

# Recommendations



Awareness  
Raising for  
Adult Learning  
and Education

Project  
partners:





We hope that these five groups of recommendations will become tools in the work of adult learning organisations and institutions throughout Europe. In these five groups we have tried to synthesize the results of the ARALE project. They are based on:

- a) *The submissions made for a survey by adult education organisations around Europe*
- b) *The presentations at the ARALE Conference*
- c) *The inputs of the participants at the ARALE Conference, during open space sessions, workshops and interviews*

Even the structure of the recommendations is the indirect decision of all the people who contributed to ARALE. The recommendations are divided into five groups, because it was on these five themes that we received the most substantial input.

1. *How to convince policy-makers*
2. *How to reach out to potential learners*
3. *How to organise Lifelong Learning Weeks*
4. *How to best use role models*
5. *How to find and cooperate with sponsors*

As you will see, most recommendations are about the advocacy theme. It is a life-and-dead issue for the adult education community to build good relations with policy makers and convince them to make decisions that create better working conditions and funding for adult learning.

From the submissions and during the conference it became obvious that a lot of experiences have been made from Lifelong Learning Weeks. Many of these recommendations are also valid for other outreach activities.

In extracting and presenting these recommendations it has been our aim to heed the advice that we have received for advocacy and campaigning: Keep it simple – be brief and clear. For that reason you will not find examples and arguments in this section. We encourage you to look in the ARALE submissions and the Conference articles to find that.

We are very much aware that this is neither a full nor a finished set of recommendations. We will rather like to see it as a work-in-progress. As ARALE partners we pledge to continue the work of disseminating these results and collecting more knowledge and experience in awareness raising on adult learning.

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# 1. How to convince policy-makers

## 1.1. Find the right person

- *Research the field of policy makers before choosing who to target. What are their roles in the decision making process and at what moment in the process can they make an influence?*
- *Choose the person that has the power to do something for you.*
- *If possible choose a person who is already interested in Adult Education.*
- *If possible choose a person that you have already built a trusting relation to – or else start doing that.*
- *Consider approaching a civil servant instead of a politician. Sometimes they are easier to access. Often they know the field of Adult Education better. They decide what is put on the desk of the minister.*
- *If you have problems getting access to ministers, consider approaching parliament members, even backbenchers.*
- *In some cases local or regional politicians are the ones that can actually solve your problem – or help you access national policy makers*
- *You may use another NGO – maybe a more influential one – as an ally or a bridge to the policy makers.*

## 1.2. Prepare yourself

- Informal contacts may be a successful first step to a formal meeting or to an exchange of documents.
- Choose one thing that you want to accomplish, the one thing that you want support for. If possible a topic that matches the policy-maker's current political issues.
- Make sure you know a lot about the policy-maker that you are meeting.
- Put yourself in the policy-maker's shoes and imagine what he or she may gain from supporting your organisation. "What is in it for him or her?" What is her present problem? Does she need press coverage? Is she having an in-fight with another minister for position? Are she looking for the easiest way out (less work, less problems)?
- Produce a brief paper that documents (references to documentations) your problem/project and what your organisation can do if....
- Prepare your arguments and your introductory speech in advance.

## 1.3. Be brief and clear

- Keep it simple!
- Open the meeting with a short presentation (2-3 minutes): Present yourself, your organisation, and the one action that you want him to take - and include what he can gain from getting you the support that you ask for. Examples, documentation, arguments can wait until you have caught the interest of the policy-maker.
- Do not appear as a beggar, even if your purpose is funding. Make him feel/understand that supporting you means also supporting his own interests. One example: our action makes them save money. Another example: our action will solve a problem in society that the public/the media wants the politicians to solve.
- Offer your assistance in writing concrete proposals, even law proposals.

## 1.4. Provide facts and statements

- Provide relevant information such as key facts, key numbers on your organisation or project: how do you spend the money, what are your activities, how many people do your reach, how many participants do you have.

## 1.5. Bring in a learner's story

- Focus on storytelling, especially when people are telling their own story.
- Present adult learners to policy-makers: their personal stories are the most convincing argument you'll find!
- Try to have a learning representative appointed to official boards in order to include a learner voice in the policy making.
- Make sure to brief the learner about what his role is before he joins a meeting or a board to empower him and allow him to give a powerful speech.

## 1.6. Invite policy-makers to your events

- To your public meetings and conferences
- For a tour of your adult education centers
- To an internal event where they can meet your members, teachers or adult learners and hear their stories.
- Invite a policy-maker on to the board of your organisation. Beware, though, that they are very busy - maybe rather aim for a politician with a lower profile that has the time to be really involved.

## 1.7. Be patient, professional and persistent!

- Convincing policy-maker takes time.
- Be patient and persistent until your message has been received, action has been taken and solutions are not just decided but also implemented.
- Be professional and enthusiastic - both aspects are necessary.

# 2. How to reach out to potential learners



## 2.1. Basics first: Out of bed - Out of home

- The first step in reaching out to learners may simply be to get them out of their house.
- Introduce the future learner to a social environment in which she feels comfortable.
- Then she may be ready for new learning experiences.
- This is especially true for those marginalised social groups that suffer from the crisis.
- This is especially true in times of crisis.

## 2.2. Focus on the benefits for the learners

- Make sure to give a positive connotation to the learning experience and deliver a positive message instead of focusing on the problems of for example illiteracy
- Highlight that education is useful, fun, and allows making connections.
- Demonstrate that adult learning is not confined to any particular demographic segment.

## 2.3. Clever communication

- Adapt your communication to your target groups.
- Make sure that your communication does not contain in itself barriers for the learner to receive it.
- Do not expect persons with reading difficulties to join learning on the basis of written leaflet or a complicated website.

