

**THE DEVELOPMENT AND STATE OF THE ART OF
ADULT LEARNING AND EDUCATION (ALE)**

National Report of the Republic of Armenia

by

Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia

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General Overview

The Republic of Armenia is located in the Southern Caucasus

- The capital is Yerevan City
- The area is 29743 sq. km
- State borders: in the North: with Georgia, in the East: with Azerbaijan, in the West and South –West: with Turkey, in the South: with Iran
- RA population, according to the Statistical Yearbook of Armenia, was 3.223 million in the beginning of 2007. Out of that total number, the number of people of able- to-work age was 2.12 million, and the number of people of the above of the able-to-work age was 0.4 million. Among the latters the number of employed was 1.092 million (51.7%), out of which 0.5 million people were employed in agricultural sector (23.7%), self employed 0.058 million people (2.8%), hired workers 0.533 million (25.2%). The number of officially registered unemployed in the country is 0.089 million (4.2%). The number of people of not able-to-work age and students getting full time education is 0.175 million (8.3%), the number of people of the able-to-work age engaged in household work and others is 0.758 million (35.9%).
- Male population is 48.3% and female population is 51.7%. The number of employed male population is 0.593 million and the number of employed women is 0.499 million.
- The number of urban population is 2.065 million and the number of rural population is 1.157.
- The state language is Armenian.
- Armenians make up 97% of the total population.
- National minorities make up 3% of the total population, including Yezidis, Russians, Assyrians, Kurds, Ukrainians, Greeks, Jews.

1. Policy, Legislation and Financing

1.1. Legislative, Political and Administrative Frameworks of Adult Education and Learning

1.1.1. Legislative and political frameworks of Adult Education and Learning

The legislative and political frameworks of Adult Education and Learning are reflected in the number of legislative documents of the Republic of Armenia (RoA).

The “Law on Education” of the Republic of Armenia was adopted in 1999 and contains the basic, framework approaches and principles of the management, financing and methodological support of the whole field of education.

Article 26 of the above mentioned Law concerns the issues of additional education, creating certain frameworks for adult education.

1. Additional educational programs are implemented with a purpose to satisfy the needs of the citizens and the public in education. Within the framework of each level of professional education the main objective of additional education is the continuous growth of the qualification level of a person.

2. Additional education is provided by educational facilities of general, vocational and additional education, as well as through individual pedagogical activity, the regulations of which are established by the Government of the Republic of Armenia.

The Law of the Republic of Armenia on “Higher and Postgraduate Professional Education” was adopted in 2004. The Law regulates the activity of the system of higher and postgraduate professional education in the Republic of Armenia making certain reflection on lifelong education, as well as on growth of the level of professional qualification of the specialists and their training.

In 2004 the Government of RoA approved “The Strategy of Preliminary (Craftsmanship) and Middle Professional Education and Training” the goals of which were:

- *To ensure the formation of a modern individual and a citizen, the reproduction and development of intellectual potential of the society and the workforce, its competitiveness and social solidarity, which brings a new level of the development of the nation and will lead to political stability and democracy*
- *To ensure the possibility to achieve success for everybody during the all life, based on the harmonization of individual abilities of the learners and the needs of the economy and the job market*

One of the strategy tasks for achieving that goal was *Lifelong education, which includes adjustment or updating of any kind of the knowledge or skills of the workforce, required from the employees in order to keep their job or from unemployed to find a job.*

Workforce shall have an opportunity to learn during his/her whole working life, upon his/her desire and/or according to the requirements of the job market.

In order to solve this problem the strategy suggests the ***Lifelong learning***:

A) *Lifelong learning* is a process, which is carried out by means of both educational and non-educational institutions, during which specific educational and internship programs are used aimed to reproduce, update, develop and efficiently use knowledge and skills acquired during main education, depending on requirements and conditions of a given time.

On the one hand, any VET system cannot any more provide students with such education, which will ensure employment and income prospects for the whole life but, on the other hand, continuous and never interrupted educational process brings to the renewing of human resources and adaptation of the education content during the whole life, which as a general notion can comprise the sub-system of vocational education, initial and continuous vocational training.

