

PARTNERUP

Development Groups

Country Reports



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Introduction

Development groups are planned as structured meetings of key stakeholders formed with the primary objective of facilitating discussion, cooperation, and partnership building in the context of improving the implementation of Upskilling Pathways. These groups are a critical component of initiatives aimed at enhancing adult learning opportunities and engaging stakeholders effectively.

These development groups serve as a platform for engaging in open and constructive discussions. They bring together a diverse set of partners and stakeholders from various sectors, including public authorities, education providers, adult learners, and other relevant parties. These discussions are centred around identifying challenges, sharing insights, and brainstorming solutions to improve the implementation of Upskilling Pathways.

Furthermore, development groups facilitate the organisation of meetings and interactions among key actors and cooperation partners. This includes representatives from public authorities responsible for policy and regulation, education providers delivering Upskilling Pathways, adult learners themselves, and stakeholders identified through comprehensive analysis. These meetings aim to create a collaborative environment where all relevant parties can come together, share their perspectives, and work towards common goals.

One of the primary tasks of development groups is to identify and design cooperation structures that can effectively support the goals of Upskilling Pathways. This involves determining how various stakeholders can work together, allocate responsibilities, and establish mechanisms for seamless cooperation. It may include the creation of frameworks, guidelines, and protocols that ensure coordinated efforts.

In addition, development groups focus on enhancing the flexibility and adaptability of learning pathways for adult learners. This involves discussing and proposing strategies to make learning opportunities more accessible, responsive to learners' needs, and adaptable to changing circumstances. The aim is to design learning pathways that empower individuals to acquire new skills and knowledge at their own pace and convenience.

Characterised by interdisciplinary collaboration, regular in situ or online meetings, data-driven decision-making, problem-solving orientation, and an action-oriented approach, development groups play a vital role in advancing the implementation of Upskilling Pathways and improving adult education. They foster collaboration, align strategies, and promote the creation of flexible and effective learning opportunities, ensuring that all relevant stakeholders work in synergy to achieve shared goals in adult education and lifelong learning.

Priorities and key areas

The following priorities have been identified based on the stakeholder analysis:

- Strengthening collaboration mechanisms between the stakeholders - setting frameworks, structures and responsibilities for allowing and facilitating effective cooperation
- Development of policies which are less fragmented and more coherent with EU strategies
- Increasing participation - working on outreach strategies and practices - promotion of good practices, information exchange, communication and publicity for greater involvement of adults with no or low qualifications.
- Improving the effectiveness of training needs analysis
- Validation of informal and non-formal competences and prior learning
- Financial support mechanisms for adult learners
- Enhancing the role of ALE practitioners
- Relevance of non-formal educational practices for ALE
- Digitisation strategy for the development of ALE
- Support for local adult engagement initiatives, involvement of regional/local level in promoting ALE development
- How to exploit European experiences linked to UP

Based on analysis findings, the development groups focus on several key discussion areas:

- **Opportunities**
 - What collaborations or initiatives related to UP exist within the country/at the EU level, and how can they be leveraged? Are there untapped resources, organisations, or stakeholders that could be brought into the collaborative effort to enhance UP? What best practices from other regions or countries can be adapted to improve collaboration in upskilling efforts?
- **Challenges**
 - What are the major barriers and challenges stakeholders identified which are hindering effective collaboration? What funding and resource allocation, policy, and/or accessibility and inclusion obstacles have been identified? What other challenges were reported?
- **Possible solutions**
 - What solutions have been proposed for the identified challenges and barriers? What models or strategies can be explored to overcome financial challenges in upskilling initiatives? How can policy changes to address legal and regulatory barriers to collaboration be supported? What strategies can be employed to promote partnerships in UP? Are there specific incentives that can be introduced to encourage participation and engagement from stakeholders?

