



# Upskilling and reskilling: empowering individuals to thrive in life and career

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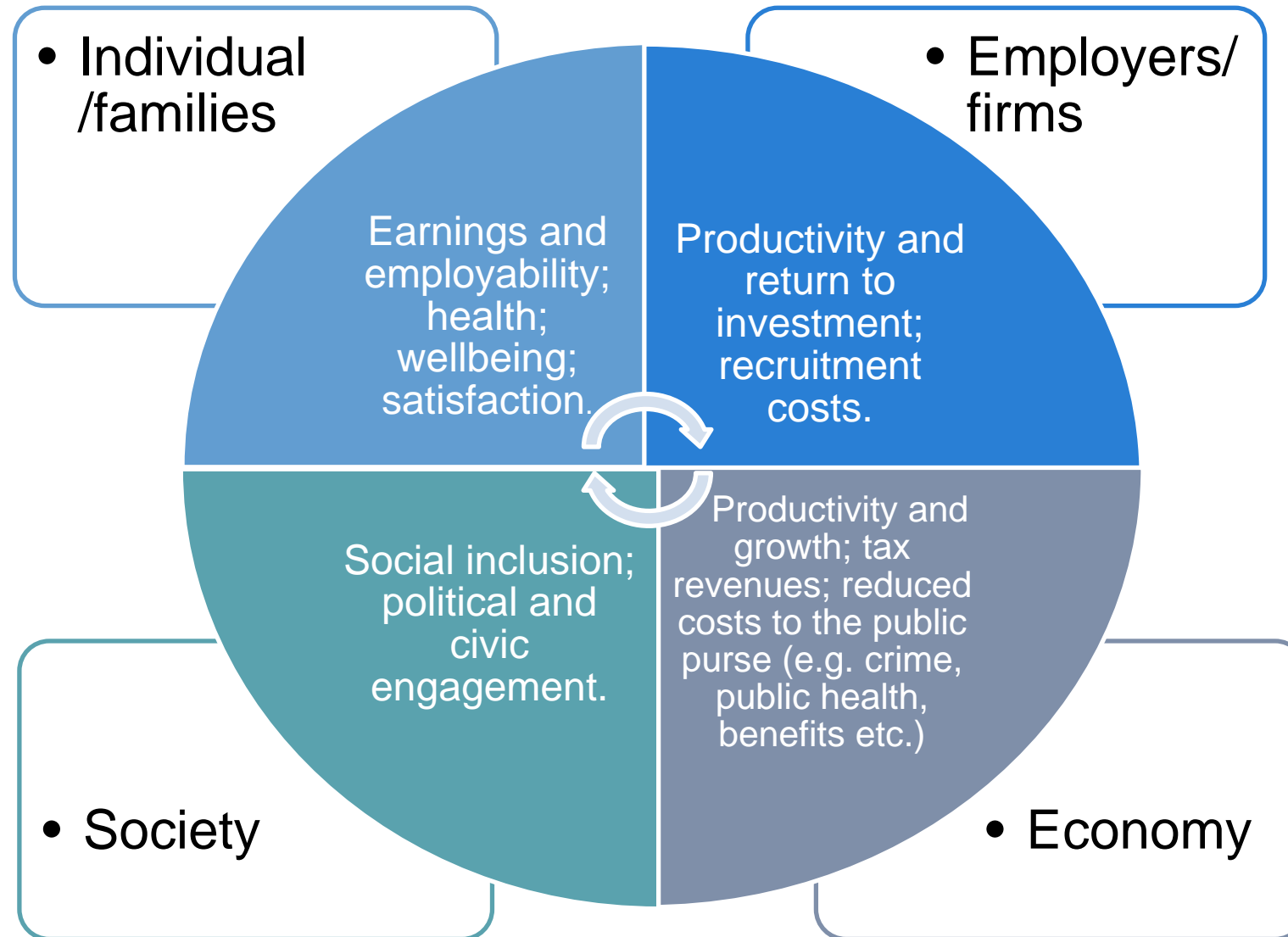
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European Centre for the Development  
of Vocational Training

