



SpLenDEd

REPORT ON FACTORS AFFECTING ADULT EDUCATION EFFECTIVENESS ON LEARNERS WITH SPLDS (01-T3)



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CONTENTS

Introduction	4
Report on research findings from the partnership regarding adult education effectiveness on learners with SpLDs.....	4
Desk research	5
General overview	5
Input from partners	5
Summary of desk research	15
Field research	17
General overview	17
Input from partners	17
Summary of field research	26
CRITERIA FOR AEP EFFECTIVENESS IN WORK WITH LEARNERS WITH SPLDS.....	28
Summary of the criteria	32

INTRODUCTION

This document is a finalisation of the first intellectual output (IO1) of the project Splended. The final task of this intellectual output is the development of a report compiling and analysing partners' research findings, specifying the criteria for assessing adult education effectiveness (in terms of outreach, inclusion, support to achieve learning results and equity) on learners with SpLDs. The report will elaborate on at least 10 criteria, emphasizing on various aspects of adult education provision, namely a. adult education providers' strategy, leadership and management, b. teaching and learning processes and methods and c. learners' progress.

Therefore the analysis will include:

- Report on research findings from the partnership regarding adult education effectiveness on learners with SpLDs
- Criteria for assessing adult education effectiveness on learners with SpLDs

REPORT ON RESEARCH FINDINGS FROM THE PARTNERSHIP REGARDING ADULT EDUCATION EFFECTIVENESS ON LEARNERS WITH SPLDS

During the work with IO1 the partnership has elaborated a comprehensive research in each partner country (EL, SI, SE, DE, HR). The goal of the research was to study the current level of adult education effectiveness on learners with SpLDs, tools and materials available, as well as challenges and barriers. The [methodology](#) for the research and coordination of the process among partnership was implemented by [Promea](#).

The research included 2 major aspects:

1. Desk research: educational schemes/frameworks, reviews/articles
2. Field research (interviews or focus groups)

AZM was partner responsible for the research coordination. All partners were engaged in research, following the methodology provided by PROMEA, and provided input and research results to the task leader. The partners performed the task with accordance to main KPIs elaborated initially by Promea in the methodology such as numbers of interviews, cases studied, literature reviews in each partner country. Below we present the summary from the key research steps.

DESK RESEARCH

GENERAL OVERVIEW

The overall focus of the research was to gather information from previous researches, relevant literature, reports, assessment schemes available in partner countries and the EU. Partners focused on analysis of the factors that influence quality and impact of adult education including for learners with SpLDs. The data for the research was gathered by each partner from relevant external secondary sources of information such as directories and European tools related to educational evaluation tools and assessment schemes (e.g. OECD, EURYDICE, UNESCO, EUROLEX), web portals of agencies and bodies responsible for AE (e.g. CEDEFOP), academic journals as well as results of other relevant EU projects. The results and summary for the partners individually is presented below.

According to methodology the key performance indicators were:

- to present 3 articles or reviews for AE in general
- 3 more for AE with regards to learners with SpLDs
- 4 schemes/frameworks (2 regarding SpLDs and 2 in general)
- 8-12 interviews per country (FU and VHS had 12 interviews, AZM had 10 interviews, Promea and POU had 8 interviews)

INPUT FROM PARTNERS

AZM

AZM analysed 4 different assessment schemes and 6 literature reviews.

Assessment schemes

3 of 4 assessment schemes was referring SpLDs learners and 1 was not referring to them. The resources of the schemes/frameworks are:

- *Institute for Dyslexia*
- *Quality in Adult Education – Offering Quality Education to Adults (POKI)*
- *Evaluation of Primary School for Adults in Slovenia*
- *Orientation of Children with Special Needs Act*

The key factors under discussion which AZM revealed during the research of frameworks and assessment schemes are:

- ✓ Offering diagnostics and support with developing learning and behavioural strategies for adults with SpLDs
- ✓ The ways to ensure quality in adult education in general
- ✓ Quality of education for adult learners with SpLD in Primary Schools for Adults
- ✓ Determining the methods and forms of implementation of education for children, minors and young adults with special educational needs.

The key outcomes identified:

- Adults themselves turn to the Institute because they are having difficulties and would like to know exactly what is their difficulties in order to deal with it more effectively in their everyday lives. The institute is not supported by government financially or in other way. Testing and issuing a certificate are services that need to be financed by the client. *Thus, there is lack of support from the public sector, lack of recognition of the problem, while real need for testing and identification of the SpLDs exists.*
- Quality Education self-evaluation guidance in Slovenia states that is targeted to all adult citizens of Slovenia and that they all are supported in exercising their right to quality education. However, the process of self-evaluation for adult education providers offered by Slovenian Institute of Adult Education *does not refer to SpLDs learners*. There is a gap in this need which has to be addressed.
- Adult SpLDs learners are very likely individuals with *certain talents* such as practical skills *which are not expressed* in Primary school for Adults
- Adults with SpLDs need learning approaches adapted to their specific needs, emotional support and special pedagogical support which is not available to them by law and depends on teacher's knowledge, skills and sensibility regarding this issue.
- Adult persons with SpLDs might face more difficulties in some areas comparing to their young/underaged counterparts. For example, many of them were not formally diagnosed as persons with SpLDs, consequently they have been unable to benefit from financial support or support of their learning process. This issue is partly addressed in Slovenia with Orientation of Children with Special Needs Act, however it is still limited and more support and recognition is needed.

Reviews and articles

Totally AZM studied 6 different literature sources, 3 of which referred to SpLDs learners.

