ENSURING THE QUALITY OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION FOR ADULTS

Country report. Latvia.

2023

CONTENT

INTRODUCTION

Already Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 2017 recommendations for education[1] included the task of providing high-quality adult, incling non-formal education. An adult can receive education both in formal education programs and in non-formal education programs. Ensuring the quality of formal education at each level and form of education is ensured in accordance with the procedure specified in the Law on Education, the Law on Vocational Education and the regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers[2].

Non-formal education, which is widely implemented for adults, is subject to the condition that gives a person the opportunity throughout life, regardless of previously acquired education, to learn new and improve existing competences in accordance with the personal interests, the state or the employer's request. Non-formal education is implemented for different target audiences and needs. For adults, this form of education is in demand for learning new skills for both working life and personal goals. In accordance with the nature of non-formal education and the target audience, a flexible, non-bureaucratic approach and processes for its quality assurance should also be created, emphasizing the use of digital technologies and opportunities.

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[1] OECD Economic Survey of Latvia 2017. Available: http://www.oecd.org/economy/surveys/Latvia-2017-OECD-economic-survey-overview.pdf

[2] Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers of October 6, 2020 No. 618 "Procedures for the accreditation of educational institutions, examination centers, other institutions and educational programs specified in the Law on Education, and the assessment of the professional performance of educational institution managers"

1. LEGAL REGULATIONS FOR ENSURING THE QUALITY OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION FOR ADULTS

Development of the regulatory framework applicable to non-formal education for adults:

Education Law (1998).
- On October 29, 1998, adopting a new Education Law in Article 46 "Adult Education Programs" it was determined that in each of type of adult education - formal and informal education programs can be offered, as well as the development of the Adult Education Law and the adult education standard was foreseen;

- On 1st September 2001, amendments to the Education Law entered into force, which changed the previously established regulation by introducing the name **"adult non-formal education programs"** and determining that educational institutions established by the state and municipalities are entitled to implement adult non-formal education programs without obtaining a license, other legal entities and natural persons - after obtaining a license from the local municipality. The new wording of Article 46 no longer included the development of either the Adult Education Law or the adult education standard;

- On 4th March 2010, amendments were adopted which **cancelled** of Education law **determined in the fourth part of Article 46**, that adult non-formal education programs are developed by their implementers in cooperation with clients, and also changed the licensing requirements, determining that educational institutions (regardless of the legal status of their founder) are entitled to implement adult non-formal education programs without obtaining a license, but other legal and natural persons who are not registered in the Register of Educational Institutions - after obtaining a license from the municipality;

- Amendments to the fifth part of Article 46 of the Education Law, adopted on 9th July 2013, added to the range of non-formal education providers for adults who do not need to obtain a license from the municipality – these were the national armed forces whose tasks include the implementation of adult education programs;

- On 8th April 2021, amendments were adopted to the first part of Article 3 of the Education Law, stipulating that **everyone has the right to qualitative and inclusive education**. Until now, the wording only included the condition that everyone has the right to education.

- Amendments to the Education Law were adopted on 8th April 2021 in Article 1, supplementing it with 7.[1]clause defining the term **qualitative of education** - educational process, content, environment and management, which provides everyone with an inclusive education and the opportunity to achieve high-quality results in accordance with the goals set by the society and the state. So, in non-formal education, including adults have the right to qualitative education that includes the quality of the educational process, content environment and management so that education is inclusive and learners achieve high-value results.
  Article 15 defines new functions of the Ministry of Education and Science in the field of education quality assurance:

"18^1) plans, sets and improves educational quality goals, including them in educational development guidelines and action plans, as well as **forms the education quality assurance and monitoring policy**;

18^2) performes **educational quality monitoring**, collects and accumulates data on the quality of education, analyzes and evaluates the performance of educational institutions, coordinates and organizes research, informs about the results;

18^3) identifies and assesses risks, **develops and approves educational quality improvement guidelines;**

18^4) introduces and **develops digital tools for evaluation and analysis of educational quality**;

18^5) **prepares an annual education quality assessment report** and submits it to the Cabinet of Ministers for approval. The report includes an assessment of the quality of the process, content, environment and management of all levels of education and adult education;"

- On September 15, 2022, significant amendments were made to Article 46 of the Education Law:
  1) By changing the title of the article – "**Article 46. Non-formal education programs**", without using the previously used concept – non-formal education programs for adults and including a single regulation for both non-formal education programs for adults and non-formal education programs for youth;
  2) Determining that informal education programs give a person the opportunity throughout his life, regardless of previously acquired education, to learn new and improve existing competences in accordance with the interests of personal growth, thus providing for the request of the state or employer, that not all the content of informal education programs should be created according to the needs of the state or employers , that you can create programs that are aimed at the growth of personal interests and abilities;
  3) Determining **components of the non-formal education program**, namely, that non-formal education programs include the learning outcomes to be achieved, the form of education, language, content, scope and material and intellectual resources necessary for implementation;
  4) By replacing the licensing of non-formal education programs in local governments, applying a different procedure determined by local governments, with the one determined by the Cabinet of Ministers **united procedure in municipalities for obtaining their implementation permits**, as well as each **the municipality's obligation to register non-formal education programs**. Persons who are not registered in the Register of Educational Institutions must obtain a permit. Accredited educational institutions, as well as units of the National Armed Forces, are entitled to implement non-formal education programs without obtaining a permit. Paragraph 100 of the Transitional Provisions of the Education Law stipulates that educational institutions that are registered in the Register of Educational Institutions, but are not accredited, are entitled to continue the implementation of the relevant educational programs without a permit no longer than until May 31, 2024;
  5) Determining that for graduation of the non -formal education program, incl. adults, provider **issues a certificate.**

- On November 14, 2022, amendments to Article 1 of the Education Law entered into force, adding16^1 point, which for the promotion of access and quality of education determines

that **municipality education ecosystem**- the system that the municipality creates in order to **provide the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to the population throughout their life.** The municipality develops a set of purposefully working institutions under its management and supervision, cooperating in the field of education with municipal, private and state educational institutions, employers, social partners, non-governmental organizations, other municipalities and educational institutions located in their territories, coordinating the implementation of education in all educational programs and grades.

