



# PARTNERUP

## Road Map

### Croatia



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**Country: Croatia**



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**Partner organization** Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education, Adult Education Institution Dante



## 1. Participating stakeholders to develop Road Map

*Which types of stakeholders participated to develop the Road Map? What is their role in? Please detail their role in implementing the road map.*

The following adult education stakeholders participated in the development of the implementation plan: Association of Adult Education Institutions, Croatian Andragogy Society, Ministry of Science, Education and Youth, Croatian Employment Service, Association for the Advancement of Human Resources and Adult Education at the Croatian Chamber of Commerce, and adult education institutions. The aim of the Association of Adult Education Institutions is to bring together adult education institutions that strive to establish high-quality and accessible education for all adults. The Association of Adult Education Institutions was established to strengthen lifelong learning and adult education and to represent, promote and protect adult education. The Croatian Andragogy Society has the task of promoting and developing andragogic theory and practice; improving the theory and practice of formal and informal forms of education. The Ministry of Science, Education and Youth approves adult education programmes and is involved in the development of education policy. The Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy manages the voucher system and analyses labour market needs for specific qualifications. The Croatian Employment Service plays a key role in regulating supply and demand in the labour market. It is also involved in implementing the voucher system and other employment policy measures that include opportunities to participate in adult education programmes. Adult education institutions carry out adult education in accordance with the applicable regulations. Activities of the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education include planning, developing, organizing, implementing, monitoring and improving the system of vocational education and adult education. In addition, the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education acts as an advisory body for institutions in the adult education system, organizes conferences and workshops on the development of the adult education system, and participates in policy-making and connecting stakeholders in the education system.

## 2. Planning the implementation plans/ Road Map

*List and describe how you plan to develop the road map. Who will start drafting, who will be consulted further, timeline, methods to be used, etc. Which were the most successful in engaging participants, generating actionable and specific suggestions for improving UP, and supporting collaboration between stakeholders?*

The implementation plan is based on the results of the research conducted during the Partner UP project. The Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education and Adult Education Institution Dante will propose an Implementation Plan that can be amended in accordance with the comments of other stakeholders from the adult education system. All stakeholders mentioned previously were involved through online and in-situ workshops and interviews, which encouraged cooperation among stakeholders. The workshops and development groups created opportunities for participants to communicate with representatives of other adult education institutions, who face similar or same challenges, which resulted in discussions on possible solutions that would be applicable to most adult education institutions. The Croatian Employment Service cooperates with the Ministry of

Science, Education and Youth; the Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy; the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education, education providers, and other stakeholders. Cooperation with the aforementioned state and public institutions was established in aligning adult education programmes with the programme development methodology and in approving and implementing formal adult education programmes which are entered into the e-Employment record book.

### 3. Successful cooperation mechanisms

*Please provide 2 examples of good practices that could be a source of inspiration for other countries.*

One example is the cooperation of adult education institutions with all other stakeholders in the adult education system. Within this cooperation, institutions participate in events organized by the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education, the Ministry of Science, Education and Youth and the Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy, and actively contribute to the exchange of experiences.

Another example of cooperation is between the Ministry of Science, Education and Youth and the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education, which continuously monitor the daily needs of adult education institutions, connecting with the Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy, and through certain projects with the Croatian Employment Service, the Croatian Employers' Association, the Croatian Chamber of Commerce and directly with adult education institutions.

### 4. Development of an implementation plan/road map

Each country (except Ireland) will develop an implementation plan/road map. The partners, together with their development groups will develop a road map/implementation plan for the cooperation mechanisms, plan any specific emphases (eg outreach, guidance, non-formal offers), and who will work on which tasks.

The European associations will develop a European Road Map

The European Road Map will propose concrete cooperation mechanisms for the better implementation of UP on and through the European level.

Implementation plans

*What are the short-term and long-term goals for upskilling initiatives, and how can they be aligned with the goals 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?*

An template for the action plans with the following framework was developed (see below) and the working groups had discussed, analyzed, and *generated concrete and applicable suggestions for improving UP and supporting collaboration between stakeholders*. After that, they presented the resulting ideas in the whole group of participants.