The initial educational phase of youth should be followed by the variety of options of formal and non-formal vocational education and preliminary and continuous training and retraining, which are efficiently connected with the job market and production by forming the alternative perspectives. This system is obviously efficient from the aspect of providing the job market with qualified specialists and its introduction should be viewed as a strategic goal for development of the VET system of the country.

B) *Lifelong learning* is aimed at:

- Expanding the possibilities for the citizens of the Republic of Armenia to receive supplementary education
- Assisting the growth of professional characteristics of the citizens of the RA during their working (production) activity
- Increasing the competitiveness of the labour force
- Developing and expanding new functions within the educational institutions currently acting in the Republic of Armenia (“education for adults” programs)
- Providing state guarantees for getting education
- Raising the effectiveness of education-market interrelations and interconnections system
- Licensing of any educational/training activity

C) The responsible state body for organization of educational activity, licensing, supervision is the Ministry of Education and Science of the RoA and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs for policy elaboration, formation of orders and financing from the state budget.

Meantime, the social partners - employers and associations of employees, which are the main beneficiaries of the introduction of this system, will carry essential responsibility.

D) The clearly necessary provisions in the law are making the lifelong learning system an integral part of the VET system, as well as clear definition of authorities of all stakeholders in this field, which is in particular implies stipulation of some duties by an employer for training and retraining of an employee.

For functioning of the system, the following steps will be necessary:

- Working out of sub-legislative field on the organization and implementation of supplementary education
- Working out of the state support system (budgetary, tax, etc) of the institutions carrying out supplementary education
- Launching of the licensing mechanisms of the institutions implementing supplementary education
- Organization of the process of state recognition of the certificates awarded within supplementary educational program in the system of institutional and inter-institutional tariff-qualifications characteristics

At the same time to increase the awareness among learners about the usefulness of lifelong education.

E) It is possible to begin the introduction of the system after providing the legal framework, but its full and natural functioning is perceived only in a long-term perspective.

F) Additional financial means will be required for improving financing that is intended for training of unemployed according to real budgetary resources.

At the initial stage, the main financial burden will be carried by employers, trade unions and trainees themselves.

In order to solve and coordinate the issues envisaged by the strategy, in 2005 the National Assembly of the RoA adopted the Law on “Preliminary Professional (Craftsmanship) and Middle Professional Education” where the term “Adult Education” was used in the first time legislatively. This Law also envisages, among other educational programs, the implementation of adult education in preliminary and middle professional (vocational) educational institutions.

Adopting as a basis “The Strategy of Preliminary (Craftsmanship) and Middle Professional Education and Learning of Armenia” the Government of the RoA has approved by the end of 2005 the “Concept Paper on Adult Education and its Strategy”.

In 2006 the Government of the RoA has approved the “Concept Paper on Non-formal Education of Armenia” which defines and regulates the basic legal and organizational provisions and directions of non-formal education in the Republic of Armenia.

In 2007 upon the initiative of the National Assembly, the RoA Law on “Adult Education” was drafted and presented for discussion, which, however, was temporarily eliminated from the list of general discussions with a suggestion to make further amendments and to elaborate it.

Then, in 2008, within the framework of the State Program of the Republic of Armenia on the development of education in 2008-2015, the Ministry of Education and Science of the

RoA has initiated the work on amendments to the “Concept Paper on Lifelong Learning” and new Law on “Adult Education” or to the existing laws, which are, at present, in the implementation phase.

1.1.2. Priority Goals of Adult Educations in the Republic of Armenia

The priority goals of Adult Education in the Republic of Armenia are defined by the RoA “Concept Paper and the Strategy on Adult Education” and the “Concept Paper on Non-formal Education”. According to these documents “*The goal of Adult Education is to provide the citizens, according to their abilities and health conditions, with new professions and jobs as well as to facilitate their ability to get adjusted to social conditions*”.

Meantime, taking into account the tendencies of development of the global economy, the main goal of Adult Education and Learning in our country is to provide a continuous development of human resources, giving a possibility to each person to develop its knowledge and abilities (competences), getting training in the fields of professional, cultural, civil and personal development.

