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STUDY

on Adult Learning and Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina



German Institute for
Adult Education
Leibniz Centre for
Lifelong Learning

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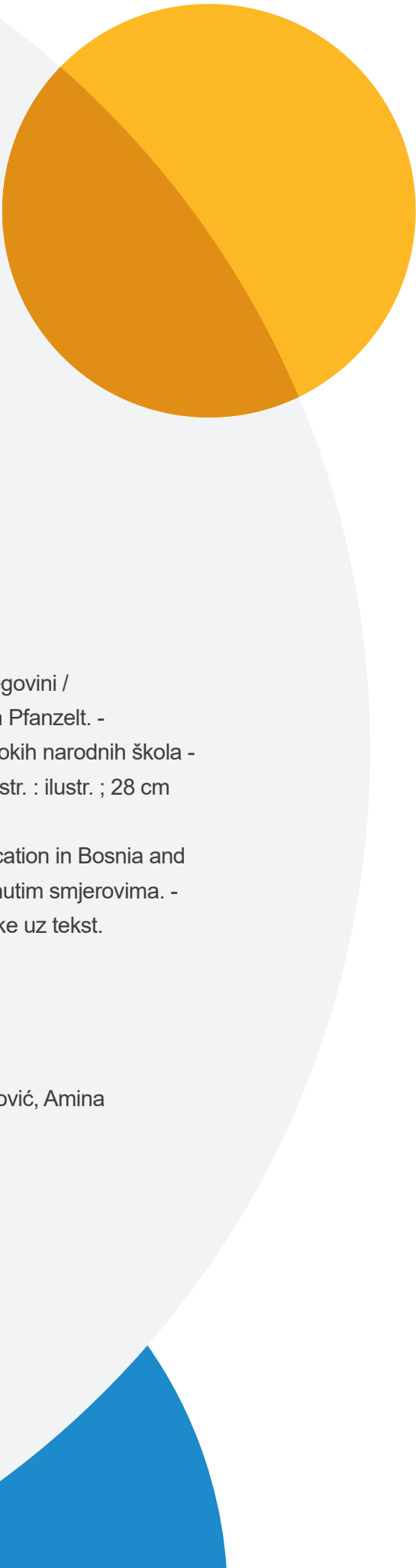


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Dear Readers,

DVV International and DIE Bonn started planning and implementing a complex regional project in 2019 which aimed to analyse the state-of-the-art of adult learning and education (ALE), and the participation of adults in education and training (formal, non-formal and informal learning). The qualitative study was conducted in Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, and Kosovo, and the adult education survey was implemented in Armenia, Georgia and Kosovo.

The purpose of the complex project was to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the ALE sector, and to provide data that would be used when creating policy and legislation in the ALE, vocational education and training, employment, lifelong learning sectors, and in other relevant areas.

The qualitative and the quantitative studies, as well as the seven country reports, were conducted and prepared from the second half of 2019 until June 2021. The quantitative study was commenced first, and the implementation of the qualitative studies started when the initial results began to arrive.

Monitoring progress on the basis of data-based surveys plays an important role in European strategy development on lifelong learning. The studies and AE surveys presented constitute a substantial stock-taking effort for the countries represented here (Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, and Kosovo), aiming to provide a comprehensive picture of adult learning, as well as of its prerequisites and challenges.

Closely following the Adult Education Survey (AES) – which is a well-established international survey on adult learning –, national specificities and information needs were identified in the coordination of the cooperation partners and through the involvement of national experts. The standard questionnaire was thus adapted to national circumstances and supplemented with additional questions on learning attitudes and motivation, as well as on educational and support needs in the face of massive changes on the labour market. Questions concerning access to education and (digital) learning during the

pandemic were added at short notice in response to the Covid pandemic. The survey results answer a number of questions, and provide information about the extent and quality of adult learning. How are learning and attitudes towards learning distributed in the adult population? Which groups are involved, and to what extent? Are particular forms of learning used by different groups? What role do socio-economic conditions play, e.g. the employment context or residence in rural or urban areas?

The qualitative country reports provide additional in-depth information on the specific national context of the education system, and on the location and promotion of ALE, gathered in qualitative studies by a team of international and national experts according to a standard outline. Together, the two reports form an excellent basis for the participating countries to assess the current situation against the background of education policy objectives and to develop political strategies for improving the ALE system.

Since the studies were carried out in four countries according to a uniform scheme, the comparison offers additional possibilities for classifying the respective national situation. As such comprehensive analyses and studies and surveys in the ALE sector were conducted for the first time in all the countries involved in this project, we are confident that a number of governmental and non-governmental institutions and organisations in these four countries and beyond will use the data and knowledge obtained.

We hope that these publications will provide a basis for discussions on further policy development, and thus contribute to the establishment of an evidence-based design of the ALE systems in Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, and Kosovo.

We would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the members of the project working group, the authors, and the research institutes, for their professional and fruitful cooperation, and for the excellent results and achievements, which were largely finalised in a difficult period during the coronavirus pandemic.

We hope that you enjoy reading the reports!



Dr. Emir Avdagic

Country Director
DVV International
Bosnia-Herzegovina

Preface

The qualitative study on adult learning and education (ALE) conducted in Bosnia and Herzegovina is a historical document that analyses qualitative aspects of the adult education system in the country for the first time. What has happened so far, where are we now, and in which direction should we go in the future has been explored and included in one document for the first time. A scientific methodology has been applied, enabling an insight to be gained into the present state of the statistical data collected, the available literature, as well as the practice of competent institutions and adult education providers.

A complex structure of educational authorities, e.g. policy-makers in education, significantly worsened and slowed down the development of adult education after the Yugoslavian adult education practice was destroyed and almost entirely erased by the war. However, adopting a legal framework and recognising adult education as an equal part of the education system was finally completed in the entire country in 2019. The time has therefore now come to look at the field from a broader perspective and identify the steps that need to be taken in the future to ensure that adequate implementation of the legal framework that has been adopted in all administrative units assures the effectiveness of adult education.

The study results indicate that the harmonisation of policies, laws and bylaws, between administra-

tive units and strategic thinking about the field's development, is conditional on a purposeful, efficient adult education system. The implementation of the laws has revealed various practical disadvantages creating a need to revise specific solutions and, in some instances, even to adopt new laws. That demonstrates that it is necessary to persevere in order to make the established system functional and agile in response to various practical needs.

The official strategic document entitled “Strategic Platform for the Development of Adult Education in the Context of Lifelong Learning in BiH 2014-2020” has expired, and it is necessary to revise priority fields and analyse the relevant institutions' performance in achieving the objectives and indicators that have been set.

A new strategy must provide a path for extending the successes that have been achieved, and must open new fields and issues enabling adult education in Bosnia and Herzegovina to become more closely aligned to the European frameworks and international recommendations for adult learning and education (ALE). This qualitative study can form an excellent baseline for elaborating such a new strategic document.

Other significant evidence from the study points to a need to raise awareness among the broader public of the importance attaching to learning and

education for personal, professional and social development. This cannot however be achieved with individual sporadic efforts alone, but is contingent on joint, continuous operations on the part of all relevant stakeholders, and on financial stimuli that would make adult education more accessible to everyone. It is also critical to continue improving the capacities of adult education providers by investing in the andragogical development of staff, and in more diverse educational offers adjusted to learners' different needs.

We are grateful that DVV International has been of considerable assistance to competent institutions and adult education organisations in many processes so far. This is also visible in the study's results. We therefore see this study as a valuable tool for us, as well as for domestic and other international organisations and projects dealing with adult education issues to align all activities with current needs at state and local levels.

Quality assurance must have primacy over all other activities here because it is the only way that we can ensure the system's long-term sustainability and increase participation in adult education programmes. That includes both the quality of the education process, and managing the whole adult education system. DVV International has already been actively working on the latter by introducing an information system for controlling and monitoring adult education – ISKOOM.

Abbreviations

AE	Adult Education	ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
AES	Adult Education Survey	LLL	Lifelong Learning
ALE	Adult Learning and Education	MEC	Ministry of Education and Culture in RS
ALMMs	Active Labour Market Measures	MES	Ministry of Education and Science in FBiH
APOSO	Agency for Pre-school, Primary and Secondary Education	MoCA	Ministry of Civil Affairs
BD BiH	Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina	NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina	NFE	Non-Formal Education
BPK Goražde	Bosnian-Podrinje Canton Goražde	NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
BQF	Baseline Qualifications Framework	ODA	Official Development Assistance
CLA	Classification of Learning Activities	OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
CONFINTEA	Conférence Internationale sur l'Education des Adultes	PIAAC	The Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies
CSO	Civil Society Organisation	PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
DIE	German Institute for Adult Education	REF	Roma Education Fund
DL	Distance Learning	RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
DVVI	Institute for International Cooperation of the Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband e.V. (the German Adult Education Association)	RS	Republika Srpska
EAAL	European Agenda for Adult Learning	RVA	Recognition, Validation and Accreditation
EPALE	Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe	SAA	Stabilisation and Association Agreement
EQF	European Qualifications Framework	SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
EU	European Union	SEE	South-Eastern Europe
FED	Formal Education	TIMMS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
FBiH	Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina	UIL	UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH	UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
GRALE	Global Report on Adult Learning and Education	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
HEI	Higher Education Institution	VET	Vocational Education and Training
ICT	Information and Communication Technology	VNFIL	Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning
ILO	International Labour Organization	WHO	World Health Organization
INF	Informal Learning	WWII	World War II

Executive summary

This study was commissioned by DVV International, the Institute for International Cooperation of the Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband e.V. (DVVI), and the German Institute for Adult Education (DIE). It provides a comprehensive analysis of the adult education (AE) sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH¹), and identifies recent developments and challenges. The study is part of a series of four country studies (Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia and Kosovo) in the South-Eastern Europe and Caucasus region, where DVVI has been active since the early 2000s (since 2000 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, since 2002 in Georgia and Armenia, and since 2005 in Kosovo). Information on the various topics reflected in this study – AE terminology, country profile, historical development, legal framework, financing, providers, programmes, participation, professionalisation, international context – was gathered online using desk-based research and a small-scale survey, which in turn was verified in a second step and then compared with the practical knowledge and on-site experience of nine national experts through online interviews. The analyses reveal remarkable progress and dynamic developments in the BiH

AE sector, but also identify the gaps that should be addressed in future.

Against the background of EU and UNESCO definitions, this study follows a broad concept of adult education which considers all forms of adult learning and education after the initial education cycle (such as compensatory education, further or continuous vocational education and training) and all intentional forms of non-vocational, community, popular or liberal education that aspires to promote professional or personal development.

The study shows that, on paper, the perception of lifelong learning and adult education in BiH follows the broad definitions of the EU and UNESCO. In practice, adult education in BiH is still largely concentrated on formal learning activities which relate to vocational education, retraining, recertification and the work environment. The past decade has witnessed dynamic developments in

¹ BiH is the official acronym for Bosnia and Herzegovina, where 'i' stands for 'and'.

adult education in BiH, with the year 2020 marking the end of an era of legislative regulation. Visible progress in systemising and professionalising the AE sector and formulating legislation can be accredited to the determination and expertise of the DVVI Country Office. BiH has two central planning documents for adult education, namely 'Principles and Standards in the Field of Adult Education in BiH', and the 'Strategic Platform for the Development of Adult Education in the Context of Lifelong Learning in BiH 2014-2020'. The results of the Strategic Platform 2014-2020 are currently being evaluated. The authorities have decided to draft a new strategic document in order to guide AE ambitions in the coming years. BiH has a complex state structure, and education is governed by the country's entities and cantons. A total of 15 government bodies, spread across three levels of governance, are in charge of administering education. Education is coordinated at state level by the Ministry of Civil Affairs, which has only recently created a separate focal point position for AE. At state level, strategic documents are in place, and entity and cantonal governments have followed suit in adopting their own adult education laws. All administrative units have their legislation in place today. Several units of education administration have initiated the process of revising AE laws, passing bylaws, and formulating relevant strategies.

BiH spends around 4% of its GDP on education. There is no specific line for adult education in the budgets of the relevant education administration units. Public spending on AE is either covered in the budget line for VET schools, or spending on employment measures. In contrast to formal education, which is largely publicly financed, financing for AE is a shared responsibility involving municipalities, employers, employees, business and professional associations, NGOs, scientific and educational institutions, and individuals.

Similar to the situation regarding legislation, governing structures and financing, adult education is a crosscutting component in the BiH education system. There are several types of institutional setting in which adult education is implicitly provided: compensatory education and retraining at primary and secondary VET schools, training for job-seekers, supplementary education programmes at higher education institutions, and non-formal education and learning activities from NGOs and private providers. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused many providers to rethink previous practices and service provision, and to search for alternative ways of meeting the learning needs of society and individuals alike.

BiH's economy is characterised by high unemployment and low economic activity rates, espe-

cially among young people and women. The fact that skilled and specialised individuals represent the group with the highest unemployment rate indicates that education content does not match labour market needs. Moreover, the country faces the significant challenge of the outward migration of skilled workers to EU countries. This should open up possibilities for AE to offer programmes that are relevant to the labour market. That having been said, and as revealed by results from the Adult Education Survey 2017, only 9% of BiH's adult population participates in some form of formal or non-formal education. The perception that education and learning are age-bound and end on completion of formal education is still widely shared. The vast majority of the population of BiH is not interested in continuing education and learning, or is not encouraged to continue. AE is still largely associated with formal education, re-training and recertification. People are more motivated to participate if the goal of further training is getting a job or stepping up the career ladder. Very few people in BiH participate in AE with the "sole" motivation of personal self-development.

A recently-introduced legal provision to professionalise AE in BiH contains the requirement that, in order to obtain official accreditation, AE providers must prove their staff's andragogical competencies with appropriate certificates. Andragogy is not however offered as a degree subject, either separately or as a sub-discipline of Pedagogy, by any of the higher education institutions. Adult educators in BiH, despite their proficiency in the subject that they teach, usually lack didactical knowledge and tools of working with adults. No state-wide training programme is available for adult educators. Similarly, there are no evaluation mechanisms to assess the

performance of the trainer or mechanisms for signalling bad performance. However, Curriculum GlobALE, which was developed by DIE and DVVI and served as a basis for AE programmes in several education administration units, represents a good platform for further development. Additionally, DVVI continuously organises andragogical training in order to form a pool of future multipliers.

In the international context, BiH contributes continuously to CONFINTEA and to the GRALE reports. However, a strategy to develop and implement a tangible monitoring and evaluation system for SDG 4 in the Bosnian context is missing so far. The most important international donors for the development of adult education in BiH include the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (through DVVI and GIZ), the EU institutions, the World Bank, the ILO and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

Based on the situation analysis, the study identifies several broad recommendations for the medium- and longer-term development of AE in BiH. Most relevant will be the early completion of a new Strategic Platform. Government and local authorities should raise awareness of the non-monetary values attaching to adult education for individual and societal development (through civic education, literacy programmes, rehabilitation programmes and personal development courses). Moreover, improved networking amongst providers, accurate measurement and recognition of non-formal learning outcomes, the creation of a common understanding of the adult teacher profession, and the provision of incentives for life-long learning at individual and provider level, are among the recommendations.

Scope and research approach

The aim of the study is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the adult learning and education (ALE) sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to identify recent developments and challenges. The basis for the study structure is a comprehensive, guiding table of contents which has been developed by DVVI in cooperation with the DIE.

This study was implemented by a team of researchers who worked closely together and were selected by DVVI. The team was made up of two international consultants, Hannah Pfanzelt and Andreas Pfanzelt, and one national expert, Amina Isanović Hadžiomerović.

The methodological approach that was adopted by the researchers combines intensive desk research with semi-structured expert interviews and a small-scale quantitative data collection. Data and information were gathered and added step-by-step throughout the research process. The first step consisted of systematically reviewing existing data, central national and international documents and strategies, as well as literature provided by DVVI and the national expert. Secondary data, which was available at national, regional, and international level – such as academic literature, analytical papers, policy briefs, evaluation documents, reports and publications from governments, international agencies and civil society organisations – constituted the main sources of information. Primary data from surveys or international databases was also analysed wherever available. In addition, information from the country which has recently been compiled by DVVI was examined (e.g., ‘Factsheet: Adult education in country Bosnia and Herzegovina’, or the unpublished DVVI study entitled ‘Re-

view of the situation on financial allocations for the field of adult education’).

All in all, the data collection and review task exposed the information available across the topics of interest. The main goal in this research phase was to collect relevant data along the predefined chapters and to identify gaps in knowledge and data. The resulting preliminary country portfolios established the basis for qualitative data collection in the next stage of the research. Directed by the results of the desk research, semi-structured interviews were conducted, via video call, in order to externally verify, complement and supplement the preliminary research findings with the practical knowledge and on-site experience of national ALE experts. These supplementary interviews were a decisive source of information about the state of ALE where online information was scarce. A total of eight representatives of ALE from the macro, meso and micro levels were selected as interviewees (including one expert from DVVI’s BiH Country Office). Questionnaires with various guiding questions were developed for all the interviews and shared with the interviewees in advance. These questions served as a broad thematic guideline during the interviews. The interviews had an average duration of one hour, and took place between mid-November 2020 and January 2021.

The information from the desk research and interviews was complemented by results from a small-scale survey². An invitation to participate in the survey was sent out to 150 organisers and providers of ALE from all parts of the country, via the DVVI Country Office. The survey generated a response rate of 39%, meaning that 58 providers returned their answers to the survey. A wide range of types of organisation took part in the survey: primary and secondary schools, special centres for AE (public and private), chambers of commerce, HEIs, NGOs, private language schools, and private organisations providing specialised programmes (e.g. Hair Academy, IT Academy). The majority (64.9%) of the 58 AE organisers and providers were public institutions (e.g., primary and secondary VET schools, public AE institutions, chambers of commerce). The rest were NGOs and private institutions (16.2% each). Although invited, no organisations such as museums, health institutions or companies took part in the survey. Educational activity that exists in such

institutions tends to be non-formal or informal in nature, which might be the reason for them to consider their educational provision irrelevant for the survey in hand. Thus, even though the survey targeted a varied group of AE organisers and providers, the results obtained are more indicative with regard to formal AE, and to the position of primary and secondary schools as AE providers. All public institutions reported that they also offer regular programmes in basic or VET secondary education for children and young people in parallel to their programmes for adults. This indicates that adult education is an additional activity for those institutions which are primarily profiled as elementary or secondary schools.

In a third phase of the research process, data and information gathered by means of desk research and interviews was clustered and put into written text. Comments from the DIE, DVVI and the national experts guided the preparation of the final study document.

The study is structured as follows:

Chapter I is dedicated to the concept of ALE, outlining its use and interpretation in BiH, and its relation to UNESCO and EU terminology. Chapter II describes the country structure, providing information about the current socio-demographic, economic, political and education situation. The historic development of ALE, outlined in Chapter III, helps to contextualise the subsequent classification of ALE in BiH. The latter results from a comprehensive analysis of the present national macro- (legal framework, policies and financing), meso- (institutions, providers, professionalisation and programmes) and micro- (participation) level circumstances for ALE, reflected in Chapters IV-IX. International efforts (actors, projects and state commitments) regarding ALE in BiH are scrutinised in Chapter X. The results from all the preceding chapters help identify current challenges and potentials for the future in Chapter XI. The final Chapter XII summarises the assessments, and narrows them down to precise recommendations for the future development of ALE in BiH.

² More detailed information about the small-scale survey is available from the DVVI's Country Office in BiH on request.

I. Concept and terminology – understanding and perception of the ALE concept

International and EU definitions of ALE, lifelong learning and adult learners

Education is frequently associated with formal education only, that is education delivered by pre-school, primary, secondary, vocational, and higher education institutions to children, adolescents, and young adults. International human rights law has however repeatedly stressed that the main principle of education is universality, according to the right to education to everybody, regardless of age.³ The continuous aspect of education and learning, which is rooted in the principle of universality in education, is aggregated in the concept of “lifelong learning” (LLL). According to the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), one of the most important international actors in the field, lifelong learning is in essence “founded in the integration of learning and living covering learning activities for people of all ages (children, young people, adults and elderly, whether girls or boys, women or men), in all life-wide contexts (family, school, community, workplace and so on) and through a variety of modalities (formal, non-formal and informal) that together meet a wide range of learning needs and demands”.⁴ The following paragraphs outline the relationship between the concepts lifelong learning and ALE,

introduce major international actors and initiatives to enhance access to and provision of LLL and ALE opportunities, summarise the aims of ALE, explain different modalities and present the different learning contexts.

The relationship between lifelong learning and adult learning and education is established by the vision that, within the universe of lifelong learning, ALE covers all forms of education and learning that “aim to ensure that all adults participate in their societies and the world of work”.⁵ Thus, ALE is a core component of LLL, and, when viewed in relation to the period in life covered, presumably the most substantial and long-term form of education. Accordingly, and in compliance with LLL which may last indefinitely in a life span, ALE addresses a particular group of learners, namely adult learners.

³ Right to Education Initiative (2018). [Adult education and learning](#) website

⁴ UNESCO UIL (2014). [Literacy & Basic Skills as a Foundation for Lifelong Learning](#)

⁵ UNESCO UIL (2015). [Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education](#), p. 6

In general, an adult learner can be considered a “person who systematically attends some form of adult education, belongs to a chronological period following adolescence and voluntarily decides to be a part of the learning and teaching process. Adulthood is characterized by different types of maturity, from biological to emotional and psycho-social, to professional, cultural and political.”⁶ This implies that adult learners are an extremely heterogeneous group, which is less defined by chronological age than by learning needs and motives. Therefore, also the “entry age” when a person formally confers upon the status of an adult differs between countries and is not necessarily linked to the legal maturity age.

On a global level, the UNESCO UIL promotes LLL, and specifically ALE, with various programmes and projects. It has installed amongst others the “Global Observatory of Recognition, Validation and Accreditation of Non-formal and Informal Learning”⁷, and monitors recent developments in National Qualifications frameworks. International exchanges on advances in ALE are facilitated in **International Conferences on Adult Education (CONFINTEA)**⁸, and progress in ALE around the world is visualised in regular **Global Reports on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE)**. GRALE 3, for example, offers a comprehensive definition of adult education:

“ ALE encompasses all formal, non-formal and informal or incidental learning and continuing education (both general and vocational, and both theoretical and practical) undertaken by adults (however this term may be defined in any one country). ALE participants will typically have concluded their initial education and training and then returned to some form of learning. But there will be young people and adults in all countries who did not have the opportunity to enrol in or complete their schooling by the requisite age, and who participate in ALE programmes, including those aiming to equip them with literacy and basic skills or as a ‘second chance’ to obtain recognised certificates.”⁹ ”

The institutions of the European Union (EU) can be considered the most important drivers when it comes to addressing the supply of and access to ALE and the harmonisation of adult education provision on the European continent. EU policy on education is currently guided by the **Education and Training 2020 (ET 2020) Framework**, and is based on the lifelong learning approach, as defined in the **EU’S Council Resolution on Lifelong Learning**. Similar to the UNESCO

⁶ Mavrak (2018). Legal Socialization program – Adult Education Manual. PH international: Sarajevo.

⁷ UNESCO UIL (n.d.). [The Global Observatory of Recognition, Validation and Accreditation of Non-formal and Informal Learning](#)

⁸ UNESCO UIL (n.d.). [International Conferences on Adult Education \(CONFINTEA\)](#)

⁹ UNESCO UIL (2016b). [3rd Global Report on Adult Learning and Education](#), p. 29 and Schweighöfer, B. (2019). Youth and Adult Education in the Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals. Bonn: DVV International

definition provided above, lifelong learning according to the EU

“ Must cover learning from the pre-school age to that of post-retirement, including the entire spectrum of formal, non-formal and informal learning. Furthermore, lifelong learning must be understood as all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective¹⁰ ”

In its glossary on key terms used in European education and training policy the EU defines adult education as “general or vocational education provided for adults after initial education and training” and thereby stresses the difference between initial education and training and continuing or general education for adults¹¹.

In order to support adult education in particular the EU Council has adopted the **Resolution on a renewed European Agenda for Adult Learning**¹². The Resolution highlights the need to significantly increase adult participation in formal, non-formal and informal learning, be it in order to acquire work skills, for active citizenship, or for personal development and fulfilment. A further initiative by the Council was the adoption of a **Recommendation**

on Upskilling Pathways¹³, which aims to enable all adults to reach minimum levels of literacy, numeracy, and digital skills. The European Commission has established a working group on adult education consisting of experts, representatives of social partners, and civil society. Moreover, it has set up the **Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe (EPALE)**, “a European, multilingual, open membership community of adult learning professionals, including adult educators and trainers, guidance and support staff, researchers and academics, and policymakers”.

As indicated by the definitions and activities above, aims and objectives of ALE in the sphere of LLL are manifold and may target different levels of society. On the individual level, ALE aims to develop the capacities and capabilities of each individual to be a socially responsible, critical, self-reliant citizen, who is able to shape the developments taking place in both the personal and professional environment. At societal level, a community of aware, active adults helps create what is known as a “learning society”, where everyone has the opportunity to learn, engage and participate in society in order to achieve sustainable development and solidarity among people and communities. All in all, comprehensive ALE fosters sustainable, inclusive economic growth which in turn is indispensable for reducing poverty, improving health and the well-being of all, and protecting the environment¹⁴.

¹⁰ European Council (2002). [Council Resolution of 27 June 2002 on lifelong learning](#). Official Journal of the European Communities C 163/1

¹¹ CEDEFOP (2014). [Terminology of European education and training policy \(2nd edition\)](#)

¹² European Council (2011). [Council Resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning](#). Official Journal of the European Union C372/1

¹³ European Council (2016). [Council Recommendation of 19 December 2016 on Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults](#)

¹⁴ UNESCO UIL (2015)

The above aims and objectives can be achieved with various types of ALE:

- **compensatory learning and qualification for basic skills** (such as literacy and numeracy), targeting individuals who may not have acquired them in their earlier initial education or training,
- **continuous education, training and professional development**, targeting adults who are interested in acquiring, improving or updating knowledge, skills or competences in a specific field related to their work environment,
- **community, popular or liberal education** (also citizenship education), which provides general education and learning possibilities for adults in topics of particular interest to them for their personal development, to engage with social issues and lead a decent life.

While basic education is commonly associated with formal learning, adult education and learning refer to the entire range of formal education (FED), non-formal education (NFE) and informal education and learning (INF) activities. All forms of education are comprehensively defined in the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)¹⁵. A second document providing detailed definitions of learning activities is the “Classification of Learning Activities (CLA) Manual” issued by the European Statistics Office Eurostat¹⁶.

