EPALE for the EUROPEAN YEAR OF SKILLS

RESOURCE KIT
Global, demographic and technological changes are shifting the needs of our society and labour market. The way we live, work, learn, and participate in society is changing so rapidly that we need to introduce new perspectives and approaches. Europe has embarked on a journey for improved strategies and actions to respond effectively to the new reality.

The European Year of Skills has established the right to stay relevant and to be agents of change, not spectators.

The right skills help individuals adapt to the challenges and ensure their wellbeing and active participation in society and to the labour market, while at the same time contributing to civic progress and economic growth.

The European Year of Skills (May 2023 – May 2024) gave a new impetus to adult and lifelong learning, enabling people and entities to contribute to the green and digital transitions, supporting innovation and competitiveness, while leaving no one behind in this collective process.

Let us take a look back at a year of EPALE’s exciting contribution to the European Year of Skills.
The European Year of Skills

Following the announcement by President Ursula von der Leyen in her 2022 State of the Union address, a political agreement was reached on 7 March 2023, agreeing to launch the European Year of Skills officially on May 9, 2023, Europe Day. The Skills Year ran until 8 May 2024, with many actions and initiatives.
EPALE Newscast: Kicking off the European Year of Skills

To celebrate the launch of the EYS, EPALE dived deep into the topic of upskilling and reskilling the workforce, with a focus on transversal competences. The June’s episode of the EPALE Newscast welcomed Ann Branch, Head of Unit for Skills and Jobs at the European Commission.
On 17 July 2023 the Commission released its Evaluation of the Upskilling Pathways Initiative, by investigating the progress made towards raising the levels of literacy, numeracy and digital skills amongst adults as well as towards providing those who are lower-skilled with further upskilling opportunities. Skills development throughout life is an individual right.
FROM THE BEGINNING
The European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) has published a brochure highlighting a range of Erasmus+ actions that boost job-related skills in Europe and beyond. The brochure gives an overview of the types of activities the beneficiaries are implementing, to reskill and upskill workers and students in Europe and beyond – all of this to better adapt them to a continuously changing job market.
EPALE for the European Year of Skills
In June, EPALE held an online discussion on Emphasising basic skills in the European Year of Skills, focusing on the professionalisation of teachers, instructors and trainers who specialise in adult basic skills and hosting an insight on the reading circles in prisons for emergent (or newer) adult readers. In fact, basic skills represent a gateway to active citizenship, as highlighted in the summary of the discussion.
The EPALE 2023 Community Conference took place from 10 to 12 October and celebrated the ongoing change, growth and evolution behind adult learning and skills acquisition. Under the evocative title *Bloom! Skills for the future*, the Conference showcased the transformative power of learning, in the context of the EYS. The highlights and behind the scenes is definitely something you don't want to miss out on!
EPALE Resource Kit: Empower

We play at home with the EPALE Resource Kit titled Empower. Workforce with the right skills. This Resource Kit underlines that reskilling and upskilling are crucial to unlock the potential of the European workforce and translating opportunities into action. New skills bring fresh opportunities for individuals and can ease their participation in both the labour market and society.
What role will skills play in the future of adult education and training? The future looks more nuanced than ever, as the EPALE community has shown us. So, pop down the rabbit hole and take a deep dive into the 2023 EPALE Community Storybook which is titled Back to the Future! Future gazing on adult learning and education.
Online discussion: Basic Skills within the Pact for Skills initiative

To say goodbye to the old year, EPALE hosted a dynamic online discussion focusing on Basic Skills within the Pact for Skills initiative. This engaging event brought together educators, policymakers, training providers, and adult learning experts to delve into the integration of basic skills within this comprehensive framework. To access the highlights of such an interesting discussion, here is the summary.
EPALE Thematic Focuses

The 2024 EPALE Thematic Focuses cast a glance at three essential challenges of our current world to help us reflect and build new practices in adult learning and education. First: the incredibly fast-paced technological developments of the past few years are affecting all aspects of our everyday lives. Second: EPALE investigates how the education and training sector can act for a greener, more sustainable future by strengthening the sustainability competences and skills of adult learners. And third: EPALE recognises adult learning and education as a core lever for reducing poverty and tackling inequalities.
EPALE podcast: Overcoming barriers, in education and society

A podcast titled *Overcoming barriers, in education and society* discussed inclusion in policies related to skills provisions. How do these policies impact inclusion? How can we best tackle inclusion in society of those who are neither employed or in training? The conversation developed spontaneously recognising that the spotlight on skills is an invaluable stage on which to build societies that leave no one behind. *Listen to the podcast now!*
...TO THE LEGACY
The European Commission has issued the results of the evaluation of two key EU initiatives, which make an important contribution to learners’ and workers’ mobility and support the visibility and transparency of skills and qualifications in Europe: The European Qualifications Framework and the Europass framework. The evaluations look at the achievements of the initiatives and possible future improvements, contributing to the broader debate on skills enabled by the EYS.
On 30 April, the European Commission organised the closing event for the European Year of Skills. It was the perfect occasion to take stock of the EU’s efforts and the status of skills shortages in Europe. The closing sessions provided further insights into what skills needs might look like in the future: in an ever-changing technological landscape, predictions are elusive, but cooperation between all stakeholders - governments, social partners, civil society, academia, and institutions - remains our best chance to succeed.
We have reached the end of the EYS in which we have made an extraordinary collective effort in terms of the pooling of resources and the development of skills. ...and how did it end up? What’s the legacy? The May 2024 episode of the EPALE Newscast featured a very special guest from the European Year of Skills: Kristīne Krivmane, the Team Leader for the European Year of Skills at DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion within the European Commission.
It is through strategic investments in human capital that the EU can pave the way for a sustainable future. Specifically, skills partnerships under the Pact for Skills brought together stakeholders to implement concrete up- and reskilling actions. The final report of the Pact for Skills initiative conducted a global analysis of upskilling and reskilling initiatives and identified best practices to draw key lessons learned and propose recommendations for policy decision makers and stakeholders on developing and implementing efficient initiatives in the future. Check out the resource published on EPALE!
“Everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and life-long learning in order to maintain and acquire skills that enable them to participate fully in society and manage successfully transitions in the labour market.”

The first principle opening the European Pillar of Social Rights adopted in 2017 at the Gothenburg Summit marked a formal step to recognise the invaluable social dimension of the European Union and its willingness to treasure and strengthen social rights across the continent.

On 15-16 April 2024, the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU convened the High-Level Conference on the European Pillar of Social Rights to take stock of the progress made through the Action Plan and to further highlight its crucial dimensions in the light of the Green and Digital Transitions. At the end of the conference, a Declaration on the Future of the European Pillar of Social Rights - named La Hulpe Declaration - was adopted.