

ADULT LEARNING AND THE GREEN TRANSITION KEY RESULTS



AT A GLANCE



HIGHLIGHTS



- Two innovative projects on the Green Transition and ALE received the 2023 EAEA Grundtvig Award.
- 120 participants at the events representing 26 countries brought their own perspective on the Green Transition and ALE: from umbrella organisations to NGOs, adult education providers, and more.
- We had two days of plenary sessions and parallel group discussions on Learning in communities and Strategies for a just green transition.



BACKGROUND

EAEA Annual Conference is organised together with the General Assembly and hosted by one of EAEA members or by EAEA in Belgium. Every year, the conference is held under a different theme, which is also the topic of the Grundtvig Award.

This year, the events were held at the National Library and the Hotel International in Zagreb, Croatia. The theme of the events was Green Transition and Adult Learning. Our host this year was the Adult Education Institution "Dante" from Rijeka.



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR
THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS

dante

USTANOVA ZA
OBRAZOVANJE
ODRASLIH | ADULT
EDUCATION
INSTITUTION



Co-funded by
the European Union



OVERVIEW

1/GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The GA discusses the green transition in adult learning

2/GRUNDTVIG AWARD CEREMONY

Awarding the winners and festive ceremony

3/ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Keynote

Strand 1: Learning in communities

Strand 2: Strategies for a just green transition

Panel discussion and conclusions

WHY ZAGREB?

We were hosted by our member the Adult Education Institution "Dante" from Rijeka. Zagreb is the capital of Croatia, a lovely city with lots of historical sights, but also modern architecture. We were delighted to have had a chance to host all of you with us for the GA and Annual Conference.



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR
THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS

dante

USTANOVA ZA
OBRAZOVANJE
ODRASLIH | ADULT
EDUCATION
INSTITUTION



Co-funded by
the European Union

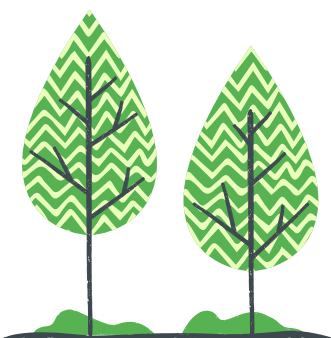


EAEA GENERAL ASSEMBLY



During the EAEA General Assembly, members approved the activity report for 2022 and workplan 2023. They also confirmed the accounts for 2022 and the financial plan for 2023-24, elected a new Executive Board, and welcomed 13 new members of EAEA.

In the second part of the General Assembly, EAEA Secretary General Gina Ebner introduced key political developments for EAEA work in 2023 and upcoming years. She emphasized the increasing attention by policymakers on the multiple benefits of adult learning in many domains, e.g. in the Green Deal, Green Industrial Plan, Net Zero Industry Act, new EU Competitiveness Strategy.





Adult Learning Wales, UK



Accademia IRSEI APS, Italy



Mindfluencer, Hungary

EAEA GENERAL ASSEMBLY: NEW EAEA MEMBERS AND EXECUTIVE BOARD

13 NEW MEMBERS OF EAEA



Centre for Advancement of Research and
Development in Education
Technology - CARDET, Cyprus

Four new members were present at the GA (pictured); nine more were also approved:

- Educational and Advisory Center "absm", Kosovo
- Foundation for Romania's Development, Romania
- Sisian Adult Education Center Foundation (SAEC), Armenia
- GO! Learning together, living together, Belgium
- Croatian Chamber of Economy (CCE), Croatia
- Tempus Public Foundation (TPF), Hungary
- Università delle LiberEtà del FVG - ETS (ULE), Italy
- Arci Pelago - Arcipelago Association, Italy
- Bulgarian Women's Lobby, Bulgaria.



EAEA Executive Board pictured (from left to right):

George A. Koulaouzides, Hellenic Adult Education Association, Greece

Alex Stevenson, Learning and Work Institute, UK

Anna Skocz, NGO Trainer's Association, Poland

Lauri Tuomi, The Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation (KVS), Finland

Uwe Gartenschlaeger, DVV International, Germany (President)

Marta Jendeková, AIVD, Slovakia

Balázs Németh, University of Pécs, Hungary

Dearbháil Lawless, National Adult Learning Organisation (AONTAS), Ireland

John Evers, Verband Österreichischer Volkshochschulen, Austria

Oleg Smirnov, Integration and Development Center for Information, Ukraine (attending online)

Gustav Fridolin, Swedish Interest Organisation for Popular Movement Folk High Schools (RIO), Sweden

Dina Soeiro, ESEC Instituto Politécnico de Coimbra, Portugal

"EVEN THOUGH ALE IS SO IMPORTANT, WE CAN'T REALLY SEE ACTION FROM THE POLITICAL LEVEL, TO RECEIVE FUNDING AND RECOGNITION. WE HAVE TO CONTINUE OUR ADVOCACY AND CAPACITY BUILDING WORK."

