

10-year Adult Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Skills Strategy: Education and Training Boards Ireland Sectoral Submission



etbi
Education & Training
Boards Ireland
*Boird Oideachais &
Oiliúna Éireann*

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Introduction

This sectoral submission is being made on behalf of Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI). ETBI is the national representative body for Ireland's sixteen Education and Training Boards (ETBs), established on 1 July 2013 to provide education and training provision in communities throughout Ireland. The purpose of this submission is to present a sectoral perspective and recommendations regarding the development of a 10-year Adult Literacy Numeracy and Digital (ALND) Skills Strategy. This submission is a collation of individual ETB ALND skills strategy submissions, highlighting areas of importance to ETBs regarding the development of the strategy. ETBI considers the promotion of ALND skills development across ETBs as essential. Therefore, the development of the 10-year ALND Strategy is extremely important for ETBI and its member ETBs. It is the opinion of ETBI that implementation of our recommended actions will enable the successful integration of ALND skills across ETB Further Education and Training (FET) Provision.

This submission will begin by providing a background to this submission including an introduction to ETBI, a short overview of the ETB Sector and FET Provision. Active Inclusion as the guiding strategic area within the ETBI FET Directorate will be briefly presented followed by an overview of existing ALND skills programmes across FET. The submission's strategy and policy background will be summarised, and a review of the consultation process and analysis, in line with the themes identified in SOLAS strategy consultation paper, will be described prior to a presentation of findings, key conclusions and recommendations.

Background

Introduction to ETBI

ETBI Vision, Mission and Values

Under the Education and Training Boards Act 2013, ETBI is defined as:

An association established to collectively represent education and training boards and promote their interests, which is recognised by the Minister for the purposes of this Act.

As outlined in ETBI Strategic Vision 2016 – 2020, the mission of ETBI is to act as a central resource for the ETB sector, providing, procuring, and coordinating a range of support services which are most appropriately and efficiently delivered at national level. ETBI provides a range of coordinated services that include:

- Staff negotiations and staff development
- Policy analysis, research, and administrative support services
- Management services required by ETBs in the performance of their executive and reserved functions

- Specialised supports to assist ETBs in promoting equality of opportunity in education and training, and in responding to the needs of disadvantaged communities
- Services as required by the Minister for Education and Skills.

ETBI Directorates include:

- Further Education and Training
- Schools Directorate
- Organisation Support and Development
- Change Programme

ETBI vision is to be an effective organisation that represents and promotes the development of the ETB sector by providing innovative and quality support services to meet the needs of ETBs and other stakeholders in the rapidly changing world of Irish public-sector education and training. As outlined in ETBI Strategic Vision 2016 – 2020, ETBI values include:

