

# **New trends in professional formation and updating in occupations associated with adult learning**

## **Latvia**

### **Content**

1. Generally: adult education providers
2. Who are the professionals?
3. Roles and criteria for adult educators
4. New training course for adult education practitioners in Latvia (KomPas)

### References

#### **1. Generally: adult education providers**

The definition of adult education in the Latvian Law on Education is the following:  
Adult education – a multi-dimensional educational process of persons, which ensures the development of an individual and his or her ability to compete in the labour market during the course of a lifetime of a person.

Until year 2001 no formal legislative acts and other regulations related to non-formal adult education field were adopted.

In 2001 Law on Education was supplemented with Article 46 on non-formal adult education, describing definition, implementation, licensing and legal sources of financing of non-formal adult education programmes.

Article 46, Adult Education Programmes states:

- (1) Formal and non-formal education programmes for adult education can be offered.
- (2) Arrangement of implementation of the adult formal education programme is set by this law, Vocational Education Law, Higher Educational Institutions Law and other standard legislative acts.
- (3) Adult non-formal education programmes set a content of this education and their compliance with interests of the government and employer, as well as personal development, and adults are empowered to acquire these programmes long life irrespective of their previous education.

- (4) Programmes of adult non-formal education and training courses are elaborated and realised by the educational establishments and other legal or physical entities independently or in cooperation with the customers.
- (5) Educational establishments, which are founded by the government or local governments, are empowered to implement programmes of the adult non-formal education without receiving licences, but other legal or physical entities have to receive licence from the local government.
- (6) Adult education can be financed from:
  - The government or local government budget;
  - Employers' resources;
  - Learners' resources;
  - Donations and grants;
  - By other sources.

There is no separate law on adult education, adult education development strategy as well as common understanding about the role and place of adult education in the education system in Latvia.

Lifelong learning ideas are the subject of discussions, but implementation is fragmented and not coordinated. The Concept of Education Development for 2002-2005 is based on the principles of the Memorandum of Lifelong Learning, but there are no lifelong learning policy documents in Latvia.

As further vocational education and continuing vocational education programmes are not classified within the national Education Classification they all are considered by statistics as adult education.

There is a lack of coordination as regards the development of adult education between all Ministries and within the Ministry of Education and Science. The Vocational education and continuing education department is responsible for development of further vocational programmes, continuing vocational programmes and adult education.

Municipalities are responsible for non-formal adult education programmes and Ministry of Welfare for retraining of the unemployed people.

Latvian Adult Education Association (LAEA) is an umbrella organisation of providers of adult education. LAEA was founded in 1993 and its goal is to facilitate the development of the adult education system in Latvia and to participate in the lifelong learning policy development, promote development of civic, democratic and open society. LAEA members are Adult Education Centres, Folk High Schools, Folk Schools, Non-governmental Organizations, and Commercial Training Centres, Universities, Vocational Schools, Evening Schools and other organisations.

Latvian Adult Education Association in cooperation with Latvian Union of Local and Regional Governments and the Ministry of Education and Science created joint work group and prepared draft regulations on licensing of non-formal adult education programmes.

There were 367 different institutions, which provided adult education and offered 5101 programmes in Latvia in 2001.

Adult education providers are:

- Adult education centres in districts usually founded and supported by the municipalities;
- Folk High Schools and Folk Schools;
- Non-governmental organizations;
- Training centres of enterprises (usually big-size enterprises have founded their own training centres);
- Universities;
- Vocational schools;
- Commercial training centres and other private education establishments;
- Institutions subjected to ministries or collaborating with them;
- Professional associations;
- Social partner organizations (employer's organizations and trade unions);
- Regional training centres and other educational establishments.

These institutions provide training for adults on different programmes as regards the content and length of programmes. Some institutions can offer the same kind of programmes.

## **2. Who are the professionals?**

There is no officially recognized "occupation" in the field of adult education in Latvia. Nevertheless the term "adult educator" is used quite often and understandable for wide society dealing with education issues.

Latvian Adult Education Association in cooperation with other institutions has elaborated a draft package of documents (set of documents) necessary for official recognition of occupations associated with adult education (adult education trainer, adult education methodologist, manager of adult education projects, adult education organiser, adult education coordinator, advisor of adult education).

In spite of lack of official recognition, there are a lot of persons working in the field of adult education. They have different educational backgrounds: teachers, lecturers, human resource specialists, psychologists, and culture workers, language trainers and others. The spectrum of professions is widening because of the tendency to organise adult education at the work place. More and more ICT specialists work as adult educators.