List of resources analysed:

1. Characteristics and special needs of adults with low educational achievements, article by dr. Marija Kavkler and dr. Milena Košak Babuder, Andrigoški center Slovenije, 2017
2. Common characteristics and needs of adults with special learning difficulties, article by dr. Lidija Magajna, Društvo Bravo, 2004
3. Motivation and adult learning, article by dr. Sabina Jelenc Krašovec, dr. Livija Knaflič, Ema Perme, ZIK Črnomelj, ACS, 2007
4. "Socialising, curiosity, width...", benefits/impact of informal adult education, article by Natalija Vrečer, Andrigoška spoznanja, 2014
5. Dyslexia among adults: Developing personal strategies and talents, article by prof. dr. Ana Krajnc, Andrigoška spoznanja, 2006
6. How adults learn, article by Marko Radovan, Andrigoška spoznanja, 2016

Key factors under discussion:

- Adaptation of a teaching process for educational success of adults with SpLDs, provision of constant support, regular assessment of the progress of SpLDs learners.
- Important motivating factors for adult learners
- Efficient learning and adaptation to life of adult learners (including SpLDs)
- Informal adult education as an important part of lifelong learning
- Dyslexia among adults as a combination of abilities and problems
- The most important characteristics of adult learners leading to successful learning

The key outcomes identified

- A need exists for teachers who would be able to adapt every day contents to their learners with SpLDs.
- Important to treat learners with SpLDs equally with other learners in terms of recognition and acknowledging their strengths if we want them to be able to overcome their difficulties and help them towards the success
- The crucial motivating factors leader to success in adult learning were identified as following: gaining useful knowledge for everyday life, positive experience with learning, enable learners to use their experience
- Factors influencing the quality of AEP (including for learners with SpLDs) include: positive environment, adaptations, support/help, short-term goals
- Lifelong learning is one of efficient ways towards enrichment and satisfaction in adults' lives, but it's important to consider: competences of teachers, suitable teaching methods (dynamic usage of different methods), supportive participants in a group, exchange of experience
- Important factors to consider regarding learners with dyslexia: to accept their differences, to accept their compensation strategies which help them to be more successful at school, no pressure in learning process, to build on their strengths and talents
- Life-centered learning, adaptation of education programs, collaboration among participants and participants and a teacher are key factors ensuring successful adult learning.

PROMEIA

Promeia has analysed 4 different assessment schemes and frameworks and 6 literature reviews

Assessment schemes

Out of 4 assessment schemes studies by Promeia 2 were regarding learners with SpLDs.

The frameworks/ assessment schemes analysed:

1. Framework for the certification of adult educators
2. National Framework for the Quality Evaluation of Adult Education programs of Professional Training and Upskilling (2017)
3. National Framework on Special Education Programs (as revised in 2019)

4. Private platform for the promotion of English as second language for Greek learners with SPLDs “Special English”

The key factors under discussion:

- assessment for educators in non- formal adult education in dimensions: competency of knowledge in the subject of teaching, competency of knowledge in adult education methods and techniques, teaching competency and practical teaching skills, assessment of previous experience
- quality evaluation in the dimensions of quality of programme content, correspondence with the European Qualifications Framework, job market links, project based educational activities and learning methods
- inclusion in special education, quality of educational processes, functionality of educational processes, multidisciplinary learning methods
- multidimensional assessment of learners needs and provision of adapted knowledge

The key outcomes identified:

- For AEP quality the role of the adult educator and flexibility to new educational challenges are important
- To ensure AEP efficiency, evaluation can be pursued by experienced adult educators with broad experience in the field to ensure that candidates skills are evaluated according to actual needs of the learners
- Shifting the focus of the AE programs from the traditional learning methods to the project-based learning (1) and curriculum that includes the open dialogues in social and professional issues of learners’ interest (2) is benefiting for the learning results of adult learners.
- There is constant upskilling of special educators upon the conceptualization of disability and SPLDs.
- digitalization and adaptation to student needs in comparison to the traditional learning methods are proven to be beneficial
- Learners with SPLDs that study in traditional schools or educational institutions are excluded by the innovative methods applied in the institutions of Special education.
- An individual learners’ approach and frequent assessment of learner’s condition are positive for AE quality for SpLDs.

Reviews and articles

Out of 6 studies analysed by Promea, 3 were regarding learners with SpLDs.

List of resources analysed:

1. Motivation in Adult Education: An approach to expectation- value theory, Dimos Michael, 05/10/2020
2. Success factors for distance learning educational programmes with the support of Digital Technology in the framework of non- formal adult education: The case study of Vocational

Training Centre of the University of Patras, Review published by Pavlos Papalamprakopoulos, Patras, June 2019

3. The gender dimension of access to LLL: incentives and participation barriers, report published by Maria Papanikolaou, Rhodes, June 2017
4. The normalization of learners with special learning difficulties by the Greek system of formal education: the case of dyslexia, report published by Marianna Kapiri, University of Peloponnesse, Korinthos 2018
5. Adult education for learners with dyslexia, report published by Nefeli Apostolaki, Hellenic Open University, Patras, August 2020
6. Learning obstacles in adult education, article published by Galiropoulos Christos, Giannoukos Georgios, Hioctour Basilios, Scientific Journal of Pedagogy and Education, 2018

The key factors under discussion:

- quality profit value of the adult education programme
- success factor for quality of the educational services
- quality of learning directed to SpLDs learners
- gender dimension in the AE process
- learning methods in the framework of formal AE

The key outcomes identified:

- progress monitoring mechanisms
- the crucial success factors ensuring AE quality are wide range of courses (non- existing in formal adult education), affordability, flexibility in structure, smart testing methods, satisfactory communication with educator, quality of learning materials
- the gender dimension is a key factor that needs to be considered seriously in the framework of adult education programmes to ensure quality of AEP.
- key elements to provide ae quality are structure of educational process, flexibility towards special cognitive skills, quality of the content of the programme, the role of adult educator

VHS

VHS analysed 3 assessment schemes and 6 literature reviews.

Assessment schemes

Out of 3 assessment schemes studies by VHS 2 were regarding learners with SpLDs.

The frameworks/ assessment schemes analysed:

1. Referral and Identification of Special Educational Needs (Braun, 2020)
2. Systems of Support and Specialist Provision (Germany) (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2020)
3. Das GRETA-Kompetenzmodell (Strauch, 2019)

The key factors under discussion:

- Special educational needs (children / young adults)
- Evaluation of skills of adult education trainers

The key outcomes identified:

- increased access to many aspects of education, i.e. schools, classrooms, educational programs, curriculum, learning materials, resources, instructional practices and accommodations is a positive trend in AEP currently
- the over-representation of minority and socioeconomic groups in the referral and identification of special education needs is one of negative trends in AE regarding SpLDs
- possibilities for improvement for AEPs regarding SpLDs in Germany are: to fix standards for main subjects, to optimise the transition in schooling; to intensify speech development programmes, especially for migrant pupils; to improve the reading ability and reading competence of German pupils, School autonomy, individual school programmes, access to information and communication technologies, individual education plan is based on the individual abilities and skills of the pupil with SpLDs.
- It is important for SpLDs to develop abilities and skills to solve specific problems successfully and responsibly in variable situations

Reviews and articles

5 of 6 sources analysed by VHS were with regards to SpLDs.

