



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS & ROADMAP



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CREDITS

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1 INTRODUCTION

This document is the D4.1 Policy recommendations and a road map to develop sustainable communities as part of the Erasmus+ SMALEI project. The project aims not only to contribute to the development of green competencies and methodologies for Adult Learning and Education (ALE) educators and staff but also to empower ALE institutions as agents of change for their learners, staff, communities, and partners belonging to sector-specific organisations and industry. Over time, this will foster systematic behavioural changes at various levels, significantly contributing to the EU's environmental sustainability goals.

A fully sustainable future hinges on the emergence of a culture driven by engaged and informed citizens committed to creating a green, safe, and economically prosperous society. This can only be achieved through a profound and reflexive learning process that permeates all educational and lifelong learning domains.

Through this document's policy recommendations and roadmap for developing sustainable communities, policymakers at the local, regional, national, and European levels are encouraged to support ALE institutions in designing and implementing sustainable practices. They are also invited to consider incorporating these practices into broader sustainability policies.



2 ALIGNING WITH SUSTAINABILITY PRIORITIES

The current policy recommendations are anchored in the EU's sustainability priorities. The European Green Deal and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provide key frameworks for advancing global and regional sustainability. The European Green Deal aims to achieve climate neutrality in the EU by 2050, promoting economic growth, environmental protection, and social equity. It highlights the importance of education and lifelong learning in equipping citizens with the skills needed to address climate change and adopt sustainable practices.

Similarly, the 2030 Agenda, with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), emphasizes the need for inclusive education, particularly through SDG 4, which promotes lifelong learning for all.

These actions, such as the Council Recommendation on Learning for the Green Transition and Sustainable Development, and the European competence framework on sustainability among others, are part of the Green education focus topics for the Member States.

The European Education Area describes this focus area as: *"Encouraging the education and training sector to take action to contribute to the green transition and to strengthen the sustainability competences of all learners is one of the EU's top priorities."* (<https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics>)

As part of the Learning for green transition and sustainable development, the European Commission supports EU Member States in their efforts to:

- Equip learners and educators with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for a greener and more sustainable economy and society.
- Help education and training institutions to integrate sustainability into teaching and learning and across all aspects of their operations.
- Create a shared understanding of the deep and transformative changes needed in education and training for sustainability and the green transition.

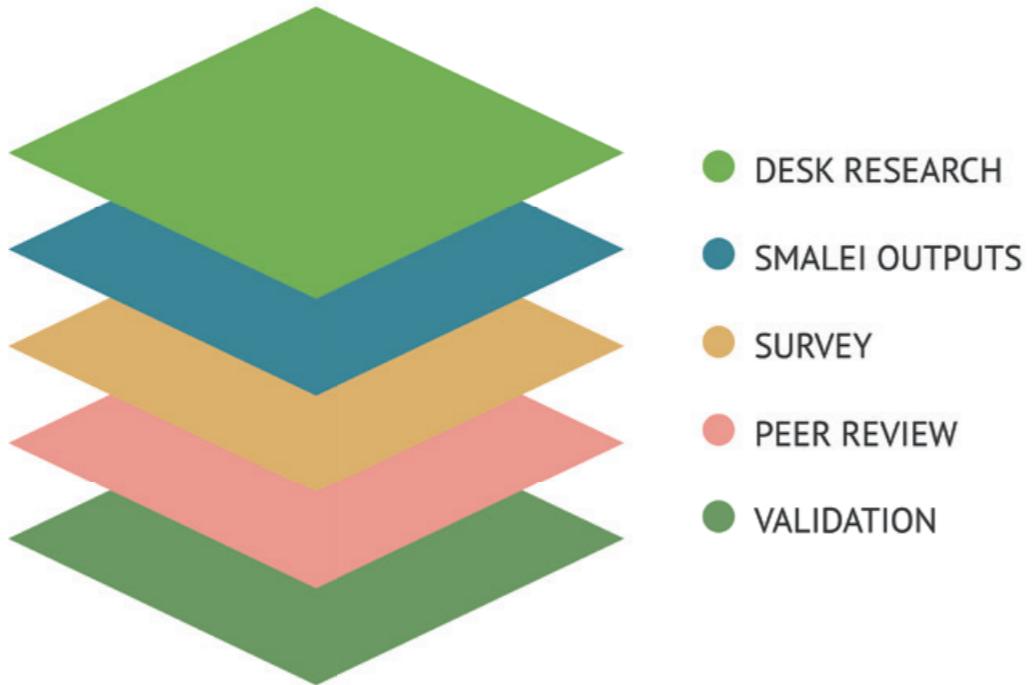
Adult Learning and Education are central to this effort, enabling individuals from diverse backgrounds to drive change in their communities by acquiring green skills and fostering sustainable behaviours to promote broader goals of climate neutrality, social inclusion, and economic resilience.

In summary, adult education is a vital tool for empowering individuals and communities to respond effectively to environmental challenges, contributing to the success of both the European Green Deal and the 2030 Agenda.

3 METHODOLOGY FOR POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

To draft a comprehensive roadmap for building the sustainability capacity of ALE institutions, as well as policy recommendations for stakeholders operating at various geographical levels—European, national, regional, and local, five steps were followed: 1) Desk Research 2) SMALEI Output analysis 3) Consultation Survey 4) Peer-review 5) Validation seminar.

By collecting the success factors from the best practices, analyzing the learning points from pilot activities, and considering the results of an ad-hoc consultation survey, a draft roadmap was prepared, and feedback was gathered to ensure alignment between the project partners' perspectives and the needs of the final beneficiaries. A validation seminar, involving stakeholders from across Europe, then provided additional suggestions and insights.



3.1. Desk research

The first step involved reviewing existing literature, reports, and data sources relevant to the topic, including policies on greening and education. This stage allows us to gather foundational information, identify gaps, and establish a baseline understanding to inform the next steps of our research.

Global, European, and Regional authorities have developed interesting material to improve the sustainability of several thematic areas, including educational areas.

As part of the desk research conducted to identify the need for developing sustainability in adult learning organizations, several key documents were analyzed.

The **GreenComp framework** (Bianchi, Pisiotis, Cabrera Giraldez, 2022) provided a comprehensive overview of the sustainability competencies essential for educators and learners.

