

Advanced draft for the Forum



European Education and Training Expert Panel

Issue paper - Demographic challenges

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1. Introduction

The strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020)¹ is based on common objectives and supports the improvement of the education and training systems of the European Union's Member States through common tools, mutual learning and the exchange of good practice via the open method of coordination. The value of this cooperation is widely recognised.

Since the adoption of ET 2020 in 2009, European societies and economies have been undergoing fast and extensive transformations that affect the way people live and work – and the way they learn. Consequently, there is a need to strengthen the relevance and impact of European cooperation by better understanding global trends and their implications for EU education and training policies.

As the current strategic framework comes to an end in 2020, the European Commission – Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture – is carrying out wide consultations as part of the preparations for its successor. The European Education and Training Expert Panel has been convened in order to make a strategic contribution by reflecting on the concept of 'embracing change', as well as discussing in what ways new trends are likely to influence education and training in the future, and how they could be addressed through European cooperation over the next decade.

The Panel – composed of 18 international experts² – was asked to focus on six thematic blocks, namely: demographic change; inclusion and citizenship; technological change and the future of work; digitalisation of society; environmental challenges; and investment, reform and governance. These were selected by the Commission from a pool of analyses of long-term strategic trends.

For each block, the Panel was invited to address the following scoping questions.

- Which are the major societal developments that will have an impact on how education and training are delivered in Europe in the medium to long term? How can European cooperation best respond to these challenges?
- What should be the strategic objectives of European cooperation in education and training for the next decade? Which should be the priority areas and themes?

The Panel carried out its work between October 2018 and January 2019.

This issue paper reflects the Panel's debates. It first illustrates the trends, challenges and opportunities for education and training that are associated with demographic challenges over the coming decade. It suggests issues that could be addressed through European cooperation, and offers a number of concluding remarks.

The information and views set out in this issue paper are those of the Expert Panel members and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the European Commission.

¹ Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020'), OJEC 2009/C 119/02 ([https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52009XG0528\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52009XG0528(01)&from=EN))

² The members of the Expert Panel were: Hermann J. Abs, Emmanuel Boudard, Etienne Denoël, Paul Downes, Malcolm Fisk, Silvija Karklina, Eva Klemenčič, Per Kornhall, Sandra Kučina Softić, Carla Morais, Rob Mudde, Serena Pastore, Andrius Plečkaitis, Anna Rabajczyk, Hanne Shapiro, Teresa Sordé-Martí, Gabriela Teodorescu and Raimo Vuorinen.

2. Key challenges and opportunities

The Expert Panel identified two major areas that presented education challenges and opportunities in relation to demographic changes in the EU. Firstly, ageing societies present a major challenge, as Europe still needs to adapt to this new demographic reality; however, this human resource also represents an opportunity for the EU to explore. Secondly, migration will both challenge education systems and provide opportunities to address demographic change. Besides migration into the EU from non-EU countries, EU citizens – particularly from younger generations – tend to take advantage of their right to free movement within the Union, creating internal migration flows: generally, from the south to the north and from east to west, and from rural areas to cities³.

One way of responding to these challenges is to focus much more intensely on lifelong learning for all citizens, which would mean that all individuals would have the resources to adapt to changing circumstances throughout their lives and to realise their full potential.

2.1 Ageing populations and the need for lifelong learning

Demography is at the heart of all major contemporary societal issues⁴. Europe is currently experiencing population ageing and is expecting a substantial decline⁵ in what has been traditionally defined as the 'working age population'. This demographic is expected to decrease, alongside a significant increase in the number of people aged 65 and over. More specifically, it is projected that the number of 15-64 year olds will drop from 330.8 to 307.9 million between 2020 and 2040, while for the same period there would be a significant increase of roughly 10 million people aged 65-74, with the population in this age bracket expected to increase from 55.1 to 65.8 million⁶. It should be noted, however, that these trends are uneven across EU Member States based on differences in population profiles and flows. For example, the ratio between older and younger people is set to increase substantially in this way in Lithuania and Latvia, and moderately in Cyprus, Luxembourg and Ireland.

