The LANEFIES partnership between Estonia, Latvia, Finland and the Netherlands focused on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) for trainers working with adult learners. Our project was designed to contribute to the UNECE (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe) Strategy for ESD. We organized experience sharing sessions to transfer skills and knowledge on how to involve senior citizens in ESD. Our participants educate adults, including non-native speakers with lower income levels among the 50+ age group. Some participants were learners from the target group, rather than educators.

We addressed the problem that there's limited ESD reach beyond native speakers with tertiary education and participants of school projects. This isn't the only benefit of the project, though. One practical reason to involve the elderly is that they (will) pay a growing part of their income on energy costs, and ESD teaching them how to save energy will help reduce these and increase their social status. A social reason is that involvement in ESD-activities will improve social contacts among those that most often feel isolated, and support new joint activities. All of these reasons combined result in producing more active and healthier citizens. Once involved in ESD, learners may develop other interests in sustainability issues and find solutions with their considerable experience.

Each of the four partner countries has developed different methods and solutions for involving people in ESD. We organized international and local workshops to demonstrate, discuss, evaluate and improve these methods during the project. Our project participants visited relevant organizations in each country to collect and analyze good practices. The resulting information was disseminating using partner websites and social media. We also ensured that the participating ESD educators developed a network of associates across the partner countries. Social media outlets provided a channel for the sustainable knowledge sharing among this network beyond the project duration.

Feedback played an important role in the project. One of the gaps in modern ESD education was the lack of a widely accepted and comprehensive tool for evaluating the success of ESD projects and programmes. Part of the project focused on bringing together experts from all participating countries to tackle this issue and develop such a tool to be used and tested during the project. The aim was to create an evaluation tool that participants and ESD educators could use after the project to evaluate different ESD events. The development was led by the Finnish team, and the tool was extensively tested during the experience sharing visits and can now be used in future ESD projects. Also, the tool emphasized the roles different countries played in the project: Latvia was perceived as contributing the most on outdoor learning, Finland on recycling and re-use, Estonia on the use of green technologies and local government role in increasing sustainability, and the Netherlands on reengaging the unemployed in the workplace through ESD, and sustainable ways to plan people's living environment by the local government. The varied experiences from different countries could be seen inspiring participants from other countries, with a direct impact on their future use of ESD programmes and the methodologies involved.

It's only fitting that a project focusing on ESD is sustainable. In this case, we can say that the network built between educators from all four participating countries is strong and vibrant, and it has already led to follow-up projects to build upon the gains from LANEFIES.