

# European context

## Chapter 7. Staff and trainers

### Spain<sup>1</sup>

#### Validating and admission

There is no specific qualification relating to teacher training for educators of seniors in Spain. Teachers of older students have to be lecturers in the University in which they teach. Participation requirements depend on the organization/location of the Senior University in Spain.

A Master's in Gerontology is available; its objectives include developing the skills necessary to work as an educator of the elderly.

#### Position

The teachers participating in non-formal/informal/formal training of elderly are professionals whose main activity is with another institution or agency, such as the University, a Health Centre, etc. They complement their work by also providing training for older people, as they have the necessary skills and competences to promote learning among the elderly. In this case, their participation is part time, and they receive payment. They must be graduates.

#### Quality assurance

The quality of teachers who teach the elderly is evaluated by each organization. In our case, in Castellón Senior University, each teacher and the subject taught are evaluated by the students themselves every academic year.

### Finland

#### Validating and admission

The teacher qualification for teachers of the elderly is the same as for all adult education: Mostly Masters degree, sometimes Bachelors degree and for some purposes another second level degree (e.g. teachers for physical exercise, handicrafts, art etc.). The pedagogical qualification is not required but very much recommended. The teachers are trained in universities as all other teachers, those with the second level degree also in other training institutes.

#### Position

Most senior trainings are arranged by municipal Adult Education Centres. In Finland, there is a Centre in every municipality, and the teachers are paid by the municipality. Most teachers in Adult Education Centres work part-time. Very often they have a full-time job elsewhere, mostly in schools (most adult teachers are also qualified subject teachers). Working as a volunteer is rare in Finland. Some third sector organisations also arrange training for seniors, and they get their funding mostly from the state.

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## Quality assurance

The quality assurance for all teachers in Finland is based on trust. Teachers are not monitored or evaluated but by the students. After each course, the participants give the evaluation of the teachers, and this is reported to the school or training institute. There are no 'special' challenges in senior training because it is a normal part of the work in the Adult Education Centres. The challenges in all teaching are e.g. motivating the learners, reaching the goals, making the teaching interesting and fun etc.

## Italy

### Validating and admission

The selection and role of the teachers is an area in which we can find the biggest difference between the formal and the non formal education. But the largest gap is the role that the teachers/trainers have related to the learner. As a matter of fact in the formal system we talk about teachers, in the non formal system about trainers. The difference is not simply a matter of terminology, but of contents. In the formal system what is important is the school concept of the teacher who has to carry out a programme which has to be the same for all the students, regardless of their background and needs. Therefore it is the student who has to adapt to the methods and contents, while in the non formal system there is the opposite situation.

In the formal system the selection of the group of teachers is ruled by very strict State laws; legal graduate university studies are required, and after that a teacher has to stand selective examinations, but there isn't any specific training for Adult Education trainers. There is no specific training for each typology of learner, only for competences in the different subjects. As soon as they pass the specific examinations, the teachers try to enter into the most prestigious schools, which guarantee them working hours, more suitable mainly to the female teaching class. The schools for adults are necessarily evening schools and, for different social and cultural reasons, they are less regarded. Furthermore, as said, no specific training is required. In this way the teachers enter into the schools for adults because they have lost their job within the morning classes, and not because they choose to do it and, being used to teach to teenagers and without any training to meet classes of adults, they often mistake the approach, establishing a kind of hierarchical relationship that cannot be proposed to people who already have a consistent life and baggage of experiences and knowledge. These two elements turn out to be disruptive: on one side the teachers feel as a kind of downgrading their evening job, on the other side they aren't prepared to move from the hierarchical relationship adult-teenager to the adult-adult one. In the non formal system this problem doesn't exist. It is true that, because of its features and other political – economical reasons, the teaching in the non formal system can be considered like a second job, as it doesn't guarantee suitable incomes, but it is equally true that the trainer is extremely gratified by this experience.

### Position

In general the teachers in the non formal system are:

- Teachers of the public school who, being retired and still relatively young, have the time and the will to make new experiences in more gratifying environments.
- Teachers of the public school who, thanks to specific studies, have competences not usable within the formal system. The teacher of Movie History at Università delle LiberEtà is a teacher of literature in a junior secondary school. This subject is not included in any curriculum of junior secondary schools. The high professionalism of this teacher, supported by publications, collaborations with the main local newspapers and by an important role in world-wide movie events, doesn't find other outlet, in terms of didactics, than within the non formal system.