Law "On Municipalities" (1994, was valid until 01.01.2023).
Article 15, paragraph 4 of the basic wording defined the duty of the municipality to take care of education and take care of culture that did not include professional and adult education. On the other hand, in the wording of the law, which entered into force on November 26, 1997, the fourth part of Article 15 was amended, determining the obligation of the municipality to ensure the education of the population in the acquisition of basic education and general secondary education, providing pre-school and school-age children with places in educational and educational institutions, etc. Therefore, although not specifically defined, but in the context of the Law on Education, the competence of local governments also included activities in professional, adult and higher education.

Law on Local Governments (2022)
On January 1, 2023, the Local Government Law entered into force, where the autonomous functions of the local government are defined in Article 4 and the first part of this Article, Clause 4 - **for the municipality to provide for the education of the population**, including providing the opportunity to obtain compulsory education and providing for pre-school education, secondary education, vocational education, interest education and **accessibility of adult education**.

Order of the Cabinet of Ministers[3]
In order to promote the development of adult education, accessibility and the implementation of quality assurance measures, as well as to ensure the implementation of the guidelines for the development of education in the field of adult education, on May 5, 2016, Cabinet Order No. 287 "On the Implementation Plan of the Adult Education Management Model 2016-2020 for the year" (hereinafter - the plan) was approved. The plan determined activities, the implementation of which is intended to attract funding from the European Social Fund, for the relevant specific support goals of the European Social Fund, by approving the evaluation criteria and implementation conditions of the specific support goals of the projects.

An inter-institutional council - **Governing Council for Vocational and Adult Education** - was created during the implementation of this plan, in which interested parties are involved as ministries, representatives from trade unions and employers' organizations, state administrative institutions, local government public organizations, etc. and councils activity is coordinated by the State Education Development Agency (hereinafter - VIAA).

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[3] https://likumi.lv/ta/id/281992-parpieauguso-izglitibas-parvaldibas-modela-ieviesanas-planu-2016-2020-gadam

Draft regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers "Procedure for issuing and canceling permits for the implementation of non-formal education programs" (23-TA-1042).
Article 14 of the Education Law11[1]point stipulates that the Cabinet of Ministers determines the procedure for issuing permits for the implementation of non-formal education programs. The Ministry of Education and Science (hereinafter - IZM) has prepared a draft of the Cabinet of Ministers regulations "Procedure for Issuing and Cancelling Permits for the Implementation of the Non-formal Education Program" (hereinafter - the draft of the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations), which has been submitted for public consultation from 28.04.2023. - 12.05.2023.[4]

The purpose of the regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers is to establish a unified procedure in which the municipality issues and cancels the permit for the implementation of the non-formal education program in order to promote the availability and quality of non-formal education, including the acquisition of digital skills, in Latvia. A unified procedure for issuing permits for the implementation of non-formal education programs is also determined in the fourth part of Article 46 of the Education Law, as well as in order to introduce wider accessibility of these programs in the order of the Cabinet of Ministers of April 28, 2021 no. 292 "On Latvia's Recovery and Resilience Mechanism Plan" determined by reform 2.3.2 of the European Union's Recovery and Resilience Mechanism Plan "Digital skills for the digital transformation of society and administration".

The draft regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers provide that the permit is issued or revoked by the municipality in whose administrative territory the program or part of it is planned to be implemented, or by the municipality where the program implementer is registered, if the program is planned to be fully implemented or will be implemented remotely or via distance learning.

If you plan to implement the non-formal education program in two ways - only in person or only remotely, then permission must be obtained for each of these programs, because the material and intellectual resources required for the implementation of the program will be different in both cases.
The application for obtaining a permit must be stated:

1) the place of implementation of the program, the premises for face-to-face classes is safe and has the material and technical resources necessary for the program and an environment suitable for the acquisition of education. The physical environment of the classrooms affects the learning process, the mutual relations of those involved in it and the achievements of the students:
   a) the size and functionality of the room affect social proximity, the work forms and methods to be used;
   b) room arrangement affects communication and movement;
   c) the design of the room forms the learner's belonging to the room, class, subject. Such conditions are applied in formal education, but their nature is universal, therefore the implementer of the non-formal education program assumes responsibility for providing a quality educational environment for all learners. Since the non-formal education program can also be implemented outside the premises and possibly in a different place each time, it is possible to indicate the name or names of the program venue without specifying the specific address.

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[4] https://tapportals.mk.gov.lv/public_participation/bc710b41-71b8-4328-b6e9-35ce396b904b

2) persons who will implement the program in which minors are admitted, meet the conditions for pedagogues specified in Article 72, Part Five of the Law on the Protection of Children's Rights and Article 50 of the Education Law. The said certificate is not necessary if the non-formal education program in which a minor can be admitted is planned to be implemented by the employees of educational institutions established by the state or municipality, as such information is available in the State Education Information System (hereinafter - VIIS).