List of resources analysed:

1. Inclusive Education for Adults?! A closer look on the Practice of Action of Headmasters and Teachers in Second Chance Education (Stobrawe, 2020)
2. Heterogenität unter Geringqualifizierten DIE Bonn (Reutter, 2016)
3. Die Umsetzung inklusiver Erwachsenenbildung mit Menschen mit Lernschwierigkeiten (Babilon, 2017)
4. Inklusiver Erwachsenenbildung in Deutschland (Ackerman, 2019)
5. Country profiles of formal and non-formal adult education opportunities in literacy, numeracy and other skills: Germany (Grotlüschen, 2016)
6. 4th Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2019)

The key factors under discussion:

- Second chance schools / diverse Learning disabilities
- Low skilled adults education
- Barriers in education with regards to inclusion and SpLDs support
- Inclusive learning offers
- Low-skilled adults in numeracy and literacy
- Adult learning global report

The key outcomes identified:

- Sensitized listening is vital for teachers.
- Heterogeneity/Diversity is an issue more so than ever in the evolving classrooms of second chance schools.
- Learners need to experience moments of success in order to stay motivated
- The willingness and ability to engage in lifelong learning is important because those who experience learning only as a lifelong burden to adapt to classrooms will then try to avoid this obligation.
- Cooperation with target group organisations and support from local authorities in order to make the courses accessible is crucial.
- Key issues to assure AEP availability to learners are Raising awareness with all stakeholders, create a reader friendly course program, enquire and register about courses in various places, accessible learning locations
- Progress in participation in adult learning and education is insufficient and they have to do more to enhance participation: i.e. marginalized groups do not take part in AE. Lowest increase in participation was seen by adults with disabilities, older or part of minority groups.
- Poor data leads to not enough information about the needs of the vulnerable groups of learners. This either is due to the fact surveys are not filled out or in adequate responses in regards to policy, governance, finance, quality and participation is absent or limited.
- Quality in adult education especially in the area of active citizenship which is vital in promoting and protecting freedom, equality, democracy, human rights, tolerance and solidarity.

FU

Assessment schemes

Out of 4 assessment schemes studied by FU 3 of them were regarding learners with SpLDs.

The frameworks/ assessment schemes analysed:

1. Investigation of disabled students in the school
2. Pedagogical evaluation as a guide from authority for education development, Sweden
3. Report: EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EU AGENDA 4 in Sweden by National educational authority
4. Work with extra adaptations, special support and action programs, National agency for education, Sweden

The key factors under discussion:

- responsibility for education and nursing in connection with the education of disabled students
- General guides of evaluation of learners
- Municipalities' conditions for implement changes in adult education
- The need for support of SpLD students

The key outcomes identified:

- It is important that the state's and others 'complementary efforts do not counteract the municipalities' initiative to use and develop their resources effectively for the education of disabled children and young people
- There is a trend in today's global society, to prioritize the measurable and quantifiable. There is a need for new evaluation models that can be used for evaluation of complex initiatives for sustainable development of AEP.
- AEP should investigate the need for and conditions for creating clearer national support for the principals' systematic quality work with regard to adult education and its results in relation to the needs of the labor market.
- It is potentially benefiting for AEP to investigate the need to produce a national support material for the development of adult education, based on the priorities of the EU agenda (innovativeness)
- Teachers and other school staff make an assessment of a student's need for extra adaptations or special support based on how the student develops in the direction of the knowledge goals in the curriculum second part or towards reaching the minimum knowledge requirements to be achieved.
- When assessing the student's need for extra adaptations in municipal adult education, special education for adults as well as education in Swedish for immigrants, the assessment is proceeded from how the student develops towards reaching the knowledge requirements in each course
-

Reviews and articles

FU has analysed 6 different sources, 3 of them referring to SpLDs at various levels.

List of resources analysed:

1. Phenomenographic study of digital technology in Swedish for immigrants level D
2. Literacy development for adult illiterate SFI students: A qualitative study of working methods in literacy teaching
3. Internet use and digital participation in everyday life: Adolescents and young adults with intellectual disabilities / Kristin Alfredsson Ågren
4. Chronicle of Higher Education Student Needs Have Changed. Advising Must Change, Too.
5. Adults with Low Skills and Learning Disabilities
6. Adult Education and Training, Sweden. EACEA report

The key factors under discussion:

- Newly arrived learners of pensioner age with immigrant background the key outcomes identified
- Access to digital tools by SpLDs learners
- Literacy of SpLDs learners
- Internet use and digital access
- Advising students with mental-health issues
- Adults with Low Skills and Learning Disabilities

The key outcomes identified:

- the teacher of learners with SPLD needs to be trained in how digital technology is used in language training
- It is not enough for students to use technology during the lesson, but the teaching and working methods also need to change
- literacy teaching should be adapted to the students as much as possible to include the students in the teaching and make them feel involved
- the most used way of working in the teaching by teachers of illiterate learners is pictures
- there is a gap in internet access and use and in digital participation by adolescents and young adults with SpLDs.
- The needs of learners has changed dramatically over last years, especially those with mental health issues, at-high risk of drop out (SpLD).
- SpLDs report limited participation in formal education, lower educational attainment and employment, and high rates of coexisting disabilities and poor health. This issue needs to be addressed systematically.

POU

Assessment schemes

POU has assessed 1 framework, which was not regarding specifically learners with SpLDs, but a general one.

The framework scheme analysed:

Agency for Vocational Education and Training (Adult education in Croatia)

The key factors under discussion:

- adult education is recognized as an important component of the education system, supported by a number of important strategic documents.
- adult education as a process of learning of adults aimed to exercise the right to free personality development, training in order to increase employability (acquisition of qualifications for the initial profession, retraining, acquisition and deepening of professional knowledge, skills and abilities) and active citizenship education.
- adult education is based on following principles: lifelong learning; rational use of educational opportunities, territorial proximity and universal access to education under equal conditions and in accordance with the abilities; freedom and autonomy in choosing the manner of content, form, means and methods; respect for diversity and inclusion; professional and ethical responsibilities of andragogic workers; guarantees of the quality of the educational offer and respect for the personality and dignity of each participant.

