

THE DEVELOPMENT AND STATE OF THE ART OF ADULT  
LEARNING AND EDUCATION (ALE)

National report of Denmark

by

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## 1. General Overview

Denmark has a total population of 5.5 million with a relatively high density (124 inhabitants per square kilometre) compared to other Nordic Countries. History has made the Danish population rather homogeneous and this has contributed to consensual approaches to issues including those related to education and training.

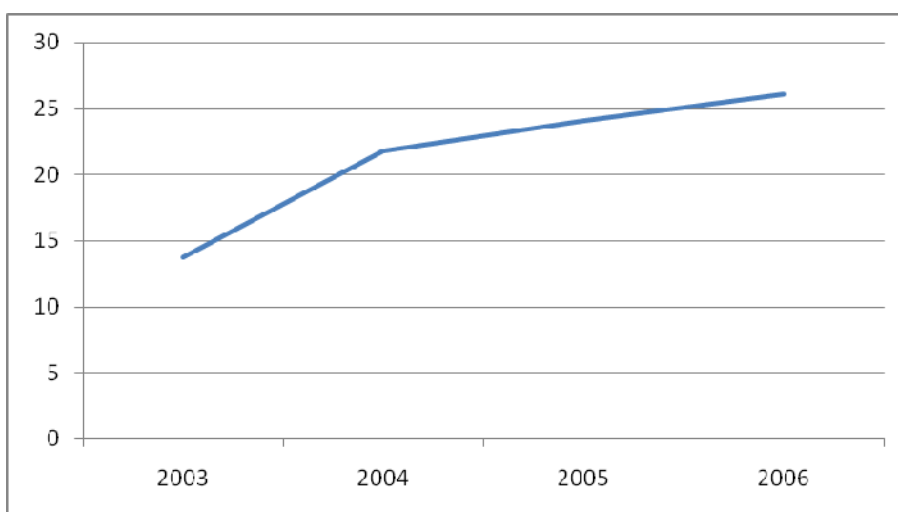
The Danish economy is a small open one, characterised by a sustained recovery since 1997. The service sector is particularly important. Small and medium sized enterprises are a strong component of the economy. Unemployment has decreased to approximately 3 per cent of the labour force in 2007. Reforms on improving active labour market policies, including training programmes for employed and for unemployed adults, have played an important role.

From 1997 to 2007, educational attainment of the labour force has increased. Development of adult education and training should be seen on the following background:

- The population of 25 to 64 years old represents 3 million individuals or 55 per cent of the total population.
- In the present youth cohort, 84 per cent achieve upper secondary or vocational education and 40 per cent enter higher education.
- For 33 per cent of the workforce, primary education is the highest educational level attained.

In 2006, more than one in four (26 %) of the Danish labour force in the 25-64 years age group had participated in an adult and continuing education activity (VEU activity) within the last four weeks before the time of the survey. This proportion is slightly higher than in 2004 and 2005, but considerably higher compared to 2003 where the corresponding proportion was 14 % (See figure).

**Figure 1 Proportion of the labour force in age group 25-64 who has participated in VEU activities within the last four weeks**



Source: Eurostat.

In Denmark it is quite normal that the adult population participates in non-formal job-related education and training. Expected hours in such education and training over a typical working life (a 40-years

period) in Denmark are 1 000 hours. See OECD Chart C5.1. expected hours in non-formal job-related training (2003): <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/068423487063>

In Denmark, it has always been seen as a public task to finance or co-finance continuing and advanced education and training, as well as liberal adult education.

Publicly financed adult learning can be roughly divided into three main categories:

- Vocationally oriented adult education and training from VET level to the highest academic level.
- General adult education (primary and secondary level – or special offers at levels that cannot be indicated precisely).
- Adult liberal education (folk high schools, evening schools etc.).

## 2. Policy, Legislation and Financing

Lifelong skills upgrading for all is a major goal for the Danish Government in recent years. The national strategy for lifelong learning is mainly based on the Government's globalisation strategy "Progress, renewal and development - Strategy for Denmark in the global economy", spring 2006. The overall aim of the strategy is to make Denmark a leading knowledge society with strong competitiveness and strong cohesion. Education, lifelong skills upgrading, research and innovation at the highest international level are crucial for achieving this aim.

The political agreement on future welfare policy and the agreement on the implementation of the globalisation fund in 2006 have established the goals and framework for a long-term, coherent development of human resources in Denmark. Extensive investment in the education system and strengthened effort in the area of adult education and continuing training will contribute to an overall enhancement of education and skills for everyone in the Danish society.

The implementation of Denmark's strategy for education and lifelong skills upgrading is based on all the relevant players taking co-responsibility. The Government and the social partners – employers' and employees' organisations – agree that it is a shared responsibility to ensure lifelong skills upgrading for everyone in the labour market.

Denmark is among the countries with the highest level of participation in adult education and continuing training, competence development at work and liberal adult educational activities during leisure time. Both public and private investment in the development of new qualifications and competences are among the highest in the world. A very substantial part of the overall learning and competence development take place in connection with the work. It is a well-established practice that the social partners, through collective bargaining, enter into agreements with concerning the competence development of employees and human resource planning in the enterprises.

The public efforts in adult education and continuing training play an important role in the development of the qualifications and competences of the labour force and provide opportunities for all groups in the labour market and in the population – from the low-skilled to those with higher education.

Publicly funded adult education and continuing training include general adult education, vocational adult education and continuing training up to and including vocational education and training level as

well as further education system for adults at three tertiary levels. In addition a number of educational programmes are provided for marginalised target groups.

See attached publications:

Progress, Innovation and Cohesion. Strategy in Denmark in the Global Economy – Summary. The Danish Government May 2006: <http://www.globalisering.dk/page.dsp?area=52>

Denmark's strategy for lifelong learning. Education and lifelong upgrading for all. Report to the European Commission, April 2007. The Danish Ministry of Education: <http://pub.uvm.dk/2007/lifelonglearning/>

### **3. Goals and actions for adult education and continuing training 2007**

It is crucial, that more adults participate in the labour market and participation in adult education and continuing training and competence development in enterprises is strengthened. This applies regardless of what job a person does. Many, especially low-skilled workers, people with literacy problems and bilinguals either do not participate in adult education and continuing training at all or do so far less than other groups in the labour market. In addition, many enterprises do not invest enough in systematic development of their employees. This applies particular to small and medium-size enterprises.

Demand for adult education and continuing training among workers and enterprises must therefore be strengthened. Those with the lowest level of formal education and training who have the greatest need for and barriers to education must be motivated. Public and private enterprises must be encouraged to become learning and developing workplaces to a greater degree and to help strengthen the development of human resources.

The Government and the social partners agree that an enhanced effort in adult education and continuing training is a shared possibility:

- Individuals are responsible for continuously developing their competences and ability in the labour market.
- The task of enterprises is to ensure the development of the competences of employees in line with the needs of the enterprises and the requirements of the labour market.
- The role of the social partners is to contribute to the development of the competences of the labour force and of enterprises as places of learning at work.
- The role of the authorities is to provide a good framework, relevant education programmes of high quality and the necessary incentives to ensure that everyone in the labour market has good opportunities to participate in adult education and continuing training.

Based on close dialogue with the social partners, the Government has laid down the following goals to be promoted in adult education and continuing training:

- Everyone shall engage in lifelong learning.
- Adult education and continuing training efforts must be effective and flexible. They shall support good job opportunities for individuals, good competitiveness in enterprises and high employment and prosperity in society.

- Adult education and continuing training must provide everyone with opportunities to improve competences – not least those with the lowest level of formal education.
- Adult education and continuing training must reflect changes in the qualification requirements and needs of the labour market.

The Governments strategy from 2007 for the promotion of lifelong learning in adult education and continuing training, which is based on the agreement on future wealth and welfare and investment in the future, as well as agreement on implementation of the globalisation fund, comprises the following key initiatives:

- Guidance and counselling for employees and enterprises is to be strengthened.
- Better and easier access to recognition of prior learning is to be ensured in all public financed adult education and continuing training programmes from basic adult education to diploma (bachelor) level.
- A significant effort to increase participation in literacy and numeracy courses for adults. Provision is to be made more flexible, and possibilities of combining literacy and numeracy courses with adult vocational training are to be utilised better.
- Better provision for bilinguals who have problems with the Danish language will be developed in the Danish language education programmes for foreign adults and in other general and vocational adult education to ensure that they can cope in the labour market and as citizens.
- Adult education and continuing training provision in e.g. labour market training will be made more attractive, targeted and flexible in relation to the needs of individuals and enterprises.
- A better and broader range of qualifying adult education programmes at higher education levels shall be developed in the adult further education system.
- The number of adult apprentices who can obtain a vocational education and training qualification shall be increased through increased State grants.
- Ensuring institutions' conditions of provision, more flexible tuition fees and a new model for financing special allowances in vocational adult education and continuing training are to be discussed with the social partners and the political parties behind the welfare agreement.
- Systematic competence development in small and medium-sized enterprises will be promoted in public as well as private enterprises through, among other things, the development of methods and tools.
- Increased public and private investment in adult education and continuing training will be promoted.
- The progress of efforts in the area of adult education and continuing training will be monitored through the development of an indicator system.

In order to fulfil the goals and key initiatives the Government has set aside an extra 2 billion DKK over a six years period for the area of adult education and continuing training within the context of a broad political agreement. Of these, 1 billion DKK has been set aside to strengthening vocational adult education and continuing training, subject to the condition that in forthcoming collective bargaining the social partners accept greater financial co-responsibility for an increased effort in the area of adult education and continuing training.

The Government will discuss with the social partners as well as with the political partners and how adult education and continuing training and competence development in enterprises can be strengthened.

#### 4. Adult learning and education in Denmark – overview

**Table 1 Adult education and training programmes**

Programme (name and brief description)	a) Provider (please choose the appropriate one from below):			b) Area of learning (please choose the appropriate one/s from below):			c) Target group/s	d) Programm e cost	e) Funding source
	Public / State	CSO/ NGO	Privat e	Genera l compe tencies	Techni cal skills	Knowl edge generat ion, innova tion			
Adult vocational training programmes	X		X	X	X	X	Low- skilled and skilled workers holding a job, but all adults can participate	2006: Approx. 1.050 mio. Dkr. (2008 price level)	State / employers (local authorities)
Basic adult education	X			X	X	X	Low- skilled/ semi- skilled	2007: Approx. 7.2 mio. Dkr.	State
Further adult education programmes	X				X	X	Skilled people or people at higher education level	2006 42 mio. DKK	State and participan ts
Diploma level programmes	X				X	X	Adults with diploma from further adult education, short-cycle mainstrea m education or from higher level	2006 65 mio DKK	State and participan ts

Programme (name and brief description)	a) Provider (please choose the appropriate one from below):			b) Area of learning (please choose the appropriate one/s from below):			c) Target group/s	d) Programm e cost	e) Funding source
	Public / State	CSO/ NGO	Privat e	Genera l compe tencies	Techni cal skills	Knowl edge generat ion, innova tion			
							in mainstrea m education		
Master level programmes	X				X	X	Adults with diploma from diploma level bachelor, medium cycle or long-cycle	2007 40 mio DKK	State and participant contribution
Preparatory adult education	X			X			Adults with low basic skills and competenc es	2007: Approx. 43 mio. Dkr.	State
General adult education	X			X			All adults	2007: Approx. 300 mio. Dkr.	State and participants
Higher preparatory examination	X			X			All adults	2007: Approx. 485mio. Dkr.	State and participants
Danish as a second language for foreigners	X			X			Foreigners with low competenc es in the Danish language	2007: Approx. 1.100 mio. Dkr.	State

Programme (name and brief description)	a) Provider (please choose the appropriate one from below):			b) Area of learning (please choose the appropriate one/s from below):			c) Target group/s	d) Programm e cost	e) Funding source
	Public / State	CSO/ NGO	Privat e	Genera l compe tencies	Techni cal skills	Knowl edge generat ion, innova tion			
Special education for adults	X			X		X		2006: Approx. 842 mio. Dkr.	State
Evening schools		X	X	X		X	All adults	2002: Approx. 510 mio. Dkr.	Local authorities and participan ts
Day folk high schools	X	X		X		X	All adults/mai nly low- skilled	2002: Approx. 300 mio. Dkr.	Local authorities and participan ts
Folk High Schools	X	X		X		X	All adults	2007: 464 mio. Dkr. (only state funding included)	State and participan ts

#### **4.1 State Grant System for Adult training (VEU allowance)**

A participant in a vocationally oriented adult education or continuing training programme (VEU) will normally be eligible for a so-called VEU-allowance which corresponds to the maximum daily unemployment benefit. The allowance is granted as compensation for the loss of income or work for participants in employment and self-employed participants. Furthermore, the unemployed, who are eligible to six-weeks' training which they choose themselves, are eligible to an allowance for the full six weeks.

