



COUNTRY REPORT ON THE ACTION PLAN ON ADULT LEARNING: HUNGARY

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This product has been more specifically drawn up on the basis of country-experts' analysis of existing national literature and the Confintea IV-report. In finalising the report, comments and feedback from the National Authority have been taken into account as much as possible; however, the report does not necessarily reflect an official position of the Member State.

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1 CONTEXT

Adult learning and has been recognised as part of adult education in Hungary for a long time. It was only after UNESCO CONFINTEA V in Hamburg that policy interests and approaches have given attention and obvious recognition to adult learning, especially in the last ten years. This is partly a result of the Lisbon process in education and training (e.g. the Memorandum-debate and the ET2010, Copenhagen processes to follow), and of the preparation process for UNESCO CONFINTEA VI.

1.1 Socio-economic context

The accession process and the full EU-membership has helped the country to make some very important reforms in social and economic terms in accordance with the so-called 'Acquis' of the European Union. Hungary has used several EU-funds and programmes to turn major state-run systems, such as public governance and education (public education, tertiary education, VET, non-formal adult training, etc.), into more efficient and quality-oriented ones referring to equal opportunities and access for everyone.

On the other hand, the education and training sector, which strongly influences adult learning, has been hit by the effects of globalisation and technological progress. These have led to strong aspirations to reach for accelerated transformation and adaptation by considering social and economic demands and 'demographic realities'.

Unfortunately, Hungary's economy has suffered over the last five to six years, in terms of both the global and regional context. Economic stagnation and then crisis has strongly influenced adult learning participation, because many adults have recognised adult learning as a way to find a better position in the labour market. On the other hand, most employers have raised or even changed their demands towards their candidate/future employees referring to special labour market skills and to some learning skills too. This trend was partially recognised by the state, and the government has intervened with some major legislative and financing tools. These tools aim to raise participation by adults in education and training programmes in both formal and non-formal settings. The core issue, despite these measures, is that the participation of adults in lifelong learning has stayed far behind the EU-27 average.

The systemic development of continuing education and training through labour offices and nine regional training centres, since 1993, has helped adult learning to become a significant tool for developing employability. However, the 2001 Act on Adult Education and its modifications could not help generating a close relation amongst formal, non-formal and informal learning, and recognising open and flexible forms of non-formal and informal learning to help reduce unemployment.

According to the CONFINTEA VI report of Hungary, the primary function of adult education changes in relation with economic and social processes. At the beginning of the 1990s, retraining was a dominant characteristic as there was relatively high unemployment, occurring as a result of large-scale staff cuts in industry and agriculture. Today it is further training and the demand for competence-based training which dominate the sector.

It must be mentioned that the realisation of the functions of adult education is an especially important social objective in disadvantaged social groups, the attaining of which is only possible with the realisation of continuously provided target programs. A description of the structure can be found in section three.

1.2 Historical-ideological context

There is a longstanding tradition of adult education and training in Hungary from the 19th century and onwards in formal, non-formal and informal settings. Historic research shows a variety of movements, and the institutionalisation of adult education in the last one-hundred and fifty years.

At the time there was intellectual experimentation, following some international and western approaches. From the 1980s there was a shift in adult education to follow the trends in research and development. The UNESCO CONFINTEA IV in 1985 brought new theoretical and practical trends and issues to reflect on.

Hungary, by turning into a liberal democracy and market economy in 1989/90, opened ways to the new development of formal, non-formal and informal adult learning. This became a consensus amongst parliamentary parties. From 1990 adult education in the country could develop as an organic system, without state hegemony.

The suddenly advent of high unemployment in 1991 and afterwards turned politics to recognise adult education and training as an effective tool to put down unemployment and to help generate better economic conditions and growth. In the 1990s, adult education and training was mainly considered to tackle illiteracy, lack of vocational qualification, and, accordingly, to train as many adults as possible. But this approach slightly changed after the millennium, when the memorandum debate on lifelong learning and the preparations for a new Act on Adult Education gave way to a more quality-centred focus, especially after 2002.

Recent governments have tried to respond to this shift, but their actions focused mainly on labour market claims and had no significant strategy for introducing a coherent plan or widespread consultation with major stakeholders to improve all sectors of adult education. That is why not only second chance schooling, but also adult learning in cultural contexts have not yet received peculiar attention other than some responses to EU-funded or guided projects and initiatives.

Since May 2010, the newly elected government has recognised that adult education is an important aspect of economic, employment and social policies. As a result the Ministry has outlined actions to change the law in order to renew accreditation and update related sanctions, It aims to modernise VET in adult education and training with the Ministry of National Resources, the Chamber of Commerce and the Regional Development and Training Committees, as well as other major stakeholders, in order to improve quality learning, better work performance and social responsibilities.

