


**ADULT
EDUCATION
PRACTITIONERS
SUPPORTING
PERSONS WITH
DISABILITIES**

Identification of national contexts

ROMANIA



Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Organisation of adult education/lifelong learning in the national context.....	4
3. Level of accessibility of persons to disabilities to adult education programmes/lifelong learning	6
4. Identification of practitioners providing support for persons with disabilities in adult education activities	13
5. Role of practitioners supporting persons with disabilities in adult education activities	14
6. Level of training of practitioners providing support for persons with disabilities in adult education activities	14
7. Resources and tools available for practitioners supporting persons with disabilities in adult education activities	17
8. Continuing professional development.....	19
9. Legislative framework and financial framework related to adult education of persons with disabilities	26
10. Financial framework.....	29
11. Key decision-makers and relevant stakeholders in the field of adult education.....	34
12. General recommendations for practitioners supporting persons with disabilities in adult education	37





Incredible Practitioners to empower adults with disABILITIES through Education, Employment & Social Entrepreneurship
Romania: country-report regarding adult education practitioners supporting persons with disabilities

1. Introduction

Partner(s) name	ACE-ES Romania & FAR
Country	ROMANIA

Incredible Practitioners to empower adults with disABILITIES through Education, Employment&Social Entrepreneurship (All IN!) is a transnational Erasmus + project led by the Federation for Accessibility of Romania (FAR) and implemented together with 4 organizations: National Confederation of Persons with Disabilities (Greece); Cesur Formación (Spain); Association of Consultants and Experts in Social Economy (ACE-ES RO) (Romania) and the European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD).

The project aims at **better equipping practitioners from the field of adult education and employment** (human resources managers, coordinators, trainers, educators, vocational advisers, social workers, mentors and other experts) with **new skills and competences needed to support persons with disabilities in inclusive adult education practices** and help them progress towards higher qualifications and labor market inclusion. The project also aims at **creating better links between the field of education & training and the labor market** by improving the cooperation between adult education providers, enterprises, public authorities, training and HR managers and other relevant stakeholders.

Aims of the research:

The project partners explored the **key challenges and needs of adult education practitioners support persons with disabilities in three countries: Romania, Spain and Greece**. The research methodology was based on desktop research, questionnaires to experts as well as consultations and interviews with practitioners working in the field of adult education, and specifically supporting persons with disabilities. The research looked at the adult education field from a global perspective – from the legal and financial frameworks within which this is organized to specific aspects related to the operational context of adult education practitioners supporting persons with disabilities in each country.

You can find more information about the project here: <https://all-in-erasmus-project.com/>



2. Organisation of adult education/lifelong learning in the national context

Adult Education and vocational training¹ take place on two different dimensions:

- a) vocational training through qualification programmes, trainings and specialisations organised by authorised professional training providers, according to the law and, respectively, on-the-job training organised by the employers for their own staff;
- b) the evaluation of competences obtained in other ways than the formal ones through competences evaluation centres authorised under the conditions of the law.

According to the Law of Education no. 1/2011², formal education is provided by the following institutions or organisations, nominated to act at a local level:

- Education and training centres in ministries or public local authorities;
- Public and private providers of education and training certified and accredited by the law;
- Governmental or non-governmental organisations that offer programmes authorised by the law;
- Employers who offer their own training programmes for employees.

Non-formal adult learning may be provided by the following organisations: workplaces, cultural institutions such as museums, theatres, cultural centres, libraries, documentation centres, cinemas, cultural houses/homes, professional and cultural associations, trade unions, NGOs. The Community Centres for Lifelong Learning (CCLL) should provide both formal and non-formal training programmes, as well as encourage and organise activities that facilitate informal learning. It would be the responsibility of local authorities to act as integrating institutions at the community level, but as of now no public budget is foreseen to support them. Other forms of training:

According to the Government Ordinance no. 129/2000 (with the latest updates)³ regarding adult education and vocational training, employers who are not authorised providers of vocational training can organise continuing vocational training programmes for their own employees and can issue graduation certificates that are not nationally recognised. However, those certificates must contain the name of the employer and the employee, the duration of the programme, the parties' occupation and the skills acquired. Other forms of training (online or distance learning courses) are not covered by the legislation regarding adult vocational training, but can be organised by any organisation, agency or company. The vocational training programmes for the regulated professions are organised accordingly to the conditions established by the regulatory authorities in the field and by the special laws that regulate these professions.

Any public or private institution⁴ that has a vocational training role in its legal status can offer continuing education programmes on the market, but only authorised institutions can issue nationally recognised certificates. The training providers are authorised for a period of four years, based on the specific evaluation criteria for each qualification, occupation and group of competences for which the providers organise training programmes. In order to obtain the authorisation, a vocational training provider must demonstrate

¹ https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/_fi%C8%99iere/Minister/2016/strategii/Strategia_VET%2027%2004%202016.pdf - pag. 12

² https://edu.ro/sites/default/files/_fi%C8%99iere/Legislatie/2019/Legea%20nr%201%20Educatiei%20Nationale%20actualizata%202019.pdf

³ https://bns.ro/images/sindicale/Ordonan%C5%A3%C4%83_nr._129r22F2000.pdf

⁴ [https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/_fi%C8%99iere/Minister/2016/strategii/Strategie%20LLL%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/_fi%C8%99iere/Minister/2016/strategii/Strategie%20LLL%20(1).pdf) – pag. 26

that its training programmes are carried out by trainers specialised in the field of the training programme who also have pedagogical experience regarding adult teaching methodologies.

Authorised and un-authorised professional training providers could be:

- education and training centres
- public and private institutions (universities, employers' associations, chambers of commerce and industry, trade unions, popular universities etc.)
- governmental agencies and organisations
- non-Governmental organisations
- community centres of lifelong learning are public entities subordinated to the authorities of the local public administration⁵.

In 2017 the Ministry of Labour and Social Justice together with the Ministry of National Education published a draft Order⁶ containing a Methodology for organising and operating protected workshops. This draft Order proposes that:

- The protected workshop is a structure with or without legal personality, in which activities of vocational training, non-formal education and occupational therapy are organised for young people with special educational needs over 16 years and for the disabled adults;
- The purpose of the protected workshop is to ensure that the educational needs are met, necessary in the qualification/preparation for work and employment, in order to obtain a qualification and to integrate into the active life, in an adapted, personalised and flexible framework.

This protected workshop would play the role of a training provider for young people and adults with disabilities. Today, such document is still only a draft.

Developing other knowledge and skills, not for vocational purposes for adults⁷ - Educational provision of this kind is mainly covered by the cultural houses and NGOs, based on different project runs. Such provision is mainly not subsidised, unless the courses offered are part of different projects (i.e. Erasmus+). For youngsters there are more provisions of this kind (i.e. on public speaking, team building, intercultural communication), than for adults.

The Romanian EAEA member Euro Adult Education Association notes that NGOs⁸ have developed and implemented a multitude of projects in Romania under the European Social Fund and the Erasmus+ programme. A number of Romanian adult education associations plan to promote the SDGs in Romania⁹ through workshops in order to increase awareness about these issues, especially the goal on ensuring quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Adult learning encompasses as many varied learning opportunities as no other area of education. It includes provision as diverse as literacy courses for adults who are struggling to read or write; second-chance

⁵ http://www.mmuncii.ro/j33/images/Documente/Legislatie/Ordin_823-2019.pdf

⁶ http://www.mmuncii.ro/j33/images/Documente/Transparenta/Dezbateri_publice/20171122-Ordin-metodologie-org-ateliere-protejateAnexa.pdf

⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?pager.offset=20&advSearchKey=Full+Country+Report&mode=advancedSubmit&catId=1307&doc_submit=&policyArea=0&policyAreaSub=0&country=0&year=0 – pag. 17

⁸ https://eaea.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Country_Reports_2018_final.pdf - pag. 49

⁹ https://eaea.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Country_Reports_2018_final.pdf - pag. 50

education courses for people who dropped-out of school before getting a qualification; work-based training for workers who need to get to know new technology; and short specialised courses to help unemployed people back into employment. Consequently, the many actors involved in adult learning typically do not perceive themselves as being part of a cohesive "adult learning system". They are rather. part of fragmented subsystems, each with its own objectives, target groups, financing mechanisms and governance structures.

Example of adult education provider:

MOTIVATION Romania¹⁰ - Since 2013 Motivation has been certified to provide training courses for the Wheelchair Supply Technician profession, based on the standards and course supports developed by the World Health Organization (WHO). Since 2014, we provide in Romania courses for specialists on the implementation of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health, in order to offer services focused on the abilities of each person.

Courses on using the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (CIF, a WHO instrument) support professionals to work in teams and adopt skills-centred principles. The courses change the current - predominantly medical - approach to disability and promote a common language among specialists.

The survey¹¹ respondents highlighted the following characteristics of the adult education/LLL sector in Romania:

- multi-site delivery
- varied modes of delivery
- a part-time workforce
- lack of investment in infrastructure
- a range of funding sources accessed.

3. Level of accessibility of persons to disabilities to adult education programmes/lifelong learning

Discrimination in education is prohibited in Romania by national legislation as formulated in the Racial Equality Directive¹². Article 11 of the Anti-discrimination Law substantiates the prohibition of discrimination in both private and public education, at all levels and in all forms. The National Education Law (Law 1/2011), provides in Article 2(4) that the state "*grants equal rights of access to all levels and forms of pre-university and higher education, as well as lifelong learning, for all citizens of Romania, without any form of discrimination*".

In accordance with Law 448¹³:

- People with disabilities have free and equal access to any form of education, regardless of age, according to their type, degree of disability and their educational needs.
- Persons with disabilities are provided with lifelong education and vocational training throughout their lives.

¹⁰ <https://motivation.ro/despre-noi/>

¹¹ FAR Survey Report

(The survey participants were 12 representatives of 6 organizations of different types: associations, organizations of persons with disabilities, community day centers, schools for persons with disabilities, training providers)

¹² <https://www.equalitylaw.eu/downloads/4971-romania-country-report-non-discrimination-2019-pdf-1-27-mb> - pag. 42-43

¹³ <https://www.prostemcell.ro/images/stories/download/Lege-448-2006.pdf> - Section 2: Education

- The person with a disability or, as the case may be, the family or the legal representative is the main decision-maker in choosing the form and type of schooling, as well as the educational unit.
- The education of persons with disabilities is an integral part of the national education system, coordinated by the Ministry of National Education.
- The education of persons with disabilities is achieved through mass education; special integrated education organised in mass education; special education; education at home or in addition to healthcare units; other educational options.

Disabled persons may access mainstream or specialised education and vocational training¹⁴. This access is directly influenced by the degree of disability and the time that the disability occurred.

According to Article 19 of the Law 448/2006, public authorities are responsible for ensuring the access of persons with disabilities to lifelong learning, as well as for adapting learning conditions to the needs of these persons. Access of participants with disabilities to continuous education is not denied in theory; however, there has only been recent progress due to a number of projects managed by NGOs or public authorities, with the support of European Structural Funds (the human resources category – POSDRU, POCU etc.). Due to the ESF funded projects, during the financial programming period 2007-2013 and 2014-2020, there were training programmes for people with disabilities, if those projects had as target group only this type of people. Also, these people with disabilities could participate in training programmes aimed at other vulnerable groups. An example of such a project¹⁵ ("*Facilitating the insertion in the labour market of persons with disabilities*") that includes training programmes for people with disabilities is implemented by National Authority for People with Disabilities and National Agency for Employment. The project has a duration of 3 years (2019-2021).

In order to increase the level of competences through education and training and to correlate them with the demands¹⁶ of the new jobs, the proposed measures¹⁶ aiming at the national expansion of the network of counselling, orientation and professional reconversion centres, including the free evaluation of skills and competences, as well as the programmes of vocational reintegration and vocational rehabilitation for people with disabilities play a very important role in the process of integrating them into the labour market.

Persons living in rural or remote areas are comparatively disadvantaged when accessing education and work. Most education programmes for persons with disabilities are provided free of charge and there are legal incentives for on-the-job trainings, both for people with disabilities and for employers. However, many people with disabilities and employers are not aware of these services.

