



Tracking and monitoring the
progress of adult learners

TaMPADA

Policy Recommendations

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Project information

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INTRODUCTION

THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT

In the European Union and its Member States, **policies still focus on education for the labour market but there is little awareness and consideration for its contribution to social inclusion or personal development.** Even when it does mention the role of education in relation to those aspects, it usually focuses on skills without mentions of other outcomes of learning (e.g. health, well-being, active citizenship). This is for example the case in the Council Recommendation on [Upskilling and reskilling pathways](#) (2016), which only recommends 'skills assessment' of adults. Furthermore, such EU policies often refer to the European Qualification Frameworks, which so far, only focus on a strict list of learning outcomes that are very often job-specific.

In most EU countries, adult education falls into non-formal education. Even though this sector is often less regulated than the formal education sector, there are often strong expectations from policy-makers that adult education providers (AEPs) fulfil the employment needs with little incentives for them to tailor their programme to meet learners' needs. This is translated into exams and assessments, very often in traditional forms (summative, knowledge-based, memory-focused) which focuses on a narrow perspective of learning outcomes.

Adult education providers have hence little incentives and support to go beyond the measurement of solely job-specific/vocational learning and qualification outcomes at the expense of the measurement of other benefits.

While research has demonstrated for many years that there are many benefits of learning, there is yet little evidence and translation into practice that those benefits are being measured. Some initiatives are emerging, in certain sectors (e.g. Graduate tracking initiative in higher education, but it focuses on employment), or in European projects like [EDUMAP](#) (2016-2019, funded by Horizon2020), in which an [Intelligence decision support system](#) (IDSS) was developed. The IDSS software aimed to provide policy-makers with evidence-based insights, hence helping them to narrow the gap between demand and supply in adult education while improving the learning and service provision for vulnerable groups. **The issue remains that these initiatives are scarce, fragmented, time-bound and rarely supported by public authorities at large scale.**

Fortunately, we can observe that the technological revolutions and the improvement of data collection tools and methodologies fosters a new trend and opportunities for collecting more data on learners' progress. There is also demand from stakeholders to better measure some data and expectations to do so (see [BeLL project results](#)). For instance, there is an increasing demand from employers to better take soft skills into account. OECD's [PIAAC survey shows](#) a positive correlation between the level of skills/competences and self-confidence, trust in institutions as well as in one's own agency to make changes in society, and active participation. This awareness is also reaching the policy making sphere. For instance, in the [European Skills Agenda](#), we see a mention of Skills for Life, which is a [welcome integration](#) by the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) as well (following the insights built in the [Life Skills for Europe project](#), which they coordinated). The [Council Resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning](#) (2011) also recommended Member States to improve their knowledge base on adult learning, especially in collecting sufficient baseline data on the wider benefits of learning for adults





and society. The [European Education Area](#) initiative however appeared to have an [insufficient focus](#) on Adult Learning and Education (ALE).

TaMPADA partners hence advocate for building on the project results for adult education providers and policy-makers to better measure learners' progress. **We highly recommend the following recommendations to be taken into account for the design of National skills strategies and in the upcoming revision of the Agenda for adult learning this year.** Stakeholders in education and training in the EU should pay attention that those national strategies do not solely focus on vocational/job-specific skills or narrow qualification learning outcomes.

Why measure learners' lifelong and lifewide progress?

- Enabling learning providers to understand their learners' journeys and progress through adult education while considering both lifelong and lifewide learning achievements;
- Supporting adult learning providers to plan learning programmes more efficiently while taking the learners' needs in consideration. Indeed, it helps them to standardise and systematise the measurement process;
- Enabling learning providers to evidence the progress of their learners;
- Enabling the learners to better understand, celebrate and evidence their progress.

