



DVV International

Education for everyone.  
Worldwide.  
Lifelong.

# REPORT 2009-2019

With financial support from the



Federal Ministry  
for Economic Cooperation  
and Development



### **DEAR READERS,**

*You are holding a small publication that describes the priorities and principles of DVV International and provides an overview of project activities implemented in Belarus in 2009–2019.*

*I was lucky to have been involved in the opening of the Representative Office of DVV International in our country. However, our first actual “contact” took place much earlier. The prelude to it was my interest in the pedagogical (or, as they would say now, andragogical) ideas of the famous Danish educator Nikolaj F. S. Grundtvig. His concept of a “school for life” was translated into practice in the form of a Folk high school and had a major impact on shaping the modern adult education systems in the countries of Central and Northern Europe. The desire to understand the nature and role of this unique educational institution for adults in modern Germany has laid the basis for the first joint actions with both individual folk high schools (adult education centres) and DVV International.*

*The 10 years of activities of DVV International in Belarus has been a fascinating and productive time, rich in events, interesting meetings, major and minor achievements. We defended the right to education for different target groups, discussed various topics, supported mini-projects in numerous towns and villages, and collaborated with dozens of partner organizations. We are extremely grateful to everyone who has been sharing their ideas with us over the years, suggesting outside-the-box approaches and facilitating better availability of adult education in the country.*

*2019 was an anniversary year for DVV International: it marked 100 years of German adult education centres, 50 years of DVV International's activities and 10 years of DVV International Belarus's work. Numerous events in Germany and other European countries have been dedicated to celebrating.*

*In Belarus, the anniversary was an excellent occasion for summing up the results of the ten years of work. The international conference “Adult Education for Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)” was held in Minsk on 5–6 December 2019. Its participants were able to learn more about the adult education centres in Germany and the history of the DVV International creation, as well as discuss the role of adult education in the context of modern global challenges. Discussion of the current best practices from Belarus and other countries in the context of achieving the SDGs allowed the conference participants to identify three main tasks for Belarus. These three theses conclude a brief overview of DVV International's activities in Belarus in 2009–2019 and will serve as a primary guideline for our activities in the future.*

Galina Veramejchyk,  
Country Director of DVV International Belarus

## REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

and education  
close to home



Education, culture,  
and history for local  
development



Learning regions and cities



Adult education  
and creative economy

### DVV INTERNATIONAL IN BELARUS AND WORLDWIDE

DVV International is the Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association (DVV). DVV represents the interests of about 900 adult education centres (Volkshochschulen) and their state associations being the largest providers of continuing education for adults in Germany. DVV International, as a leading professional organization for adult education and development cooperation, has been supporting lifelong learning in more than 30 countries around the world for over 50 years.

Education for everyone is one of the fundamental human rights. It is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, and is an essential prerequisite for poverty reduction and development stimulation. The right to education is one of the fundamental principles on which the Education 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals are based. Adults, as well as young people, need quality education that is accessible and focused on their needs. It is very important to offer it to all population groups. Therefore, we advocate for a holistic approach to adult education development, its orientation towards addressing different needs and a greater efficiency of public policy in the field of adult education and lifelong learning.

The Representative Office of DVV International was opened in Belarus in 2009. Several joint projects had been implemented in cooperation with partners in Belarus prior to the opening. The projects let us establish cooperation with the State Educational Institution "Republican Institute for Professional Education", as well as with civil society organizations in the country working to promote and develop non-formal and civic education. DVV International contributed to the development of the Adukatar magazine concept, preparation and holding of non-formal education festivals, and pilot implementation of non-formal education programs in state educational institutions.

Once the Representative Office was opened, the network of partner organizations expanded, which created more opportunities for systematic work at the three levels that have already become traditional for DVV International:

