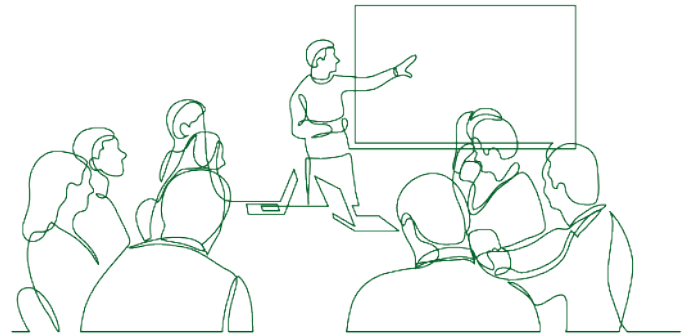


PRINCIPLE 1

Education, training and life-long learning

“Everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and life-long learning in order to maintain and acquire skills that enable them to participate fully in society and manage successful transitions in the labour market.”

[-Principle 1 of the European Pillar of Social Rights](#)



Education, training, and life-long learning as determinant of a healthy life

We live in a fast-changing world of work, affected by demographic trends and changing needs for skills and competences. Access to education and continuous training opportunities is a human right, which helps people find **secure and safe work, with decent pay and opportunities for growth**.

However, not everyone is able to fully enjoy their right to education and training. People from **under-served communities often have fewer opportunities** to participate in meaningful training and initiatives to improve their skills and career prospects.

Common barriers to participation in education and training

People with a lower socioeconomic status might not be able to participate in education and training for a [variety of reasons](#). These include lack of time and conflicting schedules, not being able to afford it, and family obligations such as caring for loved ones. Negative learning experiences in the past and health reasons also play a role, as does lack of access to the internet or a computer.

Education as a tool for healthier and prospering societies

As is, under-served communities often have fewer opportunities to participate in education and training, possibly forcing them to work in **low-income jobs** and increasing their risk of **unemployment**. Education is also an important determinant for poverty. 34.5% of people with lower education levels are at risk of [poverty and social exclusion](#), compared to 10.5% of those with tertiary education. People who live in poverty generally have [worse health](#) than those who do not.

Improving access to quality and affordable education and training can play an important role in **breaking the cycle of poverty** and improving health as a result. Education and training are [key drivers](#) for many societal milestones, including a person's employment, income and economic status, as well as the extent to which they can participate in their community.

Education and training also have a **positive life-long effect on physical and mental health and wellbeing**, by helping people build knowledge, skills and competences in many areas which impact health. Such skills include socioemotional skills, and health and digital literacy, as well as competences in finance, media, civic education and sustainable development.

Moreover, investments to improve education also offer [benefits across generations](#). Research has found that each additional year of a parent's education decreases the risk of their child dying before the age of 5 by 1.8%.

Working together to support learners' needs

To improve access to education for all and use its potential to improve wellbeing, it is key to [overcome the silo-approach](#) that is still common in education. Education is often seen as a responsibility of the education sector. In reality, **access and quality is actually impacted by all of society**, and contributes to economic growth and productivity, employment and the population's wellbeing.

Experts and organisations throughout society should be involved in creating **holistic policies and implementing measures that address barriers to education**, such as affordability, informal care responsibilities, and limited access to digital resources.

A joint approach creates accountability over the structural changes that are needed to reform education and training systems in Europe. It also contributes to any necessary changes to help the workforce keep up with the digital and green transition and other changes in the world of work.

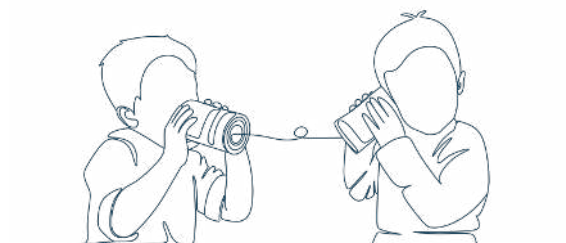
In the case of the **health workforce**, opportunities for training could support better preparedness for health emergencies and address critical shortages of workers. Training can also help build skills to implement health-promoting interventions that keep people from getting sick, such as social and nature-based prescribing.

With [public expenditure on education at historically low levels](#), it is equally important that reforms in the educational systems are matched with adequate funding.



Building healthy habits through schools

Children and adolescents spend a large proportion of their time in schools, starting from a young age. This makes schools important settings to not only provide quality and inclusive education, but to also **shape the habits that influence physical and mental health** early on.



Supportive and healthy school environments also reinforce the [close link between education outcomes and health status](#) – students who feel good in school and are healthy have better school attendance levels, academic outcomes and prospects.