In an ageing society, all age groups need to be addressed; the challenge for the future is therefore 'to ensure that people can grow old with security and dignity and that they can continue to participate in social life as citizens with full rights'. At the same time, 'the rights of old people should not be incompatible with those of other groups, and reciprocal intergenerational relations should be encouraged'⁷ (*United Nations, World Population Ageing 1950-2050, Population Division*).

Focusing on lifelong learning for all individuals is therefore a key strategy in addressing these demographic challenges. All individuals, whatever their background, having access to learning throughout their entire lives would help to ensure inclusion of all citizens and enable individuals to participate in a fully inclusive society. There have been some initiatives at European level to try to develop strategies along these lines.

Looking at the figures on participation rates in adult learning below, Eurostat data shows that Sweden and Denmark are among the few countries that have reached the 2020 European benchmark of 15 % of people aged 25-64 participating in learning. There are few indications that the EU will reach this 15 % target set for 2020.

³ Due to time constraints, this paper does not address topics such as demographic changes of the teaching force, the rise or decline in the number of students and other governance-related aspects of demographic change.

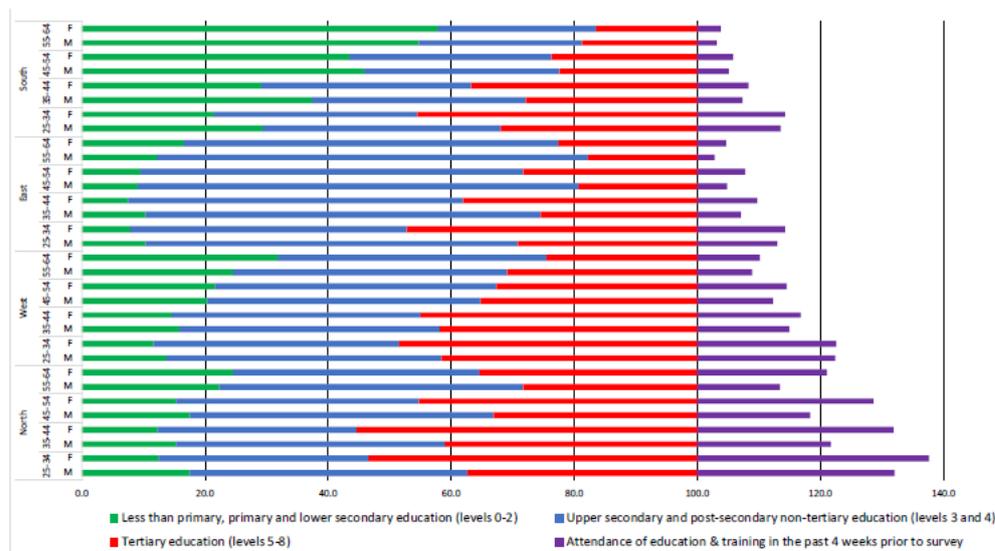
⁴ <https://www.institutmontaigne.org/en/publications/demographic-challenge-myths-and-realities>

⁵ Eurostat (2018).

⁶ Eurostat (2018).

⁷ https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/world-of-work-magazine/articles/WCM_041965/lang--en/index.htm

Educational attainment and participation in training by age group and sex, 2016⁴³



North: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden
West: Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Switzerland, United Kingdom
East: Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia
South: Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain

Source: Eurostat data (edat_ifse_03 & trng_ifse_01), 2016: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database> (accessed 31st May 2017).

