



EUROPEAN
ASSOCIATION FOR
THE EDUCATION
OF ADULTS

Country Report on Adult Education in ROMANIA

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Introduction

This Report covers the situation of Adult Education and Lifelong Learning in Romania. 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 Romania 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\[at\]eaea.org](mailto:eaea-info[at]eaea.org).



Overview

Educational reforms have been in process in Romania since the early 1990s, although with roots in the **major political changes** which began in 1989. Formal education changed considerably during this time; compulsory schooling was set for a period of 10 years, secondary education was diversified, and minority language education was permitted. In the 1990s the **Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports** also revised the curriculum to eliminate the previously highly ideological orientation of school programmes and textbooks.

During this time the first drafts of a new **Law on Education** were also drawn up, based on national and international expertise and on concepts of education reform in South East Europe. The reform touched upon the entire education system, its programmes, actors, underlying philosophy, and educational governance, and linked the education system to the market economy, the rule of law, and individual freedom in order to help the economic development of the country. [1]

These policy and legal reforms are continuing to this day, most notably with **The National Development Plan 2007-2013 (NDP)**, and the **Sectoral Operational Programme for the Development of Human Resources (SOPHRD)** starting with 2007, which aim towards attaining the benchmarks set in the **Lisbon Agenda** for education, training and employment. Some lifelong learning objectives are also explicitly found in sectoral strategic documents, such as: **The National Employment Strategy 2004-2010**, **The Short-and Medium-Term Strategy of Continuing Vocational Training 2005-2010**, and **The Ministry of Education and Research Strategic Guidelines for 2006-2008**. [2]

From 2007, after the accession of Romania to the EU, the CVT and other ALE measures have become eligible under the European Social Fund in compliance with the **Sectoral Operational Plan Human Resources Development (SOPHRD)**. A substantial part of these projects are financed through SOP HRD and have a consistent component of professional education for adults.

Currently there are many other key issues which affect policy in Romanian Education. For example, observing the right to **cultural and linguistic heritage** is an important issue in light of the conflicts in the region. This is reflected in the legal framework, which gives the right for national minorities to study in their mother tongue within faculties, school units, classes and study groups. Education at all levels is provided in the Romanian language, but may be taken in another language for schools, classes, or specific studies where instruction is most appropriately provided in the student's mother tongue. [3]



Another sector with increasing importance in Romania is that of **adult vocational training**, which includes initial vocational training and continuing vocational training, organised in the national education system. **Initial adult vocational training** is designed to ensure the training necessary for the minimum professional competences needed for obtaining a job. **Continuous vocational training** takes place after the initial training and either develops already existing professional competences or provides new ones. These professional competences can be obtained within formal, non-formal or informal pathways, as defined by this legislation:

- The formal is participation in a program organised by a training provider;
- The non-formal means to practice specific activities directly in the work place or with self-motivated study;
- The informal is to follow forms of training which are not institutionalised, not structured, or even not intended - for example through contact with different sources of the socio-educational field, family, society or the work environment. [4]

Politics and Law

Concerning the legislative framework, there is a special part within the Law of Education 1/2011, dedicated to 'permanent education'.

Lifelong learning is seen to represent all educational activities realised by each person within formal, non-formal and informal backgrounds for training purposes and for developing competences including personal, civic, social, or labour competences. Lifelong learning therefore includes early education and compulsory education, superior education (high school), university, and continuing adult vocational training.

The Romanian state ensure and sustain (including financially) access to education and continuing professional training for:

- Young people and adults who have not completed compulsory education;
- Young people who left the educational system before obtaining a professional qualification;
- People with special educational needs;
- Young people and adults who return to the country after a period of working abroad;
- Young people and adults who are residents in economically and socially disadvantaged communities;
- Employed people over 40 years old with a low educational background with low qualification levels;



- Students with a high risk of school failure;
- Any citizen who wants to benefit from permanent education.

