

Normative inputs

on the Focus Area “Education, training, life-long learning and capacity-building”

Open-ended Working Group on Ageing

Definition

The right to education, lifelong learning and capacity building, as identified by international and European human rights law, have seldomly operationalized with a life-course perspective and, on the European Union level, competence frameworks linked to education and training policies are focusing on skills relevant only to the labor market. In this context, life-long learning activities in some European countries were explicitly designed to enhance employability and skills of older workers (France and UK as example).

Scope of the right

Key normative elements should focus on the obligation for States to make education, training, life-long learning and capacity-building, available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable to specific condition of older people. Also taking account of the economic savings obtained by the society when older people are engaged in such activities, in term of both physical and mental wellbeing, that means less use of drugs and health facilities.

State obligations

States must oblige universities, and all educational structures to organize specific courses for older people, both for primary education, and for other specific activities related to training, life long learning and capacity building.

Special considerations

Governments should inform on available education and training services; reduce the cost or make such services free; provide qualified teachers to address the needs and preferences of older persons; organize logistics for accessibility to educational facilities; offer the possibility for older people to benefit from online life-long learning opportunities. Special attention should be given to improve language and digital skills, also promoting a variety of learning approaches and environments, including the adequate use of new technologies, in education, training and learning settings.

Migration flows are likely to turn the spotlight on the problem of literacy even in countries with a high literacy rate. At the time of identification and reception of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants

across the globe each host country should check the level of literacy and provide basic education. The scientific literature shows that there is a close correlation between lifelong learning and the psychophysical well-being of the elderly and, consequently, of society, which spends less and has an active person in it. Therefore, online universities should offer elderly persons free courses or otherwise affordable: for example, making at least 50% of the course content available for free. Private sector should be responsible for training older workers to maintain their working capacity