With ongoing improvements in healthcare services and an increasing awareness of nutrition and healthy lifestyles, the life expectancy of Europeans is increasing⁸. Not only are individuals living longer, but they are also healthier and able to participate in the labour market for a longer period of time. This contradicts the prevailing stereotype of old age in which individuals are expected to retire at 65 years⁹. A key question for the EU and its national governments, therefore, will be how to tap into this wealth of experienced human resource. In Germany, for example, there has been a focus on the changing composition of the country's population for some time, resulting in the realisation that a consolidated strategy and policy response is needed to respond to these changes. The German strategy 'Every Age Counts' is a comprehensive national demographics strategy based on four overarching areas: economic growth, solidarity, equality, living conditions and financial stability of the social system¹⁰.

Individuals' experience of ageing is strongly linked to the way in which a society uses age to assign people to roles, to channel people in and out of positions in the social structure, to allocate resources and to categorise individuals¹¹. The European economy currently rests on the notion of an individual's obligation to work until a particular time, with the transition signalled through the receipt of a public pension at a fixed age. However, in recent years, many national governments have restricted policies encouraging early retirement, and have developed learning programmes to retrain and reintegrate older workers in employment. As a result, the course of life that people now follow before they define themselves, or are defined by others, as 'retired' has become increasingly complex and blurred¹².

⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Mortality_and_life_expectancy_statistics#Life_expectancy_at_birth_increased_in_2016

⁹ Eurostat (2017). https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/People_in_the_EU_-_statistics_on_an_ageing_society

¹⁰ http://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/EN/Themen/Politik_Gesellschaft/further-development-demographic-strategy.pdf?blob=publicationFile

¹² Kunemund, H. and Kolland, F. (2007), Ageing in Society: European Perspectives on Gerontology, 167–185

Planned or existing labour market reforms delaying retirement age create the need for more research into how older workers perform in technology-rich working environments and how they can be supported best in changing work environments. Overall, there is limited empirical research available on the participation patterns of workers beyond the age of 65, and on successful retraining and upskilling focused on older workers¹³. In Germany, however, comprehensive panel data on the participation of adults in education and training is collected through the National Education Panel Study (NEPS)¹⁴, although this is limited to adults up to the age of 65. With regard to the issue of lifelong learning and patterns of participation in educational, occupational and life-courses, the NEPS could be a very valuable data source if its sample included older people. A further weakness of this data set is the fact that only a few forms of informal learning are registered and there is no differentiation for most types of informal learning, for example whether it is assessed as being useful for professional or for private purposes. In Denmark, labour market participation will be increased gradually to the age of 72 over the coming years; however, in many instances, adult learning participation data does not match these changing realities.

Barriers to learning are similar to those of other age groups; these include financial costs, negative experiences of education or low levels of self-confidence. Such barriers can also result from age-related circumstances, such as some form of disability, including impaired hearing, vision or mobility. Differences in socioeconomic circumstances or the nature and culture of individual jobs – i.e. whether or not workers are encouraged to learn and develop within their job – have a huge impact on learning behaviour and motivation. There may also be a lack of support from employers due to a perceived lack of return on investment in the training of older workers. Low rates of participation may also mirror self-perceptions in relation to ageing and socioeconomic circumstances, including labour market status and the nature of the work in which individuals are involved. Lifelong learning systems are not comprehensive in most EU Member States, with funding to a large extent linked to employment status. In addition, since the financial crisis, there has been a cut in public investment overall, which has exacerbated an already difficult situation.

The Education and Training Monitor¹⁵, which analyses national reforms and progress towards the education and training 2020 benchmarks, shows that increasing investment in adult learning alone is not enough – changing mindsets towards adult learning is vital. In many Member States, for example, there is no culture of learning as an adult, and there is often insignificant investment – or even no investment – of national budgets in adult education, including investment in qualified adult educators¹⁶. Taken together with the anticipated changes in the labour market, this results in an opportunity for a greater focus on how to change the culture, mindset, government policy and material investment related to the adult learning offer in order to better include all the human resources available.

