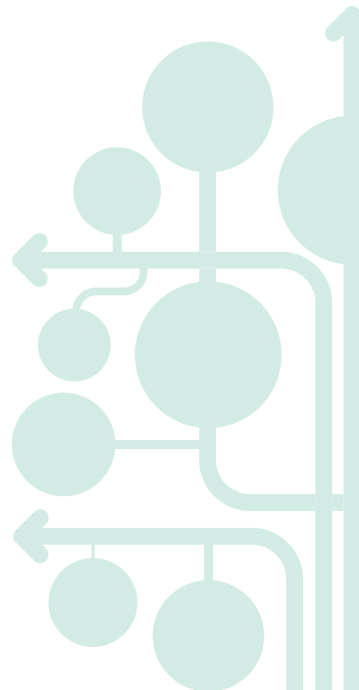


EPALE RESOURCE KIT

# Learning communities



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Enriching lives, opening minds.

# EPALE RESOURCE KIT

## Learning communities

Learning happens in communities. But **learning also builds communities, and helps them grow**. How can we guarantee that **inclusive learning communities** are created across the European space? How can we assure that the learner is at the centre of the learning process? How can we foster adult learning so that it unleashes its transformative potential for the community as a whole?

Starting from the premise that learning is beneficial for both the individual learners and society as a whole, in 2022 EPALE is dedicating a thematic focus to learning communities. Now halfway through the year, this Resource Kit is a first chance to assess what has been produced so far on this thematic focus, recommending some highlights that can guide you through the platform and inspire you in your work.

The first part of the kit provides you with a series of **reflections and narratives**: longer articles that explore some key issues in-depth and encourage you to think outside of the box. We start our journey from a place which has been very close to our thoughts and very present on EPALE in the past months: Ukraine, shaken by a tragic war, but still incredibly resilient and capable of creative and powerful initiatives, is the protagonist of a moving, yet hopeful, podcast. The kit then takes you through an inspiring initiative that is fostering community building and inter-generational learning in a rural area. We also present you with a reflection on the power of storytelling and an interview which brings us back to the initial topic: peace education and its importance for every adult.

The second part of the kit is more focused on **tools and good practices**. It includes instruments and resources, often produced within European projects, to nurture your practical work. We have selected a project aimed at fostering financial literacy in public libraries, which are critical educational actors in many communities around Europe; an initiative to empower families through the development of parenting skills; an award programme to motivate older people to engage in volunteering; a training course aimed at educators working in Roma communities.



## Learning and community building during the war in Ukraine. An EPALE Podcast.

<https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/blog/epale-podcast-war-ukraine-and-adult-education-voice-kyiv>

Photo by Elena Mozhvilo on Unsplash



On this special EPALE Podcast, Gina Ebner, Secretary General of the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA), interviewed Oleg Smirnov, representative of the Ukrainian Adult Education association.

On 12 April 2022, Oleg's voice reached us directly from Kyiv. His precious words gave us **a glimpse of real life in a city where raid sirens mark the rhythm of the days**; where citizens reclaim their spaces; where adult educators, despite everything, continue their activities, providing help to deal with the war. Among the ongoing disaster in Ukraine, Oleg's words show **how informal and non-formal learning processes can support the existence of communities and a sense of belonging** which is, now more than ever, vital for the Ukrainian people.

In a particularly moving and enlightening moment of the podcast, Oleg tells us how he and his wife started going on short walks around the city when the invasion began. During one of these walks, they met a woman who happened to be a tourist guide and started having small tours around the city – just to know a bit more about their endangered heritage. And then, the magic happened: they met other people on the streets and what had started as a personal (therapeutic) exploration became **a collective learning process**. Seven excursions took place within the space of three weeks. It was an incredibly creative and fascinating experience, which allowed the participants to share precious moments together, to support each other in their survival efforts, and to **reclaim back their city** in such a tragic moment.



## “Pasta is all we knead: all year round”. An example of learning community in rural areas

<https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/blog/pasta-factory-pasta-all-we-knead-all-year-round>

Providing a community space for older people; promoting intergenerational learning; fostering civic participation – these are some of the effects of an inspiring initiative undertaken by a local organisation in Vokány, a municipality in a rural area of Hungary. This blogpost leads us through the details (including a recipe!) of **an initiative that started from pasta-making and became much more**. The article is part of a [special Focus Week on Learning Communities in Rural Areas](#), promoted by EPALÉ teams from Austria, Belgium (NL), Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, and Poland. Jump [to this page](#) to read about many more projects and reflections!

