

Adult Learning in Times of Urgency: Moving Beyond Rhetoric

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Introduction: why “beyond rhetoric” still names the problem

In 2003, the OECD’s *Beyond Rhetoric* offered one of the first systematic diagnoses of adult learning across countries. In increasingly knowledge-based and ageing societies, adult learning was framed not as a policy option but as a structural necessity. Yet the diagnosis was already paradoxical: participation remained low, governance fragmented, and coordination weak, with strong inequalities in access and provision. The report called for coherent systems capable of turning policy vision into implementation (OECD, 2003).

Twenty years later, the same challenges persist. Despite expanded strategies and renewed policy agendas, adult learning remains constrained by project-based logic, uneven funding, and an enduring economic bias. The continuing relevance of “moving beyond rhetoric” suggests that the problem lies less in defining goals than in creating the institutional and political capacity to realise them. Stated differently, the enduring gap between ambition and practice is not merely a delivery failure: it is a governance condition.

This paper positions that condition within a longer genealogy. Since the early 1970s, two traditions have shaped the very idea of lifelong learning. A first, humanistic tradition, articulated through UNESCO’s Faure Report (1972) and reaffirmed in the Delors Report (1996), conceived education as a universal right and a foundation for human dignity, democracy, and peace. This humanistic line is often theorised as a citizenship and welfare-oriented model (Regmi 2015). A second tradition, consolidated during the 1980s and 1990s through the influence of the OECD and the World Bank, reframed learning as investment, and adult education as an instrument for productivity, employability, and growth. These genealogies coexist but only partially converge, reflecting

enduring tensions between humanistic aspirations and human-capital imperatives (Lee & Jan 2018).

The paper advances two claims. First, the shift from the right to learn to the obligation to upskill is not merely semantic; it marks a profound ideological reconfiguration of adult learning's purposes and publics. Second, the governance of adult learning has become increasingly dependent on measurement infrastructures that define what counts as learning and who counts as a learner (Piazza, 2009) and on a policy discourse that constructs the 'worthy' adult learner as adaptable and economically productive (Walker 2009). Participation, often treated as a neutral performance indicator, has gradually become a technology of governance (Karger, Kalenda, & Vaculíková, 2025), with significant consequences for inclusion, agency, and the democratic meaning of lifelong learning.

Methodologically, the paper is a conceptual and critical policy analysis grounded in international reports and secondary scholarship: OECD analyses (2003–2025), European policy trajectories and benchmarking logics, CEDEFOP monitoring frameworks and methodological shifts (CEDEFOP, 2024), and UNESCO's GRALE series and related frameworks (2009–2022). The goal is not to add another descriptive overview, but to clarify how global and European governance rationalities shape the problem-definition of adult learning, particularly through participation metrics, and what "moving beyond rhetoric" may entail as a political and institutional agenda.

Two genealogies and a shifting ideology of lifelong learning

The humanistic tradition is anchored in UNESCO's post-war internationalism. The Faure Report (1972) envisaged education as a lifelong process through which individuals fulfil themselves and learn to live together, positioning adult learning at the centre of personal and collective emancipation and the construction of democratic societies. The Delors Report (1996) reaffirmed this view, linking lifelong learning to dignity, democracy, and peace.

The economic tradition consolidated later through OECD and World Bank agendas, reframing learning as investment and adult learning as an instrument for labour-market efficiency and economic competitiveness. This repositioning is not only programmatic but discursive: the OECD progressively framed adult learning within a labour-market efficiency rationale (Rubenson 2015). Yet this apparent complementarity masks an asymmetrical relationship, in which the economic agenda has come to dominate the evaluative framework of adult learning, marginalising humanistic rationales.

This shift can be interpreted through Bourdieu's reminder that no scientific or educational field exists in isolation from the broader social space in predominantly economic, political, and cultural forces (Bourdieu, 2005). Adult education's meaning and legitimacy are continuously redefined within these struggles (Piazza, 2009). The transition from the civic humanism of the 1970s to the learning economies of the 1990s reflects precisely this reconfiguration: from education as a permanent foundation of citizenship to education oriented toward adaptability and competitiveness.