- Immigrants coming from non EU Countries, generally women, who have competences and high cultural levels, not usable within the institutional European system. For example, around 10 years ago Università delle LiberEtà established its first course of Chinese language held by a journalist of the main daily newspaper in Beijing. She was a young woman who had married an Italian man and she had left an important job to follow her husband. Since then the group of teachers at Università delle LiberEtà has had many trainers with these features.
- Professionals who have always desired to dedicate themselves to the teaching but, because of different life events, had to work in other fields.
- Lecturers who wish to leave the protected environment of the Universities and want to measure themselves with people having different cultures.
- Craftsmen who, regardless of their basic education, have technical-practical competences, highly required for the free time activities.

## **Quality assurance**

The relationship with the adults, if adequately prepared, is extremely rewarding, and at the same time is the best evaluation of the teachers' work. The free teaching makes it possible for the teachers to feel that they have been chosen at each lesson.

The students in compulsory education, have to attend classes and study all the ordained subjects; the adults instead make a conscious choice that includes all the teaching activities: they choose the subject, then, directly or indirectly, they choose the teacher, they are free to choose if they want to continue or leave the course. If they keep on attending the course, they surely are satisfied of the teaching they have received.

And with the contribution of their experience and knowledge, they can also support the orientation of the teaching. On the other hand the teachers, not having other obligations than carrying out a thematic training path, motivated by the pleasure of being chosen at each lesson by the learners, they find it rewarding to adapt themselves to the needs of the students, fitting the topics and methods to the single learner.

All this, is the strong point of the non formal system that, considering the above mentioned introduction, has a category of teachers highly enthusiastic and motivated.

## **Latvia**

### **Validating and admission**

Law on Education in Latvia collects and regulates education area and guidelines, but lifelong learning and informal education principles are not defined within its framework. All target groups involved in the education process are named in the Law, including children, young people and also adults. However, adult education is mentioned only as: "...educational process of many forms that provides development of personality and competitiveness in the labour market within the human's life".

Adult education can offer formal and informal education programs. Realizing formal education programs, teachers must have appropriate qualifications obtained in accordance with normative documentation. Educational institution implementing formal education programs for adults, have the right to enrol students only after receiving a corresponding license for implementation of educational program. Teachers' qualifications should be certified for receiving the license, and the performance quality is controlled in accordance with other educational programs.

State and municipal education institutions are entitled to implement informal adult education programs without the license, but other legal and natural persons, who are not registered in the Register of Education Institutions, can implement this program after receiving a license in the municipality. Every municipality sets its own criteria for giving the license and implementation

of the program by persons who are not registered in the Register of Education Institutions. They can vary in relation to staff qualification requirements.

There are no education institutions in Latvia that prepare teachers to educate seniors. So there is no unified staff register system in senior education. All programs are implemented by the concept of adult education.

## **Position**

Interest and informal education in Latvia is voluntary, it is not necessary to have a particular education level before entering this type of education. The Law states that informal adult education programs can be financed by: the state and local government; employers' resources; learners' resources, donations and gifts; other funds.

The majority of local authorities have social support centres for retired people, and these centres offer informal education activities: handicraft, theatre, learning languages, playing music in order to develop personal social skills. Mainly classes are led by a social rehabilitator who operates under the supervision of a social worker. Usually these employees have a full-time job at the local government institution.

Social rehabilitator qualification can be obtained by completing the 1st level professional higher education study program (college education level). Social worker qualification is of the highest level of education.

Local authorities finance also senior dance and music groups that are led by a specialist in the relevant area. Some art groups, which meet the requirements, are funded by the Ministry of Culture. NGOs widely use senior volunteers work in conducting classes, sharing their life experience. NGOs have attracted funding from various international projects.

## **Quality assurance**

Senior education is included in adult education and in Latvia it is mainly implemented by private institutions and NGOs such as Riga Active Seniors Alliance RASA. One of the priority objectives of RASA is to promote lifelong learning, knowledge transfer to the younger generation, a common reversible cooperation, to move forward a concept "Generation-to-Generation". Senior education is also implemented by Latvian Veterans (Masters)Athletic Association and social responsibility project "Connect, Latvia!" ran by Lattelecom, etc.

The main disadvantage of senior education in Latvia is that there is no a unified cooperation network the country. Preparation process has started ([www.senioriem.lv](http://www.senioriem.lv)), but it is incomplete. However, there are positive trends in the government level, because it was talked about building open universities (by the model of British Open University with e-libraries available for everyone and regional centres) and volunteer mentor programs during discussions on Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030 (Latvia 2030) and the state's growth target within next 20 years (The third discussion in Saeima on the priority "Changing education paradigms", available on <http://www.latvija2030.lv/page/301>).