Short-term and long-term goals were identified during the research and analysis stage and are presented below.

Short-term goals:

1. Ensure the participation of a number of adult education institutions in training programmes.
2. Provide relevant skills and knowledge to learners taking part in training initiatives.
3. Achieve a degree of collaboration between education and industry.

Long-term goals:

1. Improve the competitiveness of the Croatian labour market through continuous improvement of the workforce.
2. Increase innovation and productivity in the industry by supporting transfer of knowledge and technology between sectors.

Objectives should be aligned with those of stakeholders such as ministries, agencies, and adult education institutions.

The proposed time frame for implementing the initiative "Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults" is 2024-2027, accompanied by an overview of measurable indicators.

The distribution of responsibilities among different stakeholders should be clearly defined to ensure effective management of upskilling initiatives. This may include the appointment of a coordinator or programme manager, as well as the establishment of monitoring committees or councils to monitor progress and provide guidance.

Furthermore, the strategies for adapting and implementing the implementation plan should be tailored and flexible, to respond promptly to changed circumstances or new challenges. This may include a revision of the objectives and activities, a change of partners/stakeholders participating in the activities or a change of selected indicators.

To mitigate impact of unforeseen occurrences, it is necessary to plan reserve financial resources and establish mechanisms for rapid response to unexpected situations.

## **5. Implementation plans published**

The partners will prepare the final versions of the plan and they will be published in the relevant countries.

## **6. Summaries will be provided in English.**

The Implementation Plan (Road Map) contains challenges, goals and activities that stem from the results of the research conducted during the project. In order to develop the Implementation Plan (Road Map), the involvement of all stakeholders from the adult

education system was of great importance. Numerous challenges/obstacles of adult learners and adult education institutions have been identified and are integrated in the Implementation Plan (Road Map). The already existing long-term inter-institutional cooperation of stakeholders from the adult education system has proven that cooperation and communication are essential for system development, policy planning and decision-making. The challenges and objectives listed in the Implementation Plan (Road Map) contain one objective and accompanying activities that were considered important for the successful and long-term implementation of the initiative "Upskilling pathways: New Opportunities for Adults". A number of stakeholders from the adult education system participate in the implementation of most activities. The first goal in the Implementation Plan (Road Map) refers to the development and application of methods and measures that will enable as direct access as possible to adults with a lower level of qualifications. This is an important first step in encouraging the motivation of adults to participate in basic adult education programs, as well as in upskilling programs. The second goal refers to the possibility of financing participation in adult education programs through the voucher system, given that the financial aspect is often mentioned as one of the significant obstacles to participation in adult education. The importance of informing adults about the possibilities of participation in adult education programs, as well as the importance of including stakeholders from the local level in information processes, is recognized through the additional objectives of the Implementation Plan (Road Map). The continuous development of the quality system in adult education, as well as the development of methodology and guides for the application of evaluation and recognition of prior learning in adult education, are also listed as goals of the Implementation Plan (Road Map).

## 7. Lessons Learned

*Summarizing the main Lessons Learned. This concerns the outcome (implementation plans) but also the development and elaboration of said plan.*

The Partner UP project actively involved stakeholders from the adult education system and enabled the identification of challenges faced by participants and adult education institutions. Through active communication with stakeholders, the accessibility of the current adult education system and provision of education opportunities for adults with low skills were analysed.

The involvement of adult education stakeholders in project activities was characterised by effective cooperation, exchange of knowledge and welcoming contributions from their everyday experience. Over the course of the project, most stakeholders highlighted the need to develop a system for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning. In cooperation with the Ministry of Science, Education and Youth, the OECD and the European Commission are implementing the project "Establishing a validation system of prior non-formal and informal learning in Croatia". Representatives of the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education participate in the project as members of the advisory group that manages the project and participates in all project activities. By the end of 2024, the "Methodology for developing prior learning validation programmes for the acquisition of

micro qualifications, partial qualifications and complete qualifications" and the "Guide for adult education institutions on prior learning validation" will be presented.

