

Training for a Better Life

Projects on Vocational Education and Training in Transformation Countries

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**Institut für Internationale Zusammenarbeit des Deutschen Volkshochschul-Verbandes
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The reports, studies and materials published in this series aim to further the development of theory and practice in the work of the Volkshochschulen (VHS) as it relates to international aspects of adult education – and vice versa. We hope that by providing access to information and a channel for communication, the series will serve to increase knowledge, deepen insights and improve cooperation in adult education at an international level.

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Uwe Gartenschlaeger

Why Adult Vocational Education?

dvv international Project Work in Transformation Countries

“Sure it’s wonderful to write about times of transformation, but you wouldn’t want to live in them.” That’s how a former Soviet dissident accurately described the feelings of a large majority of East Europeans in the mid-90s. If at end of the 80s euphoria still prevailed due to the freedom which had just been regained and optimism about the future was still in place, then those feelings were soon pushed aside by the sobering realization that many people would have to fight hard to secure themselves a place in the *“wonderful new era.”* Especially adults – by the way, men more than women – felt and still feel overburdened when it is necessary to exercise the mental flexibility required to reorient and reestablish oneself. The enormous effort and the sacrifices this entails can only be imagined with difficulty by a West European who never went through the experience.

At *dvv international* it was clear very quickly that Adult Education had a crucial role to play in this historical transformation process. There were two reasons above all which motivated us to meet the challenge:

- Traditionally, the German Association of Adult Education Colleges (DVV) maintained good relations with its allied associations in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. These were – regardless of the political differences of opinion – respected members of the European Adult Education family. In the 60s and 70s, countries such as Yugoslavia were among the leading nations with systems which were sometimes exemplary and innovative.
- *dvv international* was and is supported and by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development in the context of *“social structural facilitation.”* This development tool

“became an important instrument in the development of policy implementation to satisfy basic needs and fight against poverty as well as the institutional work directed toward it. The facilitation of social structures benefits the majority of the people in the individual countries. Minorities and fringe groups are included in the facilitation.”

The focus is on *“fighting poverty and impoverishment as well as all their consequences in health, nutrition, social issues, education, housing and political participation.”*¹ All of this applied to the transformation countries in Eastern Europe.

1 Quote from the website of *“Social Network Improvement”* www.sozialstruktur.org

Since end of the 80s, *dvv international* has worked alongside their partners in the transformation countries in Adult Education and the difficult adjustment to new the conditions. A number of challenges resulted:

- Traditional organizations, which were embedded in a state-run system for decades, had to learn to survive under the new extremely raw conditions (in particular at the beginning) of the – to a large extent – unsettled free-market economy, without any or with very little public support.
- The new, mostly civil-social institutions, had to learn rapidly to find their way through the jungle of national politics and to adjust to the unregulated market and the requirements of international donors.
- Apart from the urgency of day-to-day survival, it was necessary to create offers which were tailored to needs, to recruit instructors and give them further training and motivation, to adjust to permanently new national requirements, to survive in partially uncertain legal surroundings, to react quickly to rapidly changing market trends, etc., – the list could go on endlessly.

While this limited segment of offers succeeded quite well for the small new “*elite*” and the narrow middle class, it was all that more difficult to create adequate offers for the large majority of the population. It was evident very quickly that apart from a rather limited demand for offers in political, cultural or health education, the majority of the population was looking for possibilities for training, further training or vocational retraining. They were confronted with the situation that their old training from the socialist era was invalidated; nobody wanted bookkeepers without EDP knowledge or auto mechanics who were unable to repair the used cars flowing into the country from the West. Additionally, over time, many poorly trained young graduates from the post-socialist education system surged unprepared into the job market.

Today the situation in the former socialist countries is very differentiated. In the meantime, many of them have become members of the European Union. In these countries, Adult Education and Lifelong Learning plays a central role, as the recent statements by the Commission prove: “*It is never too late to learn*”² as well as the action plan “*It’s always a good time to learn.*”² In both documents the importance of occupationally relevant Adult Education is emphasized, a determination which is also – and especially now – fully relevant for Central Eastern Europe. However, we must still wait and see to what extent national politics really breathes life into the requirements and recommendations from Brussels. In the discussions with our partners in the new member countries, skeptical voices have been raised.

Outside the European Union, the situation is still far more critical. Despite all efforts, most

2 Both documents are to be found (i.a.) on the website of the European Adult Education Association EAEA www.eaea.org

governments still don't comprehend the meaning of Lifelong Learning for a social, innovative and balanced development of their countries. Parallel to that, the quality of school and basic vocational training often sinks. Even where the political will is available, the substantial resources necessary are not available. The abundant compensatory functions placed on vocational and general Adult Education in the medium term are not able to be carried out without support. Alongside *dvv international*, an increasing number of development players are engaged in this field, which was extremely neglected for a long time and had to occupy a seat behind basic training. One of the few exceptions is the European Training Foundation (ETF) of the European Union, which has provided valuable – above all conceptual – support in the building and restructuring of vocational Adult Education for many years.³

A Short History of the Work of *dvv international*

At the end of the 1980s, *dvv international*, with support from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), began its activities in the transformation countries. Poland and Hungary were the first project countries, and somewhat later also Romania, Russia and the Ukraine. From the very beginning, adult vocational education was the focal point of the project work, in particular in Russia and the Ukraine. Since 1993, a network of EDP training centers has been built up in the Russian Federation – intermittently also supported in the context of a project by the European Union – which was later supplemented by an “*All-Russia EDP certification system*.”⁴ Under the care and support of the VHS Regen, a rural further education center was established and supported on a long-term basis in the Skole district near Lviv in the Ukraine. In the meantime it has developed impressively as the focal point of a local cooperative network of providers and supporters of Adult Education.

Vocational Adult Education was the focal point of the creation and development of project activities in Southeast Europe. In particular the very successful long-term project of the Albanian Ministry of Labor in Albania which concentrated on the support of training centers for the unemployed. Here, for the first time, there was successful cooperation with other development agencies, for example from Switzerland and Austria, in the development of the sub-sector. Starting from 1999, with the expanded possibilities resulting from the Southeast Europe Stability Pact, *dvv international* was able to become active in the entire region. Adult vocational education projects formed an important segment in almost all national programs. In Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro so-called *Second Chance* pro-

3 The ETF website www.etf.europa.eu offers a good survey of their numerous various activities and publishes many valuable studies and background documents.

4 See the website of the network (Russian language): www.znanie.net

grams could be established which enabled disadvantaged and marginalized subgroups like the Roma to acquire school certificates and occupational training.

From the outset the project was centered on regions in Southeast Europe. It was particularly suitable for a risky venture like the introduction of European certification systems for EDP or business. Systems developed by German Adult Education Centers and other providers were successfully introduced. This was a reaction to needs which were noticeable in the entire region: Due to high job mobility, in particular in the countries of the European Union, offers were needed which led to certifications which are recognized throughout Europe.

In 2002, project work began in the South Caucasian republics. Here as well, the need for vocational qualification was enormous. In Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, curriculum development, advanced teacher training, and the development of specific training programs and pilot projects was supported. In all three republics, through time, political counseling and support emerged as a common focal point of the work. It was important to convince people of the validity of Vocational Adult Education, which was more often recognized by the labor and social affairs ministries rather than their colleagues in the ministries of education.

Alongside this it was possible to further solidify an idea which grew from a project supported by the EU in Georgia. As a starting point, it was important to recognize the fact that in the decade which had passed the traditional mechanisms of Adult Education had been to a large extent destroyed. It was therefore necessary to build up new centers. A decision was made to begin with a program which was as broad as possible and included many aspects relating to general Adult Education as well as vocational education. The concept was initially successfully implemented in a region in Georgia with an Armenian minority, with a similar project beginning in Armenia at the same time. A similar project in the southern region of Azerbaijan is in the planning stage.

Finally, in 2005, it was possible to begin intensive work on a project in Central Asia. The core of the project pursued there was to use vocational Adult Education in the reduction of tensions in a society which is marked by poverty, lack of prospects and – as a consequence – increasing radicalization. In Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan a path was followed which promotes civilian-social initiatives and initiatives to identify possible potentials. In a second step – often pursued in parallel – the success of these initiatives is discussed with the responsible Ministries and national institutions and support their introduction on the systematic level.

In contrast to this, in Uzbekistan a policy was pursued from the very beginning of using the well-configured and exemplary system of initial vocational training for vocational further training. This was possible due particularly to the prevailing political conditions there and because of its far-flung network – if compared to the other states of the region. Based on this stable bond of trust, it was then also possible to accept and integrate valuable contributions from civil-social participants within fields such as methodology, didactics or demand orientation methods.

A European Union tender project which advises the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Tajikistan in the reform process for initial vocational training is the latest step in this development. That the European Union entrusts *dvv international* with such a function is proof of its newly won regional and technical expertise. Adult Education know-how is needed in many places, such as for integration of initial training and further training in the vocational fields, for instructors and for the development of heavily demanded modular training programs.

Outlook

As this short review makes clear, the countries of this region have handled transitional training in very different ways in the last decade, due mostly to different historical, cultural, political, economic and social conditions. If the previous western view of the so-called monolithic “*Eastern Bloc*” was false, then today the region presents itself so diversely that it is practically impossible to have a comprehensive overview.

Nevertheless, there are perhaps some lines of development which can be pointed out which will effect vocational further training one way or another in the coming years:

- Vocational education, and vocational further training in particular are still the “*stepchildren*” of education policy. Their personnel and financial situation is unsatisfactory. Basic political conditions are for the most part not in place. This is all the more absurd in view of the immense importance of this sector for social development and peaceful social intercourse. Our function will have to be to engage in political persuasion and to support our partners in their efforts to be acknowledged.
- Negative stereotypes exist not only in the political arena. In other groups of the population vocational education is still considered as something for disadvantaged subgroups – as a receptacle for “*losers*”. Non-office occupations in particular have a bad image. Parents try everything to enable their children to have a university education, even if it’s senseless to do so. It is very important to use Adult Education as a resource for consciousness-shaping through measures such as counseling in education, the family and vocations.
- Special target groups of vocational Adult Education will continue to be socially disadvantaged subgroups, which often coincide with ethnic minorities. In this instance, vocational training combined with political, linguistic and cultural educational programs can contribute to the inclusion of these groups as equal and respected members of society.
- Almost all the countries in the region are affected by the tides of migration, whose motivation is almost always the search for more and/or better paid work. Here too, general Adult Education is faced with tremendous challenges, like the struggle against racism and xenophobia and furnishing support to migrants in relation to the expectations of performance in the host country, as well support in the creation of programs for the

families left behind. However, vocational Adult Education is required, such as in the creation of programs that satisfy the needs of the host countries and the conformance of education diplomas and certificates to the standards of the host countries.

- For those countries of the region that border on the European Union or whose political development connects them very closely with the community, a further aspect comes into play: They are all faced with the challenge to adapt their systems of vocational education to the European Qualification Framework (EQF) and to develop a compatible national framework for qualifications. Another quite complex task to be undertaken in the next few years is to ensure that further training and its specific attributes are properly merged.

Along with its commitment in Africa, Asia and Latin America, with its decision at the end of the 1980s to support its partners in Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) during the transformation process, *dvv international* reacted to an obviously great need. Accordingly, its traditional partner-oriented and requirement-oriented engagement concentrated the majority of its activities on vocational Adult Education. This volume is intended to clarify which models are functional, what was achieved, and what still lies before us.

We are grateful to the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation, the European Union and the Federal Foreign Office for their support and their understanding. Just as important are the many national and civil-social partners in our partner countries who were the main participants in the project work and whose points of view are the focus of our attention.

Note: The photos in the texts have been provided by the authors

Supporting VET in Transition Processes

Olga Agapova

Vocational Further Education in Russia: Boundless Limited Opportunities

National Priority or National Problem?

A requirement to setting up the innovative economy is establishment of the system to continuously update employees' knowledge and develop their competence. Introduction of new technology into the economy and rapid changes in social life set more requirements to personnel qualifications, responsibility and willingness to master new approaches to professional activity. An essential component of effective economy is a balanced labor market, which in its turn establishes new requirements to the continuous education system and vocational education as its most important component.

Back in 2004, continuous education development was postulated at the highest national level as one of the national education development priorities; however, even now, after almost five years, changes in vocational education cannot be considered as positive, i.e. one cannot say they produce an effect on the overall systems. Most government vocational education agencies preserve conservative and stagnant systems of organization of educational processes; abstract and theoretical teaching is still there, and curricula are developed and introduced without regard to the trainee's specific needs. Once developed, the curricula are replicated without changes. Educational institutions lack material resources to upgrade equipment; frequently, technological tools and instruments are "rarities" that a course graduate will never see anywhere else.

Meanwhile, requirements for the (training) level of specialists are changing distinctly, sometimes consciously (those requirements are dictated by employers), sometimes spontaneously, as a result of labor conditions and only afterwards are recognized as some new level of professional competence. Observations show that an employer selects personnel willing to practice a wide range of activities or having mastered several occupations, and in any case flexibly reacting to external changes and oriented at addressing specific issues rather than fulfilling job requirements. In addition, an employee should be able to creatively use a wide variety of methodological methods and tools.¹ Second, at

1 As an example, a list of characteristics and competencies required for a tax consultant can be given. Based on the occupational content, one can assume that knowledge and competencies should be linked with the tax system practices. However, the list of requirements includes: "creative imagination", "communicative and suggestive abilities", as well as ability to win confidence and respect, motivate, "train people", etc. (quote from "The Combined List of Requirements" developed by the International Labour Organization).

many small and medium businesses an employee performs several functions (manager, organizer, secretary, accountant, driver, and forwarder), i.e. he/she has to master a wide range of occupations either on the job or in advance. Thus, the issue of employee's occupational mobility is inevitable. The point is not only the need to continuously update applied professional knowledge, but also the person's willingness to enrich it and to work in advance, which should underlie the education content. It has become obvious that a capability for continuous educational is nearly a personnel selection criterion helping an institution/organization develop on the one hand, and helping an employee "keep fit" on the other. Then it turns out that current reality obviously conflicts with perception of vocational education. Traditionally, it was defined as "... knowledge, skills and competencies forming an ability to perform special functions pertaining to remunerative work",² meaning that some set of skills required to perform functional duties underlies activities of adult vocational educational organizations. If now professional activity has a different basis, one can assume that the educational system must conform to the new requirements as well. In other words, the personnel training paradigm is changing – in line with challenges of the time – to a paradigm of training a professional able to achieve goals in a mobile, creative and knowledgeable way.

Where Can Adults Gain Professional Knowledge?

It can be said without exaggeration that vocational education in Russia is one of the longest established traditional structures with a long history. Upgrading and development of employees' professional qualifications, vocational training and retraining have close links with setting up schools for working youth, workers' departments, evening and part-time schools. Back in the 1980s, the author of this article underwent pedagogical training at an evening school where strict and straight-faced Russian classical writers looked down from their portraits at students of their age. At that time, this system seemed everlasting, eternal and permanent; however, in a couple of decades, when demographic and social situations changed, having digested the effects of the post-war lack of a workforce, a quiet and unnoticed closing down of evening and technical schools started. They were replaced by new educational institutions. The elements of the current vocational education are as follows:

- Specialized public institutions of vocational further education (training centers for population employment, specialized schools for adults, etc.).
- Sectoral and intra-company training centers (sectoral training centers, training and course integrated facilities, advanced training courses, etc.) being within the competence of federal-level ministries and agencies. The most active players are the Ministry of Education (over half of the total number of trainees) and advanced training institu-

2 Quote from "Adult Education. Interdisciplinary Glossary", SPb, 1995, p. 141.

tions of the Ministry of Health (20%). Advanced training and retraining institutions have been preserved under the ministries of agriculture (5%) and transport (4%). In general, we regret to note that the number of specialists being trained within the framework of departmental vocational training and on-the-job has been steadily decreasing within the last decade: for example, surveys done by specialists suggest that the number of trainees who underwent on-the-job training has decreased four-fold. This is primarily due to a reduction in financing of education by relevant ministries and agencies.

- Secondary and secondary specialized vocational educational institutions (technical schools, lyceums, colleges, and vocational-technical schools), as well as higher educational institutions (institutes, academies and universities) providing retraining and advanced training of administrative and engineering-technical personnel render vocational further training services to adults. This relatively new activity is frequently based on active interaction with local employment centers.

In general, one should say that public vocational educational institutions for adults are characterized by conservatism. Characteristics of adult trainees, as well as their life and professional experience are rarely taken into account. In fact, higher or school education systems are replicated, when students, although adult, are sitting at desks. The formal control system is preserved as well (examinations and course works). Thus, traditional vocational educational institutions today cannot be characterized as those for adult education in line with up-to-date social requirements and challenges.

- Fee-based vocational educational institutions. Since their key goal is to make profits, they follow the client and come up with a product in demand in the educational market. The most popular courses are those to master languages, various software, programs for accountants and economists and psychological programs (personal growth and development schools, oratorical skills, etc.), training in applied occupations and professions – hairdresser, masseuse, administrative assistant, etc. The quality of these services cannot be clearly determined; however, most often they are severely criticized (especially psychological programs being criticized in mass media and the Internet) and are compared to religious sects, which make people psychologically dependent on them.
- Non-profit non-government organizations, which have been actively developing in the last decade. Most NGOs initially aimed to address a set of social issues and reflected people's intention to improve the life of a society – at least in one aspect (environment, politics, social institutions development, status of disadvantaged populations, etc.). It is understandable that socially-oriented activity is close to educational. In fact, organization of round tables, preparation of publications, various campaigns, as well as training of own personnel and establishment of educational programs for target groups have turned NGOs into organizations providing vocational education, although this education is of a special type.

What Are the Characteristics of (Non-Formal) Vocational Further Education?

A specific situation in the non-formal vocational education system is determined by a number of factors including the following:

- Training in professional competencies is a part of activity within the wider concept – improvement of the socio-economic situation in the region and in the country as a whole. This provides certain prospects for participants in the educational process, assigns civil focus even to narrow specialized programs and has additional instructional capacity.
- As a rule, educational projects of NGOs are funded by foreign donors. On the one hand, this makes it possible to access European and world experience, as well as adopt and adapt best foreign practices. On the other hand, dependence on the “third party” raises the issues of stability and opportunity to plan programs several years ahead.
- There has always been serious competition for clients (in contrast to public institutions where students will be sent or referred to in any case. Thus, the most important characteristic of this training has been formed – the need to always be attentive to clients, close to people and respond to their real needs.
- Moreover, as a part of specific a market, non-formal vocational education had to offer its products in a market environment, and thus its providers mastered marketing and advertising methods, as well as specific tools initially not pertaining to vocational education (borrowed from sociology and social psychology).
- Orientation and willingness to work with challenging trainees. Groups composed of disadvantaged populations can be very heterogeneous and have different extents of learning ability and various, often negative, previous training experience. At the same time, one should admit that when such people become participants in the educational process, as a rule they are characterized by high motivation to acquire knowledge, they begin to value the obtained knowledge and skills soon and emotionally express their gratitude to course teachers and masters.

In contrast to public institutions, this client is not referred there, but comes *voluntarily*.

Although non-formal education has always been reminded of its position at the periphery and that it is second and complementary to formally recognized state-supported education, educational space began to be filled, the number and range of educational services started to increase thus providing more opportunities for the population to get rele-



Workshop for Adult Educators

vant education on reasonable terms and within a limited time period.

Since for this segment of the vocational education market to function no multi-step coordination of activities is required, it is characterized by high mobility enabling it to rapidly react to changes in the market situation and attract the best specialist and experts. The principles of adult vocational further education have been formed gradually: special pedagogical interaction between teachers and trainees, short training periods, prevalence of practical knowledge over theoretical, more intensive educational technology, wider variety of training forms used and more interest and higher motivation of trainees to acquire professional knowledge. At the same time, thanks to its orientation at a specific customer, the non-formal system makes it possible to address a number of essential – though underestimated by the society and the state – social tasks, such as training of disadvantaged populations (unemployed, without work experience or occupation oriented at local labor market demands). They are willing to undertake such difficult tasks as training of people with low-level education, of different age, and most importantly, with no experience in training.

Support to Vocational Training from *dvv international*: Yesterday and Today

One of society's objectives is give an opportunity to all people irrespective of their social status and financial situation to self-actualize and meet their educational needs. This task can be fulfilled if a person has an opportunity of Lifelong Learning without being limited to school or higher education. At this initial stage since the start of its activities in Russia (1993-94), the Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association (*dvv international*) has been supporting adult vocational education in various areas.

At the same time, one of the principles of activities by the Representative Office of *dvv international* is to provide help (support) in the key areas of Adult Education development, where support from the state is not expected and where major gaps hindering adult education development in general are identified by local adult educational organizations. To this end, the direct (targeted) support to public educational institutions (including vocational) is not provided. Alongside with that, it is clear that state agencies are the base platform for the overall system to function, and thus such institutions as, for example, Krasnoyarsk Pedagogical Institute named after V.P. Astafiev, Kuzbass Regional Institute for Vocational Education Development, St. Petersburg Academy of Postgraduate Education, Siberian Vocational Pedagogical College (Omsk), and employment centers in many regions of Russia are the key partners under a number of projects. At these institutions, conferences, workshops and other short-term programs for personnel and courses for various population groups are held in cooperation with and with the direct participation of *dvv international*.

One can mention the following areas, which have already been implemented and become history:

- Introduction and development of computer training system in the country when based on networking of 20 regional organizations of society "Znanie" the operational and certified training model on the basis of common standard (the single all-Russia certificate) in various user software programs was established; within three years, the number of project participants doubled; other flexible and mobile organizations outside the system of society "Znanie" gradually began to join this group of certified training centers. Currently, certified centers for computer training of adults operate in 40 Russian cities; at the end of last year, the festive one hundred thousandth all-Russia certificate of the "Zn@nie" computer training system was issued in Saratov.



Sewing course

- Language courses, as well as vocational courses to train administrative assistants, managers for small businesses and PC users for ethnic (Russian) Germans (jointly with GTZ, under the common name "Breitenarbeit") in more than 30 regions of Russia; in parallel with implementation of educational programs to improve living standards of the target group representatives, a broad discussion and a subsequent project to develop and introduce quality standards in vocational education were launched.
- Courses in crafts for unemployed and poor women that made it possible to master new professional skills in decorative and applied arts. Participants of training in painting, leather processing, artistic binding, fabric painting, weaving, making tapestry and souvenirs from wood, fabrics and other materials could not only acquire skills in various crafts but also became interested in traditions, history, and local crafts in the region of their residence (Leningrad region) thanks to exhibitions and fairs.
- Courses in crafts in a women's prison colony promoted effective involvement of such a challenging target group as women convicts in the educational process and revealed their creative abilities in producing decorative items, as well as provided facilities to help them adapt to new life conditions after release from the colony. The surveys based on educational programs have shown that acquiring professional skills also has a distinct psychotherapeutic effect: training helps restore communicative abilities, remove internal barriers and promotes psycho-emotional development.
- Vocational retraining of specialists working with special categories of the population (social workers dealing with the elderly, social workers-officers and staff of penitentiary facilities). This area of activity illustrates a well-known statement that professional

knowledge tends to become obsolete and needs to be updated and extended. Social worker is a specific occupation that facilitates a dialog with the population categories that need it most, whose social links and contacts are broken and who directly or indirectly feel marginalized. Work with them includes not only practical activities aimed at making their lives easier, but also skills and knowledge, which will help them address their problems independently. Thus, it turns out that to ensure effective work, in addition to legal and social-psychological knowledge, social workers should improve their andragogic (particularly, geragogic) competence, develop group participants' skills and motivation, ability to be guided by resources and participants' strengths, develop dialog skills, as well as techniques and methods revealing participants' capacity. This area in the form of projects and specific educational projects (*"Geragogy school"*, *"Training of multipliers to work with the elderly"*, and *"Human rights at a penitentiary facility"*) were supported by *dvv international* for several years.

Training of teaching staff and social workers is organized as interactive training using effective up-to-date methods. The methodological component of training, including issues associated with using a particular method or technique enables the participants to expand their set of tools, add new group work techniques, and perform their educational and organizational activities more effectively. Success of such vocational courses depends on a number of parameters including personal interest of staff and administration, observance of the above adult training principles, ability to organize training in line with trainees' needs and requests, to find reliable partners among authorities, educational institutions, social services, cultural institutions and, as noted above, personnel's ability to carry out educational activities in a professional and up-to-date manner, actively using adult education methods.

The participants discussed the following topics: social partnership and volunteer activities in rural areas (for rural multipliers); options to organize social campaigns for elderly people; planning and implementation of joint activities and campaigns for people of different age.

Vocational Training Projects: Direct Results and Collateral Effects

An example of the project on non-formal vocational education can be a course for younger pensioners and persons of pre-retirement age under the romantic slogan *"It is too early for us to live on memories"* (Novosibirsk, Social Adaptation Center).

The project goal, as stated by the partner organization, is to provide the unemployed persons of pre-retirement age with professional skills that will help them adapt to their new social status, activate their role in the local community and based on each participant's individual resources, develop prospects for professional self-determination. The project participants (32 persons) were trained under the module program containing the following blocks: *"Role of the older generation in local community development"*, *"Uni-*

versity of private finance management”, “Housing Code and municipal housing economy reforms”, “Issues related to employment of the elderly”, “Social partnership: younger pensioners – power – business”. Interactive training made it possible to practice elements and technology associated with the basics of entrepreneurial activity, the search for alternative forms of employment and business, understanding own resources, as well as the basics, techniques and methods of group work. The trainees familiarized themselves with psychological aspects of



A course in entrepreneurship in the tourism business

the success strategy, acquired skills in market situation analysis, and learned how to start their own business. Under the training, the projects aimed to build social partnership in the local community were developed. The participants developed and proposed their own educational courses and programs for further multiplication. We think that a representative result of this program implementation is that 80% of participants found professional employment based on the knowledge acquired. A collateral, and also an essential, project effect that could be mentioned is the projects they presented (which were subsequently implemented based on cooperation with local administration!), which aimed to improve the social situation in the district.

Based on the competence concept in rural tourism⁶ (ecotourism is a quite new and promising trend in economic development of rural regions), understanding of regional and local resources for tourism development, the regional vocational training program for guest house managers and hosts “*Entrepreneurship in the tourism business*”⁷ was developed. The module training program included the key themes related to financing of entrepreneurial activities (entrepreneurial marketing, business-plan, and business-project), mastering skills of working with a prospective client, principles of guest house operation as a special type of business. Terrain characteristics and building a tourism product on their basis were discussed as well. The following tourism products independently developed and presented under the Regional Adult

- 6 Rural tourism (or ecotourism) is a quite new and promising trend in the economic development of rural regions, especially subsidized regions, where since the breakdown of the Soviet Union infrastructure has been destroyed and the social situation is tight: lack of jobs, local population mostly self-employed, challenging demographic situation since young people tend to leave for district centers and big cities, and only elderly people stay in villages.
- 7 Coauthors of the program are specialists of the Department “*Technology and Entrepreneurship*” of Kareline State Pedagogical Institute.