Formal education and training are delivered “institutionalised, intentional and planned through public organisations and recognised private bod-

ies and – in their totality – constitute the formal education system of a country”.¹⁷ The recognition of the programme by the relevant education authorities or other institutions cooperating with national or sub-national education authorities is decisive for a learning activity to be formal. FED is usually associated with the continuous pathway of initial full-time education until an individual first enters the labour market. However, it may also include part-time vocational education, education for people with special needs and other types of adult education, and thus education “for all age groups with programme content and qualifications that are equivalent to those of initial education”. In any case, formal programs must have a minimum duration of one semester of full-time studies (equivalent to 30 ECTS).

Non-formal education, similarly to formal education, is “education that is institutionalised, intentional and planned by an education provider.” However, the crucial characteristic of non-formal education is that it is an “addition, alternative and/or complement to formal education within the process of lifelong learning”. NFE programmes may lead to qualifications, but in general these are not recognised by education authorities as equivalent to formal qualifications. In some cases, formal qualifications may be obtained through specially-recognised NFE programmes. In contrast with formal education, NFE needs to follow a continuous pathway of education and learning, and therefore it is better able to address all age groups than are formal education programmes. NFE programs are often short-term in nature, with lower intensity offered in workshops, courses, seminars guided on-the-job training (organised by the employer with

¹⁵ UNESCO UIL (2012). [International Standard Classification of education ISCED 2011](#), pp. 11 et seq.

¹⁶ Eurostat (2016a). [Classification of learning activities \(CLA\) MANUAL 2016 edition](#)

¹⁷ UNESCO UIL (2012), pp. 11 et seq.

the aid of an instructor) and private lessons. This enables NFEs to cater for all three types of ALE mentioned above: compensatory education in the shape of literacy education for young people and adults, or formal education-substitution for out-of-school children, professional skills development and programmes on life skills and social, political or cultural development¹⁸.

Finally, **informal learning** covers all those “forms of learning that are intentional or deliberate but are not institutionalised”.¹⁹ Unlike education in formal and non-formal settings, informal learning is much less structured and organised. It may take place in daily-life contexts within the family, at the workplace, in the local community, through voluntary work, in the digital domain, in museums or in libraries. The learning content is self-selected to meet personal learning goals or to keep up with societal development; the pace of learning is usually self-directed.

***ALE as such,
as well as all forms
of education and learning
for adults, profit from recent
significant developments
in the information and
communications technology
sector, especially with
respect to access and
inclusion.***

With information and communication technology (ICT), formal and non-formal, face-to-face settings of education and learning are opened up, and individualised learning is enabled through the use of mobile devices, digital social networking and online courses, anytime, anywhere.

Against the background of EU and UNESCO definitions, this study follows a broad view on adult education, which considers all organised forms of adult learning after the initial education cycle (such as retraining, further or continuous VET), and all intentional forms of non-vocational, community, popular or liberal education, and learning aiming to enhance professional or personal development²⁰. The term adult learning and education (ALE) will be used below in order to express all the relevant dimensions of this sector.

Understanding and perception of the concept of ALE in BiH

As a potential candidate for EU membership, as a member of UNESCO, and as a signatory to other international agreements, Bosnia and Herzegovina has undertaken to harmonise policies and legislation in adult education in line with the internationally-agreed principles and goals. Accordingly, BiH has introduced three fundamental documents for the conceptualisation and definition of AE in Bosnia and Herzegovina:

1. Strategic Directions for the Development of Education in BiH with the 2008-2015 Implementation Plan (adopted by the BiH Coun-

¹⁸ UNESCO UIL (2012), pp. 11 et seq.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Deviating from the definition of ALE provided in the 3rd GRALE, which also comprises incidental learning in ALE, this report focuses on intentional education and learning activities only, as defined in ISCED and the CLA.

cil of Ministers in June 2008)²¹, hereinafter termed “Strategic Directions”

2. Principles and Standards in the Field of Adult Education in BiH (adopted by the Council of Ministers in 2014), hereinafter termed “Principles and Standards”
3. 2014-2020 Strategic Platform for the Development of Adult Education in the Context of Lifelong Learning in BiH (adopted by the Council of Ministers in 2014), hereinafter termed “Strategic Platform”

Within the Principles and Standards, the government stresses that it considers the development of adult education as a means for advancing towards a “learning society”. “The goal is to create a flexible, democratic educational system that will be open to and accessible by all, regardless of their age, and through which adults will be granted larger and more diverse opportunities for learning and acquiring knowledge for all areas of life and work”²².

With the strategic documents in place, the concept of LLL is recognised as the main orientation at all educational levels. LLL is defined in the Principles and Standards – and equally in territorial laws on adult education – as an activity aimed at improving knowledge, skills and competencies within a personal and civic as well as social perspective, and/or the perspective of employment. Learning is understood as a continuous process in which the results and motivation of individuals of a certain age are influenced by their level of knowledge, habits and learning experience from

when they were younger. Four interrelated goals of LLL are mentioned: personal satisfaction and development of the individual, active citizenship, social inclusion, and employability. The Principles and Standards list key competences of LLL which largely resemble the European Council’s Recommendations on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning²³.

The Principles and Standards as well as the Strategic Platform acknowledge that adult education is “an integral part of the education system in Bosnia and Herzegovina, [...] a domain of special public interest, and as such is granted high social priority”²⁴. With respect to terminology, instead of applying the term adult learning and education (as it is done in the international context), the strategic documents speak of “adult education in the context of lifelong learning”. In general, the term “adult education” captures the country’s ambitions in the area. A drawback of speaking about AE and not about ALE is that this terminology does not allow for a more nuanced affirmation of different contexts where ALE activities take place. To a certain extent, this reflects the dominance of formal adult education and the tendency to formalise adult learning activities. While the term education denotes intentional and institutionally-organised activities, learning is the process that occurs naturally in any possible context and on any occasion. Practice shows a need for both terms in legislation to better reflect the reality of ALE activities. For instance, legal documents dealing with the form or type of adult education

²¹ Council of Ministers of BiH (2008). [Strategic directions of education development in Bosnia and Herzegovina with implementation plan, 2008-2015](#)

²² Council of Ministers of BiH (2014). [Principles and standards in the field of adult education in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#). Službeni glasnik BiH, 39, pp. 119-120

²³ European Council (2018). [Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning](#). Official Journal of the European Union C 189/1

²⁴ Council of Ministers (2014), p. 119

also include informal and self-driven learning. Learning is widely considered a more appropriate term for those forms than education.

The Principles and Standards consider adult education as a phenomenon which is

- part of a more comprehensive education system,
- a system by and in itself, open and flexible in the paths of learning and advancement,
- an inter-sectoral activity,
- based on a broad social partnership and shared responsibility of all social stakeholders in the development of adult education, and
- based on adults' responsibility for their own development.²⁵

Adult learners are defined as persons older than 15 who have not completed primary education, or persons older than 18 who have completed education in regular or additional schools and subsequently aim to improve, specialise or enrich their knowledge, skills or competencies.

In general, AE in BiH is envisaged to be developed as a specific, flexible component of the overall education system, and should be accessible to all through various forms of education and learning (formal, non-formal, informal). All legislative frameworks in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH), the Republic of Srpska (RS) and Brčko District (BD) distinguish between formal and non-formal education, and informal and self-driven adult learning.

Accordingly, **formal AE** is directed by teachers or instructors, takes place in formal educational

institutions, and is based on a curriculum approved by the competent education authorities. Formal adult education programmes include those for acquiring primary and secondary education, as well as additional training and retraining programmes. Participants receive a publicly-recognised certificate upon completion of their educational processes or training.

Non-formal AE is defined as an organised process of learning and education, and aims to improve, specialise and supplement knowledge, skills and abilities according to special programmes conducted by education organisers (regular schools, training centres, companies, agencies). These programmes include but are not limited to programmes for acquiring or improving job-related key and additional competencies (including active employment measures for unemployed people), environmental and occupational safety programmes, health education and quality of life education, and educational programmes aimed at meeting the specific educational and cultural needs of particular social groups.

The key documents at state level (Strategic Platform and Principles and Standards) define **informal adult learning** as unplanned learning and knowledge acquisition through everyday activities. This is contrary to the conception of informal learning as an intentional and deliberate activity, as it is understood in the ISCED and CLA definitions. Terminological inconsistency signals the

need for alignment between the key documents related to AE in BiH, which should be addressed in later revisions.

²⁵ Mavrak (2018), p. 15

In line with international terminology, the key documents also define informal learning as **self-driven learning**, which refers to activities in which an adult organises her or his own learning process and is responsible for the contents, methods and outcomes, without the immediate and continuous help of others.

On paper, the perception of lifelong learning and adult education in BiH follows the broad definitions of the EU and UNESCO.

In practice, this study reveals that adult education in BiH is still largely concentrated on formal learning activities which relate to vocational education, retraining, recertification and the work environment. Policymaking on adult education at various levels in BiH concentrates on 1. education and training of adults who have not completed primary and secondary education (e.g., compensatory learning and qualifications for basic skills), and 2. adults whose education does not match labour market needs, as well as adults who wish to ad-

vance in their careers or improve their entrepreneurial skills (e.g. continuous education and training and professional development). Community, popular or liberal education as a distinct type of AE is less considered a strategic priority for public institutions, and rather left to non-governmental and private stakeholders.

As the following chapters will show, the historical roots for the focus on formal education and the labour market lie in the workers' and people's universities (*radnički i narodni univerziteti*), which were the key adult education providers in the period following World War II (WWII). Educational reforms during the 1970s led to the establishment of a system of regular vocational and technical education, and to the gradual degradation of workers' and people's universities. Some activities in workers' and people's universities, especially those related to primary adult education and obtaining a first qualification, were assigned to elementary and secondary schools, respectively (something which is explained in greater detail in Chapter VI).

II. Country profile

Bosnia and Herzegovina is geographically located on the Western Balkan peninsula, right next to Croatia (to the northwest), Serbia (to the northeast) and Montenegro (in the southeast). As BiH belongs to the Adriatic basin as well as to the Black Sea basin, it can be considered both a Danubian and a Mediterranean country. Of its total surface area of 51,209.2 km², 12.2 km² is coastal. Its inland territory is largely covered by forest ecosystems, which is why BiH ranks among the countries with the highest levels of biodiversity in Europe.

Socio-demographic structure

In terms of ethnicity, BiH is a rather heterogeneous country. According to the population census 2013, the Bosnian population is made up of Bosniaks (50.11%), Serbs (30.78%) and Croats (15.43%). Correspondingly, there are three official languages in BiH: Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian. While Bosnian and Croatian are written in Latin script, Serbian is written in Cyrillic. Similar to their linguistic diversity, the three ethnic groups live relatively separated from each other in geographic terms. Bosniaks mainly reside in FBiH, a part located towards the west and in the centre of the country. Here they make up 70.4% of the population. Serbs mainly live in RS, which covers territories in the north, east and southeast of the country. In RS, Serbs constitute 81.51% of the population. Ethnic backgrounds mix in BD BiH²⁶. With a total population number of 12,583 (which is about 0.36% of the total population), the Roma constitute the largest minority group in BiH, mainly living in FBiH.

Along with ethnicity and language, the population of BiH is also characterised by religious diversity. Almost half of the population practices

Islam (50.7%), 30.75% are associated with the Orthodox faith, and 15.19% are Catholic. Bosniaks mainly practice Islam, whereas Serbs are mainly Orthodox, and Croats are mainly Catholic. There are also small communities of Jews and Ashkenazi. Due to the religious diversity of the three main religions, the country's capital Sarajevo is widely acknowledged as the "Jerusalem of Europe". BiH is a secular state where the presence of religion in the public sphere is tolerated. Faith-based institutions and organisations such as Caritas are also active in providing adult education programmes.

According to the 2013 census data, BiH has an estimated population size of 3.53 million inhabitants (50.9% of whom are female). BiH has experienced a decrease in population numbers during the last 30 years (more people died than children were born). BiH's population number has shrunk by almost 20% compared to 1991. A further 20% decline is expected to occur by 2050 due to population ageing and the significant outward migration of predominantly young people. The average age of people living in BiH is 42.3, with 15.34% of the population being aged between 0 and 14, 70.39% between 15 and 64, and 14.22% 65 and older.

²⁶ Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2019a). [Census of Population, Households and Dwellings in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)

The Labour Force Survey 2019 indicates that 36.4% of the working age population (26.2% male and 46.2% female) have a low level of qualification (primary school and less), 54.1% (63.7% male and 44.7% female) have finished secondary school or attained a specialisation, and 9.6% (10.2% male and 9.1% female) have attained college, university or doctoral degrees. The level of education is slightly higher in FBiH and RS than it is in BDBiH, where the share of working-age people with only primary education and less reaches 47.4%²⁷. BiH particularly underperforms in an EU-wide comparison with respect to tertiary or equivalent education completion rates. Fewer than 25% of people aged 30-34 have completed tertiary education in BiH, compared with nearly 40% in the EU, and around 33% in Montenegro, Serbia and North Macedonia²⁸.

Literacy is no longer a problem among young members of society, as the literacy rate in 2013 was over 99% among those aged 15-24. At the same time, literacy remains a concern especially for women belonging to the Roma community, where only 68.9 women aged 15-24 are literate²⁹. A total of 90,374 people aged 15 and older were illiterate in BiH in 2013, which makes up 2.82% of the population³⁰.

The average population density per km² in BiH is 69.0³¹. Almost half of the population lives in urban

areas, with the most populated cities according to 2013 census data being Sarajevo (275,524 inhabitants), Banja Luka (185,042), Tuzla (110,979), Zenica (110,663), Bijeljina (107,715) and Mostar (105,977). All of them except for Bijeljina constitute administrative centres with the most highly developed educational infrastructure in the respective region. The BiH statistical office registered 28,523 cases of internal migration in 2019 (0.8% of the population), the majority being among the younger age groups (15-40 years of age).

BiH has a long history of emigration, which can be divided into labour migration during the 1960s and 1970s, forced migration due to the war between 1992 and 1995, and migration caused by poor living and unstable political conditions since 1995. Around 40% of Bosnian refugees (480,000 individuals) were repatriated in the three years following the war³². Average net migration was -11,820 persons per year between 1997 and 2017. Approximately 1.7 million people born in BiH currently live outside their home country, equalling more than 50% of the population³³. The main destination countries are Croatia, Serbia, Germany, Austria, the United States and Slovenia³⁴.

As this study shows, population migration has become a prominent motive for adults to enrol in educational programmes. Medical occupation

²⁷ Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2019c). [Labour Force Survey 2019](#).

²⁸ Eurostat (2020). [Enlargement countries – education statistics](#).

²⁹ Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees of BiH and Agency for Statistics of BiH (2013). [Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey \(MICS\) 2011–2012, Bosnia and Herzegovina: Roma Survey, Final Report](#). Sarajevo: UNICEF

³⁰ UNESCO UIL (2021). [Data for the Sustainable Development Goals – Bosnia and Herzegovina](#).

³¹ Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2020b). [Demography 2018](#).

³² Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees of BiH (2005). [Comparative Analysis of Access to Rights of Refugees and Displaced Persons](#)

³³ World Bank (2020). [Bosnia and Herzegovina Systematic Country Diagnostic Update](#). World Bank, Washington, DC

³⁴ International Organization for Migration (2016). [Diaspora and development of Bosnia and Herzegovina \(2016 – 2020\) Main Project Document Elements](#)

programmes in particular (nursing and long-term care) have become very popular recently. Parallel to that, certified foreign language courses (especially for German) are in high demand. This becomes particularly apparent in border regions (Una-Sana, Posavina or West Herzegovina Canton). There are cases in other parts of the country where private AE institutions act as intermediaries for migration of qualified individuals from BiH via partnerships with employers from an EU country (see Chapter VI).

BiH was home to 35,000 international migrants in 2019 according to United Nations estimations (equalling a share of 1.1% of the total population). Long-term migrants predominantly come from Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Slovakia and Northern Macedonia³⁵. The number of refugee and migrant arrivals in BiH increased significantly during 2019, as BiH is a transit country to reach the EU. Exact information on the current number of refugees in BiH is hard to obtain. As of August 2020, the UNHCR reported 10,075 asylum seekers, refugees and other mixed movement in BiH, and 186 new asylum applications³⁶. Despite the notable presence of refugees and migrants in BiH, it is not possible to find evidence of organised AE interventions directed towards this group of people. Some initiatives have been implemented with a view to including migrant children in schools in Bihać and other parts of Una-Sana Canton³⁷.

More than two-thirds of all households had a computer and Internet access towards the end

of 2020, an increase of 0.8% compared to 2019. When it comes to the share of computer users by age, the figures indicate a significant decrease in the number of computer users above the age of 55 (94.7% of those aged 16-24, 83.8% of those aged 25-54, and 38.6% of those aged 65-74). The same trend becomes evident for computer use by educational attainment (the share is 92.3% among persons with higher education, 73.1% among persons with secondary education, and 35.2% among persons with primary or lower secondary education).

According to the statistics provided by the state agency, the most common reasons for private Internet use today are online/video calls, text messaging, and participation in social networks. Companies are almost always equipped with computers and Internet access. 18% of the population did not have access to the Internet outside of their homes or places of work through for example a laptop, tablet, or smartphone³⁸. According to the network readiness index, Bosnia and Herzegovina is underachieving with respect to its per capita GDP income level³⁹. During the COVID-19 crisis, however, society witnessed accelerated digitalisation and an increase in access to Wi-Fi and ICT due to the demands of remote schooling. Some initiatives were supported and financed by the respective communities, and others by companies and ministries.

BiH ranked 75th (out of 188) in the Human Development Index (HDI) in 2019, with a score of

³⁵ United Nations (2019). [International Migrant Stock 2019: Country Profile Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)

³⁶ UNHCR (2020). [South Eastern Europe – Refugees, asylum-seekers and other mixed movements](#)

³⁷ UNICEF (2019). [Bosnian schools open doors for children of refugees and migrants with the help of UNICEF](#)

³⁸ Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2021). [Use of Information and Communication Technology in Bosnia and Herzegovina 2020](#)

³⁹ Portulans Institute (2020). [Network Readiness Index 2020 Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)

0.769. The Gini coefficient stood at 33 (the EU-27 average was 30 in 2019)⁴⁰. The income share held by the richest 10% is 25.1%, while the poorest 40% hold 20% of all income.

Economic characteristics

Bosnia and Herzegovina is considered a lower middle-income country, a small economy with a stable but rather low growth momentum. With stable annual growth of around 3% since 2015, total GDP reached EUR 17,000 million (at current prices) in 2019. FBiH contributed the largest share, at 66%. Per capita GDP (at current prices) equalled EUR 5,151 in 2019. National per capita GDP equates to around 30% of the EU-28 average.

The major share of GDP is generated in the services sector (65%), followed by industry and construction (27%), and agriculture (7%)⁴¹. Employment figures largely correspond to GDP shares, with 52% employed in the services sector, 32% in industry and construction, and 16% in agriculture⁴².

BiH has managed to maintain macroeconomic stability in recent years. It turned its general government deficit into a surplus of 1.6% of GDP in 2018, and decreased government spending to 41.7% of GDP⁴³. Nonetheless, a major economic challenge at present is the imbalance of the economic model: Public policies and incentives are skewed towards the public rather than to the private sector, towards consumption rather than

to investment, and towards imports rather than to exports⁴⁴.

General government debt stood at 40.8% in 2018. The current account remained in deficit at minus 3.1% of GDP. External public debt was around 24% of GDP in 2018, which is expected to settle at 26% by the end of 2025 after a sharp increase to up to 40% in 2020 due to the COVID-19 recession and an increase in health-related public expenditure⁴⁵. While direct foreign investment flowing into BiH is rather low, at 2.4% of GDP, the BiH economy profits from remittances from abroad amounting to 8% of GDP.

BiH has registered small increases in employment rates in recent years (from 33.9% in 2017 to 35.5% in 2019 among people 15-64 years of age). According to a World Bank report, this development however resulted from a significant decrease in the size of the working-age population, rather than from actual job creation⁴⁶. There is a significant gender gap in employment, as almost one man in two is employed, but only one woman in four.

The BiH labour market is still characterised by high inactivity and unemployment rates. At the same time, a significant share of people is considered to be working in the informal economy without registration. The unemployment rate was 15.7% in 2019 (reflecting a decrease compared

⁴⁰ The Gini coefficient measures income inequality in a society. A value of 0 means perfect equality (everyone has the same income), a value of 100 perfect inequality (all income is owned by one person).

⁴¹ Eurostat (2020c). [Enlargement countries – recent economic developments](#)

⁴² Eurostat (2020b). [Enlargement countries – labour market statistics](#)

⁴³ World Bank (2020), p. 8

⁴⁴ World Bank 'The World Bank in Bosnia and Herzegovina' website.

⁴⁵ International Monetary Fund (2020). [Bosnia and Herzegovina – request for purchase under the rapid financing instrument – press release. IMF Country Report No. 20/126](#)

⁴⁶ World Bank (2019b). [Western Balkans Labor Market Trends 2019](#)

with a rate of 18.4% in 2018). RS has the lowest unemployment rate within BiH, at 11.7%. Women (18.8%) are more often affected by unemployment than men (13.6%). Furthermore, unemployment is more prevalent among young people, where 33.8% of individuals between the ages of 15 and 24 are affected (affecting young women even more, at 37.9%), a rate which is twice as high as the EU average. With a share of 74.1%, people with secondary education make up the largest group of those who are unemployed (at a rate of 16.9%). The unemployment rate of women with secondary education is higher than the average, and equals 21.1%⁴⁷.

In practice, the fact that skilled and specialised persons represent the group with the highest unemployment signals that qualification after secondary school is often insufficient to match labour market needs. Besides requiring better education planning in order to increase enrolment rates in formal institutions, this opens space for AE to offer programmes that are relevant to the labour market. The field research revealed that, in some regions of the country, e.g., the Bosnian-Podrinje Canton Goražde (BPK Goražde), persons holding a university diploma face difficulty in finding a job because industry is looking instead for skilled or semi-skilled workers. The AE sector confronts that challenge, for example by designing programmes to educate adults in new technologies, such as digital skills, for a career in the software

industry, as is practiced by the NGO ALDI in Goražde (see Chapter VI).

24.3% of young people aged 15-24 were neither in employment nor in education and training (NEET) in 2017, a value that is similar to other countries in the region such as Albania, Kosovo and Northern Macedonia (the average NEETs rate in the EU is 14.5%)⁴⁸. The proportion of NEETs among the Roma minority is 93% of women and 81% of men⁴⁹. Such a high percentage of NEETs might seem surprising given the fact that no social assistance is provided for that group, unlike in some EU countries. However, the large share can be partially explained through the dominant co-protective family structure in BiH⁵⁰. In this model where the education system and the labour market are loosely linked and employment opportunities for young people are limited, reliance of the latter on family support is a factor even up to the age of 30. It is a core feature of this model that both parents and children continue to take care of one another psychologically and financially throughout their lifetimes.

According to the latest Household Budget Survey 2015, 16.9% of the BiH population lived below the national poverty line⁵¹. Poverty is more pronounced among the rural population (20.5%), and in households where the head is unable to work (38.5%). Children (18.7%) and the elderly (19.6%) are also at greater risk of being poor⁵².

⁴⁷ Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2019b)

⁴⁸ Eurostat (2019). [Key figures on enlargement countries 2019 edition](#)

⁴⁹ UNDP (2018). [Regional Roma Survey 2017: Country fact sheet Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)

⁵⁰ Isanović Hadžiomerović, A. (2021). The Role of Higher Education Experience in Students' Adult Identity Formation. Doctoral Dissertation, University of Kaiserslautern.

⁵¹ According to the Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2018b). [Quality Report for Statistical Surveys – Household Budget Survey for 2015](#), p. 8, the relative poverty threshold is set at 60% of median monthly household consumption expenditure.

⁵² Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2019). [Voluntary Review – Implementation of Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)

Political system and structure

Following the dissolution of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, BiH embarked the path to democracy, which was disrupted by four years of war and destruction. This violent period ended with the Dayton Peace Agreement in 1995. While this Agreement successfully put an end to the war, it also laid the foundations for persistent ethnic divisions and a highly-complex, fragmented, decentralised political system. The administrative structure comprises a weak state-level government, two sub-state entities (the highly-centralised RS, and the FBiH with a weak central government and strong cantons) with their municipalities, and Brčko District. Before the war in the early 1990s, Brčko was a municipality in BiH. It was recognised as independent entity after the war. With its special geographical position between FBiH and RS, Brčko District has its local autonomy. Although Brčko District is a part of BiH where both entities have certain rights, it has constitutional and institutional responsibilities just as the two entities. The Constitutions of all three parts of BiH have to be in line with the Constitution of BiH.

The stimulus for democratisation, economic reform and state building mainly came from the international community during the post-war years, as a UN High Representative held executive power, and a NATO mission established security in the country. When international intervention came to an end in 2006, powers were transferred to the domestic leaders. The fact that the Dayton Agreement had not been revised in the meantime posed a major obstacle when it came to establishing an interethnic consensus on a common

state identity and institutions. Both Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Croat leaders frequently tried to challenge national integrity, and pushed for territorial autonomy. Internal aversions have largely side-lined unification attempts by the European Union as part of the BiH integration process. To date, interests remain divided in that RS strives for autonomy, Croat representatives are calling for a third entity of their own, and Bosniaks expect greater centralisation and unity⁵³.

BiH is governed at state level by a parliamentary political system. Parliament (Skupština) is made of two chambers, the lower House of Representatives (Predstavnički dom), and the upper House of the People (Dom Naroda). Both chambers are elected for four years. The 42 members of the House of Representatives (28 from FBiH and 14 from RS, 26.19% female) are directly elected by proportional representation. The House of the People has 15 appointed members, 10 from FBiH and 5 from RS (with a current share of 20% of women)⁵⁴.

The most recent elections, held in 2018, brought about a highly-fragmented House of Representatives with 14 parties. The largest party in FBiH is the Party of Democratic Action (SDA); the largest party in RS is the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD). The current government comprises five parties: the SNSD (nationalist centre-left), the SDA (centre-right), the DF (Democratic Front, centre-left), the DNS (Democratic National Alliance, centre-right), and the Croatian Democratic Union of BiH (HDZ BiH, centre-right)⁵⁵.

Central executive government is represented by directly-elected tripartite Presidency where sit representatives of Bosniak, Serb and Croat peo-

⁵³ Nardelli et al. (2014). [Bosnia and Herzegovina: the world's most complicated system of government?](#) The Guardian

⁵⁴ Čaušević, J. (2020). [Politička participacija žena \(Women's Political Participation\)](#). Sarajevo: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.

⁵⁵ IPU Parline (2021). [Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)

ple, together with the President of the Council of Ministers who performs the prime minister's role, and who is nominated by the Presidency and approved by the House of Representatives.

