

THE DEVELOPMENT AND PRESENT STATE OF ADULT EDUCATION IN RUSSIA

National report of the Russian Federation

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Adult education in Russia

Adult education in the Russian Federation is becoming more and more important in terms of providing people with educational services; it plays a leading role in the development of continuing education. Recently educational services for adults have been actively developing both in terms of quantity and quality.

At present in Russia there exist various forms of adult education, which can be grouped into the broad categories of formal and non-formal. Formal adult education includes general secondary education, elementary and intermediate vocational education, higher education, post-university professional education (PhD studies and post-doctoral studies), training and retraining of specialists and managers with intermediate or higher qualifications at various institutes and vocational training and retraining establishments. Non-formal adult education encompasses both professionally oriented and general cultural courses in folk schools, centres of continuing education, adult education centres including the *Znanie* (Knowledge) establishments, and through television.

Adult education covers a significant proportion of consumers of educational services, both in the field of formal and non-formal education. Timely education, including professional education, its upgrading and the possibility to take a retraining course if necessary, give an opportunity not to decrease but to increase the literacy level of the people and to guarantee a constant growth in specialist qualifications at all educational levels. The development and social integration of youth, including children of school age, who do not have (or did not have before) an opportunity to attend schools or any other educational institution for various reasons (war, immigration, ecological catastrophe, poverty, etc.), are available first of all by means of adult education. Nowadays most specialists, ex-servicemen, unemployed people, prisoners etc need to take a training or retraining course.

About 30% of the population of Russia is covered by some form of adult education, which basically divides into three branches.

The first branch of the adult education system is additional professional education, which contributes to forming the professional knowledge base of potential specialised personnel in the modern high-tech economy. The consumers of this part of the system of continuing education are socially well integrated people who receive education gradually at all levels, including post-university education.

The second branch of the system provides various groups of the population with the possibility to adapt to changing life conditions. This sub-system includes education

aimed at the adaptation and rehabilitation of social and professional groups who cannot adapt to the rapidly changing social environment on their own. Moreover, this sub-system involves people who for various reasons do not have access to the formal system of professional education, and who face the threat of de-socialisation.

This part of the adult education system also involves integrating migrants, refugees and the socially alienated into the educational process. It includes, on the one hand, the programmes of basic education that allow them, in particular, to obtain a clearer understanding of the basics of the present-day structure of the state and economy, and, on the other hand, the programmes of vocational training that also allow the trainees to master new professions, develop the acquired skills and become eligible for the labour market.

The third part of the adult education system fulfils various individual educational needs of the people, for example, language training, acquisition of new knowledge in psychology, culture, arts, communication skills, driving skills, etc.

According to the official data in Russia there are over 2,000 educational institutions that offer programmes of additional professional education in which annually ca. 1.5 million people take training courses and over 100,000 people take retraining courses. Here millions of learners who take short-term courses (up to 72 hours) and on-the-job training courses are not included. If on-the-job training as well as training of workers are included in this system, the total number of educational structures providing additional professional education rises to about 3,000.

Recently there has been a rapid growth in the number of learners within the system of additional professional education for specialists. During the past 5 years this number has increased from 898,400 up to 1,432,900 people or by 59.5% (this is without taking into account further training and retraining of labour). Within additional professional education further training makes up 92.1% and professional retraining 7.9% respectively. Professional retraining also includes Master of Business Administration (MBA) programmes, which are highly in demand at the present time. On the whole the amount of professional retraining has increased 2.2 times during the last five years.

Professional retraining plays a very important role in retraining retired servicemen (up to 85%), as well as the unemployed who are referred to the educational institutions by the employment services (38.8%). However, further training and retraining of servicemen and unemployed people occupy rather a small place in the system of additional professional education of specialists, amounting to only 1.3%. Vocational retraining and further training of the unemployed is carried out on a much larger scale in the blue-collar professions.

In 2002 and 2003 civil servants made up less than 5% of the total number of specialists doing further training and retraining courses. At the same time, this figure has increased more than 1.5 times during the last five years and is expected to grow rapidly in future due to the administrative reform.

Various non-formal modalities for training and retraining are actually subsumed under formal structures in additional professional education, although they operate in a non-formal way

The Russian adult education system is making efforts to develop flexible structures for providing educational services in line with the needs of the employers. Recently there has been a tendency towards institutionalisation of these activities within the framework of accredited structures, as both organisations and their employees have become more concerned about formal official recognition of the additional professional knowledge and qualifications acquired (i.e. through recognised certificates and diplomas).

This system includes open adult education in its various forms as well as distance education.

Although additional professional education is one of the most dynamically developing branches of adult education, in its present form it cannot fulfil the rapidly growing demands of the labour market for further training, professional retraining and the development of professional competences. The highest level of unfulfilled demand is in the area of training, further training and retraining of labour. One of the specific features of the modern labour market in Russia is that, on the one hand, there exists a great demand for highly qualified specialists in certain professions and, on the other hand, an over-abundance of specialists with higher education qualifications. People in the “fashionable” professions, e.g. economists, lawyers, managers, and those with degrees in the social sciences and humanities are not in demand on the labour market (the supply is 6-8 times larger than the demand).

In order to solve this problem it is necessary to combine the efforts of educational institutions within the system of elementary and secondary vocational education, as well as the structures providing personnel development and on-the-job training for qualified workers within companies. “Social partnership” must be ensured in this process, and the involvement of employers in increasing the qualifications potential of enterprises and the service sector in Russia must be intensified.

The development of additional professional education is interrelated with the system of social integration of the adult population, including migrants, a significant proportion of whom are in need of both professional and social adaptation, as over 50% do not have professional education and over 6% of those over 16 do not have general secondary education.

In the near future the number of learners in elementary, secondary and higher vocational education is expected to be reduced on the average by 25-30% for demographic reasons. At the same time a dramatic increase in quotas in the adult education system is expected, thus making its development a priority.

The estimated number of people who need some additional education or training is between 6.5 and 7 million, i.e. 10-11% of the employed population. Meeting this need will require a dramatic increase in the appropriate educational provision, and new

approaches will have to be developed. For example, one promising approach is the creation of corporate universities.