In order to ensure a high-quality offer of non-formal education programs, as well as unified requirements in all municipalities, the draft regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers determine what information should be included in the description of the non-formal education program. The description of the non-formal education program is developed, including the information specified in the appendix, which stipulates that:
1) the purpose of the program and the learning outcomes to be achieved,
2) target group and requirements for previous education and experience in the field related to the program, level of prior knowledge (if applicable),
3) implementation language,
4) distribution of the program scope and content learning plan,
5) material (list of necessary teaching aids, facilities and equipment) and intellectual (persons involved in the implementation of the program, their education and/or professional qualifications and work experience) resources for ensuring the program,
6) teaching methods for program implementation,
7) final exam at the end of the program (if applicable).

In order to ensure the quality of the program (in accordance with the concept of educational quality defined in the Law on Education - process, content, environment and management), in accordance with the annex to the draft regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers, the program description includes measures during the preparation or implementation of the program, the framework or purpose of which is to promote high-quality and high-quality development of the educational program.

In addition to the above, the draft regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers stipulate that when submitting an application for a permit for a program whose purpose is the acquisition of language skills, the content of the program and the achievable results are structured in the program description in accordance with the knowledge level systems of the Council of Europe document "Common European guidelines for language learning: learning, teaching, assessment" descriptions in order to ensure unified and understandable program content for the recipient of the service and achievable results for learning language skills.
The draft regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers provide that, when submitting an application for a permit for a program whose purpose is the acquisition of digital competences, the learning outcomes to be achieved in the program description are structured according to the competences classified in the Digital Competence Framework for the European Population (DigComp) (at the 2nd dimension level of detail) and the levels of competence acquisition (3 .dimensions in the level of detail)[5].

In order to ensure that the certificate of completion of the informal education program will not contain incorrect or misleading information, the draft regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers

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[5] DigComp version 2.1 is available here: http://muzizglitiba.gov.lv/sites/default/files/muzizglitiba-Digitala-kompetente.pdf.

provide that, when submitting an application for obtaining a permit, a sample of the certificate of completion of the informal education program shall be attached, specifying what information the implementer of the informal education program must include in it, but without determining its shape, design, which is the choice of the program implementer.

The draft regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers also includes a regulation that determines in which cases the municipality is entitled to make a decision to refuse to issue a permit, that is, if:

1) the purpose of the program does not correspond to the purpose specified in Article 2 and Article 46 of the Education Law;
2) the material and intellectual resources of the program does not ensure the implementation of the educational process in accordance with the program description;
3) the person has not submitted all the documents necessary for making a decision or they do not meet the requirements of these regulations;
4) the person who will implement the program for minors is subject to the restrictions on working with minors set by the Law on Education or the Law on the Protection of Children's Rights.

Part of the process of issuing permits for the implementation of the informal education program is their accounting and registration in the municipality that issues them. For the purposes of accounting and control of current informal education program permits, the municipality creates a register of permits, which contains information, including personal data, necessary for managing the educational process, as well as for communication with the program implementer.

Ensuring accessibility, in order to inform the public about non-formal education programs available in the territory of the municipality and to promote citizens' involvement in them, the municipality publishes the following information from the register on its website:

1) date and number of issued permit;
2) the name and registration number of the legal entity or the name and surname of the natural person;
3) the name of the program for which the permit has been issued;
4) the address of the place of implementation of the program for face-to-face programs or an indication that the program is implemented remotely or via distance learning;
5) validity period of the permit;
6) program implementer/training provider contact information;
7) website address or other public social network information about the activities of the permittee in the field of non-formal education program implementation (if applicable).

With the current amendments to the Law on Education and the regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers on obtaining permits for the implementation of non-formal education programs the requirements for the development and implementation of non-formal education programs will be harmonized, the higher quality of non-formal education programs in Latvia will be promoted, the transparency and standardization of the procedure for obtaining permission for the implementation of the educational program will be ensured, promoting the involvement of young people and adults in lifelong learning.

2. GOOD PRACTICE

Despite the fact that a specific regulation of adult non-formal education existed in Latvia since 2001, the insufficiency of this regulation was revealed in practice, which also allowed the implementation of low-quality non-formal education programs. Therefore, in the events where European Union funds and state budget resources were attracted for the implementation of non-formal education for adults, creating the special regulatory framework for each event, the requirements for applying adult non-formal education programs to the project and its event were specified, as well as control over their implementation was and is being implemented. As a result, the citizens' trust in these programs has increased, as well as the number of applicants for participation in these programs has increased.

Good practice example 1
Improvement of professional competences of employed persons in non-formal education programs

Action programs "Growth and employment" 8.4.1. the project of the specific support goal "Improving the professional competence of employed persons". No. 8.4.1.0/16/I/001.

Taking into account that what is stipulated in Article 33 of the Education Law applies only to formal education programs, the development of which is based on the specific educational state standard, and Article 46 of the Education Law did not include the requirements for the quality of informal education of adults, then educational institutions had to submit a uniform form in order to apply for participation in the project appropriate description of the non-formal education program (in the 3rd and 4th rounds[6]).

