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

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This leaflet reflects the views only of the authors and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.
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=8646) in %
   - More than before: 38.1%
   - More: 85.8%
   - Slightly more: 2.8%
   - No change: 2.5%
   - Much more: 86.9%
   - Much more: 7.9%
   - Much more: 0.1%

   Changes in educational experiences (n=8646)
   - I am motivated to learn: 86.9%
   - I see adult education as an important opportunity: 78.4%
   - I feel confident as a learner: 70.8%
   - I am encouraging others to learn too: 67.2%

   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 [...].”

   Changes in health, family, and work (n=8417) in %
   - Much more: 49.7%
   - More: 36.6%
   - Slightly more: 13.6%
   - Much more: 29.7%
   - More: 31.5%
   - Slightly more: 15.8%
   - Much more: 14.6%
   - More: 26.5%
   - Slightly more: 12.5%
   - Much more: 24.5%
   - More: 15.9%
   - Slightly more: 16.9%
   - Much more: 22.6%
   - More: 23.1%
   - Slightly more: 11.6%
   - Much more: 8.4%
   - More: 21.6%
   - Slightly more: 16.1%
   - Much more: 9.4%

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

   “I feel like I’m doing something with my life. People on 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...

“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.”

… and in general wellbeing and life satisfaction.

“I am motivated to learn”

Changes in Educational Experiences (n=8646)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Changes compared to before</th>
<th>Less than before</th>
<th>No change</th>
<th>More than before</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>86.9%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>“I am motivated to learn”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>57.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>“I see adult education as an important opportunity”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>80.5%</td>
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<td>“I feel confident as a learner”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>79.4%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>“I am encouraging others to learn too”</td>
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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 systems 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.