The TaMPADA project

TaMPADA (<http://TaMPADA.eu>) is a 30-month European project involving 5 partner organisations from 5 EU countries (UK, Greece, Slovenia, Belgium and Sweden). It addresses the **need for adult learning providers to improve the quality and effectiveness of their learning and service provision for disadvantaged learners and groups.**

TaMPADA partners have determined that the progress or the 'wider benefits of learning' can be measured under 4 key areas: **Development of self and life skills, Health and wellbeing, Employability, employment and learning, and Social, community and citizenship.** TaMPADA partners have elaborated a Toolkit, including a digital tool, and a thorough methodology for measuring learners' lifelong and lifewide progress.

This **Policy report** is the last publication made in the project ([see other results](#)). It follows the publication of the pilot testing report whose aim was to test the tracking and monitoring Toolkit for its functionality, usefulness and data production, storage, compilation, comparison and benchmarking processes and to validate whether the Toolkit meets the criteria and provides all the benefits planned in the initial stages of the project. Based on the feedback from the piloting we were able to collect some recommendations for systemic use at EU level, which are addressed to staff in adult education providers and policy-makers.





RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the piloting results, the following recommendations for stakeholders and other interested parties were extracted:

RECOMMENDATION 1: Overall, it is crucial to better recognise and measure lifelong and lifewide (non-formal and informal) learning achievements of adults

Rationale

- More awareness on the importance of measuring lifelong and lifewide learning is needed as well as resources to implement it. The benefits of measuring wider benefits of learning are multifold.
- First, TaMPADA and other initiatives have proven the benefits in terms of improving the learning provision to learners. It allows to design more tailored, learner-centred programmes, maximising their efficiency in terms of outcomes and impact in the four respective areas identified in TaMPADA (Development of self and life skills, Health and wellbeing, Employability, employment and learning, and Social, community and citizenship).
- Beyond the learning programmes, using tools like TaMPADA, can also improve the overarching service provision of the adult learning providers and that includes guidance, social and psychological support (for instance).
- The data collected when measuring learners' progress can also inform policy-makers for designing better policies in the long run.
- The aggregated impact of better learning programmes and services provisions in adult learning will benefit the entire community, its economy and the society, enhancing social inclusion, well-being and employment.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Adult education staff are encouraged to develop and/or further exploit results of projects like TaMPADA for measuring their learners' progress.

Rationale

- Using a learner-centred approach that focuses on the learners is very key to better understand and meet their individual needs. Measuring learners' progress and their wider benefits of learning is beneficial for AEPs for understanding the learning journey of their disadvantaged learners. The TaMPADA project results can provide a much-needed support in the process of measuring learners' progress.
- Indeed, TaMPADA is very beneficial as a tool to enable a more tailored curriculum planning. This enables the identification of the courses that have the most impact on developing learners' soft outcomes so they can be repeated, using the lessons learned as good practices, and shared with other educators and organisations.
- Tools like the one of TaMPADA can and should be used universally across the AEP's learning provision, to standardise, benchmark and compare the impact of each learning programme and provider. The measurement process can be included in the quality assurance system of the provider.
- The results of tools in the dashboard (represented in aggregated figures, charts and graphs) can then be used as evidence for showing the institution's social impact, demonstrating good





management and hence, for receiving funding, during inspections etc. It can also help the providers in their recruitment strategy, in marketing etc.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Learners should be consistently encouraged to self-reflect and self-evaluate during the learning process.

Rationale

- It is beneficial for learners because it enables them to better understand, celebrate and evidence their progress. This is especially true in the case of disadvantaged learners as they can be less likely to recognise their capabilities, particularly if they have poor prior experiences of education.
- It allows learners to internalise the value of their progress and motivate them to progress further, enhancing their self-confidence and positive attitude towards learning.
- The use of the tool can also have a positive influence on learners' trust towards the AEP staff and educational institutions in general, especially among those who initially had an adverse experience with education.
- It can help the learners, not only in their life pathways but also career, as they can show their learning achievement records to employers and other related stakeholders (public employment services and social assistance support, for instance)
- It can help learners to recognise the lifewide benefits of learning and how the learning is contributing to their lifelong learning journeys.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Other staff members in adult education providers should be involved in the process of using the tools.

