

# FINANCING ADULT LEARNING AND EDUCATION

*The way forward:  
what works, how and why?*





DVV International  
International Council for Adult Education

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what works, how and why?*

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# 1 FINANCING ADULT LEARNING AND EDUCATION – ISSUES, CHALLENGES, TENDENCIES

## 1.1 About this study<sup>1</sup>

Financing adult learning and education<sup>2</sup> (ALE) is a highly discussed and, at times, even controversial topic. There are various studies, publications, and projects dealing with it, and the financing challenges of the modern world make it even more complex and demanding. While financing adult

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1/ Throughout the text of the publication, periods are used as thousands separators, and commas as decimal separators.

2/ In this study ALE is understood with the reference to the UNESCO's Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education (RALE – UNESCO, 2016). According to RALE, learning is a lifelong endeavour that can occur in formal, non-formal and informal settings. The ultimate goal is to ensure that adults can participate fully in societies and the world of work. The aim of adult learning and education is to help people develop necessary capabilities to exercise and realise their rights and take control of their destinies. It promotes personal and professional development, thereby supporting more active engagement by adults with their societies, communities, and environments. It fosters sustainable and inclusive economic growth and decent work prospects for individuals. It is therefore a crucial tool in alleviating poverty, improving health and well-being, and contributing to sustainable learning societies. There are three key domains of learning and skills that are of central importance for ALE: literacy and basic skills, continuing education and vocational skills, and liberal, popular and community education and citizenship skills.

education was primarily considered in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to be the responsibility of the state (especially in relation to marginalised groups or the field of literacy and basic education), nowadays there is a growing tendency to consider adult education to be exclusively a matter of personal responsibility that should be financed by adult learners themselves or by companies and the private sector, or, alternatively, by communities or philanthropies. Private finance is believed to play an increasingly important role in bringing innovation to the education sector, to increase efficiency, boost development of the sector, and bring additional resources (in the OECD countries, employers pay the largest share – OECD, 2019).

At the same time, criticism towards engagement of the private sector in education is very loud. A clear call to reconsider the approach to financing and to diversify the actors came from UNESCO: “The expansion of access to education worldwide over the past several decades is placing greater pressure on public financing. Additionally, the demand has grown in recent years for voice in public affairs and for the involvement of non-state actors in education, at both national and global levels. This diversification of partnerships is blurring the boundaries between public and private, posing problems for the democratic governance of education. In short, there is a growing need to reconcile the contributions and demands of the three regulators of social behaviour: society, state and market” (UNESCO, 2015). The OECD also calls for a “healthy” mix of the involvement of the government, employers, and individuals in financing adult learning (OECD, 2019).

The lack of data and of a methodology of collecting data about financing ALE adds to the challenge in relation to the complex diversity of sources and ways of financing. Since its first edition, the UNESCO/UIE’s Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE) has been addressing this problem. The 2030 Agenda also emphasised the importance of the issue, since financing of the ambitious Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality education and promoting lifelong opportunities for all) remains

a huge problem. The current policy recommendations see two possible approaches: national resource mobilisation and blended financing, that promise to solve a majority of the difficulties caused by the lack of resources. They dominate the discussions in the UN, the OECD, and the World Bank. Both approaches have certain importance, but there is also a growing body of analysis from civil society and from research organisations suggesting numerous limitations and risks these two approaches have as a tool for achieving the SDGs, especially in developing countries.

While several organisations have undertaken research into returns on investment in adult education, as well as the effectiveness in terms of steering education, few attempts have been made to explore different success factors depending on the funding tools and mechanisms. Nobody denies that, as the OECD says, “the SDGs and Paris Agreement require new approaches and innovative solutions to finance development outcomes” (OECD, 2018), and this applies for all countries, regardless of their level of development. Strategic public investment, mobilised private investment, official development assistance – they should operate towards the implementation of the 2030 promise of quality education and lifelong learning for all, meaning: for adults too. For that purpose, there is a need for further critical reviews of the main funding sources and financing mechanisms and their implementation: an analysis of successes and failures; discussions of the success factors and the risks: the need to identify the areas of the best possible use of the public funds, as well as the role of the main funding actors for adult education, such as state and broad range of other social partners and stakeholders.

That is the background of the decision of two partners to come together for such study: **DVV International – The Institute for International Cooperation of the Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband e.V. (DVV)**, the German Adult Education Association, the leading professional organisation in the field of adult education and development cooperation, which has supported adult education and lifelong learning for 50 years worldwide, and The **International Council for Adult Education (ICAE)** – a

global network created in 1973 with a specific mandate to advocate youth and adult learning and education as a universal human right, which is also instrumental in achieving economic, cultural, social and ecological justice, and enhancing international peace and understanding, especially for vulnerable populations.

With global interest and relevant experience in international work, DVV International and the ICAE are committed to finding efficient ways to support adult education and the best financing mechanisms to meet the challenges of the contemporary development. As a part of a global project, they have undertaken a study on financing adult learning in education, which is to be used in the DVV International's project work worldwide, as well as in the lobby and advocacy work for adult learning and education in different contexts and by various actors. The study addressed the following questions:

- Which funding sources and schemes have proven successful and in which contexts?
- What are the factors of success and the determinants of substantial progress through the implementation of various funding schemes? What should be done for the “smart” investment in adult education?
- What are the recommendations, the dos and don'ts in various funding models and schemes?

The terminology and language are not the focus of this study, therefore ‘financing and funding models’ refers simply to the main sources of the financial support to ALE, i.e. where the money comes from (state budget, private sector – industry, official development assistance, personal investment), with combinations and variations thereof, and not on the specific financing mechanisms and instruments that could be applied within those main funding models.

This study, conducted by the ICAE and commissioned by DVV International, follows a research logic – description of the development of the problem, its importance, the current state of art, description of the main

sample – models, presentation of the chosen examples, and drawing conclusions and recommendations. The structure reflects the following:

- Firstly, the study offers, a short view of the main recent research dealing directly or indirectly with the funding and financing ALE, which can be also a resource for further exploration and data collection;
- The study explores the main paradigms in understanding ALE and the financing models emerging from these paradigms and relying on them, with the short development of the main paradigms and approaches, in relation to the political and economic context.
- It explains why financing ALE is an important problem by providing an overview of the benefits of funding ALE, from various studies and researches, indicating why it is so important to deal with this problem;
- Having in mind the powerful influence the global developments today have on most of the countries (directly or indirectly), the study provides an analysis of where financing ALE is today in the global policy agendas, especially in the mainstream. (the UN, the OECD);
- UNESCO and CONFINTEA are shown as the only regular global frame for the systemic collection of data on financing ALE;
- This part is complemented with the figures illustrating the current situation in financing ALE, thereby underlining the need and importance of ALE, but also the challenges that funding ALE is facing;
- In the second chapter, six good practice models are chosen from different regions, identifying success factors, contextual preconditions, and working mechanisms. Although the examples represent the main models chosen for this study, they are not ‘pure’ and they contain some elements of the other models. This fact reflects the reality of ALE in many countries, and enables more cross-country comparisons and conclusions:
  - The example from Ethiopia is mainly government-supported ALE, with some elements of ODA, state and non-state actors;

- Canada provided an example of public-supported ALE with a decentralised approach;
- In the examples from Latin America there is a combination of public funds and ODA support and the private sector, with the specific cross-country approach, involving 12 countries;
- The example from Germany offers insight into the specific model of support within the metal and electrical industries, exploring individual investments and state support;
- In New Zealand, governmental support is crucial, and support to ALE is embedded in the set of measures for achieving goals in other areas, especially around addressing inequities;
- Serbia presents an example of ODA typical for South East Europe, where EU support through the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance is combined with the public investment.

## 1.2 Studies on financing adult learning and education

There are numerous researches and studies about financial aspects of education, funding and its results, but only a few exclusively on adult learning and education. Still, valuable data could be found in broader studies – from the areas tackling or including ALE, or studies on work force, and similar. Some of them are regularly carried out by international organisations.

- The main source of data on financing ALE are the UIL's **Global Reports on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE)**, and the National reports produced for CONFINTEA. The first GRALE was published by the UIL based on 154 national reports from UNESCO member states and five regional synthesis reports in preparation for the CONFINTEA VI in Belém, Brazil. GRALE takes information from the national self-reporting and aims to inform the member states of the progress in relation to their own commitments to the Belém Framework for Action. Furthermore, it serves as a monitoring framework for the national policies and contexts and offers tendencies and plenty of positive examples that enable mutual learning. It is obvious that most missing data are related to financing, since the methodological aspects of all survey on financing ALE are limited. Namely, many countries still lack:
  - a conceptual clarity of what ALE is, of what belongs to the ALE sector and activities, and what should be observed and counted as ALE; “Only 107 out of 149 countries provided information on the proportion of public spending on education currently allocated to ALE” (UIL, 2019);
  - proper methodology for data collection on ALE, especially non-formal ALE. “Thirty-eight countries globally do not have relevant data to report on” (UIL, 2019).

It is positive that the data from GRALE is still quite valid, showing national, regional, and global tendencies in financing ALE in the long run.

- **The Global Education Monitoring Report** (earlier GMR, now GEMR) offers plenty of data, but since they offered a systematic collection of data on one chosen topic, the data on ALE is often 'hidden' among the data on financing certain areas, target groups or actions. Still, the accuracy, research depth and global scale of the GEMR does offer valuable data on financing ALE.
- **The World Bank and the OECD** also have plenty plethora of data, but adult learning and education is not the focus of their research. Still, some data on financing certain sub-sectors of ALE could be found in their publications. A recent example is the publication *Getting Skills Right: Future-Ready Adult Learning Systems* (OECD, 2019), with the chapter on Financing adult learning.
- **Financing Adult Education for Development** was a conference organised by DVV International in 2009 that adopted the *Bonn Declaration on Financing Adult Education for Development* and whose contributions are published in the thematic issues of the *Adult Education and Development* journal. Various experiences and country examples could be found, especially related to financing ALE in the context of development cooperation (DVV International, 2009).
- The Addis Agenda established an annual **ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development (FfD Forum)**, an intergovernmental process with universal participation mandated to discuss the follow-up and review of the financing for development outcomes and the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The intergovernmentally agreed conclusions and recommendations of the FfD Forum also feed into the *High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development* (HLPF). FfD publish regular reports, joint research and analysis on financing in the development cooperation context around the globe (UN DESA, n.d.; United Nations, 2015).
- **Social Watch** is an international network of citizens' organizations working to eradicate poverty and the causes of poverty, to end all forms of discrimination and racism, and to ensure an equitable distribution of wealth and the realization of human rights. Social Watch



holds governments, the UN system and international organizations accountable for the fulfilment of national, regional and international commitments to eradicate poverty. They publish selected and commented statistical data and research analysis, the most notable being *Spotlight on Sustainable Development* related to SDGs and HLPF. Financing is one of the focus areas of Social Watch, and some of the data in their publication include data on ALE (Social Watch, 2019; 2020).

- Among international organisations, **Education International (EI)** – a Global Union Federation that represents organisations of teachers and other education employees, with more than 32,5 million trade union members from 384 organisations in 178 countries and territories, conducts research and publishes on issues related to education, including financing (EI, 2020). The same with **NORRAG** – a global membership-based network of international policies and cooperation in education, whose core mandate and strength is to produce, disseminate and broker critical knowledge and to build capacity among the wide range of stakeholders who constitute its network (NORRAG, 2020).
- **The Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE)**, a regional network for Asia South Pacific, regularly publishes different regional and national reviews and reports on ALE. ASPBAE has conducted several studies on financial aspects of education and of ALE, most notably on ODA, privatisation, and public-private-partnership in the education sector of the countries in the region (ASPBAE 2013, 2017, 2018).

The research landscape on ALE in Europe is relatively rich, and there are several studies worth mentioning:

- **CEDEFOP** has launched **Database on financing adult learning in 2014** (CEDEFOP, 2014). The database provides information on cost-sharing schemes implemented in the EU Member States and designed to increase participation and private investment in

adult learning. It covers the following types of instruments: training funds, tax incentives, grants, vouchers/individual learning accounts, loans, training leave, payback clauses.

The database builds on CEDEFOP's thematic studies and the surveys of national experts conducted in 2010–2011. Reference period is 2014 – mid 2015, and there is an earlier database, with the reference period of 2010–2013.

Most of the schemes included in the database have in-built cost-sharing (between the government, companies and individuals) by nature. Currently, new data about financing VET is being collected (for the reference year of 2020), and the new database will be expanded by including some instruments covering up to 100% of education and training costs.

- **Financing Adult Learning in Europe (FinALE)** is a comprehensive study – research commissioned by AONTAS, the Irish National Adult Learning Organisation, funded by the ERASMUS programme of the European Union. It gathered experts from eight European countries who have analysed the existing funding opportunities in 102 adult and community education providers. Over a period of two years, they have analysed the existing funding opportunities and developed recommendations for ensuring sustainable funding in the future, as well as the main findings of the project as to why, how and where to invest in adult learning. The study brings data, personal stories and recommendations on where and how to invest in adult learning. (Fitzsimons & Magrath, 2017).
- **The Adult Education Survey (AES)** covers adults' participation in education and training (formal, non-formal and informal learning) and is one of the main data sources for the EU lifelong learning statistics. The AES covers the resident population aged 25–64 and includes information about employer financing and the costs of learning. The reference period for participation in education and training is the twelve months prior to the interview. The next AES is planned for 2022 (EUROSTAT, 2020).

- Certain countries conduct regular **national population surveys** which include ALE, some of such surveys being the National Household Education Surveys in the USA (Kim, Hagedorn, Williamson & Chapman, 2004).

## 1.3 Financing ALE – a turbulent development

### 1.3.1 Origins and development

The historical development of ALE always included the financing-related issues, closely connected to the consideration of the purpose and goal of education. Religiously motivated adult education, provided by various religious entities and faith-based organisations, was mostly free of charge for the participants as it has often been seen as philanthropic or as an act of mercy and welfare service to the community. On the other hand, vocational training has from the very beginning been considered something the costs of which should be borne by individuals or their current or possible future employers. The first approach embodied an idea of education as something good *per se*, something that belongs to a human being (close to a later idea of 'human right'), the second one – an idea of education as something useful, beneficial and remunerative.

It must be mentioned that the modern thinking about the financial aspects of ALE has developed under the strong influence of European philosophical, economic and social thought. There was a diversity of adult learning and education types, forms and social arrangements, including financial settings, in other regions of the world, but they are less explored than the heritage prevailing in the Anglo-Saxon world. Cultures with a long history and tradition, like Chinese culture, or indigenous communities around the globe – all have specific forms of adult education emerging from the context, shaped by the culture and answering the educational needs of adults in a way fitting the social practices and customary laws, norms and habits. The financial arrangements must be an expression of that. Although it would be important to study financing adult learning and education in the historical context of Confucianism, for example, in the indigenous communities of North America, Africa, Australia and New Zealand for example, or in the medieval Islamic world, this study will focus on the contemporary approaches shaped by the global policy and dominant educational practices of today.

The approach to education as a right was inspired and reasoned not only religiously, but also philosophically, culturally and ethically, and developed further as an idea of education as a human right, especially in Europe. After the French Revolution, the idea of 'right' was shaped as a concept of education being a 'public good' and today is grounded in the framework of human rights, re-affirmed through UNESCO's discussion on financial implications of the distinction of the concepts of education as a 'private good', 'public good' and 'common good' (UNESCO, 2015).

The concept of education as 'public good' is the basis and the rationale of the request for public financing of adult learning and education, at least for the minimal (basic or elementary) education for all members of the society, especially for vulnerable groups whose members cannot afford it. This request is well understood and accepted in the society based on the concept of welfare, where the government 'promises' equality and basic socio-economic security to all citizens, whereby education is one of the most important means to achieve it.

The understanding of education as a useful, functional and profitable tool, earlier present mostly in vocational education and training, as well as in higher education, has gained importance and started to dominate the narratives about adult education. This has made vocational education and training of adults a field of responsibility either of the individuals or of the private sector and companies, in which case the state might be sporadically involved financially. In most of the European countries, the first qualification of young people is supported by the state, which provides little support beyond that point.

The UN Special rapporteur on the Right to education, Kishore Singh, stated in 2014: "Education should be a public good, not a profit-making business" (OSF, 2014). Has this claim become a reality?

### 1.3.2 Between the welfare state and neoliberalism

During the last century of its history, adult education has undergone serious shifts, mostly in terms of its societal and economic role, function and value, its focus and how the ‘responsibility’ for adult education is shared amongst various social actors.

Adult education has always been highly political and oft politicized, playing an important role in various ideologies, being a powerful instrument used for ‘good’ and for ‘bad’. Although there have been some attempts to shape adult learning and education as a ‘neutral’ activity (such as ‘Neue Richtung’ in the German Weimar Republic), it is always value-loaded and thus susceptible to left and right ideologies, with its feet in both ‘camps’. This has had a significant impact on the financing arrangements. There has been no ‘good’ or ‘bad’ solutions that would allow simple conclusions about the correlation between ideology and adult education financing. Rather, the variety of examples illustrate this complex relationship: China and Cuba had huge successes in purely government-supported literacy campaigns for the broad mass of the population; a similar thing happened in former (socialist) Yugoslavia, where the level of education of the population was massively increased through adult literacy campaigns, but also through publicly organized adult education centres of different types; a similar thing happened in Turkey. Vietnam owes its recent rapid economic development partly to the mixture of public education and private sector investment. On the other hand, high investments in vocational training by the private sector in some West European countries, or in fast growing Asian economies, contribute to the set of ‘success factors’ and confirm the need for a careful analysis of the context, multifaceted interpretation and tailor-made approach in the practice.

Modern times have brought about an expansion of diversity in ALE and a broader understanding of the factors that determine its financing. Critical and radical approaches to ALE found their expression in various social movements, related either to liberal adult education (such as the University Extension Movement) or to the movements that influenced adult ed-

education (feminist, postcolonial, ecological movements). When conceived of as a social movement, ALE was largely based on solidarity, common values, and mutual support, while the sources of funding were available thanks to the strength of the movements' members, actions, and social power. The rise of the civil society sector had a similar impact on the financial side of ALE provision – after the 1980s, civil society was increasingly recognised as a partner in policymaking and implementation, and NGOs became one of the main providers of ALE, especially for the vulnerable groups and financially deprived ones. But the financial cuts in the civil society sector happened often at the expense of the independence of NGOs and their grounding in a movement; they became simple providers and project implementers, losing their role in policymaking, including financing, and in monitoring of the implementation of the financial arrangements.

Having been associated with social movements for a long time, adult education 'boomed' in the 1970s and 1980s, experiencing a slow transformation, while its main paradigm became lifelong learning. This biggest shift was made with the prevalence of the neoliberal economy in the 1990s – from an emphasis on human rights and social justice issues to concerns with professional development, employment, and coping with new technologies.

The economic and political framework has also experienced a shift. The 'Keynesian approach', which was dominant until the 1970s, understood public education as a precondition of a strong, functioning state and stable international systems, and was the economic theory that, to a large extent, underpinned the European understanding of the welfare state, and which led to the intensive development of adult education in many countries. From 1990 on, the 'Washington consensus' changed the focus onto the notion of human capital which understands education primarily in relation to its role in promoting economic growth. Not only did the marketization and privatisation of education become mainstream, more-

over, adult education was understood as the service offered to the customers, and the role of the state was to facilitate this process of neo-liberalization. Consequently, the burden of financing was shifted to the individual, to a large extent.

Under the circumstances shaped by both Keynesian economics and the Washington Consensus, a variety of hybrid social practices have been developed and various combinations and alternatives have been found (more or less neoliberal, with varying notions of the role of the state, with dominant or limited commercial values, etc.) creating a broad range of adult education forms and mixed approaches to the theory and practice of adult education.

With the weakening of the welfare state, the provision of adult education tends to be marked by consumerism with a decreasing role of the state and increased regulation through the free market.

The beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is marked by crises that are cutting back on not only the resources for ALE, but also the changes that are re-shaping the whole approach and the discourse of the purpose and meaning of ALE and, consequently, its financial query: the disintegration of social structures and social services traditionally provided by the state; disappearance of the network of social bonds and solidarity that once boosted adult education as a source of transformative power in communities and societies; shrinking spaces and limited support to civil society – all these phenomena are changing the place of adult learning and education in national and global policies, in international cooperation and aid, and in their financial schemes.

### 1.3.3 Why support ALE?

The UN Agenda 2030 includes adult learning and education in the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which calls on Member States to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. “Although lifelong learning is explicitly addressed, political focus and attention still concentrates on



formal education, taking limited account of the potential of youth and adult education” (Schweighöfer, 2019). But it is not only the matter of the SDG 4 – many other goals (no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, gender equality, responsible consumption and production, environmental issues) are closely connected to lifelong learning and education of youth and adults, and many other sectors of society benefit from it.

Is adult learning and education a sector that deserves so much public attention, analysis and place in policy processes? Does it really bring much to society?

The paradigm shift that happened in educational policy requires ‘hard facts’, measurement, figures and empirical data that would prove that investments in adult learning and education are beneficial for the economy and society in the first place, while individual benefits, seen as a discourse belonging to the welfare state, are less important.

There are arguments saying that the benefits of adult learning and education cannot be properly measured, since they “are visible only in part... the learning outcome is not transparent... social benefits like improving life quality, sustaining and strengthening social cohesion, and promoting democracy, which have neither direct utilisation nor a commercialisation dimension – is difficult or impossible to measure” (Timmerman, 2009). But although the methodology is certainly a challenge here, the real problem is the political nature of the current paradigm – in most of the fields and sectors, policy requires short-term results, direct input-output proportions, and ‘flagshippable’ benefits.

An evidence-based policy is certainly needed in planning of adult learning and education and in financial arrangements, but various types of evidence should be considered – direct and indirect financial return, indicators of the contribution to the short-term and long-term development of individuals and community; various research paradigms should be used to collect the data and evidence.

Several quantitative and qualitative studies have shown wider benefits of adult learning and education. The European study FinALE summarizes the benefits for individuals, economy, and society (Fitzsimons & Magrath, 2017).

Adult education benefits individuals by:

- Increasing their employability, thereby leading to monetary effects;
- Increasing their well-being in terms of better mental and physical health;
- Increasing their self-confidence;
- Providing social benefits such as an increased social circle and civic commitment;
- Improving personal and interpersonal capabilities, such as self-esteem and empathy.

Adult education benefits the economy by:

- Increasing innovative capacity;
- Improving competitiveness through increased productivity and innovation;
- Encouraging growth due to increased employment and innovative capabilities;
- Allowing an increase in tax payments.

Adult education benefits society by:

- Improving health of the population;
- Reducing criminal activity;
- Increasing sustainability and preservation of environment;
- Promoting social cohesion and respect;

- Reinforcing social/political outlook, thus development of democracy;
- Increasing active citizenship;
- Increasing cultural integration.

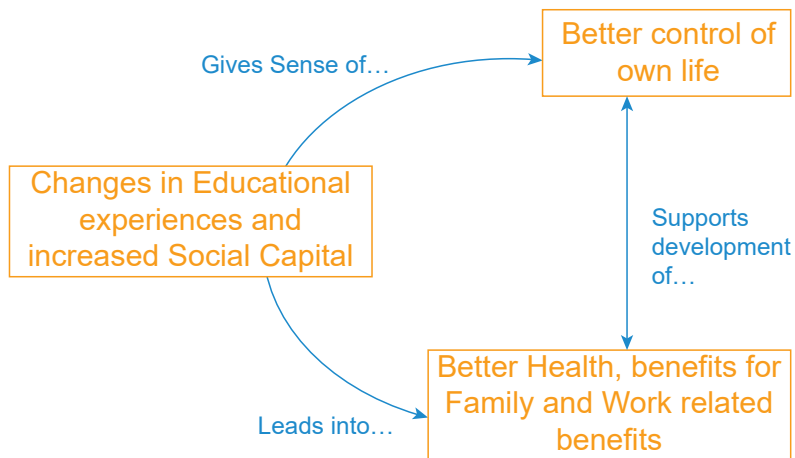
Adult education benefits society by

- Improving health of the population;
- Reducing criminal activity;
- Increasing sustainability and preservation of environment;
- Promoting social cohesion and respect;
- Reinforcing social/political outlook, thus development of democracy;
- Increasing active citizenship;
- Increasing cultural integration. BELL – Benefits of Lifelong Learning

(Fitzsimons & Magrath, 2017).

An earlier European study (2012–2014) –“Benefits of Lifelong Learning. What is adult education for?” (BELL) conducted in 10 countries focuses on the benefits of liberal adult learning and education. A three-year research project showed a broad spectrum of individual and social benefits, ranging from improved health, changes in smoking and alcohol use, increased self-esteem, confidence, agency, development of shared norms and tolerance, self-efficacy, and family benefits, to the civic competences and civic and social engagement (Manninen & Meriläinen, 2014).

The BELL study also offers an extensive list of related studies that demonstrate the benefits of lifelong learning, based on different theoretical concepts.



BELL study: Development of benefits – SEM model in plain language (Manninen & Meriläinen, 2014)

The UK study conducted by a group of researchers (Schuller et al., 2004) offers a detailed, systematic account (using both quantitative and qualitative data) of the impact of formal and informal education on people’s lives and shows how learning affects their health, family lives and participation in civic life (people’s physical and psychological well-being, family life and communication between generations, the effect on people’s ability and motivation to take part in civic and community life). Similarly, Tom Schuller demonstrated the impact of lifelong learning on: work and ‘careers’, health services and effective consumption, social well-being and crime reduction (Schuller, 2017). He used several longitudinal studies conducted mostly, but not exclusively, in the UK.

Analysis from longitudinal studies, especially large-scale cohort studies, is arguably the most powerful evidence in this field, even when it reports associations rather than causality. The University of London’s Wider Benefits of Learning Research Centre, perhaps

the single most fertile source of evidence for the benefits of learning, has drawn extensively on the UK's rich set of cohort studies, especially the 1958 and 1970 studies, for its publications. The Research Centre on the Wider Benefits of Learning has also used results from other types of research, including case studies and randomised control trials (Schuller, 2017).

The study from 2016 in England (Gloster et al., 2016) provides a range of carefully explored and systematically presented returns of investing in adult skills, and benefits for individuals, employers, and society.

There are several researches in the USA about the benefits of ALE. One such research is published by ProLiteracy in 2017 and is based on a 10-year research study conducted by Dr Stephen Reder. He demonstrated the positive outcomes that adult basic skills programmes can have on an individual's life, career, and income. He showed a dramatic increase in income, improved literacy proficiency, as well as a high probability of increased further educational aspirations and results. "This research provides a strong case for an increased investment in adults and adult education. These outcomes directly impact all Americans in that they contribute to a healthy economy, increase employment, reduce public assistance, and lower health care costs" (Morgan, Waite & Diecuch, 2017).

The USA National Coalition for Literacy offers an overview of numerous studies dealing with the 'Return on Investment' in adult literacy and education" (NCL, 2020).

Numerous studies offer a range of evidence that ALE is beneficial for the economy, efficiency, work organisation, innovation, etc. For example, FiBS – Forschungsinstitut für Bildungs- und Sozialökonomie (The Research Institute for the Economics of Education and Social Affairs) – indicates that adult learning has significant macro-economic benefits, for short-term and mid-term growth; ALE and workplace learning might be an even more important factor for innovation than both basic and higher education (finding supported by the CEDEFOP study, 2013): "... coun-

tries where a larger proportion of workplaces provide a learner-friendly environment are more innovative... there is a strong indication that this combination of learning in the workplace and formalised types of adult education drive innovation and growth, rather than, conversely, growth and innovation ‘enforcing’ adult education” (Dohmen, 2017). As for the individual level, there are income benefits and a reduced unemployment rate, and FIBS indicates several studies supporting this (see: FIBS & DIE, 2013). There are two recent studies from the years 2018 and 2019 which have shown, on the basis of regression analysis, the connection between further training and innovation or economic growth in the EU area.

Single studies can be found about the benefits of ALE, by national organisations and institutions, and by international organisations like the World Bank and some development organisations which conducted research in developing countries. Comprehensive and exact researches that quantify the payoff specifically for ALE are lacking, but there are several studies showing clearly the benefits of investment to ALE in Africa, especially in literacy and basic education. For example, uncontested are numerous researches proving the importance for children’s education of having a literate mother and their increased support for children’s schooling. Lauglo (2001) offers an overview of such researches in Sub-Saharan Africa.

At the global level, the data provided by GRALE – Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (UNESCO/UII), PIAAC study (The Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies) of the OECD and the GEMR – Global Education Monitoring Report (UNESCO) provide some indirect data about the benefits countries have from the investment in adult learning and education.

The third Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE 3) showed that adult learning and education produces significant benefits across a range of policy areas. Countries reported a positive impact on health and well-being, employment and the labour market, and social, civic and community life. Adult learning and

education led to improved health behaviours and attitudes, higher life expectancy and a reduction in lifestyle diseases, with a commensurate reduction in health care costs, the report found. It also highlighted the significant benefits of investment in adult education for individuals in the labour market, for employers and for the economy more generally. Last, but not least, it showed how adult learning and education increases social cohesion, integration and inclusion, boosts social capital and improves participation in social, civic and community activities (UIL, 2016).

## 1.4 Financing ALE in global policy agendas

Education, including adult learning and education, is still perceived as the ‘national issue’, far away from global politics. “Education is one sector which had been confined to the exclusive jurisdiction of the state for long... Traditionally, education has been the state monopoly, as it is considered as a public good, producing a huge set of externalities, and a social merit good. One of its most important functions is to promote equity in the society and contribute to nation building. In addition, market imperfections, and information asymmetry justify it to be under state monopoly” (Tilak, 2016). But increased and rapid globalisation and interconnectedness of the world makes education more and more an important element of the global policy, so international efforts – policy-making and policy dissemination have become an important aspect of the international cooperation and an element in the global programmes. Since the global bodies do not have power over decisions concerning education, their policy-making is limited to the instruments of ‘soft politics’, which include global programmes, recommendations, guidelines and funding. Therefore, international influence might not look so obvious at the country level, but it is increasingly shaping the national policies:

- by creating a global ‘climate’ in the education sector, defining the dominant ideas, narratives, and concepts;
- by using education, especially ALE, in other fields and areas of global policy (economy, trade, peace) as a means to achieve results in these fields;
- by providing financing for ALE, using various mechanisms and numerous bilateral and multilateral funds.

Two aspects add to the importance of the global ‘background’ for financing ALE:

- ALE is more prone to the global influences than school education, since it is far less formalised and consists of education measures that are usually shorter and more flexible, it is more inclined to



adapt to fact changes, new requirements and international influences. ALE is often part of programmes and activities in other fields and sectors, and therefore more susceptible of adopting and integrating changes coming from other sectors.

- Global policy influences countries around the globe, although in a different way, but there is a clear ambition nowadays to have agendas that will be universal – for both developed and developing countries. Still, developed countries are less exposed to the instruments of soft politics than the developing ones, and much more independent in the use of international instruments. Therefore, global discussions on ALE, including financing, are very much focused on the problems around development cooperation and international aid sector. Citizens and learners around the globe, living in the countries either on the more policymaking or policy using side, have a stake in the education policy game and feel increasingly its consequences.

### 1.4.1 Financing ALE – a spot in the global agenda

Two main paradigms and concepts of ALE can be found in the global policy sphere. The ‘human rights’ discourse is dominating in the UN and UNESCO, but this is changing rapidly, since the neoliberal turn has drastically weakened the ‘rights argument’ and has vehemently strengthened the ‘economic argument for ALE’ (represented by the OECD and the World Bank, while Europe is still trying to balance these two approaches). As a consequence, ALE appears in the global agenda mostly in the category of basic skills and, to a large extent, among the vocational and technical skills, where the discussions on financing have a predominantly investment-return character.

In international agenda, financing ALE has appeared since Jomtien in 1990, mostly through support to an expanded vision of basic education and/or universal literacy. This was reinforced by the Education for All (EFA) Dakar Goals, whose basic education goals clearly included

adults, while “the direct notion of education in MDGs was only identified in the second goal, ‘Achieve universal primary education’. In its target 2.A, neither adult education nor adults as a potential priority group were mentioned” (Orlović & Popović, 2017). Among numerous post-2015 arguments and discussion points on why these global programmes haven’t fulfilled what they promised (or have fulfilled to a very limited extent) – i.e. universal literacy, there is repeated criticism that big ambitions were not followed by adequate financial support.

The decline of the global policy awareness of the importance of ALE started between the MDGs (Millennium Development Goals), where financial commitment was strong, and the SDGs. At the same time, the whole education sector was shifted towards the development cooperation, which had a direct impact on ALE.

“The implementation of the two agendas was highly dependent on the World Bank and donor agencies, who had only the ‘soft power’ to implement its policy. Therefore, there were serious warnings about the need to see the implementation in the context of development cooperation (such as suggestions about the donors’ commitment in International Consultations of NGOs, 2000), but it simply became part of the usual donor policies. The humanistic rhetoric of the MDGs did raise the hope that they will be really respected. There are plenty of reports about the huge amount of money that was invested in the implementation” (Popović, 2015). When the FTI started and the ninth president of the World Bank Group James Wolfensohn said in an interview “Now, let’s get the cash and let’s make sure that it gets there to fill the gap in the education needs” (World Bank, 2005), hope was there<sup>3</sup>. But in the

3/ “The rights argument has been reinforced by the inclusion of education as a human right in the constitutions of major countries, such as India and Indonesia; by explicit statements by the World Bank, beginning under the Wolfensohn presidency, that education is a right, thereby reducing the artificial differences between the rights and economics arguments caused by their association with particular institutions; and by worldwide reaction to well-publicised attacks on education such as the shooting of the schoolgirl

reality, big share of money, which was allocated to the implementation of MDGs, went to the other sectors – almost half of it was given to the payment of debts. Wolfensohn (2003) presented the data that only half of the ODA “reaches the developing countries in cash. The rest goes to expenses, consultant fees, scholarships, emergencies, and debt relief.”

The 2030 Agenda was built on the ‘unfinished business’ of the Millennium Development Goals and the lessons learned from them. Therefore, the world decided to set a more ambitious agenda (the 2030 Agenda was signed and adopted by 193 member states of the UN General Assembly), with 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including an ambitious universal education agenda. ALE is included in the SDG 4, mostly as ‘lifelong learning’, but it is also relevant for the implementation of other SDGs. The difficulty lies in the fact that in the global policy arena the SDG 4 is ‘competing’ with other goals, where war and peace, international trade, and climate change are the dominant ‘big topics’, while education (although education does play a role in all of them) is regarded as less important. Further on, within the education sector itself, ALE is ‘competing’ with other sectors and target groups in policy agendas and financial plans. Thus, financing ALE (especially adult literacy) has remained one of the most important elements of ‘unfinished business’ of the previous agendas. Many reviews and reports (including those by UNESCO) about the implementation of the SDGs underline the huge financial gap for the implementation of the education agenda, and adult literacy belongs to the most neglected sectors (both financially and strategically). Although adult literacy is seen as the key component of the SDGs (UNESCO, UIS & GEMR, 2019), many adults, especially in low and middle-income countries, are still functionally illiterate.

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Malala Yousafzai in Pakistan in 2012 and the abduction of two hundred or more school-girls in northern Nigeria in 2014” (Burnett, 2014).

Also the finance mechanisms around the SDGs clearly omit to include adult education within the funding schemes: Global Partnership for Education (GPE, 2020) doesn't see adult among their target groups, excluding them even from the literacy support measures; The Education Commission (2020) is focused on 'future generations' and its initiative 'The International Finance Facility for Education' targets clearly children and young people, while UN (2012) SG Global Education First Initiative had broader agenda, but its actions are again focused on children and youth; Financing for Development, which is perceived as one of the main mechanisms for the support to the realisation of the SDGs, says clear in Addis Ababa Action Agenda: "We recognize the importance for achieving sustainable development of delivering quality education to all girls and boys" (United Nations, 2015).

This requires re-thinking of the existing funding mechanisms and strategies in order to secure development of the full SDG agenda and in particular the development of lifelong learning, including ALE, as well as re-thinking of the global financial architecture and structural problems that shape the global financial context, since they are the decisive factor for significant change in financing ALE. But, instead of support, there are recommendations; instead of solutions, there are initiatives. "In the past two years, two high-profile initiatives were expected to propose solutions to the financing conundrum: the so-called International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity, and the World Bank's *World Development Report 2018*. Bizarrely, both said more about why education should be financed rather than how" (Wulff, 2019).

This is one of the sources of the high level of disappointment and criticism of the United Nations' (UN) existing funding patterns, especially related to the global goals, since they may "draw the UN further from its original and ongoing purpose and further from democratic governance" (Adams & Martens, 2015) and jeopardise the implementation of the SDGs, and

especially education goals, which are behind the other goals in terms of investments.

“I am saddened by the decline of UNESCO and this community’s inability to sort out the international education architecture... There is also vast under-financing and under-provision of global analyses and tools in education; only 3% of international spending in education goes to data or knowledge generation compared to 21% in health” (Burnett, 2017).

If it happens to education in general, it is even more difficult to ensure support to ALE.

#### 1.4.2 CONFINTEA process – ‘a shelter’ for ALE financing policy

The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning makes continuous efforts in collecting data and monitoring the whole sector of ALE, including financing. In 1997, the CONFINTEA V report brought together five major papers dealing with different aspects in the economics and financing of adult learning (Singh, 1999). Over the years, it has remained one of the key areas (together with policy, governance, quality, and participation) recommended to countries for regular data collecting and reporting.

The Belém Framework for Action (BFA)<sup>4</sup> is clear about the importance of adequate financing for education in all sectors of society, for individuals and communities: “Adult learning and education represent a valuable investment which brings social benefits by creating more democratic, peaceful, inclusive, productive, healthy and sustainable societies. Significant financial investment is essential to ensure quality provision of adult learning opportunities’. The Member States committed to ‘supporting financially a systematic focus on disadvantaged groups (for example in-

4/ The document adopted at the The Sixth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI), held in Brazil in 2009, which recorded the commitments of the Member States and presented a strategic guide for the global development of adult learning and education.

digenous people, migrants, people with special needs and those living in rural areas) in all educational policies and approaches, which may include programmes that are provided free of charge or subsidised by our governments, with incentives for learning such as bursaries, fee remission and paid study leave’.” (UNESCO/UIIL, 2009).

The most serious effort to use a multilateral organisation such as UNESCO/UIIL to define and recommend national target for financing ALE was done on the CONFINTEA VI in Belém, Brazil, 2009. The request to include a proposal in the final document to allocate 6% of national budget to education, and 6% from that amount to ALE, was rejected, and watered down in the BFA (Belem Framework for Action), but the Member States committed to five points of action for financing (UNESCO/UIIL, 2009).

#### **BFA Recommendations – Financing:**

1. Seek investment of at least 6% of Gross National Product (GNP) in education, increasing the allocation to ALE.
2. Expand resourcing across government departments in order to meet objectives of an integrated ALE strategy.
3. Establish transnational funding for adult literacy and education programmes.
4. Create incentives for a new funding sources, e.g. from the private sector, NGOs, communities and individuals.
5. Prioritize investment in lifelong learning for women, rural people and those with disabilities.

(UNESCO/UIIL, 2009).

The UIL uses various mechanisms to ensure a certain level of commitment to ALE among governments. For example, in its *Global Reports on Adult Learning and Education*, the UIL regularly reports about the regional and global trends, with the focus on public expenditure on ALE and training.

### 1.4.3 Financing ALE – the figures speak

The picture of the global ALE policy and its financial aspects would not be complete without the figures that show:

- if policy is accompanied by adequate support mechanisms and thus implementable;
- how far/close the world (and the countries) is from/to the implementation, and what is missing, e.g. if there is a gap;
- what is available for the necessary support to ALE (with the direct influence on funding models) at the global and national level.

