



DVV International

Education for Everyone. Worldwide.
Lifelong.

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Strategic fields of action DVV International

Institute for International Cooperation of the
Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband e. V. (DVV),
the German Adult Education Association



1 Introduction

DWV International is the Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association (DWV). We fight poverty through education and promote development. As a specialised civil society organisation, we aim to provide more needs-oriented and high-quality education opportunities for youth and adults, especially for disadvantaged population groups. Our goal is to make relevant contributions around the world for the creation and development of sustainable structures, as well as to increase political recognition and public attention for youth and adult education. This is done in concert with our more than 200 civil society, state and scientific partners, with whom, in the past 50 years, we have built up a worldwide network and extensive expertise.

The community of states, with Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as the Incheon Declaration, have formulated new goals for international education policy. For the first time, all areas of education are addressed in the context of lifelong learning. The educational sub-goals implicitly address the central fields of work of youth and adult education, thus giving them greater significance and visibility. Nevertheless, the potential of youth and adult education to solve many social problems continues to be underestimated and thus underfunded.

In addition to the new frame of reference for the Sustainable Development Goals, the global community faces old and new challenges, to the solution of which youth and adult education can make important contributions. Political, economic and social instability and the resulting population displacement and migration, as well as technological, climatic and demographic developments and advancing digitalisation is changing learning needs and these need to be addressed with appropriate concepts. Additionally exacerbating and acute is the increasing inequality within and between industrial countries, developing countries, and countries in transition, as well as the persisting deficits in literacy and basic education.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and current social challenges have prompted us to transform our self-understanding into strategic areas of action. These are derived from the framework conditions which are in the overarching context of youth and adult education, which direct our understanding of the goal and are described below. In addition to it being the guiding function of our work, we would also like in this way to point out the relevance and possibilities of youth and adult education to a broader public.

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Framework conditions and challenges

Agenda 2030: Youth and adult education in the context of the new Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations is becoming increasingly important. The aim of the education programme is to ensure that by the year 2030 all human beings have equal access to high-quality education. The explicit naming of the concept of lifelong learning in the SDGs underpins the increasing significance of hitherto neglected areas such as youth and adult education. Learning needs are changing as a result of technological and demographic trends and increasing migration, but also in the context of climate change and the need to live more sustainably. Youth and adult education is therefore much more than possible compensation for weaknesses in the formal system – it stands for the continuing personal and professional development of people today. There are positive interactions with other agenda objectives, e.g. health care, rural development, employment, gender, climate change, strengthening of civil society and democratic participation. However, these potential synergies are currently not widely recognised.

Heterogeneous societies: The mobility of people is increasing. While some temporarily and voluntarily relocate, many others are fleeing from war, instability, and a lack of economic opportunities. Migration and integration lead to heterogeneous societies, cultural multiplicity and diversity,

which enrich us and bring new challenges. Political backtracking to national identities and populism must be countered by social and economic integration, as well as education on and awareness of development policy.

Poverty, unemployment, inequality: Despite increasing prosperity, the gap between rich and poor is increasing – within and between countries. Globally, around 200 million people are unemployed, and many more are working under precarious conditions. Large parts of the population of the Global South are active in the informal sector. In this context, the instruments of non-formal vocational training are particularly important. Measures such as literacy, job-related remedial basic training, further training and skills development programmes as well as business start-ups must be massively expanded.

Income-generating measures which are linked to core areas of adult education make an important contribution to stability and peace and provide opportunities for people in their home country. Young people, women and disadvantaged population groups deserve special attention.



Literacy and basic education: Illiteracy and a lack of basic education remain serious developmental obstacles. The number of adult illiterates, with over 750 million worldwide, is still alarmingly high. Almost two-thirds of these are women. More than 50 million children either attend no school at all or leave without any formal qualifications; far more suffer from problems of access, inadequate quality and teacher shortages. Adult education must therefore assume fundamental tasks in many areas of development in the sense of a basic education: reading, writing and arithmetic, familiarisation with complex technical modes of behaviour, critical thinking, reflection and problem-solving. Basic education demonstrably correlates, among other things, with lower birth rates, decreasing maternal and child mortality, improved employment opportunities, increased environmental awareness, tolerance and social cohesion. Without literacy and basic education for all, sustainable development and combating poverty will not be possible.

Digitalisation: New information and communication technologies enable new forms of learning and better access to high-quality education. At the same time, however, there is a threat of exclusion for disadvantaged population groups from these learning, decision-making

and discussion processes. The expansion of digital infrastructure must therefore be as pervasive as possible across countries and should be accompanied by inter-generational further training. Digital teaching and learning concepts must be developed, tested, expanded and meaningfully combined with face-to-face learning. Properly designed, digital learning can cost-effectively reach many people with education and ensure their participation, even in remote areas. It is time for a widespread and effective implementation of appropriate solutions. For this purpose, needs and existing offers should be examined more closely.

