



EUROPEAN
ASSOCIATION FOR
THE EDUCATION
OF ADULTS

Country Report on Adult Education in LITHUANIA

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Introduction

This Report covers the situation of Adult Education and Lifelong Learning in Lithuania. It is divided into two sections. The section *Policy and Politics* gives an overview of the key policy currently in force, and also outlines the main legislation or political situation in the country. *Structure and Providers* gives a more detailed look at the organizational structures, and also outlines the main adult education providers, mainly looking at non-formal and informal learning.

We want to thank our members for their contributions to this reflection on the adult education situation in Lithuania as far as possible as of 2010/2011. Inevitably there will be new things emerging within the ever changing situation of adult education, but we believe the majority of the information provided will be relevant and useful for the foreseeable future. However, to keep the resource accurate and up to date we are open to suggestions to improve the texts. If you feel there is something you can add about your country please contact us via email at eaea-info@eaea.org.



Overview

Since Lithuania became a member of the European Union, the development of adult learning education has become one of the key priorities of the Lithuanian Educational Policy. The planning and implementation of the Lithuanian policy on the development of lifelong learning is based on the **Strategy for Ensuring Lifelong Learning** and the **Action Plan for its Implementation** approved by the **Ministers of Education and Science and Social Security and Labour**. The Strategy sets out three basic types of adult education and training activities: **formal, non-formal** and **self education**.

Formal adult education includes general education, vocational education and training, and higher education. The purpose of **non-formal** adult education is to provide an individual with conditions for lifelong learning, meet the needs of cognition, upgrade qualifications already acquired and obtain additional qualifications.

Self-education (informal learning) is a natural daily **self-directed** process of learning which may not necessarily be pre planned; it is less organised and structured and may be driven by personal motives or by professional or family circumstances [1].

Politics and Law

Policy and legislative framework for lifelong learning in Lithuania is established by the following regulations and legal acts [2]:

- **The Law on Education** (2003) establishes the mission of non-formal adult education, which is to create the necessary conditions for adults to participate in lifelong education, to satisfy their cognitive needs and upgrade their qualifications.
- **The Law on Vocational Education and Training** (2000) established the structure and administration of the **vocational education and training (VET)** system of the Republic of Lithuania, based upon co-operation of the state government institutions and social partners, and also regulates the organisation of VET.
- **The National Long-term Strategy** (2002), which envisages the creation, by 2015, of an efficient and sustainable continuous education system accessible to all.
- **The Law on Non-formal Education** [3]



- **Provisions of the National Education Strategy** 2003-2012, which seeks to ensure the development of a **continuous, accessible** and socially just education system ensuring life-long learning, by specifying the measures needed to create the necessary conditions for life-long learning.

- **The Programme for the Implementation of the Provisions of the National Education Strategy** 2003-2012 [4], whereby the work of implementing institutions is organised and coordinated by the Ministry of Education and Science [5]. The Programme establishes the adult education **monitoring indicators** and their objectives, conforming to the EU education guidelines.

- Further education of employees is also mentioned in the **Labour Code** which stipulates that the employer shall ensure the necessary conditions enabling employees to upgrade their qualifications and skills [6].

Future trends/key concerns/directions

The main issues of the ongoing debates in the field of continuing and adult education are related to the updating and effective realisation of the Implementation Programme for the Provisions of the **National Education Strategy** 2003-2012, the Strategy for Ensuring Lifelong Learning and the Action Plan for its implementation [7]. An important milestone for future steps in adult education seems to be the **Strategy for Ensuring Lifelong Learning**, which was approved in 2008. The objective of this strategy is to define the direction for further development of lifelong learning, and set out measures for its implementation with a focus on the areas of **vocational education and training** and **continuing adult education**. The purpose of this strategy is to define both **development directions** and implementation measures of lifelong learning in the fields of vocational and adult education. The document describes guidelines for development of a comprehensive, coherent and efficient lifelong learning system in correspondence with the national priorities and individual needs which will create opportunities to acquire, upgrade or change qualifications and competences for better **employment, integration** into the society and improving **quality of life** [8].

Structure overview

Adults in Lithuania can access formal education in adult education centres/classes and in **adult-oriented general education schools**. Non-formal adult education programmes are designed for adults (18 years and over) who want to continue their education, broaden their horizons, upgrade their qualifications or acquire new social and cultural competencies.



To **reduce social exclusion**, the state supports **vocational training**, employment, vocational guidance and consulting, and the development of the **distance learning system**. Employers are also encouraged to organise practical training and provide opportunities for employment for people with disabilities. Another field of activity is working to ensure **equal opportunities** for men and women.

During the past several years, the **'third age' university** has gained popularity. It is a non-governmental organisation, whose activities facilitate greater **social integration of elderly people**, help them improve the quality of their life, enhance their working efficiency, broaden their knowledge and raise their cultural level. Taking into consideration the financial circumstances of the majority of their students, the 'third age' university usually provides courses free of charge [9].

Key Providers/Main institutions/Sources for Adult Education

In Lithuania, adults can follow **formal** education programmes in several types of institutions, including general education schools, adult education centres, schools of vocational education and training, colleges and universities. Another part of the formal adult education system is the labour market vocational training [10].

'Non-Formal' Learning

Non-formal adult education may be provided by various institutions, including adult education centres, high schools, institutions for upgrading the qualification skills, businesses, non-government organisations or private individuals. **The Lithuanian Association of Adult Education (LAAE)**, founded in 1992, in co-operation with the Lithuanian and foreign adult educators and institutions, promotes an approach of lifelong learning among the general public and the development of opportunities for continuing education. The LAAE assists in creating the network of co-operating adult education institutions, and also exchanging information and programmes [11].

Non-formal education of **senior citizens** is organised by the **University of the Third Age**, which has affiliates in several towns within the country. The activities of this public organisation contribute to the integration of people of different age groups in society, and aim to meet their needs for continuing education.

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

The **Non-formal Adult Education Council** is an expert institution defining the general perspectives of Lithuanian non-formal adult education development. It also provides expertise of non-formal adult education system for the



development of projects, and **co-ordinates activities** of non-formal adult education institutions. The government, or government-authorised institutions, approve the statute of the Council and its structure.

Education Exchanges Support Foundation [12] is a Lithuanian national agency responsible for implementing EU Lifelong Learning Programme plus a number of other EU and national programmes and projects within the field of education and training. They aim to help Lithuanian people **take advantage of international cooperation**. The Foundation offers guidance to potential applicants and provides information about various programmes and activities in the education and training area.

Vocational Institutions and career-related training

Non-formal vocational education and training is organised by the **Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority**, labour market vocational training institutions and other enterprises. Non-formal education is implemented by labour market vocational training institutions and organisations who have included such activities in their regulations, or who have licences issued by the **Ministry of Education and Science** to provide such training.

Vocational training centres offer training at both levels to persons who so far **have not acquired any qualifications** or have acquired qualifications which are not in demand at present. Practical training takes into consideration the work activity of the trainees and their skills. Such training may be fully or in part provided at **enterprises, organisations**, and special **vocational training centres**, or may be offered by vocational training institutions in possession of a licence to provide practical vocational training.

e-learning

The programme of the **Lithuanian Virtual University** for 2007-2012 was approved in 2007 for **promotion of e-learning** and the development of e-learning infrastructure. The Programme aims to further develop **Lithuanian Distance Learning Network LieDM** (Lietuvos nuotolinio mokymosi tinklas) and to create integrated e-learning spaces, providing lifelong learning possibilities for every Lithuanian citizen irrespective of where they live [13].



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