1.1.3. State Regulation of the Adult Education and Learning

Under the conditions of absence of the Law on Adult Education in the Republic of Armenia, at present, a certain system of state regulation of that field is also missing. However, a number of Ministries (RoA Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministries of Justice, Health Care, Culture etc.) and agencies (RoA Police, Custom’s, Tax and other services) organize training and quality raising courses for the specialists, working in their respective fields as well as for unemployed and job seekers organized by the RoA Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

As the centralized system of governance in the field of adult education and learning is missing, the adult education and learning in the Republic of Armenia is decentralized. It is organized and implemented by the state as well as private organizations and NGOs.

1.1.4. The Compliance of the Policy and Implementation Strategies of the Adult Education and Learning with the other National Development and Strategic Programs and Objectives

The retraining of the specialists in the RoA in the fields of health care, economic development, employment, rural development, the judiciary, civil service as well as in other fields is one of the most important issues of policy in the respective sectors.

According to the “Concept Paper and the Strategy of Adult Education” the adult education programs are open for anyone, without any discrimination on the basis of age,

race, ethnic, gender and other differences and expanding the possibilities of all RoA citizens to get supplementary education.

The Republic of Armenia attaches importance to the development of the knowledge economy and learning society, one of the basic prerequisites of which is the stimulation of lifelong education and learning for RoA citizens.

Since 2003 the Poverty Reduction Strategic Program (PRSP) is acting in the RoA and in 2007 the process of its elaboration and amendment started. One of the chapters of PRSP is totally devoted to the field of education. Unfortunately, the adult education as a separate educational field is not reflected in PRSP. The document attaches importance to the development of human resources in the RoA, however, it is considered only as an issue of formal education.

1.1.5. The Basic Challenges of the Development of the Republic of Armenia and its Conformity with the Development of the Adult Education and Learning

The basic challenges of the development of the Republic of Armenia are the following:

- a) ensuring of the stable economic growth,
- b) international and regional cooperation,
- c) strengthening of the independent statehood and development of the civil society,
- d) insuring of well being and poverty reduction,
- e) protection of Armenian nation

The solution of the problems of adult education and learning completely serves to the goals stemming from the challenges mentioned above.

1.1.6. Adult Education in the Relations Armenia - European Union

The Republic of Armenia is a Neighbourhood country of the European Union and has jointly developed with the European Union a National Plan of Actions, where also an importance has been attached to the issue of Adult Education under the perspective of development of human resources in Armenia. Except that, the integration of the educational system of the RoA into the European educational area /dimension/ is one of the basic issues of cooperation between Armenia and the European Union and cannot be implemented without inclusion of adult education and learning.

1.2. Financing Adult Education and Learning

1.2.1. State Financing of Adult Education

In 2008 State Budget of the Republic of Armenia the expenses on the Adult Education are included in the sections “Education” and “Social Protection”.

1. “Education”

- In sub-section “Supplementary /Additional/ Education” for the retraining of the employees of different state governance bodies and institutions
- “Auxiliary Services Provided to Education” for the retraining of teachers from Armenia and Diaspora

2. “Social Protection”

- For the professional training of persons with limited abilities and restoration of the working skills
- Retraining for the unemployed according to the requirements of the job market

The data on 2008 State Budget allocations for Adult Education is given below.

Allocations in 2008 RoA State Budget for Adult Education

	The sum in million AMD	In %	
		Of the budget	Of the given section
RoA 2008 State Budget expenditures, including:	822054.4	100	
“Education” Section	103681.3	12.6	
from which for adult education	1328.5	0.16	1.3
“Social Protection” Section	219218.5	26.7	
from which for adult education	243.0	0.03	0.11
Total for “Education” and “Social Protection” Sections	322899.8	39.3	
TOTAL /for adult education/	1571.5	0.19	0.49

Allocations in 2008 RoA State Budget “Education” Section for the purpose of Adult Education by ministries and organizations

Ministry, organization	The sum, in thousand AMD	% of total sum
Total	1328493.4	100
The National Assembly	630000.0	0.05
RoA Council of Civil Service	21550.0	1.6
RoA Ministry of Finances and Economy	61000.0	4.6
RoA Prosecutor General’s Office	55727.8	1.3
RoA Ministry of Justice	98820.0	7.4
RoA Central Electoral Commission	61060.3	4.6
RoA Ministry of Territorial Governance	119976.5	9.0
RoA Ministry of Health Care	155417.3	11.7
RoA Ministry of Education and Science	458923.6	34.6

“School for the Judiciary” SNPO	295387.9	22.2
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Except that, until 2007, within the small and medium enterprise development program, the State Budget has allocated about 5-6 million AMD annually for the retraining of the economic operators. About 439 entrepreneurs were retrained annually.

