

# Lifelong learning strategy for 2011–2015 for Kurzeme Planning Region (Latvia), Klaipeda and Kaunas region (Lithuania)

## Summary



Rīga, 2012

*Project No.LLII\_102 co-financed by Latvia - Lithuania cross-border  
cooperation program*

Within the framework of the Project No.LLII\_102 „Enhance of Lifelong Learning Cross Border Capacity” co-financed by Latvia – Lithuania cross-border cooperation program following strategy has been developed – Lifelong learning strategy for 2011–2015 for Kurzeme Planning Region (Latvia), Klaipeda and Kaunas region (Lithuania) (hereinafter in the text – Strategy). The contracting authority of the Strategy is Kurzeme Planning Region and the involved parties are all the cooperation partners of the Project No. LLII\_102:

1. The leading partner – Kurzeme Planning Region Administration (hereinafter in the text – KPRA),
2. Ventspils University College (hereinafter in the text – VUC),
3. Riga Technical University Liepaja Affiliation (hereinafter in the text – LRTU),
4. Klaipeda University (hereinafter in the text – KU),
5. Kaunas Technical University (hereinafter in the text – KTU),
6. Kaunas Regional Innovation Centre (hereinafter in the text – KRIC).

The aim of the Strategy is to: *promote the development of life-long learning (non-formal education) in Kurzeme Planning Region, Klaipeda and Kaunas region through united systematic approach and cooperation by taking into account the demand, offer, as well employment needs of the non-formal education.*

This Strategy does not contain a detailed analysis of the formal education. The formal education within the framework of this document is only considered as a resource for providing non-formal education (teaching staff, personnel, premises, and material supply).

The Strategy consists of three parts:

1. **Part I – characterization of the existing situation** – short overview of social and economic trends in Kurzeme Planning Region, Klaipeda and Kaunas region that influence the development of life-long learning;
2. **Part II – vision, action fields and activities** – vision of the development of life-long learning, directions of actions and main activities for to implement the defined vision in Kurzeme Planning Region, Klaipeda and Kaunas regions;
3. **Part III – implementation and supervision of the Strategy** – scope of activities ensuring the implementation and supervision of the Strategy in Kurzeme Planning Region, Klaipeda and Kaunas regions.

All activities of the Strategy are directed forwards development of non-formal education in the regions of life-long learning project by highlighting cooperation aspect between different educational institutions in Latvia and Lithuania. Special attention is devoted to the role of higher educational establishments in the development of non-formal education.

The elaboration of the Strategy is based on following documents:

1. Strategy for the development of life-long learning in Kurzeme Planning Region for 2007–2010 (elaborated in 2006);
2. Life-long learning demand – offer analyses in Latvia in Kurzeme Planning region and in Lithuania in Klaipeda and Kaunas region (elaborated in 2010);
3. Life-long learning guidelines for 2007–2013;
4. Strategy of Kurzeme Planning Region for 2010–2013;
5. Law on non-formal adult education (*Neformaliojo suaugusiųjų švietimo įstatymas*, 1998, current edition 27.04.2010);
6. Education development strategy for 2002–2012 (Lithuania);
7. Lithuanian virtual university programme for 2007–2012 (*Lietuvos virtualaus universiteto 2007-2012 m. Programa*);
8. Lithuanian distance learning development strategy (*Lietuvos nuotolinio mokymosi tinklo plėtra*, 2005)
9. Strategy for ensuring life-long learning (Lithuania, 2008).

At the same time the Strategy is an updated version of the document “Strategy for the development of life-long learning in Kurzeme planning region for 2007–2010” elaborated in 2006. Such update was necessary as there are new laws and regulations in force, as well also all the existing aforementioned development planning documents concerning development of life-long learning at national and regional level had to be taken into account.

#### **Part I – characterization of the existing situation**

In order to define further development steps in the field of non-formal education as the competitive capacity and development of a region is determined by social and economic processes connected with increasing the well-being of people; inter alia development of life-long learning, the Strategy gives an overview of the social and economic situation of Latvia and Lithuania as well an overview of the social and economic situation of each region, namely, as for the social and economic situation of Latvia and Lithuania:

1. Information on main economic indicators in Latvia and Lithuania (according to the forecasts of the analysts – sustained growth in both countries);
2. Information on industries with priority in Latvia and Lithuania (in Latvia – the development of producing companies and raising of export, in Lithuania – creating technology parks, business incubators and other objects important for business with an aim to become Baltic and North European technology and innovation centre);
3. Information on the employment market in Latvia and Lithuania by pointing out main indicators such as number of economically active residents, unemployment level and reasons for the decrease of the number of residents (according to the information provided by *Eurostat* – growth of the employment level in both countries, demand for highly qualified specialists).

As for the social and economic situation of each region the Strategy gives the comparison of general social and economic indicators in Kurzeme, Klaipeda and Kaunas region by pointing out such indicators as number of residents, unemployment level in all regions and main employment sectors. The information available allows concluding that the demand for highly qualified specialists is increasing, entrepreneurial activities are developing and improving, as well, when looking at the demographics, it can be forecasted that the number of economically active people shall increase in the future; therefore it is necessary to prepare the inhabitants according to the requirements of the labor market as well to ensure their integration in the labor market.