The **Proposal for a Council Recommendation on Learning for the Green Transition and Sustainable Development** emphasized the need to align educational policies with sustainability goals, underscoring the importance of lifelong learning in achieving the green transition.

UNESCO's Education for Sustainable Development: A Road Map further highlighted strategies to integrate sustainability into educational systems, offering a global perspective on the role of adult education in fostering sustainable behaviors. The ESD for 2030 framework builds on previous initiatives, focusing on five key action areas: integrating ESD into policies, promoting a whole-institution approach in education settings, empowering educators with sustainability competencies, recognizing youth as critical actors, and fostering local actions for transformative change.

The **European Agenda for Adult Learning** outlines strategies that prioritize sustainable practices in adult education, ensuring that learners are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to address environmental challenges.

Furthermore, the Member States which are responsible for their education and training systems, have a **Lifelong Learning Strategy** which emphasizes the integration of sustainability into lifelong learning frameworks, highlighting the importance of continuous education in fostering a sustainable future.

Towards a Green and Digital Future study examines how the European Union can ensure that the green and the digital transitions mutually reinforce each other and emphasises the need to offer upskilling opportunities in the labor force and all citizens to support and expedite twin transitions.

Moreover, the **European Skills Agenda for Sustainable Competitiveness, Social Fairness, and Resilience** (European Commission, 2020) highlights the importance of helping adults develop the skills needed to navigate and succeed in green and digital transitions.

Together, these documents underscore the need for ALE organizations to lead the way in cultivating sustainability and empowering individuals to contribute effectively to their communities and the planet.

3.2. Outputs developed in SMALEI project

Following the desk research, the material developed throughout the SMALEI project, the Sustainability Matrix for self-assessment, its accompanying workbook, the best practice bank, piloting experiences, and case reports were reviewed. The project outputs were developed thanks to heavy consultation among the transnational project partners, and as such are the result of co-creation and peer review.

SMALEI Matrix. Key Areas for Action in ALE Institutions

The SMALEI matrix has addressed five areas to work on for developing sustainability in ALE institutions. They are identified as strategic for sustainability as they focus on the need of institutions and stakeholders to self-assess their current status quo and progress towards more forward-looking practices and policies. The five key areas include:

- Environmental sustainability of the institution
- Green skills of trainers and staff
- Engagement of learners
- Awareness-raising of citizens
- Partnerships for sustainability

Each area is further divided into subareas, which are detailed with various aspects.

To develop the sustainability Matrix, SMALEI project partners conducted a blend of desk research and fieldwork to compile relevant documents, best practices, and expert input for the project's target audiences. We actively contributed to a database of experts, held partner meetings and working group sessions to define key areas and subareas, and organized two focus groups per partner to gather direct feedback (e.g. one with teachers and one with potential experts). Additionally, online discussions were held to determine the best visual presentation for the Matrix on the project website.

Good Practices. Policy recommendations require careful consideration of best practices that can ensure the recommendations are actionable, relevant, and impactful. Best practices are a very useful tool to create robust recommendations. In this sense, success factors have been extrapolated from the best practices collected to effectively address the challenges of sustainability and foster a culture of continuous improvement and innovation in education and other sectors.

Workbook and piloting. The piloting phase of the SMALEI project provided valuable information for evaluating the effectiveness of the implemented strategies. This phase highlighted the successes and relevance of the different areas of the SMALEI matrix in ALE institutions, which in turn highlighted the proposed criteria for sustainability in these institutions. By analyzing feedback from the piloting phase, SMALEI project partners have a clear view of the relevance of different sustainable recommendations for improvement in ALE institutions which are used to inform these policy recommendations.

All resources developed are accessible at smalei.eu/resources.

3.3. Consultation Survey

In this phase, a consultation survey (Annex II) was developed and distributed to gather the opinions of those working in ALE institutions and other relevant stakeholders. The survey targeted key stakeholders, practitioners, and experts in adult education. The survey aims to collect data, providing insights into the current state, perceptions, and experiences that will help shape the development of our recommendations and roadmap.

The survey was open from the 15th of June until the end of September 2024. A total of 61 responses have been collected from 12 countries and 48 organizations. Over half of the total responses have been provided by the management team of ALE institutions (director and project coordinator), while one-third come from teachers and trainers. Furthermore, ten percent of the responses are from education sector policymakers.

The diversity of respondents (coming from different countries, roles, and centers) helps provide a more comprehensive view of what is happening not only at the local level but also gives us an image of the regional and European context.



3.4. Peer review

Once preliminary policy recommendations were gathered, partner institutions peer-reviewed them. This step ensures the relevance, accuracy, and reliability of the research outputs by incorporating feedback and recommendations from experienced professionals in the field.

Peer review discussions have played a crucial role in refining the first drafts of both the roadmap and the policy recommendations. These discussions have provided valuable feedback, helping to ensure that the proposed strategies are well-aligned with the diverse perspectives of all partners involved. By fostering an open dialogue, the review process has allowed for the identification of potential gaps, areas for improvement, and innovative ideas that could enhance the overall framework. Furthermore, the input gathered through these discussions has been instrumental in aligning the roadmap and policy recommendations with the actual needs and priorities of the final beneficiaries (ALE institutions), ensuring that the final output is both **relevant and actionable**. This collaborative approach not only strengthens the coherence of the document but also ensures that the perspectives of all stakeholders are fully integrated, increasing the likelihood of successful implementation and positive long-term impact.

3.5. Validation Seminar

In the final stage, a validation seminar was conducted, utilizing pilot testing and stakeholder consultations to refine and confirm the policy recommendations. This step is essential for ensuring that the proposed solutions are practical, effective, and aligned with the needs of the target audience.

The validation seminar was organised by the European Association of Regional and Local Authorities for Lifelong Learning (EARLALL) to collect further suggestions and insights from stakeholders from all over Europe.

The draft of the policy recommendation and roadmap document was validated on November 13, 2024, during the "Validation Seminar for SMALEI Policy Recommendations." This blended meeting, organized by EARLALL, took place in Barcelona.

This hybrid event brought together 33 participants, including policymakers, political representatives, and lifelong learning experts from across European regions. Countries represented included Croatia, Spain, France, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Sweden, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, Germany, Norway, and Italy. The seminar was facilitated by the EARLALL Secretariat in partnership with the SMALEI project partner VHS Baden-Württemberg.