A critical point follows. UNESCO's humanistic discourse, once grounded in universality and peace, has itself undergone a turn toward technocratic frames, adapting to policy environments where evidence, accountability and results-based management increasingly mediate educational purpose and practice (Elfert 2017). UNESCO has not been immune to the technocratic turn that pervades global education governance. The OECD, by contrast, has institutionalised the language of evidence, transforming indicators into instruments of persuasion and governance. Here, the issue is not "data versus values," but the political effects of particular modes of producing evidence: indicators do not simply describe realities; they structure how problems are defined, compared, and governed, becoming instruments of policy coordination and persuasion (Grek 2009).

From diagnosis to inertia: OECD analyses and the reproduction of inequality

The OECD report *Beyond Rhetoric* (2003) identified fragmentation, inconsistent data, and persistent inequalities. Participation was stratified by education, income, age, and employment status. The disparities were striking: during a four-week reference period, participation rates in Denmark, Finland, and Sweden approached one in four adults, while Portugal, Hungary, and Spain remained below five percent. Education emerged as the strongest predictor, with participation declining sharply after midlife (notably after age forty-five). Two years later, *Promoting Adult Learning* (OECD, 2005) reiterated barriers such as lack of time, cost, motivation especially among low-skilled and older workers. Proposed solutions focused on incentives, recognition of prior learning, and quality assurance, yet the underlying rationale remained stable: adult learning as labour-market instrument, valued for productivity rather than civic or humanistic purposes. This framing proved politically persuasive, but its effects were paradoxical: rather than reducing inequality, it deepened it. Participation among higher-educated adults remained four to five times higher than among lower-qualified adults; under-represented groups remained stable—low-income earners, older adults, and workers in small enterprises.

The Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC, 2013) reinforced the cumulative dynamic. By introducing skills proficiency, especially literacy and numeracy, as central indicators of employability, PIAAC showed that adults with higher proficiency are significantly more likely to learn throughout life, while those with lower skills, older age, or disadvantaged backgrounds face persistent exclusion. Across OECD countries, adults scoring at literacy Levels 4 or 5 were around three times more likely to participate than those at or below Level 1; in several countries (including Italy, Korea, Slovakia, Poland, and Spain) the difference rose to four or five times (OECD, 2013, p. 34). Since proficiency is itself unequally distributed across educational attainment, socio-economic status, migration background, and occupational positioning, participation becomes structurally cumulative. This is the social mechanism that sustains the Matthew effect in lifelong learning: those with fewer opportunities are those least likely to access further education, perpetuating disadvantage rather than breaking it. More recent OECD analyses – *Increasing Adult Learning Participation* (2020), *Skills Outlook: Learning for Life* (2021), and *Trends in Adult Learning* (2025) – confirm that inertia endures, even as the rhetorical frame shifts toward resilience, inclusion, and digital adaptation. As Römo (2024) argues, progressive vocabularies may conceal a neoliberal logic: resilience and adaptability are framed as individual obligations, translating structural inequality into personal upskilling.

By 2025, the OECD acknowledges stalled progress. Using PIAAC Cycle 2 (2023) data, participation has stagnated or declined across the past decade, with a parallel decline in literacy proficiency, suggesting a mutually reinforcing cycle of reduced opportunities and deteriorating skills. Adult learning is also changing in form. Formal education represents only a small share: around 8% of adults are enrolled in formal programmes (a decline from the previous PIAAC cycle), while job-related courses dominate and often last only a few days (42%). These short, compliance-based and employer-driven formats may broaden access but limit cumulative learning, prompting OECD advocacy for modular and stackable pathways. Informal learning remains widespread through workplace learning, reinforcing the centrality of environments that sustain learning as social and contextual, not purely individual.

However, participation remains uneven in motivation as well as opportunity. Half of adults across the OECD neither participated nor wanted to participate in learning in the preceding 12 months. Among those who wished to learn, one in four encountered barriers (most often time or cost) while employer support emerges as decisive.

A key conceptual problem is now explicitly foregrounded. Boeren and Kalenda (2025) argue that large-scale surveys such as AES and PIAAC rely on categories – formal, non-formal, informal – that no longer reflect hybrid or digitally mediated learning, obscure duration, agency, and collaboration, and erase territorial diversity through national averages. What appears as neutral evidence is itself a form of policy production: it defines what counts as learning, who counts as a learner, and which outcomes become visible to decision-makers.