Foreign policy, diplomatic and military affairs, security and defence policy, fiscal and monetary policy of state-level institutions are governed at central level, while healthcare, education, agriculture, culture, veteran issues, labour, police, and internal affairs are competencies of the entities. Both entities are governed by a Prime Minister and 16 ministries. Furthermore, FBiH has a directly-elected House of Representatives with 98 members, and is further sub-divided into 10 cantons which in turn have their own administration with governments enjoying substantial autonomy over local issues such as education and healthcare⁵⁶. The legislative authorities in RS are the National Assembly of RS, with 83 members, and the National Council, while the presidency consists of many municipalities (cities and its suburbs), but governance is centralised⁵⁷. Brčko District has its own Assembly, Executive Board, legal institutions and police forces.

BiH is a member of the United Nations, UNESCO, the WHO, OSCE, the ILO and the Council of Europe. BiH has been classified as a potential candidate for EU membership since 2003, and officially applied for membership in 2016. The European Commission has published its 14 key priorities (covering the areas of democracy/ functionality, the rule of law, fundamental rights and public administration reform) to be fulfilled in order to open accession negotiations. EU-BiH co-operation is located within the framework of the

European Neighbourhood Policy. A “Stabilisation and Association Agreement” (SAA) entered into force in 2015⁵⁸. BiH received EUR 1.19 billion in pre-accession funds between 2007-2020. Bosnians have enjoyed visa-free travel to the EU since 2010, and more than 12,169 students from BiH took part in academic and youth exchanges under ERASMUS+ between 2015 and 2020⁵⁹.

Education system

Despite the fact that education in BiH is mostly public, and is implemented rather uniformly across the country, the fragmented and divided political sphere results in an educational system that is characterised by low levels of efficiency and limited quality. In a country with only 422,645 students, 15 government bodies, spread across three levels of government, are in charge of administering education (see Chapter IV Governing structures below). Instead of a nationwide curriculum, there is “The Common Core Defined on Learning Outcomes in Bosnia and Herzegovina”, prepared by the Agency for Pre-school, Primary and Secondary Education (APOS), as mandated by the Council of Ministers of BiH⁶⁰.

Across the country, education is compulsory for at least 9 years for all children from age 6 to 14. One year of pre-school education is compulsory in 7 out of 10 cantons in FBiH, whereas it is only recommended in RS. Education is structured into pre-primary education for children aged 3-6 (at currently 359 institutions), primary for ages 6-15 (at 14,938 schools), secondary for young people aged between 15 and 19 (comprising general and

⁵⁶ Nardelli et al. (2014)

⁵⁷ The term “national” in the Republika Srpska relates to the people of RS, and has no meaning in the sense of a nation as the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

⁵⁸ European Commission (2021b). [European Neighbourhood Policy And Enlargement Negotiations – Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)

⁵⁹ European Commission (2021a). [Bosnia and Herzegovina on its European path](#)

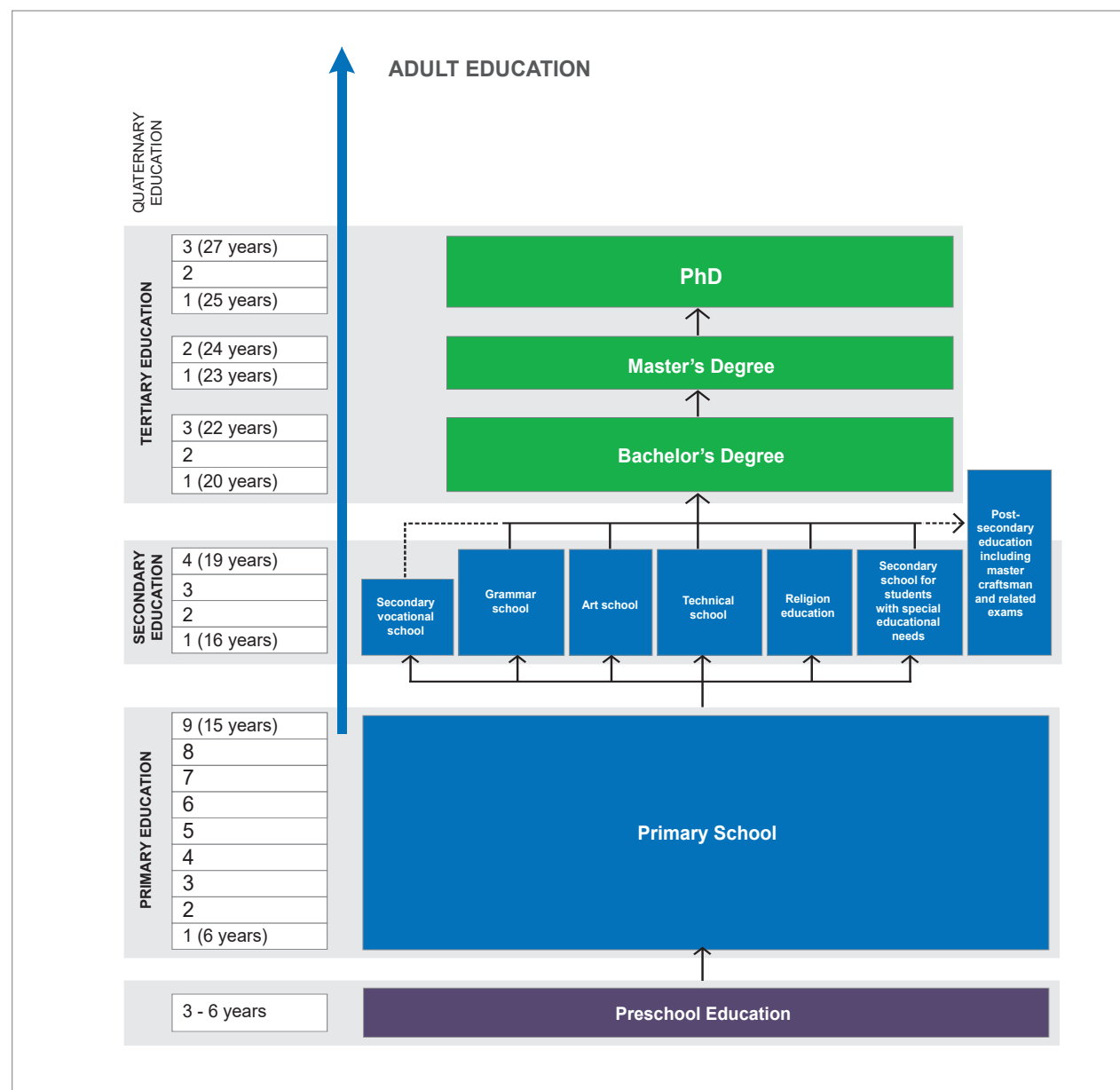
⁶⁰ This section draws heavily on: World Bank (2019a). [Bosnia and Herzegovina – Review of Efficiency of Services in Pre-University Education, Phase I: Stocktaking](#)

vocational education and training) and higher, and tertiary education for young people aged an average of 19-23 (see Graph 1). As is described in Chapters VI and VII, secondary schools are currently important actors in the AE sector in BiH.

Enrolment numbers for primary and secondary education are satisfactory, with shares of 90% and 77%, respectively. A major concern is pre-primary enrolment, which – despite high demand – is as

low as 15%, and thus is far below the EU average of 95%. This is mainly due to insufficient funding in urban areas and high unemployment, low disposable income, and the tendency to live within extended family households where members of the third generation take part in childrearing, especially in families with working parents. According to the latest available data from 2016, 4.9% of the BiH population aged 18-24 is identified as leaving edu-

Graph 1 The education system in Bosnia and Herzegovina



Source: [DVV International – Bosnia and Herzegovina Country Office](#)

cation early⁶¹. Reasons for this vary, from taking up an early job opportunity, through underachievement, to difficult living conditions. This particular group of school drop-outs could profit from a developed AE sector to improve their employability and chances for success.

The vast majority of BiH schools are public, and only a small share (less than 5%) is private. Private schools follow an international curriculum, in addition to the local one, and teaching is conducted entirely in a foreign language (most often English). Schooling in public primary and secondary schools is free of charge, while costs for private schooling can amount to up to EUR 3,000 per school year. BiH spends around 4% of total GDP on education⁶². According to information from the DVVI Country Office, spending amounts vary between the entities: While RS spends about 4% of GDP on education, this expenditure is about 6% in FBiH, and the budget of the Department of Education in BD (with sub-divisions for pre-school and primary, secondary education and joint affairs) is 11.2 % of the overall district budget⁶³. Total expenditure on education at state level is comparable to regional neighbours and to the EU-27 average (4.7%). Spending according to per capita GDP is also comparably high, although there are considerable disparities in spending per pupil between entities and cantons, and by level of education. 75% of education spending is invested in pre-university education. 90% of this is spent on teachers' wages. A further characteristic is that education funding is based on input indicators and allocated according to norms and standards, instead of being based on merit and having an output orientation.

BiH is steering the right course when it comes to creating equal education opportunities for all children in the country. Especially children from poor households whose parents cannot afford pre-school education or additional spending for learning material are nonetheless likely to be placed at a disadvantage⁶⁴. Children from poorer households are less likely to complete secondary education, and are more likely to drop out of school. Academic achievements largely depend on socio-economic status, personal ambitions and school criteria, such as the availability of computers⁶⁵. As a relic of the so-called "Two schools under one roof" policy in FBiH, it still happens that children are segregated within one school and taught distinct curricula based on their ethnicity⁶⁷. In the RS school system, the Bosnian language is called "Bosniak", an expression which does not comply with the Constitution of BiH. Children from the Roma population are the most vulnerable, with only 21% of young Roma aged 22-25 having completed secondary education (compared with 84% of the total population aged 22-25). Several local and international initiatives such as UNICEF and the Roma Education Fund (REF) are making continuous efforts to combat social inequality in primary education. Moreover, many adult education programmes are specifically designed to target vulnerable groups. There are ongoing initiatives by the Ministries of Education and NGOs such as REF that support the acquisition of primary education specifically among the adult Roma population.

Advances that have been made in wages, and accordingly gains in skills from every additional level of education, are also relatively high in BiH.

⁶¹ Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2016). [Demography and Social Statistics – Education](#)

⁶² Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2020a). [Demography and Social Statistics – Financial Education Statistics](#)

⁶³ Interview with DVVI representative

⁶⁴ UNESCO [World Inequality Database on Education – Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) website

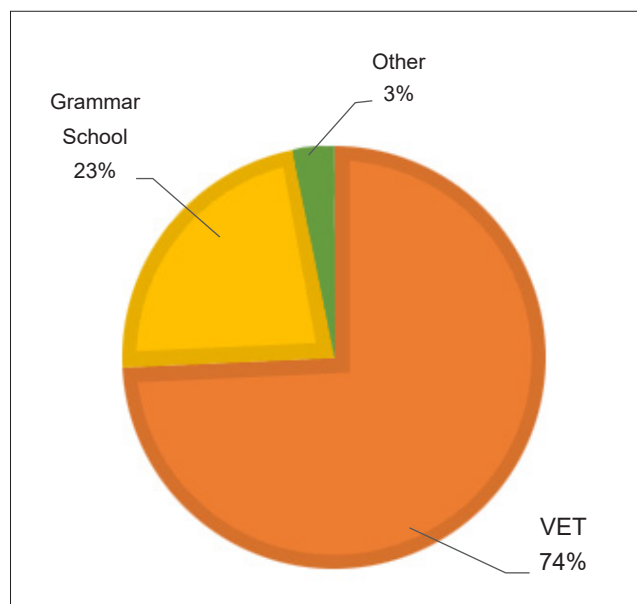
⁶⁵ European Commission (2020). [Bosnia and Herzegovina 2020 Report](#)

⁶⁶ European Commission (2019). [Analytical Report](#), p. 55

⁶⁷ UNESCO (2020). [Global Education Monitoring Report 2020: Inclusion and education: All means all](#). Paris, UNESCO

This is why the labour market demands a high level of skills from young people entering the labour market. In general, VET schools are considered to be more suitable providers of such skills than grammar schools or other schools. This becomes evident in student numbers at each education level. While 23% (26,731 in 2019) of all secondary school students attended grammar schools, a significant majority of 74% (86,986) were attending VET schools (see Graph 2). However, the skills provided in VET institutions do not necessarily meet the demand from the labour market. A GIZ study from 2018 found out that just 50% of VET graduates were working in their area of expertise⁶⁸. AE providers might become partners in future in order to address the gap that is caused by low job-related skills provision in the VET sector.

Graph 2 Distribution of students among types of school within secondary education



Source: Own presentation based on data from the Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2019b)

Note: "Other" includes art, religious schools and schools for children with special needs.

There are currently 67,031 students enrolled in higher education institutions (HEIs). This corresponds to a share of 30% of all young people aged between 19 and 23 (total 223,227). There are eight public universities, with the University of Sarajevo as the most famous, and about thirty private HEIs which have emerged during the past 15 years. Higher education is divided into three cycles: a first cycle of Bachelor's studies, continuing for 3 to 4 years, a second cycle of Master's studies for 1 to 2 years, and a third cycle of Doctoral studies lasting for at least three years. The first and the second cycles are integrated into a single study programme in medical disciplines, lasting five or six years. Some HEIs provide short-cycle or non-cyclical programmes in order to reach a wider public (see Chapter on Providers). More women are enrolled in higher education (56%) than men, and they also make up a larger share of graduates (58%). A majority of 75% of all HEI students attend public institutions^{69,70}.

Pursuant to the laws on higher education, it is possible to be enrolled as a regular (full-time), non-regular (part-time) or distance learning (DL) student, or in a scheme combining all three which varies across disciplines. Non-regular and DL study status is interesting for individuals who have a full-time or part-time job, or for those who have already started a family or who are not within the typical student age range (18-26). That said, not all disciplines offer modes of non-regular and DL study. The study programme in disciplines such as biomedical sciences, architecture, engineering, arts or psychology is organised on a full-time basis only. This implies mandatory attendance during teaching hours and full commitment to classroom-based instruction. Given their workload and mandatory attendance, those stu-

⁶⁸ GIZ (2018). [TVET Graduates in BiH – Tracer Study Report 2018](#)

⁶⁹ Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2019b). [Demography and Social Statistics – Education Statistics](#)

⁷⁰ Centre for Information and Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education, [Information on higher education in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) website

dents have limited opportunities for employment while studying. Part-time studies are organised in social science disciplines, humanities (except for the arts), and natural science disciplines. It is frequent practice for adults to enrol part-time in a university programme as a form of further education (after years of working in a specific field, they decide to pursue a university degree without quitting their job). The Information Technology (IT) study programme at the University of Sarajevo recently opened up the opportunity for students to work with companies as a part of their studies starting with the second year⁷¹. The first HEI that introduced DL was the School of Economics and Business, starting in 2006, while this form of learning has not yet been introduced in the humanities.

BiH adopted the Baseline Qualifications Framework (BQF) in March 2011. This comprises 8 levels and all types and levels of qualification. The Ministry of Civil Affairs (MoCA) is responsible for implementing the BQF in cooperation with all other relevant authorities at lower levels⁷². BiH has become the 38th country to join the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) Advisory Group, opening up the path to reference the National Qualifications Framework to the EQF, and providing

an impetus to intensify the implementation of recognition, validation and accreditation (RVA). In this sense, a need for further development of RVA in BiH should be understood as existing in the framework and context of the EU integration process⁷³. BiH signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the EU to participate in the Erasmus+ programme in June 2014.

BiH is currently a country in transition, politically, economically and societally, engaged in ongoing reform processes and trying to reconcile divisions which persisted after the war. The fact that skilled and specialised individuals represent the group with the highest unemployment rate indicates that education content does not match labour market needs. Moreover, the perception that education and learning ends on completion of formal education is still widely shared. As stated in Chapter VIII, only 9% of BiH's adult population participates in some form of FED or NFE. Raising awareness of the importance of adult education for economic, social and personal development, as well as easing access to AE programmes, will be important issues that need to be addressed in a more systematic way in order to truly progress towards a "learning society".

⁷¹ University in Sarajevo, [Faculty of Electrical Engineering](#) website

⁷² CEDEFOP (2019). [Bosnia and Herzegovina European inventory on NQF 2018](#)

⁷³ UNESCO UIL (2016a). [Bosnia and Herzegovina RVA country profile in education and training](#) and Werquin, P. (2013). [Overview of the Methods and Tools Used for Validation and Recognition of Non-formal and Informal Learning Outcomes in the South East Europe Region](#)

III. Historical development of ALE in BiH

Adult education is a phenomenon which is much older than the science that focuses on it. Centuries back, humanist theorists equated the longevity of human life with education, thereby placing an emphasis on lifelong learning.⁷⁴

The historical development of adult education in BiH was largely influenced by a general wave of andragogical development in the region. As an organised activity, adult education dates back to the second decade of the 20th century, when efforts were made to establish adult cultural or educational institutions, such as the Bosniak Cultural Society (Gajret), the Croatian Cultural Society (Napredak), the Serb Cultural Society (Prosvjeta), or the Workers' Society for Culture and Art (Proleter). Socialisation and education through seminars and public lectures provided there aimed to support health and quality of life. Learning by doing or travelling, combined with debates, linked in to the political socialisation of the population. The "Evening School for Crafts" was established in the period between 1902 and 1931.

The period leading to WWII was marked in Europe by the establishment of the Université Populaire in France and the Volkshochschule in Germany. French and German were elite languages in BiH at that time, so that the first andragogical manuscripts devoted to popular medical topics for health protection were translated into the local languages. A distance-learning school (Vidović's Correspondence School) opened in Sarajevo in

the 1920s as one of the first schools of this type in the region.⁷⁵

The modern-day development of adult education in BiH can be divided into four clearly-discernible periods, as they differ in terms of their main objectives, organisation models and key actors:

1. Era of construction of society (post-WWII until the 1970s)
2. Reform of secondary education and educational crisis (early 1970s to early 1990s and the collapse of the Socialist regime)
3. War and post-war reconstruction of the education system, political and social transition (1990-2000)
4. First attempts to systematise adult education in laws, legal acts and strategies (from 2000 until today)⁷⁶

Era of construction of society (post-WWII until 1970s)

In the context of the Yugoslav Socialist state, AE provision was controlled by the Government, which made sure that it served ideological goals. Educational needs were not a matter of subjective perceptions. Instead, they were defined by society as a whole, by workers' organisations, unions and other structures of the Socialist regime, thus enabling conservation of the ideological basis to which AE was committed.

In the second Socialist decade, however, AE was explicitly defined as "the necessary addition and

⁷⁴ Mavrak, M. (2018).

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Isanović Hadžiomerović, A. (2018). In Search of Identity: Adult Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina between socialist legacy and neo-liberal tendencies, *Andragoška spoznanja* 24(4), pp. 37-52

extension of the regular schooling system, with the aim of enabling a permanent expansion of workers' education and professional training"⁷⁷. The dominant adult education providers in the first period were people's universities, and gradually workers' universities started to take over. Institutions and associations dedicated to raising people's cultural awareness (press, publishing, radio, television, theatre, libraries, cinemas, houses of culture, people's and workers' universities, cultural-educational associations), seminars and evening schools, were important media for educating the masses. All educational activities were publicly funded.

With the educational reform in 1958, primary schools became entitled to provide primary adult education. The system of general, vocational and cultural adult education was elaborated more precisely. It is estimated that there were 57 workers' and people's universities throughout BiH between 1955 and 1990. Only six⁷⁸ of them are still operating today, under rather unfavourable financial circumstances⁷⁹. Presumably due to the proliferation of educational opportunities and the enthusiastic inclusion of the popular masses in various social and educational activities, this period is cherished by contemporaries of that period as the "golden age of andragogical work in Bosnia and Herzegovina"⁸⁰. Others criticise the period for its rigid ideologisation of AE and the fact that it served the goals imposed by the totalitarian regime. Fresh educational reforms were

launched during the early 1970s. They resulted in the creation of the system of regular vocational and technical education which led to the gradual dissolution of the workers' universities.

Reform of secondary education and educational crisis **(early 1970s until early 1990s)**

This was a period of massive educational reform which caused a major restructuring in the education system in order to better serve the new ideological goals. The essence of the new reform was to improve the link between schools and factories. The educational vision of Šuvar (the designer of the reform) encompassed permanent education in the sense of bringing the world of work into the educational process. In doing so, he clearly distanced the reform content from ideas of "Germans and Americans"⁸¹, for "we need our permanent education. This means that the world of work is permanently present in education."⁸² The ideal was to engage all working individuals in education throughout their careers, and to make education and training obligatory for all⁸³. Greater emphasis was placed on work-based training and learning. Companies and factories were recognised as legitimate providers and supporters of adult education, and companies participated in financing AE programmes for their employees.

However, instead of bringing the whole system closer to progressive global trends, the system

⁷⁷ Savez komunista Jugoslavije (1958). *Program Saveza komunista Jugoslavije*. Belgrade: Izdavački centar "Komunist", p. 222

⁷⁸ There were seven workers' universities in BiH until 2019. The Workers' University in Banja Luka, one of the longest-operating AE institutions in BiH changed its name to Centre for Adult Education at the end of 2019.

⁷⁹ Hošo, N. (2007). Cjeloživotno učenje kao pretpostavka uspješne tranzicije prema društvu i ekonomiji zasnovanim na znanju. *Obrazovanje odraslih*, VII(2), pp. 17-24

⁸⁰ Mavrak, M. (2004). Obrazovanje odraslih u BiH, *Obrazovanje odraslih*, IV(2), pp. 61-78

⁸¹ Šuvar, S. (1982). Vizija i stvarnost u socijalističkoj preobražaji obrazovanja. Osijek: Pedagoški fakultet, p. 119

⁸² Ibid, emphasis added

⁸³ Ibid, p. 47

has regressed several steps. Klipa notes that “during the 1970s, when the world in general started to adopt the idea of lifelong learning, the opposite happened in the territory of the former Yugoslavia – the reform of the education system downgraded the system of adult education, which is only starting to recover forty years later”⁸⁴. The reform did not ultimately succeed in its aim to solve the problem of unemployment and of the discrepancy between qualifications and the demands of the labour market. VET education also did not reach its desired status, as industry and the economy were unable to follow the changes in the education sector.

On the other hand, adult education gathered momentum in this period through the opening of three public universities and their corresponding faculties, in Sarajevo (est. 1949), Banja Luka (est. 1975), Mostar (est. 1977). This served to accomplish the initial prerequisites for the development of adult education as a university discipline. The first university course in andragogy was officially introduced in the 1970s at the Department of Pedagogy and Psychology of the Faculty of Philosophy⁸⁵ in Sarajevo.

The war and post-war reconstruction of the education system (1990-2000)

The collapse of Yugoslavia and the state’s struggle for independence were followed by four years of war, which resulted in severe destruction as well as in the politicisation and fragmentation of the education system⁸⁶.

Given the complex education administration and the large number of curricular issues in formal education, AE was not on policy-makers’ agenda for almost two post-war decades. Activities were nonetheless carried out here and there by NGOs and civil associations, employment institutes and some public institutions which organised education and training for their employees⁸⁷.

AE activities that were carried out during this period were most often not organised as adult education activities pure and simple, but more as charity or therapy work. They were mainly conveyed by international charity organisations, and predominantly related to foreign languages, IT courses, or art workshops. A certain number of activities were organised as therapy work, helping specific groups of people face war trauma.

That having been said, early steps towards new forms of AE also fall into this period, such as a closer focus on the education of women, humanistic education, or education for personal well-being. While the Socialist period focused on education to serve the goals of society, the post-Socialist period aspired to provide education for individual needs. It was also the time when a civil society sector was created, where many organisations emerged as AE providers. Their programmes were non-formal, without publicly-validated certificates. Those programmes were not meant to serve instrumental goals, but rather the purposes of personal growth, upskilling and socialisation.

⁸⁴ Klipa, M. (2011). Usporedni prikaz obrazovanja odraslih u zemljama na području bivše Jugoslavije. In Matijević, M. & Žiljak, T. (eds.), *Andragoška profesija i kompetencije stručnjaka u obrazovanju odraslih* (pp. 184-195). Zagreb: Agencija za strukovno obrazovanje i obrazovanje odraslih & Hrvatsko andragoško društvo, p. 185

⁸⁵ Mavrak (2004), p. 64

⁸⁶ Pašalić Kreso, A. (2008). The War and Post-War Impact on the Educational System of Bosnia and Herzegovina, *International Review of Education*, 54(3/4), pp. 353-374

⁸⁷ Mavrak (2004), pp. 68-69

Legal positioning of adult education *(from 2000 until today)*

Education reforms in the early 2000s went hand in hand with overall state reforms, all guided by the ultimate goal of bringing the country closer towards European integration. Events on the global scene (Lisbon Process, Memorandum on Lifelong Learning, CONFINTEA and UNESCO reports) provided a new impetus for rethinking the modes and modalities with which the Bosnian education system might catch up with advanced global and European trends. In this context, AE was promoted as a novelty and as a part of a general process of modernisation and Europeanisation. This certainly looked to be the case, with no material traces, vivid memories and cherished legacies from the previous eras.

International organisations such as DVVI, OSCE and GIZ initiated a number of adult education processes in BiH: establishing the Journal for Adult Education and Culture (2001), offering training in basic principles of AE, policy-making processes, as well as lobbying activities at all levels of the country's education administration⁸⁸.

A milestone was the international conference entitled "Lifelong Learning and Adult Education – Key Factors for Economic and Social Regeneration in South-eastern Europe" (SEE), which was held in Sarajevo in 2006, three years after the signing of the Declaration on Lifelong Learning in Skopje. Education ministers from the region, representatives from DVVI offices, partner organisations and experts, discussed the meaning of adult education for the peaceful development of the region and future steps. The conference conclusions strongly

highlighted the need to support two key aspects of AE in SEE countries – legal framework and institutional infrastructure, which was a prelude to further developments in AE legislation in the second decade of the 21st century. Commitments that emerged from the conference included:

- develop an LLL strategy with AE as an integral component,
- accelerate processes to design AE laws in the SEE region,
- increase the relevance of AE for societies⁸⁹.

Of all the political units in BiH, RS was the first to pass its Law on Adult Education in 2009. It established the Institute for Adult Education in Banja Luka, and revitalised the concept of workers' universities. The other administrative units passed their legal foundations for the development of AE between 2013 and 2019. All documents (such as the Strategic Platform) nominally accepted lifelong learning as their main frame of reference, and were devoted to the concepts of a learning society and a knowledge-based economy, which confidently promise better employability.

BiH can look back on a long history of adult education provision on its territory. The positive trend lost momentum with the war and the fact that AE was not on the policy-makers' agenda for almost two post-war decades. Establishing a legal framework was essential in order to place adult education on an equal footing with the other education sectors, at least on paper. Many important tasks, however, still lie ahead. They involve first and foremost the laws' practical interpretation and implementation, as well as funding.

⁸⁸ Among these activities were: the Andragogical School (initiated in the late 1990s as periodical seminars), Andragogical Regional Academy, Education of Experts in Educational Work with Adults, Systemic Education of Adults (organised by GIZ as a two-year course), ProfilPass, Subsequent Basic Adult Education and the EU-funded project Strengthening Adult Education Resources in Technical and Vocational Schools in BiH (STARS).

