COMPARATIVE ANALYSES ON QUALITY ASSURANCE TOOLS IN NON-FORMAL ADULT EDUCATION IN BULGARIA, LITHUANIA AND LATVIA

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Content

INTRODUCTION

Non-formal adult education refers to the process of learning and acquiring new competences by adults in an informal manner. The target groups for non-formal adult education include individuals over the age of 16 or 18 who have a desire to enhance their personal and professional skills. This can encompass a wide range of individuals, such as educators, seniors, vocational education and training (VET) teachers, and high school lecturers. However, it is important to differentiate between the legal definition and the concepts used in support programs and financial instruments, as this can lead to confusion and division among different groups of adults in the same community.

Education plays a vital role in transmitting cultural values, developing human capital, fostering national identity, and achieving European integration. It is instrumental in creating the foundation for sustainable human development and establishing a knowledge-based society. Non-formal and informal learning opportunities are provided by various organizations, including training centers, enterprises, NGOs, and community centers.

Unfortunately, the participation of Bulgarian, Lithuanian, and Latvian populations in non-formal education is relatively low compared to other European Union countries. Furthermore, there is a lack of legal regulations governing the monitoring, evaluation, and quality assurance of non-formal education outcomes. Each non-formal learning provider typically applies its own quality assessment model, resulting in a fragmented system.

Ensuring the quality of non-formal adult education requires professional training and qualification for teachers, as well as measures to enhance their competences in response to evolving social and economic conditions. The new economy emphasizes knowledge, critical thinking, resourcefulness, and the effective use of information, necessitating a departure from traditional formal education models. It is important to explore alternative learning methods throughout a person's lifetime and within the broader societal context.

The demands of a social and democratic society in an economic structure require individuals with diverse competences. Employees in the service-oriented society should possess social competences, actively participate in shaping their personal and professional behavior, and contribute creatively to their organizations. This shift in socio-economic demands means that learning, rather than teaching, becomes central to the education system, with a focus on personal development.

Non-formal education for adults provides opportunities for individuals to continuously learn and improve their competences throughout their lives, irrespective of their previous education. It caters to various target audiences and needs, encompassing both professional and personal goals. To ensure the effectiveness of non-formal adult education, a flexible and non-bureaucratic approach should be adopted, emphasizing the use of digital technologies and opportunities.

The EQAVET framework (European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training) is a quality assurance framework developed by the European Union to promote and improve the quality of vocational education and training (VET) systems across Europe. It provides a set of guidelines and indicators that support member states in implementing quality assurance measures in their VET systems. Within the project, we use the approach proposed by the EQAVET framework to prepare a set of indicators that serve as benchmarks for assessing the quality in non-formal adult education. They will help the three countries – Bulgaria, Lithuania nad Litva align their quality assurance practices with European standards and support acquiring valuable skills in non-formal adult education system and within the European Union.

EXISTING LEGISLATION FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN NON-FORMAL ADULT EDUCATION IN BULGARIA, LITHUANIA AND LATVIA

Bulgaria, Lithuania, and Latvia have established legal frameworks to ensure the quality of non-formal adult education. In Bulgaria, the Law on Vocational Education and Training governs quality assurance for vocational training, while non-formal adult learning is not covered by specific regulations. In Lithuania, the Law on non-formal adult education and continuing education sets out principles and responsibilities for quality assurance, including recognition of competences acquired through non-formal education. Latvia's legal regulations have evolved over time, with recent amendments emphasizing the right to qualitative education, the role of municipalities, and the development of guidelines for improvement. Proposed regulations in Latvia aim to establish a unified procedure for obtaining permits for non-formal education programs.

The main points related to quality assurance in non-formal adult education in the three countries are summarized and presented below.

Bulgaria

Existing legislation for quality assurance in non-formal adult education in Bulgaria is primarily governed by the Law on Vocational Education and Training (VET Act) and the Law on Preschool and School Education. The VET Act, promulgated in 1999, regulates vocational education and training, including quality assurance. It defines non-formal education as education organized outside the official vocational education system, and informal learning as the non-institutionalized accumulation of knowledge and skills.

Under the VET Act, centers for vocational training are responsible for ensuring the quality of vocational training by establishing an internal quality assurance system in compliance with state educational requirements and legislation. They are required to submit an annual report on self-assessment of quality to the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training. The report

includes information about the external and internal environment, self-assessment results, analysis of achievements and areas for improvement, and recommended measures and activities.

The Ministry of Education and Science supports and controls quality assurance in vocational schools, while the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training oversees centers for vocational training specifically aimed at adult education. However, non-formal adult learning is not covered by these quality-related regulations.

