

# Advancing Lifelong Learning and Adult Basic Skills for an Inclusive Europe

*A Flemish Policy Perspective*

Ewoud De Sadeleer, Flemish Education Council  
European Basic Skills Network June 19th 2025

# Flemish Education Council

Strategic advisory council for  
education and training policy  
(Flemish community)



# Focus

- Flemish adult education
  - Two types of training centres
  - Key numbers, with a focus on basic skills
- Flemish government policy and its imminent challenges

# Flemish adult education

- Mission as part of the decree on adult education
- 3 functions:
  1. Obtain qualifications that provide an advantage on the labour market
  2. Train basic and functional literacy skills
  3. Lifewide learning

# Two types of training centres with different target groups

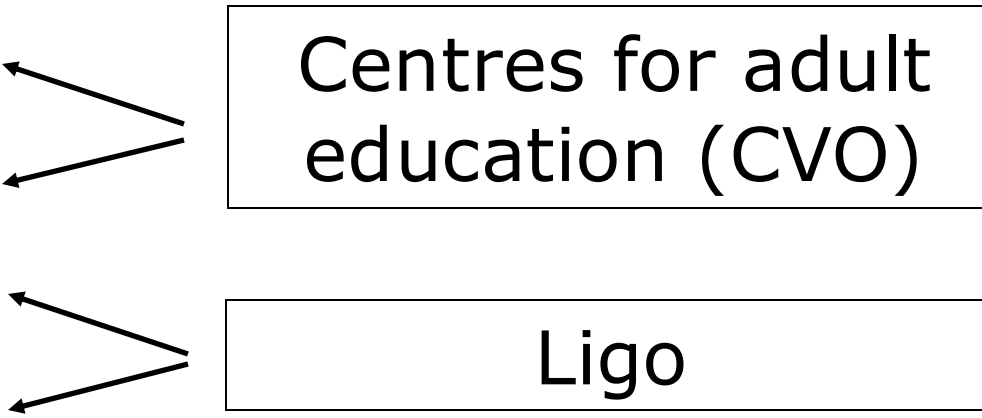
- Centres for adult education (CVO)
  - Adults who want to:
    - Obtain a high school diploma
    - Train vocational skills and receive proof of qualification
    - Learn languages, ICT, creative skills ...
- Centres for basic education (Ligo):
  - Adults who need basic training to learn to read, write, numeracy skills, ICT ...
    - Learning Dutch

# Qualification levels

NQF	
<b>Higher education</b>	8
	7
	6
	5
<b>Secondary Education</b>	4
	3
	2
<b>Primary Education</b>	1

Centres for adult education (CVO)

Ligo



# Flexible classes

- **Modulary** (cf. microcredentials)
- **Different times:**
  - Day/evening
  - Week/weekend
  - Shortened and lengthened programmes
  - Starting at different times during the school year
- **Different forms of learning:**
  - In class, from home or a combination of both
  - Dutch combined with other training
  - Dual learning in the workplace

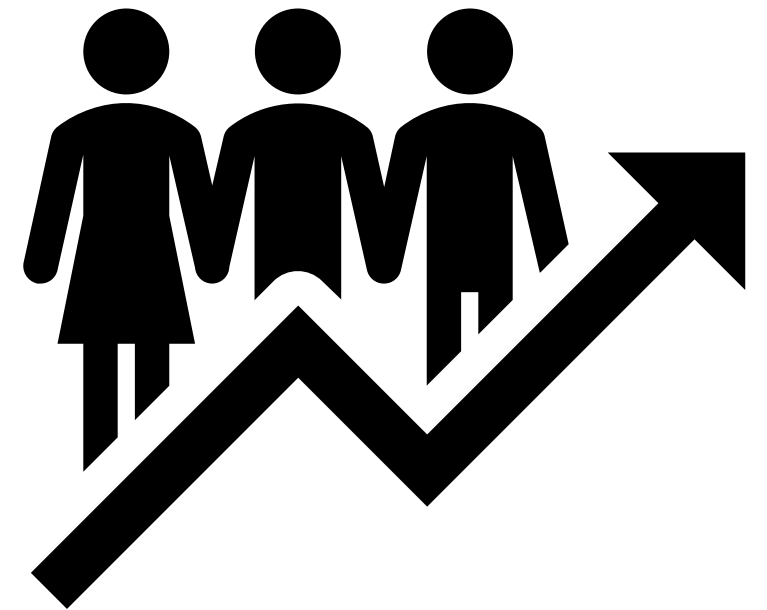
# Key numbers (2022-2023)



- **Total adult education:** 358,383 students
  - 39% men, 61% women
  - 39% of total are learning Dutch
- **Ligo:** 70,574 students
  - 37% Belgians
- **CVO:** 287,809 students
  - 59% Belgians

# Focus on basic skills

- Enrolment of students without high school diploma (2019-2023):
  - Ligo: 95,066 -> 119,478
  - CVO: 298,109 -> 395,632
- Students in literacy modules in CVO (2015-2024): 237 -> 11,137



# Flemish government policy

- Goal of participation in lifelong learning by 2030: 60% of adults
- Goals of the Strategic Literacy Plan 2017-2024:
  1. Significant increase of youngsters leaving high school with sufficient literacy skills
  2. Increasing literacy within the family environment
  3. Reinforcing literacy skills of both job seekers and workers
  4. Reinforcing literacy skills of people in poverty
  5. Increasing digital skills of both youngsters and adults
- Will there be a new literacy plan?

# Challenge: enrolment fee

## Now

- **Free for certain groups**, e.g. basic education (Ligo) and general education (CVO) is free for students without high school degree
- **Max. 1.5 euro per hour** and max. 300 euro per training programme per semester

## September 2025

- **Payments for basic education** for all students
- More than double for **lifewide learning?**

# How to advance Lifelong Learning and Adult Basic Skills in Europe

- Active government role
  - Starting in education of children: combat early school leaving
  - Whole-of-government approach
  - Remove barriers to adult education

# Thank you!