- The **micro-level**: Support for innovative projects of partner organizations that include development and pilot implementation of (non-formal) adult education programs covering various topics and targeted at various population groups. At the same time, it has always been crucial to focus on the involvement in education of people who, for one reason or another, fall outside the scope of educational policy and practice of state and non-state organizations. The key approaches to working with the partners at this level include accessibility and focus on the participants' needs, the exercise of the right to education and the elimination of barriers to participation, a variety of topics and types of training activities, just to name a few.
- The **meso-level**: Professionalization of adult education organizations and institutions, as well as training and expertise development of adult education specialists have always been an important prerequisite condition for increasing the efficiency of the adult education system. At this level, the efforts of the Representative Office have been aimed at training trainers and educators working with adults, facilitating the emergence of a new pedagogical qualification, i.e. an andragogue, the development of a network of contacts in the field of adult education, the exchange of best practices within the country and the study of foreign practices.
- The **macro-level**: Building a sustainable and effective adult education and training system means the inclusion of the best practices in educational policies that in turn become more favourable for the activities of various providers and allow them to focus on the participants' needs and offer training to the widest possible range of people. To make this happen, the outcomes of the supported partnership projects were analysed and presented during various conferences, seminars and round tables, as well as in the form of publications and recommendations.





## MISSION AND PRIORITIES

DVV International has always seen adult education as a tool to fight poverty and stimulate development. Being a professional organization dedicated to adult education worldwide, DVV International works with citizens, educational organizations and governments to create a sustainable adult education system. Together with the partners, it creates spaces for lifelong learning.

DVV International in Belarus and worldwide relies on a broad understanding of adult education as an element of the national education system, in which:

- Formal, non-formal and informal (spontaneous) state and non-state education for adults complement each other and have equal chances to get support;
- The content of training is determined by the needs of the individual, the labour market, and society;
- The right to education for adults is enshrined in legislation, and educational policy is coupled with guarantees and tools for its implementation.

Since the Republic of Belarus has a strong tradition of formal adult education (advanced training and retraining), the promotion of non-formal education has been one of the top-priority tasks. The primary activity vectors are summarized below.

**Promotion of non-formal education value and its place in the lifelong learning system.** Six non-formal education festivals were held in 2006–2016, even before the opening of the Representative Office, in cooperation with the network of civic education organizations, AGA (later the Association of Life-Long Learning and Enlightenment) and the Johannes Rau International Centre for Education and Exchange. The festival, as a dialogue platform and a forum for like-minded people, had been setting the topics for professional discussion for 10 years and had a significant impact on changing attitudes towards non-formal education as an important resource for the development of local communities and the country as a whole.

Numerous pilot projects and events for trainers dedicated to educating the elderly, convicts and released, residents of remote regions and rural areas, as well as to the adaptation of the programs to the needs of people with disabilities, etc., helped to show the **contribution of non-formal education to meeting the needs of the individual** and mitigating the risk of social exclusion.

Projects aimed **at supporting employment and developing competencies required at the labour market** have also been considered through the prism of the **“right to education”**: training programs for elderly tour guides, for wheelchair users offering an opportunity to study the basics of the barista profession, a hairdressing course for women with hearing impairments, programs dedicated to mastering various professions or becoming an artisan for convicts, etc.

In modern society, everyone participates in social and political life, which requires some basic knowledge, interpretation skills and a willingness to be an active citizen. **Civic education** is designed to help people exercise their rights, participate in solving the problems that pose significant challenges for local communities, be an active participant in civil society and a responsible citizen. DVV International, together with its partners, has been trying to facilitate the capacity of civil society organizations, increase the efficiency of their educational programs, share experience, and expand cooperation in the field of civic education.

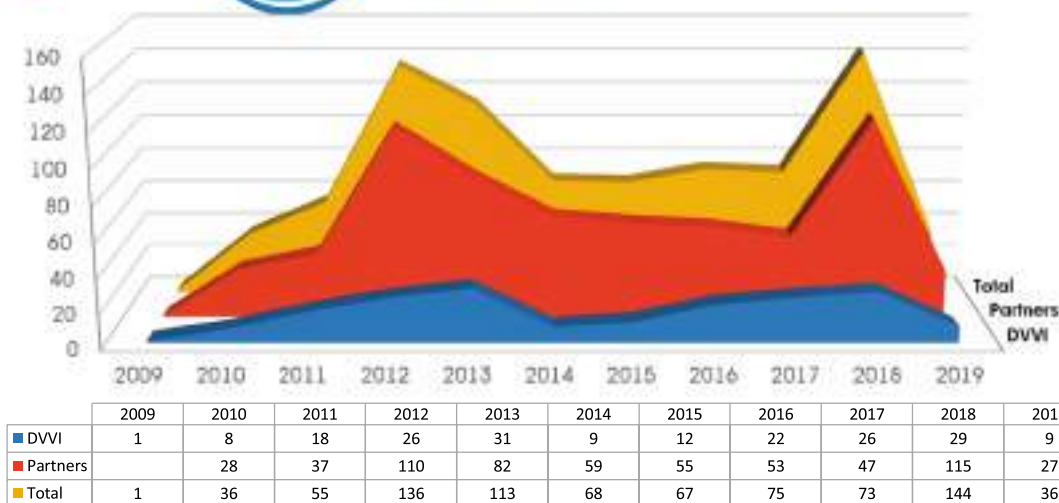
**A sustainable and efficient adult education system is a professional system** based on organizations created and operating with the primary aim of providing educational services. These organizations shall employ specialists with appropriate training. Dozens of training programs for trainers and managers working with different target groups have been supported. The contribution of experts from various organizations and the study of foreign best practices have laid the foundation for the emergence and development of a new pedagogical profession in Belarus, an andragogue.

