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**Oodi – Where Adult Learning Becomes a European Reality
Personal Reflection by a German Adult Education Trainer**

Date: October 2025
Helsinki & Espoo, Finland



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👤 Author: InnovEdu Nexus Institut e.V.

Oodi – Where Adult Learning Becomes a European Reality

Personal Reflection by a German Adult Education Trainer

When I first entered Oodi Library in Helsinki, I immediately felt that this was not just a place to borrow books — it was a living classroom for everyone. As an adult education professional from Germany, I have often discussed the idea of lifelong learning. But here, in Oodi, I finally saw it in action.

The building itself is impressive — all light, wood, and glass, designed to be open and welcoming. Yet, what truly defines Oodi is not its architecture, but its people. Adults of all ages and backgrounds sit side by side: some are learning Finnish, others exploring digital tools, some designing objects on 3D printers, and others simply reading or exchanging ideas. Nobody feels “too old” or “not skilled enough.” Everyone learns at their own rhythm, driven by curiosity and purpose.

This is what adult learning looks like when it is truly inclusive and democratic. Oodi functions as a **school without walls**. Learning happens everywhere: in workshops, conversation clubs, maker spaces, digital labs, and informal encounters. The traditional borders between formal, non-formal, and informal education simply disappear. People learn from one another — through practice, dialogue, and cooperation. In this way, Oodi becomes a genuine empowerment space for adults, supporting both personal growth and social cohesion.

As a trainer involved in an Erasmus+ KA122-ADU project, I saw how closely this experience connects with the European vision of adult education. Oodi embodies the principles of accessibility, lifelong learning, and civic participation that lie at the heart of the Erasmus+ Programme and the European Education Area. Here, education is not limited to classrooms — it is a right, a shared experience, and a bridge between people.

What inspired me most was how naturally Finland integrates learning into daily life. No one is excluded, no one is labeled. The library staff act as facilitators, not authorities. Adults come here not only to gain knowledge but to build confidence, to experiment, to feel part of a learning community.

Leaving Oodi, I realized that adult learning is not just about courses or certificates — it is about keeping curiosity alive, about learning with others and from others. If every European city had an Oodi, lifelong learning would no longer be an aspiration — it would be a lived reality.



Key Takeaways for Adult Education (ADU):

- **Inclusive Learning:** Everyone, regardless of age or background, can learn and teach.
- **Non-Formal Spaces Matter:** Libraries can become dynamic learning hubs.
- **Empowerment through Participation:** Adult learners thrive when treated as equals.
- **European Dimension:** Oodi reflects Erasmus+ values of accessibility, openness, and lifelong learning.

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