

# PARTNERUP

## PARTNER UP Analysis Reports National level

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## Project information

<b>Acronym</b>	PARTNER-UP
<b>Title</b>	Partnerships and stakeholder engagement for Upskilling Pathways
<b>Number</b>	101087193
<b>Sub programme or KA</b>	ERASMUS-EDU-2022-PI-FORWARD-LOT3
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://partnerup-project.eu/">https://partnerup-project.eu/</a>

## Executive Summary

The following national reports represent the outcome of the initial desk analysis carried out by the project partners in Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Romania with the aim to deepen the actual state of the art in the implementation of the Upskilling Pathways initiative (UP) in each project Country and at EU level.

The desk analysis allowed the partners to investigate and share knowledge about several aspects related to the UP initiative: legislative context and measures, key measures in place, wide target groups addressed, main challenges in reaching out the target groups, main challenges in skills assessment, provision of tailored learning and validation and recognition of skills acquired, actors delivering Upskilling Pathways, cooperation mechanisms in place.

It was based on stakeholders' contributions, on recent literature review, and on the consultation of National/EU documents on both Adult Learning and Education policies and Upskilling Pathways, published by European Commission or elaborated by European networks/associations.

The outcomes of the Analysis put the basis for the policy and practice work of the project.



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*September, 2023*



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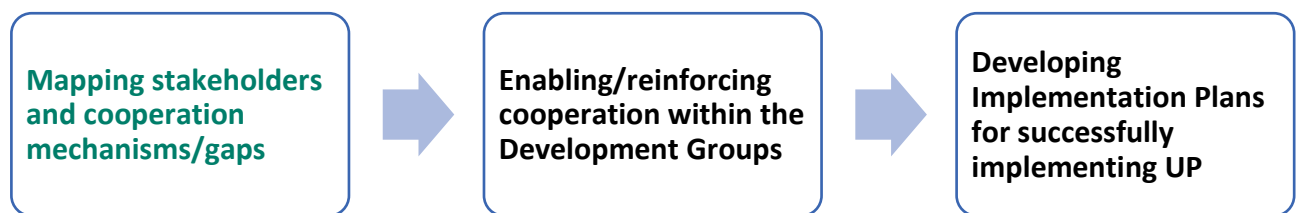
## 1 Introduction

The following national reports represent the outcome of the initial Analysis carried out by the project partners in Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Romania with the aim to deepen the actual state of art in the implementation of the Upskilling Pathways initiative (UP) in each project Country and at EU level.

Specifically, the Analysis was meant at collecting quantitative and qualitative data and information about:

- existing and missing stakeholders,
- existing cooperation mechanisms and structures,
- gaps in cooperation,
- good practices with reference to the Upskilling Pathways implementation in the Partner UP Countries and at EU level,

in order to **provide the basis for the policy and practice work of the project.**



The Analysis process allowed the partners to investigate and share knowledge about several aspects related to the UP initiative, by:

- analysing the main challenges in the UP implementation, in view of defining strengths and weaknesses in cooperation, identifying existing coordination structures, missing stakeholders and how this has impacted on a regular process of implementation;
- mapping and analysing a list of possible/useful stakeholders to engage, so as to make clear their added value and expected contribution;
- defining how they can further enable the implementation of UP.

In order to collect highly qualitative data, the Analysis is carried out according to two different methodologies, both aimed at defining gaps in cooperation and identifying opportunities for reinforcing positive/meaningful relationships already in place and involving and engaging missing and/or new stakeholders: **Desk Analysis** and **Stakeholder Mapping**.



The **Desk analysis** was mainly intended at deepening the actual state of art in the implementation of the UP initiative in each project Country and at EU level, by investigating:

- legislative context and measures;
- key measures in place;
- wide target groups addressed;
- main challenges in reaching out the target groups;
- main challenges in skills assessment, provision of tailored learning and validation and recognition of skills acquired;
- actors delivering Upskilling Pathways;
- cooperation mechanism in place.

It was based on recent literature review and on the consultation of National/EU documents on both Adult Learning and Education policies and Upskilling Pathways, published by European Commission or elaborated by European networks/associations.

The mapping of Stakeholders was developed at country level through different activities:

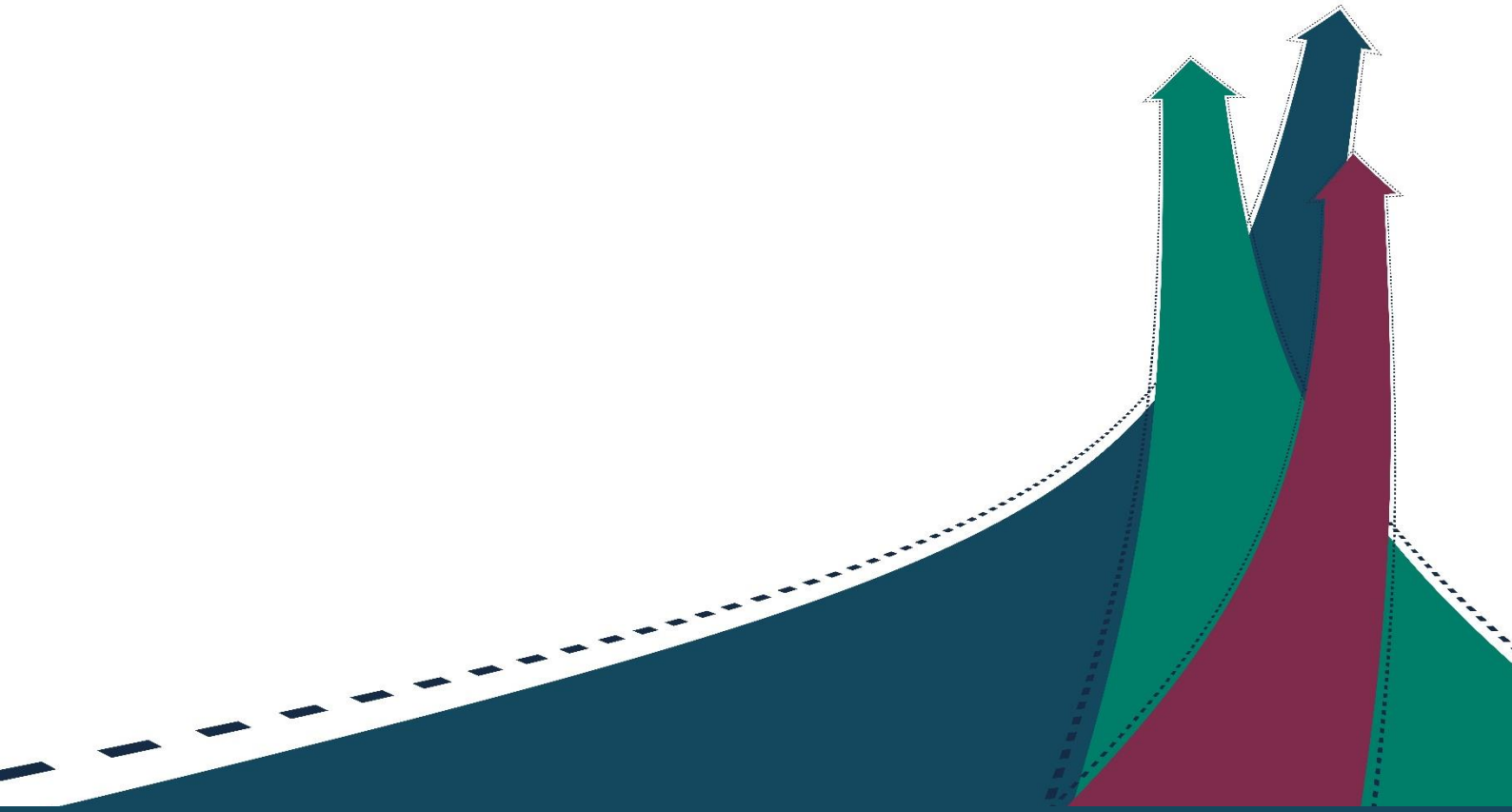
- **internal reflection** in partner organisation and/or in national project team, developed by collectively brainstorming about specific key questions, so as to share a common view of the main needs and objectives for the development of cooperation with/among stakeholders;
- **focus groups / interviews** with national stakeholders according common Guidelines, with the main aim to guide them in self-assessing their role in Upskilling Pathways, their relevance and their main contribution.