2.2 Migration and the free movement of workers

Migration, as defined by the United Nations (UN) Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), is a 'movement of people, either within a country or across international borders. It includes all kinds of

¹³ Nowossadeck, S. Wiest, M. W., Lühe, J. (2018). Ageing in Germany: Content, Quality and Accessibility of Relevant Data Sources. Results of the Data Mapping Project of the Joint Programming Initiative "More Years, Better Lives". German Centre of Gerontology. https://www.dza.de/fileadmin/dza/pdf/Diskussionspapier_Nr_56.pdf

¹⁴ <https://www.neps-data.de/en-us/home.aspx>

¹⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/et-monitor_en

¹⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/et-monitor_en

movements, irrespective of the drivers, duration and voluntary/involuntary nature. It encompasses economic migrants, distress migrants, internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees and asylum seekers, returnees and people moving for other purposes, including for education and family reunification'. There is a huge variety in the kinds of human mobility that may be covered by the term 'migration' and they pose different challenges to education and training systems¹⁷. Obvious challenges may consist of increasing diversity among learners in formal education and training, especially in urban regions as school classes become more and more diverse and multilingual. Education and training systems are also asked to recognise previous learning or qualifications gained in different countries and different types of education and training institutions.

The effects of globalisation, migration and the free movement of workers in the EU need to be taken into consideration; in 2017, 4.2 % of the EU population had citizenship of a non-EU country (roughly 21.6 million people). Eurostat also estimates that there are approximately 16.9 million people living in an EU Member State that have citizenship of another EU Member State¹⁸. The average age of non-EU citizens in the EU is lower than that of EU citizens¹⁹. On 1 January 2017, the median age of the total population of the 28 EU Member States (EU-28) stood at 42.9 years, while it was 27.9 years for immigrants to the EU-28 in 2016. In fact, half of non-EU migrants in the EU are aged under 28.²⁰ There is significant variation in the levels of emigration and immigration across Europe, with certain countries receiving more third-country nationals, refugees and 'intra-EU' mobile citizens than others.

Children and young people with a migrant background, and especially those whose families come from third countries, have the most urgent needs in Europe's education systems. Evidence shows that they tend to perform worse than their native peers across a variety of measures²¹. There are many reasons why children with immigrant background fall behind, but two in particular stand out. First, the language of instruction at schools may not be familiar to them, and second, a significantly larger proportion of immigrant children belong to lower socioeconomic groups than their native peers across Europe²².

As Europe's school-age population has become more diverse, its needs have shifted. While individual-based challenges can often be addressed through individualised solutions, social and institutional factors require specific policy measures to transform the institutional ethos of schools that serve migrant communities. This has implications for both the culture of the learning environment and the cooperation patterns among stakeholders, which would involve families and local communities more significantly in school life²³. Migration and ageing are closely linked to a broader range of changes within society, such as family structures and marriage patterns, fertility and health, housing, the creation and use of public spaces within cities and cultural aspects of daily life. Looking closely at demographic development will be key to designing future forms of education, training and learning.

¹⁷ Migration as a Development Challenge: Analysis of Root Causes and Policy Implications, UNESCO <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000247089>

¹⁸ Eurostat (2018). Migration and Migrant Population Statistics. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/pdfscache/1275.pdf>

¹⁹ Eurostat (2018). Migration and Migrant Population Statistics. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/pdfscache/1275.pdf>

²⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics#Migrant_population:_almost_22_million_non-EU_citizens_living_in_the_EU

²¹ SIRIUS Network, National round tables. Synthesis report (Brussels: SIRIUS Network, 2014), www.sirius-migrationeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/WP1.2-Synthesis-report-NRT.pdf

²² Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (2012). Untapped Skills: Realising the Potential of Immigrant Students. Paris: OECD Publishing, www.oecd.org/edu/school/Untapped%20Skills.pdf

²³ Essomba, M. A. (2014). Diversity of Contexts, Unity of Purposes: Preparing for Successful School Achievement by Those Children and Youngsters in Europe from Migrant Backgrounds. In A. Sears and A. Peterson (eds.), *Citizenship Teaching and Learning*, Bristol: Intellect Publishers of Original Thinking.