The key outcomes identified:

- the Renewed European Agenda for Adult Learning adopted by the Council of the European Union in 2011 emphasizes that adult education is a key component of lifelong learning and covers a range of formal, non-formal and informal educational activities, both general and vocational, that adults engage in after completing initial education and training.

Reviews and articles

POU has analysed 6 different resources, 2 of them were regarding SpLDs.

List of resources analysed:

1. National Library of Medicine
2. EDUCATION FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP VOL 8 NR 2 (2018)
3. Quality management in Adult Education
4. Document issued by the Croatian Ministry of Science, Education and Sport
5. Croatian Startup Omoguru
6. 2nd International Conference "Vallis Aurea" 2010

The key factors under discussion:

- effective literacy instruction for adults with specific learning disabilities: implications for adult educators
- the trends of the adult education in Croatia
- major factors influencing quality in adult education
- developing higher quality and more integrated adult education program in Croatia
- dyslexia
- trends in adult education in Croatia

The key outcomes identified:

- instructional factors that affect literacy outcomes for adults with SpLDs, such as: the use of explicit instruction, instructional technology, intensive tutoring in skills, strategies embedded in authentic contexts
- it's important with creating the knowledge society and sustainable development of social and economic life
- establishing various study programs for the needs of current and new professions, in order to meet the market demands is relevant for SpLDs learners
- building new theories of education, which take into account everything that was proven throughout the years
- improving readability and providing a better visual impact is beneficial for SpLDs learners

SUMMARY OF DESK RESEARCH

The partners have done comprehensive analysis of the key factors affecting quality of education of SpLDs learners. Such aspects as literature reviews and different assessment frameworks were overviewed and reported. Partners developed the analysis based on national and EU frameworks existing in the sector of adult education specifically relating to SPLDs. The crucial issues that affect the education of SpLDs learners can be divided concerning the learners itself, educators, and institutions.

With regards to SpLDs learners research showed that the following factors are one of the most important: early detection of specific needs, encouragement of the learners, avoiding facing unemployment or social exclusion, adaptation to the labour market. Regarding the educators such factors were mentioned: constant support to teachers and upskilling, effective communication with learners, understanding of working routine and the methodology for inclusion of SpLDs in the classroom. With regards to institutions the key factors mentioned are: use of evidence-based learning techniques, provision of possibilities for exchange of experience, mobility, engagement of institutions with leading EU experts and best practices. Other important issues are provision of technical support and all necessary adaptations needed for specific requirements of learners with SpLDs.

Summary table of results of desk research

The research showed great variety of challenges and needs encountered by SpLDs learners in partner countries. The findings showed that the challenges and important factors for successful learning of SpLDs individuals can be analysed at 3 levels: the level of learners, educators and institutions. Therefore, the key factors summarized from the research of partner countries at each level are presented below.

SpLD learners

- early detection of specific needs,
- acknowledgement of successes and accomplishments,
- focusing of strengths,
- encouragement of the learners,
- post-learning support,
- prevention of NEET and social exclusion,
- adaptation to the labour market.

Adult educators

- constant support to teachers and upskilling,
- provision of required resources,
- effective communication with learners,
- understanding working routine and the methodology for inclusion of SpLDs in the classroom.

Institutions

- systematic use of evidence-based learning techniques,
- provision of possibilities for exchange of experience, mobility,
- engagement of institutions with leading EU experts and constant sharing of best practices,
- ensuring cooperation and support from relevant public institutions.

FIELD RESEARCH

GENERAL OVERVIEW

Each partner conducted interviews with 8-12 adult education providers in their partner country. The format of interviews was semi structured. The main discussion points included aspects like: awareness of population of the education programme available for SpLD learners, needs of learners with SpLDs, effectiveness of adult training provision for learners with SpLDs. Interviews included 7 questions stated in methodology of the research.

Key issues under discussion included:

- awareness in educational programs for adult learners with SpLDs offering
- unique needs of learners with SpLDs
- main parameters for assessing the effectiveness of adult training
- all tools for learners with SpLDs to succeed in education (access to online tools, evaluation forms adapted to their needs, technological support, etc)
- motivation of learners with SpLDs to return to their studies after a short or long absenteeism
- delivering training to learners with SpLDs
- envision of equal rights and opportunities to learners with SpLDS

Key performance indicators according to methodology were:

The number of interviews per partner:

AZM – 10 interviews

FU – 12 interviews

Promea – 8 interviews

POU – 8 interviews

VHS - 12 interviews

INPUT FROM PARTNERS

AZM

Totally AZM conducted 12 interviews with different AEP employees from 9 various institutions.

The average amount of years of experience of interviewee is 20.5 years, the average age of interviewee is 47 years. Organisations which AEP interviewees represented in Slovenia:

1. Maribor Adult Education Centre
2. Tehniški šolski center Maribor/Maribor Technical School Centre
3. Department of Special and Rehabilitation Pedagogy at Faculty of education/University of Ljubljana
4. Adult Education Organizer Organisation: Ajdovščina Adult Education Centre
5. Murska Sobota Adult Education Centre

6. Koper Adult Education Centre
7. Slovenian 3rd Age University
8. Rogaška Slatina Adult Education Centre
9. Dyslexia Institute

The key findings are the following.

With regards to awareness in educational programs for adult learners with SpLDs offering the key channels used are social media, website, employment services, various relevant societies, and organisations. It is relevant with network of organisations in the local environment, contact with society involving persons with SpLDs, the portal for teachers and parents (Ringaraja.si), public lectures, collaboration with colleagues working at similar institutions.

Unique needs of learners with SpLDs include such needs as encouragement, motivation, repetitive instructions, raising self-confidence, social contacts with persons with similar issues: exchange of information, giving feedback, praise, learning skills, note taking skills, need for success/ results which gives them willpower to continue, content adapted programmes, adapted materials, more time, a lot of individual work. In most cases their problems have been compensated and they have found their own strategies to cope with their difficulties. Some of them have become aware of their advantages due to their dyslexia. Problems arise when they do not know about their being dyslectics or when they do not have a lot of knowledge about it. It is important that mentors, teachers have expertise about how people learn and memorise and also about dyslexia.

Now under the lockdown Remote schooling is a particular challenge for adults with SpLDs, which should be addressed.

