National report – ESTONIA

BAEA: Becoming Adult educators in the European Area

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Table of Contents

Foreword

Becoming Adult educators in the European Area (BAEA) is a collaborative project that has been funded with support from the European Commission under the EU Lifelong Learning Programme (Grant No. 142405-LLP-1-2008-1-DK-GRUNDTVIG-GMP).

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This publication presents the outcomes of the research activity that was carried out in Tallinn University in the department of Adult Education, Estonia. It reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

All national reports and other project related documents are available for download at: www.dpu.dk/baea

Executive summary

The context of adult education has become more and more complex and complicated, and constantly poses new challenges to the professionalisation of adult educators who have to realise their status, roles and competences and develop their own personal and professional identity.

An expanding understanding of changes in society, in educational policy and in the need for lifelong learning in Estonia brings with it an essential requirement for the professional development of adult educators.

Adult educators therefore need specific knowledge and skills, an awareness of their role and identity, as well as competence and qualification that guarantees professional skills, since they have enormous autonomy and freedom of choice in their professional area.

Professional choices and the formation of the professional identity of adult educators in Estonia have been influenced by changes in personal life, in education and in Estonian society. Particularly starting from the 1990s, political, economic and social changes, the neoliberal economy and very intensive changes in the socio-economic and cultural environment have had strong impacts.

Becoming and being an adult educator in Estonia is more a case of using possibilities and suppositions rather than a conscious and planned process. Learning, professional identity and professional development generally take place within professional work and life experiences, partly by reflecting personal experience and professional practice, which lead to reconstructions of the interpretations of self.

Becoming an adult educator is often not a planned choice. Due to life courses and individual career paths, adult educators are in a special position among professionals. They have gained a profession through prior studies, and usually do not have a formal qualification for teaching adults.

Teaching adults is linked to social, cultural and philosophical beliefs and values. Adult educators' ability to understand adult learning and teaching, as well as construct an understanding of their own activities and practice, demands a professional attitude and thinking as a professional.

The premise of our methodological approach is that individuals exist in multiple, multi-layered and interacting contexts, each of which is a domain of social relations and physical context. Here, one's individual creation of meaning is related to life conditions and social identities. An important element in our methodological perspective is the focus on the interaction between (prospective) adult educators and the structural conditions that characterise the wider socio-cultural context in which they act. Individual motivations for working in the field of adult education and the learning process that leads to the formation of competences, qualifications and professional identity in this field, can be better understood by applying a biographical perspective.

In this report research is based on desk and field research (theoretical and empirical data and statistical information was collected within 2008-2009). Empirical data was collected by narrative interviews with 15 adult educators-to-be.

We believe that our analysis carries important implications for understanding the professionalisation process of adult educators in Estonia, as well as the influences education policy development and field of practice have.

Chapter 1: Introduction

By: Marcella Milana, Larissa Jõgi & Marin Gross

In modern societies there is a pervasive consideration that lifelong learning is necessary in order to guarantee further economic and social development, to reinforce democratic participation and to strengthen social cohesion. Consequently, national and international strategies for lifelong learning have embraced not only reforms of compulsory or basic education, but also structural intervention in the field of adult education and training. This has brought along new demands for adult educators as a professional group (Merriam & Brockett, 2007; Commission of the European Communities, 2006, 2007; Nuissl & Lattke, 2008; Osborne, 2009).

In recent years, a new emphasis on the qualification of professionals in education has been championed by the European Union. In 2006, in its Communication on adult learning, the European Commission stated that Member states "can no longer afford to be without an efficient adult learning system" (Commission of the European Communities, 2006: 5). In particular, key message number two invited Member states to invest in "initial and continuing professional development measures" (Ibid.: 7). A year later, in the Communication on improving the quality of teacher education, the European Commission explicitly "identified the quality of teachers and teacher education as a key factor in securing the quality of education" (Commission of the European Communities, 2007a: 15). In the same year, the *Action Plan on Adult Learning* singled out the quality of staff as a crucial motivating factor for adult learning, while recognising that "little attention has been paid to the training (initial and continuing)… of adult learning staff" (Commission of the European Communities, 2007b: 8).

A concern about the need to qualify current adult educators is shared among practitioners and researchers. This is exemplified, on the one hand, by the creation of training modules aimed at adult educators (cf. Carlsen & Irons 2003; Jääger & Irons, 2006) and, on the other hand, by the flourishing of national and cross-national studies, which shed light on the influence of societal, educational and occupational contexts within which professional development among adult educators occurs (Sabatini et al., 2000; Pryzbylska, 2008; Research von Beleid & PLATO, 2008; Buiskool, Lakerveld & Broek, 2009; Nuissl & Lattkle, 2008; Osborne, 2009; Nuissl & Egetenmeyer, exp. 2010). However, there is relatively little focus on the initial education and training of adult educators-to-be, when compared to other fields of education and training (e.g. primary and secondary school, initial vocational education and training, etc.). Furthermore, while a number of national policies emphasise the quality of adult education and training provision, scarce attention is paid within current policy discourses on the initial education and pre-service training of prospective adult educators.

Against this background, it has to be mentioned that adult educators, equally to other professionals in education, play a focal role in ensuring quality of teaching-learning processes that take place in a variety of educational settings. This group, however, stands in a unique position when compared to other professionals in educational. Adult educators have often acquired a speciality in the course of their initial studies but often lack formal preparation for teaching adults prior to entering the profession and at its outset. Hence, it is worth questioning how do

prospective adult educators prepare themselves to perform according to high quality standards in a changing working environment.

The BAEA project was formed with the scope of filling in the knowledge gap that became apparent when taking into consideration ways in which prospective adult educators acquire professional competences and qualifications before entering the profession in different socio-cultural contexts.

1.1 Project aims

The specific aims of the BAEA project were:

- To analyse ways in which adult education policies and initial education and training opportunities for prospective adult educators affect professionalisation processes in the field of general, vocationally-oriented and liberal education;
- To investigate social and cultural factors that influence the individual formation of initial competences and qualifications of prospective adult educators in the field of general, vocationally-oriented and liberal education;
- To investigate the main factors that influence the construction of a professional identity among prospective adult educators.

This report presents the findings from the research activity that was carried out in Estonia.

1.2 Review of research literature

In Estonia, there are several cross-sectional studies which analyse possibilities and trends in adult education and lifelong learning in the contexts of educational policy, social and economical changes in society, and professional development in different fields of work (Eamets et al., 2004; Saar 2005; Saar & Helemäe, 2008). Also, there are studies on the participation rates of adults in continuing education and adults' learning motivation in non-formal education (Vöörmann & Helemäe, 2006).

In several recent studies (2005-2010), which focused on adult educators' professional development, emotions in the teaching process, beliefs and notions on teaching and learning with adults, identity and professional development in different fields of practice (Lille, 2005; Karm, 2006, 2007; Parre, 2008; Jõgi & Gross, 2009; Skorobogatov, 2009; Tuul, 2009; Emberg, 2010; Külmallik, 2010) there was no focus or clear attention on adult educators-to-be and their professional development.

Several studies analysed adult educators' competences (Kivi, 2005) and abilities in teaching adult educators in their understandings of teaching practices (Lille, 2005). Results of Kivi (2005) and Lille's (2005) studies indicated that adult educators' understanding of their competences and teaching abilities in relation to adults is generally limited. The studies also found that educators who had participated in long-term training courses were able to identify wider-known competence

and learning needs. Lille (2005), in her study, focused on educators working primarily in work-based continuing training. Karm (2007), in her qualitative study, analysed learning experiences, as well as the formation of professional identity and perceptions of 28 adult educators from different fields of practice and specialities: medicine, psychology, economics, music, accountancy, history, the performing arts, Estonian, national defence, social work, youth work, agronomy, chemistry, and educational sciences.

One of the aspects of the professionalism of adult educators is personal educational theory or subjective educational philosophy – comprised of: beliefs, principles, attitudes, values of learning and teaching – in relation to the role of educators and in the relationships between educators and learners. Külmallik (2010) presents results in her study, that are based on professional biographical interviews with adult educators from the Estonian Tiger Leap Foundation. Her sample included teachers teaching adults in continuing courses as well as schoolchildren; teachers having many years of experience in teaching children and adults. The problem of this study is formulated as a question: "how do adult educators who are working in schools, and teaching children, express their understanding of changes in subjective educational theory"? On the grounds of Külmallik's results, it can be stated that adult educators' subjective teaching theory changed, depending on the learners. Phenomena underlying this change can be linked to experience acquired from teaching adults, andragogical studies and reflecting on personal, professional activity.