“[Health-promoting schools](#)” aim to create such school settings by creating a culture and structure that **help students learn important skill sets**, such as socio-emotional learning, critical thinking and health literacy.

They also focus on creating healthy habits in the fields of nutrition, mental health and physical activity. This approach also goes beyond the traditional boundaries of the health and education sectors, encouraging collaboration across different sectors (e.g. social policy, agriculture and food supply chain, active transport, environment, public order, culture and arts).

More on health promoting schools:

- [Schools4Health](#), an EU4Health-funded project, focuses on introducing and advancing the health promoting school approach.



Supporting the digital and green transition

The shift towards a sustainable, climate neutral and digital Europe also **changes the way we work, learn and live**. The digital and green transition will require [strong European education and training systems](#) to equip current and future generations to thrive in a changing digital world and in new forms of work that focus on creating more sustainable economies and ways of living.

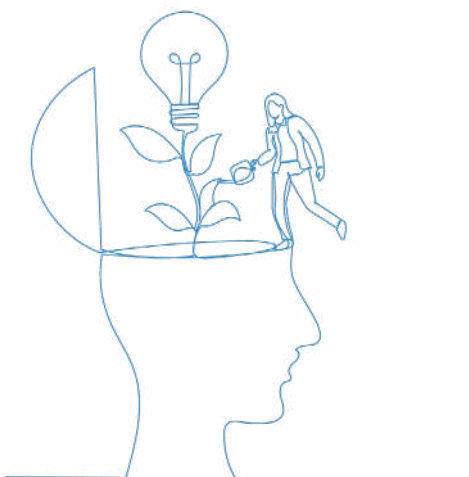


Engaging and empowering individuals to pursue learning opportunities across their careers requires policies that create opportunities for **certified training**. **Financial incentives** can promote participation in educational initiatives and support flexible certification frameworks such as micro-credentials (which certify outcomes of short-term learning experiences). By doing so, they can [boost learning and employment prospects](#).

More on the digital and green skilling:

- The [BeWell](#) project aims to build a movement of healthcare stakeholders which support and contribute to the up-skilling and re-skilling of the European health workforce.

What does the EPSR Action Plan say?



The [EPSR Action Plan](#) sets out several **overarching goals** for EU Member States to be reached by 2030:

- ✓ At least 60% of all adults should **participate in training every year**, and at least 80% of those aged 16-74 should **have basic digital skills**.
- ✓ Regions and companies within industrial eco-systems should collaborate, share information and develop joined initiatives for **skills intelligence** (insights in existing skills and training needs) and **up-skilling** that is tailored to the individual, in line with the [EU Pact for Skills](#).
- ✓ Member States should implement the policies and objectives set out in the [Council Recommendation on Vocational Educational and Training](#).
- ✓ Member States should develop **comprehensive policies to provide access to quality education for all** and provide **targeted support** to disadvantaged learners.

Where are we now?

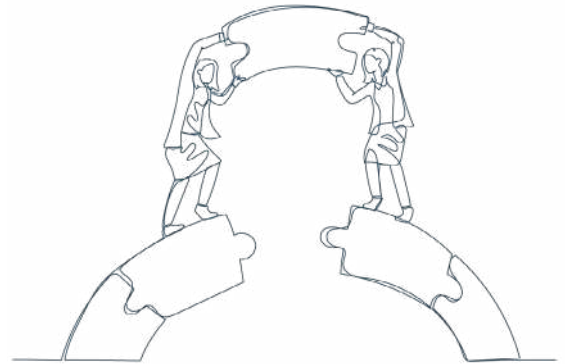


The [Social Scoreboard](#) measures progress on the principles of the EPSR. Linked to Principle 1 on education, training and life-long learning, the Scoreboard outlines that in the EU:

- ✓ 53.9% of individuals aged 16-74 had **basic or above basic digital skills** in 2022.
- ✓ The percentage of **young people in neither employment nor education and training** (NEETs) (aged 15-29) decreased from 11.1% in 2014 to 9.6% in 2022.
- ✓ **Adult participation** in learning (for population aged 25-64) increased from 9.9% in 2013 to 11.9% in 2022.
- ✓ General government **expenditure for education** decreased from 4.9% in 2020 to 4.8% of GDP in 2021.

What are public health, social and education actors doing?

The following actions taken by public health actors at (sub) national level can support the implementation of Principle 1.



Schools4Health – “Health-promoting” schools

Funded under the EU4Health programme, [Schools4Health](#) (2023-2026) will work with approximately 16 schools to analyse, implement, and evaluate good practices in the fields of healthy nutrition, physical activity, and mental health.