The development of adult education

Policies, legislation, financing

The Federal programme for the development of education for the period 2006-2010 is set out in a document that defines both the concept of continuing education and its separate elements, including adult education. The programme document states that "continuing education' is a lifelong process of increasing a person's educational resources (both generally and professionally), using state and public institutions and in accordance with personal and social needs. The need for continuing education arises from the fact that science and technology are progressing with great speed. At present it is estimated that a specialised professional needs to spend about 28% of his or her working life keeping up to date."

The main strategic aim of the programme is defined in the document as "providing conditions to fulfil the educational needs of individuals, society and the labour market by creating new institutional mechanisms in the field of education, renewing the structure and content of education, developing sound foundations and furthering the continuing education system". The measures to achieve this goal include: introducing forms of continuing professional education that enable every person to follow his or her individual educational route in the interests of their professional and personal growth; making full use of new educational technologies; and the implementation of an academic qualification system that will enable Russia to participate in the Bologna and Copenhagen processes, thereby increasing Russia's competitiveness in the international market for educational services and providing Russian students with the opportunity to participate in the international system of continuing education.

State policy in the field of adult education is coordinated with the other member countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Relevant pieces of legislation have been adopted by the Interparliamentary Assembly of the CIS.

The financing of adult education

The financing of adult education is carried out from three main sources: state funds, employers and the learners themselves.

State financing of adult education

- a) Expenditure on retraining and further training constituted 1.65% of the Federal Budget of the Russian Federation in 2007 and 1.4% in 2008.
- b) There exists also what is called the Funded Budget of the Russian Federation. Expenditures on retraining and further training from the Funded Budget are 3% on education and 1.43% on public health.

c) State financing of adult education and training covers the following:

- studies in state institutions of secondary and higher education, as well as doctoral and post-doctoral studies for people over 25 who have been selected for sponsorship;
- pre-university training (through preparatory courses in state universities) for people who have served in the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation as soldiers, sailors or non-commissioned officers for at least three years;
- retraining for retired officers of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation;
- further training and professional retraining, once every five years, for state and municipal employees and officers of the Armed Forces;
- retraining for the unemployed who are referred to the institution by the employment services.

Due to the influx of a significant number of migrants into the labour force of the Russian Federation (in the near future their number may reach one million per year) the issue of state financing of their social integration (learning the Russian language, the basics of Russian legislation, history, etc.) will be included in the agenda.

State financing of adult education and training is provided according to the following categories:

The Federal Budget covers education and training for:

- citizens over 25 in state institutions of secondary vocational education on state-sponsored places, if these institutions are within the jurisdiction of the Federal executive authorities (FOIV);
- citizens over 25 in state (Federal) institutions of higher professional education on state-sponsored places;
- PhD students and post-doctoral students who have passed a competitive test to obtain state-sponsored places in Federal state higher educational institutions and research institutes of the Russian Academy of Sciences and other departments;
- Students taking preparatory courses at Federal state higher educational institutions, who have served in the Armed Forces as soldiers, sailors and non-commissioned officers for at least three years;
- officers retired from the Armed Forces who have entered civilian professions;
- teaching staff of Federal state higher educational institutions who require further training and retraining (once every five years);
- medical staff of Federal medical institutions requiring retraining and further training (once every five years);
- civil servants working for Federal governmental authorities who require further training and retraining (once in five years);
- officers of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation who require retraining and further training.

The budgets for citizens of the Russian Federation cover the following educational programmes:

- for citizens over 25 on sponsored places in state institutions of secondary vocational education within the jurisdiction of the educational authorities of the Russian Federation;
- for citizens over 25 on sponsored places in state institutions of higher professional education within the jurisdiction of the educational authorities of the Russian Federation;
- retraining and further training for teachers in state and municipal comprehensive schools, instructors in industrial training programmes in state institutions of initial vocational training, teaching staff in state institutions of secondary vocational education within the jurisdiction of the educational authorities of the Russian Federation (once every five years);
- retraining and further training for medical staff of regional and municipal medical institutions (once every five years);
- retraining and further training for civil servants working in the government departments of the Russian Federation (once every five years);
- retraining for unemployed people referred by the employment services.

The Municipal Budget covers:

- retraining and further training for municipal servants (once every five years).

Corporate sector expenditure on adult education

Expenditure by private-sector employers on adult education reached approximately 200 billion roubles in 2007.

Additional training of new specialists is costly for enterprises taking on new staff, so often enterprises will pay external organisations to do the training, especially of the higher-grade specialists. On the other hand, specialists with more restricted responsibilities more often receive additional training at the enterprise itself. Additional training of new employees and qualified workers involves less direct financial costs, and their additional training takes place mostly on the job.

An “average” newly employed specialist needs no more than one month for “additional training”, whereas more is required for upgrading a qualified worker. For other categories of employee the period might be about two weeks.

According a survey carried out by the Levada Centre¹ employers find that about one third of qualified workers and approximately every fourth specialist with higher education among newly employed staff need additional training. The situation differs depending on the field. Additional training is needed for almost half of newly employed highly qualified specialists in the field of business services. Employers in industrial enterprises are of the same opinion: almost 40% of employed qualified workers need additional training. Newly employed workers in the engineering and transport fields need less additional training (10-20% depending on the category of worker).

¹ M. Krasilnikova and N. Bondarenko, *Quality Evaluation of the Professional Training of Employees*.

The research results indicate that today the provision of staff training, especially in the industrial field, is totally insufficient. The reasons for this may include the following²:

- low investment and lack of innovation;
- short-term (3-5 years) planning periods;
- fear of employees being pirated by other enterprises owing to lack of effective means of retaining them.

Nevertheless, in 2005 over 70% of enterprises in the field of business services organised retraining, further training or traineeship for their employees. However, only 56% of the enterprises in the trade field did further training and retraining of their staff. In industry and engineering about 50% of enterprises organised retraining for qualified workers and 54% organised retraining for specialists.³

Payments to "external" organisations make up the major expense to firms engaging in further training and retraining of staff. Such expenses make up about 60% of the training budget, and about half the money is paid to institutions of higher professional education. Two other common educational expenses of enterprises are (1) purchasing of academic literature etc. (involving 63% of enterprises); (2) organising training courses and seminars at the company (43%). These two items together make up about one third of a company's educational expenses (18% and 11% respectively).