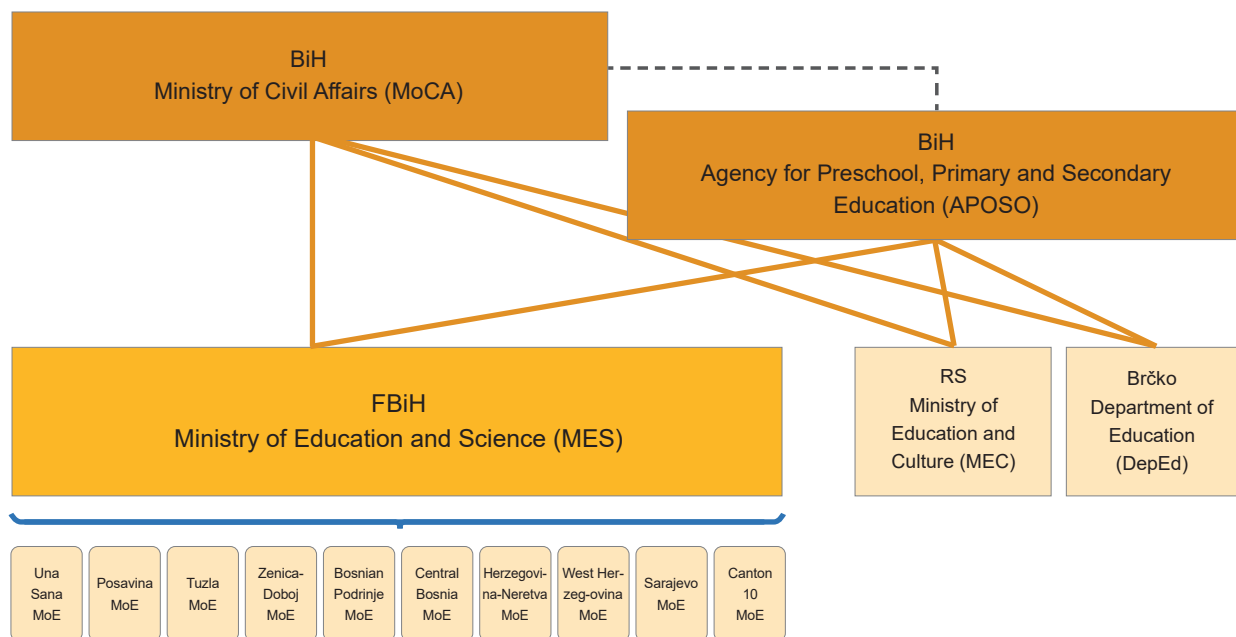
⁸⁹ Avdagić, E. (2006). *Zukünftige Schritte: Schlussfolgerungen und Empfehlungen der Konferenz*. In: Festival cjeloživotnog učenja u BiH 2006. Tuzla, Amica Educa, pp. 51-53

IV. Governing structures and legal framework

Governing structures

In line with its rather complex state structure, the governance structures for the education sector in BiH are similarly complicated. Representing a “polycentric model”⁹⁰ of governance, 15 government bodies, spread across three levels of governance, are in charge of administrating education (see Graph 3). All regional authorities have their own education budget.

Graph 3 The governance structure of education in Bosnia and Herzegovina



Source: World Bank (2019a), p. 14

At state level, education is administrated and co-ordinated by the **Ministry of Civil Affairs**, in the Sector for Education. Due to the entrenchment of education competencies at lower levels of government, its role is limited to formulating framework laws at state level, ensuring minimum common standards, representing education matters abroad, and following up on BiH’s participation in international agreements. In the Principles and Standards, the MoCA is tasked with organising

data collection (3.3.5.2 Databases). The MoCA has only recently created a separate focal point position within the Ministry which exclusively deals with AE, performing communication, coordination, data collection and reporting tasks⁹¹. The MoCA is entitled to monitor implementation of the Strategic Platform, and prepares information on the implementation of the Strategic Platform at the end of the calendar year⁹². The coordinating role of the MoCA is carried out through the **Council**

⁹⁰ Council of Ministers of BiH (2014b). [Strategic Platform for the development of adult education in the context of lifelong learning in Bosnia and Herzegovina, for the period 2014-2020](#). Službeni glasnik BiH, 96

⁹¹ Interview with political representative from BiH

⁹² At the time of the interview with the political representative, the report for 2020 was under review at the Council of Ministers.

of Ministers of Education in BiH. The Council is the highest permanent advisory body for education, but has to respect the legal integrity of the administrative units.

The Agency for Pre-school, Primary and Secondary Education is the main body in charge of standards and evaluation of education quality. In accordance with Article 10 of the Framework Law on Secondary Vocational Education and Training in BiH, APOSO monitors the standard and quality of education and training within secondary VET, including adult education and training. According to the Regulations on the Internal Division of APOSO, AE is the responsibility of the Department for vocational education and training, adult education and lifelong learning, and the Department of the VET Information System (VETIS) and adult education. APOSO hosts the BiH state support service of EPALE. The MoCA has delegated APOSO to implement and coordinate international projects, such as the EAAL (the European Agenda for Adult Learning), which has been carried out in three cycles in the period from 2014 to 2019.

The main decision-maker for and coordinator of education in FBiH is **the Ministry of Education and Science (MES)**. The education sector is governed through respective **Ministries of Education** at cantonal level. The MES is recommended but not obliged to coordinate cantonal policy with the MoCA. Each canton is autonomous and obliged to enact its own education policy in consensus with the entity level. Seven cantons (Una-Sana, Zenica-Doboj, BPK Goražde, Herzegovina-Neretva, Sarajevo, Tuzla and Canton 10) have their own **Pedagogical Institutes** which engage in improve-

ment and development of education, advisory-instructive work and performing professional-pedagogical supervision of the work of educational institutions in pre-school, primary and secondary education. They are also in charge of teachers' further professional training. Since there is no institute dealing specifically with AE in the administrative units of FBiH, the scope of work of some pedagogical institutes also includes adult education, and formal AE in particular. As stated by experts in the interviews⁹³, the Pedagogical Institute of Tuzla Canton is considered to be highly active in the AE sector, with a defined set of regulations, and about 30 accredited AE curricula⁹⁴.

“ The role of the Pedagogical Institute is improving the quality of the instruction process – at all levels. We act to support teachers in the sense of quality assurance in the teaching process. The Pedagogical Institute will be the point of reference for all curricula that are going to be designed from now on.”⁹⁵

Education in RS is governed centrally by the **Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC)**. Support with the implementation of adult education policies comes from **the Institute for Adult Education**. The Institute is responsible for performing professional and administrative tasks related to developing AE activities, supervising conditions and criteria for AE provision, monitoring the work of providers, proposing publicly-valid educational programmes for training, retraining, additional education for employed and unemployed persons, and organising and conducting teacher training.

⁹³ Interview with the director of the Pedagogical Institute from FBiH

⁹⁴ [Pedagogical Institute of Tuzla Canton](#) website

⁹⁵ Interview with the director of the Pedagogical Institute from FBiH

Education in Brčko District is centrally governed by the Department of Education. **The Pedagogical Institute** is responsible within the Department for performing professional and pedagogical supervision and improvement of educational activities, and for developing adult education programmes.

A link between the education sector and the labour market is established through the **Agency for Labour and Employment** of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Agency is responsible for initiating activities in employment services of the entities and BD to enhance cooperation between employers, unions, educational institutions and other associations, as well as to organise and implement career guidance programmes. Its work is matched by the **Employment Service of the Republika Srpska, the Employment Bureau of Brčko District of BiH, and the Federal Employment Agency of FBiH**.

In addition, public employment services established in all ten FBiH cantons are in charge of mediating between employers and the unemployed, and providing assistance to the unemployed through various education and training programmes. The field research showed that very strong local partnerships exist between educational institutions and public employment services in some cantons (e.g., BPK Goražde), also including the NGO sector.

The benefits of such partnerships lie in the joint analysis of educational needs and the possibility to design AE programmes accordingly, and in further mediating the employment of successful participants to local firms and companies.

Strategies and laws

The structural foundation of AE in a given political system requires at least two prerequisites:

1. Recognition of AE as an important, official part of the education system.
2. Existence of an appropriate legislative framework which regulates the practice of AE (strategies, laws, bylaws, a national qualification framework, adult education curricula).

No system can function without a set of rules, and working on legislation therefore became the first priority in the process of structuring AE in BiH over the last two decades. The legislative landscape as it is described below is the result of efforts at local and regional levels of AE carried out by individuals and institutions for at least fourteen years before the first legal document was adopted at state level. Today's legislative framework is the result of long-term negotiations and advocacy for AE, mainly supported by German partner organisations, primarily DVVI but also GIZ.

AE was mentioned in state-level legislation for the first time in the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education in BiH, adopted in 2003. Article 20 reads as follows:

“ The education of adults shall include professional training, supplementary training, re-training and other activities ensuring lifelong learning. Education of adults shall be governed in greater detail in the laws of entities, cantons and Brčko District of BiH, in line with the principles and standards defined in this Law.⁹⁶ ”

⁹⁶ Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2003). [Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)

More serious attention was paid to AE with the Strategic Directions adopted in 2008. The document defined the main directions for the development of AE until 2015. It defined short-, medium- and long-term objectives for adult education, which contained amongst other things the development of a framework law on adult education, definition of standards and procedures, the establishment of evaluation mechanisms, and a qualification framework, as well as a draft adult literacy strategy.

Real progress with regard to legislation was however not achieved first at state level, but at entity level. RS was the first entity to adopt a law specifically dedicated to adult education in 2009 (Adult Education Law).

“ Adopting the law marked a significant turning point compared with the time when there was no such document. Prior to that, adult education meant testing adults’ knowledge and skills in schools. Based on those tests, certificates were issued verifying completion of elementary or secondary school. The law nonetheless primarily addresses formal programmes, but an important aspect of this law is that it includes the wider circle of organisations and providers – institutions specialised in AE, private institutions, primary schools, and specialised institutions funded by the local municipalities (e.g. former Workers’ Institutes). This helped raise the importance of AE, given the fact

that more AE actors were included, and in turn widen opportunities and quality standards, as well as opening up other possibilities. Professional training programmes were also a novelty, and they were designed completely in accordance with the needs of the labour market, with a large share of practical lessons.⁹⁷ ”

The policy process on adult education achieved its first official results at BiH state level in 2014 (five years after the first law in RS). Two documents were adopted that year which are still of strategic importance for adult education today:

- the Principles and Standards⁹⁸,
- the Strategic Platform⁹⁹.

The Strategic Platform represents “the legal framework and foundation for action and cooperation of all competent bodies, institutions, organisations and individuals on all levels of administration in Bosnia and Herzegovina”. In order to ensure harmonisation of the laws on AE at the lower levels of education administration, all administrative units were obliged by an Act of the Council of Ministers to align their laws with the Strategic Platform¹⁰⁰. BiH does not yet have a framework law on AE at state level. The Principles and Standards as well as the Strategic Platform can nonetheless be regarded as major achievements, given that they represent the consensus of all BiH governing units.

The major function of the **Principles and Standards** is to underline BiH’s commitment to European and international principles on AE, and provide

⁹⁷ Interview with a political representative and an AE expert from RS

⁹⁸ Council of Ministers of BiH (2014a)

⁹⁹ Council of Ministers of BiH (2014b)

¹⁰⁰ Tubić, S. (2019). [Harmonizacija politikao obrazovanja odraslih u Bosni i Hercegovini](#). Sarajevo: DVV International

ideas on how to implement AE in the territory. It lists the AE goals to which BiH as a whole is willing to contribute, such as policy harmonisation, evaluation and monitoring, cross-sectoral dialogue, and sustainable financing. It defines key terms of AE (see Chapter I), as well as general and specific objectives for adult education work in the country, which include: achieving universal primary education and literacy among adults, enabling professional development, supporting education for active citizenship, and allowing for the recognition of prior learning.

Moreover, section 3.3 specifies adult education standards in considerable detail, comprising types and programmes of AE, recognising the importance of andragogical principles; participation and student status; the status of the organiser of adult education; conditions for performing activities, including qualifications of adult teachers; accreditation of organisers and programmes; validation of prior learning; educational documents; records, documentation and databases on adult education; adult education statistics and research; social dialogue, partnership and cooperation in adult education, including the development of legal frameworks for the systematic participation of NGOs in adult education; planning, financing and monitoring adult education policies.

In general, the Principles and Standards provide broad guidelines for the implementation of AE. They remain unspecific about *de facto* responsibilities, and require practical arrangements in the shape of laws and bylaws as well as institutional structures from the competent education authorities of the entities and cantons.

The **Strategic Platform** is intended to be a framework for educational authorities to develop adult education strategies at the entity and cantonal level. Unlike the Principles and Standards which deal with the question of how AE may be implemented, the Strategic Platform can be regarded as an evaluation report on the state of AE in BiH. The first sections give an overview of the existing legislation and of the political institutions involved. The largest section reports the results of a feasibility study and strategic planning analysis which form the basis for the formulation of goals and an operational plan at the end of the document. The paper acknowledges that “adult education in BiH is normatively positioned mainly within the formal school system, which significantly limits the availability of education, as well as the diversity of the education on offer for adults. [...] It is clear that adults in BiH represent a large but still insufficiently recognised and activated potential.”¹⁰¹ The Strategic Platform comes up with a matrix of four strategic objectives and corresponding activities:

1. Improve legislation for adult education in the context of lifelong learning and align it with the European Union's framework of reference.
2. Establish effective ways of involving the relevant social partners in the process of adult education in the context of lifelong learning.
3. Develop a programme and institutional possibilities, and improve access to adult education in the context of lifelong learning.
4. Raise the quality of adult education in the context of lifelong learning.

With information coming from the relevant ministries (RS, 10 cantons and BD), the MoCA is currently engaged in examining and evaluating the

¹⁰¹ Council of Ministers of BiH (2014b), p. 15

implementation of the Strategic Platform. After the Strategic Platform expired in 2020, it was decided to draft a new strategic document which is to guide AE ambitions in the coming years.

Either way, both strategic documents have served as blueprints for the conceptualisation of AE in the entities and cantons. They make the country eligible for specific funding from the EU or other relevant international actors, and make it possible

to track the country's progress on the path to EU membership with respect to LLL and AE matters¹⁰².

With the state-level strategic documents in place, entity and cantonal governments followed suit in adopting their own adult education laws (as shown in Table 1). All administrative units have their legislation in place today. This alone constitutes a “huge step forward” for the authorities in the AE sector in BiH, and a satisfactory achievement of strategic objective 1¹⁰³.

Table 1 Timeline and overview of the legal framework for AE in BiH¹⁰⁴

Year	Document	Level of government
2009	The Law on Adult Education of Republika Srpska (RS)	entity
2011	The Supplementary Law on Adult Education of RS	
2021	Strategy of AE in RS (2021-2031) ¹⁰⁵	
2014	Principles and Standards in Adult Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina	state
2014	Strategic Platform for the Development of Adult Education in the Context of Lifelong Learning in BiH 2014-2020	state
2014	The Draft of Principles in Adult Education Law in BiH Federation (only a draft version which was never adopted)	entity
2013	The Law on Adult Education of Una-Sana Canton	cantonal
2021	Revised Law on Adult Education of Una-Sana Canton	
2014	The Law on Adult Education of Zenica-Doboj Canton	cantonal
2015	The Law on Adult Education of BPK Goražde	cantonal
2019	Amendments to the Law on AE in BPK Goražde	
2015	The Law on Adult Education of West Herzegovina Canton	cantonal
2015	The Law on Adult Education of Tuzla Canton ¹⁰⁶	cantonal
2015	The Law on Adult Education of Sarajevo Canton	cantonal
2020	Amendments to the Law on Adult Education of Sarajevo Canton	
2016	The Law on Adult Education of K10 Canton	cantonal
2017	The Law on Adult Education of Central Bosnian Canton	cantonal
2018	The Law on Adult Education of Herzegovina-Neretva Canton	cantonal
2018	The Law on Adult Education of Brčko District	district
2019	The Law on Adult Education of Posavina Canton	cantonal

Source: Own presentation

¹⁰² Interview with a political representative from the MoCA

¹⁰³ Interview with a political representative from the MoCA

¹⁰⁴ This table gives an overview of laws and strategies adopted in BiH until June 2021. For a complete and up-to-date overview of laws and additional regulations, decisions and strategies at each level of government, please consult the website [Laws and Regulation in B&H of DVVI BiH](#).

¹⁰⁵ Sarajevo Canton (2015). [Law on Adult Education](#)

¹⁰⁶ This table gives an overview of laws and strategies adopted in BiH until June 2021. For a complete and up-to-date overview of laws and additional regulations, decisions and strategies at each level of government, please consult the website [Laws and Regulation in B&H](#) of DVVI BiH.

As noted above, the strategic documents at state level required the harmonisation of existing and future AE laws in the entities and cantons with the guidelines specified in the Principles and Standards. An analysis conducted in 2018 found that deviations from the Principles and Standards are generally small¹⁰⁷. It is however worth noting that many cantons have not passed any (or only a few) regulatory bylaws. This has a detrimental effect on the development of AE in BiH, as it creates unequal conditions and increases competition and immobility of learners between the cantons. It leads to diverging applications of the law in the cantons, and impedes the work of AE providers in practice. This requires high levels of energy and resources from organisations which maintain education centres in different cantons (see also Chapter VI).

Furthermore, the analysis found that “the promotion of adult primary education receives very little attention, and almost all administrative units

favour of persons belonging to national minorities, ethnic or other vulnerable groups¹⁰⁸. Room for improvement is noticed with regard to institutional responsibilities, qualification of adult teachers, monitoring and cooperation with the MoCA, and the involvement of the NGO sector. The fact that almost all laws stipulate cooperation with employers’ unions or Chambers of Commerce leads to the conclusion that adult education laws are orientated towards achieving continuous education and training and professional development, rather than towards citizenship education or education for personal well-being and health.

The system of adult education is still in an early establishment phase, and revisions of existing laws and bylaws are expected to be facilitated with increasing practical experience in implementing the legal provisions. A closer look has been taken at regulations in RS, for example. The box below summarises the lessons learned.¹⁰⁹

Revision of legal provisions – lessons learned in RS

- Primary AE programmes proved too rigid for persons without elementary education. Providers found it difficult to include and motivate adults. Many adults found organising daily life and going to school a challenge.
- The number of participants in primary adult education programmes is generally too small. There is a need for a more sophisticated system to verify prior knowledge and assign learners to adequate learning groups. A system of recognition of prior learning needs to be introduced.
- Primary adult education should be more decentralised in order to make it accessible for people from small towns or remote places. There should be more providers beyond primary schools.
- Employers and firms should be given greater flexibility to co-participate in programmes of VET education. The system needs to be able to respond to labour market needs more quickly, which would require a reduction in bureaucracy.
- Enhance the role and activity of examination centres in order to allow for certification irrespective of how the knowledge was acquired.
- In order to facilitate the process of approving adult education providers, standards need to be defined in terms of space, staff and material resources.
- It is expected that the Strategy of AE in RS 2021-2031 will bring necessary developments in the system of AEL.

¹⁰⁷ Tubić, S. (2019)

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Interview with a political representative and an AE expert from RS

Policies

Validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL)

A central prerequisite for the formation of a true learning society is the establishment of a system that allows individuals to document what they have learned outside the formal education system (which is commonly officially documented) in order to be able to use it to advance their careers, and for further education and training¹¹⁰. This must include documentation of learning acquired by non-formal and informal means.

Creating preconditions for recognition of prior learning RPL forms part of the Strategic Platform's first strategic objective, which is to improve legislation for AE in the context of LLL and align it with the EU reference framework. Thus, theoretically, legal documents provide for the recognition of competencies acquired through non-formal, informal, or self-directed learning. Little evidence can be found in BiH in practice on the validation of non-formal and informal learning. There are two main reasons for this¹¹¹. First, there are challenges at the level of the legal framework. BiH has a complicated vertical and horizontal structure of mandates and responsibilities. Even if one political entity succeeds in implementing a system to validate non-formal and informal learning, it may not necessarily lead to the recognition and awarding of credits and qualifications by another political entity¹¹². Second, because of the complexity of the political and administrative structure of the education sector, there may be a lack of trust in, or a lack of wide acceptance of, non-formal and

informal learning provided through NGOs and international organisations.

Representatives of VET schools advocate for the development of RPL procedures, which, in their opinion, would create space for more purposeful retraining or additional training programmes. On the other hand, the fear exists that the liberalisation of qualification and certification pathways without a proper quality assurance system could lead to irregularities. A prerequisite for implementing the objective is the accreditation of examination centres and the establishment of a sound quality assurance system. The field research revealed that both segments have been marginalised in the recent past, and are emphasised as top priorities for future AE development. Additionally, the ongoing EU Twinning Project, dealing with professional recognition procedures, disclosed a lack of knowledge in this field among relevant educational authorities and professionals¹¹³. Although the Twinning Project focuses on higher education, especially for migrants and refugees, it is also relevant to the AE sector, as it is the first project dedicated to improving legislation, enhancing competencies, and developing procedures for RPL in the Bosnian context.

The Council of Ministers of BiH adopted the Baseline of the Qualifications Framework in BiH in 2011¹¹⁴. The document is intended to help link the results of different learning activities (formal, non-formal, informal) through the evaluation of learning outcomes, and to establish a system for RPL. The Council of Ministers adopted an Action Plan in 2015 for the Development and Implementation of the Qualifications Framework in

¹¹⁰ CEDEFOP [Validation of non-formal and informal learning project](#) website

¹¹¹ UNESCO UIL (2016a)

¹¹² Werquin, P. (2013)

¹¹³ Centre for Information and Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education, [About twinning project](#) website

¹¹⁴ Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2010). [Baseline of the Qualifications Framework in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)

BiH¹¹⁵. The qualifications framework has however still only been partially implemented. Many qualifications are not based on commonly-defined learning outcomes, and many trainers, employers and learners are unaware of the framework. Further work needs to be done to fully align the framework with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). A system for the validation of non-formal learning is intended to be developed with EU support by 2022¹¹⁶.

Adult education and training in the BiH 2021-2023 Economic Reform Programme

As described in Chapter II, reducing unemployment and increasing activity rates are two major challenges for economic development. Improving coordination between education (including adult education) and the labour market can be one solution to these problems. The Economic Reform Programme 2021-2023 reacts to the gap by planning a “programme of training, professional development and education of adults, with a special focus on women, in order to facilitate integration into the labour market” for the years 2021 to 2023.

Employment strategies

There is no overarching employment strategy in BiH. Employment policies are developed, implemented and monitored by the respective Employment Agencies and Institutes in FBiH, RS and BD¹¹⁷. Active labour market measures (ALMMs) specifically target the most vulnerable groups (young people, women, the long-term unemployed, per-

sons with disabilities and minorities). ALMMs include counselling, financial incentives, occupational skills training, retraining, career orientation and stimulating self-employment. In cooperation with employers, the employment institutes also assist in the implementation of vocational guidance, training and retraining programmes for unemployed persons. As identified in the interviews, offering possibilities of retraining or additional qualification are the most common ALMMs for unemployed persons with an ISCED level of 2 or 3, while non-formal AE programmes are more directed towards unemployed persons with a tertiary qualification. AE laws stipulate that training programmes may be free of charge for registered unemployed persons if there is an economic interest, which is mostly related to the programmes organised or supported by the Employment Institutes.

To sum up, BiH has taken a big step forward with the basic legal framework for AE in place at state and entity levels. However, the AE laws have a tendency to be orientated towards achieving continuous education and training and professional development, rather than towards citizenship education or education for personal well-being and health. As the system of adult education is still in an early establishment phase, revisions of existing laws and bylaws are expected to be facilitated as practical experience in implementing the legal provisions increases. Special attention should be paid to allowing access to primary adult education for vulnerable groups, specifying institutional responsibilities, adult teacher qualification, monitoring and cooperation with the MoCA, and the involvement of the NGO sector.

¹¹⁵ Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2014). [Action Plan for the Development and Implementation of the Qualifications Framework in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2014-2020](#)

¹¹⁶ European Training Foundation (2020). [Bosnia and Herzegovina – Education, Training and Employment Developments 2020](#), p. 11

¹¹⁷ Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees of BiH (2019). [Annex 2: Answers by Bosnia and Herzegovina Authorities to additional questions of the 2016 Conclusions of the European Committee on Social Rights](#)

V. Financing

Primary and secondary education (including initial VET) in BiH is largely publicly funded, from entity, cantonal or municipal budgets, depending on the legal provisions and the levels of education. Given the state structure in BiH, there are thirteen separate budgets dedicated to education. Funding is divided along expense categories, such as staff salaries, professional development, transportation and school maintenance.

Compulsory education in public institutions is provided for free. Students and their parents are responsible for acquiring textbooks, manuals and insurance. Private education institutions cover their expenses by charging tuition fees¹¹⁸.

Higher education is funded partly from the budget of educational authorities, and partly from tuition fees. Tuition fees for full-time studies are low (around EUR 75 per year). Students in need, or those who perform well at secondary level or within university, may receive support in the shape of public grants. Others are self-financed and pay regular tuition fees, which vary from faculty to faculty and depending on the number of semesters reached. Higher education at private institutions is usually self-funded by the students.

Total spending on education amounted to 4% of GDP in 2018 (including public and private expenditure, as well as foreign funds), 95% of which was public expenditure. The largest share of funding was dedicated to primary education (50%),

followed by spending on secondary education (25%), higher education (19%) and pre-school education (4%)¹¹⁹. Public spending on education has gone down slightly in recent years. While it stood at 4.3% in 2016¹²⁰, the share of GDP spent on education was 4.88%¹²¹ in 2011. There is some variation between the entities regarding education spending. RS spends about 4% of GDP on education, and this expenditure is about 6% in FBiH, while the budget of the Department of Education in BD (with sub-divisions for pre-school and primary as well as secondary education and joint affairs) makes up 11.2% of the BD budget. The lion's share of the education budget (88%) is spent on teachers' salaries and employment costs. About 8% is spent on material costs, and only about 4% on capital investment.