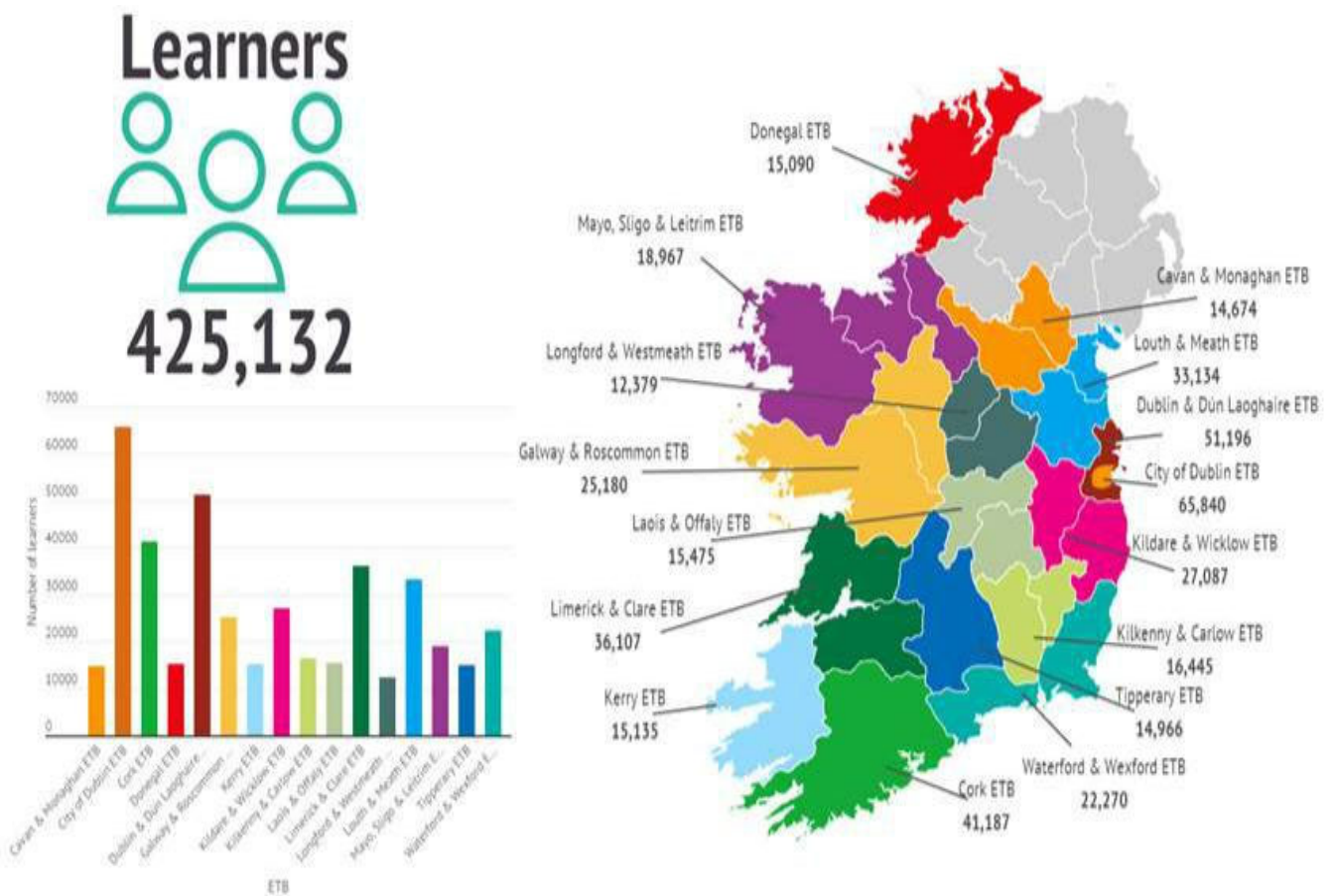
- ETBI collaborates with ETBs to promote an inclusive ethos of learning, underpinned by excellence and innovation.
- ETBI fosters a sense of shared responsibility for the successful performance of the executive and reserved functions of ETBs, in the interests of achieving the very best outcomes for all learners.
- ETBI's working relationships with ETB staff, Boards and other stakeholders are based on fairness, transparency, and professionalism.
- ETBI promotes a culture of collaboration and collegiality between the professionals working in ETBs and the members of boards, based on common shared values and commitment to quality in education and training.

The ETB Sector

ETBs are statutory local education authorities governed by the Education and Training Boards Act 2013. Sixteen ETBs across Ireland have responsibility for education and training, youth work and a range of other statutory functions. ETBs manage and operate second-level schools, further education colleges, multi-faith community national schools and a range of adult and further education centres delivering education and training programmes. The general functions of an education and training board is to establish and maintain recognised schools, centres for education and education or training facilities in its functional area.

ETBs plan, provide, coordinate, and review the provision of education and training, including education and training for the purpose of employment, and services ancillary in its functional area. ETBs also support the provision, coordination, administration, and assessment of youth work services in its functional area. The ETB sector is the leading provider of education and training in the state, active in local communities through the direct provision of training and education programmes in training centres, colleges and other training and educational settings. ETBs seek to make a real difference to the lives of the people they serve and continue to respond in a proactive and dynamic way to the needs of the communities that it serves.

The following infographics provide an overview of the number of ETB learners in 2018 (ETBI Annual Report 2018-2019 p 8):



Further Education and Training (FET) Provision

As outlined in SOLAS Future FET: Transforming Learning The National Further Education and Training Strategy 2020 – 2024, the majority of SOLAS funding invested in FET is channelled through ETBs. ETBs deliver FET provision either directly or via a network of contracted training or community education and training providers in response to the needs of their respective regions. The SOLAS FET Strategy 2020-2024 categorise FET programmes as focusing on the following skills:

- ‘Foundational’, prioritising transversal skill development and encompassing programmes including Adult Literacy; English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Intensive Tuition in Adult Basic Education (ITABE).
- ‘Bridging’, prioritising the skills needed to bridge the gap between foundational learning and accessing vocational education and training including Youthreach, Back to Education Initiative, Skills for Work, Skills to Advance.
- ‘Vocational’ skill development, encompassing Post-Leaving Certificate (PLC) provision and work-based learning include traineeships, apprenticeships, and specific skills training; concerned with facilitating progression to higher education and direct generation of employment outcomes.