According to the survey conducted by the Levada Centre, 43% of employers pay for the training of their employees through educational institutions, usually within the higher education sector (23%) or via study courses, vocational training courses etc (30%). The use of secondary and initial educational institutions is very rare (6% and 4% respectively). The employers usually prefer to transfer the payment for training directly to the educational institutions and not to pay it to the employees.

Small business spend on average 3,000 to 15,000 roubles a year and medium-sized business on average 10,000 to 45,000 roubles per employee on retraining and further training. Big business enterprises carry out many training activities and spend large sums of money for this purpose – on average 50,00-150,000 roubles per year. This covers a wide variety of modalities including corporate education centres, schools for managers, guest seminars, distance education programmes, and corporate universities.

Education financed by learners

Financing of education by the learners themselves is described in detail later on, in the section dealing with the project "Monitoring the Economics of Education", carried out by the foundation Public Opinion at the end of 2006.

Adult education provision and educational institutions

² Data from GU-VSHE

³ Data from the Levada Centre

The system of adult education is a part of a unified system of continuing education that meets the needs of the citizens in mastering knowledge and skills that are required for their professional growth and personal development during adult life. It includes the following interrelated components:

- a network of educational institutions;
- national, regional and local authorities;
- research centres;
- educational programmes of various purposes;
- didactic approaches designed specifically for adult learners;
- adult education organisations;
- social services with an educational component;
- organisations engaged in public information activities;
- scientific and cultural institutions in so far as they engage in educational activities;
- methodological associations;
- mass media used for educational purposes.

Continuing education in Russia embraces most forms of institutionalised adult education, from intermediate vocational education to higher professional and post-university education. In addition, it includes certain programmes that are not directly work-related, such as courses in foreign languages, psychology, design etc. Continuing education also includes programmes of open and distance education. Non-institutionalised forms, including various forms of self-education, are a steadily growing part of this field.

What distinguishes adult education is the fact that adults as a rule have already acquired some experience as consumers of educational programmes. Their requirements are more precise and concrete than those of younger learners, especially with regard to professional education. Adult education also presents special requirements with regard to organising courses. As a rule it has rigid time frames because it has to be reconciled with the working activities of the learner. Moreover, adult learners tend to be more motivated than younger ones.

Here the problem of definition should be mentioned. In Russia there exists no precise definition of adulthood, nor of an adult learner. The difficulty of definition becomes apparent when one considers that members of any given age group between 15 and 30 can receive general education and professional education at different levels, including post-university education. Nor is this problem solved by defining adult education as post-school education undertaken by working adults, because that would include students who are working their way through college. However, these would not normally be included under the heading of "adult learners".

Thus, age boundaries and educational categories are not clear cut, and there is much overlapping. This situation is, of course, not confined to Russia.

The development of a modern economy in Russia faces the formidable challenge of training qualified specialists who have been in short supply since the time of the market

reforms. The growing shortage of qualified workers and technical specialists on the labour market is clearly apparent, as is the need for business specialists. Increasingly, firms are providing their own educational services. These are competing with the universities, which in turn are being driven to follow the same rules that exist for market industrial and commercial enterprises. The classical universities are thus faced with the challenge of finding innovative educational approaches and developing synergies with the business world, such as through the formation of alliances between corporate universities and traditional ones.

Non-formal adult education

The growing need for diverse forms of knowledge and cognitive skills among various strata of the population is impossible to fulfil within the framework of traditional education. Thus the discrepancy between the existing education system and the new emerging needs of individuals and society is becoming more and more acute. This is stimulating new approaches in the organisation of mass educational activities for adults. There is a growing recognition that education should meet interests and abilities of the citizens at various different levels, that it should to a certain degree affect their lives, and that it should take into account special needs of different communities and groups of learners. The process of continuing education is understood now not only as “lifelong learning” but also as “lifewide learning”. The latter term emphasises that education – whether formal, non-formal or informal – can impact on various spheres of a person's life, including their profession, their leisure pursuits and their family life.

Furthermore, adult education aims to raise the level of general knowledge and to widen opportunities for the citizens to participate in the cultural, social and political life of their country. It should also contribute to the further democratisation of society and should enable individuals to strengthen their position with regard to professional qualifications.

Under these circumstances it is necessary to take a new look at the role and meaning of mass non-formal adult education, which meets diverse (but in every case rather precise) educational needs. Although non-formal education can be planned “from above”, in fact it emerges in response to concrete educational needs “from below”. Learners have an incentive to be actively involved because their interests and needs are being addressed. One can say that non-formal education (unlike formal and informal), promotes personal development in a very direct way. It both provides external guidance and makes use of the individual's own inner strengths.

In order to meet a diversity of educational needs, the non-formal education system needs flexible but effective direction, resting on a sound theoretical and methodological basis, as in the case of traditional (formal) education. It is necessary to develop a good theoretical foundation, convincing concepts and practical approaches if mass adult education in Russia is to be effectively implemented.

In this connection it is important to point out that one of the most acute problems in developing mass adult education lies in *overcoming a stereotypical view of non-formal*

education as being peripheral and inessential. The tendency to underestimate the potential of non-formal education today causes social waste and leads directly to expenses that considerably exceed the costs of measures to prevent drug addiction, alcoholism, orphanhood and other negative social phenomena. The work of combating these should also be carried out through non-formal education.

The widespread lack of understanding of the nature of non-formal education and its social potentialities (as compared with traditional secondary or higher education) is, in our view, due to the fact that insufficient attention has been paid to examining the specific characteristics of "adult" education and the pedagogical (or more precisely andragogical) dynamics that come into play when dealing with an adult audience.

The existing non-traditional types of adult education should be analysed at national level. This will permit us to form a picture of the specific features of non-formal learning in various adult communities, the motivations involved and the ways in which people organise their learning activities in connection with various aspects of their lives (profession, family, leisure etc.). Various empirical findings are now available to researchers, collected by the *Znanie* (Knowledge) organisation as well as by people's universities, clubs and other educational units both in Russia and abroad. The material – so far not a large amount – is in great demand for study.