Retraining costs per person are significantly different from sector to sector, however, with a purpose to get an idea about that, it should be mentioned that the cost of three months training of an accountant is ~ 110,000 AMD, cosmetologist ~ 220,000 AMD. The cost of short term (1-3 days) retraining for business sector is 30.000 – 60.000 AMD. .

Allocations in 2008 RoA State Budget “Social Protection” Section for the purposes of Adult Education by directions:

	The sum, in thousand AMD	Percent proportion
Expenses, allocated for adult education in total, out of which	243030.0	100
Vocational training for the vulnerable groups and restoration of working skills	35000.0	14.4
Vocational training for unemployed	144700.0	59.6
Retraining for the personnel, working in the field of social security	63330.0	26.0

1.2.2. Financing of Adult Education within the framework of bilateral or multilateral agreements

In the field of Adult Education and Learning Armenia cooperates with a number of international organizations (*dvv international*, GTZ, World Bank, USAID, UNDP, OSI AF Armenia, Eurasia Foundation, EC, British Council) and with a number of countries (Germany, Norway, Denmark, USA, Netherlands).

1.2.3. Financing of Adult Education and Learning by private organizations

The number of private enterprises financing Adult Education and Learning in the RoA is limited, the overwhelming majority of companies is not spending any money for the retraining of its employees.

Nevertheless, the big enterprises working in the Republic of Armenia are already attaching importance to the professional growth of its employees and making serious investments in that field.

Big banks are a special case, which are spending about 20 million AMD annually for the purposes of learning and training.

It is necessary to mention, however, that the retraining of private employees is becoming more and more widespread, due to the rising demand for qualified personnel.

Unfortunately, in Armenia no official statistical studies are carried out regarding this field, and this is the reason why the authors of this report were not been able to present in totality the respective data regarding this issue.

1.2.4. Financing of Adult Education within the frameworks of the activity of Non-Governmental Organizations

Different types of non-governmental organizations are active in the field of Adult Education. In Armenia at present more than 300 non-governmental organizations are acting, which, in one way or another, providing programs on adult education, being focused basically on the issues directed towards the civic, natural protection, cultural and community developments. The activity of non-governmental organizations is basically funded by international organizations, sometimes also by the state.

Armenian Apostolic Church also provides Adult Education courses in the number of communities through the infrastructures supported by it, being focused basically on the key capacities (computer skills, foreign languages and other courses), on certain crafts learning, as well as in the field of spiritual education.

1.2.5. Adult Education and Learning by private persons

Private persons, who participate in different training courses paying for the trainings by themselves are one of the active actors of the field of Adult Education. The different computer courses, foreign language courses, accounting and other educational courses are of highest demand. The costs of these courses vary from 5000 to 40000 AMD, depending on the quality and continuance of the course.

2. Quality of Adult Education and Learning: Provision, Participation and Achievements

2.1. Provision of the Adult Education and Learning and Institutional Frameworks

The imperfectness of the legislative field on Adult Education and Learning has resulted in such a situation, when the activity of organizations dealing with it remains unregulated. The RoA “Law on Licensing” is not prescribing any limitation with respect to organization providing supplementary educational programs, open with that a free road for any organization which would like to be engaged in the Adult Education and Learning. The only thing necessary for implementation is that the Charter of the given organization establishes that possibility. Other issues, such as preparedness of the educational-methodological training courses, the availability of respective specialized staff and material-technical basis, under these circumstances, have not significant meaning. The quality issues of the preparation of learners/trainees are completely left upon the conscience of the organization providing training, because this process is not inspected by any organization. As a result, the exact number of organizations engaged in Adult Education and Learning business remains unidentified until today, and the needs of adults to get education remain basically unsatisfied or not easily available.