As results of the methodologies applied, the partners/national team produced an **Analysis Country Report** and a **Stakeholder Mapping Table**, as follows.



## **2 Analysis reports**

*Report of the analyses that have taken place at the respective national level*



# Country Analysis

## LATVIA



## Country Analysis - Latvia

<b>Country</b>	Latvia
<b>Responsible organisation/s</b>	Latvian Adult Education Association (LAEA); Valsts Izglitibas Attistibas Agentura (VIAA)

### Upskilling pathways in each country/EU level: state of art in the implementation, main target groups, challenges

#### 1.1. Key Statistics

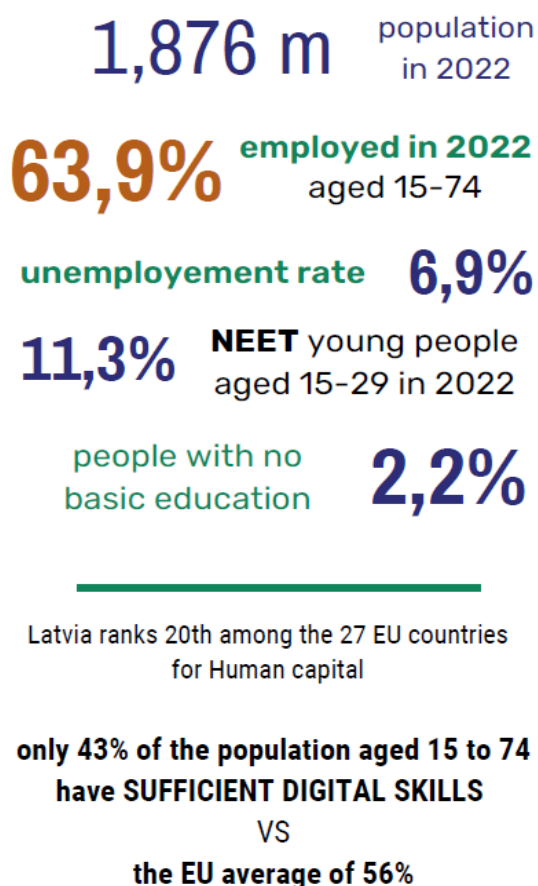
This section presents key statistics as a snapshot of the current situation (year 2022 and 2023) in adult education on overall in Latvia. (fig. 1 e 2).

**MAIN CHALLENGE** stated in the OECD Skills Strategy Implementation Guidance for Latvia - the skills needed in the labour market continue to evolve due to globalisation, digitalisation and demographic change, reducing skills imbalances remains a pressing policy priority. Most employers report that skills shortages are a major obstacle to long-term investment decisions. Shortages appear particularly acute in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), and health fields."

#### LABOUR FORCE IS EXPECTED TO DECLINE



The "2020 Skills Forecast Latvia" by CEDEFOP highlights, that between 2000 and 2030, the size of the labour force is expected to decline for all age groups except those aged 55 or more. **In 2030 about 30% of the labour force is expected to be above 55 years old**, compared to 13% in 2000. Thereby lifelong learning opportunities may be considered as a crucial pre-condition aimed to meet current challenges for transition and development.



## PARTICIPATION OF ADULTS IN EDUCATION HAS GROWN

In 2022, the participation of adults in education has grown significantly in Latvia - according to the data released by the Central Statistics Office. The proportion of the population aged 25 to 64 has increased from 6.6% in 2020 to **9.7% in 2022**, reaching the historically **highest level of participation in Adult Education**. Thereby already in 2022, the indicator stated in the Action Plan of the Education Development Guidelines "Future Skills for the Future Society" in 2024, to reach 10% of adults aged 25-64 involved in adult education has been practically achieved.



### 1.2. National Policy Framework on adult education

This section summarizes the legal framework and key national policy planning documents related to adult education in Latvia.

“Today’s changing socio-economic environment and labour market encourage us to acquire new knowledge and skills on a regular basis, and to improve our existing ones. New products and services, created through technological development, automation and competitive pressures, require investment not only in research, but also in skilled workforce, which is open to new knowledge. This means continuous personal development for all, as well as the ability to maintain and continuously improve one’s own competitiveness in the labour market.”

National Development Plan of Latvia for 2021-2027, section “Adult Education”

Latvia's future vision is clearly linked with skills development and ensuring opportunities for Lifelong Learning. This future perspective goes hand in hand with the **1st principle of the European pillar of social rights** – every person has the right to quality and inclusive education, lifelong learning, to acquire and improve the skills necessary to fully integrate into society and the labor market.

The Section 112 of the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia<sup>1</sup> stipulates that **“Everyone has the right to education.”** The Education Law of Latvia<sup>2</sup> is aimed to ensure that every resident of Latvia could develop his or her mental and physical potential in order to become an independent and a fully developed individual, a member of the democratic State and society of Latvia.

In the Section 17 the Education Law of Latvia stipulates that “local government implements a policy in adult education”. According to the Law on Local Governments<sup>3</sup>, Article.4, as one of tasks of local governments is **“to ensure the education of the population, including ..... adult education”**, In addition to tasks of local governments, directly dealing with implementation of adult education policy, according to the Regional Development Law<sup>4</sup>, five planning regions<sup>5</sup> have been established in Latvia - Kurzeme planning region, Latgale planning region, Riga planning region, Vidzeme planning region and Zemgale planning region. The territories of the planning region are determined by the Cabinet of Ministers' regulations of June 22, 2021 No. 418 "Rules on the territories of the planning region"<sup>6</sup>. The competence of the planning region is to ensure regional development planning, coordination, cooperation between municipalities and other state administrative institutions, thereby indirectly addressing Lifelong Learning and upskilling issues.

The adult education and skills development policy in Latvia is a significant component within the main policy planning implementation documents - the Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia “Latvia 2030”<sup>7</sup>, the National Development Plan of Latvia 2021-2027<sup>8</sup> and the Education and Skills Development Guidelines 2021-2027<sup>9</sup> and their Implementation plan 2021-23<sup>10</sup>. The national policy planning and implementation documents are developed via broad involvement of national stakeholders and taking into consideration EU policy documents and recommendations of the EU, UNESCO, OECD and CEDEFOP.