2 POLITICAL AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

According to the Hungarian UNESCO CONFINTEA VI National Report, the adult learning and education policy (ALE) legislative environment complies with the EU directives and objectives, which are implied in the Memorandum on lifelong learning, and in the Lisbon objectives. The ALE objectives are closely related to employment policy; this is clearly reflected by the fact that adult education (since 2004), and the professional control of vocational training (since 2006) has been shifted to the responsibility of the ministry responsible for employment policy.

On the other hand, Hungary has achieved full membership into the European Union, marking a new phase of the successful process of accession and integration. This means education and training have become a part of those peculiar policy areas where EU member states, according to the Lisbon agreement, initiated the use of the open method of co-ordination. As part of that special mechanism, Hungary, by the Autumn of 2005, produced its Strategy for Lifelong Learning which outlined a coherent policy frame for lifelong learning.

The main objective of the strategy was to structure its fields of intervention along five priorities in order to introduce a comprehensive reform of the education and training system. These priorities will respond to individual demands throughout the life-cycle:

- Equal opportunities;
- Strengthening the links between the education and training system and the labour market;
- Application of new governance methods;
- Enhancing the efficiency of the education and training system, and increasing related public and private investment;
- Improving the quality of education and training.

The strategy distinguished the following areas of intervention:

- Development of basic skills and key competences in public education;
- Improving the standards of school preparation based on personal development;
- Emphasis on key competences;
- Transformation of secondary education with a view to competence development: competence-based secondary school leaving examination.

The key to adaptation is a diverse and abundant supply in vocational education, higher education and adult learning:

- Modernisation and streamlining of the institutional network of training;
- Establishment of higher education-based regional knowledge centres;
- The successful implementation of the Bologna Process in higher education institutions;
- Development of the school-based/formal adult education in higher education institutions.

Ever-extending learning opportunities:

- Making the use of information and communication technologies a basic requirement;
- The future of learning at the workplace;
- Creation of learning and development partnerships through the inclusion of social partners in order further to improve and boost the efficiency of the entire system of further training;
- Introduction of a national prize and financial incentives for employers who support training at the work-place on the basis of Western European models;
- The prospects of informal learning and alternative learning forms;
- Development of distance learning.

Further areas of intervention and for innovation:

- Career guidance, counselling and monitoring;
- Recognition of informal and non-formal learning;
- Supporting disadvantaged groups and groups at risk on the labour market;
- Rethinking social assistance and creating an environment that encourages the combination of learning and work;
- Establishment of a new teaching/learning culture;
- Developing a culture of quality.

According to the Hungarian CONFINTEA VI report, a number of legal documents regulate the sector.

The special laws encompassing school system education and training relating to public education, vocational training and higher education were established following the change of regime in 1993. These laws also contain the regulations of school system adult learning and education. To supplement these, an act regulating non-school system adult education was passed (Act CI of 2001) on adult education in 2001, which was followed by various developmental government measures (e.g. regarding the quality assurance of adult education institutions). It is significant that the adult education act is a so-called “framework act”, which implies special regulations relating to adult education institutions and adults (e.g. the regulations of the starting and continuation of an adult education activity, or the conclusion of adult education contracts with persons admitted to the training program). At the same time the appropriate special acts imply the general conditions and regulations relating to adult education (e.g. to financing (support), or the content of the vocational training). Following accession to the EU, government documents entitled “Lifelong learning strategy” and “Vocational training development strategy 2005-2013” were drawn up in 2005. These strategies outlined the main objectives of adult education, and main measures and priorities of the strategies also appeared in the national development plans.

Please find a detailed description of the specific legislative framework in the Eurybase National Education System in section 7.3, which addresses the specific legislative framework.

In conclusion, the development of legal tools referring to adult learning and education reflect a rather top-down approach in the field of education and adult education. It is felt that it is also worth focusing on a bottom-up approach, to channel practical knowledge of stakeholders and providers. In addition, the state should initiate a revision of the 2005 Strategy on Lifelong Learning and of the 2001 Act on adult education and take examples, for the sake of effectiveness, of some Western-European and Nordic countries to modernise the legal framework of adult learning and education in a more holistic manner.

3 STRUCTURAL AND FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Structural framework

The structure of adult education in Hungary is as follows:

- Within the school system (elementary and secondary school) it is possible for adult learners to acquire higher school / vocational qualifications.
- Within the non-school system of adult education:

- Professional basic and further training according to the needs of the individual and the situation on the labour market, so for the purpose of:
 - Acquisition of first vocational qualification;
 - Vocational retraining (acquisition of second or further vocational qualification);
 - Vocational further training (primarily in accordance with employer demands).
- General knowledge training, primarily for the purpose of acquiring the knowledge required to start a vocational training course (e.g. mathematics, natural sciences, engineering), within the scope of so-called cohesion programmes.
- The acquisition of knowledge in connection with the world of work, primarily:
 - Acquiring career orientation knowledge (career selection, career correction);
 - Acquiring job-finding knowledge and skills.
- The acquisition of key competences, primarily from the range of competencies determined in the reference framework approved by the European Union. Particularly important competencies are:
 - Speaking the mother tongue;
 - Speaking foreign languages;
 - IT skills (digital), and
 - Entrepreneurial knowledge and skills.
- The extension of general knowledge competencies, primarily from the range of competencies determined in the reference framework approved by the European Union, for example:
 - Citizenship awareness;
 - Competencies involved with cultures living side by side;
 - The development of non-formal and informal learning opportunities.
- The development of learning competencies, primarily according to the approach expressed in the reference framework approved by the European Union, including the popularisation of learning as an adult.

