



DVV International

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STUDY

on Adult Learning and Education in Armenia



German Institute for
Adult Education
Leibniz Centre for
Lifelong Learning

«Մեծահասակների մասնաբաժնի կրթությունը և կրթությունը Հայաստանում» / Study on Adult Learning and Education in Armenia

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Dear Readers,

DVV International and DIE Bonn started planning and implementing a complex regional project in 2019 which aimed to analyse the state-of-the-art of adult learning and education (ALE), and the participation of adults in education and training (formal, non-formal and informal learning). The qualitative study was conducted in Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, and Kosovo, and the adult education survey was implemented in Armenia, Georgia and Kosovo.

The purpose of the complex project was to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the ALE sector, and to provide data that would be used when creating policy and legislation in the ALE, vocational education and training, employment, lifelong learning sectors, and in other relevant areas.

The qualitative and the quantitative studies, as well as the seven country reports, were conducted and prepared from the second half of 2019 until June 2021. The quantitative study was commenced first, and the implementation of the qualitative studies started when the initial results began to arrive.

Monitoring progress on the basis of data-based surveys plays an important role in European strategy development on lifelong learning. The studies and AE surveys presented constitute a substantial stock-taking effort for the countries represented here (Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, and Kosovo), aiming to provide a comprehensive picture of adult learning, as well as of its prerequisites and challenges.

Closely following the Adult Education Survey (AES) – which is a well-established international survey on adult learning – national specificities and information needs were identified in the coordination of the cooperation partners and through the involvement of national experts. The standard questionnaire was thus adapted to national circumstances and supplemented with additional questions on learning attitudes and motivation, as well as on educational and support needs in the face of massive changes on the labour market. Questions concerning access to education and (digital) learning during the

pandemic were added at short notice in response to the Covid pandemic. The survey results answer a number of questions, and provide information about the extent and quality of adult learning. How are learning and attitudes towards learning distributed in the adult population? Which groups are involved, and to what extent? Are particular forms of learning used by different groups? What role do socio-economic conditions play, e.g. the employment context or residence in rural or urban areas?

The qualitative country reports provide additional in-depth information on the specific national context of the education system, and on the location and promotion of ALE, gathered in qualitative studies by a team of international and national experts according to a standard outline. Together, the two reports form an excellent basis for the participating countries to assess the current situation against the background of education policy objectives and to develop political strategies for improving the ALE system.

Since the studies were carried out in four countries according to a uniform scheme, the comparison offers additional possibilities for classifying the respective national situation. As such comprehensive analyses and studies and surveys in the ALE sector were conducted for the first time in all the countries involved in this project, we are confident that a number of governmental and non-governmental institutions and organisations in these four countries and beyond will use the data and knowledge obtained.

We hope that these publications will provide a basis for discussions on further policy development, and thus contribute to the establishment of an evidence-based design of the ALE systems in Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, and Kosovo.

We would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the members of the project working group, the authors, and the research institutes, for their professional and fruitful cooperation, and for the excellent results and achievements, which were largely finalised in a difficult period during the coronavirus pandemic.

We hope that you enjoy reading the reports!



Ester Hakobyan

Country Director

DVV International Armenia

Preface

The DVV International Country Office, led by the Regional Office for Caucasus and South-East Europe, initiated and conducted a number of research initiatives in 2019 and 2020 that facilitated a better understanding of the situation in adult learning and education (ALE) in Armenia, including developments since independence and the current state of affairs.

We are pleased to present this publication, the first ever in-depth, multi-component Qualitative Study on Adult Learning and Education in Armenia. The study forms part of a broader regional initiative that made it possible to conduct similar research in four countries, namely Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, and Kosovo.

The study looks at such important aspects of ALE as the legal framework, governance and financing, institutions and providers, access and participation, relevance to the international context, and others. It documents progress over the last two decades, whilst also pointing to areas for improvement for lifelong learning (LLL), ALE and non-formal education to play a transformative role in Armenian society.

The study, together with other research efforts undertaken in 2020, is an essential tool for engaging with the Armenian Government and identifying the priorities that will make it possible to advance ALE, especially through strategies and policies in the education sector. It will contribute to the imperative of evidence-based policy-making adopted by the Armenian Government.

Special thanks go to the international and national consultants who gathered and analysed the data, including Andreas Pfanzelt, Hannah Pfanzelt, and Arpine Mazhinyan.

Abbreviations

AE	Adult Education
ALE	Adult Learning and Education
AMD	Armenian Dram
AUA	American University of Armenia
CONFINTEA	<i>Conférence Internationale sur l'Education des Adultes</i>
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DIE	German Institute for Adult Education
DVVI	Institute for International Cooperation of the <i>Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband e.V.</i> (the German Adult Education Association)
GRALE	Global Report on Adult Learning and Education
LLL	Lifelong Learning
MESCS	Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports (also formerly Ministry of Education and Science)
NCVED	National Centre for Vocational Education and Training Development
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
RA	Republic of Armenia
SCE	Supplementary and Continuous Education
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
ToT	Training of Trainers
UIL	UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning
VET	Vocational Education and Training
YSU	Yerevan State University

Executive summary

This study was commissioned by DVV International, the Institute for International Cooperation of the Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband e.V. (DVVI), and the German Institute for Adult Education (DIE). It provides a comprehensive analysis of the adult education sector in Armenia, and identifies recent developments and challenges in this sector. The study is part of a series of four country studies in the South Eastern Europe and Caucasus region, where DVVI has been an active advocate for strong adult education systems since the early 2000s (since 2000 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, since 2002 in Georgia and Armenia, and since 2005 in Kosovo). Information on the various topics reflected in this study – terminology, country profile, historical development, legal framework, financing, providers, programmes, participation, professionalisation, international context – was gathered online using desk-based research, which in turn was verified in a second step and then compared with the practical knowledge and on-site experience of six national experts through online interviews.

Against the background of EU and UNESCO definitions, this study follows a broad conception of adult education which considers all forms of formal adult learning and education (ALE) after the initial education cycle (such as compensatory education and vocational education and training (VET)), and all intentional non-formal and informal forms of further and continuous training and community, popular or liberal education and learning aiming at professional or personal development.

The study shows that, in contrast with EU terminology, Armenian legislation hardly refers to non-formal, informal or adult education, but rather subsumes these concepts under the term “Supplementary and Continuing Education” (SCE). Until it expired, the “Supplementary and Continuing Education Strategy and Action Plan for 2013-2017” was the central planning document for adult education in Armenia. No state policies have been adopted by the new government addressing SCE since the Velvet Revolution in 2018, including adult education per se. A new

“Education Strategy 2030” is currently in preparation. The major legislative and political frameworks with relevance for SCE in Armenia, including adult education, are the Law on Education (1999), the Law on Preliminary (Craftsmanship) and Middle Vocational Education (2005), and the Law on Higher and Postgraduate Professional Education (2004), as well as a range of regulations. The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports (MESCS) is the lead public institution responsible for SCE, including adult education. A separate, smaller ministry unit “Supplementary and Continuing Education” was merged into the “Youth Policy, Supplementary and Continuing Education” department in 2020.

According to the Armenian state budget of 2020, public expenditure on education was around 263 million EUR, which comprised about 8.3% of the country’s overall planned budget expenditure. There is no specific line for adult education in the state budget. Around 9 million EUR were allocated to the budget line “Education unclassified by levels” in 2020, which contains a subline on supplementary education embedding the costs of programmes that are also relevant to adult education.

Similar to the situation regarding legislation, governing structures and financing, adult education is not a standalone component in the education system in Armenia. There are four types of insti-

tutional setting in Armenia all in all in which adult education is implicitly provided: professional development of employees in public administration (who make up the majority of attendees at adult education programmes), supplementary education programmes at higher education institutions, non-formal education measures from NGOs and training for employees, and the unemployed.

The number of students has fallen at all levels of education in recent years, especially in higher and middle vocational education. Frequent participation in training measures is compulsory in Armenia for target groups such as public servants, teachers, professors, legal professionals and medical personnel. Two-thirds of all adult participants in job-related training measures were trained at the workplace from 2016 to 2019, while only one-third attended different educational institutions. The motivation of adult participants is low in most cases. Employees are often not released from their work-related responsibilities in the training process, which is why learning and working simultaneously is a burden. The necessity of working in several jobs for disadvantaged groups in order to be able to earn a living often leaves no time and energy for learning. Because of the inertia left over from the Soviet era, many citizens still perceive learning as age-bound and designed for young people. Learning is seen as formal education within formal institutions and structures.

Andragogy is not offered as a degree programme by any of the higher education institutions, either separately or as a sub-discipline of Pedagogy. Despite their proficiency in the topics they teach, adult educators in Armenia usually lack the methodological knowledge and tools to work with

adults. There are no clear criteria in Armenia by which trainers are selected for mandatory training provided by the state. Similarly, there are no evaluation mechanisms to assess the performance of the trainer, or mechanisms for indicating poor performance.

In the international context, Armenia contributes continuously to CONFINTEA and to the GRALE reports. However, national SDG indicators do not reflect adult education. The main international donors in Armenia include German development cooperation (through DVVI), the British Council, UNDP, the European Commission, and the European Training Foundation.

Based on the situation analysis, the study identifies several broad recommendations for the medium- and longer-term development of adult education in Armenia. The greatest relevance attaches to the early completion of the National Education Strategy 2030, a common terminological and conceptual understanding of adult education, the strengthening of non-monetary aspects of adult education (through civic education, literacy programmes, rehabilitation programmes and personal development courses) by the government and local authorities, improved networking amongst providers, sound measurement and recognition of non-formal learning outcomes, and the provision of incentives for lifelong learning at individual level.

Scope and research approach

The aim of the study is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the adult learning and education (ALE) sector in Armenia, and to identify recent developments and challenges. The basis for the study structure is a comprehensive, table of contents which serves as a guide and has been developed by DVVI in cooperation with the German Institute for Adult Education (DIE).

The aim of the study is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the adult learning and education (ALE) sector in Armenia, and to identify recent developments and challenges. The basis for the study structure is a comprehensive, table of contents which serves as a guide and has been developed by DVVI in cooperation with the German Institute for Adult Education (DIE).

This study was implemented by a team of researchers who worked closely together and were selected by DVV International. The team was made up of two international consultants, Hannah Pfanzelt and Andreas Pfanzelt, and one national expert, Arpine Mazhinyan.

The methodological approach that was adopted by the researchers combines intensive desk-research with semi-structured expert interviews. This enabled data and information to be gathered and added stepwise throughout the research process. A first step involved a systematic review of existing data, central national and international documents and strategies as well as literature provided by DVVI and the national experts. The main source of information was

secondary data, which was available at national, regional, and international level, such as academic literature, analytical papers, policy briefs, evaluation documents, reports and publications from governments, international agencies and civil society organisations. Wherever available, primary data from surveys or international data bases was considered as well. In addition, information from the region which has recently been compiled by DVVI was examined (e.g. DVV 2020, Adult Education in Armenia - Review of the State of Affairs and Developing Recommendations for Integration in Policy Framework and Practice).

The main goal in the first research phase was to collect relevant data along the predefined chapters and identify knowledge and gaps in data. The resulting preliminary country portfolios set the stage for qualitative data collection in the next research step. Directed by the results of the desk-research, semi-structured interviews were conducted, via video call, to externally verify, complement and supplement the preliminary research findings with the practical knowledge and on-site experience of national, regional and

international ALE experts. These supplementary interviews were a decisive source of information about the state of ALE where online information was scarce. Based on their expert knowledge and experience a total of six ALE experts from macro, meso and micro levels were selected as interview partners (including one expert from the DVVI country office Armenia). For all interviews, questionnaires with various guiding questions were developed and shared with the interviewees in advance. These questions served as a broad

thematic guideline during the interviews. The interviews lasted an average of one hour, and were held from mid-November 2020 to January 2021.

In a third phase of the research process, data and information gathered by means of desk-research and interviews were clustered and put into written text. Comments from the German Institute for Adult Education, DVV International and the national experts guided the preparation of the final study document.

The study is structured as follows:

Chapter I is dedicated to the concept of ALE, outlining its use and interpretation in Armenia, and its relationship with UNESCO and European Union (EU) terminology. **Chapter II** describes the country structure, with information about the current socio-demographic, economic, political and education situation. The historical development of ALE, outlined in **Chapter III**, helps to contextualise the subsequent classification of ALE in Armenia. The latter results from a comprehensive analysis of the present national macro-(legal framework, policies and financing), meso- (institutions, providers, professionalisation and programmes) and micro-(participation) level circumstances for ALE, reflected in **Chapters IV-IX**. International efforts (actors, projects and state commitments) regarding ALE in Armenia are scrutinised in **Chapter X**. The results from all the preceding chapters are to assist in the identification of current challenges and potentials for the future in **Chapter XI**. The final **Chapter XII** summarises the assessments, and narrows them down to precise recommendations for the future development of ALE in Armenia.



I. Concept and terminology – understanding and perception of the concept of AE

International and EU definitions of ALE, lifelong learning and adult learners

Education is frequently associated with formal education only, that is education delivered by pre-school, primary, secondary, vocational, and higher education institutions to children, adolescents and young adults. International human rights law has however repeatedly stressed several times that the main principle of education is universality, according the right to education to everybody, regardless of age.¹ The continuous aspect of education and learning, which is rooted in the principle of universality in education, is aggregated in the concept of “lifelong learning” (LLL). According to the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), one of the most important international actors in the field, lifelong learning is in essence “founded in the integration of learning and living covering learning activities for people of all ages (children, young people, adults and elderly, whether girls or boys, women or men), in all life-wide contexts (family, school, community,

workplace and so on) and through a variety of modalities (formal, non-formal and informal) that together meet a wide range of learning needs and demands”². The following paragraphs outline the relationship between the concepts of lifelong learning and adult learning and education, introduce major international actors and initiatives to enhance access to and provision of LLL and ALE opportunities, summarise the aims of ALE, explain different modalities, and present the different learning contexts.

The relationship between lifelong learning and adult education and learning is established by the vision that, within the universe of lifelong learning, ALE covers all forms of education and learning that “aim to ensure that all adults participate in their societies and the world of work”.³ Thus, ALE is a core component of LLL, and, when viewed in relation to the period in life covered, presu-

¹ Right to Education Initiative (2018). [Adult education and learning](#) website

² UNESCO UIL (2014). [Literacy & Basic Skills as a Foundation for Lifelong Learning](#)

³ UNESCO UIL (2015). [Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education](#), p. 6

ably the most substantial and long-term form of education. Accordingly, and in compliance with LLL which may last indefinitely in a life span, ALE commonly addresses a particular group of learners, namely adult learners.

In general, an adult learner can be considered a “person who systematically attends some form of adult education, belongs to a chronological period following adolescence, and voluntarily opts to partake of the learning and teaching process. Adulthood is characterised by different types of maturity, from biological to emotional and psycho-social, to professional, cultural and political.”⁴ This implies that adult learners are an extremely heterogeneous group which is defined less by chronological age than by learning needs and motives. The “entry age” when a person formally takes on the status of an adult therefore also differs between countries, and is not necessarily linked to the age of legal maturity.

On a global level, the UIL promotes LLL, and specifically ALE, with various programmes and projects. It has installed amongst others the Observatory of Recognition, Validation and Accreditation of Non-formal and Informal Learning⁵, and monitors recent developments in National Qualifications frameworks. **International exchanges on advances made in ALE are facilitated in International Conferences on Adult Education (CONFINTEA)**⁶, and progress in ALE around the world is visualised in regular **Global Reports on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE)**. GRALE 3 provides the following definition of adult education:

“ ALE encompasses all formal, non-formal and informal or incidental learning and continuing education (both general and vocational, and both theoretical and practical) undertaken by adults (however this term may be defined in any one country). ALE participants will typically have concluded their initial education and training and then returned to some form of learning. But there will be young people and adults in all countries who did not have the opportunity to enrol in or complete their schooling by the requisite age, and who participate in ALE programmes, including those aiming to equip them with literacy and basic skills or as a ‘second chance’ to obtain recognised certificates.”⁷ ”

The institutions of the European Union can be considered the most important drivers when it comes to addressing the supply of and access to ALE and the harmonisation of adult education provision on the European continent. EU policy on education is currently guided by the **Education and Training 2020 (ET 2020) Framework**, and is based on the lifelong learning approach, as defined in the **EU’s Council Resolution on Lifelong Learning**. Similar to the UNESCO definition provided above, lifelong learning according to the EU “must cover learning from the pre-school age to that of post-retirement, including the entire spectrum

⁴ Mavrak (2018). *Legal Socialization program – Adult Education Manual*. PH international: Sarajevo

⁵ UNESCO UIL [The Global Observatory of Recognition, Validation and Accreditation of Non-formal and Informal Learning](#) website

⁶ UNESCO UIL [International Conferences on Adult Education \(CONFINTEA\)](#) website

⁷ UNESCO UIL (2016). [3rd Global Report on Adult Learning and Education](#), p. 29 and Schweighöfer, B. (2019). Youth and Adult Education in the Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals. Bonn: DVV International

of formal, non-formal and informal learning. Furthermore, lifelong learning must be understood as all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective”⁸. In its glossary on key terms used in European education and training policy, the EU defines adult education as “general or vocational education provided for adults after initial education and training”, and thereby stresses the difference between initial education and training and continuing or general education for adults⁹.

In order to support adult education in particular, the EU Council has adopted the **Resolution on a renewed European Agenda for Adult Learning**¹⁰. The Resolution highlights the need to significantly increase adult participation in formal, non-formal and informal learning, be it in order to acquire work skills, for active citizenship, or for personal development and fulfilment. A further initiative by the Council was the adoption of a **Recommendation on Upskilling Pathways**¹¹ which aims to enable all adults to reach minimum levels of literacy, numeracy and digital skills. The European Commission has established a Working Group on adult education consisting of experts, representatives of social partners and civil society. Moreover, it has set up the **Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe (EPALE)**, “a European, multilingual, open membership community of adult learning professionals, including

adult educators and trainers, guidance and support staff, researchers and academics, and policymakers”.

As indicated by the definitions and activities above, aims and objectives of adult education and learning in the sphere of LLL are manifold and may target different levels of society. On the individual level, ALE aims to develop the capacities and capabilities of each individual to be a socially responsible, critical, self-reliant citizen who is able to shape the developments taking place in both the personal and the professional environment. At societal level, a community of aware, active adults helps create what is known as a “learning society”, where everyone has the opportunity to “learn and fully participate in sustainable development processes and to enhance solidarity among people and communities”. Comprehensive ALE fosters sustainable, inclusive economic growth, which in turn is indispensable for reducing poverty, improving health and the well-being of all, and protecting the environment¹².

The above aims and objectives can be achieved with various types of ALE:

- **compensatory learning and qualification for basic skills** (such as literacy, numeracy), targeting individuals who may not have acquired them in their earlier initial education or training,
- **continuous education, training and professional development**, targeting adults who are

⁸ European Council (2002). [COUNCIL RESOLUTION of 27 June 2002 on lifelong learning](#). Official Journal of the European Communities C 163/1

⁹ CEDEFOP (2014). [Terminology of European education and training policy \(2nd edition\)](#)

¹⁰ European Council (2011). [Council Resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning](#). Official Journal of the European Union C372/1

¹¹ European Council (2016). [COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION of 19 December 2016 on Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults](#)

¹² UNESCO UIL (2015)

interested in acquiring, improving or updating knowledge, skills or competences in a specific field related to their work environment,

- **community, popular or liberal education** (also citizenship education) which provides general education and learning opportunities for adults on topics that are of particular interest to them for their personal development, to engage with social issues and lead a decent life.

While basic education is commonly associated with formal learning, adult education and learning refer to the entire range of formal education (FED), non-formal education (NFE), and informal education and learning (INF) activities. All forms of education are comprehensively defined in the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)¹³. A second document providing detailed definitions of learning activities is the “Classification of Learning Activities (CLA) Manual” issued by the European Statistics Office Eurostat¹⁴.

