

OECD SKILLS STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE FOR FLANDERS:

The Faces of Learners in Flanders

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Launch event – 16 May 2022

OECD Centre for Skills

<https://www.oecd.org/skills/centre-for-skills>

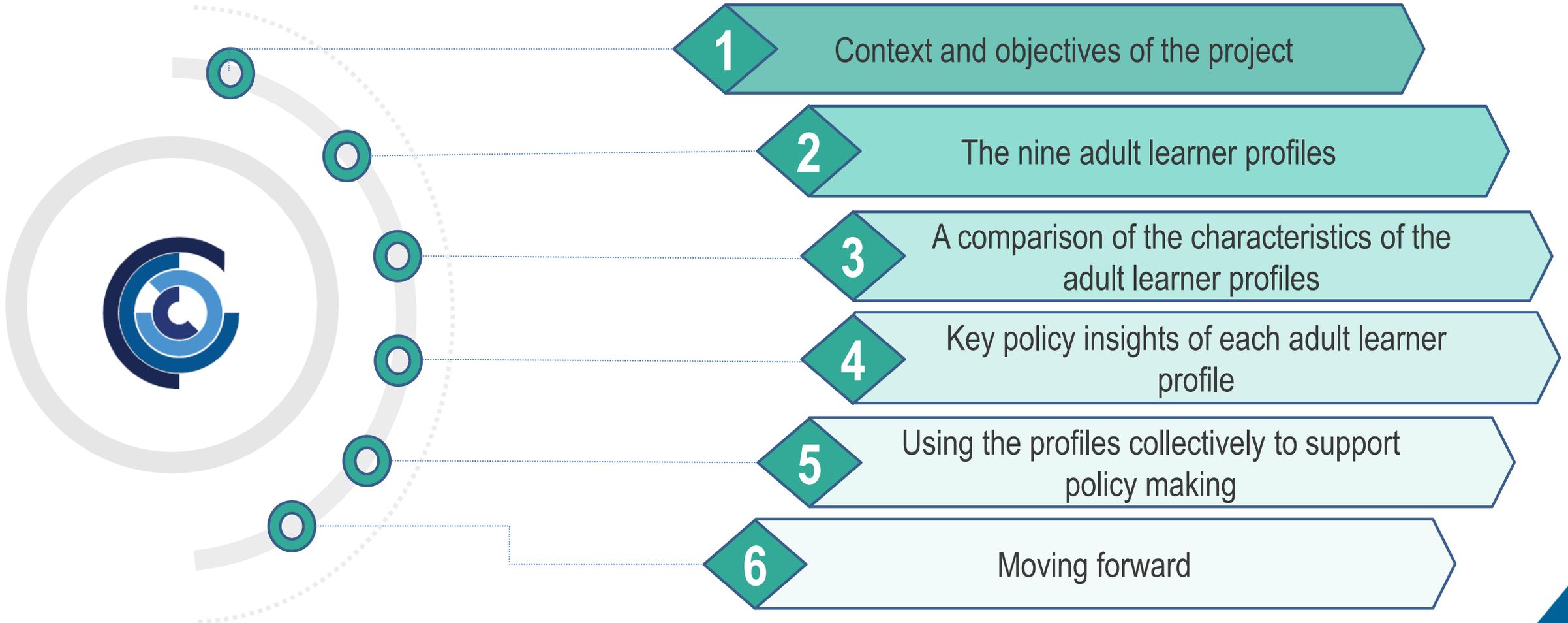


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Agenda for this presentation



1. CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT



Despite being a high performer, Flanders is still facing various well-documented **adult learning challenges**

Participation in learning of the groups most in need of upskilling/reskilling is lagging behind

- **47** percentage-point gap in participation rates in adult learning between low- and high-skilled individuals

A comparatively large share of adults is not motivated to learn

- **42%** of the population does not participate and does not want to participate

Many adults do not have the skills they will need for success in the labour market and society of the future

- **37%** of Flemish adults has low basic digital skills



Existing initiatives could better respond to the identified challenges

Many initiatives already in place....

Paid educational leave

Training credit

Tax deduction

Sectoral training funds

Training vouchers

SME wallet

Registration fee exemptions

Career guidance vouchers

Strategic transition support

... but their impact could be further enhanced

- *Support structures and information/guidance do not always reach the groups most in need*
- *Existing target groups do not fully consider the diverse motivations, combinations of obstacles, and other group-specific characteristics of adults*



Objective of the “The Faces of Learners” report



Make **lifelong learning policies** more **targeted** and **tailored** to the needs of learners...