3. Looking towards 2030: priority areas of action

The following key themes for future European cooperation over the coming decade emerged.

- **Strengthening lifelong learning and adult education:**
 - The accessibility of lifelong learning and adult learning opportunities should be strengthened, while existing barriers need to be removed.
 - The up- and re-skilling of all citizens promotes a positive shift in the perception of society towards learning and towards older people.
- **Encouraging active participation in learning:**
 - The debate should be framed around 'learning' rather than 'education and training'.
 - Non-formal and informal learning should be strengthened, for example through engagement in civic community action.
 - Learning needs to adapt to changes in society and in work environments. Further investment in digital technologies is key to empowering people.
- **Making education accessible to all and capitalising on opportunities:**
 - As well as informal and non-formal learning, intergenerational learning is important because it brings a community closer together.
 - Successful approaches to learning require that groups such as older learners or learners with migrant backgrounds are not considered as homogeneous groups.
 - Education institutions have the premises and resources to cater for all; their doors need to be kept open.
- **Making targeted efforts to support learners with a migration background:**
 - A positive attitude towards the diversity of learners promotes academic success and boosts self-confidence.
 - Learning environments in which using multiple languages is perceived as a richness and a resource should be promoted.

3.1 Strengthening lifelong learning and adult education

With individuals working into their 60s and 70s, there is both an economic and a social case for changing society's mindset about older people and for providing the conditions in which all individuals can, throughout their entire lives, be actively engaged in education, training, work and in society in general. The accessibility of lifelong learning and adult learning opportunities should be strengthened, as the Expert Panel believes that the up- and re-skilling of all citizens would promote a positive shift in society's perception of both learning and older people. However, the tools for up- and re-skilling and for addressing potential skills mismatches – such as the learning offer and incentives for all individuals to participate in lifelong learning – need to be reshaped.

Looking forward to 2030, more people will need to upgrade their competences (knowledge, skills and attitudes) due to the digitalisation of society and the economy. In addition, all citizens will need to acquire functional digital skills as more services are accessible through the internet. The current education and training offer, including formal and non-formal learning as well as broader lifelong learning policies, are not aligned to these changing circumstances. Rather than designing new policy frameworks or large-scale pilots in a top-down way, it would be more helpful to learn from the piloting, implementation and scaling of successful social and education innovations. It is also important to collect reliable data as well as case studies covering all citizens and all forms of learning in order to inform policy choices and direction.

In addition, research on adult learning traditionally focuses more on ‘transforming effects’, such as community activism, and less on ‘conserving effects’, such as self-maintenance or the conservation of the social fabric, where ‘education potentially can prevent decay and consolidate a positive sense of stability’²⁴. Given the context of global ageing, it is becoming more important to investigate the latter effects of learning which, though they might be invisible, play an important role in maintaining autonomy, health and quality of life among older adults, and hence the social fabric of a community or a country²⁵.

3.2 Encouraging active participation in learning

European education and training systems need to adapt in order to capitalise on the opportunities presented by changing demographics and, most crucially, to focus on learning in general, rather than more narrowly on education or training. Research on inclusive education, as outlined in the corresponding issue paper, also points to this necessary adaptation in order to reach out to different groups in society, including migrant learners, learners from low socioeconomic backgrounds and older learners. The limited research available on older people suggests that their inclusion in society in general, and learning communities in particular, also improves social cohesion and has psychological and social benefits for communities. Through tackling this particular priority area, communities would also benefit from an increased richness in its social fabric resulting from the accumulated experience and life skills of all people, whatever their age or background.

