



# Adult Education in Montenegro



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# **ADULT EDUCATION IN MONTENEGRO**

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e-mail: [juventas@t-com.me](mailto:juventas@t-com.me)

**For the publisher:**

Ivana Vujović

**Author:**

Mira Popović

**Print:**

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# INTRODUCTION

Lifelong education is an organized and institutionalized system of activities implemented to constantly improve knowledge, skills and competences, regardless of the educational level and the age of an individual. All activities in this area lead to the achievement of higher market competitiveness and employability of those human resources who have completed secondary education or left school earlier, willing to improve their existing knowledge and develop new skills; at the same time, they constitute the most employable group of work-capable population. Why can we say this? Because persons with their newly acquired knowledge or improved existing knowledge acquired in the area of key competences or professional qualifications have more employment opportunities for jobs with insufficient human resources in Montenegro, necessary to reduce the costs of imported labor force. Therefore, the work on human resources is the key of lifelong education.

In order to understand better the term *lifelong education*, we should make a historical overview indicating the time and reasons for its appearance, as well as the course of development up to its current form.

Lifelong education is a relatively recent term. It appeared at the end of the 60s and the beginning of 70s of last century. Most of the countries saw quick recovery after World War II, which was followed by industrial development, economic growth and, consequently, GDP growth. These were the changes that also reflected on education, in other words, they were tightly related to it. The need of improving overloaded and inefficient educational plans and programs became more expressed, and in some countries, claims for such reforms were accompanied even by riots (first in the US, after which they came to Europe, concretely France, etc.).

This movement only strengthened the global idea that already existed, but needed a clear-cut form. It was in this way that the ***International Commission on the Development of Education*** started working in 1970, chaired by Edgar Faure, former minister of education and prime minister of France, which also included six more people with high expertise<sup>1</sup>.

The 1972 report positioned lifelong education on the map of the necessary educational profile of each individual. At the time of changes, which also brought a gap between supply and demand of educated people, the standard education form failed, that is, it did not yield the desired results, necessary for the young generation and did not go hand in hand with permanent development and innovation in science and technology. The report states: *“They appreciate that fresh progress is possible and desirable, by making the highest possible level of knowledge available to the greatest possible number of ‘learners’<sup>2</sup>.”* Therefore, the report indicates that *the concept of democracy itself must be developed, for it can no longer be limited to a minimum of juridical guarantees protecting citizens from the arbitrary exercise of power in a subsistence society furthermore, and in conjunction with this, more support must also be given to educational requirements, for there cannot—or will not—be a democratic and egalitarian relationship between classes divided by excessive inequality in education ; and the aim and content of education must be recreated, to allow both for the new features of society and the new features of democracy<sup>3</sup>.*

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1 The remaining members of this Commission were Felipe Herrera, Abdul-Razzak Kaddoura, Henry Lopes, Arthur V. Petrovsky, Majid Rahnema, Frederick Champion Ward.

2 *Learning to be, the world of education today and tomorrow*, UNESCO, Paris, 1972, p. 20

3 *Learning to be, the world of education today and tomorrow*, UNESCO, Paris, 1972, p. 26

The Commission's work was founded on four assumptions: 1) the world has common aspirations, problems and trends, despite all other major differences; 2) belief in democracy, the keystone of which is education; 3) the aim of development of each individual as complete fulfillment; 4) only lifelong learning can shape a complete human being. These set the basis of lifelong learning and also modern democratic society, which is dependent on its educational policy, the focus of which is learning.

In this Report, lifelong learning is not considered from the point of view of a continuous schooling process, adult education or continuous professional development of teachers. It is positioned as a principle which builds up an entire educational system. The Report cause great expectations, even unreachable in some cases, bearing in mind the complexity of factors and the number of stakeholders influencing the creation of public policies in education.

The second report was written around twenty years later in the contexts which is best described by Roberto Carneiro and Alexandra Draxler: *"The final decades of the 20th century were particularly rich in ideological, economic and policy changes in approaches to the role of education in society. As some of the traditional links between education and human development seemed not to work as planned, a range of criticisms, reflections, and actions attempted to establish a closer causality between education and social harmony"*<sup>4</sup>. In 1993, UNESCO formed a new **Committee for Education for 21st Century**, chaired by Jacques Delors, former president of the European Commission, composed of 15 experts in education. That Commission published its final report in 1996 "Learning: the treasure within", also known as the "Delors Report", which had major impact on social discourse on lifelong learning.

By considering education to be the basis of personal and social development of individual, this Report set the assumption that lifelong learning will be a norm that will meet the 21st century's society needs. This is where the concept of four pillars of education generated: 1) **Learning to be** – referring to learning to develop own skills, with as much autonomy as possible, learning to evaluate and accept responsibility; 2) **Learning to know** – basis of lifelong education through combining broad general education with the possibility of in-depth exploration of particular areas, i.e. learn to learn in order to benefit for oneself and obtain the possibilities offered by lifelong education; 3) **Learning to do** – education gained by professional qualifications or at workplace, referring to the skills that will make it possible for an individual to cope with numerous unpredicted situations, through practical application of the learned contents within different experiences; 4) **Learning to live together** – as inevitable in the process of understanding the differences, as well as independence on each other, followed by respecting fundamental values such as pluralism, mutual understanding and peace<sup>5</sup>. This Committee retained its primary role of formal education, but, in the essence, it raised the value of secondary education and tolerance threshold for alternative ways of acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills, the number of which increased. For the needs of harmonization of competitiveness and equal opportunities, the Committee upgraded the concept of lifelong learning through the cohesion of: competitiveness, cooperation and solidarity<sup>6</sup>. Intentions of the Committee have the tendency of expanding the notion of lifelong learning so that each individual could adapt to changes in the nature of work, assist in forming of a whole human being that thereby forms its critical faculty and the ability to act, in order to enable people to develop their self-awareness and their environment in order to be equal and efficient participants in society, in their work and, above all, active citizens.

The conclusion of the 2013 Senior Expert Group meeting was that after all the changes that took place after 90s, it is necessary to consider education differently and to strengthen the link between society, state and market. These numerous challenges at global level may be recognized in Montenegro as well, whereby Montenegro has additional load of problems of the transition, which makes it difficult to find a solution for a growing problem of unemployment of national human resources.

After having examined all tendencies in education, which have considerably bypassed the educational system of Montenegro, it is clear that the state is presently at the crossroads where it is necessary to give a valid response to the need of establishment of a qualitative system, the outcome of which will be employable human resources in Montenegrin labor market and beyond. The fact that the negotiation chapter 26 – Education and Culture has been provisionally closed has resolved neither these nor many

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4 Education for the 21st century: lessons and challenges, Roberto Carneiro i Alexandra Draxler, European journal of education, Vol.43, No. 2, 2008, p. 1

5 Find more at [http://www.dadalos.org/politicka\\_didaktika/bildung.htm](http://www.dadalos.org/politicka_didaktika/bildung.htm)

6 Learning: The treasure within, UNESCO, 1996, p. 16.

other problems in education. The educational system is marked with numerous anomalies which allow neither its functional harmonization with the European model nor enforcement of the current legislative framework. This system is among the most vulnerable in terms of corruption, which is indicated not only by NGOs' findings but also by the European Commission Progress Report on Montenegro for 2014. The said Report indicates also the following: *"Regarding the reform of vocational education, entrepreneurship centers were established in three secondary vocational education schools in north-east Montenegro. The share of 54 enrolment in upper secondary VET, with roughly two thirds, is relatively high. However, attractiveness, in particular of the 3-year VET programs, is decreasing... Some progress has been made in the field of education and culture. The mismatch between skills available and labor market needs still remains an issue. Overall, preparations are advanced"*<sup>7</sup>

This said, it can be concluded that significant efforts are required in order to improve this area, but the open question remains – is there enough political willingness and institutional capacities to do so?

In democratically developed countries, the promotion of lifelong education aims at increasing employability and competitiveness of human resources; however, do young people in Montenegro have the opportunity for lifelong education? Unlike in the system which was in force until 20 years ago, when it was possible to work without professional development, using only the knowledge and skills acquired during education, nowadays employees cannot afford that. Therefore, there is a reasonable question if young people in Montenegro are given the opportunity to constantly improve their knowledge and skills through a system of lifelong learning and education?

Considering the complexity of the situation of our educational system and the suspicion that current educational system in Montenegro may successfully adapt to the model of gaining knowledge by lifelong learning, it is hard to speak and think of supplementary forms of development of secondary school and university students without being skeptical. One of the numerous problems of this form of improvement of the existing and the development of new knowledge and skills is, among others, lack of familiarity of the target group with this model for the improvement of knowledge.