Main parameters for assessing the effectiveness of adult training are number of educational programmes offered, number of participants, evaluation questionnaires upon programme completion, satisfaction of AEPs and partners. Practically oriented learning contents which are set up according to the needs of the labour market and interests expressed by individual learners are important to consider. Animation should not be focused on their difficulties rather on their possible advantages they should dwell on. Contents of the educational programme should be related to evidenced situations at work and in everyday life.

There have been several necessary tools for learners with SpLDs to succeed in education which are used and showed to be successful and helpful to increase the adult education level. These include individual attention offered to participants with SLDs, offering support and adjustments to achieve success, collaboration of teachers and organisers to be constantly aware of the learners' needs. Other important aspects are individual attention to each learner, building a team around each person with SpLDs, counselling, work on personal and educational empowerment, cost free learning support, additional consultations with teachers. Some technical adaptations can include: web page adapted to them as concerns colours, the choice of fonts, illustrations etc. Evaluation is often done orally to avoid using forms. A teacher of SpLDs can do a lot of research and provide extra learning material; it is easier now when every classroom has a computer and access to internet available. Differentiated instructions and lessons, individual approach, addressing the issues of irregular attendance, attention deficits, short time memory, graphomotor skills. Flexible learning process, individual learning support mostly in primary school for adult, programmes for

NEETs and other relevant trainings. Individual learning plans that take SpLD in consideration are beneficial as well for both learning process and inclusion of SpLDs.

Motivation of learners with SpLDs to return to their studies after a short or long absenteeism is important factor for the learners success. Regarding this the following aspects are important: regular contacts with students, occasional calls and words of encouragements, collaboration with organisations specified for working with persons with SpLDs to identify appropriate educational pathways for individuals, then continuous provision of help and support to avoid dropping out. Many teachers use techniques as personal approach, and guidance, individual learning support, inclusion in various supporting activities available.

Delivering training to learners with SpLDs has been proved to be challenging. Many AEP in Slovenia do not have specific protocol in place to assess the effectiveness of SpLDs educational progress; teachers are the ones who monitor their learning progress and offer individual learning support

Activities for learners which are flexible and adaptable to their needs, learning contents are divided in to smaller parts, more working breaks, inclusion of relaxation techniques has been proven to be beneficial. In adult education educational programmes are roughly drafted but goals to attain are clear at the beginning of the study year. In the course of the year they are being adapted to the students' preferences. Students contribute their own sources of knowledge. If students are dyslectics, more adaptations are needed. Extra time and attention dedicated to learners with SpLDs, always starting the teaching process with checking the existing knowledge. Adaptation of learning content supported by visual learning aids is relevant. Flexible learning processes (lessons and breaks, methods, materials), availability of mentors who offer learning support on an individual level proved to be beneficial.

Regarding envision of equal rights and opportunities to learners with SpLDs many educators noted the importance of personal engagement

Promea

Promea has interviewed 8 different AEPs. The average age of the interviewee 47 years old, the average work experience duration is 24 years.

The respondents were from the following organisations:

1. Orange House classes- Teaching Greek language to Refugees and Asylum Seekers from Africa.
2. Education and job consultant for people with mental diseases and SpLDs
3. Vocational Training Centre acknowledged by the State
4. University of Piraeus on adult education and digital technologies
5. The network Special English for learners with SpLDs
6. SpeLL Educational Centre for Special learning difficulties
7. Lifelong Learning Centres/ author of the book: Adult Education in Greece, The structure of Lifelong Learning Centres
8. Freelancer adult education consultant

The key findings of the interviews included:

To ensure awareness regarding the adult education services the SpLDs learners in Greece are directed by state services, social organizations, NGOs, it varies widely on the kind of SpLDs. There are many immigrants/newly arrived in Greece, the challenge for them is mostly different educational backgrounds, which makes it complicated to find and reach relevant level of adult education. Sometimes newly arrived comprehend adult learning programme which supports SpLDs as disability and taboo and they try to avoid any further. Therefore, the information regarding the SpLDs special educational provisions might be a reason for potential learners not to register in the programmes. Some bigger state organisations are already well known to SpLDs learners since the institution is well known locally/nationally. Other sources to rise awareness commonly include: websites, social media, advertisement, academic consultants, connection to the state and municipality institutions/services.

Unique needs of learners with SpLDs were discussed widely by Greek educational providers. Most of them commonly include easy and accessible learning materials (video, technical support). Many SpLDs presented the need for extra meetings and time for discussions, constant communication, sessions with teacher and academic consultant. Support from the educators or social scientists were mentioned as important factor among psychological needs as a mean to prevent drop out. Another issue mentioned was more time for performing different activities (writing, reading, calculation, tests), need for mentors or tutors to enhance success, addressing psychological trauma. Well-trained, flexible and sensitive educator who would understand and accept their uniqueness is also a common need of SpLDs learners.

Assessing the effectiveness of adult training provision include specific parameters when relating SpLDs, such as dropout rates evaluation, level of satisfaction, results in the final assessments of students, integration, and further achievements after education, employment rated in progress. Discussion for the strength/potential and the weaknesses of the programme with learners in key as well.

Ensuring that SpLDs have what they need to succeed in education (tools and support) is one of the priorities for some institutions now, it is also one of the strategies defined by the EU agenda. To achieve this Greek AEPs use such methods as provision of necessary equipment to learners, online tools, offering special training for different issues to adult educators, creating learning materials based on the needs of our students, development of a certain study plan designed per student, where there are mentioned all the special needs. Another important factors included flexibility of the trainings, psychological support and consultation, follow-up and mentorship after studies, helping with integration and employment.

Another important factor for us to measure in field analysis was motivating learners with SpLDs to return to their studies in case of absenteeism or drop out. The successful ways of motivation include communication, explaining to people with SpLDs how they can overcome the difficulties, completion of the educational programme for their integration in the society and job market, explaining that it is vital for ensuring their return to the job market and their future survival. Making learners part of the educational planning and determining the progress of the learner with SpLD is also beneficial to avoid or tackle drop out.