- **Implementation plans**
 - What are the short-term and long-term goals for upskilling initiatives, and how can they be aligned with the objectives of the stakeholders? What is the timeline for implementation, and what are the key milestones that need to be achieved? How will responsibilities be distributed among the various stakeholders, and what governance structures will be put in place? What strategies will be in place to adapt and evolve the implementation plan as circumstances change or new challenges arise? What contingency plans can be developed to mitigate unforeseen challenges or disruptions in UP?



Findings at the national level



Latvia

Latvia

Partner organisation(s): State Education Development Agency, Latvian Adult Education Association

Participating stakeholders

State Education Development Agency (hereinafter - VIAA) and Latvian Adult Education Association (LAEA) implemented four development group meetings in Riga and [Limbaži municipality](#), with a total number of 105 participants. In all events implemented online participation opportunities (ZOOM) were provided, thereby 18 participants out of 105 participated online. Participants represented different types of stakeholders:

- Representatives from the project partner - the State Education Development Agency, implementing ESF project Nr. 8.4.1.0/16/I/001 «Improving the professional competence of employed persons» (2017 – 2023) – and Ministry of Education and Science of Latvia - 8 participants;
- Latvian Adult Education Association - promotes the development of the non-formal education system in Latvia - 4 participants;
- Municipalities, mainly represented by officials, responsible for adult education & development in their territory - 33 participants;
- Private and public adult education providers - 37 participants;
- Non-governmental organisations, involved in adult education - 12 participants;
- Libraries - 5 participants;
- As well as 6 entrepreneurs, 3 representatives of social services providers in municipalities, 1 hospital and 1 local newspaper representative.

Opportunities

It should be highlighted, that during the period from 2016 to 2023, it has been possible to change previously widespread public opinion in Latvia that adult education is available only for a minor part of society, and only a limited circle of employers, municipalities or individuals with sufficient income can afford to use its opportunities. Revitalizing the culture of lifelong learning as one of the most important directions of EU skills policy has experienced significant development in Latvia during the previous six-year period. Data from the [Central Statistics Office](#) demonstrates that the participation of adults in education in Latvia has increased significantly in 2023. In the age group from 25 to 64, the proportion of adults who participated in education has increased from 6.6% in 2020 to 10.7% in 2023, thereby exceeding the indicator (8%) set in the national education planning document - [Education Development Guidelines 2021-2017](#) for the year 2024.

One of the factors that significantly influenced the increase described, was adult education opportunities, financed by ESF and state budget, in particular, ESF project [Nr. 8.4.1.0/16/l/001 «Improving the professional competence of employed persons»](#), 2017 – 2023 (hereinafter – “The ESF project”). Until then, free learning options were available only for unemployed and job seekers, provided by the [State Employment Agency](#). The ESF Project started in 2017, implemented by the VIAA, involving municipalities as cooperation partners and in collaboration with the State Employment Agency, involved in career counsellor services for the participants. The total number of individuals involved in the training was 74,949. Adults with low education levels and skills were project priority target groups and due to successful cooperation with municipalities, their involvement reached 19% of the total number of learners.

During the implementation of the ESF project essential new measures for the development of adult education have been initiated and introduced, just a few to be mentioned:

- Existing adult educational offers were supplemented with modules and sets of modules for professional education programmes in 2018, and study courses and study modules from universities and colleges were added in 2020.
- During the COVID-19 crisis, an operative response was made by announcing and implementing a study round in which educational programmes were implemented completely remotely, promoting the introduction of remote learning offers in adult education (2020).
- The structuring of the digital skills training offer was started in 2021 following the Digital Competence Framework for European Citizens (DigComp) explaining this framework to educational institutions and learners.
- An individual approach to persons with a low level of education was started in 2022, developing a single unit cost methodology, a profiling methodology, and informing educational institutions.

Particular details of the project implementation, challenges, conclusions and lessons learned are provided in the report “Lessons learned and proposals for adult education development”, created by the VIAA Adult Education department in April 2024 and provided as an **Annex 1** to this report.

