

The role of the National Coordinator for Adult Learning in upskilling the basic skills of low-qualified adults

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The Research

Objective: Explore the role of National Coordinators in improving basic skills of low-qualified adults following the Upskilling Pathways Recommendation

Method: Qualitative study using semi-structured interviews

Sample: 8 National Coordinators for Adult Learning

Framework: Master's thesis in Adult Education

<https://apothesis.eap.gr/archive/item/212022>

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Research Results

- The role of National Coordinators (NCs)
- NCs' contribution to the implementation of the Recommendation "Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults"

1. The Role of National Coordinators

“Each country should have a designated representative to coordinate the implementation of adult education policy. This role should be housed within a dedicated unit of a ministry or be linked to a relevant government agency.”

- Funding and support from policy makers
- Participation in partnerships and activities



Awareness Raising
Activities
Educational Workshops
Research & Studies
Conferences
Staff Training &
Professional
Development
Promotion & Publicity
Activities
Study Visits

2. Contribution to the "Upskilling Pathways" Recommendation

Key Areas of Contribution:

- Development of skills assessment tools
- Creation of certification programmes for targeted professions

NCs from central bodies:

- Emphasize the need for a comprehensive national strategy integrating the three steps: assessment, tailored learning, certification

NCs from civil society / adult education organizations:

- Stress the importance of local-level awareness campaigns, “without outreach, even the best strategies won’t reach low-qualified adults”

3. Contribution to the guidance & support activities for people with low qualifications

- information on **available career guidance** programs or services
- organizing **conferences**
- creating learning **workshops for stakeholders**
- **collaborating** with relevant stakeholders, including counselor associations and other support organizations

Research Conclusions

- Selecting a National Coordinator (NC): A Strategic Challenge
- An effective implementation of the Recommendation “Upskilling Pathways”, upgrading the basic skills of low-qualified adults

1. Selecting a National Coordinator

- Choosing an institution as the National Coordinator is a **critical decision** for every country
- Adult education involves a **broad range of stakeholders** (from both public and private sectors)
- **Effective coordination** requires:
 - **Flexible** project and funding management
 - Active **engagement** in national policy development

2. An effective implementation of the Recommendation “Upskilling Pathways”

Upgrading the basic skills of low-qualified adults

- an **integrated three-step approach**, within the framework of a **national basic skills strategy**, which may include support for individuals and specific measures for **addressing school dropout**
- Skills assessment plays a crucial role in accurately **diagnosing the educational needs**
- A well-designed, **flexible certification system** can serve as a strong incentive for participation

Suggestions – Recommendations

- For an effective National Coordinator for Adult Learning
- For a successful implementation of the Recommendation at the national level
- For a successful implementation at the organizational Level

1. For an effective National Coordinator for Adult Learning

- **A Central body:** all stakeholders in a structured dialogue - building on effective existing practices - national strategy - measurable objectives - appropriate funding
- **A civil society organization:** trustworthy body - collaboration with central policy-making entities
 - The participation of civil society organizations is vital in policy design
 - Awareness-raising about adult participation in education must be ongoing

2. For a successful implementation of the Recommendation at the national level

- A **three-step** process – **outreach / guidance** - **support** measures tailored to people with low qualifications
- Reforms **aligned with the formal education system** - addressing **school dropout** - establishing **educational pathways**
- Financial sustainability

3. For a successful implementation at the organizational level

- **safe** and **inclusive** spaces
- **learner-centred teaching methods** empowering learners - an approach especially effective for those with low basic skills
- educational environments **distinct from traditional school models**
- continuous **support, guidance**
- training programmes must reflect **learners' real needs**
- promoting programmes effectively including **success stories** of past learners
- **collaboration** with other institutions, nationally and internationally

- ✓ Challenges and solutions:
 - implementing the Recommendation
 - upgrading basic skills
- ✓ Key Challenges for National Coordinators for Adult Learning

Challenges and solutions in implementing the Recommendation

- ✓ Implementation of the Upskilling Pathways Recommendation is particularly difficult in countries with **rigid or opaque education and training systems**. These systems:
 - Hinder adult mobility across formal, non-formal, and informal education levels
 - Often lack effective mechanisms for validating existing knowledge and skills.
- ✓ **Small-scale pilot projects** can:
 - Adapt existing structures
 - Inform broader policy and strategy implementation

Challenges for upgrading basic skills

- ✓ People with low qualifications often do not seek training programs due to **various barriers**:
 - Lack of trust in institutions
 - Feeling unsafe in formal environments
- ✓ **Training** both for **educators and employees** working in adult education institutions.
- ✓ **Coordinated action** and **cooperation** between various institutions
- ✓ The sustainability of measures depends on **clear priorities** and **stable funding**

Key Challenges for NCs

- ✓ Effective **cooperation** among Stakeholders
- ✓ National **institutional constraints** within the education and training systems
- ✓ Translating proposals into **concrete and actionable policies**
- ✓ Enhancing the **visibility of adult education**
- ✓ Focusing on **vulnerable groups** and improving **access to basic skills education**
- ✓ Overcoming **institutional barriers** between relevant ministries (e.g., poor cooperation between ministries)



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