The inclusive legal framework is not matched by effective measures to ensure inclusive education of pupils and adults with disabilities¹⁷.

One of the 5 countries that reported regression in Adult Learning Education policy¹⁸ since 2015 is Romania.

¹⁴ <https://www.disability-europe.net/downloads/556-ro-15-aned-2010-task-5-request-11-in-layout> - pag. 2, pag. 9

¹⁵ <http://anpd.gov.ro/web/conferinta-de-lansare-a-proiectului-facilitarea-insertiei-pe-piata-muncii-a-persoanelor-cu-dizabilitati-cod-mysmis2014-130164/>

¹⁶ http://www.mmuncii.ro/j33/images/Documente/Munca/2018/SN_Ocupare_forta_munca_2018.pdf - National Strategy for Employment 2014-2020

¹⁷ FAR Survey Report

(The survey participants were 12 representatives of 6 organizations of different types: associations, organizations of persons with disabilities, community day centers, schools for persons with disabilities, training providers)

¹⁸ http://uil.unesco.org/system/files/grale_4_final.pdf - pag. 41 - 4th GLOBAL REPORT ON ADULT LEARNING AND EDUCATION - LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND: PARTICIPATION, EQUITY AND INCLUSION; UNESCO, 2019



The limited integration of employment, education, health and social services does not allow the sustainable inclusion of the various disadvantaged groups. People with disabilities¹⁹ receive limited support to lead an independent life and have access to a job. While Romania is implementing several initiatives to improve participation in education, especially for those at risk²⁰, there is no coherent and consistent approach to raising the educational outcomes of all participants.

Adult education programmes are provided by a wide range of governmental organisations, from the private sector to the tertiary sector. Therefore, the effectiveness of the adult education policy and the provision of this type of education as a whole are often undermined by the lack of coordination between these many parties, which leads to fragmented and inconsistent activities²¹.

There is neither a national data collection system²² nor a mechanism to systematically evaluate and review developments in vocational training and adult education²³, which leads to not knowing about the changes in the overall participation in the country as there are no data available to track participation.

Romania did not have information to report participation of adults with disabilities in LLL programmes or data collected - a major challenge for the education and training systems in Romania²⁴ is also the monitoring of persons with disabilities who have access to different forms of education and training. The main sources of statistical information at the national level regarding persons with disabilities are ANPD, ANPDCA, INS, MENCs. However, statistical information is collected at different times of the year and using different criteria; as a result, significant differences occur, and the data are not comparable and cannot be used complementarily between the educational system and the social protection system. Data on the participation of persons with disabilities in higher education and/or in adult education programmes are not collected at the national level, but different studies in the field consider that the value of this indicator is very low.

There are no statistics related to the participation of persons with disabilities in the training programmes authorised by the National Authority for Qualifications. The Authority collects data only related to the authorised organisations and the type of training programmes for which they have been authorised - data from the National Register of Authorised Vocational Training Providers -, register for each county²⁵ and the municipality of Bucharest²⁶.

There are no monitoring tools which track the level of success of graduates finding a job (including for persons with disabilities) after having completed a vocational training course.

¹⁹ [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/RO/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32019H0905\(23\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/RO/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32019H0905(23)&from=EN) – pag. 5

²⁰ <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264274051-en.pdf?expires=1579531649&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=E96D35A7BA95196F934953300EE38392> – pag. 60

²¹ https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/education/policy/strategic-framework/expert-groups/2014-2015/group-highlights_ro.pdf - Education and training 2020

²² https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/_fi%C5%9Fiere/Minister/2016/strategii/Strategia_VET%2027%2004%202016.pdf – pag. 16

²³ http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/publicatii/Romania_in_cifre_breviar_statistic_2018.pdf - pag. 47-50

²⁴ <https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/106166/130094/F-830599240/PDF.pdf> - pag. 29

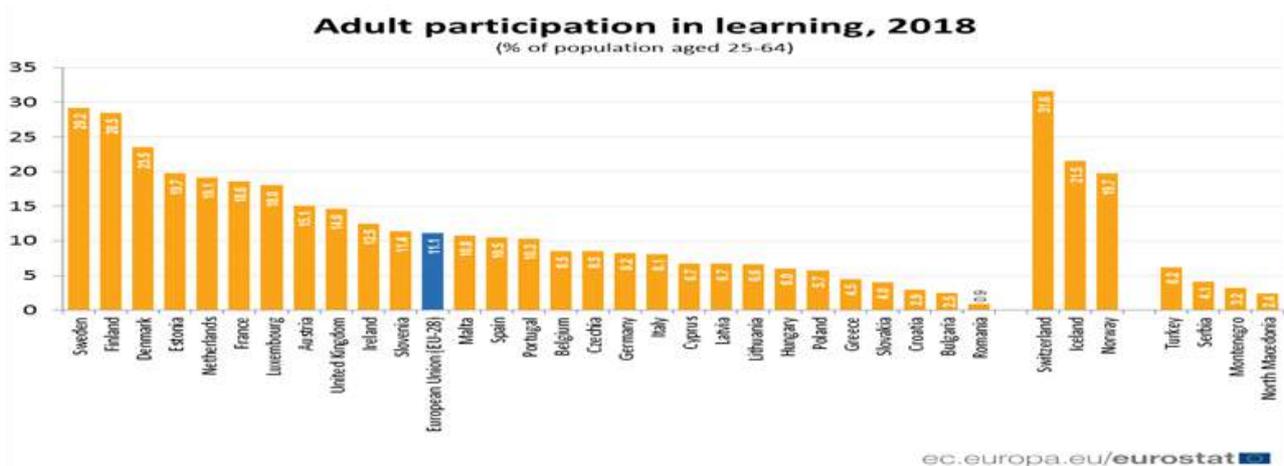
²⁵ <http://ialomita.mmanpis.ro/formare-profesionala/registrul-furnizorilor-de-formare/>

²⁶ <http://bucuresti.mmanpis.ro/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/RNFFPA-2019-ianuarie-septembrie-1.pdf>

Poor data collection and a limited culture of participation in LLL²⁷ (i.e. people do not label some activities as learning when reporting participation in LLL) represent potential reasons for the low participation in adult education in Romania. Data collection for research purposes is undertaken by the Institute of Educational Sciences but this organisation has limited capacity to cover adult education, as it focuses mainly on the pre-university system. The research institute connected with the Ministry of Labour provides studies on skills and labour forecasts. The universities and the Romanian Institute for Adult Education (IREA) also support research activities, but on a small scale and in a systematic way, as research grants are largely missing.

It is even more difficult to collect data from private providers, since a comprehensive database or dedicated studies do not exist for all kinds of educational offers, but mainly for the (state) certified provisions. NGOs tend to provide educational offers for community development and personal development which, otherwise, are very limited. However, their offers are more project-based and are therefore not constant or regular.

In the EU Member State- the highest rates of adult participation in learning were in Sweden (29.2 %), Finland (28.5 %) and Denmark (23.5 %). In contrast, five Member States had participation rates below 5 %: Romania (0.9 %)²⁸, Bulgaria (2.5 %), Croatia (2.9 %), Slovakia (4.0 %) and Greece (4.5 %).



There are weak data collection and limited data availability to inform both adults and decision makers about the different parts of the adult learning system. This constitutes a limit listed as such in all strategic documents, with the limited resources allotted for such purpose (and for the adult learning system as a whole) impacting the possibility of running systematic national surveys for all the EQVET indicators. There is the need for informed, evidence-based policy decision making and revisions.

The presence of a specialist centre for data collection, for evaluation and monitoring²⁹ is foreseen. Such centre is also mentioned as an integrated management system for data collection, with periodic evaluation and monitoring, together with a role in quality assurance. This aspect is definitely to be set up, because so far explanatory data about the real causes of low participation rate and how they can be addressed are missing. There are doubts about the feasibility of the targets set, and there are missing data about the impact

²⁷https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?pager.offset=20&advSearchKey=Full+Country+Report&mode=advancedSubmit&catId=1307&doc_submit=&policyArea=0&policyAreaSub=0&country=0&year=0 – pag. 14-15
²⁸ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/DDN-20190517-1>
²⁹https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?pager.offset=20&advSearchKey=Full+Country+Report&mode=advancedSubmit&catId=1307&doc_submit=&policyArea=0&policyAreaSub=0&country=0&year=0 – pag. 39, pag. 41

of adult learning and how it can be improved. The data are more descriptive, as set by, for instance, Eurostat, but the explanatory part is missing.

Increasing the inclusion of people with disabilities in the labour market will involve their better participation in education, broadening the spectrum of lifelong learning programmes and making qualification systems more flexible. Currently, people with disabilities have very few lifelong learning opportunities for participation³⁰. Very few adults with disabilities were involved in a continuous training programme: for instance, in 2018, according to data of ANOFM³¹ the situation of the persons belonging to disadvantaged groups included in the courses is presented as follows:

- 11,083 unemployed people from the rural area;
- 2,495 long-term unemployed;
- 695 unemployed Roma;
- 149 persons in detention;
- 39 persons released from detention;
- 33 unemployed people with disabilities.

For the upcoming period, there are three immediate priorities in Romania³²: to strengthen the connection between the three Upskilling Pathways steps by adjusting the legislation and changing methodology, to reinforce the coordination between stakeholders, including funding associations and finally, to gather data and evidence on the current landscape as well as exploring the feasibility of participating in the next PIAAC survey. The Euro Adult Education Association recommends a board for adult education in Romania to be formed by academics and practitioners in order to further develop this sector. There is also a need for the development of a database with all the courses and seminars on participation in lifelong learning which will be particularly useful for population living in rural areas. Such information could be collected by cultural houses and libraries.

Romanians are among the highest percentages in Europe declaring financial barrier³³ against participating into lifelong learning, as the poverty level in the country is high. Therefore, a proper prioritisation of target groups to be supported is to be considered, to ensure equity of access to learning for all, not only through the active measures managed by the employment services (as they are implementing mainly the stipulations of the employment strategy), but also through community centres for lifelong learning and other educational institutions (as foreseen in the NSLL and NSVET), as it is known that adult education in Romania for other purposes than employment is largely not supported.

Barriers and obstacles can be caused by three types of constraints that are frequently encountered in Romania³⁴: insufficient and asymmetric information between the institutions involved; reduced incentives for participation in education and training activities; and inadequate institutional capacity.

Other type of obstacles pertains to:

³⁰ http://www.mmuncii.ro/j33/images/Documente/Familie/2015-DPS/SI_Vol2_Background_DocTranslation.pdf - pag. 190

³¹ https://www.anofm.ro/upload/5798/Raport_activitate_2018_ANOFM.pdf - pag. 16

³² https://eaea.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Country_Reports_2018_final.pdf - pag. 50

³³ https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?pager.offset=20&advSearchKey=Full+Country+Report&mode=advancedSubmit&catId=1307&doc_submit=&policyArea=0&policyAreaSub=0&country=0&year=0 – pag. 43

³⁴ [https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/_fi%C8%99iere/Minister/2016/strategii/Strategie%20LLL%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/_fi%C8%99iere/Minister/2016/strategii/Strategie%20LLL%20(1).pdf) – pag. 29

a) The lack of promotion of training opportunities and benefits³⁵.

- The lack of a strategy to promote training leading to awareness of the benefits of participating in training programmes and recognition of the results acquired in a non-formal and informal context.
- A reduced dissemination of examples of good practices, i.e. the relatively limited presentation of some examples of successful careers of graduates of vocational training programmes.
- A lack of motivational activities to encourage adults to participate in vocational trainings, e.g. national and international competitions on trades in the system of adult vocational training and apprenticeship in the workplace.
- Insufficient adaptation and development of forms of support for adult participation for continuing vocational training, in particular people facing periods of transition in the labour market, workers at risk of unemployment, unemployed and disadvantaged groups and people over 50 years of age.

b) Career guidance and career counselling.

- The lack of a coherent national system of information, counselling and professional guidance at the national, regional and local level, aimed at both initial and continuing vocational training.
- Insufficient provision of counselling and professional guidance services for all categories of groups at risk.
- Lack of regulation regarding the possibility of organising online professional training programmes.

c) Non-comprehensive and non-systematic programmes of continuous professional development of trainers and teachers.

