



UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

Population Unit

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Policy Brief on Life-Long Learning

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Introduction

Life-long Learning in an ageing society:

- Expansion of working age
- Changing nature of working environment
- Distinction between basic education and further training
- Life course approach
- Commitment 6 of the Madrid Action Plan on Ageing(MIPAA)



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Basic education

Basic education aims to people that have not received sufficient educations in the initial period of education

Elements:

- Literacy and numeracy
- Recognition of knowledge
- Vocational training and apprenticeships



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Basic education

- Adult literacy and numeracy:
- Reduction of adult illiteracy
- gender sensitive, e.g. family literacy programmes

Family Literacy Programmes in Turkey

Turkey has considerably increased literacy rates within its population in the last few years. Nonetheless, as further measures are still necessary, Turkey has implemented a Family Literacy Programme which entails early childhood education as well as adult education programmes, and is especially designed for those living in remote areas with few education facilities.

Another initiative which has been proven to be very successful is one for mother-child education (MOCEP). Within this framework, courses are taught to mothers and their children, with the result that literacy skills of both have improved and mothers are enabled to be the first teacher for their child. Early child education is imperative as it influences the future educational and psycho-social development of the child and in fact the MOCEP has achieved significant results. For example, children who attended courses have shown to be better prepared for school and most importantly, the school retention or completion rate was significantly higher (87%) among children from families that had participated in MOCEP compared to non-participants (67%).

Another focus is put on women's education since women represent two thirds of the illiterate population and are thus especially vulnerable. The Functional Adult Literacy and Women's Support Programme concentrates therefore on women's literacy. Through education, women may gain self-confidence and also improve their relationships with the husband and other family members. Moreover, educated women have been proven to be more involved in family decision making than uneducated women. These factors notably enhance family cohesion. Additionally, educated women may pass their knowledge on to their daughters which consequently may further improve the development of valuable human capital.

Sources: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute for Lifelong Learning (2009). "Family Literacy Programmes" in Effective Literacy Programme. Germany: UNESCO.



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Basic education

- Recognition of knowledge:
 - Formal education
 - Non-formal education
 - Informal education

European Qualifications Framework: guidelines to better validate informal and non-formal education

To promote mobility across the European Union for work and study, the education ministers of EU Member States have acknowledged the importance of consistent guidelines for the recognition of informal and non-formal education across all member States and candidate countries.

Skills which have been achieved through non-formal and informal learning are valuable. They often represent important characteristics and qualities of a person, but without any kind of certification, they may not be included in working records or in a person's CV. To improve the situation, the EU has approved guidelines including eight levels of knowledge from basic skills over professionalism to innovative knowledge. According to these guidelines, each country may develop national guidelines which will then be fitted into a European context. A translation and comparison of the level of knowledge from one to another country will be possible. Like this, the need of information about job candidates from other countries should be decreased and which may ultimately result in higher mobility.

Sources: European Parliament (2008). Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning, in: *Official Journal of the European Union*. Brussels, Strasbourg: C111/01.
Commission of the European Communities (2007), "The European Qualifications Framework: major benefits for citizens and employers throughout Europe", Rapid Press Release. Brussels: IP/07/1760.
European Inventory (2005). "Validation of informal and non-formal learning". United Kingdom.



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Basic education

- Vocational training and apprenticeships
 - Education in a professional context
 - Initially for young people, but need also be accessible to middle-aged cohorts
 - Allows easier access to labour markets for people with career breaks

Perspective: Vocational Qualification („Perspektive Berufsabschluss“) – An initiative of the German Ministry for Education and Research to promote education and further education of low-qualified young adults

In 2008, the German Ministry for Education and Research adopted the programme Career Advancement through Education. In this framework, the programme Perspective: Vocational Qualification („Perspektive Berufsabschluss“) (Perspective: Vocational Qualification) focuses on bringing teenagers and young adults into apprenticeships and to promote vocational training as well as retraining. The main aim of this initiative is to promote a better and wider basic education which reaches everyone by providing equal opportunities regardless of a person's social background. Moreover, the German government promotes that more people should attain a school leaving certificate in order to enhance chances on the job market and to receive an apprenticeship.

Perspective: Vocational Qualification is divided into two initiatives. The first is about improved networking to exploit unused capacities in a supra-regional context in terms of apprenticeship, training and retraining positions. The second initiative focuses on training opportunities of low-qualified young adults. To augment their education, employers need to be encouraged to invest in training. It is recommended that training and retraining programmes are restructured in a modular way. Like this, employers may send employees to very specific courses which imply quick results and low costs, but also efficient learning and certification for the employees that further enhance their future chances on the job market.

Sources: German Federal Ministry for Education and Research (2009). „Aufstieg durch Bildung - Qualifizierungsinitiative für Deutschland“. Berlin.
German Federal Ministry for Education and Research (2009). Perspektive Berufsabschluss. Germany.