These elements are necessary for the estimation of the funds, funding models, and mechanisms that need to be engaged and applied for the full support to ALE, if it is expected to provide the benefits and returns at all levels.

While the empirical evidences about the data clearly show the needs for ALE, the available figures indicate disappointing reality of ALE investments, regardless of the sources.

First of all, the global financial landscape, currently focused on the SDGs, does not bode well in terms of achieving goals: “The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) says achieving the SDGs will take between US\$5 to US\$7 trillion, with an investment gap in developing countries of about US\$2.5 trillion” (UN, 2019; Niculescu, 2017). And OECD adds: “Not enough of global finance is reaching the people and countries most in need. Only 20% is held in developing countries, home to 84% of the world population. It is unclear how much of it actually promotes sustainable development. And how much is actually ‘SDG washing’. Over USD 30 trillion are labeled as ‘sustainable’ finance by hundreds of different measurement standards utilised by different actors”(OECD, 2020a).

The education sector was already facing financing problems in the MDG period (“ASPBAE notes that the chronic lack of finances was a clear fac-

tor in the failure to meet key EFA and MDG education targets” – ASPBAE, 2013), and the new agenda made the gap between ambitions and the reality even bigger: The Education 2030 Framework endorses two key benchmarks for public financing of education: allocating at least 4% to 6% of GDP, and/or at least 15% to 20% of public expenditure to education, but 1 in 4 countries does not meet both of these targets (GEMR, 2019). Furthermore, governments are supposed to integrate the global SDG 4 commitments into their national education development efforts and to develop appropriate intermediate national/local benchmarks. Referring to these benchmarks, the Global Partnership for Education states also that lower middle-income countries will need to increase public spending on education from the current US\$1 trillion per year to US\$2.7 trillion between 2015 and 2030 (GPE, 2018). The Global Education Monitoring Report estimated that low- and lower-middle-income countries would face an annual financing gap of US\$39 billion in 2015–2030 (EFA GMR, 2015) in order to achieve inclusive, equitable and quality education for all. The World Economic Forum estimates that there is a US\$40 billion annual funding gap for primary and secondary education alone (Wilson, 2016). This highlights the challenge of financing this gaps.

However, investment in education is decreasing worldwide, both in the form of domestic spending and development cooperation. GEMR and UNESCO put the issue of lacking funds into the broader context and remind: “While the overall financing gap in education may appear large, it is equal to just 8 days of annual global military expenditure, which totalled US\$1.75 trillion in 2013” (EFA GMR, 2015). Global military expenditure sees largest annual increase in a decade reaching US\$1.917 billion in 2019 (SIPRI, 2020).

It is not easy to find the data on financing ALE in the overall financial and funding data. The lack of methodological procedures to track investments in ALE sometimes requires some ‘hunting out’ of the data on ALE from the overall figures on education; the UIL shows that ALE receives a very small share of the total funding for education (UIL, 2013, 2016); Schull-



er and Watson (2009) confirm that fact, adding that the “investment is heavily skewed towards young people (18–25), and those who succeed initially”.

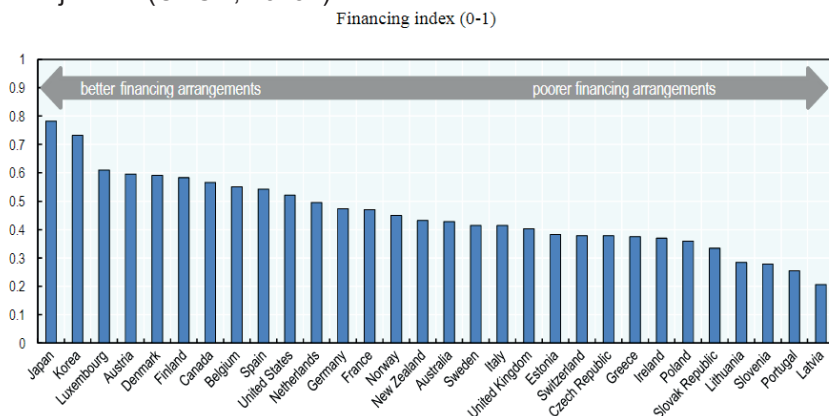
GRALE 4 reports on the global tendency of decreased public funding of ALE: “41% (61 countries) reported no progress on ALE spending as a proportion of public education spending since 2015, despite 57% of countries in GRALE 3 mentioning a planned increase in funding. This was followed by 28% (42 countries) where ALE spending as a proportion of public education spending increased and 17% (25 countries) where spending has decreased since 2015. Importantly, 14% of countries (21) indicated not knowing whether there has been a change in ALE spending over the past three years. Nineteen per cent reported spending less than 0,5% of their education budget on ALE and a further 14% reported spending less than 1%. Nineteen per cent of 107 countries reported spending more than 4% of the education budget on ALE” (UIL, 2019).

The funding of ALE from the private sector may show different characteristics compared to public funding, but the overall public investment in education is still the main reference for the investment in ALE, and the figures indicate that ALE is the least supported link in the overall lifelong learning chain. The findings of GRALE 3 and GRALE 4 confirm: ALE remains globally underfunded in many countries.

“Over the last 10 years, ALE spending has continued to decrease, not only in the low-income countries but also in lower middle- and high-income countries, suggesting that attention being paid by countries and governments to their adult learners is decreasing over time” (UIL, 2019).

The OECD emphasises the need for change: “Adult learning systems need to be adequately financed in order to function well. Although there is no benchmark for a ‘sufficient level’ of spending, it is clear that adult learning receives less overall funding compared to other education areas. As the demand for adult learning will likely increase in the context of the mega-trends... that are changing the skills needs of the labour market,

the financial resources devoted to adult learning programmes will need to be adjusted” (OECD, 2019b).



The OECD (2019) provides a comparison of overall financing arrangements for a limited number of countries (Financing dimensions – see OECD, 2019 for details on data sources and methodology):

In many countries in the Global South, development cooperation is an important source of investments in education and in ALE, but the decline of investments from this source is also evident: The 2015 Addis Ababa Action Agenda calls for DAC donors to allocate 0.7% of the gross national income to aid (United Nations, 2015). If they would do it and make sure to allocate 10% of their aid to education, the gap could be significantly reduced (EFA GEMR, 2015<sup>5</sup>). But in 2015, only 6 out of 29 DAC donors met this target (GEMR, 2017) and there are no indications that this will change. Reports from the World Economic Forum include both bilateral and multilateral sources, and WEF reports that “total education aid... now accounts for just 7% of the world’s total aid budget” (Brown, 2019).

ODA for education “stood at an all-time high US\$14,1 billion in 2018, an 8%-increase over the US\$13,0 billion disbursed in 2017. In 2018, edu-

5/ Significantly, the EFA GEMR (2015) “does not take into account objectives in the currently proposed post-2015 education targets related to tertiary education, skills for work, adult literacy and scholarships.”

cation received 7,2% of total development assistance” (Donor tracker, 2020). According to the GPE, funding for all education among country donors in the OECD’s DAC was US\$7,6 billion in 2015, or 6% of the total ODA. Data show that most of this funding goes to the post-secondary education – scholarships and student costs within their borders, while the OECD donor countries allocate US\$2 billion to basic education, which includes a variety of sub/sectors: primary education, early childhood education, and basic life skills for youths and adults. (Kardish, Zühr & Campe, 2020). The amount allocated to basic life skills for youth and adults was around US\$247 million in 2016 (OECD, 2020; Schäferhof & Burnett, 2016), but no further data disaggregation is available. The amount invested in vocational education and training was around US\$1,335 billion, which indicates the clear ODA priorities within adult education sector: vocational education, followed by basic education. Apart from those data, no data on funding of other types of ALE are available.

GRALE 4 doesn’t provide any data on the amount invested in ALE through ODA, except for the statement that the conclusion from GRALE 2 is that “...‘adult education remains a low priority for investment for governments and international development assistance alike’, rings as true today as ever“ (UIL, 2019).

## 1.5 National realities and models of financing ALE

In the background of the global policy and the financial architecture – funds and costs – it is possible to explore the directions that countries may take, the funds they could use, and the mechanisms they can apply in order to fulfil their goals in ALE and sectors that require the use of ALE.

The diversity of these goals, the complexity of their interconnectedness, and the number of actors indicate the need for different approaches to funding.

Even if it is not publicly provided, ALE is a public good; that, however, does not automatically imply funding from governmental resources. Therefore, the UNESCO's *Rethinking Education* (2015) introduces the notion of a '**common good**', which "allows us to go beyond the influence of an individualistic socio-economic theory. The principle of knowledge and education as global common goods has implications for the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders." The collective social responsibility is required, where various partners contribute to adult education provision, but quality, affordability and accessibility have to remain the crucial principles. A 'common good' implies that "the creation of knowledge, as well as its acquisition, validation and use, are common to all people as part of a collective societal endeavour" (UNESCO, 2015).

Part of the discussion about education as the public or common good is also the question of the main actors and their responsibilities. **Partnership** among various stakeholders is one of the most important messages of the 2030 Agenda, and most of the global actors underline its importance for both national efforts and in international cooperation. There is an assumed agreement that ALE should be funded from various resources, even if there are different views on who and how should take part in the process. As a matter of fact, it is already happening 'on the ground': the main contributors to the financing of adult learning are generally governments, employers, and individuals. "Available estimates for selected OECD countries (2009) show that the state on average bears the small-

est share of the financial burden (22,1% of total spending on adult learning on average), followed by individuals (24,7%)... On average across the OECD countries participating in PIAAC, 77% of participants received funding from their employer for at least one learning activity” (OECD, 2019). In EU countries (data from 2016) “some 65,1% of the non-formal learning activities followed by adults aged 25–34 were job-related and sponsored by employers” (EUROSTAT, 2020a). On average, the state bears the smallest share of the financial burden, followed by individuals and the largest share of adult learning costs rests with employers (OECD, 2019; FiBS & DIE, 2013). It does indicate that state is not playing the role of the biggest supporter, but this fact is not undermining its role. It rather opens the question of what role the state should have, and what kind of interplay should exist with other actors.

The project FinALE (2018a) has identified 11 different funding tools used in non-formal adult learning, categorised according to the demand- or supply-side:

### **SUPPLY-SIDE: FUNDING OF PROVIDERS**

**1. Programme funding:** *A provider accepts a contract by a public authority to provide a range of courses.*

**2. Project funding:** *A funder gives a contract to providers for a specific service, such as delivering learning, developing new courses or reaching out to particular types of learners.*

**3. Formula funding:** *A standard amount paid to providers to achieve a specified outcome.*

*The funding is based on the number of teaching hours, student enrolment or programme completion rates.*

**4. Philanthropic funding:** *A philanthropic agency provides a grant for the provider. This can be project-based funding or more long-term/structural funding.*

**5. Learners' fee:** *Fees from learners that partly or entirely fund the provider and delivery of training.*

#### **DEMAND-SIDE: FUNDING OF LEARNERS OR EMPLOYERS**

**6. Tax incentive:** *A taxation rule which allocates financial benefits to taxpayers who participate in learning.*

**7. Direct grants:** *Subsidy to support the individual's or company's investment in learning.*

**8. Vouchers/individual learning accounts:** *A subsidy (in the form of a monetary coupon) which enables individuals or companies to access learning.*

**9. Loans:** *Schemes allowing people to borrow against their future income to cover training costs.*

**10. Training leave:** *A regulatory instrument that seeks equitable access to education by granting leave to employees for learning purposes.*

**11. Payback clauses:** *Repayment of training costs to the funding employer, if the employee decides voluntarily to discontinue the employment relationship.*

For the purpose of this study, only the models defined by the main source of funding will be considered – the most used, discussed, and most recommended in the global context, and single or specific financial mechanisms for allocation of funds will be depicted only within the chosen examples.

#### **1.5.1 Public funding**

Public funding, direct or non-direct, still plays an important role in adult education in many countries, or at least it is perceived as important. But the figures show a decline, as “even in Europe, evidence suggests that

around 0,1 percent to 0,2 percent of GDP are public expenditure on adult education. The total expenditure on adult education, including other financial sources such as funding through employers, learners' fees, etc., varies between 1,1 percent and less than 0,6 percent of GDP" (FinALE, 2018).

The approach to adult education as a human right and a public good secured a place for ALE in national policies and funding in many countries, for the educational needs of either the whole population or only certain groups, mostly for the vulnerable and marginalised ones. In many of the countries, there is still some level of funding, even though a minimal one, reserved for adult education. However public education in many countries is already underfunded and less than 1% of education budgets go to adult education. With the economic crisis of the past years, the funding for adult education has been further reduced, which has resulted in the discontinuity of some funding streams. The crisis has led to 'prioritisation' and the redirection of the funds to other education sectors, adding weight to the recommendation to diversify the sources of funding and to find new models.

Due to lack of reliable data on financing ALE on many countries, the existing data does not give the whole picture, but still there are some clear tendencies. Reduced public funding is one of them. This is the national reality in the countries around the globe, and the diverse nature of ALE provision, as well as diverse goals and purpose, make it inevitable. However, it is still the most important and most sustainable way of funding ALE for some social groups; whereby the questions that should be answered are related to the adequate proportion of the budget that should be allocated to ALE (and the analysis of factors that should determine this proportion), and to the choice of areas and target groups that should enjoy public funding. The common understanding of basic education as the priority area and of vulnerable groups as the priority target, is far from enough. The realities of the countries might require some other priorities (peace or intercultural education, for facing conflicts or migrant crises; or

entrepreneurship training, if the current stage of the economic development requires a new direction), therefore discussions on public funding must be:

- seen in the global context, especially for developing countries (having in mind the global financial architecture, including illicit tax flows and debt burden) – for the sake of long-term and sustainable solutions, especially in the countries that depend heavily on the international economic relations;
- contextualised, taking the reality of the countries into account, so the funding could be targeted, matching the needs of both the country and the groups that need the support.

The government and its bodies can use a range of various financial mechanisms for the allocation of public funds: programme funding, project funding, formula funding, grants (to the civil society or other stakeholders), etc.

Still, the need for the diversification of funding sources does not abolish the government from a range of responsibilities. Although *Abidjan Principles* (2019) refer to the education sector in general, they remind of “the human rights obligations of States to provide public education and to regulate private involvement in education”. Even when the private sector can help to “overcome government inefficiencies, increase participation and introduce innovation” (ActionAid, 2019), more careful consideration on the impact of privatisation on education is needed, so, the second part of the Abidjan commitment (“to regulate private involvement in education”) remains important for ALE too. Therefore, ActionAid reminds us of the importance of public education and underlines that the private sector should “support governments to mobilise revenue in a progressive and sustainable way to adequately fund free, quality, public education” (ActionAid, 2019).



Proportion of countries that have introduced new mechanisms or sources of funding for ALE since 2015			
	Total responses GRALE4	Yes	Proportion
<b>WORLD</b>	135	63	47%
<b>REGIONAL GROUPS</b>			
Sub-Saharan Africa	25	14	56%
Arab States	18	7	39%
Asia and the Pacific	30	13	43%
North America and Western Europe	20	10	50%
Central and Eastern Europe	18	9	50%
Latin America and the Caribbean	24	10	42%
<b>INCOME GROUPS</b>			
Low income	17	9	53%
Lower middle income	32	17	53%
Upper middle income	41	14	34%
High income	45	23	51%

UIL, 2019

The impact of neoliberal approach to ALE and the global financial crises jointly caused numerous countries to decrease public funding and find new funding schemes for ALE: in GRALE 4, “135 countries reported on the introduction of new mechanisms for financing ALE... Of these, 47% (63 countries) have introduced new financing mechanisms since 2015. These range from cross-collaborations such as inter-ministerial, public-private, council, agency, programme and campaign initiatives, to special types of funds, unemployment insurance, scholarships, bilateral, multilateral, national and local mechanisms, and international and regional funding” (UIL, 2019).

It is interesting that low-income and lower-middle-income countries reported the highest rates of introducing new mechanisms for ALE funding. According to GRALE 4, this “might indicate that these countries are recognizing the potential of ALE and the positive return on ALE investment

not only for individuals, but also for society and the economy” (UIL, 2019), but that is probably also due to the necessity and extreme financial constraints and budgetary problems they face, causing reduction in support to ALE from the public funds. Although public funding is still the most important and most sustainable way of funding ALE for some social groups and for some areas, the question remains: what mechanisms could be used for the diversification of funding sources, but with the preservation of the coordination and regulation role of the public authorities.

### 1.5.2 Private sector, business and funding ALE

The business, industry, and private sectors (enterprises, SMEs, national and multinational companies) are the biggest investors in ALE, predominantly (and naturally) in vocational education and training. Still, their role is not sufficiently recognised due to at least two reasons:

- Vocational education of adults is often (from the perspective of social movements, civil society, human rights activist) not seen as an integral part of ALE. This somewhat artificial distinction was/is quite harmful for the improvement of the both subsectors of ALE – vocational and general education of adults, later including literacy, civic education etc. (see more for example: Reutter, 2004; Nuisl von Rein, 2003), but might be eliminated thanks (among other factors) to the ‘connecting’ concepts such as ‘decent work’ as part of human rights agenda, and the good practices of holistic and integral approach to different ALE activities,
- The usual ways of data collection also ‘suffer’ from this artificial distinction and seldom include cross-sectoral investments. The official data on ALE are provided (if provided at all) by the Ministries of Education, while the data from the private sector are obtained through either research (such as that conducted by FIBS) or the projects and work of international organisations and ODA actors.

For the investments in ALE, currently, “an average across the OECD countries participating in PIAAC, 77% of participants received funding

from their employer for at least one learning activity, with low shares in Greece (36%) and Turkey (49%) and high shares in countries like Denmark (87,7%), France (88%) and the Netherlands (88,6%)” (OECD, 2019). Recent data from England show that the greatest investors are employers, followed by the government, European funds, and learners (Gloster et al., 2016).

The investments from the private sector may have cross-sectoral benefits and may boost development in other areas. The UNDP describes this potential and asks the crucial question: “Private funding and private capital hold another great potential for growth... The question is: how do we combine social good with profit?” (Niculescu, 2017).

“Private finance plays an increasingly important role in bringing innovation, expertise and additional resources to help developing countries achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Recognising this, development finance providers are finding new ways of engaging with the private sector as a key partner, including through Blended Finance, Social Impact Investing and Green Finance. Delivering the resources at the scale required to achieve the SDGs within the next 10 to 15 years requires concerted action from all actors...” (OECD, 2018).

Funding coming from the private sector is usually related to the economy and the world of work, so it is traditionally seen as responsible for vocational education and training of employees or potential employees. The open question remains: Could they be engaged in other subsectors of ALE? There are already some good experiences in combining vocational training and literacy or basic skills, and several researches show the benefits for both employers and employees.

A special case of private investment is **philanthropy**. There is an increasing influence of new philanthropic actors on the global education sector, and huge amounts are invested by big foundations belonging to rich com-

panies or individuals. Private philanthropic initiatives, as well as private sector management initiative, (sometimes considered as a kind of public-private-partnership) are praised for their involvement in some of the important global education initiatives, and significant amounts invested in education sector. There is an estimation that between 1995 and 2012 a total of 383 PPP (in a broader sense) transactions have been made in the education sector, a total value of approximately US\$40 billion (PPP Knowledge Lab, n.d.).

Although many of the private, philanthropic investments go to the ‘critical’ sectors of education, such as youth and adult illiteracy, there is a lot of scepticism about this type of funding. The main concerns are related to equity, accountability, neutrality, effectiveness, and efficiency, and there are serious questions about their mandate and their democratic accountability. Philanthropy now actively engages in policymaking which often creates imbalances in the political arena and can disrupt the democratic structures and put important decision-making and planning into the hands of a small group of people without the mandate. It also blurs the line between profit and social goals (diminishing the role of the concept of education as a public good) while focusing on a large-scale impact (which leads to developing standardised, universalistic solutions for a very diverse set of learners and contexts) and the adoption of business thinking in the management and implementation of projects and other measures. Philanthropy is bringing about new forms of privatisation, as well as the use of large-scale technological solutions (Avelar & Patir, 2020), which often contradicts the real needs of education sector and its priorities.