OECD's call for a "paradigm shift" thus remains ambiguous. While advocating more coordinated strategies, it coincides with an expanding market of micro-modules and autonomous online learning (Knight et al., 2024), often hosted by global platforms (LinkedIn Learning; Coursera). These micro-credentials promise measurable returns but often have low engagement and completion, turning learning into self-service consumption rather than collective or transformative education. This trajectory resonates with the broader utilitarian turn in adult education policy, where lifelong learning is aligned with market mandates (Panisides 2015). The semantic evolution from lifelong education to lifelong learning and to lifelong development signals a deeper policy drift from public good to private endeavour, carries purposive and ideological consequences (Milana 2012; Milana 2019), transforming learning into what Knight et al. (2023) calls "edu-tainment": individualised, commodified, episodic activity detached from democratic purposes. Notably, UNESCO's GRALE III had already warned against "vocational overemphasis," suggesting that even distinct institutional languages can converge around a shared diagnosis of fragmentation and instrumentalisation.

Europe: hybrid ideology, benchmarks, and the governance of participation

European lifelong learning policy reflects a complex negotiation between UNESCO's humanistic heritage and the European Union's economic rationality. The Faure Report's vision of lifelong education as citizenship right and democratic project was progressively reframed. The European Commission's *Memorandum on Lifelong Learning* (2000) echoed the "learning society" ethos while explicitly linking lifelong learning to employability, adaptability, and competitiveness, with learning defined as "all purposeful learning activity" aimed at improving knowledge, skills, and competence. A substantial body of scholarship has shown how EU coordination mechanisms institutionalised adult learning within employment-oriented strategies (Milana & Holford 2014; Milana & Klatt 2019).

Subsequent strategies consolidated this shift, including *It Is Never Too Late to Learn* (2006), the *Action Plan on Adult Learning* (2007), and the *Renewed European Agenda* (2011), which introduced the symbolic 15% participation benchmark by 2020 never achieved. Alongside this economic trajectory, EU discourse also retained a social dimension. The Council Recommendation on Key Competences (2018) linked lifelong learning to inclusion, intercultural dialogue, and sustainable lifestyles, aligning with the UN 2030 Agenda, while maintaining a competence-oriented and measurable-outcomes orientation (PISA; PIAAC) and accountability.

This coexistence has been described as a European hybrid ideology of lifelong learning (Antikainen, 2006; Knight et al., 2024): progressive and neoliberal rationalities intersect, and participation is valued more for economic returns than emancipatory potential. Scholars have framed this trajectory as part of broader neoliberal reconfigurations of lifelong learning (Biesta, 2006, 2009; Romö, 2024). Kinnari and Silvennoinen's (2023) typology, humanistic, economic, soft-economic, captures the production of learner identities: *homo humanus* within UNESCO's humanistic discourse, *homo politicus* within the Council of Europe's democratic framework, *homo economicus* within the OECD's economic rationality. What began as collective humanist project increasingly functions as technology of self-management.

Empirically, the Eurydice Report (EC, 2021) provides a structural picture of deficits and stratification: in 2019, one in five adults in the EU had not completed upper secondary education, with deficits concentrated in southern Europe and among adults born outside their country of residence; substantial shares also lack essential literacy, numeracy, and digital competences, with 40% at risk of digital exclusion. Participation data reproduce inequality: fewer than one third of Member States achieved the 15% benchmark within the previous four weeks. Learning forms also matter: most adults engage in short non-formal courses rather than programmes leading to recognised qualifications, reinforcing an education-to-skills drift, and a learning-as-adaptation framing.

Within this hybrid landscape, CEDEFOP's monitoring framework becomes central: it translates political ambition into targets and indicators and exposes both progress and limits.

Measuring Participation: from attendance to engagement (and why it matters)

Participation research has evolved from individual explanations to multi-level approaches recognising the interplay of social, institutional, and motivational factors (Boeren, 2023). CEDEFOP's monitoring has become a principal instrument for assessing Europe's progress. Using Labour Force Survey (LFS) four-week measures, participation increased only marginally - from 9.5% in 2007 to 11.9 percent in 2022 - while Nordic countries remain above 25% and Southern/Eastern countries lag significantly (e.g., Italy 8.3; Romania 5.1; Greece 4.5). CEDEFOP (2024) attributes disparities to structural inequalities and to measurement limitations: the four-week LFS reference period underestimated participation compared with annual surveys such as AES, often missing short, episodic, or workplace learning.

Methodological reforms followed. The *European Skills Agenda* (2020) and the *European Education Area 2021-2030* extended the reference period to 12 months and introduced new benchmarks: 47% by 2025 and 60% by 2030. Adult Education Survey (2022) reported 43% participation in formal or non-formal learning over 12 months, rising to nearly 60% when informal learning is included. Yet low-qualified adults remain below 20%.

