



Nordic Network for  
Adult Learning



**NORDIC  
NETWORK**  
for Adult Learning

## THE NORDIC NETWORK FOR ADULT LEARNING (NVL)

is a program under the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM) for Education and Research. The NCM aims to uphold the Nordic Region as an area with coherent and dynamic education, research and innovation, and to strive towards enhancing the values and strengths of the Nordic countries.

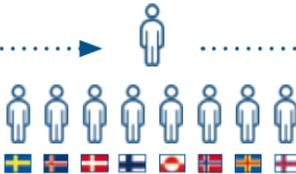
### The goals of NVL are to:

- enhance the competence development in various areas of adult learning in the Nordic countries
- contribute to the development of adult learning systems in the Nordic countries through enhanced dialog with the Nordic Council of Ministers and the rotating presidencies of the NCM
- contribute to personal development and democratic participation through various forms of adult learning
- contribute to cross-sectoral and cross-national cooperation
- enhance cooperation with the civic society and working life, especially with liberal adult education
- disseminate experiences and results of Nordic cooperation on adult learning.

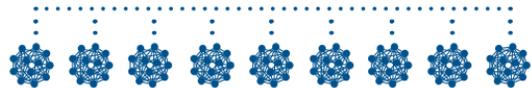
[www.nvl.org](http://www.nvl.org)  
[www.norden.org](http://www.norden.org)

The Nordic Council of Ministers for Education and Research

NVL is a network organisation consisting of 1 head coordinator and 8 coordinators from the whole Nordic region and different sectors of adult education.



Work is organised in expert networks



Results are used at the policy and practice levels in the Nordic countries and by the Nordic Council of Ministers

Each network consists of representatives from all the Nordic countries and different sectors:

- Public authorities
- Formal education sector
- Liberal adult education
- Research
- Business and working life

Mapping Report Analysis Policy brief Meeting places

Products



## VALIDATION

Validation and the visibility of competences improve the individual's conditions for mobility during the employment or between education and employment. NVL's support for the development of the validation systems in the Nordic countries, as well as quality development of validation practices contribute to the implementation of the Nordic agenda of future competences, and aids in managing skills' shortages in many professional areas in the Nordic region.

NVL's expert network for validation implements the Roadmap 2018. Roadmap 2018 is a set of indicators that can be used for monitoring of validation systems at a national, regional or sector level. It is useful for indicating development opportunities or for comparison with validation systems in other countries.

The expert network also supports quality development and benchmarking of validation systems in the Nordic countries. The ValiGuide service is a Nordic platform for validation practitioners, and supports the methodology development. It describes the different phases of the validation process and the competencies needed in order to perform qualified validation.

[nvl.org/validering](https://nvl.org/validering)





## Quality in validation of prior learning

A group of researchers from Finland, Sweden and Denmark have carried out a study on quality in the validation process. The study is based on a model for quality assurance developed in connection with a Nordplus project. The study shows that the model is useful when identifying the areas for further development. All the participating educational institutions confirm this. Furthermore, the study shows that the model is useful for reflecting on quality in the validation process, which is of both importance and interest, as the work with validation is crucial for working life in the Nordic countries, when recruiting people with the right and relevant competences.

[bit.ly/qualityinVPL](https://bit.ly/qualityinVPL)

## **GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING**

There is a need for a strategic competence development in order to meet the challenges of an ever-faster change in society and working life. NVL is engaged in improving the coordination of guidance between the education sector and the labour market in the Nordic region, in order to support a better transition between the education and working life.

The Nordic Network for Guidance focuses on adults' opportunities to develop their career competences and sees career development as a lifelong process. The network has, among other things, worked on competence development of adult guidance counsellors and the development of guidance services, as well as dealt with questions concerning lifelong guidance and career competences. The network also strives to formulate a common Nordic definition of career guidance.

**[nvl.org/vaglednings-natverket](https://nvl.org/vaglednings-natverket)**





## Coordination of guidance and counselling in the Nordic countries

The report describes how the coordination of guidance is organized in the Nordic countries, and presents various forms of informal cooperation between the sectors involved. The report briefly describes the co-ordination of guidance and counselling with the focus on adults' opportunities to develop their career competences and create meaningful transitions on the labour market and between education and working life.

The report is available in Swedish and Finnish.

