




Analysis Report Summary

Country: Latvia



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Upskilling Pathways Implementation

The “Partner UP” project in Latvia was implemented by the Latvian Adult Education Association (LPIA) and the State Education Development Agency (VIAA).

As stated in the Latvian National Development Plan 2021-2027, Latvia's vision for the future is clearly linked to skills development and the provision of lifelong learning opportunities. The Latvian Constitution and the Education Law guarantee the right to education for every resident of Latvia. Local governments play a major role in implementing this right, as current legislation designates adult education as one of their key responsibilities.

Adult education and skills development policy in Latvia are integral to the country's key policy planning documents - the Latvian Sustainable Development Strategy "Latvia 2030" and the Latvian National Development Plan 2021-2027. These documents are developed with broad stakeholder involvement and are aligned with EU policy documents as well as recommendations from EU, UNESCO, OECD, and CEDEFOP.

In June 2023, a strategic coordination body, the Human Capital Development Council, was established. It consists of the Ministers of Economy, Education and Science, and Welfare. In cooperation with social partners and non-governmental organizations, the Council defines strategic goals for human capital development, provides national-level assessments of labor market trends, and forecasts workforce needs at both national and local levels. It also evaluates unemployment trends and their impact on the competitiveness of different population groups, as well as the responsibilities of ministries and institutions involved in lifelong learning.

The main institutions involved in adult education in Latvia include the **Ministry of Education and Science** and the **State Education Development Agency** (under the Ministry of Education and Science), the **Ministry of Welfare**, the **State Employment Agency** (under the Ministry of Welfare), and the **Ministry of Economics**. Other key stakeholders include the **Employers' Confederation of Latvia** and the **Latvian Free Trade Union Confederation**.

The primary cooperation mechanism for adult education is the Joint Adult Education Coordination Commission, established in 2024. This body was formed by merging the Adult Education Management Council (led by the Ministry of Education and Science) and the Training Commission (led by the Ministry of Welfare). The Commission includes representatives from the State Chancellery, the Ministry of Economics, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Welfare, the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, the Investment and Development Agency of Latvia, the State Education Development Agency, the State Employment Agency, the State Education Centre (affiliated with VIAA since 1st January 2025) and the State Education Quality Service, as well as representatives of social partners from the Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Employers' Confederation of Latvia and the Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments.



Challenges in Implementation

As a result of both document analysis and focus group discussions, the following key challenges were identified:

1. **Fragmented adult education management** – as numerous institutions are involved in managing adult education policy. Therefore, a more consolidated approach is needed. This challenge is set to be addressed by establishing the Joint Adult Education Coordination Commission in 2024.
2. **Gaps in the adult education management system.** According to the study "Adult Digital, Technological, and Language Skills: Opportunities and Challenges for Their Development in Latvia," conducted at the request of the Saeima (Parliament) of the Republic of Latvia, improving the adult education management system has been a national priority since 2006. However, significant shortcomings remain. The report highlighted insufficient cooperation among stakeholders, lack of coordination between training programs for employed and unemployed individuals and limited involvement of local governments in adult education
3. **Limited access to information** – learning opportunities are not always communicated in a way that meets the specific needs of target groups.
4. **Low engagement in adult education** – there is insufficient motivation among stakeholders to encourage adults with low skills or low educational attainment to participate in education and training.
5. **Mismatch between education provision and local needs** – adult education programs do not adequately respond to local-level needs, and educational demands identified at the municipal level are often unmet.
6. **Limited capacity of municipal adult education coordinators.** In many municipalities, adult education coordinators only dedicate part of their working time to adult education. Additionally, they often have a wide range of other responsibilities, limiting their ability to focus on adult education initiatives.





Stakeholder Cooperation in UP

Stakeholders participating in Stakeholder Analysis identified both successful cooperation mechanisms and several gaps and challenges in the implementation of upskilling pathways and the overall development of adult education in Latvia.