.... by applying a **segmentation approach** to identify **learner profiles** that share a set of characteristics related to their participation



Advantages of applying a **segmentation approach**



Acknowledging the large **heterogeneity** in common target groups (e.g. low-educated, unemployed)



Taking stock of different **attitudes towards** learning



Acknowledging that adults often face **multiple obstacles**



Building on knowledge and insights from stakeholders and experts in Flanders

Supported by a multi-disciplinary project team

DEPARTEMENT WERK & SOCIALE ECONOMIE

AHOVOKS AGENTSCHAP VOOR HOGER ONDERWIJS, VOLWASSENENONDERWIJS, KWALIFICATIES & STUDIETOELAGEN

Vlaanderen is onderwijs & vorming



STEUNPUNT WERK LinkedIn



Vlaamse Statistische Autoriteit

Team Gedragsinzichten



Involved a long list of stakeholders in workshops



Used insights from an extensive range of studies



2. THE NINE ADULT LEARNER PROFILES



The four categories of motivational profiles

Adults not participating in non-formal or formal learning activities

A. Unmotivated



Profile 1: **Disengaged** from learning



Profile 2: Unmotivated due to **age and health** obstacles

B. Motivated, but facing obstacles



Profile 3: Motivated but facing **time-related** obstacles



Profile 4: Motivated but facing **multiple** obstacles

Adults participating in non-formal or formal learning activities

C. Extrinsically motivated



Profile 5: Reluctant but **required** to participate



Profile 6: Participating in response to **work pressures**



Profile 7: Participating to strengthen **career prospects**

D. Intrinsically motivated



Profile 8: Participating for **personal** development



Profile 9: Participating for **professional and personal** development



A. Unmotivated adults – Profile 1 and 2

Motivations and obstacles

Characteristics



1. **Disengaged** from learning

19%

- **Not motivated** to participate in education and training.
- Adults with this profile **do not report obstacles** as the primary reason for their non-participation



2. Unmotivated due to **age and health** obstacles

18%

- **Not motivated**, and **not perceiving a need** to participate in education and training.
- Largely the result of large **age and health** barriers.

- The **lowest education** level of all profiles (41% is educated below the upper secondary level).
- Largest share of adults **not in employment** (13% is unemployed and 34% is inactive)
- Employed adults in this profile mainly work in jobs requiring **low- to mid-level skills**, often **working in manufacturing**, and have a **high risk of automation**.
- Comparatively **old** and a significant minority of **non-native speakers**.

- **Oldest** group of adult learners.
- Inactive workers are often **retirees**.
- Comparatively **low-educated**
- Jobs in small businesses with highest risk of **automation**.
- The majority of adults does **not learn informally**



B. Motivated, but facing obstacles – Profile 3 and 4

Motivations and obstacles

Characteristics



3. Motivated but facing time-related obstacles

6%

- Majority of adults are **motivated to learn** but face time-related obstacles due to either a **busy schedules or family responsibilities**.

- Largest shares of both adults in a **relationship with children (69%)** and **single parents (9%)**.
- The **youngest** non-participating group and many **women**.
- The **highest educated**.
- Almost all working and most are in **full time jobs**.
- Profile where the majority **learns informally**.



4. Motivated but facing multiple obstacles

9%

- Motivated to engage in learning
- Facing a **range of obstacles**, incl. high cost, no suitable learning offers, as well as health and age related obstacles.

- Incomes of adults with this profile are comparatively low.
- Large share of adults in medium-high skilled occupations, with jobs in small business, and with the highest risk of automation of all profiles.
- Smallest share of adults participating in informal learning.



C. Extrinsically motivated – Profile 5, 6, and 7

Motivations and obstacles

Characteristics



5. Reluctant but **required** to participate

16%

- Participating in learning, but only because they are **required** to do so by the **employer** or by **law**.

- Very **young** profile – 47% under age of 35.
- One of the lowest-educated participating profiles (still more educated than any non-participating profile).
- Large share of **unemployed** adults (9%).
- Relatively large share of participants in informal learning (76%).



6. Participating in response to **work pressures**

17%

- Participating to **adapt to workplace changes** or to **perform better in their current job**.

- Adults are **older** and more often **employed**.
- Jobs with **low risk of automation**.
- Lowest participation rate in informal learning among the participating profiles.



7. Participating to strengthen **career prospects**

5%

- Participating to improve **job prospects**, and increase **professional possibilities**.

- Majority is **women** (63%), very **high educated**, and very **young**.
- Largest share of **part time workers** (22%), often with **professional occupations**.
- High intensity of learning and participation in informal learning.
- The largest proportion of part time workers



D. Intrinsically motivated – Profile 8 and 9

Motivations and obstacles

Characteristics



8. Participating for **personal** development

3%

- **Intrinsically motivated**, but for **personal interests** unrelated to work, e.g. explore personal interests and passions.