[bit.ly/vägledning](https://bit.ly/vägledning)

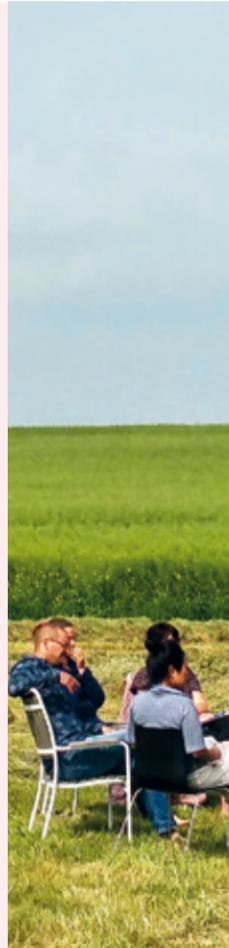
[bit.ly/Ohjausraportti](https://bit.ly/Ohjausraportti)

# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

NVL contributes to the development of the Nordic education systems by raising awareness of the UN Sustainable Development Goals among adult education providers.

The Sustainable Development Network disseminates knowledge and expertise on how to work with the Sustainable Development Goals from a didactic perspective in adult education organizations and in local communities. The network's vision is to support the Nordic Region being a leading knowledge and welfare region. The network contributes to the implementation of the Nordic strategy for sustainable development by developing and delivering adult education offers, which help individuals to become active and integrated citizens, as well as develop local communities in the Nordic countries.

[nvl.org/hallbar-utveckling](https://nvl.org/hallbar-utveckling)



## New Nordic Education for Sustainability

The network has for several years worked actively on finding good education methods for sustainable development with adults as a target group. Actors and organisations working with adult learning in different sectors meet and inspire each other across the sectors of education, institutions, organizations and age groups towards a good and sustainable community.

In collaboration with NVL and the Nordic Council of Ministers, a Nordic project group was given an opportunity to start two courses promoting sustainable development. The first was a pilot project (2014/15), and was followed by a course (2016), where the pilot's experience was implemented. In this publication, you can read about the course program, the participants' experiences, the evaluation of the program, and be inspired by learning examples delivered by the course participants.

[bit.ly/education\\_for\\_sustainability](https://bit.ly/education_for_sustainability)

# COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT

The Nordic Region is challenged by a need to find new ways to work with learning and competence development for citizens, employees, in companies and in organizations. This is essential in order to meet the increased diversity of society, rapid changes and demands for new solutions. NVL supports collaboration between different professional groups in adult education organizations, between organizations and companies, and between research and practice, in order to promote sustainable solutions in response to complex challenges.

## **Adult Educator's Competence Development**

The assignment for a newly established interdisciplinary network for the adult educators' competence development is mapping the competence needs and developing an organic model for continuous, practical and flexible competence development of adult education professionals. The organic model for competence development should be a supplement to the existing formal education offers.

[nvl.org/netverk/kompetenceudvikling-af-voksenlaerere](https://nvl.org/netverk/kompetenceudvikling-af-voksenlaerere)





## Adult Educator's Competences and Competence Development

The point of departure for the new network is, among other things, this report. The purpose of the report is to supplement the findings and conclusions of previous reports on adult educator competences by mapping the competence needs that the adult educator him- or herself has experienced.

At the same time, the report highlights the adult educators' approach to and standpoint on joint Nordic educational initiatives within adult learning, in order to provide a basis for recommendations for further work on competence development of Nordic adult educators.

The report is available in Danish, English and Finnish.

[bit.ly/kompetenceudvikling](https://bit.ly/kompetenceudvikling)

[bit.ly/CompetenceDevelopment](https://bit.ly/CompetenceDevelopment)

[bit.ly/OsaamisenKehittäminen](https://bit.ly/OsaamisenKehittäminen)

# ALFARÅDET

The target group for the Nordic Adult Literacy Network Alfarådet is adults with a short or no formal school background and adults who do not have one of the Nordic languages as their mother tongue. The network collects, discusses and communicates knowledge about the target group's prerequisites and the necessary didactic tools that educators and institutions need and require in their work. Specifically, support has been developed for continuing education of literacy teachers within the themes, like every-day mathematics; digital skills; and communication without written support.

[nvl.org/alfaradet](http://nvl.org/alfaradet)



## Description of Teachers' Competence

### **in basic literacy for adults with non-Nordic mother tongues.**

The report defines in detail the specific competences required for this complex task. The competence description consists of six different areas of competences, which are further elaborated with clearly defined knowledge, skills and actions necessary. The competence description serves as a basis for the development and implementation of teacher training programs and courses in the Nordic countries. Organising such courses in cooperation among the countries is an added value.