As it was mentioned above, a number of governmental and non-governmental organizations in RoA provide retraining and level raising courses for the specialists of their respective fields/sectors, the educational programs of which are provided upon the request of that organizations and aimed exclusively on rising the level of conformity of the knowledge and capacities of that specialists with their working functions. This rule is not applicable to the training courses ordered by the RoA Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs implemented for unemployed and the ones, who seek jobs, the basic goal of which is to provide to unemployed and job seekers with such a knowledge and form skills, which will allow them to enter the job market and be competitive there. In order to implement this process the educational, non-governmental as well as organizations with other organizational-legal status can apply for participation in the respective competitions organized by RoA Ministry of Labor and Social Issues agency “State Employment Service” to win the right to provide courses for rising the professional qualification and training courses.

Meantime, the various non-governmental organizations are also active in the field of Adult Education. More than 300 non-governmental organizations work in Armenia which organize Adult Education programs in different ways being focused basically on the development of civil society, natural protection, cultural and community fields.

It is also necessary to mention the role of entrepreneurs in the issue of providing Adult Education. Large entrepreneurs which need skilled workmen – workers, have found a very interesting solution for satisfaction of the demand for the latters. First of all it is the

retraining at the workplace, which is not accompanied by a special educational program or a process. The future specialist for the given workplace is getting employed directly and is serving as an apprentice for the most skilled workman during the first several weeks or a month. This phenomenon is quite widespread in the RoA and it can be called shadow learning. On the other hand, large employers, the number of which is small, form educational centers on the basis of their organizations where the future specialists learn for a time period of up to 6 months.

At present separate arrangements are being implemented at the governmental level in an attempt to regulate the formed situation. Thus, during 2007-2008 the RoA Ministry of Education and Science organizes expert assessment for the content of those educational programs through which different organizations including preliminary and middle professional educational facilities, would like to provide Adult Education and Learning. The programs dealing with the fields of services, mining, construction, informational technologies have an especially big demand.

In separate cases the Adult Education and Learning is also being regulated by the certain legislative acts. Thus, the RoA Law on “Rendering Services and on Services” prescribes, that the all cooks, bartenders, waiters, confectioners, pastry-cooks and barkeepers working in all service outlets of the Republic shall have either a respective diploma or a certificate. In order to ensure this process, RoA Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Trade and Economic Development through a number of sub-law acts launched a procedure of development and approval of standards and unified programs for training courses on above mentioned services. Meanwhile, the named ministries have established the list of those organizations where all those who wish can get training and receive a respective certificate.

As we have mentioned above the Adult Education is not being governed and coordinated on the national level by any state structure.

Starting from 2003, after the comprehensive arrangements of the “Adult Education Days in Armenia” organized by the *dvv international* (Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association), different stakeholders have started the continuous process of cooperation in the field of Adult Education and Learning. In the same 2003 “Adult Education and Lifelong Learning” Association was created, which assumed an important role in the matters of development of Adult Education and Learning.

However, such organizations as the NGO “Adult Education and Lifelong Learning”, the *dvv international*, Yerevan State Humanitarian College and others are playing an active role on the national level.

Table 1. Programs implemented in the field of Adult Education and Learning

Programme (name and brief description)	a) Provider (please choose the appropriate one from below):			b) Area of learning (please choose the appropriate one/s from below):			c) Target group/s	d) Progra mme cost	e) Funding source
	Public/ State	CSO/ NGO	Privat e	General compet encies	Technica l skills	Knowle dge generati on, innovati on			
Training courses organized for unemployed	X	X	X	X	X	X	Unemp loyed	144.7 million AMD	State Budget
Training for civil servants	X	X		X	X	X	Civil ser- vants	21.55 million AMD	State Budget
Training for community workers	X	X		X	X	X	Comm unity ser- vants	46.8 million AMD	State Budget
Training for school teachers	X			X	X	X	School teacher s	457.7 million AMD	State Budget
Training for health care personnel	X			X	X	X	Health care person nel	155.4 million AMD	State Budget
Training for employees of other state bodies	X			X	X	X	Emplo yees of state bodies	185.7 million AMD	State Budget
Training courses organized for unemployed	X	X	X	X	X	X	Unemp loyed		International Organizations
Training for community servants	X	X		X	X	X	Comm unity servant s		International Organizations
Training for Schools, Colleges, Higher Educational Facility lecturers	X			X	X	X	School teacher s		International Organizations
Training for health care	X			X	X	X	Health care		International Organizations