Formal education and training is delivered “institutionalised, intentional and planned through public organisations and recognised private bodies – in their totality – [constituting] the formal education system of a country”¹⁵. The recognition of the programme by the relevant education authorities or other institutions cooperating with national or sub-national education authorities is decisive for a learning activity to be formal. FED is usually associated with the continuous pathway of initial full-time education until an individual first enters the labour market. However, it may also

include part-time vocational education, education for people with special needs, and other types of adult education, and thus education “for all age groups with programme content and qualifications that are equivalent to those of initial education”. In any case, formal programmes must have a minimum duration of one semester of full-time studies (equivalent to 30 ECTS).

Non-formal education, similarly to formal education, is “education that is institutionalised, intentional and planned by an education provider”. However, the crucial characteristic of non-formal education is that it is an “addition, alternative and/or complement to formal education within the process of lifelong learning”. NFE programmes may lead to qualifications, but in general these are not recognised by education authorities as equivalent to formal qualifications. In some cases, formal qualifications may be obtained through specially-recognised NFE programmes. In contrast with formal education, NFE needs to follow a continuous pathway of education and learning, and therefore it is able to address all age groups, more so than formal education programmes. NFE programmes are often short-term in nature, with lower intensity offered in workshops, courses, seminars, guided on-the-job training (organised by the employer with the aid of an instructor), and private lessons. This enables NFEs to cater for all three types of ALE mentioned above: compensatory education in the shape of literacy education for young people and adults, or formal education-substitution for out-of-school children, professional skills development and programmes on life skills and social, political or cultural development¹⁶.

¹³ UNESCO UIL (2012). [International Standard Classification of education ISCED 2011](#), p. 11f

¹⁴ Eurostat (2016). [Classification of learning activities \(CLA\) MANUAL 2016 edition](#)

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ UNESCO UIL (2012), p. 11 et seq.

Finally, **informal learning** covers all those “forms of learning that are intentional or deliberate, but are not institutionalised”¹⁷. Unlike education in formal and non-formal settings, informal learning is much less structured and organised. It may take place in daily-life contexts within the family, at the workplace, in the local community, through voluntary work, in the digital domain, in museums, or in libraries. The learning content is self-selected to meet personal learning goals or to keep up with societal development; the pace of learning is usually self-directed.

*ALE as such,
as well as all forms
of education and learning
for adults, profit from recent
significant developments
in the information and
communications technology
sector, especially with
respect to access and
inclusion.*

With information and communication technology (ICT), formal face-to-face settings of education and learning are opened up, and individualised learning is enabled through the use of mobile devices, digital social networking and online courses, anytime, anywhere.

Against the background of EU and UNESCO definitions, this study follows a broad view on adult education, which considers all organised forms

of adult learning after the initial education cycle (such as retraining, further or continuous VET), and all intentional forms of non-vocational, community, popular or liberal education and learning aiming to enhance professional or personal development¹⁸. The term adult learning and education (ALE) will be used below in order to express all the relevant dimensions of this sector.

Understanding and perception of the concept of ALE in Armenia

A number of different terms related to ALE have surfaced in various legislative documents of the Republic of Armenia (RA) in recent decades. These terms include additional education, supplementary education, preliminary and middle professional education, non-formal education, and lifelong learning.

The major legislative and political education frameworks in RA are the Law on Education (1999), the Law on Preliminary (Craftsmanship) and Middle Vocational Education (2005), and the Law on Higher and Postgraduate Professional Education (2004), as well as a range of regulations (see Chapter IV). These Laws mainly refer to the continuous development of an individual’s professional qualifications through the provision of additional short-term in-service training.

The Law on Education states that “[s]upplemental educational programmes shall be implemented to meet the educational requirements of citizens and society. At each level of professional training, the major objective of supplemental education is

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Deviating from the definition of ALE provided in the GRALE 3 report, which also comprises incidental learning in ALE, this report focuses on intentional education and learning activities only, as defined in ISCED and the CLA.

the uninterrupted improvement of the person's professional qualifications. Supplemental education is implemented at the institutions of general education, the institutions of specialised and supplemental education, as well as through individual educational activities, the procedure for which is defined by the RA Government".

According to the "Strategy of Preliminary (Craftsmanship) and Middle Professional Education and Training" from 2004, the opportunities open to Armenian citizens to receive supplementary education can be expanded through the concept of Lifelong Learning. The strategy stresses that "Lifelong learning is a process which is carried out by means of both educational and non-educational institutions, during which specific educational and internship programmes are used that aim to reproduce, update, develop and efficiently use knowledge and skills acquired during main education, depending on the requirements and conditions of a given time"¹⁹.

In order to promote the development of LLL, the Government of RA adopted in 2006 the "Concept of non-formal education in the Republic of Armenia", outlining the main legal and organisational aspects for non-formal education in Armenia. The Government also approved the "Concept of lifelong learning in the Republic of Armenia" in 2009, which was based on the Belém Framework for Action, and thus promoted a structured approach to LLL.

The Strategy on Supplementary and Continuous Education for the years 2013-2017 also considers UNESCO's understanding of adult learning,

and specifically refers to several directives and formats in which supplementary education for adults is implemented in Armenia:

- training, mandatory by law and mostly funded from the state budget, aiming to support the retraining of employees and their relevant re-qualification/certification. This primarily refers to jobs in public and civil service sectors.
- training which results in a certificate, qualifying the participant for a specific position or enabling her/him to do a specific job. It mainly refers to those cases where certification is a legal requirement.
- training which is implemented in the framework of social assistance programmes, mainly funded by the state. Such training is meant for the unemployed or job-seekers, members of vulnerable families, or people with disabilities.
- training which supports the participant in expressing his/her individual talents and interests, developing creative, intellectual and physical abilities, improving professional qualities and enhancing knowledge and skills.

The term "adult education" was used (although not yet defined) for the very first time in the Law on Preliminary and Middle Vocational Education and Training, adopted in July 2005. The "Concept and Strategy of Adult Education"²⁰, adopted in December 2005, contains the first definition of AE for the Armenian context: "Adult education is the learning process implemented for learners above the age of general (secondary) education through basic and supplementary as well as vocational supplementary education programmes. It is the learning process that is carried out through ed-

¹⁹ Ministry of Education and Science (2008). [National Report: The Development and State of the Art of Adult Education and Learning](#)

²⁰ Government of Armenia (2005). [Adult Education Concept and Strategy](#) website

educational programmes, teaching and learning methods, technical means, daily activities, as well as pedagogical and social services necessary for organising the education of citizens”.

Although the definition of ALE from 2005 indicates which target group is considered as adult learners, difficulties occur with the translation of the term “Adult Education” into Armenian (Arm. մեծահասակների կրթություն). The word used for “adult” in Armenian usually refers to elderly people above 64. This is why it was not possible to establish the use of this term in Armenian policy and educational practice in the long run.

Contrary to EU terminology, Armenian legislation hardly ever refers to NFE, informal education and adult education, but rather focuses on the term “Supplementary and Continuing Education”. This term has been continuously in practice as an expression of non-formal education for children, young people and adults. ALE is implicitly includ-

ed there. The fact that the Ministry of Education’s unit responsible for adult education is called the “Department of Youth Policy, Supplementary and Continuing Education” underlines the preference for the overarching term “Supplementary and Continuing Education”.

After the positive developments between 2005-2017 with regard to conceptual clarifications of ALE and LLL along the lines of UNESCO and EU terminology, further developments have been missing since 2018. The practitioners’ perspective is that Armenia has been falling behind in recent years, or reacting only slowly to EU developments on ALE. For example, civic education as an important pillar of ALE has never been considered in Armenian terminology, although international organisations put it on their agenda in Armenia several years ago. With the new Strategy on Education being developed now, there are strong expectations that both ALE and LLL will be integrated into a national strategy for the very first time.

II. Country profile

Geographically, the Republic of Armenia is situated in Western Asia. It shares borders with Georgia in the north, with Azerbaijan in the east, with Turkey in the west, and with Iran in the south. Armenia has a national territory of 29,743 km², and its capital is the city of Yerevan.

Socio-demographic structure

Armenia is a mono-ethnic country, with 98.1% of its population being ethnically Armenian. The minority part of the population includes Yezidis (1.16%), Russians (0.39%), Assyrians (0.09%), Kurds (0.07%), Ukrainians (0.04%) and Greeks (0.03%). Armenia hosts around 190,000 international migrants (which is a share of 6.4% of the total population) and 18,000 refugees (9.5% of international migrants). International migrants in Armenia largely originate from the same geographical region, namely from Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Russian Federation, Syria and Iran^{21,22}.

While Armenian is the official language, Russian is also widely spoken, followed by English, which can be considered the fastest-growing foreign language in Armenia.

The Armenian Constitution establishes freedom of religion and separation of religion and state affairs²³. At the same time, it recognises the Armenian Apostolic Church as the “national church”.

This is intended to preserve the Armenian national identity²⁴. Accordingly, 93% of the population are members of the Armenian Apostolic Church, only 1.0% are Evangelical, 0.8% practice Yezidism, and 0.5% are Catholic²⁵.

As of January 2020, the number of inhabitants in Armenia amounted to 2.95 million, 6.6 thousand fewer than in January 2019²⁶. Almost two-thirds (63.9%) of the Armenian population live in urban settlements. 36.5% of the permanent population live in the capital city Yerevan. The population is composed of slightly more women (52.7%) than men (47.3%). The average age in Armenia is 36.7, with 20.8% of the population being under the age of 15, 67.4% between 15 and 64, and 11.8% 65 and older.²⁷ Following the global trend, the fertility rate in Armenia is declining, and the trend is towards population ageing. Current life expectancy at birth is 75.

Census data from 2011 provides an insight into the educational attainment of the population. Accordingly, 5% of the population have not complet-

²¹ United Nations (2019). [International Migrant Stock 2019: Country Profile Armenia](#)

²² Estimates of the migrant stock were based on the foreign-born population. Refugees were added to the estimates of international migrants. Data on refugees include asylum-seekers. Data refer to known origins only for migrants originating from the same SDG region.

²³ United States Department of State (2019). [Armenia 2019 International Religious Freedom Report](#)

²⁴ Freedom House, [Armenia Country Profile 2019](#) website

²⁵ Statistical Committee of RA (2019). [The Demographic Handbook of Armenia – RA Population Census 2011](#)

²⁶ Statistical Committee of RA (2019). [The Demographic Handbook of Armenia – Summary](#)

²⁷ UNFPA, [World Population Dashboard Armenia](#) website

ed primary education, 8% have completed primary education (elementary school level), 9% have completed basic education (middle school level), and 40% have completed secondary education. 15% have completed secondary vocational education, and 20% of the population have attained higher professional education levels at university²⁸ (see below for more information about the education levels²⁹). Armenia has reached almost universal literacy. Nevertheless, according to UNESCO data of 2017, there were 586 people between the age of 15 and 24, and 6,196 people aged 15 and older, who were illiterate³⁰. Though far less than in 2010, the number of emigrants still currently exceeds the number of immigrants, resulting in a net migration rate of 1.7 (estimated net migration in 2018 is -18,286 according to the Integrated Living Conditions Survey of Households)³¹. Emigrating Armenians predominantly migrate to France, the United States, Germany and Russia³².

Access to, as well as the reliability and speed of the Internet has generally improved throughout recent years, so that Internet access is now widespread in Armenia. An average of 96% of the population have access to at least a basic Internet connection, and there are virtually no differences between the urban and rural populations. Moreover, there are no significant differences with respect to income groups³³. 3G service is widely available (covering 90% of the country), and even

4G+ already covers around 90% of Armenian settlements. Free Wi-Fi is accessible in many public spaces in Yerevan³⁴.

With a Human Development Index of 0.760, Armenia is above the world average, and ranks 81st out of 189 countries. The country has shown a stable, positive development trend since 2010³⁵.

Economic characteristics

The Armenian economy registered average positive economic growth of 6.7% between 2017 and 2019, with GDP reaching EUR 11,569 million in 2019. Per capita GDP (PPP current) grew by 7.3% from 2018 to 2019, reaching EUR 12,030 in 2019. Gross national income (GNI) stood just below EUR 4,000 in 2019. The economy is expected to contract by 2.2% for 2020.

The Armenian economy has transformed away from agriculture towards services over the past 15 years, with agriculture now contributing less than 15% of GDP, services around 50%, and industry and construction roughly 45%. Important emerging sectors of productivity are the tourism industry, an expanding ICT sector, and growing agribusiness (in beverages and tobacco)³⁶.

Due to expansionist fiscal policies, general government debt increased significantly from 16% percent in 2008, before the financial crisis, to

²⁸ Statistical Committee of RA (2011). [Population \(urban, rural\) Distribution by Educational Attainment, Scientific Degree, Sex and Age](#)

²⁹ Statistical Committee of RA (2011). [Educational level of de jure population](#)

³⁰ UNESCO UIL, [Data for the Sustainable Development Goals Armenia](#) website

³¹ Migration Data Portal, [Armenia](#) overview

³² Statistical Committee of RA (2019). [The Demographic Handbook of Armenia – Migration](#)

³³ World Bank Blog, April 22, 2020 [Internet use in Armenia: How might connectivity shape access to opportunity?](#)

³⁴ Freedom House, [Freedom on the Net Armenia 2019](#) website

³⁵ UNDP, [Human Development Indicators Armenia](#) website

³⁶ World Bank (2017). [Future Armenia: Connect, Compete, Prosper – A Systematic Country Diagnostic](#), Report No. 124816-AM

53% of GDP, including 42.3% of external debt, in 2019³⁷. The state budget deficit was reduced from 5% of GDP in 2010 to 1% in 2019.

Armenia has made considerable progress in reducing national poverty since the beginning of 2000. Nonetheless, more than one-fifth of the Armenian population (23.5%) lived below the national poverty line in 2018 (2.2% fewer than in 2017). 1% were registered as extremely poor, living on less than USD 1.90 a day. Poverty is greater in rural parts of the country, varying between 42% in Shirak Province and 16% in Aragatsotn Province. The income share held by the richest 10% is 28.4%, whereas the share held by the poorest 40% is 20.8. Income distribution equality has steadily improved since 2010, resulting in a Gini index of 34.4 in 2018.

The labour force participation rate in Armenia stood at 57% in 2018. The Armenian employment rate has decreased all in all since 2008, from 49.8% to 47.7% in 2018. This rate is higher for men (58.8 %) than for women (38.1%)³⁸. Furthermore, employment rates increase with educational attainment, reaching 60.3% for people with tertiary education, while they remain as low as 23.8% with general primary education. Economic activity and employment are higher in rural than in urban areas.

19% of the economically active were unemployed in 2018, there being no substantial differences between male and female unemployment rates.

A gender gap in unemployment rates appears in relation to educational attainment. While only 9% of women with basic education are unemployed, the rate is 25% for men. This is reversed at the stage of general secondary education, when the rate equals 23% for women and 19% for men. Unemployment remains problematic even with higher levels of education, 17.2% of individuals with tertiary or post-graduate education are unemployed. This figure increases in cities such as Yerevan, where unemployment is generally higher (27% in Yerevan). While unemployment is lower in rural areas, this largely relates to high rates of employment in the informal sector. The share of informal employment is comparatively high, at 44.5%. Informal jobs are mainly located in the rural agricultural sector³⁹.

Youth unemployment remains persistently high in Armenia. The unemployment rate reached 27.9% for the age group of 15-29 year-olds⁴⁰ in 2016 (compared with 18% for the 15-75 year-old population), 35% of those aged between 20 and 24, and 24% of those aged 25-29^{41,42}. Around 33% of young Armenians are not employed, in education or training (NEET). At 42%, the NEET rate for women is higher than for men (23.5%). While women are at greater risk of being NEET in rural areas, it is the other way around for men (27% of men are NEET in urban areas). The NEET rate is still below 10 percent at age 15, as most youngsters are still in school. There is a sharp increase between ages 16 and 20 in the percentage of both males and females who are neither in employment nor edu-

³⁷ Statistical Committee of RA, [Main Indicators of Government Finance by indicators and years](#) website

³⁸ Statistical Committee of RA (2018). [Labour Force Survey – Work Activity 2018](#)

³⁹ Statistical Committee of RA (2019). [Statistical Yearbook of Armenia 2019 – Employment](#)

⁴⁰ Young people graduate from high school at the age of 18. Afterwards, most of them continue into military service, colleges or higher education. This is the major reason for the high percentage of 48% being categorised as unemployed in this age group.

⁴¹ Sargsyan, A. & Castel-Branco, E. (2019). [Youth Transition to Work in Armenia](#). European Training Foundation

⁴² Bardak, U. et al. (2015). [Young People Not in Employment, Education or Training \(NEET\)](#). European Training Foundation

cation. The NEET level peaks among men at age 20, driven by a significant share coming back from compulsory military service who either become unemployed/inactive, or go back to school. The risk of being NEET increases with age for women, whereas age is irrelevant for this status among young men to some extent. The reasons for being NEET differ between women and men. While a large share of young women are inactive because they take charge of household and carer activities (54%), 58% of men are inactive due to unemployment. Educational attainment does not necessarily exempt people from the risk of being NEET, and particularly women with upper secondary (33%), vocational (44%) or tertiary level (21.5%) education are at risk of inactivity⁴³.

Political system and state structure

The initial years that followed the breakup of the Soviet Union and the resulting Armenian independence in 1991 were marked by the territorial war in Nagorno-Karabakh, social and economic deprivation, and large-scale emigration. Armenia's path remained unchanged until the early 2000s, when a boom in the construction sector triggered economic growth for the ensuing years. Armenia was hit hard by the global economic and financial crisis in 2008, and saw itself increasingly dependent on Russia with respect to economic and security matters. The political domain was long characterised by deteriorating human rights, corruption and nepotism⁴⁴.

A constitutional reform process which was launched in 2013 was concluded with a successful public referendum in December 2015^{45,46}. The reform was to transform the current semi-presidential form of governance into a parliamentary system. This had not however been fully implemented by the time the peaceful Velvet Revolution in 2018 dismissed Prime Minister Serzh Sargsyan and his government, who had previously attempted to consolidate his power by assuming the post as Prime Minister after his second term as President had come to an end. The snap elections held in 2018 were free and fair, and marked a new chapter of state-building and development. The former opposition party achieved a landslide victory, whereas the former ruling Republican party failed to reach the 5% threshold.

The new Constitution transferred basic political powers which had previously belonged to the President to the Government and the Prime Minister. While the President is the head of state with primarily representative tasks, he or she has no veto rights, cannot take legislative initiatives, and is no longer elected directly but by the National Assembly (Parliament) for a single seven-year term only. The Government holds the executive. It is composed of ministers and led by the Prime Minister, who is proposed by Parliament and appointed by the President. Parliamentary elections are implemented on the basis of a fully proportional electoral system with national and territorial party lists and a 5% threshold. Parliament

⁴³ World Bank (2019). [Exploring the Diversity of Young People Not in Employment, Education or Training \(NEET\). The Gender Profile of NEETs in Georgia and Armenia](#)

⁴⁴ Bertelsmann Stiftung (2020). [BTI 2020 Country Report — Armenia](#). Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung

⁴⁵ Borisov, N. (2018). [From Presidentialism to Parliamentarism: Parliamentarization of Government Systems in Kyrgyzstan, Georgia and Armenia](#)

⁴⁶ Badalyan, L. (2019). [Protests in Armenia. The Domestic Dimension](#). Caucasus Analytical Digest No. 108

currently consists of 132 elected members, with a female share of 23.48%⁴⁷. Three parties are represented in Parliament. The ruling party is Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's My Step Alliance, with currently 88 seats, including four minority representatives (Yezidis, Russians, Assyrians and Kurds). Prosperous Armenia (BHK), with 26 seats, and Bright Armenia (LHK), with 18 seats, are the two opposition parties⁴⁸.

There are two levels of governance in Armenia, one at central government level, and one at local or community level. The ten provincial administrations (marzes) are part of the central government, and have no separate budget. Armenia is subdivided into a total of 915 communities (with their own mayors and municipal councils), one of which is the capital Yerevan.