- The **highest educated** group.
- Highest share of adults in **high skill, professional occupations** – often in health and social work, and education – with high **household wealth**.
- Most adults participate in informal learning (84%)



9. Participating for **professional and personal** development

7%

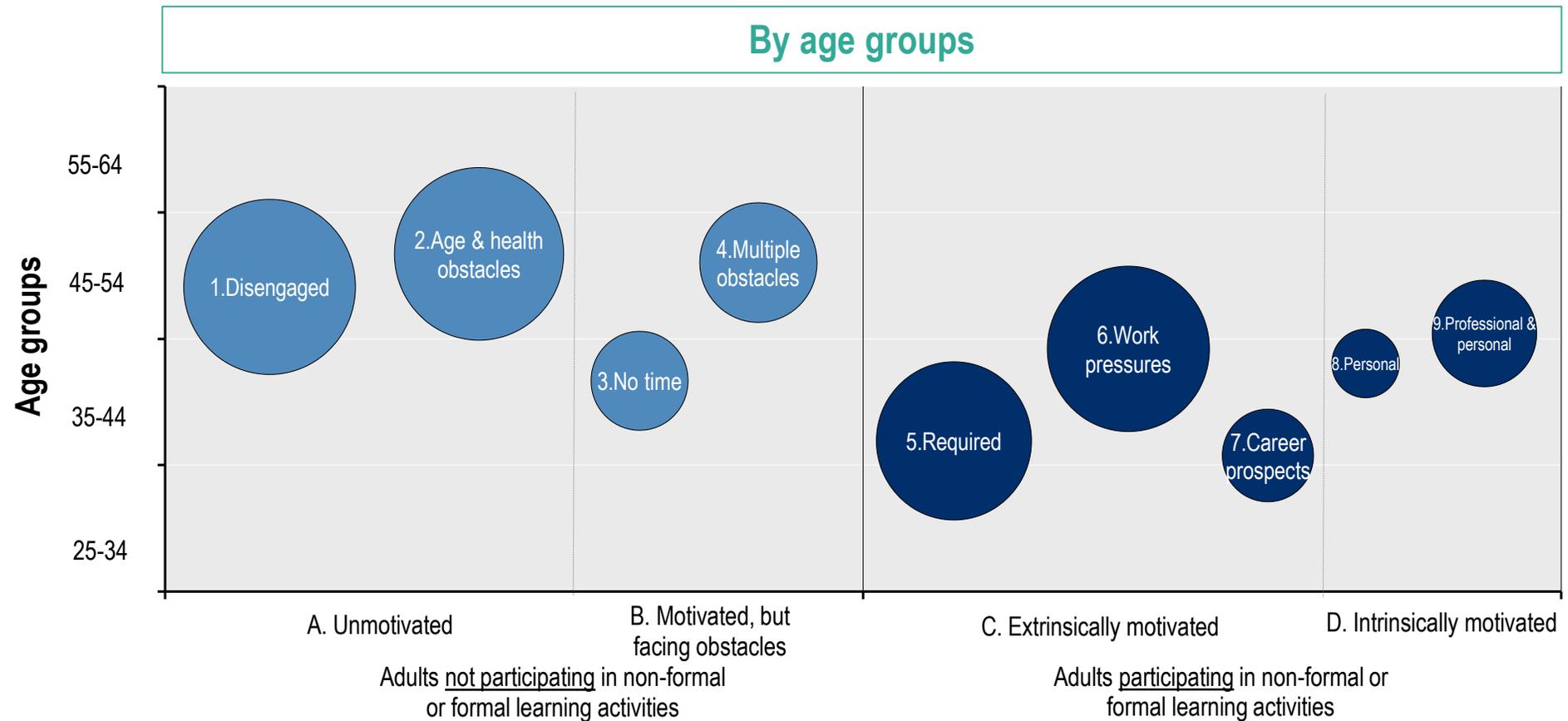
- **Intrinsically motivated** to achieve **work** related objectives

- **Highly educated** adults.
- Working predominantly in **high-skilled** occupation (often managerial positions)
- Jobs in **medium- to large-sized firms** with long tenure and with the highest **household income** of all profiles.
- Training generally provided by the **employer**.