One's understanding of profession and professional development is linked to opportunities for professional communication and belonging to a community of practice. Tuul (2009), in her research, analyses what kind of community of practice supports adult educators' professional communication and what influence this has on professional learning and development.

Moreover, the meaning of reflection and reflective practice is analysed by Skorobogatov (2009), where the research focuses on how an understanding of reflection is expressed in an adult educator's reflective practice. Results show that reflection manifests as an ambiguous concept in the understanding of adult educators. An adult educator's reflective practice is characterised by the variability of its content, reasons, depth, results, time of reflection, impacts, meaning of emotion and methods. Based on their understanding of reflection, adult educators can influence and shape their reflective practice and aspects of reflection that manifest therein.

Today, when liberal education is not a state-priority, we can rely on adult educators, whose activities are motivated by values and mental attitudes, to act as shapers of the active citizen. The results of research conducted in 2005, showed that adult educators working in liberal education express in their perceptions, social values of civil society and popular education, such as: freedom, voluntariness, mission-sense, civil-activity, creativity and tolerance (Mägi, 2005).

There are a very limited number of studies which have focused on adult educators, especially those working in informal and formal education. This being the case, the professional development and learning in the vocation, of teachers who are working with adults in vocational education, is beyond the scope of this study.

1.3 Conceptual clarifications

The context of adult education has become more and more complex and it constantly poses new challenges to the professionalism of adult educators who have to realise their status, roles and competences and develop their own personal and professional identities. The term professionalisation indicates a direct attempt to use education and training possibilities to improve the quality of practice, standardise professional responses and enhance cooperation and communication within the professional field. Professionalism is dynamic in essence and includes a core profession (specific knowledge and skills, roles, tasks, competences, qualifications, personal and professional identity) which is influenced by changes and processes which take place in society, the social context, expectations, norms and the course of an individual's life.

Professional learning and professionalisation take place in the context of one's life course and are discussed as personal development processes. Human life is connected to time and life is seen as a journey across time, as a life-span or as life trajectory that unites different life periods and life events (Habermas & Bluck, 2000). Development and learning occur throughout one's life and time is perceived as past, present and future. At each stage of life, there can be something that challenges, supports or impedes one, forcing one to study, learn or develop. Aspects of one's life course and career path tasks can be recycled throughout personal and professional life spans as changes occur in career paths, and other life-roles changes occur (McAuliffe, 2006). However, adult educators are in a unique position, as they have acquired a speciality in the course of their studies, but often lack the formal preparation and initial training to teach adults.

Individual motivations for working in the field of adult education and the learning process that leads to the formation of competences, qualifications and professional identity in this field can be better understood by applying a biographical perspective.

Chapter 2: Methodology and data collection
By: Marcella Milana, Larissa Jõgi & Marin Gross

The premise of our approach is that individuals exist in multiple, multi-layered and interacting contexts, each of which is a domain of social relations and physical context (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986). Here, the individual creation of meaning is related to life conditions and social identities. An important element in our perspective is the focus on the interaction between (prospective) adult educators and the structural conditions that characterise the wider socio-cultural context in which they act. Hence, we believe that individual motivations for working in the field of adult education and the learning processes that lead to the formation of competences, qualifications and professional identities in this field can be better understood by applying a biographical perspective (Bertaux, 1997; Bertaux & Thompson, 1997; Fischer-Rosenthal, 2000).

Within this perspective, Horsdal (2002) argues that narrative interviews provide important insights in the learning experiences of people, and constitute the basis for analysing the significance of specific learning arenas for individuals to develop viewpoints, which guide their intentions and actions and shape their identities. People's narratives convey information about both individuals' participation in different learning contexts and the impact of such experiences on their life course. Accordingly, identity is understood by Horsdal as a narrative construction – a narrative about who one is, in relation to the life one has lived and the life one wants to live in the future. In line with this, processes of identity-construction represent retrospective creation of coherence and meaning in the temporarily separated parts of the lived experience. We position ourselves within this perspective.

Initial education and training opportunities for prospective adult educators and their management, however, are increasingly a consequence of strategies related to lifelong learning. Against this background, our research design included both desk research and field work activities.

2.1 Desk research activity

From autumn 2008 to spring 2009, we collected existing information on initial education and training opportunities for prospective adult educators in the fields of general, vocationally-oriented and liberal adult education. In addition, we conducted documentary analysis on three types of key documents: 1) research reports and articles; 2) official papers describing the national education systems; and 3) policy papers such as policy statements, laws, by-laws, and reports.

The aims of the desk research activity were: a) to map out current initial education and training pathways for prospective adult educators and map the different understandings of professionalisation processes governing general, vocationally-oriented and liberal education strategies; and b) to identify specific policy strategies put forward to enhance quality in the field of adult education.

The analysis only dealt with the areas of adult education which receive public funding. The huge market of purely private courses was not part of the analysis, though private suppliers are

important providers of education and training for adults. The criterion for the selection of policy papers has been that they either focused on education of adults or on education and training for adult educators, with a special attention on the latter. The analysis focused on the mentions (or omissions) of qualifications of those teaching adults in the Estonian strategies for lifelong learning and adult education and training. The selection of policy papers was restricted to the last decade only. The main results of the desk research activity are presented in chapters 3 and 4.

2.2 Field work activity

The narrative interview method was used for the collecting empirical data. Using narratives in research means that we integrate personal and social experience in the broader social and educational context. We based the research on a holistic-inductive approach by using content and thematic analyses (Horsdal, 2002).

Two researchers collected fifteen narratives during the months of June-August, 2009. These were used in seeking to understand, ***How the formation of the professionalisation of adult educators develops in education and training?*** The empirical data was collected by using personal narratives. When interviewees finished telling their stories, interviewers then asked them thematic interview questions.

Empirical data collection and analyses procedures were agreed upon by BAEA project partners and were the same for research conducted in all country contexts. At the start of each interview, researchers introduced the project, the study's aims, as well as the aims for the narrative interview. Interviewees' consent was obtained and interviews all followed the same procedures and format. Each narrative interview was collected in Estonian, and narratives were coded with a name and numbered (*see Annex 1*). Seven narrative interviews (1-7) were conducted by one researcher and eight narrative interviews (8-15) were conducted by the second researcher. The average length of each interview was 70 minutes. In the next sub-section, details of the methods will be presented.

All fifteen narrative interviews were analysed and discussed by both researchers, who have extensive experience in conducting qualitative research, interviewing and analysing qualitative data. The data was analysed using NVivo 8, and was later discussed and interpreted by both researchers.

The sample (*see Annex 1*) was comprised of participants aged between 25 and 47 years (3 men and 12 women) – from the so-called "*winners generation*" (Titma, 2002; Kalmus & Vihalemm, 2004). According to presentational sampling strategy, interviewees represented different fields of work in adult education: non-formal (9, 11, 12, 15), vocational (1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 13), and formal adult education (7, 8, 11). Interviewees' studies were being undertaken at the MA level, in adult education (8-15) and at the BA level, in a vocational education and qualification course (1-7, 11). They were all adult educators-to-be (1-5 years of experience in teaching adults). Interviewed educators received their higher education degrees throughout the 1980s and 1990s and were all involved in different types of studies in adult education at the time of their interviews (*see*

Annex 1). Kristiina, Ülle, Viire, Kerttu, Kaja and Helle graduated from higher education in the 1990s, during Estonia's period of change (Illustration 1), and it is therefore possible that their education and or its content became no longer relevant, prompting them to start work and continue studies in other fields.

Illustration 1. Changes in Estonian society
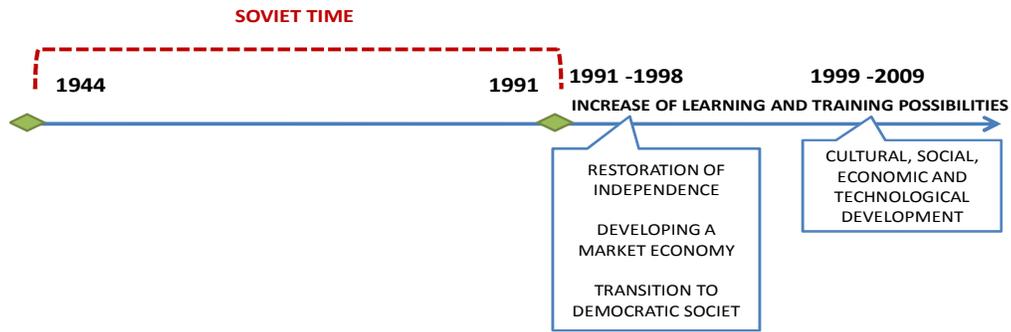
They were able start to use their knowledge and skills to their fullest, and purposefully, in independent Estonia, while their professions created wider possibilities for involvement in training. Changes in Estonian civic and economic life and in adult education during the 1990s caused or enabled interviewees to turn to the different fields of adult education.