A condition for eligibility for the VEU allowance is that the participant does not have an educational background beyond vocational education and training level. Holders of diplomas in specialised business studies, computer studies, and technical studies, as well as certain technicians and people with higher education qualifications are also eligible for the VEU allowance, if they have not used their qualifications for the past 5 years.

There is no limit for the duration of the allowance, nor is there any age limit. This is due the fact that the VEU allowance builds on the principle that allowance is granted to the participant, when he or she is affiliated to the labour market and the programme followed is relevant both vocationally and with regard to labour-market policy. Employers, who pay full wages to an employee during the programme, may receive the VEU allowance as compensation.

In 2006, the VEU allowances was granted to approx. 350.000 course applicants, with a total amount of 1 billion DKK.

#### **4.2 State Grant System for Adults (SVU allowance)**

The State Educational Support for Adults (Danish acronym SVU) scheme is directed towards those who wish to engage in supplementary or further education. The scheme offers course applicants the opportunity to receive instruction without substantial loss of income. SVU is equivalent to the maximum unemployment benefit rate for one week of full-time instruction. The benefit payable is calculated on the basis of the number of working hours lost as a result of the education. The SVU scheme is divided into two parts. One of them is concerned with subsidised instruction at primary/lower secondary and upper secondary school (also called general education). The second relates to support for participation in higher education. The conditions of qualification for support differ depending on whether the application is for support for general or higher education. Employers, who pay full wages to an employee during the programme, may receive the SVU as compensation.

In 2006, the SVU scheme was granted to a total of 14,315 course applicants, 4,787 of them for general education and 9,528 for higher education. The total amount of SVU granted in 2006 was approx. DKK 387 million.

**Table 2. Number of participants in adult education and training**

<b>Programme-(name and brief description)</b>	<b>Participation</b>
Adult vocational training programmes	2006: Ca. 617.000 participants Ca. 9.180 full time equivalent participants
Basic adult education	2007: Ca.164 full time equivalent participants
Further adult education programmes	2006: Ca. 71.000 participants Ca. 6.700 full time equivalent participants
Diploma level programmes	2006: 9.800 full time equivalent participants
Master level programmes	7.400 participants 1.600 full time equivalent participants
Preparatory adult education	2005: Ca. 23.000 participants Ca. 1.160 full time equivalent participants

<b>Programme-(name and brief description)</b>	<b>Participation</b>
General adult education	2005: Ca. 91.500 participants Ca. 6.100 full time equivalent participants
Higher preparatory examination	2005: Ca. 86.500 participants Ca. 11.400 full time equivalent participants
Danish as a second language for foreigners	2005: Ca. 37.000 participants
Special education for adults	2004: Ca. 113.000 participants
Evening schools	2005: Ca. 750.000 participants
Day folk high schools	2006: Ca. 16.000 participants
Folk High Schools	2007: Ca. 50.000 participants  Ca. 4.700 full time equivalent participants

Tal, der taler 2007, statistics, Uddannelsesnøgletal [only in Danish]:

<http://pub.uvm.dk/2008/taldertaler/>

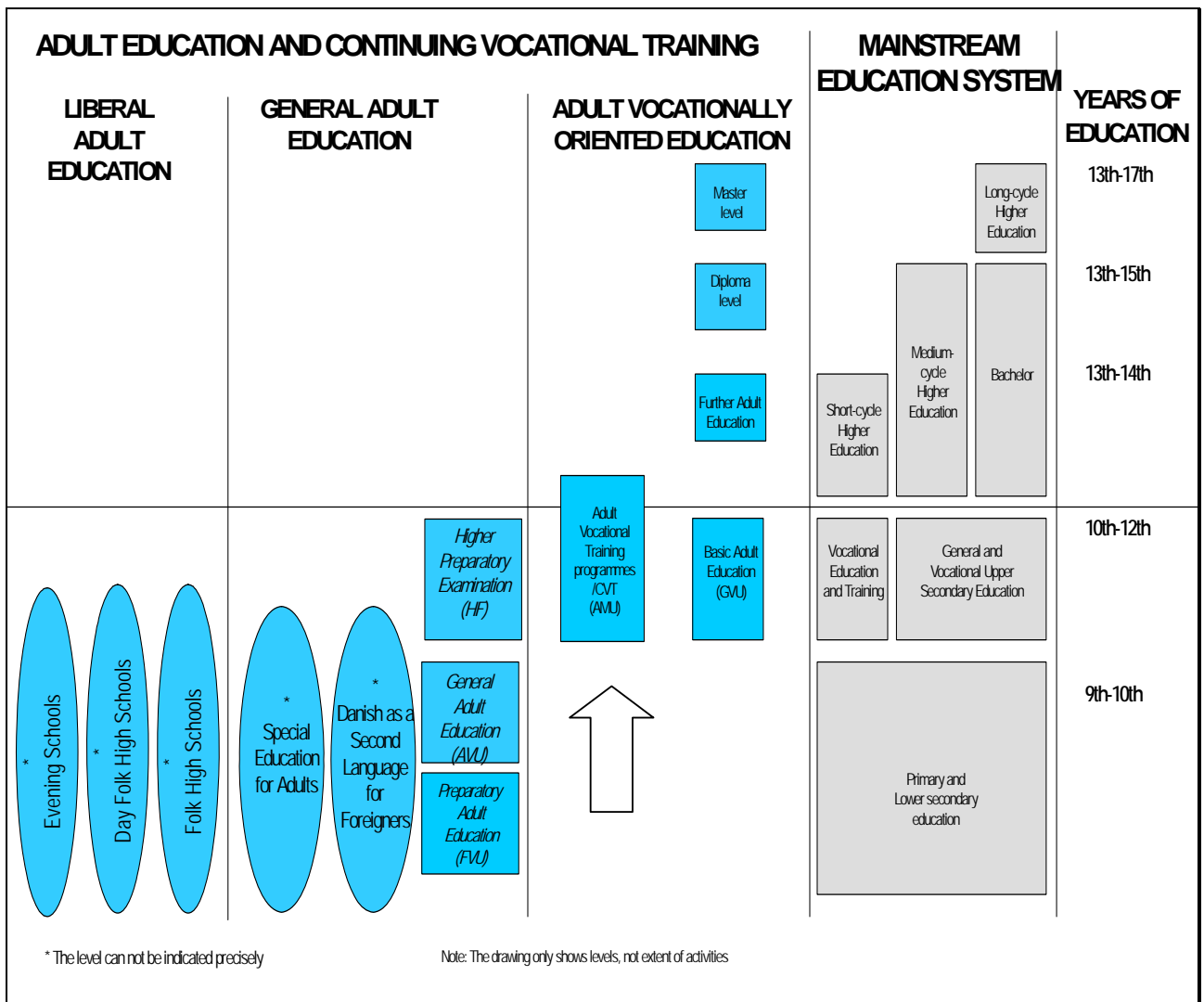
Fact sheet for the taximeter system (the model for distributing state funding):

<http://eng.uvm.dk//publications/factsheets/taximeter08.htm?menuid=2505>

Fact sheet for the institutional structure of the self-governing institutions :

<http://eng.uvm.dk/publications/factsheets/selfgovernance.htm?menuid=2505>

Figur 2. The Danish education and training system



## 5. Partnerships – stakeholders

In common with the other Nordic countries, Denmark has a long-standing tradition for life-long learning for adults, ranging from liberal adult education activities to qualifying general as well as vocationally oriented adult education, both basic education, further education and continuing training.

In the area of Continuing Vocational Training (CVT) (adult vocational training programmes and basic adult education) as well as Vocational Education and Training (VET) there is a long standing tradition of involving the social partners, who have been attributed significant influence in a number of areas defined by law. This partnership is founded on a harmonious historical development and confirmed by sustained, shared responsibility.

In vocational education and training (VET) including adult programmes, the decision-making model rests on three principles:

- A tripartite cooperation between government, employers and employees.
- A strong organisation of the social partners when it comes to education and training matters.
- Collective agreements on the labour market.

Subject of recognition in the Ministry of Education, the social partners decide on the aims, content, duration and final status of the individual programmes. Within the framework of this distribution of tasks and authority, which is laid down by law, the development and innovation of programmes take place in a tripartite consensus.

This cooperation shall ensure that the education and training effort appears as a unity to individual, colleges and enterprises as well as administrative authorities. It is also intended to ensure coherence between education and employment possibilities, accommodating both education and training policy, qualification requirements of the labour market and individual skills and needs, ensuring quality and use of programmes. Coordination and development take place in a number of overall tripartite committees as well as in a great number of trade-oriented, self-governing vocational committees with representatives of the social partners.

In the CVT system, the social partners also play a central role in the management, priority setting, development, organisation and quality assurance of the programmes. Through the central council and CVT committees and on decentralised level in local school boards and education committees, the basis is provided for accommodating the need for qualification and competencies of the labour market, the enterprises and the individuals.

Also in the area of liberal /non-formal adult education, which remain truly liberal and free in spite of a 150 years old tradition of state funding, there is also a rich and long-standing tradition of involving the organisations (NGOs) in active dialogue and interaction.

## **6. The programmes**

### **6.1 Adult vocationally oriented education at all levels**

From/During the late 1990s Denmark has seen a rapid development of provisions of vocationally oriented education and training at all levels. A new adult education reform took effect from 1 January 2001. Adult vocational learning programmes had at that time been developed and provided more or less independently and by this reform turned into a single, coherent and transparent adult education and training system. Important objectives of the Adult Education Reform are:

- To offer good and relevant adult education and continuing and further education and training programmes to all adults at all levels, from the low-skilled to university graduates.
- To ensure that the provision of further and continuing education and training constitutes a transparent and coherent system and competences, with well-known and comparable competence levels, i.e. vocationally oriented adult education and general adult education consistently mirror the levels of the initial education system.
- To ensure good possibilities for bridging education programmes and educational levels, thus avoiding blind alleys/dead ends.
- To offer new possibilities of more systematic recognition of CVT courses into adult VET programmes including the new Basic Adult Education framework, securing recognition of formal competences of low-skilled adults.
- To add new and more flexible possibilities of recognising non-formal (and informal) learning, especially workplace learning, both as adult VET programmes including the new Basic Adult Education framework and in the organisation of further education at advanced (higher) levels.
- To offer new provision of such basic skills as literacy and numeracy skills (reading, writing and mathematics) especially for the low-skilled.

Preparatory Adult Education, a general adult education programme is mentioned above. The vocationally oriented elements, called the new Adult Education System as follows.

While adult education and training programmes must be organised in such a way that they may be followed by adults who keep their work on the side /continue to hold a job. Also unemployed persons may follow the courses if they have an action plan set up by the job centres/local authorities /the Public Employment service, which pay for their education and training.

The Adult Education System roughly speaking in two general levels: Basic adult education and advanced/higher levels of further education. See Figure above.

The adult education and training system have one general level corresponding mainstream vocational education and training programmes (VET) with two programmes for adults:

- The Adult Vocational Training programmes (AMU)
- Basic Adult Education (GVU)

And one general level corresponding higher education programmes with three programmes for adults:

- Further Adult Education (VVU)
- Diploma level programmes
- Master level programmes.

The Ministry of Education is responsible for all these programmes except the master level programmes which are under the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation.

#### Adult Vocational Training programmes (AMU)

Adult vocational training is short vocational training programmes mainly for low-skilled and skilled workers on the labour market.

The adult vocational training programmes (AMU) serve a triple purpose:

- To contribute to maintaining and improving the vocational skills and competences of the participants in accordance with the needs on the labour market and to furthering competence development of the participants.
- To contribute to solving labour market restructuring and adaptation problems in accordance with the needs on the labour market in a short and a long term perspective.
- To give adults the possibility of upgrading competences for the labour market as well as personal competences through possibilities to obtain formal competence in vocational education and training.

Participants may acquire new and updated skills and competences to better their opportunities to managing new and wider job functions and to becoming more flexible on the labour market.

Adult vocational training programmes have been developed for low skilled and skilled workers. But everybody may participate irrespective of educational background. Only formal entrance requirement is being resident or holding a job in Denmark. In general:

- The programmes are mainly provided for low skilled and skilled workers *having* a job. Workers and employers in private as well as public sector enterprises may participate in the programmes.
- The unemployed in their first unemployment term may have a combination of adult vocational training programmes of their own selection for 6 weeks. Unemployed with a personal action plan from the job centres/local authorities may participate.
- Immigrants and refugees may follow ordinary courses or courses specifically developed for this group.

