

VOICE OF WRITING
AND READING LEARNERS
IN EUROPE

MANIFESTO



WHO ARE WE?

We are **writing and reading adult learners** from Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Scotland and Spain. We developed this Manifesto in the framework of the **Eur-Alpha** network (2009 – 2012).

We would like you to share and promote our actions and aims so that together we can achieve **education for all**.

The European Parliament needs to recognise this and help to make the numbers of people with reading and writing difficulties known. We have the right for our issues to be included as a priority in European policies.

To achieve this there needs to be more cooperation with the European Parliament and between countries.

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The more we learn,
the more we want to learn.
The more we write,
the more we want to write.
The more we read,
the more we want to read.
Words have become
our friends.



1 To have a voice in Europe

To achieve this we need European policies to include our views and address our needs. This would help provide the necessary support for our learning.

2 More investment in adult education, especially in writing and reading, numeracy and IT skills

Investment in adult education means:

- better training for all workers and for the unemployed,
- more socially active older people,
- a second opportunity for young early-school leavers,
- improved health of learners, families and communities, and
- improved educational success for children through family learning.

We want adult basic education to be:

- OPEN TO ALL,
- FREE TO EVERYONE whatever their nationality, gender, ability, social status, and
- available in workplaces.

3 To participate directly in Adult Education projects and centres

Education providers, policy makers and relevant others need to promote:

- educational projects and other relevant projects we are participating in so that our voices count. This means that learners should be allowed to discuss, decide and organize projects.
- projects lead by Learners Associations or Organizations, especially if they include many learners who have basic levels of education.

4 Trainers to be specially trained to teach Adult Education

We want an education based on dialogue, results and a good group environment. Trainers have to get the best training on Adult Education methodologies and relevant knowledge. This training has to include the most internationally respected contributions on Adult Education, for example, the critical pedagogy approach of Paulo Freire.

5 To define what, how and why we want to learn. We want a say in how policies and educational programmes are designed

We want to be listened to when proposing relevant learner questions. When we are heard we have:

- more independence,
- better jobs, and
- more self-confidence.

The concrete proposals are attached as an Annex to this Manifesto.

6 Politicians to be involved in our Manifesto and to agree specific commitments

We want more specific commitments from politicians and in policies to our Manifesto. We want specific actions to ensure that relevant European policies promote literacy programmes based on our demands.

7 To spread the word to the world and also have more contact with more learners from different countries

Our aim is for learners and adults with literacy needs in Europe and throughout the world to learn to read and write. We ask your help in making this Manifesto known in all your networks, to encourage them to get in contact with us so that learners can be stronger and united.

This last version has been agreed in Lisbon, 6 December 2011.

When all these points are acted on society will be more just, built on solidarity, citizens will participate more and literacy difficulties will be no more.



WHAT WOULD WE LIKE TO LEARN?

- To read to be able to complete official letters, forms and e-mails
 - To learn how to read, write, explain ourselves and make ourselves understood
 - To be able to use ICT
 - Reading for safety
 - Reading and writing for study and education
 - Reading to know our rights so that our voice can be listened
 - Reading so that we can travel and go abroad
 - Reading for work purposes
 - To learn new skills and learn from other people
 - Other languages
 - To prepare the driving test
 - To calculate and to capture the value of money.
 - To stop being ashamed of our past and present
- To learn how society WORKS:
 - ▶ Administration: banks, social services, post office, work contracts, registration with the municipality, trade unions, job and training centres...
 - ▶ Health: hospitals, GPs, nursing homes
 - ▶ Education: school system
 - ▶ Careers advice
 - ▶ Government: how it works (regions, parliament...), subsidies, who are the decision makers? Why? Where are these decisions made?
 - ▶ Politics, political parties, to learn who can we vote
 - ▶ Existing political regimes, democratic regimes, dictatorships... Which countries have what regimes? Where and why?

WHY WOULD WE LIKE TO LEARN?

- To improve our quality of life
- To have a voice
- To be more confident
- To help ourselves and help others
- To know our rights
- To get qualifications and be an equal
- To feel more included
- To find ways to cope dyslexia
- To connect with other people
- To stop surviving and start living
- To stop being prisoners of our present and to be able to think freely about the future
- To be recognized, to be visible in society
- To be there for our children during primary school (between 6 – 12 years)
- To be able to take up responsibility not only in individual life, but also in collective decision making

HOW WOULD WE LIKE TO LEARN?

- In a group
- Near our home
- In the workplace
- Face to face
- Blended learning with some at home and some face to face
- During the day
- At weekends
- E-learning
- Using technology
- Free access to education, or a more convenient access for those of us who have difficulties
- More hours dedicated to training during the day, in the evening
- Many more places where we can learn
- A training that motivates us
- Good tools: materials adapted to adult students and specific for Adult Education
- Knowledge of what we've achieved and where we are
- Evaluation: moments to reconsider whether we've made any progress or not in our learning process
- Childcare (while we are learning in the classroom)
- External resources: libraries
- By having well-lit classrooms and big enough to work in small groups
- Making sure that nobody is lost on the way

HOW WOULD WE LIKE TO SEE

OUR POLITICIANS AND COMPANIES

INVOLVED IN ADULT LEARNING?

- A Ministry for adult education
- Involvement of rich companies in the funding of literacy training
- Involvement of Europe to prioritize literacy training
- More equal rights, and less determinism
- More determined and willing policies from politicians
- Politicians who prove that they are actually doing something about it and that literacy is their priority
- Representatives should not only come to seminars or conferences, they should see the reality with their own eyes
- We should find the right bait to attract them (inviting them to lunch meetings, giving good examples from elsewhere)
- More cooperation among countries



WE WANT

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