



Newsletter

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COOPSKILLS unites communities, businesses, and educators to foster a culture of continuous learning. By establishing 'Learning Companies' and local Reskilling Labs, we empower individuals facing career transitions or unemployment, equipping them with the skills required to succeed in the evolving green and digital job market.

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COOPSKILLS – Cooperation of public and private players to reskill and upskill workers

coopskills.eu

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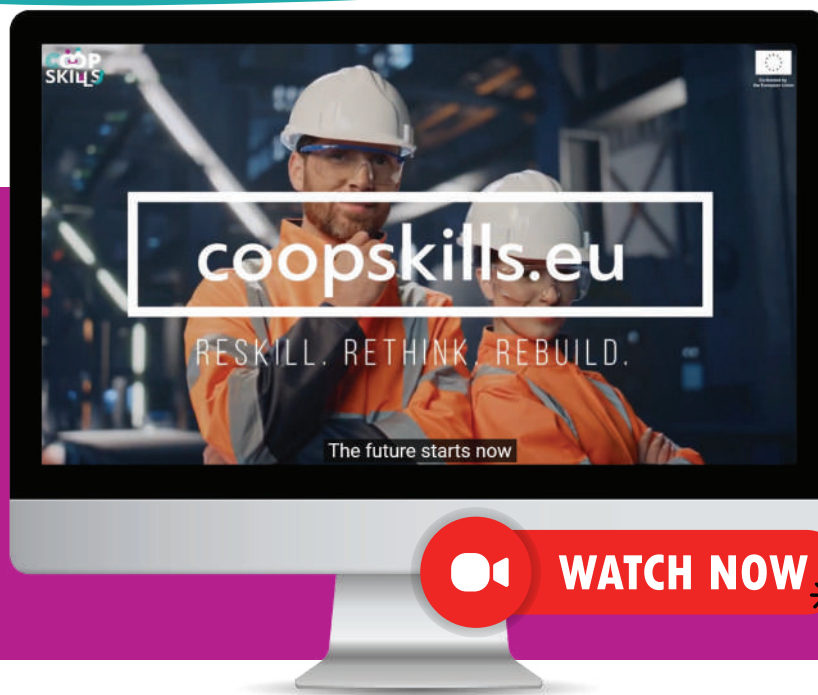
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Table of Contents

Welcome to the second edition of the COOPSKILLS newsletter!	4
Empowering Adult Learners for the Future	4
Summary of the Study on Best Practice Mobilization Actions	5
Insights from our 2nd Transnational Meeting	6
Learning Cities: Paving the Way for Learning Companies	7
Kaunas – a Learning City Driving Knowledge, Innovation and Community Growth.	7
Larissa: Building a Culture of Lifelong Learning in Greece (2016–2023)	9
Next up in COOPSKILLS	11
Our Reskilling Labs	11
Our Launch Event	12
Our partners	14

Welcome to the second edition of the COOPSKILLS newsletter!

Empowering Adult Learners for the Future



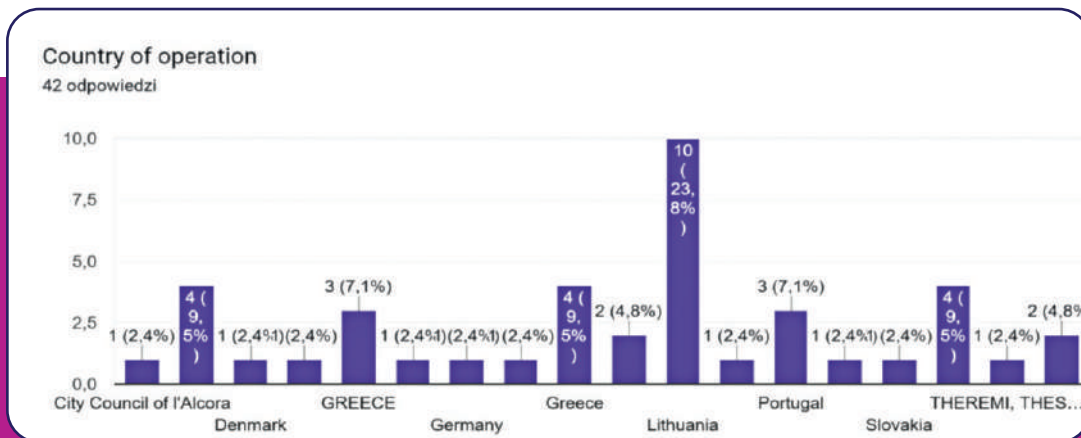
As the job market evolves, reskilling and upskilling low-skilled adults are key to ensuring that everyone can succeed in the green and digital economy. Lifelong learning equips individuals with the skills they need to adapt, open new career opportunities, and contribute to sustainable economic growth.