personnel							personnel		
Training for employees of other state bodies	X			X	X	X	Employees of state bodies		International Organizations
Training for the specialists /experts/ of different local and international enterprises	X	X	X	X	X	X	Specialists		Private enterprises, State Budget, International Organizations
Training courses for individual citizens aimed at professional, cultural, civil and personal development	X	X	X	X	X	X	Private persons		Private persons, Private enterprises, State Budget, International Organizations

2.2. Participation in Adult Education and Learning

Unfortunately, regarding this field official statistical studies are not carried out in Armenia and this is why the authors of the report were not been able to present fully the respective data about this issue. The data given below are very approximate and are based on approximate calculations of the team of the authors, according to which each year in the Republic of Armenia, in the system of the adult education and learning, more than 30000 people participate in the training and qualification rising courses, which is about 1.5% of all adult population.

Meanwhile, it is necessary to mention that one part of that trainings are provided by the organizations voluntarily, without financial investments.

2.3. Monitoring and Evaluation of the Programs, Learning Outcomes

2.3.1 The Methods of Evaluation of the Adult Education and Learning Programs

Under real conditions of the Republic of Armenia the documents given as a result for participation in adult education and learning programs often have not legal power of the documents issued for graduation from formal education courses and are not recognized by state (official) structures. However, based upon the peculiarities of the present level of development of economy and the shortage of the specialists in the job market, especially with craftsmanship education, many employers have started to recognize the results of Adult Education and Learning, if the given specialist is demonstrating not only the education certificate but also his/her practical capacities.

During the last period of time some novelties in the RoA legislation facilitate the recognition of the results of supplementary /additional/ professional education (adult

education and learning). In particular, the enforcement of the RoA Law on “Rendering Services and on Services” allows the cooks, bartenders, waiters, confectioners, pastry-cooks and barkeepers to have only a training course certificate. .

2.3.2 Monitoring of the Adult Education and Learning Programs

Today effective mechanisms or tools /means/ in the RoA are not available for the monitoring and evaluation of the Adult Education and Learning programs.

It is envisaged to have in the future legal and/or sub-legal acts which will regulate the above mentioned field.

As the processes of recognition of the results of additional education are not regulated until now, the availability of practical abilities and skills are the basic criteria for the employers.

2.4. Adult Educators/Facilitators Status and Training

The school, preparing the educators for adult education system is absent in the Republic of Armenia, however, the speciality “Andragogics” is envisaged in the list of specialities of the system of higher and middle professional (vocational) education.

In the RoA at present professional qualification is not required for work in the field of Adult Education and Learning, the experience acquired by that specialist in that field is becoming decisive.

Meantime, today in the Republic of Armenia, as a result of the activity of international and non-governmental organizations, a quite big army of adult educators is formed, with the help of which a big number of retraining courses are being implemented each year. Moreover, “Adult Education and Lifelong Learning” Association along with the specialists from Yerevan State Humanitarian College has developed, within the frameworks of one of the *dvv international* grant projects, the curriculum and the educational plan for learning and retraining of adult educators.

The specialization “Andragogics” is envisaged in the list of specializations of the system of higher and middle professional (vocational) education, however until now the entrance for that speciality is missing because of absence of those who wish to apply. The main reason of this is the very low payment (25 000 AMD monthly, which is equal to the level of minimal wage established in the Republic of Armenia) of lecturers in the medium professional education system. Therefore the work in colleges does not attract the lecturers and they are not interested in continuing their work there.

In spite of the above mentioned, the retraining courses are organized for the lecturers of RoA medium vocational education facilities.

For example, during 2003-2006, with the support provided by GTZ project, about 50 lecturers (about 1.1% of the total number of lecturers) were retrained in the system of medium professional (vocational) education. These lecturers have organized retraining

courses in their colleges for other lecturers, the total number of which has amounted up to 700 people or about 18% of the total number of lectures.

