ERASMUS + PROGRAMME

National Coordinators for the Implementation of the European Agenda for Adult Learning

2014-2015

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Final Report
GENERAL INFORMATION

Project title: National Coordinators for the Implementation of the European Agenda for Adult Learning

Decision/Agreement number: 2014-2635/001-001


Reporting period: From 01/11/2014 To 31/10/2015

Date of submission: 22nd December 2015

Beneficiary organisation: National Institute of Adult Continuing Education

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- publications, CD Rom, DVD with audio, video materials: electronic version or web link are sufficient
- official invitations and agenda of conferences, meetings, training or other events organised/participated by the centre, copy of presentation: electronic version is sufficient
- references to the internet sites where appropriate

For questions, please contact us via the functional mailbox: EACEA-EPLUS-AL@ec.europa.eu

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1. **Project objectives** (please present the objectives of the project, the potential impact upon and benefits to the target user group)

In 2014 the National Coordinator, NIACE and its partners across the UK set out a new programme of work as part of the European Agenda for Adult Learning. This built on our successes since 2012, but this time we decided to be even more focused on what truly makes a difference to adult learners’ lives.

With the publication of the *Survey of Adult Skills* by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development in October 2013, a new impetus was given to investigating the competences that help people succeed at work, at home, in their communities, and wider society.

Such competences—basic literacy, numeracy, functional, digital and problem-solving skills—were often not truly represented by the qualifications people held. Employers had been telling governments this for years, now there was hard and fast international evidence to back this up.

But in the UK, we felt that we needed to dig deeper. We aimed to ensure the UK policy communities had the best evidence bases available to support policy formation in each of the four administrations. We continued to support the development of improved approaches to adult literacy in English, numeracy (or mathematics) and problem-solving in technology enriched environments (digital learning). At the same time we wanted to focus more on supporting access to learning and progression for disadvantaged groups.

To this end we continued to support policy formation in each of the four UK administrations through promoting our own research into the *Survey of Adult Skills*, the Citizens’ Curriculum, young adult employability, working with excluded groups, and digital skills. We enabled the debate through newly-established EU Agenda forums in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, and England.

Because we wanted these meeting, seminars and events to focus on what adult learning achieves in improving people’s lives we called them ‘Impact Forums’. Over 200 people came together across the UK and many attended our summative conference to share their work. The aims of this year’s work were to:

- Enable greater policy coherence through sharing existing research, looking for regional and local case studies, and disseminating it
- Engage a wider range of policy makers, influencers and decision makers in each of the four home nations
- Promote evidence-based approaches to policy development and formulation across the UK
- Produce, translate and disseminate evidence which effectively supports young unemployed adults to get the skills they need to access sustainable work
- Attend and contribute to transnational events and collaborations to ensure that UK policy and practice is promoted, and to learn from other countries’ experience
- Establish and run four Impact Forums in each of the four UK nations to support collaboration, policy coherence and the sharing of transferable practice
- Organise and run a summative conference to disseminate and showcase the work in 2014-15.
The target groups we aimed to reach throughout the life of the project through a combination of bespoke communications, contact with the Impact Forums (in each country), through general NIACE briefings and communications, through networks of practitioners in the UK and internationally.

We expected the programme to have these impacts at the following levels:

**European level:**
Improved information sharing and involvement with UK projects, practice and policy development

**National level:**
Greater coherence in and knowledge of policy development across the four nations of the UK.
Improved communication about adult learning and skills policy and practice in each of the four nations and devolved administrations.
Joint working on specific projects and networking of adult education professionals

**Regional level:**
Impact forums established as a means of getting a regional focus on the European Agenda and improving communication with other regions, or statistical neighbours in Europe.

**Local level:**
For some localities and local adult learning and skills providers there will be an opportunity to be involved in projects.
All learning providers in membership of the lead organisations (approximately 1000) will receive a series of communications and information on the EAAL, Erasmus + and the UK National Coordinator work programme.

2. **Project methodology** (please present the methodology for achieving the objectives, including the evaluation and dissemination strategies)

As part of this work, during 2014/15 we ran a number of projects that continued the work undertaken in 2012/14:

- Following up the 2013 *Survey of Adult Skills* research across the UK
- Basic skills and social inclusion (the Citizens’ Curriculum)
- Employability skills for young adults (What Employers Want)
- Supporting progression for excluded groups
- Digital learning in communities (policy development), and
- Self-organized groups using digital learning

But we knew that it was not enough to run development and research projects in isolation from practitioner feedback. This is particularly critical when there are four different policy climates making the ‘weather’ in the UK. Therefore, our methodology was based on the creation of Impact Forums in each of the four UK administrations. Each of the projects above presented their findings to all the UK impact forums, providing feedback on the research and contextualising it for regional/local policy contexts.