Another special case is **corporate social responsibility (CSR)**, which enables companies and organizations to benefit society in a number of ways, to invest in different areas, such as education and ALE, and to empower their social impact on communities. It is rapidly growing in significance as both a strategic management instrument and the way to strengthen the ties between private sector and society, creating a win-win situation based on a shared value (economic and social). Although

there is the criticism that companies implement CSR mostly for marketing and branding purposes, promoting a positive public image, problems are more complex than that: the concept of CSR is very incoherent, and the practice is often not well coordinated (Kastru Rangan, Chase & Karim, 2015). Further more, CSR could work well under certain conditions, but it is highly dependant on companies' dynamics and changes; therefore it is not predictable and cannot not play a significant role in education policy of a country or region. Planning of CSR is seldom related to the systemic educational planning, and does not emerge from policy making but from the companies' strategies, benefits, and preferences. The issues of voluntarism and lack of accountability are also noted, although some authors (such as Tamvada, 2020) argue for “establishing the obligatory nature of responsibilities using the lens of ethical and legal jurisprudence. This new approach towards CSR recasts it as an obligatory responsibility that is linked to accountability”.

### 1.5.3 Privatisation and public-private partnership

The last two decades, marked by overall financial crises and numerous financial challenges for education, have inspired a range of initiatives and new suggestions for overcoming the funding and structural challenges in the field. **Privatisation** of the education sector is often seen as a good way to compensate for missing resources, to increase the offer, enrolment, and participation in education. Particularly in adult education, which is perceived as an area where less state involvement is needed and more personal investment is expected, privatisation might expand the overall ALE supply and reduce the necessity for public funds, which in turn may be used for other priorities, for example the education of marginalized groups. If education is seen as the common good, it could be provided by the private sector in a more efficient or optimal way than by the state, under certain circumstances.

Making public education increasingly dependent on private funds bears many risks, leading to commercialisation and commodification of educa-

tion, as well as to the increased inequalities and social-economic gaps. Pring (2006) warns: “as a consequence of privatization, the public sector of education becomes an impoverished substitute for what cannot be bought.” Experiences from various regions show also the possible negative effects of privatisation. For example, ASPBAE calls the increasing trend of the privatisation of education in several countries across the Asia-Pacific region a “serious concern... and alarming development” (ASPBAE, 2017). In 2012 Open Society Foundations launched a big initiative called *Open Society Institute’s Privatisation in Education Research Initiative* and has since collected valuable research results, empirical data, in-depth surveys, experiences, numerous cases and a critical case-based and comparative empirical analysis (see: CIES, 2012; Cornucopia, 2017). There are indicators showing that the massive involvement of the private sector could have a negative impact on the realisation of education as a human right, leaving large groups of population behind, especially the marginalised ones. (See for example: ActionAid, 2014, 2019; ASPBAE, 2017, 2018; Attridge & Engen, 2019; CEDAW, 2014; Ball & Youdell, 2017).

There is obviously the need to identify the factors that will unlock the potentials of the private sector for ALE, increase the possibility of its positive contribution to the quality, sustainable and inclusive solutions, but at the same time reduce the risk of the commercialisation and exclusivity of education, which may leave large groups behind.

The 2030 Agenda has brought new financing mechanisms to the stage, encouraging and recommending multi-stakeholder partnerships and promoting effective public, public-private, and civil society partnerships (United Nations, 2015a). “Is blended finance a silver bullet or a double-edged sword? Blended finance, or blending, is a slippery concept...” (Meeks, 2018). Encompassed under the umbrella term ‘**Blended finance**’, various partnerships are often seen as an important way of overcoming the foreseen gap in the implementation of the global and national policies, since blended finance investment solutions can capitalize on partnerships among diverse actors, including international organizations, devel-

opment cooperation agencies, and private enterprise. The World Bank warns about some risks, but keeps been optimistic about the potentials of blended finance: “Blended finance is not a silver bullet and should be used only as part of a broader strategy that includes regulatory and pricing reforms. But overall, blended finance has proved an effective element of the development finance toolkit and will continue to be going forward” (IFC World Bank Group, 2016).

The World Economic Forum stated about the concept of blended finance: “Where development challenges or perceptions of risk prevent investment on purely commercial terms, these models can enable the private sector to balance certain risks with appropriate rewards. This, in turn, can connect target groups to the market and eventually enable solutions to become financially sustainable. For multistakeholder partnerships to have the desired development impact, both public institutional expertise and emerging market knowledge are essential; together they permit the identification and structuring of projects that can be sustainable and replicable in the long run” (Wilson, 2016).

Especially the **public-private-partnership (PPP)** seemed promising and was even promoted as an almost magical solution that would bridge the public needs, including education, with a resourceful private sector.

PPPs first need to be compared with privatisation. Yidan Wang (as cited in LaRocque, 2008) explains privatisation as permanent transfer of control; transfer of ownership right from a public agency to one or more private parties, or a capital increase in which public sector decides not to take share. In contrast, PPPs aim to “promote improvements in the financing and provision of services from both the public and private sectors but not to increase the role of one over the other. Rather, PPPs are geared toward improvement of existing services provided by both sectors with an emphasis directed on system efficiency, effectiveness, quality, equity and accountability” (LaRocque, 2008).

As the World Bank Group (2018) defines it, public-private-partnership (PPP) is “a long-term contract between a private party and a government entity, for providing a public asset or service, in which the private party bears significant risk and management responsibility, and remuneration is linked to performance... PPPs combine the skills and resources of both the public and private sectors through sharing of risks and responsibilities. This enables governments to benefit from the expertise of the private sector, and allows them to focus instead on policy, planning and regulation by delegating day-to-day operations.” There are various models – depending on who takes the initiative, how the tasks and responsibilities are shared, but PPP is essentially about state and private sectors coming together on a specific task.

PPP is widely used in building infrastructure, but it is being extended to education, including basic education. World Bank is widely promoting PPP in education: “Public-private partnerships (PPPs) in education are long-term contractual relationships between the government and a private provider for all or some part of the delivery of education infrastructure and services... PPPs can help extend the reach and effectiveness of government funds, encourage innovation in education, increase safety, efficiency, and capacity of physical educational infrastructure, and given the right public policy context, extend access to educational services and parity of services received across a population. They allow government to maintain strategic, financial and regulatory control over public education, allowing them step back from the day-to-day delivery and management of the infrastructure and/or service in situations where their resources are limited... More recently, PPPs have extended into early childhood education and technical and vocational education and training (TVET), as opportunities for PPPs in these areas are seen as viable and necessary by governments to achieve education for all throughout the education life cycle” (PPP Knowledge Lab, n.d.).

Some experiences have been made already, where the PPP showed not only a potential but also a broad range of risks and failures. “One piece



of the puzzle is a sensible balance between autonomy and accountability for the regulator or PPP contract supervisors... Another piece is the legal form of the private party involved in a PPP” (Klein, 2015). Lack of proportional accountability and transparency of the financial schemes is noticed as a big problem, involving complex contractual arrangements and the fact that financial risks are usually fully taken by the state. Even the 2030 Agenda talks about the need for transparent and accountable scaling-up of appropriate public-private cooperation (United Nations, 2015a). Further on, there is a continuous problem of aligning the interest of public and private sector, whereby the latter tends to, directly or indirectly, dominate and impose the main discourse, by introducing competitive pressures in the education sector, which should generate efficiency gains, or by focusing solely on the outcomes and neglecting the educational processes etc. The criticism of the lack of implementation capacity for the PPPs could be easily mitigated by capacity building measures, but it remains that “PPP in education have also been criticised on the grounds that they represent a first step toward full privatisation” (LaRocque, 2008).

“Recent experience has shown that the role of private sector in sectors such as education and health has been producing mixed effects, more often negative effects on quality, equity and other dimensions of education, jeopardizing the well established goals of human development. Instead of direct provision by private sector, PPP is depicted as if it is different from privatisation, and as a viable strategy in this regard that would minimise the adverse effects of private sector movement and strengthen the desirable effects of the role of public sector” (Tilak, 2016).

Additionally, boosting the ‘new public managerialism’ – “basically the application of private sector management systems and techniques into the public services” (Farnham & Horton, 1996), can undermine the values and principles that running the ALE sector is based on, and ruin the understanding of ALE as public good. Authors of FinALE project underline that

“new public managerialism replaces traditional needs-based approaches with outputs based models which are enforced through measurability and compliance with performance models. Critics of neoliberalism believe this socio-economic approach has colonised adult education spaces and transformed them into spaces that satisfy market need and which negatively impact adult education’s pursuit of equality“ (Brookfield & Holst; 2011; Mayo & English 2013; Murray et al., 2014 - as cited in Fitzsimons & Magrath, 2017). The warning points at some important consequences: „In doing so, lifelong learning fails to appreciate the multifaceted dimensions of unemployment, and how underachievement in education is both a cause and symptom of structural inequality“ (FinALE, 2018a).

There is a variety of mechanisms for the allocation of resources based on the blended funding approach – contracts, projects (involving two or more parties – the government and the private sector; in combination with further stakeholders, such as civil society, research institutions, etc.). It seems important to keep the government as the bearer of the prime responsibility for delivering education and regulating any non-state actors in education. When it comes to private providers of ALE, it is important that the state defines the framework and set of rules and principles, while the investments of private companies and foundations require a clear clarification of the roles, especially in policy making and defining priorities and desired results.

There are many attempts to develop innovative approaches to funding ALE, but most of them are simply an ‘extension’ or a version of the existing models, or more sophisticated forms of private involvement in education through PPP. This is the case with **Public-Private-People Partnership (PPPP)** – a new concept that combines PPP with society (people). The PPPP concept involves the current PPP financing scheme and societal participation, whether in terms of legal aspects and policies or institutional matters. This new concept can help the society (people) to achieve some progressive goals together with the institution under PPPP, and not to depend on the state budget, as it increases the pri-

vate equity. There is currently no systematic mechanism governing how social concerns should be captured at different stages of a PPP project and how to put people as a major stakeholder for PPP schemes. Since this framework embraces bottom-up participative strategies for planning, and moves decision-making power towards a shared-powered network, it would be worth exploring the potentials and possibilities of its use in adult learning and education (Thomas, Wong & Wong, 2013).

#### 1.5.4 Official Development Assistance

Cross-country support and support by supra-national bodies might have very different forms in different parts of the world. For example, the Treaty of Lisbon in Europe<sup>6</sup> has defined education as a right of every citizen of Europe, and although education and training policies remained in the hands of the Member States, the EU committed itself to the strong supporting role by securing the budget and establishing numerous mechanisms to invest in ALE (European Union, 2020). Education and training policy gained a particular momentum in the Europe 2020 Strategy, Education and Training 2020, and several lifelong learning and ALE documents, so large amount of money was available for citizens of Europe of all ages for education, learning and training, making Europe a multinational learning space.

However, development aid, later known as official development assistance (ODA), is substantially different. In this case, the international education policy is not created by a group of countries, for the same countries (as in the EU), but by 'outside' actor, sometimes far away from the regions where the support, based on that policy, will be used. This is one of the reasons for certain scepticism against ODA, including ODA in ALE – it has to do with the mandate, dependency, and power relations.

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6/ Treaties and amendments governing European integration, adopted in 2009, when European Community transferred all its powers and institutions to the new European 'Union'.

Still, for many countries around the globe, development cooperation and official development assistance are an important resource for implementing educational reforms, measures, and initiatives. The overall amounts spent on ODA might seem high, but there has been a continuous decline since its peak in 2016.

ODA is not important only as a financial source but also as the mechanism to engage other sources. “An important use of international public finance, including ODA, is to catalyse additional resource mobilization from other sources, public and private. Aid will thus remain a crucial source of education finance over the next 15 years if the targets are to be met and will be complemented by the growing contribution of middle income countries” (UNESCO et al., 2015).

The data about ODA investment to ALE is scarce and unclear. It is significant that GRALE 4 is silent about ODA, probably because of the lack of data, but also because of the conceptual diversity of the ALE fields and topics that characterizes the international donors’ landscape. Another example is the International Education Funders Group (IEFG), whose interest include ALE, but none of their sub-groups includes specifically adult education, except Technical & Vocational Education and Skills Training (IEFG, 2020).

Research shows that the pattern is usually the following: ALE receives a small share of the total ODA investments in education and remains a low priority in the global development cooperation. But in many developing countries it is still a very much needed resource, most notably for adult literacy – a field where high amounts have been invested, but the needs still can be hardly covered alone by certain countries.

The scepticism towards the ODA’s role in further development of ALE is based on:

- A general decrease of the ODA amount and a decreased role given to ODA in the new global agenda compared to the previous one (MDGs and EFA). Despite renewed 'commitments' to increase ODA, only a few countries reach the agreed target of 0,7% (Inter-agency task force on FfD, 2016) – the famous “ghost of 0,7 per cent of GNI” (Clemens & Moss, 2007).
- The inadequate use of ODA on both sides (the sender and the receiver), as proved by numerous studies. Very often, ODA was used for not-agreed or needed purposes and wasn't aligned with the countries' real priorities.<sup>7</sup>
- A huge percentage of the ODA amount that, firstly, goes back to the countries/regions it came from (through various schemes, arrangements and conditions), and secondly, it is not spend in an efficient and targeted way – the costs of transactions, monitoring, reporting, international staff, and country missions are proportionally big compared to the investment in countries' education.<sup>8</sup>

We must seek to better understand why current donor investments in education – and in particular basic education – are falling short of the needs and expectations. Steer and Smith (2015) identified three possible reasons:

1. “Lack of prioritization and leadership. While many donors – including multilateral agencies – have made strong public statements about the importance of education, they have not been backed by aid commitments. Given that aid agencies are increasingly decentralized, implementing central priorities will

7/ For example: “\$37 billion – roughly half of global aid – is ‘phantom aid’, that is, it is not genuinely available to poor countries to fight poverty: At least one quarter of donor budgets – some \$19 billion in 2004 – is spent in this way: on consultants, research and training (‘technical assistance’)” (Shah, 2014).

8/ An example from Asia: “In 2005, 18 countries had to deal with at least 12 donors for basic education alone. In 2007 Niger hosted 600 donor missions, of which less than 100 were joint.” (ASPBAE & GCE, 2011).

require clear incentives. The sector also lacks a visionary narrative...

2. Failings in aid architecture. Lack of donor coordination, ineffective division of labour and unpredictability of aid have limited the scale and effectiveness of donor support to education. The lack of strong global coordination is a particular problem for the education sector. A lack of innovative approaches to raising and delivering financing are also hampering progress. Donor financing can address funding gaps directly, but perhaps more importantly it can help leverage the mobilization and allocation of domestic resources that are by far the most important sources of financing in education. Opportunities may also have been missed to engage with new players, such as private actors, in part due to ongoing ideological debates around the role of those actors in the delivery of basic education.
3. Poor evidence and use of evidence in advocacy... the evidence-based case for education has not been made strongly enough. While data on education systems and outcomes has improved significantly over recent years, in part due to the increasing number of rigorous evaluations, several types of evidence continue to be missing – including reliable and consistent estimates of funding needs (many education country plans do not include cost estimates) analysis of different cost recovery and financing arrangements and evidence on the impact of education interventions on learning outcomes or other socio-economic benefits later in life.”

There is a variety among the different types of ODA and numerous factors determining its character, so its effects do depend very much on these differences:

- Financial supports might come from the banks in the form of loans, or from the donor organisations directly;

- Support might be given within the global/multilateral cooperation or in bilateral cooperation;
- Aid could be conditioned or not; and the conditions could be harsh or beneficial, they could be of financial nature, or linked to the area/group/activity that will be supported;
- The way implementation is organized – with the careful analysis of local/national context or imposing of pre-made plans and copy-paste solutions; as short-term and project-type support, or long-term and partnership-oriented cooperation.

All these factors should be carefully analysed in order to find the most adequate type of ODA in ALE and to make it really work for the people and for the country. It has to be seen in the global context as well – ODA cannot be adequately used without addressing debt crises of developing countries, global tax-dodging, illicit financial flows, unfair trade and corruption at all level, as the main causes of existing global inequalities and the position of countries receiving ODA in the global economic and political architecture.

### 1.5.5 Personal investment

It is an obvious fact that there is a significant growth in adult education in the private sector through personal, learners' investments. While financing adult education is still considered primarily the responsibility of the state (especially when it comes to marginalised groups, or to the field of literacy and basic education), there is a growing tendency to consider adult education as a personal responsibility that should be financed by adult learners themselves (if not covered by companies and the private sector).

The OECD (2019) provides an overview of individuals' investments in adult learning by countries, based on the Adult Education Survey in Europe, WRTAL – Data on Work-Related Training and Adult Learning in Australia, and the international PIAAC programme, which also helps to understand the level of financial barriers for the learners' participation in

ALE. One of the most important findings is that in the Nordic countries in Europe most of non-vocational adult education activities are supported by the government, so the percentage of participants that personally contribute financially to their training is low in these countries, while it is much higher in South European countries (OECD, 2019). Since the net-income and wages are higher in Nordic countries, the opposite might be expected, but these data are an important indicator of the importance attached to adult learning and education in these countries, and the priority these governments give to ALE in their financial schemes.

Although in some cases it might seem like an area that should be left to the personal demand and learners' financial capacities, without interference of education policy, there are several aspects that have to be considered when thinking of learners' investment:

- Personal investments in ALE are partially grounded in the understanding of education as commodity, something that is produced, offered and traded on the free market as any other good; policy-making could balance these approaches in certain areas or for certain groups, by targeted measures.
- Making education dependable on the level of personal income will leave a huge number of people behind, and consequently many countries. The existential problems, poverty, unemployment, austerity and other circumstances that might hinder someone in accessing education require to be taken and treated as a policy problem, not only as individual one, especially in a socially and economically depriving context. Financial reasons are one of the main reasons for low participation in ALE, especially in developing countries, therefore only certain sectors of ALE could be fully left to the free market.
- Even the types of ALE provision that do not represent an immediate priority of the country (in terms of economy, employment, or any other priority area), but are more beneficial for the individuals, do have long-term benefits for families, communities, and the



country (benefits such as lower costs of the public health system, lower criminality rate, etc.)

- In addition to the direct costs of further training, individuals also face additional indirect costs (e.g. by reducing working hours, foregoing overtime or secondary employment, etc.). The proportion of indirect costs borne by the individual himself out of all the costs he has borne is likely to be around one third after all (Müller & Wenzelmann 2018).

While some of the personal interests should be satisfied from the personal budget, there is a range of mechanisms that could be used to enable access to ALE provision for individuals and to increase overall participation – either through direct support to them (direct grants, loans, vouchers/individual learning account) or support to the providers (through reduced taxation or new approaches, such as programme funding, project funding, formula funding, and tax incentive). There is also a range of financial mechanisms that could be arranged with the employers (learning voucher, training leave, payback clauses, etc.).

### 1.5.6 Domestic resource mobilisation – a remake of a classic

The urge to find new approaches for securing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the existence of a huge financial gap identified for achieving the 2030 Agenda and SDG4 inspired the search for new solutions and new recommendations regarding the manner of bridging the gap in financing education in financing education, and caused a ‘come-back’ of the traditional approaches.

This was the case with the shift of the financial responsibility for education from international actors back to the governments, called Domestic Resource Mobilisation (DRM), accompanied with decreased ODA and reduced involvement of organizations like the World Bank in the implementation of the SDG compared to the MDGs.

Domestic resource mobilisation (DRM) became ‘commonplace’, especially since the Addis Ababa Action Agenda for financing development called on developing countries to step up their efforts in collecting more taxes domestically to achieve the SDGs. “Relying increasingly on domestic resources could allow developing countries to distance themselves from the volatility of official development assistance (ODA) and can increase their policy space strengthening accountability and achieve greater country ownership of their own development strategies” (Byiers & Dalleau, 2011).