A key way of looking at this is to frame the debate around learning rather than education and training, and studies from the UN and Eurofound suggest that it is necessary to adopt integrated policy frameworks, as has been the case in Germany and Finland²⁶. As a result, everyone could be involved in learning. Adopting an integrated policy framework may mean changing the way in which learners access learning opportunities: at present, this is a one-way process, which does not imply the participation of the recipient. ‘Provision’ is perhaps a better word than ‘delivery’ in this context, as this highlights the interactivity of the learning process.

One way of incentivising all learners to engage in further learning and upskilling is to place more focus on learning outside of formal education – for example, through engagement in civic community action, which can span a number of different causes. In recent years, government expenditure on adult learning has increasingly targeted labour market needs, which has led to individuals outside or at the fringe of the labour market having no or limited access to participation in lifelong learning. Policy could be oriented by exploring different funding formulas used around the world and their effects in terms of participation rates and the nature of participation in lifelong learning. Likewise, it would be important to follow up on participation rates as a result of the recognition of prior learning measures used by older people, migrants or low-skilled adults.

The nature of work is also changing. This includes new forms of business with a social and/or green focus. Within Europe, some business models are developed based on measures aiming to re-engage young people who are NEET (not in education, employment or training). Based on these experiences, the European Commission could explore actions to stimulate similar measures targeting older long-

²⁴ Schuller T. (2004). Three Capitals. In Schuller, T., Preston, J., Hammond, C., Brassett-Grundy, A. & Bynner, J. (eds.), *The Benefit of Learning*. London: Routledge Falmer, 25.

²⁵ Schuller, T., Preston, J. & Hammond, C. The Benefits of Learning: The Impact of Education on Health, Family Life and Social Capital.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/286569172_The_Benefits_of_Learning_The_Impact_of_Education_on_Health_Family_Life_and_Social_Capita

²⁶ Eurofound (2017). Towards Age-Friendly Work in Europe: A Life-Course Perspective on Work and Ageing from EU Agencies.

term unemployed people. This could also be linked to a green agenda or other policy priorities within the EU.

In addition, learning opportunities should go beyond the skills required for a particular job or for a promotion in the workplace. It is also vital to ensure that learning environments are inclusive and that learners, who may face difficulties in learning or in adapting to a new environment, feel comfortable in engaging in learning and upskilling. Non-formal and informal learning is an important factor as it provides the flexibility that is often better suited to more mature learners or learners with special educational needs. In this respect, the enabling power of new technology and digitalisation²⁷ could also be marshalled towards learning opportunities that are more flexible.

Regarding the power of digitalisation in particular, opportunities available through digital technologies are seen as plentiful, but only to those who are digitally skilled. This implies the need to invest in digital technology training for as broad a set of the population as possible, up to and including the oldest demographics.

3.3 Making education accessible to all and capitalising on opportunities

The distribution of human resources within and throughout EU communities has been significantly affected by migration and the free movement of workers within the EU, as well as by increasing imbalances between the proportions of old and young people, qualified and less qualified people, those in rural and urban areas or those in different regions in Europe. The Expert Panel believes that one possible solution to this problem lies with investment in the human resources that are available, de facto.

Intergenerational, informal and non-formal learning are important as they not only bring a community closer together, but they also ensure that learning takes place both inside and outside school environments or other formal education and training settings. The local community could act as 'conduits of learning' in a variety of ways, such as 'whole school approaches' outlined in the issue paper on inclusion and citizenship education. In addition, both older and younger generations could be encouraged to engage in learning around literacy in digital tools. Further investment in digital technologies is also key to empowering people. A crucial issue here is broadband networks, which are vital to increasing inclusion and learning opportunities, particularly in rural and remote communities.

The Expert Panel is of the opinion that intergenerational learning or 'all-age learning' can take place at multiple levels, presenting a further opportunity for the EU. However, success in doing so hinges upon target groups – such as older learners or learners with migrant backgrounds – not being considered as homogeneous groups²⁸.