- Lack of legal regulations regarding the development of the skills of the tutors.
- Lack of physical and moral wear of the didactic means and the equipment related to the training infrastructure, not only for people with disabilities.
- Insufficient development of community centres for lifelong learning and resource centres from vocational training.

The FAR Survey Report³⁶ also highlighted other types of obstacles:

d) **Attitudinal barriers:** one of the most significant obstacles in relation to inclusive education is the prevalence of negative attitudes towards persons and children with disabilities. Such attitudes can be found among a wide range of stakeholders, including teachers, parents, community members, government representatives and even children themselves.

e) **Physical barriers:** although inclusive education advocates that all adults with disabilities should be able to attend and benefit from education, irrespective of individual differences, there are a number of physical and environmental barriers that often prevent them from being included. These include

³⁵ https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/_fi%C8%99iere/Minister/2016/strategii/Strategia_VET%2027%2004%202016.pdf, pag 73-80

³⁶ FAR Survey Report

(The survey participants were 12 representatives of 6 organizations of different types: associations, organizations of persons with disabilities, community day centers, schools for persons with disabilities, training providers)

difficult terrain and poor quality of the roads, the distances that they have to travel to reach their education providers and the lack of transportation. If they do make it to the education provider, the accessibility within the organisation itself becomes an issue, because few institutions comply with the principles of universal design and there are many physical elements that make it difficult to access learning in classrooms.

- f) **Curriculum and pedagogical barriers:** a lack of awareness and technical knowledge within the education provider can lead to the implementation of particularly inflexible approaches that do not cater for the needs, potential and interests of adults with disabilities. One of the critical weaknesses in trainers' and teachers' education programmes in almost all contexts is the near total absence of core modules in initial teacher education for all teachers to understand the reasons for breaking down learning and how to address barriers to learning and participation for all. One critical aspect is also that "inclusive pedagogy"³⁷ is rarely adopted as an overall approach, but subject-based didactics is still prevailing. While there is a lot of research on "inclusive pedagogy", it has proved to be hard to integrate in the teacher education.

- g) **Programmes:** topics such as classroom management, group dynamics, co-teaching, etc. are often ignored. A further critical barrier is the separation of the education of teachers, according to levels, disciplines, etc. A useful resource for teacher education is the "Profile of Inclusive Teachers"³⁸ by the European Agency for Special Needs Education and Inclusive Education. Furthermore, modules on inclusive education more often continue to have a 'special needs' focus and overemphasise specialist knowledge on specific impairments (such as learning sign language and braille) rather than looking holistically at the needs of learners and addressing the critical skills of inclusive pedagogy. Another weakness of the inclusive modules is that they are usually very theoretical rather than practical, and generally have no, or limited, practical application of knowledge or observations of practice in the field. The implementation of inappropriate curricula and learning schemes as well as inflexible teaching methods and assessment policies and procedures are often due to the fact that teachers are not very skilled in pedagogy and, therefore, curriculum directives are used to ensure minimum levels of quality. Inflexible teaching methods are also due to the fact that educators in teacher education institutions have not been exposed to more efficient and flexible approaches.

- h) **Funding and resource barriers:** the overall aid investment into education is in a continued state of stagnation. The analysis of the European executive in Romania³⁹ shows that "*public spending on education is low compared to the EU level, while the investment needs of the sector are high. Any major reform may require additional funding to strengthen equity and efficiency mechanisms.*"

The lack of financial resources prevents participation in educational programmes⁴⁰, especially in the case of disadvantaged categories. In a study carried out by the World Bank (2014), 22.8% of the nearly 400 actors involved in lifelong learning in Romania said that an obstacle to increasing participation is the cost of

³⁷ Center for Research and Promotion of Equity in Education (CCPEE) of the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences - University of Bucharest - <https://echitateineducatie.wixsite.com/ccpee/scopul-centrului>

³⁸ <https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/Profile-of-Inclusive-Teachers.pdf>

³⁹ <https://www.edupedu.ro/educatia-din-romania-in-2019-se-scurfunda-sub-nivelul-pe-care-il-avea-in-2009-arata-monitorul-comisiei-europene-suntem-la-mare-departare-de-tintele-europene/>

⁴⁰ http://www.mmuncii.ro/j33/images/Documente/Familie/2015-DPS/SI_Vol2_Background_DocTranslation.pdf - pag. 185

education and training. This is a very important factor in the social inclusion policy because education and training are essential to enable those facing the risk of exclusion.

4. Identification of practitioners providing support for persons with disabilities in adult education activities

There is no clear stipulation in the legislation regarding adult education on who are the experts that should provide support for persons with disabilities in adult education activities and programmes.

As for children and young people with disabilities, there is a range of specialists who support the education process⁴¹. By extrapolation, we can list the types of specialists⁴² that should and/or have to be involved in the education programmes of adults with disabilities:

- Support teachers or the teaching assistants.
- Psychologists in the specialty of psychological counselling⁴³.
- Psychologists in special psycho-pedagogy specialty⁴⁴.
- Psycho-pedagogues⁴⁵.
- Instructional designers⁴⁶.
- Social workers⁴⁷.
- Pedagogues⁴⁸.
- Occupational therapists⁴⁹.
- Psychologists in the specialty of educational psychology, school and vocational counselling⁵⁰.
- Educators⁵¹.
- Workplace instructors.
- Mentors⁵².
- Recovery pedagogues⁵³.
- Defectologists⁵⁴.
- Specialists in vocational assessment of people with disabilities⁵⁵.

⁴¹ FAR Survey Report

⁴² We mention that the selection of these experts is based on the official code in Romania - COR - Classification of Occupations in Romania

⁴³ https://www.rubinian.com/cor_6_ocupatia_detalii.php?id=263402

⁴⁴ https://www.rubinian.com/cor_6_ocupatia_detalii.php?id=263408

⁴⁵ https://www.rubinian.com/cor_6_ocupatia_detalii.php?id=263412

⁴⁶ https://www.rubinian.com/cor_6_ocupatia_detalii.php?id=235904

⁴⁷ https://www.rubinian.com/cor_6_ocupatia_detalii.php?id=263501

⁴⁸ https://www.rubinian.com/cor_6_ocupatia_detalii.php?id=235908

⁴⁹ https://www.rubinian.com/cor_6_ocupatia_detalii.php?id=263419

⁵⁰ https://www.rubinian.com/cor_6_ocupatia_detalii.php?id=263407

⁵¹ https://www.rubinian.com/cor_6_ocupatia_detalii.php?id=531203

⁵² https://www.rubinian.com/cor_6_ocupatia_detalii.php?id=235902

⁵³ https://www.rubinian.com/cor_6_ocupatia_detalii.php?id=235205

⁵⁴ https://www.rubinian.com/cor_6_ocupatia_detalii.php?id=235201

⁵⁵ https://www.rubinian.com/cor_6_ocupatia_detalii.php?id=263506

5. Role of practitioners supporting persons with disabilities in adult education activities

Main tasks⁵⁶: *“Assistance and support: consulting, counselling, accompanying adults with disabilities to remedy, reduce and eliminate their effects; preventing the entry of students and young people in difficult situations; assistance and advice to teachers, parents or legal representatives, other adults working with them.”*⁵⁷

*“In the context in which the practitioners do not benefit from a training applied to cover the education or training requirements required by the labour market, identifying such tasks is relative and inappropriate. However, if we were to speak strictly on a theoretical level, the main tasks should be confused with their ability to focus on identifying the positive aspects, qualities, resources, and the competencies of the beneficiary that they support and their development for socio-professional training in the prospect of facilitating inclusion and insertion through this possibility.”*⁵⁸

“Providing specialised services:

- a) correlating the types of education with the purpose of the education, the general and specific objectives;*
- b) ensuring the educational connection among complex activities.*
- c) creating the conditions for the best social and professional integration of the person with special needs.*
- d) advising adults with disabilities on problems related to the knowledge and self-knowledge of their own personality; supporting mutual adaptation between students and education providers, optimisation of inter-human relations with the local community:*
- e) prevention and/or reduction of factors such as of abandonment, education failure or mental discomfort, career orientation;*
- f) examining the students from a psycho-pedagogical point of view;*
- g) elaborating specialised psycho-pedagogical materials;*
- h) collaborating with the local factors involved in achieving the educational objectives”.*⁵⁹

6. Level of training of practitioners providing support for persons with disabilities in adult education activities

*“Practitioners do NOT have sufficient skills and abilities to support people with disabilities. They have nowhere to receive training to support people with disabilities. They do not have the necessary experience. At the national level, there are no public policies and strategies in order to train these experts”.*⁶⁰

There are no specific training programmes for human resources in the education system⁶¹ in order to apply the principles of inclusive education, in the spirit of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

⁵⁶ FAR Survey

⁵⁷ FAR Survey – FAR point of view

⁵⁸ FAR Survey – DISTONIA Association point of view

⁵⁹ FAR Survey – PARASCHIVA Association point of view

⁶⁰ FAR Survey – APH Sporting Club Galati point of view

⁶¹ FAR Survey Report

Teachers/trainers say that they need training in⁶²:

- a) teaching special needs students training;
- b) ICT skills for teaching;

Although the National Strategy "A society without barriers for persons with disabilities" 2016 - 2020 and its Operational Plan⁶³ refer to persons with disabilities, most of the objectives, directions of action and measures proposed for the Education section are focused on children and young people with disabilities and less on adults with disabilities. Even the statistical data and the analysis of the situation existing at the time of elaborating the Strategy also focus mainly on children. There is no specific reference to the training and career of specialists in the education of adults with disabilities.

Most of the documents regarding the practitioners refer to teachers from the pre-university education. There is no clear documentation regarding trainers in the adult education system.

For instance, for each teaching position⁶⁴ the legislation establishes the initial training requirements in the form of appointment conditions. These refer to the education level and the professional training that have to be completed and passed by the prospective teachers. Only persons compelling with these requirements are considered qualified for the considered position. However, under special circumstances, teaching positions in pre-university education can be occupied for a limited period of time with unqualified personnel. In most cases this works as a postponement of the qualification and is applied only when and where there is a lack of qualified teachers (e.g. for certain subjects – like ICT or foreign languages, or in certain areas, etc.). This was a situation rather frequently encountered until the late 1990's.

Teaching positions (also referred to as didactic functions) in pre-university education are established within the legislation by education level, and are as follows:

- In pre-primary education: educator; institutor.
- In primary education: institutor.
- In secondary education: teacher, psycho-pedagogue-teacher, social pedagogue-teacher, master-instructor.
- In special education and in complex evaluation services (for evaluation and selection of the children with special educational needs): educator, institutor, teacher, itinerant teacher, special education teacher, psycho-pedagogue-teacher, school psychologist-teacher, logopaedic-teacher, social pedagogue-teacher.

The preparation and standards for entry into the teaching profession are low⁶⁵. The Teaching Staff Statute that forms part of the 2011 Education Law sets the rules for recruitment, salary levels, career progression and training as well as teachers' rights and obligations. Teachers in Romania are required to complete at least a bachelor's degree for all teaching levels, and between one to two semester modules in initial teacher education depending on the level of education that they will teach. Overall, however, the initial preparation that Romanian teachers receive offers less preparation, especially in teaching practice, than in other EU countries.

⁶² https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/document-library-docs/et-monitor-factsheet-2019-romania_en.pdf - pag. 2

⁶³ <http://anpd.gov.ro/web/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/MO-nr-737Bis-din-22-septembrie-2016.pdf>

⁶⁴ https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/teachers-and-education-staff-63_en

⁶⁵ <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264274051-en.pdf?expires=1579531649&id=id&acname=guest&checksum=E96D35A7BA95196F934953300EE38392> – pag. 49

Trainers in continuing education and training⁶⁶:

Continuing vocational training programmes are provided by trainers with a profile or specialisation that are relevant to the training programme. They must hold:

- (a) the level of education within the national framework of qualifications equal to or higher than the level of training they support;
- (b) a qualification in the field of activity of the training programme;
- (c) any form of certification for the following occupations: instructor, trainer, trainer of trainers or certificates for the teaching profession (60 ECTS credits).