For the overall description of the situation, it should be noted that the Ministry of Education and Science and the State Education Development Agency under its jurisdiction provide support for learning opportunities for employed adults, the Ministry of Welfare provides support for the unemployed and job seekers, while the Ministry of Economics provides support for adult education at the request of employers.

The national level collaboration mechanisms are described in the first section of this summary.

At the **regional level**, the institutions responsible for the implementation of the region's long-term development goals and priorities are the Development Councils of the planning regions. However, the planning regions do not have a direct educational function, therefore decision-making related to adult education initiatives in the planning regions is diverse and depends on many aspects. Currently, a unified coordination system between the planning regions related to the development of adult education is not provided.

At the **local level**, municipalities are responsible for adult education, as they implement adult education policies at the local level and issue licenses for non-formal education programs. Some municipalities promote adult education in cooperation with local adult education providers, which may be adult education centers, cultural clubs, associations or others. However, the operation and capacity of local adult education centers largely depend on the resources of particular municipalities.





Lessons Learnt

The analysis process, in particular the focus group discussions, including the preparatory and follow-up activities, contributed to the commitment of the stakeholders involved to continue contributing to the development of adult education. The level of stakeholder participation in the analysis process can be considered as high, responsive and proactive. It is also worth noting the significant components of the interaction between the stakeholders - the focus group discussion participants exchanged examples of good practice during the meetings, established mutual contacts to share the lessons learned from the successful implementation of public awareness activities, the dissemination and use of the developed teaching materials and programmes.

One of the special highlights of the mutual discussions was the issue of effective approaches to involving adults with low skills/low education levels in the learning process. The focus group discussions and the discussed preparatory and follow-up activities positively contributed to the strengthening of relationships with stakeholders based on mutual respect and trust. The participants openly expressed their opinions, highlighting both achievements and good practices, and critically assessing the existing shortcomings in the overall provision and management of adult education, as well as outlining the challenges to be addressed. The senior management of the State Education Development Agency was informed about the main conclusions and findings of the analyses carried out, thus contributing to the development of adult education policy implementation documents, improving existing cooperation mechanisms and implementing measures to promote public awareness. LPIA uses its member organizations and partner network to promote the interaction of the NGO sector in the development and implementation of lifelong learning policies.





One of the **main challenges**, discovered during the analysis process was that there were difficulties in gathering information on adults with low skills/low education levels, as there are various interpretations on this issue (e.g. incomplete primary education, low-skilled professions - 8th, 9th basic group according to the Classification of Professions). The different situations and individual learning needs of specific target audience members must be taken into account, therefore, correlation with age groups, income level, places of residence in cities or rural areas and other criteria is necessary. Problems and challenges related to the involvement of these learners should be clarified in the subsequent stages of project implementation.

Several samples of good practices should be mentioned during both desk analyses and focus group discussions. At the national level, a significant role is played by successfully operating **sector expert councils**, the development of which began in 2010. The work of sector expert councils is coordinated by the Latvian Employers' Confederation, their goal is to promote the efficiency and quality of vocational education in the relevant sector, promoting cooperation between the government, employers and trade unions. Currently, 13 councils are operating, covering all major manufacturing and service sectors.

Another example of good practice in Latvia should be noted: **a network of adult education coordinators** established in Latvian municipalities. Coordinators provide local residents with consultations on adult education opportunities, available support and the procedure for receiving it. The State Education Development Agency organizes regular seminars for municipal adult education coordinators and provides methodological support.

As a sample of **good local cooperation practice** a Limbazi Foundation, operating on the territory of Limbazi municipality of Latvia, should be mentioned. Operational since 2009, it aims to improve the quality of life by raising funding 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 renovating an apartment with limited resources, materials were donated for the repair, thereby increasing their self-confidence and involving them in local social life and learning opportunities.





Priorities for Development Groups

According to the Stakeholders Analysis in Latvia, the following directions should be set as priorities for the Development Groups:

1. Promotion of good practice, information exchange, communication and publicity for greater involvement of low-skilled adults

Goal: to achieve wider opportunities and formation of closer partner cooperation for greater involvement of low-skilled 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. Contribution to 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 low-skilled adults.

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.