Education Festival “Days of Culture – “Free Education” Organization” can serve as examples: “Nothing is impossible” (ecological route for people with disabilities); “Walk into the past” (traditional types of peasants’ work); “Forest cabin” (tourists’ stay at a forest house on Ladoga Lake); “Water serpentine” (unique route for water tourism); “A nice place in the depths of a neglected village” (acquaintance with architecture and nature); “Following the way of the first called Apostle” and “Even apostles were fishermen” (pilgrim’s route), and “Health promotion course” (health-improving program based on local natural components).

As a result of the training, 30 guest houses have started operating, and their hosts – project participants – actively apply the acquired knowledge and skills based on tourism products they have developed.

As a collateral effect of interactive training, a number of proposals by the educational program participants based on the idea of social partnership can be mentioned:

The initiative group to set up the Association of rural guest house owners has been established; a data base on guest houses in Olonets district in the Republic of Karelia has been developed; and organizational work has been carried out to establish cooperation with travel companies in the Republic of Karelia, Pskov and Velikiy Novgorod.

Cooperation with Russian partners to implement vocational further education projects is not limited to the above projects. However, even these projects are indicative of benefits offered by this activity.

They primarily aim to support disadvantaged populations (the elderly, people living in rural areas, women, prisoners, etc.).

Vocational education produces SOCIAL collateral effects – willingness to unite, development of joint campaigns and subsequent (upon completion of training) joint campaigns and projects.

A significant number of trainees become multipliers, i.e. remain involved in joint activities using the acquired skills; they become volunteers who not only continue training, but also further disseminate their knowledge.

The project approach characteristic of international cooperation implies feedback, strict accountability and understanding of training outcomes by all project participants. First, this makes it possible to include knowledge of project management. Second, even staying within common content and the educational area it is possible to continuously develop new training forms, include new topics, and adjust programs in line with evaluation by training program participants.

Since training envisages independent development of mini-projects, where the acquired theoretical knowledge is translated into a product in practice, discussion of problems and gaps underlying each project encourages the participants to discuss economic and social prospects of regional development. Thus, the participants consider their own lives and professional prospects at a specific point of view – with regard to social development prospects.

Thus, non-formal adult vocational education becomes a local development resource, and training addresses a person’s issues within the context of regional problems, transforming him/her from a “specialist” to a mobile, flexible, and socially mature professional.

Nazaret Nazaretyan

Networking for VET in Armenia

This Article will describe the activities of the *dvv international* branch office in Armenia in the area of development of bilateral and multilateral cooperation between different VET stakeholders (state and non-state VET institutions, employers and their organizations, the State Employment Service Agency (SESA), NGOs, ministries, local governments, etc.) as well as the results of those activities. Special attention will be paid to lessons learned during our work. In the article we will discuss mechanisms of existing cooperation as well as the challenges in that area.

Description of the Situation

During the Soviet era the VET Institutions were fully dependent on state management. The task of determining the training and employment needs was the responsibility of the centralized government. Educational institutions prepared specialists as ordered by the state, and after their education, graduated students were assigned jobs. All cooperation worked only through state governing bodies. VET institutions did not have any tools for developing cooperation with various stakeholders and partners. After the col-



Working group

lapse of the Soviet planned economy, most of the structures were also destroyed and most state VET institutions were unable to develop sufficient cooperation mechanisms with stakeholders and partners. There was no culture of cooperation between a number of different institutions. This was very common for former Soviet countries. International organizations are now starting to build links between local institutions in order to support them in their cooperation with each other.

Because of the issues mentioned, the system of education in general, and VET in particular, does not work properly. This is one of the reasons we will concentrate on. Most VET institutions are not very aware of the labor market situation, neither in the communities where they are working nor on the national level. Mostly they offer only very normal educational services like they did during the former (Soviet) era. Most of them are



Partner Meeting

not aware of existing capacity-building programs offered by various national and international organizations. Very often VET institutions don't participate at exhibitions and other events which would give them a good chance to present themselves.

Cooperation between VET institutions is also bad.

As a result:

- VET has image problems and a low level of trust with the population and with social partners in particular.
 - VET content mostly doesn't correspond to the requirements of the labor market.
- Existing mechanisms for determining training needs are not effective.
 - Only a few VET institutions have active contact to the labor market and social partners.
 - The existing topdown approach does not correspond to the challenges of the modern VET system.
 - Enough statistical and other information exists on labor market needs, but existing information is not used properly. Existing structures of information flow and their impact on the decision making process in VET is not very effective.
 - The process of involvement of social partners in the management structures of state VET at national and local levels only started at the end of 2008.
 - Social partners are not really involved in making the VET provision relevant to the labor market needs, although there are mechanisms which could be helpful for that.
 - Social partners are involved in the practical training of learners at VET institutions, but in most cases practical training isn't organized at a proper level.
 - Different NGOs are very actively involved in vocational training as well. They provide training courses for foreign languages, accountancy and management.
 - No reporting system exists for future qualification demands at any level.
 - The needs of Adult Education and Lifelong Learning are widely neglected in the VET-system.

***dvv international* Projects: Examples of Cooperation and Network Development Meetings with Stakeholders**

In April 2003, the first meeting of stakeholders mainly involved in adult vocational training took place in the *dvv international* project office in Yerevan. Representatives from national and regional Chambers of Commerce and Industry, the SESA, the Ministry of

Education and Sciences, as well as several state, private, and nongovernmental providers of vocational education and training, and other stakeholders participated in the meeting. During the meeting, the study conducted in the framework of *dvv international* activities was presented. Under discussion were the issues of weak links and poor communication between the different stakeholders in VET, which results in low levels of employability of the workforce with VET qualifications. Other meetings besides this one were organized in order to discuss several issues regarding VET.

Vocational Training for the Unemployed – Cooperation with SESA (IATC, Yeghegnadsor, Gjumri Centre, Vanadzor, Sisian, Yerevan)

The *dvv international* project office in Armenia has been active in the area of vocational training for the unemployed since 2003. Initial training was fully financed by *dvv international*. Through the organization of training courses we were able to cooperate with state, private and nongovernmental training providers. Since the very beginning we have cooperated with the State Employment Service Agency (SESA) as well as with their local employment centers. SESA provided us with lists of officially registered unemployed people, as well as support with the selection of trainees. Also, based on SESA information, we discovered the workforce requirements.

In the framework of their active labor market measures, SESA also finances several training courses for unemployed and handicapped people, but the resources which SESA provides are limited to organizing different types of training. However, the links between SESA and other vocational training providers are not very strong. Most of SESA's partners who participated in the organizing of vocational training courses were firms who train people for their own needs, with resources provided by SESA. In our projects, we found appropriate training providers in various regions of Armenia who could provide required courses, then we provided them with additional support and, in cooperation with SESA, we organized training courses.

Representatives from the business sector were actively involved in our projects through the organization of vocational training courses. They usually oversaw the training programs and participated in examinations.



Vocational Training in Armenia

In the new projects we will also introduce, along with the main topic, some components of key competencies which will enhance employability chances for the unemployed.



Fieldtrip organized by a consulting center

Establishment of Consulting Centers for Farmers

Since 2004, *dvv international*, in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, has supported the establishment and the work of consulting centers for farmers in six State Agricultural colleges: Nor Geghi, Masis, Gavar, Armavir, Stepanavan and Gjumri. The colleges involved in the project actively cooperated with local communities and the State Agricultural Academy.

Workshops on Key Competences

With support from *dvv international*, an Adult Education and Lifelong Learning Association (AE&LLL Association) has developed and piloted a training course on key competencies. The basis for this project was the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on key competences for Lifelong Learning from 18 December 2006. Representatives from local employment centers, various NGOs, educational institutions and employers participated in the training course.



Members of the Education and Lifelong Learning Association

Adult Education and Lifelong Learning Association

In 2003, an Adult Education and Lifelong Learning Association was established and officially registered in 2005. The AE&LLL Association has more than 40 members representing several state, private, and civic society organizations (providers and stakeholders). The AE&LLL Association is a network which consists of members from very different areas. The association has members from Yerevan as well as from var-

ious regions of Armenia. The members represent the business section as well as educational institutions, ministries and NGOs. The AE&LLL Association has a trilingual website (www.mku.am) with information and a library, supported by *dvv international*.



Partner Meeting

The AE&LLL Association website is linked with the website of the European Association of Education for Adults (EAEA), which has been a member since 2005. Since 2008, the AE&LLL Association have published a journal on issues in Adult Education.

The AE & LLL Association is actively involved in the Process of VET reforms in Armenia, members of AE&LLL Association are playing an important role as stakeholders and experts in that process. The AE&LLL Association was actively involved in the preparation of the national CONFINTEA VI report and in the creation of a legislative framework for Adult Education in Armenia.

Adult Education Weeks in Armenia

Since 2003, in cooperation with local and international partners, *dvv international*, has been organizing Adult Education Weeks in Armenia.

The goals of those events are to:

- Raise awareness about the importance of adult education and of vocational training in particular.
- To build up and develop networks supporting adult education and vocational training.
- To show the diversity of providers of adult education and vocational training.
- To provide appropriate forums for open and broad discussions on reforms in the area of VET and adult education in Armenia.

Since 2003, during the AE Weeks, a number of events have been organized:

- Educational exhibitions
- Job Fair
- Several training courses and master classes
- Presentation of various training courses
- Conferences and workshops on several issues regarding the educational reform process in Armenia. The topics of those events were in particular the reforms in the VET area.



Adult Education Week

Several organizations were involved in the organization of the AE Weeks. Since 2003, the following organizations have been co-organizers of AE weeks in Armenia: Adult Education and Lifelong Learning Association, Ministry of Education and Sciences, Chamber of Commerce of the Republic of Armenia, and the State Employment Service Agency (SESA). Several other organizations have also supported the AE weeks in Armenia: European Training Foundation, UNDP VET support project in Armenia, British Council, USAID, Armenian Social Protection Systems

Strengthening Project, LOGOS Expo Centre, and EXPO Media.

AE Weeks allow the promotion of ideas for the diversity of adult and vocational training in Armenia.

Poverty Reduction through Active Adult Learning (PROACTIVE) – Pilot Project in Tavush Marz

In cooperation with the Adult Education and Lifelong Learning Association and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Tavush Region, *dvv international* has developed a project proposal for financing by the European Commission in the frame of the program Non-State Actors and Local Authorities in Development, Actions in Partner Countries. The proposed project to be implemented in the towns of Ijevan and Tavush Marz, aims to contribute to poverty reduction by promoting and establishing modern strategies and structures for human resources development. It aims to activate Lifelong Learning strategies and tools and foster collaboration and active participation of local authorities and social partners for the development of human resources through education and training. The project will concretely demonstrate the key role of human resources development in reducing poverty. By establishing sustainable adult learning services, it will contribute to the overall development of the economy and the whole community.

Specifically, the project aims to create sustainable modern adult education services in Tavush Marz, reaching the most vulnerable members of community in particular – the unemployed. A newly established Adult Education Center will act as an educational institution as well as a mediator for dialogue between different stakeholders and players in the area of education. The AEC will be a unique educational institution, which will provide learning opportunities for adults in different areas, adapted to the needs of the econ-

omy and to the needs of the learners. Benefiting from modern adult educational facilities, vulnerable members of the community in Tavush, will have a chance to foster their self-development and increase their competitiveness in the labor market.

Foreseen as a pilot project to be shared and possibly replicated at the national and regional levels, the project seeks to contribute to promoting human resources development and building sustainable Lifelong Learning strategies and structures on local and national levels. The project will contribute to further decentralization through capacity building of local actors, building networks and partnerships.

Conclusion

Based on our experience we can say that:

- An openness and readiness for cooperation between different stakeholders exists;
 - It is necessary to establish an appropriate framework for cooperation, involved parties will develop the partnership themselves;
 - Networking and Partnership is helping to bring more transparency to the process of educational reforms in Armenia;
 - Local partners have experience which can be shared in networks;
 - Local partners possess various resources which can be shared and used more effectively;
 - VET institutions should have strong communication with all stakeholders – with concentration on local stakeholders;
 - Public relations, improving the VET image – not only an issue for state authorities but for each manager, staff member and social partner of every VET Institution;
 - Professional communication with universities should be developed by VET providers, aiming toward being a user of professional and scientific developments in each particular area;
 - Active communication and cooperation between VET Providers should be developed;
 - The parents of learners should be involved in the lobbying and advocacy and PR actions for VET;
 - Networks help to provide interested partners for making VET relevant to the requirements of the labor market;
 - Cooperation with high schools should be developed and aimed toward organizing professional orientation;
- Networking and social partnership will ensure information flow about developments in several issues such as the labor market, training needs, international cooperation, capacity building, etc.

Anita Jakobsone

Times of Change in Basic Vocational Education and Training in Tajikistan

The Situation in Basic Vocational Education and Training in Tajikistan

In 1991, Tajikistan gained independence after the breakdown of the Soviet Union. Adverse economic and social effects of the country's transition from the Soviet system to a market economy were aggravated by the five-year civil war.

As a result of the difficult situation in the country, some 600 – 800 thousand citizens of Tajikistan work as seasonal workers in other CIS countries, most of them in the Russian Federation.

Changes in the industrial pattern have affected the vocational education and training system, as well as broken traditional links between vocational technical schools and the labor market. In the end, basic vocational technical education is no longer in line with the labor market demands.

Basic vocational education and training in Tajikistan is still facing a number of challenges: physical infrastructure, pedagogical staff capacity, curricula content, teaching and learning methods, and organization of the training process do not comply with the up-to-date requirements.

In general, the system is underfinanced and is characterized by poor capacity for transformations. A comparatively low level of teachers' salaries causes greater staff turnover and, as a result, lower qualification of pedagogical staff and the quality of training. Consequently, the education coverage has decreased sharply, and attendance rates have dropped as well.

Moreover, during the civil conflict in the 1990s a number of vocational schools, workshops and dormitories were destroyed. Many educational institutions need re-equipment and capital repair. Limited power supply also contributes to lower quality vocational education.

However, basic vocational education is becoming increasingly important to social protection, since due to poverty, the lower-income population has limited access to higher education.

Currently, in line with the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan *"On Basic Vocational Education"*, the vocational education and training (VET) system is mainly aimed at securing the right of a citizen to accessible basic, and possibly secondary, vocational education, and meeting the population's needs for appropriate vocational educational services, given the status and trends of labor market demands.

Basic vocational schools provide wide access to vocational education aimed to train specialists of lower and sometimes medium levels.

Currently, 67 public basic vocational educational institutions (vocational technical schools and vocational lyceums) operate in Tajikistan. The government agency administering the VET system is the Ministry of Education. The number of students is over 30 thousand. The educational process is provided by some 2.7 thousand teachers and industrial training masters. Basic vocational schools annually train over 14 thousand specialists in 97 occupations.

At the same time, as of 2005, over 80,000 secondary school leavers were not covered by vocational education. The system is still unable to respond to the needs for new professional skills. Most curricula and training materials were developed back in the 1980s and are obsolete. Lack of up-to-date textbooks and manuals hinders provision of quality education and training in new occupations.

In the last decade of the past century, the basic VET system of Tajikistan was mainly self-preserving. However, with the adoption of the National Educational Standard for Basic Vocational Education (November 2002), the new Law *“On Basic Vocational Education”* (March 2003) and the *“National Basic VET System Reforms Concept”* (October 2004) there has begun a new period of the system’s revival and recognition of its social and economic importance.

Recently, Tajikistan has recognized its basic VET system as one of its national priorities and begun the reform process. The new approach to the basic VET system focuses on providing trainees with qualifications complying with the labor market requirements.

To increase labor productivity in all sectors of the economy, including industry, agriculture and the service sector, better competence, development of new professional skills and an ability to successfully adapt to ever changing labor market demands throughout one’s career are required.

The *“National Action Plan to Reform the Basic Vocational Education and Training System in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2006 – 2015”* was developed to implement the decrees of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan and the requirements of the *“National Basic Vocational Education and Training System Reforms Concept”* adopted by the Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan. This National Action Plan became the basis for national policy and strategy in the basic vocational education and training system development.

Project Goal and Key Objectives

The goal of the EC Project *“Support to Basic Vocational Education and Training in Tajikistan – Phase 2”* implemented by *dvv international* is to contribute to the upgrading of the basic vocational education and training system and to adapt it to current and future needs of the economy and trainees (students).

The project objectives are directly determined by the need for changes in the vocational education and training (VET) system of Tajikistan, and they are as follows:

- 1) Ensure consultations for the Ministry of Education (MoE) on strategy development to upgrade the basic vocational education and training system and support implementation of the *“National Action Plan to Reform the Basic Vocational Education and Training System in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2006 – 2015.”*
- 2) Build the capacity of the MoE institutions, develop and introduce up-to-date curricula in the basic VET system by implementation of pilot curricula at educational institutions and training of the MoE leaders, heads of educational institutions both at the national level and at the level of educational organizations.

The expected project outcomes include integration of the *“National Action Plan to Reform the Basic Vocational Education and Training System in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2006 – 2015”* into the *“National Education Strategy”*; institutional capacity building of the Ministry of Education to support upgrading of the basic VET system; development and coordination of the plan to optimize the network of vocational educational institutions and its management; development and implementation of the labor market demands-oriented module training programs, as well as recommendations for their introduction into Tajikistan’s basic VET system; improving the capacity of pilot vocational school teachers and staff of supporting institutions; strengthening of international cooperation, etc.

The project’s direct beneficiaries are the key staff of the Ministry of Education and its institutions, as well as directors and teachers of the selected pilot vocational schools. The project’s indirect beneficiaries are students of vocational technical schools (especially pilot vocational schools), as well as employers in the selected sectors to be provided with the well-trained personnel.



Carpenter's workshop in Khudjand

Management Capacity Development Needs

Managerial staff at all levels – national, regional and local – will play a crucial role on the difficult path of changes in the basic VET system. The effectiveness of sectoral reforms largely depends on the level of managerial competence of the two groups – staff of the Ministry of Education, other ministries, heads of institutions supporting the basic VET system and heads of the vocational technical schools (directors and deputy directors).

The training needs assessment has identified quite a wide range of needs in the above two groups of managers; they are similar in many aspects, but have their specific characteristics as well. These needs are directly related to challenges and problems of the sector, the need to reform it and improve the quality and effectiveness of vocational education in the country.

The training needs analysis has demonstrated that heads of vocational technical schools need training in vocational school management, including basics of planning, strategic planning, personnel management and organization of the training process.

The following topics have been identified as the most relevant to the staff of the Ministry of Education, other ministries, and heads of institutions supporting the basic VET system: change management in the basic VET system, effective manager/leader, social partnership and marketing of educational services, education quality control, basic VET in the Lifelong Learning context.

The first workshops have shown that managers at all levels have clear motivation to training and take a very active part in discussions. Each workshop is integrated – in addition to general knowledge and skills, much time is given to discussion of topical issues regarding changes in the basic VET system, including methods for overcoming obstacles. Given that workshop participants are representatives of various ministries and their institutions, the workshops have set up a platform for interagency discussions. The participants recognized this aspect as one of the most fruitful. The workshop participants discussed improvement of the basic VET regulatory framework and the rope of social partnership in the basic VET development. The participants admit that so far inadequate financial and organizational capacity of the Ministry of Education to carry out special training programs for managers, as well as limited availability of relevant experts-trainers make this project implementation very timely and essential.

Updating Curricula

Due to the aforementioned various social and economic factors, the main problem of the basic VET system is the gap between curricula and real labor market demands for vocational school graduates' knowledge and skills. This situation was caused by considerably deteriorated basic VET system management in recent decades.

First, professional standards are still not developed. Thus, curricula are not targeted at the achievement of a specific level of knowledge and skills in a relevant occupation.

Second, institutions supporting the basic VET – the National Training-Methodological Center and the National Advanced Teacher Training Institute perform their functions very poorly. The vocational school directors state that these institutions can no longer be called supporting. The National Training-Methodological Center was transformed from a methodological center to an institution for control and punishment. The contribution of the National Advanced Teacher Training Institute for the training and retraining of vocational



Trainee welders in Khudjand

technical school teachers is highly inadequate. Given the high turnover rates for vocational technical school teachers, available (three-day) training once in five years does not meet the vocational school development needs. The National Advanced Teacher Training Institute stopped advanced training of industrial training masters. In recent years, vocational technical school directors try to find options to train their industrial training masters using their personal contacts with employers or higher educational institutions.

Third, there is no regular training for heads of vocational technical schools. The workshop participants have noted that it is their first advanced training workshop within the past decade.

Fourth, previous social partnership arrangements have been destroyed. Until the early 1990s, in the vocational education system of Tajikistan there was a mechanism of interaction between vocational educational institutions and the industrial sector through the system of “base” enterprises, when specialists were trained under the government contract upon request from base companies given the predetermined qualification characteristics and guaranteed employment for graduates at these enterprises. Currently, employers are highly unwilling to cooperate with vocational technical schools since they do not consider VET schools to be real partners in personnel training. It should be noted that due to lack of resources most employers are not ready to invest in personnel training. It is obvious that in the market economy context it is impossible to get back to the base enterprise system. New mechanisms of partnership between VET schools and employers need to be established with regard to the market economy context.

Under the project, much attention has been given to employers’ needs assessment and laying the foundation for partnership with them in the basic VET system.

At the initial project stage, the labor market needs analysis was performed using statistical data, analysis of enterprise vacancies, and information on the potential employers’ basic requirements to specialists, self-employment and labor migration.

This analysis, as well as interviews with decision-makers from ministries and agencies have demonstrated that the occupations in strongest demand are as follows: gas welders, fitters, sanitary technicians, electricians, elevator operators, electrical technicians, masons, plasterers, crane operators, painters, carpenters, tile layers, processors of agricultural products, cooks, hairdressers, appliance repairmen, foreign-made car mechanics, waiters, housemaids, geologists, spinners, accountants and lathe operators. This quite extensive list shows

the real needs of employers and shortage of skilled factory and office workers. Under the project, further attention will also be given to setting up continuous mechanisms for labor market needs analysis to form state orders for VET schools to train specialists.

Based on the labor market needs assessment, four occupations have been selected, and under the project, relevant module training programs are being developed and implemented: gas welders, sanitary technicians, electrical technicians, and carpenters. Also, VET schools – project partners have been selected to implement these programs. The programs being introduced by the project are aimed at knowledge and skills required for those occupations. Module training programs are an example of a flexible response to changing labor market needs. They were developed using the DACUM¹ method. Employers participated in curricula development. Their participation was especially important in identifying a professional profile – a professional standard in line with employers' needs.

There is ongoing cooperation between project staff and experts and pilot VET school heads and teachers during implementation and adaptation of training programs. An important aspect of this process is training of teachers and staff of supporting institutions in module training programs development and interactive adult training techniques.

The project carries out continuous monitoring of program implementation and coaching for teachers. To ensure quality and effective coaching and adaptation of module training programs, experts have developed the concept and tools for coaching at pilot VET schools. From September to December 2008, coaching for 39 teachers instructing 167 students of 8 pilot courses was carried out.

During coaching, experts identified some challenges that impair effectiveness of training programs introduction into the pilot VET schools. The following main challenges were stated:

- Low level of students' basic knowledge of general subjects
- Inadequate pedagogical training of teachers and industrial training masters
- Shortage of textbooks and methodological guidelines
- Poor equipment status of training workshops
- Low salaries and rapid turnover of teachers

Conclusions based on coaches' observations also confirm the weak role played by supporting institutions in improving the quality of education and training at VET schools.

Given the above, labor market demands-driven module training programs do not seem to be easily introduced in the basic VET system. The project will generalize the experience in pilot programs development and implementation and develop recommendations for their use in the basic VET system. However, this is not enough for the new system to start

1 DACUM = **D**evelop **a** **C**urriculum is a worldwide method used to develop curricula in compact workshop together with employers, professionals and representatives of ministries.

operating. The most important aspect is to identify to what extent supporting institutions will be ready to continue the project activities. To facilitate upgrading of both supporting institutions, the project suggested that working groups on strategic planning at each institution, in partnership with representatives of the Ministry of Education and the project's working groups, be established. The project staff and experts think that this approach will provide more opportunities to communicate and assess the relevance of the supporting institutions' activities to the VET schools' needs.

The need for such an approach became evident after the study tour to Germany of the project's working group in charge of the introduction of pilot module training programs. Discussion of the study tour results and its participants' proposals to introduce German experience into the basic VET system in Tajikistan have covered various aspects of the basic VET system development. A lot of wishes have been expressed to improve performance of both supporting institutions given their special role in the reform process.

An important factor in increasing the long-term impact of project activities is ongoing and prospective international projects.



Welder training in Khudjand

International Synergy Development

Currently, a lot of international donor organizations operate in Tajikistan, including the United Nations Development Programme, UNICEF, International Labour Organisation, Asian Development Bank, World Bank, German Development Agency, German Research Foundation, the United States Agency for International Development and others. A part of international donors implement projects in education, including basic vocational education. Given

the common interests of the donor community, mechanisms to exchange information and joint activities to influence educational policy development have been established and are operating successfully. International donor organizations have held a number of meetings to make a wide use of international expertise in the introduction of the National Basic VET System Development Action Plan into the National Education Development Strategy of Tajikistan. This strategy has been agreed upon with the Ministry of Education and submitted to the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan for approval.

In November, the project signed the Memorandum of Intent with the GTZ vocational education project. Based on this agreement and a greater amount of financing, the number of participants in management workshops has been increased. Opportunities have been provided for both projects' target groups to participate in additional educational activities.

Since early 2009, the project has initiated quarterly meetings of leaders of international projects on basic vocational education. Representatives of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection participate in these meetings. These meetings aim to coordinate project activities to ensure more effective utilization of international resources and avoid duplication of activities. Representatives of the ministries have noted the usefulness of such meetings.

Effect on Educational Policy Development

Educational policy development in Tajikistan, as in any other country, is a multifaceted and complex process.

First, it is related to introduction of several new conceptual approaches. For instance, Lifelong Learning, core skills training and others. Changes are associated with improvement of legal and regulatory framework of education and management of educational resources – such as human, material and technical, training materials and funds. Political transformations are closely related to changes in education management: capacity of leaders and institutions, feasibility and specificity of strategies and plans; introduction of social partnership mechanisms and education quality control.

Project objectives are equally related to all these aspects of the political process. However, given the timeframe and limited financial resources, the project activities are rather associated with the basic vocational education and training policy.

Regular consultations are provided for the Ministry of Education on development of specific plans to implement the *“National Action Plan to Reform the Basic Vocational Education and Training System in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2006 – 2015”*, which is integral to the National Education Development Strategy.

Thanks to close cooperation with the Ministry of Education, the project has participated in preparation of amendments to the Law on Education of the Republic of Tajikistan. Social partnership competencies have been proposed to be reflected in this law. The project has participated in the assessment of the standard provisions for VET schools.

Before the project completion, managerial capacity building of ministerial staff, activities promoting establishment of the social partnership mechanisms, and strengthening of the supporting institutions' role in the basic VET development are planned to be continued.

The long-term impact of the project will be facilitated by publications and electronic database of the project materials.