According to one interviewee from civil society, a major problem for the development of the education sector in general is that the weak economy in BiH does not create sufficient returns for supplementary spending on education. Scarce resources are usually allocated ad hoc to the most urgent needs in the education sector (such as continuity of formal primary and secondary education, teachers' salaries and basic infrastructure maintenance). The general lack of strategic long-term spending works to the detriment of AE, which is not a priority for government spending. The goal should be to support all forms of education, and not one at the expense of another.¹²²

Official financial education statistics and reports on education spending (such as the Financial

¹¹⁸ European Commission, EACEA (2021). [Eurydice National Education Systems – Bosnia and Herzegovina Overview](#)

¹¹⁹ Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2020a). [Demography and Social Statistics – Financial Education Statistics](#)

¹²⁰ European Commission (2020)

¹²¹ UNDP (2013). [Progress towards the Realisation of Millennium Development Goals in Bosnia and Herzegovina 2013](#)

¹²² Interview with NGO representative

Education Statistics Report by the Agency for Statistics) do not currently provide an insight into the amounts spent on AE in BiH. There is no special code for AE expenditure, and it is difficult to discern from the budgets what amount is allocated to that purpose. Moreover, there are no public competitions for grants or funds for projects in AE issued by relevant ministries. Ascertaining the amount of money spent on AE by reviewing annual reports of relevant ministries is highly demanding, as data is often provided at aggregated level and, for example, does not allow conclusions to be drawn as to the beneficiaries' ages. In international terms, according to research results for GRALE IV, adult education and learning is allocated at least a small part of public funds. Countries spend an average of roughly 1% of their GDP on AE. 33% of the countries covered by the GRALE IV survey spend less than 1% of the public budget on ALE, and 19% spend more than 4%¹²³.

In contrast with the other types of education, AE is a shared responsibility involving municipalities, employers, employees, business and professional associations, associations, scientific and educational institutions and individuals¹²⁴. According to the Principles and Standards (Article 3.3.7.2), AE is to be financed from public revenues, employers, participants, the European Union and other donors. Actors involved in cross-sectoral partnerships and social dialogue are encouraged to take concrete actions and measures to improve existing legislation and develop adequate strategies for the sustainable funding of adult education, such as

- strengthening the accountability of the government sector for financing adult education,

- creating stimulating tax policies and incentive measures for employers and other entities to invest in adult education,
- ensuring greater financial freedom for public educational and non-formal education providers of adult education, in order to
- strengthen their market competitiveness and provide various forms and mechanisms of financial support to individuals involved in the adult education process.
- On paper, these provisions create a satisfactory framework for AE financing. However, there are no regulations and assistance which would put this framework into practice. Policies on the application of co-financing structures or funds for formal and non-formal adult education are still missing.

The Laws on Adult Education that have been adopted by the administrative units clarify roles played by public authorities in financing AE. The laws of several cantons (e.g. BPK Goražde, Sarajevo Canton, Zenica-Doboj Canton) state for example that compensatory adult education, for instance involving the acquisition of a primary education qualification for adults, should be free of charge, and that the cost of monitoring, improving, and developing adult education should also be met by public education budgets. Moreover, BPK Goražde, for example, commits itself to co-financing AE projects to a tune of 20% if the majority of funds comes from international development partners such as the EU.

The implementation of these provisions, however, is still ongoing, and due to the spread of responsibilities and competencies at different levels of policy implementation, there are certified primary

¹²³ UNESCO UIL (2019). [4th Global Report on Adult Learning and Education](#), p. 53

¹²⁴ European Commission, EACEA (2021). *Adult Education and Training Funding*

AE providers that do not receive public funding for their activities. This is the case at the workers' universities in RS, which do not receive support due to the fact that the MEC has delegated jurisdiction for the implementation of free primary adult education to the local municipalities. As the workers' institutes are under the authority of the municipalities, the MEC is no longer obliged to provide finance for primary AE. The municipalities in turn often have no means to finance primary AE from their budgets¹²⁵.

AE is not free of charge in all parts of the country, and is conditioned on the age of adult learners. This is the case with the still legally valid Law on AE in Canton 10, for instance. The Law on AE in Canton 10 restricts free attendance at primary education for adults to students aged 15 to 18. Primary education in all other administrative units, including BD, is free of charge, which is regulated by special articles in AE Laws.

Defacto public spending on adult education is further increased once expenditure executed in the area of employment and labour market is taken into consideration. Although labour market reintegration, further training, re-training, and qualification programmes offered by the employment offices to adults generally count as formal or non-formal adult education provision, they are not declared as such in official statistics. The provision for cantonal governments to meet the cost of training measures offered by the Employment Service is included in the local Laws on Adult Education mentioned above.

In FBiH, for example, employment mediation, and vocational programmes targeting students, unemployed people and employers, are co-financed by the Federal Employment Agency and cantonal employment services. The MES implemented a project in 2018 entitled "Support for training programmes, professional training and development of adults with a focus on women for the purpose of easier integration into the labour market". Moreover, job training, vocational information and counselling, upskilling and pre-qualification, as well as school fees for people with disabilities, were financed with the "Fund for professional rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities of the Federation of BiH"¹²⁶.

The most important item in financing adult education in RS provided for the implementation of the Employment Action Plan for 2019, which is approved by the Employment Bureau, through the "Training, additional training and retraining programme in 2019"¹²⁷.

Unpublished research by DVVI on public AE spending in selected cantons hints at the fact that public authorities (such as the Employment Service, Chambers of Commerce and Ministries) actually engage in financing adult education activities in their regions. They tend to invest in professional development, further training and qualification, as well as in monitoring improvement and development of AE, rather than in compensatory education for adults. Public programmes are funded by the Ministries of Education, Science and Youth, the Ministries of Economics, international donors (such as DVVI, EU or ILO), partic-

¹²⁵ DVVI (2020). Factsheet: Adult education in country Bosnia and Herzegovina

¹²⁶ International Labour Organization (2021). [Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 \(No. 142\), Direct Request \(CEACR\) – adopted 2019, published 109th ILC session \(2021\)](#)

¹²⁷ Klix.ba (2019). [Adult education is becoming strategic in BiH – a path to more employees and fewer illiterate people](#)

ipation fees, or own budgets. However, none of the cantons have budgets which are specifically allocated to AE. The authors conclude that monitoring of AE financing is insufficient in all administrative units. There is currently no guideline for monitoring financial allocations in AE.

Intersectoral cooperation and the implementation of a distinct budget line are key to the future development of adult education in BiH. One interviewee pointed out that what is needed is intersectoral cooperation between the Ministries of Labour and the Ministries of Education, which is currently non-existent¹²⁸. Thus, although employment offices invest millions per year in qualification measures targeting adults, these are not declared as funds for AE because of a lack of cooperation between the ministries. The absence of a separate funding line for AE and of cooperation between institutional actors currently hampers the development and recognition of AE. Many interviewees stressed that it is only once separate accounts with finances for AE have been installed those political efforts can be seriously recognised.

Many AE programmes in the formal education sector are implemented in the shape of projects which are financed by international donors such as ILO, European Commission or DVVI. Local implementing partners are VET schools or Pedagogical Institutes. Such cooperation is beneficial for learners, who usually participate free of charge, and for the schools themselves, as teachers acquire further qualifications, infrastructure is improved, and learning capacities are extended. There are instances where local civil society or-

ganisations (CSOs) act as mediators between schools and donors. Such partnerships provide training at schools, whereas the CSO applies for funding and assumes the project management and budgeting tasks, including paying the teachers and renting school facilities¹²⁹.

The lion's share of further or continuous FED and NFE programmes is financed by the learners themselves. Primary and secondary schools in BiH may decide to become providers of further adult education. Their advantage is that they already have teaching staff who are active in the regular process, and facilities for practical classes. In contrast to primary adult education, such training has to be paid for by the participants themselves. The Framework Law on Vocational Education and Training states that adults who participate in training provided by schools are charged for the training. "The fee amount is determined and adopted by the school board, with the approval of the competent ministry of education."¹³⁰

In practice, however, schools remain reluctant when it comes to implementing AE programmes. As suggested by information from school representatives from several cantons, reasons for not implementing AE programmes are of a financial nature. On the basis of existing cantonal legislation and very strict budget regulations, schools are obliged to hand over the additional income generated through AE programmes to the cantonal government. Moreover, additional work arising from the implementation of AE programmes is not remunerated via extra salaries, a factor that demotivates school managers and teachers.

¹²⁸ Interview with an NGO representative

¹²⁹ Interview with director of a Pedagogical Institute in FBiH

¹³⁰ European Commission, EACEA (2021). Adult Education and Training

“ The main reason is the information from the Ministry of Finance in Sarajevo Canton that all financial resources accumulated from those programmes would be treated as part of the public budget, and not as resources belonging to the school. This is currently regulated by the existing Regulations of the Ministry. As long as this regulation is in force, our school will not implement a single AE programme.”¹³¹ ”

“ The Ministry of Finance [of Sarajevo Canton] does not leave any option for schools to retain the finances from adult education programmes. Instead, according to the regulations on the allocation of income, almost the whole amount of money earned through any form of training or adult education programme goes to the budget of Sarajevo Canton. This makes teachers demotivated since they cannot make any additional earnings from teaching in adult education. This makes it difficult to recruit teachers for AE programmes, even though there is considerable interest among adults in the programmes offered by our school.”¹³² ”

“ Principals have no facility for organising the budget. For example, if you want to buy a computer, there is a strict procedure to go through. That is why many schools have no motivation to initiate anything besides the formal system. [...] We do not have a defined

pricelist of services for AE in our Canton. For instance, if I would like to enrol in a language or IT programme, I don't know how much it costs. We need a pricelist urgently. As soon as the schools have these pricelists, and they know how much they earn from AE, maybe their interest will be greater.”¹³³ ”

Greater freedom in budgeting and financial management of own resources would motivate the schools to develop their adult education programmes.

There is as yet no sustainable, long-term policy which includes non-formal providers in public funding schemes. NGOs can achieve some form of co-financing through international donors in some cases, in addition to collecting participation fees. There are usually two ways for NGOs to generate income and meet their expenses: 1. Sell adult education activities at market prices, based on a thorough analysis of the NGO's current expenses. The goal for non-profit NGOs is to offer activities at fair prices for learners to cover their own running costs without generating additional income. 2. Attracting and collecting funds from donors. Some interviewees however raised the concern that, with increased commercialisation through official accreditation, the practice of providing education which is completely free of charge tends to change towards raising at least small fees for participation. The greatest problems attach to the instability of funding and often selective interest in providing funding on the part of international donors (see Chapter X). Donors appear to be more likely to fund participation by

¹³¹ Interview with a representative from a VET school in FBiH

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Interview with the director of a Pedagogical Institute in FBiH

specific societal groups, such as women, children, people with disabilities, migrants and other vulnerable groups. While this might be a way of NGOs gaining support in order to offer adult education opportunities for people from certain groups free of charge (or at lower rates), they have to plan their finances strategically to keep offers for the general public alive.

As the interviews tell us, the practice of enabling education provision by NGOs free of charge tends to change as those organisations have their AE programmes accredited as well as becoming more commercialised.

Our interviewee from civil society criticised the fact that although non-formal education for adults might help solve economic and social problems even faster and more cheaply than formal education, the strategic advantage of non-formal AE continues to be neglected by the authorities¹³⁴. What prevails is a deeply-rooted opinion that financing non-formal education is up to the learners.

Private providers registered for AE, including formal programmes, are in a position of comparative advantage vis-à-vis public institutions and NGOs. They are motivated to compete on the market, and enjoy greater financial freedom. Learners and employers are more willing to expend funds on further training that relates to career development (see Chapter VIII). The initiatives of private providers are of great importance for the further development of the AE sector in BiH. Their programme initiatives detect and fill existing training

gaps, and are therefore well aligned with labour market demands (see Chapter VI)¹³⁵.

The above information is largely mirrored in the answers from the small-scale survey conducted for this study. In total, the 58 AE organisations which participated in the survey provided information on the finances of 231 programmes implemented over the past three years. As shown in Graph 4, most of the programmes are financed by learners themselves (68%), while only 6% are financed from the public budget via the Ministries of Education, the Employment Service or the local municipalities. Such programmes mostly cover formal elementary and secondary education in private or public VET schools. There are also short programmes, such as programmes for learning first aid and programmes on writing and implementing EU projects which are implemented by NGOs but financed from the public budget (via calls for projects in municipalities¹³⁶). Companies or firms finance AE programmes in 9% of the cases, and those are language programmes, IT skills or short seminars, such as writing project proposals. In some cases, firms and companies also finance secondary VET education in private schools (for example a private school in RS¹³⁷).

Reflecting impressions from the interviews, the survey results indicate that AE provided by NGOs is fully financed by donors, or in some cases combined with adult learners' contributions. Through larger projects, international funds also support public institutions (in 19% of the programmes). VET programmes are financed by learners in 73% of cases, while the rest is accounted for by Em-

¹³⁴ Interview with an NGO representative

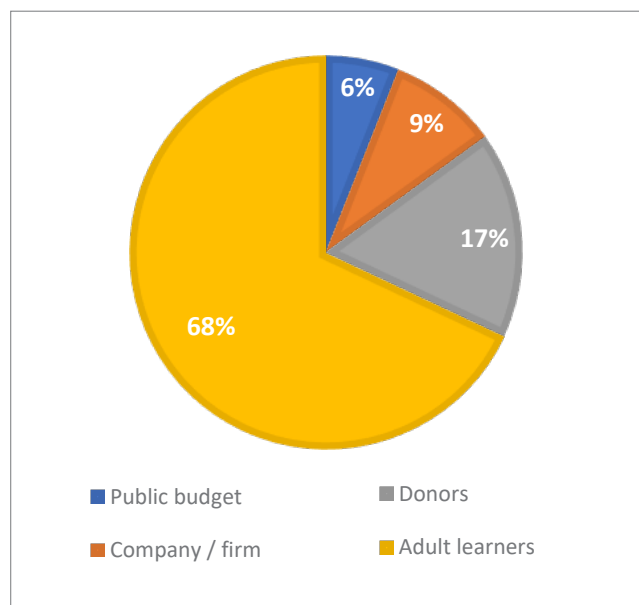
¹³⁵ Interview with a political representative from the MoCA

¹³⁶ Municipalities issue open calls for project proposals for NGOs every year, and some of those projects fall in the domain of AE, but the call itself is not exclusively intended for AE.

¹³⁷ Secondary vocational school for adult education "Business and technical school" Bijeljina

ployment Institutes, donations or firms. AE programmes in private institutions are financed by adult learners in 93% of the cases, while the rest is covered by donations and Employment Institutes.

Graph 4 Financial sources of AE programmes



Source: Own presentation based on data from the small-scale survey conducted as part of this study.

This chapter has shown that primary adult education and participation in active labour market programmes are free of charge in most administrative units in the country. Further professional development and education for personal well-being, however, must be largely financed by the learners themselves. Some AE programmes are financially supported by international donors or employers in some cases, which reduces the costs for learners. Public providers raising own revenues from offering additional adult education programmes face strict budget rules, and are therefore hampered in their development. A major challenge for the development of AE in BiH is the lack of a separate budget line for AE. Public spending on AE is either covered in the budget line for VET schools or spending on employment measures. Monitoring of AE financing is insufficient in all administrative units, which makes it difficult to relate financial input to the outcome and achievements, which in turn should be the prerequisite for future policy development.

VI. Institutions and providers

Historically, adult education in BiH is associated with the institutions of workers' universities and people's universities. Those institutions were the bearers of all AE activity during Socialist era, and included both vocational and liberal education programmes. Today, with the democratic system and the new model of educational administration, the relevance of those institutions has been transferred to different local organisations, and the number of workers' universities and people's universities has significantly decreased.

DVVI has been one of the major advocates of developing a comprehensive and sustainable AE system in BiH since 2000, and the only stakeholder focusing exclusively on the advancement of AE¹³⁹. With its work, DVVI seeks to make an impact on all levels of society, on policymaking, development of organisations and administration, and the participation of individuals. DVVI's engagement can be categorised into five focus areas.

1. Employment support: DVVI's projects are intended to promote a functioning and effective VET system which meets labour market demands. The tripartite involvement of formal VET schools, NGOs and adult education providers is intended to establish common standards in learning contents and certification.
2. Andragogical training: DVVI is the only provider of adult education train-the-trainer programmes in BiH. Teachers and other professionals are trained in didactics and methods of AE according to the Curriculum GlobALE (see Chapter IX).
3. Management: DVVI also provides capacity-building seminars for managers of adult education centres. An important component of the training is to encourage networking be-

tween participants, and hence between AE institutions in BiH.

4. Capacity-building: To harmonise the overall AE work in the country, DVVI regularly offers capacity-building workshops for staff from ministries, partner organisations and AE providers.
5. Legislation: DVVI offers consultancy for the evidence-based development and revision of AE legislation at all levels of BiH governance in order to ensure sustainable, high-quality AE provision across the country.

DVVI's systemic approach to AE policymaking and its supportive role vis-à-vis the MoCA and education ministries throughout the country was frequently emphasised in the interviews.

According to information provided by the DVVI Country Office, more than 150 organisations and institutions in BiH are currently accredited by the relevant ministries as AE providers. In order to become a recognised AE organiser and provider, an institution is required to undergo the process of registration and accreditation, which includes specific standards and norms for the educational work with adults defined by the Laws on AE and Standards and Norms in AE where applicable (for

¹³⁸ There are six workers' universities throughout the country (in Novi Grad, Derventa, Kotor Varoš, Lukavac, Šipovo and Tuzla, which bears the same name but is essentially an NGO). There are twelve people's universities (in Bosanska Gradiška, Kalinovik, Kiseljak, Kladanj, Knežev, Konjic, Rudo, Široki Brijeg, Srbac, Srebrenik, Vlasenica and Živinice.).

¹³⁹ [DVV International – Country Office BiH](#) website

instance on facilities, programmes and teacher qualifications)¹⁴⁰. Providers have the possibility to apply for accreditation for certain programmes only (for example, providers offer a total of 20 programmes, but only three are officially accredited). After successful completion, participants of accredited courses receive a certificate issued by the relevant Ministry of Education.

Even though accredited AE providers are commonly entered in official Registers, it is difficult to identify the exact number of AE institutions and organisations. Registers of AE organisers and providers exist in individual ministries, and include those organisations and institutions that meet the requirements defined by the Law. In most education administrative units, however, Registers only include primary and secondary schools, and no non-formal providers. Moreover, due to the fact that not all Laws on AE prescribe public access to the Register, only a small number of education administration units have made their Registers of AE providers publicly accessible via websites¹⁴¹.

Government representatives advocate strict regulations when it comes to including an organisation or institution in the Register, while the providers themselves report major obstacles and call for procedures to be rationalised, especially when it comes to legal provisions (see also Chapter VII). As the interviewees explain, admission to the Register is much easier for schools as they already have the necessary resources to meet the quality standards. In some cases, non-formal organisations and institutions had to establish a

new sisterorganisation specifically designed for AE provision in order to facilitate its inclusion in the Register (e.g. Education Centre of the Chamber of Commerce of RS, ALDI in Goražde).

Pursuant to the Laws on AE, AE providers can be **institutions of primary and secondary education**, as well as higher education institutions. Those providers are already equipped by the educational infrastructure, and are qualified teaching professionals who were additionally trained in the andragogical programme¹⁴². VET schools are legally obliged to organise retraining or compensatory programmes for adults in the vocations that they already offer in the regular school curriculum.

The results from the small-scale survey among AE organisations and institutions provide an insight into the practice and obstacles faced by AE providers. All public institutions reported that they also offer regular programmes in basic or VET secondary education for children and young people, parallel to their programmes for adults. This means that adult education is an additional activity for those institutions which are primarily profiled as elementary or secondary schools. The vast majority of public providers (91%) actually implement AE programmes, while it was reported in 9% of cases (all of them VET schools), that such programmes are inactive. Reasons for not implementing AE programmes are financial in nature (compare Chapter V). According to the survey results, the additional AE activities bring almost no direct financial benefit to schools

¹⁴⁰ Groups in primary and secondary AE are for instance smaller than regular classes.

¹⁴¹ The [Register of the Institute for Adult Education in RS](#) counts a total of 725 programmes with corresponding curricula. The [Register of the Ministry of Education of Sarajevo Canton](#) contains 27 registered providers (10 still need to be published), and the [Register of the Ministry of Education of Tuzla Canton](#) counts 44 providers and 26 publicly-recognised programmes.

¹⁴² Successful programmes implemented in cooperation with primary and secondary schools in BiH were Subsequent Acquisition of Primary Education for Adults and the EU project STARS (see footnote 87).

and teachers. The lack of financial benefit has led some schools to stop developing new programmes specially designed for adult learners or for meeting labour market needs. Some schools have however managed to secure funding for both adult learners and schools via partnerships with Employment Institutes or NGOs (as is the case at the VET school in Goražde).

AE programmes at **higher education institutions** can be roughly divided into those aimed at professional development of academic and administrative staff¹⁴³, and non-cyclical programmes offered to persons outside academia. Non-cyclical programmes lead to obtaining a licence or a publicly-recognised certificate for professional practice, and are highly valued on the labour market. Some faculties have established centres for lifelong learning and professional development¹⁴⁴.

There are many more centres for AE or LLL in various HEIs which are not yet registered as AE providers, but their certificates are valid and recognised on the labour market (for example, pedagogical training for teachers offered at the Faculty of Philosophy in Sarajevo). The Faculty of Political Sciences of the University of Sarajevo established its Lifelong Learning Centre in 2017 with support from DVVI. It was the first of its kind at a public uni-

versity, and constituted a significant step forward when it came to encouraging and strengthening andragogical work in the academic community.

By offering AE programmes, HEIs express their ambition to become real learning organisations and foster the idea of LLL. For the most part, however, the AE provision at HEIs still remains underutilised and inflexible. There is a need for more flexible organisational forms and programmes that can meet the needs of adult education, training and lifelong learning, especially for employees pursuing work-based or professional education. Although implemented in an institution of formal education, AE programmes at HEIs are regarded as non-formal programmes, since they do not lead to a higher formal qualification level, but to improvements in skills and competencies. Despite its nominal dedication to promoting LLL, the academic community is developing opportunities slowly in that regard. Private universities tend to be more proactive in opening non-academic programmes and learning centres for the wider public¹⁴⁵.

The emergence of **private AE schools** can recently be observed which operate either as VET schools or as specialised AE centres, and offer a variety of occupational programmes or profes-

¹⁴³ For example, the programme entitled [TRAIN \(Training & Research for Academic Newcomers\)](#), which was first developed at the University of Sarajevo and has been transferred to other public universities in the country, such as the University of East Sarajevo and the University of Mostar

¹⁴⁴ For instance, the Pedagogical Faculty in Sarajevo, the Faculty for Political Sciences in Sarajevo, the Faculty for Sport Education in Sarajevo, the Faculty for Mechanical Engineering in Banja Luka, the International University of Sarajevo – Lifelong Learning Centre (IUS Life).

¹⁴⁵ Public universities have to undergo a difficult academic procedure if they wish to establish extra-curricular AE programmes. Procedures for private universities are more rational and pragmatic. As extracurricular education offers allow the private HEIs to strengthen their position and ensure additional finances, private universities turn to continuing education provision for the wider public much more often. Prominent examples are the [Lifelong Learning Centre at the International University of Sarajevo](#), or the [Continuing Education Centre at the International Burch University](#). Greater flexibility at private HEIs is also reflected in their educational offer, which goes beyond academic or professional competencies and includes courses in personal well-being, art or self-help.

sional development training. Private institutions, registered for AE, including formal programmes, are considered to be in a more advantageous position compared to public institutions¹⁴⁶. The benefit of public institutions is that teaching staff are already teaching in the regular process, and that facilities for practical classes exist. Their problems, however, consist of dependence on the public budget and restrictions on revenue spending (as explained in Chapter V). Private institutions, on the other hand, are motivated to compete on the market, and are more interested in exploration and innovation. They enjoy greater freedom with regard to establishing partnerships with the labour market (e.g., Adult Education Centre in Gračanica), and are better connected with stakeholders from economy and industry. Private institutions can play an important role in labour market analysis, and in proposing much-needed, novel programmes. There have been a number of very good programme initiatives which were purposefully aligned with labour market demands. Some private providers are even active in the domain of formulating legislation and normative acts. At this stage, resourceful private institutions are seen as important drivers for advancing the AE sector¹⁴⁷. At the same time, information from the interviews suggests that there is a need for a common system of quality assurance to facilitate monitoring, also of the work of private providers. There have been cases of private schools which were not able to make sure that quality standards were implemented, and they have been closed down¹⁴⁸.

Further important providers of AE across BiH are the public **Employment Services**. The offer by the employment services primarily targets unemployed persons and job-seekers. The services organise training in active job search, self-employment, or even retraining programmes in co-operation with VET schools.

Public agencies and companies are also recognised by the laws as possible AE providers. One example is the Public Service Agency¹⁴⁹, which organises professional development training on a regular basis for civil servants and has a remarkable base of external professionals delivering a variety of programmes. According to the legislation, Chambers of Commerce, employers, entrepreneurs and craftsmen and their associations, trade unions, as well as foundations, can also be providers of AE. Moreover, as stated by the experts in the interviews, Chambers of Commerce often operate their own learning or education centres as separate departments which are entitled to provide educational activities both for professionals in the economy and commerce, and for the wider public¹⁵⁰.

Besides institutions in the formal education system, various providers are active in the provision of non-formal AE.

One group of non-formal AE providers are centres for foreign language learning, ICT, training and human resource development. While providers of foreign languages, ICT or driving

¹⁴⁶ Interview with a political representative and an AE expert from RS

¹⁴⁷ Interview with a representative from a VET school in FBiH

¹⁴⁸ Interview with a political representative from FBiH

¹⁴⁹ [Public Service Agency](#) website

¹⁵⁰ See for instance the [Education Programme](#) at the Centre for Education and IT Affairs of the Chamber of Commerce of Sarajevo Canton

schools have been prominent in AE over the past decades, special training centres for human resource development have emerged only recently, with a rising awareness of the need for a highly-skilled, motivated work force. These centres operate either individually, or as a part of a company or firm. In order to be accredited as AE organisers and providers, they are required to implement standards defined by the legal acts. A highly novel initiative is the InLearnCentre opened in February 2021, which promotes “non-formal education through support for companies, training centres and public institutions as a meaningful way for skills development to converge labour market conditions and increase the economy’s competitiveness.”¹⁵¹

which are primarily related to personal development and well-being, active citizenship and creativity.

The **Centre for Education & Research**

“**Nahla**”¹⁵⁴ is a good example of this group of providers. Nahla engages in the social and economic empowerment of women through education and the provision of other services for personal development. Education and learning opportunities provided by Nahla are available to all women regardless of age, language, religion and social class. At Nahla, women can make use of educational programmes, counselling and business support, as well as sport and recreational activities.

A prominent example of a successful organisation engaged in human resource development is the **Association for Local Development Initiatives – ALDI**. The Association has been engaging for more than 20 years to advance citizens’ living standards through capacity-building and policy development. ALDI has been focussing since 2008 on the development of individual knowledge and skills, and as digitalisation has progressed, the focus has narrowed down to preparing citizens and organisations to work with and profit from developments in digital technologies. In the context of the EU-funded project entitled “Provision and improvement of the quality of adult education in the context of lifelong learning”, in cooperation with a secondary VET school in Goražde, ALDI has developed an institutional partnership between employers, employment services, schools and the public sector of the BPK Goražde. Through active involvement of companies in VET for unemployed persons, the cooperation, which has become known as the “Goražde model”, has contributed to a significant reduction in unemployment and in education and labour imbalances in the canton.