## 2.4. Involve the learner in campaigning

- Learners are the best advocates for adult education.
- Ask them to become mentors or learning ambassadors.
- Use their personal stories to convince new learners to join.
- At the same time this is empowerment of the involved learner.

## 2.5. Find good partners

- Work together with social institutions as job centers or social centers.
- Organise your event within the framework of another event. You will most probably be able to use the main organiser's communication and PR channels

## 3. How to organise Lifelong Learning Weeks

### 3.1. Ensure a national coordination

- A strong national coordination is necessary. This is necessary to create an event during a short time frame on a country wide scale.
- The national level is the first coordinator of the event.
- Promotion of the event is a key task for the national coordination – through a common logo, through media actions and the coordination.

### 3.2. Regional or local coordinators

- A great way to have a strong connection to the local level is to have local, regional or thematic coordinators.
- Staff members from adult education centers will be right for the task because they know best how to address local target groups and how to organize in the specific local community according to the places, the human resources, the local activities, etc.
- Local coordinators can be intermediates between local and national level and between different local event organisers.
- Make room for bottom-up-approach and allow local coordinators and organisers to make decisions at the different levels.

### 3.3. Create partnerships

- Cooperate with partners, both from the national level and from the regional or local level.
- Create local partnerships or local networks between adult education providers (both formal and informal) and also other organisations (libraries, job centres ...)
- Involve many organizations, like adult education institutions, schools, cultural institutions, public libraries, employment services, public local authorities.

- Create partnerships at the national level with other national umbrella organisations.
- Media and media representatives are also important partners.
- Make sure that all partners benefit from the event and are happy with its outcomes.

### 3.4. Be visible

- Have clear and simple messages that everybody can understand
- A common logo helps the LLL Week to be visible.
- Organise events in places where ordinary citizens pass by – the idea is to go to the learners, and not to ask learners to come to the events.
- Fun can be a major part of the activities, as the objective is to show that learning is an attractive activity.

### 3.5. Celebrate the learner and the learning activity

- Make it a happy moment by celebrating.
- Make the learners proud of their achievements.
- Organise awards and award ceremonies and competitions.
- Make the events festival-like.
- All this can help attracting media attention and a wider public.

### 3.6. Adapt best practises from other countries

- Have a look at what other countries do and how they succeed.
- Do not copy other countries but think about how to implement it in your country, taking into consideration the cultural and historical differences of the country.

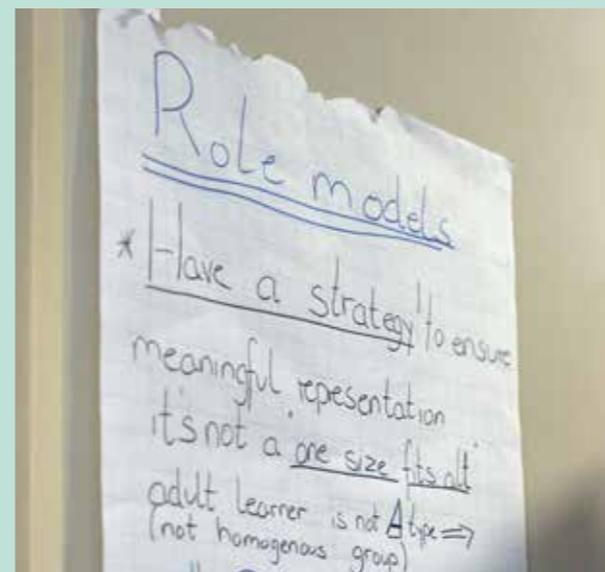
## 4. How to best use role models

### 4.1. Involve the learner

- Role models are great motivators for adult learners
- Especially if they themselves have gained a lot by participating in adult education courses.
- Especially if they strongly believe in what they do and are therefore able to motivate others.
- Listening to a role model encourages future learners, as they feel “I am not the only one”
- Beware not to “misuse” the learners and to hurt their privacy, but to represent them in a meaningful way

### 4.2. Have different types of role models

- Use different types of role models from different learning paths or different areas. This will appeal to different types of adult learners.
- Local role models may have a special effect.
- Famous people and celebrities are good as role models – based on their own learning experiences.
- Establish a pool of people to draw on.



## 5. How to attract and cooperate with sponsors

### 5.1. Find sponsors

- Communicate your benefits to attract and gain sponsors.
- Define your product and present it accurately.
- Keep your message simple, so that people can relate to it.
- Find private companies that will have an interest in adult education.
- Use personal contacts to overcome the filters within companies – also contacts of your staff and your learners.
- Try the local level and local contacts.

### 5.2. Communicate

- Create connections - Make it personal.
- Partnerships are about dialogue, interaction and exchange, it's not a one-way relationship.
- Be able to offer them something in return, like an audience for a specific campaign or product.
- Find out how it connects to the specific brands of the companies – or to their customers or their staff.
- Put together reports – and show how the money is spent, in a concrete way.

### 5.3. New ideas

- Present new ideas, like for example every time a ticket is sold at a cinema they will hand out a postcard informing the customer about adult education activities.



## ARALE WEBSITE:

<http://www.eaea.org/arale>

On the website you can access all submissions to the survey plus the articles published in the magazine. For each submission and each article you will find relevant links to further information on each case.

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European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) - Representing 116 member organisations in 43 countries, EAEA is the voice of non-formal adult education in Europe. EAEA is a transnational, non-profit association whose purpose is to link and represent European organisations which are directly involved in adult learning.

Danish Adult Education Association (DAEA) - An umbrella organisation (NGO) catering for 34 countrywide member organisations, all working with non-formal adult education

Estonian Non-formal Adult Education Association - A non-governmental, national umbrella organisation in the non-formal adult education field associating education-orientated NGOs



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