Delivering training to learners with SpLDs include different practical methods such as classification and SpLD test upon registration, separate classes for SpLD learners but still

classified according to prior knowledge, study plan for SpLD learners which is updated upon the feedback of educators, different progress assessment in short period of time. Learners with SpLDs having constant sessions with psychologists/ social workers and job consultants is beneficial in the long run. Another methods are digitalized presentations and recorded lectures, different time frameworks for progress reports and oral or digitalized phonological exams for students with SpLDs. To envision equal rights and opportunities to learners with SpLDs is important for both institutions and SpLDs individuals. To achieve this research showed that it is important to address employment organizations for further co-operation between and reduce unemployment in SpLDs learners, digital education, multiple communication channels. The potential challenge in this is that the state system recognises SpLDs as disabled which limits further potential development, which is a huge challenge on the way to providing equal rights and opportunities.

VHS

VHS has contacted 10 AEPs from Germany. The average age of the interviewee is 53 years, average working experience length is 18 years.

The following organisations:

1. BBV e.V. / Association to support further vocational education in adult education centres
2. Werner von Siemens Berufsschule Cham / Vocational School
3. VHS im Lkrs Cham, department of languages and literacy courses, expert working working for various adult education centres in Germany
4. BVV Bavarian Association of adult education centres
5. District Office Cham
6. VHS im Lkrs. Cham, department of vocational, qualification courses and counselling services for learners with special needs, second chance school
7. Youth Migration Service
8. Diocese/Adult Education, Johanniter Unfallhilfe
9. Supporting service for women / VHS Cham
10. Vocational School in Cham
11. Bildungseinrichtung KolpingBildungswerk / Education centre
12. VHS im Lkrs Cham, department of VET courses for adult learners

Field analysis showed that awareness of the SpLDs learners about the educational program is achieved by cooperation with different organisations (job centre, employment agency, youth welfare office), work of the administration / head office of the centres, information in the website, printed flyers / brochures, provision of information to other umbrella organisations. Separate challenge is provision of awareness about educational program among SpLDs with immigrant background.

Unique needs of learners with SpLDs specifically recognised by Cham VHS include need for Individual support from the trainer, focus on the action competences, necessity of building a stable

and continuous relationship between learners and trainers, differentiation of learner groups, more time for implementation of specific activities, exploration of the concrete learning methods, integrating learning assessments into educational process. Cooperative forms of learning, including peer-to-peer learning, including internal differentiation, wide range of social forms, introduction to digital learning resources, encouraging individual further learning, as well as deepen individual support/counselling, use of various teaching techniques considering various disorders have been also shown to be important. Assessing the effectiveness of adult training provision parameters include standard seminar evaluation forms (for both SpLDs and generally), individual social and emotional development assessment, entry level tests, indicators of success of the literacy learning offers, sustainability of the education offers, and their anchoring regionally in the context of lifelong learning, progress in learning, increasing confidence in dealing with tasks and requirements, increase in self-confidence, enjoyment of learning.

Results of the field research with VHS regarding ensuring that SpLDs have what they need to succeed in education in terms of tools and support included providing basic educational services such as counselling and support, individual educational measures, the evaluation forms or materials are adapted to SpLDs needs, adapted teaching structures, adapted curriculum. Individual exchange and reflection with learners including additional units has also been mentioned. At the same time convincing learners with SpLDs to return to their studies includes such strategies as positive reinforcement, and emphatic behaviour, addressing needs, feelings and interests of the learners, keeping personal contact with learners. It showed to be important to design of learning offers so that the adult learners can easily enter the learning process, and networking with social organisations and other services e.g. health care. Delivering training to learners with SpLDs normally employs such procedures as cooperation with job centres, educational counselling and coaching, specific learning structure: specified by changing the social form in 20-minute cycles (group work, partner work), individual approach, including individual learning plans. One of the strategically important issues is envision equal rights and opportunities to learners with SpLDS, which is provided by generally open and equal system in adult education in Germany. The challenge here is however, that SpLDs are rarely examined, especially with regard to the interaction between mainstream and special vocational schools. Sufficiently trained staff, small class or group sizes and appropriate further training measures are also factors for achieving equal opportunities for SpLDs.

FU

In Sweden 12 interviews was done with educators from different AEPs, organisations list included:

1. SFI training courses, Uppsala Municipality (5 persons)
2. Educational institution, Uppsala Municipality
3. Office for Social Sustainability within the municipal management office, Uppsala
4. TrimTab, Stockholm
5. Katarina skola, Uppsala Municipality
6. Loviselund institution, Stockholm Municipality
7. Youth organisation EKFB, Uppsala Municipality (2 persons)

Awareness of the SpLDs learners is one of the priorities in Sweden and for Folkuniversitetet. It is achieved with help of such tools as websites, social media, connection to municipalities, public bodies and organisations. Before the pandemics there were many physical meetings, such as

educational fairs, which encouraged learners to participate in specific educational programmes with specific attention to SpLDs to reach them. Some training programmes send yearly newsletters to learners who finish high school and would start adult education. Connection with important organisations help with disseminating the learning programme, such as regional authorities, municipalities, public employment services, job and consultation services.

Unique needs of learners with SpLDs are considered at many levels during the education. Many educators recognise such needs as time for activities, more attention and time from the teachers, personal assistant. Some mentioned that the needs depend on the specifics of the learners with SpLDs, customised study programme and evaluation is also important. The effectiveness of adult training provision parameters is often assessed with the following tools: national examinations to evaluate the level of knowledge of SpLDs, follow up evaluations are also used widely. One of the educators mentioned important parameter of presence of learner in the classroom and results of learner's progress. Harmonization/reconciliation between the educational programme and learner's needs can be one of the parameters as well.

Ensuring that SpLDs have what they need to succeed in education (tools and support) includes getting additional resources to work with learners with specific needs, both technical and human resources. Many educators noted that it is actually a problem, they think that SpLDs should get more resources and support from the government. In Sweden there are many educational organisations (for example Studieförbund) which can support adult learners in their specific learning needs. Digital education, technical support tools, extra adjustments are necessary means to ensure learners possibility to reach success in education. The strategy used by one of the educational providers to ensure success by SpLD learners is:

- start to work with students from detailed and wide interview to find out their needs, difficulties, strong sides, ambitions
- follow up by finding out how they experience their studies, what feelings, complications, positive/negative feedback
- provide enough support, teachers and special educators
- creating individual checklist for each student with plans, ambitions, gaps we need to tackle
- always update the list and add new areas
- monitor how learners improve and show progress
- investigate the situation of the students to help with anxiety and worry
- based on some specific needs (physical needs) refer to specialist or provide help in the institution

In order to motivate learners with SpLDs to return to their studies employ various procedures. Such measures has shown to be effective: communication and understanding reasons of absenteeism or drop out, show clear link between education and employment, life success and progress. A lot depends on relationships between teacher and learner, active listening. Educator should show understanding and support, not judgement.