To assist the municipalities to perform more successfully in adult involvement in education, Latvia is involved in the project "[National Coordinators for the Implementation of the European Agenda for Adult Learning](#)". Within the project adult education coordinator network

is created in municipalities, providing opportunities to collaborate with governmental institutions involved, to discuss current education policy and strategy development and practical implementation, as well as to share best practical experience.

Implementation of the ESF project and the involvement of VIAA as a new actor in the implementation of adult education policy has had a significant impact on the overall performance of adult education institutions involved. Adult education institutions have confirmed that as a result of the ESF project implementation they have created new programmes, required by the labour market, improved online learning opportunities, significantly upgraded education programme content and necessary adjustments to the adult audience. They have also increased the number of education programmes with a learning schedule customised to employees' needs as well as purposefully worked on improving the pedagogical competences of teachers and trainers involved.

An innovation in the VIAA-administered project was the creation of a monitoring system for collecting and analysing data on the learning choices and results of employed adults, providing an evidence-based background for purposeful discussions with all stakeholders involved at specific initiatives necessary to be performed or activities aimed to strengthen the education institutions involved.

The evaluation report "[State support for adult education - national or personal benefit](#)" conducted by the State Audit Office, completed and available at the end of 2023 aroused a significant public interest. The report may be considered a significant factor in the development of skills improvement pathways. The report provides a detailed analysis of whether adult education achieves its goals and meets the needs of the labour market, highlighting both achievements and challenges, as well as providing proposals for improvement. Discussions about the findings of the report significantly contributed to the development of legal acts for the new planning period of EU Structural Funds (2021.-2027) to reconcile the views of all stakeholders involved in the implementation of adult education policy focused on the needed results.

Involvement of VIAA in the "Partner UP" project has created valuable synergy, as during the implementation of WP3 ("Development Groups") and WP 5 ("Implementation Plans"), as numerous lessons learned within the implementation of the ESF project were discussed as well as proposals developed and elaborated for the new projects on adult learning and upskilling, going to be financed by the ESF, the [European Union Recovery Fund](#) and the [Just Transition Fund](#).

The challenges Latvia is facing in the context of the changing labour market requirements promote more initiatives in the improvement of upskilling pathways and in strengthening the cooperation of stakeholders. According to the Ministry of Economics' [medium and long-term labour market forecasts](#), workforce reserves in Latvia in the coming years will continue to decrease, thus aggravating already existing workforce insufficiency and creating risks for future economic growth.

The most important inconsistencies expected in the labour market to be mentioned are:

- deficiency of the labour force with secondary professional education in the middle term period - it is predicted to be about 69 thousand missing specialists. It is expected in all sectors of the economy, related to all thematic VET sectors, especially in engineering and manufacturing industries;

- workforce surplus of persons with general education, basic education and lower education levels could reach about 95.8 thousand persons by 2030.

Adults with low basic skills could be involved as a significant human resource for meeting the demands of the labour market. Therefore, special attention should be paid to their retraining and further education as a significant precondition for national economic growth. Thereby special attention should be paid to the field of human capital management and the cooperation of the stakeholders should be strengthened.

To ensure faster and more controlled changes in adult education at the national level, in 2023 a decision was made to establish the [Human Capital Development Council](#), consisting of three ministers - economy, education and science, and welfare, with the following main tasks:

1. to evaluate the situation in the labour market on the national and regional (municipal) levels, and create scenarios and forecasts of the labour market development, including the prognosis of the unemployment situation and its impact on the competitiveness of various population groups in the labour market, and to make decisions, based on data and forecasts in the field of human capital development;
2. to determine the strategic goals of human capital development and directions of action to achieve in consultations with social partners and other non-governmental organisations, to determine the strategic goals of human capital development and the directions of action for achieving the mentioned goals, to prepare proposals for support measures for the human capital development, as well as monitor the progress made in achieving the set goals;
3. To evaluate the functions and tasks of the subordinate institutions of the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Welfare and the Ministry of Education and Science (the Central Statistics Office, the State Employment Agency, the VĪAA and the Investment and Development Agency of Latvia) in the field of lifelong learning and labour market development, as well as promotion of sectoral competitiveness. To develop proposals for more effective implementation of the above-mentioned tasks to ensure the supervision of the offered (adult) education and the quality and efficiency of education;
4. To prepare proposals for adult education courses/ particular fields of study to be co-financed by the state budget and European Union funds;
5. To evaluate and prepare proposals for quality requirements for adult education service providers;
6. To prepare proposals during the development process of legislation and policy planning documents, aimed to address issues related to lifelong learning, employment and economic competitiveness;
7. To ensure the implementation of priority solutions for promoting the availability of human resources in the short term.