The concept of lifelong education is impossible to examine independently from lifelong learning. Their mutual dependence is reflected in the fact that after the completion of regular schooling, in the majority of cases, new knowledge and skills are acquired in the lifelong educational system. Therefore, it is only after the completion of regular schooling that lifelong learning and lifelong education concepts gain in importance and start to be fully implemented. It is very important to emphasize that the need for lifelong learning, and at the same time, for applying the lifelong education process originates from work and work practice, or individual's striving to be constantly involved in modern trends during work practice. Consequently, individual's striving to apply lifelong learning principle does not come from the contents of any legal act, but exclusively from their own aspirations and needs. However, this does not mean that this area should be legally defined by arranging the lifelong education system.

Unfortunately, in our case, the training process of human resources who convey knowledge ends with the moment of completion of regular schooling. Hence, someone who does not participate in the lifelong learning process cannot be expected to convey the necessary knowledge and experience in a quality way to a final beneficiary through lifelong education, especially knowing that knowledge and experience to be conveyed are "shaped" after the education of the teaching staff. This is the motive for creation of the administrative and legislative framework for lifelong education process. Legislative framework relates primarily to the arrangement of the control over teachers' competence, quality and way of conveying knowledge, in accordance with international and national legislation and recommendations. This is the prerequisite for conveying knowledge to future human resources in the lifelong education process. However, the lifelong education process exists and lives independently from legislative framework, because the way of acquiring new knowledge and skills largely depends on the final beneficiary as well

Montenegro has partially identified the described issue and accordingly has adopted a set of legislation governing this area, which will be discussed in the continuation of this analysis.

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<sup>7</sup> Montenegro Progress Report for 2014 by European Commission, Chapter 26, p. 67

# 1. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK (INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL)

Normative acts cannot limit the scope of lifelong learning since knowledge and skills permanently evolve depending on the needs of the work process and technological progress and relate to all fields of social development. The contents of lifelong learning can be legally governed to a certain extent only by vocational acts. Therefore, our scope of interest of regulating this area relates only to questions dealing with the way of conveying knowledge in lifelong learning process through lifelong education.

## 1.1 International framework

The aim of long-lasting work in education in the European Union is certainly reflected through the term Europe based on knowledge, which means that knowledge is taken as one of fundamental values of European society<sup>8</sup>. European Union countries are independent in selecting the system and the contents of education and vocational development to be offered to their citizens<sup>9</sup>. However, the rules of the **consolidated version of the Treaty on the European Union** imposes cooperation among EU member states in education. Therefore, EU countries retain their sovereignty in the part of their educational policy, which may not act to the detriment of the rights of other EU citizens. Of course, this is not easy to achieve. A basis for further improvement of education has been established through a set of international acts.

The right to learn is one of the fundamental human rights according to the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations**. A provision of Article 26 of the Universal Declaration states that *“Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. **Technical and professional education** shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.”*<sup>10</sup> One of the ways to acquire the necessary knowledge and experience is also lifelong education. Therefore, we can consider the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the UN as the starting point of the international legislative framework governing lifelong education, ratified by Montenegro.

These principles of the Universal Declaration have been recognized in the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education, confirming that *“education is a human right, and that higher education, which is instrumental in the pursuit and advancement of knowledge, constitutes an exceptionally rich cultural and scientific asset for both individuals and society”*<sup>11</sup>. Certainly, this Convention puts the most emphasis on recognition of higher education qualification, as in its title, but it also launches the question of student mobility, which can be considered as the most important link in modern societies, aspiring to improve knowledge and skills of their human resources.

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8 Determined to promote the development of the highest possible level of knowledge for their peoples through a wide access to education and through its continuous updating. Consolidated version of the treaty on the functioning of European Union, Official journal of the European Union, 26.10.2015, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/collection/eu-law/treaties.html>, p. 3.

9 Consolidated version of the treaty on the functioning of European Union, Official journal of the European Union, 26.10.2015, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/collection/eu-law/treaties.html> Art. 165 and 166, paragraph 1 p. 74

10 United Nations General Assembly – Universal Declaration on Human Rights – adopted and proclaimed Resolution of the General Assembly, 217A ( III ) from 10 December 1948, Art. 26, p. 6

11 Declaration of the European Ministers of Vocational Education and Training, and the European Commission, convened in Copenhagen on 29 and 30 November 2002, on enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training , the Copenhagen Declaration, p. 1, <https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/hr/resources/downloads/misc-documents.iehtml>

The Lisbon Treaty from 2010 aims at promoting employment growth and puts special emphasis on creating unified IT diplomas application throughout the EU, knowledge of languages etc., all of which is included in the term *professional qualifications*, with the obligation of all signatories to work on the reduction of the number of persons having only vocational education between the ages of 18 and 24 (3-year secondary schools), who are not included in lifelong education programs. All these categories can be linked to lifelong education particularly in the part of recognition of higher education diplomas that are part of vocational education and that will be recognized throughout Europe in order to expand the market for individual countries and create the possibility of improvement and continuous work on human resources in the whole Europe, while encouraging quality teaching staff to implement educational programs. One of the instructions of the Treaty is the necessity of close cooperation with other social partners, whose activity and innovation can improve the lifelong learning process through special systems and obtain a better position in Europe as a whole. This would mean that the best adult educational programs are promoted also beyond the country of implementation.

**Declaration of the European Ministers of Vocational Education and Training, and the European Commission, convened in Copenhagen on 29 and 30 November 2002, on enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training**, better known as **the Copenhagen Declaration**, continued what the Lisbon Treaty had started – the idea of knowledge as a most profitable asset that Europe can develop and use in many ways in a competitive match with other world powers. *“The development of high quality vocational education and training is a crucial and integral part of this strategy, notably in terms of promoting social inclusion, cohesion, mobility, employability and competitiveness.”*<sup>12</sup> A special overview of the cooperation and elimination of the bases for discrimination by *“facilitating access for all to education and training systems, and opening up education and training systems to the wider world”*<sup>13</sup>, which calls for stronger and closer cooperation in vocational education and development.

This Declaration did not leave the concept of lifelong learning unknown or undefined, but placed it in correlation with the mobility of persons, which relies again on the idea Europe 2020 and on the need to improve knowledge of all individuals living in Europe and considering it in the light of the work on personal development: *“Strategies for lifelong learning and mobility are essential to promote employability, active citizenship, social inclusion and personal development.”*

In the era of globalization, the question who at the global level tends to connect at all levels U eri globalizacije kada se pitanje ko na svetskom nivou teži povezivanju na svim nivoima, konkurentnosti stručnog i obrazovnog kadra je dobilo na značaju. The competitiveness policy surpasses the borders of the EU because EU member states must compete with other parts of the developed world and strengthen their position in the domain of economic, technological and social innovation, for the benefit of their citizens<sup>14</sup>. That is why the European Council set *“the strategic objective for the European Union to become the world’s most dynamic knowledge based economy”*<sup>15</sup>.

The Copenhagen process has produced the idea of close cooperation of all European countries in vocational education and development, which established the vision Europe 2020. Clear parameters and guidelines have been set, which should create favorable environment for higher mobility of human resources, facilitation of selection of education methods in the period from 2011 to 2020, through work at national level, in order to facilitate employability, increase the quality of knowledge of teaching staff,

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12 Declaration of the European Ministers of Vocational Education and Training, and the European Commission, convened in Copenhagen on 29 and 30 November 2002, on enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training , the Copenhagen Declaration, p. 2, <https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/hr/resources/downloads/misc-documents.iehtml>

13 Declaration of the European Ministers of Vocational Education and Training, and the European Commission, convened in Copenhagen on 29 and 30 November 2002, on enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training , the Copenhagen Declaration, p. 2, <https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/hr/resources/downloads/misc-documents.iehtml>

14 **Globalization involves economic integration; the transfer of policies across borders; the transmission of knowledge; cultural stability; the reproduction, relations, and discourses of power; it is a global process, a concept, a revolution, and “an establishment of the global market free from sociopolitical control.** P. V. Nikitin and J. E. Elliott, “Freedom and the Market (An Analysis of the Anti-globalisation Movement from the Perspective of the Theoretical Foundation of the Evaluation of the Dynamics of Capitalism by Palanyi, Hayek and Keynes)”, The Forum for Social Economics, Fall 2000, pp. 1-16, p. 14, as cited in G. Gaburro and E. O’Boyle, “Norms for Evaluating Economic Globalization”, International Journal of Social Economics, Vol. 30, No. 1/2, 2003, pp. 95- 118, p. 115.

