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## Survey on Adult Population Involvement in Learning Activities (AES). Year 2007

### Three out of 10 persons 25 to 64 years old have participated in some learning activity in the past year

### 68.4% of those who take part in learning activities do so for reasons related to work

Three out of 10 persons 25 to 64 years old participated in some learning activity during the past year, according to the results of the Survey on Adult Population Involvement in Learning Activities (AES) from the year 2007, which the INE is publishing for the first time today.

Worth noting was the decrease produced in the percentages of the population participating in learning activities as people grow older. Thus, the figure dropped from 39.6% of the population 25 to 34 years old to 8.0% of the adults 65 to 74 years old.

By sex, 28.2% of women and 27.7% of men participated in some type of learning activity.

#### Formal and non-formal education

The AES measures both formal and non-formal educational activities. The former lead to gaining an official degree. The latter do not lead to an official degree, and may take place both inside and outside of educational institutions (tools for coping with life, work-related courses, general culture, painting classes, ...).

Both types of education were more frequent in persons 25 to 45 years old.

#### Percentage of persons who participated in learning activities in the last 12 months, by age group\*

	Total 25 to 74 years old	<b>25 to 64 years old</b>	25 to 34 years old	35 to 44 years old	45 to 54 years old	55 to 64 years old	65 to 74 years old
Participate in educational activities	28.0	<b>30.9</b>	39.6	33.6	27.5	17.0	8.0
Formal	5.3	<b>6.0</b>	11.8	4.6	3.4	1.8	0.7
Non-formal	24.7	<b>27.2</b>	32.5	30.6	25.3	15.7	7.4

(\*) Age Group required by Eurostat. See Methodological Note

**The Autonomous Communities with the highest participation in learning activities were Castilla-La Mancha, Canarias and Madrid, all with 32%. Those with the lowest participation were Asturias and Andalucía, both with 23%.**

## Learning hours and average expenditure

Formal education students invested an average of 414 hours in learning. Three out of four of them had some type of expense-related to this learning. The average expenditure came to a total of 1,189 euros, 920 euros of which were used for tuition, registration and exam fees, and 269 euros of which were used for books and technical study means.

21.5% of formal educational activities were distance-learning. Men opted for this learning modality in 24.3% of the cases, as compared with 19% of women. Computer or Internet use was very widespread, and present in seven out of every 10 activities.

On the other hand, the persons who participated in non-formal education took an average of 1.6 courses in the past 12 months. To this end, they invested an average of 111 hours in learning, 114 hours in self-study and 37 hours in transport.

Half of the adults that participated in non-formal educational activities had expenses due to them. The average expenditure was 696 euros, of which 452 euros went toward tuition, registration and exam fees, and 243 euros which were spent on books and technical study means.

Computers or the Internet was used in 44% of non-formal educational activities. These activities took place in the classroom in nine out of 10 cases.

## Main data on formal and non-formal education. Year 2007

Population 25 to 74 years old

	Participants (thousands)	Hours of learning per participant	Average expenditure (euros)	ICT use (%)	Distance learning (%)
Formal	1,544.5	414	1,189	72.9	21.5
Non-formal	7,214.6	111	696	44.2	10.5

**The most frequently taught subjects were information technology (18.6%), occupational safety and health (9.3%), arts and humanities (8.0%) and foreign languages (6.5%).** 38% of these courses combined theory and practical studies. 34% were completely theory-based and almost 18% were carried out on the job and were of a practical nature.

## Life-long education and the labour market

50% of adults with a higher education participated in learning activities. Among the persons with a first stage secondary education or lower, this percentage dropped to 15%.

68.4% of persons who participated in some learning activity did so for reasons related to work, either because it was necessary for their work, or because they thought it would be useful on seeking work.

### Self-taught persons

Another activity measured by the survey is known as *non-formal learning*, which is the activity of acquiring knowledge in a less organised or structured way than non-formal education, and without turning to any educational institution (we could refer to this as *self-teaching*).

More than 7.5 million persons, that is, **one out of four adults tried to acquire knowledge through self-learning**. The most common means were printed material (59.0%), the computer (53.5%), learning from a family member or friend (38.9%) or audiovisual media (24.9%).

Information technology was the main subject studied in this type of learning, and in which there was a significant variety of topics, notably mechanics and electronics, social sciences, arts and humanities, learning foreign languages or health.

### Obstacles and incentives

Although 65.0% of adults 25 to 74 years old did not participate in learning activities nor were interested in doing so, 14.7% planned to study or continue to study.

The main reasons why these persons did not want to participate in any type of learning activity were the lack of time due to family commitments (22%), age or health problems (13.8%) or they did not need it for their work (11%).

In terms of the obstacles that had prevented the adults who wished to participate in these activities from doing so, worth noting were the lack of time due to family commitments (29.7% for men and 45% for women), incompatibility between the working day and the learning hours (38.4% for men and 26% for women) and the learning being too expensive (12.3%).

### Linguistic and information technology knowledge

Almost 50% of adults 25 to 74 years old could speak some language other than their mother tongue.

Regarding languages, **almost 30% of adults spoke English and 14.7% spoke French**. In terms of level, more than half of the persons admitted to having a medium level in English, and 16% stated that their level was advanced.