Almost all interviewees started their stories from its conception – birth date and time – and almost all were chronologically told, besides Andres, Kristiina, Ülle, and Kerttu's stories. All narratives focused on growth; about being born, childhood, studies/formal education, friends, family, meeting with partners and about life itself (new situations, life events, partners, new opportunities) as well as changes in society, adapting to the changes in life and taking risks. Each person had a unique set of memories and experiences. The different episodes, situations and periods of a life were not equally comprehended. Some of narratives were very reflective and self-focused carrying a strong **I-voice** (Kerttu, Andres and Ülle). Some stories were told in short (Jaana and Kaja), some in great detail (Kerttu, Ülle, Kristiina, Jaana, Aivar and Andres). The narratives and life stories directly demonstrated the social-cultural framings of individual life-experiences. Social, work, education and personal life contexts were very important in all narratives. All tellers said that they learned a lot from life and for life.

Narratives as empirical data provided very important and rich backgrounds for analysing and understanding how professionalisation develops.

2.2.1 Method for data collection

Each narrative interview was collected in Estonian and in a single session. All sessions followed the same format. First, the researcher introduced the project and established a relaxed atmosphere, ensuring that the interviewee was comfortable with the situation. The interviewee was the

presented with the following invitation to tell his/her own life story: "What I would like you to do is to tell about your life, from the beginning until where we are today". Alongside this question, information on the interviewer's expected behaviour during the interview was made explicit: "I will write down what you say, so please do not speak too fast. I will also record the interview if this is okay with you. After the interview, you will be provided with a transcript of your story so that you can make comments or corrections. At the same time, you can remain as anonymous as you feel comfortable with". Once an interviewee had finished telling his/her life story, the researcher would then request clarifications, as needed. Finally, following a short coffee break, the researcher would the following pre-defined questions:

- Can you tell about the path that you have taken in order to work in the field of adult learning (this question was only posed in cases where the theme had not spontaneously been covered by the interviewee)?
- Can you tell about what made you choose this course?
- How would you describe a person working in the field of adult learning?
- Do you see any difference between teaching children and teaching adults?
- How do you see yourself in a vocational context?
- What are your visions for the future?

Some time after the interview, interviewees were provided with a transcript of the interview so that they could correct it as needed. Interviewees were also asked to provide their final agreement to the transcript, so that it may then be considered for the analysis.

2.2.2 Analytical strategy for empirical data analysis

As presented in the previous two sub-sections, empirical data collection and analyses procedures were agreed upon by BAEA project partners and were the same for research conducted in all country contexts. At the start of each interview, researchers introduced the project, the study's aims, as well as the aims for the narrative interview. Interviewees' consent was obtained and interviews all followed the same procedures and format. Each narrative interview was collected in Estonian, and narratives were coded with a name and numbered (*see Annex 1*). Seven narrative interviews (1-7) were conducted by one researcher and eight narrative interviews (8-15) were conducted by the second researcher. The average length of each interview was 70 minutes.

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story so that you can make comments or corrections. At the same time, you can remain as anonymous as you feel comfortable with". Following each narrative interview, thematic questions were asked.

For the empirical data analysis, we based our frame of reference on thematic inductive analyses (Horsdal 2002,; Van Manen, 2001, 2005). At a second stage, researchers made a cross-case analysis aimed at identifying similarities and variations on common themes within the sample. During deconstruction and analysis of narratives and interviews, elements of inductive analysis were used (Van Manen, 2005) – in interviews, context analysis, person's life and educational situations as well as theoretical apprehensions were taken into account. The main results of the field work activity are present in chapter 5 of the present report.

The concept of voice can refer to the inner voice or the outer voice (Belenky, Clinchy, Golbberger & Tarule, 1986). The inner voice informs a person of what they know, think and value. One may experience their inner voice as "talking with" them or "talking at" them. One's inner voice tells about oneself based on personal experiences and subjective knowledge. The outer voice is the voice of others that one has internalised and contextualised in their conscience and personal model of reality. One's outer voice repeats back to them the received knowledge that comes to them from others. With the outer voice, one shares his/her knowledge, ideas, feelings (MacKeracher, 2004: 157). Belenky and her colleagues also described "feeling silenced" as a way of knowing or experiencing. Feeling silenced is the experience of having no voice, of feeling mindless and voiceless. Silence as a way of knowing, experienced as a lack of an outer and inner voices (Belenky, Clinchy, Golbberger & Tarule, 1986).

Almost all tellers in their stories were silent about their understanding of adult educators' roles, identity and personal views of the self and of the future in relation to adult education; this came out later, through thematic interview questions.

Chapter 3: Adult education as a professional field of practice

3.1 The status and provision of adult education

During the last fifteen years, Estonia has experienced political, ideological, economic, cultural and social changes; at the same time, globalisation has been influencing the development of information and communication technology, the global market and labour force mobility. EU membership from 2004 ensures a more stable social, cultural, political and economic environment in Estonia. Good infrastructure, geographical location and a skilled, adaptable workforce, create a good basis for economic, political, cultural and educational development. Adult education and lifelong learning is one of the priorities for development in Estonia. In 1993, Estonian Parliament accepted the Adult Education Act; changing the role of adult education in society, significantly (Märja, 2000: 30). Depending on its objectives, education is, according to the Estonian Adult Education Act, one of the following:

1) formal education acquired within the adult education system;
2) professional education and training;
3) informal education.

Figure 1. Adult education opportunities in Estonia

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION	FORMAL EDUCATION	INFORMAL EDUCATION
• Continuing education departments in universities • Training enterprises • Non-formal training centers • Folk high schools • Continuing education departments in vocational schools	• Universities • Open Universities • Adult gymnasiums	• Folk high schools • Non-formal training centers • Libraries • Clubs, learning circles

In Estonia, there are a number of institutions and organisations dealing with and promoting adult education and lifelong learning (*approximately 400*). Existing statistical data is fragmented and not systematically collected. Therefore, there is no exact or correct statistical data and information about adult education and training providers or about the number of specialists engaged in the field of adult education and adult training.

Different providers offer training courses for adults:

Acquisitions of higher education – Universities in public law and state institutions of professional higher education offer opportunities to study in the form of evening courses and distance learning; also continuing education outside formal education may take place in these

institutions. Studying part-time is usually affordable, yet only priority areas are financed by the state (e.g. teacher with no higher education). In the 2004/2005 academic year, 17.7% of the adult population was undertaking a higher education program part-time (Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, 2005a).

General education – Obtaining basic education and general upper-secondary education in the form of evening courses, distance learning and as an external student is free. In the 2004/2005 academic year, 33 educational institutions were providing general education for 0.8% of the adult population and upper-secondary education for 14.4% (Ibid.).

In-service training – Training centres offer in-service training, and so do applied higher education institutions, universities and vocational schools. More and more in-service training is being offered by professional unions. The vocational education system provides in-service training to 8.4% of the adult population (Ibid.).

Non-formal adult education – Non-formal adult education plays a significant role in adult education, and is delivered by public universities and training centres, but also by different societies and groups where the main form of learning is via learning circles. Participation in non-formal learning involves 3-3.5% of the Estonian adult population, annually (EVHL, 2006).

3.2 Adult educators: the profession's social status

The adult educator as a profession has been recognised and regulated by the Professional Qualification Standard in Estonia since 2004. According to the definition, an *adult educator* is a specialist, intermediating skills and/or knowledge to adult people, directing their formation of comprehension and attitudes, and supporting their self-development in adult general education, job-related and/or continuing professional training, popular education courses, study circles and other circumstances related to a purposeful learning situation. The adult educator creates a positive and motivating learning environment that assists learners in accomplishing the goals of their learning in the best possible manner. In order to achieve better results, an educator includes additional resources (other instructors, specialists, learners etc.), if the need becomes evident. Applying for a qualification standard is voluntary and depends on an applicant's wish to formalise his/her professional skills. A professional standard as an adult educator or andragogue can be applied for at four levels (levels II, III, IV and V). Since 2007, the professional standard has been competence-based, and this has significantly influenced the preparation of applicants for a qualification standard. A systematic description of qualifications from levels II to V ensures a seamless transition from one level to the next and creates accordance with Estonia's other professional qualifications and the European qualification system, as well as enabling the harmonisation of study programmes. The opportunities for adult educators to prove their professional qualifications have also been extended – in 2004, the right to prove a qualification was accorded to three levels (III, IV and V level). Since 2007, it has been possible to acquire professional qualification as an adult educator at four levels (level II was added, giving less experienced adult educators the opportunity to apply for qualification). Thus, the system of professional standards for adult educators and competences according to the levels has continued to develop. Training programmes have also been brought into accordance with the levels of professional standards.

