



Chapter 1. ABOUT THE SURVEY

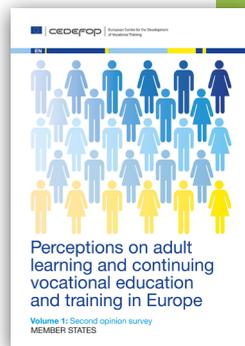
Perceptions on adult learning and continuing vocational education and training in Europe

Volume 1: Second opinion survey

MEMBER STATES

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CHAPTER 1.

About the survey

This chapter outlines the survey background, its rationale and briefly outlines its methodology.

1.1. Policy background

Cedefop's first opinion survey showed, overall, that people often see adult learning and continuing vocational education and training (CVET) as less attractive learning options than general education ⁽⁴⁾. But while the first opinion survey gave insights into comparisons between general education and vocational education and training, we know little about the image people have of adult learning and CVET.

We know little about the extent to which people think that adult learning and CVET are important for life and work; whether people believe that they bring tangible benefits or that there are opportunities for them to learn and, if so, what stops them from taking those opportunities. To find out more, Cedefop launched this second opinion survey.

Understanding such perceptions is important. Adult learning and CVET are essential aspects of lifelong learning ⁽⁵⁾. They help adults acquire the knowledge, skills and competences they need to manage changing jobs and lives. They also support employment, competitiveness and innovation.

Despite their importance, only a handful of Member States meet the EU's target of 15% of adults participating in lifelong learning. The target is not new. For more than 10 years the EU has struggled to meet it; the EU average in 2019 was 11.1% ⁽⁶⁾.

⁽⁴⁾ Cedefop (2017). *Cedefop European public opinion survey on vocational education and training*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. Cedefop research paper; No 62.

www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/5562

⁽⁵⁾ See Cedefop's work on adult learning and CVET:

www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/adult-learning

⁽⁶⁾ The indicator measures the share of people aged 25 to 64 who stated that they received formal or non-formal education and training in the four weeks preceding the survey (numerator) and is based on the EU labour force survey. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/DDN-20190517-1>

The consensus is that levels of participation are not in the desired range. European averages also mask big differences between countries. Recognising this, the Council resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning of 2011 ⁽⁷⁾ highlighted the need to increase adult participation in formal, non-formal and informal learning significantly to develop work skills and support active citizenship, personal development and fulfilment.

In addition, the Council recommendation on upskilling pathways of 2016 ⁽⁸⁾ called on Member States to improve access to quality learning opportunities for low-skilled adults through coordinated approaches, including skills assessment, offers of learning tailored to individual needs and validation of skills acquired.

Knowing more about the image people have of adult learning and CVET can help Member States identify the perceived strengths and weaknesses of their systems and inform strategies for increasing participation.

The survey's findings are presented in two volumes. This first volume examines perceptions and image of adult learning and CVET in Member States ⁽⁹⁾. The second considers perceptions and image among the demographic and socioeconomic groups (gender, age, economic status, occupation, education, migration background) that make up Europe's adult labour force.

1.2. Methodology

Cedefop's second opinion survey comprised 40 466 telephone interviews (landline and mobile) with adults aged 25 and over who live in the EU Member States, Iceland and Norway. Interviews were carried out between May and July 2019. The Annex details the survey methodology, but it is helpful to note some key points about it.

⁽⁷⁾ Council of the European Union (2011). Council resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning. *Official Journal of the European Union*, C 372, 20.12.2011, pp. 1-6.

[https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32011G1220\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32011G1220(01)&from=EN)

⁽⁸⁾ Council of the European Union (2016). Council recommendation on upskilling pathways: new opportunities for adults. *Official Journal of the European Union*, C 484, 24.12.2016, pp. 1-6.

[https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32016H1224\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32016H1224(01)&from=EN)

⁽⁹⁾ The term 'Member States' in this publication includes the EU-28 Member States at the time of the survey and Iceland and Norway.

First, the survey defines adult learning and CVET as ‘any learning activities undertaken by adults (whether employed or not) with the intention of improving knowledge or skills’.

Second, the concept of image is the perceived value of adult learning and CVET in producing desired outcomes for individuals (such as personal, skill and career development and personal financial situation), society and the economy (such as lower unemployment) and benefits for countries (such as social cohesion).

Third, the core of the questionnaire asked about perceptions of the image of adult learning and CVET in relation to delivering these outcomes. It also discussed reasons for participating and not participating, work-organised training activities, and the skills respondents need for their current jobs. Finally, an image of adult learning and CVET and its different aspects is constructed from these perceptions.

Chapter 2 of this report reviews the survey results about how important people perceive adult learning and CVET to be. It looks at respondents’ views about learning and why they want to learn.

Chapter 3 considers perceptions of the benefits of adult learning and CVET. It looks first at the employment-related benefits and then considers perceptions of the role of adult learning and CVET in personal development and further educational attainment. It concludes with a brief review of respondents’ answers about the quality of VET in their countries.

Chapter 4 looks at perceptions about access to adult learning and CVET. It considers how people view the opportunities for adult learning and CVET in their country, how well-informed they feel about them and how good the guidance and support available is to those wanting to participate. The chapter examines respondents’ reasons for not participating in adult learning and CVET and concludes by presenting views on measures to encourage participation.

Chapter 5 outlines observations on the perceived importance and benefits of adult learning and CVET as well as access to them. It also discusses some key findings about their image from the survey data.