Table 1: Numbers of unique FET learners participating in each category (Future FET: Transforming Learning The National FET Strategy 2020 – 2024 p24):

Skill	Learner Numbers
Foundation Skills (NFQ Level 1-2)	100,000
Bridging Skills (NFQ Level 3-4)	40,000
Vocational Skill (NFQ Level 5-6)	60,000

Community education is a critical aspect of FET provision, particularly with respect to the 10year ALND Strategy; incorporating initiatives developed to serve the needs of localities, often in partnership with local organisations. Much of this provision helps to develop core or foundational skills.

ETBI Active Inclusion

ETBI FET Directorate supports the following Strategic Areas:

- Strategy and Policy
- Quality
- Active Inclusion
- Work Based Learning
- Planning, Resources and Reporting

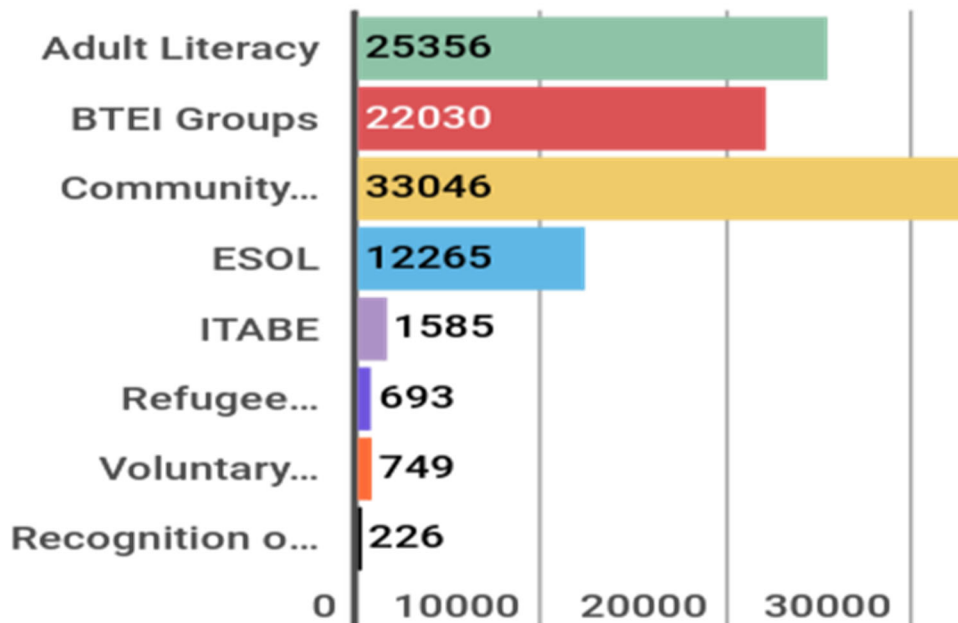
ETBI strategic area of Active Inclusion, in line with SOLAS FET Strategy 2020-2024, regards inclusiveness within FET as unconditional positive regard for all people. FET must be readily available to all and accessible by all, regardless of their location, culture, language, disadvantage, or disability. Provision should facilitate equality of participation in and outcome from education. Moreover, FET resources and opportunities must be targeted at those who are most educationally disadvantaged.