Delivering training to learners with SpLDs involves such procedures as provision of extra time, resources and attention, inclusion of learners with SpLDs into the classroom, individual approach, providing support, involving special pedagogues, psychologists, mentors. AEPs employ different kinds of resources: technical (computers, hearing devices) and human (mentors, psychologists, personal assistants). The exam procedures can be adapted to the needs of the SpLD students. Envision equal rights and opportunities to learners with SpLDS is one of the strategic priorities in adult education in Sweden, according to Swedish agency for education guidance. It is reached by:

- making sure that learners train different skills which they are interested in and have potential to develop
- digital support, for example, learners get iPads or laptops
- some courses are on distance digitally to allow for example mother to stay home with children
- those learners of Swedish who are completely new in Sweden normally spend more time in the classroom.

Another important factor is to focus on those who have the most difficulty, go from the learners needs and opportunities, strengths.

POU

Total of 8 interviews was performed and analysed by POU. Average age of the interviewee is 45 years, average working experience is 14 years.

Organisations interviewed include:

1. Učilište Studium
2. Narodno učilište Rijeka
3. Educational Institution POUKA Karlovac
4. POU Bjelovar
5. Učilište Finis Zadar
6. Učiteljski fakultet Zagreb
7. POU Novska
8. POU Čakovec

Awareness of the SpLDs learners about the educational programs is achieved in Croatia by cooperation with other institutions, centers, associations, agencies, other educational institutions, appropriate authorities (red cross, Agency for vocational education). AEPs also inform learners through the local media (newspaper, radio, TV, internet portals), leaflets and visiting institutions. According to educators interviewed by POU, the unique needs of learners with SpLDs are individual approach and certain adjustments of the teaching methods and evaluation process. Some learners need additional stimulation and motivation for learning and specifically adjusted literature. Many of interviewees stated that each difficulty requires different approach/therapy.

Assessing the effectiveness of adult training provision include such parameters as percentage of participant that successfully complete their education and the percentage of participant who find the job in their profession for which they were educated. Ensuring that SpLDs have what they

need to succeed in education includes cooperation of institutions with professionals (educational rehabilitators, psychologists, pedagogues), monitoring the progress and asking for the feedback. Educators usually convince learners with SpLDs to return to their studies by reminding them of the positive sides of learning and education, to change the negative attitude which they might have because of the previous experience, by offering various educational programs which could be helpful during the employment process or acquiring new skills. Another important thing is a supporting dialogue and the support of the professionals.

Delivery of training to learners with SpLDs is performed by adjusting the teaching materials (font, colour, video materials), adjustment of the time needed to complete certain tasks (longer period for written tasks), adjustment of the grading procedure (participants can write their exams alone with the teacher if they need additional peace and quiet), different procedure of grading; emphasis on the oral examination if the participant has dysgraphia, or written examination if the participant has problems with verbal expression. Also, the emphasis on the group or individual work (depending on the need) is important.

Envisioning equal rights and opportunities to learners with SpLDS is achieved by organising the education for educators, creating the literature adjusted to people with SpLDs and arranging the helpers during the classes, Investment in equipment and teaching staff through professional trainings, teaching programs individualised for each particular student.

SUMMARY OF FIELD RESEARCH

Awareness of educational programs for learners with SpLDs

- sources: websites, social media, advertisement, academic consultants connection to the state and municipality institutions/services
- connections with bigger state/municipal organisations
- cooperation with job centers, social services.

Unique needs of learners with SpLDs

- adapted learning materials
- progressive way of teaching, interactions
- more time for activities
- constant communication, sessions with teacher and academic consultant.
- tutoring, mentorship, building a stable and continuous relationship between learners and trainers

Parameters for assessing the effectiveness of AEP

- dropout rates evaluation, level of satisfaction
- results in the final assessments of students, integration
- further achievements after education
- satisfaction of education
- personal development
- percentage of participant that successfully complete their education
- the percentage of participant who find the job in their profession for which they were educated

Training delivery/Support tools for SpLDs

- technical tools
- individual approach
- cooperation with coaches, job centers
- psychological and mental support
- providing enough time for performing specific learning tasks

Ensuring success

- providing more time and attention
- individual approach
 - more resources is needed
- individual checklist for each student with plans, ambitions, gaps
 - follow up

Motivation to come back to learning

- make them part of the educational planning
 - communication
- show clear link between education and employment, life success and progress

Envision equality

- updating learning methods
- digital technologies
- teaching adjusted to people with SpLDs and arranging the helpers during the classes
 - investment in equipment and teaching staff through professional trainings

The results of the desk and field research allowed consortium to analyse and summarize the key factors affecting the quality of adult education for SpLDs learners. It is important to note that due to different state legislation and policy structure within adult education the results were different from partners. One of the main outcomes of the research is that not all the countries addressed centralized provision of AE. We understand this limitation, and considering this we try to suggest the common criteria. We summarised the criteria for AEP effectiveness based on common findings, challenges and potential for development. The key criteria that we suggest are at 3 levels identified during the research: SpLDs learners, adult educators, and institutions. Each level has own shortages and challenges and requires individual approach on the way to ensure effectiveness in adult education with specifics of SpLDs learners.

With regards to SpLDs learners (needs and deficiencies)

1. Testing and early identification of SpLDs

Many organisations mentioned that adult learners with SpLDs, whose difficulties were not identified/diagnosed, may encounter challenges and loss of potential for further progress. While the testing and identification procedures depend a lot on the state system and legislation, there is still an opportunity for AEPs to make sure that the SpLD is identified at least when the training program is started. For example, AEP can refer the learner for the testing procedure within other relevant institution, if some difficulties in the learning process are encountered by the educator. Important issue to consider is differences between capacities of private and public institutions while private facilities are usually more flexible, public institutions work according to strategic/policy regulations within their countries, in some cases public institutions can be more limited financially and in resources to identify SpLDs in particular learners.

Such aspects are important to account when assessing AEP capacity for SpLDs identification.

