



Citizens of public life in digital learning

Preliminary Research United Kingdom

Project Citizens of public life in digital learning
2019-1-UK01-KA204-061372
Erasmus Plus program - Key Action 2
Strategic partnerships for adult education – exchanges of practice



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ANALYSED BY RIVENSCO CONSULTING LTD

English

Country:	UNITED KINGDOM
Category:	VOCATIONAL & EDUCATIONAL CENTER
Title of Best Practise:	SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION IN UNITED KINGDOM
Organization name:	URBAN MBA
Brief summary/description of the best practise (maximum 100 words)	<p>The UK is currently the fifth largest economy in the world and in Europe, Britain's economy is the second largest economy with a GDP of approximately £2.1 trillion despite having gone through the detrimental experience of the 2008 financial crisis.</p> <p>After the financial crisis caused a significant global shock, the UK's economy had shrunk by over 6% between 2008 and 2009. Due to this, UK economy had taken 5 years to get back on track to what its initial GDP was before the recession happened and now, the UK's economy is 11% larger than before the financial crisis. However, following Brexit, there are issues surrounding whether or not the UK can manage to keep a consistent economic growth.</p> <p>Since the UK is a developed country, its GDP is dominated by services due to its international status of being the leader in financial services.</p> <p>It's GDP composition by sector in 2017:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agriculture = 0.7% - Industry = 20.2% - Services = 79.2% <p>UK's GDP growth from 2000 to 2019</p>  <p>Based on this graph, the UK had managed to recover shortly after the financial crisis in 2008, but the UK's recent economic performance has not been positive after Brexit and is shrinking.</p>

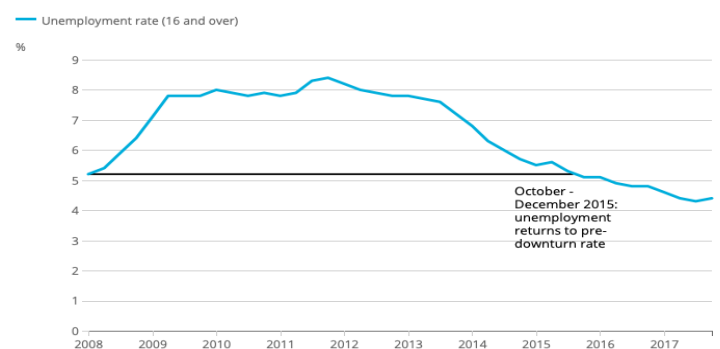


Employment policy

The UK has been very successful with its employment, reaching its highest unemployment rate since 1995. After the financial crisis, unemployment rate had increased as people begun losing their jobs but since 2015, unemployment had lowered back to its pre-downturn rate and further continued to lower.

The UK government has managed to do this, despite Brexit, by utilising monetary policies such as cutting interest rates to improve its aggregate demand. By doing this, the UK's current base rate has reached its lowest point of 0.1% to encourage businesses within the UK to have greater availability of capital to invest with, such as expanding on their workforce. There is also various educational opportunities available for the UK population to improve on their knowledge and diversify their skills to enter the workforce in this method. Taking measures like these has proven successful in attempting to lower unemployment for the UK, but whether or not this trend will carry on, there is uncertainty considering terms have not been discussed following Brexit and the impact of its overall employment structure including EU citizens.

In the long term, employment can change significantly not only due to Brexit, but also because of the UK's progression towards becoming a flat white economy; with technology developing and becoming more advanced, there is a shift going towards jobs that focus on being more digital. This would come at a cost of jobs in the long run and with this issue, the workforce would have to be trained again to adjust to this change and be a part of this new digital economy. Therefore, the UK has plenty of free training courses that focus on learning about the digital world to prepare for this shift.



Integration

The UK being part of the EU has had a strong influence on migrants flowing into the economy and joining the workforce. With no immigration barriers between the UK and EU, EU citizens are easily able to reside in the UK, work and pay taxes to contribute towards

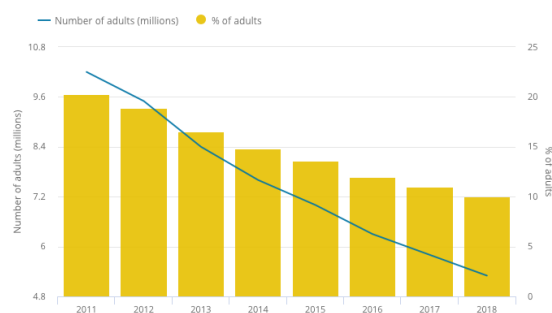
the UK government's budget to reinvest into the economy. On average, an EU citizen who is an adult contributes about £2,370 more than the British-born citizen who is also an adult. This statistic shows the importance of integration of migrants with the UK economy and has been effective in supporting the UK's economic growth.

However, with Brexit, the UK will have significant changes to their immigration policies, making the inflow of migration decrease and make the UK less diversified and integrated. Having this combined with the UK having an ageing population would be detrimental to the UK and so the government should take measures to ensure a smooth transition out of the EU while catering to the needs of migration if they want to maintain a stable growth rate in the long term, especially when there is the risk of job losses.

Digital Literacy

As a developed country, the UK is generally well in digital literacy and being ranked 7th in the Digital Literacy and Society Index (DESI) in 2017.

Number (millions) and percentage of adult internet non-users, UK, 2011 to 2018



With greater technological advancements going on, there has also been a gradual decrease in the number of 'non-internet users' in the past few years as we begin shifting into the digital world.

However, the progression towards the digital world comes at the cost of leaving some individuals behind. For instance, although the UK has a wide availability for digital learning (such as Microsoft and Google who provide free training), how many people actually have the knowledge of this? Individuals lacking this information are then hindered in their abilities to enter the digital world and if they are unable to educate themselves on digital literacy, the flat white economy could leave these individuals behind in the future.

Another issue is the lack of access for those individuals in poverty; they would be unable to afford the gadgets such as smartphones and laptops, or even internet access, which can be unaffordable for these individuals which can be a huge problem in the long term because if these individuals are disadvantaged and cannot develop



their digital literacy because of financial problems, the income inequality gap would increase as those individuals that do not have those financial problems have the opportunity to access these digital training courses.

Following Brexit as well, there is a question of whether or not migrants have the equal opportunities of British citizens. Migrants may also not have the financial needs to access the technology. They may only have a standard phone just to be able to call back home but not a smartphone to learn about the digital world. Instead, migrants may be disadvantaged as they may have to focus on getting basic necessities instead of educating themselves that can help them in the future.

The government aims to combat digital illiteracy by having invested £85 million towards training up to level 2, focusing on digital skills as well as recently offering free Wi-Fi across all libraries which will particularly assist those disadvantaged individuals to use the technology that they are unable to afford for personal use, hence offering them the equal opportunity for access into the digital world. Below are a few examples of free online resources available to be used for those who lack access to digital education.

- Open University:
<https://www.open.edu/openlearn/education-development/digital-literacy-succeeding-digital-world/content-section-overview?active-tab=description-tab>
- Microsoft
<https://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/digitalliteracy/home>
- Apple
<https://training.apple.com/us/en/courses>
- Alison
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