Today, Armenia is an official member of the United Nations and its organisations, the Council of Europe, the WTO, the WHO, Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, as well as the Eurasian Economic Union and the Collective Security Treaty Organization⁴⁹. It is a signatory to all major UN Treaties, conventions and protocols⁵⁰.

Armenia's relations with the EU culminated in a provisional membership application in June 2018⁵¹. They are based on the "EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agree-

ment" (CEPA), and operate within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership. The CEPA entered into force on 1 March 2021, after the Agreement had been ratified by the Republic of Armenia, all the EU Member States, and the European Parliament. This Agreement provides a framework for the EU and Armenia to work together in a wide range of areas: strengthening democracy, the rule of law and human rights, creating more jobs and business opportunities, improving legislation, public safety, a cleaner environment, as well as better education and more opportunities for research⁵². Armenia received annual grants amounting to EUR 65 million in 2019⁵³.

Education system

Since 2008, education has been obligatory for all children in Armenia for at least 12 years from ages 6 to 17. The education system is structured into pre-school education, general education up to high school, and professional education (see Graph 1). Children can attend pre-school from ages 1 to 6 (there were 884 spread over Armenia in 2018), either in nurseries (for children aged 2-3), kindergartens (for 3-6 year-olds), or joint nursery-kindergartens. As pre-school is not mandatory in Armenia, only about one-third of all eligible children are enrolled in pre-primary education institutions⁵⁴.

⁴⁷ Government of the Republic of Armenia, [State administration system](#) website

⁴⁸ IPU Parline database, [Armenia National Assembly](#) website

⁴⁹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, [International Organisations](#) website

⁵⁰ [UN Treaties, Conventions, Protocols Armenia is a signatory](#) overview

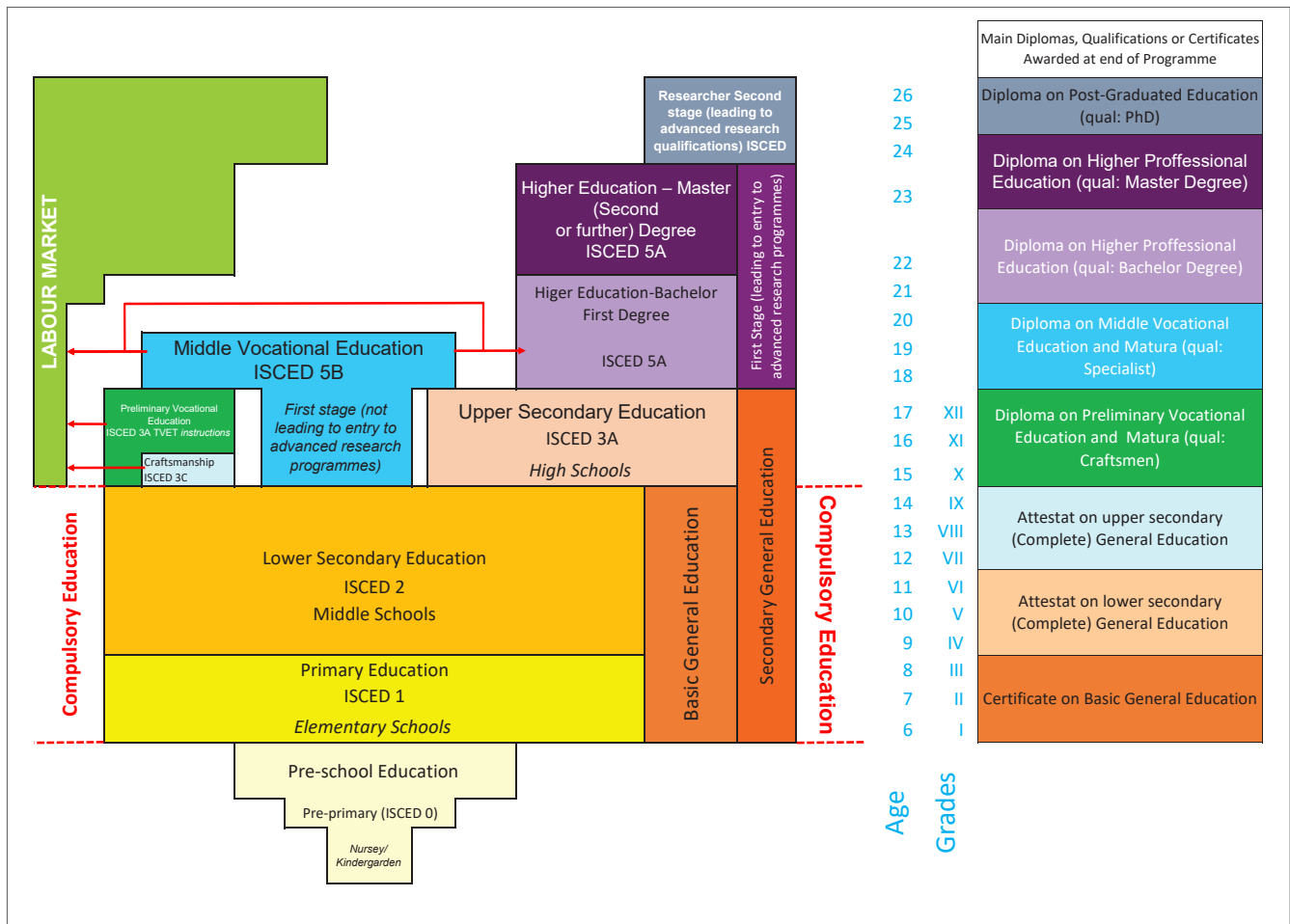
⁵¹ European Commission, [EU – Armenia Relations](#) website

⁵² EEAS (2021). [The EU and Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement enters into force](#), Press release 28 February 2021

⁵³ European Commission (2021). [Facts and Figures about EU-Armenia Relations](#)

⁵⁴ UNESCO UIL, [Data for the Sustainable Development Goals Armenia](#) website

GRAPH 1 Armenia's education system.



Source: McBride, V. (2019), p. 47⁵⁵

The 1,409 general education schools in Armenia are divided into elementary schools (for Grades 1-4), middle schools (Grades 5-9), and high schools (Grades 10-12). Moreover, there are 18 schools for children with special needs⁵⁶. The net enrolment rate in primary education experienced a slight decrease recently, falling from 96.4% in 2012 to 91% in 2019. Girls and boys are enrolled to an equal extent. The net enrolment rate into lower secondary education stood at 89.71% in 2019, with a higher rate for girls. The gender gap in enrolment widens for upper

secondary education, where 96.32% of young women are enrolled, compared with 83.57% of young men.

Next to high school, primary and secondary vocational education are part of upper secondary education in Armenia. Admission to vocational programmes is granted with at least basic general education (e.g. middle school level). Primary vocational education concentrates on handicrafts training, with a duration from 6 months to 3 years. Training is provided in vocational schools and

⁵⁵ McBride, V. (2019). [Policies for Human Capital Development, Armenia](#). An ETF Torino Process Assessment. European Training Foundation, p. 47

⁵⁶ Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports, [Education System](#) website

other vocational education institutions such as educational centres and penitentiary institutions. Secondary vocational education focuses on training specialists. Training continues for 2 to 5 years, and is provided in colleges and higher education institutions. A dual TVET system is currently being piloted in cooperation with GIZ. 28,902 individuals attended VET training in 2019⁵⁷. It is estimated that this corresponds to 28.4% of upper secondary students participating in VET^{58,59}. Adult education is not a standalone component of the system, though some of the short-term supplementary programmes implemented at tertiary level (by Universities or VET colleges) can be considered as targeting adults⁶⁰.

Armenia has been a fully-fledged member of the Bologna Process/the European Higher Education Area since 2005. Armenia first adopted a National Qualifications Framework (ANQF) in March 2011, which was updated in July 2016. Similar to the European Qualifications Framework, it comprises eight levels of qualification, covering general, VET and higher education. Levels 6 to 8 are currently reserved for higher education. Overall responsibility for the implementation of NQF rests with the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports (MESCS)⁶¹.

Armenia has 27 public and 31 private higher educational institutions⁶². Admission is granted on the basis of at least secondary general or secondary vocational education. Higher education is

offered in first-level Bachelor's programmes (for at least four years) and second-level Master's programmes (for at least one year), at Universities, institutes, academies or conservatories. Corresponding to international patterns, there is a gender gap in graduation ratios from first-level higher education (ISCED 6 and 7) to the advantage of women. Whereas the gross graduation ratio is 33% for young men, the ratio is 56% for young women. This rate for women is among the highest in the world⁶³.

According to a study by Open Society Foundations (OSF), major differences in the enrolment rates are revealed when considering the socio-economic background of students at upper secondary level⁶⁴. For the period 2010-2015, the enrolment rates for the richest quintile of students are 1.3 times as high as those for the poorest quintile, causing higher drop-out rates from the main schools by children from poorer backgrounds (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2017). There is a close link between students' level of achievement, and their family background. The share of students from impoverished families with excellent scores is 34.3%, compared to 42.8% of children from more affluent backgrounds. The trend appears to persist as students transition from primary to upper secondary levels, and tends to worsen. The findings of the study suggest a correlation between family wealth and the intention to pursue studies to tertiary level (84.2% of well-off families, as against

⁵⁷ Statistical Committee of RA (2020). [Labour Market in the Republic of Armenia 2018-2019, Vocational Training](#)

⁵⁸ McBride (2019), p. 18.

⁵⁹ [UNESCO Institute for Statistics](#), Armenia, Indicator "Distribution of enrolment by programme orientation"

⁶⁰ DVV Armenia Factsheet

⁶¹ UNESCO UIL (2015). [Global inventory of regional and national qualifications frameworks, v. II: national and regional cases](#)

⁶² SPHERE consortium, [Higher Education in Armenia](#) website

⁶³ [UNESCO Institute for Statistics](#), Armenia, Indicator "Gross graduation ratio from tertiary education"

⁶⁴ Open Society Foundations (2018). [The Profile of Equity in the General Education in Armenia in 2010-2016](#)

51% of non-rich). It becomes particularly clear that poor households have lower educational attainment if one compares tertiary completion rates. 10% of the poor have completed tertiary education, compared with 22% of the non-poor. Moreover, the share of households where members have secondary education at most, and where children are more likely to be absent from school, is higher within the poorest quintile. The educational attainment is also linked to spatial indicators. The shares of people in rural areas who have completed vocational education (14%) or tertiary education (9%) remain far below those in secondary cities or in the capital Yerevan (20% vocational education and 25-31% tertiary education).

Education in Armenia is largely located in the public sector. Pre-school is largely publicly financed, and secondary education at state institutions is free of charge. Fewer than 3% of all students attend private schools up to lower secondary education. This rate increases to 3.7% for upper secondary education. Roughly 10% of students attend private institutions for tertiary education⁶⁵. Public institutions of tertiary education are permitted by law to set their tuition fees. The government however provides full tuition reimbursement for a number of students (the quantity of scholarship-holders is defined by the government annually for each institution/department)⁶⁶. Public spending on education currently amounts to 2%, a rate which corresponds to less than 50% of the EU-27 level.

⁶⁵ [UNESCO Institute for Statistics](#), Armenia, Indicator “Distribution of enrolment by type of institution”

⁶⁶ <http://escs.am/files/files/2020-05-26/8669c4da71fcbb508c30fd7e10c9864b.pdf>

III. The historical development of Adult Education

The Soviet period

Armenia was previously a constituent Republic of the Soviet Union (1920-1991). In an attempt to help illiterate adults, the Bolsheviks adopted a decree on the “elimination of illiteracy” on 26 December 1919, generally known as Likbez, and launched an ambitious campaign between 1923 and 1927 called “Down with Illiteracy in Society”. The new policy made literacy training obligatory for all citizens aged between 8 and 50. Millions of illiterate adults all over the Soviet Union were enrolled in special literacy schools, and were trained in grammar. The 1926 census showed that only 51 percent of Soviet citizens over the age of ten were literate. 81.1 percent of Soviet citizens (aged ten and above) were literate by the 1939 census, and literacy was commonplace among almost all citizens of the Soviet Union by the 1960s^{67, 68}.

Formal adult education courses were incorporated into secondary, vocational and higher education frameworks⁶⁹. Evening and correspondence courses gave workers the opportunity to obtain secondary education without losing their jobs⁷⁰.

People’s Universities had characteristics of both formal and non-formal education, and were described as organisations of post-school self-education for adults⁷¹. The All-Union Znaniye Association was founded in 1947 with a mission to teach workers technological and scientific changes through adult education⁷². The members of the Association were professionals and scholars who helped in organising lectures and exhibitions, publishing books and brochures, and distributing a yearbook called “Science and Mankind”. The trade unions played an active role in adult education via places of work in the Soviet Union. Institutions were required to facilitate on-the-job training for their employees⁷³.

All education programmes were financed by the government, which exercised centralised control over all education activities. Along with the purpose of enhancing skills and raising the completion rate of secondary education and cultural enrichment, one of the main goals of adult education in the Soviet Union was political and ideological propaganda, with programmes being shaped by Marxist-Leninist ideology^{74, 75, 76}.

⁶⁷ Egorov, B. (2019). [How the Bolsheviks taught Russians to read and write](#). Russia Beyond

⁶⁸ Foley, K. (2007). [Literacy and Education in the Early Soviet Union](#)

⁶⁹ Wells, R. L. & Goetz, D. N. (1987). [Adult Education in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics](#)

⁷⁰ Charters, A. N. & Associates (1981). Comparing adult education worldwide. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers

⁷¹ Darinsky, A. (1974). People’s universities in the USSR. *Convergence*, 7 (1), 51-58.

⁷² Brady, H. G. & Allen, S. E. (1974). The post-war development of adult education in Russia. *Adult Leadership*, 23 (3), pp. 77-79.

⁷³ Wells, R. L. & Goetz, D. N. (1987)

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Kvatchadze, L. (2009). Adult Education in South Caucasus – Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. In: *Gartenschlaeger, U. (ed.): European Adult Education outside the EU. – International Perspectives in Adult Education (IPE) 63. Bonn: DVVI, pp. 131-147.*

⁷⁶ DVV International Armenia (2020). AE in Armenia: Study of Policies and Practices. Yerevan: DVV International

“The Concept of Continuing Education” was developed and approved by the Soviet Government in 1989. The concept was not however implemented due to the collapse of the USSR⁷⁷.

After independence

The education system in Armenia started to undergo some transformations in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union which prepared the ground for new developments in AE. According to Kvatchadze (2009), the three republics of the Southern Caucasus (Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan) set new priorities for AE after independence. Those new considerations included:

- helping citizens of newly-independent countries to adapt to the new challenging living conditions and to be able to gain access to the labour market
- encouraging active citizenship through civic education of adults
- developing professional training programmes in line with changes in national economic structures
- recognising employers’ role in the development of employees’ qualifications

The Government of Armenia approved the “Law on Education” in 1999. Article 26 of the first and main law which regulates education in the country covers supplementary education. The “RA Law on Ecological Education of the Population” was adopted in 2001. This was the first law to cover continuous education in Armenia through mentioning ecological education and awareness

in society⁷⁸. Next in the timeline is the “Law on Higher and Postgraduate Professional Education”, which was adopted in 2004. Again in 2004, “The Strategy of Preliminary and Middle Vocational Education and Training (VET)” was approved. This strategy is of particular importance, as it not only mentions the importance of continuous education, but also outlines specific actions. One year later, following the adoption of the strategy, the “Law on Preliminary and Middle Vocational Education and Training” was passed in the National Assembly of Armenia. The term “Adult Education” was used for the first time here in the history of laws in Armenia. This strategy and law set the ground for adopting the “Strategy and Concept of Adult Education” in 2005 (more about the laws and strategies mentioned can be found in Chapter IV).

With the basic laws and strategies in place, new players started to emerge in the field. The “Adult Education and Lifelong Learning Association” non-profit organisation was established in 2005 in order to “develop and institutionalise quality adult education systems in Armenia through active stakeholder involvement, and to contribute to the development of the professionalism of Adult Educators”⁷⁹.

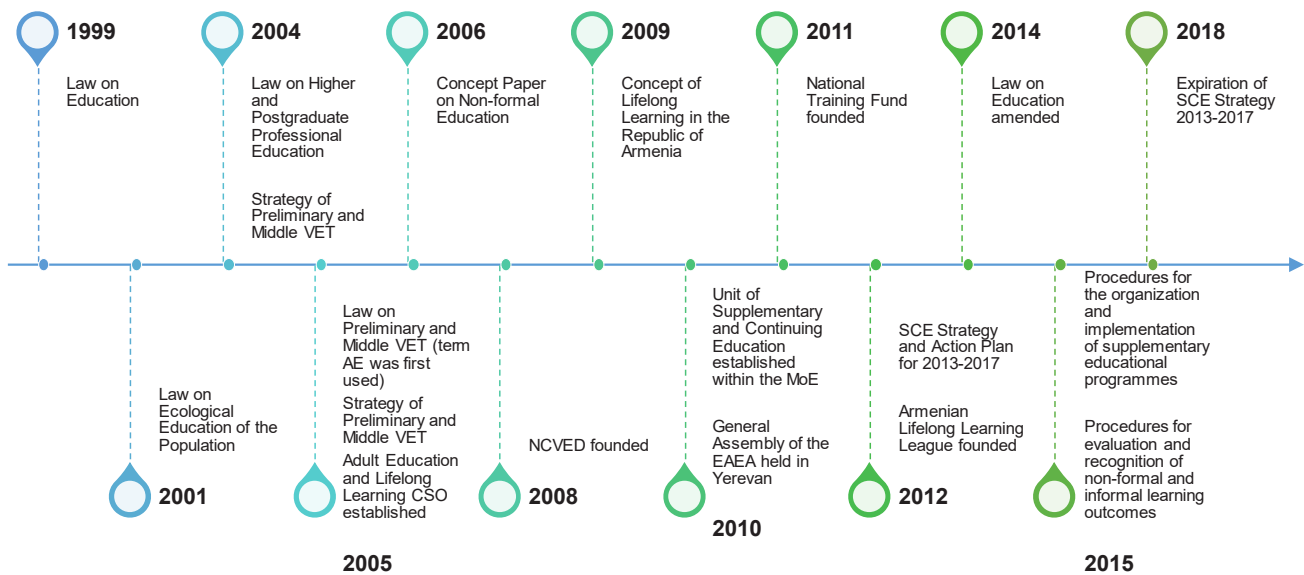
Another development worth mentioning in the historical timeline is the “Concept Paper on Non-formal Education” adopted in 2006, which spells out the framework for the planning and provision of non-formal education in Armenia. The “Law on Adult Education” was drafted in 2007⁸⁰. However, it was sent back for further elaboration.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ [Adult Education and Lifelong Learning Association \(Armenia\) website](#)

⁸⁰ Parliament of the Republic of Armenia, [Law on Adult Education](#)

GRAPH 2 Historical development of AE in Armenia, 1999–2018

Source: Own presentation.

With the aim in mind of enhancing the efficiency of implementing reforms and further developing the VET system, the National Centre for Vocational Education and Training Development (NCVED) was founded in 2008 as the construction for methodical support and assistance for preliminary (craftsmanship) and middle vocational education⁸¹.

Another milestone in the development of AE in Armenia was the adoption of the “Concept of Lifelong Learning in the Republic of Armenia”. Approved in 2009, this document used the term “learning” instead of “education” for the first time⁸². A notable development in 2010 was the establishment of the Unit of Supplementary and Continuing Education within the MESCS (see more about the Unit in

Chapter IV, pp. 28-29)⁸³. The term “Supplementary and Continuing Education” has been put into practice as an expression of the non-formal education of children, young people and adults. ALE is implicitly included there (see Chapter I).

