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**From Digital Gaps to Green Impact:
Transforming Adult Education for a Sustainable Future
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**Community-Based Projects in Adult Learning:
From Local Action to European Impact**

Date: October 2025
Helsinki & Espoo, Finland



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-  Location: Helsinki & Espoo, Finland
-  Date: October 2025
-  Author: InnovEdu Nexus Institut e.V.

1. Introduction

Adult learning becomes transformative when it connects directly with the lives and environments of learners. Community-based learning turns education into action by linking classroom knowledge with local engagement. During the Erasmus+ KA122-ADU job-shadowing at LFI in Finland, educators demonstrated how adult learners can design and lead projects that solve real community challenges while developing green and digital skills. This OER offers a roadmap for adult educators to foster impact through locally grounded, learner-driven initiatives.

2. Why Community-Based Learning?

This approach:

- Enhances learner motivation and ownership.
- Connects theory to tangible change in local settings.
- Fosters intergenerational, intercultural, and civic engagement.
- Supports lifelong learning as a social, not just individual, process.

Finnish adult education uses local environments—neighbourhoods, nature sites, community centres—as living laboratories for inclusive learning and innovation.

3. Key Principles of Community Projects

Principle	Explanation
Co-Creation	Learners and facilitators jointly define problems and solutions.
Local Relevance	Projects address real needs in learners' communities.
Inclusion	Everyone contributes regardless of language, age, ability, or background.
Visibility	Results are showcased to the public to increase pride and recognition.
European Perspective	Local action is linked to SDGs, EU Green Deal, and Erasmus+ values.



4. Real-Life Examples from LFI

a. Urban Greening Action

Learners mapped heat islands in their neighbourhood and proposed low-cost interventions (tree planting, shade structures). The project involved city officials and resulted in new funding applications.

b. Digital Heritage Stories

Adult learners co-created digital exhibits of traditional ecological knowledge from their countries of origin. Using Canva and mobile phones, they produced visual stories shared during a local “Green Cultures” week.

c. Community Repair Café

A group organised a one-day event teaching basic repair skills—sewing, electronics, furniture. Migrant learners taught others, reversing roles and building confidence.

5. How to Design a Community-Based Learning Project

Step 1: Identify a Local Challenge

Let learners share concerns (waste, social isolation, access to green space).

Step 2: Map Resources

Identify local actors (libraries, NGOs, elder centres) that could partner.

Step 3: Co-Create a Plan

Use tools like Jamboard or Trello to structure roles, timeline, communication.

Step 4: Pilot and Reflect

Test on a small scale. Use simple impact metrics (before/after photos, learner journals).

Step 5: Share and Celebrate

Hold an exhibition, open day, or publish results online.

6. Suggested Tools and Platforms

- a. Padlet – Brainstorming community issues
- b. Canva – Creating visual storytelling outputs
- c. Google My Maps – Mapping resources and project areas
- d. Mentimeter – Community feedback collection
- e. EPAL Project Gallery – For dissemination and exchange



7. Assessment and Recognition

Recognise not just outputs, but process, collaboration, and growth. Suggested methods:

- Project logs and team reflections
- Peer and community feedback
- Final presentation or local exhibition

Issue micro-credentials for:

- “Community Project Participation”
- “Civic Engagement through Adult Learning”

Badge templates available via Open Badge Factory or Europass.

8. Resources and Further Reading

- European Commission (2020). *EU Green Deal & Adult Education*
- EPALE (2024). *Community Learning and Social Impact*.
<https://epale.ec.europa.eu>
- UNESCO (2023). *Learning Cities and Community Engagement*.
- CEDEFOP (2022). *Validating Non-Formal Learning Through Civic Action*

9. Licensing and Acknowledgements

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Prepared by the InnovEdu Nexus Institut e.V. Team – Nersingen, Germany