Geographical differences of approach have always been part of the delivery of adult education in the UK. But what has been striking in the past year, is the willingness of policy makers, planners, practitioners, researchers, and learners to come together to discuss these issues at our impact forums. Over the course of sixteen meetings and seminars in Cardiff,
Belfast, Edinburgh, London, Birmingham and Leicester, over 200 people have come together to discuss research presented by NIACE alongside local case studies of practice and policy development. We have been delighted to see other EAAL national coordinators invited to these meetings, as well as employers and community groups.

Anyone involved in European work will know that one of the key success factors is always about the partnerships that are formed. The stronger the partnership, the more likely it is to achieve the intended outcomes. Working across the UK, it was essential that we developed additional strong partnerships in Northern Ireland and Scotland to support our existing relationships at NIACE Cymru. Looking back, one of the reasons we were able to achieve so much over the last year was specifically because of those partnerships we developed with Scotland’s Learning Partnership, the Forum for Adult Learning Northern Ireland and the UK National Agency for the Lifelong Learning Programme (Erasmus +) Ecorys and the British Council. The new partnership that has been welcome this year has been with EPALE. For the first time we can all share right across Europe and the UK information and evidence on how we can continue to make the case for adult learning within all areas of public policy.

All our partners were key in developing the UK wide Impact Forums by bringing together, sometimes for the first time, policy makers with employers; local government officers; learning providers; health providers, third sector organisations; trade unions and community groups, creating a platform for informing and learning. In order to have strategic impact the project has targeted key decision-makers and influencers in each of the four UK nations.

We reached them through a combination of the four Impact Forums, the six development projects, and ongoing media and social media interaction, together with a summative international conference. We produced a final ‘magazine’ report designed to reach the widest possible different audience: at EC level, at national level (UK), at regional level (in this case England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales), as well as local adult education practitioners interested in our research findings.

A link to this magazine-style report can be found [here](#).
3. Project outcomes and results (please describe the major achievements and results for the reporting period)

Following up the Survey of Adult Skills research across the UK
- Presentations on the international Survey of Adult Skills to all the four Impact Forums at meetings in Birmingham, Belfast, Cardiff, and Edinburgh.
- Discussion on the implication of the research findings across the UK with over 100 practitioners.
- Presentation from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development at the summative conference in London on the latest information on skills in England.

Basic skills and social inclusion (“The Citizens’ Curriculum”)
- Citizens’ Curriculum case studies for disadvantaged adults: homeless / vulnerably housed adults, young adults in disadvantaged communities, prisoners, adults recently released from prison, recent migrants, and family learning in disadvantaged communities.
- A final Citizens’ Curriculum report, detailing the impact of the approach for adult learners, adult education practitioners and providers, and an infographic summarising key impact
- Presentation to the European Basic Skills Network, June 2015 'Challenges to Policy Cohesion: The Skills for Life Story.'
- Citizens’ Curriculum presentations at England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland Impact Forums, to Unionlearn and representatives of the health professions unions, April 2015, at National Association of Teachers of English and Community Languages to Adults (NATEELA) national conference, July 2015, at the Into Work Convention, a national conference for employment skills providers organised by the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion, July 2015, Learning at Prisoners’ Learning Alliance national conference, September 2015, Ireland’s National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) conference, September 2015, to final EAAL conference, September 2015, at 21st Century Citizens’ national conference, organised by NIACE, National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy (NRDC), Research and Practice in Adult Literacy (RaPAL), the University and College Union (UCU) and NATEELA, October 2015

Employability skills for young adults (“What Employers Want”)
- A What Employers Want website developed and presented to all four UK Forums and in the UK parliament in September 2015. Members were introduced to the project website and received copies of the guide for young people.
- Further development work with the NOW Group, based in Belfast, Northern Ireland to develop an adapted framework for the delivery of the activities to meet the needs of young people with disabilities.
- Training sessions for young people to develop their employability skills, based on the earlier research findings of this project.
- A short film made by young people, interviews with employers and promotion via various social media channels including Facebook and Twitter.
- Presentations to the four UK impact forums England (11th June 2015), Wales (1st July 2015), Scotland (28th September 2015), and Northern Ireland (6th October 2015), at the UK Skills Show (November 2014).
Supporting progression for excluded groups
- A literature review to inform the selection of the case studies, and opened communication channels with key partner agencies in each UK nation.
- Case studies to enable impact data on working with excluded groups to be shared more readily
- Presentations to the four UK impact forums, and the final conference in September 2015.