3.2 Financial framework

The financing of adult education rests on four pillars (the latest available data on the ratios are from 2007):

- Central budget (the maintenance of regional education centres and the training of target groups, 12 per cent);
- Certain parts of the Labour Market Fund (primarily for the education and training of unemployed persons and other target groups);
- Employers' statutory contribution to vocational training by paying VET tax (1.5 per cent of wage costs) and organising in-service training courses training for staff (the contribution of VET tax to financing is 33 per cent);
- Those participating in the training (primarily fares and textbooks and, to a smaller degree, tuition fee or training contribution); ratio in financing: 33 per cent;
- Other resources, e.g. applications (10 per cent).

Businesses pay for the education and training of their own employees if the training is not the initiative of the employee. In this field there is a governmental incentive: companies can allot one-third of the obligatory vocational training contribution (1.5 per cent of labour costs) for the education of their own employees; in the case of small and medium enterprises, the proportion is 60 per cent.

Recent trends in financial schemes:

1. From the central budget:

- There is support for the public education school system, for both full-time and part-time learners. Trainings are basically supported by maintainers on normative grounds (85 per cent of them are local authorities), higher education is mainly supported directly from the budget of the Ministry of National Resources (Former Ministry of Education and Culture);
- Typically there is support for the training of the state institutes' own employees.

2. From the budget of local authorities:

- The budget of the public education school system and training institutes is ensured;
- There is financial support for further training programmes of the VET oriented local training institutes' (local VET schools and VET secondary schools) own teaching staff.

3. Allocated state funds:

- The Labour Market Fund is a central fund for employment and training, of about HUF 400 billion. It supports adult training by allocating a fund for employment (training the unemployed and people looking for jobs), and a fund for training (the development and support of school-system vocation training and adult training).

4. Social insurance:

- Trainings, further trainings of the employees of state owned firms, institutions and organisations.

Apart from the above:

- The financing of trainings at companies is partially supported by the state, but companies are increasingly bearing the costs from their own other incomes;
- An increasingly significant role is played by the economy. One of its main areas is the vocational training contribution system, which is regulated by law. In the framework of this, companies and enterprises are obliged to pay a vocational training contribution equivalent to 1.5 per cent of their wages costs. These obligations can be fulfilled in different ways:
- Payment into the Labour Market Sub-Fund (51.8%);
- Practical training provision for VET students at enterprises (19,8%);
- Vocational training (secondary) schools (13,2%);
- Training provision for own employees (9,6%);
- Practical training provision for the Higher Education (5,6%)¹

¹ <http://osap.nive.hu/statisztika>

4 PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPATION IN ADULT LEARNING

The main barriers and opportunities for participation of adults in lifelong learning in Hungary are the following:

- Barriers: unemployment, lack of effective financial tools, lack of time, social inequalities, poverty, lack of motivation, lack of learning opportunities in local/rural contexts; bad learning experiences. (These barriers may vary depending on the individual and the social/physical environment);
- Opportunities: development of funding sources, variety of VET programs for adults in non-formal settings, growing actions and programmes of adult learning and education offered by NGOs.

It is important to underline that the main target groups of adult education are the unemployed and undereducated, unskilled adults. On the other hand, it should be recognised that there is more than one target group in Hungarian adult education and training. The adult education and training system in Hungary is heavily constrained by labour market policy approaches, and so another major target group is adults at employment age (25-64) participating in labour market training, or preventive training. Young adults in the age cohort of 15-24 form another important target group.

The CONFINTEA VI report produced by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour indicates that the special target groups are (according to most relevant ALE programmes):

- The Roma (e.g. programmes for catching up, job-seeking techniques);
- The elderly (e.g. IT skills, continuing training);
- The homeless (e.g. programmes for catching up, job-seeking techniques);
- Those receiving childcare benefits (e.g. professional continuing training, returning to work);
- The unskilled, unschooled (e.g. acquiring first profession, catching up, acquiring school degree and vocational qualification at the same time in cooperation with schools, career orientation, job-seeking techniques, enterprising knowledge).

The sectors in which particular difficulties are faced in reaching the identified target groups are the VET-sector, the cultural sector, and the school sector/public education (formal education).