- Multidimensional assessment of learners needs
- Adapt the approach of testing within the institution or center
- Consider the distinction between private and public institutions

2. Recognising strengths and potential of SpLDs instead of focusing on weaknesses

When referring to work with SpLDs it is a common strategy to focus on their shortages and problems in order to solve them. While at some point this may be benefiting in the short term, providing solving the concrete challenge of the learner. In the long term it may bring negative consequences and limit the ability of the learner's independency, success and development. Thus, it is important to find and acknowledge the strong sides of the learners with SpLDs and use this potential in the educational process, as well as during further post-educational support of the learner. Moreover, data suggests that many learners with particular SpLDs become more successful than average in some specific areas. The classic example is prevalence of dyslexia among successful entrepreneurs.

Important factors from the research regarding focusing on the learner's strengths:

- boosting self-confidence of the learner
- focus on recognising and updating of existing skills, education (especially relevant for newly arrived immigrants)
- learners need to experience moments of success in order to stay motivated
- adults actively engage in education and training
- empowerment
- understanding and accepting differences of SpLDs learners, to accept their compensation strategies
- accepting and learning to work with diversity/multiculturalism

3. **Ensuring and monitoring post-educational progress of the learners** (employability, inclusion in society, further learning)

In today's education climate, AE success is defined as ensuring achievement of important 'societal milestones', such as successful employment and inclusion in the society. This factor is particularly important when addressing learners with SpLDs from disadvantaged groups of the society. The particular issues to consider here include:

- preventing drop out
- frequent assessment of learner's condition related to the educational and post-educational progress
- development of "key competencies": abilities and skills available or learnable by individuals to solve specific problems successfully and responsibly in variable situations
- avoid the risk of long-term exclusion
- adults engage in after completing initial education and training

4. **Accessibility and awareness of SpLDs about AEP**

Promoting accessibility to AEP for SpLDs learners is key task to ensure sustainability and progress for SpLDs learners life-wide. To provide awareness of the adult education programs to the learners is crucial for their engagement in the programs. Different EU countries and providers has various strategies to ensure awareness. A lot depends on the type of institutions, whether it is private or public provider, how much resources the provider has, and which connections the institution possess at local and national level.

Important parameters which show the level of accessibility and awareness to AEPs by learners are:

- level of awareness and connection with all stakeholders
- create a reader friendly course program
- enquire and register about courses in various places
- accessible learning locations
- make courses available in public educational systems with inclusive classrooms
- bring together more than just learners with SpLDs and learners without, provide offers which bring together a diverse age group of learners or nationalities. some examples: book clubs, orchestra, gardening

- improve the access to informal and non-formal training, which extends to promoting lifelong learning at the end of compulsory school, provide guidance to companies with proactive human resource management.

With regards to educators

5. **Ensuring constant upskilling of adult educators**

The constant development and improvement of skills of the staff is generally a good indicator of AE quality level. The upskilling can be provided upon the conceptualization of SpLDs in AEP through including ensuring knowledge exchange through innovative practices and international initiatives. The important elements and ways that can provide upskilling are:

- provision of needed resources (human, technical)
- mobility, EU projects
- multimedia, MOOC courses
- asynchronous learning

6. **Recognition of needs of SpLDs, effective communication, prioritisation**

Constant communication, meaningful dialogue, understanding are milestones for sustainable learning and adaptation of SpLDs learners. The understanding and communication is particularly important with work with SpLDs learners considering that there is a great variety of special needs, and each learner would need individual approach. Thus it is crucial to recognise:

- role of educators in the learning process as dialogue between educator and student
- sensitized listening is vital for teachers.
- flexibility in the learning process with SpLDs learners

With regards to system/institutions

7. **Updating methods and forms** of implementation of education for SpLDs learners

Common structure for implementation of education in the institutions with regards to SpLDs learners can provide more efficient results. Constant updating and improvement of methods of teaching for learners can also be one of the criteria for effectiveness of AE.

The updating can be monitored in the following areas:

- Inclusion of SpLDs in general learning environment
- use evidence-based learning methods for successful education
- building new theories of education, which consider everything that was proven with evidence research throughout the years

- inclusive environment of the learning space and diversity (inequalities in adult education are often ignored by policy makers, which excludes vulnerable groups, i.e. older adults, adults with disabilities, rural locals and adults with low education)
- cooperation with target group organisations and support from local authorities in order to make the courses accessible, this may be by using public transportation, team teaching, assisting, coaching, advising and so on.
- shifting the focus of the AE programs from the **traditional learning** methods to **the project-based learning or more innovative learning**

8. **Systematic quality assurance** with regards to education of SpLDs as part of routine producers of the institution. Quality assurance is strategic tool that supports effectiveness and monitoring of education. It is important to ensure that AEP has common and systematic procedure to monitor quality of education, and some elements in it which would particularly address the work with SpLDs learners.

Such aspects can be considered as part of quality assurance are:

- level of satisfaction of SpLDs learners with education
- addressing specific challenges of SpLDs
- assessing the progress of the learners including improvement of soft skills along with the progress in the educational program
- dealing with transition from traditional to innovative learning
- monitoring for innovativeness

9. Provision of **necessary adjustments/ flexibility** of institution including aspect of digitalisation

SpLDs learners are diverse and each of them have specific challenges to overcome. Therefore making sure that AEP has possibility to provide necessary adjustments is crucial for sustainable learning. The following aspects should be considered there:

- accessibility and affordability
- technical support
- individual learners' approach which is adapted either in individual or group classes.
- cooperation with target group organisations and support from local authorities in order to make the courses accessible, this may be by using public transportation, team teaching, assisting, coaching, advising and so on.

10. Updated and **adjusted curriculum**

The curriculum which can be adapted to particular challenges of SpLDs learners is important for AEPs to incorporate in routine to provide effectiveness of the training. The curriculum of the APE working with SPLDs should ideally have the capacity to:

- include the open dialogues in social and professional issues of learners' interest
- multidisciplinary curriculum

SUMMARY OF THE CRITERIA



Learners

- Identification of SpLDs
- Recognising strengths and potential
- Ensuring post-educational progress
- Awareness about AEP



Educators

- Constant upskilling
- Recognition of needs and effective communication



Institutions

- Updating methods and forms of education
- Systematic quality assurance
- Provision of necessary adjustments
- Updated curriculum