Institutions providing vocational training in Bulgaria, such as vocational high schools, vocational colleges, and centers for vocational training, are required to develop and implement a system for quality assurance. The conditions and procedures for quality management in general vocational education and training are specified in a state educational standard outlined in the Preschool and School Education Act.

The validation of professional knowledge, skills, and competences acquired through non-formal education or informal learning is also addressed in the VET Act. The state educational standards serve as the basis for quality assurance in both formal and informal training.

The Law on Preschool and School Education, enacted in 2015, further regulates the quality management process in general vocational education and training. It emphasizes continuous organizational development based on analysis, planning, execution, and evaluation, taking into account factors such as goal achievement, strengths and weaknesses analysis, outcomes of trained individuals, and the educational environment.

To promote non-formal learning, the Bulgarian government approved the National Youth Strategy for 2021-2030. The strategy aims to increase access to quality non-formal education for young people by expanding the network of providers and implementing standards. It emphasizes the importance of non-formal learning in addressing various personal, educational, and social needs and proposes measures such as supporting non-formal education, encouraging youth participation, adapting and promoting quality standards, and creating tools for validating and recognizing skills acquired through non-formal education, informal learning, and experiential learning outcomes.

These regulations aim to ensure that non-formal education and informal learning meet the expectations and needs of individuals and society while promoting access to quality educational opportunities for adults.

Lithuania

The existing legislation for quality assurance in non-formal adult education in Lithuania is governed by several laws and regulations. The Education Law of the Republic of Lithuania sets the foundation for education in the country and recognizes education as a basic right of every individual. Non-formal education is defined as education provided through various programs to meet educational

needs, improve qualifications, and acquire additional competencies outside of formal education programs.

The Law on non-formal adult education and continuing education further elaborates on the regulation of non-formal adult education in Lithuania. It aims to provide legal guarantees for individuals to develop their personalities throughout their lives and acquire knowledge and abilities. The law introduces key concepts such as andragogus (a person qualified to teach adults), lifelong learning (learning activities to improve personal, civic, social, and professional competences), and participants of non-formal adult education (individuals aged 18 and above studying non-formal adult education programs).

The law emphasizes principles such as contextuality, equal opportunities, continuity, and effectiveness in non-formal adult education. It aims to ensure that non-formal adult education adapts to the country's economic, social, scientific, and cultural development, provides equal rights and opportunities to individuals, responds flexibly to changes, and achieves quality results. The law also highlights the main goals of non-formal adult education, including meeting the needs of self-education, developing creative powers and abilities, acquiring and improving competences, and becoming active members of a democratic society.

The law establishes the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders. The Government of the Republic of Lithuania approves the Development Program of Non-formal Adult Education and Continuing Education, which sets the main directions for the development of non-formal adult education. Municipal councils approve action plans for non-formal adult education and appoint implementation coordinators. Providers of non-formal adult education and continuing education have the right to offer programs financed from state and/or municipal budgets, and they are responsible for the quality of education provided.

The law also addresses the recognition of competences acquired through non-formal education and self-education. Competences may be recognized as part of a formal education program or as qualifications required for specific jobs or functions. The Lithuanian Non-formal Adult Education Council serves as an expert advisory institution, considering the main perspectives and strategic directions for the development of non-formal adult education and providing recommendations.

In terms of financing and support, non-formal adult education can be funded through various sources, including state and municipal budgets, employer funds, participant funds, and others. State and municipal budgets allocate funds for adult education programs, and employers may receive state support to partially finance employees' non-formal education expenses.

Additionally, an order has been issued regarding the assessment and recognition of competences acquired through informal and self-education related to higher education in higher

education institutions. This order emphasizes principles such as accessibility, flexibility, transparency and objectivity, comparability, and voluntariness in the assessment process. Higher education institutions are recommended to organize the assessment and recognition process in stages, including information provision, consulting, assessment, and decision making.

We may summarise that Lithuania has established legislation and regulations to ensure quality assurance in non-formal adult education. These laws outline the rights and responsibilities of stakeholders, provide guidelines for program development and funding, and address the assessment and recognition of competences acquired through non-formal education.

Latvia

The legal regulations for ensuring the quality of non-formal education for adults in Latvia have undergone several developments over the years. The Education Law of 1998 introduced the provision for adult education programs, including both formal and informal education. Subsequent amendments in 2001 changed the regulation to include the term "adult non-formal education programs" and specified that certain entities could offer these programs without obtaining a license. Further amendments in 2010 and 2013 modified the licensing requirements and expanded the range of providers.

In April 2021, additional amendments were made to the Education Law, emphasizing the right to qualitative and inclusive education for everyone. The term "qualitative education" was defined to include the quality of the educational process, content, environment, and management. These amendments extended the right to qualitative education to non-formal education, including for adults.

