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C O N C E P T

International Conference on the Role of Adult Learning and Education in the Development of Local Communities

9-10 November 2022

Venue: Chisinau, Republic of Moldova

Relevance

Socio-economic changes, war and conflicts, rapid development of information technology, and humanity facing previously unknown incisive problems constitute a new stage in today's changing world. They require constant revision of approaches, knowledge, and competencies.

The international community has adopted Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) to protect people, the planet, and ensure prosperity. They address challenges we face globally and locally.

The role of Adult Learning and Education (ALE) as a key component of lifelong learning in this respect proves to be crucial. "ALE plays a key role in creating humanistic responses based on human rights, democratic societies, ethical principles, the mobilization of collective intelligence and an open dialogue informed by interdisciplinary knowledge" (Marrakesh Framework for Action)¹.

The study of DVV International "Youth and Adult Education in the Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals"² proves that ALE plays an essential role, both as part of SDG 4 and in achieving other SDGs (combatting poverty, end hunger, ensure health and wellbeing, and take climate preserving actions, etc.).

Alongside with the international Agenda 2030, ALE is substantial for local development. Policymakers at the local level have recognised its value and benefits and endorse the concept of Learning Cities developed by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning.

The strong political commitment of municipal governments and other stakeholders of cities to promote lifelong learning for all is a fundamental principle that builds the concept. The enduring development of learning communities along with the local prosperity is the subject of sound strategies and policies supporting ALE. The importance of strengthening ALE at the local levels, as a strategic dimension for planning, design and implementation of learning programmes, and for supporting and (co)funding

¹ <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000382306>

² [https://www.dvv-international.de/fileadmin/files/Inhalte Bilder und Dokumente/Materialien/IPE/IPE_75_EN_web.pdf](https://www.dvv-international.de/fileadmin/files/Inhalte_Bilder_und_Dokumente/Materialien/IPE/IPE_75_EN_web.pdf)

training and learning initiatives such as community learning centres is also recognised by the Seventh International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VII).

Civil society organisations play important role in reflecting global programmes in national-level priorities which consider local relevance based on people's real-life demands. International best practices demonstrate that CSO's involvement into policy making and policy dialog as well as into the implementation of local programmes supporting ALE development is essential. The best results of the involvement of CSO's in various development programmes promoting ALE, therefore, should be observed and analysed.

DVV International has been operating in Ukraine since 2010 to promote ALE as a key to public welfare and sustainable development. The goal of DVV International in Ukraine is to support the establishment and development of sustainable structures for youth and adult education.

DVV International together with its partner - the Ukrainian Adult Education Association (UAEA) promotes ALE on the national level and participates in shaping ALE and lifelong learning policy in Ukraine, including the elaboration of draft legislation documents. The project of the law on ALE has been elaborated since 2018 and two alternative drafts were submitted to the Rada (Parliament) from the Cabinet of Ministers and from a group of Peoples' Deputies of Ukraine. Currently both drafts are being reviewed by the Committee on Education and have already been included in the agenda of the Parliament for the autumn session.

On the other hand, the work on the local level on strengthening domestic providers improves the accessibility and quality of ALE services thus enabling local authorities to put ALE to their agenda.

Cooperation with local partner organisations resulted in elaborating and adopting first local strategies and programmes supporting ALE development in regions of Ukraine as Nikopol, Melitopol, Poltava, Mykolayiv oblast. Every year new cities and communities, which want to adopt successful practices join the process. Only within the last years, more than ten local strategies and special programmes targeting ALE have been approved by local authorities.

However, as the consequence of Russian invasion into Ukraine, financial support of local administration is stopped because all budgets have been relocated for the support of local defence groups and internally displaced people who lost their houses, etc. At the same time there is an understanding of the role of ALE can play on national and local levels, thus authorities try to attract resources from donor organisations for educational activities in local ALE Centres.

DVV International also operates in the Republic of Moldova and contributes to shaping the vision of sustainable ALE and lifelong learning development in the country by establishing ALE-offers in the country. Currently, the Country office is working on the establishment of an Adult Learning and Education centre in the city of Chisinau, which will also be driven by local demands and start shaping the ALE policy for the country through the newly established ALE-working group at city council of Chisinau and the existing platform of key ALE actors in the country from the civil society.