In this edition, we highlight recent progress in our project. Our team has conducted an in-depth study to uncover the best practices across Europe for motivating adults to participate in training, with a special focus on green and digital sectors. We've also held our second Transnational Project Meeting (TPM) and begun setting up our four Reskilling Labs, which will serve as local hubs for hands-on learning and skill development.

As we continue to build a culture of lifelong learning, we invite you to discover more about our project through the [promotional video](#). Join us in helping adults and communities thrive with the skills for tomorrow's workforce.

“Lifelong learning equips individuals with the skills they need to adapt”

Summary of the Study on Best Practice Mobilization Actions



During the first months of the project, from April 2025 to October 2025, a comprehensive research study was conducted to identify effective strategies for motivating adults to engage in reskilling and upskilling, with a focus on the green and digital economy. The study, carried out by IARP, our partner from Poland, involved desk research, questionnaires, and interviews with VET providers and key stakeholders across Europe.

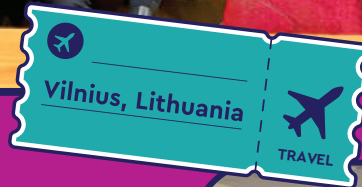
The research revealed that key motivational drivers include economic stability, regulatory compliance, personal development, and financial incentives, with intrinsic and external motivations varying by country. In Turkey and Georgia, for example, financial and regulatory factors were most influential, while Poland and Portugal saw stronger personal motivation for career change.

Awareness-raising efforts, such as online campaigns, local events, and employer collaborations, proved effective, with digital channels playing a key role. However, targeted, personalized outreach was found to be more successful than general campaigns, especially when supported by trusted intermediaries like local employment offices.

The study also identified barriers to participation, including time constraints and employer reluctance. To address these, the study recommends adopting flexible, context-specific strategies within our own soon-to-be-established Reskilling Labs and Learning Companies, promoting employer collaboration, and offering financial incentives to engage learners.

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Insights from our 2nd Transnational Meeting



In December 2025, COOPSKILLS partners gathered in Vilnius, Lithuania, for the project's second transnational meeting. Over two days, twelve partners from five European countries worked together on key project developments, including the creation of the Reskilling Labs Road Map. This session focused on strategies to design sustainable, adaptable labs tailored to local community needs and the green and digital transition.

A major highlight was the presentation of the best practices research on motivating adults to engage in training. The findings, based on extensive surveys and interviews, revealed effective mobilization strategies and the barriers that still hinder participation across different regions. The meeting also provided a platform for partners to discuss the organization and operation of the Reskilling Labs, with a focus on aligning training programs with labor market demands.

The second day centered on the development of educational materials, emphasizing gamification to enhance engagement and effectiveness. The partners also addressed dissemination strategies to ensure the project's outcomes reach the right audiences. The meeting concluded with plans for the next meeting in Nicosia, in April 2026, setting the stage for further progress.



Learning Cities: Paving the Way for Learning Companies

As part of our ongoing efforts to build sustainable learning ecosystems, we look to the UNESCO Learning Cities as valuable models for the development of our future Learning Companies. These cities have long been recognized for their commitment to promoting lifelong learning and creating inclusive educational opportunities for all. In this section, we feature two exemplary Learning Cities—Larissa in Greece and Kaunas in Lithuania—highlighting their achievements and how they are shaping the future of learning, which will serve as a guiding blueprint for our Reskilling Labs and Learning Companies.

