



JOINT STATEMENT FOR ENHANCEMENT OF ADULT EDUCATION

FROM THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE BUILDING BRIDGES IN ADULT EDUCATION 2017, HELD IN SKOPJE (MACEDONIA) FROM 25TH TO 26TH OCTOBER 2017.

We, participants who met in Skopje (Macedonia) on 25th and 26th of October 2017 on the third international conference Building Bridges in Adult Education 2017, organized by Lifelong Learning Center from Skopje in partnership with Public Institution Adult Education Center, supported by DVV International from Bonn, FR Germany, financed by German Federal Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation, and under the auspices of Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Macedonia, discussed the news, achievements and challenges in adult education in the region of South East Europe.

Taking into consideration challenges that we, adult education stakeholders in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Germany, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia, face and have discussed during the conference, have recognized common challenges, identified good practices in the region and came forward with suggestions for solutions. Major challenges we face include: low public awareness about adult education, situation with validation of prior knowledge, recognition of foreign certificates, development planning tools and creation of adult education policies.

Together, we propose the following conclusions and recommendations, which are also messages for improving the situation of adult education sector in the region:

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

Processes of recognition and validation of prior learning should be inclusive at all levels and should include all relevant actors. It is expected from all institutions and organisations in the region who have yet not introduced the system that will implement only inclusive systems which are linked to the national qualification frameworks. It is expected that institutions, organisations and actors involved in the recognition and validation process will secure all relevant contextual resources including human, financial, etc.

UNIVERSITY AND LIFELONG LEARNING

Universities in the region should develop not only in education of the adult education staff, but also in their communication with communities and the rest of the society. The university role should expand in terms of improvement of competences in andragogy of all stakeholders in the society. The process should be implemented with the motto "Hand in hand" with life. In order to implement this, Universities should develop flexible curricula that will be reflecting the needs of all actors in the society.

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RAISING MEDIA'S AWARENESS ABOUT IMPORTANCE OF ADULT EDUCATION AND ROLE OF PROMOTION IN DEVELOPMENT OF ADULT EDUCATION

The value of adult education has to be seriously understood as a societal value and that it requires societal recognition throughout its promotion. Promotional activities should enable media to put more attention to adult education in their everyday work. In this regards all stakeholders should employ positive experiences from the region. Communication of best practices in adult education such as: establishment of non-formal relations, establishment of long term promotional goals, education of media, and public relations strategies, should be improved in order to provide examples of positive effects on personal development and societal development. The stakeholders who promote adult education should simplify the language and create customer driven terms, which will be understandable during promotion activities. The stakeholders in adult education in the region should improve Public Relations and should start thinking about utilizing the available marketing tools.

Adult education stakeholders should have proactive approach to media by providing information and educating them about the adult education. Universities, associations of employers and trade unions should undertake seriously the role of stakeholders and should become advocates of adult education. Media must be understood as a partner in the promotional activities, leading to societies of knowledge and quality of life for all. Media organizations can be involved and can help in preparation of PR strategies for Adult Education. Media has to become proactive and contribute with courses on promotion and media usage for adult learners, providers, and stakeholders involved in the adult education.

RECOGNITION OF FOREIGN PUBLIC DOCUMENTS – CERTIFICATES

The lack/absence of a system of recognition of foreign certificates in the region needs to be considered as an obstacle in our regional cooperation. We, the representatives of the countries at this conference, confirmed that there is an urgent need for approaching this issue by creation and implementation of common projects. Hereby we encourage all relevant actors in adult education to start working on creation of regional project and platforms. These proposed platforms should serve involved stakeholders to exchange information and establish systems and tools for recognition of certificates. The exchange might be general but also following the good example from Montenegro which can be expanded and can serve the region. The number and type of institutions and organizations involved in the adult education is big and they should be better connected and improve their communication.

TOOLKITS FOR PLANNING THE PATH AND ACHIEVING THE GOALS OF LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT OF ADULT EDUCATION

In order to achieve the successful policy creation, we encourage all the actors in the region to exchange the available tools that are already developed and proved as successful. The tools that are to be developed, should be developed inclusively with all relevant stakeholders including those who work in adult education and are part of the strategic development and policy creation.

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CREATION OF PUBLIC POLICIES IN ADULT EDUCATION

Policy creation in adult education should be always based on findings, which are results from conducted researches, including findings of ET 2020 Working Group on Adult Learning.

Policies' implementation has to be under constant monitoring which will include flexible and functional instruments. These instruments should reflect the success and influence of the policies in the society. Such measurements will enable improvement and successful adjustment accommodation of the policies to the societal needs. For an effective formulation and implementation of the adult education policies, we raise the voice and demand increase of the financial frameworks for their successful implementation. At the same time we urge increase in transparency of their use.

We believe that the example of the two Ministers of Education from Bosnia and Herzegovina who actively participated in the conference will serve as a good example for all ministers in the region. We urge that in this way the practitioners, policy makers and decision makers will be able to respond to the needs of the adult education and improve the cooperation.

Hereby we declare that the cooperation in adult education among the countries in the region will continue and will be expressed through common research projects, development of comparative studies and evaluations, as well as joint action initiatives in the interest of all.

26 October 2017, Participants from: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Germany, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia.

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