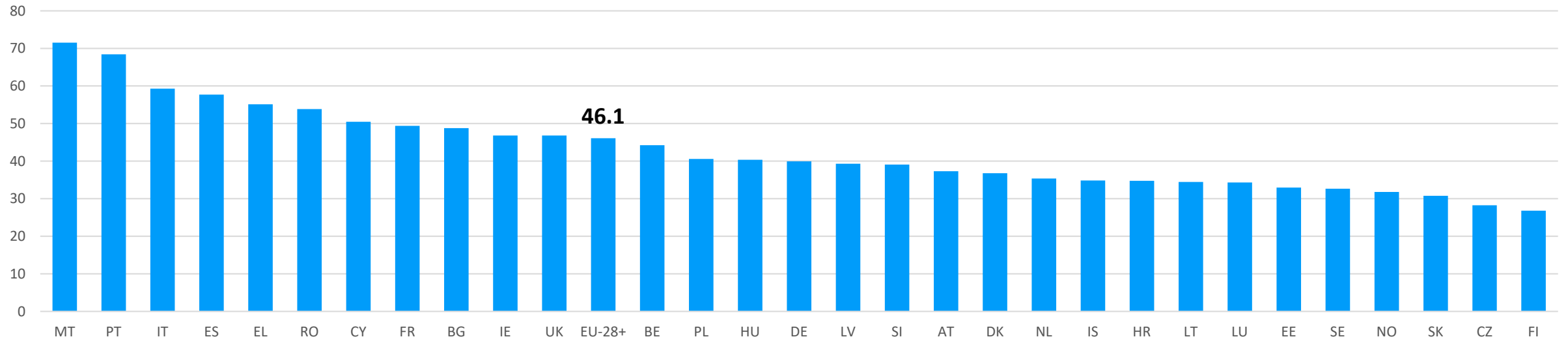


# Why investing in skills matters?

## Benefits of higher levels of skills



# 128 million adults in the EU-27, Iceland, Norway and the UK are in potential for upskilling and reskilling







(\*) EU-27+ = EU-27 + IS, NO, UK

Source: Cedefop calculation on LFS 2016, CSIS 2015, OECD PIAAC 2012, 2015.



**Need for a systematic approach to upskilling and reskilling of the low-skilled adult population**

# Risk of being low-skilled by skill dimension

 <b>Education</b>	25-34 Employed	35-54 Employed	55-64 Employed
 <b>Digital skills</b>	<b>25-34 Unemployed</b>	35-54 Unemployed	55-64 Unemployed
 <b>Literacy</b>			
 <b>Numeracy</b>	25-34 Inactive	35-54 Inactive	55-64 Inactive

## Low- skilled adults: a vulnerable segment of the population

- Low levels of skills associated with **negative consequences**;
- **Empowering low-skilled adults** by means of promoting their upskilling and/or re-skilling is associated with **large social and economic benefits**;
- **Heterogeneous group**: low skilled subpopulations;

Effective policies recognise and target the different needs and characteristics of the low-skilled

# Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and continuing vocational education and training



- Over 40,000 adults (25+) in the EU27, IS, NO, UK;
- Fieldwork: May - June 2019, CATI;
- AL and CVET: any learning activities undertaken by adults (whether employed or not) with the intention of improving knowledge or skills.

# Adult learning and CVET: a positive image

Personal development

Further educational  
attainment

Work-related benefits

- Career progression
- New job
- Better income
- Skills to be used in any job
- Reducing unemployment



# Personal development and improving job skills: top reasons for participating in learning and training

- Regardless of the setting (formal, non-formal, informal) or specific characteristics (sex, age, etc.)
- Regard it as good (93%)

## Skill development: a clear need

- Agree their job requires to constantly update their skills (88%)
- Lack some technical skills (28%)
- Lack some general skills (23%)



# Non-participation: main reasons

- No need for it (36%)
- Difficult to fit in with other commitments (32%)
- Feel too old (28%)
- Too expensive (15%)
- No suitable opportunities (13%)
- Insufficient support (11%)
- Lack of right skills or qualifications (7%)