The development of a professional qualification[1] system for adult educators has been initiated in Estonia in the last couple of years. The professional qualification of the adult educator is defined as an additional/partial qualification; the basic qualification being the profession or specialist knowledge acquired either at a university or vocational education institution (in the subject he/she is teaching). The new professional qualification standard is based on adult educators' competences, which imposed changes on the curriculum of adult educator training. The most important competences forming the bases for these qualifications are written out below (Professional qualification standard of adult educators), where the adult educator:

- Defines the objectives of the training based on the educational needs. Prepares a training programme targeted at the achievement of a result that is systematic and logically structured. Assesses the level of achievement of the training result.

- Manages the learning process purposefully, while complying with the principles of purposefulness and feedback. Applies the methods of process monitoring, acts flexibly and creatively under changing circumstances and regarding problem solving. If necessary, uses his or her negotiating and conflict resolution skills. Uses different training methods and techniques based on a set of objectives, the needs of learners and the specifics of the subject.

- Models a learning environment that is compliant with the learning objectives and facilitates learning. Creates cooperation networks between the stakeholders and affiliated groups, which are relevant from the viewpoint of the efficiency of learning. Applies methods for the management of group processes. Supports the shaping of positive attitudes towards learning and learning motivation; creates an atmosphere that is both stress-free and reciprocally supportive. Supports the development of the learner through an increase in self-confidence and self-guidance skills.

- Accounts for the psycho-physiological and social peculiarities of an adult. Provides aid to the learners in setting objectives, planning studies and acquiring learning skills. Takes into account the special individual needs of the learners. Values the learner's level of prior knowledge and skills and uses their previous experience as a common resource. Addresses the study group as a subject, fostering support for each other and the influence of the reciprocal development of the learners.

- Reflects his or her activities. Commands and applies methods of self-analysis. Sets objectives, and plans and assesses his or her activities. Is constantly engaged in self-development.

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[1] **Professional qualification** – the level of competence in a given profession that is accepted on the basis of either regulated post-experience or international requirements.

- Performs complex duties: manages educational and training processes taking place at the institutional or organisational level, prepares study programmes, arranges monitoring of processes, analyses results and makes decisions.

- Compiles training teams at the organisational level or the level of its sub-units, arranges the division of tasks between the members of the team. Motivates employees and assesses the results of their activities. Creates conditions for the professional development of each team member.

- Analyses the learning requirements of target groups, forecasts the volume of training and prepares programmes.

- Participates in the planning of training programmes for the representatives of other cultural and language environments. Prepares training programmes in foreign languages and delivers courses. Models an environment that facilitates learning in study groups that represent different nations and different cultures.

- Makes proposals regarding the refinement of adult education and the education system as a whole. Participates in discussions regarding the development of and/or amendments to the concept of adult education and the strategy for lifelong education. Explains the need for the promotion of adult education to educational officials and to the general public and motivates adults to learn. Uses the framework documents of the European Union directing the development of lifelong learning in his or her activities in facilitating adult education in Estonia. Provides counselling to people submitting project applications regarding the preparation of EU projects addressing the facilitation of adult education and their financing opportunities.

- Actively participates in the work of some international organisation engaged in policies, practice and/or research in Europe or in the world, mediating the required information and the experience of other countries into Estonia and sharing Estonian experience with others. Participates in international cooperation projects in the area of adult education or lifelong learning. Communicates with the representatives of different cultures and integrates stakeholders in order to achieve project objectives. Recruits international project teams and acts as the leader of these teams.

- Participates in conferences and/or seminars in the field of adult education and lifelong education both in Estonia and abroad. Chairs plenary sessions, modules or activities of work-groups at conferences and submits summaries of these activities.

Holding a professional certificate as an adult educator confirms an educator's level of professionalism. It is also a means for increasing the competitiveness of training services in the market, and serves as a guarantee of professionalism for training providers' service users – individuals or contracting entities. Although professional qualification has been assigned to more than 100 trainers, the number of full-time adult educators in Estonia is not high. The number of adult educators is considerably smaller than the respective number of teachers teaching in basic

schools and senior high schools, and academic staff in universities. While the number of teachers is more than 18,000 in Estonia, the number of adult educators (Jõgi, Jääger, Leppänen & Rinne, 2008) is around 1,000. Until now, only 145 of them have applied for, and have been awarded, a professional qualification as an adult educator.

Moreover, only the most successful business training centres hold a position in the training market and have recourse to resources, enabling them to recruit full-time trainers in their teams. Most adult educators are working on part-time agreements, and are usually teaching simultaneously in several adult training centres and/or university departments. When an adult training centre or school or department wants to apply for a licence from the Ministry of Education and Research, they have to have a list of adult educators who affirm with a signature that they will perform their training tasks according to the curriculum approved. This kind of request guarantees the quality of the training, but also creates a situation where a particular adult educator could be on several lists. At Tallinn University, there is a department of andragogy providing BA and MA degree studies in adult education, but the graduates graduate as managers in adult education, not professional adult educators.

As stated earlier, most adult educators are working on a part-time basis, having no permanent salary, but remuneration for the number of teaching hours. Those adult educators employed by (mostly) business training centres, generally have agreed with the employer on a monthly salary and additional income (extra payment) for each lecture and/or training session provided by them. At higher educational institutions and vocational schools, teachers/lectures and academic staff have full-time employment and working hours planned for adult professional or continuing training are usually added to the general number of lectures foreseen for different jobs/professions/occupations. The same model is also put into practice in adult senior secondary schools. Remuneration for lectures/training for part-time adult educators differs greatly. It depends on the institution hiring the person to deliver a training programme and the academic level of the educator. For example, at public institutions like universities, the rate for one academic hour is 15-25 Euros (net). At adult training centres, providing courses as part of a European Social Fund project, the remuneration could be higher and reach up to 75 Euros (net) per an academic hour. Adult business training centres pay their trainers a lot more. The highest payments could reach to 1000 (gross) Euros per hour.

Chapter 4: Structural conditions that support or hinder professionalisation processes

4.1 Opportunity structures for adult educators

Adult educators' initial training in Estonia has not been regulated nor is there a system for it. There are two main providers of adult educator qualification courses: AEAE Andras and ENAEA. The Association of Estonian Adult Educators – Andras (AEAE Andras) – which was established as a non-government institution in 1991, unites the representatives of different branches of adult education in Estonia and aims to increase the competence of adult educators. AEAE Andras provides a qualification course that is linked to the professional standard of adult educators. The course is 160 hours and based on 6 modules, as follows:

- the role of adult education in society;
- learning in adulthood, the adult learner;
- learning process planning and implementation;
- teaching adult learners, the adult educator;
- methods in adult education;
- using IT solutions for teaching adults (e-learning).

The course finishes with a final paper that is written on a chosen topic. The curriculum is currently being developed further as the available programme is not learning outcomes-based; making it is difficult to see clear outcomes of the programme. Participants are expected to have at least some experience on the field of adult education; thus, people who have an interest in entering the field of adult education, but have no prior experience might not be able to enrol in the course. The course is organised in various regions of Estonia, and therefore, provides opportunities for a wider audience. Participants have the opportunity to apply for the professional qualification standard after having completed the course and many adult educators use the opportunity to apply for the professional standard.

The Estonian Non-formal Adult Education Association (ENAEA) is a non-government national umbrella organisation in the non-formal adult education field that brings together education-orientated NGOs. ENAEA, the successor to the Estonian Union of Education (1924-1940), was re-established in 1994 and organises a course for adult educators that is 824 hours in total, and runs for two years. The curriculum is module-based and consists of the following:

- Socio-cultural environment
  - Cultural environment
  - Social environment

- Learning environment
  - Adult learner
  - Adult educator
  - Practitioner-researcher
  - Organiser
  - Counsellor

The curriculum is based on learning outcomes and states as its clear aim to support adult educators in their various roles as teacher, supervisor, organiser, counsellor, researcher and practitioner. The course also offers an opportunity for participants to apply for the professional standard.

Tartu Folk High School provides a course for andragogues. The course is 80 hours and is aimed at practitioners who wish to develop their professional competences. The course does not have a clear link to the qualification standard.