Stakeholders from the adult education system highlighted the need to maintain continuous communication with each other, as well as a clear division of responsibilities in terms of finding solutions to barriers and challenges learners and adult education institutions face.

There is a need to develop and implement methods and measures that will enable more effective identification and better inclusion of people with low qualifications in primary education programmes, followed by participation in training programs. In addition to the activities carried out by the Croatian Employment Service, employers should be more involved in the process of identifying and motivating employees with a lower qualification level to take part in training programmes. Also, citizens' associations that work with vulnerable groups could contribute to the identification of adults with a lower qualification level and, in cooperation with CES and adult education institutions, direct adults with a lower qualification level to take part in vocational guidance, primary education programmes, and training programmes.

Another challenge identified by adult education stakeholders is the need for more widespread and continuous availability of information on adult education opportunities to reach as many adults as possible. The Lifelong Learning Week campaign, implemented annually by AVETAE, is a positive example of the visibility and dissemination of information on available adult education opportunities. Continuous stakeholder meetings at national and local level should be organised to share information and adapt the adult education programme offer to specific needs of employers operating in the local community.

The Partner UP project is a good example of involving different stakeholders in the processes of exchanging practical experience and clearly identifying obstacles and challenges for which stakeholders have offered possible solutions. The need for a clear distribution of responsibilities among different stakeholders has also been recognised, to ensure effective management of the 'Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults' initiative. Certainly, the results of the Partner UP project will contribute to creation of specific activities for promoting adult education and involving as many adults as possible in adult education programmes.



## Annex: Road Maps

**1.Challenge/barrier:** Lack of effective means of reaching/accessing and identifying adults that are unemployed, have low-skills, belong to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, to overcome barriers to participation in adult education programmes

**Objective:** To develop and implement methods and measures that will enable reaching/accessing vulnerable groups of adults and disadvantaged adults who are not registered as unemployed, and whose level of skills and formal education requires investment in new knowledge in order to reintegrate individuals into the labour market.

	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNERS	INDICATORS	TIMEFRAME
1	Identification of adults with lower qualifications and unemployed persons in cooperation with the Croatian Employment Service and the local community	Croatian Employment Service	Local government, local community, citizens' associations	Number of identified adults that have low skills or are unemployed	2024-2027
2	Identifying potential learners of adult education programmes in cooperation with employers /in the workplace	CES	Croatian Employers' Association (CEA), Croatian Chamber of Commerce (HGK), employers	Number of identified adults that have low skills or are unemployed	2024-2027

**2. Challenge/barrier:** Insufficient financial resources to fund adult education programmes resulting in a lower level of participation in adult education

Objective: To inform adults that have low skills or are unemployed and employed adults about the possibilities of financing adult education programmes through vouchers.

	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNERS	INDICATORS	TIMEFRAME
1	In cooperation with MRMS, promote the opportunities provided by the voucher system	Croatian Employment Service	Career information and counselling centres (CISOK centres), CES - regional and local offices, Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education (AVETA), Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy (MRMS)	Number of informed persons	2024-2027
2	Present the positive impact of acquiring micro-qualifications through vouchers	MRMS	CES regional and local offices, CISOK centres, adult education institutions	Number of presentations held	2024-2027
3	Enable enrolment for people with low qualifications in customized adult education programmes with only primary education completion as a prerequisite	Adult education institutions	MZOM, MRMS, ASOO	Number of customized adult education programmes developed	2024-2026

**3. Challenge/barrier:** Low level of involvement of stakeholders from the local level in promoting adult education opportunities

Objective: Achieve a higher level of involvement of stakeholders from the local level in the activities of promoting and implementing adult education. Continuously informing stakeholders from the local level about news and opportunities in the adult education system. Develop continuous communication and coordination with a clear division of responsibilities.

