

# The Citizens' Curriculum and Life Skills for Europe

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# The Basic and Life Skills Challenge

- **OECD Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC)** (2013): 16.4% scored at the lowest level for literacy; 24% for numeracy (ENG / NI).
- Census data (2011) records around **850,000 adults in the UK 'non-proficient' in the English language**
- **11.3m people in the UK do not have the basic digital skills** they need (Lloyds Bank UK Consumer Digital Index 2018)
- In England, Government data shows that adult (19+) **participation in formal English, maths and ESOL provision is falling** by approx. 25% over last five years.

So, L&W believes that ....

More **flexible**, creative and innovative models are needed to **engage and motivate** learners and meet the challenge of poor basic language, literacy, numeracy and digital skills in the context of rapid social change.

Tom Schuller • David Watson

# Learning Through Life

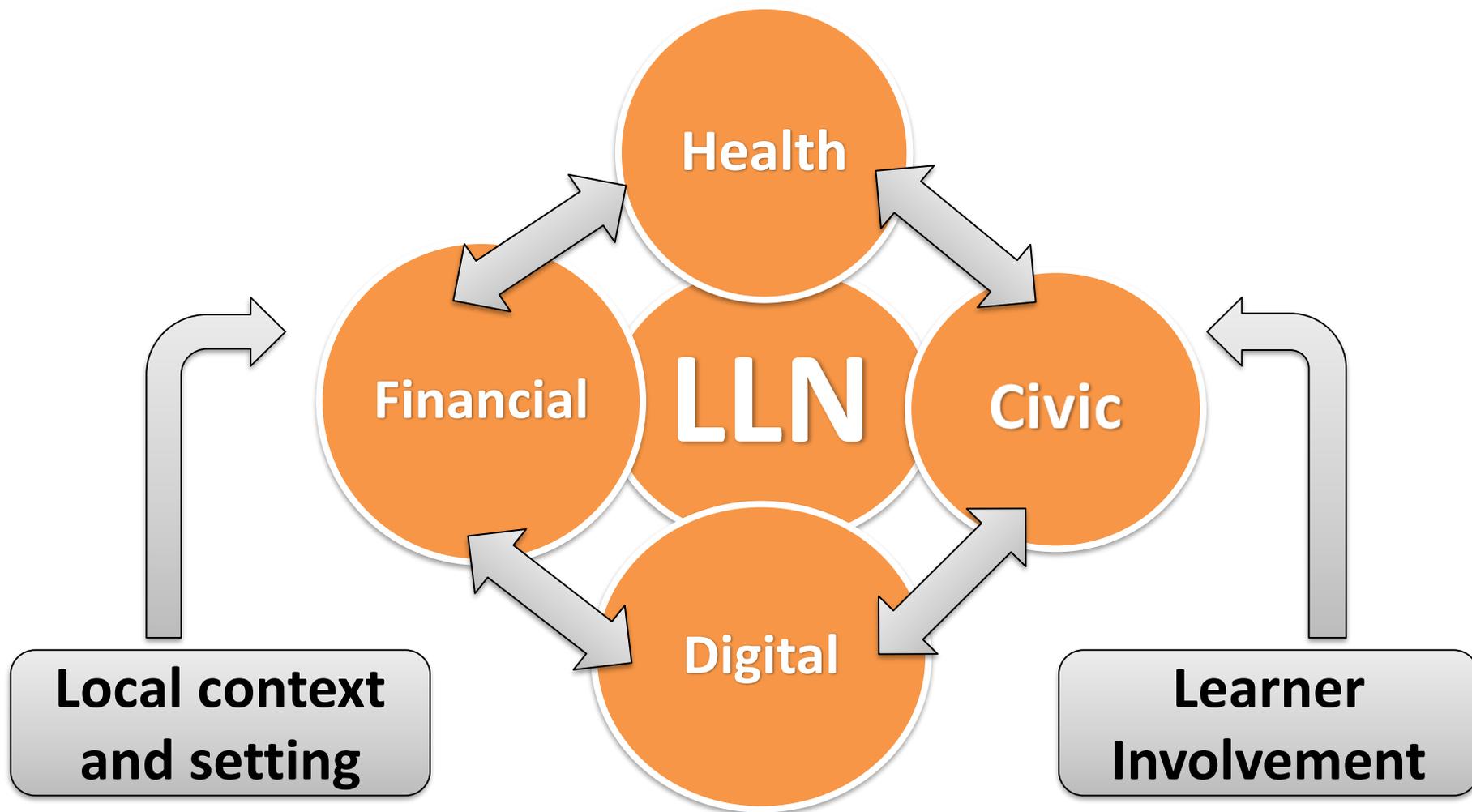
Inquiry into the Future for Lifelong Learning

Summary



- Schuller and Watson ( NIACE, 2009)
- NIACE / NRDC Evidence on impact of embedded basic skills – Eldred (2005); Casey (2006)
- Adult learning perspectives on participatory approaches and co-design of the curriculum.