The report is available in English, Swedish and Finnish.

[bit.ly/competence\\_description](https://bit.ly/competence_description)

[bit.ly/kompetensbeskrivning](https://bit.ly/kompetensbeskrivning)

[bit.ly/OpettajienOsaamiskuvaus](https://bit.ly/OpettajienOsaamiskuvaus)

## COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT IN AND FOR WORKING LIFE

Strategic competence development is necessary today in order to meet the challenges created by ever-faster changes in society and working life. NVL focuses on competence development in and for the working life through activities in a new network uniting representatives from the labour market organisations. The network follows up on the previous NVL work, which highlighted the factors that are essential for effective competence development in working life.

The network creates a knowledge base about the systems and models that promote effective competence development for adults, and inspires towards more flexible competence development in and for workplaces. The network was established in 2018 and chose the following themes for further study and exchange of experience:

- Digitalization
- Validation
- Return of investment in relation to competence development.

The development work in the network forms the basis for concrete recommendations aimed at the decision makers in charge of continuing adult education.

[nvl.org/Natverk/Kompetanseutvikling-i-og-for-arbeidslivet](https://nvl.org/Natverk/Kompetanseutvikling-i-og-for-arbeidslivet)





## Competence from a working life perspective

The point of departure for the network is this report. The report highlights important strategic issues that contribute to further developing good transitions between education and working life and mobility during the employment.

The report calls for a new thinking of competence policy, stronger cooperation between the labour market organisations, improved strategic competence development in companies and increased individual responsibility.

The report is available in Swedish and Icelandic.

[bit.ly/arbetslivsperspektiv](https://bit.ly/arbetslivsperspektiv)

[bit.ly/atvinnulifs](https://bit.ly/atvinnulifs)

# INCLUSION AND INTEGRATION

NVL contributes to the development of education policies that promote inclusion and make visible models and innovative adult education solutions that are inclusive and promote job creation, as well as support the participation in adult learning and civil society.

## **Inclusion and adult learning – for active participation in society and working life.**

REPORT

The starting point for working with inclusion and integration involves, among other things, the recommendations from this report. It is a resource for competence development of adult educators, and provides examples of adult education methods and collaboration models that aid adult learning. It highlights perspectives and policies for the policy and system development that promote integration and participation in society. NVL has analysed experiences from both national and Nordic development projects in order to provide inspiration for the field of adult education.

[bit.ly/Inklusion\\_og\\_integration](https://bit.ly/Inklusion_og_integration)





## LEADERSHIP AND INCLUSION

NVL's learning circle "Inclusion and leadership" contributes to the development of Nordic continuing education opportunities for managers who work with the theme of inclusion as a central part of their job. The purpose of learning circles is to create a framework for participants in a co-operative learning process and to develop their knowledge and new opportunities for action in relation to concrete and current challenges and themes.

[nvl.org/Natverk/Lederskab-og-inklusion](https://nvl.org/Natverk/Lederskab-og-inklusion)

### Handbook – learning circles in a Nordic context

The handbook contains guidance and inspiration on how to work with learning circles. It presents reflections and considerations that participants and facilitators can choose from when starting and implementing a learning circle in their own work context.

[nvl.org/Content/Handbok](https://nvl.org/Content/Handbok)



HANDBOOK

## PRISON EDUCATION NETWORK

The network promotes the development of adult education for prisoners as part of the prevention work. The network initiates and coordinates several smaller Nordic working groups that carry out a specific task and are time limited. In 2019, there are two active working groups associated with the network: a working group on ICT and prison education, and a working group on guidance and counselling.

[nvl.org/fengselsundervisning](http://nvl.org/fengselsundervisning)



## Education in Nordic Prisons

### Prisoners' Educational Backgrounds, Preferences and Motivation

This report presents the findings from the first joint Nordic survey of prisoners in the Nordic countries with a focus on educational backgrounds, participation in prison educational activities, and motivation to become involved in education. Two out of every three prisoners were not participating in any form of prison educational activity. An average of between every third and fourth prisoner stated that they had reading and writing problems. The research report aims to help develop good, well-structured educational programs that satisfy the needs of the target group.

