

Per Paludan Hansen

Per Paludan Hansen has been a key figure in adult learning and education in Denmark and in Europe. Since 2001, he has served as the secretary general of the Liberal Adult Education Association (LOF), an organization for which he has worked since 1994. Also, he has been the chairman of the board of the Danish Adult Education Association (DAEA) since 2007 and was president of the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) from 2013 until 2019. He previously served as a member of the board. Currently he is treasurer of the International Council of Adult Education (ICAE). He holds a master's degree in political science from Aarhus University in Denmark.

He has been instrumental in establishing the Danish Institute for Non-formal Education, developing activities and support for refugees in Denmark, forming an adult education network on sustainability in Denmark, and advocating for better funding and legal frameworks for adult education in Denmark. His strength is in his ability to support and nurture other people by providing ideas, exchange, and encouragement. He tirelessly advocates for adult learning and education in order to inspire, influence, and cooperate with a wide range of members, partners, stakeholders, and policymakers.

Hansen has either led or contributed to refugee inclusion, life skills, improvement of financing for adult education, mental health, and wellbeing through adult learning and education. His work with others has created an environment where people are encouraged, guided, and inspired to work together for the common good of adult learning and education.

In 2016, EAEA decided, under Hansen's leadership, to produce and launch a publication on the importance and potential of adult learning and education. The final product was the EAEA Manifesto for Adult Learning in the 21st Century, which made the case for adult learning touching almost every aspect of Europe's challenges, from social inclusion to sustainability. The central theme of the manifesto, "the power and joy of learning," highlighted the important impact that adult learning has on individuals, societies, and economies. The manifesto has been translated by EAEA members into sixteen languages, underscoring the resounding endorsement it has found in the European adult education community. It also has been much referenced and quoted by policymakers.

Hansen has proven himself extremely good at networking with policymakers and other stakeholders in order to advocate for adult education. At the Danish level, he has been in contact with the relevant ministers and stakeholders, and he regularly organizes forums in which the importance of adult education is emphasized and demonstrated. His own organizations, LOF and the DAEA, have run campaigns to reach different target groups—e.g., activities for and with refugees. In Europe, Hansen has met with a number of high-level policymakers (European commissioners, directors-general, directors) and established strong relations with members of the European parliament, seeking their support for adult learning. He currently is on the steering group of ICAE, where he advocates for a sustainable funding system, supporting the secretary general and representing the interests of adult education at the global level.

Hansen also has been a member of the board and the bureau of the Danish Youth Council (1987-1989) and chairman of the Århus Youth Council. In these arenas, he has focused on strategic leadership and been an active member of networks in strategic leadership.