Professionals must have knowledge about personal characteristics; they must know what the individualised and differentiated approach is in working with students and young people with CES (with emphasis on learning, communication, social interaction and employment), structure and the pace of the educational process, as well as the characteristics of the labour market, etc.

Regarding the level of education, it is recommended that the specialists have a degree higher or equal to 240 study credits according to the European Credit System transferable (ECTS). The practical experience gained over time is also very important. In the initial training of teachers, emphasis is placed on the importance of rapidly creating opportunities for acquiring knowledge and experience in working with people with disabilities. It is appropriate and practical to accumulate informal experiences in working with people with disabilities, in order for the pedagogue to form and change their opinions on the inclusion process.

The studies held by the specialist are important, but they are often not sufficient if we take into account the continuous transformation of the labour market, the changes in professions, the evolution of assistive technologies for students and young people with CES, as well as the new approaches and working methodologies with them.

There is a clear direction on the training that all teachers should be receiving to change this situation. It states that *“all teachers must be provided with dedicated units and modules to prepare them to work in inclusive settings, as well as practical experiential learning, where they can build the skills and confidence to problem-solve through diverse inclusion challenges. The core content of teacher education must address a basic understanding of human diversity, growth and development, the human rights model of disability, and inclusive pedagogy including how to identify students’ functional abilities”* (UN, 2016, par. 79).

Competences of persons with attributions in the provision of adult education and vocational training programmes⁶⁷: the financial support of the European Union has made it possible to co-finance a large number of professional development programmes for teachers and trainers, but these have been fragmented and there is no nationally-coordinated approach to ensure coherent and unitary development of the competences of persons with attributions in adult education and vocational training.

A study commissioned by the European Commission⁶⁸ identified key competences for adult learning professionals by analysing 19 job descriptions and 20 educational programmes. This study established a

⁶⁶ https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/4171_ro.pdf, pag 52

⁶⁷ https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/_fișiere/Minister/2016/strategii/Strategia_VET%2027%2004%202016.pdf – pag. 16

⁶⁸ <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/resource-centre/content/key-competences-adult-learning-professionals>

European framework to discuss competences and to compare practices across Europe. It helped national and European policy makers to start a debate on the professionalisation of adult learning staff and the quality of adult learning provision in general. The competences identified were grouped in the following clusters⁶⁹:

- Interpersonal competences
- Pedagogical competences
- Subject knowledge and methodological competences
- Organisational competences
- Competences in collaborating with colleagues
- Competences in collaborating with the working environment
- Competences in reflection and development
- (Additional competences)

The data show that educational programmes are particularly focused on the first four clusters of competences (interpersonal; pedagogical, subject knowledge & methodological; organisational) and less on the others. This indicated that the educational programmes focus more on the primary tasks of non-vocational adult learning staff, namely educating, guiding, counselling adults by using the appropriate pedagogical and didactical methods, the right interpersonal attitudes, and having profound knowledge of the subject of teaching.

Teachers in education for adults with disabilities should have three categories of competencies⁷⁰:

- a) be experts in their field
- b) be able to teach to transfer their knowledge to adults
- c) be able to support the specific needs of a persons with disabilities.

7. Resources and tools available for practitioners supporting persons with disabilities in adult education activities

Adult education activities of practitioners supporting persons with disabilities are filled with many obstacles⁷¹, including negative attitudes, lack of adequate materials and learning and working methods, lack of adequate means of access, lack of support services (counselling and professional orientation, etc.).

There is a great need for allocation and endowment with specialised equipment, correlated with the type and degree of disability⁷². The lack of assistive techniques is often the cause of education dropout for children, youth and adults with disabilities, especially for certain categories (for example, the group of people with sensory disabilities), and the efforts and punctual projects of non-governmental associations or organisations cannot cover the need for intervention at the level of the entire educational system.

Most of the resources are created by private organisations with different funds. For example, the Orange Romania Foundation⁷³ finances different NGOs to create:

⁶⁹ <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/blog/adult-learning-practitioners-competences-between-job-descriptions-and-education-programmes>

⁷⁰ FAR Survey Report

⁷¹ The Academic Network of European Disability Experts (ANED) – Country Report on the European semester, <https://www.disability-europe.net/country/romania>, pag. 12

⁷² http://sgg.gov.ro/legislativ/docs/2014/12/6zfbn3dkj05_sm98rgv2.pdf - pag. 24

⁷³ <http://www.csrreport.ro/stiri-csr-romania/finantare-de-pestre-230-000-euro-oferita-de-fundatia-orange-prin-concursul-lumea-prin-culoare-si-sunet-cinci-proiecte-digitale-vor-ajuta-persoanele-cu-dizabilitati.html>; <https://www.fundatiaorange.ro/lumea-prin-culoare-si-sunet/>

- the first "do-it-yourself" printer that makes embossed images that can be understood by people with blindness
- an educational software package for students with deaf-blindness
- a digital textbook of the Romanian sign language
- stories accessible to students with hearing impairments
- digital lessons accessible to students with visual impairments about birds in Romania.

Only within the project "Facilitating the insertion in the labour market of persons with disabilities"⁷⁴ implemented by the National Authority for People with Disabilities (NAPD) in partnership with the National Agency for Employment, co-financed by the Human Capital Operational Programme (POCU) - Priority axis 3 - Jobs for all - a voucher is granted at the request of the people with disabilities who benefit from active employment measures, registered on the county's employment agency or of the municipality of Bucharest's agency. This voucher is meant to purchase assistive products recommended by a specialised doctor, which can be found in the List of assistive technologies and priority access devices for employment. The project duration is 3 years (2019-2022).

Many assistive technologies⁷⁵ are produced by different companies in order to market them for profit. Adult education organisations do not have access to such resources due to a lack of funds for endowments.

One of the measures included in ORDER No. 1254/2018 of March 16, 2018 for the approval of the Monitoring Instrument on the implementation of the national strategy "A society without barriers for persons with disabilities" 2016 – 2020 is Measure no. 2.1.⁷⁶ "*Development and diversification of teaching aids, adapted learning aids such as workbooks, Braille writing texts, augmentative communication, enlarged or simplified texts, assistive electronic learning technologies, special educational software and others*". Such measure unfortunately only remains on paper and is not being put into practice.

Adequate resources are particularly important for new teachers, who require more support in their first year of employment and currently receive limited initial preparation in areas that are essential for activating student learning.⁷⁷

The main challenges⁷⁸ faced by the adult education sector in Romania concern the adoption of new technologies and interactive methods, and the increasing involvement of mentors and coaches in training. A EAEA member in Romania recommends applying more creative teaching methods, especially the use of art, in learning.

Recommendations⁷⁹:

- The learner is at the centre of the development, methodology, process and outcomes of the learning offers;

⁷⁴ <http://anpd.gov.ro/web/conferinta-de-lansare-a-proiectului-facilitarea-insertiei-pe-piata-muncii-a-persoanelor-cu-dizabilitati-cod-mysmis2014-130164/>

⁷⁵ <https://www.techexpo.ro/2019/prezentare-solutiilor-de-tehnologie-asistiva/>

⁷⁶ <http://www.mmuncii.ro/j33/images/Documente/Legislatie/O1254-2018.pdf>, pag. 17-18

⁷⁷ [https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264274051-](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264274051-en.pdf?expires=1579531649&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=E96D35A7BA95196F934953300EE38392)

[en.pdf?expires=1579531649&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=E96D35A7BA95196F934953300EE38392](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264274051-en.pdf?expires=1579531649&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=E96D35A7BA95196F934953300EE38392) – pag. 122

⁷⁸ <https://eaea.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Country-Reports-2019.pdf> - pag. 50

⁷⁹ https://eaea.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/eaea_manifesto_final_web_version_290319.pdf - pag. 4

- The empowerment of non-formal methods and methodologies applies creativity, existing knowledge and skills of learners and provide inspiring learning experiences;
- Professional trainers, teachers and staff are necessary for applying the appropriate methods and achieving high-quality provision and a successful learner experience.

There are no material, human and curricular resources to support the real inclusion of adults with disabilities in LLL programs. It is necessary to organise the educational process in the most appropriate form (through special languages, ways, methods and programmes) for each type of disability in adult education programmes⁸⁰. Their acute absence does not allow the creation of suitable contexts for personalised and adapted learning for learners with disabilities.

Curriculum and pedagogy: flexible approaches in education are needed to respond to the diverse abilities and needs of all learners. Where curricula and teaching methods are rigid and there is a lack of appropriate teaching material – for example, where information is not delivered in the most appropriate manner such as sign language and teaching materials are not available in alternative formats such as Braille – adults with disabilities are at increased risk of exclusion. Assessment and evaluation systems are often focused on academic performance rather than individual progress and can therefore also be restrictive for people with special education needs.

8. Continuing professional development

In Romania, the Law of National Education no. 1/2011 (Art. 357) mentions for the first time the need to create a system that will ensure the initial formation and the development of professionals in adult education⁸¹. This need is based on the fact that, at present, the Romanian system of qualification in the field of adult education is a lacuna, divided by incoherent mechanisms of certification and regulation that do not take into consideration the diversity of the field and professional status, experience, tasks and roles played by adult educators and trainers.

In Romania, most often, the adult education practitioner is most strongly associated, at the level of common sense, with that of a trainer, teacher or lecturer. However, there are a number of new roles that do not enjoy a consistent and regulated definition such as coach, mentor, skills evaluator, programme evaluator or training provider evaluator, online facilitator, learning space designer and list could be keep going.

The universe of regulations and practices by which a person can undertake professional activities in the field of adult education in Romania is, at this moment, extremely varied. In Romania there are still a variety of ways of qualification and career progression, more or less regulated, recognised and interconnected.

The initial training of specialists in adult education exists⁸² (it is done within the formal education system), but it does not continue (the exception is the system of continuous training of teachers in pre-university

⁸⁰ FAR Survey Report

⁸¹https://epale.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/proalps_repere_pentru_dezvoltarea_sistemului_de_profesionalizare_a_practicienilor_din_educaia_adulilor_2_.pdf
pag.6, pag. 10

⁸²https://epale.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/proalps_repere_pentru_dezvoltarea_sistemului_de_profesionalizare_a_practicienilor_din_educaia_adulilor_2_.pdf - pag. 16-17

education). There are no systems or structures that ensure continuous professional development, not even training or specialisation courses in certain branches.

In general, the personnel involved in adult education work in precarious professional conditions, working mostly part-time and having another main occupation. In this regard, most educators and trainers take courses in their area of expertise and are highly dependent on the demand on the training market.

Although there are alternative mechanisms for certifying the professional competences of trainers in adult education (or for other related occupations, such as project manager, skills evaluator, etc.), such as the one regarding the validation of competences, the credibility of this professionalisation route is still limited, on the one hand due to insufficient knowledge, on the other due to the inefficiency of the mechanisms of professionalisation and quality assurance.

Disappointment

Professionalisation of adult educators does not happen⁸³. Conflicting interests on a national level prevent the promised move from policy formulation to determined action to professionalise adult educators.

There is an increasing emphasis in the European policy documents on the need to professionalise adult learning professionals, and lifelong learning staff in general, considering that the quality of professional behaviour is seen as a determinant for the quality of learning. Furthermore, in the European Agenda for Adult Learning it is stipulated that by the end of 2014 the Member States should have set up their national systems for the professionalisation of adult learning staff.

Modest progress

In countries such as Romania, where efforts have been made with the direct involvement of the Ministry of Education, action has been limited. Researchers and university professors from Timisoara and Bucharest, together with representatives from the Ministry of Education, began the evidence-based policymaking groundwork by running a national survey⁸⁴ in 2012 on the needs and expectations of the beneficiaries of a national system of professionalisation of adult educators⁸⁵. Based on the wide consultation of the relevant stakeholders, the concept of such a system was designed. But the next steps of the policy circle are missing.