ETBI Annual Report 2018 – 2019 highlights achievements within the strategic area of Active Inclusion including:

- Contribution to the development of the following SOLAS-ETBI research:
 - Guidelines for Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in FET
 - Initial and Ongoing Assessment of English Language Competency of Migrant Learners in FET at Levels 1-3
 - Initial and Ongoing Assessment of Adult Literacy and Numeracy at NFQ Levels 1-3
 - Best Practice Guidelines for Inclusion of Learners with Intellectual disabilities
 - Best Practice Guidelines for Family Learning
- Evaluation of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Programme -Tobar
- Upskilling Pathways Report – An Irish Context
- Vulnerable Adult Policy and Child Protection Policy.
- Development of Community Education and Active Inclusion Position Papers

Existing FET ALND Skills Provision

As indicated previously, provision including Adult Literacy Programmes; English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Intensive Tuition in Adult Basic Education (ITABE) is primarily located within Foundational FET programmes. The following infographic presents an overview of those learners engaging on a part-time basis with programmes including Adult Literacy Groups, BTEI Groups, Community Education, ESOL, ITABE, Refugee Resettlement, Voluntary Literacy Tuition and Recognition of Prior Learning in 2019 (This is FET Facts and Figures 2019 p9, SOLAS 2019).



Submission Strategy and Policy Background

The FET Strategy 2020-2024 Transforming Learning underpins this submission. This strategy identifies Fostering Inclusion as a strategic priority and the following as focus areas:

- Embed Inclusive Practice
- Prioritise Target Cohorts
- Consistent Learner Support
- Literacy and Numeracy

With respect to ALND skills, SOLAS has already set out an overall framework for literacy and numeracy development over the next 5 years, to include the development of:

- Recognition and Awards
- Raising Awareness
- Consistent Assessment Approach
- Diverse Provision
- Digital Focus
- Link to FET Pathways
- Integration Across FET
- Developing Pathways

Relevant national and international policy with respect to learner access, transfer and progression and sustainable and equitable economic and social development includes:

- QQI Policy Restatement 'Policy and Criteria for Access, Transfer and Progression in Relation to Learners for Providers of Further and Higher Education and Training' (2015)
- European Skills Agenda 2020-2025
- Transforming Our World - 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
- Digital Education Action Plan for 2021-2027: Resetting Education for the Digital Age
- Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020 - 2025 Ambition, Goals, Commitments.

Relevant national strategy documents with respect to ETBI development, the digital divide, securing outcomes for young people and the inclusion of minority, vulnerable and marginalised communities include:

- ETBI Strategic Vision 2016 – 2020
- National Digital Strategy, 2013
- The National Youth Strategy 2015-2020
- The Further and Higher Education Roadmap Government's Strategy contained in 'Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025 Ambition, Goals and Commitments'
- National Skills Strategy 2025
- National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021
- National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy 2017–2021
- National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030
- National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-2019

Consultation Process

This submission has reviewed consultation documents received from the following ETBs:

- Limerick and Clare ETB
- Donegal ETB
- Galway and Roscommon ETB
- Kilkenny and Carlow ETB
- Kildare and Wicklow ETB
- Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim ETB
- City of Dublin ETB
- Cork ETB

To ensure a participative approach, ETBs consulted with groups including:

- Senior Management Team
- FET Programme and Project Coordinators, Organisers and Facilitators
- Adult Literacy Organisers
- FET Tutors, Teachers and Trainers
- Quality Assurance Support Service
- Guidance Service
- Community Education Providers
- Students
- Public

Consultations were conducted through questionnaires, facilitated focus groups and interviews. In addition, ETBI considered the proposed approach to a 10 year ALND Strategy at an ETBI facilitated Thematic Discussion engaging FET Directors. Observations gathered from this thematic discussion are included in this submission.

Submission Framework

In line with the SOLAS Consultation Paper developed to assist the development of submissions, this submission will first present findings around ALND skills meanings with a focus on understandings of a digitally inclusive society. It will then identify the actions needed to meet ALND skills challenges and opportunities, under the following headings:

- The environment
- Supports and service delivery including tailored supports
- Cross-sectoral, inter-departmental or interagency approaches
- Collaborative Partnerships
- Role of communities
- Awareness and access to information including for hard-to-reach groups
- Measuring success.
- Examples of good practice.

Appendix 1 is added to present findings around examples of creative ALND skills practice.