- UWE GARTENSCHLAEGER



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR
THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS



USTANOVA ZA
OBRAZOVANJE
ODRASLIH | ADULT
EDUCATION
INSTITUTION



Co-funded by
the European Union



GLOBAL POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

"How will the monitoring of ALE look like after GRALE? More data-based? GRALE was based on narrative forms, included good practice examples - we might lose something here," said ICAE's Majda Richer introducing the developments post-CONFINTEA VII.

During small-group discussions, participants exchanged on the extent to which the Marrakech Framework for Action is implemented in their countries, and whether civil society is involved in the process.

ALE AND MICROCREDENTIALS



Is there a common approach to microcredentials within the EU? According to the participants of the group discussions at the GA, the picture is mixed: in some countries, such as Hungary, only higher education institutions use microcredentials; in others, such as Estonia, microcredentials are used in adult learning, but only in workplace learning.

The workshop also included an introduction to a MOOC developed by the European Basic Skills Network.



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR
THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS

dante

USTANOVA ZA
OBRAZOVANJE
ODRASLIH | ADULT
EDUCATION
INSTITUTION



Co-funded by
the European Union

ADULT LEARNING AND UKRAINE

Two rounds of discussions looked at how the war in Ukraine has affected the adult learning sector in the country and beyond. During the first round of discussions, focused on re-skilling, participants shared the developments in the reception of refugees from their context: from fast-track procedures in some countries to only superficial displays of solidarity in others. In the second round of discussion, concentrating on active citizenship, participants discussed fake news and discrimination as the most salient issues.



NEW EAEA MANIFESTO FOR ADULT LEARNING

The participants of the group discussions had several suggestions for the format of the new EAEA Manifesto for Adult Learning: move beyond text, with short animated videos; using more infographic and new social media such as Instagram or TikTok. A closer connection to the stories of adult learners was also suggested.

In terms of new topics, participants found AI, prison education, resilience in crisis and mental wellbeing particularly important.

Since 2003, the EAEA Grundtvig Award celebrates excellence and innovation in ALE.

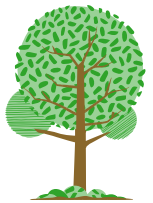
- In 2023 it showcased projects which foster the green transition and adult learning.
- The festive ceremony took place in the National University Library of Zagreb and included a performance by a journalist, pianist and adult learner, Ana Mušnjak.
- The awards were handed over by Antonija Gladović, the Director of the Croatian National Agency for EU Programmes.



"Five years ago, following the loss of my mother, I felt a strong urge to do something exclusively for myself. It was during this time that I reached out to my childhood piano teacher and enrolled in the Public University in Rijeka. Reuniting with my teacher after four decades has been a remarkable experience. Many people are surprised by this, often assuming that such pursuits end in one's twenties. However, for me, they continue to bring immense joy and offer rewarding challenges."

Ana Mušnjak

EAEA GRUNDTVIG AWARD



National category: Green Lane NGO, Armenia

Since their establishment in 2003, this NGO has been supporting member and beneficiary farmers to transition to sustainable agriculture. In the national category the Green Lane NGO won for their SDG agricultural project for women's economic empowerment in Shirak and Gegharkunik marzes, supported by UNDP. The beneficiaries gained knowledge on SDG agriculture and the latest technologies used for the conditions of global climate change. This not only empowers women but also exemplifies the importance of SDG to other residents of the community.



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR
THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS

dante

USTANOVA ZA
OBRAZOVANJE
ODRASLIH | ADULT
EDUCATION
INSTITUTION



Co-funded by
the European Union



The jury acknowledged this project as well conceived, with a clear target group and rationale. It has had a good impact on women's empowerment and training in a rather rural agricultural environment, while at the same time including different parts of the agenda 2030 and practical change.