Digital learning in communities (policy development)
- Desk research report circulated to UK and European partners
- Presentation at Scotland, England, Wales and Ireland impact forums with strategies and approaches contrasted and common themes identified and recommendations agreed
- Webinar presentations and consultation through discussion and polls with UK / European partners and stakeholders
- Case studies exemplifying use of learning technologies for disadvantaged learners and communities.
- Infographics and social media campaign to disseminate webinar outputs
- Policy framework presented and discussed with review and revision following wider consultation with European and UK partners
- Presentation to final conference with debate and discussion on the role of adult and community learning to develop higher level digital skills
- Presentations at England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland Impact Forums

Self-organized groups using digital learning
- Further development and promotion of self organised learning (SOL) groups resource website
- Digital families presentation at Department for Business Innovation and Skills
- Westminster Forum presentation on digital learning
- Blended Learning for niche groups action research report
- Assistive Technology on the Virtual Campus interactive resource (hosted on the Virtual Campus)
- Round table discussion on Digital Skills with Microsoft

Reach and Engagement
- Close working with EPALE UK to promote the programme, with a presentation at its UK launch in April 2015
- Impact Forums reaching over 200 participants over 12 meetings across the UK
- A summative in London with 120 participants from 20 countries, with others attending through livestreaming of speeches and panel sessions
- Continued promotion of our Twitter #EULearning in order to reach those people who were unable to attend out events in person. There were thousands of unique Tweets from users across Europe, reaching a high point during the summative conference
- Conference social media reached a phenomenal total of 119,090 accounts, via 1500 unique tweets and 500 additional retweets
- #EULearning appeared across Twitter in excess of 300,000 times
- 122 YouTube views over 24 videos, boosted when EPALE tweeted links to them
- General promotion during Adult Learners’ Week and Skills Show UK to over 10,000 people
- AE-Pro National Coordinators’ Webinar, 25th August 2015: 26 people participated live, 40 have viewed the recording, 31 completed all the activities in the session
Products

Many of the following products are available to view on our website: [http://www.niace.org.uk/our-resources/promoting-learning-and-skills/european-agenda-adult-learning-resources](http://www.niace.org.uk/our-resources/promoting-learning-and-skills/european-agenda-adult-learning-resources)

Please click on the hyperlinks below to view each product.

**Work across three priority areas 2014-15**

**Adult basic skills & UK response to PIAAC**

Research report: [Adult Basic Skills Proficiency in the UK](http://www.niace.org.uk/our-resources/promoting-learning-and-skills/european-agenda-adult-learning-resources)

Research report: [Towards a Citizens’ Curriculum](http://www.niace.org.uk/our-resources/promoting-learning-and-skills/european-agenda-adult-learning-resources)


Podcasts from Citizens’ Curriculum pilot organisations.

**Presentation on Citizens’ Curriculum approach to UnionLearn and representatives of the health professions unions**, April 2015

**Presentation to the European Basic Skills Network annual conference**, June 2015

**Presentation on Citizens’ Curriculum pilot models / framework for migrants at NATECLA national conference**, July 2015

**Presentation on Citizens’ Curriculum approach for unemployed adults and excluded groups at the Into Work Convention**, national conference for employment skills providers organised by the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion, July 2015

**Presentation of Citizens’ Curriculum pilot models / frameworks for Offender Learning at Prisoners’ Learning Alliance national conference**, September 2015

**Presentation on intensive approaches to the delivery of basic skills for unemployed adults to Ireland’s National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) conference**, September 2015

**Presentation of Rochdale Council pilot and framework for disadvantaged young adults and families in disadvantaged communities to final EAAL conference**, September 2015

**Presentation on Citizens’ Curriculum pilots for basic skills for homeless / vulnerably housed adults and migrants to ‘Skills for Life? English, maths and ESOL for 21st Century Citizens’ national conference**, organised by NIACE, NRDC, RaPAL, UCU and NATECLA, October 2015

**Participation and progression of excluded groups**

**Employability skills for young adults**

[‘What Employers Want’ website](http://www.niace.org.uk/our-resources/promoting-learning-and-skills/european-agenda-adult-learning-resources) and [guide for young people](http://www.niace.org.uk/our-resources/promoting-learning-and-skills/european-agenda-adult-learning-resources)

[‘What Employers Want’ short film](http://www.niace.org.uk/our-resources/promoting-learning-and-skills/european-agenda-adult-learning-resources)

[‘What Employers Want’ final report](http://www.niace.org.uk/our-resources/promoting-learning-and-skills/european-agenda-adult-learning-resources)
What Employers Want in Northern Ireland: Case Study

