

University Lifelong learning education

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A. Legislation

Lifelong learning is vital for everyone. In compliance with the State Programme on reformation of education in Azerbaijan, concept of lifelong learning was developed by national experts and adopted by the Ministry of Education. New Law on Education adopted in 2009 reflects various aspects of formal, non-formal and informal education. Still follow-up steps are to be taken on the way to recognition of prior education.

According to this law “Additional Education¹” is not separate education level in the Azerbaijan Republic and includes below mentioned:

- upgrading of professional skills;
- re-training of personnel;
- repeated high education and secondary vocational-training;
- internship and improvement of staff’s professional skills;
- rise of degrees ;
- adult education

Although overall any of these types of AE are to be self-motivated incentive measures such as rise in salary or career promotion are to be provided for teachers participating in these courses.

B.Providers

There are various state and private providers of additional education in Azerbaijan. Among them, Azerbaijan Teachers Institute. ATI is public institution under supervision of the Ministry of Education. Along with Bachelors and Masters degrees ATI offers additional education. It is the main provider of retraining courses for pedagogical staff of the country. ATI is the only Institute in the country with 11 branches in the regions. Each year around 15 thousand teachers go through courses organized by ATI, be it re-training, upskilling, changing of specialty etc.

For VET schools a cooperation is established with major enterprises so that VET teachers are up to date with modern labor market demands. ATI is the only UNEVOC UNESCO center in Azerbaijan. We are working closely with DVV

¹ Further in the document we will use “*additional education*” term as it is accepted in Azerbaijan

international, ETF in order to modernize the system of continuing vocational education.

In spite of the fact that ATI for more than 80 years has been providing additional education, it is obvious that after the shift from Soviet system of education to totally new one and having joined the Bologna process we need to reconsider many aspects. ATI has wide network of international partners. We organize study tours for our teachers with the purpose of exchange of experience.

C. Current situation

New regulations on additional education adopted in 2011 elaborate more specifically on formal, informal and non-formal education. This new model of additional education is consistent with the prerequisites and requirements of the following core education policy documents of the Republic of Azerbaijan:

- Education Law – approved by the Parliament in June 2009
- Azerbaijan ten-year Education Reform Strategy for 2003-2013, approved by the Ministry of Education
- Concept and Strategy on Continuous Teacher Development, approved by the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2007

The new regulations are consistent with most recent international trends and EU policies in the domain of in-service training, related to the Lisbon and the Bologna processes that Azerbaijan aims to meet. In this national and international context, a new „*modular*” system would establish a consistent frame of reference for improving Continuous Professional Development of educational personnel and, as such, the quality of education provision in the Republic of Azerbaijan. It would also align the country to the most advanced international and European developments in the area of in-service training.

Beginning from the next academic year further education will be provided on modular base, namely:

- - Training on Educational Foundations (developing new knowledge, skills and professional attitudes related to basics of education; educational sciences; educational psychology and sociology; general pedagogy; new pedagogies; philosophical, scientific, socio-economic, legal, practical etc. foundations of education etc.)
- Training on Specialization Areas (developing new knowledge, skills and professional attitudes related to basic specialization(s) of the educational personnel - e.g. Subject Pedagogies; Subject Didactics and Methodologies; Implementing the new curriculum for pre-school and primary; Implementing Curricula for Secondary Education; ICT in teaching different subjects; Bibliotecomy; Childcare etc.)

- Training on Current Trends and Innovations in Education (developing new knowledge, skills and professional attitudes related to innovative theories, methods and practices, new technologies, ICT, Active Learning, Critical Thinking, Cooperative Learning, etc., related to areas of individual interests and connected to the basic areas of activity of the educational personnel).

These regulations define types of training programs, accreditation, certification as well as mode of their implementation, be it inservice training, on correspondence or on a distance base.

D. Challenges and problems.

“Lifelong learning” has become a popular expression over the recent years. Social changes and economic transformations made huge impact lifelong learning in Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan has proven strong will to modernize and bring uptodate the overall process of additional education. Nevertheless, we would like to make further suggestions:

- the content of retraining courses must regularly be updated in order to meet expectations of participants of these courses;
- there should be more programs aimed at disadvantageous groups of adult learners esp. early school leavers, IDPs and refugees etc.;
- As it has been repeatedly mentioned by the Minister of Education there still remain problems in the issue of training of the Azerbaijani colleges and universities' teachers. In this regard, Azerbaijan needs to use international experience, including the CIS countries' experience in getting additional education.