



# **FINE2WORK**

## **FINE2WORK: Promoting financial, digital and entrepreneurial competences for vulnerable adults (women) with restricted access to the digitalised market (home based)**

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Intellectual Output 1: FINE2WORK from home index: Mapping of opportunities  
for home-based or remote jobs for adults with restricted access to the labour  
market: From the national to the EU level

P1 – Project Net

## Consortium

**P1 Project Net – Latvia**



**P2 Emphasys Centre – Cyprus**



**P3 Descularte - Portugal**



**P4 Ruse Chamber of Commerce and Industry – Bulgaria**



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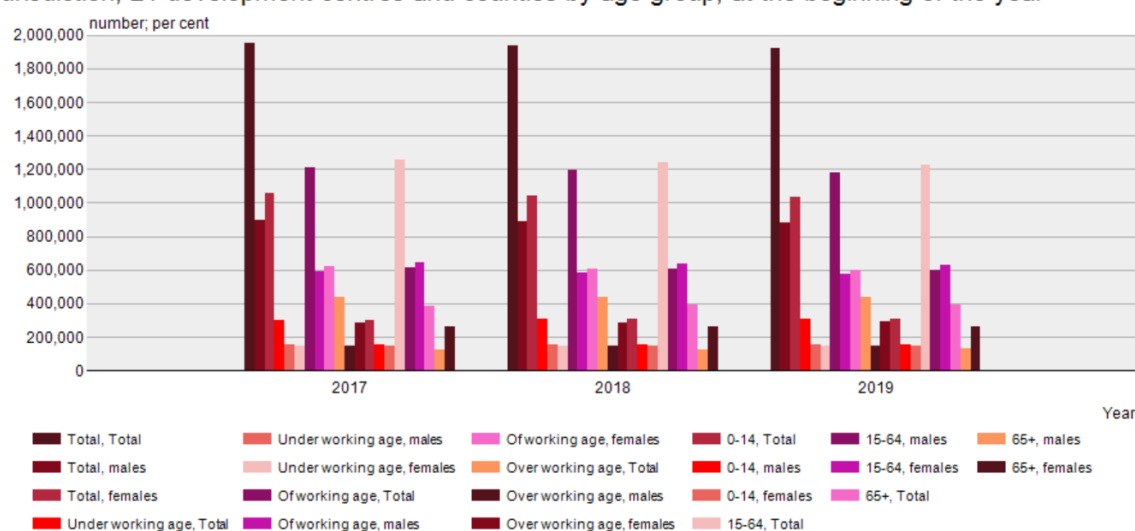
## 1. General Overview

“Adult education in Latvia is administered at three levels – national, municipal and institutional. The **main challenges of adult education** are as follows: increasing the participation rate in adult learning, validating the non-formal and informal learning outcomes, increasing mobility opportunities for learners, matching the education with the labour market needs, creating opportunities for promoting and developing basic skills, reducing the dropout rate, and enhancing second chance education opportunities”(Pigozne et al., 2019, p. 134).

OECD report on Skills Strategy (2019) states that “**adult learning matters for Latvia**. Productivity growth has slowed since the 2008 financial crisis and has not yet returned to pre-crisis levels. This is partly due to low levels of innovation and the difficulties employers experience in finding the skilled labour they need to help them attract capital investments, adopt new technologies and participate in global value chains (...). The shortage of skilled labour is exacerbated by demographic trends of population ageing, low fertility rates and a high level of emigration. To address these skill shortages, it is critical for Latvia to ensure that its education system is aligned with changing labour market needs and reduce the drivers of emigration, such as poor working conditions” (p.85).

Based on the key demographics that include population data published by Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia (CSB) in 2019, the total population of Latvia is 1 919 968, of which 884 909 are males and 1 035 059 are females. Graph 1 indicates that around 65% of males are of working age, whereas females represent around 58% of the mentioned data. Detailed data about graph 1 is available in Annex 1.

IRG010. Population under, of and over working age in statistical regions, cities under state jurisdiction, 21 development centres and counties by age group; at the beginning of the year



Graph 1. Population of Latvia 2017-2019, by CSB

Although gender equality in the EU is governed by several pieces of legislation, the CSB notes that gender differences in the labour market still exist - women are more likely to be in lower paid sectors



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and less likely to occupy decision-making positions. Overall, the economic activity of women in all EU Member States is lower than that of men. In 2015, the economic activity rate of women in Latvia was 63.2%, which was 9.2 percentage points lower than that of men, but was 4.9 percentage points higher than the average economic activity rate of women in the EU. (BNN, 2017).

