

Lifelong Learning Strategies of Latvia: Analysis and Suggestions for Eliminating the Barriers to Continuing Education and Training

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Lifelong Learning Concept Nowadays

- Lifelong learning has become a fundamental goal of education policy both in national and international level and it is often used as a tool for developing of information or knowledge society (Kokosalakis, 2001).
- 20% of knowledge that has been created in a company becomes out-of-date in less than a year (Markoff, 1996).
- 30% of the knowledge that we will be teaching in the coming ten years has not been discovered yet. Therefore it is vital to return to the competences that tell us how to do the things, to the ability to transform knowledge into action, to key competences (Renard, 2001).

Definitions of Lifelong Learning

○ LL is a self-directed development, which means to understand oneself and the world and which includes the acquisition of skills and abilities – the only true values that we cannot lose (Cross, 1981).

○ LL are any activities planned, based on the principles of humanism, oriented towards the learning of the actors involved and as a result promoting their understanding (Jarvis, 1995, 1999).

LL is the education process that occurs lifelong and is based on the changing needs to acquire knowledge, skills, experience in order to promote or change one's qualification according to the requirements of the labour market and one's own interests and needs (LL Strategies, 2008).

The Situation in LL in 2013 according to LL Strategies of Latvia (I)

- **People perceive their education as the main resource of prosperity and they have an opportunity to learn in all the spheres during every stage of life from childhood to old age irrespective of their age, gender, educational background, place of residence, ethnic group, the level of income and functional disabilities;**

- **People possess confidence, initiative, knowledge, creative approach and skills to participate in economics, social and political life;**

- **Because of the people's attitude learning lifelong, a tidy, enabling socio-cultural environment has been created;**

The Situation in LL in 2013 according to LL Strategies of Latvia (II)

- People's knowledge, skills and abilities are developed and promoted in order to raise work effectiveness and ensure socio-economic development of the country, based on highly qualified labour;**
- People have free access to information, consultancy, education and support in order to make the most effective decisions concerning the changes and feel safe during the period of changes;**
- Under the influence of ITS the creation of new learning approaches will be continued, its scope will increase, the contents will become more profound, accessibility and organization will be improved.**

Barriers to Lifelong Learning

- **Political**: the state policy is not coordinated enough, not complete legislation basis in LL, not enough support;
- **Informative**: not enough access to detailed and actual information about adult education on the level of an individual and society;
- **Situational**: lack of support of the family and the social environment for the individual's inclusion into learning;
- **Inner, personal**: lack of enterprise and uncertainty which have developed based on people's previous learning experience, education is not a value itself.

(Kože, 2008)

Barriers to LL according to LL Strategies of Latvia (I)

- Lack of accessibility to the environment for the people with functional disabilities;
- Not enough opportunities for people having imprisonment to continue/ complete/ improve their education;
- The low education level of the ethnic group of Rroma;

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Barriers to LL according to LL Strategies of Latvia (II)

- Underdeveloped infrastructure in the countryside, which diminishes the rural inhabitants' possibilities to lifelong learning;
- Not enough attention paid to the people who are to retire soon or are retired now;
- Not enough attention paid to requalification of young mothers after their maternity leave and their inclusion into the labour market.

EU Recommendations to LL following Bologna Declaration (2008)

- To improve employees' professional skills;
- Lifelong learning should be integrated into the strategy of each institution and into the professional environment;
- More attention should be paid to mobility – both to the students and the educators' mobility, as well as to the creation of the so-called “mobility windows”;
- Promoting the development of knowledge intensive society, which is based on the triangle of research, education and innovations.

Financing Mechanisms of LL Policy in Latvia

- **The Ministry of Education and Science provide the financing of LL policy of Latvia by attracting the finances of the EU Structural Funds and other financing sources;**
- **Regional approach and planning of economic development of local governments in Latvia is closely connected with the planning of human resources development.**

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The Financing of Adult Education in Regions (the year 2007)

Regions	Financing for adult education, LVL*			The number of persons educated		The number of adults in the territory**
	The proportion of provided information cf. to the number of all institutions (local governments, regional boards, etc.) in %	The allowance (incl. salaries, maintenance costs)	Financing of programmes	The number of persons	The number of hours (persons x the average length of the course in hours)	
Kurzeme region	39	105 486	132 989	4 820	120 414	258 685
Zemgale region	27	889 018	304 941	7 162	264 249	241 552
Vidzeme region	11	34 380	36 374	3 668	148 600	204 423
Latgale region	67	325 432	153 930	6 794	136 668	307 020
Riga region	31	171 380	242366	7 683	717 681	951 162
Total	36	1 525 696	870 600	30 127	1 387 612	1 962 842

* The budget of local governments, not incl. ESF and ERAF projects

** Adult – a person who is 15 and older (is of the age of being capable to work and beyond that age) according to the data of Central Statistics Bureau of Latvia, year 2007

Activities of the Ad Hock Group of Experts “An Educated and Created Person”

- One of the tasks is the creation and development of qualitative and versatile offer for lifelong learning;
- The report “Providing Qualified Educators” (2007);
- 2 reports “The Creation of Effectively Functioning Lifelong Learning System” (2008);
- Priorities of LL Strategies do not cover all the aspects of LL, the quality of the provided courses does not prove the quality of their content.

Directions pointed by the Ad Hock Group of Experts to improve LL Quality

- **Competence based education;**
- **The leading role of higher education establishments in the LL system;**
- **Effective coordination of LL policy;**
- **The role of regional coordinators in the LL system;**
- **The financing mechanisms of LL;**
- **The participation of the State Employment Agency in the LL system.**

The Main Conclusions from the Report of the Expert Group (I)

- The creation of laws and regulations that would secure the recognition of acquired knowledge and skills gained in the informal, and non-formal education institutions;
- Higher education institutions must take the leading role in implementation of LL policy in order to secure the quality of educators and the study programmes;

The Main Conclusions from the Report of the Expert Group (II)

- The Board for the Development of LL should be formed in order to effectively coordinate the LL system;
- The Ministry of Education and Science should carry out comprehensive supervision of LL system;
- The financing system for LL must be set and created.

The Suggestions for Projects (I)

- To adapt the education system of the country to the existing new situation taking into account the unfavourable demographic situation and the aging process of the society ;
- To adapt the education system to the requirements of the labour market;
- To explore the situation why the students do not choose the vocational track, to study the factors and tendencies and offer solutions for the improvement of the vocational education system in the country;

The Suggestions for Projects (II)

○ In the LL context it is necessary to start a research for securing the investigation of the situation in younger generation learning quality in preschool and in adult education, as well as to elaborate suggestions for the inclusion of LL quality to improve the current state of education;

The goals of the research should be formulated in accordance with the changes in the concept of LL which are fostered by the link between the demands of labour market and LL, the implementation of competence-oriented, learner/student-focussed education programmes as one of the major issues in LL;

The Suggestions for Projects (III)

- Therefore we are interested in working at the third offered research project of ASEM Hub LLL Network 4, initiated in the Beijing meeting in 2008, which deals with describing empirical patterns and trends of participation in LLL among different groups, in terms of educational attainment, age, socio-economic status, occupational style (skills, gender, employment status, cultural groups, community size, etc.).

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Thank you for your attention!

**Looking forward to fruitful
collaboration in the LLL projects!**

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