The most important barriers for adults participating in learning in Hungary are a mixture of institutional, situational, and dispositional barriers, and it very much depends on the individual learner which of the three types have the strongest impact. Yet, some main barriers to adult learning in Hungary are the lack of necessary entry qualifications, and the absence of relevant programmes (or rather the unequal provision of adult education and training programmes in a geographical sense). Also, poverty, or relative poverty and low income, are the strongest situational barriers together with the time-constraints and, in more and more cases, the distant location of available courses.

On the other hand, bad experiences of former education, the lack of confidence in personal capacities and a lack of support from the employer can all result in severe barriers to quality adult learning. However, another barrier is that non-formal and informal adult learning do not represent real market value for experts and representatives of (adult) educational policy. Moreover, the rate of under-qualified and

under-educated adults is rather high, which is reflected by the lack of learning capacities, and the lack of learning aspirations. Finally, a problematic barrier is that adult education and training in Hungary has become narrowly market-oriented, leading to a lack of access to education for adults. Concrete policy measures and specific instruments are generally used at national and EU level to remove barriers as part of the Lisbon-objectives indicated by the Memorandum, and the Action Plan on Adult Learning.

One of the most important opportunities for adults to participate in learning is the appearance of non-formal learning through a stronger non-governmental sector. However, a major barrier is poverty. Another opportunity is the recognition of prior learning in non-formal and informal environments, which accelerates the desire for learning.

Consequences: it is worth recognising that the identification of barriers and opportunities will not solve the problem of participation nor improve the quality measures being used. However, this process will help to explore current issues and obstacles to participation and provision and will also generate more effective planning. In Hungary, therefore, the socio-economic background of those adults for whom it is difficult to engage in learning is pertinent. Poverty, unemployment, instable family-social status, a low income or an undereducated, unskilled individual background caused by leaving school early can all have an impact on rates of participation.

5 CLUSTERS OF MEASURES

As part of a mobilising strategy at national level, major instruments have been used to increase participation of adults in lifelong learning. They are as follows:

- The Act on Adult Education and its quality management references after 2001;
- The National Lifelong Learning Strategy from 2005;
- The National VET Development Strategy for 2007-2013.

Other instruments are the Human Resources Operative Programmes of the National Development Plan for 2004-2006 and the Social Renewal Operative Programme of the New Hungary Development Plan for 2006-2010.

These strategies consider the necessary reflections/actions to the EC-Memorandum by establishing guidance and counselling services based in Regional Employment Centres. These centres aim to prepare young adults by identifying major labour market demands according to the most relevant vocations. FIT-Employment Information Counselling has been in place since 1992, with help from National Euroguidance Centres.

Disadvantaged groups are provided with counselling services (e.g. career orientation training) by the nine regional workforce training centres. Providers of adult education and training (enterprises and non-profit organisations alike) also offer this type of service as a part of their education and training programmes. The majority of career orientation services assume independent orientation; however, personal counselling is of low volume and non-systemic. Those employed in the services provided by employment centres are required to have a qualification defined on the basis of the service; as a rule, higher qualification is required, and in certain cases work experience is also necessary. There are various forms of education and training to train counsellors (training courses, special projects and professional higher education training programmes).

In addition, the VET policy 'Refernet' refers to the career guidance project of the Vocational School Development Programme for 2003-2006. Flexible routes/trajectories for adult learning are promoted by the new VET system using modular training programmes. However, most tools and programmes are narrowly concentrated within urban environments, and adults in rural communities will generally find it difficult to access regular or high quality learning opportunities.

Quality assurance has been put in focus by the accreditation of adult education and training programmes. Programmes have been accredited since 2002, with the establishment of the Adult Education Accreditation Board (FAT) to administer accreditation programmes and institutions in a national context. The adult education contract and the activity of examination committees in education and training programmes also work on quality assurance.

Organisations that provide adult education and training are registered and monitored by the regional employment centres; the authorisation of employment centres is restricted to monitoring the programme's compliance with regulations. If deficiencies are disclosed, employment centres can impose a fine or – in case of serious problems – prohibit the continuation of the education and training programme. Since 2007, regional employment centres, in cooperation with local chambers of commerce-industry, have been monitoring the practical training section of the National Register of Vocational Qualifications (OKJ) VET programmes. The proportion of these profit-oriented NGOs that carry out educational activity and are in the possession of ISO qualification is increasing.

Another dimension is quality development of the VET system and its provision in accordance with the introduction of a new NQF in 2006 and the systemic adaptation of CQAF. Several areas and phases of quality assurance are in operation. It is a basic specification that adult education institutions have to enrol in a separate system of registration that involves mandatory rules of operation. The accreditation system of adult education institutions and programmes is the second tier of quality assurance and is not mandatory, but state-supported training may be provided only by accredited institutions. The quality of the content of the training process is ensured by the integrated professional and examination requirement system of qualifications included in the National Training Register - recognised by the state - and the integrated, independent examination system. Supported trainings courses are checked on a regular basis by regional labour centres and local labour agencies. Surveys on the demands of employers and their level of satisfaction, as well as the new career tracking system under development, serve the purpose of improving the content of the courses.