The seminar successfully achieved its objectives, with all proposed recommendations validated. Participants stressed the importance of collaboration, clear definitions, and addressing both green and digital transitions. Feedback will guide the refinement of SMALEI's policy recommendations, ensuring their relevance and impact in promoting sustainability within ALE institutions and beyond.

4 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AND ROAD MAP

As a result of the five-step methodology outlined above, the SMALEI partnership has created a bottom-up proposal for policy for improving sustainability in ALE institutions from an ALE education perspective. The desk research and additional consultations have created a roadmap across six strategic areas, identifying key stakeholders and advocating for a set of policy recommendations.

The intention is to ensure that, regardless of existing constraints, practical measures can be adopted at various levels of the education system, involving teachers, learners, educational institutions, and government ministries.

These policy recommendations are aligned with current EU's sustainability priorities and aim to help their implementation to enhance sustainability within Adult Learning and Education throughout Europe.

In this recommendation "green" and "sustainable" terms appear frequently. In the context of sustainability, both terms represent broad concepts that encompass a wide range of practices and principles. While "green" often emphasizes environmental-friendly actions and technologies, "sustainable" takes a more holistic approach, integrating environmental, social, and economic dimensions to ensure a balanced and enduring approach to development. In this document, these terms are consistently aligned with the current sustainability priorities outlined in the key documents referenced in the methodology section.

The SMALEI partnership invites other education sectors to undertake the same bottom-up exercise to bring their approach to sustainability issues to the attention of policymakers and to achieve a broader perspective in future education policies.



A SUSTAINABILITY ROAD MAP FOR ADULT LEARNING EDUCATION

STRATEGIC AREAS



Aligning policies with the green transition

A policy strategy should be aligned with the green transition to strengthen the education system for sustainability through inclusive learning opportunities and cross-sector collaboration.

Transforming ALE Institutions

Align institutions should define sustainability values to make them leaders in sustainability within their community. Engage teachers and learners to become active change-makers.

Equipping teachers for sustainability

Every educator, regardless of discipline, should play a role in sustainability education. Integrating sustainable development into teacher training ensures educators' competencies in this area.

Engagement and empowering learners

Learners should be empowered to adopt sustainable lifestyles and responsible consumption and encouraged to participate in decision-making processes within their communities, as current and future drivers of the green transition.

ALE Institutions: social activators of sustainability

ALE institutions should be key drivers of sustainability, which means encouraging local participation in sustainability efforts and working with movements and initiatives to increase community engagement.

Creating alliances for sustainability

ALE institutions should act as key connectors among stakeholders, fostering networks to share best practices and create collaborative learning environments for sustainability.

4.1. Aligning policies with green transition

Policy-makers in Adult Education Learning are crucial in facilitating the significant global changes required for sustainable development today. They play a key role in creating the necessary conditions to successfully scale up sustainable practices within adult learning institutions, communities, and other environments where adults continue to learn. Policy support is essential across formal, non-formal, and informal adult education and in building connections between these sectors. Furthermore, advancing policies that support green transition is not only relevant to adult education but also extends to all sectors engaged in sustainable development initiatives.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

- Policymakers from the Education sector
- Policymakers from the Environmental sector
- ALE institutions
- Civil society organizations
- Academic institutions
- Private sector companies

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Strengthen Adult Learning and Education for Green Transition: Enhance efforts to ensure all learners, regardless of background, have access to high-quality, inclusive education on sustainability, climate change, and biodiversity, considering social, economic, and environmental factors.
- 2 Prioritize Adult Learning and Education for Sustainable Development: Make education for the green transition a top priority in policies and programs to enable the education sector to contribute effectively to sustainability efforts. Collaboration between education and other sectors is key.
- 3 Align Adult Learning and Education strategies and plans with the green transition and sustainable development, collaborating closely with relevant stakeholders.
- 4 Provide diverse learning opportunities in Adult Learning and Education: Offer a variety of formal, non-formal, and informal learning opportunities.
- 5 Facilitate the implementation of national strategies and policies related to education for sustainable development through effective follow-up and monitoring mechanisms for quality assurance. Invest in research to assess the impact and guide future policies. Provide ALE institutions with methods and tools to assess their sustainability and implement actions to improve it.
- 6 Provide training on sustainable and green resources, equipment, and infrastructure—such as buildings and technology—to create healthy, safe, inclusive, creative, and resilient learning environments.

- 7 Raise awareness about the benefits and opportunities of education for the green transition and sustainable development. Support both formal and non-formal educational institutions to make climate change, environmental protection, biodiversity, and sustainability relevant to learners' everyday lives, thereby fostering a culture of sustainability.
- 8 Collaborate closely with stakeholders to develop and support curricula and frameworks that allow learners to cultivate sustainability competencies.
- 9 Promote cooperation, mentorship and peer learning and support through European frameworks.



4.2. Transforming ALE institutions

To inspire teachers and learners to become change-makers equipped with the knowledge, resources, motivation, and courage to drive transformative action for sustainable development, educational institutions must transform themselves. Every aspect of the institution should align with sustainability principles, ensuring that the content and teaching methods are supported by sustainable facility management and decision-making processes. This whole-institution approach to sustainability principles creates learning environments where teachers and students not only learn sustainable practices but also experience them in their daily lives.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

- Policymakers from the Education sector
- Policymakers from the Environmental sector
- ALE institutions leaders
- ALE institutions: teachers, learners, and administrative staff
- Civil Society organizations
- Private sector Companies

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Provide guidelines to implement sustainability strategies and encourage institutions to adapt the organizational structure and assess its impact.
- 2 Provide ALE institution management team the opportunity to develop their leadership in sustainability reinforcing their attitude in favor of green transition to spread their commitment among all the staff and learners. Train ALE institution leaders/managers to be real leaders for sustainability.
- 3 Invest in and provide sustainable and green resources, equipment, and infrastructure—such as buildings, learning spaces, and technology—to create healthy, safe, inclusive, creative, and resilient learning environments following green procurement criteria.
- 4 Foster teachers and staff awareness regarding ecological practices in day-to-day life (circular economy, mobility, use of energy and water...).
- 5 Promote collaboration with external stakeholders (local communities, environmental associations).
- 6 Support the scaling up of effective practices and create a framework to share the expertise.