The Ministry of Education and Science was assigned new functions related to education quality assurance, including setting educational quality goals, monitoring and evaluating educational institutions, and developing guidelines for improvement. An annual education quality assessment report is now submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers for approval.

The Law on Municipalities underwent changes in 1994 and 1997, expanding the responsibilities of municipalities to include education, including professional and adult education. The Local Government Law, which came into effect on January 1, 2023, further emphasized the municipality's role in providing education, including adult education, to the population.

The regulatory framework also includes the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers, which approved the implementation plan for the Adult Education Management Model from 2016 to 2020. This plan aimed to attract funding from the European Social Fund to promote the development and accessibility of adult education. An inter-institutional council, the Governing Council for Vocational and Adult Education, was established to coordinate the activities related to this plan.

Regarding the issuance of permits for the implementation of non-formal education programs, a draft regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers titled "Procedure for issuing and canceling permits for the implementation of non-formal education programs" has been proposed. This draft regulation aims to establish a unified procedure for obtaining permits and promoting the availability and quality of non-formal education, including digital skills acquisition. The application for a permit must provide information on the program's place of implementation, the qualifications of the program's implementers, and a description of the program, including its purpose, learning outcomes, implementation language, resources required, teaching methods, and assessment.

The draft regulation also addresses specific requirements for language skills and digital competences programs, ensuring that their content aligns with relevant frameworks. Furthermore, it specifies the inclusion of a sample certificate of completion of the non-formal education program with the permit application. The municipality has the right to refuse to issue a permit if the program's purpose does not align with legal requirements, the resources are inadequate, or the necessary documents are not submitted.

These legal regulations aim to ensure the quality and accessibility of non-formal education for adults in Latvia. The changes in the regulatory framework reflect a commitment to inclusive education and continuous improvement in the educational system.

INFORMATION ON EXISTING QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ASSESSMENT TOOLS IN NON-FORMAL ADULT LEARNING (ANALYSES OF EXPERIENCE OF QUALITY CRITERIA AND MONITORING OF EFFICIENCY OF PUBLIC TRAINING FUNDS)

Quality assurance and assessment tools in non-formal adult learning are crucial for ensuring the effectiveness and credibility of such programs. However, the existing mechanisms for evaluating and certifying training results in most organizations are imperfect, often relying solely on satisfaction surveys at the end of the training activities. This lack of effective institutions, mechanisms for evaluation, and competences in quality management at all levels contributes to the low adequacy of non-formal education.

In Lithuania, the responsibility for quality assurance in non-formal adult education and continuing education lies with the providers and institutions implementing these programs. The government, in consultation with the Lithuanian Non-formal Adult Education Council, establishes the procedures for quality assurance, self-evaluation of activities, external evaluation, and self-evaluation of participants' progress and achievements in programs funded by the state and/or municipal budgets.

Recognition of competences acquired through non-formal education and self-education is also addressed in the Lithuanian law. Competences can be recognized as part of a completed formal education program or as part of a study program in higher education institutions. Additionally,

competences acquired through non-formal education or self-education can be recognized and legitimized as qualifications corresponding to certain levels established in the structure of Lithuanian qualifications.

In Bulgaria, the validation of non-formal and informal learning in the vocational education and training (VET) system is regulated by specific ordinances. Validation follows the European Reference Framework for Quality Assurance in VET (EQAVET). Individuals who successfully validate their professional knowledge, skills, and competences receive official documents that grant them the same rights as those who acquire qualifications through formal education. However, despite well-regulated validation procedures, participation rates in Bulgaria remain low.

The validation process in Bulgaria includes several steps. It begins with a contract between the center and the applicant, defining the rights, obligations, and provisions for the validation procedure. The applicant prepares a portfolio of evidence and attaches necessary documents to their profile in the information system. A committee is then appointed to assess the competences applied for validation, and a consultant assists the person throughout the process. The committee analyzes the evidence and compares the claimed competences with the learning outcomes specified in the State Educational Standards. Depending on the assessment, the applicant may be advised to undergo additional training or proceed to take exams for validating a degree of professional qualification or part of a profession. Successful candidates receive the necessary documents, which are registered and made public for employers to verify.

In Latvia, obtaining a permit for implementing non-formal education programs requires specifying the place of implementation and ensuring appropriate material and technical resources. The physical environment of the classrooms significantly impacts the learning process, and the implementer of the program is responsible for providing a quality educational environment. The description of the non-formal education program must include the purpose, learning outcomes, target group, requirements for previous education and experience, implementation language, content learning plan, necessary resources, teaching methods, and the possibility of a final exam.

To promote high-quality development of non-formal education programs in Latvia, measures are included in the program description to ensure educational quality according to the concept defined in the Law on Education, encompassing process, content, environment, and management.