CSB Labour Force Survey of 2018 reveals that the average age of employees has risen by 2.4 years in the last ten years, reaching 43.7 in 2018. Higher levels of education allow for higher positions or higher paid professions. The link between educational attainment and pay is also evidenced by survey results led by CSB: more than three-quarters (79.5%) in the largest salary category (€ 1,400 and above) are employees with higher education, while only one fifth (19.4%) of employees with higher education fit in the lowest salary category (up to € 450).

## 2. Demographic situation and trends with regards to adult learners

The population of Latvia has decreased by 186 thousands since the beginning of 2010 and at the beginning of 2018 it was 1.93 million. The **demographic decline is affecting all areas**, including education and the labour market (National Centre for Education of the Republic of Latvia (NCE), 2018). The aging of the population, together with a large brain drain, poses serious challenges for Latvia's ability to respond to the **changing skills demand**. Skills shortages have increased in recent years and are evident in certain occupations that require high skills, such as engineers, professionals and senior management. In response to this shortfall, Latvia needs to improve working conditions and promote wage increases in highly demanded occupations, while being more active in attracting foreign talent. One must keep in mind that people whose job specifics prevent them from working remotely are most likely to be in the sales, construction, service, health and beauty sectors, as well as administration and assistance. In the meantime, those who already have this opportunity most often work in marketing, advertising, public relations as well as finance, insurance and sales.

European Political Strategy Centre (2019) published a document about **future work trends in Europe**, concluding that the traditional scheme of “study, work, retire” turns into lifelong learning to support transitions and “in a broader context, working remotely also holds the potential to help address a number of structural challenges faced by the EU. For instance, it can contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution in major cities by reducing commuting traffic” (p. 13).

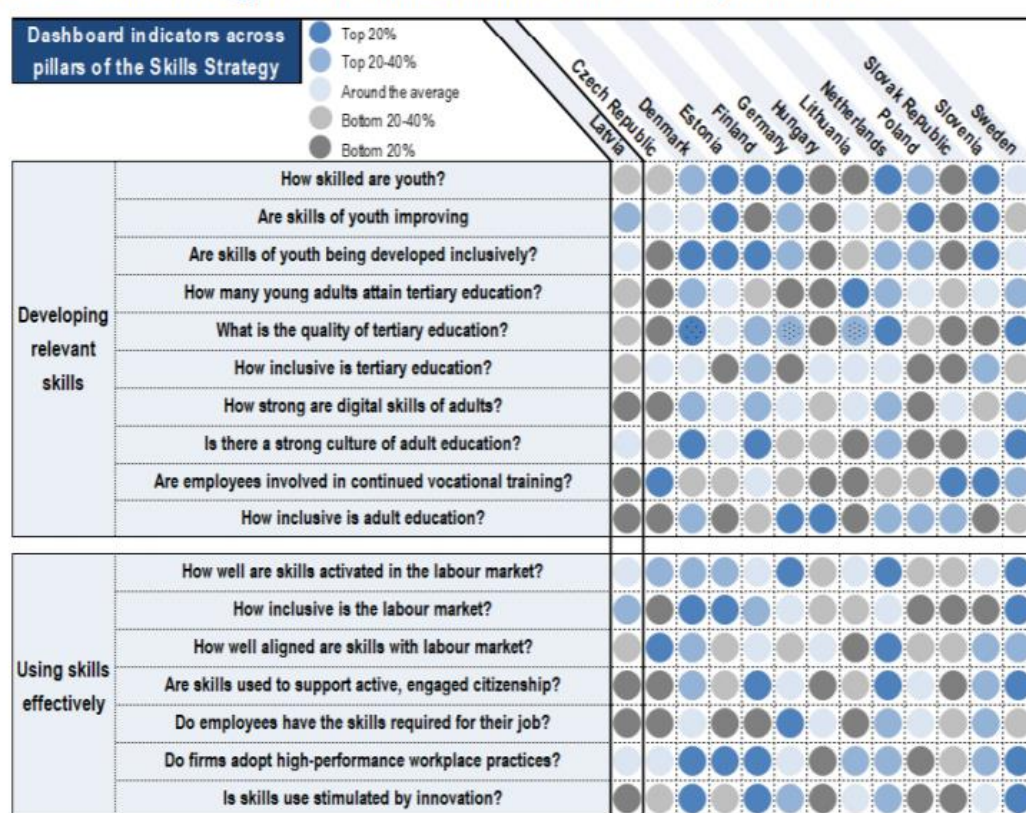
Data in 2018 revealed that **42% of Latvian women have higher education**. In addition, women outperform men in this aspect, as 24% of men have higher education in Latvia. In regards to adult education, In Latvia, there **were too few people involved in lifelong learning in 2018** - only 6.7% - in the population aged 25-64.