Cultural and educational centres, religious institutions and NGOs represent a growing group of AE providers offering a wide array of different programmes

A recent phenomenon is the establishment of “Centres for Healthy Ageing”, which operate as providers of educational and recreational pro-

¹⁵¹ [InLearnCenter](#) website

¹⁵² ALDI Stories [“The Goražde model: Developing the skills of the workforce to reduce unemployment”](#) website

¹⁵³ [ALDI](#) website

¹⁵⁴ [Nahla](#) website

grammes for older people or senior citizens¹⁵⁵. In addition, the existing legislation permits any kind of institution to act as an AE provider if they organise short- or long-term educational activities, but this potential is not yet fully utilised by various institutions (including art schools, museums or theatres).

Data obtained from the survey and expert interviews revealed six levels of AE partnership between different types of organisations and institutions:

1. Preparation of education and training content (government institutions; Ministry of Education, Ministry of Industry, municipality, Pedagogical Institute, Centre for Social Work, Chamber of Commerce, secondary schools, companies, NGOs)
2. Alignment of AE curricula with andragogical principles (DVVI, ALDI, Institute for Adult Education in RS, Ministry of Education, Chamber of Commerce – Department for Education, Teaching Faculty)
3. Accreditation of AE curricula (Ministry of Education, DVVI, Institute for Adult Education in RS)
4. Train-the-trainer programmes (DVVI, Pedagogical Institute, Ministry of Education, ALDI, SERDA, UNDP, RYCO, Chamber of Commerce, U.S. Department of State Professional Fellows Program, Institute for Adult Education, APOSO)

5. Implementation of education and training (NGOs, governmental organisations, health-care institutions, catering institutions [hotels and restaurants], Ministries)
6. Employment of trained persons (AE providers, Employment Institutes, local firms and companies, international institutes, and companies through the signed contract with AE providers in BiH)

To date, provision of AE is still largely related to the formal education sector. AE provision at public and private secondary VET schools, or through Employment Services, has received increased attention, and has made progress over the last decade. At the same time, and owing to persistent advocacy work by DVVI, the sector of non-formal education provision has also experienced positive momentum; providers exchange and network in various settings, and the offer for interested adults has become generally more diverse. Nonetheless, the full potential is not yet fully utilised by various institutions, especially for example art schools, museums or theatres. Furthermore, as described in the following chapter, the legal framework and regulations still pose a major hurdle for many smaller AE providers in terms of officially registering their programmes.

¹⁵⁵ [Healthy Ageing Centres](#) website

VII. Programmes

Until AE became legally defined during the past decade, it had always existed in various forms of learning activity and education programmes offered in various places. With the legal framework that is now in place, many ALE activities are however still invisible and almost impossible to present in a systematic way. Experts stress that one of the reasons for this is that laws on AE mainly regulate programmes of formal education – compensatory or vocational. Non-formal programmes addressing learning needs in the domains of personal well-being, family life, professional knowledge, or active citizenship, are scattered among different types of organisations and institutions, and are very often not recognised by the AE system. Moreover, the current legal framework poses specific formal prerequisites¹⁵⁶ for adding an organisation or a programme to the Register, requirements which can be met much more easily by formal education institutions. On the other hand, some institutions and organisations do not feel the need to be included in the Register although they provide educational programmes¹⁵⁷. Many AE organisations offering non-formal programmes still do not perceive any direct benefits of institutional or programme accreditation¹⁵⁸. They rather try to avoid the complicated process, which is demanding even for organisations with a strong infrastructure and high-quality standards¹⁵⁹.

The process of including AE organisers in the Register in Sarajevo Canton, for example, can take up to one year, and includes a great number of formalities. After registering the provider, every single programme that the provider wants to have publicly recognised needs to be accredited, which takes additional time and resources. Such complexities in the procedures result from shortcomings in the legal framework, which should be revised with future amendments. Specifically, as stressed by an expert from the NGO sector, the laws should be more stimulative and flexible so as to enable the emergence of more programmes and providers.

“ Suppose an organisation develops a programme, and the Ministry of Education recognises its relevance to society and individuals. In that case, the fee and the procedure should not be so high and complicated. We have excellent cooperation with DVVI, which has supported us through our registration with the Ministry of Education via its projects. DVVI has given us expert support in the process of registering, and also financial support. Small providers may give up in the beginning because of the complicated procedure, the high fees, and the required activity code, which needs to say “Education”. It was complicated even for us, and we have many years of experience in the field, so we had to establish a new institution.¹⁶⁰ ”

¹⁵⁶ This applies to specific requirements in terms of the lesson hours in a programme, the ratio of theoretical and practical classes, trainers' andragogical competencies, and standards for training rooms.

¹⁵⁷ For instance, Health Centres across the country which offer pregnancy healthcare on a regular basis, or certain local organisations which provide programmes in agriculture or nutrition. Data on such activities is not available in a systematic manner, but it is an important reflection of existing learning needs and ALE provision.

¹⁵⁸ Registered AE providers were able to benefit from state support during the COVID-19 pandemic. Sarajevo Canton initiated financing of 20% of salaries for the month of March 2020 to registered AE organisations which were forced to close due to the lockdown.

¹⁵⁹ Interview with an NGO representative

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

Although establishing a database of AE institutions and centres, including their programmes, is among the main goals defined by the Strategic Platform for the Development of Adult Education in the Context of Lifelong Learning in Bosnia and Herzegovina (2014-2020), local authorities have made little progress in that regard. DVVI therefore initiated the development of an “Information system for monitoring and quality assurance in AE” called ISKOOM¹⁶¹ in 2019, which aims to systematically register all data on AE providers and programmes. The system is expected to be launched in 2021. DVVI has financed the process of software design, launch, coordination between the ministries, and provision of training on system operation and maintenance. The system represents a significant breakthrough in AE quality assurance. It has now been approved, and will be piloted in BD, BPK Goražde, Sarajevo Canton and Una-Sana Canton. Other administrative units will be invited to join the initiative in the future. An important pre-requisite for adopting the system in a specific administrative unit is adjusting AE bylaws so that they make subscription to and regular updates of the information system obligatory for AE organisers. The release of the obuke.ba online platform constituted an earlier attempt to introduce a public information system of non-formal programmes. The portal was developed in cooperation between GIZ, USAID and the three employment agencies in the country. Its maintenance was entrusted to the Agency for Labour and Employment of BiH. Although the portal still exists, it is noticeable that it has not been updated since 2018 (see also Chapter X).

It becomes obvious against such a backdrop that attempts to provide a systematic overview of AE

programmes in BiH are compromised by the lack of systematised databases. The paragraphs below therefore present key forms and trends in AE programmes in BiH on the basis of available documents and data collected in the field research.

Formal adult education programmes

The legal acts in BiH basically divide AE programmes into formal and non-formal. Formal programmes are based on publicly-approved, recognised curricula. They always include an official assessment, after which a publicly-recognised diploma or certificate is issued. The number of lesson hours for each stage of the formal programme, as well as other standards and norms of implementation, are precisely defined by the Laws on AE and accompanying acts (see Table 1 in Chapter IV). It is nominally required that all programmes are adjusted to the age, previous education and learning needs of adult persons. The existing acts do not however specify the ways in which adjustments need to be made, nor do they require a candidate’s initial level of knowledge prior to enrolment to be assessed. The lack of a framework for RPL, which is further reflected in the lack of programme flexibility and insufficient alignment with actual adult learning needs, has already been identified in the Strategic Platform as a weakness of the AE system in BiH.

Formal AE programmes are adopted and approved by the Ministries of Education, and they include:

- primary adult education,
- secondary education (lower and upper, retraining programmes, additional basic qualification programmes, specialisation, professional training).

¹⁶¹ DVV International – Country Office BiH, [ISKOOM – Information System for Controlling and Monitoring Adult Education](#) website

Upon completion of formal education programmes in BiH, adults are issued with publicly-valid documents: certificates of class completion, high school diplomas or a final exam documenting the acquired school or vocational education or occupation, and certificates of professional qualification or training.

Primary adult education

Primary adult education programmes are implemented in selected elementary schools under the auspices of a specific educational authority, in institutions of local administration – municipalities (for example workers' universities in RS, or the Centre for Adult Education in Banja Luka), as well as in private adult education institutions (such as the Centre for Adult Education in Gračanica, Tuzla Canton). The selected schools are commonly situated in areas with higher rates of persons who have not completed elementary education. Primary adult education constitutes an additional activity for schools which is conducted by teachers working in the regular teaching process. Teachers are additionally trained in AE didactics, and the schools are equipped with the necessary material resources. Within a joint project of DVVI and GIZ, a special andragogical handbook has been prepared for teachers and professional advisors implementing primary AE programmes, entitled *Subsequent Acquisition of Primary Education for Adults: Andragogical Handbook*¹⁶². However, as mentioned above, the fact that the additional activity of AE is not remunerated, while it requires teachers to invest considerable time and effort,

poses a serious obstacle for schools to engage in primary AE provision¹⁶³.

The curriculum of primary adult education comprises the condensed content of the curriculum for school children, with the list of subjects, readings and teaching goals defined in almost identical form¹⁶⁴. The duration of the programme for adults is reduced, and is organised differently in different administrative units. In RS, for instance, primary adult education is divided into three terms, each of them providing for a different number of weeks (Grades I-III last 18 weeks, Grades IV-VI last 36 weeks, and Grades VII-IX last 54 weeks). In the cantons of FBiH, lower grades last three months each, while upper grades last six months each¹⁶⁵. The programme is organised as regular classes, distance learning, practical exercises, or consultative-instructional work. Up to 30% of the total number of lesson hours is permitted to be implemented as consultative-instructional work where participants are unable to attend regular instruction. The practice is, however, that classes are organised regularly in lower primary adult education, while consultative-instructional work is predominant from Grades V to IX¹⁶⁶. This means that students are given their learning material and assignments to work on individually or in consultations with the teacher. They come to school to take practical exercises and exams. Comments from the field survey reveal problems with the primary AE programme, where "payments for teachers are irregular[and] insufficient"¹⁶⁷, and the curricu-

¹⁶² Alibabić, Š. et al. (2012). *Naknadno sticanje osnovnog obrazovanja: Andragoški priručnik za nastavnike*. Sarajevo: GIZ

¹⁶³ Interview with a political representative and an AE expert from RS

¹⁶⁴ See for instance [Curriculum of Basic Adult Education of Tuzla Canton](#)

¹⁶⁵ Grades I-IV last for three months in some cantons (e.g. Sarajevo Canton and Herzegovina-Neretva Canton), while Grades I-VI last for six months in West-Herzegovina Canton.

¹⁶⁶ Information obtained from *Džemaludin Čaušević Elementary School in Sarajevo*

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

lum is described as “inadequate, non-functional and not outcome-based.”¹⁶⁸ It is not directed towards the acquisition and development of competencies needed for adults to respond to the demands of everyday life and improve quality of life in a personally-relevant and socially-acceptable manner. The figures on the use of ICT in BiH presented in Chapter II reveal that, besides elementary literacy, the focus of primary AE should also be on digital literacy for people with lower levels of educational attainment.

The interviewees frequently stressed that the current model of organising primary adult education lacks flexibility, and that it should be adapted so as to allow the acquisition of functional skills and competencies. The duration of the programme was also identified as a barrier to participation. Given that adults have families and some kind of job, which makes it difficult to maintain the continuity of school assignments, the programme is criticised for lasting too long. The programme duration can be seen as one explanation of the high drop-out rates. According to information available from the Institute of Adult Education in RS, “80 persons were enrolled in Basic Adult Education in the first cycle, and 1/3 already dropped out at the beginning.”¹⁶⁹ The same is reflected in statistical reports, which show that only 8 students were enrolled in primary adult education in RS in the period from 2015 to 2020 (7 in 2015/2016 and 1 in 2016/17)¹⁷⁰, despite a considerable number of working-age adults who had not completed elementary education. One suggestion would be to change the existing way of attending and completing the programme for

primary adult education in such a way as to make it possible to complete two grades in one educational cycle.

A serious problem is posed by the fact that adults who are eligible for primary AE are often hard to reach because of social isolation or living in remote areas. To tackle this problem, Zenica-Doboj Canton has started a project called “No one without basic education” (“Niko bez osnovne škole”), which aims to inform target groups of adults regarding their right to free primary AE and encourage them to enrol and then attend. More such effective strategies will be vital in future in order to reach out to this group of adults.

A cooperation project between GIZ and DVVI from 2014 to 2016 made an attempt to modernise the provision of primary AE. The project resulted in the publication of the “Concept of Primary Adult Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina”.¹⁷¹ In essence, the publication described three models and approaches to the topic, all of which promoted the acquisition of functional literacy and the integration of general and vocational education. However, although the document was widely disseminated, and was designed in cooperation with representatives from all levels of the education administration, the directives proposed in it were never implemented.

Secondary adult education

Programmes of secondary VET are implemented in regular secondary schools, private schools, and specialised AE centres. According to the available data, this is the most widespread form of AE in

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Interview with a political representative and an AE expert from RS

¹⁷⁰ RS Institute of Statistics (2020). [Primary Education 2019/2020](#)

¹⁷¹ FBiH, [Federal Ministry of Education and Science notification](#): “Concept of primary adult education in BiH” developed

BiH. Secondary AE programmes for adults are identical to those for regular students in terms of their content, teaching aims, outcomes and subjects, while programme duration is reduced. Programmes are designed in accordance with the Standard Classification of Occupations, and the overall provision attempts to meet demands from industry and the economy. An exemplary model of collaboration between AE VET and the labour market has been realised by ALDI in Goražde (see Chapter VI).

Individual motivations to participate in secondary AE programmes are closely linked with improving opportunities on the labour market. In the absence of proper employment opportunities, participation is motivated by the need to change the profession initially learned. Retraining programmes to obtain a new occupation or qualification can be entered by learners who have completed upper secondary or upper secondary vocational education. According to the existing AE laws, secondary education programmes for adults last one year less than those for regular school groups. Retraining programmes last at least six months, while in most parts of the country programme the duration leading to additional qualification, specialisation, training or improvement is not determined by the laws, but by the programmes themselves. There is the possibility of RPL in the segment of theoretical subjects, while attendance is mandatory at practical classes. Pursuant to the Laws on AE, secondary AE for unemployed persons may be free of charge, and is often co-financed by employment institutes and internationally-funded projects. The laws also open up possibilities to involve employers and firms in AE participation by providing facilities for practical instruction. According to the data obtained from the field research, companies are considered im-

portant funders of secondary AE, although much greater effort is needed to raise their awareness of the benefits of investing in human resources. The interviewees acknowledge the role played by international companies in boosting the new trend towards investing in training for employees in co-operation with local AE providers. Applicable AE legislation has also created the category of 'experimental programmes', which are intended as a rapid response to demands from the labour market.

Moreover, as stated by the director of a private AE centre, higher education graduates may complete a VET programme which would open up employment opportunities for them on the EU labour market. Programmes in nursing and healthcare (for example at the Private Adult Education Centre in Gračanica) have received attention due to the demand for such profiles in EU countries and the possibility of the mobility of qualified manpower from BiH. Such institutions are more profit-oriented, and their quality standards are not entirely unambiguous. Participation in AE programmes has become a ticket to foreign labour markets over the recent years, especially in Germany. Some VET centres have established partnerships with employment agencies and institutions in Germany. Candidates are recruited for positions offered by German agencies once they have completed a VET programme in BiH¹⁷². Experts are observing this development with caution.

At the same time, several positive examples of cooperation between VET and industry can be identified. This cooperation is characterised by substantial involvement on the part of industry and managers in the design of AE curricula, curricula which subsequently served as a basis for innovation and supplemented the regular school

¹⁷² Interview with a representative from a VET school in FBiH

curriculum. Therefore, as pointed out by the experts¹⁷³, secondary AE can be a corrective factor for the regular school curriculum.

In order to make secondary AE more flexible, the results from the field research suggest that examination centres should become more prominent players in the area, and that mechanisms of PLR should be implemented more efficiently and rationally, especially in cases where an individual already possesses considerable experience in a specific craft.

Non-formal adult education programmes

Non-formal adult education constitutes an organised learning process based on special programmes aimed at acquiring and developing general and professional knowledge, skills and competencies which enhance opportunities on the labour market, facilitate social participation, and contribute to personal development and “self-realisation”¹⁷⁴.

Pursuant to the Laws on Adult Education in BiH, non-formal programmes include:

- programmes for the acquisition and development of functional literacy (language programmes, ICT literacy programmes, driving instruction),
- key competencies for professional knowledge,
- programmes for the acquisition of additional vocational or professional competencies,
- programmes for environmental protection,
- educational programmes in health and to improve quality of life,
- educational programmes for senior citizens,
- programmes aiming to meet specific educational and cultural needs of specific social groups.

One specific group of programmes leads to the acquisition of andragogical competencies. They are provided in the shape of andragogical training and university courses.

Programmes in non-formal education are developed by AE providers, and in order to be accredited they must be approved by the relevant Ministry of Education. Organisers of non-formal programmes issue certificates of attendance, which may or may not be publicly recognised. Such certificates are often recognised by potential employers, even if they are not accredited by the relevant Ministry. The number of lesson hours in non-formal programmes may vary from short training activities to courses lasting several weeks. Non-formal programmes are commonly financed by the adults themselves. Education and further training for job-seekers is covered by institutes for employment. Some NGO programmes are funded by international projects or donations, and are therefore offered free of charge.¹⁷⁵

The non-formal sector has recently been growing, as an increasing number of different institutions and organisations from the public, private or NGO sectors has started to implement different kinds of educational programme¹⁷⁶. Given the lack of statistical reports from this segment of AE, it is difficult to define its true impact and relevance for individuals and society. The results from the field research indicate a trend towards formalisation and standardisation of the ALE sector in BiH. Although most AE providers feel more secure when they can fall back on common standards and norms for ALE, strict procedures and complicat-

¹⁷³ Interview with the director of a Pedagogical Institute in FBiH

¹⁷⁴ Council of Ministers of BiH (2014a)

¹⁷⁵ For instance, programmes at Nahla or ALDI

¹⁷⁶ Council of Ministers of BiH (2014b)

ed bureaucracy are hindering the development of NFE in some cases, especially for smaller NGOs which do not have the necessary capacities. Development is happening so quickly in some areas that non-formal AE programmes are becoming obsolete soon after their launch¹⁷⁷.

Several non-formal AE programmes for unemployed persons are organised in cooperation with Employment Institutes throughout the country. Laws on AE regulate free primary education for adults, as well as obtaining the first qualification or professional training programmes for persons registered as unemployed. Such ALMMs aim to increase unemployed persons' chances on the labour market. They include soft skills, social skills, entrepreneurial skills, or even programmes in more advanced digital technologies; as is the case in Goražde. There were programmes designed for long-term unemployed women (e.g. the Women's Entrepreneurship Academy at Nahla, with support from DVVI) and people with disabilities (e.g. the programmes entitled "Providers of support for people with intellectual disabilities" and "Personal assistants for people with sensory and motor disabilities" at the Social Educational Centre (SEC), with support from DVVI). Peacebuilding and reconciliation have been seminal topics in AE in the post-war years, with DVVI also providing support to organisations such as Sara Srebrenica¹⁷⁸.

Vocational education programmes were predominant (80%) in the small-scale survey. A small portion was accounted for by programmes for professional development and active citizenship (15%), and the remaining 5% were labelled as

programmes for professional development and well-being. The data indicates that NFE encompasses a wide array of programmes in practice in BiH. They vary from entrepreneurship, chemistry and law with the lowest frequencies, to economics (33.3%), engineering (27.3%), healthcare (24.2%) and catering (24.2%), with the highest frequencies. The duration of programmes ranges from 16 hours for "Marketing in Tourism" to 500 in programmes such as "Personal assistant to persons with mental impairments". The number of participants in learning groups is reported to be as low as 2 (in programmes for electricians and tourist guides, for instance), and as high as 30 for upholstery seamstresses, with an average number of 10 participants in a single learning group.

Even though there is innovative and creative capacity to design programmes relevant for the labour market, such as digital technologies at ALDI and data science and webdesign at Nahla, the field research shows that NFE as a form of acquiring relevant competencies is neglected in practice, is underutilised, and is not sufficiently visible. Lack of financial support from the government, coupled with insufficient attention and appreciation from political representatives, have been identified as major obstacles to the further development of NFE in BiH. The first step towards implementing a holistic LLL approach and advancing a true learning society would be to raise awareness of the importance of NFE for the acquisition of relevant competences, and for societal development in general. Awareness-raising efforts should not lastly be supported by government and other institutional stakeholders.

¹⁷⁷ Interview with an NGO representative

¹⁷⁸ Avdagić, E. & Čerkez, A. (2020). *Adult Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina – 20 Years of Support of DVV International*. Sarajevo, DVV International

VIII. Participation and non-participation

Monitoring and evaluating participation in adult education programmes is still a major challenge in BiH. The country does not participate in the OECD Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), and public authorities have not yet implemented a regular, comprehensive monitoring system for adult education. While formal education institutions are obliged to compile records of their students and to deliver monitoring reports to statistical agencies, this is not required from non-formal AE providers. Moreover, statistics on elementary and secondary education do not contain data on adult learners within the system of formal education. DVVI has created the online monitoring platform ISKOOM (see Chapter VII) in response to this gap in statistical monitoring and evaluation, and in close cooperation with the Institute for Adult Education of RS.

Only sporadic information is available about participation numbers in public formal adult education programmes. In RS, for example, an average of 1,192 participants attend formal adult education programmes annually through the Institute for Adult Education. Participants are most interested in the areas of health, transport, economics, law and trade, in the forms of retraining, secondary vocational education and additional training¹⁷⁹.

The only source to date that provides a comprehensive insight into adult participation in the various forms of LLL in BiH is data from 2017, collected with the Eurostat Adult Education Survey (AES)¹⁸⁰¹⁸¹¹⁸². The survey addresses the group of working-age people aged from 25 to 64, and asks about participation in formal, non-formal and informal learning in the twelve months prior to the survey. 6,304 people in BiH took part in the survey between February and March 2017. The data is representative of the BiH population aged 25 to 64¹⁸³. While it allows a differential analysis to be made between urban and rural areas, is it not possible to discriminate between the different governmental units of BiH.

Table 2 below gives an indication of the status of adult education participation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It shows that only a small share of the survey participants aged between 25 and 64 is attending some form of formal education (2.2%). This is below the EU-27 average, but is plausible as this age group covers people of working age who are generally outside of the formal school system. The minor significance of continuous education amongst adults becomes evident in the non-formal education participation rate. Only 6.9% of the respondents had participated in some form

¹⁷⁹ Klix.ba (2019)

¹⁸⁰ Eurostat, [Adult Education Survey - Reference Metadata in Euro SDMX Metadata Structure \(ESMS\)](#) website. The AES is repeated in five-year cycles. BiH is expected to participate in the next AES round in 2022.

¹⁸¹ [Eurostat Database](#) thread: Population and social conditions -> Education and training -> Participation in education and training -> Adult learning -> Participation in education and training (last 12 months)

¹⁸² Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2018a). [Demography and Social Statistics – Adult Education Survey](#)

¹⁸³ The population in the net sample is composed of 26.32% of people with low educational attainment (ISCED 0-2), 60.1% of people with medium educational attainment (ISCED 3-4) and 13.6% of people with high educational attainment (ISCED 5-8) (cf. Eurostat (2016b)).

of non-formal education within the past 12 months prior to the survey. This is considerably below the EU-27 average. On the other hand, over two-thirds

of all respondents indicated that they had engaged in some form of informal learning, which is above average in the EU Member States¹⁸⁴.

Table 2 Adult education participation rates in BiH compared with EU-27 averages

	BiH (2017)	EU-27 (2016)
Formal education	2.2%	5.0%
Non-formal education	6.9%	41.4%
Informal learning	74.7%	59.5%

Source: Own presentation based on data from the Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2018a) and Eurostat data on the AES BiH 2017

The survey results show that participation in AE is closely related to educational attainment and to age. As shown in Table 3 below, the share of people in the sample with primary education or lower who were participating in formal and non-formal adult education is vanishingly small. No information is available on adults in the sample with primary education or lower who were attending formal education. Participation in adult education

increases with increasing educational attainment. Respondents with secondary education as their highest level of education were more likely to participate in formal (2.3%) and non-formal (5.3%) adult education¹⁸⁵. The highest participation rate was determined among respondents with tertiary education. 5.7% of this group attended formal education, and 26.6% (which is far above average) attended non-formal education offers.

Table 3 Participation rates in ALE by educational attainment

	Formal	Non-formal	Informal
Lower than primary, primary and lower secondary education (levels 0-2)	No information available (n.a.)	0.9%	68.4%
Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (levels 3 and 4)	2.3%	5.3%	75.7%
Tertiary education	5.7%	26.6%	82.6%

Source: Own presentation based on data from the Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2018a) and Eurostat data on the AES BiH 2017

¹⁸⁴ The substantial difference between informal learning participation rates in BiH and the EU might be attributed to differences in survey question formulation and different interpretations of the term “informal learning” (see Chapter I).

¹⁸⁵ This is noteworthy, as 26.3% of the net sample respondents indicated low educational attainment (ISCED levels 0-2). In order to increase the general education level among the adult population, priority should attach to BiH adult education stakeholders particularly involving the lower-educated in their programmes.

It is more the group of young adults which makes use of adult education offers (see Table 4). The survey results show that participation rates are highest for young adults aged 25-34, and that participation decreases with age.

Table 4 Participation rates in AE by age groups

	Formal	Non-formal	Informal
Age 25-34	10.7%	16.6%	81.1%
Age 35-54	1.3%	7.3%	76.5%
Age 55-64	no data available	2.6%	69.7%

Source: Own presentation based on data from the Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2018a) and Eurostat data on the AES BiH 2017

The differences between male and female participation rates are generally small. There was a slight trend towards men tending to participate in adult education more frequently than women with increasing age. In the 45-to-54 age group, for example, 6.2% of male respondents participated in non-formal education, compared with 5.6% of female respondents. Participation in formal and non-formal education is higher in urban areas (formal 3.2%, non-formal 10.6%) than in rural areas (formal 1.5%, non-formal 4.3%). Informal learning is slightly more widespread in rural areas (urban 73.6%, rural 75.4%).

Participation in adult education programmes is also related to employment status. Table 5

shows that employed people (and here particularly those in professional occupations) were most likely to continue with some form of education, especially in a non-formal context. The participation rate in formal education was higher than average among inactive people. Further in-depth analysis would be necessary to find a reason for this. Data on the fields of training activities is fragmentary. It nonetheless shows a pattern, namely that formal training is more popular in the area of business, administration and law, engineering, manufacturing and construction as well as social sciences. Non-formal education tends to be considered for training in the arts and humanities, as well as education and services.