Project's interaction with various groups of basic vocational education employees, students, parents, employers and their associations is supposed to contribute to the establishment of the system and new image of the basic vocational education and training. The project staff, experts and partners in the Ministry of Education are fully confident that quality basic vocational education in Tajikistan will eventually become the basis for well-being of many people in the country.

Johann Theessen

Xpert in South-East Europe

Activity in South-East Europe

After the opening of the eastern part of Europe in the years after 1989, *dvv international* also began to establish project offices in South-East Europe (Romania 1992, Macedonia 1997, Albania 1999, Bulgaria 2000, etc.). In the meantime, despite difficult surrounding conditions, there is a tight network of offices and partner organizations in the region. Their goal is to modernize and develop the currently only partial structures of adult education in order to make it possible for all members of society to gain equal access to further training, particularly with the view of the future integration of South-East Europe into the European Union.

The principle goals are:

- improved opportunities for workers in the national and international job market
- tolerance and reflection as foundations for democracy and civil society
- active participation in society and social integration

Xpert Courses for Computer Use and for Key Competencies in Daily Occupational Life

Being able to deal meaningfully with a computer counts as one of the key competencies in more and more occupations today: Office work is no longer conceivable without a PC, mechanical engineering uses computers nearly everywhere, and soon even a truck driver will have to bring along IT-competence.

In South-East Europe this transition to the IT-age is particularly rough because until the early 1990s the economy and the education systems in these countries were markedly isolated from developments in the rest of the world.

One of the main activities of *dvv international* in South-East Europe is therefore directed at establishing instruments with which abilities for computer use are spread through daily occupational life. This helps the modernization process and contributes to increased occupational ability.

Xpert is the benchmark in German adult education schools and European education carriers for a high-quality and standardized system for the certifying of technical and personal competencies in basic and advanced vocational training. Since the beginning of 2000, with Xpert, a concept has been implemented in the region which, due to its modular structure, makes customized offers for various requirements in working life.

With the Xpert European Computer Passport (Xpert ECP) system, IT-user knowledge in the office domain is certified. The Xpert Personal Business Skills (Xpert PBS) system imparts knowledge and skills for the key competencies currently most demanded in working life. Further concepts, like the Xpert Business Certificate, which aims at commercial and economic expertise, and the Xpert Culture Communication Skills (CCS) Certificate, which imparts and evaluates intercultural competencies, round off the system.

The Xpert system is aimed in particular at people who are looking for a job, people who want to re-enter working life or those who want to secure their jobs by extending and renewing their knowledge. The German adult education schools and their partners offer Xpert training courses and examinations for a fee which does not make excessive demands on participants and offers a modicum of equality of opportunity.

Since 1982, the test centers of the German adult education schools have offered training courses and examination concepts for the job market. Thereby, more than 25-years of experience in the development of training course concepts and examinations in vocational further training flows into the Xpert training courses. This experience also insures the high quality of the Xpert system. Up to now, hundreds of thousands of Xpert examinations have been given. They confirm the good work done by adult education examination centers in the conception and realization of these qualification offers. Many unemployed people and people threatened by unemployment could and can clearly improve their chances in the job market with Xpert certificates.

Standardized training catalogs specify the learning content of the Xpert courses, secure transparency and the comparability of the certified abilities and knowledge. Built upon that is an extensive continuing and further training system which ensures the technical and educational competence of the trainers.

Finally, the examinations, which are precisely tailored to the needs of the job market, secure the successful vocational usability of the acquired knowledge. In addition to that, certified teaching materials guarantee optimum support during the preparation for courses and examinations.

Documented quality criteria and differentiated quality assurance systems are key prerequisites for the topicality and professionalism of the training courses and examinations.

The decisive impulse for the development of the Xpert system came from the German adult education schools and their examination systems. However, the high quality and the differentiated offers of the Xpert system convince ever more partners in Europe who, along with the German adult education schools, further develop and spread Xpert and its offers. Today there are partner organizations – among others – in Austria, Italy, the Netherlands, Hungary, Slovakia, Russia, Slovenia, Bulgaria and Romania.

The target of *dvv international* for South-East Europe is primarily that of a partner for organizations in the countries to enable Xpert courses. That is why the regional office of

dvv international offers teacher training courses and helps with their management. Additionally, *dvv international*, in a transitional phase, operates the final examinations for the course participants in order to guarantee that the European-wide standards are kept. Employers can thus rely on the quality if an applicant presents them with an Xpert certificate.

In the meantime, the partner network covers approximately 16 education providers in ten countries of South-East Europe, ranging from vocational schools to community-run education centers through to chambers and trade unions. Meanwhile, over 40 instructors in these institutions have received the appropriate training from *dvv international* in order to carry out Xpert courses.

Thus, in South-East Europe since 2001, altogether 13,302 certificates for various courses from the Xpert ECP program have been issued. The largest number of course participants so far have come from Romania (2912), Bulgaria (1250), Albania (2000) and Macedonia (780). In South-East Europe in 2006 alone, approximately 2292 examinations for Xpert ECP were given.

Xpert training courses are modular structures. Each building block ends with its own exam. So each educational facility can offer its participants a made-to-measure offer which meets their particular interests.

The Xpert system delivers both basic and expert knowledge. With basic, professional and master courses, the participants have the possibility of acquiring both core competencies and also to qualify as specialists in their respective field of activity.

Target Group: Adults

Target Group: Students, Young Adults in transition from school to work, unemployed adolescents, e.g. in BvB, BaE or in programs related to Hartz IV.



Win@Internet 1

- Basic Wordprocessing
- Presentation
- Spreadsheet Calculation
- Communication/Organization
- Data Bank Application
- Wordprocessing Pro
- Win@Internet 2

- Xpert Basic Certificate IT-Competence
- Basic Wordprocessing
- Presentation

Spreadsheet Calculation
Communication/Organization
Data Bank Application
Wordprocessing Pro
Win@Internet 2

European Computer Passport Xpert

After successfully completing the obligatory module Win@Internet 1 as well as two elected modules from the learning system Xpert European ComputerPass, the certificate European Computer Passport Expert will be awarded.

European Computer Passport Xpert Master

When a further two modules are completed the certificate EUROPEAN COMPUTER PASSPORT XPERT MASTER will be awarded.

euZBQ – European Certificate of Vocational Qualification

After the successful completion of the three modules

Xpert Basic Certificate of IT Competence

Xpert Basic Certificate of Business Competence

Xpert Basic Certificate of Social Competence

the European Certificate of Vocational Qualification will be awarded

The Xpert concepts ECP, PBS and Business are directly inter-coordinated. This enables a smooth transition between the training course systems if a participant is interested. Thus for example the completed examination for the Xpert ECP module *“Presentation”* is recognized as partial performance for the Xpert PBS course.

IT-Knowledge: European Computer Passport (ECP)

Like no other, the IT-application program area with an emphasis on *“office communication in business and administration”* has had to be adapted to rapid and constantly changing conditions in the workplace. The new examination system therefore took over the quality criteria and proven procedures of the *“PC and Internet Passports and Licenses,”* because these in particular elicited confidence in previous years with companies and employees.

The adult education schools in Germany as well as other partners in Europe and South-East Europe use this concept in particular for disadvantaged young adults and people re-entering the job market, for example like women after a break from raising children. This group of people in particular has so far only had minimal opportunities to acquire and use current IT-knowledge for vocational development.

The EDP User Pass

IT-competence is defined for the first time in the memorandum published by the European Commission in November 2005 as a key competence for Lifelong Learning. Hardly any other area is subjected to such extensive changes in such increasingly shorter cycles. This makes a constant adjustment of the training course modules necessary; in particular in order to adapt to the changing conditions in the workplace.

No other testing system can draw on a 25-year experience, as is briefly described in the following: The EDP User Pass developed by the Hanover testing center in 1982 was at that time already modularly structured and tested. In 1988 the first materials for learners were developed which were matched precisely to the contents of the training course system. The exams were introduced successively in 12 Federal states. In the course of the quality assurance testing, the respective specialized groups of the test center in Hanover compiled the first standardized training goal catalogs, evaluation schedules, sample functions as well as a detailed training goal taxonomy, in which the depth of the competence transmission of the individual training goals was determined. These defined standards were published in 1995 in the brochure "*tested quality*." By the creation of these documents, the comparability of the degree of difficulty as well as the transparency of the examinations were expounded for the first time and warranted.

Up to 1998, the testing center in Hanover had already processed approx. 500,000 examinations.

In 2000, a final harmonization of learning contents for all existing IT-applications took place. Under the new "*Xpert*" benchmark, the examinations were introduced in all Federal states and the prerequisites for the introduction of the training course system in Europe was created. Through the close cooperation and support of *dvv international*, the examinations have meanwhile been implemented in many countries in Europe.

Due to the rapid development in the online EDP area, in 2006 the Hanover testing center started to concern itself with the development of online examinations. In order to clearly distinguish themselves from other providers, they decided to develop practical online exams. The goal was to operate directly in the application during the examination. After a two-year pilot phase, this target could be achieved. Meanwhile, approx. 15,000 online examinations have been processed with great success.

The establishment of examination centers in the entire Federal Republic has already partially taken place and will continue.

With the support of *dvv international*, at end of 2009 the new examination system will start to be implemented in other countries in Europe.

Expanding Core Competencies with Xpert Personal Business Skills (Xpert PBS)

Personal Business Skills (PBS) is a second series of courses under Xpert which *dvv international* disseminates in South-East Europe. Seminars for the transmission of personal and social competence with Xpert PBS are no longer reserved for top managers and high-level personnel. With Xpert PBS these possibilities are now also available to anyone who would like to acquire or improve well-grounded social competencies in their working life.

Xpert PBS is also specially addressed to interested people who have so far had no chance to acquire important key qualifications directly through targeted support measures.

Xpert PBS training courses are also modularly structured. So the individual building blocks conclude in each case with their own examination. The participants can thus create their learning program according to their own individual interests and needs.

The "Xpert Personal Business Skills certificate" certifies, with selections taken from altogether 12 modules, the core competencies acquired in the subject area "speeches and negotiating," "effective planning and organization," "group process moderation" and "targeted presentation."

Since 2001, in the countries of South-East Europe, employed and unemployed people participated in Xpert PBS courses. As is the case for computer courses, *dvv international* is responsible for finding partner organizations as course providers, for training their instructors, for holding the examinations and ensuring their quality.

Feedback from Participants



Elona Xhyra (Tirana, Albania):

"After studying economics, I did a variety of internships at companies. Naturally, because of my studies, I could more or less deal well with word processing and spread-sheet analysis. But with Xpert, I understood for the first time everything that one can really do with the programs. The certificate helped me to finally find a steady job. I am now a secretary in a small tourism company."



Jordan Ivanov (Plovdiv, Bulgaria):

"We teachers have the problem again and again that pupils are way ahead of us in some things. Especially in handling computers, young people today are tremendously proficient. We encounter real authority problems there. Since I took the Xpert course, I can keep up and sometimes do even more. And since then I also use the computer in lessons."



Jadranka Velikovska (Skopje, Macedonia):

"As department manager in a shipping company, from time to time I have difficult negotiations with customers. Even the team meetings are not so easy... The Xpert course "Personal Business Skills" helped me decidedly in the conduct of negotiations, or when I have targeted mediation in a larger group or when I lead a discussion. I would recommend these courses to anyone who has to lead a team."

VET for the Unemployed

Nodir Rahimov

From Vocational Courses for the Unemployed to Adult Training Centers

Uzbekistan is a country that is building its new economic system based on market environment, which is often accompanied by change of enterprise ownership, modernization and automation of their production processes. In this context, the most widespread situation is job loss along with the rapid population growth in the country.¹

The country's population is 27.3 million people.² About 80% of the total population is Uzbek. Uzbekistan is a multi-ethnic country being home to representatives of over 100 ethnicities and ethnic groups.

The Republic of Uzbekistan, like other Central Asia countries, is characterized by a relatively "young" population and a large share of able-bodied people in its composition. The share of persons under the active working age in the total population amounts to 39%, active working age 54%, over active working age 7%.³

The above facts show that the labor market of the country is in a tight situation, which is more challenging in rural areas where population does not have enough opportunities to obtain additional education.

At the same time, Uzbekistan is one of the few Former Soviet Union countries which invest a lot in the education system development. The official data suggest that in 1997-2006 Uzbekistan annually spent an average of 9-10% of its GDP, and 23-29% of public expenditures⁴ on its education system.

In Uzbekistan, the government financing of education is targeted, which has been intensified in recent years by adoption and implementation of the two major national programs: the National Personnel Training Program adopted in 1996 and primarily aimed at setting up a crucial new system of secondary specialized vocational education and the School Education Development Program adopted in 2004 to fundamentally improve this education sector.

1 The number of births in 2007 was 603.7 thousand people and increased by 47.8 thousand people, or 8,6 % as compared to 2006, the birth rate increased from 20.9 to 22.4 per thousand people.

2 Statistical Review of the Republic of Uzbekistan, January-July 2008: <http://www.stat.uz/STAT/index.php?lng=2&article=27>

3 Government Internet Portal: <http://www.gov.uz/ru/ctx.scm?sectionId=106&contentId=474>

4 UNDP on Uzbekistan: "Education in Uzbekistan: balance of demand and supply", Tashkent 2007/2008.

In line with the above programs' targets, vast government resources channeled to the education sector are largely related to considerable investment expenditures for new construction and provision of equipment for secondary specialized vocational educational institutions, new construction, capital reconstruction and provision of equipment for general secondary schools.

Recently, the newly established continuous education system has been frequently mentioned in the country; this system includes the following types of educational services and institutions:



Preschool education. Preschool education aims to form a healthy child personality prepared for school studies. It is carried out until the age of six to seven in the family, kindergartens and other educational institutions irrespective of ownership.

General secondary education. Steps of general secondary education: basic education (grades I – IV); general secondary education (grades I – IX). Basic education aims to provide fundamental literacy, knowledge and skills required to obtain general secondary education. Children are enrolled for the first grade at the age of six or seven.

Secondary specialized vocational education. To obtain secondary specialized vocational education everyone has the right to select the special area of studies at an academic lyceum or a vocational college on the basis of general secondary education.

Academic lyceums and vocational colleges provide secondary specialized vocational education which entitles a person to practice the profession obtained or continue education at the next level.

Tertiary education. Tertiary education envisages training of skilled personnel. Training of specialists with higher education is carried out at higher educational institutions (universities, academies, institutes and other higher educational institutions) on the basis of secondary specialized vocational education.

Tertiary education is two-tier, providing bachelor's and master's degrees confirmed by relevant standard state documents.

Postgraduate education. Postgraduate education aims to meet the society's needs for highly qualified scientific and scientific-pedagogical staff.

Postgraduate education can be obtained at higher educational and research institutions (postgraduate studies, doctorate studies, part-time graduate studies).

Advanced training and retraining of personnel. Advanced training and retraining of personnel aim to deepen and upgrade professional knowledge and skills.

Out-of-school education. Out-of-school educational institutions include clubs and centers to develop children and adolescents' creativity, children and adolescents' physical culture schools, art schools, music schools, libraries, recreational and other institutions.

Procedures for establishment and activities of out-of-school educational institutions shall be governed by the law.

Family education and self-education. The state facilitates family education and self-education. Family education and self-education are carried out in line with curricula of relevant educational institutions. The authorized government agencies provide methodological, advisory and other support for trainees.⁵

The national education system has a great capacity. The country has 9,765 general secondary schools. In line with the National Personnel Training Program by 2010 in the country there will be 178 academic lyceums and 1,689 vocational colleges (currently their number is over 1,300).

The country has a lot of higher educational institutions. Specialists with scholastic degrees are trained at 64 higher educational institutions – universities, institutes and other tertiary educational institutions.⁶

In late 2002, *dvv international* opened its Representative Office in Tashkent to operate in the Central Asia region. The Representative Office acts on the basis of intergovernmental agreements between the Federal Republic of Germany and countries of the region.

Our work experience in Uzbekistan has shown that available capacity of the education system is underutilized for adult education purposes. If the established continuous education system is analyzed from the viewpoint of Adult Education (AE) and Lifelong Learning (LLL), one can identify that it offers more opportunities for formal adult education. The issue of bringing education "closer to home" also becomes topical since available advanced training institutions are located in big cities and offer additional education opportunities throughout one's working career only – all this results in limited opportunities for an unemployed person to get back to work after vocational training or retraining.

A number of countries willing to develop AE and LLL are known to face challenges with ensuring accessible quality education for all groups in the population. Moreover, there is a practical example of a solution that can be found in the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning adopted by the European Commission on October 30, 2000.

5 The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Education" dated 29 August 1997.

6 Government Internet Portal: <http://www.gov.uz/ru/ctx.scm?sectionId=106&contentId=488>

The EU decision in Lisbon suggests that schools and other training centers be transformed into multipurpose local educational institutions connected to the Internet and available to people of all ages.

As mentioned above, Uzbekistan is one of the few Former Soviet Union countries investing a lot in vocational education development. The country constructs new vocational colleges and academic lyceums and reconstructs old ones. To date, a number of colleges have been provided with advanced equipment. Why not use physical infrastructure of colleges to organize and carry out evening training courses for the unemployed? Why not give them an opportunity to obtain work skills so that they could find jobs and earn their living? With this proposal, the Representative Office of *dvv international* approached the Center for Secondary Specialized Vocational Education in the summer of 2002. As a result, an agreement was signed to test the idea of the Representative Office of *dvv international* in several vocational colleges of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The idea was introduced under the project of the Representative Office of *dvv international* "Vocational College-Based Training and Retraining of the Unemployed in the Republic of Uzbekistan" implemented from October 2002 to August 2006.

All courses lasted six months and included some 500 hours of training. The classes were delivered mainly in the afternoon or evening. Practical sessions accounted for two thirds of the training time.

People aged 18 to 65, temporarily unemployed or dependent and willing to master an occupation offered by the project could become the project participants. Preference was given to representatives of disadvantaged populations. Special attention was given to the following selection criteria:

- Age
- Social status
- Willingness
- Professional aptitude

From 2002 to 2006, four project stages were implemented – pilot (October 2002 – May 2003), second (September 2003 – June 2004), third (September 2004 – June 2005) and fourth (September 2005 – August 2006).

Each stage had its specific objectives to be gained by the project within the specified implementation period. At the project's pilot stage, the objective was to test retraining options for the unemployed at vocational colleges using short-term training and retraining courses.

The pilot stage showed that the approach we had proposed was effective in terms of:

- Employment rate, which was over 70% (including self-employment);
- Efficiency (no investment required to establish the base for training; expenditures per trainee were 20 euros a month).

At the same time, according to the pilot stage outcomes, we identified the main group of challenges (they can also be called new areas of activity), which, if addressed, would let us state that the project achieved its goals and objectives:

- poor relevance of graduates of educational institutions to labor market demands;
- inadequate teachers' experience in curricula development for short-term courses taking account of employers' requirements to graduates' knowledge and skills;
- incomplete knowledge of college administration and teachers about adult training and adult education management;
- poor social partnership among vocational educational institutions, labor departments, local authorities, industry representatives (prospective employers) and community;
- low awareness of Adult Education and Lifelong Learning concepts.

Later on, this project's idea was supported by the European Union and continued to develop under the TACIS Institution Building and Partnership Programme (IBPP), and from 1 March 2006 to 29 February 2008 it was implemented under another project "*Strengthening the Infrastructure and Capacity of Uzbek Colleges for Training Unemployed*" (INSTRUCT).

This project aimed to set up Adult Training Centers at vocational colleges. The project made use of the cascade system: 7 vocational colleges having experience in adult training passed on their experience to two nearby colleges. Thus, the total number of colleges involved in the project was 21.

Below is the information on our efforts to address the identified group of challenges.

Bringing Courses Closer to Labor Market Demands

Until the early 1990s, in the vocational system of Uzbekistan there was a mechanism of interaction between vocational educational institutions and industrial sector through "base" enterprises when specialists were trained under the government contract upon request from base enterprises given the predetermined qualification characteristics and guaranteed employment for graduates at these enterprises in line with the requirements specified.

Currently, due to broken links with most of the base enterprises, other equally favorable conditions should be established for effective performance and development of educational institutions using other methods and forms of interaction with enterprises. Industrial and service sectors are direct consumers of graduates of vocational educational institutions. There is a task to establish direct links between educational institutions and enter-

prises. Training should meet the employers' requirements so that graduates be competitive in the labor market.

Ensuring relevance of graduates of vocational educational institutions to quantitative and qualitative labor market demands remains a topical issue in Uzbekistan. This issue has been addressed at the national policy level. For example, an objective of the National Personnel Training Program is to ensure effective integration of education, science and industry, develop mechanisms to form the state's needs, as well as the order of non-government agencies, enterprises and organizations for the number and quality of the personnel trained.⁷



College teachers are scheduling labor market survey

Within the scope of our project activities, we proposed a flexible mechanism of labor market needs analysis envisaging active participation of an educational institution. To develop this mechanism, in 2003 our organization initiated the working group formed of representatives of the consulting company "Group" and the National Observatory (the European Training Foundation (ETF) Project), which started to develop the special labor market analysis methodology. As a result, the methodology "Labor Market Analysis" was developed for quantitative and qualitative labor market assessment by an educational institution. The developers tried to take into account experiences of their foreign colleagues from Russia, Sweden, Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, USA and other countries.

To test the above methodology, in October 2003 the developers conducted the joint pilot labor market analysis in three regions of Uzbekistan (Chirchik city, Zheleznodorozhny district of Samarkand city and Toda village in Namangan region).

We are pleased to note that almost all leaders of the analyzed enterprises were enthusiastic about the survey and answered all the researchers' questions. Employers think that this was the first time that representatives of the vocational education system started to cooperate with employers and became interested in their needs.

From 2004 to today, we have been regularly carrying out trainings using the labor market analysis methodology for teachers of vocational colleges participating in our project. Currently, in each college, where we conduct vocational training courses for the unemployed, preliminary labor market survey is the basis for selection of an occupation for training.

⁷ National Personnel Training Program (Approved by the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan as of 29 August 1997).

The methodology has proven its effectiveness – it makes it possible to conduct the labor market survey and identify the labor market needs for an occupation within a short period of time and with minimum expenses (human and material).

Under the Project “INSTRUCT” we published the methodological guidelines “How to Assess the Local Labor Market Needs”.

It gives practical recommendations for application of the “Labor Market Analysis” methodology designed for assessment of local labor market needs by educational institutions.

The guidelines are designed for specialists of the vocational education system, and may also be of interest to the general public interested in advanced approaches to labor market analysis.

Curricula Development with Regard to Employers’ Requirements

It is well-known that in addition to adequate conditions, quality curriculum is essential to ensure quality training at all education levels. This factor becomes increasingly important when it comes to vocational training of adults since there are other factors like time limits, adults’ previous experiences and training needs. It has been found that a factor motivating an adult to training is increased opportunities in the labor market, which is constantly moving for a variety of reasons.

How can a curriculum be developed taking into account qualitative requirements of the labor market? How can adults’ time be spent on training to maximize benefits for them? Similar questions repeatedly arose during our project activities in Uzbekistan.

Our search led to the DACUM method,⁸ which offers answers to such questions. DACUM as a process of occupation analysis is unique since it identifies objectives of any occupation or profession within a two-day workshop.



DACUM Materials

Since 2004, we have begun to introduce this method into our project activities through a series of workshops and trainings. A specialist of the Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB) was involved as an expert.

Initially, trainings were designed to inform teachers of vocational colleges participating in our project on the method’s advantages, characteristics of preparation and carrying out of DACUM workshops. Another series of trainings aimed to train teachers in DACUM method-based curricula development techniques. In the final stages, the focus was on teachers’ skills development to independently conduct DACUM-workshops and training of multipliers.

8 Abbreviation: **D**eveloping **A** Curricul**U**M.

The practical experience showed us the following advantages of the DACUM method:

- Ensures a firm basis for curricula development or revision;
- Maximizes contribution and participation of industrial workers;
- The analysis takes two days as compared to other methods requiring much more time;
- Identifies all the key tasks;
- Strengthens links between an educational institution with commercial and industrial enterprises.

During these years, over 14 occupations have been analyzed using the DACUM method, and curricula have been developed.

We have prepared and published the methodological guidelines *"DACUM in Vocational Education"*. The guidelines are designed for vocational education specialists. It is important that specialists planning to organize and hold DACUM-workshops should undergo preliminary theoretical and practical training before they proceed to occupation analysis. These guidelines are primarily designed as the main resource for such trainings.

Professional Development of Administrative and Teaching Staff in Adult Education

We selected trainings, seminars, round tables and study tours as professional development tools. Topics of educational activities were different for each group. Training topics for teachers covered labor market analysis, curricula development with regard to employers' requirements, while for heads of vocational colleges the training was in such areas as management in AE, fundraising, as well as study tours to Germany.

Two study tours were organized – the first one in 2005 under the project *"Vocational College-Based Training and Retraining of the Unemployed in the Republic of Uzbekistan"*. During the study tour 11 persons from seven vocational colleges and relevant ministries familiarized themselves with activities of the Adult Education University in the city of Aurich.



Guests from Uzbekistan in the Adult Education University in Aurich, Germany

The second one was organized from 15 to 22 September 2007 under the TASIC IBPP project "INSTRUCT". The training group included 14 specialists in the secondary specialized vocational education system, 2 representatives of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Uzbekistan, a senior specialist from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Republic of Uzbekistan, and trainers-consultants of the consulting company Group. The group was accompanied by three staff members from the Representative Office of *dvv international* in Uzbekistan. Overall, the group included 22 persons.

The study tours were organized to familiarize our partners with the education system in Germany. The focus was on informing specialists from Uzbekistan on the activities aimed to train the unemployed carried out by the Adult Education Association, vocational schools, the Labor Agency and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Development of Social Partnership in Vocational Education

The worldwide practice shows that areas of cooperation between social partners in vocational education include: labor market demand analysis, development and modification of educational standards, teaching methodology, organization of practical training, final examinations, advanced teacher training, education infrastructure, and provision of services by vocational educational institutions.

Under this project we tried to involve social partners at almost all stages of project implementation and training. For example, the project activity at a college began with a round table. The participants were representatives of various organizations, *makhalla* committees,⁹ employment promotion centers, heads of enterprises, etc. These events informed them about the project goals, objectives and forthcoming activities. This helped us reach certain agreements with our partners and urge them to cooperate at initial stages of project implementation.

At the labor market analysis stage, we also tried to work in close cooperation with employment promotion centers, *makhalla* committees and enterprises.

Curricula were developed jointly with specialists of local enterprises and factories. They were invited to DACUM-workshops, where the joint analysis of an occupation was performed. A curriculum was based on the information collected.

In the course of our work, we agreed with the enterprises that they would arrange traineeship and organized excursions to the enterprises.

The training process is finished with examinations involving specialists from the industry sector as independent experts. Along with final examinations, we organize round tables with local employers.

Such cooperation with social partners makes it possible to jointly cope with practical

9 *Makhalla* committees are community self-governing bodies.

tasks and achieve better results at project implementation sites. This activity facilitates employment of graduates. For example, the employment rate a month after the training completion was at least 70% (including self-employment).