15 Declaration of the European Ministers of Vocational Education and Training, and the European Commission, convened in Copenhagen on 29 and 30 November 2002, on enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training , the Copenhagen Declaration, p. 1, <https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/hr/resources/downloads/misc-documents.iehtml>

develop key competences, professional skills and create a common system of competences which will be equally valued throughout Europe and represent the foundation of higher mobility of people.

**The Bruges Communiqué** from 07 December 2010 is the continuation of the Copenhagen process. The backbone of the Communiqué is a continuous work on developing human resources through various forms of training (**all types of learning, also including in-company training and work-based learning, and should be equally accessible to both women and men**<sup>16</sup>), as well as the necessity of close cooperation with other areas of public policies. One of the objectives set for the period until 2014 is harmonization and promotion of the national qualification framework and guidelines for the assessment of formal and non-formal learning, which is the core of lifelong learning<sup>17</sup>. In aging Europe, there is an emerging need of upgrading personal capacities in order to extend the working age of an individual along with the established system of non-formal and informal learning. *“These broader competences – key competences – are important to succeed in life, and it should be possible to acquire them as well in VET as in any other form of education. Also VET has to give learners a chance to catch up, complement and build on key competences without neglecting occupational skills. ICT skills and competences and foreign language skills, in particular, will become more and more critical in terms of getting and keeping a job and in managing everyday life”*.

The Bruges Communiqué envisaged a set of measures that each signatory country should implement and continuously work on in order to achieve the foreseen standard of 15% participation of adults in education until 2020. Some of these measures are aimed at vocational education providers and their involvement in the training process itself and training of special categories of the unemployed or the hard-to-employ such as non-qualified and elderly persons and women, while others directly refer to the need of harmonization of the legislative framework and adoption of special regulations in order to recognize non-formal and informal education and establish the connection with national vocational qualifications, which would lead to *“increasing coherence between the two European credit systems - ECVET and ECTS”*.

## 1.2 National legal framework

The following Montenegrin regulations govern the system of lifelong adult education: Constitution of Montenegro, Law on Vocational Education, Law on Adult Education, Adult Education Plan of the Government of Montenegro, Law on International and Vocational Qualifications, Law on the National Qualification Framework, Law on Labor, Law on Civil Servants and State Employees, Strategy for Vocational Education Development, Strategy for Adult Education in Montenegro (2005-2015), Action plan for Adult Education (2010-2014), Strategy for Vocational Education Development (2010-2014), Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for Education and Training Development in Montenegro (2010-2011), Strategy for Lifelong Entrepreneurial Learning (2008-2014), Strategy for Introducing Montenegrin Qualification Framework (2008-2013), Strategy for Establishing the National Qualification Framework in Montenegro (2008-2010), Strategy for Development and Financing of Education in Montenegro (2011-2020), Strategy for Adult Education (2015-2025), Action Plans for Implementation, Teaching Plans and a number of rulebooks, among which the following is crucial for the implementation of lifelong learning – *“Rulebook on the method of assessing knowledge and skills acquired over a short period according to programs for further qualification, re-qualification, specialization, in-service training and other forms of education and training (2009)”*.

**The Constitution of Montenegro** does not contain any provision governing directly the right to education. However, it guarantees the right to schooling as the manner of acquiring education. Additionally, Article 9 states that *“the ratified and published international agreements and generally accepted rules of international law shall make an integral part of the internal legal order, shall have the supremacy over the national legislation and shall apply directly when they regulate relations differently than the national legislation”*<sup>18</sup>.

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16 European Commission, The Bruges Communiqué on enhanced European cooperation in VET for 2011-2020

17 **Develop and promote the use of procedures for assessing non-formal and informal learning supported by both European and National Qualification Frameworks and Guidelines**, European Commission, The Bruges Communiqué on enhanced European cooperation in VEC for 2011-2020, Interim results for 2011-2020, item 9, [http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/vocational-policy/doc/brugescom\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/vocational-policy/doc/brugescom_en.pdf).

18 Constitution of Montenegro, Official Gazette of Montenegro, No. 1/2007, from 25.10.2007, Article 9

**The Law on Vocational Education** does not deal with the issue of lifelong learning/education; this subject is additionally elaborated in the Law on Adult Education, which sets the foundation of promotion and implementation of lifelong learning in Montenegro.

**The Law on Adult Education** defines the concept of lifelong education as “*organised overall general education, vocational education and non-formal education throughout entire life*”<sup>19</sup>. The Law subsequently recognizes four forms of education and learning: *formal, non-formal, informal and self-directed learning*<sup>20</sup>. Without proper understanding and practical application of lifelong education, the other objectives recognized by this Law would remain a dead letter. The principle of lifelong learning is achieved through the permanent vocational education conducted by schools, often in cooperation with employers. “*Non-formal education, or learning (hereinafter: non-formal education) is conducted through organised and planned goals and support, for the purpose of acquiring and improving knowledge, skills and competences, which can be tested and confirmed in the process of acquiring a national vocational qualification, i.e. key skill.*”<sup>21</sup> The way of acquiring non-formal education is defined in 3 items of Article 14 of the Law and includes a wide range of further qualifications, re-qualifications by acquiring key skills and competences up to acquiring individual knowledge and skills licensed by this authority upon the proposal of the Vocational Education Center or a provider.

**The Law on Labor** envisages the obligation of vocational training of employees in accordance with their skills and for the needs of the work process, provided by the employer’s funds<sup>22</sup>. “*When required by the work process, a new method of organization of work, and in particular when new methods in organization and technology of work are introduced and applied, the employer shall make it possible for an employee to receive education, vocational training or further improvement.*”<sup>23</sup>

Employees of public authorities also have right to vocational training, as provided in Article 11 of the **Law on Civil Servants and State Employees**, which means that also staff of state institutions can be additionally trained in their areas in order to improve the quality of public authority staff and meet the requirements of their role in state administration, which must not only be transparent, but also implies responsibility towards the beneficiaries of their services, i.e. citizens who pay for their financing.

Article 97 of the **Law on Higher Education** envisages organization of special training programs for the needs of lifelong learning in higher education in faculties, without being considered to be special study programs. The Law also defines who accredits these programs (the Council), how practical knowledge is assessed and when diplomas are issued to participants. This article sets up the foundation for development of students, standards for all higher education institutions in Montenegro which should work on the development of their students even after the completion of the formal part of education.

**The Law on National and Vocational Qualifications** introduced a change based on which unemployed persons or persons with lower educational profile are given the possibility of further qualification or re-qualification. In Article 3, items 3 and 4 give the basis for the assessment of the acquired knowledge: *undergoing knowledge assessment, skills and competencies upon the completion of a special adult education curriculum; - undergoing a direct knowledge assessment, skills and competencies in accordance with a catalogue defining standards of knowledge, skills and competencies necessary for a specific vocational qualification (hereinafter referred to as: Examination Catalogue)*<sup>24</sup>; as well as a set of rules on how to acquire and recognize foreign certificates in with the aim of unification of European labor market.

An important point the **Strategy for Vocational Education Development in Montenegro 2010-2014** relies on is the age of society. One of the objectives of the Strategy is to provide the conditions for lifelong education and higher mobility of individuals, as well as to work on the recognition of non-formal and informal learning and link them to one another. However, the concern is the reason for the improvement of existing human resources to make them more competitive at the labor market. An important argument presented in item 2.2.5 is the change introduced by the Law on National and Vocational Qualifications, based on which the objective of the Strategy itself is to achieve the connection between formal and non-formal education and create a program which would

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19 Law on Adult Education, Official Gazette of Montenegro, No. 20/2011”, Article 6 paragraph 3

20 Law on Adult Education, Official Gazette of Montenegro, No. 20/2011”, Article 8

21 Law on Adult Education, Official Gazette of Montenegro, No. 20/2011”, Article 10

22 Law on Labor, Official Gazette of Montenegro, No. 49/2008, 26/2009, 59/2011 and 66/2012.”, Article 38, paragraph 2 and 3

23 Law on Labor , Official Gazette of Montenegro, No. 49/2008, 26/2009, 59/2011 and 66/2012.”, Article 38, paragraph 1

24 Law on Adult Education, Official Gazette of Montenegro, No. 20/2011, from 15.4.2011, Article 3, indents 3 and 4

offer the possibility to students who left school earlier, persons with disabilities etc. to acquire national vocational qualification. The Strategy envisages the necessity of further work in strengthening vocational capacities of the counseling staff and the introduction of new technologies in non-formal education system. The role of the Vocational Education Center is important for the promotion of lifelong education and adult education. The Vocational Education Center certainly plays the role of driving force in adult education, which is reflected in adult educational programs that the Center must accredit. The fact is that they design the majority of the programs on their own upon the request of an employer, so the quality of adult education is partly within their responsibility, except for the part relying on the responsible Ministry. Special emphasis is put on the role of teachers, who guide students and give them support for further development by conveying their own knowledge.

