



WEBINAR | REPORT | 9 FEBRUARY 2023

Understanding Individual Learning Accounts

Challenges and prospects
ahead



earlall

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL & LOCAL
AUTHORITIES FOR LIFELONG LEARNING



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Webinar promoted by EARLALL's
Working Group on Skills and Labour Market



earlall@earlall.eu

ABOUT

EARLALL is a Brussels-based network of regions aiming to contribute to EU policy-making and cooperate in projects in the field of lifelong learning. Based on the unique strengths of every region and local authority, EARLALL facilitates regional collaborations and partnerships, as well as an open and rapid exchange of knowledge in a context of trust and confidence.

The network was established in 2001 under the initiative of regional governments willing to build solid cooperation in the field of lifelong learning.

EARLALL believes that regions and local authorities have a privileged role in designing and implementing strategies related to it, since they are in direct contact with educational institutions, the business environment and, most notably, citizens.

WORKING GROUP SKILLS AND LABOUR MARKET



Skills & Labour Market

The WG on Skills and Labour Market is exploring the skills anticipation that has emerged as a key policy response to combat skills mismatch in the labour market within European regions.

[More information](#)



OPENING

Understanding "Individual Learning Accounts"

In May 2022, EARLALL's Working Group for Skills and Labour Market co-organised with SwissCore the webinar “**European approach to Micro-Credentials**” to understand better micro-credentials in the Vocational Education and Training sector. To follow up on that webinar, **on February 9 2023, EARLALL's Working Group hosted a second webinar ‘Understanding Individual Learning Accounts: Challenges and Prospects ahead’ to learn from a range of policy and regional perspectives about Individuals Learning Accounts (ILAs) in Europe.**

The **innovative aspect of this proposal** is that it puts the individual directly at the centre of skills development. It also calls on Member States to modulate funding according to individuals' needs for training. While in principle this tool presents attractive features (e.g. giving individuals training rights as well as empowering individual choice), their effectiveness depends critically on their design. In particular, there is a risk that if the tool is poorly designed, it may end up widening the participation gap between under-represented and over-represented groups.

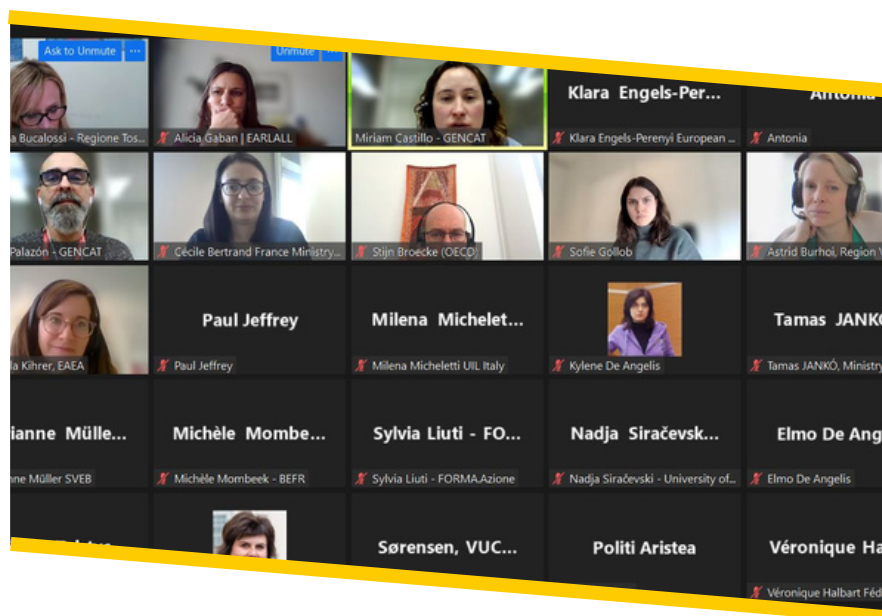
The webinar welcomed **over 60 participants** who had the opportunity to interact with the European Commission, OECD and French Ministry of Labour representatives to better understand the challenges and prospects ahead regarding the implementation of Individual Learning Accounts in Europe. Furthermore, regional experts introduced their local experiences and equivalent programmes to the ILA system.