Promotion of Adult Education and Lifelong Learning Concept

A number of conferences were organized to promote AE and LLL among various population groups.

On 4-5 June 2003, Tashkent Business Center hosted the first Regional Conference "Education for All – Lifelong Learning in Central Asia". The Conference was organized by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, the Representative Office of *dvv international*, the UNESCO Delegation, the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized, Vocational Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan, enjoying support from the Institute for Higher and Secondary Specialized Education Issues, the National Commission for UNESCO, DAAD, as well as the Ministry of Public Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The Conference aimed to present new approaches to continuous education, establish contacts, and promote cooperation and exchange of experience among organizations involved in "Education for All".

The Conference envisaged work by the following sections:

- Continuous education policy in Central Asia region: social effect;
- Participation of the non-profit sector in the continuous education process, where the role of NGOs in adult education will be covered;
- Education under globalization as a factor of competitiveness;
- The role of higher education in continuous education;
- The role of professional associations, quality issues of adult education standards;
- Use of up-to-date techniques in adult education.

The Conference included speakers' presentations and discussions of key points. The first regional Conference resulted in adoption of the Declaration "Education for All – Lifelong Learning in Central Asia".



First regional conference, Tashkent, 4-5 June 2003



Conference in Tashkent, 2006

On 20 April 2006, Tashkent hosted the Conference on the launch of the TACIS IBPP Project “*INSTRUCT*”. The participants were representatives of the Center for Secondary Specialized Vocational Education, the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, directors and teachers of vocational colleges, as well as representatives of embassies, international organizations and mass media.

The Conference presented the following topics:

- Vocational college-based training of the unemployed;
- Key issues of skills development for the labor market in Uzbekistan and ways to address them;
- Adult education and economic development of Uzbekistan;
- 4-year experience of vocational colleges involved in the project “*Vocational-College Based Training and Retraining of the Unemployed in the Republic of Uzbekistan*” and prospective development of colleges as Adult Training Centers;
- Review of the “*INSTRUCT*” project.

Within the framework of the Conference the exhibition of the project “*Vocational-College Based Training and Retraining of the Unemployed in the Republic of Uzbekistan*” was organized, where participants could learn more about the outcomes of four year’s activities.

On 6 March 2008, another Conference “*Employment Improvement: New Approaches and Partnership*” was organized to wrap up the “*INSTRUCT*” project.

Presentations covered the following topics:

- Outcomes of the “*INSTRUCT*” Project;
- Training, retraining and professional development of persons considered unemployed as an employment improvement factor;
- Role of employers in improving employment of the population and their interrelation in the training process;
- Experience of introducing up-to-date adult education methods into vocational college activity;
- Introduction of the training and retraining system for the unemployed into Andijan Vocational Construction College activity.

Thus, the mass media were used to widely inform the population on the project outcomes and further activities planned by *dvv international* to ensure sustainability of Adult Training Centers set up at vocational colleges participating in the project.

Out Target Group at a Glance

Overall, since 2002, 112 vocational training courses have been organized and attended by over 1,180 people.

To get a comprehensive picture of the project trainees, we conducted a small survey "Project trainee's social portrait". The survey was carried out in January 2008 under the "INSTRUCT" project using questionnaire survey and document analysis methods.

The key objectives were to identify causes of unemployment and idle periods, level of education and family status. Also, important aspects of interest were trainees' age and gender composition.

We also wanted to practically confirm the already well-known hypotheses:

1. The higher the education level is, the more chances people have to get a job, and vice versa the highest unemployment rates are reported among people with low education capacity;
2. It is sensible to coordinate social support programs for low-income populations with retraining and advanced training programs for the unemployed.

Based on the social challenges and unemployment risks facing the contemporary society with market economy, one should agree with the opinion that

*"unemployment affects all aspects of social life – economic, political and social relations. It entails enormous waste of the society's main productive power – manpower, unimplemented social capacity of several millions of the unemployed, considerable decrease in potential gross domestic product and national income, heavy nonproductive expenses of the state (or, more specifically, taxpayers) for unemployment benefits, retraining of the unemployed and their employment, enormous economic losses of hired workers having become unemployed (loss of wages), and as a result, sharp deterioration of the unemployed families' living standards, increase in morbidity and crime rates, and escalation of social tension"*¹⁰

For individuals, stable employment (and earnings) is primarily the feeling of security and a stable socioeconomic situation.

10 Plyakhsya V.I. "Bezrobotitsa: teoriya i sovremennaya rossiyskaya praktika (sotsialno-ekonomicheskiy aspekt)". M.: RAGS 2004. p. 384.

Age	
18-25	39,21%
26-35	38,48%
36-45	15,44%
46-55	5,64%
56 and over	0,74%
N/A	0,49%
How long have you been unemployed?	
1 year	12,25%
1-2 years	35,54%
Over 3 years	50,49%
N/A	1,27%
What is the cause of your unemployment?	
lack of occupation and vocational education	49,51%
low wage	0,74%
lack relevant document	2,45%
no job	22,06%
have not looked for a job	0,74%
other	17,40%
N/A	7,10%
Education	
Secondary school	50,00%
Vocational or technical school	14,22%
College, Lyceum	7,84%
Higher educational institution	1,22%
Various courses	1,72%
N/A	25%

Our task was to identify our trainees' period of unemployment, since we fully recognize the results of the survey by Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld, performed back in 1938 to confirm the theory of reduced adaptive ability of employees due to long-term unemployment.

Our source of information was questionnaires filled out by each person willing to be trained at project courses. In addition to personal information, trainees had to answer questions about causes and periods of their unemployment, the number of employed family members, main source of family income, level of education (i.e. there was all the information we needed to test our survey hypotheses).

The research findings were representative owing to the analysis of 408 trainees' questionnaires (81.6% of the total number of project trainees in 2007-2008). The questionnaires collected were filled out by trainees from 10 regions of Uzbekistan, where the project was implemented.

The data obtained show that most of the project's target group (78%) were people aged 18 to 35 (See Table). This might be explained by the fact that the population in Uzbekistan is quite young.

The comparative analysis by gender showed that men accounted for 55.6% of the course trainees, and women for 44.4%.

In the above survey, Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld identified four adaptation cycle stages due to unemployment.

At stage one, loss of job causes shock, but the unemployed think that lack of jobs is temporary, stage two is characterized by an active hunt for a job, at stage three, failure to find employment causes fears, social protest and nervous breakdown. This stage is char-

acterized by family discord and broken relations with relatives and friends. At stage four, the unemployed become desperate and fatalistic about their unemployment.

Our data show that most project trainees experienced stages three and four in line with the theory of reduced adaptive ability due to long-term unemployment. For example, 36.1% of respondents stated they had been unemployed for 1 to 2 years, most respondents (50.49%) said they had been unemployed over 3 years.

It is also interesting to note the causes of unemployment as stated by project trainees – 49.51% of respondents answered *“No occupation and vocational education”*, and the other responses were as follows: 22.6% *“no job”*, 17.40% *“staff reduction at previous place of employment; childbirth and marriage (women); moving to a new place”*.

Almost half of project trainees had secondary education only. The above data also confirm that the higher their education level is, the more chances people have to get a job, and vice versa the highest unemployment rates are reported among people with low education capacity.

The above data confirm our hypothesis that it is sensible to coordinate social support programs for low-income populations with retraining and advanced training programs for the unemployed.

Findings

Having started organization of vocational courses for the unemployed, we are now at the stage of opening Adult Training Centers (ATCs) at vocational colleges in Uzbekistan. Currently, we can state that ATCs have been formally recognized by our partner colleges.

On 14 June 2008, the *“Provisions for Vocational College-Based Adult Training Centers in the Republic of Uzbekistan”* was approved by the Center for Secondary Specialized Vocational Education and will be tested under the *dvv international’s* project until 2009. It contains the key goals, objectives and activities of the Adult Training Centers.

After that, the Order of the Deputy Minister of Secondary Specialized Education and the Director of the Center for Secondary Specialized Vocational Education officially opened Adult Training Centers at 20 vocational colleges-partners of *dvv international*, where the activities will be organized in line with the Provisions.

Opinion About The Project

Nilufar Kuryazova, 24 years old, trainee
Course "Ladies and men's garment specialist"

I was born and live in the city of Khanka, Khorezm region. After finishing secondary school I could not continue training to obtain vocational education due to family reasons – this is the primary cause of my long-term unemployment.

It was the dream of my life to become a professional seamstress, however, I had limited opportunities to make my dream come true – educational institutions were located far from home, and I could not afford to go there to study, and there were family reasons as well (there are seven people in our family).



Course: ladies and men's garment specialist

Not long ago I was told that my neighbor had finished an adult training course at a college and opened her workshop where local women worked and studied. She recommended I go to the college administration, which had announced enrolment in another training course. There I was told that this training course would be funded under the European Union program. I am really happy that I was enrolled after the preliminary selection process.

From 1 December 2006 to 1 June 2007, I was trained at the course "Ladies and men's garment specialist". I liked the course organized under the project very much. I was particularly impressed with the training methodology used by trainers, which first of all took into account our age, experience and training needs. Another important aspect is that the college is near my house, and training was delivered in the afternoon – it is very convenient for married people unable to be trained far from home. In the near future I plan to open my own workshop, involve several fellow trainees and start my own business. I have no doubt that I will be able to do that – the most important thing is that I am willing to do that and have the knowledge required!

Taking this opportunity, I would like to thank all the organizations implementing this project for the training facilities provided.

Other results of our activity include the system introduced to guarantee quality curricula development. Simple, but effective techniques of labor market analysis and development of qualification requirements are integral to this system. Again, one should mention methodological guidelines “DACUM in Vocational Education” and “How to Assess the Local Labor Market Needs”, which are the main source of information to introduce the quality curricula development system at other colleges in the country.

Teachers and masters of the colleges involved in the project have obtained basic knowledge of and skills in adult training, labor market analysis and curricula development using up-to-date training techniques. They have been trained under such educational activities as “Interactive Adult Vocational Education Techniques”; Coaching; “Local Labor Market Needs Assessment”; “Organization and Delivery of the Modified DACUM Method-Based Workshops”; and “Curricula Development”.

We think that the activities conducted have contributed to education quality improvement not only under the project, but also in the colleges’ main activity – vocational training of youth in Uzbekistan.

Directors of colleges in seven regions have acquired skills in adult education, finance and personnel management. We think that this has improved professional knowledge of partner college representatives, and to a certain extent has increased their income – a lot of colleges have begun to organize fee-based courses for local people.

Most trainees responded positively to the statement “I have become more self-confident owing to the courses”. Given the above, it is safe to say that the project has produced a significant effect on the target group’s life since they have acquired relevant professional knowledge making them more competitive in the labor market. The 2007 graduates’ employment rates show that some 70% found jobs within a month after the project completion (including self-employment).

Opinion About The Project

Tatiana Tasheva, Director, Samarkand Vocational College for Light Industry



“The “INSTRUCT” project has outlined new areas of activity: adult education development, policy implementation to secure employment, and introduction of the Lifelong Learning concept in Uzbekistan. Thanks to the project, our college has started to perform a new function – as the Adult Training Center. On the one hand, this enables us to contribute to the implementation of national employment promotion programs, and raise additional funds to develop the vocational college’s physical infrastructure on the other”.

Several aspects of the project's activity have been reflected in the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Measures to Improve Employment and Performance of Labor and Social Protection Departments" №-616 dated April 6, 2007 mandating the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection jointly with the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan to specify by location the base vocational colleges to carry out training, retraining and advanced training of the unemployed, and develop relevant curricula tailored to the labor market and employers' needs for competent personnel.

Currently, the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection delivers vocational training and retraining courses for the unemployed at over 200 vocational colleges.

We consider this to be an indirect outcome of the project, which extensively promoted benefits of using vocational colleges to train and retrain the unemployed.

While being an acknowledgement of the previous project activities by *dvv international* and its partners, the official opening of the ATCs is also a challenge to all the people involved in these activities. We realize that much remains to be done to ensure that activities of the newly opened Adult Training Centers are multifaceted and meet the adult population's educational needs.

Under the above projects, *dvv international* and its partners focused on vocational training, namely, on vocational training and retraining of unemployed adults.

Vocational adult training is known to be one of the ATC activities. Such areas as civil education targeting personality development, language courses, organization of lectures, seminars and groups of interest, and advanced training for staff of local enterprises are also relevant to the current situation in Uzbekistan.

Given the above, *dvv international* continues to further facilitate the ATC development to reinforce the positive outcomes achieved under the previous projects so far.

Development of the ATC educational-methodological framework, promotion of new areas of activity, introduction of the unified certification system for trainees' knowledge and qualifications, advanced personnel training, facilitation of the ATC partnership with local enterprises, employment promotion centers and other public organizations will become *dvv international's* key activities in the near future.

Nadezhda Romanenko

Social Partnership in Non-formal Vocational Education in Kyrgyzstan

The experience of various countries shows that social partnership is a critical factor in improving the labor market situation and thus slowing down deterioration of living standards, improving the social climate, and stabilizing the economy. In contradictory settings of the market relations being formed, joint activities of representatives of various social groups and structures based on each party's interests promote addressing many social issues including adaptation of the formal and non-formal vocational education system to the new social and economic situation.

Currently, Kyrgyzstan's economy is being formed. The situation is characterized by the growing unemployment, labor migration, and a decline in industrial and agricultural production.

Protracted transition from the centrally planned to a market economy has affected the labor market situation. The labor market is characterized by the following:

- Small chance of employment, despite staff turnover, for all age groups a limited number of full-time jobs is created;
- A great number of workers mainly involved in primitive farming or being self-employed without remuneration; this activity does not result in any sizeable profit;
- Prevalent unemployment and part-time employment, mainly in the informal sector;
- A number of people who stopped seeking employment and inactive able-bodied people;
- Considerable disparities in regional labor markets and labor migration from rural areas to Bishkek and Osh cities, as well as to nearby foreign countries.

In the short-term, the labor market situation in Kyrgyz Republic will remain tight. Two population groups will primarily face employment challenges:

1. young people, i.e. graduates of vocational lyceums (VL) and higher educational institutions seeking employment; and
2. workers who dropped out of the labor market and are willing to come back, especially those over 50.

In addition, there are considerable problems with obtaining comparable data on the labor market situation. Although statistical reports are available, there seems to be lack of objective information on the labor market.

Economic transformations in Kyrgyzstan have drastically changed the vocational education development paradigm. Vocational education is increasingly becoming a tool to primarily address economic issues facing society as a whole and every individual citizen.

In the context of the labor market changes, vocational education providers, both formal and non-formal, face the need to be more flexible, respond to labor market changes in a timely fashion and search for new forms of operation and provision of educational services. In the current situation, vocational education programs should be adjusted, improved and changed quickly to ensure quality training in occupations.

Social Partnership as a Tool for Vocational Education and Quality Improvement?

One of the levers to improve quality of training in occupations and professional skills conforming to the labor market requirements is development of social partnership in vocational education.

The idea of social partnership in vocational education began to be a subject of a stormy discussion in European society within the framework of the standing committee on employment in 1970.

Finally, a consensus was reached that social partners should be given equal opportunities to make decisions about the joint social policy, which takes into account interests of all the participants. Vocational education is a significant component of employment policy. Philosophy of social partnership in vocational education implies harmonization of vocational education and advanced training and retraining in the employment system.

Social partnership is a joint activity by representatives of various social groups and structures aimed at overcoming social issues and based on safeguarding each party's interests. Social partnership in vocational training is a special type of interaction among training providers and labor market entities and institutions, government and local authorities, and community-based organizations aimed at maximum coordination of all the participants' interests.

Partnership between a vocational education provider and employers is a mutually beneficial cooperation aimed at:

- Labor market projections
- Development of new programs
- Revision of available programs
- Program financing
- Retraining of the unemployed
- Development of small and medium businesses
- Development of legal framework

Social partnership should be established with all the stakeholders that could contribute to the achievement of training providers' goals and the labor market development goals at national and local levels.

Given the well-planned partnership, a vocational training provider will gain the following advantages:

- Support in organization of vocational practical training for trainees at enterprises-partners and other enterprises;
- Support in training programs development;
- Job placement for graduates;
- Consultations with social partners on the assessment, as well as their evaluation, of competencies acquired by graduates of vocational training institutions;
- Partnership skills development;
- Supplies of equipment, either new or old, for demonstration and training purposes;
- Supplies of materials for production and training purposes, for example, wood, metal, plastic, etc.;
- Information on employment opportunities at partner enterprises;
- Counseling and assistance in trainees' career planning;
- Opportunity to invite masters of partner enterprises as lecturers and trainers;
- Organization of excursions to partner enterprises;
- Financial support in procurement or equipping of workshops and laboratories, as well as purchasing prizes for contests, etc.;
- Influx of trainees – workers in need of retraining or advanced training, or unemployed persons referred by employment services;
- Establishment of links with other employers, suppliers, associations and society to promote programs and support trainees;
- Masters-trainers' awareness of changes in production technology and latest developments.



Participants in the course "Yurt manufacturing master" in Chyrak village, Issyk Kul region, making felt for the yurt

Partnership with employers is considered essential to a vocational training provider, and if this partnership is properly planned and implemented, it will prove to be highly effective. However, a vocational training provider will not succeed a lot in partnership until it proves that this partnership is mutually beneficial.

Thus, when planning partnership development, a vocational training provider needs to motivate its partner to cooperate and show potential benefits, as well as what the partner will get out of this partnership:

- Positive reputation as an advocate of innovation in the education system among leaders of other educational institutions;
- Technologically proficient graduates as skilled personnel with required skills;
- New market opportunities and/or ideas to promote products generated through interaction with vocational training provider's teachers and leaders;
- New small and medium businesses emerging owing to graduates using their skills in independent entrepreneurial activities;
- Improved living standards of the local population through promotion of long-term economic well-being;
- Reduced tax burden through charity for education (if allowed by tax legislation);
- Job placement / demand for local human resources thanks to training in line with employers' requirements;
- Jointly developed training programs complying with employers' requirements.

Vocational Training in the Kyrgyz Republic

Vocational training and retraining of the adult population in Kyrgyzstan is reduced to activities of the Employment Service and trainings by several NGOs.

Registered unemployed persons have the right to retraining under the programs conducted by employment services at a district level. The size of training and retraining groups depends on the amount of funds allocated from the national budget. State-financed spaces are limited to the number of people that can be trained. In recent years, some 6,000 people are annually put into the list of those to be trained and retrained, though in 2005 this rate was only 5,120 people. This number of retrained persons is very small and cannot produce a significant effect on structural unemployment in Kyrgyzstan. Vocational lyceums (VL) are the main training and retraining providers both in towns and agricultural regions.

In big cities like Bishkek, Osh, Jalal-Abad, in Chui and Issyk Kul regions, more and more independent commercial training providers have started to provide their training and retraining services for the unemployed. Moreover, independent providers' services are of different quality and make use of different training standards. In 2005, 57% of the trainees were trained within the vocational education system, and the remaining 47% were trained at commercial training centers. A lot of non-government organizations carry out training and retraining of the adult population under various projects supported by donor organizations.

Below is a list of common problems associated with training and retraining within the national vocational education system and training offered by commercial providers:

1. Inability to pay for courses offering high-quality training. Currently, the fee for a 3-month course is 1,500 soms per trainee, which is even cheaper than that of the basic vocational education. Some vocational lyceums continue to train the adult population as they consider it necessary for the state, while other VLs have already closed such courses.
2. Retraining course programs often lack training in key occupations under the “life skills” program,¹ which offers the unemployed new employment opportunities and helps them better overcome difficult situations.
3. Training curricula do not envisage occupational guidance or consultations on vocational choice.
4. Vocational lyceums do not trace destinations of their trainees. Normally this is done by the Employment Service, but almost no feedback is maintained with vocational lyceums and private providers to identify the capacity to improve training programs and methods.



Participants in the course “Yurt manufacturing master” in the Chyrak village, Issyk Kul region

Kyrgyz Adult Education Association (KAEA) and *dvv international* – Partners in Vocational Training

Within the last 12 years, one of the key activities of Adult Training Centers in Kyrgyzstan, currently united into the Kyrgyz Adult Education Association (KAEA), is vocational training and professional skills development of the adult population at large.

The KAEA was established in 2006 and is a non-profit organization uniting institutions – adult training providers; it was initiated by 12 Adult Training Centers offering a lot of adult training opportunities through educational and information activities, as well as various training courses.

The KAEA mission is to help various adult population groups in Kyrgyzstan adapt to the rapidly changing economic, social and political environment and diversify self-improvement opportunities through training programs.

¹ A rare exception are Adult Training Centers offering courses to obtain such qualifications.

The Association mainly aims to write to all its members' efforts to set up and develop the effective adult education system meeting community, professional, cultural, social and moral needs of people in the contemporary developing society.

The Association has assigned itself an objective to improve quality of adult education services, create a common educational space, promote up-to-date adult training techniques, and generalize and introduce international experience in adult education development. Expansion of the regional coverage and development of the regional adult education system are two of the Association's key objectives to provide access to education for the adult population in cities and the most remote areas.

Activity:

1. Organizational Capacity Building
 - Organization of training programs for managerial, administrative and financial staff of member organizations
 - Consultations on organizational development of members and organization management
 - Advisory support to carry out educational activities and promotion of member organizations
2. Methodological Development
 - Professional development of the Association members' teaching staff at training workshops, trainings and conferences
 - Development of educational-methodological guidelines, materials and programs
 - Distribution of methodological publications, reference manuals, guidelines, and up-to-date methodologies
3. Project Implementation
 - Development and implementation of joint projects in adult education
 - Support to the Association members in project development and expert analysis
 - Consultations on donor organizations and funding opportunities
 - Training in project management

The KAEA implements educational projects in vocational training, entrepreneurship, human rights, religion, HIV/AIDS prevention, health promotion, psychology, management, environmental science, information technology, gender issues, foreign languages, etc.

The Association members are united into a common network, and activities under joint projects are based on the developed and tested guidelines, policies and strategies, as well as on planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation procedures. Available mechanisms of interaction ensure quality project implementation in line with donor organizations' requirements and the target groups' needs.

4. Information Support

- Publication of newsletters
- Development and distribution of information leaflets
- Dissemination of information through the website
- Organization of press conferences, exhibitions, and cultural activities

5. Promotion of Adult Education Concepts

including "*Lifelong Learning*" and "*Education for All*" among stakeholders in politics, science, education and culture and among the population at large

- Participation in adult education policy development in Kyrgyz Republic
- Organization of conferences, seminars, and round tables on adult education development

6. Network Expansion

- Organization of experience exchange with international, government and non-government organizations, adult training providers
- Networking with government authorities, local self-governments and profit and non-profit organizations
- Joint implementation of social, economic, cultural, scientific and other programs promoting adult education development

Adult Training Centers offer the adult population in Kyrgyzstan vocational training courses in various occupations. The courses at Adult Training Centers are short-term and practice-based. The programs are flexible and can be adjusted depending on the target groups' training level, training process and trainees' wishes. Most trainees are unemployed adults in rural areas and cities.

In 2004-2005, Adult Training Centers in partnership with *dvv international* implemented the project "*Social Partnership in Vocational Training*" funded by the European Union's IBPP Program. This project aimed to reduce the unemployment level in Kyrgyzstan through establishment, development and strengthening of long-term cooperation between Adult

Training Centers, employment departments, and associations of entrepreneurs by building technical, pedagogical and organizational capacity of partner organizations, introduction of dual education elements in several districts of six regions in Kyrgyzstan, as well as carrying out of various adult education activities.

This project's goals were achieved by organization of project activities for two target groups: the unemployed in several districts of Kyrgyzstan as the first target group and administration of Adult Training Centers, employment departments, and associations of entrepreneurs as the second target group in 10 districts of Kyrgyzstan. Vocational training courses enabled the unemployed to start income generating activities or find jobs. The courses, seminars, and conferences for partner organizations strengthened their organizational capacity, as well as the innovative model of social partnership in vocational education able to operate after project completion.

Within the whole project implementation period, 36 courses were delivered covering 551 unemployed persons in the following occupations:

1. Hairdresser
2. Welder
3. Electrician
4. Appliance repairman
5. Office manager
6. Waiter-barman

A partner in this project was the employment agency responsible for forming groups from among registered unemployed persons, payment of stipends to the trainees, co-financing of course organization and delivery. Moreover, the employment agency regularly monitored and evaluated the courses conducted. In addition, under the project the labor market analysis was jointly performed by Adult Training Centers and the employment agency after a special training.

Another social partner involved in project implementation was employers. Their role was to provide industrial base for practical training of the trainees, evaluate graduates' competencies and skills, as well as participate in the development and adjustment of training programs. The employers also acted as industrial training masters and carried out practical training sessions for trainees at their enterprises. Upon course completion, the employers secured jobs for course graduates. As a result, 48% of course graduates were employed.

Representatives of social partners were involved in the activities of the Project Coordinating Council and directly participated in project planning, implementation and monitoring. Most importantly, a social dialog between partners was developing during the project activities, and they achieved a common understanding of partnership and interaction principles based on:

- Openness and mutual trust
- Strict observance of commitments
- Joint decision making and equality of partners' rights irrespective of their contribution
- Clarity of each partner's goals and common goals of all partners
- Clear structure of roles and contributions prior to project implementation
- Continuous joint monitoring and control over project activities

An opportunity for social dialog opens various prospects for further development and strengthening of links at both regional and national levels.

The social partnership model established under this project was continued to be used in organization of courses offered by the Adult Training Centers and under the project *"Non-Formal Vocational Training in Rural Areas of Kyrgyzstan"* implemented by the KAEA jointly with *dvv international* and funded by the EU IBPP Program. The project is designed for 2008-2009 and aims to improve the employment level and opportunities for income-generating activities for poor unemployed rural populations by offering more short-term courses and access to training in various professional skills in demand in the local labor market.

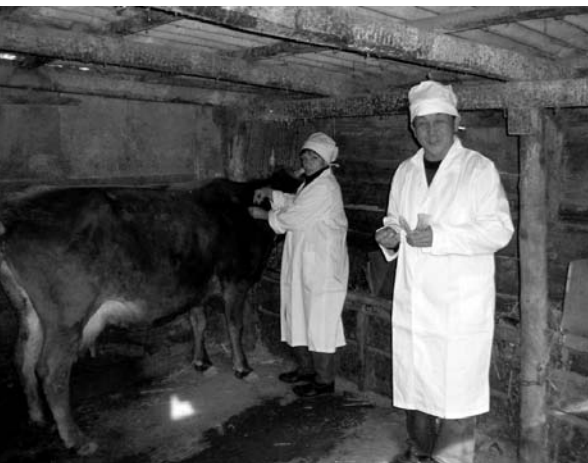


Participants in the course "Master to manufacture national clothes" in Sovetskoe village, Chui district

The project activities cover 36 villages in Kyrgyzstan, where courses in the following occupations will be delivered:

1. Household veterinarian
2. Yurt manufacturing master
3. Master to manufacture national clothes
4. Master to manufacture national interior design
5. Milk processing master
6. Tailor

Selection of these occupations is necessitated by universal unemployment reported in rural areas of Kyrgyzstan, and many people leave for Bishkek or neighboring countries to earn money for themselves and their families. Occupations obtained by unemployed rural peo-



Participants in the course “Household veterinarian” in Kalininskoe village, Zhayyil district

ple under this project will enable them to earn money staying in their places of residence and possibly to develop their businesses.