Findings

ALND Skills Meanings:

- Social practice model: ALND skills as functional, for use in everyday social, working and home life, 'Learning for Living'.
- Essential for social, economic and cultural development.
- Core skills of listening, speaking, reading, reading comprehension, and writing. Oral language extremely relevant for learner agency and voice.
- Transversal skills including learning to learn; independent learning; critical thinking; decision making; self-advocate; respond to external pressures and change; social and emotional development for example confidence and self-esteem. A focus on the whole person.
- A human rights and equality concern.
- Incremental in nature; evolving and developing over time – Lifelong Learning.
- Emergence of new literacies in addition to 'traditional' literacies: Critical Literacy; Media Literacy; Financial Literacy; Health Literacy; Environmental Literacy; Digital Citizenship and Citizenship
- Numeracy Skills include the ability to access, use, interpret and communicate numerical information and ideas in day-to day transactions for example shopping, banking, and cooking.
- Digital skills required for daily living including the use of self-service check-outs and ATM style machines replacing tellers in banks. Require the capacity to use office-based ICT resources, engage in online activity and 'adapt' to changing ICT and software and systems.
- ALND skills are interdependent; one skill cannot be emphasised over another – broad and flexible understandings.
- Varying learner needs– spiky profile.
- Movement away from a deficit model, towards learners' abilities and the value of life experiences. Language and Terminology – promote 'foundation,' 'core' and/or 'essential' rather than 'Basic Skills,' which risks demeaning the existing strengths and life skills of FET learners. Also applies to ALND skill development within the context of ESOL learners – recognise the value of learners' mother tongue avoiding deficit discourse.

Digitally Inclusive Society:

- Digital citizenship is a critical component of digital literacy and includes online etiquette; safety and security; the ability to evaluate online content; personal bias and understanding copyright laws.
- The digital divide is reinforced by the in/capacity to access and fully use devices and to reliable and affordable broadband. A fear of the unknown is strong. Results in marginalisation; a reduced sense of worth and self-confidence; dependency on family or friends to complete basic tasks; reduced access to cost saving offers; reduced access to public services including health and education; limited engagement with school online platforms; exaggerated fears of scamming, phishing, and a genuine vulnerability to online scams.
- Isolation due to lack of capacity to engage digitally with family and friends especially apparent during lockdowns.
- Tutor use of Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) enable learner-centred approaches, learner independence and self-assessment. Further supports learner confidence to engage with software and systems. WhatsApp is a particularly simple and accessible tool.
- ICT can provide a gateway to education as learners are less likely to feel stigma; providing an opening to additional ALND development.

Solutions, Priorities and Actions

The Environment:

- Ring-fenced ALND skills budgets supporting development and continuity. Parity of structures and supports for services across ETBs.
- Investment in a sustainable staffing structure with suitable terms and conditions for qualified staff and accompanying recruitment drives. Reduce administrative burdens on teaching staff.
- National and local level Literacy Awareness Training (LAT) across government, public and community bodies including 3rd level Initial Teacher Training institutions.
- A Common European Numeracy Framework including a nationally agreed definition of numeracy.
- The development of a national ESOL strategy, which would include a focus on learners who are developing ALND skills for the first time through English.
- Progression routes from literacy courses into higher level certified courses and/or progression routes into employment.
- Review of accredited QQI level 1-4 modules. Specifically, digital skills accreditation and with respect to the needs of the learner.
- Acknowledge the need to integrate ALND skills across all levels, prioritising intensive integration across Levels 1-4.
- Deliver ALND supports for PLC and Training Centre learners.

- Travel allowances, access to affordable childcare, meal allowances, access to transport in rural areas outside major cities. Prioritise varied local provision. Increased opportunities for adults to return to learning at Levels 1-4 while maintaining social welfare allowances.
- Reliable and affordable broadband. Grants/tax credits for purchase of devices and access to affordable Wi-Fi particularly throughout the pandemic. Unlimited data to mobile phone users. Interpret broadband providers on terms including fair usage and data limits. Provision of devices and assistive technology for learners – accessible grants and lending library.
- Infrastructural development supporting delivery in bright, modern, comfortable, professional environments. Accessible buildings.

Supports and Service Delivery Including Tailored Supports:

- *‘The first step is by far the most difficult’* - Support initial engagement via welcoming, trusting, fun and social, informal, and non-judgemental environments.
- Confidential, discreet, and accessible learner friendly registration processes.
- Understanding of individual learner contexts and experiences, recognising negative associations with the ‘school’ experience.
- Recognise differing learner motivations for example helping their child with homework, employment, and household budget.
- Blend formal and informal initial assessment for example the Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT) and the ‘Progress Framework’. Initial assessment is key in the development of Individual Learning Plan (ILP) and in planning and tailoring ALND supports.
- Learner-centred interactive methodologies. The use of one to one and small group methods.
- Ensure integrated and thematic approaches for example integration across programmes including childcare and horticulture.
- Integrated provision across all levels of and type of provision (Levels 1-6) with more intense and targeted provision at levels 1 – 3.
- Focus on the delivery of Maths/numeracy skills for apprenticeships and progression to higher education. Delivery of Maths as a standalone module.
- Well-being supports developing learner confidence, self-belief, and resilience, for example guidance and counselling services and self-care workshops.
- Affordable and accessible educational psychologist service.
- Taster sessions and Step-Up access programmes are welcoming and non-threatening.
- Resources, which reflect local contexts. Examples of Irish speaking voices on Irish resources – creating indigenous resources.

- Support ETB sharing of resources for example Support to Apprentices Group' (SAG) resources for apprentices. Resource toolboxes for use across programmes. Sharing resources via ETB digital/lending library, Newsletter. Develop communities of practice.
- ALND skills pathways and progression and skills development linked to vocational awards. Summative assessment is essential in attaining recognised accreditation. Progression matched to learner needs with the potential for non-accredited provision offered in engagement stage and accreditation thereafter. Limit a focus on and the pressure of accreditation.
- Support lifelong learning, flexibility, and progression for example through blended learning opportunities, flipped classrooms, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) enabling flexible attendance and progression.
- Access to short, non-accredited digital skills programmes for all learners regardless of educational attainment or means. Embed ICT in all programmes.
- FET Centre Digital Learning Hubs with Digital drop-in services. Support in learner use of assistive technology.
- Peer mentors / learner ambassadors.
- Staff professional development in areas including: UDL; Integrated and themed methodology; Language Aware Teaching Methodology; Assessment; Literacy Awareness Training (LAT) for frontline staff; Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) and Maths/Numeracy.
- Uniform volunteer training for volunteer tutors.
- Dedicated Learner Support service and Access Officer based on a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) model of delivery.
- Customer service strategies are essential to engaging marginalised demographic - adopting in person traditional face to face methods of communication.
- Prioritise ALND skills supports for the language and literacy needs of learners from diverse linguistic backgrounds. For example language-aware teaching methodologies enabling ESOL/plurilingual learners to develop English language skills.
- Intercultural and ALND skills supports for learners from diverse linguistic backgrounds experiencing challenges including incarceration, homelessness and addiction, young people with little or interrupted education and for parents of school going children.
- Supports for learners with additional support needs including Dyslexia.

Awareness Raising:

- Unified messaging from across government, public services, and wider community groups.
- Framed by effective ETB communications policy with a strong, visible social media presence. Ring-fenced funding for the development of ETB media presence. Nationwide ETB branding and logos to increase regional and community recognition informed by a strong ETB identity.
- ALND skills services and supports branded within the ETB.
- Linking campaigns to local delivery options; use of local phone numbers. Clarification on referrals resulting from calls to national helplines.
- Local advertising and social media campaigns in ETB regions. Community based newspapers, church newsletters, radio, billboards. Local campaigns will support local referrals.
- Dedicated Learner Support information on social media.
- Increasing visual presence of providers in the community, pop up stalls at retailers, community centres, GAA or sports centres, informal open days and showcasing the breadth of provision.
- Create awareness using high-profile organisations/individuals in the community. Promoting Learner Champions within the community.
- Visual as opposed to verbal messaging including short, animated videos. Personal stories/testimonials enabling relatability and inspiration. Provide visuals of modern adult learning environments representing collaboration, discussion and technology as opposed to chalk and talk.
- Include people in advertising campaigns from marginalised groups.
- Awareness raising that broadens the understanding of learners with ALND skill's needs; not only early school leavers.
- Focus advertising on the positive outcomes of returning to education as opposed to a negative school experience. Foster a culture of collective responsibility
- Reduce stigma through normalising - literacy is not only a service for special learners.
- Less stigma around acknowledging poor numeracy/maths skills.
- Demystify ALND as doable., particularly numeracy, maths, and STEM subjects.
- Decoupled literacy, numeracy, and digital literacy promotion.
- Campaigns in English and in Irish.
- Campaigns targeting specific cohorts of society or the workforce. Geographical targeting. Specific campaigns around skills for example numeracy/maths and/or target groups for example under 30s.
- Campaigns targeting marginalised groups for example disability groups, direct provision centres, homeless hubs, travelling community, prisons.
- Promotion of services to employers.
- Promote ETBs as ideally placed to address the digital needs of adult learners.

