>

The Lithuanian National digital coalition (NSK): <u>http://www.skaitmeninekoalicija.lt/en</u>