Table 5 Participation rates in AE by employment status and in the context of work

	Formal	Non-formal	Informal
Employment status			
Employed	2.5%	14.3%	79.2%
Unemployed	0.9%	4.3%	73.4%
Inactive	2.9%	1.2%	70.9%
Occupation			
Managers, professional, technicians and associated professionals	4.2%	24.7%	81.9%
Clerical support workers, service and sales workers	n.a.	11.1%	80.9%
Skilled manual workers	n.a.	8.7%	75.7%
Elementary occupations	n.a.	n.a.	77.3%
Fields of training activities			
Generic programmes and qualifications	n.a.	5.3%	n.a.
Education	n.a.	14.3%	n.a.
Arts and humanities	n.a.	16.4%	n.a.
Social sciences, journalism and information	13.7%	5.5%	n.a.
Business, administration and law	24.5%	7.3%	n.a.
Information and Communications Technologies	n.a.	10.9%	n.a.
Engineering, manufacturing and construction	14.2%	7.3%	n.a.
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries, veterinary	n.a.	3.8%	n.a.
Health and welfare	12.2%	8.9%	n.a.
Services	n.a.	14.5%	n.a.

Source: Own presentation based on Eurostat data on the AES BiH 2017

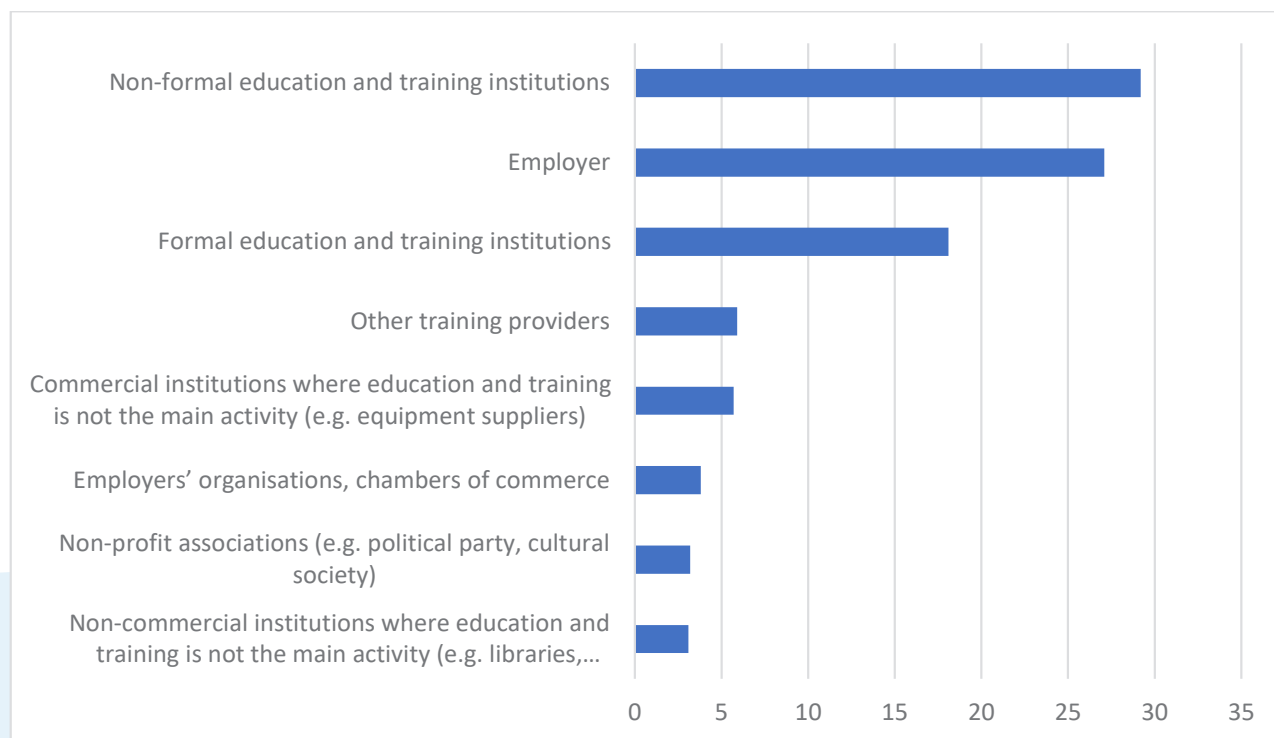
The following paragraphs examine participation in non-formal education in greater detail. Regarding the motivation behind participation in non-formal education, the data shows that the lion's share of all non-formal education activities is job related (73.7%), and more than 60% of non-formal job-related activities are employersponsored. 25.9% of the activities in non-formal education are notjobrelated.

The overall participation rate in job-related, non-formal education and training among the

respondents was 5%. 12.3% of employees participate in job-related, non-formal education and training¹⁸⁶; the participation rate increases with educational attainment from 3.4% with upper secondary to 21% with tertiary education, and it is higher in urban areas (7.7%) than in rural ones (3.0%). Differences in job-related, non-formal education and training with respect to age were less pronounced, while the participation rate among people aged 25-34 was 8.6%, and as many as 5.1% of 45-to-54-year-olds participated in job-related, non-formal education and training.

¹⁸⁶ This information is not available for unemployed and inactive persons.

Graph 5 Participation rates in non-formal education by training provider (%)



Source: Own presentation based on data from the Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2018a) and Eurostat data on the AES BiH 2017

As illustrated in Graph 5, non-formal education and training institutions attract the largest number of participants for job-related, non-formal training, followed by in-house training provided by the employer, and training at formal education and training institutions.

With respect to informal learning, respondents most frequently reported learning through television, radio or video (68%). Respondents are least likely to make use of informal learning on guided tours in museums, or in historical or natural or industrial sites, as only 6.9% of the respondents have engaged in this activity over the last 12 months prior to the survey.

Table 6 Participation in informal learning by form of learning

Learning form	Participation rate
Learning through television/radio/video	68%
Learning from a family member, friend or colleague	59%
Learning using printed material	45%
Learning using computers	39%
Learning by attending learning centres (including libraries)	7%
Learning through guided tours in museums, as well as historical or natural or industrial sites	7%

Source: Own presentation based on data from the Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2018a) and Eurostat data on the AES BiH 2017

Women are more likely than men to make use of learning offers in learning centres and libraries (8.6% women and 5.9% men), whereas men are slightly more likely to learn in private spaces (e.g. from family members, with printed material or using a computer)¹⁸⁷. As is shown in Table 6 above, participation in informal learning decreases with increasing age. The data shows that particularly learning with a computer is still very uncommon for people aged between 55 and 64, with only 19.2% of people in this age group stating that they were learning using a computer, compared with 66.5% among the 25-34 age group. Similarly, older people frequent learning centres or libraries much less often (3.9%) than young people (16.4%).

Whereas learning in the private context (learning from the family, learning from television) is practiced relatively independently from educational

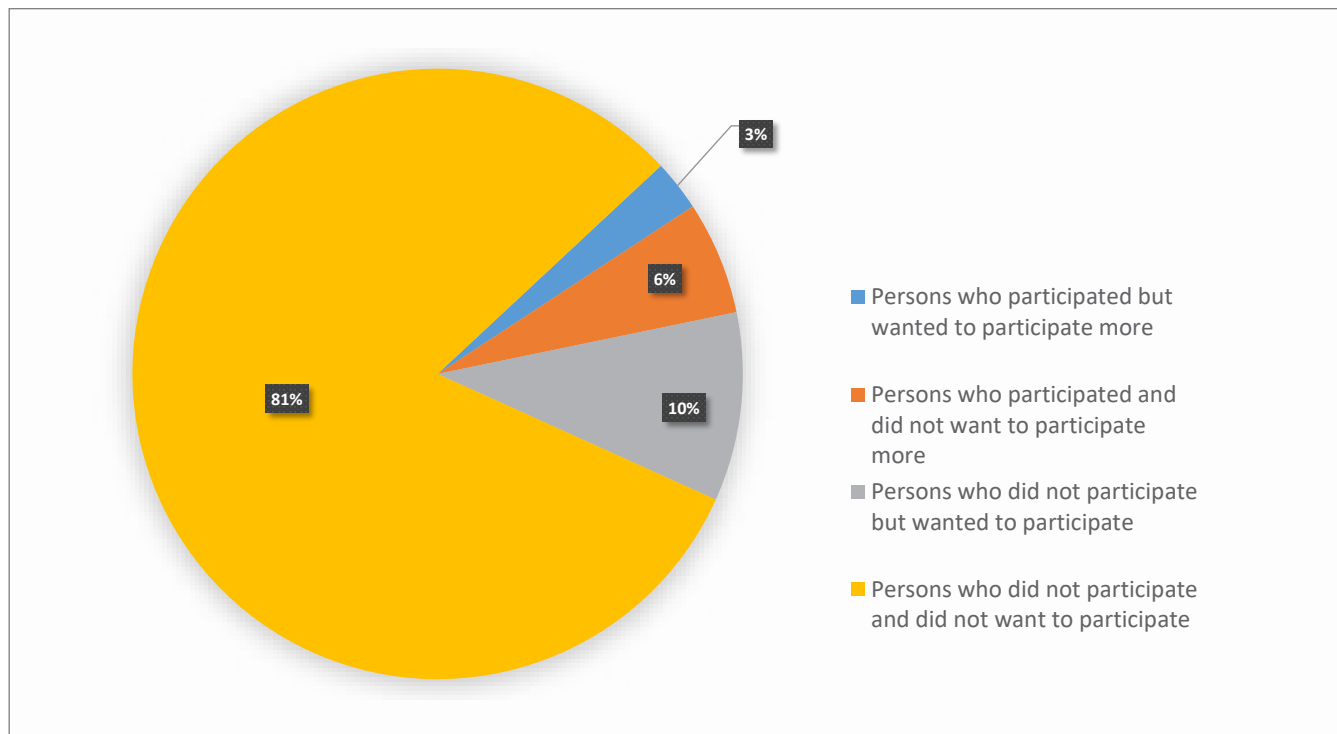
attainment, learning with printed material, at computers and from guided tours in museums, heavily depends on educational achievement. This difference is most pronounced when it comes to learning with a computer: While the rate is 15.4% among those respondents with primary education or lower, 72% of people with tertiary education make use of this form of learning. There is generally less difference between secondary and tertiary education than between primary and secondary educational attainment¹⁸⁸.

There is no difference in learning through TV or with family members between employed, unemployed or inactive people. The data however suggests that employed persons are more likely to participate in guided tours for learning and to visit learning centres. There is also a difference in computer use for learning, and to a lesser extent in using printed media.

¹⁸⁷ With the exception of the 25-34 age group, where women are more likely than men to learn with printed material and through radio or television

¹⁸⁸ See Agency for Statistics Bosnia and Herzegovina (2018a), Table 6.

Graph 6 Population by willingness to participate in education and training



Source: Own presentation based on Eurostat data on the AES BiH 2017

Graph 6 gives an impression of the motivation to participate in ALE programmes. With 81% of all respondents being disinterested in education and learning offers for adults (e.g., persons who did not participate in ALE and who also did not want to participate in future), BiH is in the highest share in a European comparison. The main reason for non-participation among those who did not want to participate was that they do not see a need to participate (84%). The share of people holding this opinion increases with age. 9% did not participate for personal reasons.

For those who wanted to participate more in education and training, high costs are the most common barrier. 56% state that costs are a reason for their non-participation, especially among younger people and those with lower levels of education. Other barriers are conflicting schedules (52%), family reasons, or other personal reasons (45%,

and more prevalent among women), the distance to the education or training location (31%, and also more prevalent for women), lack of support from employer or public services (27%, especially among men), and health or age reasons (12%). The latter reason is more important among the 55 to 64 age group, where 31% indicate health or age as reasons for their non-participation. The variety of offers seems to be a minor problem, as only 6.8% indicated that a lack of suitable offers of education or training was a reason for their non-participation.

In summary, the results from the AES BiH suggest that overall participation of adults in education and learning is low, especially in non-formal education, where BiH is far behind the participation rates in the EU. The vast majority of survey respondents are not interested in continuing education and learning. The AES data shows that

participation in all forms of education and learning is related to the socio-economic indicators education, age and labour status in the expected direction. While gender guides learning preferences in informal learning, it is not decisive for more or less participation in FED and NFE education contexts. In general, high costs of training keep people from participating in adult education programmes. What drives the participation of adults in NFE is the work context, presumably also because the majority of non-formal activities are sponsored by employers.

The data from the Adult Education Survey thus largely reflects the impressions that were also conveyed in the interviews. Many people are not aware of the possibilities that adult education holds for them. The population still largely associates adult education with formal education, re-training and recertification. Participants are usually highly motivated if the goal of further training is getting a job or rising up on the career ladder.

Adult education does not seem to be recognised as a serious pursuit during times of unemployment, and people do not see the chances and

advantages of permanent adult education for their personal and professional development. Especially among the older generations, the assumption prevails that, in an individual's lifetime, learning and education are finished on completion of formal education. With greater flexibility required by the changing job market, young people are starting to realise that continuous education and permanent learning are becoming more and more necessary in order to survive on the labour market. AE and lifelong learning will play a much bigger role for them in the future¹⁸⁹.

Not many people in BiH are currently participating in adult education with the "sole" motivation of personal self-development. Nonetheless, participants, especially in non-accredited programmes, appreciate adult education programmes for providing possibilities to network, socialize, exchange experience or just to be together with other like-minded adults, as was reported by one of the interviewees from civil society. Participation thus helps strengthen self-esteem and self-confidence, particularly among women. Some people reportedly see participation as some kind of personal challenge, as they apply for a course without being sure of passing it¹⁹⁰.

¹⁸⁹ Interviews with NGO representatives

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

IX. Teaching personnel and professionalisation

The andragogic qualification of adult educators is an essential element for the thorough development of a lifelong learning infrastructure in any educational system. The EU's Council Resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning states that "improving the quality of adult education staff, for instance by defining competence profiles, establishing effective systems for initial training and professional development, and facilitating the mobility of teachers, trainers and other adult education staff", is necessary to improve the quality and efficiency of education and training¹⁹¹. This implies that it is not suitable to assign teachers to adult education programmes who have been trained to teach children. Compared with children, participants in adult education already possess knowledge and skills, and can fall back on their experience. More so than teachers at primary and secondary level, adult educators therefore have to take on roles as group leaders, facilitators and trainers, a demand which places different requirements on the educators' personal and social as well as methodological and didactical competences.

The workspaces of today's adult educators include a wide range of didactical and non-didactical activities. Didactical activities include learning as well as educational counselling and planning, teaching, learning guidance, as well as developing learning and education material, and evaluation. Next to didactics, adult educators might also engage in management and marketing tasks, public relations work, as well as educational policy committee work. The diversity of activities and focal areas of

each single adult educator makes the establishment of an overarching definition of professionalisation and qualification standards in AE both difficult to achieve and crucial at the same time.

Adult educators' individual professional qualifications are generally based on formal scientific education, as well as on formal and informal further training in didactics and methods. The systematic acquisition of theory-based knowledge and practical skills is usually transmitted through the education system (which ideally offers university education for teachers on certain subjects as well as theoretical and practical training in didactics and methodology to work with adults). Formal academic education may be further expanded and consolidated individually through informal self-learning, for example from professional-scholarly communication such as websites, journals, magazines and conferences.

A professional lifelong learning environment is furthermore characterised by the existence of policy committees and professional associations which regulate and guide the process of licencing and further professional development. Relevant outputs are laws, common, precise professional standards and socially-mediated descriptions of expected behaviour within the domain (in the sense of competencies and ethics).

In combination, professional qualification, common (ethical) standards and societal orientation have the potential to increase public recognition of the value of adult education for society and

¹⁹¹ European Commission (2011)

contribute to the general professionalisation of this area within education.¹⁹²

BiH has made progress in terms of the above-mentioned characteristics of a professional adult education environment (composed of laws, education, ethics and exchange). The idea of professionalising adult education teaching staff in BiH and developing a legal framework to ensure the quality of the process emerged from a range of project activities implemented by DVVI and its continuous effort to establish a dialogue between civil society, the profession and the BiH educational authorities. “Andragogic training is recognised” today “by educational authorities at all levels of governance in BiH, and is treated as a legal right and obligation in the laws on adult education”. In addition, the educational authorities have taken major steps towards the public recognition of possible modes of financing for andragogic training programmes, and have thus facilitated the enforcement of the legally-prescribed right to and obligation to engage in this type of training¹⁹³.

Teacher training is generally considered seminal for the development of a sustained, sophisticated education system, also in AE. A recently-introduced legal provision to professionalise AE in BiH contains the requirement that AE providers must prove their staff’s andragogical competencies with respective certificates in order to obtain official accreditation. This means that AE trainers are required to undergo a minimum of AE-specific training activities. Opportunities to obtain a formal university diploma in AE are however currently few

and far between. Professionals holding university degrees in AE have been trained abroad (in Serbia or Germany). There are attempts to develop AE as a separate study programme at the University of Sarajevo in the near future. This endeavour will require scholars from the field, as well as a willingness on the part of education authorities to open a new programme. Cooperation with partners from the labour market will also be needed in order to open up jobs for AE professionals.

A competency framework for teachers in adult education does not exist, so that licensing and further professional development requirements in AE remain unclear. One exception applies to teachers in secondary schools, whose continuous professional development is regulated by the rules of that particular sector, even in AE.

The only medium currently contributing to the development of an academic AE discourse in BiH is the journal *Adult Education*, which has existed for 20 years and publishes articles by renowned authors from BiH and abroad¹⁹⁴. The journal was published jointly by the DVVI Country Office in BiH and the Bosnian Cultural Centre of Sarajevo Canton until 2019, and is currently published by the Bosnian Cultural Centre alone.

Thus, besides the legal requirements to hold an andragogical qualification related to minimal training, and for providers to obtain accreditation, the status of AE professionals is poorly regulated, and the level of professionalisation of AE remains notably low. Interviews and surveys conducted by

¹⁹² Lattke, S. & Strauch, A. (2019). [Competency framework for adult educators in teaching GCED. UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning](#). UNESCO Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding

¹⁹³ Avdagić, E. & Tubić, S. (2019). [Developing good adult educators – from idea to legal framework](#). *Adult Education and Development*, 86, pp. 54-58.

¹⁹⁴ [Journal Adult Education](#) website

DVVI in BiH show that a large share of AE teachers have no prior andragogical education¹⁹⁵.

Ensuring quality in education and teachers' professional development is the responsibility of cantonal or entity authorities. Most of them do not however have the requisite capacities in terms of experts, previous experience or knowledge of international standards in this regard. No state-wide model for andragogical training programmes yet exists¹⁹⁶.

Due to a lack of adult educator programmes and training experts, other solutions are tolerated by the authorities, and the legal provision is not strictly enforced. In reality it is still possible to work in the sector with minimal or no andragogical competencies. Instead, previous teaching experience is often considered a sufficient indicator of andragogical competencies, and in the majority of cases, completing programmes of pedagogical training for secondary school teachers is regarded as sufficient.

Results from the field research indicate that the most common form of acquiring teaching competencies for AE trainers is through various programmes of pedagogical education (66%). In addition, AE trainers are likely to receive in-house andragogical training (33.1%), while it is also reported (31%) that trainers are not required to obtain specific training if they have prior experience of working with adults. The latter finding is interesting given the new legal provision requiring AE trainers to have completed an organised process of andragogical education. It was only reported

in one case that the staff had exclusively attended andragogical seminars. Teachers working in the regular teaching process in public schools are also teaching in programmes for adults, and some of them have not completed any form of andragogical training. This is reported to be an obstacle resulting in teachers being unable to differentiate between specificities of andragogical approaches compared to pedagogical ones, and hence to adapt their teaching styles. Moreover, this leads to widespread public insecurity with regard to professional knowledge in the domain of andragogical work.

Given the diversity of institutions and organisations providing AE, and the lack of a common foundation for a basic qualification, it is evident that AE trainers are practicing who have various different backgrounds and profiles. They can be organised around three groups in BiH¹⁹⁷:

- The voluntary amateur group: The biggest group, comprising talented individuals who perform the role of a tutor or a leader and organiser of andragogic activities, either voluntarily or by the nature of their job in an organisation. This group includes people who do not have a degree in adult education, but who do have experience in working with adults.
- Professionals: A relatively large group composed of professionals with different initial professional backgrounds who have a certain amount of experience in adult education by virtue of their profession. This group includes librarians, teachers at all levels of the education system, media staff and staff at military and correctional facilities. Members of this

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Interview with a political representative from MoCA

¹⁹⁷ Kušić, Vrcelj & Zovko (2016). *Didaktičke odrednice obrazovanja i andragoga – komparativni pristup*. Rijeka: Filozofski fakultet u Rijeci; Mavrak (2018)

group can provide proof of their participation in adult education programmes, which will then be compared with formal programmes for education of adult education teachers.

- **Scholars and specialists:** A rather small group of scholars and specialists in adult education who develop their careers in andragogy, who work as full-time adult educators, and have a formal diploma proving their qualifications in andragogy. This group comprises university professors who develop andragogy, principals and managers of vocational training agencies, and specialists with an undergraduate, post-graduate or doctoral degree in andragogy.

To compensate for shortcomings in formal adult education training opportunities, non-formal programmes step up to educate and socialise experts to work with adults. Some AE providers have become eager and dedicated to providing andragogical training to their employees themselves. Professionals from university or experts in teaching are engaged as trainers, and experience shows that regular training of trainers has a considerable positive effect on participants' learning outcomes¹⁹⁸.

In methodological terms, non-formal adult educator programmes are usually implemented through seminars, workshops and study trips, and are commonly financed by international organisations. The aim of these programmes is to offer the possibility of acquiring knowledge and skills for working with adults in the domain of a focus area,

to persons working in educational institutions, employment offices, and other governmental and non-governmental organisations¹⁹⁹. Training also presents an opportunity for an exchange of experiences and “good practices” between experts working in different areas.

Participants in the field research emphasised that although programmes for AE trainers do exist, they are rarely organised due to the lack of andragogical experts in the country (e.g. university teachers or certified trainers). This indicates that train-the-trainer programmes should be placed among the top priorities in future.

With the aim in mind of setting common standards in terms of adult educator training, non-formal andragogical training modules have been developed with the support of DVV International. These follow the content set out in the Curriculum globALE, a “cross-cultural core curriculum for the training of adult educators worldwide” developed by DIE and DVV²⁰⁰. The Curriculum globALE defines the skills needed to educate adults successfully. It is composed of five learning modules, and requires 660 lesson hours. It was introduced in Sarajevo Canton in 2017 as a publicly recognised, non-formal adult education programme. The second programme of professional development, entitled “Basic Andragogic Training”, was developed in 2018 on the basis of the Curriculum GlobALE. It is based on the previous practice and on the fundamental principles of the Curriculum globALE, and comprises 120 lesson hours. Its reduced term enables it to respond more quickly to

¹⁹⁸ Interview with an NGO representative

¹⁹⁹ The majority of programmes targeting educating experts in AE in BiH are organised by DVV International; Andragogical School, Andragogical Regional Academy, Education of experts for working with adults, Training for Multipliers, STARS, Training for Schools Managers, etc.

²⁰⁰ DVV International [Curriculum GlobALE](#) website

needs and shortcomings in educational practice. This shorter training course is aimed at teachers who are not full-time employees of adult education providers, and who are occasionally engaged as teachers in adult education regardless of the form of education. It can be said in retrospective that the efforts undertaken by DVVI provided an impetus for the development of a legal and programmatic framework for andragogic training of teaching staff in adult education in BiH²⁰¹. Various DVVI training activities have enabled large numbers of instructors to gain andragogical competencies, at least at a basic level.

DVVI also offers further training for managerial staff, for example on teacher qualification, evaluation and monitoring. This has facilitated the training of staff from public institutions such as the Institute of Adult Education in RS. The next step involved the Institute organising training programmes itself, with financial support from DVVI. This structured train-the-trainer approach enabled a wider group of institutions working in the field of AE to be involved²⁰².

The training activities for teachers and managers operated by DVVI are highly appreciated by providers and public authorities. At the same time, DVVI's capacities are limited, and local partners stress the need to institutionalise andragogical training nationally and locally in order to ensure its sustainability²⁰³.

DVVI is currently the only provider of AE train-the-trainer programmes in BiH. Because of a lack of adequate training programmes and qualified trainers, the legal requirement for all adult trainers to show a minimum level of professional training cannot be strictly enforced. The status of AE professionals therefore remains poorly regulated, and the level of professionalisation of AE notably low. Greater emphasis should be placed on the importance of teaching quality and the special characteristics and needs of adult learners in order to professionalise teaching in AE in future. AE providers and political stakeholders should develop a common understanding of the profession which is still flexible enough to encompass the diversity of AE and resulting demands for AE teachers and trainers.

X. The international context

UNESCO membership

The concept of adult education and learning entered the global scene in 1949 when the UNESCO member states, fuelled by the consequences and experiences of WWII, came together in Denmark to discuss how adult education and learning could help promote world peace and international understanding. This conference was to mark the first of six international conferences on adult education, known as CONFINTEA (the French acronym for CONFérenceINTernationale sur l'Educa-tion des Adultes), which have taken place every twelve years since then to continue the healthy global dialogue.

The latest, sixth CONFINTEA took place in Belém, Brazil, in December 2009. It closed with the adoption of the Belém Framework for Action²⁰⁴, a document which offers member states a strategic guide to develop adult education in their country within the perspective of lifelong learning. It also established the beginning of regular monitoring and reporting of progress on ALE by means of the GRALE and national voluntary reports. Four reports have been published since 2009 (2009, 2013, 2016, 2019), and these provide comprehensive pictures of the state of ALE worldwide (GRALE 5 will be published in 2022).

BiH has contributed to the global ALE monitoring effort with three national reports (2008, 2012,

2015). The 2008 report entitled “The Development and State of the Art of Adult Learning and Education (ALE) National report of Bosnia and Herzegovina”²⁰⁵ was prepared by DVVI. It provides a comprehensive insight into the BiH education system, the legislative, policy and administrative framework of AE, as well as its financing, provision, participation and monitoring. For the upcoming CONFINTEA VI, the authors formulated the expectation that it should “help with the process of awareness concerning the needs of adults, the labour market and educators and trainers who are active in the field of ALE”.

The 2012 report was submitted by the MoCA on behalf of the government of BiH as part of the commitments made at CONFINTEA VI²⁰⁶. It states that a common definition and policy framework for adult education is still lacking, but points to the progress made in RS with the adoption of the Law on Adult Education in 2009. According to the report, adult education in BiH should address all adults older than 15 who did not complete primary education with the goal of employability and social inclusion by 2015. It does not contain information on financing and investment, or on specific activities and initiatives.