The notion of non-formal adult education often coincides with such notions as “additional” and “continuing” education. However, it is non-formal education that most fully reflects and fulfils people's individual needs, thus mobilising their natural capacity for self-improvement and inner development. Non-formal education not only develops learners' intellectual abilities, but it also helps them to guard against negative influences in the social environment. By being given the opportunity to fulfil their potential and develop an “open” and positive attitude towards the world, themselves and other people they can be helped in combating destructive tendencies such as rivalry, aggression and excessive materialistic greed. While learners are motivated by the prospect of learning something useful, it is worth mentioning that many of them continue to think that diplomas are not as important as is widely acknowledged.

Thus, non-formal education can provide conditions for self-realisation and moral improvement as well as offering a wide range of educational opportunities in both the vocational and leisure spheres.

Monitoring and evaluation of educational programmes and results

Within the framework of one of the projects carried out in 2006, members of the Academy of National Economy conducted a monitoring survey of the system of additional education in two regions of Russia: the Voronezhskaya region and the Chuvashskaya Republic.

One of the conclusions from this survey is that the development of *additional professional education in the regions*, i.e. the introduction of a wide spectrum of training, retraining and further training programmes for employed people, is an

important trend within the development of continuing education. While retraining on a sectoral basis has not been developed, it is likely that the institutions of professional education will soon launch an initiative in this direction. Their task will be to investigate demand, to collaborate with the employers and to offer the required study courses on the market for educational services. They are well placed to do this, as they possess a good infrastructure and qualified personnel. Collaboration with various social partners, such as private enterprises, employment services, trade unions and voluntary associations of employers, is considered to be an important strategy for strengthening the position of the institutions of vocational education on the market for educational services.

The above-mentioned survey also revealed that in both regions there is a growing percentage of graduates who are not content with the education received at higher educational institutions. Over half of the senior students in such institutions are convinced that they will never work in their professional field and that the education received at these institutions is useless. However, those who had graduated a few years ago and started their careers responded somewhat differently. They proved to be less demanding with regard to professional education, often considering it as a continuation of general education and aiming not at professional but at personal development.

Correspondingly, the requirements in the field of additional post-university education are becoming more demanding and thus forming a basis for subsequent professional training. Hence the growth in demand that has been observed in the field of continuing education. As the survey shows, 31% of those who intend to continue their education are ready to pay whatever is required. A further 44% are willing to pay, but cost is the most important factor for them in making a choice. Only 13% are not ready to pay at all for post-university educational services.

However, experts and specialists in the field of continuing education agree that the main obstacle is not lack of money but rather lack of information. Both customers and suppliers of continuing education services are hampered by this lack. Owing to the inadequate flow of information in the field of continuing education it is difficult to make well-founded decisions.

Young specialists listed the following obstacles that they encounter vis-à-vis entry to post-university education, in order of importance:

- 1) insufficient information;
- 2) insufficient means;
- 3) lack of time.

This rating is consistent throughout both the Chuvash and the Voronezh regions.

Additional adult education can be received through external further training courses at the demand of organisations and institutions in the field of business studies, vocational training and retraining. The organisational and legal forms of these organisations vary. They include state educational institutions, business schools, non-state educational organisations, autonomous non-commercial organisations, commercial partnerships, limited companies and individual entrepreneurs.

The number of institutions offering such education has grown year by year as follows: 53 in 2002, 58 in 2003, 64 in 2004, 67 in 2005, and 69 in 2006. It is also necessary to mention that there has been a change in the range of business studies offered. Whereas previously the demand was limited to courses in sales, computer technology and accounting, since 2004 there has been a marked increase in courses in brand management, advertising, public relations, business efficiency, market research, staff motivation, stress management etc.

Miscellaneous training courses. Along with the institutions offering business studies, which form a kind of elite among regional providers of additional educational services, numerous courses have emerged that are targeted at a wider spectrum of the population.

Recently the number of foreign language courses has considerably increased. It is estimate that about 2,000 people take such courses annually in the Voronezh region. These are provided by both language schools and language centres within higher educational institutions (both state ones such as Voronezh State University and commercial ones like the Institute of Management, Marketing and Finance) as well as by independent organisations. Some organisations offer wide programmes including study in Great Britain, Ireland and other countries of Western Europe, as well as in the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. These programmes are intended for various categories of learner such as school pupils, students and specialised employees. There also exist further training programmes for foreign language teachers, businessmen and specialists from different fields.

Computer courses have also become increasingly popular within the education system. These include computer courses for special groups such as unemployed and disabled people etc.

Responses to the survey indicate that the number of advertised foreign language and computer literacy courses has recently increased considerably. At the same time it was felt that the quality of services is going down.

At present in the Voronezh region there are over 200 vocational training courses available at the sub-professional level. They vary greatly in terms of trends and numbers of learners.

Social education, further training and retraining of staff. Programmes in the area of social education (social or professional rehabilitation) **in Chuvashia** are carried out in the centres that specialise in retraining the unemployed and in the educational institutions that collaborate with the employment service.

In 1993 a centre for training unemployed people was created at the republic level. This has now become a multi-profile educational institution catering for 29 professions or specialities and providing services in professional orientation, psychological support and social adaptation. Professional training is carried out in or close to the learners' area of residence in order to achieve maximum accessibility.

In the **Voronezh region** programmes of social education are carried out at present in the framework of retraining and further training of employees in the field of social work. Specialists (such as psychologists) will often have received some elements of social education as part of their professional education.

Migrants and immigrants receive training, if required, within the general education system. However, here some changes have been observed. Thus, for example, the voluntary organisation Spiritual Unity has a programme to improve the computer literacy of people who were compelled to resettle and who are living in the Voronezh region.

In the Voronezh region a system of vocational training has been developed which is able to train on average every sixth person among the unemployed. The list of professions and specialities within which training is provided has been extended to 100. Furthermore the system has built a sound capacity for the training of various groups of the unemployed, taking into account their sex, age, educational and professional background, working and personal experience.