Cross-sectoral, inter-departmental or interagency approaches:

- National level policy supporting structured local level interagency collaboration and complementarity, minimising ad hoc relationships. For example, in facilitating ETB links with national and local government departments statutory agencies and other stakeholder groups (NALA, DAI, HSE, DEASP, Local Development Companies, LEADER Partnerships, TUSLA, CYPSC, Social Services, CIC, SEN Organisations, Community Employment Schemes, TUS, MABS, Disability Agencies -DSI, INTREO, Direct Provision Centres).
- Clarity around the role of the various agencies. Sectoral MOUs.
- Clear referral networks/lines/protocols. Promote local referral networks.
- Statutory bodies have an obligation to be informed about ALND and engage with the ETB AES. Capacity development for stakeholder organisations - LAT, plain English, supporting learners to engage with and navigate ICT systems for social welfare, farm IT, car tax. Training delivered by ETB Adult Literacy Services.

Collaborative partnerships:

- Creative partnerships with Corporate/Local Sponsors.
- Increased engagement with employers and employees for example programmes and modules for learners and incentives including paid leave. Support employers to support learners and understand the benefits of ALND development for their staff.
- Development of a work based ALND development programme delivered in partnership with local employer agencies and trades unions and targeting sector specific needs for example construction, manufacturing, hospitality.
- Developing and delivering Family Literacy Programmes in collaboration with schools, Home School Liaisons, early years settings, local children services committees, family resource centres and homeless services. Family Literacy Programmes as a gateway to further education opportunities for parents with low-level skills.
- Collaboration via Mitigating Educational Disadvantage Fund specifically around hard to reach groups.

Role of Communities:

- Resourcing and support for ETB staff to take on an outreach role, developing greater links with local schools and community groups including local resource centres, homework clubs, family support centres, Women's Projects, Men's Sheds, Active Age Groups, Pavee Point, Exchange House and Parish Centres.
- Exploration and sharing of good practice of innovative, creative approaches to building local links with community groups.
- Library partnerships built on protocols - engaging with the local library as a natural extension of the classroom and another space where adults can access a range of digital technologies and supports.

- Foster community engagement through inviting learners to bring a friend and/or family members.
- Emphasis on intergenerational learning and parents as primary educators of their children.
- ETB Adult Education Service is best placed to meet ALND development within communities.

Measuring Success:

- Accreditation should not be the primary measurement of success with equal status given to the measurement of soft outcomes and to lateral progression.
- Professional capacity development in outcome-oriented planning and evaluation.
- Resource supports for documenting and reporting.
- Staged, Longitudinal and Sampled measurement.
- Process indicators could include access to flexible, high quality teaching and course attendance.
- Outcome indicators centred on the development of transversal skills, Wider Benefits of Learning (WBL)/Wealth Models in addition to participation and course completion / progression.
- Societal outcomes.
- Qualitative and quantitative measurement tools could include:
 - International and European measurement studies and surveys: PIACC/PISA - adapted for Irish contexts
 - Learner Stories/Testimonials/Case studies
 - Learner Self-assessments/Ratings – Distance Travelled Tool
 - Learner Questionnaires / Interviews /Surveys/Focus Groups
 - Learning Journals / Diaries.
- Staged, Longitudinal and Sampled measurement

Conclusion and Recommendations

ALND Skills Meaning

In terms of ALND meanings and understandings, this submission supports understandings underpinned by a social practice model; prioritising ALND skills for use in everyday life. Recognising the interdependence between transversal and ALND skill development is essential. ALND skills evolve and develop over time and encompass ‘new’ and ‘traditional’ literacies. ALND skills are interdependent; making it difficult to emphasise one skill over another. Any definition should emphasise learners’ abilities as opposed to deficits.

Digital citizenship is a critical component of digital literacy. The digital divide has become particularly apparent throughout the COVID crises resulting in further marginalisation; reduced sense of worth and self-confidence; dependency on family or friends to complete basic tasks; reduced access to public and/or health services and limited parental engagement with school platforms. ETBs are particularly well-placed in terms of digital skills development.