3. A COMPARISON OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ADULT LEARNER PROFILES

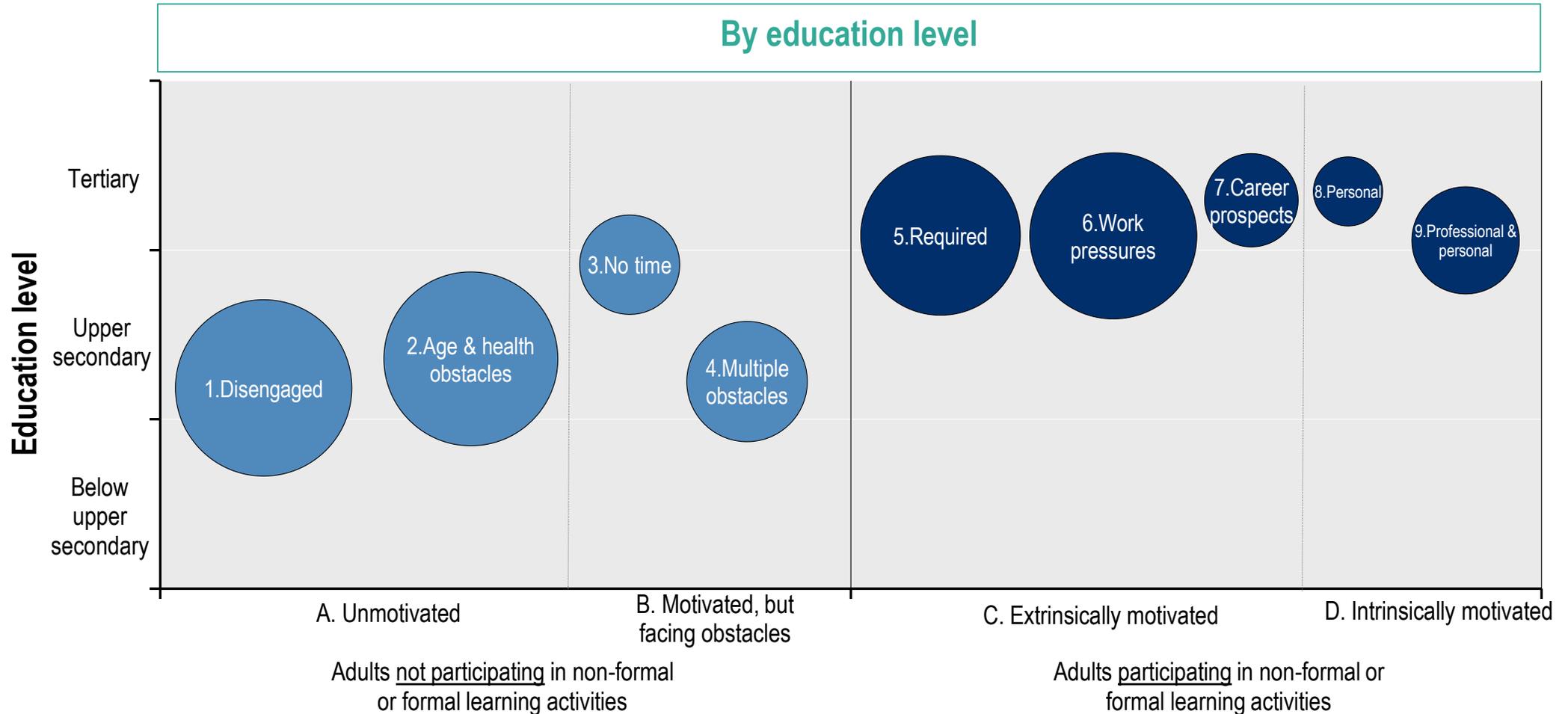


Older adults are concentrated in profiles characterised with the lowest levels of motivation