Tallinn University Department of Adult Education provides a curriculum for adult educators/andragogues. The curriculum is 45 ECTS and can be studied as part of undergraduate studies or also as a separate curriculum through the open university. This is not a degree course on its own. The curriculum has the following courses:

- Introduction to andragogy
- Development and learning in adulthood
- Competence of the adult educator
- Modern methods in adult training
- Social identity of adult educator
- Study groups in adult training

The curriculum aims to create opportunities for obtaining knowledge and skills to work in the area of adult learning, teaching and training. The completed curriculum makes it possible to apply for the professional standard of an adult educator.

Tallinn University's Department of Adult Education also provides 3+2 curriculum in adult education. Undergraduate and graduate level curriculum not only focuses on enabling one to become an adult educator; rather, it has a wider aim: developing the professional consciousness and identity of andragogues, developing one's readiness for work in development and research, and continuing studies on in-service and advanced level.

In summary, courses available for adult educators merely require that the participants have prior experience in the area. As there is no clear system for training adult educators, courses are difficult to compare and the curricula are at different levels of development (*Figure 2*).

Figure 2. Opportunity structures for adult educators-to-be.
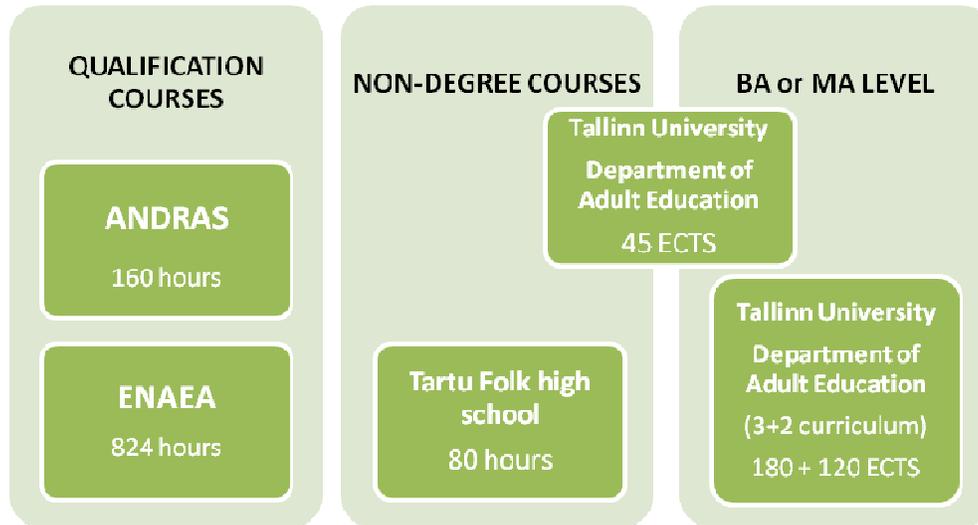
4.2 National policy strategies for adult learning

In 1993, the Estonian Parliament passed the Adult Education Act, regulating the following:

- Formal education acquired within the adult education system outside the daytime study format or full-time study (basic, secondary or higher education)
- Adult professional training
- Informal adult education
- Ensuring study opportunities
- Organisation of training
- Financing training
- Implementing the provision of training

Among other things, the Act prescribes which other legislation applies to adult education and the activities of the Adult Education Council (Estonian Government, 1993b).

Since 2006, one the most important strategic documents in Estonia has been the *Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy for the Years 2005-2008* (Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, 2005a). This strategy includes descriptions of lifelong learning goals, measures and activities for Estonia. The strategy implements plans for the realisation of lifelong learning goals. According to the strategy, the aims are to provide equal opportunities for learning, to assure the quality of education and training, to provide information about learning opportunities and the counselling system for adults, to develop a professional qualification system and to guarantee active participation in policy development at all levels. Inconsistent financing can be identified as a weakness of the strategy.

Educational policy, with its focus on lifelong learning, has been the subject of a continual, systematic process of strategic renewal. *National Priorities for Adult Education for 2004-2006* focused on opportunities for adults to participate in lifelong learning – also, in the field of formal education – by creating opportunities for dropouts from the education system to return to the system. Other priorities focused on ensuring the quality of adult training, including vocational training and developing an adult education financing model, which included motivating companies to invest in training their employees.

The *Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy for the Years 2005-2008* describes the principles of and need for lifelong learning on a wider scale, but its goals, measures and activity plans focus on adult education (Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, 2005a). The general goal of the strategy is to increase the opportunities and motivation of Estonian people to participate both in formal and informal studies in order to improve their knowledge and skills in line with their own needs and those of citizenship, society and the labour market. The strategy comprises goals, and measures important for Estonia, and their implementation in order to:

- enhance study motivation in all target groups, especially those groups whose access to learning opportunities is hindered due to economic reasons, lack of time or interest, or any other reason;
- improve the competitiveness of Estonia and its population in the world;
- achieve sustainable, economic development;
- improve every person's capacity and ability to cope with life;
- strengthen the social integrity of the population and the development of citizenship and improve the quality of people's lives;
- achieve the strategic aims in education and training set by the European Council for the year 2010 – ensuring quality, accessibility and openness.

The *Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy for the Years 2005-2008* is closely linked to the aims of all EU lifelong learning policies (Ibid.). Unfortunately, the strategy's aims are not yet fully in practice, and other education strategies that are not so friendly towards lifelong learning are tending to lead education policy because the action plan, for the *Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy for the Years 2005-2008* (Ibid.), depends on the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research's *Action Plan "Smart and Active Nation" 2007-2010* (Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, 2006).

For example, the objectives stated in the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research's *Action Plan "Smart and Active Nation" 2007-2010* (2006) only partly reflect the aims of the *Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy for the Years 2005-2008* (2005a) or EU lifelong learning policy. The first goal of the development plan is "equal opportunities for lifelong education", but the only direct action connected to lifelong learning is "to create the conditions whereby lifelong learning is attractive and people are motivated to participate", and less than 0.2% of the education budget is set aside for this (Ibid.). Another important aim of the plan is "to create a national qualification system to identify the needs of the labour market, to describe the results of different levels of education and learning and to promote the mobility of learners" (Ibid.). The only evaluation indicator for this goal is the amount of adults participating in different training courses (Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, 2006). The development plan does emphasise the importance

of vocational training, and the aims of the development of vocational training carries the ideas of EU lifelong learning policy. Furthermore, the *Estonian Vocational Education System Development Plan 2005-2008* (Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, 2005b), which serves as the basis for future steps towards the modernisation of the education system and reflects EU lifelong learning policies, is currently being re-drafted .

It is possible that in the light of the *Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy for the Years 2005-2008* (2005a) and trends in the economy, the EU's lifelong learning policy will be put into practice, and outdated regulations like the Adult Education Act (Estonian Government, 1993b) will be reviewed and modified according to the aims of EU lifelong learning policy, and all the other steps needed to implement the new EU education policy will be undertaken.

Chapter 5: Individual pathways of professionalisation among teachers of adults

> *My professional path has been short but I already have something to talk about, I've had choices...obstacles...joys...and there's going to be a lot to experience and learning (Jana).*

The professional choices and the formation of the professional identity of adult educators have been influenced by changes in personal life, in education and in Estonian society, as the 1990s saw, political, economic and social changes, the neoliberal economy and very intensive changes in the socio-economic and cultural environment. According to our analysis, and as stated earlier, adult educators are in a unique position among professionals as they have acquired a speciality in the course of their studies but often lack formal preparation and initial training for teaching adults. Their former studies and education have not included education for training and teaching adults. At some stage of their life and career they undertake adult education studies, but the general tendency seems to be that the skills, knowledge and identity of the educator are developed through work, learning experiences, and reflection on their practice.

The quality of preparation and professional activity are highly varied. The educators we sampled have different perceptions of their professional identity, personal understandings about being adult educators and teaching adults, and of their own needs for personal development and education.

5.1 Paths to adult education

A career path or phase task makes sense as a requirement at a particular time of life (McAuliffe, 2006: 478). At each stage of life, there can be something that challenges, supports or impedes, forcing one to study, learn or develop: for Kerttu, this was living in Sweden and studying Japanese language at university (1991-1996) as well as living in Japan (1996-2004); and for Andres, this was Estonia's independence in 1991 and joining the Estonian Defence League in 1999.

Aspects of career path tasks can be recycled throughout personal and professional life spans as changes occur in career paths and other life roles changes occur (McAuliffe, 2006). There is no clear pattern in adult educators' career paths: they appear heterogeneous. An educator's initial education, professional experience and career development are unique and atypical. Training adults in the classical sense of career, is either a progression or a regression, but in every case, a career is sensed as a professional or personal challenge and as an opportunity for self-realisation. Becoming an adult educator in Estonia in the context of one's career is more a case of using possibilities and suppositions as one comes across them, rather than a conscious and planned process.