The system now embraces information and consultative centres at vocational educational institutions, an information agency, a centre of professional orientation and psychological support for unemployed people, the Personnel (*Kadry*) education centre, a regional model centre for professional, medical and social rehabilitation of disabled people, and the Voronezh town youth employment centre. These have been created within the regional employment service. They make up a network, providing information, offering professional orientation and facilitating employment. Institutions offering educational programmes within this system are chosen by the employment department in a process of competitive selection.

Training unemployed people in villages is an important development in the educational activities of the Personnel education centre. Special programmes that take into account the demands of the local labour market are being elaborated. Courses for hairdressers, knitters, dressmakers and other consumer service professions are in great demand here. Taking into consideration the fact that entrepreneurship activities can be carried out within these specialities, a separate study module on the basics of running a small business is included in the curriculum.

Unlike other “players” in the field of continuing education, the institutions of social education and of further training and retraining are not supposed to have their own educational policies and independently choose their educational strategy. Their strategy is supposed to be determined by the imperatives of social policy in the region. However, we cannot say with conviction that this is much in evidence in their activities. Rather they are characterised by an inertia inherited from the old training and retraining system.

On-the-job training. Theoretically, on-the-job training is a typical form of corporate education. Preferably corporate educational centres should appear and develop commensurately with the development of the programmes of on-the-job training. However, this sector is still in its initial stage.

The development of this type of education (for example, in the Chuvashskaya Republic) has recently involved the tendency to bring large employers and institutions of continuing education into an integrated system of retraining and further training of administrators and business managers. This trend tends to preserve and strengthen the existing sectoral differences in the field of continuing education.

In the Chuvashskaya Republic at present there is a tendency towards creating a regional system of corporate education. Already there have appeared organisations serving as centres for disseminating the practice of continuing education via large enterprises. Altogether 255 retraining and further training programmes for employees have been carried out, and a corporate university is actively operating.

The all-Russia Centre for Research into Public Opinion (VTSIOM) has conducted an experimental survey among the representatives of corporate universities and educational centres in large Russian companies, the aim of the survey being to define the place and role of a corporate training system within the structure of education in Russia, as well as to identify the possible modes of interaction between corporate forms of education and classical universities.

The main tasks of this survey were to evaluate the existing situation in the field of corporate education and to examine the possibilities for classical and technical universities to be integrated into the process of business training and further development of business personnel.

To this end a survey was conducted among the representatives of 11 large companies that have a corporate university or educational centre in their structure. The main conclusions and findings of the research were based on examining the present situation in the field of corporate education on the basis of materials from conferences, round tables, survey results from other centres, articles in the press, information from the sites, etc.

According to those who participated in the survey, the main *raison d'être* of corporate education is linked with the inherent dynamics of business development. For many companies the opportunities for rapid growth that characterised the 1990s have become exhausted. Now, in order to maintain their competitive positions, businesses face the need to make qualitative changes, first of all within their own organisations. Therefore their *modus operandi* regarding the personnel is gradually changing and they are re-examining their strategies for the retention and further training of their employees.

At the beginning of the 1990s, when the process of accelerated privatisation was going on, many businesses tried to shed what they considered to be non-essential functions, and many of them regarded the training of personnel to be non-essential. Now, however, managers are starting to understand that the staff constitute the main capital of the company and that continuous further training is necessary.

Furthermore, there has been a steady tendency towards the merging of enterprises and the creation of large holding companies in Russia as well as worldwide. When one company buys another, there arises the problem of different management systems,

values, and corporate structures. Here a corporate university becomes a highly effective instrument for harmonising business modalities and unifying aims and values by means of common curricula.

The urgent need to introduce corporate education into Russian companies is directly linked with the necessity to attract foreign capital. When financial groups take investment decisions they look not only at the profitability of a business but also whether it is safe to invest in it. All the agencies that post investment ratings point out two factors. The first is financial transparency, the second is management transparency. A prerequisite for the latter is the existence of a training system for managers within the company in order to instil common modern standards of management at all levels, including the management of personnel.

Of key importance for a corporate university is the choice of its target audience; this choice determines the scale of activity and the specific features of its training programmes. In Russia there exists a great difference of opinion about whom and what to teach at a corporate university.

Despite the seemingly different models of corporate education in the companies examined, their target audience can be identified clearly, namely the employees of these companies, regardless of their positions. The extent of educational provision for the various positions and levels varies from one company to another. In some companies educational services are concentrated on the technical staff, in others on the management level etc. But all of them provide some educational programmes for the employees, whatever their level.

This situation is closely linked with factors that are similar to the reasons for creating a system of on-the-job training. These include the need for internal development and further training of staff.

Within a single company the educational alternatives are limited – for some employees business studies are required, while others are assigned courses to raise their professional qualifications. Training provisions within one company include both technical training and courses in innovative business strategies etc.

As for additional courses for integrating new and younger employees, many companies are in the same position in this regard. Their personnel policies are directed first of all at employing “ready-made” specialists who will not need any additional courses.

In the context of company-internal training, special attention is given to courses provided by institutions of higher education. This applies mainly to technical and engineering specialities. Many companies involved in research collaborate actively with the classical universities, where students in their last year of studies constitute a reserve of potential employees. These students are often given the opportunity to do practical work in a company and to defend their diploma projects. This helps to fill the gap between study and practice that is typical of the modern higher education system.

Thus, certain trends in corporate education can be identified. These include training of management (with different curricula depending on the level), creation and training of a reserve of young specialists, further training of technical staff, and compulsory training and evaluation of specialised workers. This means that the training system practised by the corporate universities occupies a similar niche to the engineering education system (in its broader sense). The latter in effect "seceded" from the modern education system in Russia and provides professional training at almost all educational levels (intermediate vocational, higher and post-university).

Despite the shortcomings of the modern education system that were revealed during the survey, above all at the higher education level, it was observed that there are many possibilities for using the resources of classical higher educational institutions. The representatives of corporate universities and company educational centres who took part in the survey stated that they were ready to work on a personal basis with teaching staff who meet the requirements for company trainers. That is to say, they must be ready to develop new courses, take into account the specific requirements of customers, continuously renew their knowledge, adjust to the present-day business situation in Russia and be "market-oriented" in all respects. In addition they must have some practical experience in consulting and be able to use modern technical equipment in training.

