

PROJECT COORDINATOR



German Institute for Adult Education – Leibniz Centre for Lifelong Learning (DIE) - www.die-bonn.de

PROJECT PARTNERS



Associazione di donne Orlando (AddO)



Association for Education and Development of Women (ATHENA) - www.athena-women.cz



University of Barcelona. Research Centre (CREA-UB) - <http://creaub.info>



European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) - www.eaea.org



Institute of Education, University of London (IOE) - www.ioe.ac.uk



Romanian Institute for Adult Education (IREA) - www.irea.uvt.ro



Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (SIAE) - <http://siae.acs.si>



Swiss Federation for Adult Learning (SVEB) - www.alice.ch



University of Eastern Finland (UEF) - www.ueff.fi

ASSOCIATE PARTNER



Adult Education Society (AES)

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The main purpose of the BeLL study was to investigate the individual and social benefits perceived by adult learners after participating in non-formal and non-vocational (liberal) adult education courses. The study focuses on the perceptions of participants in liberal adult education courses of the benefits that accrue to them through their learning experiences. Moreover, the study focuses on the connection between different elements of learning situation (e.g. the role of the teacher, the group, the methods) and the development of benefits. Finally, it gathers information and empirical data on the landscape of non-formal liberal adult education in 10 European countries and interprets the results against this background. The BeLL consortium collected comparative quantitative and qualitative data on measurable individual benefits through 8646 questionnaires and 82 qualitative interviews in 10 countries.

MORE INFORMATION ON:

<http://bell-project.eu/>

FUNDING

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Benefits of Lifelong Learning in Europe

Social Engagement
Mental Well-being
Locus of Control
Self-efficacy
Tolerance
Health benefits
Sense of Purpose in Life
Changes in Educational experience

EUROPEAN ADDED VALUE

The BeLL study improves the knowledge base on non-formal and non-vocational adult learning and due to this explorative character BeLL provides a number of benefit indicators to a further assessment of the liberal adult education sector. It emphasises individual benefits of learning such as improved self-confidence, learning motivation and health; and social benefits in the form of social cohesion, networks and civic involvement.

As BeLL is the first European project investigating all wider benefits of liberal adult education the empirical data set is unique and provides insights not only into the effects of adult learning, but also on important areas of the liberal adult education landscape in ten different European countries. Moreover, the research focuses on the connection between different elements of learning situation (e.g. the role of the teacher, the group, the methods etc.) and the development of the wider benefits.

Thus, it is anticipated that the results will not only contribute to improving the quality of non-formal adult learning provision, but that they also suggest aspects of benefits-oriented professional pedagogical action in liberal adult education.

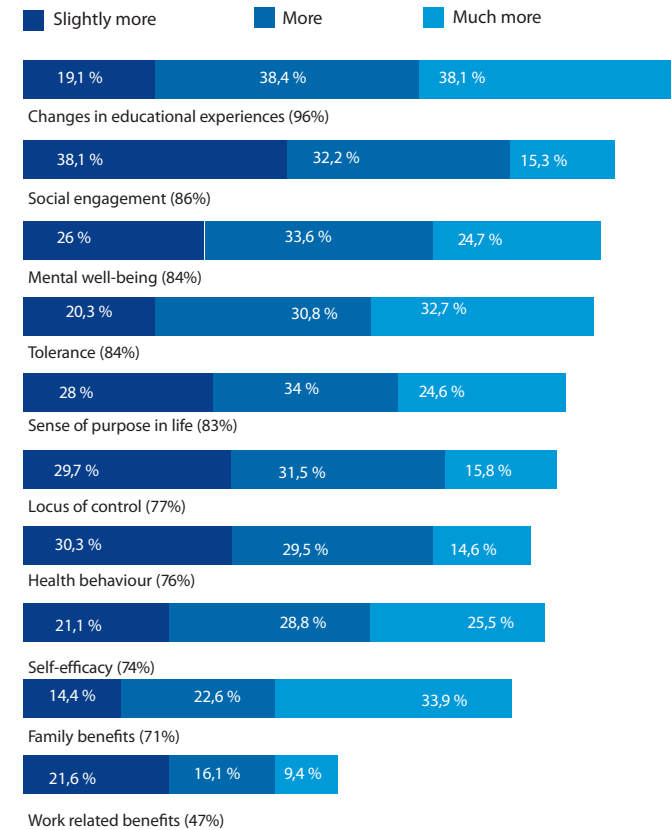


MAIN RESULTS

The BeLL study shows that:

1. Participants experienced multiple benefits after participating in liberal education courses.

Percent of respondents who have experienced positive changes in benefit factors (n=8417) in %



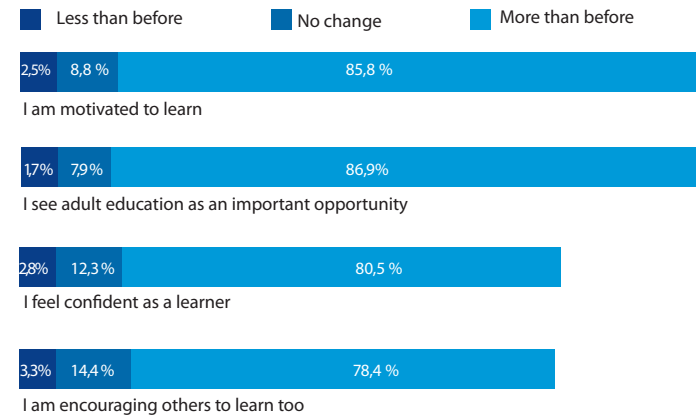
2. Statistical analyses of survey data (n= 8646) found 10 benefit factors.
3. Qualitative analysis of interviews and open questions in the survey show that people are able to recognise, name and describe these benefits

“I feel like I’m doing something with my life. People at my voluntary work give me more respect, and responsibility. Sense of achievement, progression towards personal goals as well.”

KEY FINDINGS

70 - 87 % of respondents experienced positive changes in learning motivation...

Changes in Educational Experiences (n=8646)



... social interaction...

“That too is definitely quite important. Because people tend to move in certain circles [...]. And there, it is quite nice to be able to get together with other people for a change, people from different professions with different educational backgrounds [...].”

“I’ve been able to make new contacts. My circle of friends and acquaintances has grown. Information is transmitted better as a result. I get important information and hear about what’s going on in society.”

”The long term benefits are the emotional relationships established with those women...”

... and in general wellbeing and life satisfaction.

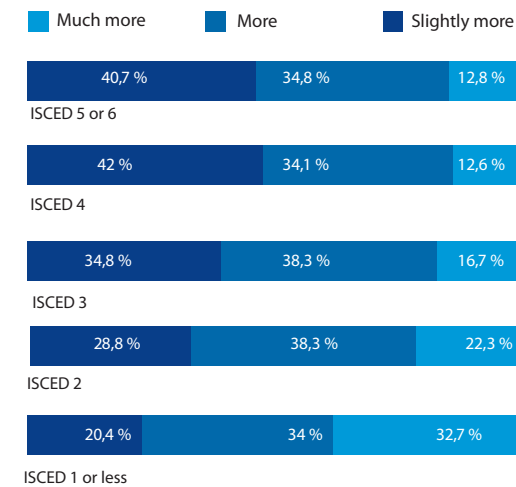
“I have learnt some things to apply to my hobby of horse keeping that improves the quality of my life, and makes my interest more in-depth. It keeps my mind active, and improves my wellbeing by giving me goals to achieve.”

“I feel more confident in the choices that I make about my future”

“In one course we attend now we are informed about medical issues: how to eat, what medicines we should avoid, [...] how to live and eat naturally, which I think is very important.”

- In all ten participating countries similar types of courses and course topics were found – as well as similar benefits within these courses across the countries.
- The differences by gender, age, employment status and course types are rather small, even though statistically significant: all groups benefit from liberal adult education, and all types of courses generate changes in peoples’ lives. However, the results show that liberal adult education participants, who have lower educational level, experience the biggest changes.

Changes in health, family & work sum score by education level



- Interviewees identify teachers’/trainers’ personality, topic-related expertise and their teaching approaches as important factors for developing benefits within the course context.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EUROPEAN AND NATIONAL POLICY MAKERS

- 1 The important role of non-formal and non-vocational adult education and its wide range of course topics and types as part of Lifelong Learning system should be better recognized at national and European policy level.
- 2 The impact of the social environment in which learning takes place has to be acknowledged. BeLL learners place a high value on the social aspects of course participation, with improved social networks high among the benefits identified.
- 3 Further research on the wider benefits of adult learning should be encouraged. For example, questions about participation in liberal adult education should be included in the next round of PIAAC.
- 4 Awareness raising actions on the BeLL findings about the positive impact of learning should be addressed to employers and social partners in order to encourage them to facilitate such learning for their employees/ members .
- 5 Public investment in learning for adults should be increased.