The important historical and social context for adult educators' development is Estonia's re-gaining of its independence in the 1990s and the changes in socio-political, economic and social life that followed. The re-introduction of the Estonian currency, the establishment of private

enterprises, changes in legislation, technical development, and international cooperation, created new circumstances that forced people to find new solutions, new options, changes, and turns in their lives. Similarly, changing a workplace or a profession appears normal in the context of the free market economy, and therefore giving up an existing job and choosing training seems natural. Collective activity lost its importance to individual enterprise, so that adjustment to change must be faced individually by setting goals, making plans and taking risks. Several researchers highlight how the generation born in the middle of the 1960s, the so-called the "generation of winners", was in its prime during the regaining of independence; its members were in their best working years, at the beginning of their careers, and thus able to broaden their horizons and use the new possibilities (Titma, 2002).

Our analysis suggests that the generation born at the beginning of the 1980s received a good education and has had the opportunity to make choices based on their education and qualifications rather than on the available opportunities and random chance. Getting involved in training also happened as a result of losing a previous job or following the closure or restructuring of an organisation. Opportunities to work as an educator were made possible in the new structures and institutions in the Estonian Republic (such as in the Defence League, public enterprises, training and consulting centres, non-profit organisations) and in popular new fields of training (management, teamwork, sales training, computer training). The development of the field of adult training was influenced by changes in legislation, which set new demands in terms of qualifications, and thus created a new demand for training. In line with this, we uncovered four career paths among 15 adult educators-to-be, and the prerequisites, needs and expectations are individual and depend on several circumstances.

According to our analyses it is possible to distinguish **4 different paths to become an educator of adults:**

Path I – The field of training grows out of professional experience
(Aivar, Jaana, Kaja, Helle, Kristiina, Viire, Andres, Toomas and Kerttu)

The path seems logical and natural: educators learn in a certain field (the Defence League, Japanese language and culture, the English language), gain experience by working in the field and then share it as an educator. Turning to training might be influenced by supplementary training that was taken during learning in university or qualification courses. This training is often described as enlightening or very significant. The final paper (thesis) submitted in fulfilling the requirements for graduation from higher education may also be significant in becoming an educator. By conducting a piece of research, a person develops as a specialist in a narrower field and obtains specific knowledge to share with others.

Training might start as an additional activity alongside the main job and in time, grows into the main activity (Kaja, Maris, Kärt and Triin). In time, the content of training may change due to work experience or additional training. The smoothness of the path is illusory – there are disjunctions: workplaces or dwelling places change, and different positions are taken within the profession.

Path II – The field of training grows out of continuing education or interest or voluntary activity (Maris, Ülle, Kristiina and Kaja).

In the case of the second path, a field of training is found through continuing education which is not directly connected with the learned profession, but with hobbies or interests. During or after the continuing education, individuals find both work and a field of training. Later, they may get a degree, but they continue training in the field of practice in continuing education.

Path III – The field of training appears as if from nowhere: there is no visible connection with the profession, work experience or hobbies, but at the same time there is a connection with everything
(Kärt, Triin and Helle)

When looking at the facts from a trainer's previous life history, these choices are hard to understand: they have a job, and becoming an educator doesn't initially improve either their financial situation or their position. But their previous education, work and life experiences, have created a background suitable for training.

Path IV – The field of training grows out of work experience in the field, but is not learned at university (Ülle, Triin and Kärt)

The fourth path means a profession is learned, however, one works in another field and the field of training develops out of practical work experience (sales, work in a museum, international relations). Individuals have no theoretical foundation learned in university for the field, but the practical experiential knowledge is passed on.

The professional development of adult educators is difficult, due to the fact that educating/training is often a person's second or even third choice, meaning that people have gotten into a situation where they have to start their lives over again because their normal life cycles have been interrupted or they have started to search for new directions in their lives.

Furthermore, becoming an adult educator is often not a planned choice. Due to life course and individual career paths, adult trainers are in a special position among professionals because in prior studies they have gained a profession, but they usually do not have a formal qualification for teaching adults. Prior learning may not include specialist knowledge, specific teaching skills or adult learning specialities.

We have also noticed that learning, professional identity and professional development generally take place through one's own work and life experience, partly by reflecting on one's personal experience and professional practice. In some moments, there might be doubts as to whether an educator's prior qualification that is based on practical work experience and does not include any knowledge about adult teaching and learning is adequate for working with adults. Consequently, adult educators' professional learning needs may differ greatly depending on the profession itself, prior experience, knowledge, apprehensions, beliefs and the needs and expectations of the organisation concerned.

5.2 Choice of current studies

There is great hope that studies will support professional and personal development; self-development for educators, understandings in how to teach adults and how to support their learning, and greater awareness related to enabling learning through active dialogue and cooperation within the adult educators' community. This being said, there is no general, typical, or clear pattern discernable from the data, with respect to choices in current studies. An educator's initial education, professional experience and career development are subjective, unique and atypical. Changing workplaces or professions seems normal in the context of the free market economy (Ülle), and therefore giving up an existing job and choosing adult training seems natural (Kerttu). As a result, becoming an adult educator in Estonia is more a case of using possibilities and suppositions as one comes across them, rather than the result of a conscious and planned process.

Why further studies in adult education?

The most important motives that learners have when they start their studies are linked to attitudes that are influenced by aspects of their socio-cultural environment and individual personalities: educators' understandings of the self, as well as the self as an educator; context of profession, social relations and significant others, needs (experienced and actual needs; need for participation), opportunities, aims, and subjective experience. Adult education and adult learning as a field is seen as complicated but at the same time, as a very interesting field for self-development and professional growing. Thus, studies are seen as a systematic way of analysing and learning about it.

> *I have great interest for adult learning as a process and adult educators' profession.*
> *I find that this area is exactly where I want to develop myself (Kärt).*

The motives and explanations for beginning studies are related to life, events of life, and work. Reasons for beginning studies in adult education are related to current work assignments and needs related to improving the practice of adult training, as a strong responsibility is felt in teaching in the area of adult education (Andres, Kerttu, Triin and Kaja).

Moreover, the choice for starting master level studies can be intuitive or random:

> *I noticed the curriculum of Adult Education and felt that this is something for me. I*
> *wanted to study because the studies seemed to be concrete and the area interests*
> *me and finally, I found many connections with my everyday work (Kärt).*

Self-development as an adult educator is also seen as a reason for participating in courses (Kärt and Kerttu). Furthermore, the need for theoretical knowledge of adult learning and teaching was also mentioned as a motivator (Maris, Jaana, Triin and Kerttu). For Viire, significant others were influential when making a choice to study at the master level:

I was influenced by my ex-colleague Evi and ex-course-mate, Meelike... the direction for becoming an adult educator was given to me by a training company who invited me to be a trainer for their courses. The topic was known to me, obviously my everyday work – work law, work safety and work healthcare. I made it and liked it but also the extra earnings were nice. I realised that this is what has been attracting me already decades ago and I decided to study Adult Education (Viire).

5.3 Defining an adult educator

View of the profession

All tellers have different perceptions of their professional identity, personal theories on teaching, and needs for personal training and development. Their professional choices and the shaping of professional identity have been influenced by personal life and work life, values, as well as by changes in life and in Estonian society.

At some stage of their life, each undertook adult education studies, enabling the development of the personal self, professional skills and knowledge, subjective educational theory and identity, through experience, learning and reflection on the practice. Data analysis shows that personal teaching theory, subjective educational theory and an adult educator's identity formation is influenced by subjective aspects (developmental attitudes towards self, willingness to learn and develop, interest, personal characteristics and life course) as well as objective aspects (developments in society, developments in the field, new situations, learners, family and significant others).

View of the self as an adult educator

One's view of the self as an adult educator often takes on a critical angle, where one is not content with oneself. Interviewees said that currently, they had reached a certain level, which was not where they would like to see themselves.

I've understood that I can't stay still in one place. As an adult educator, I'm developing (Andres).

I'm not very satisfied with myself as an adult educator. … I feel that I'm lacking time and thus I'm lately often using PowerPoint presentations to teach because it's an easy way out (Jaana).

The image of self is linked to practice and prior experience as educators but interviewees expressed that they felt something was still "missing" – knowledge and theory. Some expressed that they cannot call themselves adult educators yet, thus some felt they are not fully adult educators.

I'm more self-confident, I value interactive learning methods but I also feel insecure in many aspects (Helle).

Right now, I'm a practitioner (Kaja).

I think I still have a long way to go before I can consider myself as an adult educator (Kärt).

I'm in the developing phase of becoming an adult educator. I know what to teach but not how (Triin).