A common set of criteria for judging the efficiency of corporate universities is hardly possible because they have different tasks, possess different resources and exist in a rather heterogeneous environment. Nevertheless, certain important criteria were identified by the majority of experts. These include the rate of business growth, the level of competitiveness and the rate of increase in company capitalisation. Less important are factors such as rapid employee career growth and the recognition of diplomas of corporate universities. The efficiency of corporate universities is not in any way related to the tendency for such institutions to turn into sectoral universities. The latter, according to experts, merely represent a further stage in the development of corporate education, which does not necessarily imply greater economic efficiency.

Experts were divided on the question of whether corporate universities should be self-financing and generate their own profits. Some experts think that the transition towards self-financing will ultimately have a negative influence on the quality of training given to company personnel because the institutions will act autonomously to secure profitability and income.

Special attention was given to the question of the rate of personnel turnover, which might be considered a criterion for the effectiveness of corporate education. Almost none of the experts considered reducing the turnover of personnel to be an important criterion of effectiveness. The prevailing view was that the purpose of company-internal training is not so much to retain personnel as to increase their professional capacities and thus to benefit the development of the company.

Many experts addressed the interrelation between staff training and the level of turnover. This interrelation can work in two different ways. Training can increase

turnover by enhancing the competitiveness of employees. Conversely, it may help to retain employees within the company.

As mentioned above, the functions of a corporate university are usually threefold: (1) further training of technical staff; (2) integration of new personnel (in collaboration with higher educational institutions); (3) further training of managerial staff.

The first two functions have been developed in many enterprises ever since Soviet times, and there have been well established processes in place within enterprises for many years. The third trend has become significant quite recently because modern requirements for managerial staff in a modern competitive environment are radically different from those that prevailed in the past.

Training of managers takes place at different levels from foremen up to top manager. In most enterprises top managers are responsible for arranging their own further training for the following reasons.

- As they are already qualified specialists with wide experience and various higher education diplomas such as the MBA, they do not need to study elementary management skills.
- They tend to need highly specific forms of new knowledge and skills, which they can best acquire via contacts with other top managers.
- Strict company hierarchies usually do not allow the staff of the educational centre, regardless of their authority in the company, to evaluate top personnel and give them advice on further training.

Hence, the educational units in a company tend to focus on the training of managerial staff from the lowest level up to the level of potential candidates for top management.

There is a broad understanding of the necessity for these strategies, and the further training of managers is going on at all educational centres. This shared perspective is what links them and can be the basis for further collaboration. This is not affected by the economic sector in which the company is working, because the main management principles are common to all fields. Furthermore, the issues of competitiveness and privacy of information are alleviated to some extent in this cross-sectoral context.

Research work, innovations and experience of good practice

In the field of adult education significant theoretical research work is going on and serious practical results have been achieved that are having great influence on the development of the whole spectrum of educational services in the country. The field of adult education has stimulated much systematic study and has given birth to the discipline of andragogy, which has recently become one of the main branches of the science of education.

Systematic scientific research work in the field of adult education is carried out by the Institute of Adult Education of the Russian Academy of Education in St. Petersburg. This is the only academic institute in the country that conducts research work on adult education and related areas.

The institute:

- develops strategy and builds social partnerships with state and public organisations in the field of adult education – general and professional, formal and non-formal;
- collaborates with international organisations and leading adult education centres of the world in formulating the scientific, organisational and legal prerequisites for elaborating adult education policy in Russia and the CIS countries, taking into consideration modern global tendencies;
- carries out various kinds of complex interdisciplinary research work;
- coordinates scientific research work and practical activities related to adult education and carried out in regional adult education centres in Russia;
- trains people towards higher scientific and pedagogical qualifications recognised in Russia and the CIS countries;
- promotes diverse educational activities related to the training of various groups within the adult population (e.g. parents, company personnel, the unemployed, the disabled, retired servicemen, external students, migrants and prisoners);
- carries out publishing activities;
- offers consulting and educational services to institutions, management authorities, the social services and private citizens.

At the end of 2006, within the framework of the project “Monitoring of Educational Economics” commissioned by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation and the Federal Agency for Education, the foundation Public Opinion carried out a survey of 9,000 Russian families (households) who live in towns and villages in all regions of the Russian Federation. The sample was chosen so as to give a representative geographical cross-section.

The survey addressed two main questions: the degree of involvement of the adult population of the Russian Federation in educational processes, and the expenditure of its citizens (households) on adult education.

In total within all-Russian sample, 8,998 households participated in the survey, including 516 in Moscow, 294 in St.Petersburg, 822 in regional centres with a population over a million, 1,530 in regional centres with the population under a million, 3,405 in small towns and urban communities, and 2,431 in villages.

In addition 2,999 households in Moscow were examined on the basis of a separate representative selection.

Results showed that 70% of household members who took part in the survey were adult family members ranging in age from 23 to 60. Of these, 14% had pursued studies in the academic year 2005/2006. In 7% of households adult family members were participating in professional retraining and further training courses, while 3% were about to complete their initial higher education and 1.5% were receiving second-stage higher education.

In other words, one out of two adult learners was improving his/her current professional level (48% were doing further training on their main job and 2% off the job). Every fifth adult was receiving (or completing) their initial higher education (15% were taking a bachelor's degree and 6% a master's degree). Some 5% of all learners were studying in order to change their speciality. Of these, 4% were in the second stage of higher education, and 1% were doing doctoral and post-doctoral studies. Taking into account all forms of training, 57% of adult learners were doing further training, 17% were mastering their first profession, and 9% were mastering a new profession.

About one fifth of adults (21%) intended to study in the next year or two, and 5% of them were studying during the current academic year (i.e. they intended to continue their studies).

During the period in question 5% of adult learners took up studies as a hobby, and 10% took up computer courses, which can be regarded either as a hobby activity or as a vocational one.

The survey revealed the average age of adult learners to be 35; however, one third of them (33%) are under 30. Among women, 72% are pursuing studies as compared with only 28% of men. Most often, adult learners are professional specialists (48% among adult learners as compared with 27% among all the participants in the survey). Most rarely do adult learners belong to the worker category (9% of adult learners and 32% of respondents generally).