Conflicting interests

One of the explanations for this is the conflicting interests at the national level. Indicators of the low professional status of adult educators have been formulated by academics, transnational studies, professional associations, trade unions and different stakeholders. But there are contradicting interests, difficult to overcome, at different levels: the practitioners themselves, the employers and the policymakers. There are two sides to this situation. On the one hand, the practitioners have agreed to this ambiguous situation, leaving space for creativity and diversity, to benefit from people's expertise without constraints and in a flexible way. Some practitioners are against any form of regulation, preferring to rely on the rules of the competitive market. The employers also have hesitations, as a practitioners with a higher level of

⁸³ <https://asemllhub.org/policy-briefs/professionalisation-of-adult-educators/>

⁸⁴

https://epale.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/proalps_repere_pentru_dezvoltarea_sistemului_de_profesionalizare_a_practicienilor_din_educaia_adulilor_2_.pdf

⁸⁵ This is the only survey regarding the topic! During our desk research we have not identified other relevant studies and reports.

qualification are likely to demand more money. The state, as the main employer in adult education in a lot of countries, is saving money by employing mainly freelancers, not qualified individuals.

On the other hand, such "freedom" and diversity make it difficult to increase the professional status of adult learning professionals (ALPs), in that anyone can enter this occupation. And this might result in bad quality, and thus, consequently, a bad image. Any constraint on continuing professional development (CPD) has a bad effect on the image of the professional status of adult educators, as signalled by the final report from Adult Learning Professions in Europe (ALPINE)⁸⁶ on quality in adult learning, which highlights the lack of a clear view on what is required of adult learning staff.

The questions launched for debate in the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning, "What can be done to modernise and improve initial and in-service training for ... practitioners? Where are the most urgent needs for enriched training?" are still not answered in a convincing way, and it is not clear how the 'effective' initial and continuing professional development systems to be established by the member states might look. Instead, the solution recommended is learning from each other with the help of staff mobility. The vague mention may be a reason why the member states did not put in place such systems, nor a wider training resources system for (up)skilling adult learning professionals. These may be possible explanations, but more determined action at national levels relies on the determination of the Member States to adopt and implement these solutions.

The difficulties related to professionalisation⁸⁷ are related both to the level of development of the field of practice, and to its heterogeneity and complexity. More specifically, Professor Emil Păun added explanatory elements for the current situation in the field of adult education, namely that the field is "contaminated" by school practices. Most practitioners come from teachers, which makes it difficult to build a professional identity.

Romania⁸⁸ lacks professional teaching standards, which provide a national definition of what teachers should know and be able to do. As a result, each teacher appraisal process uses different evaluation criteria and relies heavily on other assessment material like job descriptions and tests, without evaluating the full range of knowledge, skills and aptitudes that are important to good teaching. Standards would clarify the different dimensions of high-quality teaching. In Romania they would help to orient appraisals and all teacher policies towards the competencies that are central to effective teaching and delivery of the new curriculum. In particular, they would enable the development of more well-rounded, performance-based appraisals and reduce the reliance on teacher examinations at different stages of teachers' career paths.

Ensuring appraisal supports teachers' professional development⁸⁹: Romanian teachers undergo many appraisals throughout their career. However, the system is not as effective as it could be at identifying promising candidates, recognising and rewarding the competencies that are essential for effective teaching or in supporting teachers to grow and develop. Basing teacher appraisal on common professional standards will help to ensure that teachers are evaluated according to the competencies associated with good teaching.

⁸⁶ https://www.ne-mo.org/fileadmin/Dateien/public/MumAE/adultprofreport_en.pdf

⁸⁷ https://epale.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/proalps_reperu_pentru_dezvoltarea_sistemului_de_profesionalizare_a_practicienilor_din_educatia_adulilor_2_.pdf - pag. 7

⁸⁸ <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264274051-en.pdf?expires=1579531649&id=id&acname=guest&checksum=E96D35A7BA95196F934953300EE38392> – pag. 26

⁸⁹ <https://www.unicef.org/romania/media/141/file/Executive%20Summary.pdf> – pag. 2

Making greater use of principals and experienced teachers as appraisers and creating more space for classroom observation, feedback and discussion will focus appraisals on the actual practice of teaching and give teachers useful input to improve. Some of the consequences attached to appraisal undermine its ability to support teachers' development. Appraisals affect salaries and careers, and are used to grant salary bonuses. Instead, a differentiated career structure where teachers can take on different roles and responsibilities will give them incentives to develop throughout their career.

Professional training of specialists⁹⁰: in Romania the professional training of the existing specialists in public services is insufficient based on scientific data that support the principles of social and professional integration of people with disabilities, this being evidenced by the reduced training offer from the Romanian universities for areas such as: occupational therapy, ergonomics, vocational counselling for people with disabilities. Unfortunately, the public system has less availability and flexibility for accepting or imposing a professional training of the specialists in the system that are in line with the new approaches regarding the support for the access to the labour market of people with disabilities. These new specialisations would mean preparation for education, vocational assessment, guidance and counselling, job coaching, job finding and all of these tailored to specific needs of different categories of persons with disabilities. The specialists trained in this field would have, in addition, the mission to change mentalities - at the level of people with disabilities and at the level of employers, so as to modify the simplistic vision on the human resource, which is currently limited to the aspect related to "making a profit/not making a profit".

National occupational standard for trainers in Romania⁹¹: the National Adult Training Board (CNFPA) awards certificates based on occupational standard for trainers. The standard was developed at national level as one of the key outcomes of a cooperation project on quality assurance of vocational education for adults with the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development and the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) (currently known as GIZ, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit); the project took place between 2004 and 2006. The qualification of trainers was validated by the sectoral committee, Education and professional training, research, culture, sport, in 2007. The standard aimed to make the qualifications of Romanian trainers more transparent across Europe. It was also to ensure compliance with national legislative requirements stipulating that all providers of training services accredited must prove that their authorised training programmes are delivered by professional trainers qualified according to the established occupational standards (as of January 2010).

Target group - The standard targets:

- (a) trainers (formators) who carry out theoretical and practical training activities and usually work for training providers (qualification at the higher education level);
- (b) foremen-instructors (maistru instructor) who deliver practical training in secondary vocational education establishments and on-the-job tutors/supervisors in work placements in enterprises (a qualification at the secondary education level).

It has been explicitly stipulated that trainers should not deliver training to those who have higher qualifications than themselves.

⁹⁰ <http://www.assoc.ro/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/POSDRU-54702-Studiu-Comparativ-Rom%C3%A2no-Olandez.pdf> – pag. 152-153

⁹¹ https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/4126_en.pdf - pag. 28-31

Main approach and activities: the standard was developed to clarify the concept and professional status of a trainer. A trainer was defined as a specialist who designs, delivers, evaluates and revises theoretical/practical activities and/or programmes to develop and enhance professional competences in specialised centres or at workplace. The standard is used to develop and implement coherent and standardised training programmes for trainers and trainers of the trainers and to validate and certify the competences acquired in non-formal and informal contexts. Training modules for CVET trainers have been developed and put in place based on these competences. The training (360 hours for trainers at the qualification level of higher education and 140 hours for trainers at secondary level) is split between theoretical and practical preparation in simulation conditions (six weeks and two weeks accordingly) and 'real time' training (four weeks and two weeks accordingly).

Competences required: a common set of competences was proposed for all trainers: IVET, CVET and apprenticeship/workplace trainers. The standard comprises four compulsory competences for all categories of trainers and four optional competences, which pertain to trainers with higher level qualifications.

Compulsory competences:

- (a) planning training activities: identifying the training objectives in terms of learning outcomes accordingly to the needs of participants and current legislation; establishing the overall training programme strategy; planning the learning environment and documents; choosing adequate physical environment; acquiring and developing support materials;
- (b) running training activities: informing trainees about the training programme; increasing their motivation, engagement and self-assessment; implementing in-class training; managing conflict; providing feedback to the trainees;
- (c) evaluating trainees and ensuring the quality of training: using evaluation methods and tools; organising evaluation sessions; recording evaluation results and preparing evaluation reports on the training programme/activity;
- (d) applying specialised training methods and techniques: encouraging critical self-assessment and self-development; promoting learning through peer learning and group work; working in teams with other trainers and related personnel; renewing personal training approaches, methods and techniques; developing more general learner competences, such as job market exploration, information searching, and career development.

Optional competences:

- (a) marketing of training: recommending a training programme most relevant to the learning needs and objectives;
- (b) design of training programmes: establishing an overall training programme strategy by identifying theoretical and practical parts, relevant techniques, time planning, evaluation sessions and performance indicators;

- (c) practical organisation of training programmes and sessions at different levels: negotiating a training programme with a funder; establishing working units (groups or individuals); arranging breaks, transportation, meals, if necessary;
- (d) VET programme quality assurance: monitoring the effectiveness of a training programme; conceiving evaluation portfolios; reviewing the training programme; promoting quality assurance standards and methods to the training provider and beneficiaries. Link to the validation of non-formal and informal learning. One of the routes to certification is through assessment and recognition of the competences acquired by attending unauthorised programmes and/or acquired by non-formal and informal learning. This kind of certification takes place in authorised evaluation centres.

Outcomes: introduced in 2007 as a result of a partnership between national, sectoral and external parties, the occupational standard has provided key support for the training, validation of non-formal and informal learning, and certification of trainers in Romania. It has also supported longer-term developments in the certification and quality assurance of authorised 'train the trainer' programmes.

One important issue under discussion is that the occupation of trainer was included in the classification of occupations in Romania (COR) in the group of occupations, which by definition require the completion of higher education⁹². As a result, the standard initially elaborated for all categories of trainers can be used in practice by VET providers only for trainers who hold a higher education degree and not for trainers with the qualification level of secondary education, who are trainers in apprenticeship schemes and work placements. The solution would be to shift the occupation into a different group to allow access to training for graduates of pre-university high school or post-high school education. The standard is well known and used by authorised training providers; however, to date, enterprises and their in-house trainers did not use the standard for training and certification so far.

Practitioners in adult education are hardly supported to deal with the challenges of the job. Those working with adults with disabilities are not supported at all⁹³.

From the point of view of the specialists with direct activity in the training of the adult person with disability the possibility of their professional development is seriously endangered because the education/training market has so many gaps in its evolution⁹⁴.

But what might be done:

- Ensure that new teachers receive more support to develop professionally⁹⁵. All new teachers should have a mentor, be closely monitored and receive regular feedback to develop their teaching competencies. The current teacher portfolio should be developed into a formative tool that includes evidence of new teachers' work with students, to be discussed with their colleagues and mentors and to encourage self-reflection.

⁹² https://www.rubinian.com/cor_6_ocupatia_detalii.php?id=242401

⁹³ FAR Survey Report

⁹⁴ FAR Survey – DISTONIA Association point of view

⁹⁵ <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264274051-en.pdf?expires=1579531649&id=id&acname=guest&checksum=E96D35A7BA95196F934953300EE38392> – pag. 28

en.pdf?expires=1579531649&id=id&acname=guest&checksum=E96D35A7BA95196F934953300EE38392 – pag. 28

- Improve initial teacher education so that new teachers are adequately prepared to teach. Raise the bar for entry to initial teacher education programmes by selecting candidates with the appropriate skills and strong motivation to teach. Ensure that programmes prepare teachers in the new learner-centred curriculum and provide them with sufficient practical preparation in instructional practice and assessment. Progressively introduce the new Masters of Arts in the teaching programme, ensuring that institutions have the capacity to meet its quality requirements and that the impact on teacher preparedness is evaluated before it is made mandatory.
- Reward and incentivise teachers' development of higher competency levels. The teacher career path in Romania is not associated with new roles and responsibilities linked to higher-level competencies. This is a missed opportunity to use the career path strategically to motivate teachers to develop and to ensure that experienced and competent teachers share their expertise within and across organisations.
- Revise the teaching career path so that teachers are motivated to develop competencies and take on new roles and responsibilities throughout their career. The new career path should be guided by teacher standards that relate to the different stages of a teacher's career (e.g. from being a beginning teacher to an expert teacher), each stage being associated with new responsibilities. New salary levels should also be defined to reflect the different stages and responsibilities of the career path.
- Develop and support more and more institutions focused on the development of the sector of adult education.