Sustainability: Our actions and economies today must not reduce the opportunities and quality of life of future generations. People need to be better informed about global challenges. This includes, among other things, areas such as environmental protection and climate change, production and consumption of food, human rights and urbanisation (rural to urban migration), as well as the economic and social consequences of globalisation. Education for sustainable development as well as concepts such as global learning need to be implemented more intensively to promote an active civil society. A particular challenge here is the recently narrowed scope for civil society organisations in many countries of the world (*shrinking spaces*). This situation must be tackled with prudent and flexible concepts in order to maintain dialogue.

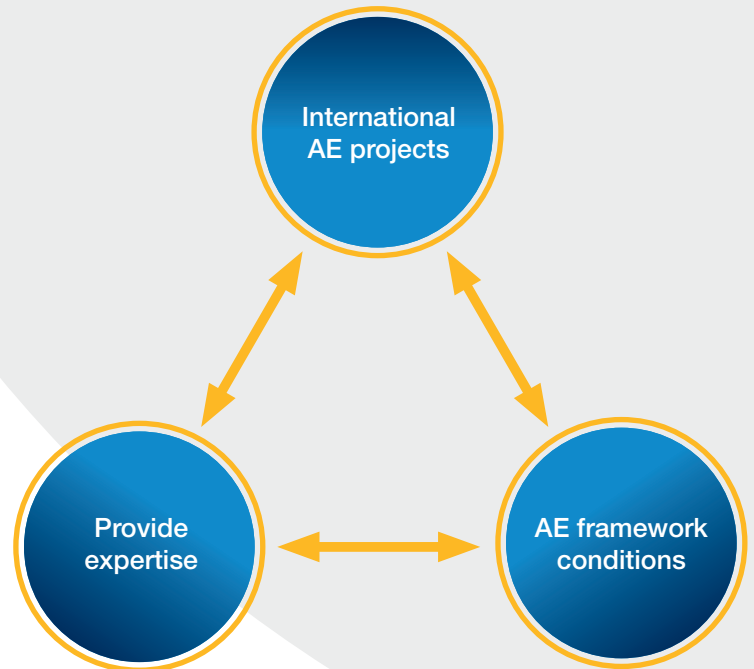
3 Objectives and strategic fields of action

Education for all is a human right. It is a key building block for poverty reduction and development. For this, much more needs-oriented and high-quality education must be available to young people and adults in the future – especially for marginalised groups. We therefore advocate a holistic approach to education. We pursue the goal of building up the structures of youth and adult education and making them stronger worldwide. Political recognition and public awareness for the adult education sector must increase. Provision of resources must be significantly increased.

Three fields of action for the strategic orientation of DVV International’s work can be derived from the framework conditions, the future challenges and our goal of sustainably strengthening educational structures. The main field of action concerns international adult education projects which we develop and carry out with our partners locally. As an expert organisation, we provide expert knowledge at the interface between adult education and development, whereby recourse to our knowledge

acquired at home and abroad plays a central role. We also use this expertise to improve the general conditions of adult education worldwide. The fields of action are closely interrelated – they presuppose and support one another.

Fields of action of DVV International



Field of action A

Promoting development through adult education projects

Disadvantaged young people and adults are at the centre of our project work. Disadvantage has many faces: the poor quality of, or the lack of access to basic education, unemployment and lack of access to the labour market, little participation in political and social life. Our projects will therefore, also in the future, continue to pursue a holistic and inclusive approach to education with the involvement of civil society in order to make an effective contribution to socio-economic, political and social development. We will continue to systematically pursue this approach and thereby involve new target groups, such as returning refugees.

In our project work, we commit ourselves to long-term and sustainable structural support. In the future, the focus will also be on developing and building systems for youth and adult education. Educational offers at the grassroots focus mainly on literacy and remedial basic education, training for occupational skills qualifications and general youth and adult education (political education, environmental and health education as well as global and intercultural learning). Our projects are making a major contribution around the world in the fight against the causes of population displacement, the integration of refugees and conflict prevention.

We promote the capacity building of teaching, administrative and management personnel of educational institutions and

other partners. This is achieved through the introduction and testing of innovative teaching and learning methods for adult education as well as provision of support for organisational development, including quality management. We have extensive knowledge and work experience regarding methodology, didactics and curriculum development for young people and adults. Consultation, exchange and training are carried out by our own employees and our worldwide partner and expert network.