**The Strategy for Vocational Education Development 2015-2020** adopted by the Ministry of Education of Montenegro, continues the mission of the Strategy 2010-2014 as for the promotion of lifelong education, increasing mobility in learning, equality in terms of learning accessibility, social cohesion and inclusion. The concept of lifelong learning is mentioned in this Strategy only as work on the promotion of lifelong education and its development. Therefore, the basis for developing and improving the situation in lifelong learning is the work on the National Qualification Framework, which supports the ideas of the Bruges Communiqué and the Copenhagen Declaration, directly related to the recognition of non-formal and informal education, and strives at the same time to reduce the number of persons who leave school earlier. One of the major preconditions for the improvement of vocational education is the work on enriching the education offer in Montenegro, which often lacks in the third category of educational programs defined in the Law of Adult Education, Article 14 item 3: *“acquiring knowledge and skills for civic democracy, environmental protection, sustainable development, family life, successful social integration, raising life quality, health education, social skills, third age and similar.”* One of very important activities defined by this Strategy is the creation of a unique database on persons who went through the adult education programs. The Strategy for Adult Education 2015-2025 clarifies the method of adopting educational programs: *Educational programs leading to the acquisition of vocational qualifications shall be adopted by the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare or adult education providers. Educational programs for acquiring key skills and key competences and other programs shall be adopted by a competent council, upon the proposal of the Vocational Education Center or adult education providers. The preparation of educational programs for training for particular vocations and other is done by the Vocational Education Center, which forms working groups composed of external associates and experts in a particular field. Educational programs for key skills and competences are usually prepared by adult education providers, with the support of the Vocational Education Center.* Accreditation of adult education programs is followed by the process of licensing adult education providers, in accordance with the Rulebook on the Conditions for Establishing Educational Institutions.

The Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for Vocational Education focuses the most on the enforcement of the **Law on National and Vocational Qualifications** in order to promote lifelong learning and non-formal education through activities such as: **Strengthening the capacities in institutions that will enforce the Law on National Vocational Qualifications and Creating the conditions for its enforcement etc.**

It is important to stress that the lifelong education principle becomes an integral part of Montenegrin educational system, being also defined by the **University of Montenegro** in its **Strategy for Introducing Lifelong Learning 2012-2014**. By applying this principle, integration of lifelong learning into our educational system creates close linkage between primary, secondary and higher education and, later, adult education. However, regardless of the mutual connection between lifelong learning and school, i.e. academic education, the University's work on this strategy should be directed on strengthening the teaching process and creating a functional system of support to lifelong learning with a set of actions headed in that direction.

The existing legal framework, which defines targets of lifelong education in Montenegro, covers a considerable number of subjects, but it should be noted that there are certain deficiencies preventing this concept from being fully applicable to each individual and from reaching its purpose, which is achieving benefits for individual, employer and society through a direct application of the acquired knowledge, skills and work experience.

## 2. ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION

### 2.1 Adult Education System in Montenegro – legislative framework and practice

The legislative framework governing Montenegrin education system is very generally defined without sufficient direct explanations and individual solutions related to adult education. There is a lack of initiatives and activities in following international trends in this subject matter and harmonization with best international standards and practice, which results in serious shortcomings in the overall quality of education.

As an illustrative example, we can refer to the Universal Declaration on Human Rights of the UN which states that everyone has right to free education, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages, which shall also be compulsory, but certainly there is a gap between Montenegro's reality and ratified international documents. In Montenegro there are *542,649 persons with the age of 10 or above. Out of them, there are 8,149 illiterate persons, which is 1.5%*<sup>25</sup>. Despite the fact that there are programs offering functional literacy to persons without elementary education, this figure is certainly high, and additional concern is the fact that there is a higher number of illiterate women. They are the most endangered part of society, having no possibility of exercising their right to professional development or adequate job, which would bring them social and health insurance and old age pension. Evidently, the policy is not inclined toward meeting fundamental needs of socially marginalized people.

Our legislative framework can surely be assessed as rather harmonized and positively set, but we are reserved as for the assessment of its implementation process. The available figures found in printed media and reports every day are not encouraging and we must invest additional efforts to overcome numerous obstacles while improving the situation in Montenegrin education, particularly in vocational education, where decrease of interest for continuation of schooling or any kind of professional development after completing secondary education is noticeable, which is one of the goals of lifelong education, currently with a negative trend.

Observed from the point of view of lifelong education, different programs have been identified offering diverse forms of professional development, but also further qualification, re-qualification and other forms of acquiring key competences or key qualifications. *Methodology for creation of educational programs*<sup>26</sup> specifies the conditions to be met by a program so it can be implemented. These conditions include: necessary equipment an adult education provider must have available, learning outcomes, duration and credit value of the program, methods of assessments, teachers etc. The important of program assessment is particularly emphasized: *Modular and credit-wise assessed educational programs enable vertical and horizontal mobility and improve the possibility of employment*<sup>27</sup>. All of these programs, naturally, must be in compliance with vocational and qualification standards. There are two ways of drafting up educational programs: 1) adult education providers may draft up the programs on their own or 2) Vocational Education Center may draft up a special program adapted to the providers, based on their instruction and aspirations.

The mere existence of a national framework does not suffice regardless of the quality of the law, implementation and application levels, without adequate institutional solutions thanks to which the laws make sense. In spite of the deficiencies in the work of those institutions involved in lifelong education processes, we must say that all of them have been set up in order to contribute to a facilitated implementation of the Strategy and improving the quality and promoting lifelong education, however, with noticeable halts and shortcomings that need to be resolved in a systematic way, which will be discussed below.

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25 Adult Education Strategy of Montenegro 2010-2015, Ministry of Education

26 Methodology for creation of educational programs, Vocational Education Center, 08.04.2015

27 Methodology for creation of educational programs, Vocational Education Center, 08.04.2015

## 2.2 Licensing and training of adult education providers

After implementing the accreditation process of adult education programs, the process of licensing adult education providers follows, in accordance with the Rulebook on the Conditions for Establishing Educational Institutions.

Latest data on licensed education providers in Montenegro<sup>28</sup> indicate **86 adult education providers**, offering **95 educational programs** leading to the acquisition of vocational qualifications (prepared by the Vocational Education Center) and **72 accredited programs** (leading to the acquisition of key skills and development of key competences)<sup>29</sup>. Those programs have unequal distribution per municipality:

1)	Podgorica	40
2)	Nikšić	10
3)	Cetinje	0
4)	Danilovgrad	3
5)	Budva	5
6)	Bar	0
7)	Ulcinj	1
8)	Kotor	2
9)	Tivat	0
10)	Herceg Novi	2
11)	Berane	4
12)	Kolašin	0
13)	Bijelo Polje	11
14)	Pljevlja	3
15)	Mojkovac	1
16)	Plav	1
17)	Rožaje	2
18)	Plužine	0
19)	Šavnik	0
20)	Žabljak	1
21)	Andrijevica	0

Table 1. Overview of the providers per municipality<sup>30</sup>

The largest share of programs is in three largest cities – Podgorica (40), Nikšić (10) and Bijelo Polje (11), while other cities either have no education providers or the number of providers is below five.

After completing the licensing process and obtaining a license, there are no defined procedures for extending a license or the period of license duration. The Law on Adult Education and the Rulebook on the Licensing Process of Educational Institutions and method of keeping the register of licensed institutions does not envisage any conditions under which providers may lose their license; however,

28 Data of the Center for Civic Education (Centar za građansko obrazovanje) collected according to the Law on Free Access to Information in the first quarter of 2015

29 Reply from the Vocational Education Center to the request for free access to information addressed by the Center for Civic Education, Decision No. 01 – 125/2, from 05.03.2015

30 Taken from the List of licensed education providers of Montenegro, p. 2

a special Rulebook on the method of issuing and revoking licenses for the work of examiners, and the form and contents of licenses for the work of examiners, has addressed this issue as for licensed examiners.

Bearing in mind that so far no quality controls have been conducted, no license has been revoked to any adult education provider. However, the Vocational Education Center started in 2015 quality controls, which will result in improving the quality of licensed providers and, at the same time, in revoking licenses to those who do not meet the set criteria any longer.

Particularly problematic are those education providers who perform training without an appropriate license, whose diplomas are not valid and who constitute a particular form of black market in this area. They charge beneficiaries for their services with no possibility of issuing a recognized diploma; their tax evasion has a harmful effect to the state as well.

Training level of teaching staff is another issue, because the Law *requires* teachers to have andragogic education<sup>31</sup>. The Strategy for Adult Education 2015-2025 states that andragogic training has been attended by almost 200 teachers and associates who work in adult education institutions/organizations.