Compared to the usual concept of public funding, DRM offers more – it ‘promises’ to mobilise further resources in the country, and this multipliers-effect of the mobilisation of domestic tax revenues and better tax administration is perceived as a way to increase the amount of which the education could get a bigger share.

The Education Commission proposed an ambitious financial agenda, with very high financial targets for domestic resources (The Education Commission, 2016). However, the invitation to do more domestic resource mobilisation adds to the already big challenges developing countries are facing, without efficient solutions for the problems that heavily influence their economy and finances, such as tax evasion, tax dodging, and debts crises. These systemic problems play an important role in their budgetary situations and directly influence the investments in education on the national level. One example is Oxfam’s estimation that “corporate tax dodging costs poor countries at least US\$100 billion every year. This is enough money to provide an education for the 124 million children and prevent the deaths of almost eight million mothers, babies and children a year” (Oxfam International, n.d.). Could domestic resource mobilisation compensate for what developing countries are losing?

“While aid amounts to around \$70 to 100 billion per year, the poor countries pay some \$200 billion to the rich each year” (Shah, 2014). As for the debts which are killing the economies of many

African and Asian countries, ActionAid's new research shows that those countries which spend more than 12% of their budgets on debt servicing are invariably forced to cut their spending on public services" (ActionAid, 2020).

It is difficult to expect that countries that are most in need of higher investments for quality education can reach the needed budget through better domestic resource mobilisation, while their economies are at the same time plagued by economic injustice and inequalities.

The issue of financing ALE is thus left to the unsolved set of intertwined issues of politics and economy, where DRM and collection of taxes are only part of the problem: "Essentially, the social contract needed to make any revenue effort is broken. The general populous is unclear about the benefits of paying taxes and is sceptical about their social duty to contribute to a revenue system where they see large and powerful players – be they individuals or corporations – opting out, sometimes because of tax exemptions. The economically powerful in a country can keep the tax authorities at bay... Multinational corporations use a complex web of international tax laws to skirt paying taxes in low-income countries; they also exploit asymmetries in accounting capacity between them and local tax authorities to impede audits and call on powerful political networks to 'protect their investments'." (Gupta & Plant, 2019).

The Education Commission estimated that 97% of resources for education would need to come from domestic resource mobilisation (according to Archer, 2020). There is also a need for an additional effort to make sure that ALE gets its share from that budget. But this requirement ignores the main issue: Isn't the size of the cake itself more important than the size of the piece of the cake ALE gets? Problem of the lack of funding of ALE goes deeper than the efforts of national advocacy and the negotiations on the amount from the budget ALE will get, deeper than the imperative of

the better use of existing resources – it is located in the global power architecture, the economic and political relationship that shape the financing environment for education.

Episodic examples of the low-cost but high quality education measures, in addition to an efficient use of minimal education resources and inexpensive solutions in education, are not showing the way to meet the huge educational needs of the adult population. Finding innovative, less costly solutions and ways to use existing resources in a more efficient way might help sporadically, but in the current context of many developing countries this approach is more of a distant, long-term goal than a solution that would help to solve deep, structural roots and problems.



## 2 GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES FROM THE REGIONS

This studies explores some examples of various models of financing ALE in different regions, addressing the challenges and questions posed in the previous chapter, offering some valuable experiences and recommendations.

The six examples are chosen from the ICAE and DVV International regional members and partners in five regions: Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Africa, the Arab region, and Latin America. First, three different examples were explored from each region, and from each of them one was chosen mostly based on the criteria of diversity of the funding types and models, as well as on the OECD methodology, the PCM methodology, and the main DAC criteria – relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability (OECD, 2019a).

Since the approach using the DAC criteria is highly discursive and grounded in a somewhat reductive understanding of adult education and in the development cooperation model often criticised in adult education, additional criteria were used, related to the satisfaction of participants and beneficiaries, impact on policy development, contribution to the social and personal development, etc.

## 2.1 Ethiopia's integrated functional adult education<sup>1</sup>

### 2.1.1 Overview of ALE Financing in Ethiopia

Funds for public ALE just as other education sub-sectors are generated largely from tax and other domestic revenues supplemented by foreign loans and grants. The education share of the national GDP has been at an average of 4% over the past few years. Its share of the national expenditure stood at over 23% in a decade. ALE expenditure forecasts are mainstreamed in the ESDPs.

The country runs a decentralised finance system. The Ministry of Finance coordinates the national budgeting process. It disburses a portion of funds for national level expenditure to the Ministry of Education, and transfers the rest of the funds to regional governments. Regional education bureaus together with zonal and district (*woreda*) education offices undertake education spending at their respective levels of jurisdictions.

For a few of years since 2005, Ethiopia implemented a tripartite financing partnership model for a gender-based ALE programme. The Federal Government partnered with DVV International and Royal Netherlands Embassy in providing resources for the Integrated Women's Empowerment Programme (IWEP). Piloted in 6 regions, the IWEP's implementation involved the Ministry of Education, regional governments' structures including bureaus, Women's Associations and other NGOs. The IWEP's engagement of state and non-state actors outside the mainstream education institutional arrangement was in a way an acknowledgement of the investment into ALE by such players whose financial and related contributions are often not captured by official statistics and reports.

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1/ Prepared by Robert Jjukko, Uganda, edited by K.P.

### 2.1.2 Description of the Initiative: Integrated Functional Adult Education

The Integrated Functional Adult Education (IFAE) programme is a two-year-long course targeting out-of-school adults and young people aged 15 and above (Federal Ministry of Education, 2011). During the ESDP IV period, the IFAE enrolled 10,2 million adult learners (42% of which were female) of the revised target of 19,4 million. A contested figure between 3,5–7,5 million IFAE graduates was reported by 2015. Around 13,2 million adults (9,2 million female and 4 million male) is estimated target for the IFAE under the fifth ESDP.

The IFAE is actually a tag name for all ALE-related activities for non-literate and neo-literate Ethiopians. Anchored in a poverty eradication paradigm, the IFAE aims at supporting disadvantaged population groups to improve their livelihoods. The caution against narrowing it to reading, writing and numeracy skills development is evident in the public policy document owing to the desire to present the broadened vision of adult education.

Integration is a desired overriding principle geared at delivering a programme that is deemed to be multi-sectoral. The IFAE curriculum framework requires a teaching-learning content to integrate literacy with aspects from agriculture, health, civics & ethics, environmental conservation & protection, gender, and income generation. Policy documents including the ESDPs emphasize the engagement of strategic sectors at federal, regional and lower levels of government. Already, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) involving five federal level ministries (Agriculture, Health, Women, Children and Youth Affairs, and Labour and Social Affairs) with the Ministry of Education was signed by the end of the ESDP IV. Incidences of signed MoUs involving sectoral bureaus are indicative of deliberate attempts to forge functional inter-sectoral linkages at lower levels of government.

Offering supportive or literate environments is technically embedded in the IFAE's strategy to establish community learning centres (CLCs). According to the ESDP V document, CLCs are expected to serve as focal points for the IFAE programme. The mission to provide and promote continuing learning pathways was expected to receive a boost through the ratification of a transfer directive by the Ministry of Education. With the directive, IFAE graduates would be able to transit to formal education as well as technical and vocational education and training (TVET) options.

### 2.1.3 Financing mechanism – description and analysis

National finances for the IFAE are distributed by the Ministry of Finance and utilized through the framework of education bureaus at the federal ministry and regions as well as at education offices at zonal and woreda levels. The IFAE expenditure, the clearest ALE-related financing arrangement, is captured under the general education vote with 43% share of the total ESDP V budget of 453,822 million birr (ca US\$11,6 million) (Federal Ministry of Education, 2015a), which is remarkable. The current ESDP V targets a 5% share of general education in favour of the IFAE, and an overall 6% share of the entire ESDP V budget. This comparatively better positioning of ALE-related expenditure in the national education budget grew from slightly over 1% on the advent of the ESDP II in the early 2000s.

Line ministries, particularly those which are signatories to the MoU with the Ministry of Education, make occasional human and technical contributions to the IFAE. While sectoral offices and staff at regional, zonal and woreda levels are reported to be supportive in some regions, their performance in others is rather conditional and dependent on financial incentives such as per diems.

As autonomous entities, regional governments budget and allocate resources to the IFAE as they deem fit though they are expected to operate within the framework of the ESDPs. The respective regional government councils allocate financial resources to the IFAE based on the plans sub-



mitted by education bureaus at regional and *woreda* levels. This potentially provides the ANFE technical personnel in the WEOs to participate in the planning and budgeting processes. Of course, there are variations regarding financial commitments to the programme by different regional states and woredas. While, for instance, the regions of Amhara and Tigray are reported to be allocating at least 5% of the education budget to the IFAE, it is not a regular phenomenon across the country. There are claims that planned full allocations are not always disbursed for utilization at service delivery points.

Woreda education offices (WEOs) are in charge of utilizing the disbursed funds for the IFAE. They access the resources from the Woreda finance and economic development offices. Recurrent expenditure in the form of personnel costs at woreda levels take the lion's share of capital development. Recruitment and remuneration of critical technical staff such as Experts in Adult and Non-Formal Education is mainstreamed in the regional education bureaus (REBs) and WEOs. There are progressive woredas that pay salaries to adult education tutors (facilitators). For instance, Degua-Temben and Kite-Awlaelo in the Tigray region are reported to have allocated, respectively, 2,19% and 1,17% of their education budgets to tutors' allowances. However, there are reports of uneven remuneration of adult education tutors across the regions, learning resources and related materials are provided on public finances by the woredas. Claims of limited supply of learning materials, which inevitably leads to borrowing from schools in some regions, are also evident.

Monitoring and supervision of the use of resources in the regions with relatively effective adult education boards ensures value for money. Such regions as Amhara, Oromia, Tigray, Harrari and Benishangul-Gumuz were reported to have posted good outcomes by the end of the ESDP IV. Of course, by virtue of the explicit engagement of the Federal Ministries of Finance and of Education, accounting and management of the IFAE funds is subjected to regular national financial regulations and standards.

#### 2.1.4 Effects, lessons learned and sustainability of the financing model

Mainstreaming IFAE planning and financing in the Education Sector Development Programmes (ESDPs) raised the profile of the programme leading to improved budget allocations, though there are still gaps. The direct engagement of REBs and WEOs potentially offers the IFAE financing and implementation a professional character. The integration strategy that in part helped to bring on board the sector ministries and bureaus at federal and regional levels enhanced opportunities for optimisation of personnel and related resources. The development of an adult education master plan and strategy together with the IFAE implementation guidelines is a great step toward setting a formidable public discourse on ALE financing. Likewise, the establishment of a national adult education board, replicated at regional governments together with the now established ANFE directorate in the MoE provides hope for a sustainable framework for IFAE planning, financing, and implementation.

However, IFAE financing optimisation is still hampered by the intricate challenges associated with decentralised service delivery systems on the one hand, and insufficient enabling environment on the other. Regional governments can only be guided by the federal education financing targets and prospects, but they retain the prerogative to manage their finances as they deem fit. There are claims that disbursements and releases of funds to IFAE implementations at woredas and kebeles is highly discretionary and dependent on not only the revenue base but also the political, fiscal and technical commitment at those levels. Goodwill and real commitment vary as evidenced by reports of uneven budget allocations to the IFAE across the regions.

Enforcing national or regional financing benchmarks is rather unthinkable. Moreover, the created institutional mechanisms such as the National Adult Education Boards do not have a clear policy and legislative mandate. Actually, regional governments are not legally required to report their allocations: “financial resources for IFAE, as estimated in the ESDP

IV budget, were not fully allocated by all REBs” (Federal Ministry of Education, 2015).

Relatedly, the signing of a memorandum of understanding by line ministries with the Federal MoE has not yielded financial contributions to IFAE implementations. This indicates the challenge of sector integration that can potentially deliver mutual financing amidst anticipations for per diems by individual sectoral staff as reported in some of the regions and woredas.

Overall, the IFAE financing model in Ethiopia offers interesting lessons for the rest of the region. The great attempt to mainstream and integrate the IFAE into wider education and related development needs to be augmented by appropriate enabling environment within the country’s federal system of political and fiscal governance. The IFAE financing prospects are brighter once a mutually acceptable participatory budget management culture is in place that engages all stakeholders within, and beyond the education bureaus, and across other development bureaus.

## 2.2 The Nation Rebuilding Program of Canadian government<sup>2</sup>

### 2.2.1 Financing ALE in Canada

In all jurisdictions, provincial and territorial governments, funds should be provided for adult learning and skills development, through funding of institutional providers, community and voluntary providers, subsidies directly to learners, special project funding, and/or subsidies to and cost-sharing programmes with industry and business (CMEC, 2019). Skills development may also be facilitated through fiscal stimulus measures.

A lack of common budget indicators among provinces and territories makes it difficult to calculate total expenditures on adult learning and skills development across the country. It is even harder to determine public investments in adult literacy programming, since it is often provided in partnership with other sectors and integrated with other areas of programming (e.g., workplace safety, public libraries, public health) (CMEC, 2019).

The Government of Canada has taken on an integral role in supporting the skills development of Canadians by investing in post-secondary education, training, and literacy. It achieves this through transfer payments to provinces and territories, research and infrastructure funding, and direct support to learners (CMEC, 2019).

### 2.2.2 Description of the Initiative: The Nation Rebuilding Program

The Government of Canada has acknowledged that “recognition of and respect for Indigenous rights is the foundation to an improved relationship with Indigenous peoples and for advancing reconciliation” (Government of Canada, 2018e). This builds on the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples’ 1996 recommendation that Indigenous nations should begin to

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2/ Prepared by Daniel Baril, Institut de coopération pour l'éducation des adultes (ICÉA), Canada, edited by K.P.

reconstitute themselves as nations and create institutions with breadth and capacity to take on the exercise of rights, including self-government (Government of Canada, 2018e).

The Nation Rebuilding Program stems from the federal government's agenda "to renew relationships with Indigenous Peoples" (Government of Canada, 2018a) as well as its stated "commitment to working with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people through a respectful and co-operative dialogue to advance reconciliation and renew their nation-to-nation and government-to-government relationship for the benefit of all Canadians" (Government of Canada, 2018c). The aim is to work with Indigenous peoples "to support them in their work to rebuild and reconstitute their nations" (Government of Canada, 2018e), by targeting the capacity building of Indigenous peoples, while doing so in a "manner that responds to their priorities and the unique needs of their communities" (Government of Canada, 2018e).

The objectives of the Program have been articulated as:

- a re-establishment of Indigenous nations
- an increase in the ability of reconstituted nations to take on greater sectoral responsibilities
- an increase in the sense of unity within Indigenous nations
- identification and agreement among member communities on priorities for action and approaches to issues
- a reduction in the duplication of the resolution of issues at the individual First Nation or Indigenous community level. (Government of Canada, 2018).

The guidelines articulated for the Nation Rebuilding Program emphasize that eligible activities include capacity development training and workshops and institutional or leadership capacity building development "in support of rebuilding efforts and taking on the exercise of rights, including self-government" (Government of Canada, 2018).

### 2.2.3 Description of the Financing Model/Mechanism and Analysis

The funding envelope: The Nation Rebuilding Program was introduced in the 2018 budget as a five-year-long commitment with a funding envelope of \$101.500.000 (CAD) (Government of Canada, 2018c). The financing mechanism is aimed at Indigenous peoples in the spirit of reconciliation and will in part support adult education within the framework of nation building. Funds will be transferred from the federal state to Indigenous nations. Nation-to-nation relationships are being built now but are not yet in place.

The Nation Rebuilding Program falls under the responsibility of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC). Maximum funding is \$1.500.000 (CAD) per year for each project, however, funds may be allocated on a multi-year basis (Government of Canada, 2018e).

Financing Mechanism: Funding will flow through fixed or flexible contribution agreements (Government of Canada, 2018e). These are governed by a Government policy on transfer payments and a directive (Government of Canada, 2017b). Specific provisions have been developed for transfers to aboriginal recipients (Government of Canada, 2017a).

**Fixed contribution** funding will be considered when the amount of the contribution can be based on a reliable estimate of the funding required to achieve the project objectives. Any unexpended funding remaining after meeting the project obligations and objectives can be spent on purposes consistent with the programme objectives or any other purpose agreed to by the department.

**Flexible contribution** funding will be considered when the project is expected to require a two or more year relationship as captured in a multi-year funding agreement. The recipient will have flexibility to redirect funding among the cost categories established in the agreement.

The recipient may be allowed to retain unexpended funding remaining at the end of each fiscal year for use in the next fiscal year to further achieve results toward the programme objectives. Any funds remaining at the expiry of the funding agreement will be expected to be repaid.

## 2.2.4 Effects, Lessons Learned, Impact and Sustainability of the Financing Mode

In the first year of the five-year funding cycle, the selected projects supported a variety of adult learning activities that included:

- training and capacity building
- cultural reclamation activities, including language and culture workshops
- community consultation, engagement and information processes (Government of Canada, 2018b).

Other projects included the development of citizenship codes, constitutions, charters and protocol agreements as well as research on governance models and development of culturally-appropriate governance systems, including the development of laws, policies, and standards (Government of Canada, 2018a).

According to Bob Joseph of Indigenous Corporate Training Inc., an organization was set up in British Columbia to “provide training to get everyone working effectively with Indigenous Peoples in their day-to-day jobs and lives”: “there has been little negative press about the program since it was announced (Joseph, 2019).

Currently, contribution agreements are the preferred mechanism for transferring funds under the Nation Rebuilding Program. However, the entire system of government transfers to Indigenous peoples is under upheaval (Government of Canada, 2017). The challenges faced under the current fiscal relationship have been identified as:

### 1. Insufficient Transfers

2. Insufficient and Under-Utilized Revenue Generation Opportunities
3. Inflexible and Unpredictable Funding Arrangements
4. Excessive Administrative and Reporting Burdens
5. Excessive Focus on Compliance Rather than Results (Government of Canada, 2017).

These system-wide challenges would likely also apply to the contribution agreements mandated by the Nation Rebuilding Program, especially items 3, 4 and 5.

The Government of Canada has recognized that “reconciliation and self-government require a renewed fiscal relationship, developed in collaboration with Indigenous nations, that promotes a mutually supportive climate for economic partnership and resource development (Government of Canada, 2018d). Many initiatives are currently underway, including:

- creating 10-year grants
- replacing the Default Prevention and Management Policy
- developing a mutual accountability framework
- establishing an advisory committee on fiscal relations
- working jointly with 25 self-governing Indigenous governments to develop a new self-government fiscal policy framework (Government of Canada, 2019).

The goal is a new fiscal relationship between Canada and Indigenous groups, one that “enhances sufficiency, predictability, flexibility and autonomy of funding (Government of Canada, 2017).



## 2.3 Blended learning for Ibero-American Literacy and Lifelong Education Plan – PIALV<sup>3</sup>

### 2.3.1 Overview of financing ALE in the region

The financing of ALE in the LAC region continues to be a critical issue: the scope and reliability of data are limited, the commitments are not met, and funding is scarce. Furthermore, the mechanism of accounting, monitoring and evaluation of the effectivity of the programmes are only partially set up.

From the 20 LAC countries which delivered information for the third Global Report on Adult Learning and Education – GRALE III, most of them (n=8) invested less than 1 per cent of the budget in public education in ALE. The unweighted average of the public resources for ALE activities can be estimated at 2 per cent, which means a severe underfunding of the ALE sector, even considering that some activities are carried out by Ministries other than that of Education and are not declared as ALE.

Of course, the public sector is not the only promoter of ALE. Social movements, churches, NGOs and large companies promote ALE programmes using their own resources, the latter in accordance with their need for a qualified workforce. Unfortunately, reliable data about the share of non-public investment in ALE is unavailable or only partially available.