“A citizens’ curriculum is learning which is **locally-led**, developed with the **active participation** of learners, and **interlinks life skills** such as language, literacy and numeracy with health, financial, digital and civic **capabilities.**”



# Piloting the Citizens' Curriculum

- Our **pilots** helped us to learn more about how a Citizens' Curriculum approach can work in **different contexts**.
- In 14/15 - **13 providers** (incl. Further Education colleges, adult learning centres and civil society organisations) targeting disadvantaged groups – over **160 learners**.
- In 15/16 – **13 providers (incl. 5 returners)** with a focus on language, literacy and numeracy provision – **152 learners**.

# Implementation

- Focus on **Entry Level** – tutors did not need to be expert in all capability subject areas.
- In both **formal and non-formal** settings, within existing funding stream and quality assurance.
- In formal settings, accredited **qualifications were mapped against Citizens' Curriculum capabilities** to develop a programme of learning.
- Formal basic skills provision – **wider capabilities used as contexts** for literacy, numeracy and language learning.
- Providers and practitioners supported with a '**health check**', **resources** and **community of practice**.

# Engaging Learners – Key Messages

- In **community settings**, wider capabilities relevant to learners' lives (esp. financial, health, digital) can provide a 'way in' to other learning e.g. literacy, numeracy.
- Some pilots used '**taster courses**' and **community learning champions** to engage learners around the wider capabilities.
- In non-formal settings, **participatory approaches to curriculum development** allowed a focus on meaningful issues (e.g. access to healthcare, housing conditions) – practitioners designed the programme with learners, to develop literacy and language skills which helped address issues the learners had identified.
- Providers of formal learning undertook **greater engagement with learners** (e.g. negotiation of course content) within the framework of their accredited qualifications.

## Key Overall Findings – Practitioners (15/16)

- Increased confidence in **adopting a learner-led approach**
- Enhanced capability to adopt interlinked and **contextualised approaches** to teaching Citizens' Curriculum capabilities
- Improved **practitioner morale** through greater autonomy and involvement in curriculum design and development

# Key Overall Findings – Providers (15/16)

- Improved **understanding of their impact** on learners
- **Improved organisational ways of working**, including the sharing and adoption of good practice and expertise across curriculum teams;
- **More effective planning** and interlinking of provision through adoption of a recognised and evidence-based framework; and
- Increased number of **learners returning as volunteers**.

# Key Overall Findings – Learners (15/16)

- Increased **social and civic engagement**, with
  - 73% making new friends
  - 59% reporting an improved social life
  - 28% improving their relationships with their family
  - 16% joining a community group
- Improved **self-efficacy**, with
  - 67% improving their self-confidence
  - 65% reporting a greater satisfaction with their life
  - 31% reporting improved physical health.