What Employers Want Skills Show presentation November 2014

Employability skills thematic paper to Impact Forums in Wales, Scotland, England

Employability skills presentation to Impact Forums in Wales, Northern Ireland, England


Parliamentary Reception : What Employers Want 9th September 2015

Supporting progression for excluded groups

Case Studies: Manton Chldrens’ Centre, HMP New Hall, St Mungo’s Broadway

Digital learning and problem-solving

EU Self Organised Learning website

Technology blogs on the NIACE website

Webinars:

Implementing FELTAG 3: Taking FELTAG forward, 9th December 2014

Implementing FELTAG 5: Funding FELTAG, 3rd February 2015

AE-Pro National Coordinators’ Webinar, 25th August 2015: 26 people participated live, 40 have viewed the recording, 31 completed all the activities in the session

Technology in the WEA, 15th September 2015

STEM Resources for Community and Family Learning

Webinar resources:

Implementing FELTAG: Webinar recordings, link to presentations, infographics

Presentations:

Livestream from NIACE Digital Learning Conference, 14th November 2014

Presentation to Northern Ireland Impact Forum 17th June 2015

Digital families presentation with BIS October 2015

Storify media story of the Digital Skills Conference November 2014

Birmingham Adult Learning (ROI for self organised groups) 4th June 2015

Luton Adult Learning (ROI for self organised learning groups) 31st July 2015

Derby Adult Learning (ROI for self organised learning groups) 1st August 2015

Storify social media story of the EAAL conference September 2015

Blended Learning for niche groups action research report September 2015

Social media:

Social media supporting NIACE Digital Learning Conference, 14th November 2014
**Social media supporting final EAAL conference, 10th – 11th September 2015**

### Impact Forums 2014-15

**List of all Impact Forum meetings 2014-15**

Impact forums were set up in Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and England, bringing together learning providers and representative bodies from all sectors delivering adult learning.

Papers resulting from the discussions at each forum were produced for each theme: Basic Skills, Digital Inclusion, Employability and Excluded Groups.

Working with the forums, NIACE also produced a theoretical framework for understanding impact, and a tool for capturing impact which was used in discussions at all four forums. In England a peer critique template was completed for four different approaches to capturing impact by Rochdale Borough Council, the Community Health and Learning Foundation, WEA and Northern College. In Wales the Welsh Assembly Government provided detailed feedback identifying key policies in Digital Learning and Basic Skills.

A final report was written on the work of the Impact Forums in 2014-15: Thinking About Impact.

Click on the links below to see all papers relating to each forum meeting.

#### Wales Impact Forum

**Wales Impact Forum 18th February 2015**: [Agenda](#), [minutes](#).


**Wales Impact Forum 1st July 2015**: [Agenda](#), [minutes](#), Excluded groups key questions form, EQAVET working group findings on quality assurance in adult learning June 2015, WCVA Unlocking Welsh Potential presentation, NIACE Employability skills thematic paper, NIACE Employability skills presentation (Lorraine Casey), NIACE Progression in Excluded Groups presentation (Susannah Chambers), Excluded groups case studies: Manton Children’s Centre, St Mungo’s.

**Wales Impact Forum 28th September 2015**: [Agenda](#), [minutes](#), Basic Skills key questions form, Basic Skills key questions reply from Welsh Government, AONTAS presentation (Berni Brady), AONTAS briefing papers: PIAAC and everyday skills use, PIAAC and social wellbeing, PIAAC and workplace skills, Slovenian Institute for Adult Education: PIAAC in Slovenia presentation (Zvonka Pangerc Pahernik), NIACE Basic Skills and Social Inclusion thematic paper, NIACE Citizen’s Curriculum case study: St Mungo’s Broadway, Dwr Cymru case studies: Mark Church, Paul Leadbeater, Tony Price.

#### Scotland Impact Forum

**Scotland Impact Forum 10th March 2015**: [Agenda](#), [minutes](#), Impact Forum terms of
Scotland Impact Forum 12th May 2015: Agenda, minutes, SCVO Digital Participation presentation (Sally Dyson), EPALE presentation, NIACE Adult Learning and Technology presentation (Susan Easton).


Scotland Impact Forum 28th September (2): Agenda, minutes, Education Scotland presentation (Cath Hamilton), NIACE Basic Skills and Social Inclusion presentation (Lorraine Casey), NIACE Basic Skills and Social Inclusion thematic paper.

Northern Ireland Impact Forum

Northern Ireland Impact Forum 24th February 2015: Agenda, minutes, Evidence capture tool, Skills to Succeed presentation (Patricia Cochrane), NIACE Basic Skills and Social Inclusion thematic paper.