“The priority of the National Development Plan is the development of “a knowledgeable, inclusive and creative society in an efficient, innovative and productive economy” is stated be achieved with the help of **“promoting demand for lifelong learning through high-quality and flexible adult education opportunities and accessibility by: effectively using educational institutions and adult education centres; building skills funds, promoting employer and sectoral investment and employee motivation; ensuring “second chance” education in accordance”**.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.saeima.lv/en/legislative-process/constitution>

<sup>2</sup> <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/50759-education-law>

<sup>3</sup> <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/336956-pasvaldibu-likums>

<sup>4</sup> <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=61002>

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.varam.gov.lv/lv/planosanas-regioni?utm\\_source=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F](https://www.varam.gov.lv/lv/planosanas-regioni?utm_source=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F)

<sup>6</sup> <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/324290>

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.pkc.gov.lv/sites/default/files/inline-files/LIAS\\_2030\\_en\\_1.pdf](https://www.pkc.gov.lv/sites/default/files/inline-files/LIAS_2030_en_1.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.pkc.gov.lv/sites/default/files/inline-files/NAP2027\\_ENG.pdf](https://www.pkc.gov.lv/sites/default/files/inline-files/NAP2027_ENG.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> <https://digital-skills-jobs.europa.eu/en/actions/national-initiatives/national-strategies/latvian-education-development-guidelines-2021-2027>

<sup>10</sup> [https://tapportals.mk.gov.lv/attachments/legal\\_acts/document\\_versions/3933422d-6b86-4bd2-a5c6-e92ce237e0d6/download](https://tapportals.mk.gov.lv/attachments/legal_acts/document_versions/3933422d-6b86-4bd2-a5c6-e92ce237e0d6/download)

The main goal of the Education Development Guidelines 2021-2027 is to set Latvia's priorities in providing a high-quality and inclusive education and training system for all its citizens, and to support sustainable national growth.

National Reform Programme of Latvia and Stability Programme of Latvia 2020<sup>11</sup> implementation strategies are aimed to contribute to achieving the goals of the "Europe 2020" strategy via implementation of the lifelong learning principles, structural changes in the vocational education, modernization of tertiary education, development of the research potential, modernizing of the material and technical infrastructure of tertiary education and raising of the efficiency of resource use, provision for equal availability of tertiary education, improvement of the study and research quality, provision for the availability of the basic and secondary education and introduction of modern study methodology. Delivering the opinion of the Council of the European Union on the 2020 Stability Programme of Latvia<sup>12</sup> (2020/C 282/14):

***“Effective and easily accessible adult learning, reskilling and upskilling measures, together with the provision of social services and mobility support, could provide more people with the skills necessary for the labour market.”*** (2020/C 282/14)

The “Digital Transformation Guidelines for 2021-2027”<sup>13</sup> represents an overarching strategy for the digital transformation of Latvia and covers, among others, ICT education and digital skills development for all groups of society.

### 1.3. Ongoing Measures in Adult Education

This section summarizes ongoing priorities across all adult education, which are described in the Implementation plan 2021-23<sup>14</sup> of the Education Development Guidelines 2021-2027<sup>15</sup> (EDG). The main goal of the (EDG) is to set Latvia's priorities in providing a high-quality and inclusive education and training system for all its citizens, and to support sustainable national growth. The main focus on the adult education is related to the access to opportunities for the development of strong proficiency in a broad set of skills including cognitive skills, social and emotional skills, job and occupation-specific skills, and digital skills (see below).

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<sup>11</sup> [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32020H0826\(14\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32020H0826(14)&from=EN)

<sup>12</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0514>

<sup>13</sup> <https://digital-skills-jobs.europa.eu/en/actions/national-initiatives/national-strategies/latvia-digital-transformation-guidelines-2021-2027>

<sup>14</sup> [https://tapportals.mk.gov.lv/attachments/legal\\_acts/document\\_versions/3933422d-6b86-4bd2-a5c6-e92ce237e0d6/download](https://tapportals.mk.gov.lv/attachments/legal_acts/document_versions/3933422d-6b86-4bd2-a5c6-e92ce237e0d6/download)

<sup>15</sup> <https://digital-skills-jobs.europa.eu/en/actions/national-initiatives/national-strategies/latvian-education-development-guidelines-2021-2027>

**Image 1: Definition of skills by OECD (2019)<sup>16</sup>**

**Cognitive skills** involve the understanding, interpretation, analysis and communication of complex information and the ability to apply this information in situations of everyday life. These skills are general in nature and relevant for all kinds of occupations. They are considered necessary to provide a foundation for effective and successful participation in the social and economic life of advanced economies.

**Social and emotional skills**, also known as non-cognitive skills, soft skills or character skills, these are the skills involved in working with others (friendliness, respect, caring), in achieving goals (perseverance, self-control, passion for goals) and in managing emotions (calmness, optimism, confidence). They are based on recognised taxonomies in personality psychology, particularly the “big five” factors (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability and openness).

**Job and occupation-specific skills** refer to technical skills that are demanded in the context of workplaces. Unlike cognitive and social and emotional skills, they are not relevant for or portable between all occupations, but are specific to one occupation. They are typically reflected in the qualification a person holds and are valued by employers.

**Digital skills** are considered technical skills, although they entail cognitive ability to enable the understanding, interpretation, analysis and communication of digital content. They are applied in a variety of different occupations and are increasingly pervading the social aspects of everyone’s life.

### **Strengthen the availability of adult education in secondary vocational and higher education institutions**

Key activities – the development of modular training programmes for adult educators; updating of Latvian Qualifications Framework<sup>17</sup> (levels 5-7 and 2), including continuing vocational education and training for adults;

### **Ensure the implementation of individualized and flexible adult education offer, including support for reducing barriers to participation**

Key activities – continued provision of public funding support for adult learning via ESF projects, including low skilled adults and activities in regions;

### **Improvement of the skills recognition system**

Key activities – continued improvement of the system of skills recognition by amendments to respective governmental regulations;

### **Strengthen the governance of adult education**

Key activities – amendments to the Law on Education have been developed in order to strengthen the operation of the body, Adult Education Governance Council, the conceptual model of individual learning accounts is under development, methodological support to municipalities for the implementation and management of adult education at the municipal level provided.

<sup>16</sup> OECD (2019[2]), *OECD Skills Strategy 2019: Skills to Shape a Better Future*, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264313835-en>; OECD (2020[3]), *Strengthening the Governance of Skills Systems: Lessons from Six OECD Countries*, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/3a4bb6ea-en>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.nki-latvija.lv/en/lqf>

### **Promote understanding of society and employers of adult education and contribution to increasing the motivation of adults**

Key activities – numerous information and awareness rising events by governmental and non-governmental stakeholders were implemented, including targeted events for adults with low skills and activities of [EPALE National support service](https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/nss/national-support-services-latvia)<sup>18</sup>, the content of National Lifelong learning portal [www.muzizglitiba.lv](http://www.muzizglitiba.lv) is constantly upgraded.