Quality assurance and assessment tools vary across countries, but the overall goal is to ensure the quality and recognition of competences acquired through non-formal adult learning. These mechanisms include self-evaluation, external evaluation, validation procedures, and detailed program descriptions. However, challenges persist in implementing and popularizing these tools, emphasizing

the need for effective institutions, evaluation mechanisms, and competences in quality management to enhance the adequacy and credibility of non-formal adult education.

GOOD PRACTICES

In **Bulgaria**, private companies have established internal quality management systems, but there are challenges in terms of competencies, learner focus, financial resources, and quality assurance in distance learning. The need for quality standards and updated infrastructure is emphasized, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic. In **Lithuania**, the role of adult non-formal education coordinators is explored, highlighting the need for clear job definitions and responsibilities. General trends and practices of coordinators in other countries are analyzed, emphasizing the importance of coordination, planning, and strategic involvement. In **Latvia**, the insufficiency of existing regulations led to the implementation of low-quality programs. To address this, special regulatory frameworks were created for each event, specifying requirements for program application and implementation control, resulting in increased trust and participation. Two examples are given: one focuses on improving the professional competences of employed individuals, while the other targets persons at risk of unemployment. The latter project involves cooperation between the State Employment Agency and the State Service of Education Quality to ensure quality and legal education. Stricter control measures reduced violations in program implementation.

SWOT ANALYSIS

From the presented in-depth analyzes of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in Bulgaria, Lithuania and Latvia, despite the obvious differences that exist in individual countries, a summarized SWOT Analysis of Quality Assurance in Non-Formal Education can be prepared. It will help in the preparation of the follow-up results within the project.

Strengths:

- Positive effect of accelerated digitization: Digitization has led to better control and improved quality in the teaching-learning process, record-keeping, and communication in non-formal education.

- Flexibility and workability: Non-formal learning offers a wide range of formats, providing adult learners with more choices. Remote services and online courses have become preferred options, allowing for greater engagement and voluntary participation.

- Quick feedback and data analysis: Digital surveys and evaluations enable faster processing of feedback, leading to timely decision-making and improvements in curriculum, materials, and methods.

- Legal and institutional framework: Legislation defines the responsibilities and financing of non-formal adult learning, with support from institutions such as the Ministry of Education, education boards, and adult education coordinators.

- Infrastructure and support: Modernized vocational education institutions, implementation of adult education programs with state support, and initiatives like VIAA and NVA contribute to the availability and quality of non-formal education.

- Recognition and validation of skills: Recognition of knowledge and skills acquired outside formal education reduces administrative obstacles and encourages participation in lifelong learning.

- Awareness and participation: There is an increasing awareness among the population about the importance and benefits of adult learning, resulting in active participation in EU-funded adult education projects.

Weaknesses:

- Limited quality assessment: Smaller organizations with resource constraints often lack specific measures to evaluate the quality of training, relying on learner feedback or complaints. The lack of regulation in the sector makes it difficult for citizens to choose appropriate courses.

- Poor career guidance services: Inadequate career guidance limits individuals in selecting suitable courses. An information campaign highlighting the benefits of lifelong learning and assisting in course selection is needed.

- Funding and control issues: Insufficient state funding for non-formal adult learning and limited monitoring capacity of control institutions pose challenges to maintaining and improving quality standards.

- Specific target group needs: There is a lack of mechanisms to flexibly address the needs of different target groups, such as additional support for mobility or childcare, hindering their involvement in non-formal education.

Opportunities:

- Marketing potential: A well-organized system for monitoring quality can serve as a marketing tool, attracting new learners through positive feedback and success stories.

- Collaboration with formal education: Non-formal education can learn from and share good practices with formal education systems, leveraging its flexibility and adaptability to align with business trends and introduce innovations.

- Validation of skills: The validation process can make acquired skills visible and valuable, increasing employment opportunities and revealing new professional paths.

- Harmonized legal framework: Establishing a unified and efficient management system, respecting shared responsibility and interaction among sectors, can develop a comprehensive lifelong learning system.

Threats:

- Challenges in quality monitoring: Questions arise regarding the responsible institution for quality monitoring and how the results will be utilized for improvement.

- Access and recognition issues: Ensuring accessibility to non-formal education, linking literacy levels, and validating the acquired skills pose challenges in quality assurance and recognition.

- Technological transition: Methodological issues regarding adult education in the context of technological advancements need to be addressed to ensure effective implementation.

- Fragmentation and resource utilization: Insufficient cooperation among resources involved in adult learning may lead to fragmentation, lack of cost-effectiveness, and the inability to achieve policy objectives.

- Demographic and geographical limitations: Aging populations and limited opportunities for education, especially in rural or remote areas, pose threats to the demand and availability of adult education.