Northern Ireland Impact Forum 21st April 2015: Agenda, minutes, Papers illustrating Northern Ireland perspectives, NIACE Excluded groups thematic paper.


England Impact Forum


England Impact Forum 23rd April 2015: Agenda, minutes, Impact framework, Summary of EAAL National Coordinator work, Rochdale Borough Council presentation (Helen Chicot), Community Health and Learning Foundation presentation (Janet Solla), Northern College presentation (Kay Sidebottom), WEA report to forum, NIACE Adult Learning and Technology presentation (Susan Easton), NIACE Digital Learning thematic paper.

England Impact Forum 11th June 2015 Capturing Wider Impact workshop: Workshop invitation, Peer critique template, Critique of example from Rochdale Borough Council, Critique of example from the Health Literacy Foundation, Critique of example from WEA, Critique of example from Northern College.

England Impact Forum 11th June 2015 Impact Forum meeting: Agenda, Minutes, NIACE Employability skills presentation (Nicola Aylward), NIACE Employability skills thematic paper, NIACE Excluded groups thematic paper, Excluded groups case studies: Manton.
Children's Centre, St Mungo's.


Final Conference 2015

Our September 2015 conference, Realising Impact: Making a difference through adult learning, was a challenging, thought-provoking event. A full conference report is available here. Click on the links below to download slides from the main conference sessions and workshops.

Click here to see the agenda and delegate list.

Conference day 1, 10th September 2015

Slides from main sessions on day 1

Introductory presentation from David Hughes, CEO of NIACE.

Keynote speaker: Professor Tim Harford presentation and transcript.

Workshops

The Citizens' Curriculum: Basic Skills and Social Inclusion presentation (Emily Jones); Towards a Citizens' Curriculum presentation (Alex Stevenson).

Digital Skills and Inclusion: Adult Learning and Technology presentation (Susan Easton).

Family Learning and Excluded Groups: Launch Learning (Shelley Morris and Claire Arnold); The Impact of Community Learning (Shelley Morris and Claire Arnold); Excluded Groups presentation (Susannah Chambers).

Young Adult Employability: What Employers Want presentation (Nicola Aylward).

Dinner at the RSA

Dinner in the spectacular surroundings of the RSA House included speeches from Adult Learning Ambassadors Amanda Scales, winner of the Outstanding Adult Learner of the Year award in 2012, Adele Tilly, selected by Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal as the recipient of the first Adult Learners’ Week Patron's Award in 2015, and Lee Hughes, recipient of the 2015 Outstanding Individual Learner award.

Conference day 2, 11th September 2015

Slides from main sessions on day 2

Keynote speaker: Simon Field presentation and transcript

Keynote speaker: Michael Davis presentation and transcript

Workshops
Northern Ireland (FALNI): Inspiring Impact presentation: Collaboration on Impact
England (NIACE): Community Health and Learning Foundation poster and close-up; WEA poster
Scotland (Scotland’s Learning Partnership): Learning Link Scotland presentation: Evidencing the Impact
The EAAL programme for 2015-17: Presentation by Joyce Black

This conference was the third in a series of four as part of the UK’s contribution to the EAAL. The first was in Cardiff in 2013, and the second in Edinburgh in 2014.

The conference was planned by a group which reported to the UK reference group for the EAAL. This comprises of the UK National Agency for Erasmus +, EPALE UK, NIACE Cymru, Scotland’s Learning Partnership, the Forum for Adult Learning Northern Ireland, and NIACE in its role as National Coordinator.

The focus of the conference was: “despite research showing that learning of all kinds has a profound impact on people’s lives (health and independence, earnings, civic engagement etc) it has become less of a priority for both the public and private purse. Is one of the reasons we are becoming more reluctant to invest in adult learning is because we cannot see its impact?”

The conference aimed to showcase the research NIACE and its partners had undertaken as part of the European Agenda on: basic skills and the Citizens’ Curriculum, digital skills, young adult employability, and working with excluded groups. The aim was to report on the progress of the research alongside developments in each of the four UK administrations responsible for adult learning policy.

The conference was held at the ‘City Lit,’ one of the greatest adult learning institutions in the UK. The Principal of the Institute, Mark Malcolmson, welcomed delegates to the conference and emphasized the support of UK adult educators for the EAAL.

A full conference report is included HERE.