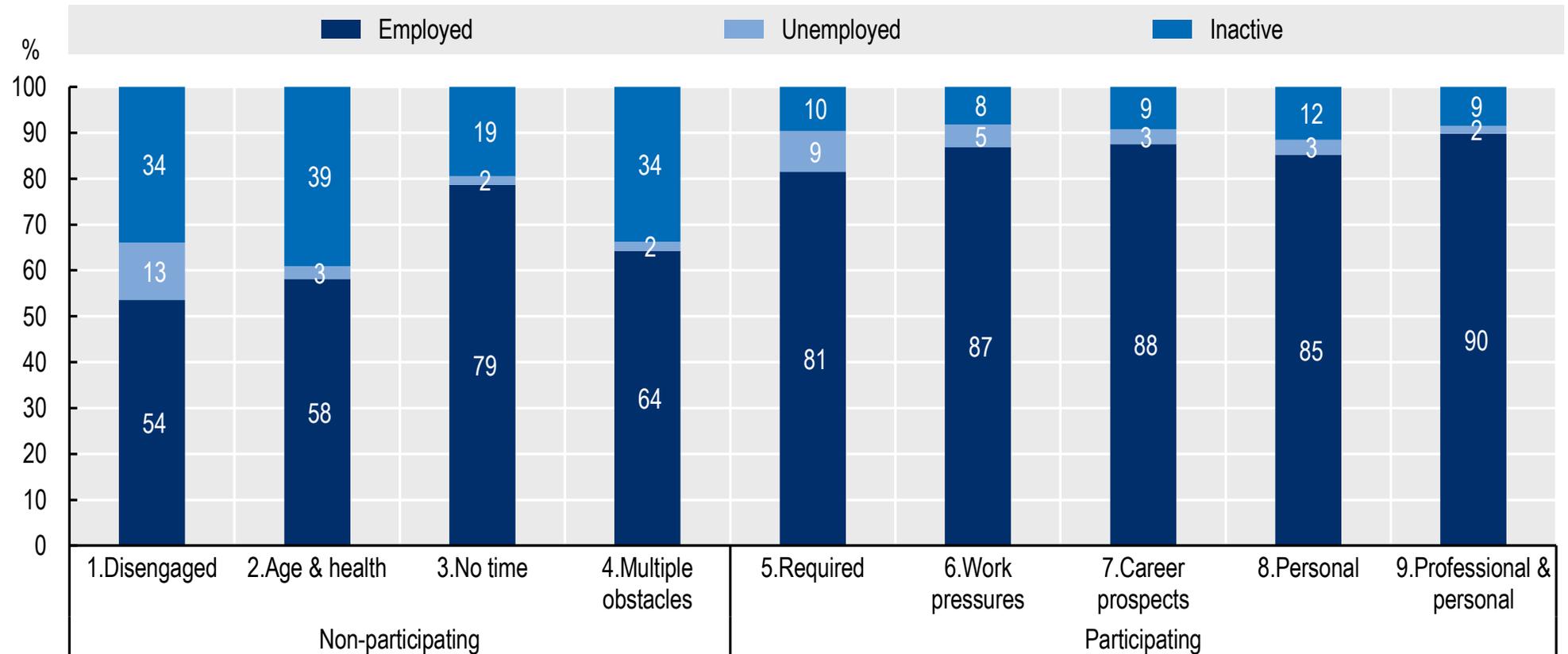
Low education levels are strongly associated with low motivation and non-participation in learning





