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THE S.P.A.R.K.L.E SYLLABUS

For Inclusive Literacy



From Literacy to Participation: How S.P.A.R.K.L.E is
Redefining Language Education for Adult Migrants



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Strengthening Inclusive Language Education for Adult Migrants: The S.P.A.R.K.L.E Training Syllabus

One of the central outcomes of the S.P.A.R.K.L.E project is the development of a **comprehensive** and **modular training syllabus** aimed at enhancing the pedagogical competences of professionals working with adult migrants, refugees, and newcomers.

The syllabus responds to challenges reported by our teachers during the teacher training workshops organised across the partner countries, while also drawing on the expertise of the project consortium. Rather than being developed exclusively through academic literature, the syllabus was co-designed through an iterative process combining educational research, teachers' professional expertise, and the experiences shared during national workshops. This participatory approach (Lenette, Caroline, *Participatory Action Research. Ethics and Decolonization*, 2022.) ensures that the final framework responds to concrete classroom challenges while remaining grounded in current research on adult learning and second language acquisition.

Conventional language teaching approaches often fail to meet the needs of learners with emerging literacy, limited formal schooling, or experiences of forced displacement. Effective language provision for these groups requires **learner-centred methodologies** that acknowledge diverse educational trajectories, promote social inclusion, and support meaningful participation in host societies.

Designing inclusive language programmes for adult migrants goes far beyond simplifying vocabulary or grammar. One of the greatest challenges for educators is recognising that literacy is not a uniform concept, but rather a continuum shaped by educational histories, cultural practices, social contexts, and individual life experiences (Ajayi, Olumide, *Reimagining Inclusivity in Literacy Education for African Immigrant Adolescents*, 2026.) Learners may share the same language level while having profoundly different relationships with reading, writing, formal education, and learning itself. For this reason, truly inclusive language education cannot rely on standardised assumptions about learners' cultural or educational capital; instead, it requires flexible pedagogical approaches that recognise diverse epistemologies of literacy and **place the individual learner at the centre of the educational process**.

The S.P.A.R.K.L.E Syllabus provides a structured training framework for language teachers, adult educators, trainers, volunteers, and other practitioners involved in host-country language education. It combines evidence-informed pedagogical principles with practical teaching strategies that can be adapted to a wide range of educational contexts.

The overarching objective of the syllabus is to strengthen **inclusive, accessible, and dignity-based** language education that enables adult migrants and refugees to develop communicative competences essential for everyday life, access to public services, community participation, and opens pathways towards education and employment.

What makes the S.P.A.R.K.L.E Syllabus particularly distinctive is its strong ethical dimension. Rather than treating language learning as the transmission of linguistic knowledge alone, the syllabus encourages educators to first understand the individual behind the learner: their previous educational experiences, personal history, motivations, vulnerabilities, and strengths. Creating psychologically safe learning environments, fostering dignity, and adapting teaching practices to diverse learning profiles are presented as fundamental pedagogical competences rather than complementary skills.

The training draws on contemporary research in adult education, second language acquisition, and **literacy development**. Particular emphasis is placed on **oral-first language learning, Easy-to-Read** communication, multisensory **instructional approaches**, authentic **task-based learning**, and **teaching strategies suitable for learners experiencing digital exclusion or learning in low-resource environments**.

Within this perspective, literacy is understood as a **social practice** rather than merely the ability to decode written text (Street, Brian, *Literacy in Theory and Practice*. Cambridge University Press, 1984; Barton, D., & Hamilton, M., *Local Literacies*. Routledge, 1984.) Consequently, the syllabus does not privilege written grammar as the primary entry point to language learning. Instead, language is contextualised through **authentic communication, everyday interactions, oral expression, visual supports, and meaningful real-life situations** that are immediately relevant for newcomers navigating their new communities. This approach recognises that communicative participation is often a prerequisite for literacy development, rather than its outcome.

These approaches recognise that language learning is most effective when it is directly connected to learners' immediate communicative needs and real-life contexts.

The syllabus is primarily intended for educators working with adult learners at **A0** to **A1** proficiency levels, especially those supporting individuals with limited literacy, pre-literacy, interrupted educational experiences, unstable attendance patterns, or restricted access to digital technologies. While the **direct beneficiaries** of the training are **educators and practitioners**, its ultimate impact is expected to **improve learning opportunities and social inclusion** for adult migrants and refugees.

Designed with flexibility in mind, the syllabus can be delivered in several formats according to institutional needs. It may be implemented as a 24-hour core training programme, suitable for an intensive four-day mobility activity, as a series of modular training sessions, or as an extended 32-hour programme incorporating additional practice and reinforcement activities.

The curriculum consists of **eight interconnected modules** covering learner profiling and needs analysis, inclusive curriculum planning, Easy-to-Read material development, task-based language teaching, digital and low-technology learning supports, assessment strategies, and micro-teaching. Each module specifies learning outcomes, practical activities, and methods for verifying the acquisition of professional competences, thereby supporting both theoretical understanding and classroom application.

Beyond the production of a training resource, the S.P.A.R.K.L.E Syllabus contributes to ongoing European discussions on inclusive adult education, lifelong learning, and migrant integration. By combining evidence-informed pedagogy with practical classroom experience, it seeks to strengthen educators' professional capacity while promoting more equitable access to language learning as a prerequisite for social participation, active citizenship, and access to employment (UNESCO, *Embracing a Culture of Lifelong Learning*, 2020.)

The complete S.P.A.R.K.L.E Training Syllabus is available on the project website and can be downloaded free of charge in English, Italian, Spanish, Greek and French.