SURVEY RESULTS

Within the framework of the project Creation of self-assessment quality assurance tool in non-formal adult learning" (SelfAssessAL) an online study was carried out for the needs of the target groups - providers of non-formal adult learning programs and educators.

The questionnaire for providers of non-formal adult learning programs (incl. trainers) was structured and distributed online. As a result, total 279 responses were received – 85 from Bulgaria, 91 from Lithuania and 103 from Latvia.

The results are presented in the next few figures, and we have tried to make a comparative analysis between the three countries.

1. *Do you agree that information about quality assurance and assessment in non-formal adult learning is sufficient for building and implementing non-formal adult learning programs?*

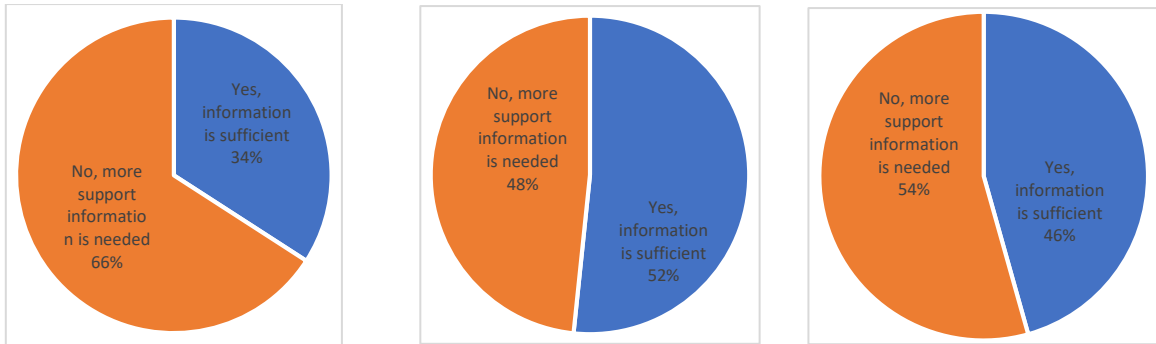   ***Bulgaria***   ***Lithuania***   ***Latvia***

Figure 1. Relative share of responses to question #1

In Lithuania and Latvia, the distribution of answers is around half – according to half of the respondents the existing information is sufficient, while in Bulgaria two thirds (66% of the respondents) believe that information about quality assurance and assessment in non-formal adult learning is not sufficient.

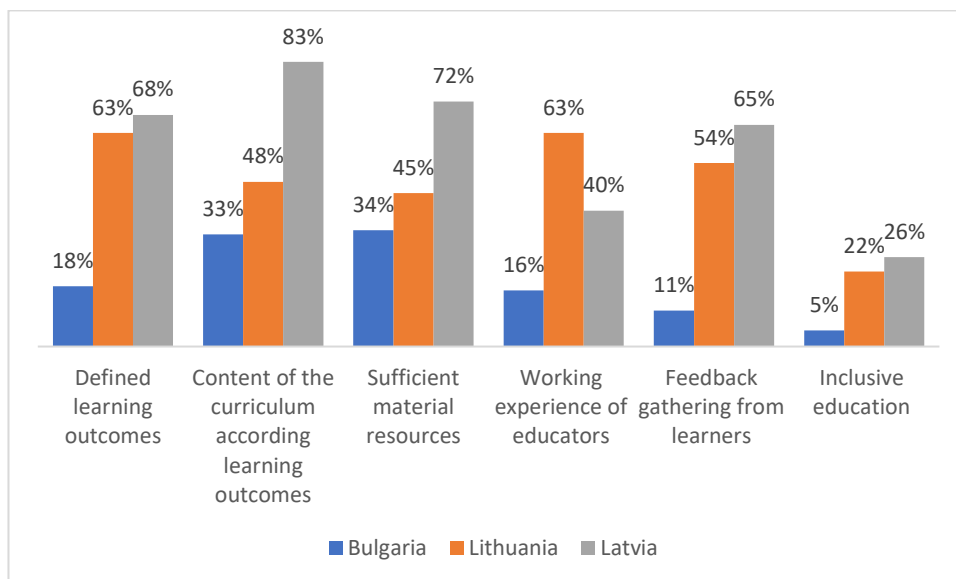2. *Which are most important quality criteria for building and implementing non-formal adult learning programs?*

Figure 2. Distribution of answers to question #2

According to the distribution of the results of the three countries, it can be concluded that all the proposed criteria are important, except for *inclusive education*, which is indicated in Bulgaria, Lithuania and Latvia by 5%, 22% and 26% of the respondents, respectively.