The General Assembly of the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) was held in Yerevan in June 2010, together with the international conference on “Vocational training for youth and adults”. It was initiated by the Armenian Association of Adult Education and Lifelong Learning, DVVI, MESCS of the Republic of Armenia, EAEA, the European Education Fund, and the British Council^{84, 85}.

The National Training Fund was founded on the basis of Government decree N1550 of 2011⁸⁶.

⁸¹ [National Centre for Vocational Education and Training Development](#) website

⁸² DVVI Armenia (2020a)

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ DVV International (2010). [Newsletter No. 17](#) of the Representative Office of DVV International in Central Asia and the South Caucasus

⁸⁵ DVV International Armenia. (2020b). *Adult Education Network Study*. Yerevan: DVV International

⁸⁶ Government of the Republic of Armenia (2011). [Statute of the National Education Fund](#)

Among other objectives and functions, this entity became responsible for promoting equal opportunities for all to develop knowledge and skills for becoming more competitive on the labour market.

The “Programme of Expansion of the Process of Integration of the Vocational Education System of the Republic of Armenia into the European Higher Education Area, and its Implementation Timetable” was approved in 2012. Specific sections of the Programme pertained to supplementary and continuing education, and among other expected outcomes, the timetable specified the drafting of the new law on “Supplementary and Continuing (Adult) Education” or making adjustments to the existing legislation by 2013 and developing the respective state educational programmes by 2014⁸⁷. Another attempt to develop the “Law on Adult Education” was made in 2012⁸⁸. As in the case of former, the latter draft was also excluded from the further discussions⁸⁹.

The MESCS adopted the “Supplementary and Continuing Education Strategy and Action Plan for 2013-2017” in 2012. This served as the key document in ALE and supplementary education until it expired in 2018.

The “Armenian Lifelong Learning League”, a union of legal entities, was founded in April 2012 to identify needs and promote opportunities in lifelong learning in Armenia⁹⁰.

The RA “Law on Education”, adopted in 1999,

underwent some notable amendments in 2014. The revised law now incorporates definitions of terms that are important for ALE (such as lifelong education, informal education, non-formal education, etc.). More importantly, the section covering supplementary education was made more extensive, and a new section was added on evaluation and recognition of the outcomes of supplementary education. Based on the revised Article 26 of the abovementioned law, the Government of Armenia approved a decree in 2015 on the “Procedures for the organisation and implementation of supplementary educational programmes, and the procedures for evaluation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes”.

Post-Velvet Revolution (2018)

Armenia achieved a peaceful transition to a new government with the Velvet Revolution in 2018. This development resulted in some systemic changes, and in the adoption of new strategies. Although no state policies have yet been adopted by the new Government addressing Adult Education per se, some documents nonetheless contain provisions relevant to it.

The 5-year Action Plan of the Government of Armenia adopted in 2019 envisions development of human potential through “encouraging education, ensuring quality education, developing professional potential required for the structural changes in the economy”. The Action Plan also mentions the need to “develop learners’ cognitive, personal and interpersonal skills, capaci-

⁸⁷ Government of the Republic of Armenia (2012). [Program of Expansion of the Process of Integration of the Vocational Education System of the Republic of Armenia into the European Higher Education Area, and its Implementation Timetable](#)

⁸⁸ Parliament of the Republic of Armenia, [Law on Adult Education](#)

⁸⁹ [Statement by the President of the Parliament](#) on the Law on Adult Education

⁹⁰ DVV International Armenia (2020b)

ty-building for teachers, and strengthen the education-science-labour market connection”⁹¹.

In 2019, the Government approved the “Work Armenia” Strategy and Action Plan for 2020-2023⁹², and the “Concept of Development of Work-based Learning (WBL) in Armenia and 2019-2025 Action Plan”, with the support of the European Training Foundation (ETF)⁹³ (see Chapter IV, pp. 27-28).

The Ministry of Education and Science expanded into the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture

and Sports after 2018, which resulted in some structural changes and redistribution of functions between departments and units. The Unit of Supplementary and Continuing Education ceased being a stand-alone entity, and was merged with the Department of Youth Policy, Supplementary and Continuing Education in 2020. Another institutional change took place in January 2021, when the National Centre for Education Development and Innovation was launched to replace the liquidated National Institute of Education.

⁹¹ Government of the Republic of Armenia (2019). [Action Plan for 2019-2023](#)

⁹² Government of the Republic of Armenia (2019). [Work Armenia Strategy](#)

⁹³ Government of the Republic of Armenia (2019). [Concept of Development of Work-based Learning \(WBL\) in Armenia and 2019-2025 Action Plan](#)

IV. Legal framework and governing structures

Laws

There are a number of laws, policies and strategies regulating Adult Education in Armenia. The main document defining the principles of state policy in education and the legal and organisational, as well as the financial and economic foundation of the education system, is the “**RA Law on Education**”, which was adopted in 1999 and has been revised several times since then.

According to the Law, the State, in cooperation with social partners, ensures “the development of professional (vocational) education and of the system of instruction in accordance with the needs of the labour market, as well as guaranteeing the proportionate operation of the formal, non-formal and informal education system and recognition of the outcomes thereof” (Article 2 clause 1).

The Law does not mention Adult Education per se, but it covers Supplementary Education, which sets a framework for Adult Education. Article 26 of this Law, which was revised in 2014, states that “Supplementary educational programmes shall be implemented throughout a person’s life in order to fulfil their professional/vocational and personal education needs, and shall be considered as a way to provide non-formal learning (Article 26 clause 1)”. The law also mentions that supplementary educational programmes are “to improve, update and complement previously obtained (prior) knowledge, abilities, skills and values” (Article 26 clause 2), and are to be “organised through training, courses of group and individual professional instruction, and those of short-term instruction, the outcomes of studies

whereof may be evaluated and recognised as prescribed by law” (Article 26 clause 3).

The term Adult Education first featured in a legislative document in 2005, when the “**Law on Preliminary and Middle Vocational Education and Training**” was adopted. This Law states that the institution of craftsmanship and middle vocational education is, among other things, to implement educational and instruction programmes for adults (Article 18 clause 1). The Law also specifies that management bodies authorised by the Government are to participate, within the scope of their competence, “in the elaboration of state educational standards for craftsmanship and middle vocational education, establishment of lists of professions and specialisations, as well as qualification requirements to specialists, requirements as to the knowledge, capacities and skills of students, organisation of education and instruction of adults” (Article 17 clause 1).

Some principles of Adult Education are reflected in the “**Law on Higher and Postgraduate Education**” as part of supplementary education. According to this Law, which was adopted in 2004, higher and postgraduate professional education is to be provided in the Republic of Armenia through the basic and supplementary programmes. While the basic programmes include Bachelor’s, Master’s and certified specialist degrees, as well as programmes for medical practitioners in research and residency, the supplementary programmes are for training and for raising the qualifications of specialists (Article 8 clause 4). Article 7 of the

Law also mentions the supplementary education programmes, stating that the systems of higher and postgraduate education are to include state educational standards for them, as well as licensed higher education institutions and organisations providing supplementary professional education⁹⁴.

The “**Law on Adult Education**” was drafted in 2007 at the initiative of the National Assembly. It was however temporarily excluded from general discussions, suggesting that further elaborations should be applied (State of the Art, 2008). The Ministry subsequently opted not to follow up with drafting a separate Law on Adult Education, but to make amendments to the existing “Law on Education” with the revision that took place in 2014⁹⁵.

Policies

Before 2018 (pre-revolution)

The Government approved the “**Concept Paper and the Strategy of Adult Education**” in 2006. This covered secondary education, professional (vocational) and supplementary education, as well as training and requalification. The document identified the need to organise education for adults who had been left behind by education, facilitate their efforts to change professions, help requalify those who lacked opportunities to work in their current profession, organise professional (vocational) education for those who were unemployed or had health issues. According to the document, the goal of Adult Education is to provide citizens with new professions and jobs,

in line with their abilities and health conditions, as well as to support them in becoming accustomed to social conditions⁹⁶. It should however be noted that this document is largely declarative in terms of its status, and that it was adopted as a result of the country’s participation in international ALE events. In reality, the Government is not strongly committed to it, even though the document is still valid.

The same is true for the “**Concept of Lifelong Learning in the Republic of Armenia**”⁹⁷, adopted by the RA Government in 2009. This document stresses that the system of Lifelong Learning covers all forms of learning: formal, non-formal and informal, professional and non-professional, including not only the services provided by different organisations and individuals, but also self-education. The Concept notes that lifelong learning in Armenia is mostly based on formal education, while non-formal education is unregulated. State policy on evaluating the outcomes of non-formal education is missing. Entities have been established for education management, methodological assistance and quality assurance, but all these reforms target formal education, particularly public educational institutions. In the same way, according to the Concept, legal documents and strategies point to a need to establish a Lifelong Learning system, but none of them suggests and establishes unambiguous norms for policy development, planning and implementation of Lifelong Learning in Armenia. The document recommends establishing new mechanisms for financing the organisation of Adult Education and Lifelong Learning. Although the Concept has the potential

⁹⁴ Government of Armenia (2004). [Law on Higher and Postgraduate Education](#)

⁹⁵ DVV International Armenia (2020a)

⁹⁶ Government of the Republic of Armenia (2005). [Concept Paper and the Strategy of Adult Education](#)

⁹⁷ Government of the Republic of Armenia (2009). [Concept of Lifelong Learning in the Republic of Armenia](#)

to serve as a basis for developing a new Strategy for SCE, it still remains declarative in nature.

Based on the “Law on Education”, the Government of Armenia adopted the Armenian “**National Qualification Framework**” (NQF) in 2011 (revised in 2016)⁹⁸ in order to ensure that national qualifications are comparable with European ones⁹⁹. The NQF, in line with the European Qualification Framework model, specifies eight levels of education with descriptions of three broad categories: knowledge, skills and competences.

The Government also adopted regulations of the **State Accreditation of Educational Institutions** “to assure educational institutions, students, families, employers, and the interested public, that the institution operates with a high level of quality in education and is recognised by the Government”¹⁰⁰. Accreditation of institutions and academic programmes is carried out in three phases: 1) self-evaluation by the educational institution, 2) site visit by an independent expert group, 3) decision on the accreditation status by the National Centre for Professional Education Quality Assurance Foundation’s (ANQA) Accreditation Commission¹⁰¹. However, ALE or SCE does not require accreditation in Armenia. Consequently, most NFEs operate without going through the lengthy accreditation process.

The “**Supplementary and Continuing Education Strategy and Action Plan for 2013-2017**” was one of the key policy documents in the field.

⁹⁸ Government of the Republic of Armenia (2011). [National Qualification Framework](#)

⁹⁹ UNESCO-UNEVOC (2012). [World TVET Database Armenia](#)

¹⁰⁰ National Center for Professional Education and Quality Assurance Foundation, [Accreditation process and documents](#) website

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Government of the Republic of Armenia (2015). [Procedures for the organisation and implementation of supplementary educational programs, as well as the procedure for evaluation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes](#)

¹⁰³ Government of the Republic of Armenia (2003). [Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper](#)

The document set out the steps for six strategic directions:

- promotion of the concept of supplementary and continuous education
- review and enforcement of the legal acts regulating supplementary and continuous education
- validation and recognition of the outcomes of non-formal and informal education
- adjustment/reconciliation of supplementary and continuous education to the current needs of society and the labour market
- promotion of application of supplementary and continuous education through professional/vocational training and short-term educational programmes
- creation of a national database of the resources and outcomes of supplementary and continuous education.

The Strategy expired in 2018, but the outcomes of the policy implementation were not assessed as there are no monitoring mechanisms in place. According to some experts, those mechanisms would have been possible if Government Decree 1062-N adopted in 2015 on the “**Procedures for the organisation and implementation of supplementary educational programmes, as well as the procedure for evaluation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes**”¹⁰² had been legally enforced. The decree is not currently operational.

Armenia adopted the **Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper** (PRSP)¹⁰³ in 2003, and the **Second**

Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper¹⁰⁴ in 2008. Both strategy papers discuss the sector of Education, but do not reflect on Adult Education as a separate topic. The second PRSP specifies that education policy in the country should be in line with the UN’s “Education for Sustainable Development Strategy” in order to ensure results that have a “significant impact on the economic growth of the country, poverty reduction, mitigation of inequality and human development processes, assuring ecological sustainability, both in a short- and a long-term perspective” (p. 244). Analysing professional education programmes by age groups, the paper concludes that the difference in representation in professional education across the generations is slight, and that it was about 22% over the last 20-30 years, which indicates some issues in the country’s professional capital reproduction.

Other policy documents produced during this period, indirectly related to ALE, include the “Strategy of Preliminary and Middle Vocational Education and Learning” (2004), the “Concept Paper on Non-formal Education” (2006), the “Concept on social partnership in the field of preliminary (craftsmanship) and middle vocational education” (2009), the “VET Reform Programme and Action Plan for 2012-2016” (2012), the “Programme of Expansion of the Process of Integration of the Vocational Education System of the Republic of Armenia into the European Higher Education Area, and its Implementation Timetable” (2012), and the “Strategy for Enhancing Ecological Education and Upbringing” (2018) (see Chapter III for a more detailed discussion of some of these documents).

After 2018 (post-revolution)

The **concept paper and roadmap for the development of work-based learning in Armenia for 2019-2025**¹⁰⁵, elaborated by the Armenian Working Group on WBL of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports with the support of European Training Foundation (ETF), establishes a policy framework for the development of work-based learning (WBL) in vocational education and training (VET), as well as defining activities targeting the gradual implementation of new forms of WBL. The roadmap suggests a number of actions in the following four directions in order to develop WBL in Armenia: Improving the policy and legal framework; WBL organisation and implementation in the workplace and classroom; Quality assurance of WBL; WBL financing and incentives for companies.

The **Education Strategy and Action Plan for 2021-2025** has already been drafted, and is in the process of discussion and finalisation. One of the goals in the draft Action Plan, aiming to increase the accessibility of continuous and non-formal education, embeds objectives and activities related to ALE. These activities include increasing the level of the basic literacy of vulnerable adults, putting in place civic education in rural and urban communities, capacitating employees and service providers using ALE methodology, and developing a legal framework and mechanisms for data collection on participation in ALE. The draft Strategy also addresses the issue of the recognition of prior learning for non-formal and continuous education. It aims to develop mechanisms for evaluating and recognising the outcomes of non-formal education by establishing a legal ba-

¹⁰⁴ IMF (2008). [Republic of Armenia: Second Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper](#). IMF Country Report No. 08/376

¹⁰⁵ Government of the Republic of Armenia (2019). [Concept paper and road map for development of the work-based learning in Armenia for 2019-2025](#)

sis and ensuring comparability with the qualifications framework.

The **State Youth Policy and Action Plan for 2021-2025** is currently in the process of development. The draft Action Plan envisions improving the legal framework in youth policies, training in soft skills for young people, training on labour rights for young people, education and employment of professionals, development of informational and educational materials on financial literacy, revision of the youth worker training programme, as well as development of tools for measuring non-formal and informal educational outcomes. The concept paper adopted in 2014 defines the subjects, objectives, issues, principles and directions of the state youth policy of the Republic of Armenia in the long-term (2015-2025)¹⁰⁶. As set out in the document, the promotion of youth participation in social, political, economic and cultural life, development of mechanisms for youth employment, the promotion of spiritual, cultural and family values, and the promotion of continuous education and the recognition of non-formal education, are among the priorities for state youth policy for 2015-2025.

Two other policy documents, the **Work Armenia Strategy and the 5-year Action Plan of the Government of Armenia**, both adopted in 2019, emphasise the importance of developing skills through non-formal learning in order to help enhance employability. The Work Armenia Strategy builds on three pillars, namely human capital development, employment promotion and institutional reform, and highlights the importance of non-formal, especially lifelong education in developing skills de-

manded by the labour market. These documents could have served as windows of opportunity for developing ALE policies, but no policy document on ALE has been created since 2018.

Governing structures

The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports is the lead public agency in education, including adult education. The *Unit of Supplementary and Continuing Education (SCE)* was established within the Ministry in 2010, aiming to ensure the development of supplementary and continuing education, to introduce the latter into the system of vocational education, as well as to monitor the activities of organisations that provide supplementary education. As ALE is implemented as an area of intervention under the topic of NFE (see national understanding of terminology, page 7), the Unit's goals implied covering ALE objectives too. Although the unit provided insights for policy development, adult education was not incorporated into the 2011-2015 Education Development State Programme, nor was it included in the draft 2016-2025 Programme¹⁰⁷. The Unit ceased functioning in 2020, and a new Department of Youth Policy, Supplementary and Continuing Education is currently being established.

Along with NCVETD (see Chapter 3, p. 20), the National Training Fund is another important national agency in the field. The objectives of the Fund include training employed and unemployed people, as well as job-seekers, based on the labour market requirements, developing knowledge, abilities and skills in line with the principles

¹⁰⁶ Government of the Republic of Armenia (2014). [Concept of the Youth State Policy in the Republic of Armenia](#)

¹⁰⁷ DVV International Armenia (2020a)

of lifelong learning, as well as providing support in addressing the issues in Adult Education¹⁰⁸. The Fund was selected by the Ministry to run the National Learning Registry.

The *National Centre for Professional Education Quality Assurance Foundation (ANQA)* was founded by the Government in 2008 as an independent organisation to “implement quality assurance processes through institutional and programme accreditation in preliminary, vocational and higher educational institutions”¹⁰⁹.

The *National Centre for Education Development and Innovation Foundation* started its activities in

January 2021 with the aim in mind of becoming a new “brain centre” in education¹¹⁰. The newly-established foundation, working on behalf of the MESCS, will coordinate the activities of education analysis, professional development, innovation, development of methodological programmes, and organisation of expertise, and will address the gap left after the liquidation of the National Institute of Education. Promotion of professional development is one of the Centre’s main tasks. The main function of the Centre in this regard will be to develop a training methodology, while the actual training of teachers, which is a prerequisite for certification, will be carried out by organisations selected by the MESCS.

¹⁰⁸ Government of the Republic of Armenia (2011). [Statute of the National Education Fund](#)

¹⁰⁹ National Center for Professional Education and Quality Assurance Foundation, [Mission](#) website

¹¹⁰ National Center for Education Development and Innovation Foundation, [“Brain center”](#) website

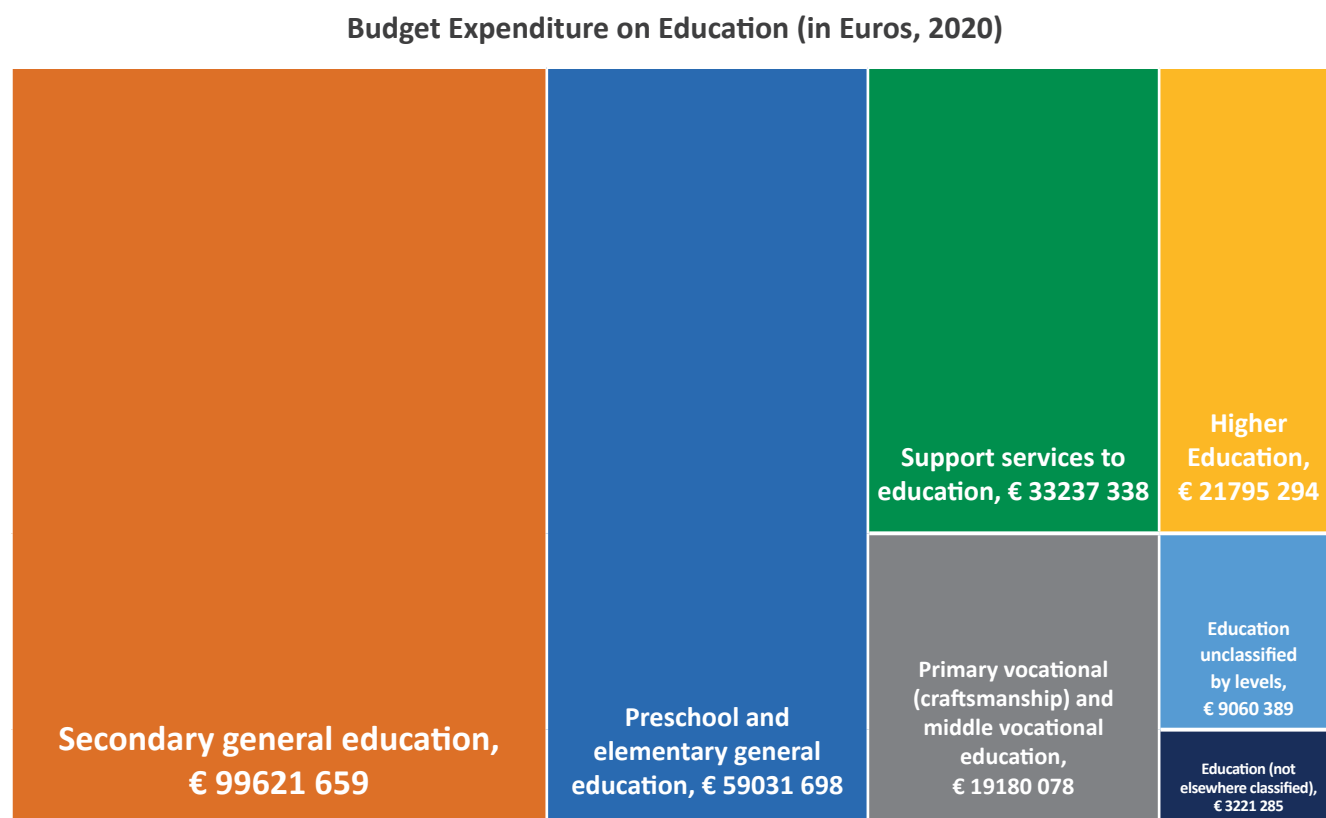
V. Financing

Public expenditure

Planned public expenditure on education in Armenia was around 153 billion AMD (263 million EUR¹¹¹) according to the state budget of 2020. This comprised about 8.3% of the country's overall planned budget expenditure. The largest share in the education sector belongs to expenditure on secondary general education, followed by general pre-school and elementary education (see Graph 3).

