



31<sup>st</sup> October 2019

## **Submission on normative elements on the right to education, training, lifelong learning and capacity-building**

This answer is submitted in reply to the call of the Chair of the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWG) to NGOs. AGE Platform Europe (AGE) has ECOSOC status and is accredited to the OEWG since 2012.

As the largest European network of self-advocacy organisations of older people, our position aims to reflect the situation at EU level on behalf of the 40 million older citizens represented by our members. Our contribution is based on written answers received from organisations of older people in several EU Member States, discussion during an online webinar with AGE members and oral debate in the frame of our Council of Administration where representatives from 24 countries<sup>1</sup> and 6 European organisations/federations<sup>2</sup> sit.

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<sup>1</sup> All EU countries with the exception of Croatia, Latvia, Luxembourg and Slovakia

<sup>2</sup> FIAPA, ESU, NOPO, EURAG, EDE, OWN Europe



## 1. Definition

1. Older persons have the right to lifelong learning, education and skills-building on an equal basis with others and without discrimination, so they can live autonomous, healthy and independent lives, fulfil their aspirations, build their skills and capacities, develop their full human potential and sense of dignity, wellbeing and self-worth, and participate fully in society.

## 2. Scope

### **Non-discrimination**

2.1 Older persons have the right to acquire and utilize their knowledge and skills without discrimination and on an equal basis with others.

### **Availability**

2.2 Older persons have the right to all forms of formal and informal lifelong learning, education and skills-building, including but not limited to tertiary education, in-work, vocational training and retraining, digital and new technology-based education, adult education, self, recreational and community-based education, lifelong learning programs, legal literacy, and skills training in literacy, numeracy and technological competencies.

### **Acceptability and adaptability**

2.3 Older persons have the right to equal access to opportunities of lifelong learning, education and skills-building available to the general public and to learning opportunities adapted to their specific needs, including duration of study and communication needs, skills, motivations, preferences and diverse identities

### **Accessibility**

2.4 Older persons have the right to affordable lifelong learning, education and skills-building opportunities.

2.5 Older persons have the right to lifelong learning, education and skills-building opportunities in settings that are accessible to them, including in their communities and in care and support settings.

2.6 Older persons have the right to information about lifelong learning, education and skills-building opportunities and how to access them.

### **Participation**

2.7 Older persons have the right to participate in the decision-making processes regarding the shape and content of lifelong learning, educational and skills-building programs aimed at older adults.

2.8 Older persons have the right to participate as teachers and sources of knowledge in lifelong learning, educational and skills-building programs for all generations.

### **Remedies and redress**

2.9 Older persons have the right to accountability mechanisms that provide for remedies and redress when their rights are violated.

### **3. State obligations**

States Parties shall take effective and appropriate measures to guarantee the right to education (as defined above) to older persons. They have the obligation to create the necessary conditions for access to information, education and training, including through ensuring that :

3.1 Older persons have equal access to opportunities for all forms lifelong learning, skills-building and levels of education without discrimination based on age or any other grounds.

3.2 Older persons have the same opportunities as others to benefit from scholarships and other educational or study grants, including mobility programmes.

3.3 Systems and mechanisms are put in place so that all older persons are able to upgrade their acquired knowledge and skills and utilise them for the benefit of all.

3.4 Reasonable accommodation of an individual's requirements is provided.

3.5 The elimination of negative ageist stereotypes and prejudices about older persons' ability and willingness to learn, and the value and importance of learning, education and skills building in older age.

3.6 All forms of formal and informal lifelong learning, education and skills-building are available to older persons, including but not limited to tertiary education, in-work, vocational training and retraining, digital and new technology-based education, adult education, self, recreational and community-based education, lifelong learning programs, legal literacy, and skills training in literacy, numeracy and technological competencies.

3.7 Older persons have access to lifelong learning, education and skills-building opportunities. adapted to their specific needs, skills, motivations, preferences and diverse identities.

3.8 Sufficient funds are allocated for lifelong learning, education and skills-building opportunities for older persons and for the training of teachers, educators and facilitators.

3.9 Older persons have access to affordable lifelong learning, education and skills-building opportunities.

3.10 Older persons have access to lifelong learning, education and skills-building opportunities in the settings in which they choose to live, including in their communities and in care and support settings.

3.11 Older persons have access to information about lifelong learning, education and skills-building opportunities and how to access them.

3.12 Older persons have opportunities to participate in the decision-making processes regarding the shape and content of learning, educational and skills-building programs aimed at older adults.

3.13 Safeguards are put in place to protect against breaches of the right to lifelong learning, education and skills-building, including breaches of privacy and security of data on digital, online and new technology-based learning platforms.

#### 4 and 5 Special considerations

States must ensure that lifelong education and learning opportunities are available across the country, including in rural and remote areas

States must ensure that education and learning opportunities are available in both online and offline formats

States must take measures to promote literacy, including digital literacy, among older persons so that they are able to equally benefit from and participate in training and education

States must ensure that older persons can equally benefit from digital technologies and learning opportunities available in digital formats.

States must ensure that older persons have equal opportunities for in-work training as well as employability training, when they are unemployed

States must ensure the availability of qualified teachers to address the needs and preferences of older persons, including through appropriate wage policies

States must extend data collection on older persons' access to education and lifelong learning to cover the older age groups (i.e beyond 60-65 depending on dataset)

States must ensure that learning opportunities are available both through the public and private or voluntary sector

States must regulate and supervise the provision of education and lifelong learning by non-State actors to ensure that it remains accessible, affordable and non-discriminatory

States must take due account of the multiple barriers faced by vulnerable groups to access education, including but not limited to, older women, older people with disabilities, older minorities, etc.

## **6. Implementation**

Some of the main challenges include budgetary constraints, ageism and prejudicial attitudes, age limits in, inter alia, scholarships, grants, mobility programmes, vocational training, tertiary education, adult education programmes, etc, the fact that lifelong learning programmes are often targeting individuals active in the labour market with very limited opportunities to learn and develop skills outside their employment; the informal and volunteer nature of the majority of initiatives in this area that may jeopardise their sustainability and quality, geographical inequalities and the digital gap