The document submitted for the GRALE 3 captures progress in AE in BiH in the shape of survey answers²⁰⁷. Accordingly, the most significant indicator of progress in AE policy is the adoption of the Prin-

²⁰⁴ UNESCO UIL (2010). [Confintea IV – Belém Framework for Action](#)

²⁰⁵ Herić, E. & Grgić, K. (2008). [The Development and State of the Art of Adult Learning and Education \(ALE\) National report of Bosnia and Herzegovina](#). Sarajevo: DVV International

²⁰⁶ Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH (2012). [Follow-up of CONFINTEA VI: National progress report submitted by the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)

²⁰⁷ [Monitoring survey results from Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) for the 3rd Global Report on Adult Learning and Education

ciples and Standards and of the Strategic Platform at state level. Overall, however, the survey demonstrates that BiH lags behind with respect to implementation, monitoring and evaluation, as no information is available on participation in AE offers, AE outcomes, its impact, and other substantial factors surrounding AE such as quality criteria for teaching, diversity of providers, equity issues, barriers, and perception of AE among policy makers.

There is no BiH national report publicly available which has informed the compilation of the GRALE 4²⁰⁸. The report only mentions BiH once in the section on financing. It is noted that funding for AE in BiH “is offered through employment offices and non-governmental organisations’ projects”, which resembles a sort of cross-collaboration for AE financing.

BiH commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals

ALE is part of SDG 4 “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”. There are three specific targets which relate to ALE:

- 4.3. By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university,
- 4.4. By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship,

- 4.6. By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy.

BiH is fully committed to the Agenda 2030 and to the implementation of the SDGs. Information about activities and resources related to the SDGs in BiH can be retrieved from the Imagine2030 platform²⁰⁹. Multi-stakeholder consultations which were held in May 2018 identified education, including greater opportunities for vocational education and skills development, as the foundation for sustainable development. However, a strategy to develop and implement a tangible monitoring and evaluation system for SDG 4 in the Bosnian context is lacking so far. The Sustainable Development Report 2020 does not present any data on SDG 4 (besides literacy rates drawn from the 2013 population census), but does note that trend information is unavailable²¹⁰. Regarding the state of adult education, the Voluntary National Review Report of 2019²¹¹ cites the results of the Adult Education Survey (see Chapter X), without mentioning a strategy as to how adult education could be further developed in future.

International development assistance: partners and projects

BiH is still a net recipient of Official Development Assistance (ODA) in 2020. Insight into the activities of international donors in BiH is provided in the “Developing Partners Mapping Report 2019”²¹² prepared by the Ministry of Finance and Treasury/Sector for Financial Planning of Development and Coordination of International Economic Aid.

²⁰⁸ UNESCO UIL (2019)

²⁰⁹ [Imagine2030 platform](#) website

²¹⁰ [Sustainable Development Report 2020 Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)

²¹¹ Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2019)

²¹² Ministry of Finance and Treasury of BiH (2019). [Development Partners Mapping Report 2019](#)

It provides a comprehensive overview of projects and programmes supported with ODA funds by the members of the Development Partners Co-ordination Forum. Accordingly, BiH was allocated EUR 751.83 million in ODA in 2019, 34.4% of which were grant funds and 65.6% were loan funds. Total disbursements amounted to EUR 535.86 million. With more than EUR 80 million in grant funds allocated, the EU is BiH's most important multilateral development partner. The most important bilateral partner is Germany (EUR 40 million in grant funds allocated), followed by the USA and Switzerland.

The report explains that assistance in education is coordinated via meetings of the Conference of Ministers of Education. If appropriate, the MoCA organises forum meetings with international organisations involved in educational reform processes. Assistance in “Vocational education and training”, “Lifelong learning” and “Labour market and employment”, are instead coordinated somewhat informally and ad hoc, project-based in bilateral or multilateral meetings. The MoCA and international partners coordinate and exchange information on AE initiatives and projects in a dedicated forum²¹³.

Efforts regarding LLL and AE are listed in the sector “Education, employment and social policies”. Roughly EUR 38 million were allocated and disbursed to the sector, which equates to 5% of ODA in 2019 (the largest share of ODA – 31% – was allocated to transport). Croatia and the World Bank were the most active development partners in the sector (having disbursed around EUR 9

million each). Other important partners in the sector were Slovenia, Switzerland, the USA, the EU, Sweden, Germany, Japan, Norway and the UN. The sub-sectors “Education, employment and social infrastructure” and “Labour market and employment” received two-thirds (30% each) of all funds within the education sector; 16% was allocated to the sub-sector “Education”, and 15% to “Vocational education and training”. National, entity and cantonal authorities expect to become more credible, reliable partners for international donors by pursuing specific goals defined in various strategic documents in education in general, and in AE in particular²¹⁴. The principal priority for the education sector in BiH is to implement those activities that have been agreed between all education authorities in strategic documents, standards and directives on education.

For many international donors, however, the topics LLL and AE are often rather add-ons or smaller secondary projects within larger projects in the education sector. This assessment was confirmed by a number of interviewees. This explains why no projects are currently listed in the donor mapping database in the sub-sector “Lifelong learning”²¹⁵.

The biggest impetus for the advancement of AE in BiH certainly comes from DVVI (see Chapter VI) and the EU institutions. Claims and interference from the EU are accepted and welcomed from the side of BiH authorities due to BiH's aspirations to become an EU Member State in the near future.

The EU's priorities to support BiH in the education sector have been defined in Article 100 of the

²¹³ Interview with a political representative from the MoCA

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ BiH [Donor mapping Database](#) website

“Stabilisation and Association Agreement”²¹⁶. This makes raising the level of vocational education and training in line with the “Copenhagen Declaration” one of the focus areas. BiH has taken part in various EU programmes and instruments over the last decade. The VET and ALE sectors mainly profited from participation in the PHARE, OBNOVA, CARDS²¹⁷ and Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) assistance programmes.

EU IPA (through the Danube Transnational Programme) co-funded the “Learning by Doing” project between 2017 and 2019, which aimed to improve capacities of VET sector stakeholders and develop secondary education training schemes that facilitate the transition from education to work, boost youth employment, and reduce labour market disparity. The project was implemented in Sarajevo Canton by the Chamber of Commerce and the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth²¹⁸. Project funds supported workshops for employees on topics such as ‘Stress at work and burnout, coping and prevention’, ‘Autogenic training’, ‘Communication with clients’, ‘Project management’ and ‘Presentation skills. Moreover, they served to create a video to promote secondary vocational education, leaflets, a blog, the implementation of round tables, and fact-finding visits²¹⁹.

Probably the most prominent EU instrument to foster international mobility, learning and ex-

change among young people in Europe is the **Erasmus+** programme, which is supervised by the European Education, Audio-visual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). The latest BiH 2020 Report by the EU Commission stresses that participation in Erasmus+ “fosters young people’s non-formal learning at international and national levels to enhance their competencies, skills, and employability”²²⁰. The Erasmus+ database shows that there are currently 80 projects based in Bosnia and Herzegovina²²¹. Educational authorities are quite optimistic with regard to the new 2021-2027 Erasmus+ programme, expecting it to broaden possibilities, including in ALE. At state level, BiH’s participation in Erasmus+ is coordinated by APOSO. National authorities value Erasmus+, as it “provides an opportunity to organisations from BiH to keep up with international trends, but also creates a space for our international partners to come here and see what we are doing”²²².

A current project in adult education funded by Erasmus+ is the **CORE** project (assessing Competences for REintegration)²²³. It “addresses counsellors who work with disadvantaged young adults who are not in employment, education or training and who support them in the process of gaining awareness of their own competences”. Through specific training, counsellors are expected to be able to provide more targeted assistance

²¹⁶ Delegation of the EU to BiH & EU Special Representative in BiH, [education sector](#) website

²¹⁷ Poland and Hungary Assistance for the Restructuring of the Economy (PHARE), EU support programme for the rebuilding of Bosnia, Croatia and FYROM (Macedonia) (OBNOVA), Community assistance for reconstruction, development, and stabilisation (CARDS)

²¹⁸ Interreg – Danube Transnational Programme, [Learning by doing project](#) website

²¹⁹ Tubić, S. & Duhović, A. (2019). Pregled stanja o finansijskim izdavanjima za oblast obrazovanja odraslih (Review of the situation on financial allocations for the field of adult education), pp. 36 et seqq. Sarajevo: DVV International. (unpublished)

²²⁰ European Commission (2020), p. 99

²²¹ [Erasmus+ projects in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) website

²²² Interview with a political representative from the MoCA

²²³ [ProfilPASS CORE project](#) website

to young people in need. The project is being implemented with partner organisations from Germany (DIE), Slovenia (Andragoski zavod Ljudska univerza Velenje), Serbia (Laris), and BiH (Association for Competency Development S.K.I.L.L.S.).

BiH participates in the **EU EPALE**²²⁴, a “multilingual, open membership community of adult learning professionals, including adult educators and trainers, guidance and support staff, researchers and academics, and policymakers”. As a platform and a community, it offers its members possibilities to connect with and learn from colleagues across Europe, and provides comprehensive information and self-learning options for adult education practitioners.

To deepen and root the offers by EPALE in the member states, each member state appoints a national partner organisation. This task is performed in BiH by APOSO²²⁵. APOSO has its seat in Mostar, and two regional units are located in Sarajevo and Banja Luka, respectively. The Banja Luka Unit is working on the development of Vocational Education and Training, Adult Education and Lifelong Learning. The Agency promotes regional cooperation including exchange, study trips, counselling, professional support between relevant actors from B&H and Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo and Macedonia.

EPALE supports the implementation of the renewed European Agenda for Adult Learning (EAAL) which defines the focus for European co-

operation in adult education policies until 2020. The national coordinator for EAAL in BiH is hosted at the APOSO Unit in Banja Luka.

Three NGOs from BiH are members of the **European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA)**²²⁶, “the voice of non-formal adult education in Europe”.

- Social Educational Centre– BanjaLuka
- Libar Vocational High School
- Friends of Education Amica EDUCA

As noted above, most actors in Bosnia and Herzegovina implement lifelong learning and adult education measures within larger project settings in education and the labour market. ALE in itself is often not explicitly mentioned in the project descriptions.

The **EU Delegation in Bosnia-Herzegovina**²²⁷ recently announced that it will continue to help improve the BiH education system with a new project called “Education to Employment” worth EUR 2.6 million. The goals are to develop modern lifelong career guidance services, better higher education and vocational education and training, new study programmes and curricula for teacher training colleges, and to support local employment partnerships and public employment services.

The **European Training Foundation**²²⁸ (active in BiH since 1997) cooperates with and complements the work of the European Commission and the European External Action Service in BiH. It offered expertise in 2020 on Bosnia and Herzegovina’s

²²⁴ [EPALE website](#)

²²⁵ [EPALE National Support Service BiH website](#)

²²⁶ [EAEA Members in BiH website](#)

²²⁷ EU Delegation [press release 18 December 2020](#)

²²⁸ [ETF Bosnia and Herzegovina overview website](#)

referencing report to the European Qualifications Framework, as well as input to activities promoting the accreditation of non-formal learning.

By promoting the reform of higher education in BiH in line with the European Higher Education Area and respective diverse activities, the **Council of Europe**²²⁹ contributes to increasing mobility and employability. The focus is on establishing qualification standards and learning outcomes by means of further training for university employees and civil servants.

The **GIZ** can be considered the most important international partner for BiH in vocational education and training. GIZ is implementing the project “Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Bosnia and Herzegovina”²³⁰ from 2017 to 2023. The project goal is to anchor dual vocational education and training in the structures and processes of the selected TVET actors, support exchange between public and private stakeholders to define occupational standards, and develop specific teaching and learning materials. GIZ also explicitly contributed between 2010 and 2016 to the advancement of AE and lifelong learning in BiH. The project “Promoting adult education in Bosnia and Herzegovina” supported “reforms that improved job-seeker employability by emphasising lifelong learning and introducing modern adult education legislation and qualification frameworks”²³¹. 22 advisors at the Pedagogical Institute and 100 teachers attended a training course on teaching adults as part of the project

period. 20 of them received training as teacher trainers. Furthermore, project input was used to draft legislation on adult education and qualifications frameworks in various cantons, and 17 training programmes were developed on the basis of the needs of the labour market. The project also implemented the online database obuke.ba²³², which provides an overview of available non-formal training opportunities, and introduced the Competence Pass for application in employment agencies.

With its Bosnia and Herzegovina Employment Support Programme (2017-2021), the **World Bank** predominantly engages in the area of the labour market and employment²³³.

Another active partner in economics and employment is the **Government of Switzerland and the SDC** (the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation). With the “Skills for Jobs” project (Prilika Plus), the Swiss Government aims “to enhance employability and productivity of job-seekers, vocational training school students, and employees in need of new skills”²³⁴. Besides providing further training to the unemployed and school graduates across BiH, the project focuses on developing labour-market-orientated curricula and work standards. One significant output for the advancement of AE is the “Handbook for Adult Training Providers” with guidelines and instruments for planning, implementing and evaluating adult training programmes, funded by “Skills for Jobs” and compiled by the Centre for Development Evaluation

²²⁹ [Council of Europe in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) website

²³⁰ GIZ [Technical Vocational Education and Training \(TVET\) in Bosnia and Herzegovina project](#) website

²³¹ GIZ [Promoting adult education project](#) website

²³² Online platform and database [obuke.ba](#)

²³³ World Bank [Bosnia and Herzegovina Employment Support Program project](#) website

²³⁴ SDC [Skills for Jobs project](#) website

and Social Research in Sarajevo²³⁵. In addition, SDC currently runs several projects which touch upon ALE in the broadest sense. MarketMakers (2017-2021) aims to reduce youth unemployment through private sector growth, self-employment and new ventures, as well as social enterprises. Youth for Change (2017-2023) focuses on the promotion of youth community initiatives and social entrepreneurship. “Improving nursing care for better health services”²³⁶ (2017-2021) supports the improvement of nursing training.

Guided by its interest in EU accession, BiH has already participated in the **OECD**-led Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). So far, it has not yet taken part in the OECD’s Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC). As informed by a political representative at state level, participation in PIAAC is among the long-term goals as soon as the necessary preconditions are met.

The **International Labour Organization** actively supports local employment partnerships, public employment services, and the promotion of entrepreneurship in BiH. The BPK Goražde celebrated the kick-off of a local employment partnership to support local economic and social development in 2019²³⁷. Funded by the EU to a tune of EUR 4 million, the project is being implemented with support from the ILO, and is located within the EU project “Establishment of effective ways of participation of relevant actors

in the process of adult education in the context of lifelong learning”. Our interviewees stressed that the location of international firms throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina played an important role in raising awareness of and demand for adult education and training. In Goražde, for instance, it is reported that a number of programmes were developed in collaboration with the local TVET school and ALDI with the purpose of meeting the needs of the growing industry²³⁸.

As a reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic, the ILO is working together with UNICEF on the project “Business Unusual: Reimagining Education for Marginalized Girls and Boys during and post COVID-19 in Bosnia and Herzegovina”²³⁹. Here the ILO will focus in particular on promoting e-learning and blended learning in TVET, and inter alia on professional development for TVET providers to create, facilitate and implement e-learning/blended learning.

The **U.S. Embassy in BiH** is active with its Democracy and Human Rights Education Programme²⁴⁰. The goal of the programme was to prepare young people to be active, committed, informed citizens through civic education in primary and secondary education, and to promote quality education through teacher training programmes and intercultural exchanges throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. Project activities included teacher certification programmes and development of high-quality teacher training modules

²³⁵ Centre for Development Evaluations and Social Science Research (2018). [PrilikaPlus Handbook for Adult Training Providers](#)

²³⁶ SDC [Bosnia and Herzegovina: Improving nursing care for better health services project](#) website

²³⁷ [Employment Service BPK Goražde](#) website announcement

²³⁸ Interview with the director of a Pedagogical Institute in FBiH

²³⁹ ILO [Business Unusual: Reimagining Education for Marginalized Girls and Boys during and post COVID-19 in Bosnia and Herzegovina project](#) website

²⁴⁰ U.S. Embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina [Democracy and Human Rights Education project](#) website

and textbooks. **USAID** aims to foster political, economic and social participation of women with the project “Empowering Women in Bosnia and Herzegovina”²⁴¹.

The **Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)**²⁴² is committed to improving inclusive, high-quality education, as well as curriculum reform, and to developing teaching and learning material, as well as establishing continuous professional development for teachers.

The **British Council**²⁴³ is committed in BiH to creating international opportunities through language training, arts and education. It currently is implementing two projects in the adult education sector: the EU Scheme for Young Professionals in BiH, aiming at professional capacity-building among young civil servants, and the Western

Balkan Science Engagement Programme (SEP), which focuses on capacity-building among early-career researchers.

In conclusion, it is possible to state that various actors were and are active in BiH with their projects and initiatives, but that what is missing is coordination and prioritisation from the local authorities. Similar to national budget lines, AE projects and activities are not monitored in a central category, as international projects seldom address AE or LLL in exclusivity. Some projects are replicated many times (i.e., initiatives to introduce dual TVET and address unemployment and professional development for teachers), while others are of a short-term nature (for example the obuke.ba platform), and fail to install the requisite sustainability mechanisms in order to ensure that achievements are extended beyond the project term.

²⁴¹ USAID [Empowering Women in Bosnia and Herzegovina project](#) website

²⁴² OSCE Mission to BiH [education sector](#) website

²⁴³ British Council in BiH [‘Our work in education and society’](#) website

XI. Challenges and future developments

Like many other countries in Central and Eastern Europe, BiH was under a Communist political regime during the second half of the 20th century. Its path to democracy was interrupted by a brutal war in which social systems and infrastructure were damaged or completely destroyed. The country's post-war route was very often termed as a "transition" period. It was marked by permanent welfare state reforms that aimed to bring the state structures closer in line with European political and social trends, eventually reflecting its aspirations towards EU accession. At the same time, the BiH constitution shapes the administrative structure in such a way that the country is fragmented and administratively divided, a fact that slows down state-wide reform processes.

BiH is still in transition today. National, entity and cantonal authorities have started to implement social and economic reforms, but the economic situation remains poor, with high unemployment, low economic activity, and gaps between labour supply and demand. BiH is a candidate for accession to the EU, but there are many requirements that still have to be met along this path to fulfil the basic accession standards, also in the context of ALE. Thanks to persistent lobbying work by DVVI, the legal foundation for AE is now in place in all parts of the country. BiH's AE system will have to prevail over three fundamental challenges in future:

1. The fragmented administrative system and heterogeneous legal frameworks
2. A conceptualisation of adult education that is closely linked to the labour market (including a strong focus on skills and efficiency)

3. Establishing a culture of lifelong learning (in which the adult population recognises AE as an efficient tool to achieve private or work-related goals in an accessible and transparent system of learning opportunities)

After having adopted laws on adult education, entities and cantons now face the challenge of implementation. A revision of legal frameworks (see Chapter IV) has shown that many cantons lag behind when it comes to formulating bylaws and installing an effective system to implement the law. AE can only become effective where there is political will and capacity on the part of the administrative authorities. Due to an underdeveloped monitoring and evaluation system, it remains unclear how AE could actually work in the region. The authorities have to beware of unintended negative effects arising from the tendency to draft even more legislation and regulations without prior systematic analysis, and of the lack of availability of the relevant resources and capacities.

Raising the quality standards of AE should be the next major strategic goal. A first step towards enhanced quality assurance will be taken with the launch of the ISKOOM platform. The joint register of participants, programmes and providers offers the possibility to track changes in the field in real time, and to monitor the instruction process from enrolment to completion. It makes it possible to gather data which are to form the basis for reporting and strategic planning. The educational authorities are using the platform to gain an insight into the work of accredited organisers of AE, and are enabled to monitor, evaluate and enhance quality.

Furthermore, this concerns the professional development of teachers. Teacher training curricula

need to be revised and implemented comprehensively; standard qualifications need to be approved, and official teacher training programmes established at universities. Moreover, in order for the system to work, certificates issued for participation in AE programmes need to be valued and recognised on the market.

The match between learning content and labour market needs remains a challenge. Strengthening regional networks between formal, non-formal AE providers, the public, private and civil sectors is essential here. DVVI initiated the establishment of a network of formal and non-formal AE providers in Sarajevo Canton and BD in 2020, together with ALDI from Goražde. A network of AE organisers already exists in RS and BPK Goražde as well. They are currently committed to widening the network of formal providers to include organisers of non-formal education. The need for a network has been recognised in Herzegovina-Neretva Canton, but nothing has been done so far. Institutionalising the work of such networks, and drawing from their experience for policy implementation, is a priority challenge for the future. Such a network needs to counteract the current tendencies towards identifying AE with private providers, buying quick diplomas and accepting job opportunities abroad.

An overarching network of institutions and organisations from various sectors could help to promote a common approach to AE. AE in the sense of citizenship education is still widely considered a cost rather than an investment. A challenge will be to raise awareness of the importance of AE for society (for both economic and societal development). Instead of focusing on the economy, AE will need to be centred around the well-being of society.

The promotion of AE in BiH is largely concentrated on the work and activities done by DVVI and other international donors. A challenge will be to

make the AE system in BiH sustainable in itself. In the short term, this would require closer cooperation between international initiatives, and consultation with national authorities on purposeful activities for the country. The strategic initiatives for AE programmes should ideally come from national authorities in future.

Challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic

Quality education and learning needs to be reconsidered in the face of the pandemic. The overall number of participants was significantly reduced. Especially people from vulnerable groups suffered when programmes were cancelled. The procedures for online teaching are not precisely defined. Teachers' digital competencies have turned out to be a significant challenge, and this is something that needs to be enhanced and solved in the future.

The pandemic has increased financial insecurity for AE providers, as donors were reluctant to forward the project planning. International support for the education system in general mainly targeted formal primary and secondary education.

Restrictive measures included closing the schools and reducing on-site work in firms. This affected collaboration between AE and the labour market. There are areas of AE which it is practically impossible to teach via online learning. For instance, bricklayers or carpenters have to experience real work challenges. This affected retraining programmes in particular.

Online learning offers may furthermore provide opportunities if they ensure the equitable participation of learners from all societal groups and genders. The situation generally opened up new opportunities, and it has to be reconsidered how the AE system can be made more flexible.

XII. Conclusions and recommendations

With the basic legal framework for AE in place at state and entity levels, BiH has a sound foundation for further developments in this sector. The next important step will be to draft a new guiding strategy on AE for the years to come which can replace the “Strategic Platform for the Development of Adult Education in the Context of Lifelong Learning in BiH 2014-2020” after it has expired. This central document is a prerequisite for providers and practitioners to be able to sustainably plan and implement AE measures. It will also be necessary to align international projects with the newly-formulated objectives. This should minimise the chance that foreign interventions are replicated many times (i.e. initiatives for introducing dual TVET) without proper coordination, or that other projects of a short-term nature fail to install the requisite sustainability mechanisms in order to ensure that achievements are continued beyond the project term.

- ⇒ Formulate a guiding AE strategy for the years to come
- ⇒ Align international projects with national development goals
- ⇒ Register, label and visualise AE activities funded by international donors, especially if AE is only a partial activity within a larger project

Furthermore, it is recommended that lawmakers in BiH add substantial bylaws which are based on monitoring results and best practices. Only the reflection of the perspective and needs of adult learners will allow the legislative authorities to understand which regulation is actually needed in order to facilitate ALE (for example in progressing with VNFIL and RPL), and where over-regulation can be avoided at the same time. Special attention

should be paid to allowing access to primary adult education for vulnerable groups. Use should therefore be made of statistical data for all law-making and planning processes related to AE.

- ⇒ Continue efforts to harmonise legislation across entities and cantons
- ⇒ Establish a common system of monitoring and evaluation that can inform the evidence-based development and revision of laws and bylaws
- ⇒ Develop and standardise procedures to analyse and anticipate the learning needs of different groups of adult learners

AE regulations in BiH currently tend to be orientated towards achieving continuous education and training and professional development, rather than towards citizenship education or education for personal well-being and health. This study reveals that adult education in BiH is still largely concentrated on formal learning activities which relate to the work environment. It is recommended to give more space to the development of non-formal, informal and self-driven learning processes when AE measures are setup and implemented. Adults need to be encouraged to take responsibility for their own personal development throughout their lifetimes. In societal terms, this requires systematic awareness raising with regard to the value of ALE for economic, social and personal development in order to make real progress towards a learning society.

- ⇒ Raise awareness among citizens on the advantages of continuous non-formal AE for personal, social and economic development
- ⇒ Encourage people from vulnerable groups to participate in non-formal and informal education and learning activities

The fact that skilled and specialised persons represent the group with the highest unemployment rate in BiH indicates that education content does not match labour market needs. Joint efforts by both the government and the private sector are therefore needed in order to achieve coherence between AE content and demands from the labour market.

- ⇒ Improve inter-ministerial cooperation and exchange
- ⇒ Make employers partners for the development of curricula and provision of further training
- ⇒ Institutionalise cooperation between companies, policymakers, education institutions and AE providers in networks, also across entities, to exchange and learn from good practices

Whereas participation in active labour market programmes and primary AE programmes is free of charge in most administrative units of the country, further professional development and citizenship education has to be largely financed by the learners themselves. Steps should be taken to reduce the costs of further training through public incentives for employers and providers. Greater freedom should also be given to public providers in budgeting and financial management when it comes to raising own revenues from offering additional adult education programmes.

- ⇒ Monitor and coordinate public and private AE spending
- ⇒ Allow schools that engage as AE providers greater freedom in budgeting and financial management of own resources
- ⇒ Make adult education accessible and affordable for everyone, for example through learning vouchers for individuals and tax incentives for employers and providers

The involvement of other potential providers of non-formal and informal adult education and learning activities is particularly critical. Since public spending on AE is either covered in the budget line for VET schools or for employment measures, financial resources are hardly accessible for small non-formal AE providers. It is necessary to develop a sustainable, long-term strategy in BiH which includes non-formal providers in public funding schemes. Utilising the full potential in the AE provider landscape would also mean activating art schools, museums and theatres. A good tool for transparent information provision is the ISKOOM platform, where many more providers and programmes are to be registered in the near future.

- ⇒ Activate and recognise the work done by providers of non-formal and informal ALE activities through targeted awareness-raising campaigns
- ⇒ Promote the application and use of the ISKOOM platform as a register for providers and programmes, and as a valuable tool for information and monitoring

In order to professionalise teaching in AE in the future, greater emphasis should be placed on the importance of teaching quality and the special characteristics and needs of adult learners. AE providers and political stakeholders should develop a common understanding of the profession which is still sufficiently flexible to encompass the diversity of AE and the resulting demands for AE teachers and trainers.

- ⇒ Develop a common understanding of the desired competencies and qualities of AE teachers
- ⇒ Expand the availability and provision of adult educator training programmes, for example at universities or through work-based training

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