3. *In which of the topics of quality assurance and assessment in non-formal adult learning programs are needed additional support materials most?*
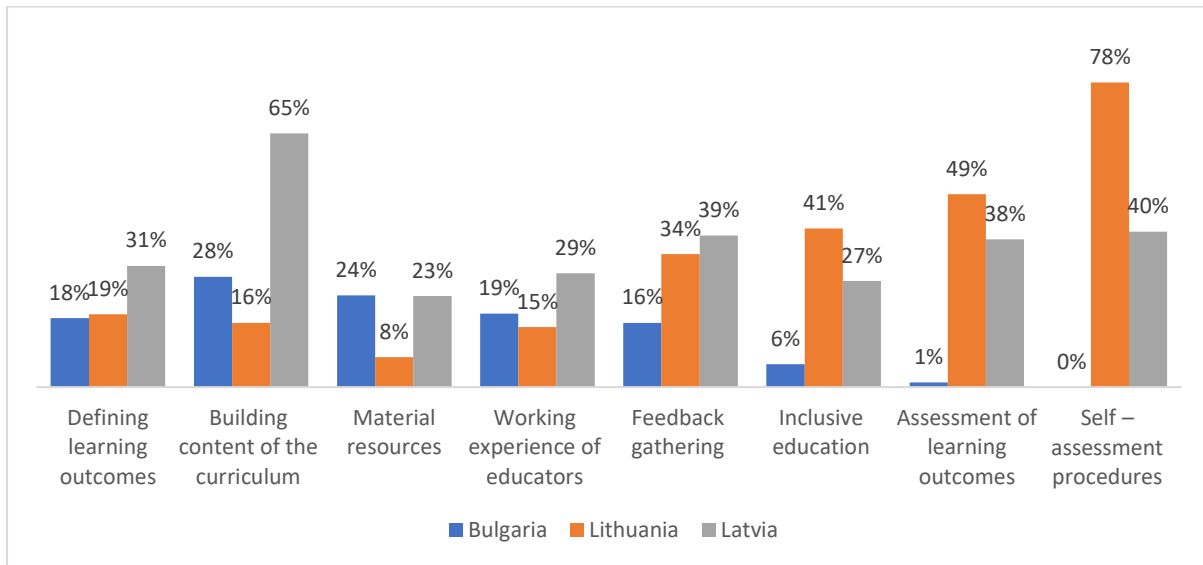

Figure 3. Distribution of answers to question #3

The distribution of responses varies across countries. In Bulgaria, additional support is needed in the development of the content of the curriculum, in material resources, in working experience of educators and defining learning outcomes. For Lithuanian respondents most support is needed in self-assessment procedures, assessment of learning outcomes, inclusive education and feedback gathering. In Latvia building the concentration of the curriculum, defining learning outcomes and working experience of educators are topics for additional support.

4. *What support tools are needed for non-formal adult learning program providers and educators to improve quality of non-formal education programs?*
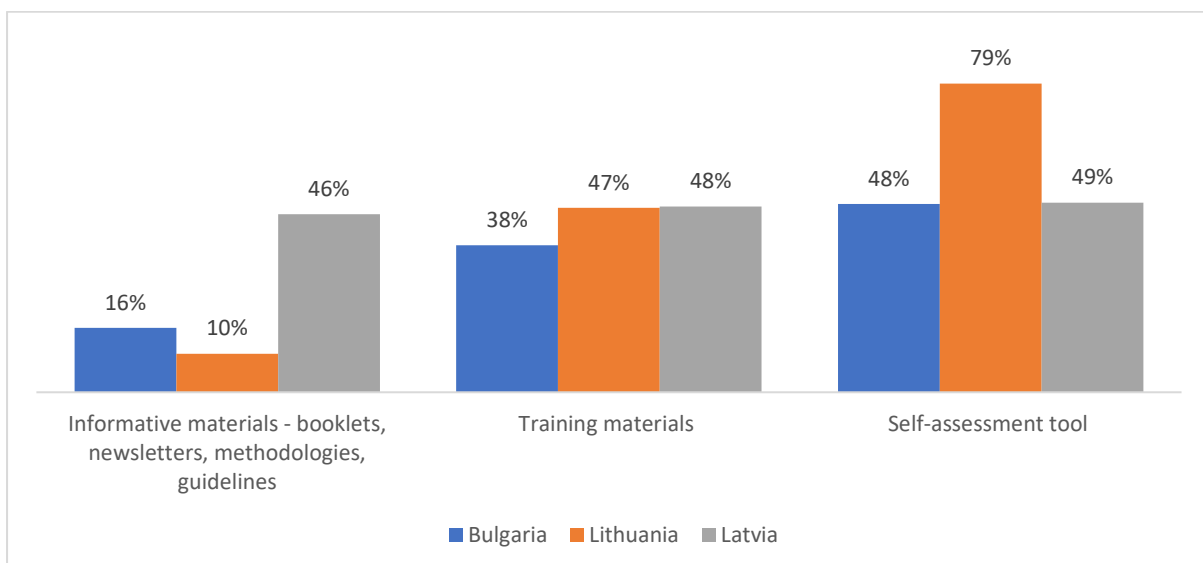
Figure 4. Distribution of answers to question #4

It is clear from the presented graph that the self-assessment tool is the most important tool for providers and educators to improve the quality of non-formal education programs. Of course, training materials are also important.