In the community outreach programmes, workplace learning is mainly developed with civic organisations trying to improve adult learning and labour performance through project-based development. However, it is almost impossible to shift good practice of such models into mainstream adult education or into VET-school programmes so as to promote partnership building with stakeholders. The country's strategy on lifelong learning is aiming to reach social consensus by building partnerships and inter-sectoral co-operation to reach out to those major target groups in adult learning. However, most relevant programmes with such dimensions are mainly run by regional employment offices, regional training centres, and by some adult education and training SMEs and NGOs.

The establishment of Regional Development and Training Committees of the Regional Development Councils in the seven regions of the country has been an attempt to co-ordinate employers and stakeholders in local and regional VET programmes, and to support initiatives promoting adult learning funded by certain projects of the National Development Plan. The Chambers of Commerce and Industry

have been trying to initiate the same kind of involvement of economic stakeholders. At the national level, some major economic stakeholders are members of the National Adult and Vocational Training Council, which supports the work of the National Institute of Adult and Vocational Training.

As far as the acknowledgement of prior learning is concerned, recognition of non-formal and informal learning became one of the most important elements of the National Lifelong Learning Strategy in 2005. The measures of the Education and Training 2010 programme has accelerated such measures in accordance with the OECD's RNFIL survey in 2006-08 to promote the recognition of non-formal and informal learning. Its revised document in 2009 stated that by having adequately modified the Public Education Act and Vocational Educational Act, the possibility is open for low-skilled adults to complete the 7th and 8th degree of primary school during two five-month learning periods. In this way their primary school attainment is acknowledged, which is important for their further studies and position in the world of work. Regarding guidance, the scope of supply has been enlarged by mentor activities for enrolling to courses, contracting, learning, etc. The original law is the 30/2000 departmental order of the Ministry of Economy, dated 15th September, for free-of-charge labour market services, which are given to 100,000 adults (who are mainly unemployed or in danger of losing their position).

Last year, a special project started at the National Institute for Educational Research (OFI) as part of the Social Renewal Operation Programme so as to help Hungarian Higher Education develop its validation system for prior learning (Programme 4.1.3). Its results will eventually influence the practice of recognition and validation of prior learning in national contexts.

Economic instruments mainly focus on financial incentives and tools trying to help adults in finding adequate learning opportunities. However, financial tools such as subsidies, vouchers, loans, saving systems and tax deduction, introduced in 2001-02, have been either cut or reduced as a result of economic difficulties and crisis situations. In addition, some of those effective tools have not yet been introduced or used effectively, in spite of the public demand to make use of such measures and incentives. Employers can still support secondary or higher education institutions in providing vocational and mainly practical trainings for young people and adults as a levy reducing tool. Also, employers can support the training of their employees by subsidising up to 33 per cent of the 1.5 per cent VET levy. In the case of micro and small companies this subsidy is up to 60 per cent of the 1.5 per cent levy..

The CONFINTEA VI report of Hungary emphasised that more coherent monitoring systems ought to be developed to assess adult learning processes at macro-level and through international comparison. In addition, data should be put into contrastive analysis at local and regional level, based on statistics and learning achievement and success figures. Another important monitoring dimension is the follow-up and monitoring of career paths and of the impact of learning achievements in the labour market.

Conclusions: most clusters of measures indicate that the issue of implementing accessible and relevant tools for mobilisation has become important for stakeholders of adult education and training stakeholders and for major providers too. However, the effectiveness of such measures varies according to their planning, implementation and monitoring of use and cover-up of feedback.

6 THE FIVE PRIORITIES OF THE ACTION PLAN ON ADULT LEARNING

6.1 Analyse effects of reforms in other educational sectors on adult learning

Adult learning and education surveys on Hungary come to the same conclusion: that it is the VET reforms which have a direct effect on the modernisation of the adult learning sector, especially on non-formal adult vocational and labour market trainings.

Responses to the EC Questionnaire on *Policy Developments – Adult Learning Sector 2008-09* indicate that the policy on adult education has not significantly changed in the last two years and the main policy objective is to increase responsiveness of training to labour market requirements. This determination is embedded in a series of modifications in law, in the structure of learning and development programmes, and through the modernisation of VET system and related training for adults to develop their practice-related knowledge.

The 2007 Ministry Report on the implementation of tasks referring to the Strategy on Lifelong Learning underlined the impact of the preliminary process of strategy building. It provided a more coherent approach to connect formal, non-formal and informal learning.