Solutions, Priorities and Actions

Environmental recommendations prioritise ring-fenced ALND skills budgets supporting parity of sustainable structures and supports across ETBs. ALND skills capacity development across government, public and community bodies. The development of a Common European Numeracy Framework including a nationally agreed definition of numeracy and the development of a national ESOL strategy, which would include a focus on learners who are developing ALND skills for the first time through English. The identification of clear progression pathways across all educational levels along with a review of accredited QQI level 1-4 modules with respect to ALND skill development and intensive provision at these levels. Financial and other supports including maintaining social welfare allowances, travel allowances, access to affordable childcare, meal allowances, access to transport in rural areas outside major cities. Finally, local provision is prioritised.

Supports and service delivery priorities including tailored supports emphasise accessible welcoming, learner centred, trusting, social, informal, and non-judgemental environments informed by an understanding of learner's contexts and motivations. Initial assessment is key in planning and tailoring supports. Integrated provision from levels 1-6 in tandem with more intense and targeted provision at levels 1 – 3. Well-being supports are essential in developing learner confidence, self-belief, and resilience. ALND skill's resources should reflect local contexts and language. Support resource sharing and communities of practice. Recognising progression and accreditation while keeping initial engagement informal and flexible. Staff professional development/upskilling is essential. Dedicated Learner Support services, digital hubs and the development of ESOL supports for the language and literacy needs of learners from diverse linguistic backgrounds are emphasised.

With respect to awareness raising, local campaigns promoting local delivery options are emphasised. Visual as opposed to verbal messaging including short, animated videos and personal stories/testimonials enabling relatability and inspiration were noted. Visuals of modern adult learning environments representing collaboration, discussion and technology as opposed to chalk and talk were prioritised as was stigma reduction via normalising and demystifying ALND. Targeted campaigns including specific cohorts and geographical areas was highlighted.

Interagency collaboration, partnership and community engagement recommendations prioritise national level policy supporting structured local level interagency collaboration and complementarity, to minimise ad hoc relationships, enable clarity around the role of the various agencies and support clear referral networks/lines/protocols. Creative partnerships with Corporate/Local Sponsors, employers and schools were highlighted. Community engagement via outreach roles and the key role of the library was also emphasised.

Finally, with respect to measuring success, that accreditation should not be the primary measurement of success was endorsed. Transversal skill measurement via Wider Benefits of Learning (WBL)/Wealth Models was noted in this regard. Professional capacity development in outcome-oriented planning and evaluation while recognising the additional administrative burden of documenting and capturing outcomes was highlighted.

Appendix 1: Examples of Innovative and Creative Practice

- Get Connected –support access to online and blended learning for adult literacy students at the start of the pandemic - <https://view.genial.ly/5f08955c1ff5300d26bd2278>
- ‘Outsmarting your Smart Phone’ - short, themed programme to enable better communication skills.
- Decoding Dyslexia - for adults with the Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD) Dyslexia
- BYOD – Bring Your Own Device policy
- Little Lessons - two-minute videos that address topical and common literacy mistakes. <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL1HRy1EecPt2ImUCRgP2KobKR356Qw7X8>
- Touch Type and Spell - An intensive summer course to help dyslexic learners improve their spelling and reading.
- Eurowatchers course in Partnership with MABS.
- Family Literacy Programmes – My Baby and Me; Digital Family Learning Project; Mini Museum Project; Storysacks; At the Kitchen Table; Maths for Parents; Irish for Parents; Internet Safety for Parents; Help your child with spelling and grammar; Digital Family Literacy; Intercultural Family Learning
- Digital literacy for older people living in sheltered housing
- Maths for Trades booklets - ALND resources for apprentices developed by Support to Apprentices group (SAG); a national community of practice.
- Tobar RPL Project in collaboration with the defence force.
- New Horizons programme – Interagency collaboration with the DEASP targeting engagement of long-term unemployed.
- Acorn tablet training.
- Website - [www.CoolockALS.ie](http://www.coolockals.ie) showcasing students’ writing and visual work <http://www.coolockals.ie/>
- Youtube - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2-oV8iAnif0>
- Access Maths programme.
- Get Started Kits.
- Work and Learn Programme for adults with intellectual disabilities in the houses of the Oireachtas.
- Youth and Education Service for Refugees and Migrants - an access programme focussing on English language, literacy, maths and life skills for newly-arrived teenagers before they transition to mainstream school