There is polarization in the labour market. Latvia ranks first among EU countries, where the lack of employees with appropriate skills is a major obstacle to investment. Interestingly, skill mismatches are most concentrated in the high-skilled segment, incl. there is also a lack of cognitive skills. Effective skills management is essential to reduce skills mismatches.

The dashboard (Fig. 1) published in OECD Skills Strategy report on Latvia (2019, p. 11) visualizes Latvia's performance across the OECD skills dimensions.

**Figure 1.2. Skills Strategy Dashboard: Latvia and selected European countries**



Note: These summary indicators are calculated as a simple average of a range of underlying indicators. All underlying indicators have been normalised in a way that implies that a higher value and being among the "top 20%" reflects better performance. Only aggregated indicators are presented for which more than half of the underlying indicators have data available. The "x" indicates insufficient or no available data, and dotted circles indicate missing data for at least one underlying indicator. This version of the Dashboard is specifically developed for OECD-EU countries as a response to the lack of data for Latvia in the Survey of Adult Skills, a product of the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC). As a result, the outcomes of performance indicators in this Dashboard are not comparable with the outcomes as presented in the OECD Dashboard included in the OECD Skills Strategy 2019.

*Fig. 1. OECD Skills Strategy report on Latvia (2019, p. 11), Skills Strategy Dashboard.*



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The main reason of not participating in adult learning activities are **lack of motivation and financial reasons**, as visualized by OECD (2018), Fig. 2.

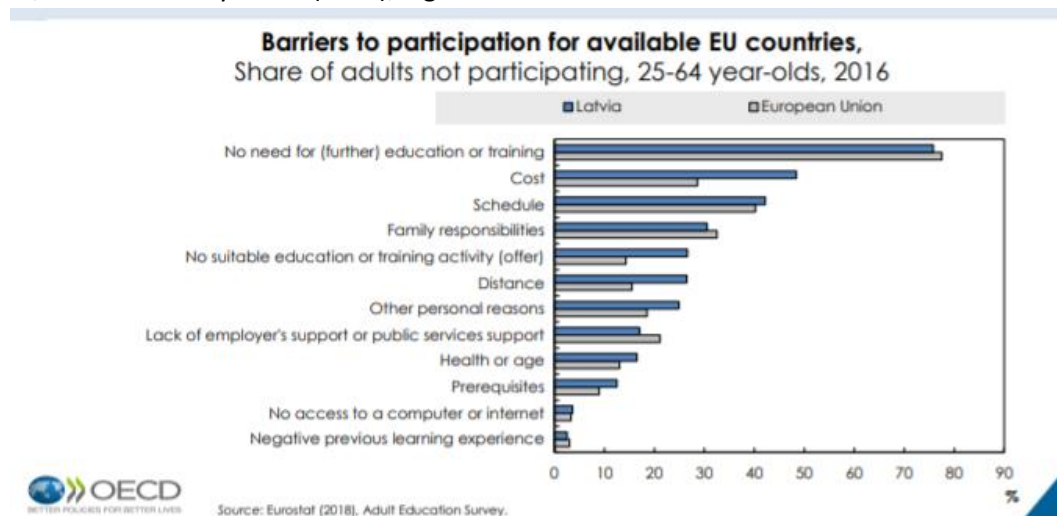


Fig. 2. Barriers to participation in adult learning activities, by OECD 2018.

Furthermore, Fig 3 represents data about percent of employees and their educational level, and skill gaps, demonstrating that low educated employees face significantly large skills gaps (OECD, 2018).