The program description had to indicate:

1)The purpose and tasks of the educational program;

2) Target audience of the educational program;

3) Requirements for previously obtained education, experience in the field related to the educational program (level of prior knowledge);

4) The amount of the educational program in hours, separately indicating the number of hours of theoretical study, practical study, independent work and test for each form of implementation: face-to-face or distance learning;

5) Content of the educational program indicating the results to be achieved and for each result to be achieved: topics, sub-topics and number of hours;

6) List of material and technical provision of the educational program;

7) List of pedagogical personnel necessary for the implementation of the educational program;

8) Evaluation of learning the educational program (test);

9) Document certifying completion of the educational program;

10) Teaching methods used for the implementation of the educational program;

11) List of literature to be used.

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[6] https://www.macibaspieaugusajiem.lv/izsludinatas-atlases?tab=collapse-410

The experience of the mentioned project, incl. description of the non-formal education program, was taken into account when preparing the draft of the regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers "The procedure for issuing and cancelling permits for the implementation of the non-formal education program".

Example 2 of good practice
Learning the professional competencies necessary for the job market of persons at risk of unemployment, job seekers and unemployed people
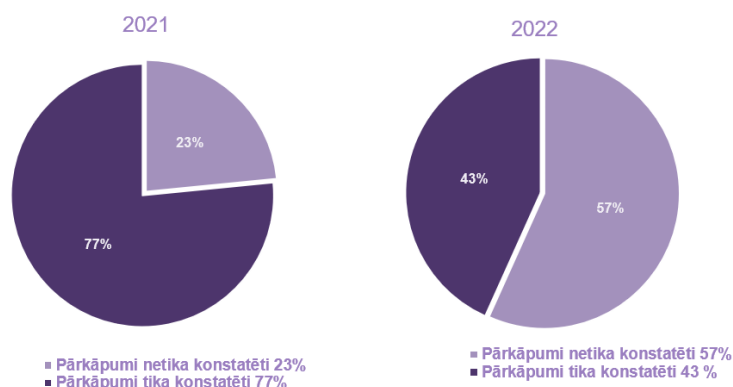
Action programs "Growth and employment" 7.1.1. the project of the specific support goal "Increase the qualifications and skills of the unemployed according to the demand of the labour market" and 14.1.2. project of the specific support objective "Recovery measures in the field of well-being".

To ensure the implementation of educational programs in accordance with legal norms and of high quality The State Employment Agency (hereinafter - NVA) attracts a cooperation partner in the implementation of the project - the State Service of Education Quality, which is a direct administrative institution under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and Science, which ensures quality and legal education, monitoring the quality of education and providing support in the implementation of the educational process and implements the functions specified in Article 20 of the Education Law, incl. control of compliance of the educational process with laws and other laws and regulations regulating education. In cooperation with the NVA, the methodology to be applied in the tests was developed, which determines the procedures for the implementation of educational programs and the control of the administration of tests. The cooperation was started in 2021. By implementing stricter control measures for the implementation of educational programs, the number of educational programs implemented in violation of the requirements of regulatory acts was significantly reduced within one year (from 77% to 43%)[7].

Figure No.1.
Effectiveness of inspections of total inspections

NO KOPĒJĀ PĀRBAUŽU SKAITA:

2021

23%

77%

▪ Pārkāpumi netika konstatēti 23%
▪ Pārkāpumi tika konstatēti 77%

2022

43%

57%

▪ Pārkāpumi netika konstatēti 57%
▪ Pārkāpumi tika konstatēti 43 %

In 23% cases violations were not found
In 77% cases violations were found

In 57% cases violations were not found
In 43% cases violations were found

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[7] https://www.ikvd.gov.lv/lv/projekts/atbalsts-bezdarbnieku-izglitibai

At the same time, it must be recognized that face-to-face testing at educational program implementation sites is a very labour- intensive, expensive and high-competent human resource capacity-related measure that cannot be implemented on a wide and comprehensive scale within the framework of daily state administration services without attracting additional project resources.

3. SWOT ANALYSIS

The initial SWOT analysis of the adult education (hereinafter - AL) system situation is included On May 5, 2016, in Cabinet Order No. 287 "On the Implementation Plan of the Adult Education Management Model 2016-2020 for the year"[8]:

Strengths (Advantages)	*Weaknesses (Disadvantages)*
• According to the legal acts (Law on Education, Law on Vocational Education and Law on Universities), the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Science for AL policy, the role and competence of local governments in the implementation of AL, as well as the principles of AL financing are defined. • The network of vocational education institutions provides modern and suitable infrastructure for the needs of various target groups. • The majority of local governments implement the functions prescribed by law in the implementation of AL, delegating this function to education boards or other institutions, or keeping it at the discretion of the municipality itself, thus institutionally ensuring regional coverage in the implementation of AL. • In the planning period of 2004-2006, within the framework of activity 3.2.4.1 "Development and implementation of lifelong learning strategy", an adult education system was created, coordinators and an adult education network were provided. • State Education development agency (VIAA) operates under the authority of the Ministry of Education and Science (IZM), which, in accordance with the regulations, implements state policy in the field of higher education	• Insufficient state funding for the provision of AL for employees. • The existing AL offer does not ensure a gradual restructuring of the labor supply from the middle to the higher qualification group. • Insufficient coordinating, unified management of AL, involving all ministries responsible for the implementation of AL, determining the tasks to be achieved, priority directions of support, target groups, distribution and proportion of funding. • There is no database in which unified information is available on AL providers and programs offered, as well as on participants involved in AL. • Insufficient capacity of the Education Quality State Service of the Ministry of Education and Science for monitoring the quality of AL. • In the creation of the PI offer, there is a lack of connection with mid- and long-term labour market forecasts, forecasts of demographic trends and scenarios of the development of the economic situation. • The analysis of AL demand and supply is not sufficiently based on the specifics and needs of the territories. • There is no established mechanism for