## Everyone is living with a gap. Exploring the power of storytelling

<https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/blog/everyone-living-gap-exploring-power-storytelling>

A gap can be defined as something that is missing; parts of our lives that are disconnected from each other. One might have gaps inside themselves, but gaps also exist between you and other people or the society. Starting from this concept, and from her own professional and personal experiences, EPALÉ expert Rasha Shaaban reflects on how **sharing our daily life gaps can bring us closer to each other**, facilitating inclusion, equality and intercultural dialogue. In doing so, **storytelling** can play a key role, building human bridges beyond any cultural or socio-economic barrier.

## Why all adults need peace education: an EPALÉ Interview to Hanna Niittymäki

<https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/blog/epale-interview-hanna-niittymaki-why-all-adults-need-peace-education>

In this eye-opening interview, Finnish education professional Hanna Niittymäki introduces the many nuances of the concept and practice of peace education. It emerges as a complex and holistic process, where the key is **learning how to live in harmony**, not just with oneself and the people close to you, but also with humans on the other side of the world and the natural environment that we inhabit. She also provides some details on the tools she uses in her trainings, including materials challenging Eurocentric and white normative thinking, exercises to identify different types of privilege and critical walks.



# Financial literacy in public libraries. The *FINLIT* project

<https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/blog/financial-literacy-public-libraries-model-non-formal-education-adult-library-users>



Photo by Alexandra Kirr on Unsplash

**Libraries conduct a variety of educational activities for the residents of their local communities.** Librarians are guides to knowledge and information for residents, which is particularly important in smaller centres where access to cultural and educational institutions is often difficult and the offer is not as extensive as in larger cities. However, they still need to strengthen their training skills – methods and tools for conducting classes with adults.

**Increasing financial awareness** and strengthening the skills of using the offer of financial institutions is extremely important for people who make financial decisions on a daily basis that affect the lives and well-being of entire families.

These two considerations are at the basis of the Erasmus+ project *Financial Literacy through Public Libraries (FINLIT)*, which aims to **provide librarians with the competence and skills to develop the financial literacy of library users.**

The project has developed a financial education model and has implemented an online learning platform, available in four languages, offering open and free online courses for both librarians and library users. The platform also includes a mapping report and several publications detailing the used methodologies, the implemented programmes and the adopted model.



## Empowering families through the development of positive parenting skills

**Learning guide:** <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/resource-centre/content/empowering-families-through-development-positive-parenting-skills-learning>

**Handbook:** <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/resource-centre/content/handbook-professionals-working-parents-and-carers>

The Erasmus+ project *Skills4Parents* aims to improve the personal growth, communication and parenting skills of parents as well as professional skills of professionals. A **Learning guide**, addressed to parents, contains educational packages to boost parenting skills in five areas: Communication, Empowerment, Meditation, Problem-Solving, and Digital. A **Handbook** targeted at professionals contains further explanations on how to transform the content of the Learning Guide into training with a suggested learning plan.

## Older people and volunteering

<https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/blog/nothing-much-expected-older-people-you-dont-say>

Due to their age, older and very old people are rarely encouraged to become volunteers. However, with motivating education and efficient public campaigning **older and very old people can start volunteering, thus enriching both themselves and the community they live in**. Focusing on this priority, the Erasmus+ *Go Get Award* project has developed a resource library, a repository of real life stories about authentic volunteering experience, and an **award program for older adults**, which offers the possibility for older people to set personal goals for learning and volunteering as well as receive acknowledgement for their efforts and achievements.

## Breaking the stereotypes. European Cooperation for Roma Inclusion

<https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/blog/ecri-european-cooperation-roma-inclusion>

In light of rising nationalism, xenophobia, and glottophobia, the Erasmus+ project *ECRI* focuses on developing the skills of **trainers who work with Roma communities** by assisting them in developing their capacity to integrate cross-sectoral integration processes; train mentors; train local authorities to propose internal mechanisms and cooperation for the inclusion of Roma people. To reach this goal, the project has developed training activities, a series of inclusive methodologies and a **mentoring training course** aimed at trainers and educators, including mentors within Roma communities.