60
PARTICIPANTS



REPLAY 





Klara Engels-Perenyi
European Commission



 [Presentation](#)

Ms Klara Engels-Perenyi, Policy Officer in the Skills Agenda Unit in DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion at the European Commission, presented the **Council's Recommendation on Individual Learning Accounts (ILAs)** as an enabling framework that seeks to promote the take-up of ILAs in Europe and to:

- Support all working-age adults in accessing training
- Increase their incentives and motivation to seek training

Ms Engels-Perenyi also highlighted the opportunities, and challenges of implementing ILA across all regions, saying that **"there are many countries and regions with a similar idea of ILA. We don't want everyone to use the same model because that model must be adapted to local needs."** To this end, the European Commission will support the ILA's implementation phase by facilitating mutual learning activities across and within Member States:

- Starting with seven countries' exchanges (more to come)
- Organising two seminars in Brussels, so one will take place online
- Organising activities in the home country

At the regional level, Ms Engels-Perenyi stressed that **"from the European Commission point of view, the involvement of local stakeholders is very important to have a successful ILA (or similar) scheme in place. Particularly for regions facing a severe labour shortage issue, ILAs become a suitable tool to boost upskilling and reskilling in the active working population."**

She concluded her presentation by introducing **the state of play of the European Year of Skills**, which will start as soon as the proposal is adopted.

EUROPEAN YEAR OF SKILLS

Why a European Year of Skills?

- **Attracting people:** Attracting people from third countries with the skills needed by the Union
- **Matching aspirations:** Matching people's aspirations and skills-set with labour market opportunities
- **Skills relevance:** Strengthening skills relevance by close cooperation
- **Investment:** Increased, more effective and inclusive investment

Planned Key Events:

- 9 May: European Year of Skills 'festival'
- 8-9 June: 'Making Skills Count' event
- 23-27 October: European Vocational Skills Week
- 11- 16 November: Employment and Social Rights Forum
- Beginning of 2024: Concluding event



[Visit the official website](#) 



OECD: Individual Learning Accounts: 8 lessons for effective design and implementation



Stijn Broecke
OECD

Stijn Broecke, Senior Economist, at the OECD Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Directorate, presented OECD's 'ILA's: 8 lessons for effective design and implementation' included in the [Report on Individual Learning Accounts](#) (2019):

1. Need to be clear about objectives – ILAs will not solve all training problems
2. Financial support needs to be high enough to promote participation and real upskilling
3. How ILAs are financed has important distributive and sustainability implications
4. Accompanying measures are needed to increase participation among under-represented groups
5. Keep governance and processes simple
6. Targeting can reduce deadweight loss but can come with other costs
7. ILAs reinforce the need for quality assurance
8. The link with employer-provided training needs to be taken into account

As Mr Broecke explained, 'if the problem is about increasing choice for individuals in their learning journeys, then ILAs may be the solution. But, if the problem is about training only low-skilled workers with higher skills, then this may not be the role of ILA. It is very important to ILAs as part of a wider ecosystem of training on offer.' From this policy perspective, as Mr Broecke said, 'ILAs are not a solution for all training issues and are implemented through varying mechanisms across Europe.'

"Mon Compte formation" platform and recent trends in CPF in use (France)



Cécile Bertrand
General Delegation for
Employment and
Vocational Training
(France)

Ms Cécile Bertrand, Head of the Personal Training Account (*Compte Personnel de Formation*), General Delegation for Employment and Vocational Training (France), introduced the French Personal Training Account "*Compte Personnel de Formation*" (CPF) which was the first (and only) example of ILA's in Europe. This programme was introduced in 2004.

The CPF works as a platform where all working, job-seeking or economically active citizens can log in and check their entitlements to training, seek to support through their learning journeys, find a training session, obtain additional funding, perform the training and gain certification of participation.

Ms Bertrand explained that since 2004, the platform, [mon compte formation](#), has undergone a series of transformations and has now offered **2 millions training opportunities in France in the year 2022**. She also highlighted that additional funding from public employment services, regional authorities, the employer and other entities is growing slowly.

Despite the success of the CPF, there are **several CPF abusive commercial practices**, Ms Bertrand said. Therefore, they are working to implement actions to fight against fraudulent practices. In the **future**, they will continue to promote the system to develop partnerships and contributions from co-financiers; reorient the training offer towards the professions of the future and regulate the offer by empowering the CPF holder.