International aid for the LAC, in the case of ALE, is limited, so most national efforts must be funded using local resources. Only 36 per cent of countries related external aid (UNESCO, 2017). One of these cases is the PIA, which will be explained below. In a few cases (Brazil, Colombia) alternative mechanisms for funding have been created (royalties from oil exploration), but it can be assumed that the financing of ALE has not improved in the past years.

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3/ Prepared by: Timothy D. Ireland (Brazil) and Dietmar Pfeiffer (Germany), edited by K.P.

### 2.3.2 Description of the example project/ initiative: Ibero-American Literacy and Basic Education Plan for Young People and Adults

The Ibero-American Literacy and Basic Education Plan for Young People and Adults, or the PIA as it became known, was inspired initially by the UN Literacy Decade (UNLD) 2003–2012, but also incorporated orientations and commitments contained in the UNESCO’s Agenda for the Future from 1997, the Education For All initiative of UNESCO, adopted in Dakar, 2000, the Millennium Development Goals adopted in 2000, and the Regional Education Project for Latin America and the Caribbean (PRELAC) announced in 2002. It expresses an understanding of literacy as a humanitarian and ethical commitment which depends upon the political decision of governments. At the same time, it is seen as a key instrument in the fight against poverty, illness and infant mortality, based upon the creation and strengthening of a critical and reflexive conscience. Literacy and basic education constitute the indispensable foundation for critical citizenship, economic and social development and professional training and access to employment.

The PIA is a regional plan which seeks to integrate different national literacy strategies whilst respecting the sovereignty of each nation to identify and develop its own literacy and basic education strategies. Whilst a limited level of coordination among the countries of the region already existed – Cuba, Venezuela and Bolivia with regard to the literacy method “Yo si puedo”, the countries which have used the PAEBAs<sup>4</sup> (El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Dominican Republic, Paraguay, Colombia and Peru) and the space provided by the Andrés Bello Agreement – the PIA’s objective is to coordinate and articulate national and local government efforts, and those of NGOs, civil society and International Organisms, as a way of articulating technical, human and economic efforts. Literacy is under-

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4/ The Literacy and Basic Education Programme for Adults (PAEBA) was managed by the PEI with funds from the Spanish Ministry of Education and Culture.

stood as part of a comprehensive concept of basic education, whereby young people and adults are able to complete it.

National plans for overcoming illiteracy articulated with regional strategies of support for adult and youth basic education are the basis of the Plan which included six different functions. Firstly, the Plan was responsible for documenting and disseminating available information and knowledge about literacy among the regional partners. Secondly, the PIA sought to create networks which would facilitate the exchange of experiences and the educational resources used by each country. At a third level, research and studies were seen as an essential part of the activities of the Plan. Fourthly, the PIA offered technical assistance to those countries which requested it. Fifthly, the PIA was charged with the responsibility for coordinating efforts with other international initiatives, notably UNESCO. And, finally, importance was given to communicating and divulging information and data about the results of the Plan.

At the XXIV Ibero-American summit held in 2014 in Veracruz, México, a revised version of the PIA was approved. The Declaration of Veracruz affirmed its support for the new Ibero-American Literacy and Lifelong Education Plan – PIALV to run from 2015 to 2021, which “gives continuity whilst deepening and broadening the traditional concept of literacy contained in the 2007–2015 Plan, with a focus on lifelong learning, in reply to the needs of young people and adults for personal development and insertion in the labour market, in a knowledge society, and incorporating a gender perspective and attention to the needs of minorities in risk of social exclusion” (Cumbre Iberoamericana, 2014, article 7).

It is important to note that the PIALV is made up of two distinct lines of action: an Ibero-American line, which is executed by the OEI, and a national one, which includes all projects carried out by the individual member countries. The following description of the financing model is focused strictly on the international dimension, since the total disbursement of all projects together is considerably higher. It is notable that there was no

budgeting for the PIALV in 2019, but a perpetuation of the AECID 2017 budget.

### **2.3.3 Description of the Financing Model/Mechanism and Analysis**

The financing structure of the programme is characterized by a multi-funding model based on three broad sources: (1) national budgets (2) international organisations, like AECID, and (3) private donors, especially companies.

However, the most important donor which disbursed 62,1 percent of the total amount of US\$42.330.247 from 2013 until 2017 is ECOPETROL. The Governments of the countries which participate in the programme disbursed a share of 28,9 percent.

ECOPETROL is the largest and primary petroleum company in Colombia. It is a mixed stock-holding corporation (80 percent governmental and 20 percent private). On the other hand, Colombia is also the most important beneficiary receiving around 77 percent of the budget during the 2013–2017 period.

In order to understand the financing mechanism, it is important to note that the PIA (LV) is a kind of an umbrella programme covering national as well as regional programmes of different scopes. The responsibility for financing of the national programmes is basically that of national governments. Other national and international donors complete the budget in case of financial gaps.

The programme was calculated to last for three years on average at a cost of US\$40 per student annually – US\$120 over the three-year period, broken down as following:

Table 1: DISTRIBUTION OF AVERAGE COSTS FOR THE LITERACY PROGRAMME	
Facilitators/Literacy teachers	40%
Training	20%
Materials	20%
Follow up	20%
Total	100%

Source: OEI, 2014

In addition to the resources needed to cover the educational programmes, resources are also employed to finance the joint lines of action of the Plan – workshops, exchanges, studies, research, etc., and to cover the costs of coordination and management of the plan.

It is notable that the second phase of the programme started in 2013 with a disbursement of US\$21 million, which was reduced to US\$4 million by 2017 in spite of the inclusion of a lifelong learning component in the programme.

### 2.3.4 Effects, lessons learned, impact, sustainability of the financing

Accountability is a matter of concern in all kind of adult literacy programmes. Is the programme working as expected? Are the outcomes in accordance with the goals? What are the impacts for the participants? To ensure government and private support and funding, literacy programmes need to demonstrate their effectiveness and efficiency. Accountability needs quality criteria and clear standards for evaluation, such as impact, outcomes, sustainability of the financing model, and cost-effectiveness.

The official documents - *Programa Presupuesto*, published by the OEI (2017) pointed to positive effects of the programme carried out since 2007: “Throughout these years, the PIA has contributed to the decrease in illiteracy rates in the region and to the implementation of educational policies in the countries. In 2007, absolute illiteracy reached 9% of the Ibero-American population aged 15 years and over. Whilst in 2009 the percentage of absolute illiteracy was 7% and in 2010, 6,3%, according to data reported by countries for follow-up reports. In 2013, the update of the data allowed us to see that nine countries continued to lower illiteracy rates, which accounts for the positive effects of the different actions that are being developed in each of them”.

However, due to the lack of data, it is not possible to determine how much of the reduction of the illiteracy rate can be attributed to the PIALV. This points to the urgent need for an external study of impact.

The distribution of resources between different countries in the region appears to vary, although it would seem that the poorer countries of Central America (Honduras and El Salvador), together with the Dominican Republic and Colombia, have been the recipients of the greater share. In the case of the Dominican Republic, it is interesting to note that the PIALV supported both the National Literacy Plan Quisqueya “Learns with you” and an external evaluation programme in addition to material for the continuation of the programme.

With regard to the overall objectives of the plan, there is clearly a need for some kind of continental articulation which involves both national governmental programmes and those developed by NGOs and civil society in general. Unfortunately, there is no data which allows us to evaluate in an objective form those mechanisms which sought to strengthen this articulation: research projects and studies, the yearly meetings of the Intergovernmental Committee, exchanges between the countries involved and the dissemination of information concerning programmes in diverse countries.

The financial model which apparently depends on a majority investment by one partner would not appear to be the most effective especially when the home country – in this case Colombia – becomes the principal recipient. Of the total budget, the OEI's contribution at 6,8% is relatively low. In the Plan of this scope, perhaps the principal contributions could be in the field of pedagogical material, teaching methodology, evaluation, and the training/formation of teachers and managers. In this direction, at a meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee held in Brasília in 2016 during the CONFINTEA + VI International Seminar organized by the Brazilian Ministry of Education, two groups were created to make proposals on methodology and training.

There is now a clear option to coordinate the combined force of the PIALV with the Goals established in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and in particular with SDG 4, in which Lifelong Learning is the guiding concept.

## 2.4 Further training supported by metal and electrical industry in Germany<sup>5</sup>

### 2.4.1 Overview of the financing of ALE in Germany

It is difficult to estimate the total financial resources spent on adult training due to the lack of consistent statistics. Several attempts have been made in the past to arrive at an overall picture on the basis of the evaluation of various statistics (Dohmen, Laps, & Cristóbal Lopez, 2017; Walter, 2016; Beicht, Berger, & Moraal, 2005). Most recently, Cordes and Dohmen calculated for the year 2015 that, considering tax effects, a total of around 36 billion euros were spent in Germany on continuing training (Cordes & Dohmen, 2019a). This includes both direct costs, such as participation fees, travel costs or learning materials, and indirect costs.<sup>6</sup> This sum is distributed among companies, private individuals, and the public sector, whereby the share of companies in these costs is somewhat higher than that of the other two groups. Public expenditure in 2015 amounted to 4,5 billion euros, of which 1,1 billion euros came from the Federal Government, 1,3 billion euros from the state governments and municipalities, and 2,1 billion euros from the Federal Employment Agency.

A number of different financing instruments are available to finance continuing training. With regard on the total sum of around 36 billion euros mentioned above, most of these instruments<sup>7</sup> describe movements in financial resources between the three groups: primarily from the public sector to enterprises and private individuals, and in some cases also from enterprises to private individuals.

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5/ Prepared by Dr. Michael Cordes, Germany, edited by K.P.

6/ Indirect costs are incurred by companies as a result of staff shortfalls during further training and by private individuals as a result of loss of earnings, e.g. due to a reduction in working hours or the waiving of overtime.

7/ For the sake of completeness, reference should be made to instruments within a group. An example of this would be company training funds to finance company training (Bosch). However, these are less common in Germany than in other countries such as France, Canada or Korea.



Re-financing of adult education for companies and private individuals takes place in particular within the framework of tax regulations. Even though the data available at this point only permit extremely rough estimates, tax shortfalls due to continuing training are in the order of just under 7 billion euros (Cordes & Dohmen, 2019a). In addition, the state and the federal countries offer a range of different financing instruments for participants in adult education. The most significant in terms of volume and number of training places they offer are: the “Förderung der beruflichen Weiterbildung” (promotion of continuing vocational training) by the Federal Employment Agency, the “Aufstiegsfortbildungsförderungsgesetz AFBG” and – if this is used for continuing training purposes – the “Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz BAföG” (Cordes & Dohmen, 2019b). In January 2019, the “Qualifizierungschancengesetz” came into force, which supports the continuing training of employees (BMAS, 2019). In 2019, around 30,000 admissions to adult education were recorded through this programme (Statistik der Bundesagentur für Arbeit, 2020). In addition, the federal government, the federal countries, and local authorities are participating financially in the infrastructure of the continuing training infrastructure. These include, for example, the financing of adult education centres, but also the promotion of various continuing education programmes and offers.

In addition to public funding and financing instruments, there are regulations governing the participation of enterprises in private CVET activities. This applies in particular to educational leave laws, which exist in 14 of the 16 federal states. Educational leave laws grant employees the right to paid leave for educational purposes, usually five (depending on federal country) days a year. Although the participation fees remain with the employee, the employer participates in the indirect costs with the continued payment of wages. Another regulation is the collective bargaining exemption for education in the metal and electrical industry, which is described in detail below.

### 2.4.2 Description of the action: Collective part-time education in the metal and electrical industry in Germany

According to the collective agreements for the metalworking and electrical industries, since 2015 employees have had a legal right to be released for further vocational training at their personal request. This regulation applies nationwide and applies to all companies covered by collective bargaining agreements. This makes it easier for employees to take the initiative on their own behalf and to continue their vocational training independently of the employer's interests.

A distinction must be made as to whether further training is necessary for the company, expedient from the company's point of view, or it takes place at the employee's personal request: further training that is necessary for a company (in order to be able to fulfil one's own area of responsibility, to adapt to changing requirements at the workplace or to change one's area of responsibility) generally takes place during working hours. The employer bears the costs of this. The employer also finances training courses which are useful for the company and which serve the purpose of being able to take on a higher-value task in the company. According to the collective agreements, half of these further training courses are to take place during the paid working hours. The other half of the time must be invested by the employee himself (unpaid). It is obvious that employers co-finance training that is necessary or appropriate from a business perspective. This should be seen as an investment in one's own human capital.

Since 2015, there has been a new option for employees to take time off for personal further training. The leave of absence is a maximum of seven years, so that the completion of a course of study, for example, is also possible during the period of leave. As far as the form of the exemption is concerned, the regulation is flexible. The leave can be taken on a fixed part-time basis or in blocks. A longer time out is also possible. It is also possible to complete a phase of working time and a phase of further training within the seven years and to distribute the salary over the entire pe-

riod of seven years. Although this leads to losses during the work phase, it also secures income during the education phase. After further training, they have a legal right to return to the company. The job must correspond to the qualification and salary level that the employee possessed before the start of further training.

The procedure for an exemption from training stipulates that the measure must be agreed with the employer. In this respect, the employee is not completely free in his decisions, but requires the cooperation and agreement of the employer. For this purpose, a personal qualification interview is held with the supervisor. If an agreement is reached on a qualification requirement, an individual training agreement will be concluded with the company. This agreement defines the duration of the continuing training measure, its start, the scope and duration of the leave, as well as the return and conditions for continued employment after the end of the measure. On the other hand, financing issues such as the establishment of an in-company training account (see Chapter 4) or the use of other financing instruments are regulated. If no agreement is reached in the qualification interview, the employees concerned can call the works council. In companies with more than 200 employees, a joint commission (IG Metall, n.d.) makes the decisions.

### 2.4.3 Description of the financing model/mechanism and analysis

Most public funding instruments in the field of adult education in Germany are provided in the form of a financial contribution for the participant receiving financial resources for his adult education directly (e.g. within the framework of the “Aufstiegsfortbildungsförderungsgesetz (AFBG)” or the various voucher models of the Federal Government and the German Federal States<sup>8)</sup>) or subsequently reimbursed (e.g. in the form of tax refunds). The non-public model of collective part-time training has a differ-

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8/ Strictly speaking, participants in voucher models do not receive any financial resources, but rather a voucher. The voucher is submitted to the training provider and billed via this provider.

ent approach in that the funding is primarily provided from funds saved or earned by the employees themselves. Possible additional subsidies by the company tend to have a supplementary function here.

The costs of a personal measure are initially borne by the employee himself. However, it is of course open to the employee to use other public funding instruments for financing purposes. The right to take time off for further personal training laid down in the collective agreement on part-time training is therefore to be seen only indirectly as an instrument of financial support. It aims to reduce income losses through participation in further training. The resulting indirect costs account for around 27% of private continuing training costs (Müller & Wenzelmann, 2018). What is important in this context, however, is that, in terms of financing, collective part-time education is less about the costs of the measure itself than about the means of subsistence during this period. The fact that this is secured is a necessary condition for the realisation of further training at all. Collectively agreed part-time training therefore offers financial security, both during and after continuing training. The latter is anchored in the right of return, which offers job security and thus reduces one's own occupational risk.

The central financing instrument within the framework of collective part-time education is the so-called education account: for an employee, an education account is set up in the company which can pay him/her, for example, the wage earned through overtime or special annual payments (e.g. Christmas bonus, holiday pay). The education account is not managed as a time account, but as a financial account. Up to 152 hours of working time can be charged per year. It is also possible to overdraw the education account to a limited extent and process the minus upon the return to work. Although the amount saved on the education account can be used directly to finance further training, the main function of the education account is to enable continued payment of wages during time off. For this purpose, the amount can be converted into paid leave. In this way, the part-time salary can be increased in case of in-service training or

the missing income can (partly) be replaced in case of full-time training. The aim is to continue to receive at least 70% of the regular monthly wage (IG Metall, 2016). It should be noted, however, that the continued wage payments taken from the education account during continuing training can have an influence on the scope of other income-dependent support instruments that are used as an accompanying measure.

Thus, the concept of collective part-time education is based on two points that are among the greatest educational barriers: financial and time resources (Bilger & Käßlinger, 2017; Kuwan & Seidel, 2013).

With the education account, the model of part-time education has a financing concept that cannot, however, be clearly integrated into the distribution of costs between companies, private individuals and public funds as described in Chapter 2. First of all, as already mentioned, it is a concept that is primarily aimed at financing one's livelihood. In this respect, only a small part of the education account is directed towards continuing training expenditure. If these continuing training expenditures are financed from saved benefits in the form of wages, holiday pay, Christmas bonus, etc., they are to be assigned to the area of private education expenditures. In the public sector, costs are only incurred if their instruments are used as a supplement. Companies participate when additional financial support is offered. However, the right of returning to work results in additional organisational, personnel and (thus) financial expenses in the area of personnel management that cannot be quantified.

#### **2.4.4 Effects, Lessons Learned, and Sustainability of the Financing Model**

Data on the previous use of part-time education are not yet known due to the model's young age. It can be assumed that such a model requires a start-up phase of one to two years for its dissemination. In the case of a seven-year part-time education period, the persons concerned will therefore return to work on a larger scale at the earliest in the mid-twenties.

Only then will it probably be possible to make any real statements about the model's success.

Nevertheless, it is already possible to draw some conclusions about the significance of the model insofar as the concept of part-time work for education in Germany is increasingly moving into the political debate and is seen as one of several answers to fundamentally changed employment structures and working conditions. Thus, Objective 2 of the National Strategy for Adult Education states: "For this reason, the BMAS will examine measures such as state-subsidised training periods and part-time training periods for employed workers in order to promote in particular the significantly increasing demand for development qualifications and, in some cases, retraining of employed workers, also across sectors." (BMAS & BMBF, 2019, translated by the author). A reference to the collective agreement on part-time education in the metal and electrical industry is obvious here.

However, it should be noted that part-time education models are neither a new nor a specifically German approach. The Austrian "Bildungskarenz", according to which Austrian employees can be released from work for up to two years for educational purposes, should be mentioned here above all. Unusual on the German regulation in the metal and electrical industry, however, is the long duration of up to seven years. This becomes particularly important when one considers the differences between company and individual educational decisions: company education decisions are geared in particular to rapid usability and less to formal qualifications. As a result, training that is necessary in enterprises is usually shorter. Only every tenth of these lasts more than 50 hours (Schönfeld & Behringer, 2017). The average annual duration of continuing training per participant in continuing vocational training in enterprises in Germany is 22,2 hours, while the total duration of continuing training per participant is 124 hours (Eurostat, 2018). This can be explained by the fact that private educational decisions are less likely to focus on short-term adjustments, but rather on one's own career and thus more often on comprehensive, systematic

competence acquisition or presentable qualifications. At this point, educational decisions can become life decisions by determining one's own future career path.

The associated utility value is often used as an argument in favour of further training for private individuals. However, this argument loses its power of persuasion at the moment when not only the time and financial expenditure but also the associated occupational insecurity becomes clear. From a statistical point of view, mostly certificate-oriented further training is worthwhile (WZB, 2018). However, it remains uncertain whether this will be the case in individual instances, so that a weighing must be made between the opportunities offered by further training and the associated disadvantages and risks. This shows the importance of collective part-time education by granting time resources (exemption), facilitating financing (education account) and offering security (right of return). This can break down educational barriers and force decisions for further training. Building blocks such as part-time training under collective agreements thus offer the prerequisites for making the recently called-for new further training culture possible at all. However, this model from the metal and electrical industries is only suitable for removing or reducing obstacles to education. This does not remove them. Irrespective of the question of whether and, if so, what problems are associated with the reintegration of those returning from education after several years, this is reflected in the aspect of income during leave: even if the goal of having 70% of the former net income at one's disposal is achieved, this would still mean an income loss of 30%. Especially for people with a low income this is a high, often unrealisable burden – apart from the fact that the previous savings on the education account are made from special payments or wages. These funds are therefore not available to those affected.