and science development, development of the lifelong learning system, development of the professional education system, and development of the general education system.	flexibly responding to the needs of different (not only individual) target groups, providing additional support (for example, mobility, support for child care, etc.), thereby promoting their involvement in AL.
- State Employment agency (NVA) has approved the implementation of adult education programs with the coupon method for both employed and unemployed, which gives the client the opportunity to freely choose a service provider	- Among the population, there is a low level of understanding and experience of the nature and offer of AL.
- Recognition of knowledge and skills acquired outside of formal education is ensured.	
- IZM is involved in the EPALE network, which provides an opportunity to learn from professionals in other European countries and collaborate to improve the quality and availability of AL in Europe.	
- From 2012 to 2015, the Ministry of Education and Science implemented two EC projects in the field of adult education[9], an analysis was made of the AL process and results implemented in previous periods, as well as the experience of the Ministry of Welfare in adult education.	
- During the 2007 - 2013 planning period, the Ministry of Economy has implemented training for the employed to promote the competitiveness of their employees and to raise the qualifications of their employees, as a result of which an analysis of the results of the implemented programs has been carried out.	

Options	*Threats (Risks)*
- To create a harmonized system of regulatory acts and effective resource (including financial) unified administration, respecting the principles of shared responsibility and the interaction of sectoral policies, for the development of a unified lifelong learning system.	- Without implementing a coordinated adult education policy, the number of persons involved in AL will not increase.
- Ensure the availability of AL to citizens regardless of their age, gender, previous education, place of residence, income level,	- Failure to create a AL offer based on mid- and long-term labour market forecasts will not reduce the mismatch of workforce qualifications to labour market requirements.
	- Systematic approach to adult

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[9] From 2012 to 2014, the Ministry of the Interior has implemented the EC project "*Implementation of the European program in the field of adult education*", and from January 2015 to October 30, 2015 implemented the EC project "*National coordinators for the implementation of the European program in the field of adult education*".

ethnicity, functional disabilities, etc. • To develop an offer of quality education for adults, which ensures sustainable competences for work, civic participation, personal growth and promotes the development of a competitive knowledge economy and democratic society in Latvia based on high skills. • Regular analysis of service demand and quality can be provided. • Creating modular programs with options and adaptation to individual needs.	education will not be ensured without arranging adult education data acquisition and regulatory base. • By not linking the AL offer with mid- and long-term labour market forecasts, the mismatch of workforce qualifications to labour market requirements will not be eliminated. • Insufficiently mobilizing all the resources involved in the AL and not promoting their cooperation to achieve the goal will not prevent AL fragmentation and will not ensure cost effectiveness. • The risks of structural unemployment will not be mitigated without creating a sustainable AL system aimed at qualification acquisition, retraining and further education of employees. • Without developing a AL management model that is able to respond to the needs of different target groups, sufficient support for the involvement of socially excluded persons in AL will not be provided.

Taking into account that in the period from 2020, significant amendments have been made to the Education Law in the aspect of promoting the quality of education, including the quality of non-formal education for adults, this previously conducted SWOT analysis should be updated.

This report contains an updated SWOT analysis in the context of non-formal education for adults (hereinafter referred to as non-formal AL):

SWOT (2023)

Strengths (Advantages)	*Weaknesses (Disadvantages)*
• In accordance with the legal acts (Education Law, Local Government Law), the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Local Government for the non-formal AL policy, role and competence in non-formal AL implementation is separated, as well as the principles of non-formal AL financing are defined. • The network of vocational education institutions has been modernized, which provides modern and suitable infrastructure for the needs of various educational target groups, incl. according to the status criteria,	• Allocation of state funding to the provision of non-formal AL for employees, so that this function is not implemented only within the framework of EU projects. • Insufficient capacity of the control institution (e.g. the State Service for Quality of Education) to monitor the quality of non-formal AL. • The complicated improvement of state education information system (VIIS system) functionality for the implementation of a unified register of

the involvement of adult learners in continuing professional education, professional development education and non-formal education programs is mandatory. • The majority of municipalities implement the functions prescribed by law in the implementation of non-formal AL, assigning this function to education boards, education specialists or adult education coordinators; • The activity of VIAA, an institution subordinate to the Ministry of Education and Science, which implements the ESF project for the provision of adult education opportunities (currently the last 9th round), where the acquired practice can be used in the provision of adult education activities with co-financing from the state budget. • NVA has approved the implementation of adult education programs with the coupon method for both employed and unemployed, which gives the client the opportunity to freely choose a service provider, incl. in non-formal education. • Wider implementation of the practice implemented by the NVA in AL implementation inspections; • Recognition of knowledge and skills acquired outside of formal education (including non-formal education) is ensured, reducing administrative obstacles for educational institutions (from 2023, no delegation from the Ministry of Education and Science is required). • EPALE's activity in Latvia, which provides the opportunity to learn from professionals in other European countries and to cooperate, as well as inform about non-formal AL and AL current affairs; • Among the population, there is awareness and experience of the importance and offer of AL, which is confirmed by the active participation in adult education projects of EU funds implemented by both VIAA and NVA.	permits; • The analysis of the demand and supply of AL is not sufficiently based on the specifics and needs of the territories, as well as evidence of economic development trends; • There is no mechanism for flexibly responding to the needs of different (not only individual) target groups, providing additional support (for example, mobility, support for looking after a child during school, etc.), thereby promoting their involvement in AL. • Among residents with a low level of education and qualifications, there is a low understanding and experience of the need to study AL programs, and the improvement of general and professional competences.
Options	*Threats (Risks)*
• Creation of a harmonized system of legal acts and efficient unified management of resources (including financial), respecting the principles of shared responsibility and the	• Without organizing the registration and acquisition of non-formal AL data, a systematic approach to monitoring and development of adult education