The survey shows that what also distinguishes adult learners from other respondents is that they use modern technical equipment and financial services more actively. 84% of adult learners possessed some experience in using computers, and 52% had worked on a computer during the previous 24 hours. Approximately half (54%) of adult learners had some experience in using the Internet, and 24% had used it during the previous 24 hours. Almost half (45%) of adult learners had already taken out a bank loan (as compared to 36% of respondents as a whole). Over one third (37%) received their salary on a credit card (as against 27% of all respondents). Every fourth person in this group (24%) paid his/her purchases by credit card (compared with 13% of all respondents), and every fifth adult learner (20%) regularly exchanged foreign currency for roubles and vice versa (as against 11% of all respondents).

The main stimuli to pursuing additional adult education were found to be the following: necessity to acquire new knowledge at work (63% of adult learners); personal interest (14%); the aspiration to find a better paid job (10%); and the aspiration to find a more challenging job (7%).

Responding to the question "What kind of knowledge and skills do you lack most at the present time?", 27% of adult learners answered "legal knowledge", 33% replied "computer skills", and 19% responded "foreign language skills".

A quarter (26%) of adults had taken a retraining course lasting less than one month, 38% had taken one lasting from one to five months, 4% had pursued such training over six months to a year, and 33% over a period of one to six years.

Almost two thirds (59%) of adults had received full-time training and a quarter (24%) had pursued training by correspondence. Only 2% of all adult learners had used distance education.

Here it should be mentioned that about every fourth adult learner uses the Internet daily (which means that he/she has the facilities for distance education). In other words, at present only one tenth of the potential market for distance education is being exploited.

61% of adults had taken study courses requiring payment. In most cases (33%) the learners themselves or their families had paid for education. In somewhat fewer cases (22%) an employer had paid. Very rarely (only 1% of cases) the employment service had paid.

The families of adult learners often carried such expenses as the entrance fee and the training fees (in 31% and 41% of cases respectively). In 24% of cases they also covered additional expenses during the entry phase, such as purchase of textbooks. And in 30% of cases they covered additional costs during the period of study, such as stationery and copying. According to the estimates given by the respondents, on average a family spends 3,324 roubles on an adult entering an educational institution. In large cities the average amount is less – 2,660 roubles. In the country it is higher – 4,433 roubles, most likely due to transportation costs. However, tuition costs for residents of large cities are nearly twice as high as for country dwellers (16,757 roubles and 6,850 roubles respectively). Taking into account the fact that the percentage of families who pay for adult education in both large cities and in country villages is almost equal, the difference in the fees can be explained by the more modest educational ambitions of the villagers.

About one third of adult learners had been told about demands for unofficial payments in connection with adult retraining. In the case of the entrance fee and the diploma fee, 31% had heard of this practice. In the case of the tuition fee, 33% had heard of such demands. In higher educational institutions 1.5 times more of the respondents had heard about this form of corruption. Judging by the estimated sums involved in these corrupt payments (33,285 roubles for entry, 19,700 roubles for training, 18,651 roubles for completion), this constitutes a very serious barrier to adult trainees entering the system. In this connection it is worth noting that the use of distance methods in adult retraining, which are still underdeveloped, could reduce the problem of unofficial payments.

The field of adult education in our country is facing a number of problems which seriously hamper its development and consequently impede socio-economic advancement in Russia. These problems include:

- an insufficient basis of theory and research;
- lack of scientifically based methods in the provision for adult training;
- an almost total lack of specially trained teaching staff.

These problems can be solved only by utilising the discipline of andragogy, which is an independent field of study concerned with adult education and which constitutes a

branch of higher professional education. What is the present state of andragogy and what are its prospects for development in Russia?

Over the past five or six years in Russia dozens of doctoral students in education have addressed the theory and practice of training adults as well as the question of how to train specialists in andragogy. The problems of training people of different ages, in different conditions and with different study requirements have recently been analysed in a number of articles in scientific and popular science journals. For example, the journal *New Knowledge*, published by the nation-wide society *Znanie* (Knowledge), is entirely devoted to the above-mentioned issues.

Thus, while andragogy is developing steadily in Russia in terms of theory, methodology and technology, the field needs to develop further and work more deeply, drawing on the insights of other disciplines such as psychology, philosophy and sociology. There is a need for larger-scale and more task-oriented efforts on the part of researchers, teachers, administrators and even of adult learners themselves, especially in the field of higher and additional professional education, in order to secure a solid scientific and methodological basis for the further development of educational services for adults.

Innovations

One example of good practice in adult education is the use of a training programme called "Financial Literacy", which was developed by the Academy of National Economy of the Russian Federation. This programme was developed as a practical way of helping to create modern financial institutions by increasing financial literacy among citizens. The most effective training method for accomplishing this task is to give the learners practice in working with simulations of real situations in which financial decisions have to be made. There are various modern training and simulation methodologies available for this purpose. Learning modules can be accessed via the Internet technologies or by means of CD-ROM applications that accompany the curriculum.

The training programme includes:

- a set of tasks and tests that develop and measure basic financial competencies;
- an illustrated manual that develops understanding of the principles, bases, models and technologies that are used in the financial field;
- additional teaching aids in electronic and printed forms;
- methodological guidelines accompanying the learning module.

The modular nature of the programme has the following advantages:

- Learners can organise their own learning agenda in a flexible way.
- Additional and revised modules can be put in place as required.
- There is the possibility, should it be necessary in the future, to introduce some parts of the modules into the curricula of comprehensive schools and higher educational institutions.

This training programme helps learners to enhance their financial literacy skills at any time, without teachers or trainers, just with the help of the Internet. It also makes possible large-scale participation with minimal expenditure of money and time.

Positive experiences

One of the examples of positive experience in the field of adult education is the work of the Folk High School in St. Petersburg, which was set up in 1998. Since then it has accumulated considerable experience in working with both senior citizens and younger ones and bringing them together in common programmes. The school has succeeded in creating an environment that attracts many interesting people, both learners and teachers.