By promoting the UNESCO concept of Learning Cities and Community Learning Centres, DVV International supports selected partner organisations in their efforts to establish sustainable offers of non-formal education on the local level. Involvement and support of city administrations and municipalities is, of course, of key importance in this process.

Successful experience in establishing centres was achieved in Georgia in particular, where since 2006 the DVV International's Country office Georgia was able to establish a network of 13 Adult

Education/Community Centres throughout the country. AECs adapted the European model of AE to the country needs and are providing learning opportunities, vocational, civic, and cultural education, social and community activities on average to 20.000 beneficiaries annually, including socially disadvantaged individuals, unemployed, national minorities and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in eight regions of the country³. Given the extensive experience in establishing and developing AE-Centres in the country, the project team developed their own successful model of cooperation with the local municipalities. It starts with concluding an agreement according to which, the municipality gives the centres permission to use the buildings which belong to the municipalities for free. Then a study trip is organised to provide more information to local governments and then involve them into Centres project work. And after the AECs gain some experience of working independently and implementing projects successfully, they address the municipalities for financial support.

In Armenia, four adult education centres have been established in Shirak, Tavush, Gegharkunik, Syunik that over the past 20 years have provided opportunities to over 30,000 beneficiaries in the country. While all these centres have close cooperation with their Municipalities, the Sisian Adult Education has been co-founded by the municipality and is continually supported by both DVV International and Sisian local government in the past 9 years. Three of the four cities where the centres are located have the status of UNESCO learning city.

The conference has a regional dimension and thus will involve participants from six countries of the region: Ukraine, Republic of Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo.

Objective:

The International Conference will present and discuss successful experiences in promoting ALE through community-based centres and cooperation with local authorities. By doing so, it will formulate a joint appeal on the importance of the role of ALE in the development of local communities.

The Conference will serve as a communication and discussion platform for interested specialists working in adult learning and education and lifelong learning with an emphasis on the non-formal education sector.

Format

The Conference will last two days and will be held in the format of plenary sessions with expert inputs, panel discussions, group works and site visits where the participants will be given an opportunity to get new experiences and hold discussions informally. It will serve as a communication platform for participants from Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo, Moldova and Ukraine, and offer an opportunity to exchange on the achievements and challenges in the development and advocacy for ALE on local and national levels.

³ DVV International, Georgia Country office. Adult Education Centers in Georgia. Tbilisi 2020. https://www.dvv-international.ge/fileadmin/files/caucasus-turkey/Georgia/Resources/20210517_AECs_in_Georgia.pdf

Participants

Approximately 60-70 representatives of international and national ALE-experts, representatives of non-formal providers of ALE, and local authorities from Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo, Moldova and Ukraine as well as representatives of local communities interested in the promotion of ALE development in their communities.

Working languages

Working languages of the Conference will be English (simultaneous interpretation into Russian will be provided).

The Conference is organised by:

DVV International – the Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association (Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband, DVV). As an association DVV represents the interests of more than 900 Adult Learning and Education Centres (or as they are called in Germany: "Folk High Schools" / Volkshochschulen) and their state associations, the largest non-formal education providers in Germany. German Adult Learning and Education Centres have been an effective community centres model with an extensive experience of activity for many decades. DVV International provides support for the establishment and development of sustainable structures for Youth and Adult Education in Asian, European, African and Latin American countries (more than 30 countries in total); facilitates exchange of information and expertise at international level through conferences, workshops and publications; promotes lobby work and advocacy for the human right to education and for lifelong learning for all. In its activity the organisation orients itself on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the UNESCO World Conferences on Adult Education (CONFINTEA).

European Association for Education of Adults (EAEA) is the voice of non-formal adult education in Europe. EAEA is a European NGO with 120 member organisations in 43 countries and represents more than 60 million learners Europe-wide. EAEA is a European NGO whose purpose is to link and represent European organisations directly involved in adult learning. Originally known as the European Bureau of Adult Education, EAEA was founded in 1953 by representatives from a number of European countries. EAEA promotes adult learning and access to and participation in non-formal adult education for all, particularly for groups currently under-represented.

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