	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNERS	INDICATORS	TIMEFRAME
1	Organize continuous stakeholder meetings at national and local level (online and in person) – at least 2 meetings per year	AVETAE, MZOM, MRMS	Youth centers, local government, local community, citizens' associations, libraries, CISOK centers, CEA, HGK, adult education institutions, entrepreneurship centers	Number of meetings held	2024 - 2026
2	Organization of educational events, conferences, meetings and workshops to raise awareness of the importance of partnership among stakeholders in the system	AVETAE	MRMS, CES, adult education institutions	Number of events organized	2024 - 2027

**4. Challenge/barrier:** Encourage opportunities for effective counselling on the adult education programme offer, on career counselling opportunities and on the voucher system

Objective: To improve services of career counselling, counselling on adult education programmes and vouchers

	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNERS	INDICATORS	TIMEFRAME
1	Introduce employees of adult education institutions to career counselling opportunities and the voucher system	AVETAE	Adult education institutions	Number of trainings held Number of informed adult education institutions' staff	2024 - 2026
2	Continuously conduct consultations on the offer of adult education programs	CES	CISOK, Adult Education Institutions	Number of consultations implemented on the adult education programme offer	2024-2027

**5. Challenge/barrier:** Insufficient support for adults who have a low level of motivation to learn and are at risk of leaving the adult education programme they enrolled in

Objective: To ensure the provision of quality and continuous support to adults who have a low level of motivation to learn and are at risk of leaving the adult education programme they have enrolled in.

	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNERS	INDICATORS	TIMEFRAME
1	Inform and educate employees of adult education institutions in the field of providing support and motivating adult learners at risk of leaving	AVETAE	Adult education institutions	Number of information events held Number of informed and educated employees of adult education institutions	2024 - 2026

**6. Challenge/obstacle:** Improve stakeholder and public awareness of upskilling and training opportunities available in the adult education system.

Objective: To provide and ensure quality and timely information to stakeholders and the public on training opportunities through the adult education system. Informing is carried out continuously throughout the year. Tailored dissemination.

	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNERS	INDICATORS	TIMEFRAME
1	Continuous implementation of Lifelong Learning Week	AVETAE	MZOM, MRMS, Adult Education Institutions,	Number of events held	2024-2027

			citizens' associations, libraries,		
2	"Dandelion of Knowledge" award ceremony during Lifelong Learning Week	AVETAE	Adult education institutions	Number of awards	2024-2027
3	Promotional activities aimed at employers – dissemination of information on vouchers, on-the-job education opportunities	AVETAE	CEA, CCE, Adult Education Institutions, MRMS	Number of events held	2024 - 2026
4	Setting up Info corners with Lifelong Learning Week promotional materials and materials that promote the voucher system	AVETAE	Libraries, citizens' associations, CES	Number of Info Corners	2024-2025
5	Awarding recognitions to companies that actively provide support through on-the-job learning and those that encourage their employees to continuously improve and train	AVETAE	CCE, CEA, CES, Adult Education Institutions	Number of awards	2024 - 2026

**7. Challenge/barrier:** After the adoption of the Handbook on Validation and Recognition of Prior Learning, it is necessary to develop a methodology and guide for the evaluation and recognition of prior learning.

Objective: Developed methodology and guide on validation and recognition of prior learning. Implementation of the process of validation and recognition of prior learning in adult education institutions.

	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNERS	INDICATORS	TIMEFRAME
1	Developed methodology and guide for the validation and recognition of prior learning in adult education	AVETAE	Adult Education Institutions, MZOM	Developed Methodology Developed Guide	2025
2	Adult education institutions with a high and very high quality score have started to apply the methodology of validation and recognition of prior learning	AVETAE	Adult education institutions	Number of institutions applying validation and recognition of prior learning	2025-2027

**8. Challenge/barrier:** Increase the level of quality in the adult education system

Objective: Continuous implementation of self-evaluation and external evaluation of adult education institutions.

	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	PARTNERS	INDICATORS	TIMEFRAME
1	Conducted external evaluation of 10 adult education institutions	AVETAE	Adult education institutions, independent experts	Number of adult education institutions	2024
2	External evaluation of 30 adult education institutions conducted	AVETAE	Adult education institutions, independent experts	Number of adult education institutions	2025
3	Adult education institutions continuously carry out the process of self-evaluation	AVETAE	Adult education institutions	Number of adult education institutions conducting self-evaluation	2024-2027





To learn more about the Partner UP project and the results from other countries, visit the **Partner UP Virtual Map**.



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