EAEA GRUNDTVIG AWARD

The awards for our winners were created by adult learners from Narodno učilište Rijeka who were happy to give away some of their artwork to other adult European students on this very occasion. The pieces were made during the ceramics course run by Boris Roce, a prominent artist and an art teacher at Narodno učilište.

Transnational category: Fenan Consulting.

In this category Fenan Consulting won for their "Building green skills for the circular economy" project. It was aimed at developing an online course for young adults that would raise awareness about circular economy principles, develop their skills and competencies, and create motivation for the circular lifestyle by demonstrating its attractiveness, desirability, and easy adaptation.



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR
THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS

dante

USTANOVA ZA
OBRAZOVANJE
ODRASLIH | ADULT
EDUCATION
INSTITUTION



Co-funded by
the European Union



ANNUAL CONFERENCE

120
PARTICIPANTS

26
COUNTRIES

In this year's Annual Conference we discussed the topic of Green Transition and ALE. Our keynote speaker **Arjen Wals**, Professor of Transformative Learning for Socio-Ecological Sustainability and UNESCO Chair Social Learning for Sustainable Development gave a speech on: *A just green transition in times of crisis: how can adult learning help us build a more sustainable world?*

Following the keynote input, two strands of parallel activities took place:

- 1 - Learning in communities
- 2 - Strategies for a just green transition.



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR
THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS



USTANOVA ZA
OBRAZOVANJE
ODRASLIH | ADULT
EDUCATION
INSTITUTION



Co-funded by
the European Union

KEYNOTE

We live in times of multiple crises: from recession to biodiversity collapse. Many of these issues were flagged long ago, but remained in the periphery of the public conversation. Now sustainability is mainstreamed in our public discourse. In his keynote, Arjen Wals looked at sustainability as a complex matter, one in which critical citizenship and critical media literacy are essential.



"Education needs to be more responsible and more responsive in today's climate. We need to consider new forms of learning in ALE: transformative, transgressive, and transdisciplinary. And we need to create ecologies of learning: where different types of learning complements each other, issues are framed critically, from knowledge to meaning and wisdom, also intergenerationally."

Arjen Wals

According to Arjen, education should help people grow, become resilient but a critical perspective on education is needed. Are we serving the economy or people and planet? How to get the transition away from consumer driven/extractive economy?

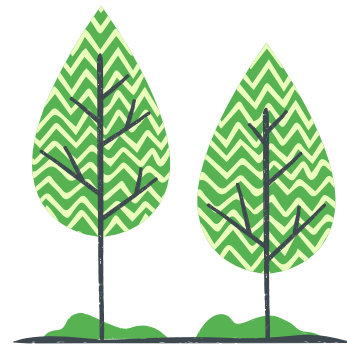
Doughnut economy provides a good model to live within planetary boundaries and the social foundations, some SGDs can be connected to this model.

Adult education and learning can be for: eco-qualification (skills, defining everything in terms of skills), eco-socialisation (taking care of oneself and the world), eco-subjection (becoming who I want to be).

Developing transformative skills is important; they include openness, perspective seeking, sense making, developing an inner compass and compassion.

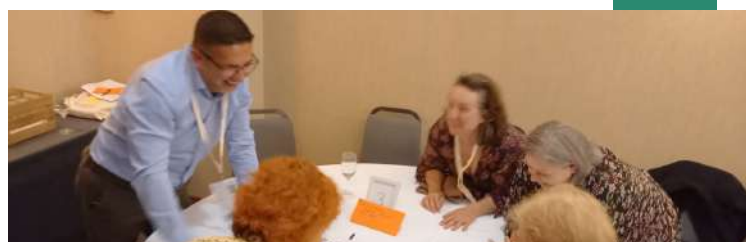
Is education up to these challenges? According to Arjen, education needs to be more responsible and more responsive; it needs to include new forms of learning: transformative, transgressive, transdisciplinary. Examples include citizen science, repair cafe, carbon conversations... Creating ecologies of learning is particularly important.

STRAND 1: LEARNING IN COMMUNITIES



What do learners say about their engagement in green transitions? How can adult learning organisations help create dialogue around the topic of the green transition, and support political engagement?

Strand 1: Learning in communities explored these topics through several thematic sessions, which included a learner roundtable, two parallel workshops, and an interactive world cafe.