I'm definitely an adult educator, but what kind of skills I have is another story (Viire).

Self-image is linked to what is valued in teaching and learning. Learner-centeredness, respecting and valuing learners, openness, and group cohesion are some of the mentioned values.

As an adult educator, I value my own and others' time. I see people as special, I respect them and value every moment as it is the first and last that we are together. My values are with me every day and I express it in my activities, behaviour and everyday routine (Kerttu).

For me as an educator, it's important to create opportunities for freedom in its best meaning (Kerttu).

I've noticed that adult learners like it when they're given an opportunity to share their opinions and this is considered important by others. A learning environment that is open, learner- and learning-centred, is important (Jaana).

As an adult educator, I see myself as someone who notices the learner and focuses on emotions (Maris).

Some adult educators examined their competences against adult educators' qualification standard (Kristiina). Some tried to list the features that identified them as adult educators: open, independent, smart, critical, responsible, helpful and determined.

The educator has to have a "spark" and an "inner burning" (Kerttu).

Becoming an adult educator

Becoming an adult educator was seen by interviewees as inevitable and related to needs and job assignments (Andres and Jaana). It was also considered as linked to "something" that is inside:

I think it's something inside me because otherwise I would have not chosen that job (Andres).

Firstly, experiences as adult educators were described as being accidental or coincidental, rather than as a result of a carefully planned choice (Jaana, Kärt and Triin). Moreover, it was remarked that becoming an adult educator was a hobby that begun at the workplace, and that due to the motivation in learners' positive feedback, it evolved (Jaana). Indeed, workplace and job assignments linked to teaching or training adults have been identified as main reasons for becoming interested in adult education and further training as an adult educator.

5.3.1 Defining differences in teaching adults versus children/youngsters

All interviewed adult educators pointed out distinctive differences between teaching adults and teaching children, as well as differences between two roles (teacher and adult educator). The role of adult educator was understood as greatly different from that of a teacher's role; the main differences being of relationship-building for teaching, and in understanding who the learners are. In adult education, teaching is learner-centred and rooted in partnerships. The learning environment is thus different, as well as more learner-centred in adult education, than in compulsory education. The adult educator was therefore seen as a supporter:

> I've worked for several years as a teacher and trainer and it becomes more and more clear that those two roles are different. As a teacher I teach, as a trainer I facilitate, I'm a partner. The main difference is in sharing responsibility. As a teacher, I'm responsible for the learner, but as an adult educator, we share the responsibility; adult learners understand that they take the responsibility (Kaja).

Kaja also pointed out that in both children and adult groups there are participants who are interested and open to what is new, and there are also learners looking for easy ways out. As a result, new knowledge has to be interestingly presented while also being interesting for adult educators.

> Adult learning and teaching is more learner-centred as learners are directing their own studies, and the educator/trainer is becoming a supporter. In teaching children I think unfortunately, the teacher is in the centre role and gives knowledge to learners and is also the planner, taking responsibility for the learning process (Maris).

Many of the educators interviewed didn't have much, or any, experience in teaching children. However, they still identified differences or guessed some that would be present (Andres, Helle and Viire):

> I have never taught children but I guess that children cope easier with [what is] new and unknown but see the teacher as an authority (Helle).

> Teaching children, based on prior experience and in comparison with teaching adults, has been easier because children don't have formed opinions and beliefs that could be hindering in learning (Andres).

Adult learners are mainly characterised by their prior experience that was both seen as an advantage and a disadvantage. Experience was referenced as a great potential that adult educators can wisely use in training courses. Prior experience was also perceived as what adults can build their knowledge around. The disadvantage or challenge pointed out, in relation to adults' prior experience, corresponded to something adults hold on to and are not open about. In comparison with children, adult learners are experienced, thus children were perceived as "pure" and open to what is new and unknown.

> *Adult learners have prior experiences, aims and goals to learning, understanding and expectations towards learning and teaching. Adults are more conscious when they learn but children catch new by "air" (Helle).*

> *Adult learners have life experience that they build their knowledge on, and [it is] also something they hold on to. Adult learners are self-aware but often have no clear idea what it is that they want to or need to learn and need the adult educator to provide support [with/for]. Adult learners reflect on their experiences [and] are more demanding about learning situations (Jaana).*

One's orientation to learning and motivation to learn was expressed as being different in relation to teaching adults or children. Children were said to be more oriented towards grades, while adult learners were perceived as oriented to their work or everyday life problems. Thus, it was mentioned that one's motivation to learn, in a child's case, is often linked to something external, being that learning is compulsory. In turn, this means that a teacher has to support motivation. On the other hand, adults are believed to be internally-motivated and therefore, interviewees perceived teaching as easier for this group.

> *Orientation to learning is different. Kids are focused on grades rather than knowledge. Thus, as a teacher, you need to motivate them to learn. Adult learners take responsibility for their studies (Kristiina).*

> *For me it's important to motivate people ... I've understood that all people should be seen as individuals and you need to listen to their opinions (Andres).*

5.4 Defining the self in the vocational context

Defining self in the context of vocation is more clear and consistent for those who had their first experiences as adult educator and opportunities to reflect upon them. From the data analysis, two important tendencies appeared: the self as an adult educator in the vocational context was seen through work and training courses; in the development and formation of professional skills:

> *Work, training courses and training; it is important to me. It's important because I can put my heart in it, help others with it. My work is a self-realisation for me. I develop through that work, and with my own development, I develop my work. The*

more I understand my work, the better choices I make, I understand people I work with more and also understand myself better (Kristiina).

The second tendency was that defining the self is related to personal self-realisation, learning, self-developments and professional development.

When being in the role of adult educator it's important to understand that the roles forced from outside would not make you a good educator. For fulfilling the roles of adult educator you need to fulfil these within yourself, your life and colours, emotions and YOURSELF (Mare).

Based on several researchers (King & Lawler, 2003; Karm, 2007), it is important to emphasise that professional development depends greatly on orientation, or, in other words, on what is in focus: is it the activity, training/work, self and professional development? A prerequisite for professionalism is professional development and this can take place when an adult educator has the orientation for it. Thus, it seems that studies can greatly influence educators' professional development, changes in orientation, and attitudes towards self-development.

5.5 Future expectations

Future or ideal view of the self as an adult educator
Notions and visions about oneself as an adult educator divide into three. Firstly, some perceived the self and the future for oneself in relation to individual contentment, the development of educator roles, skills and activities, as well as corresponding towards a greater understanding of one's practice (Jaana, Kärt, Ülle, Viire and Aivar). On a second level, these notions and visions related to self-development (Andres, Maris, Triin and Kristiina). Thirdly, they related to professional development of the self as an adult educator in the context of studies (Kerttu, Kaja, Helle and Mare). The ideal view of the self as an adult educator was thought to be linked to making people satisfied and content with their courses, while enjoying teaching.

In the ideal, I'm content with my work (Jaana).

My courses are enjoyed by learners. A good adult educator does everything well if he or she enjoys it himself or herself (Kärt).

The ideal is also linked to adult educators' roles as one is expected to be a motivator, supporter, and able to take responsibility.

As an ideal, the adult educator is like a good friend who motivates and directs learner to the "right" path (Helle).

An adult educator has to be there when learners need him or her. That means that he or she has a responsibility towards the taught subject and learners (Jaana).

> *As an adult educator, I see myself as someone who notices more, is committed, and values learners' activeness and is supporting them, awakening their experiences (Mare).*

The ideal is also linked to what one believes he or she should be, as a person. As an example, Andres expressed that he should be more self-critical and analytical. Thus, knowledge of adult learning and teaching theory is wished for, as well as knowledge and skills of using interactive methods and working with groups.

> *I want to become more self-confident and balanced (Maris).*

> *In the ideal, I see myself as an adult educator who can react quickly in teaching situations (Triin).*

The future vision of the self as an adult education was connected with self-understanding and self-development, in the education and training context:

> *In my development, I'm at the stage where in the Adult Education master studies I can learn to know myself better, [and also] understand [how to] accept every learner as they are, broaden my opportunities and world-view, and reach for continuing self-realisation (Mare).*

5.6 Analytical discussion

The professional development of an adult educator is difficult due to the fact that educating/training is often a person's second or even third choice; pointing to the fact that people get into situations where they have to start their lives again, because their normal life-cycles have been interrupted, or they have started to search for new directions in their lives. Significantly, becoming an adult educator is often not a planned choice. Due to life course and individual career paths, adult educators are in a special position among professionals because in prior studies they have gained a profession, but they usually do not have the formal qualification for teaching adults. Prior learning may not include specialist knowledge, specific teaching skills or adult learning specialities.