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interaction of sectoral policies, for the development of a unified lifelong learning system for all AL, incl. non-formal AL for target groups. • Introduction of a unified local government register for registering permits for the implementation of non-formal education programs, as well as the obligation of accredited educational institutions to register non-formal education programs in the VIIS system, which would promote the awareness of those interested in education and the availability of AL; • Abbreviated AL, incl. Implementation of non-formal AL educational programs at the higher education level; • To popularize the offer of high-quality education for adults, which provides digital competences, sustainable competences for work, civic participation, personal growth and promotes the transformation of the economy into a knowledge economy based on high skills, as well as the development of a civil and democratic society in Latvia. • Developing a modular approach to creating AL programs with options and adaptation to individual needs.	will not be ensured. • Insufficiently mobilizing all the resources involved in the AL and not promoting their cooperation to achieve the goal will not prevent AL fragmentation and will not ensure cost effectiveness. • Without creating a sustainable AL, incl. The non-formal AL system, aimed at qualification acquisition, retraining and quick acquisition of competencies required for the labor market, will not reduce the risks of structural unemployment. • Without creating a set of quality measures suitable for the non-formal AL, as well as without implementing regular quality control of its implementation, the achievement of the objectives of the AL policy will not be ensured.

4. SURVEY DATA AND RESULTS. STAKEHOLDER VISION AND NEEDS

Foundation "Smart minds" in cooperation with the State Service of Education Quality within the framework of the Erasmus+ project "Creation of a self-assessment tool for quality assurance in adult non-formal education" from 3-25 March 2023 conducted a survey of adult education policymakers and implementers on quality assurance in non-formal education programs for February. 103 respondents participated in the survey, of which 90 respondents were educational policy implementers (learning centers, implementers, educators, etc.), 10 educational policy makers and 3 specialists involved in the coordination of adult education.

Figure 2. Do you agree with the statement that you have sufficient information about quality assurance in non-formal education to create and implement qualitative non-formal adult education programs?
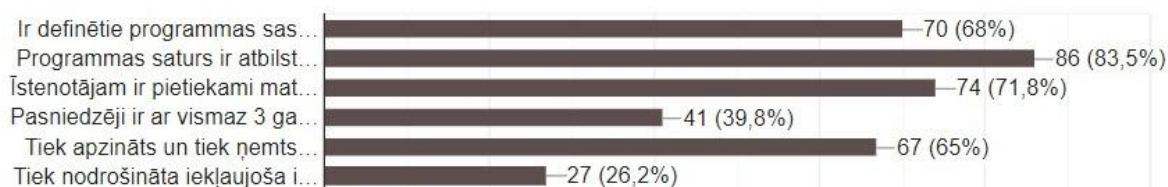
103 responses

- ● Jā, informācija ir pietiekama
- ● Nē, ir nepieciešama papildu informācija

45.6%

54.4%
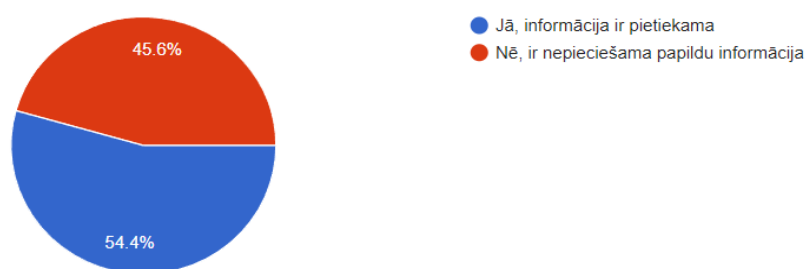
54.5% of respondents agreed with the statement that there is sufficient information on quality assurance in non-formal education to create and implement qualitative non-formal adult education programs, while 45.6% or 47 respondents indicate that additional information on quality assurance in non-formal education is needed.

Figure 3. In your opinion, what are the most important quality criteria in the implementation of non-formal education programs?

103 atbildes

Ir definētie programmas sas...	70 (68%)
Programmas saturs ir atbilst...	86 (83,5%)
Īstenotājam ir pietiekami mat...	74 (71,8%)
Pasniedzēji ir ar vismaz 3 ga...	41 (39,8%)
Tiek apzināts un tiek ņemts...	67 (65%)
Tiek nodrošināta iekļaujoša i...	27 (26,2%)

83.5% of respondents indicated that the relevance of program content to achievable results is the most important quality criterion in non-formal education.