5. *Is an information campaign needed about quality, quality assessment, quality self-assessment, feedback of adult learners among non-formal adult learning program providers and educators to promote quality of programs?*
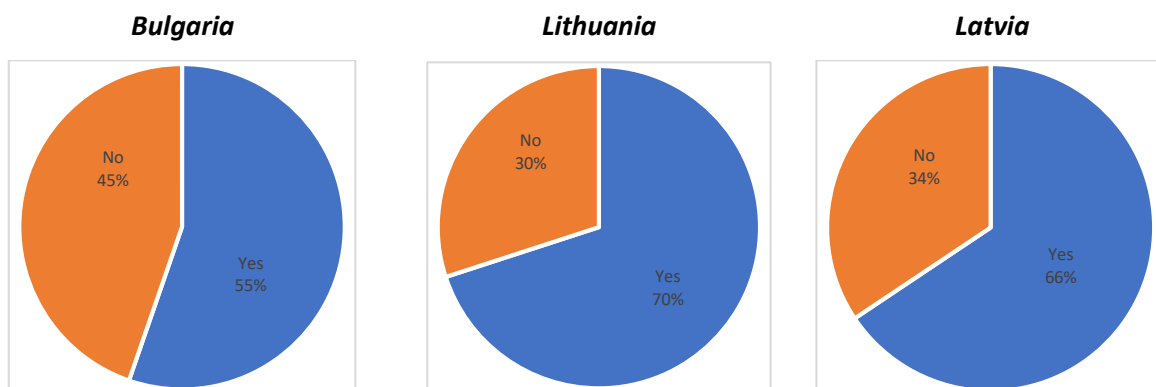

Figure 5. Relative share of responses to question #5

About two-thirds of the respondents from Lithuania and Latvia believe that such an information campaign is necessary (respectively 70% and 66%), while this answer was given by about half of the respondents in Bulgaria - 55%. This conclusion is important for the results of the project, since the development of a self-assessment tool within the project needs to be accompanied by an explanatory information campaign in order to be adopted by non-formal adult learning program providers.

MAIN CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions and recommendations can be drawn from the prepared National Reports for Bulgaria, Lithuania and Latvia:

Bulgaria:

- Internal and external quality assurance mechanisms in non-formal training in Bulgaria are often limited to feedback surveys and tracking trained individuals for employment purposes, rather than comprehensive quality assurance systems.

- Additional and alternative educational services provided by various organizations outside the formal education system are gaining importance in Bulgaria. Quality assurance of these services becomes crucial, especially with the European focus on short-term courses leading to employment.

- Non-formal vocational training programs in Bulgaria involve collaboration between formal education institutions, trade unions, and state institutions. However, these programs tend to serve individuals with higher formal education degrees and those higher up in the social hierarchy. Efforts by trade unions aim to address this and promote social justice and overall societal development.

- Civil society organizations in Bulgaria are increasingly involved in personal development activities and participate as partners in formal education programs. Clarification of objectives and responsibilities in assessing non-formal and informal training is needed due to the conceptual diversity in these types of training.

- The development of a unified conceptual basis for quality assurance in vocational education and training (VET) is lacking in Bulgaria. While various government documents address VET quality in formal and informal settings, a comprehensive document specifically focusing on quality assurance in VET has not been developed.

Lithuania:

- The regulation of non-formal education for adults in Lithuania lacks clarity and specific guidelines, leaving room for interpretation. Clearer regulation is needed to avoid ambiguity and ensure consistent implementation.

- Municipalities play a key role in non-formal adult education, including supervision and quality management. However, the position of coordinators responsible for this activity is often assigned to employees who have other primary duties, due to insufficient funding and remuneration. A more dedicated approach to this role is necessary.

- The network of adult non-formal education coordinators in Lithuania is well developed, but there is a lack of a clear and unified understanding of their responsibilities. A standardized description of the coordinator position should be established.

- The assessment of non-formal education programs for adults in Lithuania tends to focus on quantitative measures rather than the quality of content. There is a need to evaluate the learning outcomes and distinguish between targeted skill development and leisure activities.

- The assessment of skills acquired through non-formal adult education is limited, with a focus on measuring the number of learners rather than their actual achievements. Developing a comprehensive assessment or self-assessment tool could be beneficial in evaluating the effectiveness of non-formal education.