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Further education

Further education aims to people with initial education, however need further training

Elements:

- Further professional training to keep qualifications up-to-date
- Training in informational technology
- Language training
- Third-age universities



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Further education

- Further professional training to keep qualifications up-to-date
- job-related training
- research: income improvement after participation in adult learning programmes



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Further education

- Training in informational technology:
 - Technical awareness as a key skill allows broader access to the labour market
 - in particular skills, such as using the internet, e-mail, the use of the mouse and keyboards

ABC pc and Maths Aid – online programmes to improve basic ICT and numeracy skills in Norway

Vox, an agency of the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research which coordinates government funds to educational non-governmental organizations has created diverse online sources to improve basic skills in the adult population. Their online platform includes programmes to improve skills in literacy, numeracy, ICT skills, oral communication as well as word processing.

One of the specific programmes is “ABC pc”. It is an interactive training programme for basic PC skills. It comprises the use of mouse and keyboard, writing texts, using the Internet and e-mail. The programme is aimed at adults who want to improve their basic ICT skills.

More advanced is the programme “Maths Aid” (Mattehjelpen) which is offered on Vox’ webpage. This programme’s objective is to improve basic numeracy skills of adults through exercises which require also the direct application of basic ICT skills. Beside the use of the computer, it is on the one hand designed to help parents understand the mathematics their children learn at school on the other hand to let any adult verify their mathematical skills on the basis of everyday tasks to feel comfortable with the requirements of today.

Sources: Vox - Norwegian Institute for Adult Learning of the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research (2009). “ABCpc” in Digital Resources. Oslo.
Vox - Norwegian Institute for Adult Learning of the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research (2009). “Maths Aid” in Digital Resources. Oslo.



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Further education

- Language training:
 - Immigration: Important in the context of professional mobility in a globalising world
 - Emigration: e.g. helps to integrate high-skilled migrants

Needs and motivation of adults at Bulgarian universities to study foreign languages

Accounting for the language diversity in Europe, especially after the enlargement in 2004, the European Commission has made it a main interest that every adult should be able to communicate in at least one other European language, other than its mother tongue. The Bulgarian government, to smooth the progress of further integration into the European Union, facilitates access to language courses for adults. The focus is on adults since the majority of them did not have the opportunity to learn a second or third language in school as it is customary nowadays for teenagers. Thus, to encourage mobility of workers and students and to strengthen their competitiveness, Bulgaria is taking diverse measures to enlarge the supply of formal language courses and to facilitate the certification also of non-formal and informal language skills. To give a concrete example, Bulgarian universities have part-time curricular to encourage also working adults to complete a 3-year Bachelor or 2-year Master degree in one or several foreign languages.

The New Bulgarian University in Sofia has integrated a Centre for Foreign Languages as a part of their Centre for Continuing Education where foreign languages are taught according to the Council of Europe's Framework of Reference (levels A1 – C2).

Sources Betcheva, Rossica. "Needs and Motivation of Adults at Bulgarian Universities to study Foreign Languages". The Alpine European Manual of Good Practice. Sofia.
New Bulgarian University (2009). Centre for continuing education (CEE). Sofia.



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Further education

- Universities of Third Age:
 - Particularly designed for senior citizens
 - Accessible without school degree
 - Promotes integration and well-being of older persons

The implementation of Universities of the Third Age in Ukraine

Universities of the Third Age were initially invented in 1973 in France from where the concept spread out to many Western European countries and they have now reached Ukraine. The original idea was to offer higher education to people no longer in full time employment. U3As may be attended by anyone without the need of school leaving certificates or previous academic education.

While in France, for example, the “universités tous ages” have curricular especially for studying foreign languages, literature and other cultural studies, in Ukraine, the U3A is emphasizing the need to provide a place for older persons to meet and communicate in general. The Ukrainian project on U3A is closely connected to the implementation of MIPAA/RIS and is supported by the United Nations Populations Fund (UNFPA) as well as the Ukrainian Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. Up to 2009, four U3As have been implemented with the following main targets:

- All-round development of older people
- Older persons' adaptation to the modern living conditions
- (Re)-integration of older population in active life of society
- Organization of communication
- Formation of principles of healthy lifestyle in older age

The interest in the U3As is high and the project is by now carried on by other non-governmental organizations.

Sources: International Association of Universities of the Third Age (2009). France. Université tous ages de Lyon (2009). Présentation. France.
United Nations Population Fund Ukraine (2009). “Supporting the Implementation of the MIPAA in Ukraine”. Ukraine: UKRIP41A (UNFPA).



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Recommendations

- Emphasis on advantages/benefits of further education
 - > career prospects, social participation
- Adaption of learning methods to particular needs
 - > use of different didactic methods
- Development of gender sensitive education programmes
 - > well-proven method: gender budgeting



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Life-long learning : A Checklist		
Main Areas	Areas of Implementation	Key Elements
Basic education	Literacy and numeracy	Initial education
		Adult learning
	Recognition of education	Recognition of formal education
		Recognition of non-formal education
		Recognition of informal education
	Vocational training	Integration of early school leavers
Integration after parental leave and other work interruptions		
Further education	Job-related	Integration into labour market
		Promotion
	Language	Supporting professional mobility
		Integration and participation of migrants
	IT skills	Professional development
		Societal integration and participation
Education for pensioners	Universities of the Third Age	Societal integration and participation
		Well-being of older persons
		Sharing of expertise of older persons



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- Thank you very much...
- Questions:
 - Is there any specific good practice example that you would like to see added?
 - Where do you see a need for improvement?