CEDEFOP's 2024 *Analytical Note* marks a conceptual shift: participation cannot be reduced to attendance; it includes engagement, intensity, and perceived usefulness. This move implies a transition from measurement for efficiency to measurement for meaning. Yet critical scholarship cautions that large-scale surveys can reproduce economic bias, rely on outdated categories (formal/non-formal/informal), reduce participation to binary variables, introduce recall bias, and erase local contexts (Kalenda & Boeren, 2025). Field et al. (2016) describes the resulting "league tables logic," which privileges comparability over understanding.

In this perspective, CEDEFOP's introduction of qualitative indicators (engagement intensity, learning purpose, and outcome relevance) appears not merely technical but epistemic and political. It acknowledges multiple aims of adult learning (economic, personal, civic) and repositions monitoring closer to UNESCO's discourse, distancing it from narrow productivity logic. The remaining issue is why participation is measured, and whose purposes such measurement serves, a question about the politics of knowledge underlying adult learning governance. Participation, therefore, cannot be treated as an unquestioned good: it may conceal mechanisms of active exclusion and subtle forms of andragogical control (Federighi et al. 2025).

UNESCO: a humanistic continuum and its limits

In contrast to OECD pragmatism and EU target-driven logics, UNESCO has remained the moral custodian of adult education. Through GRALE I-V (2009-2022), UNESCO consistently reaffirms learning as human right and public good, anchored in the Belém Framework (2010), Incheon Declaration (2015), and Marrakech Framework (2022), linking adult learning to social justice, sustainability, and peace, aligned with SDG 4 (Grotlüschen et al., 2023). This rights-based framing, however, also raises questions about what such a commitment means in practice for adult learning systems and governance (Elfert 2019).

Recent interpretations of CONFINTEA VII describe the Marrakech Framework as an attempt to restore coherence and normative direction to adult education governance in a fragmented global landscape (Rhodes & Ó Tuama 2025). Its emphasis on active citizenship and collective responsibility has been widely noted (Avoseh 2024), particularly in light of intersecting crises that demand civic engagement beyond employability. At the same time, climate action agendas highlight the need for clearer institutional roles for adult learning and education providers (Griswold 2024), suggesting that normative aspiration must translate into operational clarity.

Across the series, the normative continuity is visible, alongside increasing self-critique. GRALE IV (2019) and the follow-up *Adult Education and the Challenge of Exclusion* (2020) denounce “inclusion from above,” narrow definitions of participation as course attendance, and epistemic inequalities reinforced by Eurocentric data standards, arguing that those excluded from education are excluded from knowledge about exclusion. The call is for plural knowledges and community-based forms of learning.

GRALE V (2022) produced amid overlapping crises, recentres adult learning on citizenship and democratic participation, recognising community learning centres as key infrastructures for local resilience and inclusive participation, and explicitly linking lifelong learning to Learning Cities as territorial agents of democratic sustainability. Yet governance remains fragmented: only one third of countries have dedicated coordination bodies, and inter-sectoral cooperation remains weak. GRALE (2015) recognises citizenship, employability, and personal development as core functions, but policy priorities continue to gravitate toward employability.

UNESCO’s normative strength is also its limitation: persuasion without enforcement, lacking the financial leverage of the World Bank or the

benchmarking authority of the OECD. The shift from UNESCO to OECD paradigms has moved education “from learning to be to learning to earn” (Elfert & Ydesen, 2023). Still, UNESCO’s recognition of community learning centres and learning cities keeps open an alternative grammar centred on justice, diversity, and human flourishing.

Discussion: structural persistence, governance gaps and the narrowing of purpose

Urgency is politically ambivalent: it can mobilise transformative energy, but it can also compress deliberation into reaction, depoliticising adult learning into adaptive compliance (English & Mayo 2019). In policy terms, urgency often legitimises simplification: complex structural inequalities are translated into measurable targets, accelerated reforms, and short-term performance indicators. Across OECD, CEDEFOP, and UNESCO frameworks, one message is consistent: participation remains socially stratified. OECD analyses show older, less educated, and low-income adults remain systematically excluded; apparent narrowing of gaps can reflect decline among highly educated groups rather than inclusion. “Equality achieved through decline” is not progress.