IMPLEMENTATION OF SUSTAINABILITY GUIDELINES FOR THE INSTITUTION

49 out of 61 respondents of the consultation survey agree or slightly agree that ALE institutions are implementing some sustainability guidelines.



4.3. Equipping teachers for sustainability

Educators play a crucial role in guiding learners toward sustainable lifestyles in an era where information is readily accessible and their responsibilities are rapidly evolving. In various educational settings, educators can assist learners in navigating the complex decisions associated with sustainable development while inspiring them to initiate personal and societal transformation. To effectively guide and empower learners, educators themselves must be equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills, values, and behaviours for this transition. This encompasses a comprehensive understanding of the environmental challenges as well as insight into how transformative actions take place and transformative pedagogical approaches that can facilitate these changes.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

- Policymakers from the Education sector
- ALE institutions leaders
- ALE institutions: teachers and administrative staff
- Civil Society organizations
- Private sector Companies

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Recognize that every educator, regardless of their discipline or educational sector, serves as a sustainability educator. Foster their awareness regarding the green transition.
- 2 Promote the inclusion of the green transition and sustainable development in initial teacher and trainer education programs, as well as in continuing professional development courses. This integration should align with teacher professional standards and frameworks to enhance educators' sustainability competencies.
- 3 Enhance teaching and learning for the green transition by providing the necessary infrastructure, digital tools, and resources, while also developing educators' digital competencies.
- 4 Provide educators with the time and resources necessary to adopt pedagogies that promote interdisciplinary teaching and foster socio-emotional learning to integrate sustainability practices in daily work.
- 5 Create and distribute learning resources (best practices, activities,..) to assist educators including assessment strategies. Promote mentorship, peer learning and collaboration among the staff and sharing culture with staff exchanges, celebration events...

IMPLEMENTATION OF SUSTAINABILITY GUIDELINES FOR TEACHER AND STAFF

44 out of 61 respondents of the consultation survey agree or slightly agree that ALE institutions are implementing guidelines to train teachers/trainers/staff in green skills.



4.4. Engagement and empowering learners

Adult education organizations foster innovative green curricula and support sustainability within learning communities. They empower learners to take ownership of their educational journeys and engage in the green transition. Through hands-on learning and collaboration, these institutions equip participants with the skills and motivation needed to contribute to a sustainable future.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

- Policymakers from the Education sector
- ALE institutions leaders
- ALE institutions: teachers and administrative staff
- Civil Society organizations
- Private sector Companies

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Integrating sustainability into Adult Learning and Education curricula, assessment methods, and initial and ongoing professional development of learners.
- 2 Provide Diverse Learning Opportunities based on sustainability in Adult Learning and Education. Develop a variety of formal, non-formal, and informal learning opportunities in sustainability.
- 3 Empower learners cultivating knowledge, skills, and attitudes to adopt sustainable lifestyles and responsible consumption patterns and contribute to the collective transformation of society as a driver of green transition developing critical thinking, entrepreneurship, and collective ownership.
- 4 Empower learners to actively engage in decision-making processes at their institutions and within their broader communities for sharing experiences to raise awareness among the citizens. Empower them as drivers of green transition and sustainability.
- 5 Provide an appropriate and diverse learning environment where transformative and interdisciplinary approaches can be developed to reinforce and facilitate their engagement in sustainability.

IMPLEMENTATION OF SUSTAINABILITY GUIDELINES TO ENGAGE LEARNERS IN SUSTAINABILITY

47 out of 61 respondents of the consultation survey agree or slightly agree that ALE institutions are implementing guidelines to engage learners in sustainability



4.5. ALE institutions as social activators of sustainability

Society will face the repercussions of unsustainable development, placing their present and future at risk. In response, individuals are increasingly vocal and proactive, demanding immediate and decisive action from global leaders, especially concerning the climate crisis. They envision and propose innovative solutions to sustainability challenges. Additionally, their evolving consumption patterns will greatly influence their countries' sustainability trajectories. Therefore, empowering and mobilizing people is essential for a societal-wide green transition.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

- Policymakers from the Education sector
- Local and Regional public authorities
- ALE institutions leaders
- ALE institutions: teachers, learners, and administrative staff
- Civil Society organizations
- Private sector Companies
- Media
- All people in the local community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Position ALE institutions as key drivers of sustainability, not only within their own organizations but also within their broader communities.
- 2 Provide ALE institutions with funding and networks for developing initiatives to increase awareness of sustainability in their communities.
- 3 Offer ALE institutions opportunities to strengthen their communication strategies and amplify their message in advocating for a more sustainable society.
- 4 Raise awareness about the benefits and opportunities of education for the green transition and sustainable development. Support formal and non-formal educational institutions to foster a culture of sustainability.

IMPLEMENTATION OF SUSTAINABILITY GUIDELINES TO RAISE PEOPLE'S AWARENESS AND INVOLVEMENT IN SUSTAINABILITY

50 out of 61 respondents of the consultation survey agree or slightly agree that ALE institutions are implementing guidelines to raise people's awareness and involvement in sustainability



4.6. Creating alliances for sustainability

Meaningful change and transformative actions for sustainable development are most likely to occur within communities. It is at this level, in their everyday lives, that people make decisions and take actions that promote sustainable development. Fostering active cooperation between educational institutions and communities is essential to ensure that the most current knowledge and practices for sustainable development are leveraged to further local goals.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

- Policymakers from the Education sector
- Policymakers from the Environmental sector
- Local and Regional public authorities
- ALE institutions
- Civil Society organizations
- Private sector Companies

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Build networks and promote collaboration, position ALE institutions as key connectors among stakeholders in the green transition. Encourage the creation of networks to share best practices and develop collaborative learning spaces that foster sustainability efforts.
- 2 Engage in decision-making and partnerships, and support ALE institutions in participating in local, regional, and national decision-making forums. Promote alliances with local authorities and diverse stakeholders to strengthen cooperation on sustainability initiatives.
- 3 Develop collaborative curricula for sustainability. Work with stakeholders to create curricula that develop sustainability competencies, incorporating local examples and intergenerational learning. This approach ensures relevance and demonstrates the local impact of climate change and sustainability efforts.