There is no specific line for Adult Education in the state budget. The budget line on "Education unclassified by levels" contains a subline on Supplementary Education which embeds the costs of programmes such as training of civil servants, training of staff from different public agencies, professional development and capacity-building programmes. The top three expenditure items here are Training services, Training of special servants of the Ministry of Justice, and Training services for tax and customs officials (see Table 1).

GRAPH 3 State expenditure on education by type



Source: Own presentation based on data from minfin.am¹¹²

¹¹¹ An exchange rate of 1 AMD = 0.0016 EUR was applied at the time when the study was prepared.

¹¹² Ministry of Finance, [Budget overview](#) website

TABLE 1 State-planned expenditure on supplementary education programmes relevant to ALE 2020

Supplementary Education (€ 1,997,612)	
Programme	Planned expenditure
Training services	802,477 €
Training of special servants of the RA Ministry of Justice and special learning	340,801 €
Training services for tax and customs officials	227,968 €
Staff training and retraining services	195,991 €

Source: Own presentation based on data from minfin.am

Social protection expenditure constitutes the largest share of the state budget (8 billion EUR in 2020). There are a few allocations to programmes

within this sector that are directly or indirectly related to ALE. A list of them and their respective costs are presented in Table 2 below.

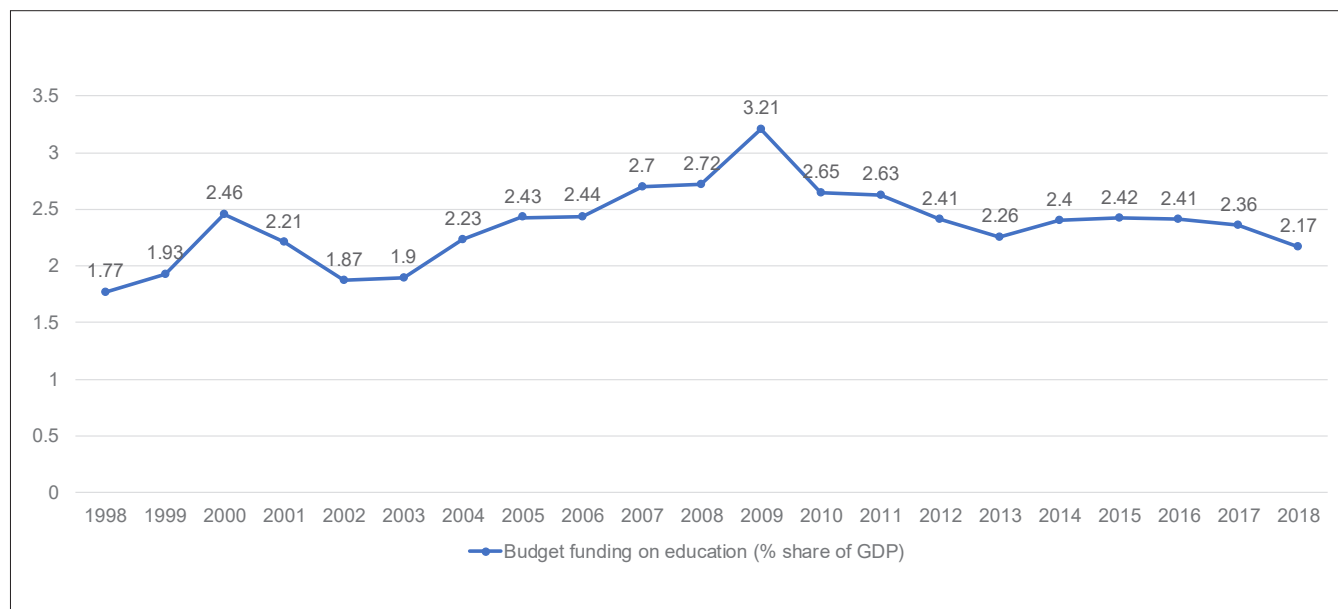
TABLE 2 State budget-planned expenditure by social protection programmes relevant to ALE 2020

Social protection programmes	
Programme	Planned expenditure
Development of methodological manuals, conducting research, training social protection personnel	166,857 €
Vocational training for job-seekers at risk of dismissal, as well as for job-seekers who have six months' remaining sentence	102,200 €
Vocational training system methodology support and staff training services	38,489 €
Support for the unemployed to obtain professional work experience in the profession learnt	262,944 €
Support for small business activities of people who are not competitive on the labour market, through training and consulting services	16,000 €
Civic orientation training for people recognised as refugees by the Republic of Armenia	3,600 €
Vocational training with employers for young mothers who are not competitive on the labour market	181,526 €
Social campaigns to revitalise the role of education	178,733 €

Source: Own presentation based on data from minfin.am

Education budget expenditure as a share of GDP has shown an upward trend since 1998, peaking at 3.21% in 2009. It decreased steadily after 2009, reaching 2.1% in 2019, this being the lowest share since 2003¹¹³ (see Graph 4).

Graph 4 Budget funding on education (% share of GDP)



Source: Own presentation based on NCPPR Report 2008

According to the 2020 GRALE reporting, public spending on ALE increased in 2020 as a proportion of public education spending in Armenia. However, only fewer than 0.5% of public spending currently goes to ALE as estimated in the questionnaire submitted by the country. The government has planned to maintain spending on ALE at about the same level. Armenia tends to prioritise financing ALE for unemployed adults and prisoners. Comparatively low priority is allotted to groups such as older adults (65+),

adults disadvantaged due to lack of education and skills, residents of remote and rural areas, adults with disabilities, minority groups (ethnic, linguistic, religious), migrants and refugees, while young people (15-24), women and girls (15+), as well as men and boys (15+), are not prioritised by the government at all. As for ALE, funding has increased since 2018 for literacy and basic skills, continuing training and professional development, as well as citizenship education.

¹¹³ Open Society Foundations Armenia. [Evaluation of Education Budget Expenditure Efficiency](#), first interim report

Donors

As stated in the 2020 questionnaire submitted for Armenia's UNESCO GRALE report, ALE is co-funded in Armenia through international cooperation, and there is no co-funding from the private sector.

DVVI, the biggest player in ALE in Armenia, has been spending around 300,000 EUR annually in the last three years, funded by the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Administrative costs comprise nearly half of the annual budget. It should be noted that such a large share accounted for by administrative costs is explained by the fact that partner costs are also considered as office costs by BMZ, unlike other international organisations where expenditure on partners is viewed as programme costs. The “pure” programming costs of BMZ-fi-

nanced DVVI interventions in Armenia are thus around 150,000 EUR per year. In addition, DVVI frequently receives funds from other sources, e.g. from the EU or the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AA). The EU-financed EU4Culture Project, implemented by DVVI, had a budget of a little over 500,000 EUR, 470,000 of which was provided by the EU, the remainder of the costs being shouldered by the BMZ. Around 10% of this budget was allocated for training and capacity-building activities. The Prison Education project funded by the AA in 2019-2020 had a budget of over 30,000 EUR to create an improved educational infrastructure and resources for a specific group of vulnerable adults, i.e. prisoners.

It was not possible to identify expenditure on programmes of other international donors (see Chapter X) – e.g. ETF, the British Council and UNDP – during the research for this study.

VI. Institutions and providers

There are four types of institutional setting in Armenia where ALE is provided¹¹⁴: professional development of employees in public administration, supplementary education programmes at higher education institutions, non-formal education measures from NGOs, and training for employees and the unemployed.

Public administration

The majority of AE programmes take place in state bodies such as ministries and state agencies. In this context, the state is both a provider and a recipient of AE measures, as further training (professional development) for public service employees in government bodies and agencies has become very elaborate. The employees' right and obligation to improve professional knowledge and competencies through participation in training courses is embedded in Article 19 of the RA Law on the Civil Service. Training courses are seen as an important part of continuous professional development. Employers are therefore obliged to offer training opportunities, and to ensure that their employees take part. Training is assigned on the basis of a development plan for each employee which accommodates professional development needs and performance. Once a training measure has been completed, credits are added to a personal development plan, which in turn forms the basis for further training measures.

This type of job-related competency training is organised by the Civil Service Office, which reviews

and approves requests from state institutions. The training itself is provided by a suitable professional organisation. Within each public institution, the Secretary-General is in charge of managing in-house training, overseeing (special) training needs, methods, certification and accreditation, as well as allocating funds, time and training providers.

The major public administration bodies and state organisations of RA offering training for civil servants and other employees of state structures include the following:

- the Academy of Justice of the RA Ministry of Justice¹¹⁵
- the Diplomatic School of the RA Ministry of Foreign Affairs¹¹⁶
- the Methodological Centre for Professional Orientation (under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs)
- the National Centre for Educational Technology¹¹⁷
- the National Centre for VET Development¹¹⁸ (NCVETD)
- the National Institute of Health¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ This chapter largely draws on information gathered in DVVI Armenia (2020a).

¹¹⁵ [Academy of Justice of the RA Ministry of Justice](#) website

¹¹⁶ [Diplomatic School of the RA Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#) website

¹¹⁷ [National Center for Educational Technology](#) website

¹¹⁸ [National Center for VET Development](#) website

¹¹⁹ [National Institute of Health](#) website

- the National Institute of Labour and Social Research¹²⁰
- the Training Centre of the RA State Revenue Committee¹²¹

Higher education institutions

Universities are enabled by law (Article 6 of the 2004 Law on Higher and Postgraduate Professional Education) to offer supplementary education programmes in addition to their general education programmes. As such, Universities are not obliged to offer this extracurricular learning option, but they may do so on a voluntary basis. This is why the provision of supplementary education programmes at universities is not regulated. SCE is affiliated with the Faculty of Humanities at some universities, where SCE appears as a possibility to obtain a (second) specialisation degree. Others dedicate special departments to the provision of SCE, such as the Department of Postgraduate and/or Supplementary Education at Yerevan State University (YSU) and the Research Centre of the Armenian State Pedagogical University. There are also Universities that have installed specific Learning Centres such as the Yerevan Brusov State University and the American University of Armenia. The latter has a branch called AUA Open Education, which is exemplary in the higher education institutional landscape of Armenia because it is conceptualised as a centre of excellence for Continuing Education, Adult Training and Lifelong Learning.

American University of Armenia Open Education (AUA Open Education)¹²².

AUA Open Education has been serving as the University's principal interface with the community for more than 18 years. AUA is a transnational University with American accreditation and quality standards. Through its Open Education, the University follows the Western model of LLL, providing both for-a-fee and tuition-fee-exempt training services. In addition to the main campus in Yerevan, it reaches out to a broad target group through its offices in Gyumri, Dilijan, Yeghegnadzor, Vanadzor, and Stepanakert (Nagorno Karabakh Republic).

AUA Open Education plans, designs, develops and delivers a variety of trainings, workshops and seminars for public and private sector organisations, as well as for individuals. These include comprehensive English language training, a multitude of Computer Literacy and Information Technology training activities, and a number of Leadership, Business Management, and Entrepreneurship courses. AUA Open Education thus aims to help participants to achieve their professional and/or career goals.

¹²⁰ [National Institute of Labor and Social Research](#) website

¹²¹ [Training center of the RA State Revenue Committee](#) website

¹²² [American University of Armenia. Open Education](#) website

The following Universities in Armenia provide SCE:

- American University of Armenia, Open Education
- Armenian State Pedagogical University after Khachatur Abovyan¹²³, Research Centres
- Armenian State University of Economics¹²⁴, Change Lab
- Brusov State University¹²⁵, “SMART Caffè” Entrepreneurship Centre
- Public Administration Academy of RA¹²⁶, Department of Training
- Yerevan State University¹²⁷, Postgraduate Additional Education Department

Non-governmental organisations

Non-profit and civil society organisations, including charitable interest groups, can be considered the third major type of ALE providers in Armenia. In general, they offer more flexible programmes than other actors do, in a less formal education environment. Learning formats in practice are usually workshops, small conferences and training courses. Many of their course topics focus on civic education with aspects of human rights, anti-corruption, democracy, activism, journalism and media literacy. Furthermore, there are courses targeting the improvement of employability (e.g. through enhancing soft skills or entrepreneurship), which are often free of charge and sometimes include funds for participants to carry out small projects of their own on the basis of the knowledge that they have

acquired. The funding is mostly provided by international donor organisations, as the state budget does not provide to allocate funds for non-formal learning (see Chapter X for more on international donors). Target groups are usually interested individuals or groups, as well as newly-established non-governmental initiatives and organisations.

DVVI’s Armenia Country Office¹²⁸ has worked towards acknowledging the role and importance of ALE and LLL in Armenia since 2002, and has thus evolved into a key player in this field. DVVI’s target groups are the general public and decision-makers. It engages at micro, meso and macro level in Armenia through advocacy, lobbying and capacity-building. Macro-level activities focus on counselling the MESCS on adult education legislation and strategic development. DVVI contributes at meso level to the capacity-building of ALE providers, for example through training of trainers (ToT) courses, and developing programmes and curricula. At micro level, various adult education programmes and courses are conducted through partner organisations, mostly targeting marginalised adults. DVVI has so far supported the establishment and operation of three Adult Education Centres:

- Sisian Adult Education Centre (since 2014)¹²⁹
- Children of Armenia Fund (COAF) SMART Centre (2019)¹³⁰
- Social-Educational Centre of Shirak Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church (SEC), cooperation since 2007, recently registered as Khachmeruk educational consulting foundation

¹²³ [Armenian State Pedagogical University after Khachatur Abovyan](#) website

¹²⁴ [Armenian State University of Economics](#) website

¹²⁵ [Brusov State University](#) website

¹²⁶ [Public Administration Academy](#) of RA website

¹²⁷ [Yerevan State University](#) website

¹²⁸ [DVVI Armenia Country Office](#) website

¹²⁹ [Sisian Adult Education Center](#) website

¹³⁰ [COAF SMART Center](#) website

The AECs provide skills-based vocational training and retraining for vulnerable local target groups, as well as general guidance and support for the unemployed in order to facilitate re-integration into the labour market. Roughly 500 beneficiaries take part in more than 20 courses per year.

Moreover, DVVI facilitates cooperation amongst CSOs through its engagement for associations such as the Adult Education Association and the Armenian Lifelong Learning League¹³¹. In order to enhance the institutional capacity of its partners at all levels, DVVI supports their participation in regional and international forums and exchanges.

DVVI also established a non-formal Adult Education Network at its own initiative, and this brings together eight organisations from different regions of Armenia. As was stated in the Memorandum of Understanding (2020), the common goal of the network is to support LLL and AE opportunities in Armenia, as well as to contribute to the institutionalisation and professionalisation of AE. Major topics are capacity-building, information and knowledge exchange, learning, innovation, advocacy and effective service delivery and resource allocation. This non-formal network initially included the three AECs from Shirak, Syunik and Lori regions (see above). The network expanded in 2020, accepting five new members:

- the Khachmeruk educational consulting foundation
- the Sisian Adult Education Centre Foundation
- the COAF SMART Centre
- the Gavar State University Foundation

- the Dilijan Community Centre NGO
- the Green Path Agriculture Support NGO
- Martuni Women's Community Council NGO
- the Sevan Youth Club NGO

Since its establishment in 2002 and up to 2019, DVVI has also cooperated with local museums to introduce innovative ALE programmes in cultural education. In this context, DVVI trained museum staff, organised study visits, and allocated project funds for the implementation of small-scale educational measures. It also worked with local and regional partners on topics of the traumatic historical past and reconciliation, and engaged in civic education by organising public discussions, debates and lectures. Publications of professional content, both print and digital, on a wide range of social and educational topics, were also supported by DVVI.

Amongst art institutions, one major player is the ROCHEMP Centre¹³², which is located on the premises of the National Gallery of Armenia. In its role of a centre of excellence, ROCHEMP provides opportunities for meeting and deepening by activating intensive lifelong training courses. The courses, targeting experts and local operators in Cultural Heritage, are organised with the direct involvement of international experts in order to encourage dialogue and the transmission of knowledge.

The Museum of the Armenian State Pedagogical University after Khachatur Abovyan¹³³ pays particular attention to visitors with special educational needs. It organises various programmes and events for audiences of all ages.

¹³¹ [Armenian Lifelong Learning League](#) Facebook profile

¹³² [ROCHEMP Center](#) website

¹³³ [Museum of Armenian State Pedagogical University after Khachatur Abovyan](#) website

Other key providers of ALE, with the status of a non-profit or civil society organisation, include but are not limited to:

- Armenian Civitas¹³⁴ (civic education)
- AGBU Armenian Virtual College¹³⁵
- COAF (English Language, Training Teachers and Administrators, After-School and Summer Programmes, Democracy and Civic Activism in Schools, Professional Orientation and Internship Opportunities for Young People)
- Eurasia Partnership Foundation¹³⁶ (Creative games, Conflict transformation school, Critical thinking school, CSO school)
- Institute of Public Policy¹³⁷ (Summer School of Public Policy, Training on human rights monitoring and advocacy, Professors' training, etc.)
- Legal education and rehabilitation programmes implementation Centre (SNCO)¹³⁸
- Media Initiatives Centre¹³⁹ (Media literacy training)

Training providers for employees and unemployed people

Companies in Armenia are known to be open to offer their employees possibilities for further training and development. Many large and medium-sized companies nowadays invest in continuous upskilling of their staff. They provide in-house training courses according to the demands of the job and with a great degree of flexibility in order to choose the most suitable form of training. Furthermore, every employee is entitled to take educational leave – regulated by the RA Labour Code on the Composition of Working Hours – to

prepare for examinations, tests, graduation theses or laboratory work. An employee can also apply for paid leave if the training is prescribed by the employer.

The overall goal of AE within the working context is to enhance skills and upgrade qualifications, as well as to acquire specialist knowledge. Companies which increasingly offer supplementary educational programmes to their current or potential employees are “Synopsys Armenia”, “Veon Armenia” (Beeline trademark), and “Yeremyan Projects”.