The Strategy also gives characterization of resources and availability of life-long learning by giving description of supply and availability of formal education and non-formal education in all project regions.

In general there are varied resources and wide base for gaining a formal education in the territory of life-long learning project. In many places there is a possibility to use this base for the needs of non-formal education, which is already being done in several institutions of formal education. The premises and material supply of formal education allows offering non-formal education in a higher quality and in a wide variety.

The Strategy shows that project partners have similar problems in the field of non-formal education. The strategy gives possible solutions for such problems as financing, supply in the field of non-formal education, demand in the field of non-formal education, legislation, laws and regulations, cooperation, EU projects and their sustainability.

Within the framework of this life-long learning project the emphasis is placed on a non-formal education with practical use in the fields where labor market has a demand. During the implementation of the life-long learning project several resident groups were studied. Following groups were defined as priority target groups:

1. Employees of the companies in the region (special educational programmes for the needs of a specific company);
2. Unemployed / in search for employment (non-formal education as a tool for finding a new job and raising competitiveness in the labor market);
3. Teaching staff (important for supplying non-formal education of good quality).

The specific target groups are chosen by taking into account several criteria such as volume of the target group, economic activity of the target group, potential economic activity of the target group as well involvement of the target group in the supply of non-formal education. Other important target groups in need of non-formal education are children, people without elementary education, people with low level of skills, people with special needs, and people with addiction and co-addicted, as well retired or people of preretirement age.

The results of the study allow concluding that the most visited courses of study in the whole territory of the life-long learning project are foreign languages, psychology, communication,

solving of problems, sales and marketing, bookkeeping and taxes, computer science and programming. The aforementioned courses do not require specific preliminary knowledge and may be attended by everyone.

## **Part II – vision, action fields and activities**

The vision – creation of flexible, modern and qualitative non-formal education system resulting from the cooperation between supply and demand parties and so satisfying public needs for non-formal education, as well introducing formal valuation of the non-formal education and distribution of teaching materials via information technologies as freely available educational information.

In order to achieve the vision the project parties have agreed on following directions of action to be carried out through cooperation by implementing joint projects, as well individual projects in each of the regions:

1. To supplement laws and regulations and to evaluate knowledge and skills obtained beyond the formal education;
2. To develop distance learning / e-learning;
3. To create information net of the non-formal education;
4. To increase the capacity of the teaching staff of the non-formal education.

The Strategy also contains activities for each of the aforementioned directions as well action steps to be taken to reach each specific activity and so the directions of action. The realization of each activity includes the implementation of one or more projects. As the Strategy covers large geographic territory in Latvia and in Lithuania and there are many parties involved in the implementation of the project, particular projects are not listed in present Strategy and it only concludes possible solutions and recommendations for the development of a non-formal education.

The possible financing sources for the implementation of activities are own capital of the regions, state co-financing, as well external financing sources – EU structural funds, credits, sponsor financing. In order to implement the activities the regions can also attract co-financing in the framework of EU structural funds for planning period 2007–2013 by preparing projects of regional and local level. The Strategy contains a list of support available from EU structural funds in the planning period 2007–2013 for activities connected with life-long learning both in Latvia and Lithuania.

In addition the activities may also be implemented within the framework of the cooperation projects „Latvia – Lithuania cross-border cooperation programme for 2007–2013”. The aim of the programme is to promote sustainable and equal social economic development of cross-border region in order to ensure its competitiveness for the economic and business development and make it attractive for living and visiting.

As the main part of financing from EU structural funds for 2007–2013 is already used it is of essence to duly cooperate in planning next activities for the planning period 2014–2020.

### **Part III – implementation and supervision of the Strategy**

The Strategy is a practical and control tool for the development of non-formal education in regions. Kurzeme Planning Region shall ensure the implementation of the Strategy in Kurzeme region in time from 2011–2015, as well the project partners from Lithuania shall ensure the implementation of the Strategy in Klaipeda and Kaunas region from 2011–2015. All partners shall cooperate in the implementation of the Strategy.

The Strategy shows possible activities for the implementation and supervision, namely, informing the society about the implementation process and the results, ensuring regular information exchange with cooperation partners, developing cooperation with information intermediaries by educating them on issues connected with life-long learning and by ensuring them with overall information, analyzing the needs of the target group on a day-to-day basis and ensure them with the necessary information, summarizing and popularizing the successful experience examples, etc.

The next step for the implementation of Strategy is the elaboration of a detailed project pipeline giving answers to such questions as – What to do? Who has to do? How much is it going to cost? Who shall finance it? When shall it be done? What the result is going to look like? How it will influence the target groups?

The monitoring of the Strategy shall be carried on a yearly base. Kurzeme Planning Region Administration shall prepare an informative report on the implementation of the Strategy, elaboration of the project pipeline, their implementation progress, identified problems and recommendations for the improvement of the Strategy. The report shall contain information on progress in the implementation of the Strategy in Latvia and Lithuania.