Our commitment to the promotion of social structures is secured in the long term by participation in political policy framework conditions. This is carried out through advice and support to state and international partners in the preparation of strategies, laws and regulations for adult education and lifelong learning.

We will continue in the future to build our project work together with a regional structure to cover development cooperation of core countries. In the coming years, we want to strengthen our presence in current hotspots and regions with great needs. We will strengthen the trans-regional exchange of experience on effective projects and methods in order to spread innovative approaches worldwide. Digital teaching and learning formats will play an increasingly important role in improving the reach, access and quality of our educational offers.



Field of action B

Providing expertise

We are *the* professional organisation for adult education and development. Our expertise is made up of several components: the knowledge gained from our international project work, which we have been conducting for over 50 years with today more than 200 partners in 40 countries; our active participation in international networks and adult education associations; and last but not least, the work of around 900 adult education centres (VHS) and affiliated associations in Germany. This world-embracing expertise gives DVV International a unique profile.

We strengthen adult education as a key component of lifelong learning through the provision of expertise. In the future, we will highlight the role of adult education for Agenda 2030, in particular the education objective, even more precisely. We want to contribute to the discourse and public debate on current issues such as combating the causes of population displacement, integration, promotion of employment and conflict prevention. This also relates to the impacts on other key development areas such as health, the environment, climate change, gender equality and education for democracy. We will make clear that the solution to global challenges cannot succeed without sustainable structures of adult education and without the active involvement of civil society.

We provide professional expertise and insights through our own publications (*International Perspectives in Adult Education, Adult Education and Development*). We organise and support specialist conferences, create position papers and specialist articles. We will further develop our products and services, such as framework curricula for the professionalisation of adult education (Curriculum globALE). We carry out studies within the framework of our worldwide project work and systemise adult education methods for development cooperation. We will continue to support the critical analysis of work approaches, methods and products within the global network, and contribute our know-how to specialist dialogue with policymakers and civil society. Our expertise will be provided and discussed even more in virtual space (Internet, social media, platforms).

In order to expand our expertise, we want to further develop professional and regional knowledge. We will more closely examine current issues of regional relevance at the interface between adult education and development. To this end, we will also enter into alliances with new partners and strengthen our own internal circulation of knowledge. The learning and knowledge will be applied in our international project work and the expansion of lobbying and advocacy.

Field of action C

Improving the framework conditions for adult education worldwide

Improving the framework conditions for adult education is one of our core tasks. Lobbying and advocacy for the human right of education and lifelong learning is carried out together with national, regional and global associations and adult education networks. We highlight the successes of adult education in a targeted way and we show their importance for development policy processes and the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations. We promote the dialogue between civil society and state partners. We emphasise our humanistic understanding of education and the power of education, which allows for broadly effective participation of wider population groups. We underpin our understanding of education as a public good and work towards further funding approval from the donor community and the governments of our partner countries.

We carry out lobbying and advocacy for adult education through different channels: as part of our social structure-reinforcement projects, we engage through advice and support for state partners by involving civil society. We formulate political policy framework conditions through advice on laws and strategies for adult education. We support European and worldwide information and technical exchange through conferences, seminars and publications. In doing so, we also reach back to our global project experience and our expertise (fields of action A and B).

In concert with international experts in adult education, we design global processes in favour of development, peace and security. We actively contribute to the further development and implementation of development policy strategies and Agenda 2030 and participate in the UNESCO World Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA).

We want to further expand lobbying and advocacy. Together with our partners, we engage critically and constructively in the implementation of Agenda 2030 in order to better position youth and adult education in the policymaking process, to increase budgets and to make effective programmes possible. We will bring our expertise to the interface between adult education and development through position papers, specialist conferences and other media into the public discourse in order to improve the framework conditions worldwide. To this end, we will increasingly publicise lighthouse projects to a broader public and explain to people more precisely what youth and adult education encompasses, means and provides in the context of lifelong learning in order to come a step closer to our goal of building and expanding educational structures around the world, thereby making an important contribution to peace and development.



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Responsible and Author: Christoph Jost

Co-Author: Esther Hirsch

Concept and Editor: Anja Thöne

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DVV International is the Institute for
International Cooperation of the Deutscher
Volkshochschul-Verband e.V., the
German Adult Education Association (DVV)

DVV International
Obere Wilhelmstraße 32
D-53225 Bonn
Germany

Tel.: +49 (0) 228 97569-0

Fax: +49 (0) 228 97569-55

Email: info@dvv-international.de

Internet: www.dvv-international.de