The State Employment Agency of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is a separate division that supports job-seekers in finding jobs. The division organises free AE courses for unemployed people and job-seekers. These courses are provided by employers who are selected via a procurement process announced by the Agency. There are also services for companies, assisting them in their search for professionals with certain qualifications. The State Employment Agency runs 51 local offices countrywide, ten of which are in Yerevan.

Furthermore, the National Training Fund is authorised on behalf of the social partners (the state, employers and trade unions) to coordinate and organise the implementation of supplementary and continuing education. Amongst other objectives, it also aims to support the organisation of training, development of qualification enhancement, and requalification courses targeted at upskilling the employed, the unemployed, and job-seekers.

¹³⁴ [Armenian Civitas](#) website

¹³⁵ [AGBU Armenian Virtual College](#) website

¹³⁶ [Eurasia Partnership Foundation](#) website

¹³⁷ [Institute of Public Policy](#) website

¹³⁸ [Legal education and rehabilitation programs implementation Center](#) website

¹³⁹ [Media Initiatives Center](#) website

VII. Programmes

Similar to the providers landscape, ALE programmes in Armenia mainly consist of training for civil servants, supplementary educational programmes for university employees and their alumni, ToT for teachers, on-the-job training for employees in companies and VET programmes, as well as cultural and civic education programmes in non-governmental organisations. In contrast, non-formal literacy programmes for adults are very rare. Various online programmes have been initiated since the beginning of the global pandemic in 2020.

DVVI cooperation and programmes

The DVVI country office in Armenia has implemented measures at micro, meso and macro level through five 3-year project cycles funded by BMZ since 2002 (see Chapter VI). Collaboration with national authorities and civil society at policy level to enhance, promote and integrate the core values and philosophy of ALE in Armenia has always been at the centre of DVVI's activities. Moreover, DVVI contributed to a wide range of programmes with different partners. These programmes include:

The **Museum Education Centre**¹⁴⁰ was established in 2014 in order to support the development of educational programmes in Armenian museums, to build the capacity of museum workers (through training, seminars, exchange visits), to develop methodological manuals on different aspects of

museum education, and to disseminate best international (particularly European) practice in museum education programmes and methods.

In cooperation with the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the National Academy of Sciences, DVVI established the **Oral History Centre**¹⁴¹ as an educational and research centre that promotes oral history as a complementary method of historical inquiry and teaching. It provides both closed courses/lectures/talks for the Centre's researchers to develop their knowledge and skills, and public courses/lectures/talks to disseminate the methodology and approaches of Oral History among social scientists.

In partnerships with **Boon TV**, AE and LLL are promoted online through a total of nine short videos that reached more than 60,000 viewers.

Other programmes of non-profit organisations and charitable interest groups

Starting from February 2020, the ROCHEMP Centre (see page 36) has established one pilot course "**ROCHEMP2020: training for cultural heritage experts**", carried out by professors and researchers of the University of Bologna with support from the National University of Architecture and Construction of Armenia. The course consists of classroom lectures, individual study and practical activities, and is open to 30 participants.

¹⁴⁰ DVVI Armenia, [Museum Education project](#) website

¹⁴¹ Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, [Oral History Center](#) website

The “**CSO DePo: CSO Development Programme**”¹⁴² fosters sustainable civil society development through strengthening the capacity of CSOs. Part of the programme is the CSO Management School that offers training on project management, organisational development, business planning, advocacy, gender mainstreaming, and service provision. The School is enhanced by the CSO DePo Portal, which offers information on CSO development and funding opportunities. In addition, the School plans to establish a CSO Multimedia Solutions facility to enhance communication among CSOs, and between CSOs and other stakeholders. It is expected that up to 160 CSOs will undergo training, either in-person or online. Training for trainers is to be established at a later stage. Grants will be awarded to the most advanced CSOs in order to support their own capacity development.

Adult and continuous education projects initiated during COVID-19 pandemic

Online museums¹⁴³: 25 museums and 12 libraries offer educational, cognitive and entertainment programmes on the “From home to Museum and Library” Facebook common platform¹⁴⁴. Furthermore, various museums have developed online programmes on their social media accounts with hashtags #From home Museums, #museum will come home, #Inter-Museum Collaboration, #En-

gage in self-education, #work together. Users can take part in intellectual quizzes for different age groups, film screenings, online discussions, articles, memoirs about artists, online museum-visitor collaboration programmes, reading, painting, literary, music, animation games, youth competitions, cognitive films, exhibitions, Quest competitions, online educational programmes, etc.

Online libraries: 12 Armenian libraries (coordinated by MESCS) are using their social networks to offer a variety of online platforms as well as digital and audio-visual materials, to organise meaningful entertainment for the population, to encourage self-education, and to make the educational process at home continuous. Their reading community follows the Facebook Page “Libraries in Your Home”¹⁴⁵.

Online theatre, music, cinema and TV programmes: “Cultural Corona pause” offers tours of videotaped cultural institutions with the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports (e.g. to the Yerevan State Puppet Theatre, Aram Khachaturian Concert Hall). The TV programme “Unseen Cinema” broadcasts full-length feature, documentary and short films on public TV. “All About Cartoons” presents 14 Armenian cartoons and animated films on YouTube¹⁴⁶.

Online and distance education: The Armenian Educational Portal www.armedu.am includes a number of websites, a resource library, an educational forum, and a distance-learning platform.

¹⁴² [CSO DePo: CSO Development Program](#) website

¹⁴³ UNESCO (2020), Armenian National Commission, website article [The Armenian National Commission outlines measures taken during the COVID-19 outbreak](#)

¹⁴⁴ [From home to Museum and Library](#), Facebook platform

¹⁴⁵ [Libraries in Your Home](#), Facebook page

¹⁴⁶ [All about Cartoons](#), YouTube

The e-learning platform “Introduction to online education”¹⁴⁷ offers 158 courses to teachers of vocational schools and colleges. Video lessons are broadcast on public television 1tv.am on a daily basis. In addition, a new educational TV channel Hybrid Edu (ch121) was launched by the MESCS in cooperation with the mobile operator Rostelecom. Video tutorials are accessible on Ucom’s UTV Video Rental (VoD) distance

learning section. The open online platform for young adults <https://www.boonus.am/> features courses on social sciences and life skills, including problem solving, financial literacy, communication, and others. Armenia’s Environment Education Network, <http://eenarmenia.org/>, is an open online platform with several events and resources available on key environmental issues.

¹⁴⁷ [Introduction to online education](#) e-learning platform

VIII. Participation and non-participation

Participation rate and structure – public information

In a report on young people registered with the Agency, the State Employment Agency presents the numbers of students in formal education institutions by education levels from 2013 to 2018 (see Table 3). The number of students has fallen at all levels of education in recent years, espe-

cially in higher and middle vocational education. Although the number of students in higher education institutions has declined by 8.3%, the preference of young people towards higher education institutions still prevails.

TABLE 3 Number of students from 2013 to 2018

Academic year	Primary (Craftsmanship) Vocational Education	Middle Vocational Education	Higher Education
2013-2014	7,448	30,125	85,922
2014-2015	7,295	28,483	79,623
2015-2016	6,874	24,300	84,591
2016-2017	6,251	23,193	81,648
2017-2018	6,500	23,063	78,747

Source: Own presentation based on data from the State Employment Agency.¹⁴⁸

Medium and large-scale organisations and companies submit reports “On the Vocational Training of Employees” to the Statistical Committee of Armenia. The reports include data on the number of employees receiving vocational training, institutions providing that training, and the expenses disbursed by the organisation. The reports only include information on vocational training funded by the employer, and do not reflect

the training initiated and/or paid for by the employee. The collected data is presented in the Labour Market in Armenia Report. According to the 2020 report, 6.5% (21,559 persons) and 8.5% (28,902 persons) of employees received training in 2018 and 2019, respectively (see Table 4). The number of trainees includes those persons who underwent vocational and qualification improvement training and retraining during the reporting period¹⁴⁹.

¹⁴⁸ Research among young people registered at the [State Employment Agency](#)

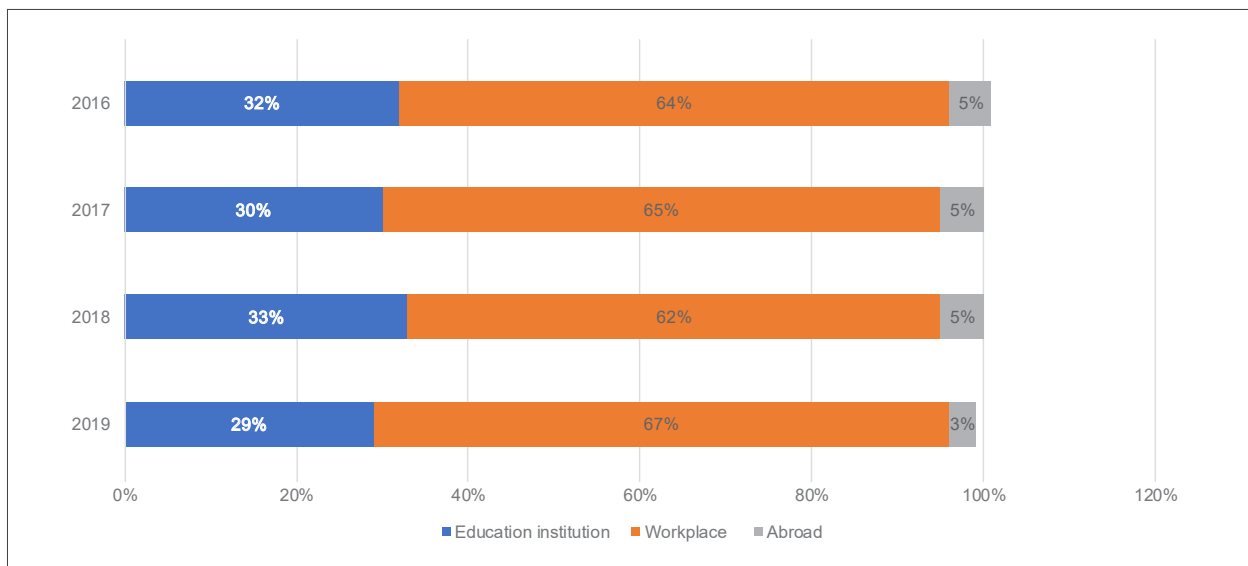
¹⁴⁹ Statistical Committee of RA (2020). [Labour Market in the Republic of Armenia 2018-2019. Vocational Training](#)

TABLE 4 Number of vocational training recipients by type of training

	Total		Male		Female	
	2018	2019	2018	2019	2018	2019
Employees, total	330,263	350,130	148,618	169,714	181,645	180,416
Trained, total	21,559	28,902	11,188	15,952	10,371	12,950
vocational training, retraining	18,200	23,536	8,827	12,563	9,373	10,973
trained for the first time	4,456	5,211	2,171	3,235	2,285	1,976
trained in a second (related) profession	856	1,454	532	1,133	324	321
retrained	12,888	16,871	6,124	8,195	6,764	8,676
upgraded qualification	3,359	5,366	2,361	3,389	998	1,977
young people aged under 30	6,185	8,647	2,390	3,545	3,795	5,102
took an apprenticeship, total	317	483	136	293	181	190
took an apprenticeship abroad	6	9	5	7	1	2

Source: Own presentation based on Statistical Committee of RA (2020).¹⁵⁰

Based on the same reports submitted by employers, the Statistical Committee presents the distribution of training based on the place where it was offered to employees (see Graph 5). The training recipients were mostly trained at the workplace (64-67%) from 2016 to 2019. While some were trained at different educational institutions (29-33%), only a small share of employees travelled abroad for training (3-5%).

GRAPH 5: Number of training recipients by training venue

Source: Own presentation based on data from the Statistical Committee of RA (2020).

¹⁵⁰ Statistical Committee of RA (2020). [Labour Market in the Republic of Armenia 2018-2019. Vocational Training](#)

As for the structure of the participants, 53% of all employees who underwent training were male (12,563 people) and 47% female (10,973 people). The largest share of vocational training, 47%, in 2019 was conducted in financial, real estate, professional, scientific, technical, administrative and support activities (11,038 employees). 60% of the employees undergoing training in this sphere of the economy were female (see Table 5).

Employers spent an average of about 6,000 AMD (9.60 €) per month on their employees' training in 2019. Public administration, education, human health and social work accounted for the highest level of spending on training by employers (7,900 AMD = 12.64 €), while industry accounted for the lowest (about 3,500 AMD = 5.60 €).

TABLE 5 Vocational training recipients and monthly costs of vocational training by sectors of the economy 2019

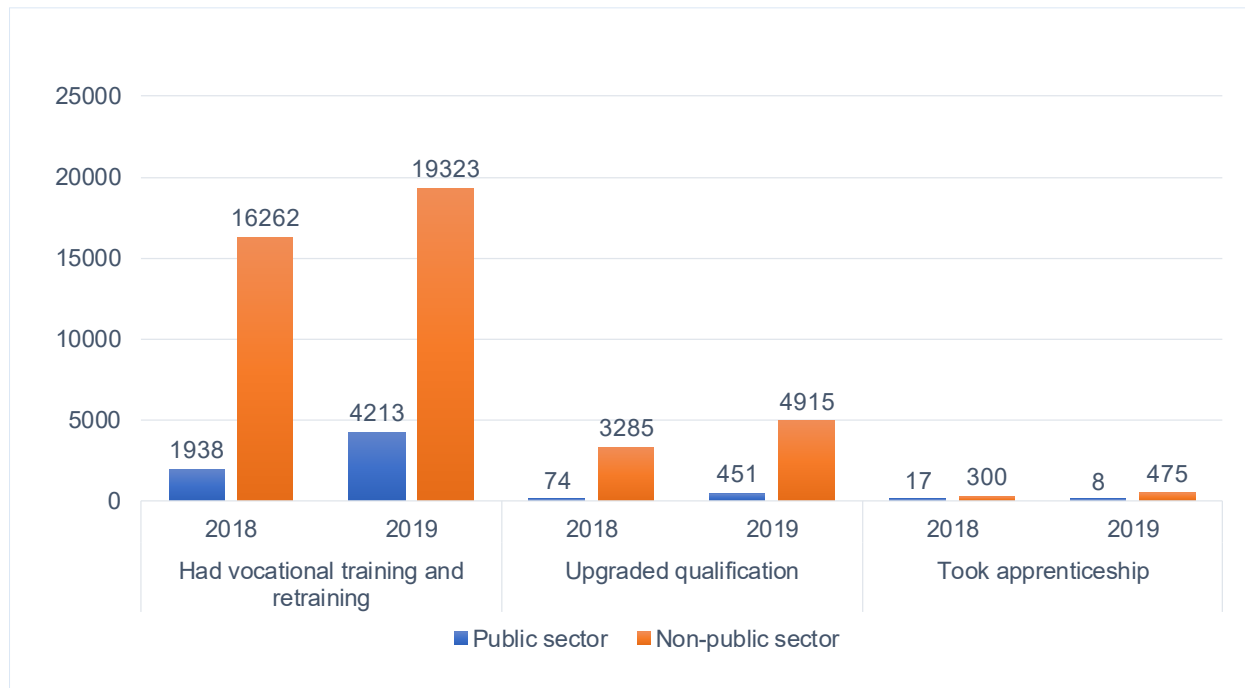
	Total	Industry	Construction	Transportation and storage, information and communication	Financial, real estate, professional, scientific, technical, administrative and support activity	Public administration, education, human health and social work	Other
Underwent vocational training and retraining	23 536	4 713	270	5 316	11 038	1 117	1 082
Male	12,563	4,280	131	2,740	4,381	303	728
Female	10,973	433	139	2,576	6,657	814	354
Persons upgraded qualification	5,366	3,091	17	1,753	336	112	57
Male	3,389	1,983	16	1,209	157	11	13
Female	1,977	1,108	1	544	179	101	44
Took an apprenticeship	483	184	-	31	221	3	44
Male	293	182	-	22	66	-	23
Female	190	2	-	9	155	3	21
Average monthly spending on vocational training, AMD	6,315	3,518	4,931	6,104	5,830	7,935	5,799

Source: Own presentation based on data from the Labour Market in Armenia, 2020.

The number of vocational training recipients¹⁵¹ is substantially higher in the non-public sector compared to the public sector (see Graph 6). It should however be noted that there was a visible

increase in public-sector employee involvement in vocational training, retraining and qualification upgrading from 2018 to 2019.

GRAPH 6 Vocational training recipients in public and non-public sectors



Source: Own presentation based on data from the Labour Market in Armenia, 2020.

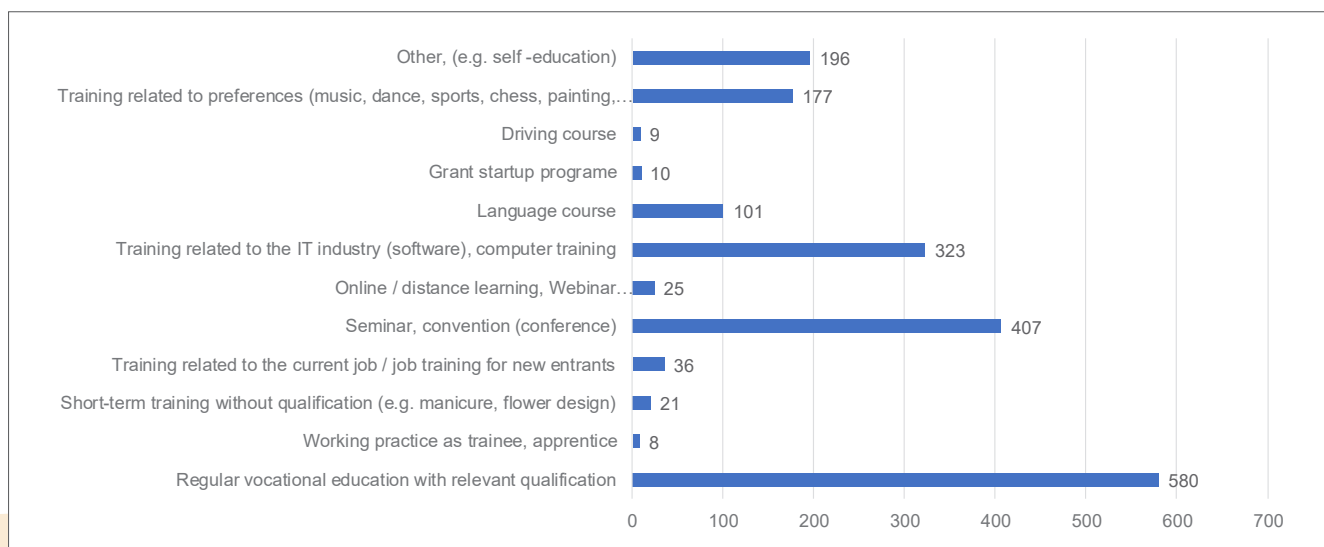
The Statistical Committee of Armenia conducts annual Labour Force Surveys among households, and publishes an anonymous database of micro-data. The survey includes a question on (vocational) education, verifying whether respondents had taken a course, internship, private courses, vocational training, regular or occasional, lasting even a few hours or days during the month

(including the week surveyed)¹⁵². The calculations based on the published database of 2019, containing data on 16,383 subjects, showed that 580 people were receiving regular vocational education, 407 had attended seminars or conventions, and 323 respondents had taken IT-related training during the month in which the survey was taken (Graph 7).

¹⁵¹ It is not possible to show the relationship to the actual sector size (participation rate by sector). Armstat reports in absolute numbers on vocational training based on the reports they received from employers from both the public and private sectors. Armstat does not mention in the published report from how many employers they received data by sector.

¹⁵² Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia, [Labour Force Survey anonymised micro data database and questionnaire \(by household members\)](#) website

GRAPH 7 Number of people attending any course or vocational training during the month of the survey



Source: Labour Force Survey 2019

Results from the Adult Education Survey 2021

Now that first Armenian Adult Education Survey, initiated by DVVI and DIE and implemented by CRRC-Armenia, has been finalised in 2021, more comprehensive, precise information is now available about adult learners, their motivation to participate or not participate in adult education, and their preferences¹⁵³. The survey was administered in line with the established methodology of the European Adult Education Survey¹⁵⁴.