The adult vocational training programmes and affiliated single subjects from the mainstream vocational education and training programme has been organized in joint competence descriptions (FKB). The joint competence descriptions gives an overview of the system for users, guidance staff etc. Every joint competence description corresponds to one job area for low skilled and skilled workers. A competence description consists of:

- A description of the typical workplaces
- A description of relevant competences within the job areas
- A list of adult training programmes and affiliated single subject courses from mainstream vocational education and training programmes leading to those competences.

There are about 120 joint competence descriptions to which are affiliated about 2 800 adult vocational training programmes and 300 single subject courses from the mainstream vocational training and education programme.

They are mainly short vocational training programmes, the duration of which normally varies from half a day to 6 weeks, in average 3 ½ days. It is possible to combine adult vocational training programmes in a package including programmes in the same field at a higher level.

The specific content of the programmes reflect development and demands from sectors with many low skilled and skilled workers. About 500 - 800 programmes are developed or revised every year. In general there are three main types of programmes directed at:

- Specific job/sector related skills and competences, e.g. crafts, technical insight and knowledge of materials
- General skills and competences, e.g. ICT and job relevant mathematics

- Labour management skills and competences, e.g. social communication, organization and management.

In addition there are special programmes for:

- Recognition of prior learning according to the individual competence assessment programmes (IKV) within the adult vocational training programme - with the aim of recognizing competences acquired in education and training, on the labour market or from spare time activities as the basis for composition of an individual training plan including one or several adult vocational training programmes for the participant.
- Immigrants and refugees not having adequate Danish language skills to join ordinary adult vocational training courses, may join specifically developed programmes e.g. Danish language courses combined with introductory short training courses and work placement. According to individual needs immigrants and refugees may join a combination of courses for a short or long period, where ordinary adult vocational training courses are combined with Danish language courses and practical training.

Participants with inadequate basic skills and competences may be assessed in reading, writing, arithmetic and mathematics and may receive guidance in this context. Participants may follow preparatory courses for adults with low qualifications and competences in reading, writing and mathematics (FVU) as a supplement and support to the adult vocational training programme/-s.

On completion of a programme the participant receives a certificate. The teachers assess the participant and almost everyone gets a certificate. For about 150 of the training programmes the participants pass an exam and receive a formal, qualifying certificate for the labour market recognized by the legal authorities, e.g. crane driver. All certificates from the adult vocational training programme are qualifying for the national labour market.

Certificates from adult vocational training programmes do not give direct access to further education in mainstream education or in other adult education and training programmes. However, there are many options for participants who want to continue in education and training programmes corresponding to mainstream vocational education and training or higher education programmes.

In the adult vocational training system participants may receive proof of recognition of prior learning as a result of competence assessment in two ways. As recognition in the form of a regular certificate when the school has assessed the participant's competences to be equivalent to a completed adult vocational training programme, or/and a single subject registered in the joint competence description; or as recognition in the form of a competence proof when the school has assessed the participant's competence to be equivalent to parts of an adult vocational programme or/and a single subject in the joint competence description.

A regular certificate or proof of recognition of prior learning may give access to specific jobs and sectors on the labour market or/and credit transfer. For low skilled it may give credit transfer into mainstream vocational education and training programmes or into the basic adult education programme (GVU). Admission requirements for the basic adult education programme are being minimum 25 years of age, minimum two years of relevant work experience and qualifications corresponding to the leaving examination of upper secondary school in relevant subjects. The participant will have an individual personal education plan drawn up by the school and normally follow the education and training activities part-time while still keeping his or her job. The certificate from the basic adult education programme gives the same formal qualification for the labour market and for

further studies as a certificate from the mainstream vocational education and training. At the higher education level skilled workers may have access to continuing professional education programmes, i.e. mainstream short-cycle higher education programmes or further adult education programmes (VVU) and possibly gets credit transfer.

#### Basic Adult Education (GVU)

Education and training programmes at the basic adult education level give competencies which are comparable to the mainstream vocational education and training. In other words, the end goals, examinations to be taken and the level of education and training received, are identical to the mainstream vocational education and training programmes. The programmes offer new and more flexible opportunities to adults lacking in skills to have access to formal learning, notably adult vocational training courses, as well as non-formal learning, notably work experience, recognised as part of a formal education and training programme. Thereby, considerably reducing the length of the vocational education and training programme.

Further, the programme entails chalking out an individual plan for each participant by the school, in order to maximise the benefit of the education, based on individual background and need. This plan is made on the basis of assessment done at VET, which is not a new education and training programme but a new organisation of existing vocationally oriented education programmes at upper secondary level. It is a framework of recognising courses etc., which allow the participant to have a credit transfer into a VET programme. Further, it is responsible for assessing and recognising other prior learning including work experience and determining the supplementary education and training needed in order to sit for the final exam. After the requirements are worked out, these are incorporated in the individual study and training plan for the participant.

#### Open education

There are open education programmes at vocational education and training level as well as higher education levels. The standard of an adult education as open education is a full time or part time education. The part time educations can for a limited time be transformed to a full time study for a year. These educations are put together by using the elements from existing educations and are offered by the schools own decision. The contents are decided by the schools and the schools decides what to offer and when.

All institutions accepted to offer advanced education can offer open education as one course or a course with several elements taken from the education. It is the intention, that the institutions shall have a good deal to decide by themselves in this area of adult education.

For a group of further educations- advanced adult education and diploma education - included in the law - is the content described in rules, and these educations can not be offered by the schools own decision. They will have to get the permission from the ministry of education.

”Merituddannelserne” (primary and lower secondary training programme with award of credit for prior learning educations) has primary had the purpose to remedy a great lack of skilled labour within certain areas like teaching. These educations are especialley adressing grown up people, who wants to learn more and get a better or a different job. These educations are ruled by the ministry of education and the possibility to offer these educations is therefore also ruled by the ministry. It demandes an approval to offer rhese educations. This part of the educations also implies a fee like the rest of the educations after this law. The latest comming up is a set of rules for ”merituddannelse” to nurses.

There is a great need for nurses and a simpler way to get qualified educated persons within this area is therefor under consideration.

The greatest challenge within the area of Adult Learning ruled by the law of open education is to secure sufficient qualified adult learning.

#### Advanced levels of further education

The adult further education system includes programmes at three levels – advanced adult education programmes, diploma programmes and master programmes. In general the adult Further Education System from 2000 is a viable further education possibility for adults who have completed initial education and training at upper secondary or higher education level.

Advanced levels of further education programmes are higher education programmes specifically developed for adults. The programmes correspond to 60 ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) and the participants normally follow the programmes on a part time basis while still holding a job. The entrance requirements are a relevant exam/diploma and minimum two years of relevant work experience.

The three advanced levels of further education are at the same level as the the three levels in the ordinary higher education system (short cycle, medium cycle and long cycle), but not leading to exactly identical qualifications.

The aim of the advanced further education programmes for adults is to further develop job competences. Further education programmes at the advanced levels may be studies in depth or in breadth, i.e. vocational specialisation either within or outside the participant's original first education and training field. The goal is not only to offer the possibly of taking one step up the educational ladder but also to move sideways, i.e. a course or an entire programme on the same level as participants previous education and training. Like at the Basic Education programme level the advanced levels of further education offer the possibility of getting credit transfer and a second chance to acquired skilled qualifications.

## **6.2 General Adult Education programmes**

### Preparatory Adult Education (FVU)

The goal of the preparatory adult education programme is to better the basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics for adults. A relative large group of adults, especially low-skilled people, do not have adequately qualifications in these basic skills to meet the increasing demand for qualifications on the labour market in a more globalised world, see e.g. Literacy Skills for the Knowledge Society, OECD 1997 and Literacy in the Information Age, final report of the International Adult Literacy Survey, OECD 2000. In 2001 the Adult Education Reform was implemented. Introduction of the preparatory adult education programmes was a part of this wide reform. The aim is to offer to all adults of at least 18 years of age a possibility to improve and supplement their literacy and numeracy skills so that they will be better equipped to get along on the labour market and as citizens in a democratic society. This will also enhance their opportunities for undergoing further education and training within the framework of the adult education system.

Provision of this programme is the responsibility of the State (the Ministry of Education). The teaching is organised so that it will be in interplay with daily life of the participants. This means that many of the activities will take place at the workplace rather than in educational establishments.

General Adult Education (AVU)

The aim of the general adult education programme is to provide competence-based education that will enable adults to improve their knowledge and skills within general subjects at lower secondary level. Syllabus and examinations are adapted to the experience and interests of adults without any change in the qualification level. Examinations give the same right of access to upper secondary education as examinations at basic school level for youngsters. All adults of 18 years and more have the right of access to General Adult Education, with a corresponding obligation for the state authorities to ensure the provision of such education for the adult population in accordance with the law. The courses are offered at Adult Education Centres (VUC). The programme is partly financed by the State. There are tuition fees for participant. Participants may receive a grant from the state educational supports for adults.

Higher Preparatory Examination (HF)

Single subject courses leading to Higher Preparatory Examination corresponds to the level of general adult education at upper secondary education. The courses are identical to the courses in initial upper secondary education. All qualified young and older people have a right of access to general higher preparatory courses. The courses are offered at Adult Education Centres (VUC) as well as at Upper secondary schools. The programme is partly financed by the State. There are tuition fees for participant. Participants may receive a grant from the state educational supports for adults.

**6.3 Non-formal adult education/ liberal adult education**

Non-formal adult education consists of forms of teaching and education that only to a limited degree are part of the formal, public educational system. Non-formal activities are frequently based on private initiatives by non governmental organisations (NGOs). Non-formal adult education includes /comprises several programmes.

No particular school or professional qualifications are required for participating in liberal adult education.

Folk High Schools

Folk high schools provide general youth and adult education on the basis of the Danish tradition of literally, popular enlightenment (folkeoplysning). The schools have a high degree of freedom to choose the subjects, content and methods of their teaching, which means that there are great differences between the schools in this respect. The subject must be of a broad, general nature for half of the time. The rest of the time may be spent on going into depth with special subjects and skills. Some high schools e.g. concentrate on music and theatre while in others focus is on sports, art, politics or philosophy. General discussions about important topics are common to all the teaching.

The courses vary in length from 4 days to 36 weeks. Short courses are most frequently held during the summer with participants of all ages. The longer courses are held during the winter and the participants are normally in their 20s. About 45,000 people a year take part in one of the short courses while the longer courses have approximately 8,000 participants per year. The minimum age is 17½ years. There are 78 folk high schools all over the country. Three folk high schools are only for young people between 16½ and 19 years of age, and four folk high schools are only for retired people /pensioners.

Folk high schools are independent boarding schools, partly financed by the State. The schools receive subsidies for each full-time equivalent participant. Participants pay a tuition fee.

Day folk high schools

Day folk high schools offer teaching for adults to better their skills and competences to enter/for formal education or employment. The target group is mainly low-skilled persons having a weak connection to the labour market. The aim is to strengthen the participants' and social competences and improving their possibilities in the education system and on the labour market. The courses normally run for 4 to 18 weeks full time. Many day high schools offer preparatory adult education (FVU) in reading, writing and mathematics. Before 2002 the schools were co-financed by the State, now by the local authorities. The local authorities may award grants to the participants. There are approximately 50 day high schools with approximately 16,000 participants per year.

Evening schools

Private non-formal education and activities in evening schools must be established by non-formal adult education associations. The fundamental principles are free choice of topics, universal assess, free initiative and free choice of teachers. The evening schools are partly financed by local authorities. Allocation by the municipality must not exceed one third of the evening schools total expenditure and the municipality may differentiate their allocation according to subject, it may decide on special allocations to reduce user payment for special groups of participants. There are approximately 2.100 evening schools.

University Extension courses are to disseminate knowledge of methods and outcomes of research through non-formal adult education teaching and lectures.

Special teaching for the handicapped

Since 1980, the act on special education for adults with handicaps (physical or mental) has been the legal foundation of compensating special teaching for adults who, after the end of their compulsory schooling, have a need for relieving or limiting the effects of the handicap. The aim is to enhance the handicapped person's possibility of taking an active part in society ' including participating actively in a profession, in education, and in society. Tuition is free and administrated by the regional authorities, which offer teaching through their own institutions, government or municipal institutions, adult education associations or private initiators.

## **7. Competence development in and across various learning areas for adults**

### **7.1 Recognition of prior learning**

The main objective of the Government's initiative is RPL seen in an educational perspective. But it also stresses the importance of improving the interplay and interaction between learning taking place in formal education, in work life and in the third sector.

