

IN MEMORIAM

Albert Tuijnman (1959-2024): Pioneer in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning Policy Development

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A pioneer in adult education and lifelong learning policy development and scholarship, economist Albert Tuijnman made extraordinary, long-lasting contributions to its legacy.

From within OECD, he was responsible for the first International Adult Literacy Survey. He convinced delegates in the OECD Network working on Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators, to develop the first OECD indicator for adult education participation, based on his original research work. When OECD Ministers of Education met in 1996, Albert Tuijnman organised their conference. He was the principal author of the conference document laying out the lifelong learning policy issues and strategic directions “Lifelong Learning For All: Meeting of the Education Committee at Ministerial Level”. The Ministers adopted the position that lifelong learning constitutes the overall policy for organizing and financing education systems.

In his most groundbreaking research work, “Recurrent Education, Earnings and Well-Being: A Fifty-Year Longitudinal Study of a Cohort of Swedish Men,” he introduced the application of statistical models to longitudinal data to investigate the effects of initial schooling and later adult education on individuals’ employment, earnings, and quality of life. A game-changer for the field of adult education, the work demonstrated that when analyzed over an extended time horizon, participants in adult education regard their lives as more worthwhile, full, rich, and interesting than those who do not take part.

The longitudinal method Tuijnman employed in the study is now considered the gold standard in adult education research. He attracted

and promoted many data analysts, guiding their Ph.D. dissertations and launching them toward their academic careers.

In recognition of his achievements, Tuijnman was invited to become editor of the International Encyclopedia of Adult Education and Training (Elsevier Science, 1996).

A professor and Head of the Institute of Comparative Education at Stockholm University, he was invited to be the first and still the only Fellow of the International Academy of Education, to represent the field of adult education, and has since been awarded many honours, including special professorships in the United Kingdom, Denmark, China (Hong Kong), the Netherlands, and Sweden.

During the 20 years of his career as Managerial Advisor for Education and Public Research in the European Investment Bank (2003-2023), Albert Tuijnman laid the groundwork for the conceptualisation and financing of over 150 large-scale infrastructure projects in all countries of the European Union and much of the Neighbourhood. In Greece, projects have included Attica Schools PPP, Hellenic Education I-III, Hellenic Research Universities, Demokritos, and the Hellenic Foundation for Research and Innovation, the national agency dedicated to scholar-led and bottom-up financing of research projects in all scientific disciplines. In Ireland, brand-new primary and secondary schools were constructed in all communities and major investments were directed to vocational colleges, universities, and adult education centres, including the Institutes of Technology in Galway and Limerick and Grangegorman in Dublin. In Poland, investments have targeted schools and community colleges in all regions and top-tier universities of the country. Importantly, Albert Tuijnman was instrumental in creating and financing the Polish National Science Council and the National Agency for Research and Development. He has also directed sustained financial support to the Polish Academy of Sciences since 2005.

Albert Tuijnman had a stunning work energy, a quicksilver intelligence, and a drive to overcome incredible amounts of tasks, that was second to none. He became a friend and collaborator of many of those who shaped the cause of adult and continuing education in several decades. He will be dearly missed.