[Presentation](#)



TOPICS OF INTERESTS



- Barriers to access paid training leave and training vouchers from neighbouring countries / regions or online education.
- Quality framework for learning offers

Klara Engels-Perenyi explained that there are not many examples that allow this option and that the European Commission suggested Member States have open registers of their training offers. One tool to solve this issue is the [Europass](#) portal which will include ILA's schemes. She added that countries should trust each other.



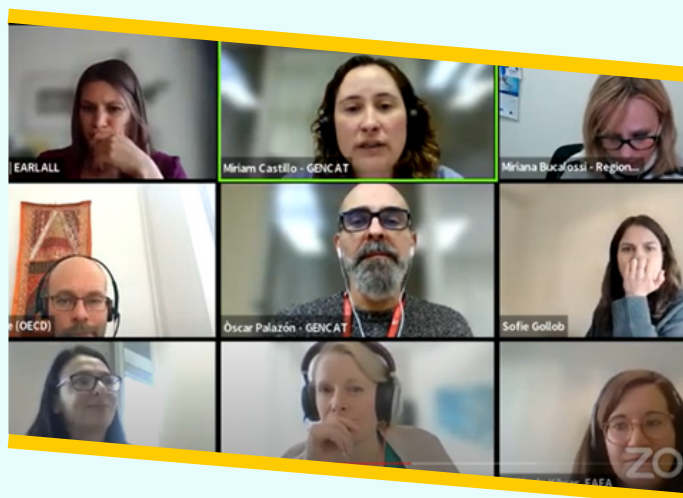
- Do you think one day there will be a European ILA system?

Cécile Bertrand said that the main challenge is funding. For example, in France, they rely on companies' contributions.



- Regarding the French "*Compte Personnel de Formation*", is there any support for those who don't have access to digital tools? Is the platform only accessible online?

Cécile Bertrand explained that the CPF training offers are only accessible via the online platform. Those without access to digital tools can be helped at their career guidance or job seekers' offices.



- Is there a plan to introduce a database for quality-assured courses to help learners navigate the market?(and keep out fraudulent offers)

Klara Engels-Perenyi replied that this should be a core element. The Erasmus+ programme supports the establishment ([see 2023 Call, lot 6 under the Forward-looking cooperation projects](#)) and Europass can also be used to show trusted courses. But the Quality Assessment should be set at national (or regional, if a regional ILA scheme) level.



Roundtable with regional experts | From policy to regional experiences

In the roundtable participants learnt from regional experts implementing equivalents to the ILA system.



Sofie Gollob
Swiss Federation for
Adult Learning (SVEB)
Switzerland



Miriana Bucalossi
Tuscany Region
Italy



Antonia Rodríguez
Catalonia Region
Spain



Geoff Hicks
Welsh Government
UK

All four regions have been implementing a system where adult learners can receive financial support to train adults in improving their basic skills, further skills or upskilling. In each case, the following measure has been implemented:

- Swiss Federation for Adult Learning: Education Voucher for Basic Skills
- Tuscany, Italy: Individual Learning Accounts
- Catalonia, Spain: Recognition of Professional Experience
- Wales, UK: Personal Learning Accounts

Opportunities

While the target market and the methodology for each regional system varies, **all four examples highlighted the common opportunities for this kind of service for adult learners:** offering equal opportunities to those without professional qualifications and from a low-income or migrant background; increasing employability after training; creating a new model of Public Employment Services active labour market policy; stimulate VET providers to offer courses relevant to the labour market; allowing learners to be flexible with the content and methodology of their learning and increasing ownership over learning.

Challenges

However, alongside the opportunities for these services, the four examples indicated the following **challenges in the future for ILA systems:** reducing the dropout rate by learners as it is voluntary and requires no financial input from the learners; continuously proposing consulting and guidance to participants; ensuring no fraud or scams in the collection of training offered; linking these systems to a full package of other measures intended for adult learners; how to offer reskilling to those who are not on low-income jobs and offering opportunities in both formal and informal education networks.