IMPLEMENTATION OF SUSTAINABILITY GUIDELINES TO BUILD NETWORK AND PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

40 out of 61 respondents of the consultation survey agree or slightly agree that ALE institutions are implementing guidelines build networks and partnerships for sustainability



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6 ANEXES

Annex 1: Consultation Survey results

Annex 2: SMALEI_Survey on Challenges in Adult Learning Education Institutions - Google Forms.pdf

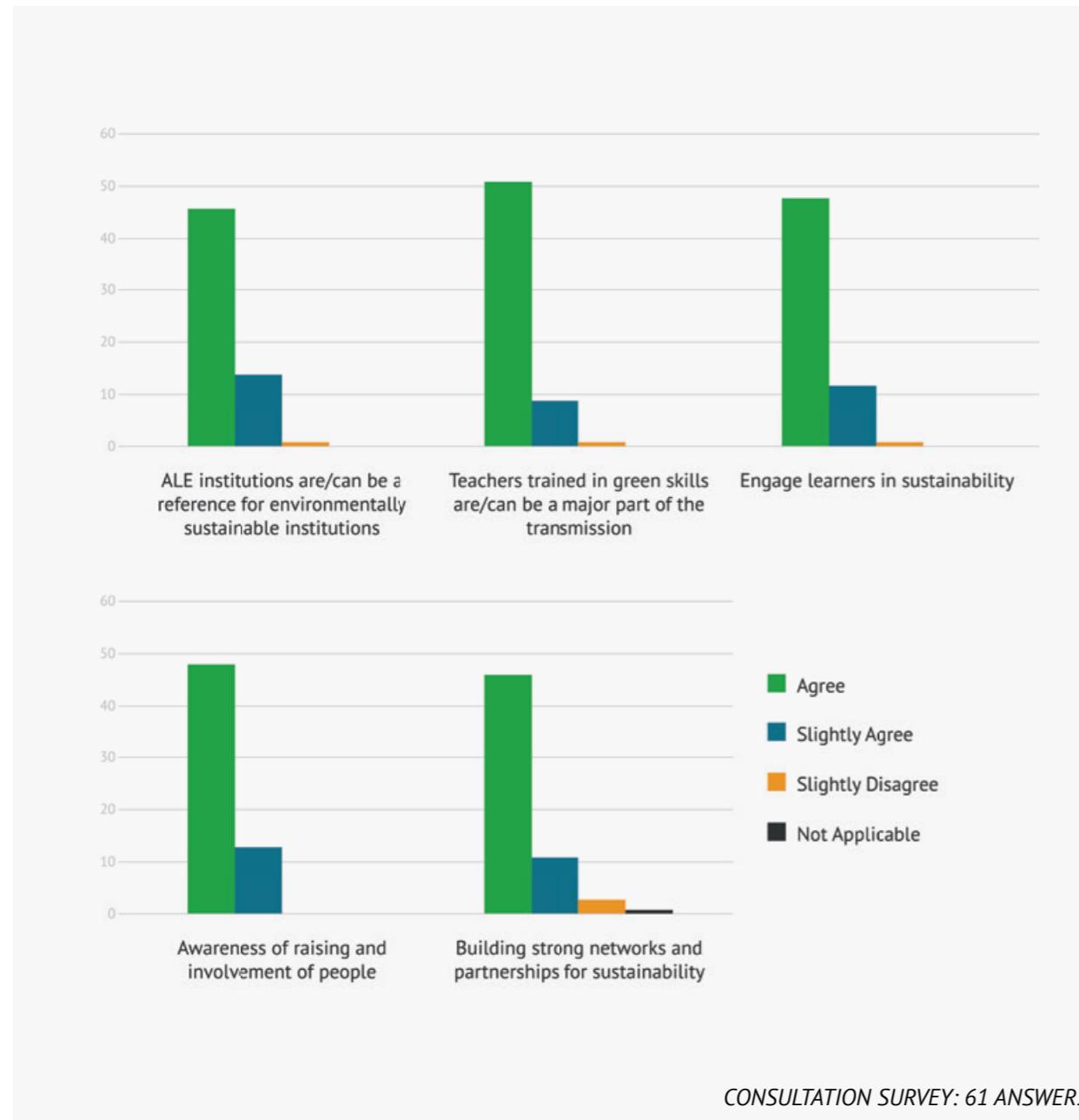