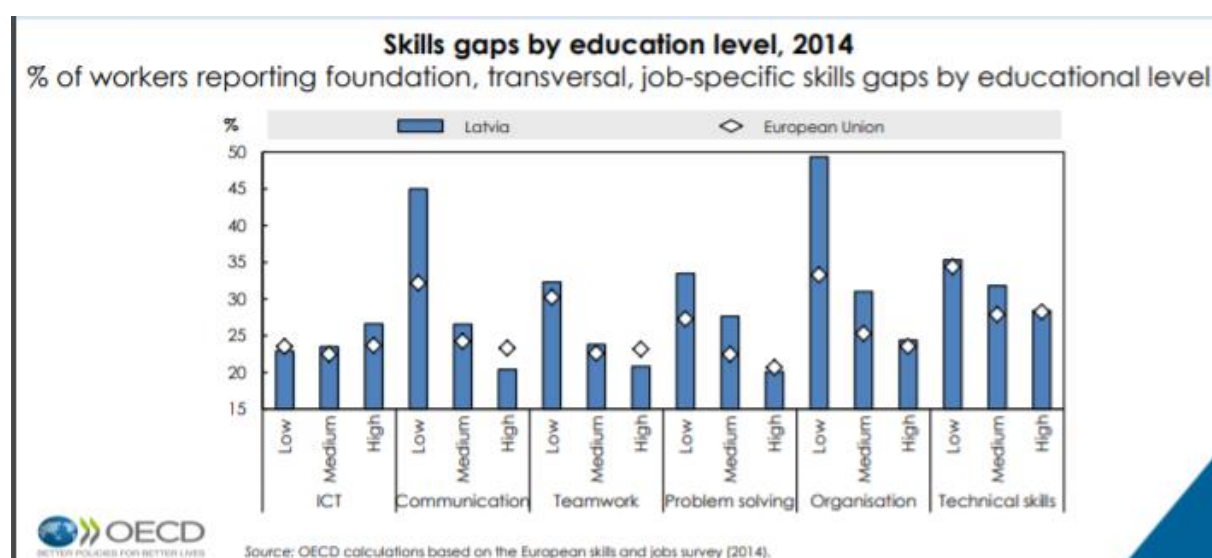


Fig. 3. % of workers reporting foundation, transversal, job- specific skills gaps by educational level, by OECD 2018.

In a recent adult education policy research Melnikova et al. (2019) summarize that “there is a big demographic group aged 45+ (more than 40% of Latvian employees) who have acquired their higher or vocational education in 1980s-1990s. They have sufficient skills for the work they have been doing for many years with the same employer or in the same industry, however, upon losing that particular



position, they are **no longer competitive** in the labour market **due to the lack of the basic skills that correspond to the modern requirements: foreign languages, digital skills, business skills etc.**”(p.24).

## 2.1. The current scene in relation to the adults working remotely or from home

The concept of telework has been raised in the European Union since 2002, when the European social partners signed the Framework Agreement on Telework. In 2006, the Latvian social partners concluded an agreement on the implementation of this Framework Agreement in Latvia. The Framework Agreement defines teleworking as a form of work organization and/or execution where, in an employment relationship, the work that could be performed on the employer's premises is regularly carried out outside the premises using information technology (IT).

Being able to work outside the office is also one of the major benefits appreciated by young jobseekers. The so-called Y Generation, or Millennials, and Generation Z employees are more demanding on comfort, and they have much more to do with independence, emotional balance, and work-life balance. Likewise, these generations have the most "digital nomads" who want to work while traveling. In today's job market, there is also talk of "Generation Flex" - young and capable professionals who are aware of their value and do not want to go into a rigid routine but to set their own schedules.

Cekuls et al. (2017) carried out a research on remote workers in ICT sector from Latvia and one of the main revelations in the context of this National report is that “it is not clear how exactly remote work intensity - hours or days per week spent working remotely - affect employee’s productivity, job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Overall, there is a limited number of research on this problem in scientific literature and there is no information available if such research has been conducted in Latvian organizations.” (p.101).