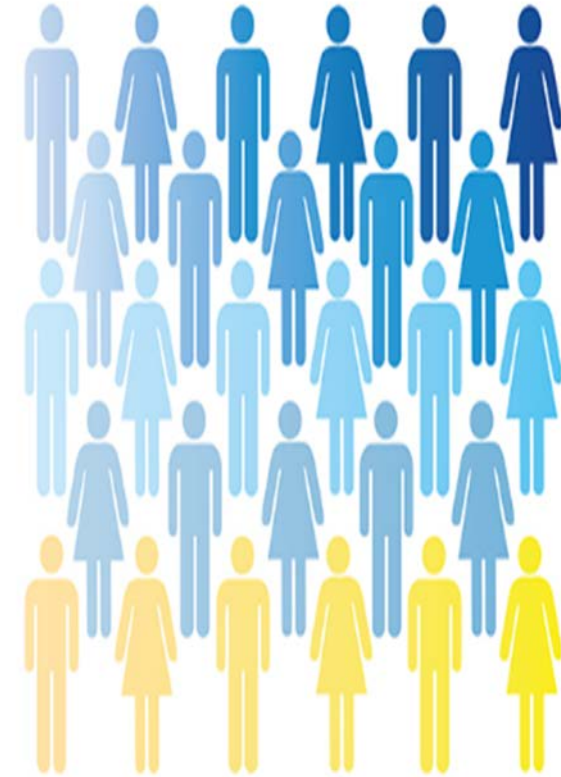


# Incentives: measures encouraging participation

- Flexibility: working hours or time off work (58%)
- Financial incentives (56%)
- Recognition of certification by employers (54%)
- Support with caring responsibilities (54%)
- Information and guidance (49%)
- Tailored learning and training (49%)
- Better quality (48%)

# Cedefop opinion survey on AL and CVET (2019): the participation dilemma

- The potential demand for AL and CVET is high;
- AL CVET has a positive image - linked to a wide range of benefits, including employment related ones;
- Participation rates are too low – no need for it;
- Despite a clear need for skill development.



**Lack of participation is not because people see AL CVET negatively or unable to help them; there is a question of incentives, despite pressing needs to improve skills.**

# Image and participation: a question of incentives

Incentive to participate depends on  
the likelihood of the desired benefits being realised:

- personal development benefits are defined by the individuals and outcomes are in their control;
- work-related benefits are generally in the hands of employers.

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**Attractiveness of adult learning and CVET is not only about people's willingness and readiness to participate, but also employers' willingness and readiness to invest**

# A learner-centred approach to adult learning and training

- Participation in AL and CVET is not only a question of **incentives** and it is **more than just standard training provision**
  - It is also contingent on **individual circumstances and needs**: heterogeneity of the adult population and their needs
- 



A more **learner-centred approach to adult learning and training** which not only tailors learning and training to individual needs, but also combines it with existing supporting measures that motivate, encourage and support adults to participate in a **holistic** manner

# Companies have a central role to play

- Learning conducive work environments: steer the learning and skill development process, systematically demand and supply training, act collectively and share responsibility;
- A new role: beyond just training provision;
- Right support and incentives for employers to invest and participate in skill development.



**“The best investment in our future is the investment in our people. Skills and education drive Europe’s competitiveness and innovation. But Europe is not yet fully ready. I will ensure that we use all the tools and funds at our disposal to redress this balance.”**

President Ursula von der Leyen





# Lifelong skills development: important EU level policy initiatives

- The **European Skills Agenda** (2020);
- Council Recommendations on a **Youth guarantee** (2013 + 2020);
- Council Recommendation on **Upskilling pathways** (2016);
- Council Recommendation on **Individual learning accounts** to boost training of working-age adults (2022);
- Council Recommendation on a European approach to **Micro-credentials** for lifelong learning and employability (2022).

**Empower individuals to progress and thrive in their life and career, and contribute to economic and social prosperity, well-being and strengthening of social cohesion.**

A close-up photograph of a person's hand with the index finger pointing towards the right, resting on the surface of a laptop. The background is blurred, showing the laptop's keyboard and screen.

**Cedefop**

**VET toolkit for tackling early leaving**

[www.cedefop.europa.eu/TEL-toolkit](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/TEL-toolkit)

**Cedefop**

**VET toolkit for empowering NEETs**

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/neets>



# Identify and prevent



## Risk of early leaving



Learners at risk of early leaving

Early leavers



Learners escaping the system



Learners confronting the system



Learners disengaging due to difficulties adapting after transition



Learners disengaging because they cannot find a placement



Young people who left education and training because of caring, parenting or working obligations



Young people who left education and training and combine multiple disadvantage, possibly facing health and psycho-social issues



Young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs)