Annex 3: Validation seminar and results

Annex 1: Consultation Survey results



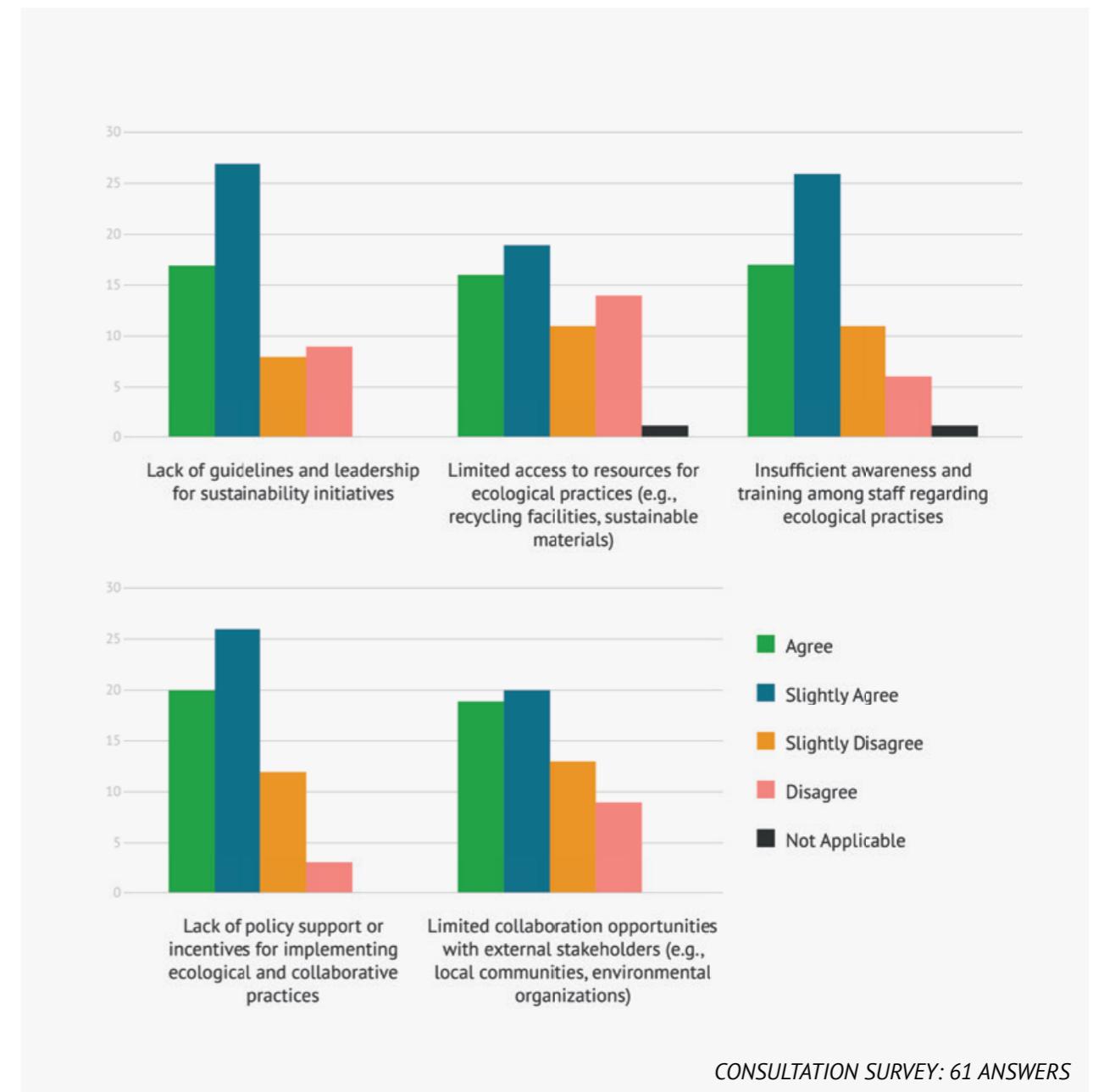
ARE ALE INSTITUTIONS IMPORTANT FOR SUSTAINABILITY?

To what extent do you agree that ALE Institutions are important for sustainability.....



BARRIERS TO OVERCOME

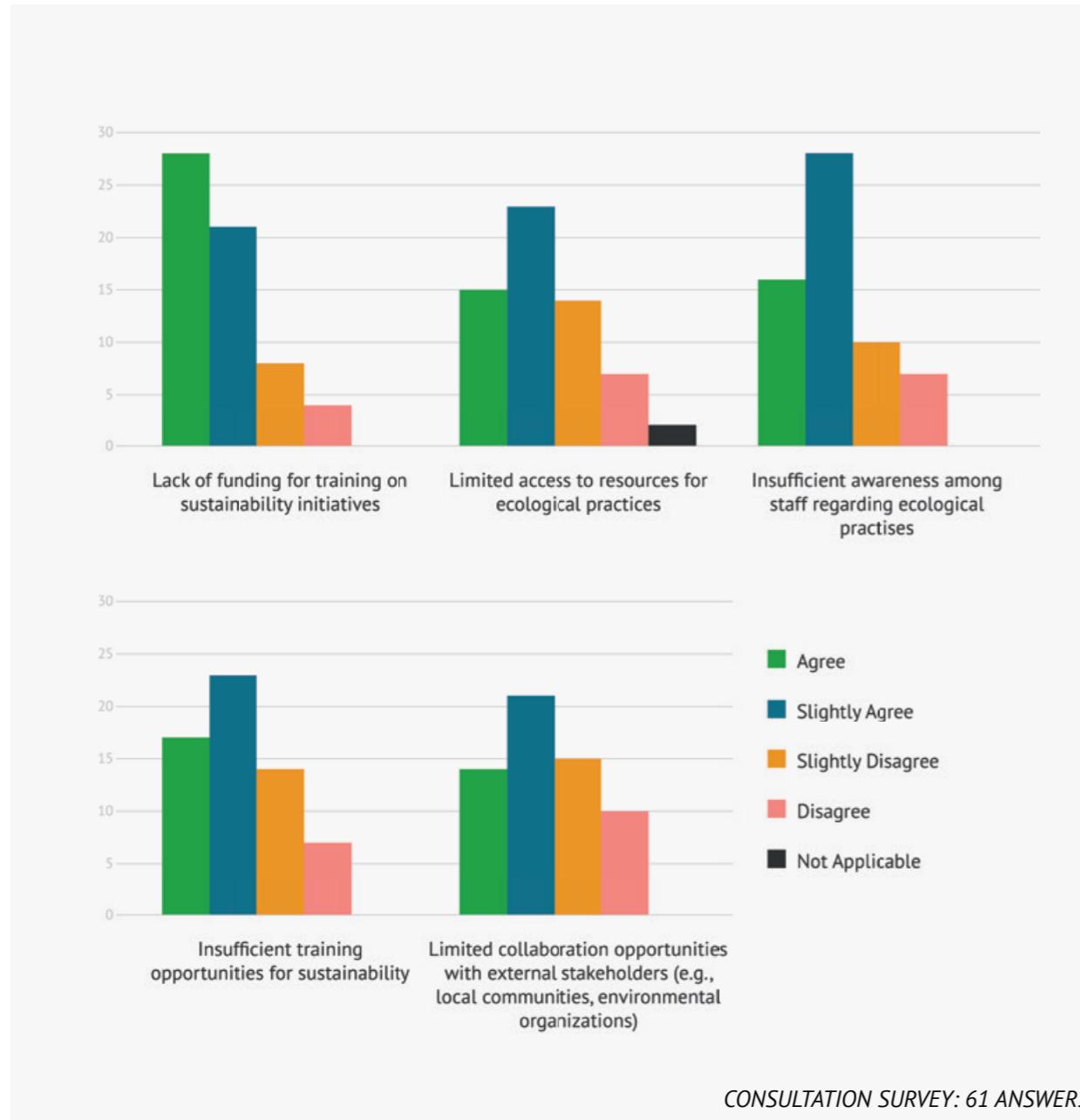
To what extent do you agree with the relevance of the following barriers that your ALE institution must overcome to **enable circular and environmentally friendly use of resources?**