Presentations at other events

In addition we spoke to approximately 500 people at around 20 events and webinars including:

- ‘What Employers Want’, UK Skills Show 2014
- ‘The European Agenda for Adult Learning’, EPALE UK launch
- Presentation on Citizens’ Curriculum approach to UnionLearn and representatives of the health professions unions
- NIACE’s Citizens’ Curriculum: A New Agenda for a New Government Event sharing the lessons from the Citizens’ Curriculum Pilots – held in the presence of NIACE’s Patron, Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal
- Presentation on Citizens’ Curriculum pilot models / framework for migrants (Leicester College, English for Action pilots) at National Association of Teachers of English and
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**Parliamentary event**

In September 2015 we held a reception and seminar in the UK Parliament to promote the work across the four administrations on the ‘What Employers Want’ website. This was attended by over 50 policy makers, influencers, learners and practitioners, with speeches from MPs Gisela Stuart and Jon Ashworth, and Lord Boswell of Aynhow, chair of the national inquiry into literacy (2011) 1

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1 ‘Work, Society and Lifelong Literacy’, NIACE, 2011
4. Plans for the future (emphasize how the project outcomes / achievements will be sustainable beyond the project's lifetime.)

The challenges outlined in this report will not go away. Indeed with constraints on public funding, some of the most excluded groups in society will find themselves further disadvantaged. The cuts to adult learning and skills funding mean that our approaches to addressing these issues will have to be more imaginative—and effective.

International benchmarks such as the OECD Survey of Adult Skills indicate that the UK, like most European nations, faces significant challenges in attainment in basic and digital skills. These challenges are more acute for groups such as 16-24 year olds, socially excluded adults and those out of work.

So in 2015/17, we will continue to focus UK work on improving skills for low-skilled individuals and participation in learning for groups currently excluded from education, training and the labour market. We will help bring about change by influencing both policy makers and practitioners. A key issue we have identified is the need to engage a wider audience outside of adult learning policy/practice circles.

The result in 2017 will be a State of the Nations report.

Winter 2015: establish research group, write policy briefings, impact forum meetings
Spring 2016: further research and promotion via NIACE / EPALE blogs
Summer 2016: interim State of Nations report and year one conference
Autumn-Winter 2016: further EU & UK research
Spring-Summer 2017: final reports drafted
Autumn 2017: final conference

We envisage our Impact Forums continuing to follow a broadly similar format but they will, increasingly, shape their own agendas to advocate and meet the identified needs of their populations. In partnership with NIACE as the EAAL national coordinator, they are well placed to gather information on need as well as what creates and optimises impact.

Each Forum will:

- Convene at least three times per annum at times planned to maximise synergies with policy cycles in each administration
- Promote its work through progress blogs for EPALE UK
- Enable greater policy coherence through sharing existing research, looking for regional and local case studies, and disseminating it
- Promote evidence-based approaches to policy development and formulation across the UK, particularly around the social and economic impact of learning
- Produce, translate and disseminate evidence to networks from other workpackages

We expect the programme will have the following outcomes and impact by 2017:

- Greater awareness of the EAAL in the UK, and policy coherence between the four UK national administrations and the UK government, ensuring policy development is evidence-based, accessible and effective
- A State of the Nation (or Nations) report outlining the current state of play in UK adult learning to inform future policy development
- A fully piloted Citizens’ Curriculum with outline longitudinal findings that provide evidence for future policy development across the UK and Europe to enhance basic skills levels & other key competences
- Documented evaluations of young people-led participant research to inform policy
development & practice
- Influential reports from UK impact forums on how they have contextualised research to enable better regional policy development & planning
- A fully trialled & developed CPD programme to support adult educators in the four UK nations to better use technology to support under-represented groups
- The direct participation of 200 practitioners & policy makers in two international conferences in the UK, with the involvement of EC colleagues, EPALE & other National Coordinators
- Virtual participation of 5000 people interested in adult learning policy development via social media

5. Contribution to EU Policies (describe the contribution of the project in implementing the European Agenda for Adult Learning and the Impact on National Policies and on target groups.)

Contribution to EU Policies

A thematic approach to the UK’s work programme and the forums was undertaken to address the priorities of the European Agenda for Adult Learning:

1. Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality;
2. Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training;
3. Promoting equity, social cohesion, and active citizenship;
4. Enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training;
5. Improving the knowledge base on adult learning and monitoring the adult learning sector.

Our approach was based on sharing knowledge, research, challenges and solutions (priorities 2 and 5 above) in relation to;

- Particular groups of people who might be described as excluded or disadvantaged, compared with the population as a whole, such as: young people who are not in employment, education or training; homeless people; people who have experienced mental ill-health, especially that related to drugs and alcohol; families in particular neighbourhoods or situations; unemployed people and those with few or no education qualifications (priority 3);
- Digital inclusion and the implications for adult learning (priority 3);
- The impact of PIAAC and the development of basic or essential skills of English and Maths (priorities 1 and 3);
- Employability (priorities 1 and 4).