These efforts will demonstrate how Health Promoting Schools and other whole-school approaches can **provide children and adolescents with the right skills and supporting environments to pursue healthier lifestyles**. This will ultimately improve educational outcomes and equity, address inter-related societal challenges like climate change, and boost future employability and income.

BeWell – Skills of the future health workforce

The [BeWell](#) project (2022-2026), funded under the Erasmus+ programme, aims to build a movement of healthcare stakeholders which support and contribute to the development, implementation, and upscaling of a strategy on the up-skilling and re-skilling of the European health workforce.



This will entail addressing the skills needed to support the digital and green transition within the health ecosystem at local, regional, national, and ultimately at the European level. The project pilots curricula and training programmes target all professionals of the health workforce.

National use of EU recovery funding

EU Member States' [plans for using resilience and recovery funding](#) include investments for education, training, and life-long learning within the context of the digital and green transition. A few examples of investments are:

Austria

- Re-skilling and up-skilling of the workforce (including establishing an 'education bonus' to incentivise training for the unemployed).

Belgium

- Improving inclusiveness of education systems, particularly training on digital skills.
- Training and employment of under-served groups.
- Improving the accessibility of the labour market and training.

Slovenia

- Labour market resilience and inclusivity, including improving the employability of lower-skilled and older workers through training provision and more targeted active labour market policies.
- Strengthening competences, particularly digital skills.

Spain

- National plan for strengthening digital skills.
- Strategic plan for vocational training.
- Modernisation and digitalisation of the education system, including early education for children 0-3 years old.



National implementation of the EU Child Guarantee

In their implementation of the [EU Child Guarantee](#), Member States also focus on education and training in schools as an important component of child development. A few examples of country-level implementation measures are:

Bulgaria

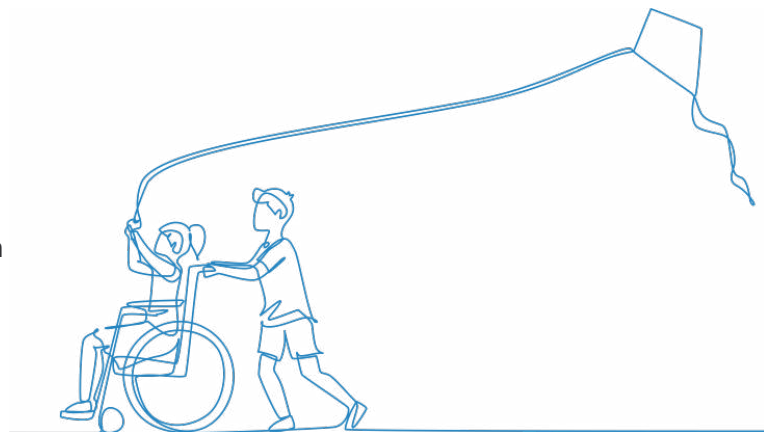
- Improving students' skills for learning and communicating in a multicultural environment, and increase educators' qualifications and skills.

Ireland

- The [Digital Strategy for Schools](#) seeks to support all students in gaining the knowledge and skills needed to navigate a digital world. Safe and effective use of digital technologies as well as inclusion are important features of the strategy.

Malta

- The inclusion of physical and nutrition education in the national school curriculum to instill healthy skills.
- The 'Opportunity Knocks' project aims to help youth learn and enhance their skills, boosting employment and career progression.



Scotland – National action to secure nourishing conditions for children

Since 2010, the [Scottish Curriculum for Excellence](#) has helped pupils develop resilience and pragmatic skills, with literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing being the three central areas.

In the national improvement framework ('the [Scottish Attainment Challenge](#)'), the focus is to use education to improve outcomes for **children and young people impacted by poverty**, with a focus on tackling the poverty-related attainment gap.

In addition, '[Getting it Right for Every Child](#)', is the **national approach** to improving outcomes and supporting the wellbeing of Scottish children and young people by offering timely and tailored help.