In order to actually achieve the educational goals geared to economic, social, and individual needs, further assistance is required. The example of collective part-time education shows a sector-specific approach, but it would be desirable to have a cross-sector concept that is closely inter-

linked with other measures to promote education (e.g. public funding). The initiative of political actors is called-for here. It remains to be seen what effects the National Adult Education Strategy of the current Federal Government will have in this context in the future.



## 2.5 Smart investment in adult education of Māori and Pacific peoples in New Zealand<sup>9</sup>

### 2.5.1 Successful funding instruments and schemes

For the indigenous people of NZ, the Māori ways of learning were through osmosis which can be categorised as non-formal, informal and lifelong, therefore creating the suggestion that adult and community education is not new to NZ (Morrison & Vaioleti, 2011). During the post-contact times, ACE formally began in 1895 with the introduction of the Manual Technical Instruction Act. In 1947 the Government passed the Adult Education Act, the first stand-alone piece of legislation dealing with adult education. From 1963 onward universities were free to deliver adult education as they wanted and this was referred to as university extension or continuing education (Pollock, n.d).

ACE boomed and expanded in the 1970s. The decade opened with the establishment of the Committee on Lifelong Education, sponsored by the NZ National Commission for UNESCO. Starting with 1974 adults could attend daytime classes at secondary schools and even Radio NZ created its own adult education programmes. By the end of the decade the Rural Education Activities Programmes (REAP) was established aiming to provide adult education for rural communities.

Internationally, there was a growing awareness that adult education was not reaching the most disadvantaged matching similar arguments in NZ regarding inequity in education, especially for Māori. Institutions were established for Māori and Pacific language learning and English as a Second Language (ESOL) tuition began in the 1970s. In 1974 the Association of NZ Community Education (now ACE Aotearoa and a subject of this report) was formed to represent non-formal adult education providers (Pollock, n.d).

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9/ Prepared by: Dr Timote M Vaioleti and Associate Professor Sandra Morrison, Indigenous Māori and Pacific Adult Education Charitable Trust, edited by K.P.

Since the 1970s the Government slowly started to reduce funding as well as increasingly taking away control from communities. The 1970s were also a period when NZ reached its height of service to the community through ACE and indirectly a service to the social and economic well-being of the country. A meaningful contribution was made possible by support from the Government under a favourable international environment set by UNESCO.

### **2.5.2 NZ experiences and how could funding ALE be improved in different contexts**

In the early 2000s, the Government clustered the community, vocational and academic education together. Through these tertiary reforms, the new neoliberal, largely demand-driven model of tertiary funding was modified and a 'third way' mixed-model was introduced containing both regulated and competitive elements.

In addition, the barriers between 'academic', 'general' and 'vocational' or 'work-oriented' types of post-school education were reduced to one sector, and the justification for providing publicly funded tertiary education shifted from one based on individual rights to one which viewed tertiary education as a tool for national economic growth and social and cultural development. Funding of post compulsory education which now included adult and community education were now based on contractual arrangements between educational institutions or community organization within the newly created Tertiary Education Commission acting on behalf of the Government. Their mandate of work and priorities were outlined in a Tertiary Education Strategy (TES), which has been renewed every five years.

The TES has six priorities:

1. Deliver skills for the Industry
2. Getting at-risk young people into a career
3. Boosting achievement of Māori

4. Boosting achievement of Pasifika (people who identify with Pacific ancestry)
5. Strengthening research-based institutions
6. Growing international linkages.

For funding ACE, the TEC also outlined its three priorities namely:

- target learners whose initial learning was not successful
- raise foundation skills
- strengthen social cohesion, enhancing a learner's ability to participate in society and economic life.

(Tertiary Education Commission, 2020)

ACE is delivered by different sectors: ACE in schools; ACE in communities and ACE at the Institute of Technologies and Polytechnics (ITP) and Wānanga (Māori based tertiary institutions of learning).

The ACE in Schools funding is for informal, community-based education provided by schools. Funding is agreed through a school's investment plan submitted to the TEC and allocated at a fixed rate of US\$7,40 per hour.

Adult and Community Education (ACE) in ITPs and Wānanga is for community education delivered by institutes of technology and polytechnics (ITPs) and wānanga. The funding rate for ACE provision by them is US\$4.524 per EFTS (Equivalent full time student).

The ACE in Communities funding is for informal, community-based education provided by private training establishments (PTEs), rural education activity programme (REAP) providers and community organisations. The funding allocation for these are a mix of provision (MoP) and contracted volume and delivery are agreed with each organisation through the Investment Plan processes. Funding allocated by these means contributes to the growth and expansion of ACE in New Zealand and moreover responds to local community needs, these being the philosophical drivers

to the success of ACE. The Government also funded and directed establishments, such as the Universities, in order to provide support for the communities through their support of local ACE.

### 2.5.3 Factors of success and determinants of progress

As an example of a “smart” investment in adult education with successful outcomes in the funding arrangement is that which the TEC has with ACE Aotearoa. ACE Aotearoa is the national lead body for adult and community educators and a voice for adult learners. It has a responsibility to serve all learners, providers and practitioners across the ACE sector. It is an umbrella body for 450 ACE organisations, TEC-funded, self-funded or funded by others. As a membership organization, it also is a communication conduit between the Government and the wider sector, directing and advising on policy development and supporting its implementation (ACE Aotearoa, 2017).

ACE Aotearoa receives funding from a broad mix of individual and philanthropic supports, but the TEC is its main funder contributing around US\$1.500.000 annually (ACE Aotearoa, 2018). Although ACE Aotearoa works within the limitations of the Government’s set of priorities and focuses on learners with previous low or no success in their educational experience, it goes well beyond its specific contractual obligations, which is to provide primarily a Professional Development programme, but also an ACE Pool programme, such as the annual Festival of Adult Learning.

These endeavours contribute to achieving SDG 11 (Building Sustainable Cities and Communities). Indeed, as part of its overall trajectory of work, the ACE Aotearoa 2018 Annual Report articulates an impressive set of key events/projects with key indicators of success and key outcomes. Some examples include: resources and services to support ACE learner outcomes, building capability to improve learner outcomes, revision of ACE Sector standards and a Quality Assurance and External Evaluation Review which is reflective of analysing what quality education is according to SDG 4. A key strategy for ACE Aotearoa is to increase the partici-

pation and success of Māori and Pacific learners in the sector. This is in line with its constitutional commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi<sup>10</sup> and further reflects the requirements of SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 10 (Reducing Inequality).

ACE Aotearoa has made targeted funding available as well as targeted activity which has had considerable success in increasing numbers of Māori and Pacific peoples in the ACE sector (Phillips, 2015). Increasing Māori educational success is also a key government goal as there are significant equity gaps between Māori and the total population. Although ACE certainly provides many Māori (and Pacific learners as well) with the opportunity of further learning, it is important to note that for Māori (as with other indigenous populations) adult education is part of a broader political and cultural agenda with an aim towards cultural and linguistic retention (Morrison & Vaioleti, 2011).

Many Māori tribes are committed to improving the educational outcomes of their people and around the country and there are numerous fora of learning occurring in Māori places of learning, only it is not called adult education. It takes on nomenclature that has cultural relevance and cultural appropriateness. The concept of adult education is embedded within the collective political aim of self-determination. To this end, adult education can be perceived as a western, linear concept as opposed to a holistic and integrated approach to learning which has tribal well-being as its end goal contributing also to meeting SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 15 (Life on Land) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions).

Be that as it may, there are some benefits to having ACE Aotearoa as a national leadership body receive investment from the government funding. Those are:

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10/ Te Tiriti o Waitangi/ the Treaty of Waitangi is a document signed by Māori chiefs and representatives of the British Crown in 1840, which allowed for European settlement.

- An acknowledgement from the Government that the work being undertaken by ACE Aotearoa is important
- ACE Aotearoa can rely on a base fund towards certain activities, even if they are contracted (if not limited) to meeting government priorities, thus reducing pressure on membership fees
- The certainty of funding allows for some space to find other funders
- Working in collaboration with the Government enables ACE Aotearoa to have a preferential place to contributing to policy and strategic advice, especially in regard to the financing of adult education.

The success of ACE Aotearoa in NZ has been through it staying relevant to the local needs of its communities. Its membership is diverse, and its service to the needs of Māori, Pacific peoples and migrants are to be commended. It responds to local changes and community needs, but is also informed by international trends. To this point, it has been an active member of the ASPBAE and the ICAE. Its philosophies, management, policies and activities are based on the principles of ACE and partnership with Māori, which is a requirement of the Treaty of Waitangi.

It carries out professional development for marginalised groups at no cost to the communities. It involves itself in advocacy as well as making submissions to promote ACE. While the Government now insists on a market model to deliver adult education, ACE Aotearoa is nimble enough to complete a broad agenda of activity in which the joy of learning for itself can be celebrated. This is achieved through annual awards.

It could be argued that the independence of ACE Aotearoa is compromised by receiving funding. However, this needs to be measured against the activity that could not occur if base funding was not available. ACE Aotearoa has successfully managed to continue its work while enjoying the trust of the Government and its members being a strong responsive advocate for the ACE sector. The Government policy and funding is, however, subject to change depending on the Government in power, and historically the ACE sector has had a feast or famine financing arrangement.

Yet a recent report commissioned by ACE has noted the participation of 600+ ACE organisations plus 73.000 learners, and these are conservative numbers (Chauvel, 2019). While many of these organisations and learners may not come under ACE Aotearoa specifically, one can see the breadth and depth of the sector. ACE also supports the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and wider challenges that beset Aotearoa NZ as well as the globe. In preparing this report, we acknowledge that the world is dealing with COVID-19, which is a reminder of our global interdependence and of our need to help adults and young people all over the world to adapt behaviour and work together to manage the pandemic and its aftermath.

## 2.6 ODA: Second chance in Serbia through the EU pre-accession funds<sup>11</sup>

### 2.6.1 Financing ALE in Serbia

Adult education in Serbia is not treated as a strategically significant factor for the development of economy and society. Within the education policy, education is put on the level with schooling, meaning that the Government has desisted from the provision of systemic solutions to adult education and has greatly diverted its interest from this field, focusing its concerns solely on schools, i.e. on formal education.

Budgetary financing of adult education is reduced to such a low level that both the adult education system and national interests in this field are jeopardized. The Government conducts a generally restrictive and non-selective tax policy towards adult education. It is indicative that taxes are not imposed on formal, but only on non-formal education.

The years of conflicts, political upheavals, and disastrous economic phases have made the country highly dependable on international support and official development assistance. After the devastating decade of the 1990s and a 'new start', there was a range of donors investing in adult learning and education, supporting various areas – vocational education and training, professionalization and train the trainers, policy and governance – legislative and strategic measures, international cooperation, etc. The donors were international organisations (such as the World Bank and the EU). In addition, the EU Member States have also provided substantial bilateral assistance through their agencies and organisations for development cooperation (USA, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, Austria, etc.). EU Member States donations have reached €523,86 million (between 2007 and 2016), while investments from the Member States reached almost €6 billion during a three-year period (2014–2017) (The delegation of EU to the republic of Serbia, 2019). The EU is also the larg-

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11/ Prepared by: Prof. Katarina Popović, University of Belgrade.



est lender to Serbia, with more than €4,3 billion worth of loan agreements, including support by: the European Investment Bank – EIB, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development – EBRD, the Council of Europe Development Bank – COEDB, KfW) for a total of €4,377 billion during the 2007–2018 period. Of this sum, the EIB separately has provided €2,913 billion during the 2007–2018 period (The delegation of EU to the Republic of Serbia, 2019; EC, 2015).

With almost €200 million annually, Serbia is the biggest recipient of EU funds among the Western Balkans countries (EC, 2015; The delegation of EU to the Republic of Serbia, 2020). Since 2000, the EU has implemented projects regarding the rule of law, justice, public administration reform, social development, transport infrastructure, environment (air and water quality, solid waste treatment...), agriculture, and health care, in order to deliver better services to citizens. In recent years, support is increasingly oriented towards preparations for EU membership (The delegation of EU to the Republic of Serbia, 2020). The EU, the biggest donor in Serbia, has invested with more than €3,6 billion – through the following mechanisms (The delegation of EU to the Republic of Serbia, 2019):

- Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (2007–2018): €2,1667 billion
- CARDS 2000–2006: €1,15 billion
- Multi-country programmes (2014–2017): €0,378 billion

The financial assistance provided through the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) aimed to help Serbia prepare for assuming and effectively implementing obligations of its future membership in the EU.

On top of the national IPA programme, EU funds for Serbia are also available through the Civil Society Facility (€2,5 million), the TEMPUS programme (€4 million), and funds for refugees under the Regional Housing Programme (€12 million).

Under IPA II for 2014–2020, the European Commission together with the Serbian authorities is focusing on the fact that only strategically important and mature projects will be considered for funding under the sectoral approach (The delegation of EU to the Republic of Serbia, 2019). The Serbian authorities need to create the legal and institutional structures that will enable a more efficient and effective absorption of EU and other donor funds (including loans by international financial institutions), especially in infrastructure projects.

### **2.6.2 Description of the action: Second chance – Functional basic education of adults in Serbia**

Second chance: functional basic education of adults was a three-year-long project in Serbia, supported mostly by the European Union (EU) and the Serbian Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, that was also the main beneficiary. The aim of the project was a systemic development of elementary, practice-based adult education in Serbia and the establishment of a system of functional elementary adult education in Serbia that is accessible and adaptable to the needs of adult learners, focused on life skills and competencies, and based upon lifelong learning. The project is based on the examples of good practice and positive experiences gained primarily in the programme of reform of vocational education (CARDS I and CARDS II) and the Functional Elementary Education of Adult Roma (FEEAR) project (Medić et al., 2010), financed by the Roma Education Fund (REF), as well as a number of individual programmes realised with the assistance of various international organisations. This was one of the main factors for the success of the project. It was tailor-made according to the needs of the country, based on the lessons learned from the previous relevant projects, while most of the experts and staff were local people.

The Second Chance piloted a concept of the *Functional Elementary Education for Adults* (FEEA) involving 4.000 participants during two school years (September 2011 – June 2012 and September 2012 – June 2013).

The education programme was intended for adults above 15 years of age with incomplete elementary education or without vocational qualifications, a priority being given to socially vulnerable target groups.

The FEEA represents a second chance for acquiring elementary education and is accessible to all above 15 years of age who have not acquired a complete elementary education and professional skills. It was the first step in developing a system of adult education which targets the most vulnerable and difficult to employ people and offers them a unique chance to complete elementary education and thus become eligible to progress further with their education or to gain access to better jobs by gathering essential life skills (EU, 2008; Popović, 2019; Second chance, 2013) and initial professional competence. Since the completion of elementary education is a prerequisite for entering into any form of vocational education, the FEEA helped to bridge the gap in learning and professional qualification for this target group. The purpose of the FEEA was to improve the social integration, employability and quality of life for adults.

The curriculum was organized in three cycles, each lasting one school year: the first cycle (grades 1–4), the second cycle (grades 5–6), and the third cycle (grades 7–8 and training for 30 vocational profiles). All those who successfully completed the FEEA curriculum received an elementary school diploma and a certificate on vocational competence. Adding knowledge to their life experience, participants and their families got a second chance to live a better life through improved literacy, general education and obtained certificate of vocational training (The delegation of EU to the Republic of Serbia, 2013; Second chance, 2013).

The FEEA concept was piloted by 80 elementary school teams (directors, teachers, psychologists, and pedagogical assistants) and 75 teams in secondary vocational schools. More than 1000 teachers have been trained in delivering the curriculum for adults by 50 teacher-trainers (Second chance, 2013).

In order to achieve the defined results, national and local partnerships will be established with all FEEA stakeholders such as: the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development, other relevant ministries, the Institute for Education Quality and Evaluation, the Institute for Improvement of Education, the National Employment Service, the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities, NGOs, employers, centres for social work, etc. (Second chance, 2013).

The implementation of the project leaned upon the legislative framework defined through the Law on the Basis of the System of Education, the Law on Elementary School, and the Law on Secondary School. This legislation permits conducting experimental work aimed at testing the quality of existing solutions, suggesting alterations and verifying the effect of new solutions. On the basis of the pilot phase results and the evaluation, a legislative framework allowed the introduction of the FEEA in the education system and the FEEA concept turned into a systemic solution, replacing the old, obsolete system of basic education for adults (EU, 2008; The delegation of EU to the Republic of Serbia, 2013; Second chance, 2013).

### **2.6.3 Financing mechanisms applied in the project**

The project was led by a consortium, consisting of GOPA, DVV International, and the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA). The project was implemented during the 2010–2012 period and included 80 schools in Serbia. The total project value was 7,5 million EUR – the European Union granted 4,5 million EUR for the implementation of the Second Chance Project of the Ministry of Education and Science in Serbia (within the framework of IPA funds – funds for pre-accession aid), and 3 million EUR are the national co-financing funds (EU, 2008; The delegation of EU to the Republic of Serbia, 2013; Second chance, 2013).

Most costs were covered from the project budget (EU IPA funds), especially technical support, capacity building, expert works, curriculum development, etc. In that sense, this is one of the usual forms of ODA funding. But, typically for this kind of EU funded initiatives, it is required that the

recipient country contributes to it, since this is seen as a guarantee of the systemic impact, sustainable results, sense of ownership, and continuous commitment. This is both an advantage and a risk, depending on how the costs are shared, what management and control mechanisms are, and if there is a true partnership among the actors. In the FEEA project, the Ministry of Education, in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour, provided financial support for the vocational trainings of the participants who enrolled in the general education programmes. The in-kind contribution included the work of teachers in the schools and the Ministry staff. Further institutions were also involved – the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development (MERD) and the National Employment Service (NES) (EU, 2008; Second chance, 2013). Their contributions have not expanded the frame of their usual work, but have functionally connected it with the project, thus paving the way for the inclusion of the measures and the project outcomes into the education system, and increasing the capacity of the involved partners. Projects with only ODA funding will probably have less success in terms of a systemic impact and sustainable results .

A very complex system of contracts and subcontracts was applied, involving several ministries and governmental bodies (at the national and the local levels), as well as civil society organisations and local employers. The administrative work was burdening, with many complicated legal and administrative procedures, but together with a strict monitoring and reporting, rigorous control of all financial aspects, full accountability was provided, as well as the transformation of the pilot-project into the integral part of the system.

A targeted, well-structured partnership, both in the project implementation and in planning and budgeting, was one of the key success factors.





### 3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FINANCING ADULT LEARNING AND EDUCATION

It is difficult to draw universally valid recommendations for various contexts, but the existing experiences and the examples from different regions allow drawing numerous conclusions, observing the tendencies (both positive and negative), and recognising possible developments, both beneficial and risky ones. The lessons learned and the recommendations provided are taken from the examples chosen by DVV International and the ICAE and presented above, as well as from other described studies, projects, and research. Since the examples include, touch upon (directly or indirectly) or discuss various types of funding, each of the models provided various lessons learned and messages for different funding models.

The recommendations are structured according to the previously chosen main groups of funding models, therefore they do not target any specific group, but could be used by policy makers, ALE providers and organisers, donors, evaluators, etc.

### 3.1 General recommendations

- The diversity of adult education types, forms, content, target groups, as well as the specificity of the context, require a range of various financial mechanisms, depending on who/what and where is supported and for what purpose. The FinALE study (2018a) put it simple: “Recognise and finance all forms of adult learning.” This also contributes to broader policy goals: “Adult education challenges are common to several policy domains such as skills needs, training provision, investment and funding issues. Therefore, combining various policy dimensions (e.g. education, finance, employment, and migration) can help contribute to developing a systematic and comprehensive policy response” (Dohmen & Yelubayeva, 2018).
- It is recommended to include diverse providers or implementing organisations of funded programmes and/or combination thereof. The actors outside the mainstream education institutional arrangement should be considered too. Although their financial and related contributions are often not captured by official statistics and reports, they might be great partners for the work ‘on the ground’, as the experience from Ethiopia shows. For measures targeting a specific group, the national leading body for that group, with the most relevant experience, is a good choice (New Zealand), while for systemic-oriented measures an adult education professional association and/or academic unity are good strategic partners (Serbia). Usually, they go well beyond the specific contractual obligations.
- Civil society was and still is one of the main providers of ALE, therefore they should be considered as one the main partners. Including and supporting NGOs is crucial in the measures for vulnerable and marginalised groups (clearly the case in New Zealand) – very often this is one of the success factors, but also a way to strengthen civil society sector and to improve their capacities.