Outside of the European Agenda for Adult Learning, we believe our work has contributed directly to the Europe 2020 strategic growth strategy in supporting employment through our work on What Employers’ Want and social cohesion through our work on digital skills and the Citizens’ Curriculum. We know that literacy, numeracy, science and technology are seen as key factors in the achievement of this strategy and we believe our basic skills and digital skills work continues to directly support this and help achieve our own national targets.

Our programme of work has done much to support the ET 2020 (Education and Training 2020) strategy in supporting national actions and sharing solutions to common challenges particularly in relation to skills deficits (basic skills and digital). Literacy, numeracy and technology are viewed as the foundation for further learning and the gateway to employment and social inclusion and we will continue to focus on these strategic areas.
Impact on national policies and target groups in the UK

The impact of creating forums was very quickly identified. Three of the UK administrations (England, Scotland, and Wales) have adult learning organisations, which conduct research and development, to support advocacy and speak out for the right for adults to learn. They gained by being able to facilitate gatherings of more and different organisations and agencies, with whom to share research and evidence of the impact of adult learning. But, in Northern Ireland, where the work of FALNI (Forum for Adult Learning Northern Ireland) was enhanced, with resources available to support networking and action planning, there is no such organisation.

Specifically, the impact forums facilitated:
- learning from members both within and across UK administrations
- co-ordination of information, issues and ideas, from different perspectives of adult learning, within each administrative area
- exchange of information and ideas between policy-makers, officers and practitioners
- discussion and debate with policy makers about the impact of some policies on programmes and provision
- insight into partnership initiatives, within adult learning as well as with other sectors, in order to address the diversity of adults' priorities, interests, ambitions and aspirations
- information-sharing about where adult learning complemented, supported and enhanced other policy areas and agendas, outside the ‘adult learning’ departments
- identification of the social and economic benefits to individuals, families, communities and work-places of participation in learning
- insight into challenges faced by different policy areas and identification of some responses and solutions
- reporting on research and data from different administrations and assessment of how they could help in different contexts
- sharing processes and tools to capture impact data at different levels of operation
- identification of potential collective advocacy to, amongst others, funders, politicians and government officials, in relation to future agendas in adult learning.

In conclusion, the forum processes supported: greater policy coherence within and between administrations (TOR1); the promotion of evidence of social and economic impact (TOR2) and sharing of evidence of the impact with wide networks and at conferences and workshops (TOR3).

Other impacts on national policies included promotion of the economic and social benefits of adults learning such as:
- a CHANGE model, capturing Confidence, Health and well-being, Aspiration, New thinking, Getting involved and Empowerment, used by Northern College, Adult Residential College
  a) the Greater Manchester New Economy cost-benefit analysis approach by a local authority adult learning service in a neighbourhood development in Rochdale, Lancashire
  b) an annual impact survey, as well as a long term study, implemented across England, by the Workers’ Education Association (WEA)
  c) a base-line with end-of-course questionnaire approach, along with an external evaluation, used in health literacy learning by the Community Health and Learning Foundation.

For example, in England, the work by Rochdale Local Authority demonstrated how an
injection of adult learning, piloting the Citizens’ Curriculum approach, could begin to address issues of employability, drug and alcohol abuse recovery, neighbourhood disruption, law and order issues and fear. A whole neighbourhood approach was adopted and many public and voluntary organisations and agencies were brought together to address the challenges presented. The results were analysed using the standard cost-benefit model used across Greater Manchester and clearly demonstrated fiscal, social and economic gains. The total investment of £35,000 revealed a return of over £69,000.

The Welsh Assembly Government representatives provided detailed insight into the policies that influenced adult learning and excluded groups. These included their Strategic Equality Plan, Refugee Inclusion; Community Cohesion, Communities for Work and Communities First. Part of the responses to these policies was closely linked to the Adult and Community Learning policy and provision.