The purpose of assessing and recognising prior learning in formal education and training, which is what the new legislation is about, is to give the individual the possibility to continue to build on his or her competences irrespective of where and how they were acquired, and thus obtain formal recognition. The reference points for the PL assessment are the educational objectives and/or entrance requirements pertaining to the desired formal education or training programme. The result of the assessment and recognition is documented by a certificate/documentation as described above. The individual contributes through documentation of his or her competences acquired in education, in work life or in the third sector. Whether the person's competences may be recognised, depends on

whether the educational objectives etc. of the particular education programme are considered to be met.

In work life, identification and clarification of 'real' competences, and making competences visible, plays an important role for the job and competence development of the employees as well as for the competitiveness of the enterprise. Many enterprises already work systematically with identification, clarification and assessment of the employees' competences as part of the enterprise's competence development. Through the enterprise's PL assessment, the employee may be assessed in reference to certain job functions. As a rule, an enterprise chooses to use its own yardstick, or reference points, for its employees' competence assessment and development. Clarification and documentation of competences in relation to the enterprise's job functions may also be used actively by the individual employee, or by the enterprise itself, to obtain recognition in relation to a state approved education or training programme.

Within liberal adult education as well as in association life, 'real competences' are developed in many different contexts and comprise a broad spectrum of knowledge, skills and personal competences. Making 'real competences' visible is seen by the third sector as an important contribution to improving the individual's awareness of the benefit of e.g. a liberal adult education course and competences acquired in the process. On this background, the third sector organisations and the Ministry of Education co-operated to develop a set of tools that may support the individual in evaluating, describing and documenting competences acquired in liberal adult education, association life and voluntary social work, respectively, which may prove to be an active contribution to a person's competence development. Documentation for competences acquired in the third sector may also be used as preparation for job interviews, or for RPL in relation to a formal education or training programme.

### **7.2 Guidance and counselling**

Guidance and counselling about opportunities in adult education and continuing training for workers and enterprises must be improved. It is the Government's aim that the guidance effort shall contribute to strengthening the demand from both employees and enterprises. For the groups which have the greatest barriers to participation, the outreach guidance and counselling effort shall be increased. Better and more informed guidance for young people and adult shall be promoted through, among other things, the following initiatives:

- Increased guidance at all levels – in the basic compulsory school, upper secondary education, higher education and in relation to the adult education and training system.
- The establishment of a professional bachelor degree at medium-cycle higher education level in education and vocational guidance.
- New initiatives to reinforce the guidance effort in adult education and continuing training with particular emphasis on the needs of those with the lowest level of formal education for guidance and advice from enterprises.

## **8. Research studies in the field of adult learning**

In the last 10 years a considerable number of research project have been made in the area of adult education and continuing training with the overall objective to find new and more general knowledge about learning processes and lifelong learning including formal, informal and non-formal learning. The

results should contribute to the development of the pedagogical approach in schools and other education institutions, at the workplace etc.

The Ministry of Education finances some research and development programmes. The focus has been on:

- Guidance and individual education plan
- ICT in the education programmes
- Outcomes of education
- Quality development and assurance at school level
- Upqualifying of teachers
- Interplay between education and training and workplace learning
- Recognition of prior learning.

Public investment in adult education and continuing training have increased considerably in the 90<sup>th</sup>. At the same time there has been a growing focus on quality and efficiency of the different programmes in relation to the overall outcome for society. E.g. an analysis of how the enterprises use and benefit from the adult vocational training programme and an analysis of the outcome with the objective of developing new methods of measuring the results and the effects of education and training for adults. The revision of the act of adult vocational training etc. in 2002 build on the results from an analysis of the activity and users i.e. participants and enterprises using the adult vocational programme.

Currently there are focus on the interplay between education and training activities in educationn institutions and workplace learning. Also motivation for participation in adult education and training especially of low-skilled persons has been on the agenda, e.g. new and more flexible learning methods and organization of the courses, e-learning etc.

Since 2001 a more general and continual measurement and evaluation of the overall activity in the adult education and continuing training had taken place.

See also:

<http://www.dpu.dk/>

<http://www.akf.dk/english/>

<http://www.sfi.dk/sw14574.asp>

[www.uibk.ac.at/iup](http://www.uibk.ac.at/iup) (e.g. Competence development as workplace learning, 2007)

## **Appendix - Fact sheets about the educational programmes**

Fact sheets: <http://eng.uvm.dk/factsheets/?menuid=25>

Education in general: <http://eng.uvm.dk/education/?menuid=15>

- 1. Adult vocational training in Denmark**
- 2. Open education**
- 3. Adult education at advanced levels**
- 4. General adult education**
- 5. Non-formal adult education/liberal adult education**
- 6. The Danish guidance reform in brief**
- 7. Recognition of prior learning**

## 1. Adult vocational training in Denmark

### - Short vocational training programmes mainly for low skilled and skilled workers on the labour market

#### *Government objectives*

The adult vocational training programmes (in Danish arbejdsmarkedsuddannelser or AMU) serve a triple purpose:

- To contribute to maintaining and improving the vocational skills and competences of the participants in accordance with the needs on the labour market and to furthering competence development of the participants.
- To contribute to solving labour market restructuring and adaptation problems in accordance with the needs on the labour market in a short and a long term perspective.
- To give adults the possibility of upgrading competences for the labour market as well as personal competences through possibilities to obtain formal competence in vocational education and training.

Participants may acquire new and updated skills and competences to better their opportunities to managing new and wider job functions and to becoming more flexible on the labour market.

#### *Target group*

Adult vocational training programmes have been *developed* for low skilled and skilled workers. But everybody may participate irrespective of educational background. Only formal entrance requirement is being resident or holding a job in Denmark. In general:

- The programmes are mainly provided for low skilled and skilled workers *having* a job. Workers and employers in private as well as public sector enterprises may participate in the programmes.
- The unemployed in their first unemployment term may have a combination of adult vocational training programmes of their own selection for 6 weeks. Unemployed with a personal action plan from the job centres/local authorities may participate.
- Immigrants and refugees may follow ordinary courses or courses specifically developed for this group.

#### **Statistics 2006**

Number of participants	617.000
Of which women	270.000
Number of individuals (participate in one or several programmes)	318.000
Number of full time equivalent participants	11.000
Number of schools (approximately)	120

#### *Structure and duration*

The adult vocational training programmes and affiliated single subjects from the mainstream vocational education and training programme has been organized in *joint competence descriptions* (FKB). The joint competence descriptions gives an overview of the system for users, guidance staff etc. Every joint competence description corresponds to one *job area* for low skilled and skilled workers. A competence description consists of:

- A description of the typical workplaces

- A description of relevant competences within the job areas
- A list of adult training programmes and affiliated single subject courses from mainstream vocational education and training programmes leading to those competences.

There are about 120 joint competence descriptions to which are affiliated about 2 800 adult vocational training programmes and 300 single subject courses from the mainstream vocational training and education programme.

They are mainly *short* vocational training programmes, the duration of which normally varies from half a day to 6 weeks, in average 3 ½ days. It is possible to combine adult vocational training programmes in a package including programmes in the same field at a higher level.

The training is *organized* in classes or as open workshops where participants may follow different programmes at different levels in the same room with the same teacher or organized at the workplaces. Normally the training activities take place during working hours. The training activity may also take place outside working hours e.g. during weekends or as distance learning. Language of instruction is normally Danish, but may be other languages.

#### *Content – the training programme*

The specific content of the programmes reflect development and demands from sectors with many low skilled and skilled workers. About 500 - 800 programmes are developed or revised every year. In general there are *three main types* of programmes directed at:

- Specific job/sector related skills and competences, e.g. crafts, technical insight and knowledge of materials
- General skills and competences, e.g. ICT and job relevant mathematics
- Labour management skills and competences, e.g. social communication, organization and management.

In addition there are special programmes for:

- Recognition of prior learning according to the individual competence assessment programmes (IKV) within the adult vocational training programme - with the aim of recognizing competences acquired in education and training, on the labour market or from spare time activities as the basis for composition of an individual training plan including one or several adult vocational training programmes for the participant.
- Immigrants and refugees not having adequate Danish language skills to join ordinary adult vocational training courses, may join specifically developed programmes e.g. Danish language courses combined with introductory short training courses and work placement. According to individual needs immigrants and refugees may join a combination of courses for a short or long period, where ordinary adult vocational training courses are combined with Danish language courses and practical training.

Participants with inadequate basic skills and competences may be assessed in reading, writing, arithmetic and mathematics and may receive guidance in this context. Participants may follow preparatory courses for adults with low qualifications and competences in reading, writing and mathematics (FVU) as a supplement and support to the adult vocational training programme/-s.

### *Governance and financing*

The *social partners* play a major role in the management, priority setting, development, organisation and quality assurance of adult vocational training programmes. At *national level* a National Council for Adult Vocational Education and Training (REVE) advising the Minister of Education and 11 continuing training and education committees, each responsible for a specific sector of the labour market. The continuing training and education committees have to continuously analyze the need for new competences on the labour market and for developing relevant new joint competence descriptions and adult vocational training programmes. At *local level* the social partners participate in the governing board at institutions providing adult vocational training programmes e.g. at vocational and technical colleges and commercial colleges. Each institution sets up one or several local education boards for adult vocational training programmes directed at specific local job areas, i.e. job areas corresponding to the joint competence description(-s) that the school has permission to provide.

The adult vocational training programmes are partly publicly *financed*. The providers operate within a fixed financial framework (EVE) based on taximeter funding according to the Budget and provided by the Ministry of Education (taximeter grant per full-time equivalent participant, a fixed rate per programme). There are different instruments to securing that the fixed financial framework not is exceeded. Once a year the school has to present and negotiate activity and budget targets with the Ministry, i.e. the framework within which the school may decide which programmes they want to provide according to the need in the local area. See [fact sheet om taximeterstyring mv.]

There are *user fees*, 500 DKK or 750 DKK per week. Free of user fees are courses in the social and health service, in the pedagogical field, individual competence assessment, and participation by the unemployed in their first unemployment term who attend individually selected programmes for 6 weeks and finally programmes part of a basic adult education plan. The expenditure for user fee is normally paid by the employers. On average the user fee for adult vocational training programmes is about 15 per cent of the total working expenses.

Low skilled and skilled participants are entitled to a fixed *allowance* financed by the state, the State Grant System for Adult Training (VEU-godtgørelse) corresponding to the level of maximum unemployment benefit rate. Companies paying regular wages to employees participating in adult vocational training programmes are entitled to receiving the grant instead. Expenditures for the allowances are covered by employer's en bloc (AER Arbejdsgivernes Elevrefusion). Expenditures for participation by unemployed after their first term of unemployment are covered by the job centres/local authorities.

There are about *120 schools* approved by the Ministry of Education to *providing* adult vocational training programmes all over the country - the principle being to offer training programmes in all regions. The providers are adult vocational training centres, vocational technical colleges, commercial colleges, agricultural colleges, social and health service schools etc. Most of the schools provide education programmes for adult as well as young people. The schools are mainly state schools, but also a number of private schools provide adult vocational training programmes e.g. driving schools.

### *Teachers*

Training is carried out by teachers with qualifications at the same level as a vocational education and training certificate or a diploma at higher education level in the relevant field and with minimum three years of relevant job experience. Two years after being employed by the school teachers also have to have acquired adult pedagogical education experience at least at the same level as required for teachers at the vocational technical colleges and commercial colleges. Some teachers only teach at adult

vocational training courses, others teach at adult vocational training courses as well as mainstream vocational education and training courses. The teachers need to be flexible, as new programmes are currently introduced, training may be organized at the workplace and teachers take part in counselling and guidance activities for workers and enterprises.

#### *Motivation and guidance*

Guidance and counselling activities for workers and enterprises take place in many locations, and many actors are involved: teachers at schools or visiting the workplaces, local authorities in job centres, trade unions etc. For small and medium size enterprises guidance, counselling and dialogue at the workplace is specifically important. In addition there is a demand for relatively more activities specifically directed at motivating low skilled workers for participation in adult training programmes, i.e. there is focus on information by trade unions representatives at the workplace, with immediate superior etc. See [www.vidar.dk](http://www.vidar.dk) for updated information of all adult education and training courses at all levels including adult vocational training programmes.

#### *Certification – further education*

On completion of a programme the participant receives a certificate. The teachers assess the participant and almost everyone gets a certificate. For about 150 of the training programmes the participants pass an exam and receive a formal, qualifying certificate for the labour market recognized by the legal authorities, e.g. crane driver. All certificates from the adult vocational training programme are *qualifying for the national labour market*.

Certificates from adult vocational training programmes do not give direct access to further education in mainstream education or in other adult education and training programmes. However, there are many options for participants who want to *continue in education and training* programmes corresponding to mainstream vocational education and training or higher education programmes.