The choice of the teaching staff is not equal throughout Montenegro. Some providers select based on vocational competences and the selection itself is done by the Teaching Council of the school<sup>32</sup>, while others choose teachers based on the qualification standards and examination catalogue with clear conditions that need to be met by a teacher. The Teaching Council does not play any role here, teachers are hired based on the decision of the employer who appoints them<sup>33</sup>. Another group of providers select teaching staff through vacancy announcement in the local media and interviews with the candidates applying for the job conducted by the project team<sup>34</sup>. These three examples illustrate the diversity of selection and training methods of the teaching staff in adult education and reflect the fact that there is no uniform standard for publishing, evaluating and hiring this personnel.<sup>35</sup>

Additionally, it should be stressed that each of the answers we have received states that training conductors have attended andragogic training by licensed trainers. For the records, Montenegro has no study department for andragogic training of the teaching staff.

### **2.3 Promotion of lifelong education among target population**

Although the Law on Adult Education<sup>36</sup> states that *an education provider shall announce education program publicly (publication, website etc.), not later than one month before the enrolment of candidates*, which obliges the provider to publish an announcement or a call for new participants, it is very difficult to implement vocational education programs efficiently unless there is a form for publishing their announcements or a system referring people to use this type of professional development.

Legal definition includes all elements of lifelong education, but the question emerges if the number of 8,715 persons who have attended any type of non-formal education is sufficient for the period of four years, bearing in mind the unemployment rate of 34,700 persons at the end of 2014<sup>37</sup>, without counting the persons who have been deleted from the records of the Employment

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31 The Law on Adult Education, Official Gazette No. 20/11, Art. 21, paragraph 2

32 Reply from the Public Institution Mixed Secondary School "Vuksan Đukić" Mojkovac to the request for free access to information addressed by Center for Civic Education, Decision No. 178, from 07.04.2015

33 Reply from the Public Institution Secondary Vocational School "Ivan Uskoković" to the request for free access to information addressed by Center for Civic Education, Decision No. 408, from 11.03.2015

34 Reply from the Public Institution Secondary School of Medicine „Dr Branko Zogović“ to the request for free access to information addressed by Center for Civic Education (the reply came by e-mail and therefore has no Decision No.), 02.03.2015

35 Law on Adult Education, Official Gazette No. 20/11, Art. 20

36 Taken from the website of the Employment Agency on 15.12.2014

37 Strategy for Adult Education of Montenegro 2010-2025, Ministry of Education, p. 22

Agency of Montenegro on various grounds. This data indicates the necessity of additional work on promoting such forms of professional development in order to reduce the percentage of persons who are beneficiaries of services and allowances given by the Employment Agency, which would add extra funds to the state budget and encourage (self)employment through a set of activities that would give exemptions and assistance to entrepreneurs more considerably than so far. Therefore, the new Adult Education Plan for the period 2015-2019 envisages the work on the *promoting advantages of lifelong learning and carrying out promotional campaigns, fairs, observing the Literacy Day, Day of Older Persons etc. intended to encourage citizens to actively participate in adult education programs*, which is the area of intervention. However, there is still concern about numerous outstanding obligations from the action plans for 2012 and 2013.

A number of documents in this area indicate that additional work on the promotion of lifelong education is necessary, not only by the Vocational Education Center, but also by other social partners who can benefit from this form of education. The Strategy for Adult Education of Montenegro 2010-2025 states: *"It is necessary to have a good information and counseling system and continuously work on the promotion of the importance of lifelong learning and learning for individual and social development. At all levels of education, it is necessary to improve the mechanisms of career guidance and make it available to each individual"*<sup>38</sup>. Presently, there is no unique website or e-platform which would offer electronic information, and it is still with difficulty that potential program users reach systematic information. Also, a significant part of providers do not have their own web page and are not present on social media, although nowadays these are easily accessible and very efficient means of communication and promotion of programs they could considerably benefit from, as private adult education providers.

**The Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for Vocational Education Development in Montenegro 2010-2014** foresees measures of promotion of lifelong learning by establishing cooperation with local self-governments, adult education providers and companies in order to achieve the aim of awareness raising on the importance of investing in human resources. In spite of such plan, the **Information on the implementation of the activities of the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for Vocational Education Development in Montenegro for 2012 and 2013**, obtained by the Ministry of Education, contains no data on the performed activities, despite its formulation as on-going activity in 2012-2013. In order to study the (un)employment trends in Montenegro and the impacts of adult education programs on those trends, credible statistic data and measurable results are needed, which currently do not exist.

## **2.4 Records on the scopes and effects of lifelong learning programs**

Education providers are divided into 3 groups:

- 1) Trainings, re-qualifications, further qualifications, professional development and vocational development;
- 2) Acquisition and improvement of key skills and key competences (foreign languages: Montenegrin language for foreigners, use of information and communication technologies; entrepreneurship etc.);
- 3) Acquisition of knowledge and skills for civil democracy, environmental protection, sustainable development, family life, successful social integration, improvement of quality of life, health, education, social skills, old age etc.

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38 Law on Adult Education, Official Gazette of Montenegro, No. 20/11, Art. 14 paragraph 2

Number	Municipality	Vocational qualifications (number of providers)	Key competences (number of providers)	Mixed (number of providers)	Total number of providers
1	Podgorica	18	20	2	40
2	Nikšić	3	4	3	10
3	Bijelo Polje	7	2	2	11
4	Budva	2	2	1	5
5	Herceg Novi	/	1	1	2
6	Berane	3	1	/	4
7	Danilovgrad	/	2	1	3
8	Žabljak	1	/	/	1
9	Plav	1	/	/	1
10	Pljevlja	1	1	1	3
11	Kotor	1	1	/	2
12	Mojkovac	/	1	/	1
13	Rožaje	1	1	/	2
14	Ulcinj	/	/	1	1
		<b>38</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>86</b>

Table 2. Structure of education providers<sup>39</sup>

In conclusion, adult education providers have similar number of programs offered to their target groups. Figures demonstrate that there are 38 providers offering acquisition of vocational qualifications and 36 providers offering programs for acquisition of key qualifications.

No.	Municipality	Number of licensed adult education providers (in municipality)	Providers implementing programs for acquisition of knowledge and skills for foreign languages	Providers implementing programs for acquiring knowledge and skills in cosmetics and hairstyling	Providers implementing programs for acquiring knowledge and skills in computing and languages	Providers implementing programs for acquiring knowledge in mixes areas, including computing, languages, cosmetician, hairdresser	Other providers
1	Podgorica	40	14	8	4	1	13
2	Nikšić	10	1	/	1	4	4
3	Bijelo Polje	11	/	/	2	2	7
4	Budva	5	2	/	/	1	2
5	Herceg Novi	2	1	/	/	1	0
6	Berane	4	/	1	/	1	2
7	Danilovgrad	3	/	/	2	/	1
8	Žabljak	1	/	/	/	/	1
9	Plav	1	/	/	/	/	1
10	Pljevlja	3	1	/	/	/	2
11	Kotor	2	/	/	1	/	/
12	Mojkovac	1	/	/	/	1	/

<sup>39</sup> Mixed adult education providers are those providers who offer programs of acquiring key competences and vocational qualifications in the scope of their activities.

13	Rožaje	2	/	/	/	1	1	
14	Ulcinj	1	/	/	/	1	/	
		86	19	9	10	13	35	
		51 (general education programs)						

Table 3. Comparison of the number of programs included in general education programs with other programs

By studying the structure of providers, there is a noticeable trend of high number of providers offering acquisition of vocational qualification of cosmetician and, as for key competences, computer skills and foreign language schools are dominant. Thus, it can be assumed that these vocations might offer more employment opportunities, but the missing database on the cost-effectiveness of the programs limits the conclusions based on accurate data. Third category programs are missing, and not those which are necessary for the acquisition of key competences or vocational qualifications, but those that will serve as a form of further development of particular knowledge in areas such as civil democracy, environmental protection, health education, social skills, old age...<sup>40</sup> *“There is an obvious lack of licensed adult education providers in some parts of Montenegro (southern region) in order to achieve the principle of balanced supply and application of lifelong learning principle at the territory of the entire country”*<sup>41</sup>.

Bearing in mind that the majority of providers are private institutions (organizations), which are not subject to submitting any information on their operations and programs implemented, according to the Law on Free Access to Information, the procedure of collecting information on training participants, programs, financing is made rather difficult. There are 29 adult education organizers in Montenegro (5 primary schools, 22 secondary schools and one institution of post-secondary education) established by the State, among which there are predominantly vocational secondary schools offering acquisition of necessary knowledge and skills in the areas of their educational programs.