The persistence of fragmentation is equally robust. Adult education remains marginalised in policy architectures, neither fully part of education nor labour policy. Validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning remain weak, limiting visibility and value. Only a minority of countries have dedicated coordination bodies and integrated governance across ministries (UNESCO, 2019; CEDEFOP, 2024).

A central argument emerges: policy fragmentation is mirrored by epistemic fragmentation (Boeren & Kalenda, 2025). Participation data infrastructures often reproduce the biases they seek to measure, prioritising employability over civic/humanistic dimensions. The limits of governance are thus institutional and conceptual: how participation is defined and counted shapes what becomes visible to policymakers. In this sense, measurement does not merely accompany governance; it structures the horizon within which adult learning problems are recognised and addressed.

This is also an ideological issue. Adult learning remains framed largely in terms of employability and competitiveness. OECD vocabulary evolves from human capital (2003) to skills ecosystems (2025), while logic persists: training as investment for productivity. UNESCO re-centres education on agency and citizenship, but risks moralising crises rather than confronting political causes (Mufic, 2025).

The governance-by-numbers paradigm becomes hegemonic (Grek, 2009): indicators produce reality by defining progress and narrowing participation to what can be counted. Even the basic categories formal/non-formal/informal, originally introduced to widen recognition (Faure et al., 1972; Coombs, 1974), are now conceptually obsolete (Boeren & Kalenda, 2025), failing to capture hybrid trajectories across institutional, digital, and community spaces. This conceptual lag undermines evidence-based policy because what is measured no longer reflects how adults learn. What appears as technical lag is therefore political lag: a misalignment between lived learning practices and the administrative categories that govern them. The paper therefore supports a conceptual renewal: a redefinition of adult learning as a continuum of lived, relational, and territorially embedded practice rather than as an administrative construct reducible to measurable episodes.

Conclusion: beyond rhetoric, again-toward a politics of implementation

Twenty years after *Beyond Rhetoric*, the call remains painfully relevant. Participation remains unequal, systems fragmented, and learning narrowly instrumental. The failure is not primarily technical; it is political and imaginative. Lifelong learning continues to be managed through urgency and scarcity, as if learning were a race against time rather than a space for meaning. Moving beyond rhetoric requires shifting from project logic to system logic and from attendance-based participation to meaningful engagement. It entails three interrelated commitments:

- Re-grounding adult learning in social rights and democratic agency, recognising learning not as a privilege of the adaptable but as a collective condition of citizenship.
- Building systems that sustain participation, prioritising engagement, continuity, and relevance over attendance-participation understood as interplay of opportunity, motivation, and agency (CEDEFOP, 2024; Karger et al., 2025).
- Re-embedding learning in everyday trusted spaces-community learning centres, neighbourhood schools, libraries, cultural associations, and universities-understood as infrastructures of reflection, cooperation, and the capacity to act upon experience (Broek et al., 2024; UNESCO, 2022).

Learning is territorial. Learning cities, local skills ecosystems, and place-based agendas converge on the same insight: participation grows where learning infrastructures are rooted in trust, proximity, and care. Supporting adult educators, counsellors, and community facilitators is therefore not ancillary but

structural: they are connective agents who bridge individuals, institutions, and policies, forming the living infrastructure of adult learning systems.

If the OECD counts, CEDEFOP connects, and UNESCO inspires, the challenge is to make these logics converge around a democratic conception of lifelong learning, less as marketplace of skills and more as a commons of knowledge, dignity, and participation. Only then can adult learning genuinely move beyond rhetoric.

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Roberta Piazza

Abstract

More than twenty years after the OECD's *Beyond Rhetoric* report (2003), adult learning continues to be characterised by persistent inequalities in participation, fragmented governance, and an enduring economic bias. This paper argues that the limits of lifelong learning are not primarily technical, linked to insufficient targets, inadequate monitoring, or weak incentives, but conceptual and political: adult learning is still governed through a nagerial scripts of efficiency and urgency that translate structural problems into individual obligations. Building on the long-standing tension between UNESCO's humanistic tradition and the economistic orientation consolidated through OECD and World Bank agendas, the paper examines how international organisations construct adult learning through indicators, participation measures, and benchmark logics. Drawing on OECD analyses (2003–2025), European policy trajectories, CEDEFOP's evolving monitoring frameworks, and UNESCO's GRALE series (2009–2022) and its rights-based reframing under SDG 4, it shows how participation has increasingly become a quantifiable object of governance, often reducing learning to attendance and obscuring agency, duration, collaboration, and territorial diversity. Moving beyond rhetoric requires a politics of implementation grounded in social rights, systemic governance, and learning infrastructures rooted in trusted local spaces, capable of sustaining meaningful participation beyond compliance-based training.