In the adult vocational training system participants may receive proof of *recognition of prior learning* as a result of competence assessment in two ways. As recognition in the form of a regular certificate when the school has assessed the participant's competences to be equivalent to a completed adult vocational training programme, or/and a single subject registered in the common competence description; or as recognition in the form of a competence proof when the school has assessed the participant's competence to be equivalent to parts of an adult vocational programme or/and a single subject in the common competence description.

A regular certificate or proof of recognition of prior learning may give access to specific jobs and sectors on the labour market or/and credit transfer. For *low skilled* it may give credit transfer into mainstream vocational education and training programmes or into the basic adult education programme (GVU). Admission requirements for the basic adult education programme are being minimum 25 years of age, minimum two years of relevant work experience and qualifications corresponding to the leaving examination of upper secondary school in relevant subjects. The participant will have an individual personal education plan drawn up by the school and normally follow the education and training activities part-time while still keeping his or her job. The certificate from the basic adult education programme gives the same formal qualification for the labour market and for further studies as a certificate from the mainstream vocational education and training. At the higher education level *skilled workers* may have access to continuing professional education programmes, i.e. mainstream short-cycle higher education programmes or further adult education programmes (VU) and possibly gets credit transfer. See [link til fact sheet om det samlede voksen- og efteruddannelsessystem og til fact sheets om erhvervsuddannelserne hhv. de videregående uddannelser]

*Quality assurance*

The providers are responsible for meeting the demands of their local labour market and the Ministry supervises provision and quality of the training activities. Moreover, the providers analyze the quality of the training activities i.e. the satisfaction rate is measured systematically among all participants and a representative segment of companies. The results are made available on the Internet by the Ministry. See (in Danish) [www.viskvalitet.dk](http://www.viskvalitet.dk)

## 2. Open education

The standard of an adult education as open education is a fulltime or parttime education. The parttime educations can for a limited time be transformed to a full time study for a year. These educations are put together by using the elements from existing educations and are offered by the schools own decision. The contents are decided by the schools and the schools decides what to offer and when.

All institutions accepted to offer advanced education can offer open education as one course or a course with several elements taken from the education. It is the intention, that the institutions shall have a good deal to decide by themselves in this area of adult education.

For a group of further educations- advanced adult education and diploma education - included in the law - is the content described in rules, and these educations can not be offered by the schools own decision. They will have to get the permission from the ministry of education.

”Merituddannelserne” (primary and lower secondary training programme with award of credit for prior learning educations) has primary had the purpose to remedy a great lack of skilled labour within certain areas like teaching. These educations is especialley adressing grown up people, who wants to learn more and get a better or a different job. These educations are ruled by the ministry of education and the possebility to offer these educations is therefore also ruled by the ministry. It demandes an approval to offer rhese educations. This part of the educations also implies a fee like the rest of the educations after this law. The latest comming up is a set of rules for ”merituddannelse” to nurses. There is a great need for nurses and a simpler way to get qualified educated persons within this area is therefor under consideration.

The greatest challenge within the area of Adult Learning ruled by the law of open education is to secure sufficient qualefied adult learning.

### *Financing*

The Open Education is partly paid by the state and the rest by fees. The institutions offering the educations decides how much it is necessary to pay in fee for one course for the institution to be able to offer this as well as other education at this level.

There was jused a sum of 261, 6 mio. kr. in the year of 2006, and it is the expected intention to use 258,6 in the year of 2008. The financial law for 2008 has not yet been passed because of an election late in the year 2007.

The participants can under a set of rules obtain finansial support on a level taking in consideration that they are adult and often with children. The support last for a year counted in full time. The participants will normaly have a employer, who helps to pay the education.

### 3. Adult education at advanced levels

#### *Background*

A programme for adults at lower secondary level and at advanced level was passed at 1993. The purpose of the first law about adult education at lower and upper secondary level in Danish called the law of open education issued by the Ministry of Education, was to secure provision of vocational adult education and training for adult working people on part-time courses. It was the purpose thereby to give working grown ups possibilities to obtain professionally oriented education. Education they have not had in their youth. Most of the effort within rules about open education is on the advanced level. These possibilities are only a part of the offers to adults and implies a fee for participation stipulated by the institutions.

Most of the adult learning and education is organized within the Ministry of Education. There is however some adult learning and education organized by the Ministry of Culture, the Church Ministry, the Ministry of Industry and Economics and the Ministry of Science, Technology and Development. The financial aid to the institutions is what the parliament decides when the yearly financial law is dealt with in the parliament. The parliament decides in this way the amount of money spent to that kind of education and thereby how much the institutions will have to collect as fee to finance the educations. There is no private money in this programme.

Adult education at lower and upper secondary level is made of modules and are often ability grouped courses. The educations today are a system of educations with parttime and fulltime education, education with elements from the original education from as well the vocationally as the professional oriented education, courses with especially academic contents and a number of educations called "merituddannelse" in Danish. That means primary and lower secondary training programme with award of credit for prior learning educations.

#### *Reform*

In May 2000 a major reform of the vocational education and continuing training system was passed. The parliament adopted a number of acts which would tie the continuing training and further education programmes together into a single coherent and transparent adult education system.

The adult vocational reform had three main objectives:

1. *To provide relevant adult education and continuing training offers to all adults at all levels, from the low skilled to university graduates.*

The offers of education/training was to constitute a system of competences which will give all adults formal recognition of the knowledge and qualifications they acquire, whether this takes place at the job or by participations in formal educations/training programmes.

2. *Improving opportunities for those with the lowest levels of education.*

Courses for adults in general subjects such as reading, spelling, mathematics and continuing vocational training play an important role in the efforts to enhance education/training opportunities for the low-skilled groups. The same applies to the new possibilities for having work experience and participation in continuing training credited as part of an education programme which will give the participants formally recognised vocational competences.

3. *Better utilisation of the resources*

The adult education reform made it possible to use huge resources for adult education in an effective way.

The education programmes within the adult education system are characterised:

- by being organized for adults in employment
- by having a content which takes into account the work and life experience of the adults and
- by their flexible organisation

Denmark already in 2000 lived up to the conclusions and the European Council in Lisbon.

#### *The adult education system*

The main principles of the adult education system are:

- good and relevant opportunities for continuing and advanced training for all
- adult education programmes shall be recognised at comparable levels and
- good possibilities for building bridges between education programmes and education levels.

It is a characteristic feature of education programmes within the adult education system that the work and life experience of the adults plays an important role in connection with the organisation of the education programmes as well as their content, profile and duration.

The adult education system can grossly be split into two levels of education.

1. Basic Adult Education in the form of education programmes which give the same competency as ordinary youth education programmes up to and including the level of vocational education.
2. Advanced education levels which are comparable with ordinary education levels, but different from these as regards to organisation and content; short and medium-term education programmes.

A very important element of the adult education reform was to strengthen basic skills such as reading, writing and mathematics. About one million adult Danes with labourmarket attachment have reading skills at a level which is considered insufficient compared with the literacy skills required in a knowledge-based society.

#### *Advanced levels in the adult education system*

The adult education system comprises two advanced education levels

- Advanced adult education which corresponds to the level of a short advanced education programme within the ordinary educational system.
- Diploma level education which corresponds to an intermediate level higher education programme within the ordinary educational system

Education programmes at the advanced levels within the adult education system may be advanced in depth and in breadth, i.e. either vocational specialisation within or outside the ordinary vocational field of the participant.

The organisation of the content and teaching methods of the continued education programmes within the adult education system is also to a high degree based on the life and work experience of the adults.

It is a condition for starting in continued adult education that the participants have a relevant educational background and at least two years of work experience. It should be possible for the individual to participate in advanced education while still performing the daily work. This is why adult education at the advanced levels mainly takes place as leisuretime education i.e. open education.

## 4. General Adult Education

### Preparatory Adult Education (FVU)

#### *Aim*

The aim of preparatory adult education (FVU) is to provide adults with the opportunity to improve and supplement their fundamental skills in reading, spelling and written presentation, as well as their skills with numbers, arithmetic and basic mathematical concepts. This takes place with a view towards continuing education as well as strengthening their prerequisites for playing an active role in society.

#### *Structure*

FVU consists of two subjects: FVU Reading and FVU Mathematics.

FVU Reading includes training in reading, spelling and written presentation. The training is to be functionally adjusted according to the participants. Authentic texts involving the participants' own daily life are used as teaching material. These could include, for example, instruction manuals, articles from trade magazines, work-related notes and manuals and public pamphlets.

FVU Mathematics includes training in number skills, arithmetic and basic mathematical concepts. The training is to be functionally adjusted according to the participants. The teaching involves material taken from daily life. This could include work plans, recipes, payslips, statistics, labels and other specific material.

Both subjects are divided into levels, and at the conclusion of each course participants will have reached a skill level equal to general adult education level 1. FVU Reading is offered at levels 1-4 and FVU Mathematics is offered at levels 1 and 2. A non-qualifying exam is offered after each level in both FVU Reading and FVU Mathematics. The exam is voluntary and its purpose is to evaluate whether or not the participant has achieved the necessary skills to advance to the next level or conclude the FVU programme.

#### *Admission Requirements*

Anyone who is 18 or older has the opportunity of participating in an FVU programme. People under 18 can be admitted if:

- FVU is combined with an educational programme established under the law concerning vocational training
- FVU is incorporated into a vocational training programme and the applicant is employed at an enterprise
- The FVU programme takes place at an institution under the Danish Prison and Probation Service

In order to be eligible for an FVU programme, the applicant must complete a test lasting approximately half an hour. The purpose of the test is to determine whether or not FVU is the right programme for the individual. After the test, the applicant will receive individual guidance based on the results. If the applicant is judged to have the right profile, they will be offered the opportunity to participate in an FVU education programme on a level appropriate to their skills.

#### *Organisation*

FVU is a state-financed education programme offered through adult education centres (VUC). Based on organisational agreements with VUC, FVU programmes can also be offered by:

- Institutions that provide vocational training (AMU)
- Institutions that provide vocationally oriented education programmes

- Youth and adult liberal education organisations and day folk high schools
- Folk high schools, home economics schools and arts and craft schools
- Production schools
- Language centres
- Social and healthcare training schools (SOSU)
- The Forestry School
- Institutions that provide basic maritime education programmes
- Institutions that provide special needs education programmes for adults

A major part of the activity consists of vocationally oriented training, where the education is designed according to needs of the enterprise and the employee's own desire for improvement. The training can take place either at the enterprise itself or at an educational institution.

#### *FVU Activity*

In 2005 FVU had 26,248 pupils. This represented an increase of 11 per cent in relation to 2004. Of the 26,448, 80 per cent participated in FVU Reading.

#### *FVU's History*

Preparatory adult education (FVU) has been offered as an education programme since 2001, when it replaced the previous remedial reading programme (remedial reading courses for adults). At that time, the programme was expanded to include FVU Mathematics. The basis for this development was the OECD's report on adult literacy<sup>1</sup>, which indicated that up to 46 per cent of Danes between the ages of 16 and 65 did not have sufficient literacy skills. Based on these figures, it was deemed necessary to increase the efforts aimed at improving Danish adults' reading skills. At the same time, it was similarly decided to ensure that Danes also had an opportunity to improve their skills in mathematics.

#### **General adult education at lower secondary level (AVU)**

The Consolidated Act on General Adult Education is no. 998 of 20 July 2007 from the Ministry of Education.

It is the aim of the programme to provide education that will enable adults to improve or supplement their knowledge and skills within general subjects. General adult education at lower secondary level (in Danish 'almen voksenuddannelse', abbreviation 'AVU') is provided as single subject courses. The general adult education is parallel to, but not identical with, the initial basis education system the "Folkeskole" (the Danish municipal primary and lower secondary school for children between the ages of 6-7 and 16). Curricula and examinations are adapted to the experiences and interests of adults.

The teaching leads to an examination, which qualifies for admission to continued education on a par with the school-leaving certificates obtained after the 9th and 10th forms of the Folkeskole. The target group is thus primarily adults, who have never completed lower secondary education or who have a need to improve or supplement their basic education.

Every year, approximately 50,000 adults participate in general adult education.

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<sup>1</sup>Jensen, T. P. & Holm, A (2000): Danskernes læse-regne-færdigheder – i et internationalt lys. AFK Forlaget, København.

### *General Adult Education and Adult Education Centres*

General adult education is offered at adult education centres (Voksenuddannelsescenter, Danish abbreviation: VUC). Since 1 January 2007 the VUCs are self-governing institutions (initially the VUCs were established by the counties). The teaching is financed via a taximeter funding (i.e. a cash-per-student grant). There are 29 VUCs in Denmark, with a large number of regional satellite departments spread geographically over the country.

Other kinds of general adult education are also offered at the VUCs: education for people with reading and writing disabilities (dyslexia), preparatory education for adults (Danish abbreviation: FVU), Higher Preparatory Examination courses (Danish abbreviation: HF), and supplementary examination courses at upper secondary level (Danish abbreviation: GS). The students can combine subjects from AVU with subjects from the other education programmes.