Kaunas – a Learning City Driving Knowledge, Innovation and Community Growth

author: Aušra Misonė, [Kaunas Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts](#)



Kaunas, Lithuania's second-largest city, is making its mark internationally not only as a hub of culture and business but also as a UNESCO-recognized Learning City. This status highlights the city's commitment to building a culture where learning is accessible, inclusive, and lifelong.

Lifelong learning at the heart of city development

Kaunas integrates learning into its urban strategy. From early childhood education to senior activities, the city creates opportunities for residents of all ages. Community centres, universities, and innovation hubs all work together to provide formal, non-formal, and digital learning options.

Recent initiatives include:

- Green and healthy lifestyles: Cycling infrastructure, public "Move Healthy" programmes, and nutrition workshops.
- Digital upskilling: requalification courses and startup support programmes for entrepreneurs.
- Inclusive education: social services and targeted support for vulnerable groups, ensuring that no one is left behind.

Upskill today. Thrive tomorrow.

Why Kaunas stands out

Kaunas demonstrates that learning is not limited to classrooms. It is woven into the city's culture, economy, and community life. By empowering citizens through knowledge, skills, and innovation, Kaunas builds resilience and competitiveness in a rapidly changing world.

Facts & Figures: Kaunas as a Learning City

Indicator	Value
Population	~305,000 residents
University students	30,000+ across major universities (KTU, VDU, LSMU, etc.)
General education schools	90+ schools with 35,000 pupils
Vocational learners	Several thousand in Kaunas training centres
IT sector	16,000+ specialists, one of the fastest-growing in the Baltics
UNESCO status	Member of the Global Network of Learning Cities since 2016

Looking ahead

As a member of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities, Kaunas continues to share best practices internationally while investing locally. Its vision is clear: a city where every resident can learn, grow, and contribute to sustainable urban development.

References

UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning – Kaunas in the Global Network of Learning Cities: <https://www.uil.unesco.org/en/learning-cities/kaunas>

Kaunas City Municipality – Education statistics and city development

Kaunas Universities (KTU, VDU, LSMU) – Student enrolment figures

Invest Lithuania – IT talent pool in Kaunas

Lithuanian Department of Statistics – Population data

“a city where every resident can learn, grow, and contribute to sustainable urban development”

Larissa: Building a Culture of Lifelong Learning in Greece (2016–2023)

author: Chelsea Lazaridou, [Hellenic Adult Education Association](#)



The city of Larissa, capital of the Thessaly region in central Greece, stands as one of Europe's most active examples of a Learning City. With a population of around 162,000 residents, Larissa has become a vibrant hub of lifelong learning, civic participation, and social innovation. Since 2016, when it joined the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities with the Hellenic Adult Education Association (HAEA) as Scientific Advisor, and until the end of 2023, the municipality implemented systematically a programme that promoted inclusive learning opportunities for all citizens — from children and young people to adults and older learners. The programme was implemented under the guidance of the Mayor, A. Kalogianis. Since 2024, the new municipalities' authorities followed a different direction regarding the goals and practices of the Learning City.

A Vision for a Learning Society

Larissa's vision was clear: to nurture a culture of lifelong learning as a driver of personal development, social cohesion, and sustainable growth. The city's learning strategy aimed to connect educational opportunities with local labour market needs, ensuring that learning contributes directly to employability and community well-being. At the same time, the municipality integrated inclusion, equity, health, and sustainability into all its initiatives, seeing learning not just as education, but as a way of life.

Structures that Bring Learning to Life

At the heart of Larissa's learning ecosystem lied the Citizens' University, a municipal platform offering a diverse range of educational activities. Through courses such as Education through Arts, Parents' School, and Digital Learning for Older People, the Citizens' University fostered participation, creativity, and intergenerational learning.

The city also promoted youth engagement through the Youth Council, giving young people a voice in decision-making and strengthening local democracy. Moreover, the Open Schools initiative transformed school buildings into community learning spaces, enabling citizens to design and implement projects that respond to local needs.

From Digital Inclusion to Social Empowerment

Larissa's commitment to learning was also reflected in its wide network of training and adult education programmes. The city collaborated with educational institutions and NGOs to offer courses for adult educators, socially vulnerable groups, and older adults. A particularly successful initiative was the digital inclusion programme for older people, where volunteers helped older citizens acquire essential digital skills — bridging both technological and social divides.