# VET toolkit for tackling early leaving

Source of support to policy makers and education and training providers

Introduction

Identify

Intervene

Evaluate

Resources

Ambassadors

Advanced search

About the toolkit

Contact the team



**Building motivation to learn**

Show related protective factors ▾



**Community involvement**

Show related protective factors ▾



**Comprehensive support to tackle complex needs**

Show related protective factors ▾



**Counselling to address barriers to learning**

Show related protective factors ▾



**Developing employability skills**

Show related protective factors ▾



**Digital inclusion**

Show related protective factors ▾



**Flexible education and training systems**

Show related protective factors ▾



**Guidance: supporting youth to manage their careers**

Show related protective factors ▾



**Identification of learners at risk of early leaving**



**Improving VET image and attractiveness**

Show related protective factors ▾



**Inclusive work-based learning environments**

Show related protective factors ▾



**Monitoring early leavers**



**One-to-one support through coaching or mentoring**

Show related protective factors ▾



**Practical application of theoretical courses**

Show related protective factors ▾



**Professional development for inclusive teaching and training**

Show related protective factors ▾



**Psychosocial support**

Show related protective factors ▾



**Second chance measures**



**Tailored learning pathways**



**Validation of non-formal and**



**Work-based learning and**



# Cedefop work on inclusion Empowering young NEETs



## BRIEFING NOTE

### VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AS A LIFE JACKET

#### Cedefop's work on VET supporting social inclusion of young NEETs

Young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs) are absent both from the labour market and the education sector, thus facing a high risk of professional, digital and social exclusion. Analyses of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic show that, in spite of EU countries' bold response to this crisis protecting jobs, businesses and livelihoods, yet again, young people were hardest hit by its effects. This is why young NEETs have continued to be a top policy priority at national and EU levels.

The concept of NEETs as an individual risk group (e.g. compared to early leavers from education or long-term unemployed adults) emerged in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, which had a devastating effect on young people's employment in the EU. The concept has allowed policy-makers and practitioners to tackle the effects of progressive marginalisation and prolonged inactivity of young people in a more targeted way.

#### YOUNG NEETs: WHO ARE THEY?

In the EU, young people with no or low qualifications are, on average, three times more likely to be NEETs than those with tertiary education, and twice as likely as those with secondary education. Other factors also play a role: living in a household with low income, being raised by a single parent, living in a rural area, being born in a country outside the EU, or having a disability. Young NEETs often suffer from poverty, social exclusion, insecurity, or health problems (1).

Beyond personal circumstances, labour market failures and mismatches often disproportionately affect young people. The results of a 2020 large-scale research project in Greece, funded by the European Economic Area, illustrate the dire employment situation of young Greeks: 16.9% were unemployed and actively looking

for a job, compared to 6.3% of their peers in the EU as a whole (2). The large number of young unemployed in Greece includes many well-qualified young people. Perceiving vocational education and training (VET) as a potential route to a job, many of them are willing to attend a training programme, provided it will help them (re)enter the labour market.

#### VET TO EMPOWER YOUNG PEOPLE

In line with the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights, VET, offering young people practical opportunities to obtain skills and acquire a qualification, is a powerful shield against marginalisation. According to the 2021 Council Resolution on a European education area by 2030, we are witnessing an increase in labour market needs for a different mix of skills and qualifications.

Being closely tied to the labour market, VET can react swiftly to skill needs as they emerge. For example, to keep pace with the digitalisation of the European economy, VET is incorporating a range of digital skills, responding both to occupation-specific and transversal skill needs. It is also central to policies supporting young NEETs, such as outreach, personalised guidance, and assessment and validation of their existing formal and informal skills. It is the role of policy-makers to ensure VET's labour market relevance and so help unlock its inclusive potential. VET programmes, with their practical component, can help young people acquire entrepreneurship skills and ease their transition to work. Ultimately, they can provide young people with skills harnessing their employability and fostering their inclusion in society.

(1) Broken down by gender, this corresponds to 14.6% of men and 17.4% of women aged 20-34 for Greece, compared to 6.8% of men and 5.8% of women of that age for the EU as a whole.

## Distance from participation in employment, education and training



### SEEKING WORK AND/OR EDUCATION OR TRAINING



Re-entrants



NEETs in recent search



NEETs in long-term search

### NOT SEEKING WORK AND/OR EDUCATION OR TRAINING



Unavailable due to family responsibilities



Unavailable due to illness or disability



Discouraged and disengaged young people



# VET toolkit for empowering NEETs

Source of support to young people not in employment, education or training

Introduction

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About the toolkit

Contact us



**BLOG HIGHLIGHTS**

27 APR 2021

## What is the VET Toolkit for empowering NEETs?

This Europe-wide toolkit is inspired by successful VET practices and aims at helping policy makers, practitioners, and providers of support to young people not in employment, education, or training (NEETs) to design policies and implement practices that will better address the needs of NEETs, helping them to reintegrate into education or training and the labour market.