Lifelong learning education is financed from public and private funds through public or private partnerships, with financing and co-financing from employers, non-governmental organisations, etc.

According to law, lifelong learning focuses on the organisation of these permanent education programmes through educational institutions, particularly stating that they must ensure:

- compensatory education (a "second chance" route into education for adults who did not obtain the basic level of school qualifications);
- continuing vocational training;
- civic education and
- personal education designed to enable people to play an active role in society [4]

This laws aim to create training opportunities for newly **disadvantaged groups**, and stimulate employment. Many groups can be classed as 'disadvantaged', and therefore qualify for this public support, including the long term unemployed, women, the disabled, those returning to work after maternal or paternal leave, or after military service, single parents, and those in rural areas with a low income. This support is organised through the **National Agency for Employment**, which facilitated the access to these training programs. [5]

'Second Chance' pathways

The question of second chance pathways for adults who had not achieved the basic level of school education was high on the agenda during the early 2000s. A project was started by the Ministry of Education with '**Center Education 2000+**' which offered a second chance for young adults between 14-25 years who did not complete compulsory education, where they were offered a '**basic education recovery**' programme in parallel with an apprenticeship type of training. These apprenticeships deliberately combined traditional Roma professions with other, more "modern" professions to motivate student participation. [7]

Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports supports both young people and adults who left school early or, who do not have any professional qualifications, through the educational programme "**The second chance**". This programme is organized in partnership with Local Public Administration through school inspectorates.



Roma communities

Within Romania there are areas with a high Roma population, and there has been a policy to encourage more Roma people to become teachers, in order to serve as positive role models. In order to achieve this there are '**positive discrimination**' programmes to attract young Roma students into teacher training, including a distance learning programme through the University of Bucharest, and a system which allocated special places for Roma students within all universities. The Centre Education 2000+", a member of **Soros Open Network (SON) Romania**, also supports Roma students with the condition that they work within their communities for some time after they graduate. [8]

Statistical data on the support of the civil society are not available, but there are numerous examples of good practice on the participation of NGOs in the different ALE activities and of cooperation between MERYS and various NGOs, public and intergovernmental bodies in the order to develop and run projects/activities for Roma people. Besides the measures and strategic directions of MERYS, incorporated into different programmes run in collaboration with UNICEF in 2006, and in 2007, The Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports has continued to co-operate with the other governmental, non-governmental and inter-governmental institutions. Also, under SOP HRD special projects for Roma people are developed.

Structure overview

The key ministries responsible for the organisation and accreditation of adult education are the **Ministry of Education Research and Innovation** (Previously the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth), the **Ministry of Labour Social Solidarity and Family**, and the **Minister of Culture and Cults** - depending on the type of the programme provided. [11]

Overall there are three different levels of governance. As well as the central governance from the Ministry, responsibility is divided between the **Regional, Municipal and Local levels**, particularly for the formal education system. [12] The Ministry of Education has the overall responsibility for education in Romania, including ALE (Adult Learning and Education). More specifically, they coordinate, monitor and evaluate institutions and the programmes which provide educational and continuous training. Their main roles include:

- Providing CVT (continuing vocational training) through public education institutions (schools, colleges, universities);
- Continuous training for teachers in VET to provide training for adults, and to evaluate competencies for the recognition of informal and non-formal prior learning;



- Developing education and training based on the eight domains of key competences in order to ensure the basis for lifelong learning;
- Developing alternative forms of training such as distance education in order to increase access and participation
- Supporting partnership structures at regional and local level in order to ensure the relevance of vocational training (from quantitative and qualitative approach);
- Developing the "second chance" programmes run by public institutions and NGOs which provide alternative curricula for those who left school without a basic qualification level,
- Establishing the National Authority for Qualifications, in order to ensure the National Qualification Framework relates to the European Qualification Framework.
- Establishing the National Centre for VET (vocational education and training), developed to support coherence between initial (including HE) and continuing training.