By processing the collected data, several problems have been identified which reflect the real situation in lifelong education in Montenegro. The major issue is the lack of statistics on the number of participants per program and per provider, as well as the data on trends per year in order to establish if interest for particular programs increases or decreases. This survey showed that 4,082 attendees completed adult education programs successfully. Additionally, the data indicates that the successful completion of programs is exceptionally high, but this imposes again the question: *what is the number of persons who have completed some of the adult education programs who have been employed after completing the trainings?*

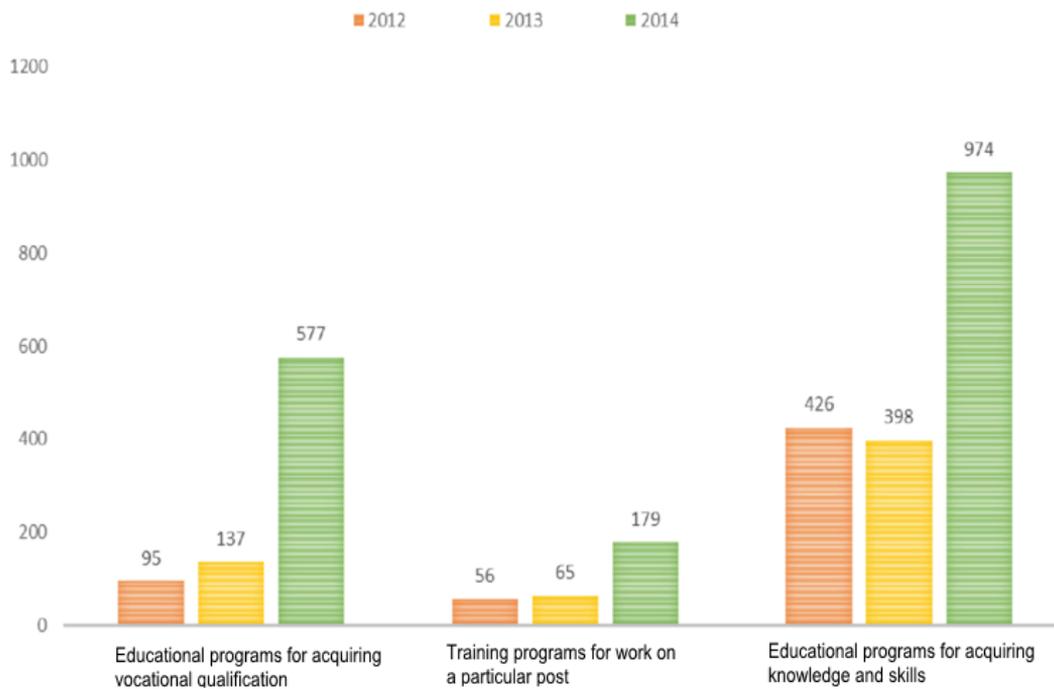
The Adult Education Plan for the period 2015-2019 states that *Montenegro has not established yet the mechanism of systematic collection of data on the number of adult population participating in various forms of education and learning and what their education needs are, which does not help at all to create educational offer and plan the activities in this subject matter*<sup>42</sup>. Consequently, *creation of a mechanism for setting up a unique database on the participation of citizens in the activities of lifelong education and learning* has been conceived as one of top priorities.

A limited survey at the representative sample of adult education providers has been carried out for the needs of this study, but the collected data cannot be considered complete. Since there is no foreseen model of reporting to the Vocational Education Center or the Employment Agency of Montenegro, providers do not have systematic data available and are not in possession of all required data. Education providers were requested to submit data on the number of licensed adult education programs implemented by their institution, number of participants who started attending the program and who successfully completed adult education programs, how they were financed and how teaching staff was selected.

40 Law on Adult Education, Official Gazette No. 20/11, Art. 14, p. 2

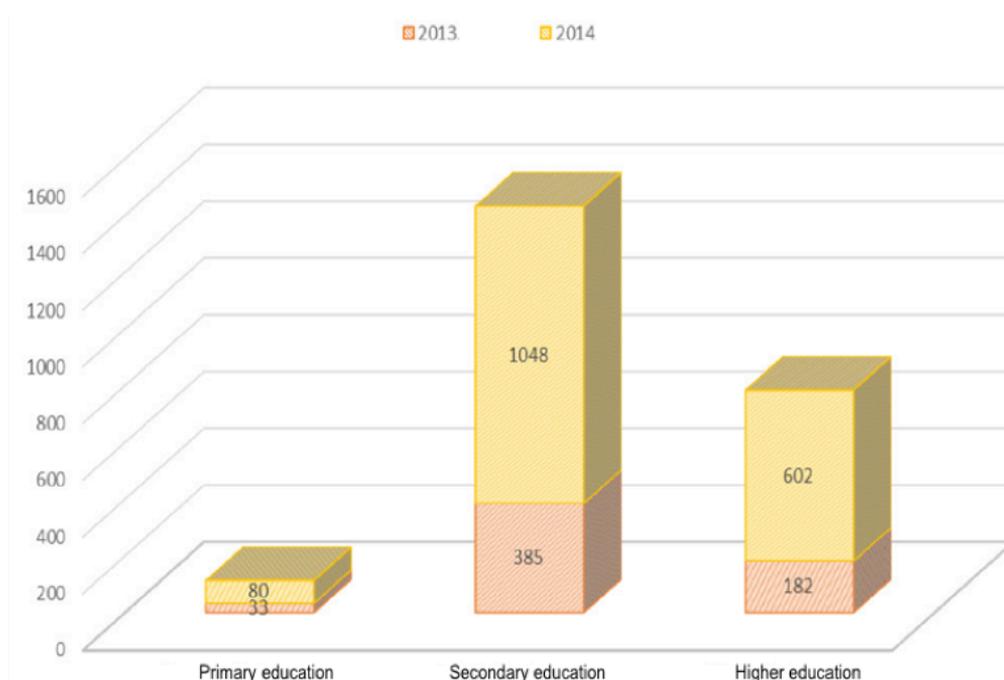
41 Adult Education Plan 2015-2025, p. 7

42 Adult Education Plan 2015-2025, Ministry of Education, p. 8



*Graph 1: Number of persons who have attended some of the aforementioned programs per year*

Annual reports on the work of the Employment Agency of Montenegro from 2012, 2013 and 2014 indicate that year after year there is an increase of persons attending programs organized by the Agency in cooperation with social partners. There is an evident growth in educational programs for acquiring knowledge and skills – around 400 persons more than in 2013 who acquired a particular vocational qualification. There is still an ongoing trend of small number of persons who get trained for the work on a particular post, compared to the other two categories. The highest interest is for the programs for acquiring key competences, so the number of persons trained in this way is more than doubled in 2014 compared to the previous year. This is a positive trend, but it must be intensified so the results can be more visible, in particular in entrepreneurial learning, which can be used as one of the methods of resolving unemployment.



*Graph 2 – Number of persons with particular education who participated in adult education and training programs*

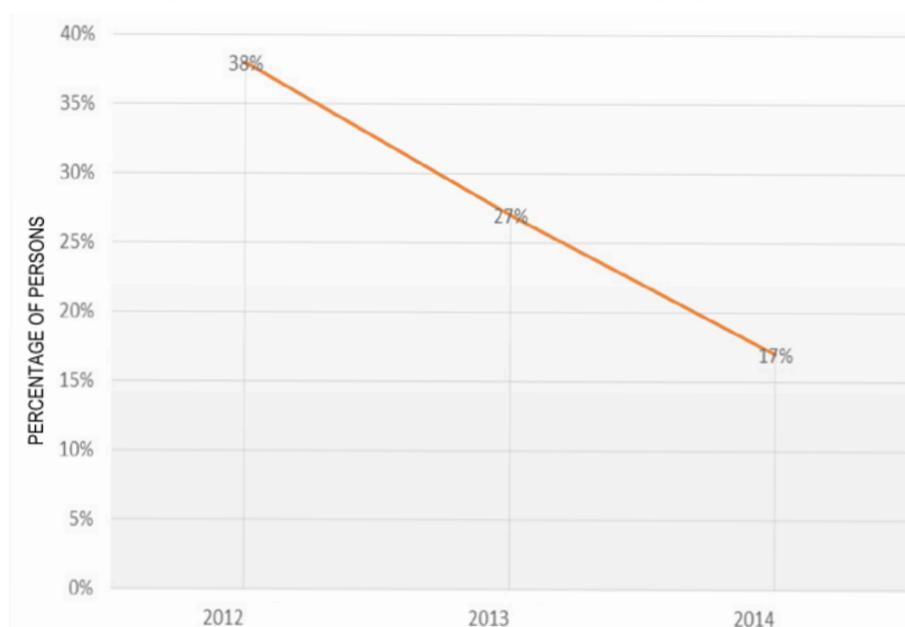
Graph 2 indicates that the structure of persons attending these programs is much diversified. The most numerous are persons with secondary education who participated in some form of adult education and training, thanks to the fact that they are at the same time the most numerous group according to the Employment Agency's records. Their number is 1,430 for the past two years. There are 784 persons with higher education and 121 persons with primary education. The data presented in the Annual Report of the Agency for 2014 point out dominant share of 17,705 or 51,04% of unemployed persons with education degrees III, IV or V (on 31.12.2013 – 17,454 or 50.6%), unemployed with degrees VI, VII and VIII make 31,38% or 10.884 (on 31.12.2013 – 10,947 or 31.7%), and unemployed with degrees I and II – 6,098 or 17.71%, (on 31.12.2013 – 6,113 or 17.58%)<sup>43</sup>; compared to the data on the persons who attended any form of professional development, this is not more than 5% of the unemployed from the Agency's records, which is not encouraging, given the fact that we are speaking about lifelong education, stated as one of the goals in the Operative Program of the Employment Agency of Montenegro in 2013 and 2014.

