

**Workshop 2**  
**Strengthening the resource base (human and financial)**  
**John Leavey, Chair**

Several countries pointed out that funding in the adult sector is generally fragile and project-based, making it difficult to run sustainable programmes. The situation is particularly challenging given the fact that many adult ALN learners are themselves quite vulnerable. There are countries however where the situation is different, eg Sweden and Norway, where the adult education sector forms part of the ordinary education system, and instructors are fully trained and on permanent, full-time contracts (similar to those in primary and secondary education). One difficulty in the sector in Norway is that lower and upper secondary levels are administered under different local authorities (municipalities and counties).

In Canada all education is administered by the provinces rather than the federal government; in addition, in the adult sector there are a multitude of providers and agencies operating with multiple points of access and pathways, a situation described as a 'chequerboard'.

In Slovenia funding is project-based and fragile. Policy makers are, on the whole, not convinced of the need and importance of ALN as education for young people (including tertiary) is considered more important and is a priority for funding. This situation creates a lot of uncertainty. Organisations are sometimes reluctant to invest in instructor training as they are not sure that there will be adequate funding available to continue ALN teaching during the next year.

Workshop participants also discussed the need to engage employers in adult learning. For example, a campaign to involve employers in training of their low-skilled staff is currently underway in Canada. One strategy for doing this used in New Zealand. It includes outreach to employers –and efforts to convince them that better literacy skills will result in fewer accidents and therefore insurance payments. Employers may therefore benefit in ways other than, for example, productivity gains due to better-skilled staff.

The European Union is currently conducting a Europe-wide study on the adult foundation skill sector, as there is currently little consistent information across countries on even basic issues such as number of staff and learners. It is difficult to convince politicians and policy makers of the importance of the sector when there is lack of information. The adult sector has to compete for resources with the compulsory sector; this is particularly challenging at the moment as there has been much recent evidence on the equity and efficiency gains of pre-school and early childhood education.