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR
THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS

dante

USTANOVA ZA
OBRAZOVANJE
ODRASLIH | ADULT
EDUCATION
INSTITUTION



Co-funded by
the European Union

VOICES OF LEARNERS IN THE GREEN TRANSITION: ROUNDTABLE

What is it that makes learners want to get engaged in the green transition in their communities? The facilitator of the roundtable, **Dearbhail Lawless** from [AONTAS](#) and EAEA Executive Board invited four learners from across Europe to share their experiences: **Maria Hourigan** and **Margaret Browning** from [Roscommon Women's Network](#), Ireland; **Stelios Zografidis** from [ASTO](#), Greece, and **Klara Pavić**, a pharmacist and adult learner from Croatia.

"We got to act because we got tired of waiting people above us, people from the state to do

things that are important for us and our community," said Stelios, who is part of the "Let's change it" group at ASTO. The goal of the group is to make small but important changes in the city of Patras with a focus on sustainability.

The participants of the roundtable shared their diverse experiences with the green transition: from making more sustainable cosmetics to textile upcycling or greening communal spaces in the neighbourhoods.

"We need to trust people that come together on seemingly minor interests, because these interests when shared will create motivation and change," said Maria Hourigan.



"IF YOU CAN ENCOURAGE CREATIVITY IN ANY WAY, THIS IS ALWAYS WORTH IT FOR THE PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT AROUND THEM!"

MARGARET BROWNING



STRAND 1: PARALLEL WORKSHOPS

A. Green transition and democratic processes: getting everyone on board

Facilitated by Stefan Grasgruber-Kerl, Head of Campaigning at [Südwind](#), Austria and Katarina Stekić, associate at the [Center for the Promotion of Science](#), Serbia, the workshop invited participants to reflect on communication processes to reach citizens and on how active citizenship is related to the green transition.

During the session, participants also explored inspiring case studies, including the [Climate Capsule](#), a participatory art installation that has engaged citizens in Novi Sad, Serbia, in dialogue with a person from the future.

B. Adult learning as a space for political engagement

Adult learning can provide a space for political empowerment or even activism to address the climate crisis. In a workshop facilitated by Dearbhail Lawless from [AONTAS](#), participants shared their experience with political engagement and the relevance of the climate crisis to their communities.

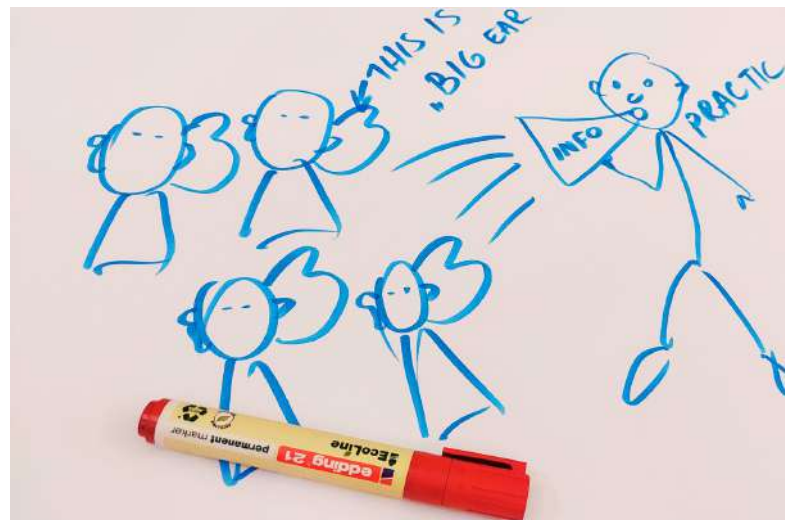
Looking at successful examples of activism, such as the case of Finnish citizens who objected to having a powerplant next to a beach, the group reflected on the political dimension of adult learning. "If you want sustainable development to become reality, you need to work towards a political movement," concluded Dearbhail.



STRAND 1: WORLD CAFE

During interactive sessions, participants were invited to use different methodologies to show how adult learning can support green transition in communities.

While building the perfect learning community with Lego blocks, participants shared their impression that it is green, transferable but also fragile. Through visualisations, they also reflected on the way ahead: from obstacles, to understanding, to change and evolution.