Examples of Romanian institutions focused on the development of the sector of adult education:

- University of Bucharest Master's programme "Train the Trainers" (ToT)⁹⁶.
- Research Centre for Adult Education within the Oradea University⁹⁷.

Romania's plan⁹⁸ to provide mentors to all beginning teachers and the government's announcement of a virtual library for teachers are positive developments. However, a shortage of national funds and dependence on external financing from the European Union (EU) and NGOs have made it difficult to develop a systematic approach to continuing professional development, offering both formal and informal, job-embedded learning opportunities.

Surprisingly, those expected to ensure the quality of the provision, namely the adult learning professionals, are largely neglected⁹⁹, with no mention of professional development opportunities, career advancements, recruitments, etc. The only stipulations refer to the teachers in formal educational institutions of VET and universities, as well as to the employees of public institutions (ANC).

⁹⁶ <http://fpse.unibuc.ro/despre-noi/prezentare/misiune/categorie/28-masterat?start=28>

⁹⁷ <http://steconomiceuoradea.ro/wp/cercetare/centre-de-cercetare/centrul-de-cercetare-pentru-educatia-adultilor/>

⁹⁸ <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264274051->

<en.pdf?expires=1579531649&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=E96D35A7BA95196F934953300EE38392> – pag. 124

⁹⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?pager.offset=20&advSearchKey=Full+Country+Report&mode=advancedSubmit&catId=1307&doc_submit=&policyArea=0&policyAreaSub=0&country=0&year=0 – pag. 38

A similar situation is registered in the training of teachers in mainstream education in the spirit of inclusive education¹⁰⁰, as well as in the field of strategies for working with children with disabilities, providing them with contexts to inform and train in what concerns the conditions, the difficulties of school adaptation, communication and socialisation of students with disabilities. In the beginning teacher training there are no curriculum elements for this purpose, and the supply of specific continuous training programmes at the county level is limited - either because it is not considered a priority of a professional development, or because of the lack of specialists at the local level in the field of education of children/adults with disabilities.

9. Legislative framework and financial framework related to adult education of persons with disabilities

National legislation

Main policy documents framing the field of adult learning¹⁰¹:

- Ordinance 129/2000, regarding the professional training of adults;
- Strategy for Employment of Labour Force 2014-2020 (HG/GD 1071/2013);
- GD 918/2013 - National Qualifications Framework (revised in 2015);
- Lifelong learning strategy 2015-2020, with its related Action Plan (HG 418/2015);

- National Strategy for Youth Policy 2015-2020 (HG 24/2015);
- The Education and Vocational Training Strategy in Romania during 2016-2020 (HG/ GD 317/2016).

The Law of National Education 1/2011 provides the general and integrating regulatory framework for lifelong learning in Romania. Lifelong Learning refers to all learning activities carried out by every person throughout their lives in formal, non-formal and informal contexts for the purpose of acquiring or developing competences from a multiple perspective: personal, civic, social or occupational. Lifelong learning includes early childhood education and care, school education, higher education, adult education and continuous training. The main goals of lifelong learning are concerned with the full development of a person and the sustainable development of society. Lifelong learning is focused on the acquisition and development of key competences and of competences specific to an area of activity or to a qualification. In accordance with the specific legislation on adult training, adults are defined as people at an age allowing them to get involved in work relations and can participate in training programmes under the law.

Adults have equal rights of access to training without discrimination based on criteria related to age, gender, race and ethnic origin, political and religious membership. The Law on equal opportunities for women and men (Law 202/2002) underlines the equal right for both genders to participate in training programmes, as well as to benefit from professional counselling and guidance. The access of adults, employees or people looking for a job (defined in compliance with Law 76/2002) to training is a right guaranteed by the Code of Labour (Law 53/2003). The professional training of adults, completed with qualifications or graduation certificates with national recognition and/or certificates of professional competences, is an activity of general interest that is part of the national system of education and vocational training.

¹⁰⁰ http://sgg.gov.ro/legislativ/docs/2014/12/6zfbn3dkj05_sm98rgv2.pdf - pag. 24

¹⁰¹ https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?pager.offset=20&advSearchKey=Full+Country+Report&mode=advancedSubmit&catId=1307&doc_submit=&policyArea=0&policyAreaSub=0&country=0&year=0 - pag. 24

Legislative framework¹⁰² aimed at education and training for people with disabilities:

- Constitution of Romania (Article 16, Equality of rights)
- Law 221/2010 on the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- The Law of education, no. 1 / 5.01.2011 (see mainly Chapter 2, sections 13 and 16)
- Law 448/2006 on the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities
- Government Decision No. 655/2016 of September 14, 2016 for the approval of the National Strategy "A society without barriers for persons with disabilities" 2016 - 2020 and its Operational Plan
- Law 76/2002 on unemployment insurance
- Law no. 279/2005, regarding apprenticeship on the workplace, with subsequent modifications and completions - The apprenticeship training programmes in which apprentices with special needs participate are adapted to the specific characteristics of each category of persons.

The Romanian legislation in the education field¹⁰³ regulates the situation and rights of persons with disabilities within the education sector in all stages, from primary education to life-long learning without discrimination. However, the legislative framework still has insufficient provisions regarding the education of children, young people and adults with disabilities. The terminology used in different pieces of legislation points to confusion and even errors: concepts are used inconsistently or even conflictingly with international norms. Finding a definition of the inclusive education concept represents an immediate priority.

National Lifelong Learning Strategy¹⁰⁴

Current status: Approved, under implementation.

Time frame: 2015 – 2020

Responsible institution: Ministry of National Education

Action content: the strategy will ensure the coordination of national policies in the area and more European funds for projects aimed at enhancing access to all forms of formal, informal and non-formal education, with positive implications for the work productivity and the competence level.

Strategic Vision: the strategic vision for lifelong learning in Romania encompasses both social and economic aspects of the benefits of lifelong learning. It is based on close dialogue between the Government of Romania and social partners as well as in the development of partnerships between all relevant stakeholders in the lifelong learning arena. Romania's lifelong learning vision is to provide all individuals, throughout their lives, with opportunities to improve needed competences for successful performances in the labour market and for constructive relationships in society.

Goals of the strategy: the strategic goals are to increase the participation in lifelong learning and improve the relevance of the education and vocational training systems in the labour market. The main strategic target for 2020 is to have at least 10% of the adult population (ages 25-64) participating in lifelong learning activities.

¹⁰² http://www.mmuncii.ro/j33/images/Documente/Familie/2015-DPS/SI_Vol2_Background_DocTranslation.pdf - pag. 358

¹⁰³ The Academic Network of European Disability Experts (ANED) – Country Report on the European semester, <https://www.disability-europe.net/country/romania>, pag. 14

¹⁰⁴ https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/ongoing-reforms-and-policy-developments-56_en

The goals of the strategy for lifelong learning relate to both the inclusion and productivity agendas. This was determined considering the existing challenges of integrating out-of-the-labour force working age individuals as well as addressing a shrinking and aging population.

The productivity objective was established to help the Government of Romania close the observed skills gaps and better compete with knowledge-based economies in a context of rapid technological changes.

Strategic pillars:

- a) **Access:** access to lifelong learning opportunities should be facilitated and be as wide as possible. For Romania to reach the proposed target of 10% by 2020, several measures include:
 - (i) The recognition of prior learning
 - (ii) Participation of underrepresented groups
 - (iii) Utilisation of flexible forms of service provision
 - (iv) Broader access to mobility programmes, as well as
 - (v) Other initiatives to stimulate the demand for lifelong learning, such as counselling support and financial incentives.

- b) **Relevance:** lifelong learning should be relevant to individuals and to the labour market. Accountability and quality assurance are two core aspects of the LLL strategy covered by the measures proposed in this pillar.

- c) **Learning attitude:** a favourable attitude towards learning should be promoted. The measures being proposed under this strategic pillar include the promotion of functional literacy and the development of key competencies, which are those mainly characterised by their ability to be used in new situations.

- d) **Partnerships:** lifelong learning should be developed in close collaboration with social partners and all relevant stakeholders.

ORDER No. 1254/2018 of March 16, 2018¹⁰⁵ for the approval of the Monitoring Instrument on the implementation of the national strategy "A society without barriers for persons with disabilities" 2016 – 2020 includes a few measures regarding the education:

- Measure 1.1¹⁰⁶. Improving the legislative framework for the realisation of an inclusive educational and vocational training system, in all forms and levels of study, and harmonising the concepts of education at the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- Measure 1.2. Conducting training sessions and other types of information programmes for the development of social and civil competences of the personnel who interact or are involved in the assistance and protection of persons with disabilities, in order to encourage the participation of persons with disabilities in social life.
- Measure 1.8. Development of unitary procedures for monitoring access to education and training of persons with disabilities.

¹⁰⁵ <http://www.mmuncii.ro/j33/images/Documente/Legislatie/O1254-2018.pdf>

¹⁰⁶ <http://www.mmuncii.ro/j33/images/Documente/Legislatie/O1254-2018.pdf>. pag. 18

In order to fulfil the country-specific recommendations and the country's objectives in the field of vocational education and training, it is envisaged to develop the education and training system around 4 key dimensions, one of them being: access and participation¹⁰⁷ - which ensure the facilitation of access to education and training, with special focus on vulnerable groups and the increase of participation in education and training programmes following a process of orientation and counselling adapted to the individual needs.

System evaluation¹⁰⁸: using information for system improvement. Nowadays Romania has many of the institutions and processes it needs for system monitoring and evaluation. However, improved educational data and analysis have not played the central role they might have in developing education policy, making reforms more vulnerable to reversals and changes, and undermining the system's ability to tackle persistent challenges of quality and equity.

Reflecting the incomplete achievements and implementation of the current Law of Education, in 2016 the President launched a new consultation effort, "Educated Romania"¹⁰⁹, aimed at broadening discussion to include local stakeholders to reach social and political consensus on the future direction of the education system. At the same time, the government is currently discussing the development of a new law on education. These initiatives create an important opportunity to develop a long-term vision and strategy for education.

Educated Romania¹¹⁰: following a two-year consultation process, the Presidential Administration put forward two scenarios to revise the education structure. Teachers would play a key role in the reform whose overarching aims are to improve quality and equity in education. The result was an overview on the country's objectives related to education and research in Romania, for the next 12 years (2018-2030), along with a series of public policy proposals on the topics designated as priorities within the project. These are: (1) Teaching career, (2) Equity of the educational system, (3) Professionalisation of educational management, (4) Quality professional and technical education, (5) Autonomy, internationalisation and quality in higher education, (6) Early education, (7) Evaluation of students.

Up to this moment, nothing concrete has happened.

10. Financial framework

Investments in education¹¹¹ remains low compared to other Member States, and funding mechanisms to support equity are weak. In 2017 general government spending on education was equivalent to only 2.8% of GDP, significantly below the EU average of 4.6% and the lowest percentage in the EU. This low level of funding reflects both the underfunding of education policies at national and local levels

¹⁰⁷ https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/_fișiere/Minister/2016/strategii/Strategia_VET%2027%2004%202016.pdf – pag. 20

¹⁰⁸ <https://www.unicef.org/romania/media/141/file/Executive%20Summary.pdf> – pag. 2

¹⁰⁹ <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264274051-en.pdf?expires=1579531649&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=E96D35A7BA95196F934953300EE38392> – pag. 42

¹¹⁰ <http://www.romaniaeducata.eu/despre/>

¹¹¹ https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/document-library-docs/et-monitor-report-2019-romania_en.pdf

¹¹¹ https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/document-library-docs/et-monitor-report-2019-romania_en.pdf

Financing¹¹²: according to the provisions of the Law of National Education (Law 1/2011), Art. 8, a minimum of 6% of the GDP of the year in question is allotted annually from the state budget and from the budgets of the local authorities in order to finance national education. The educational institutions may also get and use their own income. Education may be financed directly by business entities, as well as by other natural or legal persons, in compliance with the law. Education may be supported through scholarships, study loans, taxes, donations, sponsorships, own sources, and other legal sources. The State provides free access to career counselling and orientation services to all the pupils, students and persons searching for a job.