The Human Capital Development Council has supported the management model developed by the Ministry of Education and Science for more effective inter-ministerial cooperation, establishing an inter-sectoral [Joint Adult Education Coordination Commission](#) to ensure coordination for achieving the strategic goals of human capital development. Training needs for adult education will be defined and coordinated by the Joint Adult Education Coordination Commission, established by the Ministry of Economy, bringing together the Adult Education

Management Board (MoES) and the Training Commission (MW) to ensure coordinated action to achieve strategic human capital development objectives. Its other tasks include implementation of support measures for employed adult learners, those at risk of unemployment, the unemployed and job seekers, as well as consolidating the tasks of labour market forecasting. All respective forecasting is expected to be implemented by the Ministry of Economy (at present it is implemented by several institutions), thereby ensuring more effective management of labour market forecasts.

The Human Capital Development Council has developed [the Human Capital Development Strategy for 2024-2027](#). It foresees five major priorities or strategic directions: (1) formal education and STEM skills; (2) labour market expansion; (3) recruitment of qualified employees; (4) supply and quality of adult education; (5) support for initiatives of entrepreneurship.

The strategy also includes important horizontal components - human capital management, data and evidence-based decisions, analytics, as well as cooperation with entrepreneurs. A unified platform for consideration of workforce and adult education issues will be developed, while user-oriented data management will ensure the accumulation of information and analytical capacity for evidence-based decision-making for the development and implementation of related policies.

The United Adult Education Management Commission, established by the Human Capital Development Council, has a broad representation of the involved parties. It is aimed to ensure a unified approach to the adult education measures implemented by the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Welfare and the Ministry of Education and Culture, as well as to carry out the division of responsibilities among the ministries, their subordinate institutions and cooperation partners in the implementation of the tasks of the Human Capital Development Strategy.

Publicly available comprehensive data and applied research, open discussions, unified platforms, involvement of new stakeholders in the implementation of adult education policy, creation of more purposefully oriented and expanded cooperation of stakeholders - these are the main ongoing activities to be mentioned for expanding skills development pathways in Latvia.

An overview of Adult Education policy development and implementation as well as key facts about the ESF project implemented and the new projects started in 2024 are provided in **Annex 2** - infographics presented by the representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science and VIAA during the virtual study visit in Latvia on 14th June 2024.

Challenges

- 1) Insufficient motivation of stakeholders to engage adults with low basic skills in education.** Insufficient motivation is primarily observed among adults with low basic skills, low qualifications and low level of education. It appears as a fear of learning difficulties, unwillingness to change the usual way of life, insufficient awareness of learning and work opportunities, inability to determine own learning and development needs, as well as external factors - distance to learning place, employer's attitude towards learning during work, family conditions and other factors. As a result, educational opportunities are not used by a significant part of adults.

The promotion of motivation and involvement measures in many cases are formal, providing general information about learning opportunities through media information channels and providing career counselling upon request. Municipal institutions (like social services) that are close to this target group, could be the most appropriate channel to address them.