The courses are organized in villages so that trainees could be trained in the district they live in. One of the 6 key ideas of the EU Memorandum “*Lifelong Learning*” is bringing training closer to home. The project activities have contributed to the implementation of this idea in Kyrgyzstan and ensuring accessible education for common poor people in rural areas. Each Adult Training Center (ATC) has equipped a traveling training workshop with all necessary tools, equipment and materials to ensure quality training. These training workshops are portable and can easily be

installed in each district. After the groups are formed, the portable workshop goes to a village, is installed and remains there until the course is finished. Premises for portable workshops will be provided by the local administration depending on which premises are available in the village: rural library, school, etc.

Thus, under this project local authorities – district and rural administrations – are involved as social partners, and their role is to inform the population on the courses being delivered, attract them to participate in the courses, provide premises and render practical assistance to organize transportation of equipment for portable workshops.

For example, in Sovetskoe village, Chui district, courses in producing national clothes are conducted at the rural club, which was refurbished by the village administration specifically to deliver courses.

In Belovodskoe village, Moscow district, the theoretical part of the course “*Milk processing master*” is carried out at a secondary school, while the practical part is delivered on a villager’s backyard farm.

In Ak-Ulen village, Ton district, Issyk Kul region, rural administration provided premises for theoretical classes in the occupation “*Household veterinarian*”, and the practical part is carried out on course participants’ backyard farms.

In “*Dostuk*” village, Naryn district, rural administration provided the hall to deliver the course “*Master for the manufacture of national interior design*” and supplied the equipment to the village.

In Kalininskoe village, Zhayyil district, the training was carried out in partnership with the Vet-

erinary Department of Zhayyil district, which recommended teachers for the course based on their professional level. Also, the partners in course organization were Krasnovostochniy Rural Council, which provided premises for classes and formed a group of rural people.

The social partnership models established under the projects help Adult Training Centers remain popular and train personnel with professional and technical skills and attitude to work meeting the employers' requirements. The well-being of the nation and its population depends on how successfully such competencies promote employment or help carry out independent entrepreneurial activities. Since available enterprises cannot provide jobs to all people seeking employment, Adult Training Centers guide their graduates to self-employment and private business options after the course completion. To ensure graduates' readiness for these activities, the course program includes such subjects as *"Business and entrepreneurship"*.

It goes without saying that the activities of Adult Training Centers under various projects and their own activities in non-formal vocational training would not be that successful without proper social partnership development planning. It is participation of employment services, employers, local administration and other stakeholders that enabled the graduates to obtain skills that are in demand in the labor market, find jobs and start developing their businesses.

Sokol Avxhiu

Ten Years Supporting VET in Albania



Tailor training course

There is no doubt that initial and continuing vocational training (VT) is an indispensable element for sustainable and prosperous development of a country and society. Unfortunately, after an unlucky and notorious period in 1997 and 1998 the clock stopped for public vocational training in Albania. It was in a near-collapse situation when DVV arrived in the country in the spring of 1999 to establish an office for support of adult education sector development, in particular of vocational training. The *dvv international* Project Office in Albania soon became one of the most renowned actors in the

sector whose contribution was highly appraised for its effectiveness and directness.

The team assigned by DVV conducted careful research in 1999 on the possible scope of activities within the adult education sector. The research results and the needs expressed by important national actors and stakeholders oriented DVV work on vocational training for adults which would become the core area for the DVV project office for the next 10 years. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs was defined as the top level beneficiary partner as it was by law the authority in charge of vocational training management.

What is the structure of the public vocational training provision in Albania? The Ministry of Labour remains at the policy level and is also responsible for the overall management of the public training system. It has a national agency under command, the National Employment Service (NES), which is responsible for the daily management of training programmes and other employment services. Public vocational training is provided through a network of ten vocational training centres (VTC), one of which is mobile. Nine centres are situated in the biggest urban areas, the mobile one is responsible for an extended geographic area in Northeast Albania with scarce population. The network of public vocational training centres had significantly higher training capacities in 1999 – 2007 if compared to the private one. The number of trainees varied from 5,500 to 8,500 per year. Back in 1999 the VTC's were in a desperate situation. Their positive experience until 1997

with the establishment of first courses for languages, computer skills and a very few professions, was interrupted and premises were partly destroyed during the civil riots in 1997. DVV arrived at the right time to assist the VTCs to recover and gradually expand the training profiles and increase the number of trainees. DVV negotiated a framework agreement with the Ministry of Labour and then established cooperation agreements with each of the centres. The two-level agreement helped very much to make DVV interventions more flexible in content and in timing. The needs for inter-



Tailor training course

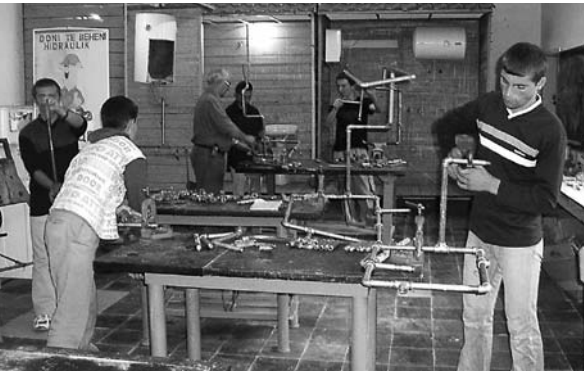
vention at the macrolevel, concerning the whole VTC network, were discussed and agreed with the Ministry of Labour and the National Employment Service, while the specific needs at each VTC were discussed with the managers of VTCs in each of the districts. DVV cared for geographically and demographically fair distribution of intervention measures and avoided working only in the easy-to-reach areas of the country.

Soon after the establishment of the DVV office and the formal agreements, the DVV Project Office became the closest partner and accompaniant of the VTCs. The project office worked for many years for development of modern module-based curricula, capacity building for trainers and managers, purchase and supply of necessary equipment, delivery of targeted training programmes. Hence, DVV equipped each centre with complete classrooms for language training, complete computer laboratories, complete sewing training workshop. Particular VTCs in possession of suitable premises received equipment for various specialisation courses like plumbing, electric installations, car mechanics, welding, home appliance repair, aluminium processing, construction related professions, etc. Investments in the VTCs always went in parallel to the respective curriculum development process.

So, the DVV office in Tirana organised and funded for more than 5 years a series of seminars which led to formulation of curricula for adult training for plumbers, electricians, hair dressers, welders, car mechanics, construction workers, etc. Although the training programme docu-



Tailor training course



Construction workers training

mentation was developed with experts for public VTCs, it was made available to any other training provider which would like to work with these products.

In the years 1999 – 2003, DVV invested a lot in management training for directors of VTCs. This was a combined effort with school management training in order to further develop human capacity at management level of both formal vocational schools and vocational training centres. The purpose was not only to equip directors with management skills related to the scope of their activity, but also to bring

vocational schools and centres closer to each other and enhance their local cooperation for a better management of their own material and human resources. Hence, vocational training centres could use existing workshops and qualified teachers of the schools. However, it turned out that school-centre relations developed only through good personal relations of respective directors, but could not be accommodated into a legal framework.

As one can easily observe that intervention measures of the DVV Project office started at providers' level with workshop equipment and funded training programmes, this was combined with expertise for curricula development, textbooks, ToT and management training. DVV naturally stepped up to the policy-making level in order to make the whole investment and assistance more sustainable. The research capacities of the DVV staff and the extensive knowledge at grass root level played a crucial role for formulation of advice and proposals for reform.

DVV established and supported an expert working group which conducted research on the public vocational training provision and produced a report with proposals for reform in the management of the VTCs. The proposal was supported by a decision of the Council of Ministers and started its implementation in 2004. The reform aimed at restructuring the management of each VTC and making it locally accountable in order to better respond to labour market needs in the regions where they operate. The VTCs would thus receive extensive autonomy and flexibility. However, changes at the top level of the Ministry of Labour, conditioned by political reconfiguration of the government, hindered further implementation of the agreed reform.

An important lesson was learnt here: although people at policy level might change and thus this may become a handicap, real and sustainable reforms, at least in Albania, can be successful only if a strong, committed political pressure accompanies it. This proved to be right when EU-funded CARDS VET Reform Support Programme was launched. The contin-

uous pressure from the EU-Commission was able to overcome difficulties that smaller bilateral projects are not able to solve.

The CARDS VET programme was tendered and its implementation was trusted to a consortium where *dvv International* is a member in all three phases of the programme. The 3rd phase will be completed in April 2010. The CARDS VET programme is tackling several reform issues. The ones more relevant to adult training include development of a two-level curriculum, the Albanian Qualifications Framework and the rationalisation of VET management at



Longlife Learning Week

local level which aims at bringing under the same umbrella both VET schools and VTCs. These and other topics have been the main focus of coordination work between foreign donor funded projects in VET.

As coordination by the Albanian beneficiary was lacking, implementing agencies of several projects funded by donors in Germany (GTZ and *dvv international*), Austria (*Kulturkontakt*) and Switzerland (*Swisscontact*) took the initiative and created, in the year 2000, a coordination forum of VET projects which was baptised as DACH Group (D = Germany, A = Austria, Ch = Switzerland). Since then the managers of the involved projects meet on a regular basis every month to exchange information about their projects and plans. They also inform and discuss with each other about trends and developments of concern for the daily and longer-term business of the DACH members. Joint initiatives and activities are defined within the group in order to achieve the outmost synergy between different development projects with the same overall goals: support for improvement in the VET sectors. DAC Group expanded several times to include new members like CARDS VET, Education Centre Elbasan (ICCO funded projects), British Council, GTZ projects, etc.

Upon arrival and launch of the CARDS VET projects, DVV analysed the new situation and concluded that emergency interventions in the system of vocational training for adults were slowly becoming less necessary and the time had come to focus on a comprehensive reform of the VET system. DVV was a member of the implementing consortium in all three phases and provided its accumulated know-how on vocational training for adults which would help the resident project management team for a better orientation in the VET sector. The DVV staff would take a crucial role for advisory activities in the daily business and continuous membership of the Project Steering Committees. CARDS VET team was immediately invited to join DACH Group and it very soon became an orientation path for all other members, whereby DVV also adapted its direction to fit with the reform



Opening ceremony of the Longlife Learning Week

perspectives. The reform was under the leadership of CARDS VET and the best DVV could do was to follow the reform process in its intervention inputs.

As major actors like CARDS VET are pushing forward for reform and other well-funded projects like Swisscontact were pouring more and more money in the VET sector in general and onto a selection of public VET providers, DVV reviewed its intervention policy. *dvv international* decided to gradually reduce its large-scale interventions in the public VET providers and preferred to focus on innova-

tive projects within the sector. Hence, a bigger share of energy and financial means actually goes into two main directions. First, to the state-run, mobile training centre operating in the poor north-eastern part of the country, which is in charge of covering the relatively scarcely populated mountainous region at the border to Kosova. Second, to the increasingly important sector of quality development and quality mechanisms in the VET sector, whereby *dvv international* is importing and adapting modern training systems on selected topics. These two directions are explained in the following paragraphs.

The mobile training centre was initially developed within the DVV office in Tirana back in 2004 and 2005. The Ministry of Labour had set a goal in its policies: it aimed at establishing VTCs all over the country, even in the regions with a limited number of people. Based on a previous experience with the Ministry of Labour (2000 – 2002), DVV tended to avoid establishment of in-efficient static training centres where start-up costs and cost-effectiveness were not in a fair relation. Hence, DVV conducted research and collected data which led to the conclusion that the northeastern region of Albania should be covered through a mobile training centre, which would make use of the small employments services agencies already present in those small districts. *dvv international* prepared the concept and presented it to the Ministry of Labour which embraced the proposal without hesitation. DVV office in Tirana acted as a continuous advisor for further improvement of the concept and resolution of various issues which rose during the start-up process. DVV support included several important initiatives, although it was never limited to these. DVV supported the mobile VTC to acquire and implement an EU-funded project which allowed a labour market analysis for five districts in northeastern Albania. The results of the projects served as the basis for vocational training provision by the mobile VTC. DVV also supplied equipment for the new administration premises and furniture and PCs for computer and language training. The most important cooperation with the mobile VTC consisted of

two training programmes for young unemployed job-seekers in the areas of Kukës and Tropoja. Both towns (districts) are situated at the border with Kosovo and are at a reasonable distance from Prizren and Gjakova respectively in Kosovo (30 – 40-minute drive). The employment services agencies in those areas together with the mobile training centre management organised a promotional campaign and series of interviews to identify the candidates for the training according to the range of courses provided on the other side of the border in Kosovo.



Tailor training course

DVV sponsored transportation costs for trainees and partly took over the organisational burden of the programme. This programme was marked as most effective training measure thanks to the high responsiveness and flexibility which were fundamental features of the programme. Special thanks should go to the Kosovar partners, the vocational training centres in Prizren and Gjakova and the Ministry of Labour. The DVV Office in Prishtina played a crucial role in the project preparation and negotiation. This cross-border cooperation project has been appreciated and highlighted by high officials of the Albanian Ministry of Labour on several public and non-public occasions. The Ministry itself has promoted the project outcomes in the electronic and print media.

Development of quality mechanisms has, since 2003, become a core business of the *dvv international* project office in Tirana. Therefore it has invested a significant share of its resources for import and adaptation of international certification systems which enjoy wide recognition in European countries. DVV has purchased licences to establish and further adapt three certification systems one after the other: Xpert – European Computer Passport (Xpert-ECP), Xpert – Personal Business Skills (Xpert-PBS) and European Business Competence Licence (EBC*L). All the systems arrive in Albania as complete packages which consist of textbook, teaching materials, training programmes, and standardised tests, which are followed by issuance of internationally recognised certificates. The functioning of these systems as independent examination authority and completely separate from training provisions, serve as a quality test mechanism for trainees and training providers. Based on the knowledge of the training market needs, DVV started with Xpert-ECP as the demand for certified computer skills was defined as large. Then Xpert – Personal Business Skills was brought to the country and thus introduced for the first time on the training market an indicator for soft skills measurement and also brought very compact training modules which were more praxis-oriented than ever before. This was followed by EBC*L as entrepreneurship training



Further Education Fair

was an obvious need, but at the same time also an articulated demand by Albanian government authorities and a suggestion made by the European Commission to the government. DVV is strongly supporting the creation of a national examination centre which would run all three certification systems country-wide. The support has been very strong up to the end of 2008. It is designed to gradually reduce in 2009 and probably phase out by the end of 2010. The national examination centre should then run on its own, licence rights will meanwhile be transferred to this centre. This would make DVV efforts and investment sustainable in time.

As final remarks one could easily assess that *dvv international* has been a main actor in the public vocational training sector between 1999 – 2006, its contribution has been highly appreciated not only within the Ministry of Labour, but also beyond. The outgoing project manager in 2006, Mr. Jochen Blanken, received “*Naim Frashëri Order*” from the President of the Republic of Albania, proposed by the Minister of Labour, with the observation “*for special merits and contribution in the development of the education and training system in Albania*”. The same project manager received the title “*Citizen of Honour in Farka Commune*”, a suburban area near Tirana where for about 5 years DVV supported the establishment of an adult education provider

similar to the German folk high schools. After arrival of CARDS VET as a major actor pushing for fundamental reform, *dvv international* in Albania re-positioned itself in order to preserve its high profile and ensure that optimum effectiveness and impact is delivered through well-targeteted and innovative projects, although the available resources are gradually being reduced. *dvv international* has further consolidated as a national reference organisation in the sector of adult education, with special emphasis on vocational training.



Welder training course

Miroslava Bagrinez

An "IMPULS" for Education and Employment

The Training and Industrial Complex "Impuls" was set up in 1996 as a project of *dvv international*. In the first two years, the training center operated as a division of the district government administration in Skol, Lvov region, and in 1998 it became a separate legal entity.

The key idea of the project "Adult Education in the Carpathian Area of Lvov Region" is to help the adult population in the region with Lifelong Learning through organization and implementation of effective and innovative educational activities and programs.



Computertraining for women

The project started in 1996 and includes the following main stages:

- assessment of adult education status in the Carpathian area, as well as identification of population training needs based on various meetings and consultations with representatives of all the stakeholders;
- establishment of the model nongovernmental educational agency – the Training and Industrial Complex "Impuls", which includes a network of computer classrooms in four districts of the region united into the Association of Computer Centers in Lvov region, as well as industrial branches for vocational training: mini-bakery, sewing and carpenter shops;
- strengthening of the "Impuls" infrastructure and its capacity not only to implement educational programs, but also to address social and economic issues of rural communities and the region as a whole by building various partner relations;

The training center "Impuls" is a continuously developing mechanism that mobilizes all resources at a local level through partnership network coordination and development to enhance the human factor in the economic development of the region.

"Impuls" is a reliable partner for people who have lost their jobs and are willing to obtain



Computer training for women

the knowledge, skills and competencies required for future professional life in the new market economy context.

Given limited employment opportunities, many people living in mountainous areas go to other areas to work. Due to remoteness of villages from traffic arteries, rough roads, poor communications, as well as living conditions of teachers and specialists, the Carpathian area has become a partially closed system.

Most school leavers enter distance education departments at various higher educational institutions and remain a rural family's basis responsible for household man-

agement. Prestigious educational institutions are often not accessible to school leavers in Carpathian villages. Vocational education is frequently not available to various youth groups due to remoteness of educational institutions and the impossibility of leaving their families. This is true, first of all, for young people from low-income families.

In this regard, adult education is of special importance. Using material resources of schools (classrooms, training and technical equipment), rural cultural centers, and private firms on contract and mutually beneficial basis, the Training and Industrial Complex "Impuls" provides opportunities for various segments of the adult population in the region to study, upgrade their qualifications, obtain consultations and information to implement their ideas and wishes for both professional and personal growth. Educational activities among the rural population lead to a conclusion that today, to orient oneself in the sea of information, it is most important to develop a commitment and habit to self-education, self-instruction and self-improvement throughout one's active professional life rather than obtain specific knowledge. All educational services provided by "Impuls" to regional population pursue this objective. As a result, there is an increase in the quantitative and qualitative indicators of educational activities.

To date, "Impuls" has set up a network of classrooms and industrial branches, where specific knowledge and skills could be obtained: 5 computer classrooms in different population centers of the region, as well as the training and manufacturing enterprise "Master" and bakery "Smak", where specialists in woodworking and bread-making could be trained. Annually, some 80 people, including school leavers and unemployed persons referred by a district employment center, are trained in these occupations at the "vocational school of excellence". After completion of the course, part of the graduates continue their productive activities at enterprises for at least three months. Statistical analysis for the past two years sug-

gests that 70% of vocational course graduates have found jobs or started their businesses.

Computer training is organized in the form of several educational projects. "Impuls" has initiated and annually conducts "Weekend Schools", where it intensively cooperates with the Institute for Entrepreneurship and Advanced Technology of Lvov. Annually, over 100 senior schoolchildren from the whole district are trained in information and computer operation at "Impuls" computer classrooms.

It has become popular among young people in the Lvov region to participate in the Summer Camp of young information specialists, which is carried out annually at computer centers in the Skol district. The trainees can improve their knowledge of information technology during the summer holidays and at the same time have a good rest in the Carpathians. Such trips are frequently organized jointly with the Social Services Center for senior schoolchildren and young people from low-income families.

A regular 3-day workshop for teachers of information science is held biannually (March and December), during holidays at the Skol computer center. The project aims to provide consultations and methodological support, as well as inform teachers on the latest innovations in computer technology. The project has been implemented jointly with the Department for Information Technology of Lvov Polytechnical University and the district education department. The participants are split into two sections "Information-processing systems operation and decision-making" and "Up-to-date techniques for school-based information technology training".

Foreign language courses have been and remain one of the most important activities, which rank second after computer courses in terms of demand among adult population and youth. Various target groups take foreign language courses, from senior schoolchildren to directors of enterprises and other government and non-government organizations. Foreign language courses are especially popular among tourism entrepreneurs and operational staff at hotels and restaurants.

Activities in civil and political education are also in strong demand.

Much attention is given to vocational training and retraining of young people and adults in the region. The number of trainees taking courses in various occupations and other educational activities offered by "Impuls" is increasing, and in 2008 it is over 800 people including unemployed persons referred by a district employment center.

Vocational training and retraining is carried out in the following occupations:

- joiner
- baker
- salesperson
- secretary- records manager
- plasterer
- tile layer



Training in gastronomy

- cook
- computer operator

Most courses end with an examination, which is graded by representatives of a vocational technical school in the Lvov region.

Computer courses remain one of the most popular areas in vocational education. The project's funding made it possible to upgrade computer classroom equipment procured back in 1996-97 that required heavy maintenance costs. That had affected the quality of the classes and courses delivered.

Recently, in addition to basic computer knowledge and skills the need to obtain various types of information has become widespread among the population. In this regard, Internet technologies are becoming increasingly popular. Annually, over 300 trainees master Internet operation skills at the computer classroom network.

The computer center "Novamedia" in Lvov remains a reliable and permanent partner in the training of specialists in system administration, presentation projects development, web development and design, as well as training and advanced training of pedagogical staff for "Impuls" computer centers.

The Training and Industrial Complex "Impuls" is strenuously bridging a gap in vocational education in rural areas developing personnel training programs jointly with employment centers, public educational institutions in the Lvov region, the social services center for young people, community-based organizations and employers.

When carrying out educational activities, "Impuls" takes into account the important socio-psychological factor for all target groups: this is training in peripheral groups where people can live with their families and rationally combine household tasks with participation in various educational activities. A priority task of "Impuls" is to bring education as close to people as possible.

Thanks to a creative approach to the organization of vocational education, skills competitions among course graduates are very popular with the district population and employers. Selling exhibitions of course trainees' items always brightens up various festivities in many regional population centers. It has become an established tradition to organize them during the Christmas and Easter seasons.

To revive forgotten occupations and local crafts, various master classes are held jointly

with recognized experts in the district. Possible establishment of local workshops to produce wooden souvenirs, sheep skin processing, fence weaving from bushes for site improvement, etc. is discussed at seminars and round tables on educational issues in the Carpathian area.

To ensure social protection of various low-income populations, "Impuls", jointly with the Employment Center, district education department and the Social Services Center for young people under the district government administration, takes an active part in the social programs:

- "New start" – training for women who have been unemployed for a long time
- Agricultural business school – practical workshops for rural youth
- Health promotion – lectures-consultations for "problem" youth
- Job fairs – meetings of course graduates with employers



Training in gastronomy

The number of participants in educational activities conducted by "Impuls" is increasing year by year. Some 70% of all the trainees are young people aged 16-29. Short-term courses up to 1 month are especially popular.

A priority of "Impuls" in vocational training of youth and adults is personnel training for the tourism sector which is critical to economic development of the region.

Tourism development prospects in the Carpathians and issues associated with the relevant personnel training are frequent topics of seminars and round tables organized jointly with the district Tourism Development Association.

Under the project "Support to Women's Rural Tourism Initiatives" for representatives of rural communities round tables and trainings are held in how to start a business in rural tourism and tourist services. The Coordinating Council set up under the district council regularly takes into account specific characteristics of the district, which has a well-developed network of health resorts and tourism facilities. The tourism personnel training program takes into account the interests of employers, unemployed persons and local authorities. Most organizational activities are done by the "Impuls" staff.

Study tours to other regions of the Ukraine and abroad (Germany and Poland) are organized to exchange experience in tourism development and train personnel for tourism sector.

As questionnaire survey of potential users of educational services has demonstrated that



Computer training for young adults women

the following occupations – waiters, barmen, hotel administrators, tour operators and hair-dressers – are in especially strong demand in the regional labor market. To train specialists for the tourism sector, “Impuls” has signed the Cooperation Agreement with the Lvov Vocational High School for Restaurant Services and Tourism. Owing to the introduction of flexible training programs and project financing from the Institute for International Cooperation every year, starting with 2005, some 40-50 people, mainly unemployed youth, undergo restaurant and hotel personnel training courses.

“Impuls” takes into account regional characteristics when selecting occupations and specialties for future training courses, since there are significant differences between labor markets in Lvov and in other regions. Thus, “Impuls” responds quickly to labor market demands, which are identified using mini-marketing research. Training is opened in the occupations, for which there are niches on the one hand, and which are required for the region on the other. The training center’s activities aim to set up a training pattern which would be in line with the local employment pattern, so that all people can find jobs in their places of residence relevant to their education rather than search for them somewhere else trying to improve their living standards – this situation results in disparities in development of the regions and the center and causes “depressive” cities, villages and regions to appear.

Market reforms also require a new approach to the organization of vocational education for the unemployed. Therefore, “Impuls” organizes advanced training upon requests from employers. Cooperation with enterprises to train specialists given the guaranteed employment is planned in the long term.

The permanent “Training and Business Center for Entrepreneurs” has been established to promote self-employment and entrepreneurship, organize traineeship for small and medium businesses and offer consultations for first-time entrepreneurs from among the unemployed.

Courses “Entrepreneurship fundamentals”, “How to start your own business”, “Taxation policy in entrepreneurship”, “Business project development” and others related to basic knowledge of entrepreneurship are of particular interest to trainees.

Focus on Villages

Rural unemployment remains a pressing issue for the region. Green tourism is promising for some population centers, and consumer services infrastructure for others. “Impuls”,

along with the district employment center, develops programs and provides material and technical resources so that unemployed people can master Ukrainian hand-embroidery and manufacturing of wooden souvenirs and smallware.

Industrial training masters and experienced teachers from vocational technical schools in the region as well as skilled workers on site are regularly invited to organize courses for the unemployed.

The "Impuls" Training Center's interaction with the district employment center and employers in preparation and organization of training courses is being changed considerably as cutting-edge technology is being introduced in the course of the region's economic development. Old traditional occupations die away and new ones emerge. The obvious need arises to expand the trainees' professional and social competencies.

Jointly with local executive authorities, local governments, social partners and community-based organizations, "Impuls" addresses the issue of professional imbalance in the local labor market, bringing together opportunities for personnel training and meeting the employers' needs for quality manpower by carrying out meetings, round tables, open days, job fairs, and open final examinations-presentations.

Strengthening business relations with rural economic agents plays an important role in the organization of training and advanced training of the unemployed in rural areas. Targeted training of the unemployed is delivered upon an employer's request, given the specific jobs available. This cooperation mechanism "Impuls" – Employment Center – Employer is the most effective one and makes it possible to

- ensure flexibility of training and professional programs taking into account labor market changes
- study and undergo traineeship at a specific workplace
- create new jobs

Thanks to such cooperation and in line with the local program to facilitate population training and employment, some 50 persons are annually trained at general and individual training courses.