All VUCs provide workshop facilities for independent study. This facility is a supplement to the teaching and is available to all students. At most VUCs special areas have been established to serve this purpose.

The workshops are equipped according to the needs and the services offered, and there will also be teachers present to help and guide. The workshops will offer what is needed for the students to work independently or in groups. There must be access to books, other teaching materials, sound and video equipment and computers.

### *Structure*

The teaching at the general adult education programme (AVU) is based on a single-subject structure, and the subjects can be pieced together according to the individual's own requirements and needs. It is possible to study one or more subjects at the same time. Attendance to the classes is compulsory. However, it is possible to enter for an examination as an independent learner without having participated in the classroom teaching. In this case, the independent learner will enter for the examination after he has studied the examination syllabus for the particular subject(s) himself.

### *The subjects and levels*

The AVU programme consists of a broad range of subjects. As well as an introductory course, the workshop course, and the student counselling, the programme consists of two groups of subjects: Core subjects and additional subjects. *The core subjects* are: Danish, English, French, German, mathematics, science, and social studies. The core subjects must be offered once a year at every adult education centre (VUC). *The additional subjects* are optional subjects for the VUCs to offer, and they are therefore not necessarily found at every VUC: Art, Danish as a second language, IT (information technology), philosophy, history, Latin, media studies, psychology and cooperation and communication. Subjects are offered at different levels: Basics, G and E. A recommended number of teaching hours has been stipulated for each subject by the Ministry of Education.

### *Curricula*

The Ministry of Education draws up curricula for all subjects. The curricula take into account the experience of the adult students. The number of weekly lessons vary. Each student decides whether to take part in a single subject or more subjects at a time. In addition to the classroom teaching, the students must expect to spend time on homework with written assignments, preparation of texts, research etc. as well as time for the examinations. Various methods of working are employed, for instance classroom instruction, project work, individual and group based written work etc.

*Marking, tests and examinations*

The AVU courses are organised in such a way that the students can enter for examinations at the end of the teaching period. The examinations are adapted to adults. Certification will be provided for all examinations passed. The certificates are equivalent to the certificates offered at the School Leaving Examinations.

Marks are not given for participation in classes. If a student decides not to enter for the examination, a certificate of attendance may be issued provided that the student has participated in at least 85% of the planned lessons and has handed in the required number of assignments.

The students take examinations in all the subjects. The examinations can be written, oral, case and project tests or take mixed forms. At most of the examinations, the students may utilise all types of aids, including IT, but they may normally not communicate with one another or with anyone in their surroundings. The Ministry formulates all written examination questions and appoint external examiners. For all examinations, marks are awarded by an external examiner as well as the students' teacher. Marks are given on a 7-point scale from -3 to 12.

*Admission*

Adults of 18 years and more have a right of access to general adult education, with a corresponding obligation for the regions and the central government to ensure provision of such education in accordance with the law. Prior to being admitted, all applicant must see a guidance counsellor in order to secure the best possible entrance to AVU. There are no formal requirements for admission to general adult education. Each applicant is admitted following a concrete assessment of whether they have qualifications corresponding to the requirements of the subject they wish to enter.

The education, which is divided into levels, ensures that the students can follow the teaching in different subjects at different levels.

*Legislation, school system and management*

The Ministry of Education issues the rules according to which the adult education centres (VUCs) work. The VUCs are self-governing institutions. They finance the implementation of the education programmes by means of grants from the Ministry of Education provided on the basis of student numbers.

The VUC is headed by a principal who answers to the centre council. The centre council has overall responsibility for the running of the school and its activity. The centre council makes decisions on a number of administrative matters of importance to the existence of the VUC. If the VUC has satellite departments, a local council with limited power will be appointed for each satellite.

Students at any VUC are entitled to appoint a students' council. This council will look after the interests of the students and appoint representatives to other councils and committees, including the centre council, which deals with general matters of importance to the students.

*Quality and supervision*

All VUCs must have and utilise a system for quality development and results assessment of each individual programme and of the teaching. Within the general requirements, the VUC itself decides the methodology for self-assessment and quality assessment it wishes to employ. The school must be in a position to document its quality system vis-à-vis the Ministry of Education, which supervises the school's implementation of the education programmes and its results.

*Student guidance and counselling*

The VUCs are obliged to provide guidance for the students and to ensure that they are offered individual and collective guidance concerning completion of the education programme. The students can also receive guidance concerning educational as well as vocational matters.

At all VUCs, there are counselling services. The guidance counsellor guides the student so that he or she can make the best possible entrance into VUC. The guidance counsellor advises the student on the subjects that are to be taken, on possibilities for subsequent education or on getting a job after the education programme. The guidance counsellor may also provide information about financial and social matters.

All students are offered counselling. During the course of education, the counsellor will give individual and collective counselling about good study techniques and about how to prepare for examinations.

*The students' financial situation*

For each subject the students pay a small fee for participation. For the core subjects Danish, Danish as a foreign language, English, and mathematics the fee is DKK 100. For all other subjects the fee may vary from DKK 300 - 900.

Except for the fee for participation, the teaching is covered by the state and is free of charge. However, to a limited extent the VUC can require the students to acquire some of the teaching materials themselves, typically dictionaries and pocket calculators.

Students at AVU have a number of possibilities of getting financial support. They are, however, only entitled to receive support from one scheme at a time. The Danish State Education Grant Scheme for Adults (SVU) is directed at adults with little or no education at all. Another possibility is to apply for a grant or loan from the Danish State Education Grant and Loan Scheme (SU). SU is given partly as a grant, partly as a loan. Unemployed people can study at VUC and still receive their unemployment benefits provided that they are active job seekers.

**Upper Secondary Education: The Higher Preparatory Examination (HF)**

The Consolidated Act on The Higher Preparatory Examination is no. 445 of 8 May 2007 from the Ministry of Education.

The Higher Preparatory Examination programme is aimed at people who are interested in knowledge, concentration, seeing things in perspective and abstraction. The objective of the education programme is to prepare the students for higher education, and in that connection ensure that they acquire general education, knowledge and competences by means of the subjects they study and in the interaction between them.

*Education centres/schools*

The HF is typically offered by the general upper secondary schools, which as well as HF also offer STX, and by the adult education centres which, as well as HF, also offer other types of adult education. Since 1 January 2007 the upper secondary schools are self-governing institutions (initially the schools were established by the counties).

*Special profile*

The emphasis in the HF programme is on both the theoretical and the practical. The education programme aims to develop the students' capacity for in-depth study and their understanding of the connections between the subjects and to promote the individual student's responsibility for his or her own and joint results. The students are to attain analytical and critical skills and achieve insight into natural science, social science and humanistic contexts. They are also to develop their linguistic competences.

HF is a fulltime, two-year programme of study, and the subjects are also offered as single subjects and sometimes as packages of subjects at adult education centres, where an annual approximately 80,000 students complete one or more HF subjects.

#### *Content*

The HF programme consists of a broad range of subjects in the fields of the humanities, natural science and social science. The education programme has its specific range of compulsory subjects that are common for all students taking the programme. It also contains multi-subject courses, among other things with the object of strengthening the students' preparedness for further study. This includes the ability to apply knowledge and methods from several subjects to illustrate interdisciplinary themes and problems and the ability to compare the subjects' knowledge and methods.

#### *Compulsory subjects and levels*

As well as an introductory course, a workshop course and project periods, the programme consists of the following subjects: Danish A, English B, mathematics C, physical education C, practical/musical subject C, natural science group of subjects (which includes biology C, geography C and chemistry C), and the culture and social science group of subjects (history B, social science C and religion C).

As well as the compulsory subjects, the student must choose two-four electives, and each student must also complete a major written assignment during the second year within one to three subjects of their choice.

#### *Electives*

The students choose from among a number of electives at C, B or A level offered by the schools. The electives can be HF subjects within the practical/musical area or electives common to the other upper secondary programmes for STX, HHX and HTX<sup>2</sup>. The schools can also tone their HF range by offering electives as "packages" for the students to choose between. The number and specific content of the elective options vary from school to school.

#### *Curricula*

The Ministry of Education draws up curricula for subjects and multi-subject courses.

All subjects are placed in system of levels, C, B and A, in relation to the subject's scope and depth. The level system is as a general rule structured in such a way that C-level subjects are allotted 75 periods of 60 minutes, B-level subjects have 200 periods and subjects at A-level 325 hours. There are a number of exceptions, however, in the individual programmes, in particular as regards B and A levels.

Each student on a two-year fulltime HF study programme completes a minimum of 1625 hours of 60 minutes each. There is, in addition, homework with written assignments, preparation of texts, research etc. as well as time for examinations.

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<sup>2</sup> Danish abbreviations for the Gymnasium (STX), the Higher Commercial Examination Programme (HHX) and the Higher Technical Examination Programme (HTX)

Various methods of working are employed, for instance classroom instruction, project work, individual and group based written work etc. Up to 20% of the teaching time can be spent on virtually organised teaching, where students and teacher are not necessarily in the same room.

#### *Marking, tests and examinations*

Marks are awarded on a 7-point scale from -3 to 12. All HF students take one or more written and/or oral examinations in all the compulsory subjects and in the subject groups within natural science and culture/social science. Examinations are also taken in the electives. An HF examination also includes an individual, major written assignment within one to three subjects and an examination project prepared individually or in groups and which covers two to three subjects.

Term marks (end of year marks) are not given in the HF programme. However, each term the school or adult education centre evaluates the teaching and every student's learning in order to secure progress.

The examinations can be written, oral, case and project tests or take mixed forms. At most of the examinations, the students may utilise all types of aids, including IT, but they may normally not communicate with one another or with anyone in their surroundings.

The Ministry formulates all written examination questions and appoints external examiners for all examinations, both oral and written.

An examination certificate is issued when the student has achieved a minimum of 02 in weighted average of the examination marks. When the examination average is being calculated, the marks are weighted differently depending on the level. The examination average is crucial to the student's future opportunities in the education system as it forms an important part of the basis for admission to higher education. The examination average is raised for students who have taken more subjects at A-level than the education programme requires.

#### *Admission*

To be admitted to HF, a student must have completed ten years of Danish basic education or have received corresponding teaching, and have taken examinations in Danish, English, mathematics, a second foreign language (French or German) and physics/chemistry.

A student must take an admission test if he/she has not taken the examinations required for admission to HF.

Students who have not attended a Danish school may be admitted following a concrete assessment of whether they have qualifications corresponding to the requirements that must be fulfilled by students who have attended a Danish school. They may be required to take an admission test.

#### *Legislation, school system and management*

The Ministry of Education issues the rules according to which the schools work. The schools, which are spread out all over Denmark, are self-governing institutions with different histories and academic profiles. They finance the implementation of one or more of the upper secondary education programmes by means of grants from the Ministry of Education provided on the basis of student numbers. The head of the school answers to a board, the composition of which reflects the school's specific profile. The teachers and students of the school appoint representatives to the board. The school board appoints and dismisses the headteacher and has overall responsibility for the running of the school and its activity.

### *Quality and supervision*

All schools offering one or more upper secondary education programmes must have and utilise a system for quality development and results assessment of each individual programme and of the teaching. Within the general requirements, the school itself decides the methodology for self-assessment and quality assessment it wishes to employ. The school must be in a position to document its quality system vis-à-vis the Ministry of Education, which supervises the school's implementation of the education programmes and its results.

### *Teacher qualifications*

Teachers must have completed a Master's programme at a university or – in certain cases – be able to document a corresponding level. Teachers must also have completed a course in educational theory and practice before or subsequent to their appointment at the school.

### *Students' influence on the education programme*

Students have a right to form a student council at their school and they are represented on the school board. The school must ensure that the students are involved in the planning of teaching in their class. The national student organisations have the right to appoint two members to the council that advises the Minister of Education on the upper secondary education programmes.

### *Student guidance*

The schools are obliged to provide academic guidance for the students and to ensure that they are offered individual and collective guidance concerning completion of the education programme. The students can also receive guidance concerning higher education and careers.

### *The students' financial situation*

Teaching is covered by the state and is free of charge. However, to a limited extent (max. DKK 2,500) the school can require the students to acquire some of the teaching materials themselves, typically dictionaries and pocket calculator. Students are eligible for Danish Education Support (SU) if they are active students, have reached the age of 18 and are Danish citizens. It is also possible in some cases to obtain SU if one is not a Danish citizen.

