



EBSN's Vienna Conference Declaration 2022

§1. The participants in the European Basic Skills Network 2022 hybrid conference, held simultaneously in Vienna and online, pledge to continue working to promote quality in European and national systems for basic skills learning provision. This includes cooperating to implement the new European Agenda for Adult Learning and continuing to especially focus on the Upskilling Pathways recommendation. We recognize the advances made but are still conscious of the need to encourage all European stakeholders to recognize basic skills as a central factor in all policy aiming at increasing resilience, promoting equity and inclusion, enabling participation, and leading to a more sustainable and democratic Europe.

§2 The present Conference Declaration builds on and upholds all previous EBSN Conference Declarations (Berlin 2018, Tallinn 2019, Online 2020, Valletta 2021), which reminded policy makers of their responsibility to develop coherent, adequately financed and robust national policies and programs for basic skills, finance further research on basic skills related issues, and develop models for learner-centred delivery and adequate systems for continuous professional development of teachers and trainers working with adult basic skills. This Conference Declaration also supports the recommendations included in the European Commission's New Agenda for Adult Learning, especially those regarding the need for a much greater inter-ministerial and inter-sectorial cooperation, as well as coordination between funding structures.

§3 A series of disruptive global changes in recent years have substantially increased the challenges experienced both by individuals and by society at large. To build individual and social resilience it is imperative that all adults have access to quality provision of a dynamic set of skills. Basic Skills continue to be the core focus, but they need to be acquired in a context that acknowledges and develops Life Skills.

Financial literacy, health literacy, entrepreneurship, environmental awareness, critical thinking skills, digital safety awareness, conflict solving skills, democratic and peace-fostering values need to be part of a Life Skills approach. A dynamic set of skills should be learnt and developed through a learner-centred approach in robust and sustainable programs organized throughout Europe.

§4 The need for more basic digital education in the population at large is currently both a challenge and a possibility for reaching new target groups. Robust, flexible, low-threshold models of learning need to be developed and evaluated. These models may include in person, online, teacher-moderated and, or autonomous delivery or a combination.



Lessons learnt from positive experiences need to become the basis for future practice. Fostering autonomous learning practices in learners builds resilience and preparedness for future disruptions. Special efforts must be made to design and implement sustainable models adapted to the needs and resources of adults with very low levels of basic skills.

§5 The current need for coherent national profiles for teachers and tutors of basic skills for adults must be met by models that provide a base for accredited professional development, allowing professionals to follow clear educational pathways that include validation of prior learning.

§6 The participants in the EBSN 2022 conference pledge to continue working to meet the need for upskilling of basic skills teachers throughout Europe, by

- ▶ Developing, delivering, implementing and evaluating sustainable projects aimed at developing models for professional development of teachers,
- ▶ Contributing where possible to the current work for the creation of EBSN Professional Development Series, PDS,
- ▶ Cooperating with the EBSN and with their national networks to adapt the PDS and the CBS (Capacity Building Series) to the needs of their respective countries,
- ▶ Sharing within the frame of the EBSN network their examples of good practice regarding the establishment of sustainable models for learning, including blended learning, in basic skills provision.

§7 The participants in the EBSN 2022 conference continue to recognize the global dimension of the challenges we face. They are keen to continue to contribute to work with these international challenges, supporting Unesco's Global Alliance for Literacy (GAL), will endorse and support the results of the CONFINTEA VII conference where these align with the EBSN Conference Declarations. We welcome the possibility to interact with basic skills stakeholders beyond Europe.

Endorsed by the participants at the EBSN's 2022 Vienna Conference

June 10th, 2022