Depending on the profile of a course, which is selected according to the target group needs, society, available teaching staff working on a contractual basis and material and technical resources, the course can be organized both at "Impuls" classrooms and secondary schools, rural clubs or directly at firms (on a contractual basis). To ensure mutually beneficial cooperation among various organizations, as well as development of a joint action plan to promote effective and bureaucracy-free utilization of efforts and resources and improve organizational activities, the Coordinating Council on the education of youth and the unemployed under the district council was initiated by the training center "Impuls" in



Computer training for young adults

2003. Moreover, in the district there is a network of secondary school-based occupational guidance and consultation centers, as well as a group of rural coordinators responsible for surveys of prospective clients for regional educational programs.

It is coordinators that help analyze and form the general picture of demand for certain educational services among the local population. They are the first link in the local education system activities. On the other hand, information on educational activities for various target groups at a district center, places of residence, as well as conditions and

opportunities for participation is submitted through local coordinators using various means at the local level. As a rule, they are people from rural councils or proactive leaders of local communities (deputies, teachers, etc.) For example, a total of 11 coordinators work in Skol district. Field meetings, workshops and trainings are held bimonthly. At joint meetings with frequent participation of district authorities, topical issues pertaining to preparation for regular activities, their financing and routine problems are discussed. As a rule, success or challenges in organization of educational activities often directly depend on coordinators' ability to focus the attention of the whole active rural community, including heads of rural councils, deputies, school directors, teachers, entrepreneurs and social leaders, on important and pressing issues of preparing young people for professional and social activities.

An illustrative example of youth education promotion is the experience of the head of Volosyanka village, a member of the district Coordinating Council on education, who could involve sponsors – owners of hotel complexes located in the rural community area in construction of the workshop, which is equipped with necessary tools and used as a classroom for courses in wood-working, producing souvenirs and master classes. Unemployed persons and young people on site can obtain the required skills and competencies, which, as shown by experience, enable them to earn their living. In this area there is a great employers' demand for manpower to process wood since in this area, like in Slavskoe village, there is rapid construction of hotels, cottages, restaurants in the Boykov style for which wood is the main construction material.

Similar examples are not only a way for young people to organize their life in rural areas, which otherwise would be without any activities and control, but also generators of new ideas and initiatives among community activists in the region.

Currently, most unemployed people in the region are youth and graduates of higher educational institutions. Society is disoriented since common links between the level of education, job opportunities and remuneration of labor are broken. Prestigious professions – lawyer, manag-

er and economist – in mass fashion have resulted in the deteriorated quality of training and underemployment. The state is not responsible for securing jobs for graduates, but exercises control over the content of education as it did in the Soviet era. Again, the state frequently offers unified programs in the form of standards which are in line with neither regional characteristics nor regional labor market demands. This negative trend is also common to the Carpathian area of the Lvov region. Thus, a priority objective is to establish the new mechanism for identification and coordination of different interests through development and testing of new educational standards. In this regard, development of local initiatives is supposed to be of great importance.

Occupational guidance activities carried out by the training center "Impuls" aim to help young people select their future occupations according to their interests and self-assessment of their abilities and current labor market demands.

Flexible organization of cooperation with various partners in education makes it possible to introduce and test innovations at the local level in the course of adult education in various areas, and improves the basic cooperation pattern "Impuls" – Employment Center – Educational Institution – Enterprise. Within the framework of such cooperation, educational and social projects are being implemented successfully:

- "Education and career" – for secondary school leavers in the district
- "Mercy" – for disabled children and orphans
- "Survival school" (trainings) – for poor single women
- "Festivity with your own hands" – for anyone
- "My assistant: PC" – for school and enterprise directors
- "Basics of handicraft" – for unemployed women
- "Through independence to business" – for unemployed persons
- "Weekend school" – regular courses for young people
- Information workshop "Where to study?" – for anyone

Thanks to the project, the effective model of educational service delivery to the adult population has been developed and established, and makes it possible to successfully implement educational policy at a local level irrespective of central management structures. The main project outcome is development and implementation of the regional policy to involve social partners in the personnel training system development at a local level.

Regardless of many challenges and difficulties primarily associated with lack of the law on adult education that would legally regulate all organizational and financial arrangements for activities of non-government educational organizations, the training center "Impuls" with its ten-year experience deserves to be considered a leader among non-government adult education institutions. People come to this center, are interested in its activities, get acquainted and sign up since "Impuls" is a guarantee of quality and success.

Olga Dekhtiarenko

Experiences of Project-based Cooperation with *dvv international* in Adult Education Development in the Republic of Belarus

The Republican Institute for Vocational Education (RIPO) was established in 1992 under the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus and is the leading institution in the Republic of Belarus in development of the national vocational education strategy.

In general, objectives of the Institute can be presented as scientific-methodological support to the educational process, legal, organizational, economic and social basis of vocational-technical and secondary specialized education, advanced training, traineeship and retraining of employees (management and specialists of organizations). Its objectives also include training of highly-qualified research workers, specialists with secondary specialized education and qualified workers with vocational-technical education, as well as continuous vocational training of workers (office workers). Continuous vocational education of workers (office workers) at the Institute is carried out as vocational training, retraining, advanced training and targeted courses.

The Institute includes:

- the center for vocational-technical and secondary specialized education development
- the center for scientific-methodological support to vocational-technical and secondary specialized education
- the center for information technology
- the center for scientific-methodological support to educational work at institutions providing vocational-technical and secondary specialized education
- the center for educational books and training aids
- the department for advanced training and retraining of personnel
- centers for training, advanced training and retraining of personnel
- the branch "*Vocational-Technical College*"
- the branch "*Industrial-Pedagogical College*"
- postgraduate training
- chairs, departments, divisions, laboratories, rooms and other structural departments

The total number of the Institute staff is 870, 45 of them have academic ranks and degrees.

From 1994 to 2008, the Institute implemented over 220 scientific-research works and projects on the issues facing systematic development of vocational education for such clients as the European Training Foundation, ministries and agencies of the Republic of Belarus (Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, Ministry of Economy, line ministries, the Committee on Science and Technology, employment services, and regional education departments), educational institutions and industrial enterprises.

The regulatory and legal documents in vocational education developed with direct participation of RIPO include the Law "On Vocational-Technical Education in the Republic of Belarus" (2003), the Concept and Program for Vocational-Technical Education Development for 2001-2005 and 2006-2010, the Concept and Program for Secondary Specialized Education Development for 2006-2010, Provisions for Establishment of Education Ensuring Advanced Training and Retraining of Personnel (2008), Provisions for Advanced Training, Traineeship and Retraining of Personnel (2008), and draft "Code of Laws on Education in the Republic of Belarus".



Training as a brick-layer

An essential activity of RIPO is development of the Lifelong Learning concept and provision of the national environment for its implementation. Thus, in line with its Charter, the functions of the Institute include:

- studying the influence of social-cultural, economic, psychological-pedagogic, physiological and other factors on functioning and development of continuous vocational training of workers (office workers), advanced training and retraining of personnel;
- analysis of main labor market development trends, forecasting of the need for workers and specialists, analysis of employment patterns of graduates of vocational-technical and secondary specialized educational institutions;
- development of standard educational-program documentation, regulatory, legal and methodological documents in vocational-technical and secondary specialized education, continuous vocational training of workers (office workers), and personnel retraining;
- development and improvement of the list of occupations for in-service training of workers and model curriculum for continuous vocational education of workers (office workers);
- submission of proposals to include new occupations for vocational-technical and sec-

ondary specialized education in the National Classifier of the Republic of Belarus “Occupations and Qualifications”;

- scientific-methodological support to vocational training of persons with special psychophysical development characteristics, including disabled people;
- elaboration of the conceptual framework for development of training aids (educational-methodological packages) for vocational education;
- organizational-methodological support to national conferences, olympiads, professional skills contests and other events;
- establishment and scientific-methodological support to the information system based on advanced computer technology in vocational education;
- development of international cooperation, studying and generalization of foreign experience in training, retraining and advanced training of personnel, and continuous vocational education of workers (office workers).

By **Lifelong Learning** we mean the activity related to continuous development of a person, including people of pension age, aiming to improve knowledge, skills and competencies. It corresponds to four social and economic goals:

- self-actualization
- active citizenship
- social welfare
- employability (including adaptability in the labor market)

Having a long-term effect on economy, environment, social processes and personal development, updating of the educational strategy is a guarantee for addressing global objectives and thus can be successful in an individual country or region provided that international experience is taken into consideration.

Therefore, an essential area of the RIPO activity is strengthening of international cooperation in education focusing on comparative international studies and exchange of positive experience in the lifelong learning concept implementation.

A significant impetus to develop this activity, particularly the adult education sector in the Republic of Belarus, is cooperation between the RIPO and the Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association (*dvv international*). This organization has accumulated extensive experience of international cooperation in implementation of educational activities helping people at large, including disadvantaged population groups, improve their socio-economic status and providing them with more opportunities to participate in social processes.

Given the priorities of *dvv international*, as well as topical objectives facing adult education in the Republic of Belarus and the project's material resources, the joint project activities of *dvv international* and RIPO for 2007-2009 were designed as follows:

1. **Research Initiative "Development of Educational Marketing in Belarus"** including analysis of problems in adult education in Belarus, as well as development of methodological guidelines for development of educational marketing for Belarusian adult education managers taking account of Belarusian peculiarities and advanced European experience.
2. **Educational Initiative "Development of Vocational Further Education in the Service Sector"** including establishment of educational programs for the adult population in the new integrated occupation "Salesperson", which replaced occupations "Food Seller" and "Non-Food Seller", and equipping of the relevant training workshop "Mini-Market".
3. **Educational Initiative "Supporting Women"** including opening in Minsk and regional centers of the leisure and training courses "Young Wife's School" comprising a series of interesting training sessions for women in three areas: "Psychology of Family Relationship", "Women's World", and the Workshop "Cozy House".

In this article, it is sensible to consider in detail the second initiative which aroused the greatest public interest during the project implementation and which we think is of practical interest to a reader.

Educational Initiative in the Service Sector: Vocational Training of Trade Personnel

Scaling up of trading activities as an important segment of the service sector is characteristic not only of the Republic of Belarus, but of the whole world community as it is essential for all organizations and citizens irrespective of age, social status and country.

Given the high demand for trade services, the project participants oriented one of the key project initiatives at quality improvement and accessibility of vocational training of trade personnel.

Initially, all trade development trends in the short run had to be taken into account and the areas of training had to be identified.

Thus, under the vocational training initiative the Target Groups Needs Analysis was performed for occupations: "Food Seller"; and "Non-Food Seller".

This analysis made it possible to identify the active growth trend in retail trade in the Republic of Belarus, which since the beginning of this decade has been primarily related to the hyper- and supermarkets networks development. Before late 2010, over 40 new



Computer training for women

major trading companies are expected to be set up in the country, and their total number will be 437 as compared to 263 similar trading companies in 2005.

Another present-day trend in the retail trade system development is a system of stores being formed within walking distance and trading in a range of essential food and non-food items.

The ongoing changes in the trade sector have determined new requirements to salespersons and head cashiers training practices which no longer meet the current requirements of trade. Narrow specialization of a salesperson in food or non-food items only without using options

offered by automated trade systems is not in the spirit of the time and does not meet the employers' expectations.

This means that there is a pressing need to adjust and complement the qualification characteristics of trade personnel.

A result of joint activities by a number of organizations concerned, including the project participants, is updating of the qualification characteristics of operations done by trade personnel, which was approved by Resolution 42 of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Belarus dated 28 February 2008, and has been effective since 1 September 2008. This regulatory document made it possible to deliver vocational training, retraining and advanced training of trade personnel in line with up-to-date labor market requirements and growing professional demands for each employee in this sector.

Instead of two occupations, "Food Seller" and "Non-Food Seller", there appeared one occupation "Salesperson", which makes it significantly easier for an employer to hire and then distribute workers among various trade outlets.

Logical continuation of this initiative is development of another integrated training program "Salesperson. Head Cashier". This has been determined by an increase in the number of self-service stores, which leads to a significant extension in the range of goods, higher workload and new requirements for all types of trade personnel. Advanced forms of non-cash payment are being actively introduced – payment is made using credit cards, and now employers need trade personnel competent in special trade system software.

To avoid gaps in knowledge acquired during training and the requirements to trade personnel in practice, curricula need to be updated, and the rooms should be equipped with

automated cash registers, stands and racks. This will make it possible to use various teaching techniques with regard to practical situations in commerce, and organize the training process bringing training closer to practice – as required by present-day reality.

To implement the updated curricula for trade personnel training, under the project the training workshop “Mini-Market” has been equipped and now includes 2 POS-terminals¹ with laser bar code scanners, electronic balance scales with label printing option to mark goods to be weighted, an electronic cash register connected to POS-terminal, a special computer-based system for trade outlets with a network center designed for 12 training seats; a whiteboard with the BEAM system; and a multimedia overhead projector.

When selecting trade equipment for a training classroom the project participants were first of all guided by its prevalence at real trade outlets and prospects of its use in the near future.

The training classroom equipped with the optimal set of up-to-date trade equipment contributes to addressing the pressing issue of trade development – active use of new sales forms and methods given modernization of trade outlets and introduction of information technology.

The established automated training places make it possible to study modern trading technologies not only for trainees that master the occupation for the first time, but also for all trade personnel willing to upgrade their qualification.

Enrollment in groups by integrated qualifications “Salesperson” and “Head Cashier” started in early 2008. The employment rate is 82% of 130 graduates.

To improve professional training and achieve sustainable project outcomes, for all training groups in all occupations there was a questionnaire survey to identify a trainee’s social portrait, key motivations to training, vision of professional activities in the beginning and at the end of training.

The questionnaire survey and interviews with trainees and specialists participated in the training process helped analyze effectiveness of the curriculum and its relevance to employers’ requirements.

The following results have been obtained:

- 100% of group trainees are women;
- the average age of trainees is 21.5 years;
- education: secondary – 67% of trainees; secondary specialized and vocational-technical – 32%; and higher – 1%.

62% of trainees were undergoing vocational training for the first time and emphasized the advisability of studying the basic labor regulations, which helped them adapt to their

1 POS stands for Point Of Sale. POS-terminal is a specialized personal computer for automation of trade operations having all common PC elements – a display, case, disk drive, hard disk, network interface card, ports, etc.



Computer training for women

teams faster and feel more confident in day-to-day life.

37% is mastering a second occupation. It was this category of trainees with some work experience that emphasized the practical importance of studying the subject *“Psychology and Ethicality of Business”*, especially the topic *“Stress. Stress Management Methods and Techniques”*.

The questionnaire survey showed that these two categories of trainees have strong motivation to find employment, and later on to achieving financial stability and independence.

At the end of training, there was a survey of graduates and employers to identify

their satisfaction with the training along the integrated curriculum developed.

The survey of graduates showed that 95% is satisfied with the content, scope and quality of classroom training of salespersons; and 4% is partly dissatisfied.

90% is satisfied with the obtained practical skills; and 9% is partly dissatisfied.

The graduates expressed the following wishes:

- deepen studies of business communication psychology; master conflict management;
- increase the scope of materials on trade organization and technology, as well as merchandising techniques;
- improve practical skills in operation of up-to-date trade equipment.

An essential result of training for both trainees and employers was the state standard document issued as evidence of vocational training and providing several social guarantees for a trainee.

Employers also made a proposal to develop cooperation in training of various trade workers given the options available in the established training classroom.

Training along the integrated curriculum using advanced equipment helps reduce the deficit in personnel for various trade outlets since obtaining two qualifications makes it possible to master a wider range of professional functions and is an additional guarantee of employment.

The working curriculum for parallel training in related occupations of a salesperson and head cashier was developed in line with the basics for development of educational-program documentation for continuous vocational education of workers (office workers) established in the Republic of Belarus.

When the integrated curriculum was being developed, the algorithm for development of general vocational and special packages was used, and based on their analysis the optimal training content for both occupations was selected. Such a development approach made it possible to reduce the time for vocational training which is essential with regard to economic considerations to key participants: employers, trainees and training organizers.

The structure and content of the developed integrated curriculum, as well as its pilot-testing results obtained under the project will be taken into consideration when developing educational standards of the Republic of Belarus for qualifications "Salesperson. Head Cashier" within the occupation "Trading".

The updated model of training process organization and content in this area has already caused positive reaction from the pedagogic community and employers organizations and could be successfully used in other educational institutions of the country.

Even today we can see that these intermediate results (there is one year of project implementation left) are sustainable and extend the initially planned framework of this project activity.

Within the project implementation period, the pedagogical staff involved became an excellent team of specialists sharing the same ideas, who enthusiastically plan further development of vocational training in this area. Thus, the project participants note the following prospects:

- a) carry out vocational training not only in the two occupations "Salesperson" and "Head Cashier", but also in the occupation "Automated Trade System Operator";
- b) offer advanced training in all three occupations;
- c) develop and test the integrated curriculum for vocational training "Concessionaire. Record Clerk".
- d) train managerial trade personnel.

Looking into the future, development of vocational further education in other areas is also planned under the project.

To announce project activities in the short and medium term, improvement of vocational further education in popular construction occupations can be mentioned.

For example, in 2009 innovation components are expected to enrich the content of vocational further education in occupations "Painter/Plasterer" with upgrading of training workshop equipment for finishing works. The following content blocks are planned to be integrated into the curriculum:

- drawing heat insulation of building enclosures and parts of its nodes on the layout;
- mastering up-to-date techniques of interior finishing works: Venetian plaster, work with plaster slab, liquid wallpaper, etc.

Moreover, courses in upgrading professional qualification for such a popular occupation



Training as painter

in the labor market as “Quantity Surveyor” with training in using special estimation software are planned to be opened.

Relevance of improving vocational further education for the construction industry is necessitated by rapid growth of new construction projects (by 2009 at least 6 mln sq m, and by 2010 up to 10 mln sq m), reconstruction of residential housing built in 1960-1980, with a rather long remaining life (up to 100 years and more) and scaled up construction of smart houses, which will make it possible to make new buildings more comfortable while reducing energy consumption.

Building comfortable and environmentally safe housing and industrial premises with regard to modern consumer characteristics

is associated with a wide range of problems including not only the lack of construction workers and specialists, but also the content of vocational further education lagging behind rapid changes in the technological structure of the construction industry. Effectiveness of the training, retraining and advanced training system for construction workers and specialists should be guaranteed by flexibility of educational programs, innovative training content, up-to-date training equipment and strong qualification of industrial training masters. These are the priorities the project participants’ efforts are planned to be focused on.

Overall, speaking about the project cooperation between RIPO and *dvv international*, we would like to express our gratitude to our German partners for their professionalism, flexibility, and respect for peculiarities and priorities of the adult education system development in the Republic of Belarus during joint development of the project content, as well as the powerful impetus given by the ongoing project initiatives to expanding opportunities for social development and strengthening economic security of various segments of the population, primarily those in need of special social care. We hope that our fruitful cooperation will further develop and the international interaction with other countries-partners of *dvv international*, aimed at exchange of positive experience and development of coordinated approaches when improving adult education in different countries, will be strengthened.

VET for Special Target Groups

Christian Geiselmann, Johann Theessen

A Second Chance: Integration through Adult Literacy and Vocational Training

An Educational Program for Employment and Social Cohesion in Montenegro

Introduction

In February 2007, *dvv international* and the Montenegrin Roma Scholarship Foundation (FSR – Fondacija za stipendiranje Roma) started a joint project to promote literacy and employability of Roma in Montenegro. The project was to run for 18 months. It was funded chiefly by the European Agency for Reconstruction (EAR). The core idea of the project was educating a group of about 75 young adults in several towns throughout the country, thereby demonstrating to the public, and especially to state institutions and policy makers, that education programs for illiterate adults are feasible and have a long term effect to improve societal integration. To this end, *dvv international* and FSR invited two additional players to the project: the Montenegrin VET Agency (*Centar za stu no obrazovanje*) – which is the body supervising VET activities in Montenegro – and the Montenegrin Employment Agency (*Zavod za zapošljavanje*). Despite various difficulties faced during project implementation, the project was successfully completed in August 2008, with 60 young adult Roma having achieved a certificate of elementary education equivalent to four years of elementary school. Six participants received certificates of education equivalent to two years of elementary school. Moreover, 61 participants passed a vocational training course in one of eight vocations at Level II of the Montenegrin VET system, and received certificates. Many participants also used the opportunity to learn using a computer and to obtain their driver's license. The project received a lot of public attention, and state institutions began to use the model for their own projects.

Background to the Project

Montenegro, which declared independence from the union of Serbia and Montenegro in 2006, has a population of about 620,000, most of them with Montenegrin / Serbian backgrounds. Among the ethnic groups in Montenegro, one with the most pressing problems are the Roma, or “Roma, Ashkalia and Egyptians” (RAE) as they are usually called in official papers. Attempts to count this group have so far only resulted in approxima-

tions. In the last official census in 2003, 2601 individuals declared themselves as Roma, and 225 as Egyptians. (Ashkalia were not separately registered but grouped under the label “others”).¹ Experts (among them, Roma activists and representatives of organizations dealing with Roma issues) suggest much higher numbers. In recent years, 20,000 is a widely accepted estimate, whereas in a new study (yet unpublished when this text was being written) the Statistical Office of Montenegro states that there are about 10,000 people belonging to the group of RAE in Montenegro. Obviously, the problem of numbering Roma is similar in Montenegro to other Balkan states, since there are rival concepts of how to define ethnic group membership, and the idea of ethnicity is problematic in itself.



Roma and non-Roma learn in mixed classes

Whatever the number of RAE in Montenegro might be, their weak and vulnerable position in society is indubitable. According to a recent study, up to 70 percent of Roma in Montenegro are functionally illiterate, meaning that they may – or may not – have attended school for a year or two, but in any case they are not able to read and write in daily life. This results in further problems, even with simple tasks such as using machines, contacting authorities, addressing the health care system, opening a bank account, receiving and keeping personal documents, and – last but not least – finding a job in the labor market. Consequently, most Roma in Montenegro are unemployed. (There is a special problem about registering with the Employment Agency, since for registration a set of documents is needed such as an ID card or a birth certificate and such documents in many cases are missing.) Due to no schooling or very little elementary schooling, most Roma in Montenegro do not have any vocational training either. (A precondition for a vocational degree in Montenegro is the completion of four years of elementary education.) Also, many Roma have no experience or very little experience in a regular work environment. Roma women are disproportionately afflicted by illiteracy and unemployment.

¹ Data are presented, for example in the EUMAP report in Montenegro, 2007, pg. 288 ff. – In the 1991 census, 3282 persons were registered as Roma.

Objectives of the Project

The main objectives of the project were:

- About 75 unemployed youth and young adults who cannot read and write (i. e. functionally illiterate) learn reading, writing, calculating and other skills necessary for daily life in a modern society. After completion of the course, they receive the official Montenegrin certificate for 4 years of elementary education.
- 75 young unemployed learn, in a 2 to 3-month course, a vocation at Level II of the Montenegrin official vocational qualification system, and receive the official certificate.

In the project application and other official documents, the target group was deliberately not restricted to “Roma” or “RAE” but was defined, without using any ethnic criteria, as “functionally illiterate, unemployed young adults.” In practice, however, it was clear that all – or nearly all – participants would come from an ethnic Roma context, since this population group is so affected by illiteracy. And, of course, the recruitment of participants would concentrate on important Roma settlements.

The two main achievements – literacy and a vocational training degree – were to be supplemented by some elements to improve employment chances and societal integration of the participants: After successful completion of the literacy courses, participants would have an opportunity to opt for a computer course. Additionally, about 20 participants would be offered the chance to take a driving test and get their driver’s license. Both, having some experience in using a computer (for simple purposes) and a driver’s license, were considered important factors to increase employability and equal participation in society.

In a broader context, it was expected that improved education levels and improved employment opportunities for the participants would have a spreading effect in their communities. It was expected that especially young parents, who have passed a school and VET program, would at least be more open to sending their own children to school. Positive effects were also expected with regard to other family members and the neighborhood.

Desired Side Effects

In addition to the direct effects of schooling and vocational education itself, the project was expected to contribute to civil society development in several ways:

- Equal opportunities: Reading and writing are skills that are necessary for an equal participation in society and in the labor market. Through the literacy and vocational training program, the participants should improve their employment chances, and their chances of integrating into overall society.
- Active citizenship: A modern, democratic society needs a certain degree of education in order to function. The Second Chance project should contribute to democracy and civil society by raising the education level of Roma in Montenegro.

- Gender equality: When recruiting participants, special emphasis was put on finding female candidates, the target being 50 percent (or over) women in the classes. The hope was that this would help promote the idea of gender equality in the Roma community.
- Transferability: Several aspects of the project contributed to long-term improvement of adult education, adult literacy and vocational training in Montenegro in general: The project put into practice, for the first time, the official “*Program for Elementary Functional Literacy*” (Program elementarnog funkcionalnog opismen-javanja), a teaching program that had been issued by Montenegrin authorities some years ago. By giving an example of how to apply this syllabus successfully, the Second Chance project supported the Montenegrin Government in starting its own activities in the field. Financed by the project, a set of new vocational standards and vocational training programs were drafted by the institutions in charge. Those documents are now available for vocational training in general.



Learning to read and to write

Funding

The project was funded by an EU grant in the program “*2006 Support to Civil Society in Montenegro*” (reference number 06MON01/02/002). The approved project budget was EUR 196,000, of which EUR 162,000 from the EU and the remaining sum as contribution from both *dvv international* (using its German government funding) and the Montenegrin Employment Agency.

Main Activities

The action plan for the project defined 32 single activities to be organized in 18 months, many of them, of course, overlapping, since an activity such as “*Literacy courses*” lasted up to 3 or 4 months, or the “*Public relations and visibility*” activity covered the whole project term.

The most essential steps for implementation of the project are presented below, together with some notes about problems which occurred, results achieved and other interesting details.

Setting up the Project Infrastructure

For the operational work, a project team was set up, consisting of the Executive Director of the Roma Scholarship Foundation, Saša Zeković, and two (part time) assistants.

In addition, a Steering Committee was established consisting of representatives of FSR, the Centar za stručno obrazovanje (VET Center of Montenegro) and the Employment Agency (*Zavod za zapošljavanje*), a representative of the Roma community in Montenegro, and *dvv international*. The task of the Steering Committee was to make key decisions for project implementation, and to solve problems on a more political or administrative level.

Teaching Assistants

Directly after the project was launched in February 2007, FSR began to establish a team of Teaching Assistants (sometimes called “Roma Assistants”) to assist the project team in all practical aspects, particularly those related to everyday contacts with participants, their families, etc. FSR hired ten such assistants, mostly with Roma backgrounds, but with an appropriate educational level (at least completed secondary education). The plan was to have one male and one female assistant to recruit the participants for each of the – planned – five literacy classes, and one assistant each for attending the classes during the teaching term.

For recruiting the team of Teaching Assistants, FSR used the contacts it had from its core activity – providing scholarships for Roma in the regular educational system. For the assistants, the employment in the Second Chance project was a welcome work opportunity. Additionally, FSR saw a chance to deliver, through the Assistant Teacher jobs, further training to the individuals involved, as a contribution to its idea of establishing, in the long run, a new vocation called “Integration Assistant” as kind of a social or community worker.

Funding for the salaries of the assistants came partly from the project budget, partly it was provided by the Employment Agency through “public work” contracts, which is the Montenegrin employment provision program.