**Professional associations** have always played an important role in the development of the system. We have cooperated and interacted with all the providers' associations in Belarus: the Association of Life-Long Learning and Enlightenment, the Education for Sustainable Development Association, the Association for Business Education, have invested in the development of thematic networks (e.g., the International Network of Penitentiary Education in the Countries of Eastern Partnership and Central Asia), supported the involvement of experts and networks from Belarus into international processes.

**EVENTS:**  
**804 IN TOTAL**



## 2009-2019 International Belarus IN FIGURES



### OVERVIEW OF IMPLEMENTED PROJECTS

DVV International's activities employ a project-based approach. Project planning and implementation largely depend on the goals and challenges faced and set by the partner countries, current objectives, and available resources. The DVV International Belarus portfolio in 2009–2019 included projects aimed at achieving the DVV International's key objective – the development of an efficient and sustainable adult education system.

All the projects were developed and implemented with the active participation of partner organizations from Belarus.

A number of implemented projects can with a certain degree of convention be included in the main group, which unites projects financed by the **Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of the Federal Republic of Germany**:

- **Professionalization of Adult Education Centres (2019–2027)** was a framework project for the Representative Office activities for 10 years and was aimed at promoting the value of lifelong learning, popularizing non-formal education, and establishing an adult education system. Over 80 mini-projects of partner organizations were supported, almost 20 conferences, forums and festivals held, 5 study visits, 7 regional summer academies organized, about 100 representatives of partner organizations and the expert community took part in conferences in Europe and the CIS, etc., during the 10 years of the project implementation.

- **Adult Education Development in Belarus (2009–2018)** was a framework project for the Representative Office activities for 10 years and was aimed at promoting the value of lifelong learning, popularizing non-formal education, and establishing an adult education system. Over 80 mini-projects of partner organizations were supported, almost 20 conferences, forums and festivals held, 5 study visits, 7 regional summer academies organized, about 100 representatives of partner organizations and the expert community took part in conferences in Europe and the CIS, etc., during the 10 years of the project implementation.

Projects supported by other donors helped us strengthen and expand selected thematic areas and ensure sustainability of the results of pilot actions implemented within the framework of the main DVV International project.

### Projects financed by the European Union (EU):

- **Learn to Act (2016 – early 2019)** was a large-scale project aimed at expanding opportunities for additional education for adults, including civic education, through developing the potential of public associations and local initiatives in the Belarusian provinces, building network contacts of non-governmental providers, and expanding their interaction with local authorities. All the regions of Belarus were involved in the project. The project supported 17 mini-projects aimed at promoting and expanding the availability of non-formal and civic education to different target groups; 3 regional resource centres prepared and conducted over 100 local events for non-formal education providers, implemented a number of long-term training programs for the population; trained over 70 representatives of local initiatives and helped to register 5 new civil society organizations. A group of educators were able to improve their qualifications through studying at the School for Trainers and the School for Managers, as well as to get acquainted with international experience during study visits and internships at the People's University in Germany.

- **Education Opens Doors (2015 – early 2017)** was a project aimed at strengthening the capacity of the penitentiary system of the Republic of Belarus to humanize the correctional institutions and socialize convicts through education. During 2+ years, 6 mini-projects were supported, almost 300 specialists were able to improve their qualifications and study international experience, 15 new training programs for prisoners were developed. Despite the fact that the main activity only covered the territory of the Gomel region, the project's contribution to increased availability of educational programs for prisoners was immense. A number of pilot programs (those focused on ensuring access to higher education, development of a network of psychological laboratories, expansion of the network of social partners of correctional institutions, etc.) are still working, even though the project was completed.