VIEW ALL

BROWSE BY

### Type of approach

6 Profiles at risk

7 Intervention approaches

8 Risk factors

BROWSE BY

### Type of resource

2 Tools

1 Statistics and data

37 Publications

10 Good practices

WAYS TO

### Take part

Evaluation plan for policy makers

Evaluation plan for learning providers

Become an ambassador tackling early leaving from VET

# Cedefop resources and tools supporting lifelong skill development



Resources for  
**guidance** +  
Inventory of **lifelong**  
guidance systems



European inventory  
validation of **non-**  
formal and informal  
learning



Database on  
**Financing adult**  
learning



Database on  
**Financing**  
apprenticeships



VET toolkit for  
**tackling early**  
leaving



VET toolkit for  
**empowering NEETs**



European database on  
**Apprenticeship**  
schemes



# Find out more on Cedefop work on empowering adults



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Investing in skills pays off: the economic and social cost of low-skilled adults in the EU**



**Empowering adults through upskilling and reskilling pathways**

Volume 1: adult population with potential for upskilling and reskilling



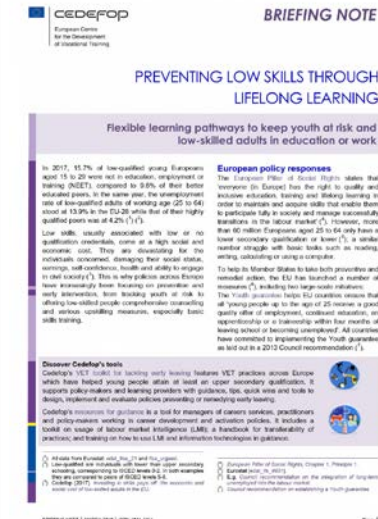
**Empowering adults through upskilling and reskilling pathways**

Volume 2: Cedefop analytical framework for developing coordinated and coherent approaches to upskilling pathways for low-skilled adults



**The importance of being vocational challenges and opportunities for VET in the next decade**

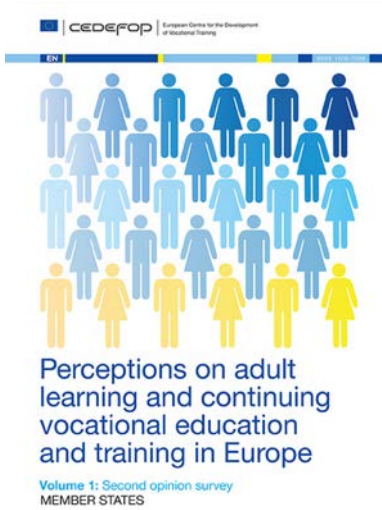
Cedefop and ETF discussion paper



**BRIEFING NOTE**

**PREVENTING LOW SKILLS THROUGH LIFELONG LEARNING**

Flexible learning pathways to keep youth at risk and low-skilled adults in education or work



**Perceptions on adult learning and continuing vocational education and training in Europe**

Volume 1: Second opinion survey MEMBER STATES



**More perceptions: opinion survey on adult learning and continuing vocational education and training in Europe**

Volume 2: Views of adults in Europe



**BRIEFING NOTE**

**ADULT LEARNING AND CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING VALUED BY EUROPEANS**

Insights from a pan-European opinion survey conducted by Cedefop



**BRIEFING NOTE**

**HIGH ESTEEM BUT LOW PARTICIPATION**

Strong belief in the value of learning and the pressing need for skills are not enough to motivate adults to participate in lifelong learning



**Research paper**

**Thematic country review on upskilling pathways for low-skilled adults in France**

Key findings of the first research phase

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/themes/vet-for-adults>



# The steps towards Europe's skill revolution



## Upscaling VET & adult learning

## Innovation in governance

## Better matching skills and jobs

### Policy level

**1 Time to move**  
When making adult learning a reality for all, actions speak louder than words

**2 Bring everyone on board**  
Successful policy design and implementation require trust-based partnerships rather than silo thinking

**3 Make permaskilling the norm**  
Investing in skills and upgrading jobs go together

### Systemic level

**4 Make VET flexible and inclusive**  
Flexible, inclusive, age-neutral and learner-centred VET is the only way forward

**5 Skills thrive best in ecosystems**  
Via better skills utilisation, companies, in particular MSMEs, can play a more active role in skills ecosystems

**6 VET fuels the twin transition**  
VET is best placed to deliver higher-level skills for the digital and green transitions

### Implementation level

**7 Foster CVET for all**  
Employer engagement drives the development, expansion and reach of CVET programmes

**8 Support learners**  
Coordinated support measures will engage people in up- and reskilling

**9 Turn skills intelligence into action**  
User-centred skills intelligence helps translate trends and policy aims into actionable learning and matching opportunities

**Cedefop EYS key resources: [publications](#) and [online tools](#)**



# Thank you

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