First of all, the Teaching Assistants were responsible for recruiting course participants for the project: about 75 young adults, functionally illiterate, but willing to improve their situation through an intensive teaching program. Then their task was to attend the classes with the learners. They acted as both assistant teachers, and as mediators in case of conflicts.

The mediator function was important also with respect to the local communities the course participants came from: Only through the personal contacts of the Roma assistants – who were all respected members of the community – was it possible to avoid misunderstandings and prevent conflicts.

Another important task before proper teaching started was to check whether participants had the necessary documents such as ID cards, birth certificates, etc. Such documents were needed at the very least for issuing the certificates, if for no other reason. Moreover, an orderly set of documents is an important step towards better integration in a mod-

ern society. About a dozen participants had to be provided with documents.

Literacy Courses

Literacy courses started after the summer holidays in mid 2007, with six classes in the two towns of Podgorica and Nikšić. This was one class more than initially planned. A rule (which however was not easy to hold in the negotiations with the training providers) was that one class may not have more than 15 learners. The courses lasted four months, ending with the final examination at end of 2008.

The courses were held by four different education providers: a regular elementary school and a private education center in Podgorica, and a “workers’ university” (traditional adult education facility in former Yugoslav countries) as well as another private training provider in the provincial town of Nikšić. On purpose, the project team chose a combination of private and public providers in order to compare their advantages and disadvantages for future projects.

For the teachers, including the Teaching Assistants, there were two training seminars on methods of adult education, one delivered by *dvv international* associates from Belgrade (Adult Education Society) and one delivered by an external specialist from Germany (from the Bergische Volkshochschule in the town of Wuppertal). The seminars were especially valuable for teachers who hitherto had worked only with school children but not with adults.

When the classes started, and during the whole teaching period, the Teaching Assistants attended the lessons, supported the teachers, cared for attendants to appear in time (often even by calling them in the morning on their mobile phones) and settled conflicts.

Teaching progress was regularly monitored by an expert of the VET center of Montenegro who was a member of the Steering Committee and herself an expert in adult education. This was to ensure that the official requirements were adhered to.

Reading and writing was a crucial, but not the only focus of the literacy courses. The teaching explicitly followed the official “*Program for elementary functional literacy*” (*Programa elementarnog funkcionalog opismenjavanja*, PEFO) which had been adopted by the Montenegrin institutions some years ago, however without having been put into practice anywhere so far. The PEFO defines teaching contents in a 330-hour program for adults who have to make up for missed elementary schooling. Reading, writing and calculating are only basic techniques. The program sees “*elementary education*” in a broader



Participants in the tiler's course

sense, including a variety of skills and knowledge useful for living in a modern society, such as: Knowing what do when dealing with the police. How can I turn to them in case of need? How can I use the health system? What is the right thing to do with my waste? How do I treat my horse properly.

After the participants had achieved elementary reading and writing skills and were able to sign a document, the project team took them (individually or in small groups) to a local bank so that they could open their own bank accounts. This was, on the one hand, another step into full participation in society; on the other hand, the bank accounts were then used to pay out monthly support stipends to the participants. (The full sum was tied to full attendance at the lessons, and not least as an additional motivation for the participants. Attendance was double-checked by the teachers and the Teaching Assistants, and missed teaching time led to reduced support payment.)

The literacy courses ended in late December 2007 with the final examination held by external examiners from the Montenegrin School Authorities. Of 67 participants who appeared at the exam (3 more were expected but did not show up) 60 took the exam with full success and received certificates equivalent to 4 years of elementary education which allows them both to enter the official labor market and to continue their education and training elsewhere in the regular education system. Six participants had results at least sufficient to issue them certificates equivalent to 2 years of elementary school. One participant failed, scoring too few points in the exam. The certificates were handed out to the participants in March 2008 at a ceremony which was attended by many officials including Montenegrin ministers and the German ambassador.

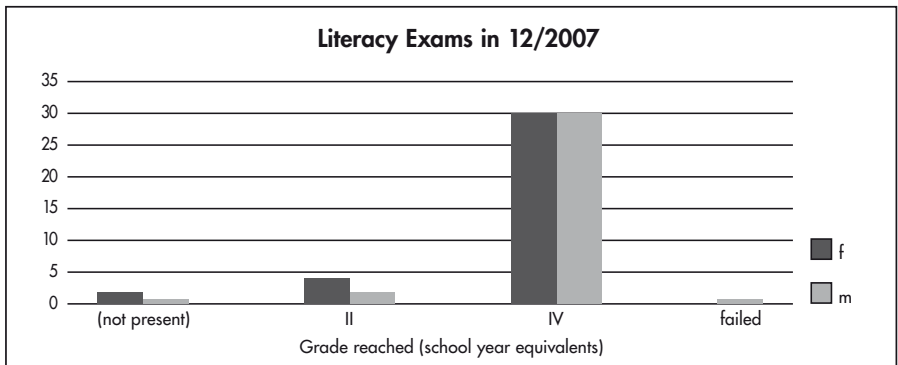


Fig. 1: Number of attendants for the course, by gender and age, in October 2007, at approximately half way through of the courses.

Interestingly, although the courses started with about 60 percent male participants, by the time of the final exam, the gender proportion had balanced itself: Of the 67 participants

who appeared at the exam, 34 were women or girls.

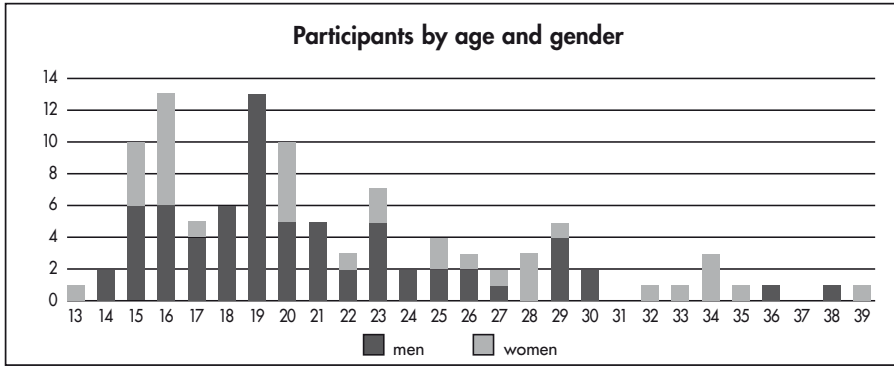


Fig. II: Results of the literacy exam in December 2007: Of 67 participants who appeared at the exam, 66 passed the test, 60 with complete success (4 years of regular elementary school). Six participants could be given a certificate equivalent to at least 2 years of elementary school.

A surprising problem was related to the specific life history of the target group – young, former Yugoslav Roma: As it turned out, about 50 per cent of the participants had spent several years as refugees in Germany, especially during childhood and adolescence. One girl even said she had lived eight years in Germany. Although one would expect that refugee children in Germany, whatever their legal status is, attend school, in fact they remained largely illiterate. Back in Montenegro they had additional problems with the Montenegrin (Serbian) language. Most of the “deported” (as they usually call themselves) have a very good understanding of spoken German and speak it fluently, although heavily demotic. This difference in life experience and behavior divided classes into two groups – a difficult task for the teachers.

Vocational Education and Training Courses

A crucial step in preparing the VET teaching for the project was defining what vocational training should be offered to the participants. Both their personal preferences and the needs and constraints of the labor market were to be taken into consideration. In order to help participants define their wishes, the Employment Agency of Montenegro, through its labor market consultants and psychologists, organized a series of events for vocational orientation, such as group discussions and individual counseling interviews. This was in February 2008, after the literacy courses had ended.



*Hairdresser class in Podgorica
Photo: Vesna Delić*

Earlier, labor market experts, representatives of economic bodies, the project team and the Steering Committee had started a consulting process to find criteria for which vocations to offer and which ones not to offer. This included a “focus group” meeting in June 2007 to outline the needs and opportunities.

For several vocations which were expected to be favorable for the VET part of the project, neither vocational standards nor vocational training programs (VET programs) were yet available. Therefore, the VET Center of Montenegro, as official associate to the project, committed itself to set up five vocational standards and VET teaching programs, with funding from the project budget. Those documents were then used for the VET part of the project, and afterwards they served for VET in Montenegro in general. This is one of the project’s long term contributions to development in Montenegro.

VET courses were organized for the vocations of assistant painter, assistant tiler, assistant plumber, communal cleaning worker, assistant hair dresser, assistant car mechanic, assistant cook and for the decorative arts and crafts. Hair dresser

(23 trainees) and communal service worker (11 trainees) were the vocations with the highest number of participants. Finally, VET certificates at Level II of the Montenegrin VET system were issued to 61 participants, of them 3 car mechanics, 11 communal service workers, 4 cooks, 5 arts and crafts workers, 23 hairdressers, 4 painters, 4 plumbers and 7 tilers.

All members of the project team saw that the number of hairdressers (mostly female, but also including 7 males) was too high from a labor market point of view, at least if this scheme was to be continued over years (which it is not). On the other hand, due to the relatively inexpensive equipment, hairdressers can quite easily start a small business or enter self-employment. (As this article was being written, FSR and *dvv international* were planning a follow-up program to support hairdressers and, possibly, construction workers to get more work experience.)

The high number of communal workers, on the other hand, was fully intended. Participants were steered actively into this training program, because employment chances here were clearly the best, due to the constant demand of municipalities for cleaning and gardening workers. Participants accepted this training program also because it was the only one which provided a regular work contract even during the VET training.

For the VET courses, FSR made many efforts to convince providers (VET schools, the contractors of the Employment Agency and private VET providers) that the Roma participants must be accepted as learners in regular classes. No special classes for Roma participants

should be installed, although organizing separate classes for Roma was the “by default” approach of many training institutions. They claimed that Roma classes need more time for learning. This was even used as an argument for asking for higher fees per participant. FSR, on the other hand, took a posture that Roma were citizens with equal rights and therefore conditions for them must be equal. Finally, classes were set up as FSR desired, with the Second Chance participants entering regular VET courses together with other learners from outside the project. This however led to a series of problems, all centered around the capabilities of the Roma participants who, for example, had a problem understanding specialized terminology. Non-Roma learners sometimes had to wait until things were explained more thoroughly to the Second Chance participants. So that, as a conclusion, even FSR representatives said that in a new project they would now accept separate classes. This seems to be reasonable, not so much because someone has an RAE background, but because the Second Chance participants had achieved their elementary education (reading, writing, etc.) just recently and had little experience in learning environments.

To prevent possible harassment and other problems in the mixed VET groups, the project team organized daily monitoring visits to all classes. This also allowed the checking of the quality of the curricula. There was one case when Roma participants complained about a teacher treating them in an offending way. This was settled through a quick intervention of the project team, together with the head teacher of the school.

Results of the Vocational Training (Success at VET final exams)			
Vocation	Successful exams		
	Women	Men	Overall
Car mechanic		3	3
Communal cleaning services	1	10	11
Cook	4		4
Decorative arts and crafts	5		5
Hairdresser	16	7	23
Painter		4	4
Plumber		4	4
Tiler		7	7
Overall	26	35	61
Of those from Podgorica			50
Nikšić			16



The first computer lesson

Additional Elements of Training

Two additional offers were made to the participants: computer courses and driving licenses. The idea was that knowing both how a computer works and being able to drive a car are valuable assets which contribute to employability.

Computer courses were initially planned to take place after the VET courses had finished, but later on the project team decided to hold the computer courses immediately after the literacy course, so that participants could use their still fresh writing skills. Participants were quite interested in the program, and so, 45 of them, in three groups, attended the computer

courses which were organized by the Training Center of the Employment Agency in Podgorica. On four weekends, mainly in February 2008, the participants learned basic steps about using computers for office applications.

The chance to get a driver's license turned out to be a highly attractive incentive for most participants. Therefore, the project team decided to postpone the driving lessons to the very end of the program and thus keep the participants' motivation at a high level. The participants knew that they would get a chance to get their driving license only if they had successfully completed their VET courses. Additionally, the project team decided to offer more places in this program than initially planned.

Driving license teaching took place at the driving school of the Montenegrin Drivers' Association in Podgorica, and a private driving school in Nikšić. FSR negotiated special prices, due to the high number of students. The participants entered the driving schools as individual learners (not in a special group) and therefore had to decide for themselves when to sit for the theoretical and practical exams.

A problem which, despite all efforts could not be solved in a satisfactory way, had to do with the examination forms: In Montenegro, as in Serbia, both the Latin and the Cyrillic alphabet are in use, and the constitution maintains that they are both absolutely equal official alphabets. However, the examination forms for the theoretical driving test are only in Cyrillic. Given the fact that the participants had learned reading and writing just a few months before, and that, following the modern trend, emphasis was laid on the Latin alphabet, many of them had the problem that they were not quick enough in reading the questions on the page. FSR tried to suggest various solutions: provide a Latin version of the questions, or Teaching Assistants could read the questions (as surruration interpreters),

but in the short time remaining, no agreement was reached with the Ministry. As a result, in the first theoretical exams, relatively many of the circa 40 candidates failed.

Related Projects

The Second Chance project in Montenegro benefited from experience garnered from related projects in other South East European Countries in previous years:

Second Chance project in Bulgaria: In 2003-2004, about 150 unemployed and illiterate young adults, mostly Roma, in the towns of Sofia, Plovdiv, Boyantsi, Trn and Krichim, learned reading, writing and other skills. The project was managed by the Bulgarian section of *dvv international* (at that time: IIZ/DVV) with funding from the Phare program of the EU.

Functional Basic Education of Adult Roma in Serbia, in 2005-2008, provided elementary education and vocational training for 275 unemployed Roma in 11 towns in Serbia. This project was managed by the Institute of Pedagogy and Andragogy of Belgrade University and the Serbian Ministry of Education, together with the Adult Education Society in Belgrade (which is simultaneously the representative of *dvv international* in Serbia), and other partners. The project was financed primarily by the Roma Education Fund.

The experience gathered from these projects was especially useful during the planning of the Montenegrin Second Chance project. Through those earlier projects, a variety of parameters had been clarified already, for example the idea of using Teaching Assistants as *"liaison officers"* to the participants and their families, and the utility of financial support for course participants, in order to compensate for their opportunity costs.

Staff Training

Several events during the 18-month project were organized to promote quality education and management capacities. Two seminars were held with teaching staff, including the Roma assistants, for the literacy courses, focussing on adult education methodology. Extended visits by a *dvv international* project consultant in Montenegro were helpful in order to promote the capability of the NGO partner FSR in project management. The areas where most work was done in this respect were accounting / financial reporting, writing new applications for follow-up projects, and web publishing.



Training the trainers

Conclusions

- Much of the success of the project was due to the efficiently working network of NGO and state institutions, including the VET Center with its genuine expertise in VET regulation, and the Employment Agency with its genuine expertise in labor market programs, vocational orientation, and provision of continuing vocational training. Through the two state agencies, the project was well linked into the institutional framework in Montenegro and could achieve results which otherwise would not have been possible, for example setting up five new VET teaching programs and issuing vocational standards.
 - A crucial asset of the project was its direct link into the structures of Roma communities. FSR – as the local partner – is a Roma-driven organization; a respected Roma leader was a member of the Steering Committee. If nothing else, this opened the doors to the Roma environment, since there was clear Roma “ownership” of the project.
 - Also crucial was the contribution of the (Roma) Teaching Assistants. During the preparation phase, they contacted potential participants and did a great job in convincing participants’ families to allow them to attend the courses. This was especially necessary for girls or women to join the courses. During the teaching term, Roma Assistants attended the lessons and assisted the teachers, often helping settle personal conflicts in the classroom, and – on a daily basis – ensuring that participants appeared at the lessons.
 - As for gender equality, it turned out to be very difficult to meet the benchmark of 50 percent female participants. Families often insisted that a male member be given preference. Even the initial plan to have mixed classes turned out to be completely impracticable. Families would not have allowed their wives or daughters go to school if there were men in the classroom. So the project team bowed to rural conservatism and accepted separate classes. (During the VET phase of the project, this rule could be relaxed, and the hairdressers then learned in a mixed group, with positive effects on their group dynamic.)
 - The chance to get a driving license at the end of the course proved to be a very important means of motivation for many participants.
 - In terms of employability, it became clear that more emphasis has to be laid on work experience: the VET courses, although corresponding with the official system of VET levels in Montenegro, seem to be insufficient: In several cases Second Chance participants who applied for jobs were turned down by employers using the argument that they did not have enough work experience. This may be, on the one hand, just a convenient argument for an employer who would not take an employee with Roma background anyway. On the other hand, it is obvious that a two or three-month VET course is in reality not much in terms of work experience.³
- Project management would have been much easier and more effective with a local *dvv international* representative in Montenegro to support the project team both with

methodological advice and a hands-on attitude. Attempts to hire such a person were made. However, for various reasons, they did not show the expected results. Therefore, support of *dvv international* for the local team was provided from a distance (from Sarajevo, Bonn, and Sofia), and through a series of extended project visits.

- There was extraordinarily good media coverage of the project, chiefly because of FSR's experience in publicity activities.

Outlook

During the 18 months the project was in effect, *dvv international* and FSR, in a common effort, tried to get funding for a continuation of the project. Several applications for projects of varying scale were made, including an application for an EUR 400,000 project to disseminate the methodology of the Second Chance project over five Western Balkan countries. However, so far the projects have not received the desired funding. The large project scored well, but obviously not well enough, given the number of competing applications for the grant.

A positive development is that state institutions in Montenegro have begun to make use of the methodology presented by the Second Chance project. Both the Employment Agency and the VET Center have submitted, or are preparing to submit, their own project proposals to the government which are based on the experience with the Second Chance project.

Since work experience appears to be crucial for employment chances, at the time when this article was being written, *dvv international* and FSR were in negotiation about a follow-up project to Second Chance. The idea is to provide additional support for the employment opportunities of the participants by offering them a chance to enhance their work experience, either in specially set up workshops, or as interns in various companies. This seems feasible, especially for the hairdressers, but for the construction workers (tillers, painters, plumbers) as well. Here, too, the idea was to cooperate with the Employment Agency.

3 DVV and FSR then tried to set up a follow-up project in order to create additional opportunities to gather work experience.

Farrukh Tyuraev

Education for Labor Migrants and the Unemployed in Tajikistan

Introduction

The Republic of Tajikistan is a country with a rapidly growing population. In the last decade, the population size increased by 20% and accounted for 7 million people by early 2007. The annual natural population growth in the Republic of Tajikistan is the most vigorous among the CIS countries. Both urban and rural populations are growing rapidly, with rural the population growing even faster.

The demographic factor is having an impact on the labor market. High birth rates result in a significant influx of youth into the labor market. Surveys show that youth accounts for a very high share in the age structure of able-bodied population in the country. A lot of young people have general secondary education. At the same time, most young people encounter difficulties when searching for permanent jobs in the labor market. Currently, most secondary school leavers get to the labor market without any preliminary training and join unskilled workers, which results in the increasing share of youth in the able-bodied population being unemployed in social production. However, it should be noted that most young people are willing to work but become unemployed due to lack of jobs and relevant qualifications.

Lifetime employment is no longer a norm, and job search, education, obtaining an occupation, and being in demand in the labor market have become a common need for all generations. Today, to be in demand in the labor market, people cannot rely on their technical qualification only. In a severe competitive environment they also need to demonstrate a wide range of personal characteristics such as motivation, confidence, activeness, persuasiveness, ability to maintain contacts, and think critically, which was not necessarily a part of their traditional values, social behavior and culture.

Labor Migration Overview and Analysis

The analytical team of the Association of Scientific and Technical Intelligentsia of Tajikistan (ASTI) carried out a survey in 2003. Several focus groups were formed in the districts with the highest level of labor migrants planning to leave the country: Asht district, and Dushanbe, Khujand and Kanibadam cities. Each focus group included an average of 6-12 outgoing labor migrants. The survey paid special attention to the following issues:

1. achieving data reliability
2. obtaining qualitative and quantitative information
3. using triangulation method to obtain better quality data

This questionnaire survey was anonymous, which enabled researchers to solve several issues. The questionnaire survey was organized at bus stations, the airport and in places where migrants get together.

To specify labor migration-related issues, researchers studied government documents, the developed labor migration concept, analytical reports and articles in newspapers and magazines on migration from Tajikistan.

Use of these methodologies made it possible to obtain quantitative and qualitative indicators. Overall, there were 300 respondents nationwide, and finally 293 questionnaires were processed. At the same time, focus groups with representatives of special institutions were conducted, and information was processed at 5 territorial advisory workshops in Sughd region carried out by the Population Employment Center under this project.

The survey has demonstrated that 46% of migrants consider it important to master an occupation which is in demand in a host country. It was essential for researchers to know what sources of information on the occupations required in a host country were available. The main sources of information were advertisements, mass media, migrants' friends, or labor migrants got to know about required and popular occupations themselves.

The migrants think that there the following occupations are popular in both domestic and external labor markets: plasterer-painter, car mechanic-driver, mason, tile layer, sanitary technician, carpenter, turner-milling machine operator, welder, layer, computer operator, accountant, salesperson, electrician and other occupations.

This result is another confirmation of the statement that continuous adult education is an important part of the education system and is an essential tool of every democratic society that ensures its citizens' participation in civil, cultural, social and economic life.

Due to poor vocational education, migrants take on unskilled and low-paid jobs. Moreover, due to lack of language skills and legal status of a migrant in a host country, labor migrants are oppressed by some law enforcement representatives. Most labor migrants are employed under a verbal arrangement, in many cases without execution of labor contracts. To help address the above problems of labor migrants, unemployed persons and labor migrants' families, the Association of Scientific and Technical Intelligentsia of



Training of the trainers

Tajikistan (ASTI) in partnership with the Representative Office of the Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association (*dvv international*) has developed the project “*Education for Labor Migrants and the Unemployed in Tajikistan*” and has been implementing it since 2003.

Project Goals and Objectives

The strategic goal of this project is to develop adequate and sustainable systems to build educational capacity of labor migrants and the unemployed and provide consultation services for them in Tajikistan in 2003-2008.

This project’s priority objectives are as follows:

- Train and retrain labor migrants and unemployed persons at short-term courses organized by training centers;
- Build technical capacity of training centers carrying out training for labor migrants and unemployed persons;
- Improve quality of the short-term courses delivered by upgrading and training of the teaching staff in interactive teaching techniques;
- Improve methods used by employment centers’ staff when working with labor migrants and unemployed persons;
- Promote the Adult Education concept among government agencies, commercial entities and international organizations;
- Improve legal literacy of labor migrants and unemployed persons through distribution of leaflets and brochures;
- Strengthen the project partner’s physical infrastructure to provide sustainable educational services for labor migrants and unemployed persons.

Educational Component of Our Activity

Attention is focused on educational capacity building for labor migrants both in terms of their professional growth and legal self-awareness. To this end, retraining and vocational training courses in various occupations being in demand both in the country and abroad are organized. Short-term courses in occupations “*Gas welding*”, “*Electrician*”, “*Construction electrician*”, “*Electrical technician*”, “*Lathe operator*”, “*Tractor driver*”, “*Carpenter*”, and “*Plasterer-painter*” are organized for this population group. The partners in organization and implementation of the short-term courses are the Main Department for Social Protection and Migration of the Sughd region of the Republic of Tajikistan, training centers (TC), and the Module Training Centers (MTC) in cities and districts of the Sughd region. It should also be mentioned that the project makes use of available structures and

educational institutions, most often government, instead of setting up new and non-sustainable training agencies.

Moreover, in partnership with organizations arranging labor migration outside the country a number of workshops were organized on “*Legal literacy of labor migrants going abroad*” for labor migrants from the cities of Khujand and Djabor in Rasul and Asht districts. These workshops in districts and cities were necessitated by migrants’ ignorance of the host country’s basic rules and laws and lack of information on certain civil rights – as a result, labor migrants are oppressed by some agencies in a host country. 20 to 30



Training of the trainers

potential labor migrants participated in each workshop. Despite a lot of informational booklets and brochures available, labor migrants normally pay little attention to these materials. Group training is cost efficient and is an effective method to inform and train labor migrants in legal literacy.

There is an example of good cooperation between the project and local employers. Upon request from the company “*Dusti-Amirkhon*” workshops were carried out on such subjects as ethics, aesthetics, history, law and correct behavior in a host country for this organization’s labor migrants; the participants were some 60 labor migrants going to Poland to earn money. These activities aimed to inform labor migrants on principles and approaches to legal labor migration, laws of the host country, specific civil rights, the Polish language basics and other labor migration-related issues.

Course timing, venue, and recognition of course completion certificates by employers, and, most importantly, funding of the courses by the project, which makes it possible to attract trainees from poor families, are of great importance to labor migrants and unemployed persons. Moreover, material support is provided for course trainees from the state budget by the social protection agencies of cities and districts in the region. Trainees registered with social employment agencies are paid stipends equal to minimum wage during training.

Within the project implementation period, for labor migrants and unemployed persons 120 short-term courses were organized where over 1,750 trainees from different cities and districts were trained. Currently, groups are formed of persons aged 18 and over. Selection criteria for course trainees are as follows:



Course for training electricians

- aged over 18
- able-bodied
- secondary or secondary general education
- able to orient themselves in the labor market
- able to select an occupation independently
- willing to obtain necessary skills

The course monitoring has identified several issues associated with trainees' ignorance of their rights, poor Russian language skills, as well as lack of occupation i.e. labor migrants and unemployed persons with no specific occupation go to work outside the Republic of Tajikistan,

which naturally makes them less competitive in the labor market.

A lot of labor migrants hope to master an occupation as soon as they get to their place of destination, and experienced migrants know that an occupation is an additional chance to get a good job.

A number of labor migrants are rural people. In rural areas of Tajikistan training in the Russian language is obviously poor, and bad command of the host country language affects communication between employers and employees, as well as migrants' integration into social life.

The adult population (over 40) knows the Russian language better than citizens under 20-30. This is due to the fact that after the demise of the Soviet Union in 1990s a great number of the Russian-speaking population left the country and the Russian language was not given due attention.

Based on our experience and the survey findings obtained under the project "*Curricula Development for Short-Term Courses*" and the project "*Education for Labor Migrants and Unemployed Persons in Tajikistan*" supported by *dvv international* and the German Development Service (DED), curricula for courses "*Gas welder*", "*Construction electrician*", and "*Waiter*" were developed and approved by the Research and Methodological Service Center of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Tajikistan.

Curricula have been developed to be used at training centers training specialists in these occupations for future work in various construction and catering sectors and aim to improve effectiveness of short-term personnel training courses for citizens of the Republic of Tajikistan going abroad as labor migrants and help those who could not find jobs sim-

ilar to their previous occupation. Both foreign and local experts participated in curriculum development. Curricula include such subjects as market economy fundamentals, Russian language, and human rights. Currently, short-term courses in those occupations are delivered at training centers in line with the developed curricula.

Cooperation with Government Agencies

The project is providing technical support for training centers. For example, to ensure quality training at Module Training Centers and training centers in cities and districts of the Sughd region, classroom roofs have been repaired, several personal computers and literature for classes in various occupations have been procured. In addition, furniture for classrooms, gas welding equipment, lathe machines, dough-mixing machines, confectionery ovens, tables for cutting and sewing, as well as various types of sewing machines have been purchased.