# Key Overall Findings – Learners (15/16)

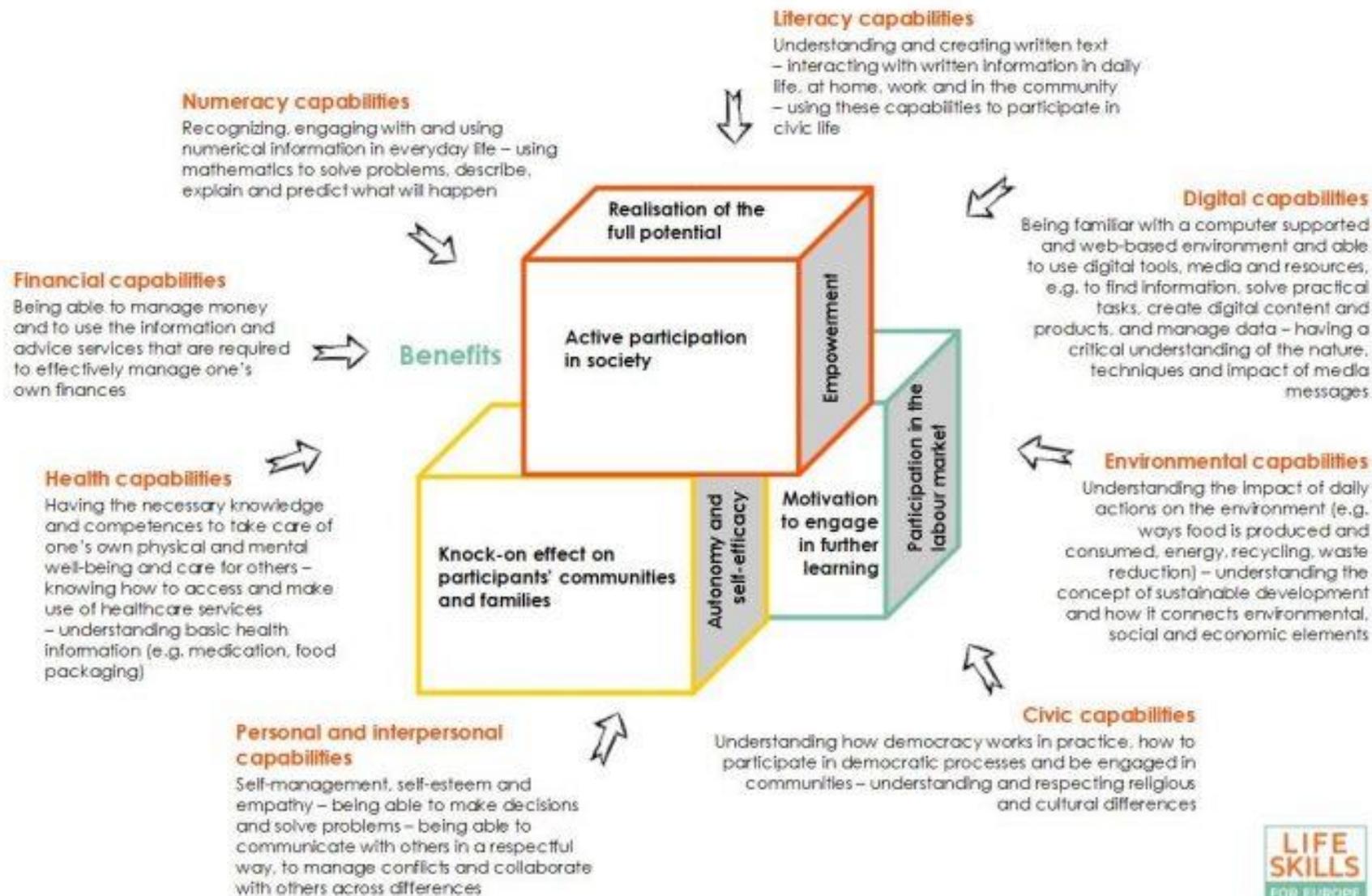
- Changes in their **employability**, with
  - 8% finding a new job
  - 20% starting to apply for jobs
  - 33% starting to look for work
  - 49% improving their work-related skills
  - 14% starting to volunteer on a regular basis.
- Improvements in their **attitudes towards learning**, with
  - 94% feeling more motivated to learn
  - 42% signing up for another course.

“Life skills are a constituent part of capabilities for life and work in a particular social, cultural and environmental context. The types of life skills emerge as a response to the needs of the individual in real life situations.”

## Development of the Life Skills Framework

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- **Format developed** by L&W, using experience developing 'Citizens' Curriculum' approach in the UK. Format validated by project partners.
- L&W and DAFNI KEK **populated the framework**:
  - relevant European frameworks
  - partner input on national and local content e.g. existing curricula
  - IO1 research on good practice and tools
- Further **validation** by project partners.



### Life Skills for Europe promotes learning that

- **responds to identified needs** of learners
- is designed, delivered and evaluated with the **active participation** of learners
- incorporates facilitative approaches which encourage **self-reflection** and **critical thinking**, help learners to take **ownership of their learning** and support **independent problem solving**
- acknowledges differences in learners and **supports inclusion** of marginalised groups

## Overview of the Framework

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The framework aims to establish a **common understanding of life skills** and **support implementation of a life skills approach**, by adding definition to the eight key capabilities:

For each capability, there are **two aspects** which allow for a range of starting points, and support the recognition of learners' progress:

**Difficulty of Skill / Capability Level**

**Familiarity of Context**

**Literacy**

**Numeracy**

**Digital**

**Environmental**

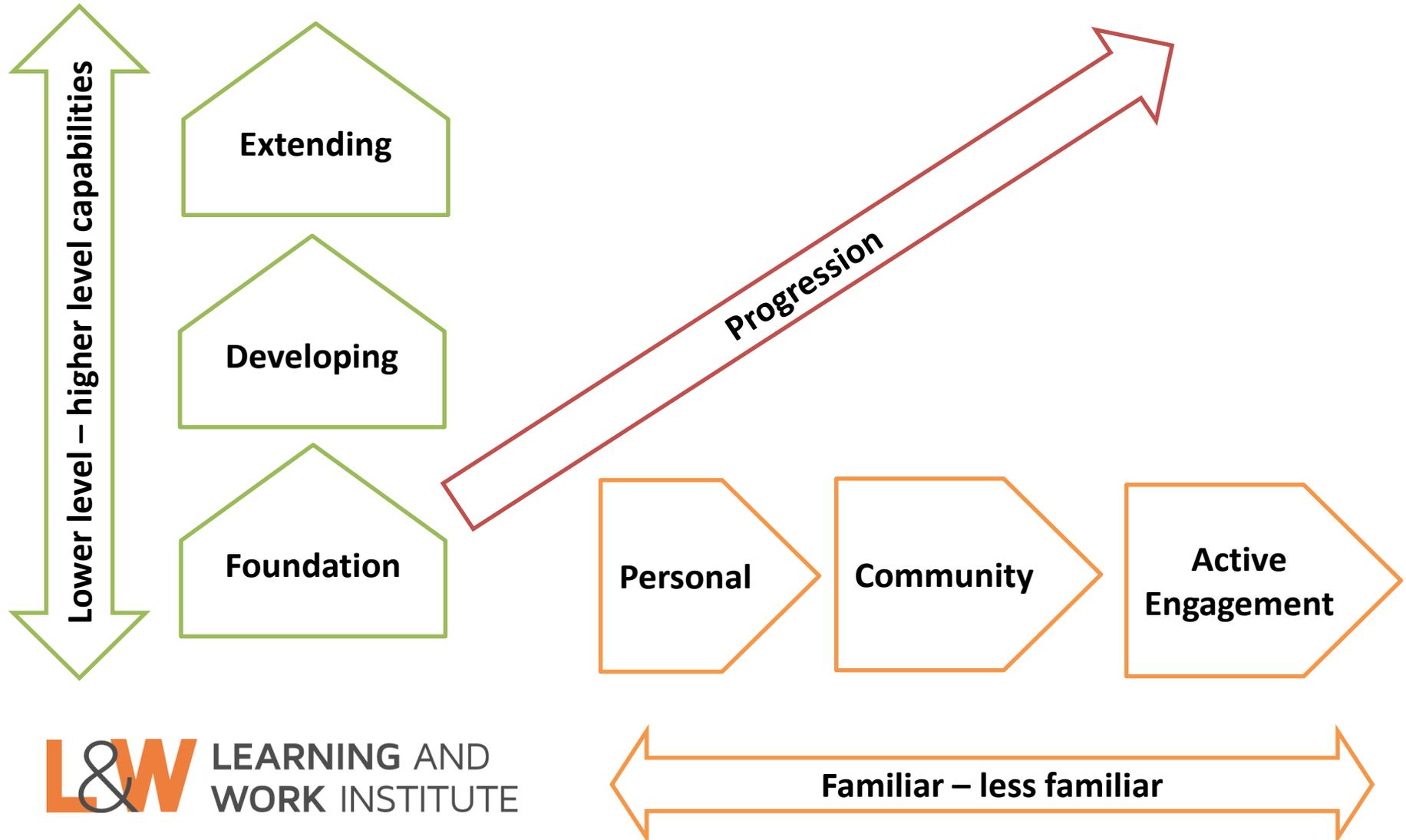
**Civic**

**Personal /  
Interpersonal**

**Health**

**Financial**

# Progression Aspects



# Financial Capability



## Description

Having the skills, knowledge and understanding enabling the individual to manage money and to use the information and advice services that are required to effectively manage one's own finances.