## **Statistics**

362 education institutions implement informal adult education in Latvia, but mostly they are professional development education programs. Only 7 programs are included in a unified database and specialized to the seniors' target group (courses of English, computer skills and nutrition). Other informal education programs (handicraft, floristry, physical activities, etc.) are implemented in government or non-governmental institutions, and the information on their activities and workload of the staff involved is not compiled yet.

The only available official statistics are concerning formal education program implementation. However, its proportion in adult education is very insignificant. According to the research data on lifelong learning availability, only 6 % of respondents aged 55-64 years have continued

acquiring formal education, while there is not even one percent of respondents in the group of 65-75 year-olds currently participating in learning activities. 13 % of respondents in the group of 55-64 year olds and only 5 % of respondents in the eldest group obtained education in connection with interests and hobbies. Only 5 % of all seniors plan to engage in any of the education activities<sup>2</sup>.

Seniors involve themselves in informal education nearly 15 times more than in formal education. This means that informal education is more captivating for elderly residents. 78.2 % of respondents do not participate in adult education at all, because the main reason is the lack of free financial resources.

## **Poland<sup>3</sup>**

### **Validating and admission**

In Polish educational system the offer of teachers' training mainly concerns the work with children and young people. There are no special institutions that train teachers to work with seniors. In our country, there are three types of Universities of the Third Age: First one - operating under the auspices of a university (French model). Second, working with associations active in popular science. Third - operating at community centres, libraries, day care homes, social assistance centres, etc. (UK model). In the Third Age University, which operate within the structures of the university, the lecturers are mainly the academic teachers, research workers employed at the university or people from art and culture world. All of them must be the professionals and authorities in the fields they deal. This model is intended to provide an academic university level education. In the other types of institutions the lecturers can be also other people, specialists, for example: teachers of local schools, doctors from the local clinics, psychologists, sociologists, historians. Simultaneously they can be the students of Third Age University, too.

### **Position**

Education of the elderly, supporting by teachers, exists in Poland mainly thanks to the voluntary work. At Third Age University the decision makers sometimes decide to pay teachers, but in many cases their work has a voluntary basis. At the average Polish Third Age University 18 persons work without pay, while average number of working for remuneration is 2.4 (zoomnautw.pl: [http://zoomnautw.pl/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Zoom\\_na\\_UTW\\_RAPORT\\_calosciowy\\_www.pdf](http://zoomnautw.pl/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Zoom_na_UTW_RAPORT_calosciowy_www.pdf)). We can see the impact of organizational form Third Age University on the structure of employment. Independent associations and public institutions rely more on Third Age University students and other persons' voluntary work than full-time employees. On the other hand, private universities and cultural centres, also largely rely on voluntary work, but they are more likely to employ workers for seniors training. The training of the elderly is not the principal occupation of the teachers. They are often the public school teachers or researchers, or lecturers from universities. In cases when they receive the money, the most common sources of funding are: Third Age University membership fees, government subsidies from which Third Age University often benefits, donations from institutions, companies, as also the grants from government sources, EU sources, or funds from the 1 % tax personal income.

### **Quality assurance**

Each institution engaged in the education of seniors independently monitor their teachers work. The way of control depends on the model of management in institution. In many cases Third

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<sup>2</sup> Mūžizglītības pieejamība un iespējas izglītoties Latvijā. Eiropas Savienības struktūrfondu nacionālās programmas „Mūžizglītības stratēģijas izstrāde un ieviešana” projekts „Mūžizglītības stratēģijas izstrāde”. 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Responsible for this part is Agnieszka Kozerska and the members of the research team of Jan Długosz University in Czestochowa

Age University students' self-governments have the right to assess the work of the teachers and other persons engaged in the activities. Students' self-governments are particularly popular in case of Third Age University operating at universities and culture centres. In the Third Age University operating at higher non-governmental organizations and public institutions we can find rather Programme Boards. They perform the function issuing opinions, in many cases they co-decide about the educational program of the institution.

## **Hungary**

### **Validating and admission**

In Hungary there are no specific requirements if you would like to train seniors. Rules applied to trainers of seniors are the same as for those teaching adults in general. There is a higher level degree for those willing to deal with adult education. Students can have a specialization within pedagogy called andragogy, where they learn about specific issues regarding adult education. Otherwise as seniors mainly enter non-formal or informal education, it is mainly market oriented who will be their trainer. It is need-driven mostly, depending very much on the concrete target group and on the topic.

### **Position**

Non-formal and informal education in general attracts teachers and trainers from various fields of other types of education or from other professionals related to the field. No additional training is needed to be able to teach. Therefore teachers training seniors rarely do it as their main profession. Mostly they do it in their spare time after working hours in their original profession or on a voluntary basis (which is rather rare). Mostly trainers are subcontracted for a concrete course with the main provider, which in case of senior education are mostly Community centres.