People become adult educators after the successful participation in adult education activities, via NGO or interest groups.

There are additional courses in adult education for teachers organised by Department of Adult Education in the Faculty of Education and Psychology of the University of Latvia.

Today there are two main groups of professionals associated with adult education.

**First group** - adult education trainers, coaches and lecturers working with trainees;

**Second group** - specialists who are dealing with organisation and management of adult education.

Second group includes:

- Adult education coordinators who are usually working on the district (local parishes') level (this is the lowest administrative level);
- Methodists (methodologists) of adult education who are working in adult education centres on the district level;
- Adult education project coordinators/managers.

Since there are no official occupations like "adult educator" or "adult education trainer" in Latvia, specialists associated with adult education are called, for example, "Specialists" or "Methodologists". There are some differences between specialists working in the formal and the non-formal system.

Duties of adult education coordinators on the parish level in many cases belong to the librarians, people engaged in cultural activities as well as secretaries of local municipalities.

At the same time, there is no exact statistical information about the number of persons occupied in adult education.

Some organisations and institutions create special training programmes for specialists and educators who work with adults.

### **3. Roles and criteria for adult educator**

There is a need for different teacher roles in adult education today.

They are as follows: the teacher as a guide, as a classical teacher, as a facilitator and as a coach.

Detailed description of the roles (1) is provided below:

**Guide** – to be a Guide means that a person acquaints others with new possibilities of development and perspectives of action. This role presupposes the ability to orient learners to work not only towards the final goals, but also towards the processes. The main task is to look for and encourage the inner motivation of learners.

**Teacher** – to be a Teacher means that a person behaves as an expert who is a mediator of knowledge. The main task is to create a positive learning environment, supporting the formation of self-directed learners who value lifelong learning.

**Facilitator** – to be a Facilitator means that a person leads group dynamics and helps everybody find their role in a network of relationships, with the main aim to act both effectively and with care.

**Coach** – to be a Coach means that a person is able to influence the shaping of a learner's personality, forcing and providing the learner with the needed skills for self-actualisation.

Learners have different needs and the adult educator should be very flexible to chose and change (if necessary) his / her role.

There are no established and generally recognized occupational profiles for adult educators in Latvia. Latvian Adult Education Association is working on quality issues of non-formal adult education.

Within the Nordic-Baltic cooperation in the field of adult education project "Learning 4 Sharing" - a Nordic-Baltic Module-based Further Training for adult Educators was realized. Project was funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers and implemented by the Nordic Folk Academy, the Latvian Adult Education Association (LAEA), the Lithuanian Association for Adult Education and the Estonian Non-formal Adult Education Association.

The goal of the project has been to create the training modules for adult education practitioners, test them in practice and refine them into courses for adult teacher training.

To fulfil this goal:

- Nordic and Baltic experts of adult education defined criteria for a good adult educator and elaborated an evaluation scheme.
- Nordic countries' experience in training adult educators was examined.
- A number of international and national working groups analysed the needs in the further training of adult educators and elaborated recommendations for the new educational programme.

Good adult educator criteria and their descriptions were elaborated in the project:

**Self-esteem** – appreciating one's worth and importance and being accountable for oneself and acting responsibly towards others.

**Tolerance** – the ability to demonstrate fairness and understanding to people whose way of thinking and opinions differ from one's own.

**Responsibility** – being responsible for one's actions, considering the result and effects in advance.

**Communication skills** – to foster dialogue in the learning process by developing the ability to listen actively, to transmit information in written or oral form; the ability to make oneself understood and to understand others.

**Empathy** – responsiveness.

**Flexibility** – the ability and willingness to change and achieve the best result, taking the permanently changing situation into account.

**Knowledge about how adults learn and understanding the psychology of adults** – knowledge about adult learning specifics, difference between pedagogy and andragogy; understanding about adult psychology. The ability to use the knowledge to help learners achieve better results in education and to develop their personality.

**Knowledge of methods in adult education and learning** – knowledge and ability to choose different ways of teaching and learning according to content of learning and participants' interests, abilities and experience.

**Skills in preparing value-based (democratic and humanistic) programmes** – content of learning, which emphasizes learners' capacities for choice and growth in combination with responsibility, respecting learners' subjective experience and sense of freedom.

**Planning and organizational skills** – skills to plan your own and participants' activities in the learning process and the ability to implement these plans.