- **Living History of My Village (2014–2016)**. The project was focused on developing local communities and supporting rural initiatives that work at the intersection of three areas: local history, culture, and non-formal education. 18 fascinating mini-projects representing small communities from all regions of Belarus were implemented. The active participants of the project



**PARTICIPANTS:**  
**25 424 IN TOTAL**



## 2009-2019 International Belarus IN FIGURES



	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
DVVI	11	418	527	1016	1201	703	417	1012	633	888	175
Partners		571	2067	2674	1873	1928	1653	1392	2144	3436	685
Total	11	989	2594	3690	3074	2631	2070	2404	2777	4324	860

studied the experience of Germany and prepared a number of methodological publications. Regional institutes for the development of education contributed to the wider dissemination of the resulting recommendations. The most active teams continue working today, using the experience gained to develop new projects and small businesses.

• **TOLLAS – Towards a Life-Long Active Society (2011–2012).** The key goal of the project was to draw attention to the needs of older generations, especially their needs for training, recognition, and social inclusion. Two Resource Centres (in the Brest and Minsk regions) helped dozens of local initiatives to develop new programs for people of the “golden years”, additional funding made it possible to implement 14 mini-projects, and the first festival of seniors' initiatives was held in Belarus. The active participation of civil society organizations, experts in the field of culture and social protection made it possible to pilot the proposed methods in organizations of various types and facilitated the promotion of education for older generations.

We have been cooperating with the Dortmund and Minsk International Educational Centres for many years. In addition to the implementation of a number of joint activities, the parties were able to implement a number of projects vital to the development of non-formal and civic education, while the funding was provided by the **Program of Support to Belarus adopted by the Federal Government of Germany (SPB).**

• **Learning City for Creative Economy (2017–2018).** This program was aimed at enhancing cross-sectoral cooperation and increasing the role of non-formal education in the development of creative segments of the economy. Most of the events thereof were targeted at the participants from Vitebsk and Gomel. Training offered to educational organizations, support for start-ups and numerous discussions of the role of education in urban development united the efforts of providers and local authorities. Promotion and acceptance of the idea of “learning territories” allowed Vitebsk to become the first learning city in Belarus officially recognized at the international level.

• **Learning Region: Education for All Generations (2012–2014).** The project sought to combine two ideas that determine the development of people and territories: the values of sustainable development and lifelong learning. Numerous partner organizations from the

Vitebsk and Minsk regions were involved in joint activities. The project included a study of the training needs of residents of these regions and a number of events for providers, as well as supported a series of micro-projects in each region. The project ended with a large-scale Learning Region forum.

• **Adult Education, Non-Formal Education and Lifelong Learning – a Contribution to the Development of Civil Society in Belarus (2010–2011).** The project contributed to the promotion of non-formal education in Belarus as an important element of additional adult education. Its valuable component was the training of trainers and fostering dialogue between government agencies and civil society organizations. To that end, meetings and discussions were held in large cities of the country, which made a preparation stage for the Festival of Non-Formal Education.

• **Lifelong Learning: a Model Andragogue Training Program (2010–2011).** The project was a great contribution to the professionalization of the system through the analysis of curricula in pedagogical specialties, dissertation research, educational and methodological literature and a review of projects of non-state players offering (advanced) training to adult educators. The analysis results and the study of the experience of Polish universities in the training of andragogues formed the basis for the resulting advanced training Contemporary Adult Education Models program. The course was implemented on the premises of the Academy of Postgraduate Education and was the first academic program in the field of adult education in Belarus.

A number of projects have been added since 2017, aimed at developing certain subject areas in the context of regional cooperation. This opportunity was provided to us and our partners within the **Expanding Cooperation with Civil Society in the Eastern Partnership Countries and Russia program adopted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany:**

• **Active for Education in Prison (2018, 2019–2020).** Two stages have already been implemented within the project aimed at broadening the network of organizations involved in penitentiary education and drawing public attention to the exercise of the right to education for convicts and ex-convicts. The training and activities within local mini-projects were complemented by the exchange of experience, development of the events to



be held by the International Network of Penitentiary Education, as well as by a comparative analysis of the educational context for prisoners in Armenia, Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine. Also, contests were held for the best journalistic works dedicated to the topic of the project in all the participating countries.