For many, having a physical space in which to learn is still an important factor for participation in learning. Schools, higher education institutions and vocational training centres are usually at the heart of a community and are the recognised centres for learning, yet they focus predominantly on education for younger people. Education institutions have the premises and resources to cater for all, yet their doors often close after the school day has ended. By extending opening hours, communities could create 'learning centres' from schools, enabling both young people and adults to make use of the resources that are available. These centres could also function as a face-to-face point of tutorage for

²⁷ See the separate issue paper on the theme of the digitalisation of society.

²⁸ Eubia (2010). Getting Older People Involved in Learning.

<http://www.associationforeducationandageing.org/ufiles/EuBiaGuide.pdf>

individuals travelling from other (more remote) locations where there is no dedicated learning centre, thereby complementing online learning, which is a vital tool in facilitating inclusion and supporting learning.

Having such a centre within a community could also contribute to changing the mindset that ‘school’ and ‘learning’ are only for young people, as school pupils would see their school also functioning as a place for community learning on a daily basis. Since, in some countries, schools can be funded from a variety of sources – including the local community, the region and the state – this may also open up other types of cooperation. Such an initiative would therefore encourage communication between different stakeholders.

3.4 Support to learners with a migration background

Research findings suggest that a positive attitude towards diversity and valuing the unique linguistic background of each child promotes academic success and boosts self-confidence²⁹. In addition, failing to value – or even devaluing – pupils’ culture and language(s) can have a negative impact on their overall learning achievement, motivation and well-being³⁰. A school with a high degree of language awareness considers all languages important for learning and building knowledge. As a consequence, the prior learning and knowledge of languages, which are not part of the curricula, can be formally recognised and can be added to school-leaving certificates. Currently, not all languages in Europe provide access to such recognised qualifications³¹.

A positive attitude towards linguistic diversity is indispensable for creating a language-friendly and language-aware school environment. In these environments, learning and using multiple languages is perceived as a richness and a resource. The importance of language learning, and of the educational, cognitive, social, intercultural, professional and economic benefits of the wider use of languages, needs to be discussed and encouraged in schools.

²⁹ Sierens, S. & van Avermaet, P. (2013). Language Diversity in Education: Evolving from Multilingual Education to Functional Multilingual Learning. In: Little, D., Leung, C. & Van Avermaet, P., *Managing Diversity in Education: Languages, Policies and Pedagogies*. Bristol, Buffalo, Toronto.

³⁰ Benson, C & Elorza, I. (2015). Multilingual Education for all (MEFA): Empowering Non-dominant Languages and Cultures through Multilingual Curricular Development. In: *The Sage Handbook of Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment*

³¹ European Commission (2018), Commission Staff Working Document accompanying the document Proposal for a Council Recommendation on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages, SWD/2018/174 final, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EL/TXT/?uri=SWD%3A2018%3A174%3AFIN>

4. Concluding remarks

Both ageing, along with its effect on society, and migration are complex phenomena; neither people in their 60s or 70s nor migrants are homogeneous groups. The different perspectives of these groups, as well as the opportunities and challenges they face, need to be taken into account in policymaking.

Notably, adult participation in learning is an area that remains significantly under-researched, particularly due to the fact that most data collection ceases when an individual reaches 65, and that there is a lack of data on adult learning in general.

There is also a need to consider further how ageism can be tackled, both in policymaking and in society more widely. Intergenerational or 'all-age learning' could help support this change, and should therefore be encouraged. Likewise, the role of the community is vital: providing targeted support to address specific learning barriers is key to improving learning outcomes of all groups in society, including children and adults with a migration background.

Overall, a significant repositioning of learning, which encompasses lifelong learning for all citizens, is needed in order to meet the multiple challenges posed by demographic change. The goal is the empowerment, inclusion and equal recognition of all citizens in Europe. This will ultimately have a beneficial effect on the status, role and recognition of older people and more widely on the economic, social and cultural life of the entire community in Europe.