The Scottish Government’s Statement of Ambition, 2014, embraces issues of the wider engagement and participation of individuals and influences the scope and direction of adult learning provision, embracing issues of equity and inclusion as well as community development and cohesion. Under this umbrella Statement, The Adult Learning in Scotland paper of 2014 sets out an ambition for lifelong, life-wide and learner centred service. In Northern Ireland, it was widely felt that adult learning providers know how to engage people, through something which resonates with their individual motivations. These include such purposes as addressing homelessness; participating in practical activities which might develop employability; building confidence and identity following negative schooling experiences; coping with health issues, including mental health; supporting children with their learning. It was agreed that few people are motivated by qualifications. The Simon Community reported how, whilst they place function and purpose before education outcomes when, for example, teaching someone how to communicate with a potential landlord or government agency, they are addressing level 2 English assessments. Similarly, learning about budgeting relates to a level 2 Maths assessment. The forum in Scotland case studies were shared on what works from different perspectives: a Social Enterprise in Northern Argyll engaged unemployed men by developing enterprise skills through conservation work. The Shine programme in Edinburgh supports women who are ex-offenders with information and guidance as well as access to learning, in order to help them to move on with their lives. The Passport programme supports men who are over 21 years with personalised Information Advice and Guidance, training and work experience. Transition supports adults recovering from drug and alcohol addiction, whilst an initiative in Inverclyde uses volunteers to help older people maintain and develop health and well-being through small group activities. The diversity of initiatives which work to help some of the most vulnerable adults in society, demonstrate how participation in learning helps to increase confidence, self-respect and actualisation and reduce access to other public services such as health, crime and punishment, probation and social services. The wider social and economic gains are demonstrable.

Sharing policies and practices from other administrations was particularly helpful in relation to mental health and the work of Recovery Colleges in England. Both Wales and Northern Ireland expressed interest in learning more about this. Similarly, work by the WEA England was shared and WEA Cymru committed to follow-up. Lessons from organising Adult Learners’ Weeks celebrations in England and Wales were taken up by Northern Ireland, with the organisation of a Learning Festival, in attempts to raise awareness of impact with stakeholders. Scotland’s example of its Statement of Ambition, not only in relation to adult learning but also community partnerships, was felt to be a co-ordinated and joined-up policy example.
Once more, the contribution of the **Welsh Assembly Government**, in identifying the key policies, was very detailed and comprehensive. It enabled the Forum to see that no single policy drives the need for digital learning. The over-arching policy was Digital Wales, along with Digital Communities Wales (ERDF funded); Communities First; the work of the National Digital Learning Council and Skills for employment Wales as well as Essential Skills policies. In addition, Welfare Reforms and the requirements of job searches mean that digital skills development is crucial. Access to many public services is through the use of digital skills. The government suggested that 21% of the Welsh population is digitally excluded.

In both **Northern Ireland** and **England**, the PIAAC data helped to alert policy-makers and providers to the need for adult digital competences. The Westminster select committee’s work on digital skills, Make or Break – the UK’s Digital Future was another key driver. As in Wales, welfare reforms and job-search demands also stimulate the need to be digitally active.

**Scotland** outlined its ambition to be a world-class digital nation by 2020 and to help drive this ambition, the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) is charged with capacity building in the 3rd sector. The ‘Digitally agile – Digitally able’ initiative provides 9 guiding principles for capacity building, with particular concerns to build capacity amongst organisations concerned with Community Learning.

**Participation and engagement approaches** were linked with excluded groups, older and disabled people but also the challenges of engaging employers and employees in learning for a digital age. **Scotland** reported how 120 interns had been placed with small businesses and organisations to help to increase digital skills and knowledge in such enterprises. **England** reported on work with the Further Education Learning Technology Action Group (FELTAG) and **Northern Ireland** expressed interest in the outcomes of their work. The BBC offers a wide range of awareness-raising and learning opportunities, across the different administrations, whilst SCVO has commissioned a MORI poll to learn more about those people not digitally included. Some forums indicated how the need to access a GP, benefits or job applications was more important to learners than taking up a general digital learning course or workshop. This was particularly so in relation to people who might be described as ‘excluded’.

**Reach and Engagement**
- Close working with EPALE UK to promote the programme, with a presentation at its UK launch in April 2015
- Impact Forums reaching over 200 participants over 12 meetings across the UK
- A summative conference in London with 120 participants from 20 countries, with others attending through live streaming of speeches and panel sessions
- Continued promotion of our Twitter hashtag, #EUlearning, in order to reach those people who were unable to attend our events in person. There were thousands of unique Tweets from users across Europe, reaching a high point during the summative conference
- Conference social media reached a phenomenal total of 119,090 accounts, via 1500 unique tweets and 500 additional retweets
- #EUlearning appeared across Twitter in excess of 300,000 times
- There were 122 YouTube Views over 24 videos, boosted when EPALE tweeted links to them
- General promotion during Adult Learners’ Week and Skills Show UK to over 10,000 people

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1 [www.goskills.com](http://www.goskills.com)  
2 [www.bbc.makeitdigital](http://www.bbc.makeitdigital)
In September 2015 we held a reception and seminar in the UK Parliament to promote the work across the four administrations on the ‘What Employers Want’ website. This was attended by over 50 policy makers, influencers, learners and practitioners.