71.8% stated that it is important that the implementer has sufficient material resources to implement the program; 68% - that the achievable results of the program are defined; 65% - that the opinion of graduates is recognized and taken into account; 39.8% - that the instructors
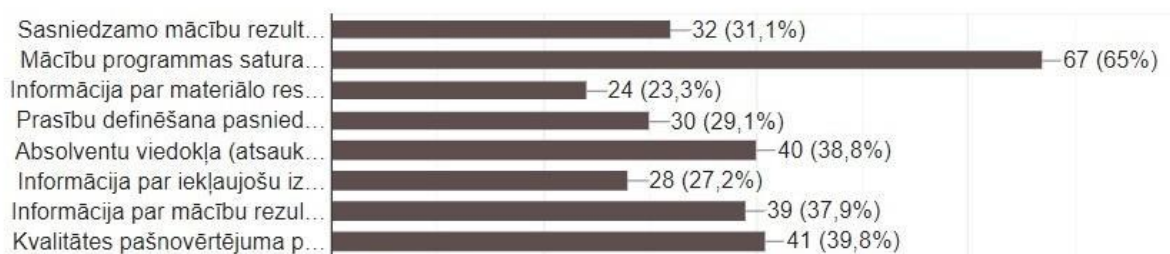
have at least 3 years of work experience in the field of the program, while only 26.2% stated that it is important to provide inclusive education.

Other quality criteria were indicated: Content agreed with potential employers, industry experts; Instructors may also have less experience in the specific field, but they must be competent and work in the field of the program (not necessarily a state-recognized qualification). There are situations where with 30-40 years of experience you can provide information that is not appropriate for today; there is a request for the program of the specific educational institution; Interdisciplinary and interdisciplinary content is provided; Educators upgrade their qualifications at least once a year; That the requirements for teacher education in non-formal education are generally defined somewhere; Trends and findings, both substantive and methodological, are taken into account; We must support, offer and implement such training programs that are really needed in the labour market! It is pointless to "produce" graduates in various courses of unnecessary content, who are then unable to use the knowledge gained during the courses anywhere, and do not fit into the labour market; Adequate understanding of the full cycle, expected investment in various stages, expressed in man-hours; relevant planning; In my opinion, non-formal education is not controlled by whoever wants, it teaches what it wants; To be one step ahead of trends and offer current, practically applicable topics and content, based on customer needs; It is important to have a business environment and a peaceful atmosphere; Little bureaucracy; Interdisciplinary and interdisciplinary content is provided.

Figure 4 In which issues in the implementation of non-formal education programs are the most necessary support materials for quality assurance?

103 atbildes

Sasniedzamo mācību rezult...	32 (31,1%)
Mācību programmas satura...	67 (65%)
Informācija par materiālo res...	24 (23,3%)
Prasību definēšana pasnied...	30 (29,1%)
Absolventu viedokļa (atsauk...	40 (38,8%)
Informācija par iekļaujošu iz...	28 (27,2%)
Informācija par mācību rezul...	39 (37,9%)
Kvalitātes pašnovērtējuma p...	41 (39,8%)

65% of the respondents stated that the most support is needed in creating the content of the curriculum according to the achievable results. Other areas requiring support materials: Quality self-assessment procedures 39.8%; identifying the opinion (feedback) of graduates 38.8%; defining achievable results 31.1%; defining requirements for work experience and education of trainers 29.1%; information on inclusive education 27.2%; information on compliance of material resources with the program 23.3%.

Other answers: Using Kirkpatrick's 4-level assessment in learning processes is a complex process; Marked are those for whom theoretical knowledge is present, but diverse tools, etc., are missing; An updated understanding of the pedagogical process, possibly "templates" and "model courses" that demonstrate the consistent application of modern pedagogic principles; it should be asked of them; Conflict resolution; Maximum simplified procedure and mechanisms in quality assessment.

Figure 5. What support tools do non-formal education program providers and trainers need to improve the quality of non-formal education programmes?

102 atbildes

Informatīvie materiāli - bukle…	47 (46,1%)
Mācību kurss	49 (48%)
Pašnovērtējuma instrumenti	50 (49%)

49% of respondents stated that non-formal education program providers and trainers need self-assessment tools to improve the quality of non-formal education programs, while 48% of respondents said that a training course.

Other answers: a lot of money to be able to deal with such content; methods of determining the necessary programs, the content of the programs meets the needs of the labour market; no formal support is required for non-formal education; interested and professional trainers, support for the pedagogue from the educational program provider, clear goal of the educational program;

I don't see the need; digital and VR tools; Constant improvement of the instructors themselves is necessary, both by learning the actuality of the specific field and pedagogic methods; Reliable and up-to-date information from the organizations representing the industries about the training programs that are really needed in the labour market!! One site where all these things can be found, so that everyone does not have to study mountains of documents and papers; prior knowledge testing for future participants.

Figure 6. Is there a need for an information campaign on quality assurance for non-formal education program providers and educators?

103 atbildes

- Jā
- Nē
- Atkarībā no kampaņas veida un mērķiem.
- Grūti atbildēt, nezinot detaļas.
- Jā, ne tikai nodrošinātājiem, nepiecieš…
- nezinu
- Ar kampaņām neko nevar panākt. Ja i…
- Grūti pateikt. Nav konkrēts viedoklis.
- Pasniedzēji atbildīgi un kvalitatīvi rea…

61.2% of the respondents indicated that an informational campaign on quality assurance for non-formal education program providers and educators is needed, 32% that is not needed.