### **Create a socially responsible and sustainable system for financing adult education**

Key activities – a framework for the creation of a state support system has been developed to encourage employers to promote the development of their employees' skills, financing model for adult education appropriate to Latvia's situation (including the development of individual learning accounts) is under development and piloting, as well as additional public funding is provided for training of employees upon the request of the employer.

#### **1.4. Mid and Long-term Policy Priorities in Adult Education**

The report “Mid- and long-term forecasts of the labour market of Latvia”<sup>19</sup> has been elaborated by the Ministry of Economics and have set the main goals to be achieved in adult education. The needs and initiatives outlined below aim at contributing to the development of lifelong learning and access to education for all, including the population with low basic skills for improved competitiveness in the labour market and integration in society with a higher quality of life.

### **Promote and increase the public awareness about the importance of adult education**

In order to increase citizens' awareness about the education and skills development as a constant process throughout life and its significance in today's changing economy, the Ministry of Economics implemented a broad public information campaign “*Be competitive! Dare to be a lifelong learner!*”<sup>20</sup> in 2021. In order to reach low-qualified people or people with no basic education in a more targeted manner and offer them more appropriate training opportunities, an evaluation about the ways how to more effectively involve adults with low skills in training has been carried out.

### **Create a sustainable and socially responsible support system for adult education**

In 2022 the amendments to the Law on Vocational Education<sup>21</sup> were adopted on modular vocational education programs in adult education (incl. the educational documents that are issued for learning the module of the program; a legal regulation determining the requirements and procedure for recognizing a person's competence for admission to the later stages of the vocational education programs). This legal framework will allow individuals to continue their studies after the assessment of the competences acquired in previous education or professional experience to obtain a professional qualification. Individuals are offered the opportunity to obtain a state-recognized qualification document by completing outside assessment and recognition of competences acquired throughout formal education. During the EU Structural

<sup>18</sup> <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/nss/national-support-services-latvia>

<sup>19</sup> [https://www.em.gov.lv/lv/darba-tirgus-zinojums?utm\\_source=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F](https://www.em.gov.lv/lv/darba-tirgus-zinojums?utm_source=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F)

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.em.gov.lv/lv/muzizglitibas-informesanas-kampana>

<sup>21</sup> <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/20244-profesionalas-izglitibas-likums>

funds planning period from 2021-2027 significant investments are planned for the development of adult education in Latvia with a total funding of 56.17 million. euro planned for raising the personal and professional skills of employees and reducing learning barriers.

### **Promote the involvement of state vocational education institutions and higher education institutions in the implementation of adult education**

All vocational education institutions, which are subordinated to the Ministry of Education and Science, implement adult education activities. According to their development and investment strategies for the period 2021-2027, it is planned to increase the number of adults involved in training. Additionally, the offer of professional continuing education programs and assessment of professional competence acquired outside the formal education system in all professional qualifications is planned to be increased.

### **Improve professional training, retraining and skills improvement measures for the unemployed**

In 2020 a total of 17.9 thousand people were involved in the training for the unemployed and job seekers carried out during the project implemented by the State Employment Agency<sup>22</sup> (ESF project Nr. 7.1.1.0/15/I/001 "Support for the education of the unemployed"), while in 2021 – 12.8 thousand persons only. In order to improve the number of the involved people, the target group was expanded to the employed people, which are at a risk of employment (incl. seniors age 50+, disabled people and people with low level of education/qualification).

### **Support the improvement of employee skills and qualifications**

The ESF project "Improving the professional competence of employed persons"<sup>23</sup>, implemented by the State Education Department Agency in a collaboration with municipalities, educational institutions and State Employment Agency, with a total budget of 46 million euros is aimed to improve skills and professional competences of employed persons in order to prevent the inadequacy of their qualifications with the labor market demands, to promote the competitiveness of employees and increase their work productivity. By the end of 2023, it is planned to involve more than 87 thousand people in training, including more than 19 thousand employees with a low level of education and skills. According to the survey implemented in 2022<sup>24</sup>, 62% of the participants regularly apply the acquired skills in practice.

### **Provide the training and improvement opportunities for company employees**

Within the framework of "Support for employee training", the Ministry of Economics in cooperation with sectoral employers' associations provides support to entrepreneurs to improve the skills of their employees in order to facilitate the productivity and innovations. By the beginning of 2022, the support was provided to 1,000 companies and 18 281 employed persons. The activity "Support for ICT and non-technological training, as well as training to facilitate the attraction of investors" is aimed to promote the productivity and work efficiency of self-employed persons, as well as SMEs and large companies. It is planned to be achieved by

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<sup>22</sup> <https://www.nva.gov.lv/en>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.macibaspieaugusajiem.lv/par-projektu?tab=collapse-78>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.viaa.gov.lv/lv/jaunums/macibas-pieaugusajiem-gutas-zinasanas-ikdiena-lieto-62-dalibnieku>

increasing the qualifications and skills of their employees in the field of ICT. This support (by the beginning of 2022) was provided to 566 enterprises and 6976 employed persons in total.

### **Participate in the OECD's International Adult Competence Assessment Program "PIAAC"<sup>25</sup>**

Latvia has started to participate in the study of OECD's PIAAC and the first results are expected to be published in 2024. The data obtained will contribute to highlighting the discrepancies between the supply and demand of skills in the labor market and influence of the relevant skills on the amount of remuneration, as well as compare internationally the quality of Latvia's human resources.

### **Provide individual learning accounts**

In order to extend the opportunities and rights for adults to participate in education aimed to improve their skills and knowledge, a decision about a conceptually new approach - the creation of individual learning accounts, has been approved by the Latvia government in mid 2023. The individual learning account will be a personal virtual account that will provide adults with access to an individualized learning budget and learning opportunities that meet the criteria set by the state and respond to the needs of the labor market. With the support of the EU Recovery Fund, the goal is to develop and approve the individual learning account approach in Latvia by the mid 2026 with a total of 3,500 people involved within the pilot project. It is expected that introduction of individual learning accounts will address the main challenges of providing equal access to learning, information on learning opportunities, and will help overcome the barriers that often retain adults from engaging in learning. It is expected that the individual learning account will include a unified information and service platform on adult education and support opportunities, learning, career development and skills assessment tool. This approach is also expected to ensure unified access to education documents.

### **Implement vet skills competitions – awareness rising and skills promotion events**

The State Education Development Agency, which is implementing VET competitions within SkillsLatvia<sup>26</sup> and represents Latvia in WorldSkills<sup>27</sup> and World Skills Europe<sup>28</sup>), is responsible for the coordination of activities of European Skills Year<sup>29</sup> in Latvia.

*"... to keep up with the time and be competitive in the labor market, everybody should be open to new information and willing to learn more and more. Today there are broad opportunities for everyone to improve their knowledge, skills and competences to new levels..."* emphasizes VAAA director.