**Good knowledge of the subject** – good orientation in the subject in order to arouse students' interest in it.

**The ability to motivate for learning before, during and after the learning process** – the ability to promote participants' personal interest, involvement and activity in the learning process.

**Development of learning environment in accordance with students' needs, focusing on self directed learning** – learning organized in accordance with the learner's individual growth and readiness for acquiring new knowledge independently, very often process-based on knowing how to learn.

**Skills to activate learners** – the process of fulfilling learners' potential on the basis of interest and discovery.

**Skills for self- reflection and critical thinking** – to raise awareness of the learning process and its results and to stimulate the ability for analysing and viewing things and matters from different points of view.

**Skills to evaluate and promote self-evaluation in oneself and students** – development of the ability to follow and assess one's achievements in the learning process.

#### **4. New training course for adult education practitioners in Latvia ( KomPas)**

The outcome of the “Learning 4 Sharing” project work has been taken into consideration in creating the **KomPas – 160-hour new training course for the adult education practitioners in Latvia.**

This training course is relevant for people working in non-formal adult education as well as other areas.

It was important to find the possibilities for raising the legal value of the new course of education by integrating it into the existing educational framework. The Latvian Adult Education Association has submitted KomPas programme for approval in the Ministry of Education and Science

##### Requirements for participants

The goal of KomPas is to raise the professional competence of practitioners of adult education. No requirements in regard to former formal education are raised. The decisive factor is whether the attendant is actively involved in the field of adult learning - e.g. as a teacher, mentor, coach, leader or consultant.

##### Objective of KomPas

The objective of the Course is to raise the competence of teachers in adult education.

##### Competences

KomPas creates an understanding about adult learning and adult education. It promotes the following competences:

- Planning and organisation of educational programmes;
- Implementation and supervision of teaching and learning processes;
- Process and result evaluation.

Focusing on the personal and professional development criteria for good adult educator (described above) fosters these competences.

##### Participants' Experience

In the beginning of the Course the level of experience of each participant is assessed. This information is taken into account in the teaching process in order to ensure a purposeful development of competences.

##### Course Structure and Content

KomPas consists of four parts:

- Adult education in today's society, how do adults learn, adult psychology;
- Planning and organization of educational programmes;
- Organization and implementation of the teaching process;
- Process and result evaluation.

## Methods

KomPas is based on the experience of each participant. The Course is organized in the following way:

- Interactive lectures (approx. 20%);
- Participants' activities in regard to the content of lectures, e.g. discussions and group work (approx 30%);
- Participant's own performance, e.g. presentations and teachings (approx. 50%).

Main methods of the Course:

Individual work – Discussion groups;  
Group work – Sharing of experience;  
Self study – Role-play;  
Literature research – Practitioners' research;  
ICT – Practice.

## Evaluation

The evaluation is organized in accordance with the KomPas criteria.

Main means of the evaluation process are methods of reflection and practitioners' research, such as participants' own practice, observation and feedback, analysis of the documents prepared by participants, portfolio.

After completing the Course the participants receive a certificate. In order to receive the certificate, the participants must not miss more than 20 % of the lessons.

## Further educational possibilities

After finishing the course, possibilities for the participants will be provided to continue sharing experience and good practice on a regular basis. The course is a good foundation for continuing studies in the included areas, such as leadership, human resources development, and psychology of adults, pedagogy and andragogy.

## Educators

A team of educators is implementing KomPas. Each member of this team has to have at least three years experience in teaching of adults, he/she has to demonstrate a high level of competence in the criteria mentioned in terms of reference of the curriculum, needs good knowledge of the Course content and she/he has to continue to raise his/her own competence by studying, attending courses or demonstrate involvement in educational projects on a regular basis, but at least every second year.

## Materials

The Latvian Adult Education Centre in cooperation with the Latvian Adult Education Association provides all materials that are required for successfully implementing KomPas. This includes a Training Manual, web-based resource materials, and an Internet communication platform.