Local governments are obliged to inform and advise adults, promoting their involvement in projects financed by the state and European Social Fund. To support the performance of these tasks, funding is provided for the salary of one full or part-time employee in each Latvia municipality. However, the current activities do not sufficiently ensure the involvement of local governments in promoting adult education, as the benefits of adult involvement in education can appear in the long term, but the investment in the form of work and additional activities should be implemented immediately. The involvement of low-qualified persons in training/learning events requires additional time and efforts for consulting, explaining, persuading, mentoring and related tasks, not sufficiently paid for by local adult education coordinators.

Therefore it is necessary to promote a lifelong learning culture for adults with low basic skills by offering short creative workshops, technology testing events and other local activities on themes that are relevant to their actual needs, thereby gradually promoting involvement, motivation and developing learning skills. Examples of related good practices about involvement activities and approaches for adults with limited learning experience and the creation of a local network of adult education stakeholders can be observed in several municipalities and are carried out voluntarily. For the wider implementation, it is necessary to increase the motivation of local governments and adequate funding.

Employers are mainly interested in hiring young, educated and motivated specialists. Adults with low basic skills/previous low qualifications, who have recently obtained or upgraded qualifications, in many cases are not considered as relevant due to their negative previous experiences. In small and medium-sized enterprises, employers face the problem of replacing an employee during his/her training period, if learning takes place during working hours. Therefore, some entrepreneurs refuse to use this opportunity.

Adults with low basic skills are not the most desirable target group for educational institutions that have applied to implement educational programmes with state/EU funds. These adults are more likely than others to drop out before completing the full programme, resulting in financial losses for the educational institutions involved. Educational institutions, both public and private, offering adult learning opportunities, are willing to engage in educational projects with their programme offerings, but

usually do not implement significant efforts to involve adults in the programmes, especially those with learning difficulties. As a result, many study groups are not completed and study programmes, demanded by the labour market, are not started. Educational institutions have opportunities and alternatives to provide their services in several forms - in other projects, in initial vocational education, by direct order from companies. Therefore, many training companies have insufficient motivation to implement additional efforts to address and involve adults with low skills in learning.

2) **The project-based approach in the implementation of adult education activities.**

Adult education for employed persons is not funded by the government in Latvia. The main emphasis in the provision of a wide scale and accessible learning opportunities for working adults is implemented via projects financed by EU funds (European Social Fund, Just Transition Fund, Recovery Fund, etc.) with state co-financing and particular priority directions according to requirements of the labour market and overall expected economic development.

The administration of particular funds is delegated to a certain ministry or its subordinate institution and is not directly linked with projects and adult learning initiatives implemented by other ministries or governmental agencies. As a result, there is a permanent risk that the offer of similar content programmes can be repeated in several projects, without creating complementary learning opportunities and causing unnecessary competition. At the same time, adults who want to learn do not have opportunities to access a common and single source of information about educational opportunities, study programmes, and the time of their implementation, as each implementing agency provides it mainly via its information sources. A unifying approach, demonstrated by the database of educational opportunities niid.lv, created by VIAA, should be mentioned, however, its continuous updating and further development requires constant cooperation of the stakeholders involved.

The separation of the activities, implemented by various agencies and institutions also causes the fragmentation of the data necessary for the situation analysis. The database of obtained qualifications is maintained by the Ministry of Education and Science, the databases about adult participants are maintained by the VIAA and the State Employment Agency within their respective projects, while information on further work progress is maintained by the Central Statistics Office.

At present there are several data sets and resources, however, they have various structures and scopes, causing comparability difficulties. Insufficient opportunities for data monitoring and analysis hinder the development of conclusions about the practical usefulness of the implemented training programmes and the quality of the performance of educational institutions to form a reasonable demand for adult education.