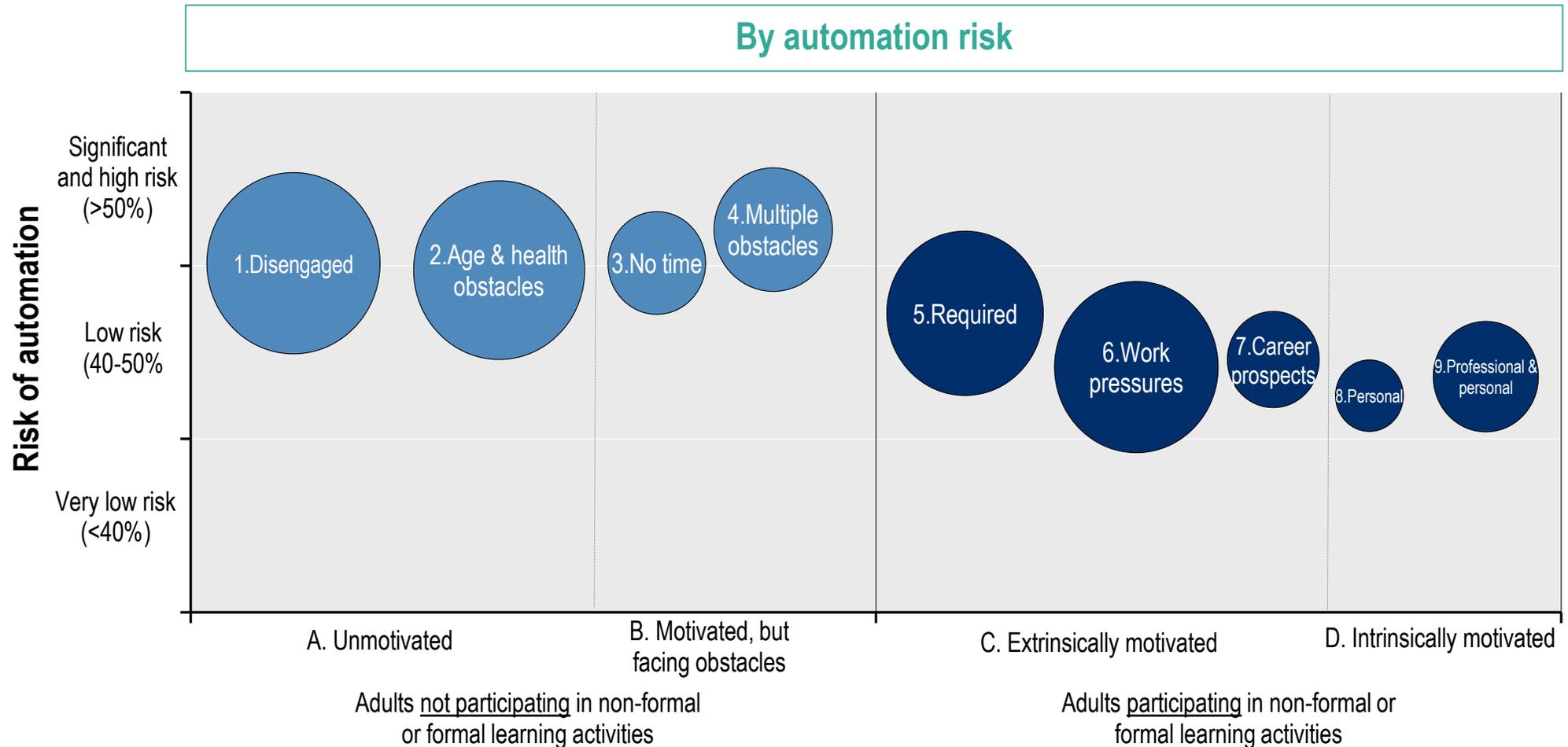
Adults who are participating in learning are more often in **employment**