In addition, the municipality provided free educational and support services for vulnerable groups: tutoring for disadvantaged students, initiatives for the homeless, services for people with disabilities, and community-based activities promoting intercultural dialogue.

Collaboration and Innovation

The success of Larissa's learning strategy lied in its strong partnerships with 102 organisations. The municipality worked closely with universities, civil society organizations, cultural institutions, and citizens themselves. This collaborative approach has positioned Larissa as a model of participatory governance in the field of adult and community education.

Recognition and Impact

Larissa's achievements have received international recognition. In 2017, the city was honored by UNESCO for its exemplary work in building a learning culture. Its flagship initiatives, such as the School for Parents (reaching around 400 parents annually) and the Summer Camp in the City (serving 2,500 children each summer), have become best practices within European learning networks. In 2020 Larissa was awarded by the European Association for the Education of Adults.

Beyond formal programmes, Larissa's municipal library, cultural events, and neighborhood learning centres contributed to a vibrant local learning environment — one that celebrated curiosity, creativity, and community engagement.

A Model for Europe

In a rapidly changing world, Larissa demonstrated how a mid-sized European city can make lifelong learning a practical and inspiring reality. By connecting learning with work, citizenship, and inclusion, Larissa has become not only a "Learning City" — but also a learning community, shaping a more sustainable and participatory future for its citizens.



a culture
of lifelong learning
as a driver
of personal development,
social cohesion,
and sustainable growth

Next up in COOPSKILLS

As COOPSKILLS moves into its next phase, the focus shifts from research and planning to concrete action. The coming period is about turning shared knowledge into practical solutions that support adults, employers, and local communities in responding to skills shortages linked to the green and digital transition.

Our Reskilling Labs

A key milestone ahead is the rollout of the **four Reskilling Labs**, which will operate as local hubs for cooperation between municipalities, training providers, employers, and social partners. Building on the Learning Cities approach, the Labs will pilot targeted reskilling and upskilling actions adapted to local labour market needs. Their role is to test mobilisation strategies, support low-skilled and reluctant adults, and strengthen employer engagement in lifelong learning.

Each Reskilling Lab will combine training activities, guidance, and awareness actions, while fostering shared responsibility for skills development at local level. Together, they will lay the foundations for the project's Learning Companies model, demonstrating how learning can be embedded into everyday working life and local economic ecosystems.



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Upskill today. Thrive tomorrow.

Our Launch Event

These developments will be officially presented during the COOPSKILLS Launch Event.

Title: "From Learning Cities to Learning Companies"

How? Online

When? 29 April 2026

What time? 10:00 to 12:00 CET

The event will introduce the project's vision and progress so far, highlight the role of Learning Cities, and host a roundtable discussion on building local ecosystems for reskilling, followed by an open discussion with participants.

Stay tuned for more information.



“Stay tuned!

As COOPSKILLS continues to evolve, the project remains committed to strengthening cooperation between cities, companies, and education providers to support inclusive and future-oriented skills development. We invite you to follow our progress, engage with our activities, and be part of the shared effort to build sustainable learning ecosystems that respond to real labour market needs across Europe.



To stay up to date with the latest COOPSKILLS news and activities, we invite you to follow the project on social media. Our Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn channels share regular updates on project milestones, events, partner activities, and insights from our Reskilling Labs and Learning Companies. By following us, you can keep track of our progress and join the conversation around lifelong learning, reskilling, and local skills ecosystems across Europe.



Our partners



Hellenic Adult Education Association
Greece



Institute of Industrial and Business Education & Training
Greece



Municipality of Thermi
Greece
Department of Education, Youth, Life Long Learning and Employment



Eurosuccess Consulting
Cyprus



Nicosia Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Cyprus



DomSpain S.L.U.
Spain



Redessa
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Instytut Analiz Rynku Pracy SP Zoo
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Greece



LESTU
Lithuania



KAUNAS CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE,
INDUSTRY AND CRAFTS

Kaunas Chamber of CIC
Lithuania

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