

Lifelong learning for local sustainable growth: Policy and Practices for the Green Transition

Event Report

As part of

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Cities 2023**

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Introduction

The workshop organised during the European Week of Regions and Cities 2023 by EARLALL, in collaboration with Skillnet Ireland and the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA), proposed an exchange on initiatives that **empower local & regional authorities, businesses, and communities to develop the skills needed in the green transition.**

RegALE: Regional Capacity-Building for Adult Learning and Education

The session was held in the context of the policy recommendations developed by the Erasmus+ KA3 RegALE project – Regional Capacity for Adult Learning and Education. The discussion was moderated by Iva Janežić, Project Development Advisor, Varaždin County (an EARLALL member and partner in the RegALE project). The workshop began with an overview of the **RegALE policy recommendations for strengthening Adult Learning and Education (ALE) systems** at the regional level, by Davide Muraro, Policy and Project Coordinator, EAEA.



One of the recommendations highlights the **importance of considering adult learning and education with a holistic perspective** and of mainstreaming ALE policies. With this in mind, the benefits of ALE at the local and regional level should also be understood not only as a means of reskilling but also as a potential catalyst to a new social network, to further specialisation and as a domino effect of social change. Moreover, the RegALE partners found that there is **a large benefit in international exchange over ALE policies**, as building partnerships and understanding different governance models of ALE across Europe can help regions to develop their own capacity.



[Download the presentation with draft recommendations](#)

Skillnet Ireland

Aoife O'Sullivan, Head of Network Development and Innovation at Skillnet Ireland, took the floor to explain the work of Skillnet Ireland in **strong public-private partnerships for skill development for the green transition**. Skillnet Ireland is a government agency that supports the development sectors, with a focus on partnerships with companies in different sectors but also with different regional hubs. Two-thirds of Skillnet Ireland's networks are sector-based, while one-third are regional hubs. The effective public-private partnerships that Skillnet Ireland fosters have been **recognised as a best practice by the European Commission** (2019) and by the **OECD** (2020).



Cork City



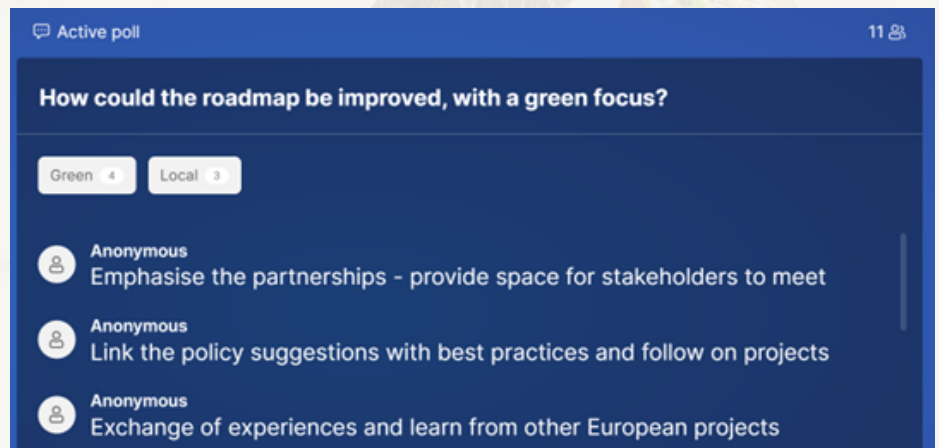
Kieran McCarthy, an independent member of the Committee of Regions and Lord Mayor of Cork (Ireland), presented Cork City and its bottom-up and top-down approaches to lifelong learning and sustainability. The city leads many initiatives including Cork as a Learning City; Lifelong Learning Festival; Learning Neighbourhoods; Green Spaces for Health; Cork Healthy Cities and Cork's commitment to become climate neutral by 2030 through the Climate Action Plan & Horizon Mission. One of the **key takeaways** from the various activities within Cork is the **importance of citizen initiatives, a lifelong learning mentality**, a celebration of learning and corporate social responsibility.



Download the presentation with more information about both best practices

Reflecting on the policy recommendations

Participants were then invited to **apply their findings from the two best-practice examples to the policy roadmap proposed by RegALE**, answering the questions “How would you improve the policy recommendations, with a green focus?” and “What have you learnt from the examples of Cork and Skillnet Ireland”. Participants pointed to the importance of information sharing on opportunities in ALE, hinting at stronger guidance policies. Moreover, multiple participants indicated **the need for solid, concrete best practices and examples of effective ALE to inspire ALE providers**. With regard to Skillnet Ireland and Cork, participants noted that the presentations inspired them to think of a range of different skills and job profiles that are needed in the green transition, such as environmental law or sustainable investments. **The need for corporate social sustainability was brought up**, as was cooperation across different stakeholders, including **local citizens, businesses and education providers**.



Conclusions

The discussions were wrapped up with **the message that lifelong learning is about curiosity**, learning to change behaviours and learning to see the benefits of learning.

In terms of lifelong learning for the green transition, **small steps can grow into large-scale initiatives, and building a community of good practices is important to inspire big changes**.



[Download the presentation](#)