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<sup>25</sup> <https://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.viaa.gov.lv/lv/skillslatvia>

<sup>27</sup> <https://worldskills.org/>

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.worldskillseurope.org/>

<sup>29</sup> [https://year-of-skills.europa.eu/index\\_en](https://year-of-skills.europa.eu/index_en)



## Stakeholder cooperation in UP: successful cooperation mechanisms, missing stakeholders and gaps in cooperation

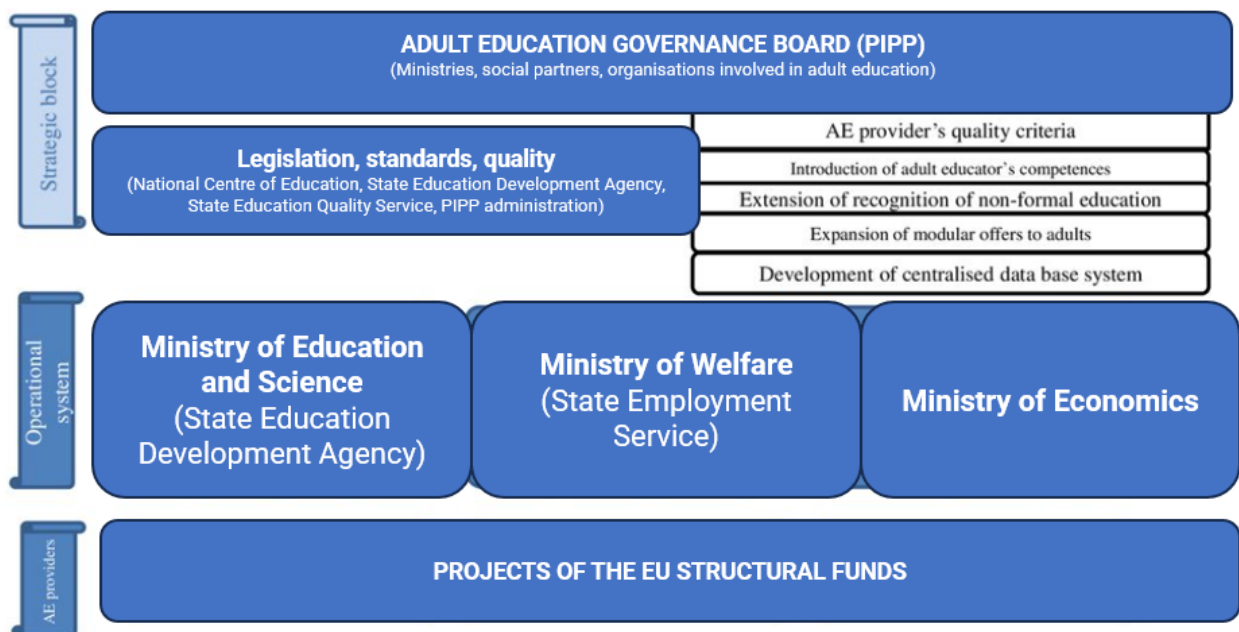
### Adult education coordination and governance mechanisms

In accordance with the Education Development Guidelines 2014-2020<sup>30</sup>, the Adult Education Governance Model<sup>31</sup> (see Image 2) was developed in 2020 as a response to the fragmentation in the adult education system. The model sets vocational education as a priority and seeks to **improve transparency and communication, manage resources and coordinate stakeholders.**

Aligned with Latvia's National Qualification Framework, the model aims:

“to improve basic skills, support adult’s transition to the labor market, recognize previous learning experiences and provide non-formal education.”

Image 2: Adult Education Governance Model in Latvia<sup>32</sup>.



In Latvia, there are a number of bodies that co-ordinate across public and private stakeholders. At the national level, the Adult Education Governance Board (PIPP) includes the three main Ministries (MoES, MoW, MoE) and other ministries involved in adult education, such as the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Health; social partners such as the Employers’ Confederation of Latvia (LDDK) and the Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia; municipalities; and organisations involved in adult education, such as the Cross Sectoral Co-ordination Centre, the Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments, and the Association of Planning Regions. The goals of the Board are to decide on priority target groups and priority areas, confirm the quality criteria for

<sup>30</sup> <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/266406-par-izglitibas-attistibas-pamatnostadnu-20142020gadam-apstiprinasanu>

<sup>31</sup> <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/281992-par-pieauguso-izglitibas-parvaldibas-modela-ieviesanas-planu-2016-2020-gadam>

<sup>32</sup> Source: Ministry of Education and Science, “Implementation of Upskilling Pathways in Adult Education in Latvia” [Implementation of «Upskilling Pathways» in AE in Latvia - ppt download \(slideplayer.com\)](#)

adult education, and evaluate and analyse the quality of programmes (see Table 1 in the Annex 1).

As the overall approach it should be mentioned, that Ministry of Education and Science deals with the support for learning opportunities for the employed adults, the Ministry of Welfare provides support for the unemployed and jobseekers, while the Ministry of Economics provides support for adult learning upon the request of employers. Within the framework of their competences, ministries cooperate with a whole range of other stakeholders involved in the implementation of adult education - from inter-ministerial public bodies to various NGO's and private sector associations. In addition, each ministry of the sector implements the management of adult education and takes care of the development of human resources according to its competence and target audience - for example, the Ministry of Health manages the implementation of the education of healthcare personnel, the Ministry of Culture is responsible for the education of cultural workers, the Ministry of Agriculture deals with the training provision in the sectors of agriculture, forestry and fishing, etc. The offer of adult education – both formal and informal education – is provided by various public and private entities operating in the field of education in free market conditions.

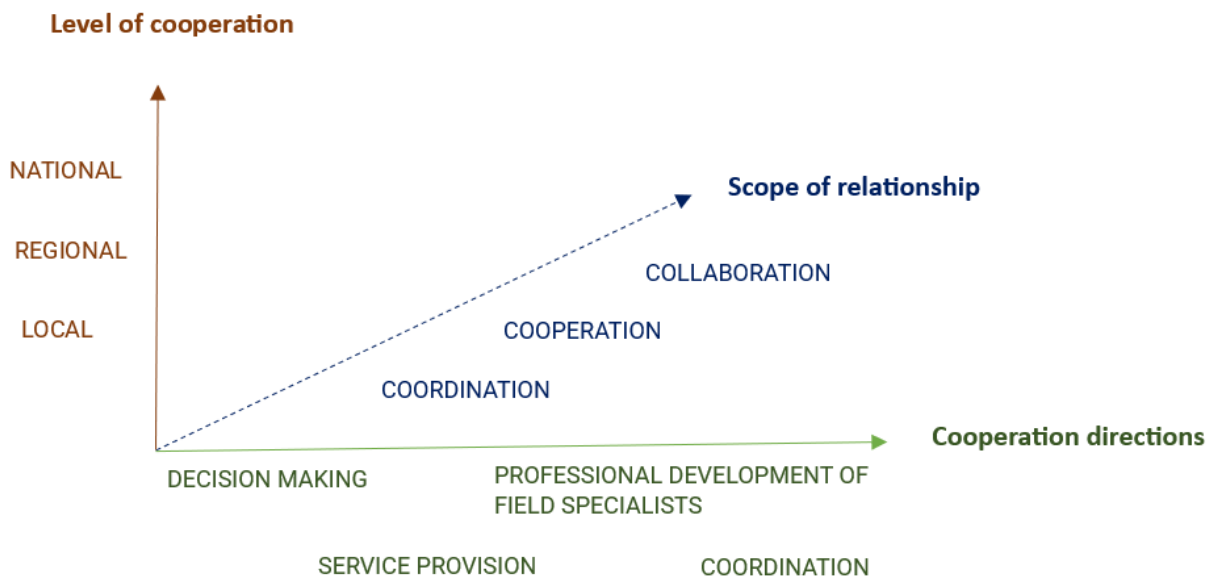
At a regional level, the decision-makers are the Development Councils of the planning regions, which comprise the heads of the regional municipalities. Planning regions do not have a direct educational function, therefore the decision-making, adult education initiatives and budget allocation is diverse and depend on many aspects in the planning regions. A unified coordination system among the planning regions is not currently provided.