- **History Competitions in Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine (2017–2018, 2019–2020).** Participation in this international project allowed us to present the topic of the historical legacy of local communities, which we had previously encountered in our activities, in a new light. The main focus was to stimulate the study of history among young people through research and project activities, the study of family history and its connection with the processes and phenomena occurring in local communities and in the country. Two contests named “Behind the Scenes: from Family History to Community History” were prepared and held in Belarus. The analysis of photographs from family archives and conversations with witnesses allowed the schoolchildren and students both to get acquainted with historical events and master the basic skills of information analysis and the “oral history” methods.

- **Regional Voices – Civil Adult Education for the Empowerment of Local Communities in Ukraine and Belarus (2018–2019).** The project concept was to

develop the capacity of civil society organizations working in the field of civic education through training their representatives in methods of studying needs and conducting pilot studies for their target groups. The approaches used and the main results of the project were presented in the methodological manual “Research of the

One of the first thematic projects of DVV International Belarus, “**Belarusian School in Cham: From Chances to the Right to Education**” (2010–2011), was also based on the joint study of history. The project was implemented within the framework of the Europeans for Peace program of the **Foundation “Remembrance, Responsibility and Future”**. The main goal of the project was to study the issue of access to education for various groups of young people in post-war Germany and Belarus. Schoolchildren from the cities of Cham (Germany) and Novogrudok (Belarus) studied the history of the Belarusian gymnasium named after Yanka Kupala, which worked in the post-war period in the village of Michelsdorf near Cham. The project participants conducted research, talked to the witnesses of historical events, exchanged the results of their work via the Internet, and prepared an exhibition on the right to education in their native language that included elements of comparison between the modern education systems of Belarus and Germany.







### THREE CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

Belarus is among the leaders in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the region: it adopted the National Strategy for Sustainable Social and Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus until 2030; the Council on Sustainable Development and the position of the National Coordinator were established under the supervision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the Education for Sustainable Development Association is doing a lot to engage the schools in the process. However, the lack of a coherent adult education policy that would focus on ensuring availability of formal and non-formal education in every corner of the country hinders the widespread promotion of the SDGs among the adult Belarusian population.

According to the participants of the international conference “Adult Education for Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals” (held in Minsk on 5–6 December 2019), the strong position of the Republic of Belarus in the field of sustainable development should be complemented by progress in the field of adult education and lifelong learning. The priority tasks include:

- **Improvement of the educational policy**, including through the implementation of the basic principle of the SDGs “Leave no one aside”. Despite the high level of accessibility of education to children and youth, the country still faces challenges in ensuring broader involvement of adults and introducing tools to support socially vulnerable groups. The steps being taken (the development of the Lifelong Learning Strategy and implementation of the National Qualifications Framework, etc.) shall be complemented by the introduction of the basic principles of the common good concept and the development of mechanisms that promote the exercise of the right to education by all adults, equality of rights, social justice, and respect for cultural and social diversity.
- **Professionalization of the adult education system**. The achievements of the last decade, e.g. the statutory recognition of the term “additional education for adults” and the recognition of such a new pedagogical qualification as an andragogue, are not sufficient for the effective system operation. Expansion of the network of providers, including the formation of a new type of educational institutions — local Adult Education Centres, the creation of favourable environment and equal conditions for various types of organizations, the introduction of modern technologies, and the stimulation of self-organization across the sector are important areas for further activities.
- **Promotion of the new way of thinking among city and district governments** focused on “bringing adult education closer to home”. The availability of local learning will contribute to the exercise of the right to education for all and social justice and will also become an additional incentive for the innovative development in the provinces. The inclusion of Vitebsk into the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities has sparked interest in the movement among the administrations of other Belarusian cities. However, the comprehensive localization of the SDGs calls for the broader involvement of local authorities into improving the accessibility of education to adults and the widespread support for formal and non-formal adult education programs. The key tools to achieve this goal include empowerment of local authorities, introduction of a corresponding cost item into local budgets, and development of local lifelong learning strategies.