The Human Resource Development Operative Programme of the National Development Plan for 2004-06 prioritised lifelong learning and the principle of flexibility. The 'New Hungary Development Plan' aimed at developing lifelong learning through a better public education by giving more attention to raising the quality of basic skills and key competencies so as to cement learning for life. In addition,, the plan targeted a more efficient system of quality assessment and assurance so as to promote education and to address local and regional differences in the quality of education and training. In order to develop access, segregation mechanisms in education ought to be eliminated, and schooling improved. Its Social Renewal Operative Programme targeted the modernisation of infrastructures of human services, for example through the development of IT systems so as to help lifelong learning programmes and labour market trainings be more adaptive and effective, on the one hand, referring to new learning needs, and, on the other, to help adult learners develop their basic skills and competencies in lifelong learning.

However, most surveys underline, according to CONFINTEA VI and Action Plan-related educational and training reforms, that:

- There are many difficulties with and obstacles to flexible learning paths and individual learning trajectories as an impact of low level permeability and underdeveloped support services for stabilising learning performance in crisis situations. These are due regularly to leaving one place and settling in another for dominantly employment and/or social reasons.
- Regulations of adult learning and education are dominantly system-centred rather than learner-centred;
- Adult learning and education programmes should be planned and developed as part of a social campaign so as to raise attention to quality learning. Active tools are needed to motivate learners to better performance and longer participation;
- New dimensions of adult learning and education should give way to inter-sectoral programmes and projects to generate co-operation amongst institutions and organisations promoting formal, non-formal and informal adult learning in non-traditional environments;

- It is essential to develop skills and the ability to learn in pre-schools and in primary education so as to prevent children and youngsters from leaving school early;
- Vocation-oriented and labour-market trainings for adults do not necessarily help to reduce social inequalities but, on the contrary, may deepen them. The government ought to take steps to balance these social differences;
- Another aspect of integrated development of education is the implementation of a more complex guidance and support system with a flexible and professional background of organisation;
- New reading and literacy programmes should be implemented to develop basic skills of adults;
- Non-governmental and civic organisations of adult learning and education should be given a more complex role to mobilise learning in adulthood and initiate voluntary actions for learning developments of adults by valuing, for example, third age learning actions.

The above listed points clearly reflect that the development of adult and lifelong learning are dominated by inter-sectoral issues and they should be promoted, from now on, by better and more co-ordinated co-operation across ministries on research, development and innovation. Social and economic policy reforms directly influence the status and promotion of adult and lifelong learning. It is worth analysing the impact of several public policy reforms on education and training, such as higher-education reform over the Bologna process, or the VET reform over the well-known Copenhagen process. There have also been public education reforms over curricula, teaching methodology and better guidance on learning to implement youth policies, employment goals, and social, cultural policies for better individual mobility and social stability. The direct usage and dominance of market-oriented rules and privatisation have not necessarily supported a more holistic understanding and use of adult education in the process of modernisation, but generally promoted a rather reductionist orientations for adult learning and education towards the labour market. It is one aspect why more accessible learning is needed to help the socially most disadvantaged, to enhance social cohesion and to promote the culture of a humanistic adult learning to raise participation, responsibility and voluntary actions of citizens with visible solidarity in learning towards underrepresented groups for a stronger mobility within the society.

In spite of several studies and reforms focusing on raising participation in adult learning, it is still difficult to measure concrete. There is a lack of convergence and co-ordination of major research and development organisations/institutions, while transparency, monitoring and follow-up of most adult education and training programmes are missing. In order to change such tendencies, more partnership with NGOs and civic groups is needed to open for a more coherent and supported package of reforms implemented through a bottom-up approach. This also needs a more effective use of resources, a more holistic approach and understanding of co-operation and sharing with practitioners. Finally a two-level analysis of actions and reforms is required to measure both local/regional learning actions and situations (e.g. cities and regions) over adult learning and to systematically relate to and disseminate practices of Europe-wide and international communities in order to promote better learning and more participation.

6.2 Improve the quality of provision and staffing

In Hungary, the quality of provision and staff is strongly attached, on the one hand, to registration and accreditation of adult education and training providers, and on the

other, to the quality development of staff. The first issue is related to the process of raising the efficiency and professionalism of adult educators, teachers, trainers, facilitators, organisers, and administrative staff. This commitment is reflected through training initiatives and programmes for educators and other members of teaching staff in organisations developing adult learning. There are different methods of accreditation for the training and re-training of teaching staff at higher education, public education and entrepreneurial sectors, according to law. The Social Renewal Operation Programme, since 2007, has implemented programmes for many teachers with ESA co-financing.

So far as the quality of staffing is concerned, adult education research and development projects have brought major European projects focusing on the professionalisation of adult education into focus. For example, the work of students on a number of projects – the European Masters in Adult Education (EMAE) project, and the TEACH and the AGADE projects – is used to promote the construction of a national curricula for the education and training of adult teaching staff with the Bachelor and Master programme in Andragogy. This training programme was introduced in higher education in the fall of 2006. It turned out to be highly popular and several hundred persons currently take part in such training at numerous universities.