Rationale

- In the pilot testing of the TaMPADA digital tool, it has been noticed that in some contexts, educators are not the best placed to collect information on their learners. In that context, within AEPs staff organisations, psychologists, doctors, mentors, or personal assistants may also find the TaMPADA toolkit useful to support their work with disadvantaged adults.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Other stakeholders are invited to increase cooperation and partnerships with adult education providers to support the design and implementation of tools like TaMPADA

Rationale

- A non-exhaustive list of organisations includes: civil society organisations, Public Employment Services, information and guidance centres, social care support services, health services and other educational institutions (e.g. schools and universities). These are listed in the second publication of the TaMPADA project (the).
- Building on these results, it is shown that involving other stakeholders in the setup and implementation of tools like TaMPADA can enhance the impact of the use of the tool.
- Cooperation with other stakeholders can, for instance, improve the outreach strategy towards disadvantaged learners (e.g. in the recruitment of disadvantaged learners) as well as the post-monitoring follow-up.
- Other stakeholders and organisations can connect their own data systems and monitoring mechanisms to tools like TaMPADA to have a better understanding of the needs and adult learning offer and its impact on their territory. For the municipalities, regional offices or national



bodies for education and any authorities who constantly monitor the education quality, the results of learners' measurement can bring useful insights.

- More networking opportunities to exchange good practices in the field can also bring useful results.

RECOMMENDATION 6: European policy-makers should take into account TaMPADA results in the European policies, particularly the upcoming revision of the adult learning agenda

Rationale

- European policies in education and training may have an impact on Member States, thanks to their recommendations and the cooperation processes taking place at the European level. EU policies such as the adult learning agenda can, hence, greatly contribute to allowing the possibility for more tools or initiatives complementary and/or extending the TaMPADA approach to be developed and/or supported by national, regional, and local policy-makers. Other key policies include for instance, the National skills strategies and the Life Skills initiative as part of the European Skills Agenda.
- Government bodies related to education or employment may find the TaMPADA approach useful when making long-term evidence-based adult learning policies, guidelines or launching corresponding initiatives.
- If the recommendations from the EU level are taken on board, this can have a rippling impact from top-down on the national policies and can improve both their outcomes and impact meeting their main goals in terms of improving participation in lifelong learning, social inclusion, reduction of poverty, etc.

RECOMMENDATION 7: More funding opportunities should be provided at European, national, regional and local levels to further exploit results like TaMPADA and develop new initiatives

Rationale

- EU projects have an end, and this limits the sustainability of results in terms of further exploitation by partner organisations and in the replicability and transferability with external organisations.
- Partner organisations in projects very often do not have the financial and other resources to continue the implementation and exploitation project results after the end of the funding eligibility period.
- Interfaces like the one developed in TaMPADA can be very costly in the design but also in the maintenance stages. It is important that funders do take this account and target funding for their development and sustainment.
- Funding programmes like Erasmus+ and the European Structural and Social Funds, should allow funding schemes for supporting the replicability and transferability of successful project results like TaMPADA.
- At national, regional and local level, other funding should be made available to develop initiatives that allow adult education providers to better measure learners' progress. Such initiatives can include theoretical or applied research in the field.



RECOMMENDATION 8: National, regional and local policy-makers are encouraged to support adult education staff, in particular managers and educators in using tools like the one developed in TaMPADA via capacity-building schemes

Rationale

- Besides the need for financial resources and incentives to further develop learners' measurement tools like TaMPADA, it is of high importance to further build awareness and competences among the adult education staff in using these types of tools and methods.
- Such training opportunities in continuous professional development can apply to the digitalisation of the measurement process from the assessment to the certification phases. In addition to essential digital skills, it is important to reinforce AEPs staff analysis skills to understand and explain the data collected.
- It is important to look at GDPR issues as well and train the users of tools like TaMPADA in collecting and storing the data while protecting the privacy of users.
- The training can be done through instructional videos, promoted on European or national platforms like EPALE.