The survey addressed the group of working-age people aged 18 to 64, and asked about participation in formal, non-formal and informal learning in the twelve months prior to the survey. 2,440 people in Armenia participated in the survey between November 2020 and February 2021. The data is representative of the Armenian population.

The survey results show that, in general, only few people (16%) are looking for information about further learning opportunities. Young people aged 18 to 35 are searching most actively (45%); only 5% of people aged 56 to 64 are seeking information. Moreover, women (19%) and people in the capital (21%) are more likely to be seeking information than men (12%) and people living in rural areas (9%). People find the information they were looking for in the majority of cases by searching the Internet and social media, as well as through educational institutions and via friends. Colleagues, employers, civil society organisations and local authorities are seldom contacted for information about adult education opportunities.

Table 6 below gives an indication of the status of adult education participation in Armenia. It shows

¹⁵³ CRRC-Armenia (2021), Adult Education Survey 2020-2021.

¹⁵⁴ Eurostat, [Adult Education Survey Reference Metadata](#)

that only a small part of the survey participants above the age of 18 had attended some form of formal education (8%). This is more than the EU-27 average, and is plausible as the EU sample does not include 18- to 24-year-olds who are more likely to still be in initial formal education. Around 45% of participants in formal education indicated that they were not working at the time of the training. 31% of the respondents indicated that the formal training took place mostly or only during paid working hours.

The minor significance of continuous education among adults in Armenia is revealed by the non-formal education participation rate. Only 14% of the respondents had participated in some form of non-formal education within the past twelve months prior to the survey. This is considerably less than the EU-27 average¹⁵⁵. On the other hand, three-quarters of all respondents stated that they had engaged in some form of informal learning, which is more than the average of the EU Member States¹⁵⁶.

TABLE 6 Adult education participation rates in Armenia compared with EU-27 averages

	Armenia (2020, aged 18-64)	EU-27 (2016 ¹⁵⁷ , aged 25-64; UK not included)
Formal education	8%	5.0%
Non-formal education	13%	41.4%
Informal learning	75%	59.5%

Source: Own presentation based on data from CRRC-Armenia (2021)

Participation in non-formal education is related to common socio-economic indicators in the expected direction. The participation rate in NFE activities increases with younger age (26% among people aged 18-24, and 7% among people aged 45-64), women (16%) are somewhat more likely to participate than men (12%), and more people participate in urban (12%) than in rural areas (8%). Moreover, educational attainment and occupational status make a difference, as participation is more common among people with higher education and in higher-skilled professions.

The most frequent non-formal learning activity is to take a course (7%), followed by attendance at workshops (5%), supervised on-the-job training (3%), and private lessons (3%). The most popular fields of non-formal learning are services, education, business and health and welfare.

Among all non-formal education activities, the largest share occurs related to the job (67%), but rather outside paid working hours. The reasons for participating in non-formal education activities are thus largely job related: “To do my job better”, “To improve my career prospects”, and “Required by the employer or by law” are among the most popular reasons. A significant share of respondents nonetheless states that they are taking part for a personal motivation “to obtain knowledge useful in my everyday life” or “to increase my knowledge of a subject that interests me”. Meeting new people or improving knowledge for voluntary work instead are less common reasons to participate in non-formal education.

¹⁵⁵ It cannot be determined at this point if the low participation rate is partially due to COVID-19 restrictions.

¹⁵⁶ The substantial difference between informal learning participation rates in Armenia and the EU-27 might be attributed to differences in the way the survey questions were worded.

¹⁵⁷ The next European wide AES will be conducted in 2022.

Regarding payment and fees, the data shows that a large share of non-formal learning activities (39%) is available free of charge. Learners pay the tuition fee themselves in 24% of the cases, and 18% of the activities are partly or fully covered by someone else (mainly the employer or prospective employer). The non-formal learning activity leads in 30% of cases to a certificate which is required by the employer or a professional body. Regarding the subjective attendance outcomes, respondents indicate that the learning activities especially helped them to perform better in their jobs, and that the activities were good opportunities to meet new people or refresh personal skills. The training leads less frequently to a rise in salary or to them finding a new job.

The respondents justify non-participation in formal and non-formal education activities with similar reasons. People do not participate primarily because their families do not leave them time for further training or education (a reason selected by 30% of the respondents). No personal or job-related need for further education (40% for formal education and 32% for non-formal education),

and thinking that further education is no longer worthwhile at a certain age (18%) are further reasons for non-participation. Around 7% indicate that the training and education opportunities are too expensive. Not finding suitable opportunities close to home, a lack of guidance, and health issues, are less significant barriers to participation.

Participation in informal learning such as non-formal education decreases with increasing age, and increases with educational attainment. The participation rate is as high as 87% within the group of young adults (18-24), and decreases to 65% for the group of 45-to-65 year-olds. Participation stands at 88% among people with tertiary education, while 68% of respondents with secondary education learn informally.

Respondents most frequently report learning informally using computers, online or offline (58%), and learning from a family member, friend or colleague (53%) (see Table 7). Respondents learn less frequently through guided tours in museums, or by visiting historical, natural or industrial sites, or by going to learning centres and libraries.

TABLE 7 Participation in informal learning by learning form

Learning form	Participation rate
Learning using a computer (online or offline)	58%
Learning from a family member, friend or colleague	53%
Learning through television/radio/video	40%
Learning using printed material	27%
Learning through guided tours in museums, or at historical or natural or industrial sites	13%
Learning by going to learning centres (including libraries)	12%

Source: Own presentation based on CRRC-Armenia (2021)

The data shows that learning with a computer is still less common among people aged between 45 and 64. 42% of people in this age group state that they learn using a computer, compared with 79% among the 18-24 age group. Similarly, older people frequent learning centres or libraries much less often (7%) than young people (32%). Learning through TV or radio instead is rather equally common among all age groups. Moreover, people rely on TV or radio for learning regardless of their educational background. Women tend to be more active than men across the different informal learning forms. The gender gap is most pronounced for learning using printed material such as books or professional magazines, which is done by 43% of female and 30% of male respondents.

In summary, the results from the AES Armenia suggest that overall participation by adults in education and learning is low, especially in non-formal education, where Armenia is far behind the participation rates in the EU. Most survey respondents are not interested in continuing education and learning, as only 16% look for information regarding further learning opportunities. The AES data shows that participation in adult education and learning is related in the expected direction to socio-economic indicators such as age, educational background and gender. Family obligations and the conviction of not having a need for further training are the most significant barriers to participating in adult education programmes. Drivers of adult participation, particularly in NFE, are the work context (improving job-related knowledge and career prospects), but to a lesser extent also personal interest in improving general skills and knowledge. Although adult learning is often job related, interested individuals receive support from their employers less frequently (be it financial or in terms of time).

Adult education in Armenia is still largely associated with formal education and job-related training and the belief that learning as an activity finished at the age of 30. With greater flexibility required by the changing job market, young people are starting to realise that continuous education and permanent learning are becoming more and more necessary in order to survive on the labour market. AE and lifelong learning will play a much bigger role for them in the future.

The data from the AES thus largely reflects impressions that were conveyed in the expert interviews. AE training is compulsory for some groups in Armenia. Those groups include public servants, teachers, professors, medical personnel and legal professionals. However, according to the experts interviewed, people are not highly motivated to participate in ALE activities, and there are several reasons for that:

1. Combining a job and training is exhausting. Employees are not released from their responsibilities at work in order to undergo training, so it is a burden for them to learn and work simultaneously. Teachers have to go for training after their overloaded workday. Usually no food is provided during the teacher training.
2. In countries with lower economic development such as Armenia, people have to take several jobs in order to be able to earn a living. This doesn't leave time and energy for learning new skills.
3. Those with university education, especially with a PhD, think they have learnt everything and that there is no room to grow.
4. Because of the inertia from the Soviet era, when there was an age restriction for learning, many still perceive learning as age-bound, designed only for young people.
5. Learning is seen only as formal education within formal institutions and structures.

IX. Personnel and professionalisation

The andragogic qualification of adult educators is an essential element for the thorough development of a lifelong learning infrastructure in any educational system. The EU's Council Resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning states that "improving the quality of adult education staff, for instance by defining competence profiles, establishing effective systems for initial training and professional development, and facilitating the mobility of teachers, trainers and other adult education staff", is necessary to enhance the quality and efficiency of education and training¹⁵⁸. This implies that it is not suitable to assign teachers to adult education programmes who have been trained to teach children. Compared with children, participants in adult education already possess knowledge and skills, and can fall back on their experience. More so than teachers at primary and secondary level, adult educators therefore have to take on roles as group leaders, facilitators and trainers, a demand which places different requirements on the educators' personal and social as well as methodological and didactical competences.

The workspaces of today's adult educators include a wide range of didactical and non-didactical activities. Didactical activities include learning as well as educational counselling and planning, teaching, learning guidance, as well as developing learning and education material, and evaluation. In addition, adult educators might also engage in management and marketing tasks, public relations work, as well as educational policy committee work. The diversity of activities and focal areas of each single adult

educator makes the establishment of an overarching definition of professionalisation and qualification standards in AE both difficult to achieve and crucial at the same time.

Adult educators' individual professional qualifications are generally based on formal scientific education, as well as on formal and informal further training in didactics and methods. The systematic acquisition of theory-based knowledge and practical skills is usually transmitted through the education system (which ideally offers university education for teachers on certain subjects as well as theoretical and practical training in didactics and methodology to work with adults). Formal academic education may be further expanded and consolidated individually through informal self-learning, for example from professional-scholarly learning content from websites, journals, magazines and conferences.

A professional lifelong learning environment is furthermore characterised by the existence of policy committees and professional associations which regulate and guide the process of licencing and continuing professional development (CPD). The development of the sector may be guided by common, precise professional standards and socially-mediated descriptions of expected behaviour within the domain (in the sense of desired competencies and ethics).

In combination, professional development, common (ethical) standards and societal orientation have the potential to increase public recognition of the value of adult education for society and to

¹⁵⁸ European Council (2011)

contribute to the general professionalisation of this area within education.¹⁵⁹

AE professionals and employees

The list of Middle Vocational Education Professions adopted by the Government of Armenia in 2006 includes “Andragogy” as a profession with the respective qualification of “Androgog” embedded the group of professions “Education”. It requires four years of learning based on basic general education and three years of learning based on secondary (complete) general education (four years in case of remote learning)¹⁶⁰. “Andragogy” is not offered as a degree programme, either separately or as a sub-discipline of Pedagogy, by any of the higher education institutions¹⁶¹.

According to the experts interviewed, ALE trainers in Armenia, even the experienced ones who are proficient in the topic they teach, usually lack methodological knowledge and tools of working with adults. Many experienced trainers do not know how to structure the training and to assess their target groups in order to build a tailored programme, how to motivate learners and lead to outcomes. Their success is currently based on knowledge of their subject, on ability to make and deliver good presentations, and on personal characteristics. Most of the trainers do not have backgrounds in education or pedagogy. They have degrees in anthropology, oral history, marketing, public relations or business.

Armenia has no unambiguous criteria for selecting trainers for mandatory training provided by the state. Similarly, there are no evaluation mechanisms to assess the performance of the trainer, and no mechanism to indicate poor performance. As mentioned by one of the experts, the culture does not encourage whistleblowing. There is “negative empathy” towards the trainer, and trainees do not wish to complain, even if the trainer’s performance is poor.

Existing teacher training programmes

The capacity-building of AE professionals is often achieved through the Training of Trainers (ToT), usually provided by internationally-supported training programmes¹⁶². In 2018 and 2019, DVVI Armenia implemented ToTs based on the DVVI-developed Curriculum GlobALE (CG) programme designed for ALE educators. Although not all CG modules were fully covered, and some were introduced through pre-training reading materials, the key aspects of the ToT programme for adult educators were incorporated in the face-to-face session. The topics covered principles and strategies of active learning, target group characteristics, goals of an educational programme, development of an educational programme, competence-based approach, methods, and others¹⁶³. The 2018 ToT targeted the trainers who were involved in an EU project on tourism, as well as a

¹⁵⁹ Lattke, S. & Strauch, A. (2019). [Competency framework for adult educators in teaching GCED, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning](#). UNESCO Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding

¹⁶⁰ Government of the Republic of Armenia, [Middle Vocational Education Professions list](#) website

¹⁶¹ DVVI Armenia (2020a)

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ ToR of CG in Armenia

number of directors of DVVI supported centres. No centre representatives were involved in the 2019 ToT, and younger trainers were trained instead.

No ToT was conducted in 2020 due to the situation resulting from COVID-19. However, the pandemic helped to promote out-of-the-box thinking, and it was decided to revise the course curriculum to become a blended course with some modules offered online, and others face to face. The programme development process, which started in 2020 and continued into 2021, involves translating the training content into Armenian and a group of experts adapting it to the local context. Whilst international expertise was previously only brought in for one week to provide the training, the new training format turns it into a multiple-week certificate programme. The outcome of the 2020-2021 CG preparation is the development of a more structured approach and creation of Armenian resources to train AE educators. It will be a sustaining product developed by DVVI that can be used by other institutions and providers of ALE. The product will be tested among a small group of selected trainers, and will fully roll out in the next few years for different ALE providers from universities, VET institutions, CSOs and private providers. The newly-designed ToT will offer five main modules¹⁶⁴:

- Module 1: Approaching Adult Education
- Module 2: Adult Learning and Adult Teaching
- Module 3: Communication and Group Dynamics in Adult Education
- Module 4: Methods of Adult Education
- Module 5 Planning, Organisation and Evaluation in Adult Education

The Curriculum GlobALE has been implemented not only in Armenia, but also in BiH and Kosovo. Evaluation of Meso-Level Interventions has revealed the main outcomes of ToTs in three countries based on the opinions of training participants, interviewees and focus group members¹⁶⁵. The main takeaways include:

- Developing competencies to work with participants with different backgrounds
- Improving teaching skills for beginner trainers
- Providing standards for experienced trainers to reflect on and improve their skills
- Peer learning and experience sharing
- Improving preparation for future training
- Discovering an intergenerational model/tool
- Kolb's learning model and the recognition of different learning styles

The evaluation using the method of SWOT analysis found out that a shortage of qualified trainers (including trainers for new subjects) is one of the main issues in all four project countries.

¹⁶⁴ CG Course Concept

¹⁶⁵ Evaluation of Meso-Level Interventions in the frame of the project "Professionalisation of Adult Education Centres in Europe", 2020

X. The international context

State commitments to, and participation in, international initiatives

UNESCO commitment

In 1949, UNESCO Member States got together in Elsinore, Denmark, to discuss how ALE could help promote world peace and international understanding in the post-World War reality. That meeting became the first International Conference on Adult Education, known as CONFINTEA (CONFérence INTERNationale sur l'Education des Adultes). Six CONFINTEAs have taken place every twelve years from 1949 to 2017¹⁶⁶. The Sixth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI), held in Belém, Brazil, in 2009, concluded with the adoption of the Belém Framework for Action. The Framework is a strategic guide defining member states' commitments, as well as the monitoring mechanisms for implementing those commitments. The Belém Framework states that the Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE) should be produced at regular intervals in order to periodically report on progress in adult learning and education¹⁶⁷.

The GRALE presents the state of adult learning and education throughout the world. The first report was published in 2009, and served as central input for negotiations at CONFINTEA VI in Belém, Brazil. Four GRALE Reports have been published since 2009 (2009, 2013, 2016, 2019). The next GRALE is planned to be issued in 2022. GRALE monitors whether UNESCO member states are exercising their international ALE com-

mitments in practice. It combines policy analysis, case studies and survey data, and reflects the status of ALE in the world based on the reports submitted to the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning by the member countries¹⁶⁸.

Armenia has submitted five National Reports, in 2008, 2012, 2015, 2018 and 2020, as its contribution to the GRALE reports. The 2008 report on the “Development and State of the Art of Adult Learning and Education”¹⁶⁹, prepared by the MESCS, covered the topics of policy, legislation and financing, discussed the quality of ALE, its provision, participation and achievements, presented research and good practices as well as expectations and future perspectives of ALE in Armenia. In anticipation of CONFINTEA VI, the report listed priority issues for ALE in Armenia. These included the adoption of the Law on “Adult Education”, the development of a plan of action in accordance with the Strategy on Adult Education, the preparation of ALE specialists in higher education institutions, ensuring the accessibility of Adult Education, and the development of the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms of adult training.

As a follow-up to CONFINTEA VI, national progress reports were submitted by national governments in preparation for the GRALE and the end

¹⁶⁶ UNESCO UIL, [International Conferences on Adult Education \(CONFINTEA\)](#) website

¹⁶⁷ UNESCO UIL (2010). [CONFINTEA VI Belém Framework for Action](#)

¹⁶⁸ UNESCO UIL, [Global Report – GRALE](#) website

¹⁶⁹ Ministry of Education and Science (2008). [National Report: The Development and State of the Art of Adult Education and Learning](#)

of the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD). In accordance with the commitments stated in the Belém Framework for Action, the survey template provided by UNESCO was completed and submitted in 2012 by the Division of Supplementary and Continuing Education of the MESCS on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Armenia¹⁷⁰. According to the report, the goal of ALE in Armenia was “to provide for the continuous development of human resources, enabling each individual to develop his or her knowledge and abilities (competences), obtaining training in professional, cultural, civil and personal development” (p. 3). The report did not mention any specific activities within the framework of the UNLD.

Monitoring survey results for Armenia for the 3rd Global Report were submitted in 2015¹⁷¹. The National Report mentions among the most significant indicators of progress in ALE since 2009 the establishment of the Division of Supplementary and Continuing Education in 2010, the development of the “National Report on Supplementary and Continuing Education in RA” in 2011, the elaboration of the “Strategy and Action Plan on Supplementary and Continuing Education in RA for 2013-2017”, as well as amendments and additions to the “Law on Education of RA” with regard to ALE in 2014.

The GRALE 4 survey was conducted in 2018, and the results were reflected in the 4th Global Report “Leave no one behind: Participation, equity and inclusion”, published in 2019¹⁷². The National Report highlighted the adoption of the Government

decree on the procedures on “Organising and Implementing Supplementary Educational Programmes” and “Recognition of Non-formal and Informal learning” in 2015, as well as the Government decree on the “Procedure for Maintaining the National Register of Training Activities” adopted in 2016, which provided a legal basis to authorise the National Training Fund to organise and implement ALE in Armenia. The report indicates continuing training and professional development as the main field of ALE in which the country has made the most progress.

The 5th National Report is the first one that was developed through a participatory process. A blended workshop (in person and online) was organised by the MESCS and DVVI in August 2020, and around 30 stakeholders from public agencies, CSOs, universities and individual experts got together to discuss the GRALE questionnaire and provide answers, where possible, based on consensus. The 2019 questionnaire also reflects the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on ALE in the country. The report has been submitted to UNESCO, but it had not yet been officially published as of December 2020.

Commitment to Global Goals

UN’s Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 – Quality Education aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”¹⁷³. SDG 4 has seven targets, three of which relate to ALE (Table 8).

¹⁷⁰ Ministry of Education and Science (2012). [Follow-up of CONFINTEA VI – National Progress Report Armenia](#)

¹⁷¹ UNESCO UIL, [GRALE 3 Monitoring survey results for Armenia](#)

¹⁷² UNESCO UIL (2019). [4th Global Report on Adult Learning and Education](#)

¹⁷³ United Nations, [SGD 4](#) website

The Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia is responsible for compiling data on SDG indicators. The data is supposed to be published on a website that is specifically designed for SDG reporting¹⁷⁴. However, the website is currently at an Alpha stage of development, and data is not available on all indicators.

SDG 4 targets related to ALE, and their respective indicators, are presented in Table 8 below. It should be noted that the Statistical Committee provides metadata for some targets for the actual indicator available from Armenia statistics closest to the corresponding global SDG indicator. Those are marked as National Indicators.