The Hungarian CONFINTEA VI Report has also indicated that the conditions of employment and remuneration are not fixed in non-formal adult education outside the school system, though the rules of the Labour Code apply in the area. However, within the school system adult education employment and remuneration is subject to the provisions of the act on civil servants. Several areas and phases of quality assurance are in operation. It is a basic specification that adult education institutions have to enrol in a separate system of registration that involves mandatory rules of operation. The accreditation system of adult education institutions and programmes is the second tier of quality assurance - it is not mandatory, but state-supported training may be held only by accredited institutions. The quality of the content of the training process is ensured by the integrated professional and examination requirement system of qualifications included in the National Training Register - recognised by the state - and the integrated, independent examination system. Supported training courses are checked on a regular basis by regional labour centres and local labour agencies. Course content is improved with the use of surveys on the demands of employers and their level of satisfaction, as well as the new career tracking system currently under development. The results of these surveys are made public, and feedback is given to those generating them.

Another aspect of quality development is the impact of the construction and application of a National Qualification Framework, in compliance with the EQF. The newly framed CQAF mechanism also needs consideration, as it is applied in adult education and training programmes and innovations in connection with labour market expectations and new European VET principles. Also, one must underline the role of the Grundtvig programme's direct initiatives for the quality development of teaching skills, methodology, ICT-knowledge, professional language usage, etc. of adult educators, as represented by the Tempus Public Foundation. It is also important to underline the impact of actions of higher education institutions in Hungary, through the Hungarian Universities' Lifelong Learning Network – MELLearn. These institutions work to promote planning and the provision of adult education, and to improve the quality of training of adult teaching staff through professional training and conferences. They also produce publications to disseminate recent innovations in the field. Finally, it is worth making some recommendations in the area of quality development of adult education and learning:

- Despite the existence of a National Council on VET and Adult Education, there should be, amongst adult education organisations and their staff, a more systemic co-operation for networking in order to develop professionalism, commitment and motivation for the promotion of formal, non-formal and informal learning;
- It is essential to reaffirm and recognise new roles for adult educators with the use of innovative means of education and training;
- Organisations, associations for non-vocational adult education and learning ought to receive more space to help develop the culture of lifelong learning through attention paid to new learning spaces in local and regional environments.

6.3 Increase the possibilities to achieve a qualification at least one level higher

In recent years, there have been many programmes to raise the qualification levels of adult learners. The order of priority, therefore – partially in harmony with the European Union employment policy strategy – is determined by the labour affairs governmental body. This is decided partly in light of long-term national development plans and partly in the given budget year. In this respect the greatest problem is helping into employment those people with low school qualifications, or no skills. The basic first step is to provide them with vocational training. To assist this the Hungarian government – also making use of European Union funding – is now organising and realising special layer programs for the third year, with the title “One step forward/Step one ahead!”.

Some 2,000 or so adults strive for primary school attainment within the frameworks of EU granted learning and training programmes. “Step one ahead” (ESA) is an example, where a further 5,000 adults were assisted in completing primary schooling during the first two phases of the programme. The “Step One Ahead” programme is the 2.1.1 construction in the priority 2 axel within the Social Renewal Operative Programme. Its groups have so far consisted people without even eight grades or vocational qualification (or with only obsolete vocational qualification). The peculiarity of the programme is that it has preferred and involved around 20,000 adults as participants with similar chances and social status in the seven regions of Hungary in a rather deformed labour market with relatively high job shortage.

To sum up the school attainment of the two stages, when entering, eight per cent have not achieved eight grades achievement, and 42 per cent have not reached secondary achievement. (The Social Renewal Operational Programme (TÁMOP 2007-2013) of the New Hungary Development Plant contains measures supporting the integration of people with multiple disadvantages into the Labour Market. “Step One Ahead” is only one measure in the line of this targeted assistance.)

Simultaneously with the ESA-funded programmes, a large scale nationally-funded programme has been launched with the title: “Path to Work”. The target group is those under 35 years, who have not achieved the primary schooling certificate, and who are receiving social benefit. Its resource is the national budget and its objective is to help learners obtain primary school certificate and to gain key competences offered by nine regional training centres.

But regarding the whole age group it is worth noting that the indicator for upper secondary attainment of Hungary (83.6 per cent) is better than the EU average (78.5 per cent). In addition, the rate of low achievers for 15 year olds according to PISA results on the area of Reading, Maths and Science are better the EU-average. See the E.T.C.G Joint Interim Report Draft for 2010.

6.4 Speed up the process of assessing and recognising non-formal and informal learning for disadvantaged groups

According to the Hungarian CONFINTEA VI Report, one of the development goals to be realised in the field of adult education, amongst other issues, are the encouragement and recognition of learning in non-formal and informal settings, and the support of disadvantaged social groups, and strengthening of their motivation to learn.