Meantime, the facilitators of the retraining courses of separate local organizations which act under free market conditions and are funded by international organizations, receive relatively high salary - 3500-20000 AMD per hour, which attracts the most skilled and experienced specialists.

3. Research, Innovations, and Good Practices

3.1. Research conducted in the field of Adult Education and Learning

In 2005 upon financial support of “Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation – Armenia”, “Armenian Centre for Political Studies and Training” non-governmental organization conducted a research on “Educational Policy and Lifelong Learning in Armenia: Formulation of the Basic Strategic Principles and Continuous Discussions”. According to the authors, the purpose of this research was to start continuous studies and to bring the idea of *lifelong learning* into the field of discussions. It shall be followed by gradual approval of concrete actions, implementation mechanisms by different stakeholder organizations and state bodies and by rising the public awareness. The program is aimed to provide information and analysis for the development of a comprehensive strategy of *lifelong learning*.

The authors of the research in the field of *lifelong learning* have made the following suggestions:

In order to achieve success in implementation of the Lifelong Learning policy, it is becoming urgent not only the development of the principles of its implementation and strategy, but also the clarification of necessary steps and the mechanisms of its application.

1. There is an obvious need to inform the Armenian public about the latest developments in the field of education in Europe and the world.
2. Necessary changes shall be made in RoA Law and in by-laws on Education, regulations connected with the implementation of Lifelong Learning policy in order to speed up the introduction of it in the field of education in Armenia.
3. There is an urgent need to disseminate information on the principles, strategy and approaches of the Lifelong Learning policy through the seminars and presentations organized for lecturers and professors.

4. It is necessary to conduct a special research in order to reveal the views of Armenian citizens regarding the policy of Lifelong Learning and its introduction.
5. Based on public opinion, it is necessary to develop an Armenian national concept paper on Lifelong Learning policy and to develop the approaches of its introduction in educational facilities.
6. New educational programs and methodological handbooks shall be prepared, devoted to the issues of Lifelong Learning.
7. A sector or an authorized employee shall be envisaged in the RoA Ministry of Education and Science dealing with the matters of Lifelong Learning.

There is no doubt that the system of higher education is going to play the most important role in the activity of introduction of Lifelong Learning policy. Taking this into consideration, we suggest to implement certain comprehensive and consecutive steps for introduction of Lifelong Learning policy in the system of higher education in Armenia.

1. Accede to Bologna and Copenhagen processes. The adoption of its principles shall become an ultimate goal and a starting point for introduction of the policy of Lifelong Learning in the field of education in Armenia.
2. It is necessary to raise interest among the managers of private business regarding the goals and expected outcomes of Lifelong Learning policy, thus encouraging the investments into higher education.
3. Work shall be carried out in order to prepare the field of professional education for accepting the strategy and the approaches of Lifelong Learning and its introduction to the field of higher education in Armenia to satisfy the personal needs and the demands of the jobs market for qualification.
4. Professional educational facilities have a need to be equipped by the means of modern information and communication technologies, in order to make available fresh knowledge and be more flexible in offering courses.
5. It is necessary to encourage the professional educational facilities to suggest courses for their graduates for updating knowledge and qualifications.
6. It is necessary to present the international systems for credit accumulation and to adjust it to the present situation and to introduce it in higher educational facilities of Armenia.
7. Put into application educational courses devoted to mastering the technologies for knowledge update, application of new teaching methods and strategies, distance-

learning technologies (Internet, CD-ROM) for the faculty and the auxiliary personnel of the higher educational facilities.

Except the above mentioned research a number of other researches were carried out in the field of adult education and learning. For example, the research conducted by the European Education Foundation in 2007 (“Study of Labour Market and VET Challenges and Perspectives for Countries Participating in the European Neighbourhood Policy. Southern Caucasus. Armenia”, October 2007) which also reflects on the situation with *Lifelong Learning* in Armenia, mentioning that it is perceived in the country as one of the basic factors supporting the reforms of the professional education and educational system. It is suggested to develop a strategy for *Lifelong Learning*, for implementation of which significant investments shall be needed. It would be necessary to restructure the system of state governance, to review the content of learning courses, to introduce a consultation and orientation system.