The National Agency for Employment (NAE)

- The National Agency for Employment (NAE) implements policies and strategies regarding **employment and vocational training** of jobseekers, and coordinates, guides and controls the activities of the subordinated county agencies, whose roles are regulated by law. They aim to increase employment opportunities for jobseekers and so provide (free of charge, from the Unemployment Insurance Fund) vocational training services for the unemployed or disadvantaged groups. This can include those who were unable to find employment after graduating, or after completing the compulsory military service; refugees, prisoners or those who have been unable to find work after being released from prison, those who are re-entering the job market after childcare or sick leave, and those in rural areas. [13]

Key Providers/Main institutions/Sources for Adult Education

There are not any statistics available regarding all the kinds of ALE providers. The accredited CVT providers are public institutions, private bodies and NGOs. Some of the initial VET schools are accredited as CVT providers. The Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports has input within the development of teachers and trainers.

In almost all the public universities there is a department for methodical and psycho-pedagogical studies, running continuing training and specialised courses, with a market oriented offer.



The Centre of Professional Training Culture (CPTC) is a public institution aiming to provide CVT courses incorporating the output from cultural institutions.

The National Agency for Employment is the one of the most important providers of vocational training for adult population, especially for unemployed people. The majority of the courses are provided by the local employment agencies through their own training centres or in co-operation with private training centres, with the costs of the courses covered from the unemployment fund.

Vocational Education and Training

Vocational and technical education and training (VET) has a long tradition in Romania, partly inspired by models adopted by other communist regimes, with a tendency to favour technical and vocational schools over traditional high school education. At one point during the Ceaușescu period, for example, up to 92% of students were apparently in some kind of vocational training at secondary level. Traditionally there has been a **strong tradition for schools to work with businesses** to provide training opportunities and apprenticeships for students, and then also provide employment for the qualified student after the studies were completed. Companies have also provided teachers for practical skills trainings, and have played a very important role in supporting the VET system in Romania. [14]

The NAE (National Agency for Employment)

The National Agency for Employment is one of the most important providers of vocational training for adults. The majority of courses are provided by local employment agencies through **their own vocational training centres**, however they also work with private training centres. The agency functions under the authority of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Equal Opportunities. [15]

Universities

With the end of communist rule in 1989, Universities began major reforms in both programmes and management within the framework of new education legislation, which is still evolving today. A boom in private Higher Education institutions led to the formation of an **Accreditation Council**, regulated by the government, along with a competitive system of incentive grants for research and development activities.

Within this structure, the Romanian tertiary education sector consists of both private and public institutions of six types:



- **Universitate** (Universities) -The largest tertiary institutions which include a broad number of faculties and programmes, and award advanced scientific and professional degrees while combining teaching and research responsibilities.
- **Academie** (Academies) - A higher education institution training specialists, normally in a single general field (e.g. Academy of Music).
- **Universitate Politehnică** (Polytechnic Universities) - This name was given to former polytechnic institutions after 1990 for those providing programmes which emphasise technical and practical fields of study.
- **Institut** (Institutions) - An institution that awards professional degrees based on study and professional experience in limited fields of specialisation.
- **Colegiu Universitar** (University Colleges) - Institutions offering courses leading to a diploma, but which do not qualify graduates for admission to postgraduate study (these may either be part of a university or operate autonomously).
- **Postgraduate schools** independent from universities. [16]

e-learning

As an example, **SREP** is a large supporter and provider of e-learning in Romania. An example of an e-learning project conducted through them is ‘**F@DO FOR ALL - E-learning for all based on empowerment of local networking**’. The methodology of the project was developed to provide equal training opportunities for people who are disadvantaged economically, socially and educationally, in order to increase social and professional skills for employment and ensure the access to the ‘Information Society’. They provided training for Romanian teachers to further use the methodology, and aimed to develop and adapt new guidelines for further application of the methodology within Romania. [17]

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