TABLE 8 SDG 4 targets and indicators related to ALE

SDG 4 Targets (related to ALE)	Indicators
4.3. By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university	4.3.1. Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex
	<p><u>National Indicator</u></p> 4.3.1a. Gross Enrolment Ratio in general education
4.4. By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship	4.4.1. Proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, by type of skill
	<p><u>National Indicator</u></p> 4.4.1a. Number of pupils per computer in general education schools
4.6. By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy	4.6.1. Proportion of population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional (a) literacy and (b) numeracy skills, by sex
	<p><u>National Indicator</u></p> 4.6.1a. Literacy rate among population aged 10-24

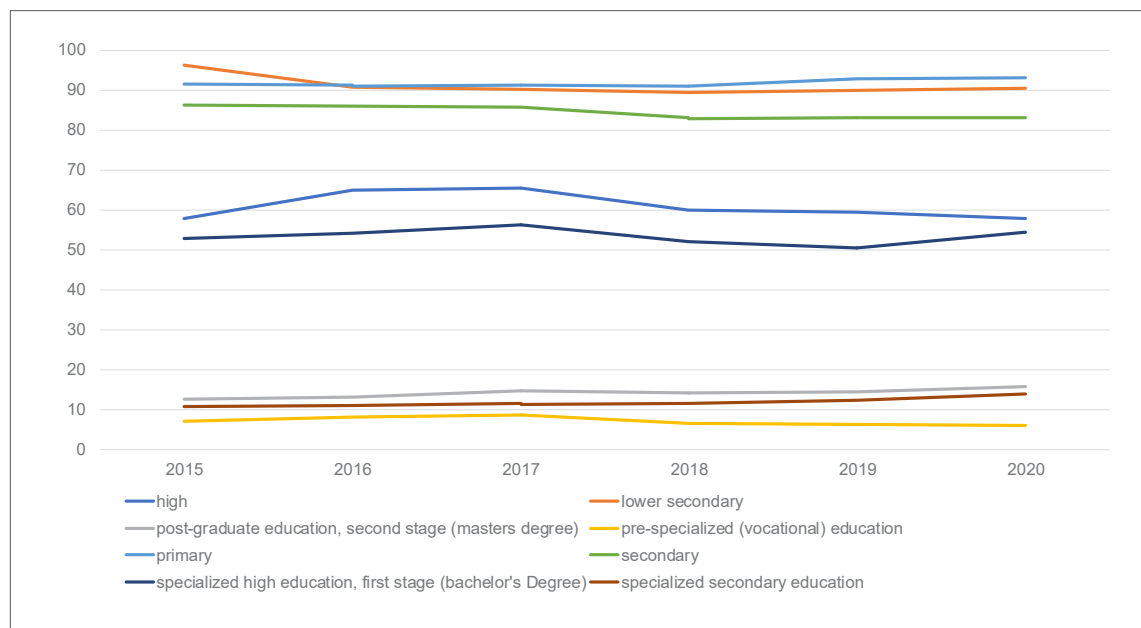
Source: Own presentation based on Armenian data for Sustainable Development Goal indicators, Statistical Committee of Armenia

¹⁷⁴ [Armenia data for Sustainable Development Goal indicators](#) website

Data on the national indicator for Target 4.3 is displayed in Graph 8. The national indicator on enrolment in general education replaces the

global indicator on participation of young people and adults in formal and non-formal education and training.

GRAPH 8 Gross Enrolment Ratio in General Education in Armenia

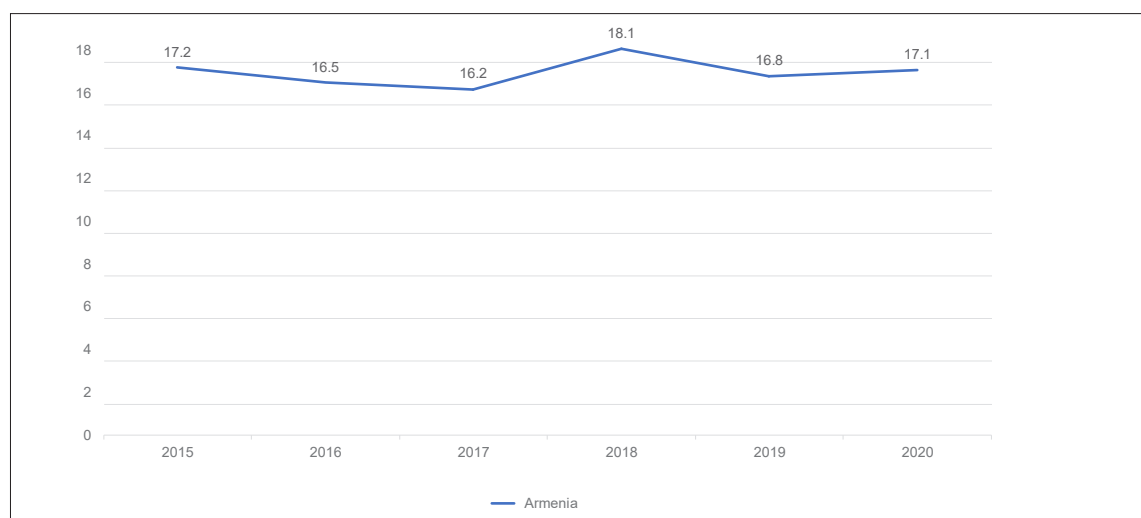


Source: Armenian data for Sustainable Development Goal indicators, Statistical Committee of Armenia

Although Target 4.4 is related to ALE, the national indicator chosen as the closest one to track progress towards the achievement of the target does

not in fact reflect ALE. National indicator 4.4.1a reports on the “number of pupils per computer in general education schools” (see Graph 9).

GRAPH 9 Number of pupils per computer in general education schools



Source: Armenian data for Sustainable Development Goal indicators, Statistical Committee of Armenia

For Target 4.6 on literacy and numeracy, the Armenian Statistical Committee provides data on the “Literacy rate among the population aged 10-24” as the closest available national indicator (see Table 9).

TABLE 9 Literacy rate among the population aged 10-24

Year	Armenia	female	male
2015	98.90%	99%	98.90%

Source: Armenian data for Sustainable Development Goal indicators, Statistical Committee of Armenia

The Rapid Integrated Policy Assessment (RIPA)¹⁷⁵ for the SDG nationalisation was carried out in Armenia in accordance with the RIPA methodology developed by UNDP. The objective of RIPA is to support countries in integrating the SDGs into national planning. The report stated that while ensuring high-quality education was a national priority for Armenia, there were gaps with regard to some of the targets of SDG 4, particularly SDG 4.4 and SDG 4.6 (both of these targets are related to ALE). The report pointed out that the reason for not having a national target and indicator might be the high literacy rate in the country. The assessment recommended that “though the level of literacy in Armenia is very high, certain undertakings need to be entered into for quality education in compliance with contemporary requirements, i.e. computer skills, basic knowledge of IT, etc.” (p. 8). It should be noted that the national indicators for the mentioned targets have already been introduced, as presented above (Table 8).

Armenia furthermore submitted two Voluntary National Review (VNR) reports to the UN in 2018¹⁷⁶ and 2020¹⁷⁷, respectively. The reviews reflected the implementation of the SDGs from 2015 to 2018, and from 2018 to 2020, presenting Armenian initiatives and the progress made towards the 2030 Agenda. They described the situation on each SDG, including SDG 4, but none of the reports presented data on ALE when discussing SDG 4.

Actors and current projects

According to one of the experts who was interviewed, almost all international organisations in Armenia can be considered as actors of ALE and LLL, as they usually have the component of capacity-building among their functions. The overwhelming majority of international organisations offer training, and organise meetings and discussion for target groups, most of whom are aged above 15. In broad terms, therefore, the international organisations are all actors in the field of ALE to some extent.

The 2012 National progress report¹⁷⁸ submitted by Armenia to UNESCO mentions DVVI, the British Council, UNDP, ETF and the EC as institutions that are involved in planning, implementing and evaluating policies for adult education.

DVVI has been one of the major players involved in adult education in Armenia since the beginning of 2002 (see Chapters VI and VII). DVVI focuses in Armenia on developing a functioning system of

¹⁷⁵ Government of the Republic of Armenia and United Nations Armenia (n.d.). [Rapid Integrated Policy Assessment in Armenia](#)

¹⁷⁶ Government of the Republic of Armenia (2018). [SDG Implementation Voluntary National Review](#)

¹⁷⁷ Government of the Republic of Armenia (2020). [SDG Implementation Voluntary National Review](#)

¹⁷⁸ Ministry of Education and Science (2012). [Follow-up of CONFINTEA VI – National Progress Report Armenia](#)

adult education, vocational training and networking, as well as exchange activities. It supports the establishment and operation of adult education centres in different regions of the country, and promotes cooperation and exchange between Armenian adult educators, technical specialists and decision-makers¹⁷⁹. Moreover, through the Regional Office for Caucasus and South Eastern Europe, regional exchange and sharing of best practices is organised within the region, as well as with German adult education institutions.

The British Council offers various educational programmes in areas such as youth and social entrepreneurship, equal opportunities and diversity, migration, social inclusion and engagement, and active citizenship. One of the programmes “The Learning Hubs: Improved Skills for Stronger Societies” is a three-year programme that aims to develop young people’s skills (English teaching, critical thinking, problem solving, communication and debating skills), so that “they can build confidence and have better access to educational and career pathways in the future¹⁸⁰”. The British Council also works with teachers in the selected communities to support their continuous professional development, using the UK’s experience and resources. Other programmes help to increase employability by enhancing skills and knowledge, support the development of

enterprise education, and contribute to education policy development¹⁸¹.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) contributes to the advancement of ALE in Armenia through several programmes and activities. For example, a project focusing on vocational education and training from 2006-2013 imparted skills and knowledge in agriculture, services, food and drinks processing, information and technologies, welding and construction, for which there is a demand on the Armenian labour market, to more than 1,000 unemployed women and young people from urban and rural areas in Armenia. About 60% percent of them found permanent jobs afterwards¹⁸².

The European Training Foundation (ETF) launched the new cycle of the “Torino Process” in Armenia in 2019. This involves a periodic assessment of progress in modernising skills development in EU neighbouring countries¹⁸³. The Torino Process (TRP) is a participatory process leading to an evidence-based analysis of the vocational education and training (VET) policies in a country. Introduced in 2010 and carried out every two years, the Torino Process provides a snapshot of the state of development of VET systems in the ETF’s partner countries, as well as an overview of progress made and priorities for the future.

¹⁷⁹ [DVVI Armenia Country Office](#) website

¹⁸⁰ British Council, [Learning Hubs project](#) website

¹⁸¹ British Council, [Education programme](#) website

¹⁸² UNDP, [Armenia Vocational Education and Training project](#) website

¹⁸³ ETF, [EU and Armenia for better education reforms](#) website article

XI. Challenges and future developments

Future challenges for AE

Armenia was heavily affected by two major crises in 2020: the COVID-19 pandemic, and the dreadful fighting in late September evolving from a decades-long conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh. This had a major impact on society as a whole, and on the entire education system and the development of adult education in particular. The most negative effect in the education sector is certainly the temporary suspension of the development of the new Armenian Education Strategy 2030, of which a first draft was already prepared in July 2019. The absence of this central strategic framework, together with several unforeseeable changes in ministerial structures and personnel, has exacerbated the lack of clarity as to the future of ALE and LLL, and hindered the planning and implementation of ALE providers and practitioners. The new strategy is highly important, as there has been no recent document on ALE after the expiry of the Strategy of Supplementary and Continuous Education for 2013-2017.

There is an urgent necessity to provide a clear, common terminological and conceptual understanding of ALE and LLL in RA in order to enhance the implementation capacities of ALE providers in the country and not fall behind developments in the EU. Discussions on terminology in RA have yet to adequately take account of the educational needs of elderly people. It needs to be ensured that elderly people (above 63) do not fall behind in educational programmes. Non-monetary aspects of education, such as civic education, literacy programmes and rehabilitation programmes (especially in the post-conflict period), and person-

al development courses, need to receive much more encouragement and assistance from the government and local authorities in future across all adult age groups.

The measurement and recognition of non-formal learning outcomes is a major challenge for further developments of the NQF, which has not been reworked since its adoption in 2016. There is currently a shortage of RPL tools, quality assurance mechanisms and methodologies for the placement of non-formal learning outcomes within the NQF. Non-formal ALE providers are very much interested in being recognised, but there is no common understanding of how to operationalise the system of microcredentials as yet.

On the provider side, there are many positive developments in the private sector and in the non-profit field. There is however less cooperation and coordination of measures. Many organisations and universities provide adult training or non-formal educational programmes, but these are not systemised. There is a need for more effective networking and cooperation in order to exchange experiences and identify best practices. Progress has been made in recent years when it comes to collaboration between providers and companies from the private sector. Some companies have already engaged in course design or supported work-based education offers. This needs to be refined and systemised. A larger number of employers nonetheless need to recognise their employees' continuing skills development needs, and invest accordingly.

There are also quite a few challenges at individual level which need to be taken into consideration. Because of the low level of economic development in RA, citizens often have to take several jobs to be able to earn a living. This does not allow time and energy for learning and acquiring new skills. Combining a job and training can be exhausting and diminish motivation if employees are not released from their job responsibilities in the training process. The same applies to teachers if they are obliged to undergo training after their day at work. The benefits and necessity of ALE are in general not widely recognised in society because the view on AE is culturally shaped. Learning is mainly seen as formal education within formal institutions. Those with university education might think that they have learnt everything, and that there is no room to grow. Because of the inertia from Soviet times, when there was an age restriction on learning, many still perceive learning as age-bound, designed only for young people. These individual barriers have to be overcome in order to create a natural demand for learning over people's lifespan.

Challenges due to the coronavirus pandemic and conclusions for the further development of the AE system

The pandemic revealed major challenges with regard to the availability and utilisation of IT in the Armenian education system. In addition to the challenges related to the IT infrastructure (absence of devices or Internet connection), digital literacy turned out to be very low. At the beginning, teachers of different education institutions randomly put in place tools such as Skype, Zoom, Moodle and others, based on availability and on their skills. Some conducted their lessons through phone calls. This led to an increase in the number of courses and training activities offered on how to use digital tools. The coordination of these measures is estimated to be poor, as many providers offered similar training without considering different skills and knowledge levels. The pandemic proved at individual level that the generation of digital natives is not very experienced with digital educational tools, in contrast to using social media.

That having been said, some structural changes were made in Armenia in response to the pandemic. Public schools introduced the Microsoft Teams tool as a compulsory communication format for online school lessons. The MESCS initiated substantial procurements with regard to devices, and provided them to vulnerable groups. The National Centre for Education Technology, supported by UNICEF, launched an e-school project¹⁸⁴. All the Universities developed and introduced learning management systems.

The situation had various positive effects overall: digitalisation of many educational services, increased demand from different age groups for

digital devices and for the development of skills to use these devices, increased understanding of LLL and of the importance of continuous learning. Blended-learning formats should be established as standard once the pandemic is over.

The major challenges for the near future include the assessment of the quality of online education outcomes. Furthermore, the active involvement of students in the process of online learning needs to be further developed. Not all methods from face-to-face training will be applicable in online teaching. Major investments in the digital infrastructure, stable Internet access and hardware availability will have to be considered.

¹⁸⁴ [E-school project](#) website

XII. Conclusions and recommendations

The basis for the sustainable integration of ALE and LLL into Armenian policy will be a clear common terminological and conceptual understanding. The main educational laws and by-laws need to make use of consistent terminology, and this needs to be aligned to international policy and vocabulary anchored in UNESCO and EU key documents (see Chapter I). This means taking a broad view on ALE which considers all forms of adult learning after the initial education cycle and all forms of vocational and non-vocational learning contributing to an individual's quality of life. Lawmakers in Armenia are recommended to refer to the commonly-agreed definitions of formal, non-formal and informal adult education, as well as lifelong learning, in all legal documents on education, including the new draft "Law on Higher Education and Science", as well as strategies, budget planning documents and annual reports of the MESCS.

- ⇒ Create a clear common terminological and conceptual understanding at policy level
- ⇒ Make use of consistent terminology in main educational laws and by-laws
- ⇒ Refer to formal, non-formal, informal and adult education as well as lifelong learning in all legal documents on education
- ⇒ Follow a broad view on ALE which considers all forms of adult learning after the initial education cycle and all forms of vocational and non-vocational learning contributing to an individual's quality of life

Furthermore, there is an urgent need to have the "Education Strategy 2030" completed and published, since the absence of this central strategic document hinders planning and implementation of ALE for providers and practitioners. Expecta-

tions are high that the strategy will address adult education explicitly, in particular because no state policies with reference to ALE have been adopted since the expiration of the "Supplementary and Continuing Education Strategy and Action Plan for 2013-2017". In addition, a separate budget line under the educational state budget would substantially facilitate needs-based planning of ALE measures in the long run and decrease dependency on international donor funding.

- ⇒ Complete the "Education Strategy 2030" in the near future and make it available to a wider public
- ⇒ Explicitly address ALE in the strategy
- ⇒ Consider a separate budget line for ALE under the educational state budget

This study shows that the majority of ALE programmes in Armenia take place in state bodies such as ministries and state agencies. Training courses for continuous professional development are well established by the government and local authorities. However, adult educators in these settings, despite proficiency in their subjects, very often lack methodological knowledge and tools for working with adults. This is why clear selection criteria of trainers needs to be developed for mandatory training provided by the state. In addition, evaluation mechanisms need to be established which enable the state bodies to assess the performance of trainers regarding their competencies in andragogy, in addition to subject-related skills.

- ⇒ Develop clear selection criteria for trainers for mandatory training provided by the state
- ⇒ Establish evaluation mechanisms which enable the state bodies to assess the performance of trainers regarding their competencies in andragogy, in addition to subject-related skills

Unlike the developments with regard to mandatory public training courses, there is still a considerable need in Armenia for more ALE programmes that focus on civic education, literacy, rehabilitation and personal development. There are many capable civil society organisations and private training providers in Armenia (see Chapter VI) that can offer non-formal ALE measures. The principal requirements will be sufficient institutional funding, the recognition of non-formal learning outcomes through the NQF, and more effective networking and cooperation amongst providers in order to exchange experiences and identify best practices.

- ⇒ Provide more ALE programmes that focus on civic education, literacy, rehabilitation, and personal development
- ⇒ Create a positive environment for NFE with sufficient institutional funding, recognition of non-formal learning outcomes through the NQF, and more effective networking and cooperation amongst NFE providers

At individual level, it is recommended to intensify the provision of incentives which can increase participants' motivation to learn throughout their lifespans. This would mean to (partly) release employees from their job responsibilities during the training process in order to create learner-friendly setting. Disadvantaged groups in particular need financial support for their participation in training measures so that they are not heavily dependent on earning a living during the

learning process. At societal level, outdated perceptions of learning as being age-bound and formal, taking place within formal institutions and structures only, need to be overcome via role models and public campaigns.

- ⇒ Intensify the provision of incentives which can increase participants' motivation to learn throughout their lifespan
- ⇒ Create learner-friendly circumstances in companies and release employees from their job responsibilities during the training process
- ⇒ Provide financial support for disadvantaged groups in order to increase their participation in training measures
- ⇒ Overcome outdated perceptions of learning by role models and public campaigns

As a consequence of the current pandemic, it is recommended to invest in the availability of IT infrastructure and in developing digital skills in Armenia. The abrupt changes in daily life made people aware of the importance of continuous learning and of adapting to a changing environment. This momentum should be utilised in order to prioritise lifelong learning in Armenia in order to have resilient, informed citizens who can contribute to society in crisis situations.

- ⇒ Invest in the availability of the IT infrastructure and developing digital skills
- ⇒ Prioritise LLL in Armenia in order to have resilient, informed citizens who can contribute to society in crisis situations

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