The webinar was a fruitful exchange between regional representatives from EARLALL members, other European regional representatives and European Commission and OECD experts in the field.

The challenges of ILA may be difficult to surmount, but the bottom line is that there is an increasing range of opportunities for ILAs in the future, with regional initiatives being key to ensure that these schemes are relevant to the local labour market needs.

Example of an education voucher for basic skills

ON THE OCCASION OF "UNDERSTANDING INDIVIDUAL LEARNING ACCOUNTS"

Birte Thellier & Sofie Gollob, 9.2.2023, Zurich

SVEB ■ Schweizerische Verband für Weiterbildung
FSEA ■ Federation for Skills Enhancement
FSEA ■ Swiss Federation for Adult Learning

 [Presentation](#)

Individual learning accounts: an active labour market policy perspective

The Province of Siena experience and
Tuscany Region new policies

 [Presentation](#)

Catalonia Region
(Ministry of Education)

Recognition of professional experience

Webinar "Understanding Individual Learning Accounts"
ILA PROGRAMME

Antonia Rodríguez Ballina

 [Presentation](#)

Personal Learning Accounts

February 2023

 [Presentation](#)



Klara Engels-Perenyi
European Commission

Klara Engels-Perenyi is a Policy Officer in the Skills Agenda unit in DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion at the European Commission. She is working on adult skills policies, and in particular on the Commission initiative on individual learning accounts and on the action “Skills for Life” of the EU Skills Agenda. Klara is coordinating the Commission expert group on Adult Learning and the Network of national coordinators for the implementation of the EU Agenda on Adult Learning. She has until recently worked on higher education policies and the Bologna Process and developed the Commission’s initiative on an EU approach to micro-credentials.



Stijn Broecke
OECD

Stijn Broecke is a Senior Economist at the OECD, where he leads the organisation’s Future of Work Initiative. He currently manages a large research programme on the impact of Artificial Intelligence on the labour market. Stijn holds an MPhil in Development Studies from the University of Cambridge and a PhD in Economics from Royal Holloway, University of London. He has 20 years experience working in government (Mozambique Ministry of Health, UK Civil Service) and international organisations (African Development Bank and OECD). He is also a Research Fellow at IZA.



Cécile Bertrand
French Ministry of Labour

Cécile Bertrand is the Head of the Personal Training Account (*Compte Personnel de Formation*), General Delegation for Employment and Vocational Training (France).



Sofie Gollob

Swiss Federation for Adult Learning (SVEB)

Sofie Gollob is a Project Manager at the Swiss Federation for Adult Education SVEB. Her main interests include educational statistics and educational evaluation.



Miriana Bucalossi
Tuscany Region

Miriana Bucalossi Head of Apprenticeship and WBL Activities, EU Projects UNIT. Master in innovation, design and evaluation of policies and services, she is in charge for Apprenticeships, internships, dual learning and EU Projects at Tuscany Region. Within the EARLALL network, the EU Association of Regional & Local Authorities for LIFELONG LEARNING, she coordinates the working group "Youth Policies" led by Tuscany Region and aimed at promoting youth employment.



Antonia Rodríguez
Catalonia Region

Antonia Rodríguez, Technical expert of the Catalan Department of Education Catalonia Region (Spain).

- Technical expert teacher of the Electric-Electronic family (Education Department)
- Vocational Training teacher of Electrical-Electronic family (Education Department)
- Head of the Advisory and Recognition Service (Education Department)
- Collaboration with ICQP (current FPCAT Agency) with Accreditation of competences, curriculum and trainer of trainers.



Geoff Hicks
Welsh Government

Geoff Hicks is Head of Post -16 Funding and Monitoring at the Welsh Government, where he leads on the policy, planning, funding and monitoring functions of further education including school sixth forms. He also leads on the development and funding of Personal Learning Accounts. Funded via the network of colleges in Wales, the primary aim of the Personal Learning Account programme is to enable people to upskill and reskill in priority sectors; to improve their career and earnings potential, and to help raise the median income in Wales.



www.earlall.eu

EARLALL - European Association of Regional & Local Authorities for
Lifelong Learning

Delegation of the Basque Country to the EU
Rue des Deux Églises, 27 - 1000 Bruxelles

earlall@earlall.eu