## Short description of the Curriculum

### A. Introduction of KomPas

Subjects	Methods	Comments
Assessment of each participants' level of experience	Questionnaires and development of individual learning plans	Ensure a purposeful teaching / learning process
Introduction of KomPas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Objectives</li> <li>•Course</li> <li>•Principles</li> <li>•Agreement on educators and participants responsibilities and working principles</li> </ul>	Presentations, discussions, written agreement	To create a foundation for successful work
Development of group dynamics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Getting to know each other and information about participants, their experience and motivation</li> </ul>	Icebreakers and presentations	To foster positive group dynamics

### B. Basic information

Subjects	Methods	Comments
How do adults learn: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&lt; Age and social roles;</li> <li>&lt; The importance and influence of experience;</li> <li>&lt;Motivation and learning motives;</li> <li>&lt;The role of feedback and communication;</li> <li>&lt;Physiological aspects of learning;</li> <li>&lt;Learning process</li> </ul>	Inputs, discussions, individual and group work	To increase understanding of adult learning needs and teaching methods  To raise awareness towards learning obstacles and factors, which facilitate learning
Practitioners' Research: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&lt;How does a practitioner researcher learn;</li> <li>&lt;Introduction of</li> </ul>	Inputs, discussions	To get acquainted with the idea of practitioners' research as an important tool within the KomPas

“Learning diary and Portfolio”		programme
Adult education and its role in today’s society: <Lifelong learning and the need for adult education policy; <The role of adult education in society, private businesses, organizations; <Ways of learning; <Situation in Latvia	Inputs, discussions	To raise understanding of the impact of adult education on the work and roles of educators  To create a common understanding of key words

“*Learning Diary*” is a practitioner’s research method, in which the participant summarises findings, impressions and questions, which arise during the Course.

“*Portfolio*” is a set of documents, which is gathered during the Course. The portfolio can be used for providing gained professional qualifications, results and experience.

### C. Planning and organization of educational programmes

Subject	Methods	Comments
Planning of educational programmes: <Defining competencies and indicators <Objectives and expected results <Planning of content and course <Obeying learning principles	Inputs, discussions, group work, independent work, participants presentations	To improve understanding of aspects related to the planning of educational programmes  To develop competencies in developing educational programmes
Administration of teaching process	Inputs, group work	To draw attention towards the role of administration for successful teaching process

#### D. Organisation and implementation of the teaching process

Subjects	Methods	Comments
<p>Key situations in the teaching process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&lt;Starting the course;</li> <li>&lt;Balancing participants' interests and teaching content;</li> <li>&lt;Involvement of participants;</li> <li>&lt;Feedback</li> </ul>	<p>Inputs, discussions, group work, independent work, teachings prepared and conducted by the participants, video feedback</p>	<p>To increase understanding of factors, which influence the teaching process</p> <p>To raise competencies in conducting teaching process and team-building</p>
<p>Group dynamics and teambuilding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&lt;Group dynamics and its impact on teaching process;</li> <li>&lt;Roles in a group;</li> <li>&lt;Teambuilding</li> </ul>		
<p>Roles, tasks and skills of the educator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&lt;The educators as a teacher, facilitator, guide, consultant;</li> <li>&lt; Communication skills;</li> <li>&lt;Skills for effective sharing of information and experience;</li> <li>&lt;Feedback skills</li> </ul>		
<p>Methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&lt;Classification of methods;</li> <li>&lt;One- way and two-way communication;</li> <li>&lt;The role of methods in the teaching process;</li> <li>&lt;Tips for using methods;</li> <li>&lt;Work with <a href="http://www.metodes.lv">www.metodes.lv</a></li> </ul>		
<p>Project as a method:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&lt;Main principles of the project method;</li> <li>&lt;Project steps</li> </ul>	<p>Inputs, group work, project work, participants' presentation</p>	<p>To raise competencies in organising and leading self-directed learning process</p>

#### E. Process and result evaluation

Subject	Methods	Comments
Process and result evaluation: <Need for evaluation; <Evaluation process; <Ways of evaluation; <Assessment criteria and systems; <Evaluation methods	Inputs, discussions, group work, independent work, participants' presentations	To raise competencies in creating and using assessment systems
Practitioners' research: <Who uses practitioners' research; <Methods for practitioners' research	Inputs, discussions, group work, independent work	To increase understanding of the importance of practitioners' research and to raise competencies in using methods of practitioners' research

#### F. Assessment of participants' achievements and evaluation of KomPas

Subjects	Methods	Comments
Assessment of participants' achievements	Set of assessment and evaluation methods	To assess the effectiveness of the KomPas programme
Evaluation of the KomPas programme		To identify possibilities for the improvement of KomPas
Further co-operation possibilities		To ensure further possibilities for sharing experiences and professional improvement

#### References:

1. " Learning 4 Sharing" Manual for Adult Education Practitioners, Vilnius, 2003
2. " Lifelong Learning- a Challenge for All". Proceedings of the International Conference, Riga, Latvia, 2002
3. " The Country Monograph on Vocational Education and Training Systems and Structures and Public and Private Employment Services in Latvia". Second draft. 2002