## Skill Level



	Foundation	→ Developing	→ Extending
<b>Personal empowerment</b>	<p>Be familiar with different ways of paying for things e.g. cash, credit, coupons</p> <p>Read and understand statements and bills</p> <p>Understand the importance of keeping records - Identify sources of income - Recognise the importance of savings</p> <p>Plan and manage a personal budget</p>	<p>Balance income and expenditure</p> <p>Manage utility accounts online and on paper - Understand principles of banking</p> <p>Understand different methods of payment e.g. up-front, in arrears, on account</p> <p>Actively save - Manage credit</p> <p>Recognise and understand own rights as consumer</p>	<p>Undertake effective financial planning, using credit, savings and pensions to achieve long term goals.</p> <p>Understand and put in practice the concept of investment</p> <p>Know how to challenge financial services providers and exercise consumer rights when things go wrong.</p>
<b>Relationships with others &amp; local community</b>	<p>Identify local goods and services that can be purchased - local financial advice and guidance</p> <p>Understand different housing costs and obligations e.g. rental agreements and mortgages</p> <p>Be aware of the advantages and disadvantages of insurance</p>	<p>Compare deals and offers e.g. select 'best buys</p> <p>Understand risk and reward</p> <p>Plan and manage a family/group budget</p> <p>Actively select appropriate insurance products and manage payments</p>	<p>Use financial advice and guidance services with a critical mindset.</p> <p>Understand and manage loans</p> <p>Plan ahead financially for future housing requirements.</p> <p>Plan ahead for old age (and possible need to insure for social care support)</p>
<b>Active engagement</b>	<p>Understand different forms of credit and credit agreement - know what interest is, recognise differences between credit deals</p>	<p>Know the advantages and disadvantages of credit and debt</p> <p>Understand and know how to manage credit scores</p>	<p>Understand the relationship between public policy and personal finance e.g. wages and the economy, income tax contributions.</p>

## What the Framework does NOT do

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The framework is **NOT**:

- **comprehensive or exhaustive** – impossible!
- **prescriptive** – learning should be adapted to prioritise the specific needs of learners and the context, involving learners in decisions about content where possible
- **a curriculum**, syllabus or scheme of work to be followed

The framework **IS a simple, yet powerful, tool** to facilitate life skills curriculum development.

## Using the Life Skills Learning Framework

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### **Possible applications** of the framework:

- **Auditing your provision** – what do you offer to learners? Is something missing?
- **Starting a conversation with learners** – what do the different capabilities mean to them? What would they like to learn in relation to each one?
- **Supporting the embedding of basic skills** – ensuring that basic literacy, numeracy and digital skills relate to real life contexts

### **What could you do with the Life Skills Framework?**

# Application 1: Strategic Skills Planning

- In England, the **Adult Education Budget** is being devolved to 8 cities / regions which have elected Mayors (Mayoral Combined Authorities – e.g. Greater London, Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region, the West Midlands ...)
- The Citizens' Curriculum offers **a potential commissioning framework** – including planning the learning offer, and also the range of outcomes to be supported e.g. **health, wellbeing, civic engagement.**

# Application 2: Providers

- Inspiring and **supporting the development of a basic and life skills curriculum** in organisations new to delivering adult basic education
- For existing and experienced providers, **refreshing the existing basic skills offer** to learners, building on existing practice.
- Finding **new ways of engaging learners**, by adopting elements of learner co-creation of the curriculum, and/or participatory approaches to teaching and learning.

# Application 3: Practice

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## Citizens' Curriculum Activity Pack for Participatory Learning

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**CIVIC CAPABILITY**

Civic participation involves a wide array of personal, practical and social skills. The framework below of a summary of some of the aspects of this capability, but it is not intended to be exhaustive or prescriptive. The table overleaf shows how providers may support learners to develop their civic capability from 'consolidating', to 'developing' through to 'extended' level.

Key Themes in Civic Capability: Personal skills, community skills, engagement skills

<b>Personal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rights and responsibilities</li><li>• Goals and action planning</li></ul>
<b>Community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Volunteering</li><li>• Community knowledge</li><li>• Teamworking</li></ul>
<b>Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cultural awareness</li><li>• Community activities</li></ul>

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- [www.learningandwork.org.uk](http://www.learningandwork.org.uk)

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## Citizens' Curriculum guide to Non-directive coaching

work.org.uk

**LIFE SKILLS FOR EUROPE**

## Life Skills For Europe Learning Framework

Erasmus+

**"GETTING A QUALIFICATION WILL HELP ME WHEN I GET OUT OF PRISON"**



the bell foundation

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Improving Language, Improving Lives:  
**Resources for ESOL tutors**

**"WHEN I GET OUT OF PRISON I WANT TO BE ABLE TO READ TO MY KIDS"**