The necessary data for evaluating the usefulness of the projects are collected (number of participants, number of participants who finished the programme, etc.). However, at present the respective data is not collected in the dimension of the individual's continuous skill improvement path. It is necessary to collect information not only about educational activities but also about the knowledge and skills gained in various projects and learning activities, serving as a basis for a person's career development planning and may more precisely determine learning needs. This challenge is expected

to be addressed by the European Union Recovery Fund project "[Development of the approach to individual learning accounts](#)".¹

- 3) Uncertainty of the cooperation mechanism of the involved parties.** The cooperation mechanism of the involved parties is created for each project separately, defining the tasks of each partner. The common drawback to be mentioned is that the partners involved are responsible for the performance of their particular tasks, but not for the overall final result. Thereby there are cases when partners have provided information about learning opportunities, but adults do not use them, educational institutions offer learning programmes, but the groups of learners are not completed, adults have completed their studies, but there are no suitable conditions for applying knowledge in the labour market.

The uncertainty of the cooperation mechanism also manifests itself in the fact that learning needs are not sufficiently specified. Taking the educational needs of the sectors as a basis for the order of the programmes, they are not differentiated according to the demand in particular regions, towns and rural municipalities. Outside of development centres of national and regional importance (capital city Riga, several other big cities), the offer of adult education is relatively limited. The existing skills of the participants are not always evaluated and factors like age and health are not taken into consideration to offer an individualised learning approach.

The expansion of skills development pathways is hindered by the fact that within the cooperation mechanisms of the involved parties, specific and individualised approaches for adult learners with different living conditions, communication habits and values are not sufficiently included. The cooperation does not sufficiently involve partners who could act as intermediaries between adults who are learning and employers who need an employee with a certain skill profile.

¹ Individual learning account (ILA) – a personal digital profile in which a person can access individualised learning offer, skills assessment tools, funding and support measures. It also provides possibility for data accumulation and analysis options. The implementation of the ILA approach is supported by the development of the Skills Management Platform - a one-stop service portal, incl. providing for integration with the systems of other institutions, using data and providing access to the learning offer regardless of resident status.

Possible solutions

During the discussions, several proposals were made to address the challenges described.

To increase the involvement of adults with insufficient skills in education, much more extensive and well-targeted work must be implemented by municipalities. To reach various target groups of adults and provide personalised communication throughout all territory of the municipality, it is necessary to **create local cooperation networks in each municipality**, involving specialists of municipal institutions, representatives from non-governmental sectors, community activists and local enterprises. A sample of an operating collaboration network of local stakeholders ([Limbazi](#) municipality, Latvia) with a description of their tasks is provided in **Annex 3** of this report.

Municipal adult education coordinators must focus on identifying the educational needs of individuals and employers, building collaboration between national level and local stakeholders, disseminating information and other responsibilities to serve as a one-stop-shop for the provision of adult education opportunities. There is a need for **local-level learning promotion initiatives** that develop forms of social learning, encourage, motivate and prepare adults with low basic skills for learning. Municipal governments should provide adequate funding for these activities.

A solution that provides an answer to several challenges could be the **creation of a unified platform of educational opportunities**. Instead of creating separate information platforms in each project, it is necessary to combine all information about educational programmes available in adult education, their content, implementation time, venue, conditions of participation, career counsellor services, opportunities to receive a possible job offer after completing the programme in a common portal with a simple and a well-understood information search solution. The platform should be easy to use not only for adults and employers who are interested in learning opportunities but also for librarians and social workers who advise adults on various issues daily. By further development of the platform interactive functionality should be added, including participant feedback on programs offered. This could serve as an incentive for education providers and a motivating factor for adults making learning choices.

To make adult teaching and learning processes simpler and more productive, it is necessary to develop models of **direct cooperation of the involved parties** as an alternative solution to the cooperation model of centrally determined educational needs and the creation of an educational offer, in which communication between the recipient of the educational service and the provider is mediated and generalised.

A model of direct cooperation was discussed and agreed upon during a seminar, implemented within the “PartnerUP” project activities on 22nd November 2023, involving the [Latvian Peat Association](#), the Ministry of Education and Science and the VIAA to agree on the necessary training for industry specialists. This collaboration format was mutually considered as positive and a prospective for wider use, if particular sectors of the economy are concerned.