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR
THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS

dante

USTANOVA ZA
OBRAZOVANJE
ODRASLIH | ADULT
EDUCATION
INSTITUTION

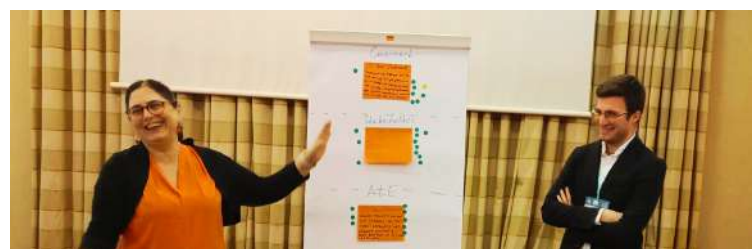


Co-funded by
the European Union

STRAND 2: STRATEGIES FOR A JUST GREEN TRANSITION

What policy environment can support a just green transition?
How political should we get in our work when addressing the multiple crises faced by European citizens?

In this strand, participants explored the more policy and strategy related aspects of adult learning and the green transition during a policy roundtable, two parallel workshops and a world cafe session.



JUST TRANSITION AS A POLITICAL ISSUE: ROUNDTABLE

A roundtable moderated by **Raffaella Kihrer**, EAEA's Deputy Secretary General and Head of Policy, looked at the (new) roles of adult learning and education against the background of multiple crises. The speakers included **Eeva Furman**, Secretary-General of the Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development under Prime Minister's Office, **Nevenka Bogataj**, Senior Researcher at the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education, and Doc. dr. sc. **Tihomir Žiljak**, vice-president of the Croatian Andragogy Society.

"This is a historical moment in which we need to change society, we emphasise how planetary and personal well being are connected," said Eeva Furman, sharing her experiences from the Finnish context.

The speakers explored the importance of focusing on local and bottom-up approaches, the key role of active citizenship and the political dimension of adult learning for green transition.

"A good scientist should also be a passionate activist," said Tihomir Žiljak.



"OPEN MINDSET AND
UNLEARNING ARE KEY
SKILLS FOR THE
GREEN TRANSITION."

EEVA FURMAN



STRAND 2: PARALLEL WORKSHOPS

A. Building green partnerships

During the workshop facilitated by Ester Hakobyan, [DVV International Armenia](#) and Davide Muraro, EAEA, participants explored the role of governments, civil society actors and the private sector in the green transition. They debated several hypotheses and assumptions related to the climate crisis, biodiversity loss and pollution, also from the perspective of the Global South and Eastern Europe.

In the second part of the workshop, participants worked on case studies based on three scenarios with actors having different levels of engagement and understanding of climate issues,

and were tasked with developing strategies for green partnerships. Debating diverse approaches, participants put forward relevant insights and ideas on the type, benefits, risks and characteristics of partnerships on environmental issues.

B. Developing a green skills strategy

The workshop, facilitated by Alex Stevenson from [Learning and Work Institute](#), UK, invited participants to explore how adult learning providers can embed green skills and environmental capabilities in their curricula.



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR
THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS

dante

USTANOVA ZA
OBRAZOVANJE
ODRASLIH | ADULT
EDUCATION
INSTITUTION



Co-funded by
the European Union

KEY IDEAS FOR GREEN SKILLS STRATEGIES

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT:

- Needs analysis needed! Different formats possible - surveys, questionnaires, focus groups... with learners and employers
- Embedding green skills into existing programmes should be encouraged
- Holistic approach needed

IDEAS FOR NEW CURRICULA:

- Courses on sustainable cooking
- Ways of (re)storing sustainable energy sources
- Sharing best practices from the local level

OUTREACH:

- Diverse target groups:
 - Community education centres
 - Adult educators / centres
 - Local / regional policymakers
 - Schools, libraries
 - Civil society organisations
- Should focus on lowering barriers
- Need for social media campaigns

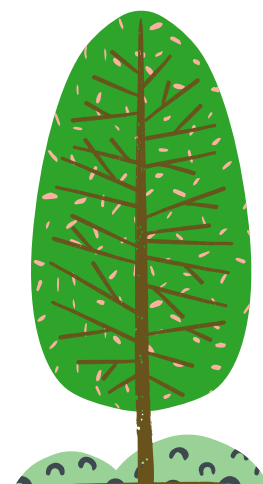
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

- Spaces for knowledge sharing should be free and accessible
- Peer learning / co-learning should be encouraged
- Should be experiential and interactive

During the workshop, Alex introduced L&W's **New Futures programme**, which is exploring what support people need to retrain and change careers. L&W surveyed a representative sample of approximately 5,000 adults in the UK to understand their awareness of and interest in green skills for work.