At a local level, municipalities share the responsibility for adult education, since they implement adult education policies at the local level and issue licences for non-formal education programmes. Some municipalities also provide adult education through public adult education institutions, which can be adult education centres, cultural clubs, associations, or others. However, similar to the regional disparity issues, the functioning and capacity of local adult education centres depend on the resources of the municipalities. Municipalities with more resources can provide better services than municipalities with fewer resources, which highlights the need for strong governance structures to ensure equity in adult learning across Latvia.

### **Challenges and gaps in cooperation**

In order to understand the wide nature of cooperation, the authors of this report have developed a model of stakeholder cooperation that looks at the **cooperation at various levels** (national, regional and local), **the scope of cooperation among stakeholders** that starts from coordination and leads to collaboration, and describes the **cooperation areas**, such as cooperation in decision-making, providing services, etc. (see Image 3 below). When summarizing the cooperation challenges and gaps below, this model has been used to address a variety of aspects related to cooperation among stakeholders.

**Image 3:** A Cooperation Model developed by the authors of the report.



Adult education and skills development issues are discussed in Latvia Parliament. The main **national level challenge** in the stakeholder cooperation and overall adult education governance, as stated in the study implemented upon request of the Latvia Parliament (2021) "Digital, technological and language skills of adults: opportunities and challenges for their development in Latvia"<sup>33</sup>, the arrangement of the adult education governance system has been included as a priority in the development planning documents since 2006, however, there are still significant deficiencies in the governance of this area. It was highlighted in the report that:

“the cooperation of the parties involved is still insufficient, the training offer for the employed and the unemployed is not optimally coordinated, and the involvement of local governments in providing adult education is not sufficient”.

The OECD recommends creating a united adult education governance institution in Latvia as the adult education system is fragmented. The main challenge is based on the fact that the horizontal nature of the field of adult education, the diversity of target groups and the distribution of financial resources require the implementation of governance within the framework of different sectors and policy planning levels. Thereby significant changes in the governance of adult education are not foreseen in the Education Development Guidelines for 2021-2027. It is planned to maintain the current adult education governance model by strengthening the **Adult Education Governance Board** as a unified platform for adult education governance. On the other hand, from 2023, the role of the Ministry of Education and Science and support for adult education based on sectoral needs is expected to increase.

In the response to the above mentioned challenges, a recently (June 2023) established coordination body - Human Capital Development Council<sup>34</sup> is expected to determine the

<sup>33</sup> [https://www.saeima.lv/petijumi/Pieauguso\\_izglitiba\\_petijums.pdf](https://www.saeima.lv/petijumi/Pieauguso_izglitiba_petijums.pdf)

<sup>34</sup> <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/342561-cilvekkapitala-attistibas-padomes-nolikums>

strategic goals of human capital development in collaboration with social partners and other non-governmental organizations, to provide national level evaluations on the labour market development scenarios and forecasts at the national and municipal levels, market, including the unemployment situation and its impact on the competitiveness of various population groups, to evaluate the tasks of the subordinate institutions of the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Welfare and the Ministry of Education and Science in the field of lifelong learning. The Council consists of the Minister of Economics (chair), the Minister of Education and Science and the Minister of Welfare.

A few **conclusions from the completed focus-groups and interviews** about the existing challenges and gaps in cooperation among stakeholders' point to:

- The **governance structure for adult education policies is multilayered** with many stakeholders involved. The functioning and capacity of local adult education centres depend on the resources of the municipalities. Municipalities with more resources can provide better services than the municipalities with fewer resources, which highlight the need for strong governance structures to ensure equity in adult learning across Latvia. Thereof, a consolidated approach to implementing adult education policies would be needed.
- A coordination mechanism shall be needed, which would ensure the achievement of common results through the cooperation of institutions based on their specific strengths and competencies. For example, the VIAA monitoring department might monitor the learning results of not only the employed, but also the unemployed; NVA career counsellors might be involved in various projects; programs and learning materials developed by one partner could be implemented by others. A **model based on the specialization of institutions** would facilitate the transition from on and off cooperation to sustainable cooperation.
- In the national projects, **information services** should be provided in line with the specific needs of the target groups for the distribution of information in different formats. Currently, for adults with low basic skills, this makes it difficult to understand the learning offer and make an appropriate choice. Insufficient attention is paid to the exchange of information and opinions of partners, ensuring feedback. The specific target group needs in the regional areas for assuring local supply and demand when implementing national level projects are not fully addressed. **Transparent cooperation mechanism** among national, regional and local players is adult education to respond to specific local needs could be strengthened. **Educational needs identified at the local level quite often lack implementation opportunities** – there are no education providers or appropriate offer in the territory of the municipality. Non-formal educational programs or small-scale learning activities are often implemented by own initiative.
- The coordination between the state institutions and municipalities for implementing a **unified approach to adult education policies remains challenging**. The adult education policies carried out in municipalities very much depend on the size, resources and priorities of individual municipalities. At the local level, there is a much greater opportunity to reach and engage different target groups. It goes hand in hand with the

- limited financial support for the development of adult education framework at a local level that would be in line with national policies.
- Adult education coordinators in municipalities often work par-time only, have a wide range of responsibilities apart from adult education and lack skills in implementing adult education policies. There is a need for **adult education coordinators in municipalities** to be fully employed with adult education coordination function, including the creation of local cooperation network, determining educational needs, building collaboration among national and local stakeholders, information dissemination, implementation of adult engagement initiatives, etc. to serve as a one-stop agency for adult education at a local level.
  - Adult education coordinators, education providers and career counsellors in municipalities are involved in informing and advising adults. However, it often happens within the framework of a single organisation. **Local networks of all involved stakeholders in adult education** for the provision of accurate and timely information has to be strengthened.
  - Lack of motivation and fear of failure are the most important factors that prevent the involvement of adults with low basic skills in learning. Solving the problem requires implementation of **motivating activities before the educational process**. It is more convenient to provide such activities at the local level, as can be seen in the examples of good practice. Local initiatives are based on an individualized approach and allow to reach different target groups. The development of initiatives is hindered by the lack of financial support and regulatory obstacles, with regulatory documents emphasizing control mechanisms that do not encourage opportunities for new approaches.
  - Local governments, employers and sectoral industry associations are involved in determining the learning needs of adults. Challenges arise from various understandings of educational needs. Individuals view life skills as important, whereas employers – skills needed in the labour market. In order to involve a person with low basic skills in educations and training, would require a **continuous approach to developing one's skills**. This would include a set of short practical trainings to motivate this target group leading to a longer training (diploma, qualification, etc.). It also requires a monitoring/mentoring activity that would support these people throughout this learning road, also after the end of the training. Moreover, regional differences should be taken into full consideration of the educational needs defined in the national level projects. The involvement of planning regions in determining learning needs would encourage the development of a more diverse educational offer. At the local government level, educational needs are determined with a target group approach, with detailed differentiation and taking into account the needs of disadvantaged groups.
  - The professional development of specialists and the maintenance of educational material platforms would require greater state support and the promotion of continuous cooperation between digital professionals, regions, municipalities and adult education providers. The National Centre of Education has the potential to promote cooperation for the improvement of the competences of adult education professionals. Although the core activity of the center is focused on general and professional education, one of its functions is to coordinate and implement the professional development of teaching staff. VISC's existing cooperation with universities and developers of teaching and methodological tools allows to broaden the competency to adult education specialists.