Specific proposals were developed, aimed at improving the organisation of adult learning processes. At present the institution is responsible for the implementation of particular adult education projects in collaboration with employer organisations, determines educational needs, selects respective vocational and non-formal adult education programmes, concludes contracts with education providers and announces applications for learners. After completing

the course, the participants search for opportunities to improve their situation in the labour market, and it should be recognised that these efforts are not always successful.

According to the opinion of employers, the solution could be a competent **assessment of skills and knowledge of the learner**, as well as the **involvement of a career consultant-mentor**, who ensures connection with companies, as well as learning offers, directly related to the needs of a particular enterprise and requirements for a particular position. The model described is aimed to achieve a specific result and may provide higher flexibility by fixing educational needs not in the form of an educational programme, but in the form of a set of skills.

Several proposals were made concerning how to move from the fragmented and termed project approach to a **permanent and comprehensive stakeholder cooperation system** in the field of adult education. This should require wider involvement of stakeholders, such as municipal [planning regions](#), aimed to ensure a balanced educational offer taking into consideration territorial and sectoral aspects concerning target groups' educational needs. The tasks and responsibilities of each stakeholder involved must be more precisely defined to ensure the availability of learning opportunities everywhere and for everyone, prevent duplication of functions, and create a user-friendly, inclusive and motivating informative learning environment. Specialization of education providers should be promoted to increase the variety of education services and reach more target groups.

To promote training at the workplace and to develop work-based learning for adults, there should be determined incentives for employers in the form of tax relief.

Cooperation should be focused on ensuring the **continuity of adult learning** and not on the implementation of a single particular activity or project. For this purpose, it is necessary to create common educational quality criteria and user-friendly databases, which allow for evaluation of the overall benefits of learning in the dimensions of the individual and society development in a certain period, to predict the future needs of individual development and career growth opportunities, and to design the next stages of the skill development pathways.

It is necessary to strengthen in-service **training opportunities for adult educators**. For the development of cooperation, regular exchange of information between the involved parties should be strengthened. Wider publicity on all levels should be provided for the decisions made, the actions to be taken and the results achieved.

Implementation plans

The long-term goal of skill development initiatives is to create a sustainable adult education system in Latvia, which, based on the coordinated cooperation of the stakeholders involved, promotes higher adult involvement in education, provides adults with continuous learning opportunities and diverse lifelong and life-wide skills development pathways, contributing to the country's economic growth and cultural prosperity, social security and integration of society.

The short-term goals of the initiatives are focused on the implementation of priorities that contribute to the achievement of the long-term goal:

1. Partner specialization and institutional cooperation. The goal is to achieve higher adult involvement and expansion of upskilling pathways by developing cooperation mechanisms among all stakeholders.
2. Support for local (regional, municipal) initiatives of adult involvement in education. The goal is to develop adult engagement and learning initiatives by creating conditions for the cooperation of institutions, associations, entrepreneurs and education providers on municipality and regional levels.
3. Information exchange, communication and publicity. The goal is to expand stakeholder involvement and collaboration opportunities by developing information exchange among stakeholders of all levels and ensuring publicity of their activities.

Long-term aim concerns all stakeholders because it aims for common benefits.

Short-term goals are based on different activities, the performance of which will require additional effort and work or reduction of it. This could be assessed by partners in different ways. However, the potential benefits of achieving the goals justify these investments.

Long-term and short-term goals cover national, regional and local levels and all stakeholders involved in adult education - ministries and governmental agencies, municipalities, all types of education institutions, universities, organisations of entrepreneurs and non-governmental organisations.

To achieve the above-mentioned goals the following **milestones** are stated:

1. **Readiness of involved stakeholders to discuss specific initiatives is achieved.** For this purpose, the results and conclusions of the implemented project and examples of good practice will be disseminated.
2. **Evaluation** of implementation opportunities of specific initiatives in upskilling pathways development has been implemented. This could be achieved by organising various kinds of events (seminars, meetings, forums, conferences etc.) for stakeholders.
3. Planned results of adult learning and upskilling initiatives have been achieved, and their evaluation has been carried out. For this purpose, the actions planned as a result of the agreement of stakeholders will be implemented.