Key words

adult learning; lifelong learning; participation; governance; UNESCO; OECD; CEDEFOP; measurement; inequality.

L'éducation des adultes en temps d'urgence : dépasser la rhétorique

Roberta Piazza

Résumé

Plus de vingt ans après le rapport *Beyond Rhetoric* de l'OCDE (2003), l'éducation des adultes demeure caractérisée par des inégalités persistantes de participation, une gouvernance fragmentée et un biais économique durable. Cet article soutient que les limites de l'apprentissage tout au long de la vie ne sont pas principalement d'ordre technique – liées à des objectifs insuffisants, à un suivi inadéquat ou à des incitations faibles – mais plutôt conceptuelles et politiques : l'éducation des adultes continue d'être gouvernée par des scripts managériaux d'efficacité et d'urgence qui traduisent des problèmes structurels en obligations individuelles.

En s'appuyant sur la tension de longue date entre la tradition humaniste de l'UNESCO et l'orientation économiciste consolidée par les agendas de l'OCDE et de la Banque mondiale, l'article examine comment les organisations internationales construisent l'éducation des adultes à travers des indicateurs, des mesures de participation et des logiques de benchmarking. En mobilisant les analyses de l'OCDE (2003–2025), les trajectoires des politiques européennes, les cadres de suivi en évolution du CEDEFOP ainsi que la série GRALE de l'UNESCO (2009–2022) et sa reformulation fondée sur les droits dans le cadre de l'ODD 4, il montre comment la participation est devenue progressivement un objet quantifiable de gouvernance. Cette évolution tend à réduire l'apprentissage à la seule fréquentation et à invisibiliser l'agency des apprenants, la durée des parcours, la collaboration et la diversité territoriale.

Dépasser la rhétorique suppose une politique de mise en œuvre fondée sur les droits sociaux, une gouvernance systémique et des infrastructures d'apprentissage ancrées dans des espaces locaux de confiance, capables de soutenir une participation significative au-delà des formations centrées sur la conformité.

Mots clés

éducation des adultes ; apprentissage tout au long de la vie ; participation ; gouvernance ; UNESCO ; OCDE ; CEDEFOP ; mesure ; inégalités.

Educación de personas adultas en tiempos de urgencia: más allá de la retórica

Roberta Piazza

Resumen

Más de veinte años después del informe *Beyond Rhetoric* de la OCDE (2003), la educación de personas adultas continúa caracterizándose por desigualdades persistentes en la participación, una gobernanza fragmentada y un sesgo económico duradero. Este artículo sostiene que los límites del aprendizaje a lo largo de la vida no son principalmente técnicos – relacionados con objetivos insuficientes, un seguimiento

inadecuado o incentivos débiles— sino conceptuales y políticos: la educación de personas adultas sigue gobernada mediante guiones gerenciales de eficiencia y urgencia que traducen problemas estructurales en obligaciones individuales.

Partiendo de la tensión histórica entre la tradición humanista de la UNESCO y la orientación economicista consolidada a través de las agendas de la OCDE y el Banco Mundial, el artículo examina cómo las organizaciones internacionales construyen la educación de personas adultas mediante indicadores, medidas de participación y lógicas de benchmarking. Basándose en los análisis de la OCDE (2003–2025), las trayectorias de las políticas europeas, los marcos de seguimiento en evolución del CEDEFOP y la serie GRALE de la UNESCO (2009–2022), junto con su reformulación basada en derechos bajo el ODS 4, se muestra cómo la participación se ha convertido progresivamente en un objeto cuantificable de gobernanza. Este proceso tiende a reducir el aprendizaje a la mera asistencia y a invisibilizar la agencia de las personas participantes, la duración de los procesos formativos, la colaboración y la diversidad territorial.

Superar la retórica requiere una política de implementación basada en derechos sociales, una gobernanza sistémica y unas infraestructuras de aprendizaje arraigadas en espacios locales de confianza, capaces de sostener una participación significativa más allá de la formación basada en el cumplimiento.

Palabras clave

educación de personas adultas; aprendizaje a lo largo de la vida; participación; gobernanza; UNESCO; OCDE; CEDEFOP; medición; desigualdad.