It is noticeable that a low number of persons attend non-formal education programs, obtain a job after the program, which is indicated in the following table:

Year	Number of persons who have attended any non-formal educational program	Number of persons who found job after completion of non-formal educational program	Percentage
2012	565 persons	214 persons	38 %
2013	600 persons	161 persons	27 %
2014	1 649 persons	283 persons	17 %

Table 4. Overview of the number of persons who have completed non-formal educational programs and the number of persons who found job after completing those programs<sup>44</sup>

Decrease in percentage of the number of persons who found job after completing the programs is noticeable as well, so it can be concluded that in spite of the growing number of persons completing non-formal educational programs, the policy of lifelong education obviously does not lead to the desired result – more employment, which is shown in the third graph.



Graph 3: Overview of the decreasing number of persons finding jobs after non-formal educational program per year

<sup>43</sup> Annual report on the work of the Employment Agency of Montenegro for 2014, p. 7

<sup>44</sup> Decision of the Employment Agency of Montenegro, No. 0601-100/42/3.

## 2.5 Financing adult education programs and vocational trainings

Answers to the requests for free access to information asking the abovementioned questions reflect another problem – financing of these programs. Namely, most of the programs are financed by the attendees themselves or the organization that referred them to the program in question or, eventually, by the Employment Agency of Montenegro and Vocational Education Center. It is worth adding that the funds of the Agency and Center considerably reduce year after year.

*The Vocational Education Center covers the costs for the attendees of a program of adult primary education<sup>45</sup>, while the 2014 Annual Report of the Employment Agency of Montenegro states the following: “Upon the proposal of the Committee for the selection of active employment policy, the Steering Committee of the Agency approved the funds for: implementation of education and training programs in the amount of 643,716.75€ for 1,611 persons from Agency’s records, which is 1,111 persons above the planned number in 2014; and implementation of training programs for work on a particular work post, in the amount of 157,503.74€ for 203 persons from Agency’s records, which is 3 persons above the planned number in 2014.”<sup>46</sup>*

The Law on Adult Education envisages methods of financing the programs: *“for acquisition of primary education, or training for the first qualification, an adult shall not pay the costs of education. For educational programs financed from public revenues (programs of retraining, additional training, specialization, professional development, i.e. acquisition of a key skill, etc.), included in the annual plan of education, adults shall not contribute to the costs of education. Notwithstanding paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Article, an adult shall pay the costs of education according to an individual agreement concluded with education provider.”<sup>47</sup>* In this way, the costs of every form of professional development not recognized as a priority by the Government’s policy should be covered by the individual, either from personal or third person’s resources, which is not encouraging in the existing economic situation in Montenegro.

A strategic objective of the **Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for Vocational Education Development in Montenegro 2010-2014** is improving the procedures in strategically important areas of vocational education such as financing, management and administration, qualification development, quality assurance, admission policy, publishing textbooks etc. Hence the idea of decentralization of financing of not only vocational but also lifelong education, which would remove the burden from the current centralized system. But, there is no data on its (non)implementation in the Report on the Implementation of the Action Plan<sup>48</sup>.

Furthermore, there are neither budget funds allocation for research in this area not budgetary obligation of the employees to provide necessary funds for further professional development of their employees. *Considering that there are no obligatory funds for adult education, there is no obligation of companies and state authorities for providing the funds intended for adult education. Only the Employment Agency of Montenegro, according to its programs for reducing unemployment and balancing the gap at the labor market allocates funds for financing the programs for the unemployed, in order to increase their knowledge, skills and competences necessary to the labor market<sup>49</sup>.* This is disadvantageous in the process of creating a society of knowledge, particularly bearing in mind that Montenegro’s average salary is € 482 while the market basket is € 795<sup>50</sup>, which means that individuals have considerably limited space for this type of self-investment. How can an individual be influenced to continue professional development in an environment where the majority of citizens struggle to survive one month and are at the same time expected to pay for a program that should hypothetically contribute to their employment opportunities? The environment is neither favorable for lifelong education development nor motivating for an individual to continue with professional development. Most of these programs are conceived for unemployed persons, so further training would be nothing but additional burden to their individual, already overloaded budget.

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45 Decision of the Vocational Education Center No. 01-125/3, 05.03.2015

46 Annual Report on the work of the Employment Agency of Montenegro for 2014

47 Law on Adult Education, Official Gazette No. 20/11, Art. 36

48 Information on the implementation of the activities from the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for Vocational Education Development in Montenegro for 2012 and 2013, Ministry of Education

49 Adult Education Plan 2015-2025, Ministry of Education, p. 12

50 <http://www.bankar.me/tag/prosjecna-plata-u-crnoj-gori/>

## 2.6 Recognition of non-formal types of education

Recognition of non-formal types of education has been made possible by the adoption of the Law on National Vocational Qualifications<sup>51</sup>. This Law defines national vocational qualifications and related terms: *A vocational qualification shall be a working or vocational competence necessary for practicing an occupation or specific activities within an occupation based on competencies and an occupation standard, then occupational standard means a document prescribing the content of a vocational qualification of a certain level of demand, and defining necessary knowledge, skills and competencies necessary to be possessed by a person to perform activities within an occupation and competence means the ability to apply knowledge and skills in a common and/or changing work situation*<sup>52</sup>.

This legislative step has been institutionally strengthened through the establishment of the Examination Center of Montenegro as responsible examiner for the needs of acquiring certificates. In the period 01.01.2012 to 31.12.2014, the Examination Center received 292 requests for the assessment of knowledge, skills and competences<sup>53</sup> and organized 17 knowledge assessments<sup>54</sup>. The authority in charge of issuing certificates for persons who have completed knowledge assessment at the Examination Center is the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, performing that duty for not more than a year (since April 2014). According to the data obtained by this Ministry, in 2014 131 certificates on acquired national vocational qualifications were issued<sup>55</sup>.

*Certification of vocational qualifications makes it possible for persons with lower education levels, unemployed persons and those who have left education earlier to acquire basic vocational qualification (qualification for first occupation) or to obtain a re-qualification or further qualification*<sup>56</sup>. There is a noticeable problem of insufficient number of organized assessments of knowledge, skills and competences, which deprived a certain number of persons of the possibility to acquire a certificate, and consequently to get jobs (in particular in services, e.g. touristic guide). The Examination Center of Montenegro is in charge of external-internal and external knowledge assessments in primary schools, final exams in secondary schools, organization of competitions at state level and other activities with the aim of preparing tests, brochures etc., all of which is a very demanding task. The workload itself must not be a pretext for not more than 17 assessments of knowledge, skills and competences in a 2-year period, which is less than once per month. As there is no measurable data on the number of persons attending different programs for acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences and the number of persons who have not attended those programs but have acquired the necessary knowledge in an alternative way, it is hard to assess how many knowledge assessments should be organized on annual basis.

The number of organized assessments of knowledge, skills and competences is insufficient, which deprived a certain number of persons of the possibility to acquire a certificate and, at the same time, to get jobs. This situation is caused by a complicated system of issuing permits and knowledge assessments. For example, in services (touristic guide), there is an overlap in responsibilities of 4 competent institutions of adult education providers (*education, internal assessment and internal certificate*), the Examination Center of Montenegro (*assessment not requiring previous training*), the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare (*issuing certificates based on the assessment documentation by the Examination Center*) and the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism (*working permit and personal identification based on the certificate of the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare*)<sup>57</sup>. This case displays in a simplified way the overall process as a demanding institutional solution, which can cause numerous problems to persons willing to be trained and planning to get a job.