Several national-level projects on adult education and upskilling pathways started/are to be started in 2024:

Project implementation has started: European Union Recovery Fund project "Development of the approach to individual learning accounts" with a budget of 14.3 million EUR. Objectives - by 31.05.2026 to develop and validate the Individual Learning Accounts approach, and to develop the Skills Management Platform, 3500 persons helped to acquire digital skills using the Individual Learning Accounts resources.

Projects in the preparation process:

- European Social Fund Plus project "Support for adult learning based on individual needs" (EUR 34.6 million). The target group - employees from the age of 18. The goal is to involve 28,000 employed persons until 31.12.2029 in adult education, at least 14,000 of them with low levels of education
- The Just Transition Fund project "Increasing the skills of the employed and support for obtaining qualifications, support for workforce training following company demand" (19,9 million. EUR). The target group is employed persons aged 17 and over, as well as NEET persons aged 17 to 29. The goal is to involve 5559 people until December 31.12.2029 in adult education.

The main new approaches in the projects mentioned above, developed with the contribution of "PartnerUP" project activities:

- Training needs for adult education will be defined and coordinated by the Joint Adult Education Coordination Commission, established by the Ministry of Economy, bringing together the Adult Education Management Board (MoES) and the Training Commission (MW) to ensure coordinated action to achieve strategic human capital development objectives
- Wider options for career support, assessment of skills and competences before starting training (cooperation with municipalities, educational institutions and State Employment agency).
- More targeted activities for the involvement of persons with a low level of education.
- Closer cooperation with municipalities, planning regions and Sectoral expert councils
- Developing a system for assessing the quality of adult formal and non-formal education, developing a common methodology for systematic monitoring of the quality of adult education
- Additional support options include covering transport expenses, compensation for living space rental costs, the provision of childcare services, and targeted scholarships for longer education programs.

Evaluation of the events

“Partner UP” project partners will contribute to the involvement of stakeholders – VIAA representing the State sector and Latvia Adult Education Association representing the non-governmental sector.

To include the initiatives developed in the project in the education policy agenda, it is necessary to link them with the development and update of educational policy planning documents as well as particular regulations on the implementation of specific activities. The responsible actors for this process are the Ministry of Education and Science and its subordinates, the Ministry of Welfare, the Ministry of Finance, the Union of Local Governments of Latvia, the Union of Free Trade Unions of Latvia, the Confederation of Latvian Employers are involved in the development process. The overall process will be coordinated by the Human Capital Development Council and the United Adult Education Management Commission.

Municipalities will be reached through the network of municipal adult education coordinators, employers - via the Confederation of Latvian Employers, and educational institutions - within the existing cooperation network between VIAA and LPIA. Partners who actively participated in focus groups and development groups of the “PartnerUP” project will be invited to share examples of good practice.

The main national goals in adult education and upskilling pathways development to be achieved are as follows:

- To increase the participation of adults (25-64) in education (the last four weeks before the survey): 7.4% (2019) and 10.7% (2023). **Goal: 12% (2027)**
- To increase the participation of the employed in education during paid working hours: 36.6% (2019) 47.9% (2022) 46.8% (2023). **Goal: 55% (2027)**
- To improve the digital skills of the population (16-74 years). At least a basic level or above digital skills: 43% (2019) 51% (2021); 45.3% (2023). **Goal: 58% (2027)**
- Reduce the proportion of the population with a low level of education. Population (15-74 years) with general secondary education only: 26.2% (2019); 22.3% (2022). **Goal 21.3% (2024)**

We assume that achievement of them may be considered as an overall effectiveness criterion of all measures, including political initiatives, national and international projects and other activities implemented. Currently, there is a reason to believe that involvement in the “PartnerUP” project has delivered its contribution to the overall adult education and upskilling pathways development process in Latvia.