

Adult learning is one of five priority areas with a special steering group in the Nordic Council of Ministers. NVL has been established in order to strengthen the Nordic cooperation in the field of adult learning, and the network started its work at the beginning of 2005.

NVL is a network

With national coordinators in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, and contact persons in the three autonomous regions Greenland, Faroe Islands and Åland. The main coordinator and the executive administrator are responsible for coordinating the NVL activities and have their office in Sweden, at the Swedish Agency for Flexible Learning.

NVL:

- aims at Being a Nordic meeting place for actors involved in adult learning;
- aims at Producing added Nordic value through information activities, development projects and networks;
- aims at Cooperating with the Baltic countries, Northwest Russia and the rest of Europe.
- focuses on cross-sector cooperation for increasing competitiveness in working life and in the civic society

To promote this dialogue about older workers in working life, the network Older Workers in the Nordic Countries OWN has been established.

The task of the OWN is to promote discussion on the employability of older workers and the opportunities available for them. Nordic values and traditions - the principles of the welfare state, learner-centred adult education, democracy, and equality - are the basis of this work.

The focus and perspective of the network is to challenge long established mindsets, as well as the policy and practice concerning working and learning in later life. We wish to promote the overall wellbeing of older workers by advocating for more choice and opportunities in work and learning for them.

To this end we need to confront stigmatising stereotypes and to identify prevailing ambivalences, and, above all, to expand the existing discussion by bringing forward the voice and initiative of older workers themselves. This means that there is a strong ethical foundation of mutual respect and acknowledgement between all the parties concerned.

This approach involves strengthening three core dimensions:

1. Motivation: Older workers' willingness to continue to contribute in working life and in their communities. ["want to do"]
2. Ability: Older workers' job competence (knowledge, skills, attitudes) and health ["can do"]
3. Opportunities: More flexibility is needed in working life and learning provision in order to balance the work/life dynamics in later life (to meet the demands of that period of life, such as intergenerational care and civic responsibilities). The responsibility for creating these opportunities needs to be shared between governments, employers, trade unions, NGOs, education providers, and older workers. ["allowed to do"]

The Nordic countries are similar to each other. However, there are also some important differences. What can we learn from these?

1. The actual retirement age is higher in Iceland than in other Nordic countries. Why is this?
2. It is claimed that there is a lack of workforce and at the same time we see that the (long-time) unemploy-

ment rate is high for older workers? Why is this?

3. In all the Nordic countries major investments have been made in lifelong learning, directly or indirectly. The outcomes as indicated in participation rates seem to differ. Why is this?

Adult Learning

and lifelong learning as an integrated part of it is a highly prioritised area in the Nordic cooperation. The steering group for Nordic Adult Education Cooperation (SVL) works for increasing and improving the possibilities for personal and professional development of the adult population in the Nordic countries. The policy initiatives are supported by the project financing programme Nordplus Adult (Nordplus Voxen).

Official Nordic co-operation

The Nordic Council and The Nordic Council of Ministers, www.norden.org, represent the official Nordic co-operation. The Nordic Council was formed in 1952 and is the forum for inter-parliamentary co-operation. The Nordic Council of Ministers was formed in 1971 and is the forum for intergovernmental co-operation.



OWN Member's profile

Leif Emil Hansen

is Associate professor at the Department of Psychology and Educational Studies of Roskilde University, Denmark. He has conducted research in opportunities for people with brief schooling in the knowledge society, seniors' association with the labour market and education, and adult and supplementary education.
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Raili Moilanen

is Docent in management and leadership at the University of Jyväskylä. She specializes in age management. Ms. Moilanen has organized development programmes in companies (e.g. tacit knowledge at UPM Kymmene's factory, tacit knowledge in the tax administration) and run a research programme at the Academy of Finland in 2004 - 2006. She has given lectures and written books on age management, tacit knowledge and older employees' possibilities in companies.

Susanna Paloniemi

works as a researcher at the Department of Educational Sciences at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland. She is currently researching professional identity construction among older workers. Special attention is given to how and by whom age is negotiated in working life and what consequences these negotiations have on the professional identity development of (older) workers.

Tarja Tikkanen

is Head of Research - Management, organizations & competence at the Department of Social Science and Business Development of the International Research Institute of Stavanger, Norway. Her most recent research has focused on ageing workers in the petroleum sector and competence development among teachers and school management (related to the current Norwegian school reform). Tarja has a broad interest and experience in various research methodologies. Furthermore, her experience covers teaching and development in higher education and continuing vocational education and training, as well as working life consultancy.

Jon Kristoffer Sandvik

worked as Senior Adviser at the NAV (Norwegian Labour and Welfare Organisation) in the Sør-Trøndelag region until October 2007, when he was

appointed leader of the NAV office of Rissa. He is interested in the effects of senior citizen policy on the development of the society, businesses and individuals. He feels that the provision of lifelong learning and competence development irrespective of age and life phase are key factors in how seniors find their place in working life.

Bernhardur Gudmundsson

My interest in older people's situations is partly personal because I myself belong to that category. I am familiar with different aspects of the issue. I have experienced the perspective of the employer, who hires and fires people in order to optimise human resources; the view of the employee, who has to stop working in his prime because of legislation; and that of the educator or consultant, who tries to help both sides understand each others' viewpoints. I am a member of Islands Råd for de Ældres Velbehag (Icelandic council for the welfare of older people).

Ingrid Caspersson

is an active and energetic 62-year-old teacher who is enthusiastically engaged in the Competence 50+ project. She first developed an interest in older workers through encounters with older colleagues. Ingrid is a co-author of the publication Erfarna lärare (Teachers with experience). According to her, it is extremely important that older workers remain longer in working life.

Hanne Randle,

Licentiate of Philosophy, is a Ph.D. student at the Faculty of Economics, Communication and IT, Unit of Working Life Studies at the University of Karlstad. Her recent research has investigated the possibility of creating a sustainable working life and diminishing the number of sickness-related absences and early retirement through various development projects. Another labour market issue that interests her is the development of workplaces and employees through adjustments in working conditions and power relations, competence development, learning and education. Her research includes projects on older workers' employment opportunities, learning and development.

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Older Workers in the Nordic countries (OWN)



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