The Lifelong Learning Centres of universities provide a wide set of various forms of training for adults, including tailor-made courses for private and public sector institutions and enterprises. They also have significant experience and expertise in adult training, including academic studies in andragogy, therefore could be more involved in the provision of consultations for adult trainers.

For further information, see **Stakeholder mapping table** [here](#)

### Qualitative information about the analysis process

The analyses process, in particular, the focus group discussions, including the preparatory and follow up activities, **provided a considerable impact to the commitment and contribution** of the stakeholders involved.

Within the WP 2 of the project the partners in Latvia – the Latvian Adult Education Association (LPIA) and the State Education Development Agency (VIAA) – carried out 3 online focus group discussions as well as several individual interviews with the adult education experts.

The **1<sup>st</sup> Focus group discussion** was held on 27<sup>th</sup> April with 7 participants of the target audience – representatives of local municipal bodies and education institutions with the aim to learn about the process about the **implementation of adult education policy and initiatives in the local community**.

The **2<sup>nd</sup> Focus group discussion** was held on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2023 with 9 participants of the target audience – representatives of public and private adult education providers, employment and social sector specialists with the aim to learn about the **adult education training provision processes and services**.

The **3<sup>rd</sup> Focus group discussion** was held on 1<sup>st</sup> June for a specific target audience – adult educators from private and public institutions, dealing with **digital skills training**. The total number of participants – 6 representatives from the digital skills training organisation, an online interview with 2 specialists on digital skills training was held individually on 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> June.

Duration of each discussion was about 2 hours. Participants were selected, motivated and involved in a close mutual cooperation among VIAA and LPIA.

**The level of participation of stakeholders** in the analyses process could be considered as high, both responsive and pro-active, with significant components of mutual interaction among the stakeholders involved.

- The questions/themes to be discussed were sent to participants well in advance, together with explanatory e-mail about the focus and aims of discussion proposed and the main information about the “PartnerUP” project.
- After each focus group discussion minutes with key conclusions were sent to all participants for checking and possible amendments, the amendments provided were included in final version of minutes.
- During the focus group interviews equal opportunities were ensured for all participants to express their opinions on all questions, included in the agenda. In addition to that the

participants had an opportunity to ask questions to each other, aimed to share and discuss details of good practices and challenges presented.

- Thereby the participants shared the good practices, created mutual contacts, aimed to share lessons learned from successful implementation of public awareness events, dissemination and use of developed learning materials and programmes, etc. One of special emphasis during the mutual discussions were about effective approaches of involvement of low skilled adults in learning process.

The total number of focus group representatives involved were 22 persons. In all discussions two representatives of LPIA (director and expert) and two representatives of VIAA (senior expert and senior project manager, contact person of “Partner UP” project from VIAA) participated. The discussions were moderated by a representative per partner, meetings were recorded in order to create detailed and accurate meeting minutes. At the end of each meeting the project team presented the main preliminary conclusions and considered notes from the participants.

According to opinion of the project team, the analysis, especially the focus group discussions and implemented preparatory and follow-up measures **positively contributed to strengthening relationships with stakeholders**, based on mutual respect and trust. The participants openly expressed their opinions, both highlighting achievements and good practices as well as critical assessments of existing shortcomings in overall adult education provision and management as well as highlighted the challenges to be solved in order to increase effectiveness of lifelong learning and upskilling processes. The key conclusions and findings of the analyses implemented **will be used to by VIAA senior officials** for contribution to development of related lifelong learning policy planning and implementation documents, proposals for elaboration of existing cooperation mechanisms and implementation of public awareness increasing events. LPIA will use the network of its member organisations and partners to contribute to interaction of NGO sector to lifelong learning policy development and its implementation.

The overall conclusion of the project team is that **the analyses process was implemented quite well**. The possible **shortcomings** to be mentioned could be related to the overall approach to the interviews implemented with the main emphasis to stakeholders from local (municipal) and regional levels, national level stakeholders were less involved. One of the **main challenges** recognised during the analyses process were difficulties in gathering information about the involvement of low skilled adults, as there are various interpretations and understanding of adults with “low skills” (for example, uncompleted primary education, professions for adults with low qualifications - 8th, 9th basic group according to the Classifier of Occupations, low basic skills, low digital skills etc.) It should be highlighted, that the low skill adults are quite diverse group with different social situations and various learning needs, thereby correlation to age groups, income level, places of residence – cities or rural areas etc. should be taken into consideration. The issues and challenges, related to involvement of low skilled learners should be specified during the further phases of project implementation.

## Good practices

*N.B. 'Good practices' are defined, in this context, as strategies, approaches and/or activities that have been shown through research and/or evaluation to be effective, efficient, sustainable and/or transferable, and to reliably lead to a desired result in supporting identification, engagement, commitment of stakeholders as well as cooperation among them, with specific reference to the UP initiative. The Good practices can be local, regional, national or international ones.*

### 1. Best Practices at a National Level

#### **Sectoral expert councils**

Sectoral Expert Councils (SEC) founded in 2010 are operating under the legal basis of the Vocation Education Law coordinated by the Employers Confederation of Latvia<sup>35</sup>. SECs are aimed to facilitate the improvement of the effectiveness and quality of VET in the respective industry by promoting co-operation between the State, employers, trade unions and specialists on issues related to human resource development and compliance of VET to labour market requirements. Currently there are 13 NEPs established covering all main sectors of industry<sup>36</sup>.

#### **Sub-council of the national tripartite cooperation council on vocational education and employment**

This sub-council may be considered as one of the first successful stakeholder collaboration samples on VET, adult education and skills development. The sub-council started its work already in 1999 as the Vocational Education Cooperation Council, with the main task to promote the cooperation of the government, employers' and employees' (trade unions) organizations in the field of development and implementation of the national policy and strategy of human resources development, education and employment. The sub-council has a wide set of tasks, including the evaluation and development of draft proposals of policy planning and legal documents in the field of human resources development, education and employment as well as the preparation of the proposals for their elaboration and updating.

#### **National coordinators for the implementation of the european agenda for adult learning**

This Erasmus+ project is implemented by the Ministry of Education and Science<sup>37</sup> with the main emphasis (but not limited to) on the collaboration with municipalities on the development of lifelong learning opportunities. It contributes to promoting adult learning, providing policy advice and gathering and disseminating best practices to national authorities. The network of adult education coordinators has been established in all municipalities, a competency development program for adult education coordinators has been developed and numerous

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<sup>35</sup> <https://lddk.lv/en/about-lddk/more-about-lddk/>

<sup>36</sup> In 2022 several hundreds of sectoral experts were involved in SECs activities from 90 employers' organizations, 56 companies, 17 trade unions and 10 state institutions as well as from 33 educational institutions and other sectoral organizations.