Latvia:

- Quality assurance tools for adult non-formal education in Latvia need to be created and implemented. The Education Law and draft regulations define the requirements for non-formal education programs and permits, but additional measures are necessary to ensure inclusive and high-quality education.

- An information campaign on quality assurance is needed to educate non-formal education program providers and educators. Implementing a self-assessment process, possibly utilizing digital resources, could help improve the quality of non-formal education programs.

- The national education quality monitoring system in Latvia covers four areas: compliance with goals, quality teaching, inclusive environment, and good management. However, the current legal framework does not adequately include non-formal education in quality monitoring. Additional information on quality areas and criteria is required, and a self-assessment tool can be an initial solution.

- Improving the regulatory framework and functionality is necessary. Establishing a unified register of permits for non-formal education programs and enhancing the State education information system would facilitate data collection and transparency.

- Professional development programs for non-formal education providers should be developed to enhance their skills and competencies. These programs can include workshops and training sessions focusing on instructional design, adult learning principles, assessment methods, and program evaluation.

PROPOSALS OF EQAVET INDICATORS FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT OF NON-FORMAL ADULT LEARNING PROVISION

The EQAVET framework is based on a cycle of planning, implementation, evaluation, and review, aligning with the Deming circle (PLAN-DO-CHECK-ACT) approach. It emphasizes the importance of

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involving stakeholders, setting clear objectives and targets, ensuring quality teaching and learning processes, and continuously improving the VET system. For the results of the project, it is necessary to adhere to this framework, which has proven itself over the years as a successful tool for quality assurance in various areas of vocational education and training.

EQAVET indicators, specific measures are proposed in order to assess and monitor the quality of non-formal adult education, to be used by training providers. These indicators provide evidence of the effectiveness and efficiency of quality assurance measures and help identify areas for improvement. The indicators cover various aspects including curriculum development, teaching and learning methods, assessment practices, qualifications frameworks, and partnerships with employers and other stakeholders.

The EQAVET Framework is accompanied by a set of 10 areas with indicators which may be used as a "tool box" by partner countries. The indicators are not designed for benchmarking but rather to support a culture of quality assurance in non-formal adult education provision.

1. *Relevance of quality assurance systems for non-formal adult education providers*
- Level/degree of satisfaction of trained persons
- Number of referrals/referred clients (e.g. referred client from a satisfied student)
- Number of new customers
- New categories of customers (from a new age group, from another settlement, etc.)
- Number of customers who return again for a course in the organization (satisfied, loyal)
- National/European projects won (or participation as a partner)

2. *Investment in training of teachers and trainers*
- Number of courses attended by the center's teachers during the year (nationally)
- Number of courses attended by the center's teachers during the year (international)
- A number of new teaching and testing tools - platforms
- Number of new teachers recruited
- Number of awards of teachers from the center in national/European competitions
- Results of the teachers' appraisal

3. *Participation rate in non-formal adult education programmes*
- Total number of trainees
- Trainees by category: new, loyal (regular)
- Trainees by type of course in which they participated

4. *Completion rate in non-formal adult education programmes*
- Number of successfully completed courses (with document)

- Number of successful graduates by type of study (preferred subjects)
- Reasons for interruption (analysis - objective, force majeure, etc.)

5. *Placement rate in non-formal adult education programmes*

- Number of people starting work on the completed course (measured through surveys to graduate tracking of the trained persons)
- Pay levels for those starting work after completing a course
- Career development of course graduates in the center (alumni clubs)
- Successful graduates recruited to teach at the center later in their careers
- Trained persons started their own business

6. *Utilisation of acquired skills at the workplace*

- Results of a survey to track the realization of graduates (graduate tracking)

7. *Unemployment rate*

- Guaranteed job opportunities (contact with potential employers)
- Number of persons registered in relevant institutions such as labour offices

8. *Prevalence of vulnerable group*

- Number of trainees from vulnerable groups
- Number of courses, topics, materials, methods adapted to the needs of persons from vulnerable groups
- Number of teachers trained to work with persons from vulnerable groups

9. *Mechanisms to identify training needs in the labour market*

- Topics updated during the year (accordingly established new trends, needs, legislative changes)
- Results of surveys among employers
- Results of surveys among career consultants/employment offices
- Use of the results of analyzes/forecasts at the national/European level, relevant to the activity (type of training) of the provider
- Analysis of the surveys after the end of the training (to what extent did the course meet the expectations of the trainees)

10. *Schemes used to promote better access to non-formal adult education*

- Updated site (blog, FB, LinkedIn, etc.)
- Introduced new sources to attract students
- Introduced new marketing tools to promote the activity
- Online courses
- Hybrid training

- Opportunities for self-study

- Admission of persons from vulnerable groups (voucher trainees, subsidized courses)