By labour market status



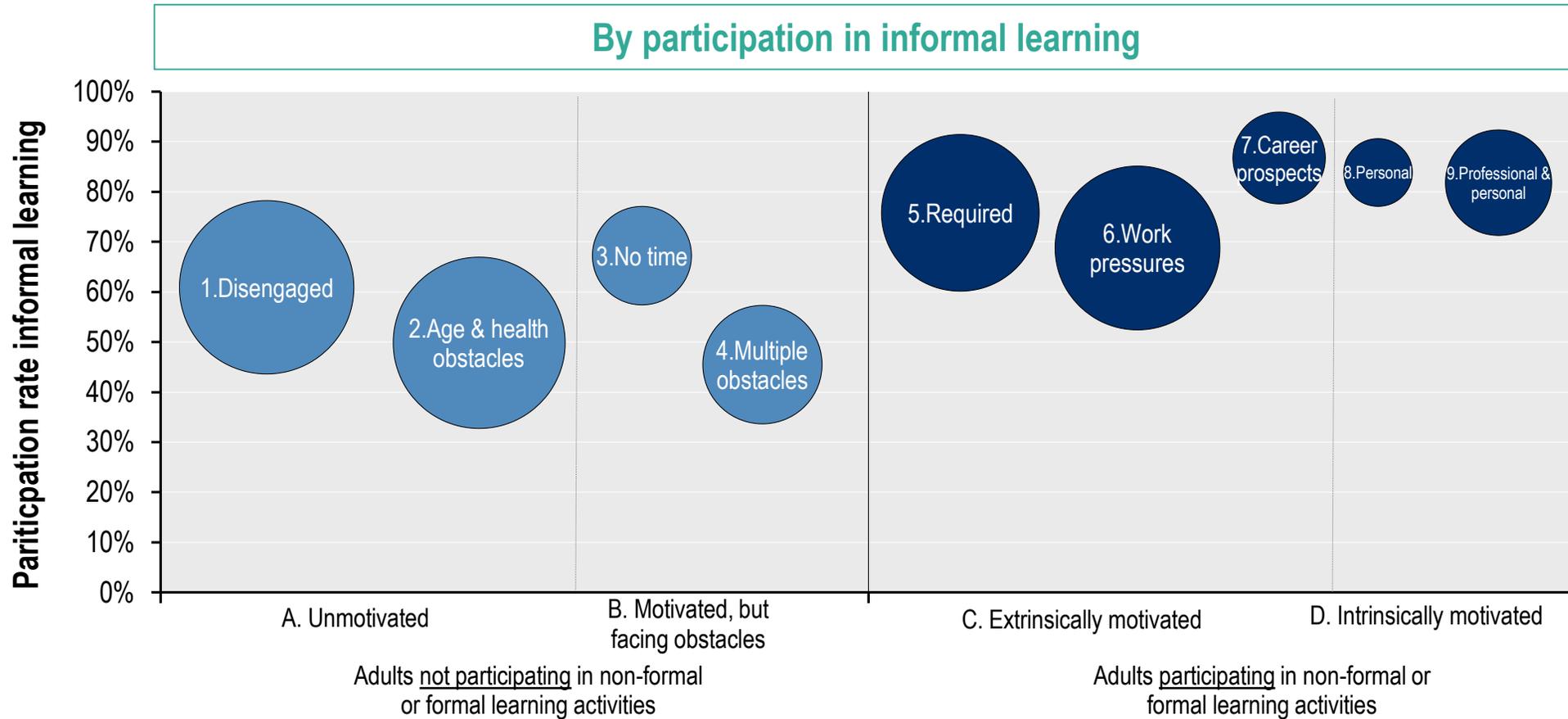


The most vulnerable groups in the labour market are less likely to participate in learning





Adults who participate in non-formal and formal learning are also more likely to engage in informal learning



4. KEY POLICY INSIGHTS OF EACH ADULT LEARNER PROFILE



A. Unmotivated adults – Profile 1 and 2

Most important policy levers



1. **Disengaged** from learning



2. Unmotivated due to **age and health** obstacles

A **broad package of policies** is required, including information and guidance services, accessible learning opportunities, learning incentives

Key insights for policy making



Existing **information and guidance services** often do not respond effectively to the diverse and multiple needs of 'unmotivated' adults



Active outreach by stakeholders in most direct contact with these adults can help to increase their participation in learning



Insights into the **motivations and obstacles** faced by these adults can be used to better **tailor information and guidance services**



Information and guidance alone is insufficient to boost learning among 'unmotivated' adults – they also require access to **relevant adult learning opportunities** and **incentives** to learn



B. Motivated, but facing obstacles – Profile 3 and 4

Most important policy levers



3. Motivated but facing **time-related** obstacles



4. Motivated but facing **multiple obstacles**

Financial and non-financial incentives are important to address the obstacles they face

Key insights for policy making



Raising awareness of **training leaves** and encouraging firms to provide more **on-the-job learning opportunities** would help to raise participation by adults facing **time-related obstacles**



Financial incentives for individuals and employers could be better designed to encourage participation in learning by adults facing a **lack of support and cost obstacles**



Incentives should be complemented with **tailored and targeted information and guidance** on the availability of incentives and learning opportunities



C. Extrinsically motivated – Profile 5, 6, and 7

Most important policy levers

Key insights for policy making



5. Reluctant but **required** to participate



6. Participating in response to **work pressures**



7. Participating to strengthen **career prospects**

Many are already benefitting from the **existing incentives** as well **information and guidance** services



The motivation to continue learning can be boosted through the provision of **high quality and relevant learning opportunities**.



Information and guidance is important to build a culture of lifelong learning, even among those who already have a strong motivation to learn.



D. Intrinsically motivated – Profile 8 and 9

Most important policy levers



8. Participating for
personal development



9. Participating for
professional
and **personal** development

Support measures are **less crucial** for their participation – their intrinsic drive to learn is often enough

Key insights for policy making



Even the most motivated learners may need **incentives and supports** to maintain their strong engagement in learning



6. HOW THE PROFILES CAN BE USED COLLECTIVELY TO SUPPORT POLICY MAKING



Using the profiles for **evaluation** and **monitoring**

What could be done?



Strengthen **ex-ante** policy evaluation practices



Strengthen **ex-poste** policy evaluation

For what?

To ensure that adult learning policies are appropriately **targeted** and **tailored** to the distinct needs of different learners at the design phase.

To reveal the **extent** to which targeted and tailored adult learning policies actually **improve learning motivation and participation** for different learner profiles.



Using the profiles to strengthen the provision of information and guidance services

What could be done?



Providers of information and guidance to adults about learning should be **made aware** of the adult learner profiles



Implement **tailored information** to different learner profiles **using digital advertising tools**



Make information on online portals **more targeted and tailored** to the needs of different learners



The learner profiles could be input directly to **learning and career guidance**

Using the profiles to support the design of the **Flemish ILA**

What could be done?



Make the individual learning account (ILA) to some degree targeted and/or tailored to **vulnerable groups**.



