

STATE POLICY OF ADULT LEARNING AND EDUCATION IN UKRAINE (EXPERT STUDY)

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The development of adult education as a fundamental component of lifelong learning has been and remains a strategic task for many countries in Europe and the world. The world community recognizes adult learning and education as an important tool for overcoming economic inequality and other social challenges, improving the social and psychological health of people, and building a society of responsibility and trust. The policy of the European Union in adult learning and education is aimed at the formation of key competencies for lifelong learning (knowledge of foreign languages, digital technologies, entrepreneurship, communication skills, active and responsible citizenship, etc.). Inclusive access to education and lifelong learning for all social groups, regardless of age, property, social status or cultural background is the priority. Ukraine's international obligations regarding lifelong learning are defined by the Association Agreement with the EU (Article 433).

The study, conducted by Ukrainian experts, aims to clarify the nature of legislative regulation and management in the field of adult learning and education in Ukraine at the present and to formulate practical recommendations for improving public policy in the area. The authors analyze the practical aspects of the activities of institutions working in the adult learning and education, on the example of selected regions of Ukraine, which equally characterize all key regions and the results are representative for the country as a whole.

The study found that the Law of Ukraine "On Education" (2017) defines the key principles of adult learning and education in the education system of Ukraine and the main components of adult learning and education, such as postgraduate education, advanced training, vocational training, development of employees.



**postgraduate
education**



**advanced
training**



**vocational
training**



**development
of employees**

At the same time, certain segments of adult education are regulated by legislation in the field of education; industry legislation; youth legislation; employment legislation and some narrow oriented laws that can only be applied in a specific context (Law on 'Professional Development of Employees'). There is an imbalance and contradiction between the norms of different legislation due to differences in approaches to adult learning and education, which are obviously the result of differences in the views of different groups of stakeholders. At the same time, the legislation broadly operates with the concepts of "postgraduate education" and "advanced training", almost identical in content.

Adult learning and education policy is implemented by the state and local authorities at three levels - national, local and sectoral. In practice, such policies often see adult learning and education only as a tool to regulate the professional activities of various fields. Licensing of education as a management tool is carried out mainly in relation to state or municipal institutions that implement vocational training programs. Public-private partnerships in adult education are local and sporadic, mostly involving cooperation with employers and businesses interested in the professional development of their employees. State and local bodies, as well as non-governmental organizations perform the functions of the founders of adult Learning and education institutions, that in practice mainly lead to influencing the appointment of heads of these institutions.

Educational programs for adults are implemented by entities of educational activity of the three most common types:



institutions of professional (vocational-technical), professional pre-higher and higher education of various forms of ownership, which, as a rule, have structural subdivisions that provide postgraduate education and advanced training;



specialized state and municipal institutions of postgraduate education, advanced training centers for employees of certain industries (teachers, doctors, employees of cultural institutions, civil servants, etc.);



non-governmental organisations.

A large number of adult learning and education programs in public regulation are aimed at various forms and types of vocational training. Applicants are required to undergo such training in accordance with the law governing their professional activities. State and municipal institutions ensure the development of such programs.

NGOs implement non-formal adult learning and education programs on a completely voluntary basis in accordance with the existing demand and expectations of potential applicants. Such providers are institutionally capable of developing programs of innovative content and implementing innovative teaching methods. At the same time, they do not have guarantees of financial support from the state and are fully focused on the market and the demand of applicants.

Adult learning and education is funded from the following sources:

- funds of public budgets of national and local level;
- funds of foreign organizations, in particular international funds;
- funds of individuals and non-governmental organizations of Ukraine.

The share of each of these sources in the structure of financing adult learning and education in Ukraine is not defined, but public funds are traditionally allocated for various types of vocational training of the unemployed or employers in certain industries, as ensured in the law on the state budget. The practice of financing other adult learning and education programs from public budgets (civic education, formation of cultural, social and communication skills, etc.) is local and sporadic. NGOs working in the field of adult learning and education can obtain funding from local budgets through participation in local government programs aimed at supporting NGOs, project competitions and participation budgets, but current regulations complicate the process of obtaining and using such funds. Some adult education programs are commercial.

The National Qualifications System is being established, which should ensure quality assessment and recognition of qualifications by comparing them with existing educational and professional standards. It is expected that in the long run this will make it possible to recognize qualifications acquired in non-formal education, in order to be able to employ people who have acquired such qualifications. However, at the same time the old practices of recognizing qualifications acquired through vocational training through established procedures for qualification assessment or

certification within enterprises and organizations acting as employers are preserved. The certification takes into account not only the results of training in adult learning and education programs, but also other indicators, such as the level (degree) of formal education, work experience, the results of qualifying exams. In certain professions, successful certification is necessary to hold the relevant positions, or leads to the assignment of qualifications or categories to employees.

As a result, **the study revealed a number of problematic aspects of the formation and implementation of state policy in adult learning and education in Ukraine**, namely:

- 01 lack of coordination in the formation of state policy in adult learning and education at the national level;
- 02 lack of a system of centralized collection of statistics on adult learning and education, which would allow the formation of sound public policy;
- 03 only partial consideration of the recommendations of leading international organizations on adult learning and education and lifelong learning;
- 04 inconsistency of the norms of the legislation regulating adult learning and education;
- 05 imbalance in the development of various components of adult learning and education, in particular due to the significant predominance of components associated with various forms of vocational training;
- 06 inequality of conditions of activities of public / municipal and private adult learning and education providers (including increased regulation of public/municipal and practically ignoring private);
- 07 lack of mechanisms for equal access to different sources of funding for adult learning and education providers, regardless of ownership and subordination.

This study provides the following practical recommendations to the entities of state policy and legislative initiative.

The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine recommended to provide:

- rationing contradictory and outdated norms of legislation related to adult learning and education, in particular through the adoption of a separate law;
- equal and competitive access of adult learning and education providers to public funding;
- formation of legislative mechanisms to ensure the financing of adult learning and education from local budgets;
- legislatively provide economic incentives for employers in various industries to support the professional development and training of employees and invest in the quality of adult learning and education.

The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine recommended:

- to provide: a unique approach to national policy that will bring the adult learning and education system closer to the best European standards;
- availability of different adult learning and education programs for all categories of the population depending on their needs;
- annual collection and publication of statistical data on the number of entities of educational activity that provide services in adult learning and education, and the number of applicants for adult learning and education;
- expanding access to education for vulnerable adults in accordance with the principle of inclusiveness;
- equality of adult learning and education providers, in particular in terms of access to funding from public budgets;
- quality assurance system for adult learning and education programs involving key stakeholders.