Eurostat (2018) data indicate that the proportion of employed people aged 15-64 who are usually working remotely in Latvia is 2.9%, which is lower than the European Union (EU) average (which is 5.2%). Eurostat data also show that women in the EU (5.5% of all women employed) are more likely to work from home than men (5%). Likewise, the proportion of remotely workers increases with age. On average in the EU, 1.8% of workers aged 15-24 worked from home compared to 5% of those aged 25-49 and 6.4% of those aged 50-64.





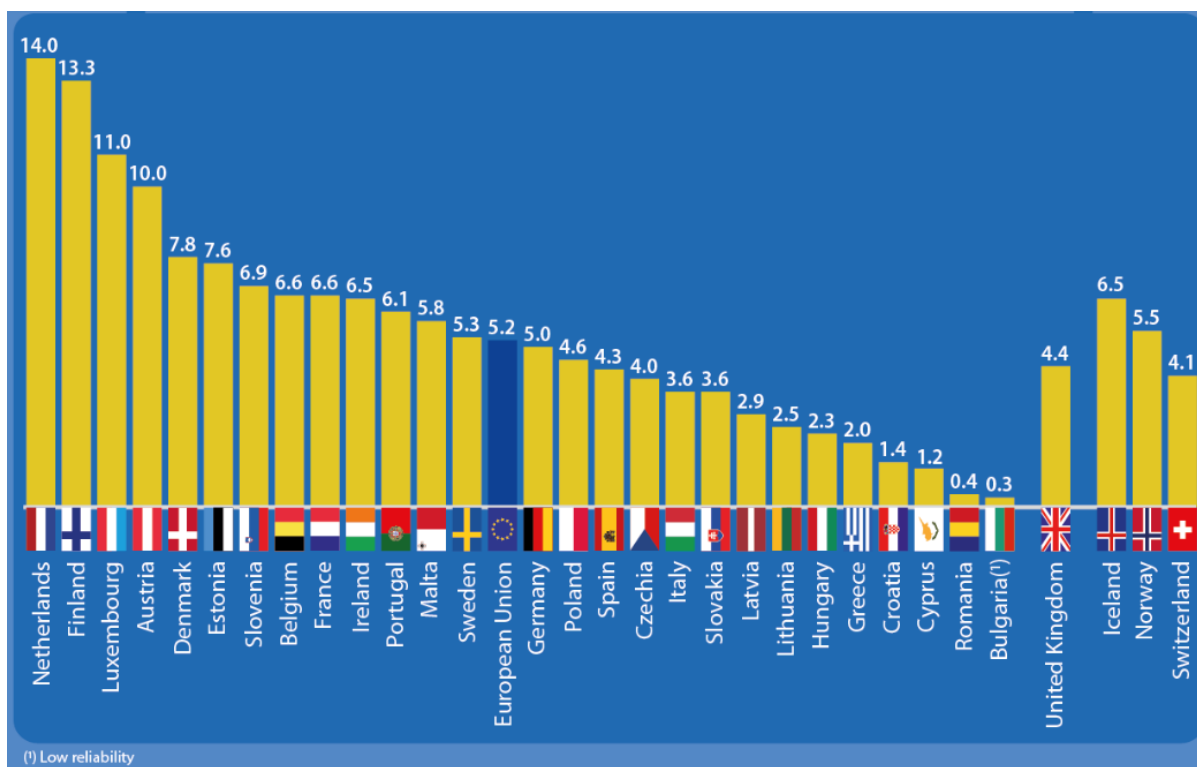


Fig. 4. Employed persons usually working from home (% of total employment aged 15-64 years, 2018, Eurostat).

In 2018, the total population of females in Latvia was 1,044,565, out of which 608,494 were in working age (in Latvia it is 15-62 years old). The amount of employed females in Latvia in 2018 was 438.8 thousands, thus based on Eurostat (2018) and CSB (2018) data there were **~12 725 employed females usually working from home** in the age group 15-64 in Latvia. In regards to males, in 2018 there were 889 814 males in Latvia, out of which 434.6 thousands were employed (in the age group 15-64), thus based on Eurostat (2018) and CSB (2018) data there were **~ 12 603 employed males usually working from home** in the age group 15-64 in Latvia.