National use of the EU Technical Support Instrument

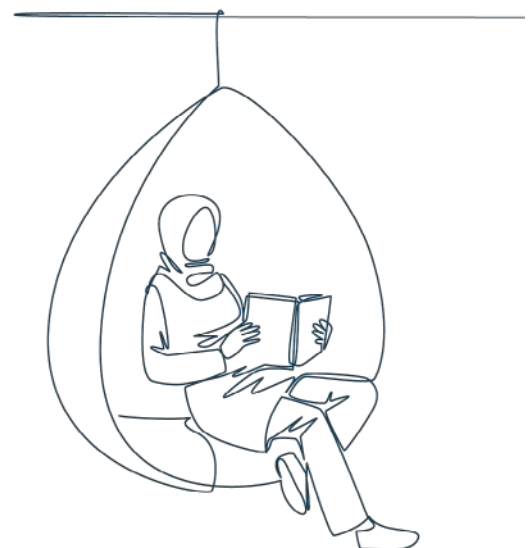
The EU Technical Support Instrument helps Member States improve the [capacities of their education and training systems](#). Examples of such investments include:

- **Curriculum reform and upgrade of the teaching profession.** Bulgaria, Estonia, Croatia, Lithuania, and Slovakia have mobilised the instrument to support the design of:
 1. Educator competence frameworks.
 2. Assessment tools for students and professional development;
 3. Teacher workforce forecasting models and policies to boost the attractiveness of the teaching profession.
- **Strengthening adult education systems.** Belgium, Spain, Hungary, the Netherlands and Portugal received guidance on how their adult education systems can be upgraded, by:
 1. Improving basic skills through national strategies and measures.
 2. Building forecasting systems.
 3. Designing governance models for adult training provision.

Other tools that help implement Principle 1

There are a range of other **policies and instruments at the EU level** that can help relevant actors in the field, including in public health, to work together to achieve EPSR Principle 1 on Education, training and life-long learning.

More information about the EU institutions and programmes is available on EuroHealthNet's [Health Inequalities Portal](#).



The EU Child and Youth Guarantee

The [EU Child Guarantee](#) sets out **recommended actions** in early childhood education and care, inclusive education, and healthcare including access, affordability, and cross-sector services to address children's health needs and potential. Similarly, the [Youth Guarantee](#) aims to provide good quality employment, continued education or traineeships. The [Erasmus+ vocational training and volunteering schemes](#) can support this.



The EU Youth Strategy

The EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027 is the **framework for EU youth policy cooperation** to “improve policy decisions with regard to their impact on young people across all sectors, notably employment, education, health and social inclusion”. Quality learning and quality employment for all are key [pillars](#) of this strategy, to support youth's transition from education to employment.

Digital Education Plan

The [Digital Education Action Plan](#) (2021-2027), supported by the upcoming European Digital Education Hub, sets out two strategic priorities: **developing high-performing digital education ecosystem and enhancing digital skills and competences for the digital transformation**. It incorporates 14 supporting actions to build structured dialogue, education frameworks, guidelines for educators and certification pathways.

The European Education Area Framework

The [European Education Area \(EEA\) strategic framework](#) aims to improve quality and equity in education and training; develop digital and green education; support teachers, trainers and school leaders; and integrate education and training in the [European Semester](#).

Under the umbrella of the EEA, the [Council Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning](#) provides a common **European reference framework** for key competences needed across the life course.

The [Council Recommendation for Vocational Education and Training](#) seeks to **equip all citizens with the skills for a fair digital and green transition**, in line with labour market needs. The [Council Recommendation on Learning for the Green Transition and Sustainable Development](#) encourages policies and programmes which enable learners to gain green and sustainable skills.



European Skills Agenda

The [European Skills Agenda](#) is a five-year plan to help citizens and businesses build skills. Its action areas focus on equipping people with the right skills, supporting them in their lifelong learning pathways and providing a framework for skills investments.

To facilitate collective action, the [Pact for Skills](#) was launched as part of this Agenda to engage public and private organisations in their commitments to up-skilling and re-skilling the workforce.

EU financial instruments

The [Resilience and Recovery Facility](#) is a **temporary instrument** contributing to the NextGenerationEU - the EU's resilience-building framework. In their respective plans, Member States were encouraged to include [re-skilling and up-skilling as a key flagship area for investment](#), to support the adaptation of education systems to current and future skills needs.

The [European Regional Development Fund](#) aims to **strengthen economic, social and territorial cohesion** in the EU. This fund can [support](#) training infrastructure and equipment.

The [Technical Support Instrument](#) provides **tailored technical expertise to EU Member States to facilitate reforms**. This instrument can be [used](#) to set up inclusive strategies for up-skilling and re-skilling, design certification and validation systems and create enabling structures for life-long learning.



For more supportive policy instruments on the topic, consult our other flashcards:

- Principle 9: [Work-life balance](#)
- Principle 11: [Childcare and support to children](#)
- Principle 18: [Long-term care for more supportive policy instruments](#)

More information about the EU institutions and programmes is available on EuroHealthNet's [Health Inequalities Portal](#).