Education at the Folk High School (FHS) has an important social function by helping senior citizens to adjust to modern life and to react appropriately to ongoing changes (both in the immediate environment and in the world in general). *The activities of the Folk High School help to reduce social tensions and to create opportunities for senior citizens to make contacts and be actively involved in the life around them.*

The FHS is closely collaborating with many other institutions, including 18 theatres, a number of museums, several scientific and research institutes, and various higher educational institutions, especially the musical Conservatory, the Russian State Pedagogical University named after A.I. Herzen, and the Academy of Culture and Arts. The school also works in partnership with the Federation of Trade Unions of St. Petersburg and the Leningrad region. The activities of the FHS are supported by the Committee for Science and Higher Education.

The classes at the FHS are conducted by leading professors, highly qualified specialists and the learners themselves almost on a daily basis according to a specially organised schedule.

The programme includes *lectures, seminars, club events, study circles, cultural excursions, visits to museums and theatres, thematic walking trips etc.* Its wide range of subjects includes history, culture, medicine, ecology, Russian studies, European affairs, psychology of communication, foreign languages, computer literacy, journalism, ethnology, literature, architecture, economics, law, ethics and many others.

The FHS has extensive international contacts and is constantly in touch with many regions of Russia. The model that was developed by FHS of St. Petersburg has spread out to institutions in other regions of Russia and the CIS countries, with which it is collaborates on an ongoing basis. The following Folk High Schools now exist in various regions:

- within the Far-East State Technical University in Vladivostok (since 1999);
- within the Adult Education Centre in Kazan (since 2002);
- in the city of Borovichi in the Novgorod region (since 2003);
- at Astrakhan State University (since 2003);

- in Kostroma (since 2004).

Sociological surveys are carried out at the FHS on a regular basis to further develop its work and learn more about interests and aspirations of its learners. The first survey yielded information on the demographic characteristics and educational level of the students. During the first semester of the academic year 1998/1999 there were about 600 students of whom 72% had a higher education diploma. Some 76% were retired people who were not working, and 24% were working on a part-time basis. Most of the learners had families with whom they were living. About 40% were living on their own. The percentages of learners in different age groups, according to year of birth, was as follows: 1915-1920: 4.4%, 1922-1927:11%, 1928-1934:19%, 1935-1939: 44%, 1940-1945:19.5%, 1947-1956: 2.1%.

In 2001 the sociological survey covered a representative group of learners, 24% of whom had studied only for one semester. Most of the interviewees had studied for 2-3 years. All the interviewees stated that they actively attended lectures, 25% took part in study circles, 78% participated in club activities, and 84% went on excursions. The most popular courses were on the culture and history of the city, as indicated by the percentages of pupils who attended the following courses: The Palaces of St. Petersburg (71%); The "Interesting Meetings" Club (37%); the "Classics" Club (32%); Masters of the Renaissance (37%), European studies (27%). Programmes on natural science and health were less popular. Some 62% of learners responded positively to the question whether the studies had helped them to understand better the events that going on in Russia. For 33% of learners the FHS opened up a new world knowledge; for 29% it was a place where people met and communicated with each other; for 25% it was a means to a more active and interesting life.

The next sociological survey, in the spring of 2004, was conducted by students of the Pedagogical University, and 90% of learners were interviewed. The interviewees were interested in why senior citizens decided to study. The general opinion was that people in the third age group tend to aspire to new knowledge and wish to extend their circle of acquaintances. Many of them said that they would like to learn what they had not managed to learn during their working life. They saw the FHS as a place where they could fulfil their potential. They also said that it was necessary for them to continue their education in order to understand modern youth better, and to be able to be part of the events around them rather than being excluded. As most learners had a higher technical education, they tended more towards courses in the humanities such as psychology, literature, history, Russian studies, design and architecture.

Another example of a positive experience in the field of adult education activities is the work carried out in one of the districts of the Novgorod region. Since 2001 the city of **Borovichi and the Borovichi district of the Novgorod region** have been conducting a municipal project entitled "The Learning Community". This project, *a pioneering one for Russia*, gives a glimpse of the real possibilities that exist for Russia to catch up in the development of adult education.

There is almost no unemployment in Borovichi. Of great significance are the human resources within the municipality and the strong participation of civil society in

performing a training function. There exists an interaction between local authorities in this field and various institutions, voluntary organisations, and the public to provide appropriate training of personnel for the labour market. In recent years certain municipal structures have been taking the initiative in promoting continuing education in non-traditional forms.

Positive tendencies in the economy and the employment market have made it possible to start implementing a strategy targeted *to create a favourable environment for continuing education of citizens*. This includes training on a contract basis, on the principles of the dual system, with support from manufacturers and using distance education methods.

For the further development of modern institutions of formal and non-formal education in the framework of a learning society it will be necessary to pay attention to certain prerequisites. It will be important, for example, to ensure coordination in the educational field between enterprises, public organisations, social institutions, and educational institutions at elementary, secondary and higher vocational level.

The creation of a learning community on a particular territory should guarantee every citizen access to the skills, knowledge and information that they require and provide them with the opportunity to participate fully in the life of their town or district.

Adult literacy

In 1958 UNESCO defined an illiterate person as “a person who does not possess reading and writing skills so as to understand simple and short messages that are related to his/her everyday life”. Two decades later a more detailed definition of functional illiteracy came into being, namely “the inability to carry out activities in reading, writing and calculating that are necessary for everyday life and for the development both of a person and his/her social environment as a whole”.

In the broad sense the “new illiteracy” should be understood as the inability of people to react appropriately to changing conditions within the labour market and in their social microcosm as a whole. Today a person's level of literacy determines the number of job opportunities for which they can compete. It is possible to identify certain categories of adult who are particularly vulnerable to the ongoing changes and who consequently are most in need of remedial education. Among them are women, migrants, third-age employees, the disabled, members of national minorities, etc.

According to the data from the State Committee of Statistics of the Russian Federation, 99.8% of the population in Russia is literate. According to the Law on Education of the Russian Federation, which guarantees “adaptability of the education system to the levels of learners and to their specific development and training needs”, every adult person can upgrade his/her education starting at the lower level (including the acquisition of basic literacy skills) within the state system of evening comprehensive schools.

Among the representatives of socially vulnerable population groups (unemployed people, prisoners, migrants) the real level of basic adult literacy in Russia is below the officially declared one.