### Number of languages that persons are able to use, by educational level. Population 25 to 74 years old.

Percentages

	Total	No language	1 language	2 languages	3 languages or more
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>49.8</b>	<b>33.6</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>4.0</b>
Lower secondary, primary education or lower	100.0	70.2	23.2	5.1	1.4
Upper secondary education	100.0	35.4	43.2	16.3	5.1
Tertiary education	100.0	19.0	47.4	24.8	8.7

Regarding the ability to use a computer, 47.6% of women and 40.7% of men stated that they were unable to use one.

Conversely, **17.1% of women and 18.8% of men using a computer were regarded as advanced users.**

### **Ability to use a computer, by sex. Population 25 to 74 years old.**

Percentages

	Total	Unable to use a computer	Basic user	Advanced user	Expert user
Total	100.0	44.2	33.9	17.9	4.0
Males	100.0	40.7	34.6	18.8	5.9
Females	100.0	47.6	33.2	17.1	2.1

### **Reading habits**

56.2% of men and 40.4% of women 25 to 74 years old read the newspaper almost every day. On the other hand, 64.3% of women and 52.6% of men had read a book for pleasure in the past year.

Reading books was related to the level of education. Thus, the higher the level of education, the more intense the habit of reading. 16.6% of those holding university level qualifications stated that they had not read a book in the last 12 months, as opposed to 58.0% of persons with a first stage secondary education or lower.

### **Reading books for pleasure in the past year, by sex**

**Population 25 to 74 years old. Percentages**

	No books	1 to 3 books	4 to 12 books	More than 12 books
Total	41.5	28.0	20.9	9.6
Males	47.4	25.6	18.6	8.3
Females	35.7	30.4	23.1	10.8

### **Social and cultural participation**

Going to the cinema is the preferred cultural activity. 22.4% of the population 25 to 74 years old had been more than seven times in the last year.

In terms of involvement in this type of activity, 56% of adults 25 to 74 years old had been to the cinema in the last year, 48% had visited places of cultural interest, 40% had been to see performing arts (theatre, concerts, opera, ...) and 37% had been to a sporting event.

Participation **in cultural activities, by sex**  
**Population 25 to 74 years old. Percentages**

	Performing arts	Cinema	Cultural sites	Sporting events
<b>Total</b>	<b>39.6</b>	<b>56.5</b>	<b>47.6</b>	<b>36.7</b>
Males	38.5	57.1	47.1	47.4
Females	40.8	55.8	48.1	25.9

38.6% of persons 25 to 74 years old were involved in social activities in the past 12 months.

By sex, the activities with greatest social involvement among women were those relating to the different churches or other religious organisations (18.2%) and those of charitable and volunteer-run organisations (14.6%). Among males, the most frequent activities were those with organisations or recreational groups (15.2%) and those corresponding to different churches or other religious organisations (12.1%).

**Participation in activities with different associations**  
**Population 25 to 74 years old. Percentages**

	Total	Males	Females
Participated in a social activity	38.6	39.2	38.0
Political party or trade union activities	6.2	7.9	4.5
Professional association activities	8.1	10.5	5.6
Activities with the different churches or other religious organisations	15.1	12.1	18.2
Activities with organisations or recreational groups	13.0	15.2	10.9
Activities with charitable and informal volunteer-run organisations	12.8	10.9	14.6
Activities with other groups or organisations	8.2	8.4	8.1

For further information see [INEbase-\[www.ine.es/en/welcome\\\_en.htm\]\(http://www.ine.es/en/welcome\_en.htm\)](http://www.ine.es/en/welcome_en.htm) All press releases at: [www.ine.es/en/prensa/prensa\\_en.htm](http://www.ine.es/en/prensa/prensa_en.htm)

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## Methodological note

The Survey on Adult Population Involvement in Learning Activities (AES), carried out in 2007, entails the implementation in Spain of the European project *Adult Education Survey*, coordinated by Eurostat and applied in all European Union countries. The objective of the Survey is to ascertain the educational and learning activities engaged in by the adult population (*life-long learning*), thereby investigating activities carried out in the last 12 months prior to the interview. Although the target population set on a European level is between the ages of 25 and 64, in the case of Spain, the investigation has been extended to persons between the ages of 65 and 74, in order to have available information for these ages, in which the employment market component no longer has an influence.

The Survey on Adult Population Involvement in Learning Activities is an investigation through sampling aimed at adults between the ages of 25 and 74 years living in family homes.

The reference period for studying involvement in educational activities is one year, with the 12 months prior to the interview taken into account.

### Definitions

**Formal education** is education provided in the school and university system, and that of other educational institutions leading to the gaining of an official qualification. They normally form part of a continuous progression of full-time education for children and young people, which generally starts between the ages of 5 and 7 and last until the ages 20-25.

**Non-formal education** entails organised and maintained educational activities which do not lead to the gaining of an official qualification. Non-formal education may take place both within and outside educational institutions, and cater for people of all ages.

**Non-formal learning** is defined as those activities which are carried out with the intention of learning, but are less organised and structured than educational activities.

In the context of the survey **mother tongue** is defined as the language or languages spoken during the first years of life (during childhood).