Available resources

Available EU funding

- [EU funding instruments for up-skilling and re-skilling](#)
- Resources from EuroHealthNet
 - [e-Guide on Financing Health Promoting Services](#)
 - [EU Funding explained](#) - Briefing

Contact points for further assistance

The following contact points and resources may be useful:

- EuroHealthNet [guide to support points for EU programmes, instruments and networks](#)
- The [Life-long Learning Platform](#)
- The [Pact for Skills for the Health Ecosystem](#) (The guidelines for registration are available [here](#))
- [Erasmus+ programme contact points](#)
- The [European Association for the Education of Adults](#)
- The [Schools for Health in Europe Network](#)
- [European SchoolNet](#)
- The [UNESCO Chair for Global Health and Education](#)
- The [European Commission's Expert Group](#) on enhancing supportive learning environments for vulnerable learners and for promoting well-being and mental health at school



Technical resources

- [EU Year of Skills 2023](#)
- EuroHealthNet publications:
 - Policy Précis: [Making the link: health, education, and inequality](#)
 - Policy Précis: [Making the link: Investing in people and employment as part of a fairer and healthier recovery](#)
- Conference Report – Skills for health: [Up – and re-skilling for a sustainable recovery](#)
- European Commission [Education and Training Monitor 2022](#)
- European Commission [EU Science Hub, Education and Training](#)
- Centre for Global Health Inequalities Research (CHAIN): [Identifying the link between parental education and child mortality](#)

Have your say

Does your public health institute have any promising policies or practices in place that support the implementation of this EPSR principle?

We invite you to reach out to our EuroHealthNet colleague Dorota Sienkiewicz via d.sienkiewicz@eurohealthnet.eu.

References and more flashcards

All EPSR flashcards are available at epsr-flashcards.eurohealthnet.eu. Scan the QR code to view more flashcards.



The European Pillar of Social Rights

Flashcard tool

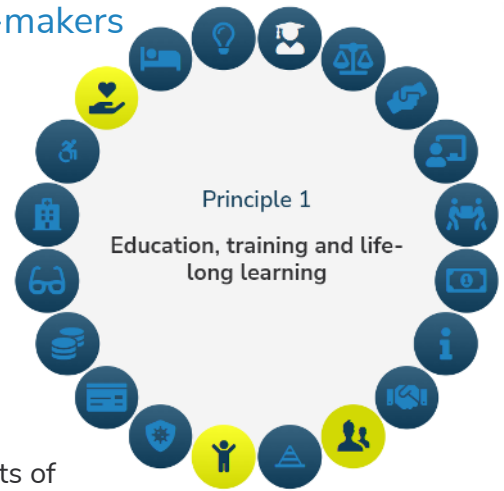
- A guide for public health professionals and decision-makers

What is the European Pillar of Social Rights?

The EPSR sets out 20 key principles, agreed upon by EU Member States, to **achieve sustainable and inclusive societies**.

The **EU Action Plan on the EPSR** sets out actions at European level to turn the principles in concrete actions. It also proposes headline targets for the EU to reach by 2030.

The EPSR sets the **aspiration and implementation priorities for a more social Europe for all**. A more social Europe paves the way for a healthier Europe. By addressing the underlying determinants of health, the European Pillar of Social Rights can be considered a **European Pillar for Health**.



About the EPSR flashcards

The flashcards are designed to **demonstrate how EPSR principles can contribute to achieving health and wellbeing**. Each flashcard explores a different principle and sets out what public health authorities across Europe are doing to help build progress.

Each flashcard sets out

- ✓ How the EPSR principle is relevant to public health
- ✓ Concrete goals set out by the EPSR Action Plan
- ✓ The EU tools available to implement the EPSR principle
- ✓ What European public health authorities across Europe are doing to implement the principle
- ✓ Available EU funding and contact points for further assistance

About EuroHealthNet

Building a healthier future for all by addressing the determinants of health and reducing inequalities.

EuroHealthNet is the Partnership of public health agencies and organisations building a healthier future for all by addressing the determinants of health and reducing inequalities. Our focus is on preventing disease and promoting good health by looking within and beyond the health system.

Structuring our work over a policy, a practice, and a research platform, we focus on exploring and strengthening the links between these areas.

Our approach focuses on integrated concepts to health, reducing health inequality gaps and gradients, working on determinants across the life course, whilst contributing to the sustainability and wellbeing of people and the planet.

To find out more about us, visit www.eurohealthnet.eu.



www.health-inequalities.eu

www.eurohealthnet-magazine.eu



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