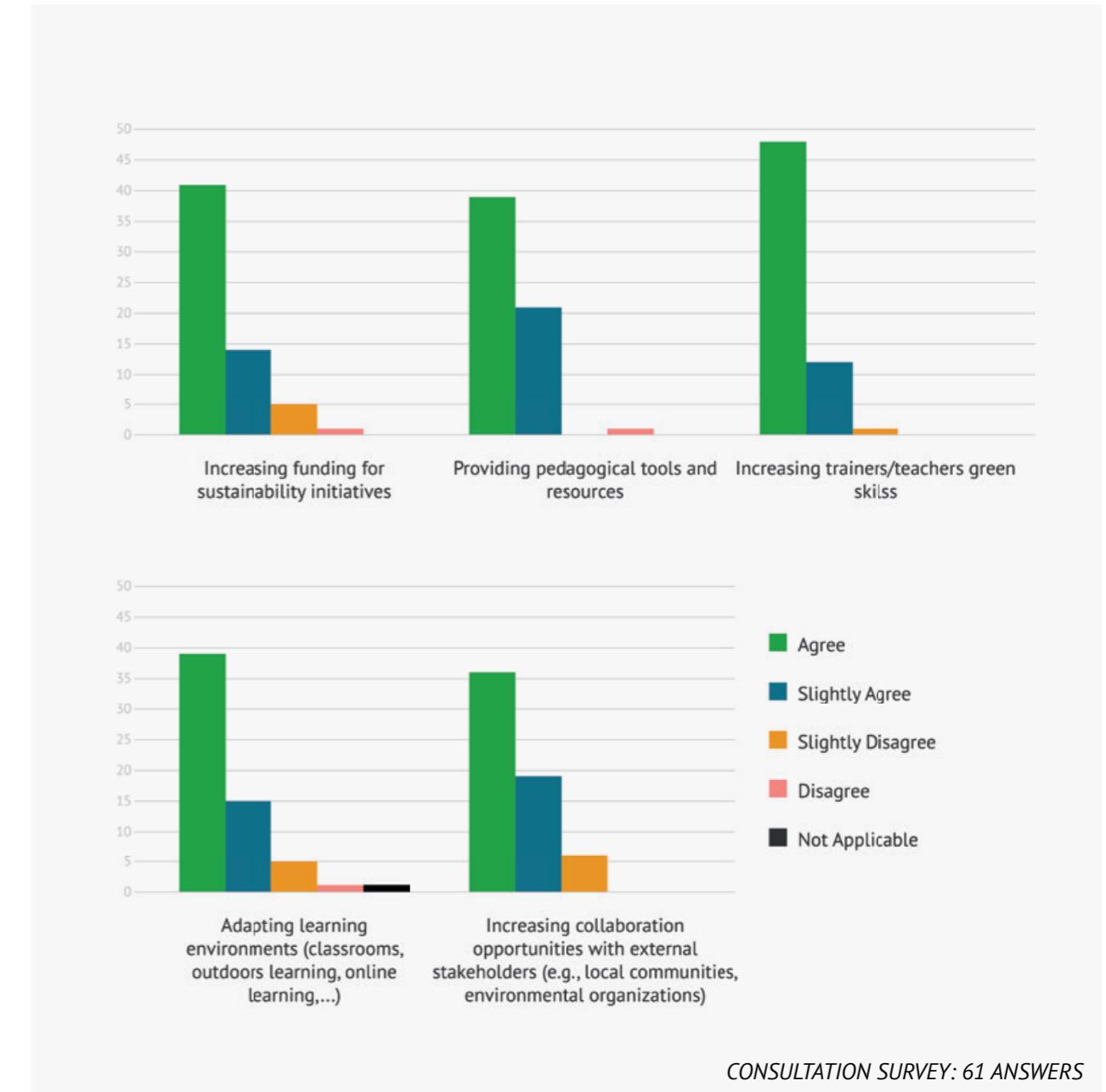
BARRIERS TO OVERCOME

To what extent do you agree with the relevance of the following barriers that your ALE institution must overcome to **promote teachers and staff green skills and support staff and trainers to take action in their daily work?**



METHODS TO OVERCOME BARRIERS

To what extent do you agree with the following methods for ALE institutions to overcome barriers to creating and sharing innovative green curricula, and supporting sustainability in their learning communities?



