



NATIONAL AUDIT OFFICE OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

Public audit report

DEVELOPMENT OF NON-FORMAL ADULT EDUCATION

28 June 2013, No. VA-P-50-9-8

Vilnius

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Full audit report in Lithuanian is available on the website
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The European Commission has emphasised that in a rapidly changing world lifelong learning needs to be a priority: learning is the key to employment, economic success and allowing people to participate fully in society.

With a view to strengthening and expanding the participation of adults in lifelong learning, the European Union has set the objective to achieve that 15 per cent of adults participate in lifelong learning¹, so it is very important to integrate learning into adult life. To this end, an amount of LTL 1.96 billion was allocated for Lithuania from the EU Structural Funds over the funding period 2004-2013. Also, in 2008 the Ministry of Education, together with the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, prepared an updated Lifelong Learning Strategy, which was supposed to encourage

¹ Council Resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning, 20 December 2011, Annex 1, paragraph 1
Accessed on 26 November 2012:
<http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2011:372:0001:0006:LT:PDF>.

the development of non-formal adult education. However, the number of adult learners has not been going up and remains about 5 per cent.

The objective of the audit was to assess effectiveness of the development of adult education.

The audit addressed the following issues:

- whether organisation and coordination of adult education ensure its effective development;
- whether the objectives and measures of the Lifelong Learning Strategy related to the development of non-formal adult education have been implemented;
- whether the existing funding ensures effective development of non-formal adult education.

The audit period – 2007–2012. The analysis of the funding of non-formal adult education also used the data for the period 2004–2006.

The audit was conducted in the Ministry of Education and Science, Education Development Centre, Administration of Marijampolė Municipality, Administration of Šiauliai City Municipality, Administration of Klaipėda City Municipality, Administration of Kretinga District Municipality. The data and information was collected from municipalities (60) and municipal institutions, Lithuanian Association of Adult Education, Universities of the Third Age (5), Lithuanian high schools and institutions of vocational education (9), universal multi-functional centres (2); the analysis also covered practice of foreign countries.

The public audit conclusions and recommendations provided below were drawn upon the assessment of the audit findings.

AUDIT CONCLUSIONS

1. Organisation and coordination of non-formal adult education at the state and municipal levels are insufficient, no funding priorities and principles have been set, the needs of non-formal adult education have not been adequately examined at the national level. Consequently, the development of non-formal adult education in the country is insufficiently effective and uniform.

2. A lack of a system of assessment and recognition of competences deprives people of an opportunity to recognise competences acquired in a non-formal and informal way, so people's motivation for lifelong learning and more successful competition in the labour market is not sufficiently strengthened.

3. The existing register of training programmes and events is not sufficiently informative, functional and user-friendly, because it is not possible to find a training programme by municipality, specific provider of education, etc.
4. The e-learning programme intended for adult learning, which is currently under development, does not cover all directions of non-formal adult education (vocational and non-vocational), which prevents achievement of the original goal – to develop person's general culture, acquire knowledge necessary for professional activity, develop and improve personal capacities.
5. Development of non-formal adult education in municipalities is uneven: 78 per cent of municipalities do not examine such educational needs of the population, 91 per cent of funds are allocated for regular trainings of teachers and staff of municipal administration and municipal institutions, funds allocated per capita for non-formal adult education trainings in regions differ up to 11 times. As a result, people are not provided with equal opportunities to improve their life quality and to be competitive by having access to lifelong learning.
6. In the absence of funding priorities, 95.8 per cent of funds intended for non-formal adult education are allocated only for one area – non-formal vocational adult education, thus failing to provide for adequate conditions for the involvement of a larger number of the population, acquisition of various needs and capacities, improvement of the quality of life, and tackling of social problems.
7. The funding of non-formal adult education increases the supply of such education but does not ensure involvement of society groups for which such education brings most benefits (persons who have dropped out of the general education system, the disabled, prisoners and persons released from imprisonment, long-term unemployed persons, and people of older age (55–74 years), etc.), and the share of adult learners in Lithuania is still relatively small – about 5 per cent in 2007–2012.

AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

To the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania:

1. With a view to ensuring effective development of non-formal adult education:
 - upon assessment of the demand, to set priorities of non-formal adult education;
 - seeking to encourage development of non-formal adult education, to draw up a medium-term strategic planning document which would provide for active participation of municipal and state institutions, ensure coordination of their activity, and to provide for funding for the development;

- to provide for funding mechanisms intended for the increase of demand and providing equal access to non-formal education for all groups of the society.
2. Upon the introduction of competence recognition systems in schools of higher education, to ensure harmonisation of these systems.
 3. To improve the register of training programmes and events, so that users could obtain detailed and relevant information about non-formal learning opportunities.

To the Education Development Centre:

To ensure achievement of all original objectives of training programmes and the object repository project, i.e. accumulation of all types of non-formal education programmes.