## 5. Non-formal adult education/liberal adult education

Non-formal adult education offers various forms of education and learning activities that may supplement the formal, public educational system. The concept of "Non-formal adult education" is associated with the Danish philosopher, poet, educational thinker and clergyman, N.F.S. Grundtvig, and his thoughts concerning free educational opportunities. The concept first arose in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and is one of the special features of the Danish education system.

Non-formal learning activities are frequently based on private initiatives by non governmental organisations (NGOs). Non-formal adult education comprises

- Independent non-formal educational activity: evening schools and voluntary activity in associations
- University extension courses
- Day folk high schools
- Private independent boarding schools (folk high schools, home economics schools, arts and crafts schools, and continuation schools)

No particular school or professional qualifications are required for participating in liberal adult education. For further information refer to the website of the Danish Adult Education Association: <http://www.dfs.dk/inenglish/aboutdaea.aspx>  
[www.nordvux.net](http://www.nordvux.net)

### Independent non-formal adult education activity

Private non-formal adult education activity is based on fellowship/community and the philosophy of the individual providers.

This activity can be divided into:

1. voluntary non-formal adult education
2. voluntary adult learning in associations

The private non-formal education activity must be established by a non-formal adult education association with a statute in order to be eligible for a grant and to be allocated facilities. In 2005 there were approximately 19,000 associations, of which approximately 2,100 were in the field of non-formal adult education and 17,000 were voluntary associations.

The local authority sets the financial framework and the rules for how it is to be administered. The local authority can appoint a non-formal adult education committee consisting of a minority elected by the local authority from among its members of the municipal council and a majority consisting of a broadly composed representation of users. The committee carries out administrative tasks such as making concrete decisions regarding, for example, non-formal adult education associations and their activity, assigns facilities and distributes grants.

The objective of **non-formal adult education** is, by taking a point of departure in the courses and activities, to increase the individual's general and academic insight and skills and enhance the ability and desire to take responsibility for their own life, as well as taking an active and engaged part in society. Non-formal adult education comprises teaching, study circles, lectures, debate-creating activities and flexibly organised activities, and fees are charged for participation. The teaching is usually offered at

evening schools which, within the framework laid down in and pursuant to law, themselves create the frame for their choice of subjects and activity. The overall grant to a non-formal liberal education activity may not exceed 1/3 of the associations' total payroll. There are approximately 1 million participants each year.

The objective of **voluntary non-formal adult learning in associations** is, taking a starting point in the activity and the binding fellowship, to strengthen non-formal adult learning and thus the members' skill and wish to take a responsibility for their own lives and to play an active and engaged part in society. Voluntary learning in associations for children and young people encompasses sports and philosophically related and socially engaged work with children and young people, and fees are charged for participation. Association work is offered by associations in such fields as sports, politics and religious activity, other philosophically related and socially engaged work with children and young people, and youth clubs, which, within the framework laid down in or pursuant to law, themselves make decisions regarding how they will make use of grants and organise their activity. In 2005 approximately 1.8 million people took part in association activity.

The Act on Non-formal Adult Education Activity also includes the University Extramural Department and the day high schools.

### **University Extention**

The objective of the courses are to disseminate knowledge of the methods and outcomes of research through non-formal adult education teaching and lectures.

The University Extention is nationwide with a regional structure consisting of 4 divisions in the university cities of Copenhagen, Aarhus, Odense and Aalborg. There are, moreover, more than 100 university extramural committees working with this activity outside of the university cities. Each branch designs its own programmes, which also offer courses by the committees of the region in question.

The state gives grants for costs involved in payroll etc. for lecturers and teachers, travel allowances and administration of the university extramural departments' activities. The size of the grant is laid down in the annual Appropriations Act and in 2007 was DKK 14.6 million. The Council for the University Extention distributes the grant for the activity both in and outside of the university cities.

The overall fees must constitute a minimum of 1/4 of the expenditure for remuneration etc, of teachers and 1/3 of the expenditure for remuneration of lecturers. In 2006 there were approximately 140,000 participants in extramural courses.

### **Day folk high schools**

The objective of the day folk high schools is to offer learning activities that has an adult education or employment-creating aim and is organised for adults. The courses normally run for 4 to 18 weeks, and as a rule the learning activities are full time.

Many day high schools offer FVU (Preparatory Adult Education).

The local authority can decide to give a grant to the non-formal adult education or employment-creating activity of the day high school when the school is organised as an independent, self-governing institution with its own board and own statute. The local authority decides the form that the municipal support is to take and may lay down further conditions for the grant. The local authority supervises the day high schools to which it awards grants.

In 2006 there were 52 day high schools with a total of approximately 16,000 participants.

### **Private independent boarding schools**

Private independent boarding schools include

1. Folk high schools
2. Home economics and arts and crafts schools

The main objectives of courses at private independent boarding schools are the interpretation and meaning of life, adult education and general democratic education. The teaching must be of a broad, general nature. While individual subjects and groups of subjects may predominate, this must never be at the expense of the general. The schools organise their activity on the basis of their chosen core values.

The pupils live at the school and the courses include both teaching and social interaction. The teachers live close to the school and take part in social life outside of class hours, and pupils and teachers also eat several of the fixed meals together. Pupils at many of the schools take part in the practical work such as cleaning and cooking.

The state supports courses at private independent boarding schools by means of taximeter funding per pupil per week.

There is a tuition fees for all courses, which can vary according to type of school and length of course. Typical tuition fees for a lengthy course are DKK 700-1200 a week, while the shorter week-long courses typically cost around DKK 3,000.

### **Folk high schools**

The folk high schools have a high degree of freedom to choose the subjects, content and methods of their teaching, which means that there are great differences between the schools in this respect. The subjects must be of a broad, general nature for half of the time, but the rest of the time can be spent on going into depth with special subjects and skills. Some high schools, for instance, concentrate on music and theatre while in others the emphasis is on sports, art, politics or philosophy. General discussions about important topics are common to all the teaching.

The courses vary in length from four days to 36 weeks. Short courses are most frequently held during the summer with participants of all ages. The longer courses are held during the winter and the participants are normally in their early 20s. About 45,000 people a year take part in one of the short courses while the longer courses have approximately 8,000 participants. The minimum age is 17½. Three folk high schools are only for young people between the ages of 16½ and 19, and four folk high schools are for pensioners.

There are 78 folk high schools located all around the country.

For further information about folk high schools, refer to the website of the Association of Folk High Schools in Denmark: <http://www.hojskolerne.dk/the-danish-folk-high-school>

### **Home economics and arts and crafts schools**

Home economics and arts and crafts schools concentrate on practical, creative and academic teaching in subjects within home economics and arts and crafts. As part of the tradition of liberal adult education, the schools stress the subjects' cultural, historical and social perspectives. The subjects are in the areas of home, body, ethics and aesthetics.

Most home economics and arts and crafts schools offer 10th class. The students are both adults and young people (starting at 16½ years of age).

The majority of the courses are of 20 or 40 weeks' duration, but some schools also offer short 1-2 week courses. About 1,000 persons participate in the schools' long courses. There are 16 home economics and arts and crafts schools.

### **Evening schools**

Private non-formal adult education activity is based on fellowship/community and the philosophy of the individual providers. The private non-formal education activity must be established by a non-formal adult education association with a statute in order to be eligible for a grant and to be allocated facilities.

The objective of non-formal adult education is, by taking a point of departure in the courses and activities, to increase the individual's general and academic insight and skills and enhance the ability and desire to take responsibility for their own life, as well as taking an active and engaged part in society. Non-formal adult education comprises teaching, study circles, lectures, debate-creating activities and flexibly organised activities, and fees are charged for participation. The teaching is usually offered at evening schools which, within the framework laid down in and pursuant to law, themselves create the frame for their choice of subjects and activity. The fundamental principles are free choice of topics, universal assess, free initiative and free choice of teachers.

The local authority sets the financial framework and the rules for how it is to be administered. The local authority can appoint a non-formal adult education committee. The committee carries out administrative tasks such as making concrete decisions regarding, for example, non-formal adult education associations and their activity, assigns facilities and distributes grants.

The evening schools are partly financed by local authorities. Allocation by the municipality must not exceed one third of the evening schools total expenditure and the municipality may differentiate their allocation according to subject, it may decide on special allocations to reduce user payment for special groups of participants. There are approximately 2,100 evening schools. The number of participant's is approximately 1,000,000 per year.

### **Teaching adults with dyslexia**

Teaching dyslexic adults is targeted for people with basic difficulties in acquiring written language skills. The aim is, through specially organised instruction, to help participants overcome the difficulties and improve their possibilities for taking a natural part in situations requiring written language.

#### *The teaching*

The teaching for adults with dyslexia is planned, targeted and progressive. The teaching is intended to assist in improving the participants' possibilities for taking advantage of compensation strategies and methods that will increase the participants' opportunities for functioning successfully in a job, an education, participating in society and in their private lives.

Through the teaching the participants develop their functional reading, writing and spelling skills as well as skills in using compensation tools, including IT resources. The teaching also includes special pedagogical assistance, including counselling for the participant and people with close connections to the participant. This counselling could concern, for example, which measures can be used to

compensate for difficulties in the participant's daily life. The teaching typically takes place in small groups of between 2 and 6 participants, but can also take place on a one-to-one basis. A course involves a maximum of 80 hours of teaching, organised on the basis of an individual teaching plan, after which it is to be determined if the participant is to continue or possibly be recommended for an alternative educational programme. The teaching material and the related resources that are necessary for the instruction are placed at the disposal of the participants free of charge.

#### *Admission requirements*

In order to be considered for a course of teaching for dyslexic adults, a prospective participant must first contact an adult education centre (VUC) or another provider of teaching for adults with dyslexia. Then, on the basis of an interview, the prospective participant will be recommended for a test of half an hour's length. The purpose of the test is to evaluate whether or not teaching for dyslexics is the proper programme for the individual. If the test indicates that teaching for dyslexics is not the proper programme, then the prospective participant will receive guidance based on the interview and the test as to other possible education programmes that might be appropriate, such as, for example FVU (preparatory adult education)

#### *Organisation*

Teaching for adults with dyslexia is a state-financed teaching programme that is offered by an adult education centre (VUC). In accordance with an operational agreement with VUC, teaching for dyslexics is also provided by:

- Institutions that provide labour market education programmes (AMU)
- Institutions for vocationally oriented education
- Adult education associations and day folk high schools
- Folk high schools, home economics schools and trade schools
- Production schools
- Language centres
- Social and healthcare training schools (SOSU)
- The Forestry College
- Educational institutions with basic maritime education programmes
- Educational institutions with teaching programmes for adults with special needs

The providers can conduct the teaching for dyslexics locally at public and private enterprises, in associations and academic organisations.

#### *The history behind teaching for adults with dyslexia*

Until 1 January 2007, adults with difficulties associated with dyslexia were able to receive instruction in accordance with the Act on Special Education for Adults, which the counties had the responsibility to provide. When the municipal reform came into force, the offer of teaching adults with dyslexia was transferred from the Act on Special Education for Adults to the Act on Preparatory Adult Education, and teaching adults with dyslexia (the FVU Act).

## 6. The Danish guidance reform in brief

Educational and vocational guidance is given high priority in Denmark. The overall structure and seven national targets in the field of guidance are defined in the [Act on Guidance in Relation to Choice of Education, Training and Career](#), which was adopted by the Danish parliament in April 2003. Subsequently, the 2003 has been amended twice: in 2006 and 2007. Please, [click for a summary of the amendments](#). The Ministry of Education is responsible for continuous supervision and development of guidance services in the educational sector.

The Act on guidance is primarily targeted at young people up to the age of 25 years but it also concerns services for adults wishing to enter a higher education programme. Read more about the [main aims of Danish guidance](#).

Two different types of guidance centres exist:

[Youth guidance centres](#) with responsibility for guidance related to the transition from compulsory school to youth education

[Regional guidance centres](#) with responsibility for guidance related to the transition from youth education to higher education.

The Ministry of Education is responsible for a national guidance portal: [www.uddannelsesguiden.dk](http://www.uddannelsesguiden.dk) or simply [www.ug.dk](http://www.ug.dk). UddannelsesGuiden means the "Education Guide". It provides information on:

Education and training possibilities at all levels

Vocations/professions

Labour market conditions and statistics

Study programmes taught in English at Danish colleges and universities

Other features include an electronic career planning tool, as well as a section with an electronic news service, a quarterly journal and various resources, especially aimed at guidance practitioners.

The Minister of Education has established a [National Dialogue Forum on Guidance](#) in order to secure a close dialogue between the Minister and relevant organisations, institutions, guidance counsellor associations, end users and individuals holding a leading position in the field of guidance.