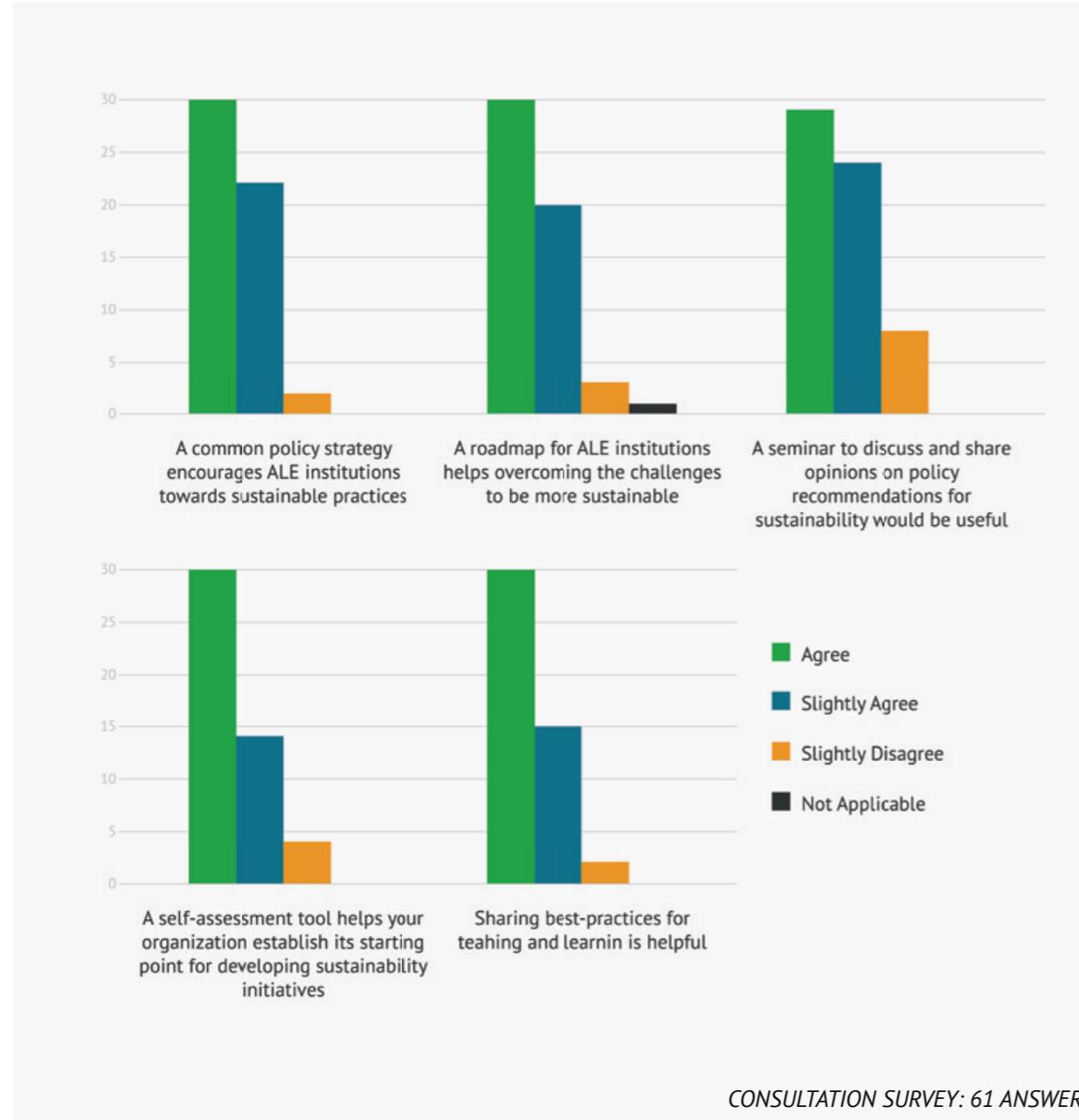


METHODS TO OVERCOME BARRIERS

To what extent do you agree with the following methods for ALE institutions to overcome barriers to creating and sharing innovative green curricula, and supporting sustainability in their learning communities?

Annex 2: SMALEI Survey on Challenges in Adult Learning Education Institutions

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1kFBYHoLpVGGtct78CWcdXBzELvND48ZC/view?usp=drive_link



Annex 3: Validation seminar and results

Date: 13 November 2024

Location: Barcelona and online

EARLALL organised the “Validation Seminar for SMALEI Policy Recommendations” on 13 November 2024. The hybrid event brought together 33 participants, including policymakers, political representatives, and lifelong learning experts from across European regions. Countries represented included Croatia, Spain, France, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Sweden, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, Germany, Norway, and Italy. The seminar was facilitated by the EARLALL Secretariat in partnership with the SMALEI project partner VHS Baden-Württemberg.

Objectives and Structure

The seminar aimed to collect feedback and promote engagement. The seminar enabled participants to share their insights to refine and validate policy recommendations and provided participants with an understanding of the SMALEI project goals and its consolidated policy recommendations.

The event was divided into two parts:

- Overview of SMALEI Project Goals: Participants were introduced to the project's focus on supporting adult learning and education (ALE) institutions in developing sustainable, green strategies. Resources such as the SMALEI Matrix and Workbook were highlighted, and participants were encouraged to join the LinkedIn community.
- Policy Recommendations Validation: A set of policy recommendations, developed by the SMALEI team led by TKNIKA in the Basque Country, was presented for review and validation. An online voting system facilitated the feedback process.

Key Findings

Participants reviewed and validated recommendations across the six strategic areas:

1. Engagement and Empowering Learners

- All recommendations were validated
- Prioritised: Creating diverse sustainability learning opportunities (formal, non-formal, informal).
- Less Relevant: Empowering sustainable lifestyles through knowledge and critical thinking.

2. Developing Teachers' Green Skills

- All recommendations were validated without significant remarks, reflecting a broad consensus on their importance.

3. Transforming to Greener ALE Institutions

- All recommendations were validated
- Key Recommendations:
- Provide guidelines for sustainability strategies and assess organisational impact.
- Equip institutions with green resources, such as sustainable buildings and technology.
- Less Popular: Encouraging eco-friendly practices in daily operations (e.g., energy, water usage).

4. ALE Institutions as Social Activators of Sustainability

- All recommendations were validated
- Highlighted: Positioning ALE institutions as community sustainability leaders.

5. Driving a Greener Policy

- All recommendations were validated
- Most Relevant: Offering diverse learning opportunities, aligning ALE strategies with the green transition, and collaborating with stakeholders to develop sustainability competencies.
- Less Relevant: Investing in sustainable resources and infrastructure.

6. Creating Green Alliances

- All recommendations were validated
- Key Recommendation: Building collaborative networks to connect stakeholders and share best practices.

Participant Feedback

Participants raised several points for consideration:

- The need to clarify terms such as “green” and “sustainable,” which can have varying interpretations.
- Greater emphasis on cooperation with sector-specific organisations and industries.
- Extending the focus beyond adult education institutions to include other educational sectors.
- Highlighting the interplay between green and digital transitions.
- Recognising the critical role of empowering learners and strong leadership in driving sustainability.

Conclusion

The seminar successfully achieved its objectives, with all proposed recommendations validated. Participants stressed the importance of collaboration, clear definitions, and addressing both green and digital transitions. Feedback will guide the refinement of SMALEI's policy recommendations, ensuring their relevance and impact in promoting sustainability within ALE institutions and beyond.

ABOUT SMALEI



The SMALEI Erasmus+ project aims to improve the sustainability of Adult Learning and Education (ALE) providers and organisations across Europe, and increase their capacity to contribute to forward-looking societal developments. Through the development of a set of factors against which to compare your institution (Sustainability Matrix), an online self-assessment tool against these sustainability criteria, and the piloting of new ways of thinking and doing, SMALEI hopes to provide ALE institutions with tools and inspiration to embark on their own sustainability journeys.

Project Partners:



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