3.2. Presentation of Innovations and Advanced Experience

In 2003 Yerevan Institute of Mathematical Machines (YIMM) along with the Armenian Union of Blinds (AUB) and through support by *dvv international* have implemented a pilot project of AREV (sun) system developed by YIMM for blind persons. AREV system enables the blind persons and the ones with weak vision to use hard copy or electronic literature using the modern technologies. The system transforms the digitized electronic text into the audio text, which dramatically increases the ability of blind persons and the ones with weak vision to communicate, supplementing the existing Brail system. After the pilot training project a number of other training courses were carried out and in 2008 the State Budget has already allocated 20.2 million AMD for AREV project.

4. Adult Literacy

4.1. According to the State Curriculum of Armenia a **literate** person shall **be able** to write and read fluently, understand the meaning of the read material, keeping the correct pronunciation of Armenian speech.

Barely literate shall **be able** to hear the interlocutor, understand what has been told, reproduce it in a correct way and give a substantiated answer.

Numerically literate shall **know** to write, read and compare natural digits, shall **be able** to express the surrounding objects in digits, to describe and to comment.

By virtue of developments the situation of the level of education and literacy of the adult population in the Republic of Armenia is in a good situation. This issue is more problematic among the representatives of certain level of young age population. Connected with hardening of economic situation of the people, starting since the beginning of 1990-s, some families started to view negligently the issue of visiting school by the children. They considered more important for the children to participate in the formation of the family budget, of course, based on different objective reasons.

According to the created situation, next to the exclusively illiterate persons, even among the graduates of the schools of general education, the number of persons with very primitive level of reading technique is quite big.

Thus, using the example of our country, it is better to substitute the term “literacy” with a term “functional literacy”, which is connected with the implementation of functional considerations.

According the 2001, 2004 and 2006 statistical data, the share of literate persons among the population of the age group above fifteen years is 99.4%. Starting from 1997, after CONFINTEA V and until today, any large scale program on the elimination of illiteracy and rising the level of functional literacy for the mentioned contingent has not been implemented in Armenia.

4.2. The issue of elimination of illiteracy in our times is not set forward by the state among the problems of our republic as it was done, for example, in thirties of the previous century, during the collectivization, and this is, on our opinion, due to the low percentage of illiterate population.

4.3. Particularly, it is necessary to mention that within the framework of the projects conducted by a number of non-governmental organizations, a consistent work is being carried out for raising the level of literacy among the prison inmates and different educational programs are being implemented to educate them.

Related to NKR conflict, an inflow of a big number of population took place to Armenia who were illiterate in Armenian language. Because of absence of systematic programs for the solution of this problem, different state and non-governmental educational organizations, upon their own initiative and resources, have undertaken a limited number of Armenian language courses which, however, were not able to cover the field of needs. The part of mentioned contingent, having high level of education, has resolved that problem autonomously through getting formal or non-formal education and the

significant majority, not being able to get adjusted to the harsh social-economic conditions in Armenia, has continued its migration to the other countries.

4.4. In general, it is more difficult to include women in illiteracy elimination programs, because they are overloaded by domestic work which does not allow them to participate in such time-consuming arrangements.

Armenia is a country of high homogeneity, the major part of population of which are Christians with an absence of religious fanatics. The Armenians are known as ones with a high level of tolerance, thus, there are not hampering factors for elimination of illiteracy. In case of increasing of necessary programs and motivation, the issue of elimination of illiteracy may become only a short time issue.

5. Expectations of CONFINTEA VI and Future Perspectives of Adult Education and Learning

5.1. We expect from CONFINTEA VI an exchange of experiences through the coordination and cooperation in the field of adult education and *lifelong learning*, aimed at ensuring national security and well being in our struggle for construction of a civil society.

5.2. Meanwhile, in a result of cooperation with CONFINTEA VI participating countries, we expect to solve the priority issues given below:

- Adoption of the Law on “Adult Education” by the RoA National Assembly
- Development of a plan of actions in accordance with the strategy of Adult Education
- Preparation of the specialists in the field of Adult Education in higher education facilities and colleges
- Ensuring the accessibility of Adult Education
- Development of the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms of adult trainings