- Long-term measures do require robust investments, but they also promise better, more sustainable, and comprehensive results. Most of the good examples, including the FinALE project, report about initiatives lasting several years: measures that are temporary by nature (such as project-based funding) tend to undermine the financial sustainability of ALE systems; efforts towards accessing external funds can 'devour' the work on the substantial problems and increase the focus on the short-term outcomes.
- It has proved to be efficient and sustainable if one action/initiative targets several goals, including various fields (like in the example from Ethiopia), or several subsectors of education and/or targeting several Sustainable Development Goals (as the New Zealand example shows). Cross-sectoral cooperation may also save a lot of resources through joint funding; however, it does not mean that focused measures are not needed – they could be even the best approach in certain contexts.
- It is important to carefully analyse what worked well in the past in the specific context, and what has not, and to build upon the lessons learned. In order to estimate the criteria for 'what worked well', the FinALE project (2018a) recommends "avoiding single outcome indicators in order to understand the return on investment. Instead, the project suggests using what is called the 'sequential mixed-methods research' consisting of a large scale survey among participants followed up by qualitative interviews. This will help capture the complexity of outcomes."
- In order to ensure any kind of support (government, private sector, ODA), funded programmes need to demonstrate their effectiveness and efficiency. Usually, accountability needs quality criteria and clear standards for evaluation, such as impact, outcomes, sustainability of the financing model, and cost-effectiveness. But evaluation and assessment should also include different approaches and methodologies, both quantitative and qualitative, internal and external, and should include partners, conduct researches, etc.

Considering a change of paradigm may be very beneficial: from the outcome based to the needs-based approach (FinALE, 2018). Links to broader strategies and policy plans are important as well.

- The comparative analysis of the efficiency of different models should carefully explore different aspects and avoid the assessment based on a single discourse or paradigm. The discursive character of different evaluation instruments should be taken into account.
- Involvement of academia and more research are needed for evidence-based planning, focused monitoring and the analysis of success factors. The FinALE project (2018) recommends more research and cooperation among experts in the field of funding for adult learning. This is a way to inspire and enhance the learning process within the teams and projects.
- Regular data collection on financial aspects of ALE policy and provision should be established. The data on non-formal ALE is usually missing, and when needed, it is difficult to get them in a short time; long-term mechanisms should be established, since this is sometimes the best start for the new planning and new initiatives. It should be noted that some of the financing data are not clearly assigned to the political departments. This applies in particular to the demarcation from labour market policy or economic policy.
- No matter which sources of funding and which mechanisms are used, it is necessary to ensure that planned projects, measures, activities, etc. follow the principles of the human-rights and civic-rights approach and involve gender aspects and the needs of minorities and vulnerable groups, while taking the most sustainable, environmentally friendly approach. This must not be treated as a financial burden and a superfluous cost, but as a necessary investment for obtaining comprehensive, sustainable results.

### 3.1.1 Recommendations for public investment in adult learning and education

The state remains one of the main funders of ALE, not necessary in the volume of funding, but more with the tasks of setting the framework, defining the principles and rules, ensuring quality, and providing support to priority groups. The government, in partnership with other national stakeholders, remains in charge in terms of the framework definition, quality assurance, inclusion and participation and cross-sectoral approach. The following should be observed:

- The context is decisive in deciding about the funding priorities. Although direct economic benefits might be attractive for funding, public adult education should consider broader goals and target groups that have social and cultural benefits (such as indigenous people) and goals that bring integration, emancipation, and long-term stability, such as reconciliation, nation building, etc. However, there is a danger of an excessive focus on compliance rather than on results, which may reduce the positive effects of such measures.
- Recommended is a combination of centralised measures in terms of the coordination by the main governmental body and dispersed financing support to the regional and local bodies (Ethiopia), and a transfer of payments to provinces and territories, research and infrastructure funding, and direct support to learners (Canada). It strengthened the partners' involvement and sense of ownership.

There is a risk of imbalance between decentralised service delivery systems on the one hand, and an insufficient enabling environment on the other. In Ethiopia, there were claims that disbursements and releases of funds to regional actors were highly discretionary and dependent on not only the revenue base but also the political, fiscal and technical commitment at those levels. Good will and the commitment can vary, while uneven budget allocations may worsen the

situation (including uneven remuneration of adult education tutors, learning resources, and related materials).

- Sometimes the full allocation of funds is not always disbursed for utilization at service delivery points. These and other administrative difficulties could hamper the process.
- What is usually seen as a difficulty, could be an advantage. It is not easy to track public investments in adult education, since it is often provided in partnership with other sectors and integrated with other areas of programming. However, bringing them together may be beneficial. The integration strategy is recommended especially for broader actions, which target bigger groups and have several goals. Various ministries should be brought on board, which may also enhance the opportunities for optimisation of personnel and related resources.

A possible difficulty may arise if the new institutional mechanisms or bodies do not have a clear policy and legislative mandate. It is advisable to have memorandums of understanding and contractual arrangements between educational institutions or community organization, between the ministries, etc.

- Partners and actors chosen for the implementation should participate already in the planning and budgeting processes, as that increases commitment and the sense of ownership, but it has also to do with the right to self-determination and understanding of the concepts and goals of the project/initiative. It is important to engage implementation partners close to the local needs, since that can also financially strengthen them, and through the certainty of funding they can have some space to find other funders.
- Flexibility in financial management is an asset, both fixed and flexible contribution agreements can work, as long as accounting and management of the funds are subjected to regular national financial regulations and standards.
- Financial and fiscal management could face various troubles, related to insufficient transfers, underutilized revenue generation

opportunities, inflexible and unpredictable funding arrangements, excessive administrative and reporting burdens, etc. The Canadian government has even developed a plan for a renewed fiscal relationship along with a set of diverse initiatives, aiming at new fiscal relationship between the Government and the target group. Improvement of these aspects contribute to the domestic resource mobilisation.

- The government can contribute and support the communities indirectly, for example by establishing and funding institutions (such as the University) that will be engaged with the communities, supporting adult learning and education together.
- The sustainability of the results can be provided also by mainstreaming and integration of the initiative into the wider education and related development needs, by setting a formidable public discourse for a sustainable framework and the creation of appropriate enabling environment within the country's federal system of political and fiscal governance, which is one of the important steps in ensuring a better domestic resource mobilisation.
- National public investments could be part of the broader, regional strategies and initiatives that can create networks, facilitating in the process the exchange of experiences and the educational resources used by each country, as it was the case in Latin America.

### 3.1.2 Public and blended financing – in international context

There are few experiences of cross-country projects, but they are very relevant and could be a good approach for a region where countries have a lot of commonalities (historical, cultural...) or they face similar challenges (economic, political, ecological...). Regardless of whether it is a developed region, where countries invest together in order to improve adult education (such as the Nordic countries in Europe), a region recovering from wars and armed conflicts (such as the Western Balkans) or one facing illiteracy as a big problem (Latin America) – funding adult learning and education is very complex and requires a lot of careful planning and

balancing of multiple factors. At the same time, the potential for joining resources is huge (national resources, regional banks, international organisations), while the possibilities for mutual learning and networking is also significant. Some of the lessons learned are:

- Coordinating efforts with other international players, donors and initiatives is highly recommended in both ODA-funded and in blended financing models on cross-countries projects, as the case of Latin America shows.
- In the case of an international multi-funding model (as in the case of Latin America), the responsibility for the financing of the national programmes should be in the hands of the national governments, while other national and international donors may complete the budget. The financial model which depends on a majority investment by one partner would not appear to be the most effective.
- In combining the resources within or among the countries, a flexible approach to the type of investment may be beneficial, and contributions could be various, including pedagogical material, teaching methodology, evaluation and the training/formation of teachers and managers.

### 3.1.3 Business and the private sector

The private sector is one of the biggest funders of adult learning and education nowadays, although this fact is not so often captured by the statistical data on education. Although the private providers of adult education could be also seen as investors (Dohmen, Frommberger & Busemeyer, 2016), the focus is more on companies in various industries that invest in education of their employees (financially or for example through the on-job training) and support it in different ways. The financial benefit plays an important role in companies' investment policies, but these are not always understood as a financial, directly measurable return, but also as broader benefits in terms of innovation, growth, competitiveness, etc. (Dohmen & Yelubayeva, 2018).

- Re-financing of adult education for companies and private individuals takes place in particular within the framework of tax regulations, so the educational policy should perceive discussions and decisions about the tax policy as an area of its interest too. This could be included in a country's efforts towards a domestic resource mobilisation. A progressive tax can lead to unequal effects: in Germany, for example, training costs can be offset against tax. However, people with a higher tax rate benefit more than people with lower tax rates. For someone who earns so little that he does not pay income tax, there is no refinancing through taxes at all.
- Support to adult education from the private sector, business and economy is expected to go to continuing education and training of employees, but different models and combinations are possible and should be used. The modalities of leave and payments vary depending on the economic sector and context, only if the economic sectors have their own models.
- The diversity of forms of support by the company could be used (educational leave, collective bargaining exemption for education, education account). Securing the subsistence by the employer during the period when the employee is in the education process is the main channel – enabling financial security, job security, and right of return. This might be restricted because if “securing the subsistence by the employer” means wage payments despite absence, then this can only be a task for the employer if the training is necessary for the company – but not if the employee has a personal wish for further training (except for wage payments for short training courses during educational leave – in Germany this is usually five calendar days per year (regulated differently in the federal states)). Employers may be able to provide support here, but a more important role is played here by public financing instruments and the private investments of participants. Three elements can break down educational barriers and force decisions for further training: granting time resources to the employee (exemption), fa-

ilitating financing (education account), and offering security (right of return).

- Collective part-time education is a form that promises satisfaction to both the needs of employers and those of employees. The regulation can be flexible – leave can be taken on a fixed part-time basis or in blocks and could be for a longer period.
- Since private educational decisions are less likely to focus on short-term adjustments, but rather on one's own career and thus more often on comprehensive, systematic competence acquisition or presentable qualifications, company education decisions are geared in particular towards rapid usability and less towards formal qualifications. As a result, training that is necessary in enterprises is usually shorter.
- The risk of a longer part-time education model within companies is associated with the reintegration of those returning from education after several years (as the example from Germany indicates). This is reflected in the reduced aspect of income during the leave; income loss is especially high for people with a low income, which may drastically reduce their motivation for further education.
- The ASPBAE (2017) recommends implementation of an effective monitoring system and adoption of stronger regulatory measures to ensure compliance by the private sector.

### 3.1.4 Private and blended financing – in companies and private sector

The investment into ALE by the private sector and companies is an area where multiple interest and different investments meet – those of the government (cross-cutting point of economic and education policy), employers (benefits for the company), and employees (pursuing their own educational goals or improving education and skills for work or life). Thus, funding ALE in the business and industry is always a meeting point of those three groups of stakeholders. The recommendations reflect the following:



- Diverse combinations of funding percentage and forms between companies, private individuals, and the public sector are available and could be beneficial for all stakeholders.
- Governments can use a range of “financial incentives to reduce the financial burden on the individual and employers, encourage them to participate and contribute to adult learning, and reduce under-investments. Financial incentives can encourage individuals and employers to financially contribute to adult learning” (OECD, 2019).
- The type and share of governmental contribution (public investment) may be indirect – in the infrastructure of the continuing training (such as financing of adult education centres) or through the promotion of various continuing education programmes and offers.
- The balance of public interest, companies’ needs, and personal strivings is of utmost importance.
- Although the prevalence of the interest of the employer (company) or of the employee will shape the share of the covered costs, the cooperation and agreement in making educational decisions should be pursued. Co-finance training by the employers is often necessary or appropriate from a business perspective, but this should be seen as an investment in one’s own human capital.
- Employees should be enabled to use and combine various public funding instruments for financing purposes.
- Since most financial incentive schemes require shared co-financing from the employees, it should be ensured “that those who cannot pay for training are not left behind, these financial incentives are often targeted at those who need most support” (OECD, 2019, also for an overview of the financial incentives).

## 3.2 Official Development Assistance

Once praised as a powerful solution to the problems of developing countries, ODA seems to play a far smaller role nowadays. But in the context of the global financial architecture, it will remain one of the primary sources for funding ALE in many countries. However, having in mind the frequent criticism of the nature of ODA and its use, it is of crucial importance to review its use in development cooperation on adult learning and education.

- ‘Pure’ ODA models of funding ALE have less chances of success in terms of systemic impact and sustainable results. The best outcomes can be expected when ODA is combined with the national resources – it increases the systemic impact, sustainable results, the sense of ownership, and continuous commitment, like in the example of Serbia. However, the financial requirements and arrangements should be balanced and realistic in terms of the country’s possibilities, with various type of contributions recognized. The example from Latin America also points out that balancing the share of investments and costs among stakeholders is extremely important.
- ASPBA and GCE (2011) recommend that “ODA for education should be more, better and faster with focus on basic education, targeting countries facing the greatest challenges. It should expand support to recurrent expenditure. Education is not consumption but investment for growth and poverty reduction.”
- A partnership between international actors and national partners should be functional – based on the roles and activities defined in the project, and in line with national strategies, action plans, and priorities. They could also aim at an increased domestic resource mobilisation.
- Involvement of several national stakeholders and the operationalization of their role through agreements and contracts require a lot of administrative work, careful planning, and excellent management. Still, administrative work could ‘kill’ the motivation and move

the focus away from the results and achievement. “Ensure less bureaucracy” is the message from the experiences of the organisations taking part in the FinALE project (2018a).

- Strict monitoring and reporting about financial issues and a rigorous control of all financial aspects are required for both poles: for the sending country/organisation and for the receiving country.
- Control and reports should focus primarily on the question if the money allocated for ALE has been used for this purpose. Countries sending ODA and their missions should reduce the transaction cost, including the costs of monitoring and reporting.
- In certain areas a change of the model should be considered, and the aid should be moved from project support to more programme/sector support (ASPBAE & GCE, 2011).
- Projects and initiatives supported through ODA should:
  - carefully study previous relevant projects, activities, and experiences, and rely on them (like in the example of the EU project in Serbia); the experience, principles, and methods from previous projects could not only guide the activities but also save a lot of time and resources;
  - carefully explore other projects and activities of donors, international or national organisations and build up on them and connect when possible, creating synergies (like in the example from Latin America).
- Participatory planning with national partners is extremely important, while taking into account the national context, without copy-paste solutions from other countries, but with tailor-made approaches developed in true partnership.
- An unequal position of international and national implementing staff, such as key experts and trainers, in terms of inclusion in the processes and remuneration, could jeopardize some activities and cooperation.

### 3.2.1 Public-private partnership in ODA context

As a type of blended financing, public-private partnership could be applied in different contexts – within one country, through the cooperation of public funding and business and private sectors, or in cross-country projects. Examples of these are shown above, therefore these recommendations include PPPs in the context of ODA.

- Donors should support governments “to mobilise revenue in a progressive and sustainable way to adequately fund free, quality, public education, as suggested by ActionAid” (2019) – this should be a growing task of ODA, helping domestic resource mobilisation for education, which leads to more sustainable and independent financing.
- Funding ALE in developing countries should be linked to the measures for reducing financial inequalities among the countries.
- The joined action of stakeholders in ALE should follow the national strategies and in the first place serve educational goals, not the agendas of single actors.
- The realisation of the right to equality in the enjoyment of the right to education should guide the drafting and enforcing regulations. It is recommended to “undertake gender, socio-economic and other equality audits of the effects of private provision and PPPs on the whole education system using evaluative frameworks suggested in the Abidjan Principles” (ActionAid, 2019).
- The goals, conditions and financial arrangement have to be transparent. PPPs should be regulated and monitored, ensuring they comply with applicable human rights laws and standards and strictly observe all substantive, procedural, and operational requirements, as suggested by ActionAid (2019).
- Transfer of funds from the public sector to the private sector bears a lot of risks (ASPBAE, 2018) and therefore should be well grounded (in the research results, previous experience and practices, through benchmarking...), clearly regulated, carefully monitored,

transparently reviewed, and used only if it is proved to be the best solution.

- Another warning comes from rich experiences of the ASPBAE (2018): “Refrain from engaging in public-private partnerships in education unless in exceptional circumstances as part of a plan to build a strong public system providing free quality education and only after conducting a prior human rights impact assessment to demonstrate that the programme prioritises on reaching the poorest and does not undermine the right to education; provided further that the public private partnerships are used as a temporary stopgap measure and do not lead to privatisation of education, and that they are consistent with other human rights requirements...”



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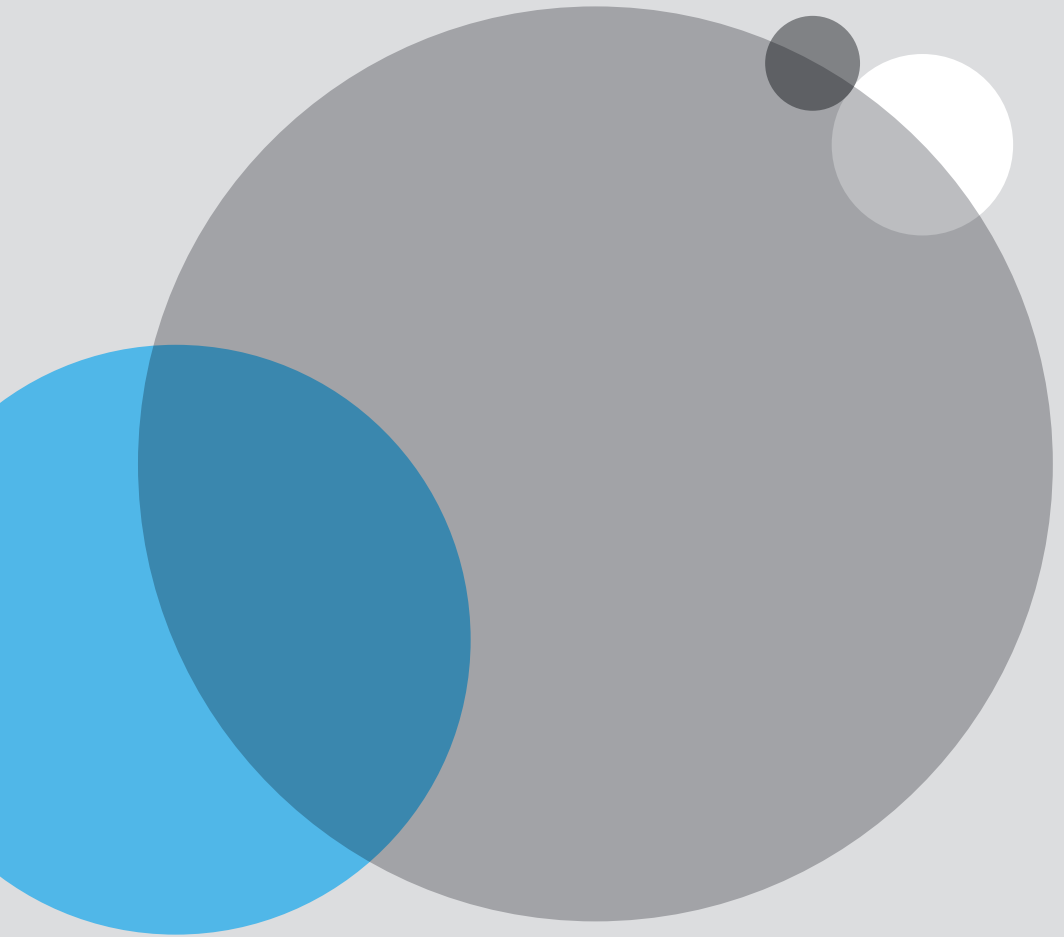
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