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.izm.gov.lv/lv/projekts/nacionalie-koordinatori-eiropas-pieauguso-izglitibas-programmas-istenosanai>



trainings and seminars, as well as program piloting (DigComp<sup>38</sup>, FinComp<sup>39</sup>, GreenComp<sup>40</sup>, EntreComp<sup>41</sup>, LifEComp<sup>42</sup>) and methodology materials implemented<sup>43</sup>.

## 2. Best Practices at a Sub-National Level

### **Latvian information and communications technology association (likta)**

Association was founded in 1998 and it unites leading industry companies and organizations, as well as ICT professionals – more than 160 members in total. It is the flagship of the industry, which comes up with digital skills development initiatives, has created a digital skills partnership platform and represents the National Digital Coalition in Latvia. In its projects, LIKTA conducts training for ICT professionals, organizes information and motivation campaigns to invite the public and entrepreneurs to learn new digital skills, helps policymakers, industry associations and small and medium-sized enterprises to more effectively implement digital solutions in the public and private sectors. In order to develop basic digital skills and transversal competences for adults with low basic skills, LIKTA has developed an integrated modular digital competence system DCDS in cooperation with European partners<sup>44</sup>.

### **Riga techgirls**

Riga TechGirls<sup>45</sup> is the first community in Latvia dedicated to educating and inspiring girls & women about technology. It has more than 6 years of experience in providing trainings, workshops, inspiration events, hackathons, mentorships, educational programs, full day conferences and scholarship programs for learning technology. One of the activities best reported about is the Riga TechGirls mentorship program, which provides continuous support prior, during and post programme, in this way motivating participants throughout their learning road, from the very beginning and monitoring participants after the end of the programme<sup>46</sup>.

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<sup>38</sup> [https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/digcomp\\_en](https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/digcomp_en)

<sup>39</sup> [https://finance.ec.europa.eu/events/using-financial-competence-framework-adults-european-union-2022-05-05\\_en](https://finance.ec.europa.eu/events/using-financial-competence-framework-adults-european-union-2022-05-05_en)

<sup>40</sup> [https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/greencomp-european-sustainability-competence-framework\\_en](https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/greencomp-european-sustainability-competence-framework_en)

<sup>41</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1317&langId=en>

<sup>42</sup> [https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/lifecomp\\_en](https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/lifecomp_en)

<sup>43</sup> The project experts have been involved in the development of uniform quality criteria for non-formal education (amendments to the Education Law 15.09.2022) and a draft of the Cabinet of Ministers regulations "Procedure for Issuing and Cancelling Permits for the Implementation of Non-formal Education Program".

<sup>44</sup> The creation of a common understanding, which LIKTA promotes by translating and popularizing EU initiative documents - the European educators' digital competence framework DigiCompEdu, the European cyber security skills framework, etc., is essential for the cooperation of partners.

<sup>45</sup> <https://rigatechgirls.com/>

<sup>46</sup> Education providers familiarize themselves with the local commune, its current issues, traditions, routines - programs are created on their basis. The learning tasks use processes that the participants encounter on a daily basis. Time is given to experiment cooperation with technology. By trying the new skills and seeing how they make work or life easier, the participants lose their fear and want to continue. The philosophy of the center is that learning is not the acquisition of a narrow field of knowledge under the guidance of a teacher. It is the development of an independent thinking and self-directed personality

### **Latvian adult education association**

With more than 60 members from different types of AE institutions (incl. 14 training centers and institutes, 3 regional adult education centers, 5 universities and their further education centers, 1 college, 11 NGO, 5 municipalities/ municipal boards of education, 1 competence development center, 1 Vocational secondary school, 1 folk high school) and 23 individual members (AE trainers), the association operates in different ways:

- represents their members and nonformal AE sector in the EU Structural Fund and Cohesion Fund Monitoring Committee, in AE management board, provides opinions to ministries for improvement of legal acts;
- exchanges with actual information and experience, shares new methodological materials within their member organizations, in network of European Adult Education Association, in Nordic Baltic AE network;
- organizes seminars, conferences, summer schools, discussions and visits to European AE institutions.

### **3. Best Practices at a Local Level**

#### **NGO 'Limbazi Foundation'**

Limbazi Foundation<sup>47</sup>, operating on the territory of Limbazi municipality, was founded in 2009; it aims to improve the quality of life by raising funds and attracting sponsors to support non – governmental organisations, informal groups of society and private initiatives. The foundation organised support to socially disadvantaged locals to improve their living space by organizing practical lessons for these families on how to renovate an apartment with limited resources, materials were donated for the repair. The self-confidence of these family members rose and afterwards they became active supporters of the foundation.

#### **Jaunpils foundation 'Rats'**

The non-profit foundation "Rats"<sup>48</sup> is a local NGO, established in Jaunpils parish<sup>49</sup>, Tukums municipality, aimed to promote local and regional development. It implements various lifelong learning events, guided by the expressed wishes of the population and the demand of the labor market, looking for possible cooperation models with other educators in order to "bring education closer" to the learner. "Rats" implemented a training cycle for young mothers who often have low self-esteem, are lonely and have insufficient education. A council chairman, social worker, lawyer, health education teacher, psychologist, hairdresser, beautician and cook worked with them for a year, trying to give them knowledge, skills and abilities in previously unlearned areas. In order for the mothers to get to the lessons, the city council financed the bus, and the representatives of the association ensured that the children were looked after during the lessons. As a result, the young women's self-esteem increased, communication improved and several training participants got jobs.

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.limbazufonds.lv/>

<sup>48</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/JaunpilsRATS?locale=zh\\_CN](https://www.facebook.com/JaunpilsRATS?locale=zh_CN)

<sup>49</sup> <https://jaunpilspils.lv/>

## Priorities for Development Groups

Based on the desk analysis and focus-group discussions on the existing challenges and gaps in cooperation of stakeholders in Upskilling Pathways, the following priorities have been proposed.

**1. Promotion of good practice, information exchange, communication and publicity for greater involvement of adults with low qualifications**

Goal: to achieve wider opportunities and formation of closer partner cooperation for greater involvement of adults by increasing the exchange of information between the parties involved at all levels, the publicity of their activities and active promotion of good practice examples.

**2. Digitization strategy for the development of adult education**

Goal: to contribute to the development of adult education by wide dissemination of effective digital innovations in learning content, and provision of information with an emphasis on the involvement of adults with low digital skills.

**3. Support for local adult engagement initiatives**

Goal: to create conditions for the active cooperation of institutions, associations, entrepreneurs and education providers at the municipal level for the development of initiatives for the development of adult involvement and learning opportunities with an emphasis on the motivation, involvement, guidance and support of adults with low qualifications.

**4. Involvement opportunities of planning regions in promotion of adult education development**

Goal: to discuss and highlight the opportunities of effective contribution of planning regions in coordination of adult education development on a regional level.

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