Professional identity in the context of professional development answers the questions: "Who am I?" and "Who do I want to be in the future?" (Beijard, Meijer & Verloop 2004: 122). Thus it can be said that the development of an adult educator's professional identity is not seamless and balanced. Rather, it is complicated and a subjectively unique process that has several contradictions and interruptions. The process is more dynamic and balanced for those whose self-concept is compatible with the changes they are experiencing, as well as for those who notice the orientation to self-development as a learner and adult educator.

Learning, professional identity and professional development generally take place within one's work and life experience, partly by reflecting on personal experience and professional practice. In some moments, there might be doubts as to whether an educator's prior qualification that is

based on practical work experience and does not include any knowledge about adult teaching and learning is adequate for working with adults. Adult educators' professional learning needs may differ greatly depending on the profession itself, prior experience, knowledge, apprehensions, beliefs and the needs and expectations of the organisation concerned.

Empirical data analysis shows that the idea of what an adult educator is, is understood, interpreted and talked about differently. Further, the need for continuous learning, reflection on experiences and noticing the self is stressed. The self, as an adult educator, is defined differently and depends on prior experiences. Self-realisation and a vision of the self develop through experiences, studies and self-analysis, being influenced by subjective education theory, professional identity development and an orientation to professional development.

Adult educators-to-be have little professional experience. Thus, they value learning and the need for studies, relations with other adult educators, and needs for discussions. Understandings and beliefs about learning and oneself as an adult educator are not yet comprehended because professional experience is rather limited and there is a clear lack of professional resources which can be used to develop throughout one's studies. The professional identity of adult educators-to-be develops in the context of many identities as for most educators, training/work is either a second or a third choice.

Plurality of identities is one of the main characteristics of professional identity of adult educators (integrated identity; Wenger, 2004), and creates contradictions and conflicts in the self and self-conception. Orientation towards professional development and a clear understanding of the self as an adult educator is common for those whose orientation in studies is towards self-development, and less towards the development of their work/trainings. These adult educators understand themselves as learners and are open to reflecting on their experiences in studies. As a result, interviewees confirmed that studies have mostly influenced understandings of the self as an adult educator, as well as adult learning and teaching, and have given them self-assurance.

Belonging to a community of practice is important for professionalism and identity (Ibid.; Karm, 2007). Novice adult educators see a need for belonging and identifying with someone with whom to share experiences; however such a community does not exist. Thus, the importance of study groups is recognised, as this gives the opportunity for analysing experiences. It can be said that study groups act as a learning community through which adult educator-to-be identify themselves as adult educators. Therefore, study groups have much broader influence than gaining knowledge and skills, as they influence the formation of subjective theory and professional identity.

Narratives and thematic interviews reflect the beginning of a formation of professional identity of adult educators-to-be. This can be characterised by the deconstruction of identity (doubting oneself and the current practice; posing questions such as: "*Is it a right choice?", "Can I do this?" and "Should I do it?");* reconstruction (interpretation of experience); and construction through which one's experience and self as an adult educator can be seen in a professional perspective by having visions of the self as an educator. Thematic interviews made it possible to interpret professional identity reconstruction and construction of adult educators-to-be.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

Estonia is a country where the processes of globalisation, liberalism, individualism, neo-modernism and post-industrialism have all taken place within a short period of time (1991-2008). Since the 1990s, the role and potential of adult education and adult professional training have been growing rapidly. As part of lifelong learning, the importance of adult education and adult educators, who play a key role in making lifelong learning a reality, are being widely recognised and discussed in adult education practice. The development of adult education, the profession of adult educators and their status in society is part of a broader social change.

Adult educators are working in a rapidly changing environment, which implies a demand for professional development and a professional identity. The prerequisites for the professionalisation of adult educators in Estonia lie in the economic, political, social and educational contexts: education policy and the recognition of the profession and its status (regulations at the national level, professional qualification standards, the status of the profession); personal and professional identity; learning opportunities (at all levels); and professional organisations.

Attention to the profession of adult educators and opportunities for professional development are quite weak in regulatory and educational policy documents in Estonia. The adult educator as a profession has been recognised since 2004. Holding a qualification confirms the educator's level of professional competence and could be regarded as a means for enhancing the educator's competitiveness on the educational market, as well as a guarantee for the user of the educator's services, including learners, people ordering his/her services, and employers.

Most educators working in the field of adult education in Estonia did not start their professional work as adult educators. Their professional work and development have been influenced by changes in the social context, educational opportunities and personal life history. Adult educators have different educational backgrounds and different jobs. There is no clear pattern to the career paths of adult educators; such career paths are heterogeneous and the initial education, professional experience and career development of adult educators are unique and atypical. Becoming an adult educator in Estonia in the context of one's career is more a case of utilising the opportunities and suppositions that one comes across, rather than being a conscious and planned process.

Working and learning experience is forming in the field of practice which is not systematic and thus is a fragmented experience. Adult educators-to-be experience a lack of training/working opportunities, when entering the field. It can be generalised that adult educators-to-be, while working and studying at the same time, form learning communities that make sharing and analysing experiences possible, deepening learning, influencing roles, increasing an understanding of the self, as well as providing opportunities for self-analysis and the formation of identity. Professional development is complicated, thus, adult educators-to-be need professional support in a structured study programme. Changes in understandings about adult learning and teaching are possible only when one's experience and practice are being analysed. Also, learning and attending studies is important as this makes the formation of a learning community possible, which has great influence on the process of professionalisation. Learning individually and in a study group is

influential and meaningful to professional development. The influence of studies is seen mainly in adult educators' orientation towards self-development. There is also an effect on the valuing of studies and influence on practice.

This situation raises a number of questions for future research. First, it suggests a major question: "How do intending adult educators interpret and construct their professional experience and professional identity?" Secondly, it is essential to analyse the developmental process of adult educators' values, in the professional context. Thirdly, it is necessary to analyse employment opportunities, professional development and initial and continuing education of adult educators. More research is needed in order to understand and analyse the context and development of the profession and the professional identity of adult educators, the professional and personal experience in the course of their lives and the social context in which they operate.

Recommendations

- All adult educators in the field should have an opportunity to study and through that, prepare for working as adult educators.
- Adult educators need to have initial education, as this is important in the beginning of their professional development because identity formation is complex.
- Adult educators' initial and continuing training needs to be systematic and continuous by supporting professional and personal development, which also enables them to be a part of learning and practice communities.
- Adult educators' prior experiential learning and studies should be recognised and valued in the professional qualification system.
- The professional qualification system of adult educators needs to be easily understood by the applicants, as well as in the field.

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Sample

Code name /number	Sex	Year of birth	Prior education	Current job	Current Studies
Aivar/1	m	1978	Estonian Defence League	Estonian Defence League, instructor	Additional speciality/AS „adult education"
Andres/2	m	1965	Farming/agriculture vocational school, bachelor studies in vocational pedagogy	Estonian Defence League, instructor	AS "adult education"
Jaana/3	w	1972	Farming/agriculture vocational school; Tartu Pedagogical College	Estonian Defence League, instructor	AS " adult education"
Kaja/4	w	1968	Tallinn Technical School; bachelor studies in vocational pedagogy	Hairdresser, Adult trainer	AS " adult education"
Kärt/5	w	1984	Private Higher college „Audentes" , international relations	Teacher	AS " adult education"
Toomas/6	m	1974	Adult gymnasium; Bachelor studies in vocational pedagogy	military officer	AS " adult education"
Triin/7	w	1978	Estonian Institute of Humanities; Estonian history	Tallinn University Library, database trainer	AS " adult education"
Helle/8	w	1960	Tallinn Nursing High-School	Tallinn Health Care College, teacher	Master studies Adult education
Kaja/9	w	1962	Tartu University, history	Educationalist in museum	Master studies Adult education
Kärt/10	w	1982	Estonian Business School	Tallink Group Human resource manager	Master studies Adult education
Kristiina/11	w	1971	Tartu University russian philology; Institute of Theology, religious education; Tallinna Pedagogical	Popular adult education center; adult teacher,	Master studies Adult education

			University, english philology	(english language)	
Maris/12	w	1983	Tallinn Pedagogical College, youth work	Tallinn Youth-work Center, youthworker	Master studies Adult education
Ülle/13	w	1969	Tallinn Pedagogical Institute, handicraft teacher; Estonian Business School	Sales manager	Master studies Adult education
Viire/14	w	1966	Tallinn Technical University	Human resourse manager	Master studies Adult education
Kerttu/15	w	1971	Tartu University, history	Adult trainer	Master studies Adult education