Other opinions: Instructors responsibly and qualitatively implement student training, but there could be educational seminars; nothing can be achieved with campaigns. If educational program providers and educators constantly improve themselves, then they are able to create a necessary, current (conforming to the needs of the moment), interesting offer that people buy, learn and ask instructors to further develop; Yes, not only providers, it is necessary to raise the issue of who is allowed to implement non-formal education programs. To prevent the tendency that everyone (not educational institutions) hold seminars about everything.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. Creation and implementation of quality assurance tools for adult non-formal education.

Article 46 of the Education Law and Draft regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers "Procedures for Issuing and Cancelling Permits for the Implementation of Non-Formal Education Programs" (23-TA-1042) determine the requirements for the development of non-formal education programs for adults and obtaining permits, if the implementer needs one.

The requirements are set for the educational program and the preparation of its implementer for the implementation of the program, namely the non-formal education program should include the learning outcomes to be achieved, the form, language, content, scope and material and intellectual resources necessary for implementation.

At the same time, the survey results (see Figure 6) indicate that an information campaign on quality assurance for non-formal education program providers and educators is needed. It is understandable that an educational program prepared only in accordance with the requirements of regulatory acts does not yet ensure high-quality and inclusive education, because the quality of education also includes the implementation, environment and management of the educational process, which provides everyone with an inclusive education and the opportunity to achieve high-value results. Therefore, measures to ensure the quality of non-formal education should be gradually introduced, e.g. self-assessment process, stakeholders should be informed and educated. At the same time, it would be useful to implement the self-assessment process using the possibilities of digital resources, reducing routine activities and administrative burden. Survey data indicate that most respondents (49%, see Figure 5) noted that non-formal education program providers and trainers need self-assessment tools to improve the quality of non-formal education programs.

In accordance with the Law on Education, the national education quality monitoring system covers four areas of education quality monitoring (see Figure 1): (1) compliance with goals (educational results in accordance with the needs of students and the entire society), (2) quality teaching (learning process, teachers), (3) inclusive environment (physically and emotionally safe, positive environment, motivation), (4) good management (process efficiency).[10]

Several criteria are defined for each of the areas and quality indicators for each criterion.

Main areas	Criterion
Relevance of the aims	Equality and inclusiveness
	Continuing of education and employability
	Competences and achievements
Good governance	Support and cooperation
	Professional capacity of management
	Financial and administrative effectiveness
Inclusive environment	Infrastructure and resources
	Safety and wellbeing

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[10] Guidelines for ensuring the quality of education in general and vocational education 2022 (Internal regulations of the State Service of Education Quality, p. 1-2 Sk. https://www.ikvd.gov.lv/lv/akreditacija.

	Accessibility
Qualitative training	Implementation of training programs
	Professional capacity of trainers
	Learning to learn

Table 7. Areas and criteria of the national education quality monitoring system[11].

Taking into account the fact that the current legal framework for ensuring the quality of non-formal education covers only the requirements for the non-formal education program and the requirements for obtaining a permit for its implementer, then in order to include non-formal education in monitoring the quality of education, additional information on quality areas and criteria is required. The initial solution can be the implementation of a self-assessment tool, which would ensure the accumulation of the necessary information and the possibilities of its use.

In the self-evaluation, the educational institution must evaluate its activity according to four cyclically consecutive stages, or the so-called Deming circle (**PLAN - DO - CHECK - ACT**)*,* in which:

1. PLANNING *(Plāno)* means setting clear, precise goals, qualitative and quantitative achievable results, defining and planning processes;
2. DO / IMPLEMENT (*Dari*) means to implement a process or implement changes in processes as planned;
3. VERIFY / MONITOR (*Pārbaudi*) means to measure by obtaining data and information to compare in performance results, their compliance with the planned;
4. ACT / IMPROVE (*Rīkojies*) means to look for and analyse the causes of non-conformities, as well as to eliminate them in order to improve the performance of the process.[12]
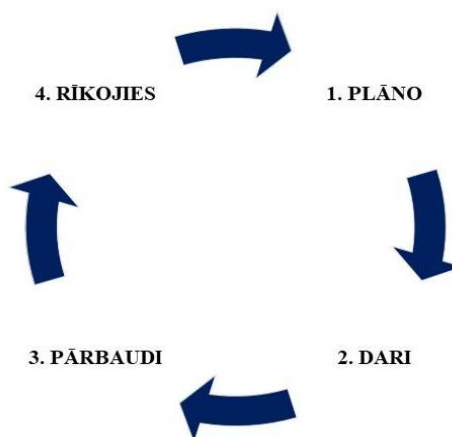

Figure 8. Quality evaluation according to the Deming circle[13].

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[11] See the previous time.
[12] Guidelines for ensuring the quality of education in general and professional education 2022 (Internal regulations of the State Service of Education Quality, p. 4-5 See https://www.ikvd.gov.lv/lv/akreditacija.
[13] See the previous time.

2. Continuation of improvement of regulatory framework and functionality.

Taking into account that Article 46 of the Education Law stipulates the obligation of each municipality to register non-formal education permits and currently there are 36 counties and 10 state cities in Latvia, it would be necessary to create a unified register of permits that would ensure easier data collection and transparency. Considering that non-formal education programs can be implemented by accredited educational institutions without obtaining a permit and each educational institution has its own VIIS website (State education information system), it would be useful to find a solution to store all information related to education in this system.

It would be necessary to update Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers of June 25, 2019 No. 276 "Rules of the State Education Information System", providing for the entry of information and permission data about non-formal education programs, as well as improving the functionality of VIIS for ensuring the entry of such information.