Funding of lifelong learning is provided through public and private funds based on the public-private partnership, through funding and co-funding from employers, non-governmental organisations, through non-reimbursable European funds, through lifelong learning accounts and contributions from beneficiaries.

Adult Education and Training Funding¹¹³: regarding lifelong learning accounts, according to the art. 356 of the Law no. 1/2011, Law of National Education, the state supports the right to lifelong learning education by according a sum equivalent to €500 to every Romanian child when she/he is born. This sum is given with an educational scope for the benefit of the holder from the state budget, through the budget of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection.

Through the National Plan of Lifelong Learning, the National Agency for Labour Employment includes in its free lifelong learning programmes:

- unemployed persons (most part of the trainees)
- persons in detention
- persons from other categories (persons who return to work after the parental leave, persons who return to work after recovery after disability retirement, persons from rural areas)
- persons who benefit of free services of evaluation of the competencies acquired in other forms than those formal
- persons who benefit of apprenticeship.

The persons who do not benefit of free services are included at courses organised by the Regional Centres of Lifelong Learning.

Adults who participate in education and training programmes that are not funded from other sources (employers' funds, the unemployment insurance budget, sponsorship, donations and other external sources) must pay for the cost of the programme. The costs are determined by the education and training providers so as to cover expenses incurred by the implementation of the programmes.

Adult vocational training programmes are financed by the following sources:

- The employers' own funds
- The unemployment insurance budget
- Grant funds from European programmes (Operational Programme Human Capital 2014 - 2020)
- Sponsorship, donations, external sources

¹¹² https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/funding-education-64_en

¹¹³ https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/adult-education-and-training-funding-64_en

- Fees paid by individuals participating in training programmes.

Commercial companies, national companies, co-operative enterprises, state-owned monopolies and other institutions may spend money for the vocational training of their employees, which represent deducted expenses from the profit taxes or from the income taxes.

The institutions that have incomes that are not coming from the state budget may spend funds for the vocational training of their employees out of these incomes. The institutions financed from the state budget or by the local budgets may spend funds for the vocational training of their employees out of budget sources or out of other sources, according to their own approved budgets.

Adult training programmes are provided free of charge for the following categories of people:

- People looking for a job
- People who have not found a job after graduating from an educational institution or after completing their military service
- People who obtained the statute of refugee or other form of international protection
- Foreigners or stateless people who worked in Romania or who obtained any income in Romania, under the law
- People who have not found a job after repatriation or detention
- People in detention who have at most 9 months until the final day of such detention.

Government financial support to adult education is very limited¹¹⁴. Not only does the whole education system have the lowest share of GDP compared to other European countries, but the adult education component has always had the lowest share of education expenditure.

The analysis of the European executive in Romania¹¹⁵ shows that *“public spending on education is low compared to the EU level, while the investment needs of the sector are high. Any major reform may require additional funding to strengthen equity and efficiency mechanisms.”*

Growing participation in education and educational attainment: the challenge in these sectors now lies in ensuring participation to disadvantaged groups¹¹⁶.

A large amount of financing for adult learning came from ESF grants, from Operational Programme Human Capital 2014-2020 (OPHC). According to the data on financial support to the Member States between 2014 and 2020 from the European Commission for Operational Programmes for the European Social Fund (ESF), the planned financial support for the investment priority most directly targeting adult learning, i.e. investment priority 10.3 – enhancing access to lifelong learning is €239.8 million. However, relying almost exclusively on such financing can create a lot of blocking of activities, and in Romania there has already been a significant delay in launching and implementing many calls of projects.

¹¹⁴https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?pager.offset=20&advSearchKey=Full+Country+Report&mode=advancedSubmit&catId=1307&doc_submit=&policyArea=0&policyAreaSub=0&country=0&year=0 – pag. 15

¹¹⁵ <https://www.edupedu.ro/educatia-din-romania-in-2019-se-scurfund-a-sub-nivelul-pe-care-il-avea-in-2009-arata-monitorul-comisiei-europene-suntem-la-mare-departare-de-tintele-europene/>

¹¹⁶ <https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/document-library-docs/eu-factsheet-2019-et-monitor.pdf> - pag. 2

The lack of financial resources prevents participation in educational programmes¹¹⁷, especially in the case of disadvantaged categories. In a study carried out by the World Bank (2014), 22.8% of the nearly 400 actors involved in lifelong learning in Romania said that an obstacle to increasing participation is the cost of education and training. This is a very important factor in the social inclusion policy because education and training are essential to enable those facing the risk of exclusion.

There is a reduced capacity¹¹⁸ of many providers of vocational training and sectoral committees on accessing European funds. Institutional capacity to access European funds: a significant number of training providers have accessed European funds, but their share of the total providers remains extremely low, both due to reduced institutional capacity and to insufficient assistance for this purpose.

The estimated costs of the Strategy for Vocational Education and Training in Romania¹¹⁹ for the period 2016-2020: the financing necessary to fulfil the measures provided for in the Action Plan is made by each institution and public authority involved through the absorption of the European funds and the financial resources necessary for co-financing the projects carried out with them, as well as within the limits of the funds approved annually in the budget of the public institutions involved. Although in the strategy¹²⁰ the annual elaboration of an Annual Progress Report is foreseen, we have not identified such documents.

Mechanisms of public and private financing of vocational training¹²¹: the financial support of the European Union has made it possible to co-finance a large number of vocational training programmes, but there are insufficient system-level measures to stimulate the companies' involvement in the initial vocational training and the participation of adults in the programmes as well as the training of trainers.

Public expenditure on education¹²² as a share of gross domestic product (GDP) is also the lowest among EU Member States and has fallen sharply since the 2008 financial crisis. Most public funding comes from central government, although local governments may provide complementary resources (Eurydice, 2016). However, there are no reliable national data on the extent of local funding. In general, state funding covers the operational functioning of the education system, while any additional investments in quality must draw on external sources. Private spending on education remains low in Romania, and is set to fall following the decision in 2015 to provide the same level of per capita funding to accredited private schools as public institutions receive.

Ensure the transparency and accessibility of progress reporting¹²³. Romania needs to develop measurable, time-specific indicators for monitoring progress towards any new national strategy's goals so that the government can be held accountable for the results and has the information it needs to design effective policies and allocate resources. Indicators should be carefully developed with the involvement of statistical and educational experts to ensure that they are methodologically sound and, where they are focused on

¹¹⁷ http://www.mmuncii.ro/j33/images/Documente/Familie/2015-DPS/SI_Vol2_Background_DocTranslation.pdf - pag. 185

¹¹⁸ https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/_fi%C8%99iere/Minister/2016/strategii/Strategia_VET%2027%2004%202016.pdf, pag. 16, pag. 78

¹¹⁹ https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/_fi%C8%99iere/Minister/2016/strategii/Strategia_VET%2027%2004%202016.pdf, pag. 83-84

¹²⁰ https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/_fi%C8%99iere/Minister/2016/strategii/Strategia_VET%2027%2004%202016.pdf, pag. 88

¹²¹ https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/_fi%C8%99iere/Minister/2016/strategii/Strategia_VET%2027%2004%202016.pdf - pag. 15

¹²² <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264274051-en.pdf?expires=1579531649&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=E96D35A7BA95196F934953300EE38392>

¹²³ <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264274051-en.pdf?expires=1579531649&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=E96D35A7BA95196F934953300EE38392> - pag. 34

learning, that they reflect the breadth of student learning to avoid the use of a narrow measure focused solely on academic achievement. Developing the State of Education report so that it draws on a broader range of system-monitoring information will help it become a more authoritative source of information on the education system's performance, and better inform decision making.

EU funding enables Romania¹²⁴ to further develop the adult education sector by implementing new projects and focusing on concrete objectives. Conferences and workshops organised around different topics in the field of adult education help Romanian adult education organisations establish strategies in relation to international and European policies.

As stipulated in the Law of Education 1/2011, funding for LLL (including adult learning)¹²⁵ is achieved through public and private funds based on a public-private partnership, through funding and co-financing from employers, non-governmental organisations, grants from European programmes, LLL accounts and contributions from beneficiaries.

The (budgetary) expenses for adult learning are divided between the budgets of different ministries. The Ministry of Education covers national sources to finance adult learning, the publicly subsidised provision and is focused on the following target groups:

- Young people and adults who have not completed compulsory education (the so-called second chance education, which is provided for free),
- Young people and adult residents in economically and socially disadvantaged communities (some of their needs are covered also by the social support programme).

The Ministry of Education is mainly responsible for the implementation of the NSLL and NSVET strategies, and the Ministry of Labour is responsible for the implementation of the strategy for employment, with the related financing, and they are even listed as responsible parties in all three strategies. We can add to this the public money at all the other ministries related to young adults (ministry of Youth, and the related strategy for youth), to people in rural area (ministry of agriculture) etc. This fact makes it difficult to identify the accurate amount of public money spent for adult learning.

The Ministry of Labour manages both the active measures for employment, and the social funds, supporting the employment of people from vulnerable groups, particularly from the following groups: young people who have left education before obtaining a professional qualification and are not enrolled in any form of education or training; graduates of non-professional education or those who have graduated high school or higher education qualifications in redundant fields or areas irrelevant to the labour market; adults with special educational needs; young people and adults who return after a period of work abroad; employees over 40 with low education, residents in urban and rural areas, the low skilled or unskilled.

In spite of the dedicated measures for employers to cover the learning of these groups, these measures remain unattractive due to the amount of bureaucracy in accessing them.

¹²⁴ https://eaea.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Country_Reports_2018_final.pdf - pag. 49

¹²⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?pager.offset=20&advSearchKey=Full+Country+Report&mode=advancedSubmit&catId=1307&doc_submit=&policyArea=0&policyAreaSub=0&country=0&year=0 – pag. 30-31

The education system in Romania¹²⁶ is under-funded and there is a strong need for increasing the capacities for its modernisation, according to the European Commission (EC) Romania's 2019 Country Report. Still, there is no integrated vision for reforming the system, only attempts promoted from either the side of the Government, either from the Presidential Administration. In the meantime, Romania remains one of the few countries that have not yet reached any of the main targets for 2020 in education. In fact, a report in the autumn of 2018 pointed that, although there are significant progresses in terms of the employment rate among young people with studies, some major challenges remain, such as the equity in education and the gap between rural and urban areas, while GDP allocations for education, although rising, continue to be well below the EU average.

The educational system is underfinanced and administrative capacities to modernise it require strengthening¹²⁷. The acquisition of basic and digital skills faces significant challenges. Investment in education remains one of the lowest in the EU (3.7 % of GDP compared to 4.7 %). Recent legislative measures postpone until 2022 the legal requirement for allocating the equivalent of 6 % of GDP annually on education. This threshold has never been reached. Strategic planning, aligning system-monitoring to educational priorities and improving the use of results at central and local level is faced with challenges.

Some recommendations¹²⁸:

- implementation of the inclusive education legislative framework at all levels by all public authorities and private organisations;
- increasing the funding for inclusive education and also for training of the practitioners working in inclusive education;
- increasing the amount of resources for practitioners working with adults with disabilities;
- putting in place some mechanisms that could assist efficiently the training providers and other adult education organisations in accessing European funds.

11. Key decision-makers and relevant stakeholders in the field of adult education

Distribution of responsibilities regarding adult learning

A big step forward in structuring the field of adult education was the adoption of the Law of Education 1/2011¹²⁹. The law has a special chapter on LLL, stipulating the roles of the main institutions responsible for the education, training and skills development of adults. It also introduces the concept of community centres for lifelong learning (CCLL). This Law of Education is considered to be the most relevant document framing the policy conceptualisation in adult education.

The adult learning system in Romania is quite fragmented, with it being the responsibility of various ministries, including the ministry of education, labour, culture, internal administration, etc, as enumerated in the law. There is still not a coordinating body for adult education, although the Ministry of Education has

¹²⁶ <https://china-cee.eu/2019/05/03/romania-social-briefing-romania-will-become-the-country-with-the-longest-compulsory-education-in-europe-new-measures-in-the-public-education-system/>

¹²⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/2019-european-semester-country-report-romania_en.pdf - pag. 38

¹²⁸ FAR Survey Report

¹²⁹ <https://edu.ro/sites/default/files/fi%C8%99iere/Legislatie/2019/Legea%20nr%201%20Educatiei%20Nationale%20actualizata%202019.pdf>

the leading role. Such division of responsibilities can be noticed while looking at the governing body of the National Authority for Qualification¹³⁰.