First certificates for national vocational qualifications were issued on 24 April 2014. **The Law on vocational qualifications has been enacted in 2008, The Law on National Qualification Framework in 2010, and the Rulebook on the method of assessing knowledge and skills acquired over a short period according to programs for further qualification, re-qualification, specialization, in-service training and**

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51 Official Gazette No. 80/08

52 Law on National Vocational Qualifications, Official Gazette No. 80/08, Art. 7.

53 Reply from the Examination Center to the request for free access to information addressed by the Center for Civic Education, Decision No. 01 – 333/3, from 16.03.2015

54 Reply from the Examination Center to the request for free access to information addressed by the Center for Civic Education, Decision No. 01 – 439/3, from 23.04.2015

55 Reply from the Ministry of Labor to the request for free access to information addressed by the Center for Civic Education, Decision No. 007 – 23/15-3, from 08.04.2015

56 Strategy for Adult Education in Montenegro 2010–2014, p. 17

57 Reply from the Faculty for Business and Tourism, Budva, 25.02.2015

**other forms of education and training**<sup>58</sup> – in 2009. It can be concluded, based on the presented information, that during the six-year period of the Law being in force, there were no concrete results, i.e. certified attendees of adult education programs. Special emphasis should be put on the fact that the assessments for acquiring the said certificates have been implemented only for 4 vocational qualifications so far, which is not enough if we compare it to the number of providers offering these type of programs leading to the acquisition of vocational qualifications. Bearing in mind that assessment can be done without the necessity of the examinee to have completed some of the licensed adult education programs (which directly enables the assessment of different types of learning), we are facing the situation that persons who have completed some of the adult education programs are not able to acquire a national certificate because there are no organized assessments by the Examination Center.

No.	Vocational Qualification	Number of issued certificates
	Mountain tour guide	13
	Tourist guide	64
	Commercialist in railway transport	30
	Conductor in railway transport	24

*Table 5. Brief overview of particular qualifications with issued certificates in 2014*<sup>59</sup>

As for the alignment with European practice of education assessment, first steps have been taken to introduce ECVET in Montenegrin education system. European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (hereinafter referred to as: ECVET) is a European instrument for support to lifelong learning, mobility of European students and flexibility of learning pathways to achieve qualifications<sup>60</sup>. At the level of Strategic Framework and the implementation of the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for Vocational Education Development in Montenegro 2010-2014, part of the basis for credit-wise assessment of learning outcomes has been set up, through the adoption of the Basis for modularization and credit-wise assessment of vocational education programs in 2012<sup>61</sup>.

Progress has been achieved by developing the system which conceived all steps leading to the continuation of an adult education program. First step in drafting up programs is the creation of *vocational standards* giving the title and the code of a vocation, requirement level, field of work, vocational knowledge and skills an attendee is expected to have after the completion of the program, occupational tasks they will be facing during work, etc. This is an important document in achieving better connection with labor market, with the aim of developing further activity. Drafting up vocational standards is followed by drafting up *qualification standards*. Qualification standards clarify and elaborate in more detail the concepts and skills the attendees will have mastered through this program, along with the **credit-wise assessment of units of learning outcomes**. Credit-wise assessment enables recognition of acquired knowledge in a particular program and is a document containing the information on its connection with other occupations that can be recognized through the system of credit-wise assessment should the person wish to obtain a re-qualification. The Examination Catalogue is the next step and the basis for the procedure of vocational qualification assessment or recognition of an international certificate. Finally, based on the abovementioned documents, adult education program is created. The process is quite demanding but may turn out to be particularly useful for all adult education program attendees because it gives them the possibility of *knowledge transfer in the form of credit*<sup>62</sup> across related programs, which puts our system in line with the European.

As this still remains a relatively new institute, it is necessary to work more intensively on the preparation of the law, but also conduct research and collect data from employers in order to assess how much they value non-formal education while hiring and to what extent they consider it important for a quality work of their employees.

58 Ministry of Education, Official Gazette of Montenegro, No. 43 from 3 July 2009

59 Information from the Decision of the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, 007 – 23/15-2.

60 ECVET Questions and Answers (revised version 2011), European Commission

61 Information on the implementation of the activities from the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for Vocational Education Development in Montenegro for 2012 and 2013, Ministry of Education

62 Credit transfer is a process through which learning outcomes achieved in one context may be taken into consideration in another context, ECVET Questions and Answers (revised version 2011), European Commission, p. 26

### 3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the past few years, progress has been made in the development of vocational education programs. Legislative conditions have been created to recognize non-formal type of education and a system of recognition of ECVET credits has been established, which requires more efforts. It is also worth mentioning that the system itself, based on which educational programs are made, has been improved and placed on a satisfactory level. A positive step forward is also the fact that quality assessment of licensed adult education providers has started in order to check the conditions and methods of work. Additionally, issuing official certificates for national vocational qualifications by the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare started in 2014, which additionally strengthened the role of lifelong learning and offered the possibility of increasing own possibilities for finding a job.

Despite all the progress made, there are still many challenges that need to be addressed, in particular in the following aspects: non-existence of a quality statistical background that would serve for further development of lifelong learning and all its integral parts, the issue of financing the programs, which is not standardized and slows down and hampers the process of adult lifelong education, lack of adequate database on program attendees, non-existence of obligation of licensed adult education providers to submit annual reports on the work and the implementation of programs, black market of adult education providers who perform trainings without issuing adequate work licenses, lack of legislative provisions on relicensing or revoking licenses to adult education providers, planning of programs which must be in line with the market needs, non-existence of a uniform method for selection of the teaching staff for trainings within a program etc.

Montenegro has a lot more to achieve, but it is important that it has built a foundation for further development and that there are continuous efforts in lifelong education.

For the purpose of arranging the subject matter in a better way and implementing the adopted documents, we propose the following:

- **Conduct a detailed analysis in order to define adequate means of promotion of lifelong education aimed at target groups;**
- **Strengthen women who will obtain education, not only at the level of primary education, but also in its continuation and lifelong learning;**
- **Continue quality assessment of organizing adult education and introduce it as an obligation of the Vocational Education Center, with a compulsory final report;**
- **Set up a database about the participants that have completed any type of adult education in order to monitor trends in lifelong education at the territory of Montenegro;**
- **Continuously monitor non-formal education trends in Europe and all over the world in order to align our system with the one of other European countries;**
- **Introduce the obligation of annual reporting by adult education providers to the VEC, in order to achieve higher transparency and facilitate measurability of the achieved results;**
- **Continuously monitor the employment rate of persons who have completed adult education programs;**

- **Improve legal standards in relicensing and conditions for revoking licenses to providers who do not meet the required criteria;**
- **Work continuously on increasing the number of programs leading to acquisition of knowledge and skills for civil democracy, environmental protection, sustainable development, family life, successful social integration, improvement of quality of life, health, education, social skills, old age etc.;**
- **Invest additional efforts in the number of adult education providers in all Montenegrin regions in order to establish balance;**
- **Conduct andragogic training of all lecturers who perform trainings at licensed adult education providers;**
- **Align methods of selecting the teaching staff for adult education programs;**
- **Create and regularly update an e-platform or a website with information on all available programs;**
- **Conduct a detailed analysis of statistical data related to all aspects of adult education with the aim of additional work on improving adult education;**
- **Invest additional efforts in the promotion of entrepreneurial learning among youth and elderly;**
- **Find adequate and sustainable financing method for adult education programs which would include all social partners;**
- **Find a way to motivate employers to regularly allocate funds for professional development of their employees;**
- **Open National Training Centers in order to strengthen the providers and offer them additional support in terms of workspace free of charge;**
- **Intensify the work on improving the recognition of non-formal education;**
- **Strengthen the capacities of the Examination Center of Montenegro in lifelong learning;**
- **Increase the number of vocational qualifications for which knowledge assessment is done by the Examination Center of Montenegro;**
- **Publish regularly all necessary Strategies, Reports on the implementation of Action Plans and Strategies, Annual Reports by competent institutions.**
- **Involve all persons of all ages and qualifications registered at the Employment Agency in lifelong education programs;**
- **Work additionally to reduce the number of persons having only vocational education between the ages of 18 and 24;**
- **Conduct detailed analysis of programs necessary for the labor market of Montenegro and develop them in cooperation with other social partners;**
- **Motivate persons with primary education to continue professional development afterwards;**
- **Work of inspection authorities should focus on fight against the work of adult education providers performing training without license on the “black market”;**
- **Connect all social partners in lifelong education in all segments with deficiencies in order to achieve optimal development and progress;**
- **Revise all existing adult education programs.**

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