Make use of the profiles' tailored messages to support **targeted and tailored communication** linked to learning and career account

6. MOVING FORWARD



Possible next step – **complement** findings with insights from other sources

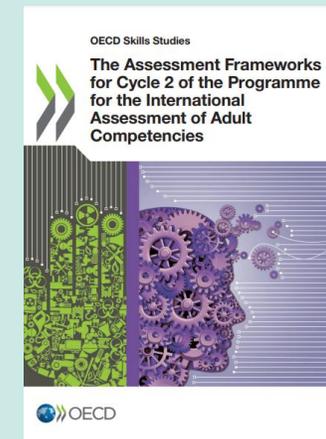
Qualitative sources

Examine and compare the findings on this report with **other studies** in Flanders, in particular the ‘customer journeys’ study



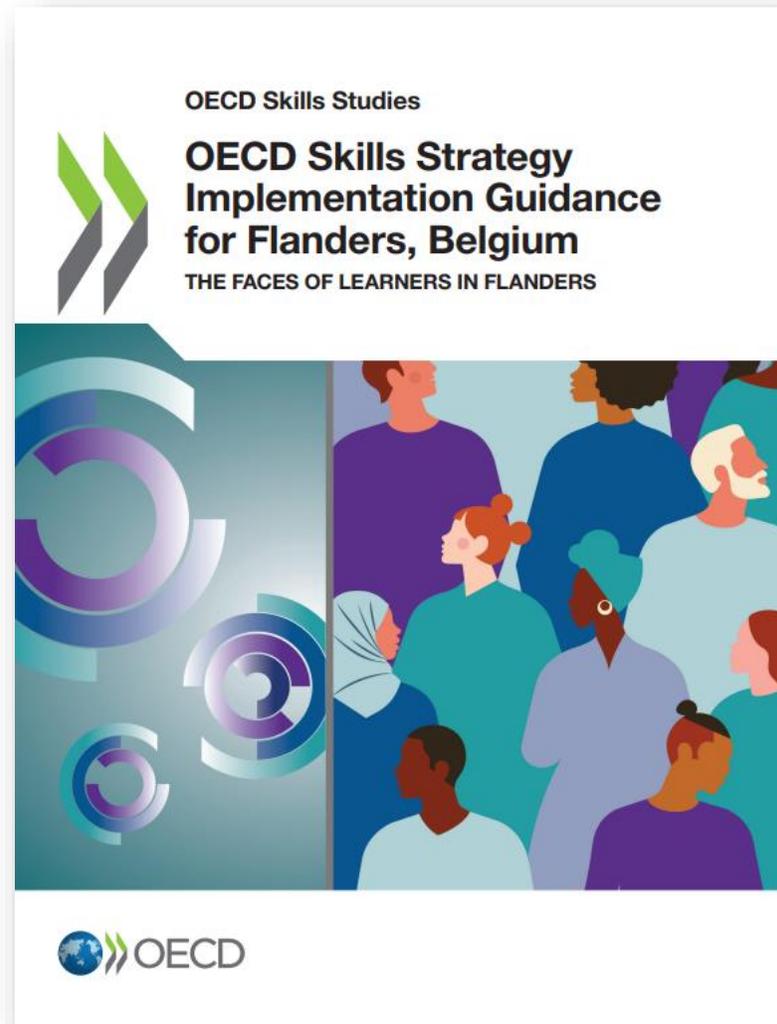
Quantitative sources

Further assess the **skills** associated with the profiles, including by using PIAAC data



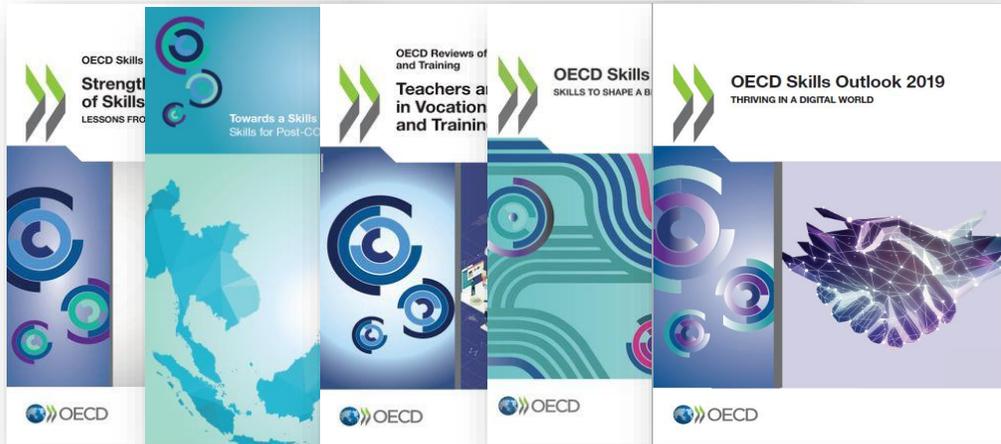


Making **lifelong learning** a reality for all in Flanders





OECD Centre for Skills



To discuss OECD's work on skills, contact:
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To learn more about the OECD's work on skills visit: www.oecd.org/skills/