



# XXIAdults

**Adaptation of the adult educational  
system to the XXI Century**

**The Good Practices Template**



INSTITUTE for  
ROMA and  
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<b>Name of the Good Practice</b>
DeutscherVolkshochschul-Verbande.V.- Germany’s Nationwide Digital Learning Platform for AdultEducation”
<b>Summary of the Practice</b>
Brief, easy-to-understand summary: What is the practice, for whom, and for what purpose?
<p><b>vhs.cloud</b> is a digital platform developed by the German Adult Education Association (DVV) to serve all Volkshochschulen (VHS) across the country. It provides a secure and inclusive online environment where adult learners, educators, and administrative staff can collaborate, teach, and learn.</p> <p>The platform enables blended and online learning, centralizes course management, and improves digital access to education—especially for underserved areas and non-traditional learners. It was created to ensure that adult education could remain relevant, accessible, and digitally inclusive, even during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>
<b>Description of the Practice – min. 2000 characters</b>
<b>1) Context / Background</b>
<p>What was the initial need or problem?</p> <p>Who was the target group?</p> <p>Was it part of a larger programme or project?</p> <p>Germany's extensive network of adult education centers (Volkshochschulen or VHS) serves millions of learners each year. However, prior to 2018, these institutions lacked a unified digital infrastructure. Each VHS center used different tools (if any) for online learning, communication, and administration, leading to inefficiencies, digital fragmentation, and a lack of consistency in quality. This became particularly problematic during the COVID-19 pandemic when digital solutions were essential to ensure learning continuity.</p> <p><b>Target Group:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult learners enrolled in VHS programs across Germany</li> <li>• Teachers and trainers working in the adult education sector</li> <li>• Administrative and technical staff of local VHS centers</li> </ul> <p><b>Part of a larger program?</b></p> <p>Yes. The platform was developed and coordinated by the <b>DeutscherVolkshochschul-Verbande.V. (DVV)</b> and funded by the <b>German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)</b> as part of the national strategy for digital transformation in education.</p>
<b>2) Objectives</b>
<p>What were the goals of the practice?</p> <p>What did it aim to improve or change?</p>





☑ To create a centralized, GDPR-compliant digital platform that supports all adult education centers in Germany.

☑ To facilitate blended and online learning by offering course management tools, communication features, and learning content.

☑ To support educators in building digital competences and offer tools to improve their online teaching.

☑ To promote equitable access to high-quality digital adult education regardless of region, infrastructure, or prior digital experience.

### 3) Implementation / Methodology

How was the practice carried out step by step?

What activities or methods were used?

How long did it take?

#### Step-by-Step Implementation:

1. Planning & Development (2016–2018): DVV initiated the project with funding from BMBF, developing a robust, cloud-based digital platform tailored to adult education.
2. Pilot Phase (2018): Initial deployment in selected VHS centers to test features such as course spaces, forums, chat, video conferencing, and file sharing.
3. Training Programs: Simultaneously, training modules and webinars were created to educate educators and administrative staff on platform use.
4. National Rollout (2019–2020): vhs.cloud became accessible to all VHS centers. Resources were scaled, and regional coordinators were retrained.
5. Crisis Adaptation (2020 Onward): During COVID-19, the platform became essential. New features (e.g., virtual classrooms) were introduced and widely adopted.
6. Continuous Support: Ongoing development, support hotlines, peer-to-peer learning networks, and user feedback loops were embedded.

#### Tools & Methods Used:

- Moodle-based LMS customized for adult education
- Integrated video conferencing tools
- Resource libraries, internal messaging, and event calendars
- Training-of-trainers and self-paced learning path

### 4) Results / Outcomes

What were the concrete results?

How did the practice impact the participants?



**Concrete Results:**

- Over 800 VHS centers across Germany adopted the platform.
- Tens of thousands of adult learners accessed online learning content via vhs.cloud.
- Over 25,000 educators and administrative staff received digital skills training.
- The platform successfully hosted thousands of courses during COVID lockdowns, ensuring minimal disruption to lifelong learning.

**Impact on Participants:**

- Educators gained confidence and competence in digital pedagogy.
- Learners could access courses flexibly from home, especially in rural and underserved areas.
- Strengthened sense of unity and standardization among decentralized VHS centers.

**5) Participants' Stories – optional**

Short quotes, personal reflections or experiences shared by participant

**6) Success Factors**

What made the practice effective or innovative?

Were there any unique or creative elements?

**What Made the Practice Effective or Innovative:**

- A centralized platform for decentralized institutions—without compromising local autonomy.
- Fully GDPR-compliant, ensuring data security and trust among users.
- Highly modular and customizable for individual VHS centers.
- Training infrastructure built alongside the platform rollout, ensuring uptake.

**Unique / Creative Elements:**

- Developed specifically for adult education, rather than repurposing a university platform.
- User-driven development—ongoing feedback from teachers and learners shapes the platform's evolution.
- Facilitated cross-VHS collaboration, allowing shared course materials and national campaigns.





**7) Transferability / Recommendations**  
Can the practice be used elsewhere?  
What conditions are needed for successful implementation?

Yes. The concept of a national digital learning hub is highly transferable to any country with a federated adult education system.

**Conditions for Successful Implementation:**

- Governmental or institutional funding and policy support
- Strong coordination from a national umbrella organization (like DVV)
- Ongoing investment in **digital literacy training** for educators
- Robust technical infrastructure with user-friendly design

**8) Tips / Implementation Advice – optional**  
Checklists, lessons, or advice for those wishing to implement the practice.

- Start small: Pilot with a few centers to refine usability.
- Embed support structures: Regional contact persons or peer mentors increase adoption.
- Integrate offline components: Not all learners are fully digital—hybrid models increase inclusivity.
- Communicate success stories: Encourage reluctant users by highlighting wins.

**9) Lessons Learned - optional**  
Biggest surprises, obstacles or key takeaways during implementation.

**10) Photos illustrating the described practice**  
Please attach at least 3 photos related to the described good practice





## PRACTICE PROFILE – CLASSIFICATION CHECKLIST

Please tick all categories that apply to your described practice.

You may choose more than one.

### TYPE OF THE PRACTICE

- Learning by doing
- Intergenerational learning
- Community-based learning
- Digital / blended learning
- Peer learning
- Mentoring / coaching
- Cultural / creative approaches
- Collaborative / partner-based
- Other (specify):

### TARGET GROUP

- Adults with low qualifications
- NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training)
- Migrants / Refugees
- Older adults
- Women
- People with disabilities
- Other vulnerable groups
- General adult population

### LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- Formal
- Non-formal
- Informal

### SKILLS / COMPETENCES DEVELOPED





- Literacy (reading, writing, comprehension)
- Numeracy (maths, logical thinking)
- Digital skills
- STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics)
- Personal, social and learning to learn
- Civic competences
- Entrepreneurship
- Cultural awareness and expression
- Language skills
- Job-related / vocational skills
- Green competences
- Other (specify):

#### POTENTIAL USERS

- Teachers / Educators
- Administrative staff
- School / Centre management
- Policy makers / Public administration
- NGOs / Community organizations
- Other (specify):