At the national level, the Ministry of Education supposedly takes a leading role in adult education, however it still does not have a dedicated department to deal with adult education within the general department of lifelong learning.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection supposes to take a secondary role in supporting adult education. The two main coordinating agencies for continuing and further education are the National Authority for Qualifications (ANC), and the National Agency for Employment (NAE/ANOFM). ANC, as a tripartite organisation, mainly under the umbrella of the two ministries, is expected to take over a lot of coordinating tasks for the adult learning system, but it has limited institutional capacity. The same is true for the ANOFM.

The Ministry of Culture was previously quite active on adult education and learning with the largest network of cultural institutions, but it currently has a very limited role and was not even invited to join the elaboration of an LLL strategy.

Responsibility for accrediting the training providers lies at the regional level with county committees under the coordination of the ANC. Formal education is largely state subsidised and regulated. The regional tripartite bodies forecast the (training) educational needs. However, it is to be noted that at the regional and local level the stipulations fostering decentralisation are quite limited. These bodies are more consultative, with no operational or governing role. The county bodies belonging to the ANC have the limited role of evaluation of the training providers. At the regional and local level in the NSVET strategy (2016) it is stipulated that the regional and local consortia for social actions (also approved by ministerial order 4456/2015) are the ones who agree on the required qualifications and competences at regional/local level, and that have to be trained in vocational education at upper secondary level.

Short description of key decision-makers and relevant stakeholders in the field¹³¹

Romania's education system is centralised¹³², both horizontally and vertically. All key responsibilities for education strategy, policy and delivery are concentrated within the Ministry of Education and Research (MER). Several specialised bodies provide input to the ministry. The MER is responsible for setting the education system's overall strategy and national policies, from pre-school and compulsory education to vocational education and training and higher education. It directly steers and monitors the implementation of national policies at the local level. Locally elected authorities play very little role in the design and delivery of education policies. The MER is also responsible for the national system of evaluation, with implementation and some policy evaluation performed by public bodies linked to the ministry.

Ministry of Labour and Social Protection

It develops and promotes policies in the context of continuing vocational training (adult vocational training), including for the training of the unemployed, apprenticeship in the workplace, actions for NEETs and for the

¹³⁰ <http://site.anc.edu.ro/>

¹³¹ https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/4171_ro.pdf, pag. 46-48

¹³² <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264274051->

[en.pdf?expires=1579531649&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=E96D35A7BA95196F934953300EE38392](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264274051-en.pdf?expires=1579531649&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=E96D35A7BA95196F934953300EE38392) – pag. 38

training stages of the graduates of higher education. Starting with 2017, the ministry coordinated the authorisation of VET providers. It also manages and updates the Classification of Occupations in Romania (a nomenclature of general interest) and the Nomenclature of qualifications which includes all the professional qualifications. The vocational training for the unemployed is monitored, analysed, controlled and evaluated by the ministry. It follows the vocational training policies of the public employment service and the National Plan for vocational training, which is drawn up annually and approved by the Minister. The plan also includes apprenticeship programmes in the workplace. The execution of the plan by the Public Employment Service is reviewed and monitored monthly by the ministry.

National Agency for Employment and County Employment Agencies

The National Agency for Employment coordinates the vocational training of people looking for a job at the national level; this is carried out by the county agencies for employment through their vocational training centres, the regional centres for adult vocational training and through other public and private authorised providers of vocational training. The implementation of strategies and policies in relation to education and training by the national agency is coordinated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection.

National Authority for Qualifications

The Authority ensures the connection between the standards used to define the qualifications and the needs of the labour market, provides methodological assistance for the elaboration of the occupational standards and supports the registration request in the National Register of Professional Qualifications.

It is also responsible for authorising the centres for the evaluation and certification of the professional competences acquired outside the formal education and for ensuring the quality of the qualifications system. The tasks of ANC/NAQ are mainly related to quality assurance and accreditation of training providers, evaluation and monitoring and validation of prior learning. It is mainly responsible for the National Qualification Framework. It is also the national coordinator of the EPAL platform. Its quality assurance mechanisms and efforts are mainly related to accreditation of training providers.

It is the umbrella organisation acting as a tripartite institution, with more than 20 members, representatives of the different ministries, social partners, and of the 15 sectoral committees of different qualifications. In spite of being a tripartite umbrella organisation, under the coordination of the ministry of education and the ministry of labour, the ANC still cannot be considered the national coordinating body for the whole adult education system in Romania.

Sectoral Committees¹³³ are institutions of social dialogue of public utility, with legal personality, organised according to Law no. 132/1999 regarding the establishment, organisation and functioning of the National Council of Adult Qualifications and Vocational Training, with the subsequent modifications and completions, at the level of the branches of activity defined by the unique collective labour agreement in force at the national level.

At the level of a branch of activity, a single sectoral committee can be set up. The main tasks of the sectoral committees are:

¹³³ https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/_fi%C8%99iere/Minister/2016/strategii/Strategia_VET%2027%2004%202016.pdf - pag. 13-14

- a) to participate in the elaboration of national and sectoral strategies in the field of vocational training;
- b) to participate in the development of the normative framework regarding the training, evaluation and certification of competences;
- c) to participate in the development and updating, under the coordination of the National Qualifications Authority, of the qualifications related to the sectors to which they belong;
- d) to validate the qualifications and standards associated with the qualifications, with the exception of those obtained through higher education;
- e) to perform occupational analysis and studies on the demand for labour force for the represented branch;
- f) to grant consultative opinion to the applicants in order to update the Classification of occupations in Romania;
- g) to propose to the training providers the qualifications and competences associated with them, as well as the correlation of the qualifications with the occupations that can be practiced.

Providers of training

Adult training providers are authorised, according to the Ordinance of Government no. 129/2000, to carry out training activities based on occupational standards, respectively professional training standards, in following the authorisation obtained from the county commission. The authorisation is valid for four years, during which time the suppliers are monitored to see if they meet the initial assessment criteria after the authorisation. The authorised training providers are registered in the national register of authorised providers, which is publicly available on the website of each county's authorisation commission.

All authorised training providers have obligations in regard of their training programmes: they comply with the conditions stipulated by the legislation in force, regarding quality assurance, data reporting and use of human resources with appropriate qualifications.

12. General recommendations for practitioners supporting persons with disabilities in adult education

Key challenges:

- Lack of awareness on the importance of inclusive education as a central contributing approach towards overall improvement of the quality of education – there is a lack of understanding about what it means in practice and how to implement it.
- Lack of capacity in adult education organisations - more work should be done to improve practitioners' capacity to respond to the diversity in their work through inclusive pedagogy. This will require innovations formalised in government policies and standards in pre-service as well as ongoing trainers' professional development. Capacity of these organisations managers also needs to be built on understanding the value of and the way in which programmes should be run that respond to the values of inclusive education. At an infrastructure and resource level, there is a need for the construction of accessible organisations, the distribution and integration of assistive devices and accessible versions of didactic textbooks, as well as the overall adoption of the universal design approach to inclusive education.

- Reduced dissemination of exchanges of good practices in vocational training and adult education.

Recommendations:

- Increasing the number of qualified educational specialists capable of routinely managing the individual needs of adults with disabilities.
- Reviewing the systems of initial and continuous training of trainers and professionals, checking the application of the principles of inclusive education and the specialisation necessary to respond to the diversity of intervention and support needs for persons with disabilities.
- Initial training of teachers in order to support inclusive education, by introducing inclusive education as a subject of study in the curriculum of the Departments for the Training of Teaching Staff.
- Review of the initial training system of professionals in specialised areas required by working with people with disabilities, in order to adapt to the elements of innovation in the field and to move from the medical model to the global approach to disability.
- Promoting some national and local offers of programmes for continuous training of practitioners in the field of inclusive education and of other professionals in specialised fields required by working with people with disabilities.
- Supporting alternative ways of continuous training of teaching staff in the field of inclusive education (pedagogical circles, methodical commissions, conferences, exchanges of experience, information meetings with specialists, etc.).
- The introduction, in the evaluation and monitoring grid of the activity of the teaching staff, of some indicators regarding the application of the principles of inclusive education in the didactic activity.
- Ensuring the organisation of the educational process in the most appropriate form (through languages, paths, methods and special individualised programmes) for each type of disability.
- Promote innovative teaching strategies, guidance and team learning of practitioners for people with the same types of disabilities.
- Developing complementary activities to facilitate the learning of alternative systems of writing and verbal communication by adults with disabilities.
- Development of teaching and learning aids adapted to the different categories of disabilities (workbooks for students with different types of disabilities, Braille writing texts, enlarged or simplified texts, assistive electronic learning technologies, special educational software, etc.).

- Development of additional resources to support the application of personalised educational approaches and the principles of inclusive education (guides for trainers, guides for family in supporting trainers , etc.).
- Promote innovative teaching strategies and personalised and flexible assessment of students with disabilities.
- Implementation of ways to monitor the progress of each student with disabilities (from a global perspective: cognitive, social and relational, self-image, etc.), which will allow professional orientation and remedial action to avoid education dropout situations.
- Facilitating the employment of teaching staff with disabilities, working with children, young people and adults with similar educational needs and requirements.
- Development and periodic implementation of specific programmes to teach inclusive adult education specialists, with the help of specialists and even people with disabilities/training programmes in inclusive education and continuing professional development of teachers and trainers, with contributions from various actors, especially organisations representing persons with disabilities and members with disabilities of these professions.
- Making the most of teachers and professionals in special education as resource persons in the information and training activities of practitioners who work with children, youth and adults with disabilities in mainstream education and their families.
- Promote an efficient and integrated system of professional guidance and career counselling for practitioners working with people with disabilities.
- Reform national teachers' and trainers' education policies and standards (both at pre-service training and continued professional development levels) to embody inclusive teaching methodologies that support throughput rates and reduce the amount of adults with disabilities abandoning education. This should include exploring the cost-effectiveness of a range of delivery models such as e-learning modalities, mentorships, co-teaching, etc.
- Adult education organisations should have access to specialist education teachers and trainers where required. The majority of training providers should be supported by at least one special education teacher as required. These teachers might provide assessments, develop individualised education plans, coordinate services and provide guidance for mainstream practitioners.
- Introducing compulsory special needs education courses to all students in colleges and universities that prepare students for the teaching profession in Romania. *"The core content for adult education practitioners must address a basic understanding of human diversity, growth and development".*¹³⁴

¹³⁴ FAR Survey – FAR point of view, in the light of UN Convention provisions

- Establishing effective support mechanisms addressing three important conditions:
 - trainers are active lifelong learners. This can happen if trainers are recognised and their contribution to quality learning is acknowledged; if they receive appropriate support and have access to all available options;
 - training providers are active and interested in providing training and supporting their trainers. This implies that organisations are aware of the importance of learning and associate continuing professional development with higher quality outcomes of provided training, more specifically, when training adults with disabilities.
 - all stakeholders at all levels cooperate in a coordinated manner and support for trainers is systematic. This condition requires clear and adequate expectations defined in qualification and competence standards; relevant and flexible training opportunities are provided; there are opportunities of validating competences acquired at work. It also implies that roles and responsibilities are clearly distributed among all stakeholders.
- Consider establishing a professional self-regulatory body for teachers that is responsible for promoting and maintaining the teaching standards within inclusive education, and which would help to strengthen the professional identity of the teaching workforce.
- Improve multi-sector collaboration and multilateral fund coordination to ensure funds are being used effectively. This, combined with regular monitoring and a robust financial reporting system, can go a long way towards promoting cost-effectiveness when allocating resources.
- Introduction of an “Inclusion Label” for training and adults education providers – the main idea being that providers should have committed pedagogical personnel, who are methodically and professionally up to date and able to develop inclusive education programmes.
- Increasing the funds for Training of Trainers in inclusive education.