On the one hand, the main target groups of adult education and learning have been identified in the CONFINTEA VI report in section 2.2.5. Also, the Hungarian CONFINTEA VI Report pointed out, referring to major findings of recent adult education research, that the training of disadvantaged target groups requires special programmes. These programmes need continuous funding using state subsidies and European Union funds. Another solution is needed to provide incentives to these target groups to participate in training. Moreover, the training of disadvantaged target groups requires special methods which increasingly require planned development.

There are several examples of Hungary participating in development projects in the field of recognition, assessment and/or validation of prior learning. For example, together with 16 other European countries (among the 23 participants) Hungary has taken part in the OECD RNFIL survey in 2006-2008. Some of the findings and recommendations are:

- Recognition and validation is known in Hungary, but is not widely accepted (especially by university faculties). There is some progress, as recognition and validation of knowledge and skills are among the development targets at several education and training institutions. The basic question: is there a need for this in society? The answer is yes. This is mainly the case among adults who already have certain work experience but without school certificates - these are people who could best use recognition and validation of their achievements;
- The best examples are in the area of language certification and ECDL-examinations;
- The new modular and competence-based NVQR can become a strong pillar of the non-formal and informal recognition and validation system in the coming years;
- The former Hungarian NIVE (National Institute for VET) has had a trial project with 53 institutions. The test-paper variation seems to be the most realistic methodological pathway;
- Although a significant number of adults take part in non-formal and informal learning, it is still not considered it as a kind of learning activity being part of the traditional adult education and training set. Hungary is amongst EU-member countries with a low practice regarding RPL and VPL, however, certain elements of VPL are functioning in VET oriented training programmes in regional training centres.

Two new measures have arisen from what was stated in the OECD RNFIL review. By having adequately modified the Public Education Act and the Vocational Education Act, the possibility is open for low skilled adults to complete the 7th and 8th degree of primary school over two five-month learning periods and, through this way, their primary school attainment is acknowledged in reference their further studies and position in the world of work.

It is worth considering that the Hungarian Folk High School Society – HFHSS) published its findings on the Action Plan in 2008, and gave recommendations to the issue of recognition of prior learning of adults in the scope of the RNFIL process.

6.5 Improve the monitoring of the adult learning sector

The system of assessment of outcomes is being formulated now. On the one hand, processes have to be assessed at a macro level, and compared internationally as well as at regional, local and institutional levels. One source for assessment is statistics, measuring learning outcomes and success. The other area is career monitoring, with utilisation of outcomes in the labour market with a view on self-achievement. The third is the competence measurement of adults. New procedures will be prepared for each field under development projects with domestic and EU-support launched and realised in several phases until 2013. The VET sector and its adult training components are monitored through the newly developed CQAF model. Adult Education Accreditation implies a special monitoring of the field through the actions of the National Adult Education Accreditation Committee (FAT). Monitoring of the sector is also undertaken by special sections of the Central Statistical Office of Hungary (KSH) and by the State Audit Office of Hungary.

However, the statistical methodology is heavily argued, referring to the validity of Eurostat figures on the Lifelong Learning benchmark (Adults' participation in lifelong learning), and the improvement of EURYDICE-based Eurybase-system needs further improvement and more attention from the members states' stakeholders and relevant ministries. Professional civic organisations and associations also monitor the field of adult education and learning in Hungary and their findings ought to be integrated into the overall picture so as to reach for a more realistic and concrete view upon practice and provision. More details at: <http://www.feflearning.hu/Home>

Further recommendations upon issues for development, in the field of monitoring and assessment, are the following:

- In Hungarian adult education, the process of accreditation should imply and foster professional guidance/counselling. Therefore, it is essential to establish local/regional professional advisory groups and/or regional centres who can provide ongoing development for practitioners in adult teaching and training;
- An advisory/mentoring network should be initiated in order to underline the impact of monitoring instead of assessment and control. This network may be able to provide and apply more coherent indicators to measure changes and challenges in adult education and learning in Hungary;
- There has been a significant number of EU-funded/co-financed projects operating in Hungary in the areas of adult education, VET and labour market developments, human resource development, social renewal development, etc. Therefore, an easily accessed and clearly structured database should be set up to collect good examples and best practices for better dissemination. Also, the start of the validation process of non-formal and informal learning is of high importance (Please find the project of the National Centre for Educational Research and Development - OFI and its detailed description on Validation in Higher Education at: <http://tamop413.ofi.hu/kvr-kozponti-validacios/projekt/index>);
- The latest survey findings of the Hungarian Folk High School Society on the diverse ways of adult learning ought to be integrated into the analysis of adult learning in Hungary. Please find more at: http://www.nepfoiskola.hu/MNT_hu/hogyan_tanulunk.html.