According to the results of L&W's research, adults face multiple barriers to developing green skills, they do not know which green skills employers need, and do not feel inspired to develop green skills to progress their careers.

After reflecting on whether the results would be similar in their contexts, participants were invited to take the first steps towards developing a green skills strategy, taking into account several considerations: funding, outreach, curriculum development and professional development.

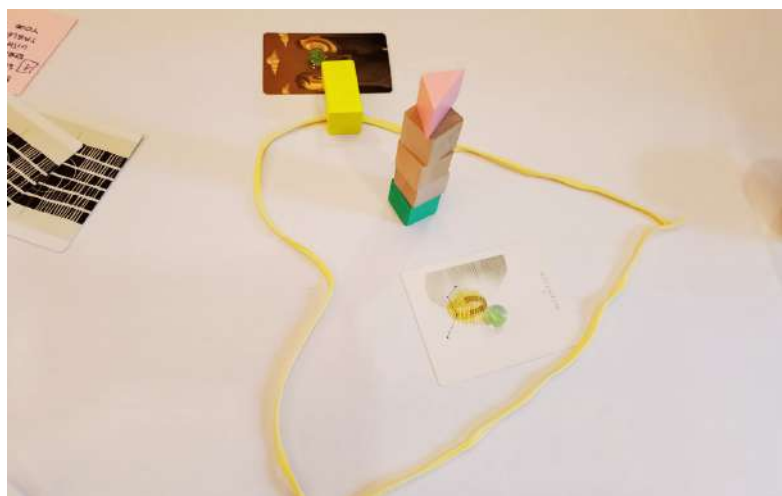




STRAND 2: WORLD CAFE

Strategies for ALE and the green transition take a long time to build and sometimes collapse as quickly as a card house when the political environment changes, found the participants of the interactive session on strategies for a just green transition.

According to the participants, adult learning strategies need to include the communities, the providers, the learners, the educators (and trade unions!), and all other stakeholders to have robust foundations.



GOING FORWARD: PANEL DISCUSSION

The final panel discussion in the plenary was facilitated by **Gustav Fridolin**, EAEA's Executive Board member, adult educator and former Minister of Education of Sweden. Together with the speakers and the event participants, Gustav looked at how adult learning organisations across Europe can support the green transition, and what should be the next steps for EAEA and its members.

The speakers included **Anna Roditi**, learner and educator from ASTO, Greece, **Nevenka Bogataj**, researcher and coordinator of study circles from the Slovenian Institute for Adult Learning, and EAEA's **Gina Ebner**.



Don't forget that we are not alone!

— ANNA RODITI, LEARNER AND EDUCATOR FROM ASTO, GREECE

"I was wondering if what we are doing is enough before coming here and what is our place here. During the day I realised that we are here because we started doing what you are all saying that we should be taking action for," said Anna, reflecting on the different activities that her organisation is doing: from cleaning up beaches to acting against deforestation.



The speakers agreed that we should aim at promoting the creation and funding of spaces that can be used freely by learners. In our work as adult learning professionals, we should also raise awareness of the fact that skills are not only linked to professional development but are integral parts of our lives.

"Good practices for the green transition are practices that relate to people's experience and life," said Nevenka, adding that adult education has a strong role to play in the necessary upcoming changes.

When asked how small green initiatives can be made bigger, Gina underlined the power of adult learning at different levels: by bringing them to the forefront and multiplying them through educators and learners. She also underscored the importance of voting in the European elections.

"The EAEA is a dynamic community and we should use it as that. A platform that brings us together and has a voice for change. Don't forget to use EAEA in your work!," concluded Gustav.



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR
THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS



USTANOVA ZA
OBRAZOVANJE
ODRASLIH | ADULT
EDUCATION
INSTITUTION



Co-funded by
the European Union



CONCLUSIONS

The intense discussions during the events have shown the need for a continued conversation on the topic of green transition and adult learning. Stay tuned for the Grundtvig Award publication, to be released in the autumn, and our paper on the green transition, which will be ready later this year!



EAEA would like to thank our host Dante, our moderators and presenters for their contributions and all of you for your active participation!



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR
THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS



USTANOVA ZA
OBRAZOVANJE
ODRASLIH | ADULT
EDUCATION
INSTITUTION



Co-funded by
the European Union