Quality in guidance is a topic that is continuously debated in Denmark. One way of enhancing the quality of guidance provision is to improve the qualifications of the guidance practitioners. Six university colleges in Denmark offer a one-year modular common training programme at diploma level for guidance practitioners across sectors. Furthermore, the Danish University of Education offers a one-year Master of Education programme in guidance counselling. With an amendment in 2007 of the 2003 Act on guidance, it is now a requirement that guidance practitioners working in the education system complete the diploma programme or, alternatively, that they – through assessment and recognition of prior learning – can document that they hold the required qualifications. Please, [click for more information about training of guidance practitioners](#).

The Division for Guidance in the Danish Ministry of Education is actively involved in international cooperation in the field of guidance, and the main aims and elements of the Danish guidance reform are very much in line with the EU Resolution on Lifelong Guidance and with EU and OECD recommendations on guidance policies and practices.

In June 2007, another comprehensive plan for adult guidance services was agreed upon by the Danish Parliament. This plan focuses primarily on improving information and guidance services related to adult and further education and training. Four new initiatives will be implemented over a three-year period:

adult guidance networks - A National Centre for Competence Development - An Internet-based guidance portal - A National Adult Guidance Council. [Click for more information about adult guidance](#)  
*Training programme for guidance practitioners*

In Denmark, guidance practitioners have many different professional backgrounds. The majority are teachers; others are social workers or have experience from the social, the educational and/or the labour market sector.

With the 2007 amendments of the Act on guidance, it is now a requirement that guidance practitioners in the education system complete [the diploma programme in educational and vocational guidance](#). This programme is offered by six university colleges. Alternatively, guidance practitioners with extensive experience in the field can apply for assessment and recognition of their competencies and prior learning.

The Danish University of Education offers a [master programme in guidance and counselling](#). Both the diploma and the master programme are further training programmes that are offered within the framework of the Danish adult education and training system. I.e., they are aimed at and adapted to adults who already have another higher education degree and who have at least two years of relevant work experience.

#### *Quality in guidance*

Quality in guidance is a topic that is continuously debated in Denmark and the Ministry of Education has taken several steps to develop a quality assurance system. [The 2003 Act on guidance](#) includes requirements concerning quality assurance, e.g. that the youth guidance centres and the regional guidance centres are obliged to implement a quality assurance system that can be used to document activities, quality and effect on clients and society.

The Ministry of Education has developed several tools that the guidance centres can use for continuous evaluation and development of their services. Improvement of the guidance practitioners' qualifications is another way to ensure quality in guidance. With the 2007 amendments of the Act on guidance, it is now a requirement that guidance practitioners in the education system complete the [diploma programme](#) in educational and vocational guidance.

[Click here](#) for a more detailed description of the quality assurance system in Danish guidance. Or go to the 2005 country report ["Indicators and benchmarks in guidance provision in Denmark"](#)

## 7. Recognition of Prior Learning ('Anerkendelse af realkompetence')

### *'Real competences' – the concept*

'Recognition of Prior Learning' or 'Validation of non-formal and informal learning' etc.: Various terminology and definitions are used in various countries and international fora. The focus of the definitions may be on elements such as 'validation', 'certification' or on 'formal, non-formal and informal learning'. In Denmark the focus is on the concept of 'realkompetence' – the 'real competences' that you wish to assess and recognise (validate, certify). Whatever the terminology, the political focus is the same. In international contexts, the Danish Ministry of Education chooses to translate 'Anerkendelse af realkompetence' as Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

The definition used by the Ministry of Education for 'realkompetence' is the following:

The full range of knowledge and competences held by an individual irrespective of where and how they are acquired.

The concept 'realkompetence' highlights the fact that learning takes place not just in formal education and training, but also on the job and during leisure time: In liberal adult education, in association life, voluntary organisations etc. It highlights the importance of making learning visible, documenting and recognising learning as competences, for it to be part of, and indeed support, lifelong learning.

The Danish Government's major initiative in this field aims at creating better opportunities for the individual to have his or her competences recognised in formal education or training. Parliament adopted an act amending various legislation within the field of responsibility of the Ministry of Education (Act No 556 of 6 June 2007 to enhance the use of RPL in the field of adult education and continuing vocational training), which came into force on 1 August 2007.

Denmark already has a rather long tradition of individual competence assessment especially within Adult Vocational Training (1997), in the Adult Education Programme (2001), and in VET (since 2003).

### *Wide political support*

There is complete political support to advancing recognition of prior learning. Already in 2004, the Danish Parliament endorsed the Government's policy paper on Recognition of Prior Learning, presented by four ministers – Also the Social Partners are backing the focus on 'realkompetence'. Since 2004, this theme has been highlighted in the final document (March 2006) from the Government's Tripartite Committee on Lifelong Learning and Upskilling for all on the labour market. In the Welfare Accord (2006) and in the political agreement on implementation of the Globalisation Funds it is also a general theme.

In this, Denmark is in line with the international political agenda in the EU, OECD and the Nordic Council of Ministers. Denmark recognises RPL as part of its Strategy for Lifelong Learning [link]. With the Government's initiatives 2007, Denmark is among the front runners in the field of RPL.

### *Legislation gives a right to the individual – and lays down some common principles*

The Act of Parliament has introduced the possibility of RPL in the adult education and vocational training area where it did not already exist, and enhanced use of RPL in areas where the possibility already existed.

The task of assessing and recognising Prior Learning lies with the educational institutions, which provide the desired education or training programme. The individual applicant's purpose of being

RPL'ed depends on his or her wishes and background/qualifications. The institution's RPL depends on the purpose of the assessment and, of course, the result of the assessment within the scope of the education or training programme. It may be:

- To meet the demands for formal educational qualifications for entry to a desired education programme (including having an entry certificate with a view to applying for entry at a later stage).
- To have a plan for a shortened study and/or individual organisation of a particular education or training programme by granting exemptions
- To have a certificate issued for the entire education or training programme, or for completed parts, in accordance with the regulations for the individual programme.

On demand, the educational institution may issue documentation for the recognition of the applicant's PL, for which no certificate etc. may be issued according to the regulations on the education or training programme, in the form of a 'real' competence certificate', in which it is indicated what has been recognised in relation to the objectives, or aims, of the individual programme.

For the enhanced use of RPL a set of common principles is laid down:

- *The individual citizen has a right to request an institution of adult education and continuing vocational training to assess his or her prior learning in relation to a particular education or training programme, based on the framework and set of regulations laid down for the respective education and training fields. RPL is carried out by any educational institution that has been approved by the Ministry to provide this particular education or training programme.*
- *The individual must contribute to the documentation of his or her competences in order to support the educational institution's assessment work. Through this process, the individual may go through a process of reflection and realisation, which may have a motivating effect in itself.*
- *There is no user fee to be paid for RPL of persons with a low educational background. RPL in relation to education and training programmes targeting people with a low educational background is free of charge. In relation to adult education at tertiary level a user fee may be charged, but only of persons with educational attainment beyond VET level.*
- *A competence assessment always uses as reference points the objectives and entry requirements of the particular education or training programme. The person's competences must be assessed in relation to the objectives described in the regulations etc. for the individual education programmes, or in relation to formal entry requirements.*
- *The individual's competences are recognised irrespective of where and how they are acquired. Cf. the definition of 'realkompetence' in the introductory passage.*
- *The quality and level of the education and training programmes must not be compromised even if a certificate or diploma is based wholly or partly on recognised 'real' competences acquired outside formal education. RPL implies that competences are assessed as being equivalent to – or just as good as – those acquired through participation in the formal education programme.*
- *The methods used must ensure a reliable and valid assessment and thus ensure confidence in the result. Applicants, as well as receiving further education institutions and prospective employers, must be able to have confidence in the tools, methods and procedures used. There are demands as to quality assurance of the assessment.*
- *The assessment result is documented by the issuing of a certificate. Depending on the applicant's purpose of assessment, and on the result of the assessment, the educational institution issues a certificate, or proof, of RPL, either in the form of an entry certificate, a 'real' competence certificate' or a proper certificate or diploma according to the regulations of the education programme.*

- *Enhanced use of RPL is an offer of new possibilities – it is voluntary for the individual.*
- *Access to complaints procedure is introduced in most fields.* The Qualification Board acts as complaints board and must give a professional assessment in connection with any complaints that may arise. There is a written procedure.

*Adult education and continuing training programmes comprised by new legislation 2007*

- General adult education at lower secondary level, in connection with entry to programme [link]
- Subjects in general adult education including upper secondary education *without entry* (effect not until 1 August 2008)
- Adult Vocational Training [link]
- Two tertiary levels of the Adult Education System: Short cycle and Medium Cycle.

For further information, see the Ministry of Education guidance portal: [www.ug.dk/realkompetence](http://www.ug.dk/realkompetence).

*My Competence Folder*

An individual, who wishes to be RPL'ed, must contribute with documentation of his or her competences. Documentation may comprise completed formal education (certificates giving right of entry to further education are used as they are and are not subject to RPL), not completed education or training programmes, as well as competences as a result of non-formal or informal learning acquired in work life or in the third sector (liberal adult education, association life and voluntary activities etc.).

'My Competence Folder' has been developed for the Ministry of Education in co-operation with the Social Partners to meet the need for documentation in connection with assessment of PL. The folder is a sort of CV framework, or portfolio, for documentation of the individual's 'real competences'. It is voluntary for the individual to use of My Competence Folder, or to prefer some other framework or method of description and documentation. My Competence Folder is also available in an English version. See [www.minkompetencemappe.dk](http://www.minkompetencemappe.dk).

The competence folder offers a personal tool to everybody who wishes to get an overview of his or her range of acquired competences. The folder may therefore also be used in several other contexts than assessment of PL in relation to an education/training programme. It may be used e.g. in interviews with a vocational or educational guidance counsellor, an employer or a superior at the work place, a person at the work place responsible for further training, or as preparation for job interviews.

The competence folder may also be used by enterprises that wish to initiate RPL and competence development among their employees. They may use a special 'Enterprise log-in'. In addition to this, a specific tool has been developed for describing and documenting competences acquired in association life, in voluntary social work, and in liberal adult education, respectively. This tool has been developed for the Ministry of Education in co-operation with major third sector organisations. The tool, which is modelled as a questionnaire for self-evaluation, offers a systematic clarification and identification of a number of specified competences including social and personal competences. This self evaluation may be supplemented with an interview on the result of the questionnaire. Association for voluntary and social work, other association work or liberal adult education may offer this form of sparring in order to help qualify and document the result. The material, which has been prepared in three versions adapted to the specific sector, is also to be found as elements in 'My Competence Folder' through links to the three special websites. See [www.realkompetence-forening.dk](http://www.realkompetence-forening.dk), [www.realkompetence-frivillig.dk](http://www.realkompetence-frivillig.dk) and [www.realkompetence-folkeoplysning.dk](http://www.realkompetence-folkeoplysning.dk).

*'Real competences': Competence development in and across various learning arenas*

The main objective of the Government's initiative is RPL seen in an educational perspective. But it also stresses the importance of improving the interplay and interaction between learning taking place in formal education, in work life and in the third sector.

The purpose of assessing and recognising prior learning in formal *education and training*, which is what the new legislation is about, is to give the individual the possibility to continue to build on his or her competences irrespective of where and how they were acquired, and thus obtain formal recognition. The reference points for the PL assessment are the educational objectives and/or entrance requirements pertaining to the desired formal education or training programme. The result of the assessment and recognition is documented by a certificate/documentation as described above. The individual contributes through documentation of his or her competences acquired in education, in work life or in the third sector. Whether the person's competences may be recognised, depends on whether the educational objectives etc. of the particular education programme are considered to be met.

In *work life*, identification and clarification of 'real' competences, and making competences visible, plays an important role for the job and competence development of the employees as well as for the competitiveness of the enterprise. Many enterprises already work systematically with identification, clarification and assessment of the employees' competences as part of the enterprise's competence development. Through the enterprise's PL assessment, the employee may be assessed in reference to certain job functions. As a rule, an enterprise chooses to use its own yardstick, or reference points, for its employees' competence assessment and development. Clarification and documentation of competences in relation to the enterprise's job functions may also be used actively by the individual employee, or by the enterprise itself, to obtain recognition in relation to a state approved education or training programme.

Within *liberal adult education* as well as in *association life*, 'real competences' are developed in many different contexts and comprise a broad spectrum of knowledge, skills and personal competences. Making 'real competences' visible is seen by the third sector as an important contribution to improving the individual's awareness of the benefit of e.g. a liberal adult education course and competences acquired in the process. On this background, the third sector organisations and the Ministry of Education co-operated to develop a set of tools that may support the individual in evaluating, describing and documenting competences acquired in liberal adult education, association life and voluntary social work, respectively, which may prove to be an active contribution to a person's competence development. Documentation for competences acquired in the third sector may also be used as preparation for job interviews, or for RPL in relation to a formal education or training programme.