[bit.ly/education-in-prisons](https://bit.ly/education-in-prisons)

## KEY COMPETENCES AND BASIC SKILLS

NVL supports the development of educational fields that can help adults acquire the necessary basic skills required in society and working life in the Nordic countries. NVL has prioritized the work on basic digital competence for adults in 2018–2019, creating sound synergy with the EU Commission's launch of the Competence Agenda in June 2016. This underlines the importance of adults having the opportunity to improve their basic skills in flexible learning environments with adapted pedagogy for adults.

## NORDIC BASIC SKILLS NETWORK

The point of departure for the network is NVL's report about basic skills. The network discusses adult basic skills and investigates how they are developed in the different Nordic countries. The network also touches upon the need to increase contact between the education sector and working life. The network welcomes a broader perspective on key competences.

[nvl.org/Natverk/Grundlaggande-fardigheter](https://nvl.org/Natverk/Grundlaggande-fardigheter)

[bit.ly/grundlaeggende\\_faerdigheder](https://bit.ly/grundlaeggende_faerdigheder)





## Upskilling Pathways – New opportunities for adults

Close to one fifth of adult Europeans struggle with

- basic reading and writing,
- calculation,
- using digital tools in everyday life.

About the same amount of adult Europeans (around 22%) have only obtained a lower secondary education level at most. Without these skills and with low level of qualification they are at higher risk of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion.

For that reason, the European Council adopted the Recommendation on Upskilling pathways in 2016. It aims to help adults acquire a minimum level of literacy, numeracy and digital skills and/or acquire a broader set of skills by progressing towards an upper secondary qualification or equivalent (level 3 or 4 in the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) depending on national circumstances).

[bit.ly/Upskilling\\_Pathways](https://bit.ly/Upskilling_Pathways)

## NORDIC CO-OPERATION

The co-operation between the Nordic countries is the world's oldest regional partnership. It involves Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland.

Nordic co-operation has deep roots in politics, economics and culture. In general, it focuses on areas where a Nordic approach generates added value for the countries and peoples of the Region.

Nordic co-operation seeks a strong Nordic voice in the world and an in European and international forums. The values shared by the Nordic countries help make the region one of the most innovative and competitive in the world.

### The Nordic Council of Ministers .....

The Nordic Council of Ministers is the official body for Nordic intergovernmental co-operation. The Nordic prime ministers have overall responsibility for Nordic co-operation.

In practice responsibility for the co-operation is delegated to the Ministers for Nordic Co-operation (MR-SAM) and to the Nordic Committee for Co-operation (NSK), which co-ordinates the day-to-day work.

Despite its name, the Nordic Council of Ministers consists of several individual councils of ministers. There are currently 11 councils of ministers for specific policy areas as well as the council of ministers for the ministers for co-operation.

Co-operation on research and education is headed up by the education and research ministers, who make up the Nordic Council of Ministers for Education and Research (MR-U).

### The Nordic Council .....

The Nordic Council is run by a presidium consisting of elected parliamentarians from all of the Nordic countries. The members discuss topical issues and the future of Nordic co-operation with the prime ministers once a year at a summit meeting held during the Session of the Nordic Council.

.....▶ **Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM)**

The Presidency of the NCM and the Nordic Council, which is held for a period of one year, rotates between the five Nordic countries. The country holding the Presidency of the NCM draws up a programme with political priorities to guide Nordic co-operation during the year to come.

The Presidency of the NCM alternates in accordance with an agreed rota: Iceland (2019), Denmark (2020), Finland (2021), Norge (2022), Sweden (2023).

.....▶ **Committee of Senior Officials for Education and Research (EK-U)**

Matters are prepared and followed up by the various committees of senior officials, which consist of civil servants from the member countries.

In practice, the decisions about NVL and Nordplus are delegated to the Committee of Senior Officials for Education and Research (EK-U), which is also the steering committee for the network.

.....▶ **NVL** .....

Together with the sub-programme Nordplus Adult, the NVL comprises MR-U's efforts within the policy area of adult learning.

The NVL's primary tasks include: promoting the development and implementation of strategies for lifelong learning and skills development; contributing to personal development and democratic participation; promoting collaboration with the Nordplus Adult framework programme; providing structured and strategic information on the experiences and results of Nordic co-operation; and establishing synergies with international, and especially European, co-operation on adult learning.

.....▶ **Nordplus Adult**

Nordplus Adult supports exchanges of adult learners and teachers; establishing of transnational networks; project cooperation between the Nordic and Baltic countries and provides financial support to institutions and organization within the field of the field of adult learning. Through project support Nordplus Adult aims to improve adult competences and recognition of informal learning, support adult education and improve cooperation between adult education and labour market.

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