### **Quality assurance**

There is no regulated system for quality assurance for teachers in non-formal education. The main indicator whether a teacher fulfils learner' expectations is the number of participants and the continuity of the given course. There are some self established systems of the specific providers like visiting at random lecturers/trainers lessons in language schools. However, well-established monitoring and a unified quality assurance system would be most welcome.

## **Bulgaria**

### **Validating and admission**

In Bulgaria senior education is not regulated by the government due to the lack of a legal act or related legally-binding documents. In terms of qualification a lot will depend on the type of institution (public, private, NGO); whether education/training is provided as formal, non-formal or informal in terms of educational settings; the nature of the courses (accredited or non-accredited); and whether this leads to certification (certificates of attendance and/or certificates of achievement). For instance in courses provided by higher educational and most secondary schools this will be done by teaching professionals with bachelor's, master's and higher degrees. In other institutions, such as libraries and community centres this could be done by trainers/tutors/mentors with a lower level of education, e.g. college degree, secondary education degree, specialist qualification, etc.

The nature of the courses provided is also of great importance when it comes to trainers' qualifications required, as some courses do not necessarily need higher education degree tutors, e.g. in the health sector in certain topics and areas where a medical nurse can do the job quite

well and the involvement of a medical doctor (MD) is not needed. The same will apply to other courses and training, for example activities related to leisure, travel, and hobbies.

The only existing data at present reviews some latest developments in this respect in the tertiary sector. Some actions in terms of providing andragogical expertise at HE level include:

- Andragogy programmes in progress in Bachelor and Master's courses for the training of adult educators in Sofia University, St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo, Plovdiv University - Paisii Hilendarski and Konstantin Preslavski University of Shumen;
- A Master's course in Adult Education Management is taught at Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, which provides basic andragogy training for adult educators;
- The implementation of a Programme for Increasing the Quality of Adult Training (in 2008), in which 200 adult educators are being trained in order to master modern teaching methods;
- An andragogy (adult education) training course was given in 2006 as part of the National Programme for Literacy Education and Qualification of Romanians. A total of 72 adult educators were trained on this course and specialised study programmes for adult literacy education have been developed as part of the same programme;
- Since 2008, a new specialty – “Non-Formal Education” – has been opened in the Faculty of Education of Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, which is intended to educate specialists and educators in the field of non-formal adult education.<sup>4</sup>

## Position

In general the senior education teaching staff in Bulgaria do not have this occupation as their main job! True there is staff involved in adult education (continuing and further education establishments, community centres, VET centres, libraries, etc.), but on the whole the senior education teaching staff are part-timers: guest lecturers, visiting tutors, freelancers, and volunteers. Their qualification will vary a lot depending on the nature and the specifics of the courses and models (see above).

As far as the special qualifications are concerned, it must be noted that in general the teacher training system does not cater for senior education teaching degrees, besides the university level and in-service teacher training courses related to Andragogy and Gerontology. Unfortunately, in terms of statistics there is no quantitative data available. Teaching staff are paid by the respective educational provider (if not volunteers), and some are paid by the allocated funds for the training from various programmes (both educational and social), from funded projects, donors, sponsors, etc.

## Quality assurance

Teachers, trainers and tutors involved in senior education activities are monitored, assessed and evaluated by the respective senior education and training provider. This will almost entirely depend on the quality assurance system of the institution itself. The same applies to the trainers' individual assessment and evaluation. In general assessment is based on the results/achievement as demonstrated by the senior learners in the process and also on their satisfaction by the senior education programmes, courses and services offered and attended.

The challenges in this respect are related to the specifics of the targeted group, and are mainly with regard to the specific needs in terms of special education teaching methods and approaches, task-based, problem-solving and practical orientation of activities, modes of delivery demanding different pace and workload, previous knowledge and experience taken into

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<sup>4</sup> Country Report on the Action Plan on Adult Learning: Bulgaria, March 2011, presented in the working group on the Adult Learning Action Plan. p. 19), [http://ec.europa.eu/education/adult/doc/bulgaria\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/adult/doc/bulgaria_en.pdf)

consideration, focus on reaching conclusions through discussions, and collaborative learning, based on real life needs and challenges faced and experienced.

### **Statistic data**

As previously pointed out, unfortunately, in terms of statistics, there is no quantitative data available regarding the above. In general there is a preference for trainers (special teachers for seniors or for adult educators), who have a degree in Special Pedagogy or other, e.g. related to Andragogy and Gerontology, and/or experience with the targeted group. There is no research data available neither on the number of teachers as adult/senior educators qualifying per year, nor on the number of trainers in senior education on a regular basis.



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