An important aspect of project implementation is upgrading staff of the Agency for Social Protection and Employment directly involved in the provision of employment to unemployed persons and work with labor migrants. For them traineeship is organized, both abroad and in the country at regional population protection agencies where they are informed on the new working forms and methods. Under this project, over 35 employees of district agencies have upgraded their qualifications.

Moreover, regular trainings in various new teaching methods “*Interactive Adult Training Techniques*” are carried out for pedagogical staff of training centers, and teachers in their turn use interactive teaching techniques in the training process, which improves the quality and level of training. A positive result of this activity is that trainees pay more attention to the training process.

Activities under this project are supported by the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Tajikistan, local *khukumats*, the Main Department of the Social Protection Agency and the Department for Migration. The agreement with the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Tajikistan on joint activities to improve the level of education and vocational training of labor migrants and unemployed persons has been signed; under this agreement the Ministry provides premises, stands and other places to disseminate information among labor migrants and to organize joint activities.

Information Component

To build labor migrants’ awareness of professional and legal issues, as well as to attract public attention to this problem, special booklets and brochures on specific and widespread problems associated with labor migration and unemployment are published.

Over 48,000 copies of booklets on legal issues and 9,000 copies of information brochures for labor migrants in Tajik have been distributed so far. Representatives of district



A drivers' education course

djamoats (local authorities) in the Sughd region are of great assistance in dissemination of information on rights and obligations of labor migrants and unemployed persons. Under the project, meetings with staff of employment agencies and migration services for 137 *djamoat* representatives have been held where participants obtained information on labor migration-related problems and possible solutions.

An important aspect in addressing labor migrants' issues is work with labor migrants' family members. Under the project, information support is provided for them, as well as short-term vocational training courses "Seamstress" and "Confectioner", where unemployed young women and

labor migrants' wives are trained. Within this period, 45 courses have been organized, where some 700 labor migrants' family members have been trained.

Under the project, regular analyses of labor migration are performed, as well as occasional monitoring of the courses being delivered. The surveys have helped identify the current status of this problem, develop recommendations for key areas of labor migrants' educational capacity building, as well as work out indicators to assess impact on the labor migration issue. Questionnaire surveys of ex-trainees show that from 60 to 70% of them find employment in line with their occupation, continue their education at higher and secondary specialized educational institutions, are self-employed in the area of their profession, or go to work abroad, mainly to the Russian Federation.

Building International Cooperation

International cooperation with project participants plays an important role in the ongoing project "Education for Labor Migrants and Unemployed Persons in Tajikistan". Thus, in June 2003, 6 specialists of training centers underwent traineeship at Novosibirsk Regional Employment Center and familiarized themselves with advanced methods and forms of work with unemployed persons and labor migrants, and 4 specialists of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Tajikistan, "ASTI" of Tajikistan and the Population Employment Agency took part in the Regional Conference "Adult Education – Lifelong Learning" organized by the Representative Office of *dvv international* in Tashkent. In December 2004, a trip to Batken region of the Kyrgyz Republic was organ-

ized for 7 staff of the employment agency and training centers in the Sughd region to inform them on methods and forms of work with unemployed persons and labor migrants; there they met with heads of regional administration, the Regional Employment Department, the Youth Labor Exchange, and the Microfinancing Agency for the unemployed. This activity resulted in the round table on “*Central Asia and Current Labor Migration Issues*” and the agreement on cooperation signed between agencies in the Sughd and Batken regions. Those trips were aimed at applying operational experience, using several aspects of the accumulated experience in practice, and developing a unified system to work with employers.

This project implementation will make it possible to improve the professional level of unemployed persons and labor migrants, which will help them find decent jobs and sources of income for their families and make a notable contribution to poverty reduction in the Republic of Tajikistan.

Lessons Learned

The project implementation has identified that short-term courses are of great importance in various aspects:

- training is free of charge for unemployed persons and gives them a chance to obtain qualifications required to be competitive in the labor market;
- government agencies are also willing to support the courses delivered and provide stipends;
- training is carried out in close proximity to trainees’ places of residence which produces a significant effect on the economic status of families as cash expenses for transportation are saved;
- every labor migrant is not a certified professional nor has a profession which is in demand in the labor market, which makes it more difficult to find jobs both in the country and abroad, while official certificates give him/her more chances to find employment;
- when developing curricula, much attention has been given to learning Russian as the language of communication in the host country and to the subject – market economy fundamentals. Much attention has also been given to legal education of migrants, which finally helps them to adapt a new environment much faster and more effectively;
- the most beneficial results were obtained through the strategy of cooperation and promotion of initiatives aimed at positively addressing labor migration-related issues in Tajikistan by non-profit-making organizations in partnership with government agencies. We think that the activities aimed to protect rights and interests of citizens outside the country and legal protection of the country’s citizens temporarily working abroad could be beneficial only if that the efforts of all the stakeholders are coordinated;



A tailoring course for young women

- activities in the area of labor migration must be aimed at prevention of illegal migration growth and must be carried out jointly with host countries;
- in order to build the mechanism of regional cooperation and promote Adult Education concepts, opportunities for interaction among non-profit-making organizations, government agencies, international organizations, commercial entities, as well as organizations working in the area of labor migration have been discussed under the project. Labor migration issues and their possible solutions have become topics of numerous round tables, discussions, debates and TV

programs. None of those agencies alone is able to address issues and problems facing a labor migrant;

- strengthening of educational institutions' physical infrastructure contributes to higher quality training and better training outcomes as a result of the classes attended by trainees, makes short-term courses more attractive and arouses stronger interest in them;
- organization and delivery of the training of trainers (TOT) and workshops for teachers and stakeholders yield good results as the obtained skills are applied in practice;
- recommendations for key areas of labor migrants' educational capacity building have been developed, as well as indicators for us to assess our impact on the labor migration issue have been worked out;
- traineeships abroad and familiarization with advanced methods and forms of work with labor migrants and unemployed persons are used by staff of the project partners on site, which finally results in better quality solutions of problems and issues facing unemployed persons and labor migrants;
- timely and quality recommendations for project implementation and interaction with partners have been extensively discussed and disseminated among relevant stakeholders.

In general, it should be mentioned again that this project has made a significant contribution to addressing a number of legal labor migration-related issues and has given an impetus to promotion of lifelong learning (LLL) and adult education (AE) concepts in Tajikistan.

Levan Kvatchadze

Non-Formal Adult Training in Georgia: Challenges and Approaches to Work with Representatives of Ethnic Minorities

*Experiences of dvv international in South Georgia
(Samtskhe-Javakheti region)*

Context

Samtskhe-Javakheti is a multinational and multi-confessional region of Georgia. It is located in the south of the country and borders on Turkey and Armenia. In Soviet times this region bordering on the NATO country, was distinguished for its isolated position. Even residents of neighboring regions needed special permits from authorities to enter this southern part of Georgia.

The region's isolated position in Soviet times, its remoteness from the capital, severe climatic conditions, underdeveloped infrastructure, language barriers, low level of investment, the overall tight economic situation in Georgia and low civil self-awareness have been determining issues facing the region. Given the above, it is considered that there is a problem with integration of population in Samtskhe-Javakheti in civil society in Georgia and low-level participation of people in this region in the country's political, economic and cultural life. The problem of integration is also aggravated by separatist ideas among a certain part of population in Samtskhe-Javakheti.

Representatives of an ethnic minority (Armenians) constitute the majority of Samtskhe-Javakheti population. Most of them have a poor command of the national (Georgian) language. This primarily refers to adults, as many of them were educated in the Russian or Armenian languages. At that time, the Georgian language was not a compulsory subject of educational programs. Today, since they completed their education under the formal education system, these people have very few opportunities to access educational institutions and programs to master the Georgian language. Moreover, it is very difficult to find a job or to retain one's current position without knowledge of the official language, since



the majority of jobs in the region are primarily available in public and social sectors (local authorities, law enforcement authorities and courts, educational institutions, etc.).

While language-related problems are mostly typical of ethnic minorities, the issues related to mastering up-to-date knowledge and skills, compensation for educational gaps and meeting the educational needs are of equal concern among the general adult population in Georgia. Unfortunately, the adult education (AE) system in Georgia is still underdeveloped and lacks variety. The AE providers do not cover the whole country with their services trying to focus on the capital and partly on other big cities. In addition, there are few non-formal vocational AE providers even in the capital.

Former Soviet agencies of further education, which in theory could occupy this niche, were not able to adapt to the new reality and almost disappeared during the transition period. Currently, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) performing functions of AE providers mainly in civil education and various organizations offering fee-based business and personal development training prevail among non-formal AE providers in Georgia. Unfortunately, due to lack of a systematic approach and coordination of donor support, etc., the NGOs activities in AE are often characterized by lack of sustainability and very limited scale and resources.

The situation in formal AE is equally challenging. To describe it, one should consider the current educational framework in Georgia.

After the *"Rose Revolution"* in 2003, the Georgian education system, which had been distinguished by a high level of corruption and poor quality, began to face drastic reforms that covered almost all sectors of the system. Initially, the Ministry of Education and Science focused on reforms in secondary and higher education. In general, the reforms were liberal and stated to be aimed at building a transparent system centered on students and guaranteeing them free choice.

Description of all the reforms implemented in the education system in Georgia, their advantages, positive results and obvious mistakes, requires a separate and detailed discussion. This is not our goal now. Based on the goals set, we will limit ourselves to a description of the changes that have produced a direct impact on AE and non-formal training.

Changes in the Georgian education system have covered almost all aspects of higher and secondary education. In terms of their pace and scale, Georgian reforms have been unique in the region since 2004. The reforms were largely determined by the World Bank-financed *"Education System Realignment and Strengthening Program – the Ilia Chavchavadze Project"*.¹

The reforms established new legislative framework in the country, in particular, the Georgian Parliament enacted new laws *"On Higher Education"* (2004) and *"On Secondary Education"* (2005). The system of educational institutions financing and governance was reformed as well – the per capita financing principle was introduced in secondary and higher educa-

1 <http://reform.edu.ge>

tion. The Unified National Examinations have been introduced (since 2005), which are based on a testing system in various subjects and identify entrants to higher educational institutions. Examinations are held by a newly established special agency – the National Examination Center (www.naec.ge). The National Accreditation Center (www.nea.ge) set up in 2006 had already carried out institutional accreditation of higher educational institutions, after which the number of accredited higher educational institutions was reduced to 43 (the initial number in 2004 was 227); institutional accreditation of general secondary schools, as well as program accreditation of university curricula are planned in the near future. In line with



*Course Artistic Wood Processing
(Manufacture of Souvenirs)*

the Bologna Process principles, ECTS and three-tier higher education were introduced; in general, secondary schools, new educational programs developed by the National Curriculum and Assessment Center (established in 2006, www.ganatileba.org) were introduced; and buildings of educational institutions were rehabilitated. Under a special government project (www.dlf.ge), the program to computerize all schools and provide them with Internet access has started. Financing of science has been reorganized, the Georgia National Science Foundation (www.gnsf.ge) has been established; etc. ²

One of the most successful results of the reforms was almost complete eradication of corruption associated with entrance examinations. Moreover, as state accreditation for higher educational institutions was introduced, a number of institutions who actually sold diplomas, paying no attention to the quality of education, became useless. As a result, the total number of all seats in accredited higher educational institutions has recently become 15,000-16,000 a year. This means that every year only one out of four persons having a certificate of secondary education will have a chance to get higher education.³ It would be logical to assume that alternative ways for further education, for example, vocational

2 See "Vocational Education and Training in the South Causasus: On the Way from Survival to Effective Functioning. Policy Report." 2008. p. 28-29 at www.dvv-international.ge or www.epfound.ge/files/regional_policy_report_on_enp_and_vocational_education.pdf

3 See The Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia: "Situation Analysis of the Vocational Education System in Georgia". The document was supported by the UNDP under the development of the Four-year vocational education strategy in Georgia. 10.02.2009. p. 13 (Georgian).

education, are open for the others. However, is that really so?

Reforms in the vocational education system of Georgia began in 2005 with the approval of the system reform concept. In 2007, the "Law on Vocational Education" was passed. The new law determined two types of vocational education programs (the term "education" in the law covers both education and training). These are handicraft training (the programs can be mastered by anyone having the basic 9-year education) and higher vocational education (a requirement for enrollment, though insufficient, is a certificate of secondary education i.e. 12 years of studies).

After enactment of the new law, vocational educational institutions began to be reorganized and optimized. If in 2005 there were 75 basic and 47 secondary vocational educational institutions, currently there are only 39 vocational education centers licensed to carry out handicraft training programs.⁴ Regarding higher vocational education programs, they are implemented solely by higher educational institutions accredited by the state.

Unfortunately, not only the number of vocational educational institutions has decreased, the overall capacity of the system has been reduced significantly (to some 5,000-6,000 seats for new students per academic year).⁵ As a result, due to limited enrollment in higher educational institutions and in higher vocational and handicraft educational programs, for example, only in 2007 some 35,000 young people, having finished secondary school (i.e. over half of applicants) were left without any further education and training.⁶ This group of people left the formal education system and without any special training entered the labor market where their employment chances can be considered as negligible.

Given the above, one can summarize that Georgia is facing the real problem with access to further (formal) education upon completion of 12-year secondary school studies. This conclusion implies a number of opportunities, as well as challenges for the adult education system, particularly, for non-formal education providers. The situation for ethnic minorities is even more challenging. Due to the language barrier, almost the only chance for self-actualization and integration into society is approaching non-formal education providers. Since in areas of compact settlement of ethnic minorities (in Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli) it is very hard to find relevant non-formal (especially vocational) education providers, unconventional steps to promote such activities are required.

Pilot Project by *dvv international* in Samtskhe-Javakheti

Having been implementing projects in Georgia since 2001 and having a representative office here since 2003, the Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult

4 Ibid, p. 33.

5 Ibid, p. 36.

6 Ibid, p. 13-14.

Education Association (*dvv international*) could not but react to that situation and initiate a pilot project to set up the AE center in line with the concept of the German Adult Education Centers (*Volkshochschule*). The project was designed in 2005, and in the same year the adapted project proposal was submitted to the European Commission tender under the program “Democracy and Human Rights” (EIDHR). The project proposal “Adult Education Centers in Samtskhe-Javakheti – Minorities’ Chance for Integration” won the competition and was awarded financing in the amount of 400,000 euros in the project.



The Adult Education Center in Akhaltsikhe

dvv international invested another 100,000 euros in the project from the funds allocated by the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) for activities in Georgia. The 30-month project started in January 2006 and, after project extension to 36 months, was completed in December 2008. The project implementing partners of *dvv international* were the Georgia Adult Education Association (which is the association of the leading AE organizations and specialists) and the Union of Democrat Meskhs (one of the oldest NGOs in the Samtskhe-Javakheti region working in human rights protection).

The project aimed at integration and conflict prevention made it possible to set up two adult education centers in Akhaltsikhe and Akhalkalaki cities in September 2006. Akhaltsikhe is the regional center of Samtskhe-Javakheti and its municipality (covering Akhaltsikhe city and former Akhaltsikhe district) governs the area where 46.8 thousand people lived in 2008. At the same time, in the area governed by Akhalkalaki municipality (city + district) there were 62.3 thousand residents.⁷ Ethnic composition of these two cities is quite different. If in Akhaltsikhe city (some 26 thousand people) citizens of Georgian and Armenian origin account for about 40-45% each of the total city population, in Akhalkalaki city (some 15 thousand residents) citizens of Armenian origin account for over 90% of all the city population.

These centers became the first multi-discipline AE institutions in Georgia and the South Caucasus that operated in line with the concept of the so-called Adult Education Centers.⁸

⁷ www.statistics.ge

⁸ At the initial stage of project implementation, managerial staff of both centers made a study tour to the Adult Education College in Regen (Bavaria/Germany) and got acquainted with the experience of German colleagues in planning, announcing, implementation and monitoring of various courses, costing of courses and educational projects, organization of social partnership under vocational training projects, etc.

According to the selected approach, the emphasis was placed on human resources development (with a focus on representatives of ethnic minorities) using non-formal education to promote integration and interaction. Given a number of common problems (employment, knowledge upgrade, etc.) facing both representatives of the ethnic majority and minority in the region, the project authors thought that joint training and overcoming of barriers will promote integration among representatives of different ethnic groups.

A priority project activity was to encourage professional integration of trainees from the target group. To this end, the program *“Professional Integration and Personal Development”* was developed. In Akhaltsikhe where mixed groups were mainly formed, the language of instruction was Georgian. Each trainer had good command of Russian or Armenian, and, if needed, provided explanations in the relevant language. As for Akhalkalaki, all the courses, trainings and other educational activities were mainly held in the Armenian or Russian languages. Thus, a flexible approach aimed at active involvement of trainees in the training process was selected.

The program *“Professional Integration and Personal Development”* aimed to increase competitiveness of the target group representatives in the labor market. Under the program, various vocational training courses were established and other educational activities were offered to develop skills, acquire knowledge and competencies. However, before describing the educational products, specific characteristics of the local labor market in the region should be addressed.

As mentioned above, most jobs in the Samtskhe-Javakheti region are in public and social sectors (territorial branches of central authority and local self-governments, courts, educational institutions, law-enforcement agencies, health facilities, cultural institutions, etc.). Jobs in the private sector are mostly available at branches of several national or regional companies (banks and insurance companies, cellular operators, power company, gas stations, etc.) and partly at local small enterprises (stores, hotels, cafes, restaurants, local mass media, NGOs, etc.).

Samtskhe-Javakheti is not rich in natural resources, and tourism capacity of the region is so far underdeveloped. The region almost lacks foreign investors, though this southern part of Georgia has already become an intermediate step for implementation of a number of transnational (Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey) projects such as the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline, the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline and the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway.

In Soviet times, agriculture was the key industry in the region, and in some terms (milk and potato production) met almost all the needs of Georgia. In the area governed by the Akhalkalaki municipality, potato production is still the main branch of agriculture. However, there are very few major agricultural companies.

Prior to project implementation, the fact that every year before summer a part of the region’s population (especially men) went to Russia to earn money was considered as the characteristic feature of Samtskhe-Javakheti region. However, this trend declined consid-

erably when a visa regime was introduced between Russia and Georgia. Another peculiarity was more about Akhalkalaki, where by the time the project launched there had been a Russian military base providing jobs for a part of population. For national security reasons and as requested by Georgian authorities a decision was taken to relocate this base outside Georgia in 2007. At the time the project implementation started in 2006, the local community was afraid that the relocation of the base would affect the socio-economic situation in the city.



Computer software course

The AE Centers' Program *"Professional Integration and Personal Development"*

As mentioned above, the program *"Professional Integration and Personal Development"* aimed to improve competitiveness of the AE center's trainees in the labor market and thus to promote labor and economic integration of the target group representatives. Under the project, within the two-year training period it was planned that at least 700 people would undergo various vocational training and handicraft courses and/or master small business management fundamentals at both centers free of charge. Moreover, it was planned that some 2,000 people will take various computer software courses free of charge. To help eliminate computer illiteracy among adults was one of the program goals. The computer training courses aroused great interest among the local population from the very beginning. The demand was so strong that sometimes interested people had to register with the course two months in advance. The trainees' age varied from 18 and over (with no upper age limit). In several exceptional cases, there were trainees under 18, and the oldest trainee was 68. It should be noted that within the period of project implementation all the stated quantitative objectives were successfully met and in some areas they were at least doubled.

In addition to the courses that lasted from two to four months (a month of training equaled some 26 hours of training), under the program, to develop special competencies various short-term trainings, mainly fee-based, were offered for interested persons (*"Effective Communication"*, *"Preparation of Presentations"*, *"Leadership"*, *"Creating a CV and a Cover Letter and effective job search methods"*, etc.).

Along with the program *"Professional Integration and Personal Development"*, the AE centers offered programs *"Civil Education and Active Citizenship"* and language programs, as well as offers where educational courses and activities (for example, free legal



*Course in Artistic Wood Processing
(Manufacture of Souvenirs)*

advice) also helped develop the general outlook and several competencies essential for the labor market. For instance, under the language program the Georgian language courses (various levels) were offered and were in great demand, especially in Akhalkalaki; these courses certainly helped the trainees without knowledge of the official language improve their competitiveness in the labor market. Overall, four to six-month various-level courses in the Georgian language in both cities were taken free of charge by some 500 people.

Naturally, while planning and implementing the project in Samtskhe-Javakheti, the project team of *dvv international* collected

information and relied on reports by various organizations to identify the local labor market trends. However, planning of specific courses and activities under the program *“Professional Integration and Personal Development”* was mainly based on consultation councils set up in both cities where the AE centers were established. The consultation councils included representatives of local authorities, educational and partner organizations, NGOs, mass media, etc. The councils met quarterly, considered the project team’s progress reports, shared advice on topical issues and information on their organization’s activities. On the one hand, this form of local partners’ involvement provided coordination of activities with other organizations, and on the other hand gave the project team valuable advice for continuous improvement of the project at planning and implementation stages.

Generally, thanks to consultations and own research, specific areas for most of the courses were identified. The emphasis was placed on the courses that could enable the trainees to find jobs or generate income by self-employment upon completion of training.

At the workshops of the adult education centers the following handicraft training courses were prepared and organized: *“Artistic Wood Processing (Manufacture of Souvenirs)”*, *“Enamel Processing and Jewelry Fundamentals”*, *“Cutting and Sewing”*, *“Carpet Weaving”*, *“Felt and Batik Processing”*, and *“Dolls and Souvenirs”*. These courses were offered on a more or less regular basis and during the project implementation were free of charge.

Moreover, several times in close cooperation with capital and local partner organizations the following courses were offered: *“Beekeeping”*, *“Royal Jelly Production”*, *“Setting up Biological Farms”*, *“Basics of Fishery”*, *“Hairdressing”*, and *“Iron Processing”*. The latter

three courses were based at partner organizations, and due to inadequate training quality control opportunities for the AE centers' managers the courses were held once and then cancelled.

Also, vocational training courses aimed to develop various competencies were worked out and offered. If under the handicraft training courses the focus was mainly on professional skills development in a particular occupation by practical training at workshops, at vocational training courses, based on the regional labor market characteristics, the focus was on development of a variety of competencies common for several areas of activity. Here, the goal was that a trainee having completed a course could engage in various activities.



Courses Enamel Processing and Jewelry Fundamentals

Such courses were mainly *"Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management"* and *"Training of Office Managers (Assistants)"*. Depending on the trainees' interests, the first course was offered in three areas. The basic part was common for all three, and then the focus was on one of the following topics: management fundamentals, basics of financial management and marketing.

The three-month course *"Training of Office Managers (Assistants)"* consisted of three modules: office software (38 hours), business (functional) Georgian language (38 hours) and the so-called *"special course"* (76 hours) covering record keeping, clerical work, effective communication fundamentals and several aspects of psychology. To ensure a basic level of knowledge and skills in computer operating and the official language, the trainees were enrolled in the course based on testing results. They could reject a module if they thought they were competent enough in it.

It is worth noting that the course *"Training of Office Managers (Assistants)"* was one of the most popular among the AE centers' trainees. This course aimed at employment rather than self-employment was distinguished by the fact that upon successful completion of the course at least over half of trainees found relevant jobs. To this end, presentations of courses and trainees were held for prospective employers. The AE centers assisted the trainees upon their request after completion of training and during probation at prospective employers. Thanks to such involvement of employers and their accumulated positive experience with the centers' former trainees, the certificates issued by the AE centers soon became very popular in the region. The employers took a serious attitude to this docu-



Course "Dolls and Souvenirs"

ment confirming successful non-formal education of a certificate holder at the AE center and his/her relevant competence.⁹ Thus, for example, a branch of a bank opened in Akhaltsikhe filled a third of available 18 vacancies with former trainees of the AE center.

It should be noted that all the above courses under the "Professional Integration and Personal Development" program were quite favorable in financial terms. Almost the only expensive course (exceeding the budget) was "Enamel Processing and Jewelry Fundamentals". It could be funded by savings from other courses, for

example, the course "Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management".

On average, each course under the "Professional Integration and Personal Development" program was budgeted at some 100 euros per trainee for the whole course. The number of trainees varied from 4-6 at handicraft training courses, to 10-15 at courses "Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management" and "Training of Office Managers (Assistants)". As a rule, to ensure effective course delivery, enrollment and subsequent training were carried out in at least two groups per occupation. This made it possible to provide more attractive terms for teachers/trainers.

Trainers of the AE centers could continuously improve their qualification by taking various courses and familiarizing themselves with new materials on their subjects. For several courses (non-handicraft training) at the AE centers the trainers developed the adapted training materials (handouts and manuals).

Finally, one collateral effect is worth mentioning as it was not planned initially. The external project evaluation showed that several female trainees of the AE centers were motivated to attend courses not only by prospective improvement of their competitiveness in the labor market, but also by some sort of social contacts established during training. The point is that, for example, Akhalkalaki city is located at some 1,700 meters above sea level and is characterized by severe climate and a conservative lifestyle. Local women first of all try

9 It should be noted that after the break-up of the Soviet Union, Georgia's qualification system remained unregulated for a long time.

to be good wives and mothers, and influenced by their husbands and fathers pay less attention to careers and social activities. Thus, attending the AE courses for many of them became a way to get away from household chores and establish new social contacts.

AE Centers: Today and Tomorrow

The project of *dvv international* in Samtskhe-Javakheti was completed in December 2008. However, of course the AE centers were not closed and continue their activities. In addition, an important factor of the successful project's sustainability was the fact that, with the permission of donors, the buildings for both centers were not rented but procured. In early 2009, the AE centers with all their equipment were transferred to the Georgia Adult Education Association, the partner of *dvv international* under the project. The AE center's activities have mostly become fee-based. This transition was not too painful since in previous years the AE centers already began to prepare for such a scenario and started offering various fee-based courses, which also were in great demand. An example is the course "Accounting" which always has trainees despite quite a high fee.

Since 2009, *dvv international* has continued to support the centers as a development partner and donor of several educational programs (for special target groups, for example, disadvantaged populations or ethnic minorities). Thus, in early 2009, both AE centers supported by *dvv international* made first steps to introduce the quality control system. The centers set a goal – to obtain ISO certificates by 2010. In parallel, they are developing new programs and products (driving schools are planned to be set up at the AE centers; an advanced training program for teachers is being developed, etc.).

At the same time, *dvv international* continues to encourage the establishment of the AE centers in line with the Adult Education Centers concept in Georgia and in the whole South Caucasus. As early as 2009, an AE center will be opened in Ijevan (Armenia). Opening of other centers in Azerbaijan and Georgia is planned as well.



Course "Carpet Weaving"

When vocational education reforms started, the National Qualification Framework began to be developed as well. When this work is completed, a mechanism for recognition of non-formal training (under non-accredited programs) is planned to be introduced as well. Thus, the AE centers' trainees will have a real chance to get a formal recognition of the knowledge acquired. On the other hand, the AE centers might be able to submit some of their programs for accreditation. Given the successful accreditation, they will be able to issue a formally recognized document on education to their trainees.