A survey conducted in Latvia (2018) revealed that remote work is also happily performed by Latvian residents, with 42% of respondents (out of 1026) acknowledging that it allows work to be done without issues. Half of the respondents (54%) appreciate the possibility of combining work from home with home responsibilities. 24% also find it easier to concentrate when working from home. In contrast, when assessing the shortcomings of remotely working, almost one in three respondents lacks direct contact with colleagues or supervisors when they need help or advice to get a job done, and 22% admit that working outside the office lacks some of the attributes that are necessary for work – access to work email, documents or PC. When asked about working from home, almost half of Latvian respondents prefer a well-equipped office that resembles an office environment. In addition, the proportion of respondents to this answer increases with age. 28% of respondents have chosen a



more relaxed working environment, such as open-air work or on the terrace, and almost one in five respondents concentrates on work only on a soft couch and coffee, which is most strongly favoured by younger age groups. Latvia shows a very positive tendency to work from home - almost one fifth (17%) of the Latvian population practice this opportunity several times a month, while almost one in ten (9%) works only from home. Only a small proportion (8%) of the respondents choose to work from home only when they have a child or during their illness, while 27% admit that they could not do their job from home.

Another survey of 2017 carried out by CV Market in Latvia, discovered that those who want to work remotely are mostly people under the age of 35. Men would prefer such a regime, but this is not allowed by the specifics of the job. On the other hand, women in the overwhelming majority have indicated that they would prefer not to work remotely.

Cekuls et al. (2017) offer a concise list of reasons why remote work is/is not practiced among ICT companies in Latvia, stating that “the **main reasons mentioned by organizations why remote work is not being practiced** are: dynamic communication is required; instant feedback and action; work carried out by the organization cannot be done outside the organization's facilities; information and data security; required increased control of employees; management of the organization does not support such flexible forms of work organization, as they believe that the work carried out working remotely is less productive; remote work is suitable only for small, clearly definable and measurable work; management's opinion is impacted by negative previous experience. **Main reasons why remote work is practiced regularly** as stated by organizations surveyed: reduced direct and indirect costs; employee time savings on the account of commuting between home and workplace; convenience; company's position that only the overall work results and achievement of goals is of importance, not the tools used to achieve it” (p. 102).

It should be noted that on July 1, 2020, amendments to the Labour Protection Law will come into force, which will clarify certain provisions regarding risks of the working environment in case of telework.

Determination of adult learning needs and educational gaps in Latvia is a challenging task. A research project EduMAP (2018) published a paper on challenges of adult education in Latvia by introducing it with: “The **needs of the adult learners'** groups (in Latvia) defined as the vulnerable young adults' group are **difficult to be identified** in the national documents about Lifelong learning guidelines.” (p.3).



## 2.2. Unemployment at the National Level

With the onset of the economic downturn, unemployment rose sharply in 2009, peaking at 19.5% in 2010. Unemployment has been steadily declining since 2011, reaching 7.4% in 2018.

In the 3rd quarter of 2019, the **unemployment rate in Latvia was 6.0%**. In the 3rd quarter there were 58.9 thousand unemployed persons aged 15-74, which is 9.9 thousand less than a year ago and 2.6 thousand less than in the previous quarter. Unemployment **remains lower for women than for men** (5.4% and 7.2% respectively). Unemployment in Latvia is rapidly approaching its lowest point before the crisis. However, even so, the **unemployment rate in Latvia remains one of the highest in Eastern Europe** and, for example, in Estonia in the third quarter of 2019, the unemployment rate has dropped to 3.9%, so the unemployment rate in Latvia certainly has the potential to continue to decline.

In 2018, 72.8 thousand people were unemployed, of whom 41.7% were long-term unemployed and could not find a job for more than a year. The unemployment rate for women (6.4%) is still lower than for men (8.4%). In contrast, the unemployment rate among young people (15-24 years) in 2018 was 12.2%. In the Baltic States, Lithuania has the lowest youth unemployment rate - in 2018 it was 11.1% and in Estonia - 11.8%.



*Graph 2. Unemployment rate (%) of Latvia, by CSB*

The structure of unemployment in Latvia is gradually changing as the population ages: the share of the long-term unemployed is over 50 years of age. Likewise, the proportion of people who have previously performed a variety of simpler and less skilled jobs has increased, resulting in lower wages without significant opportunities to invest in their skills. Although all workers are at risk of



unemployment, it is these groups and the relatively lower-skilled who are currently most exposed to it, and providing them with training support at the individual level can produce higher productivity gains than others. Data of 2014 revealed that in the age group 25-64 with low qualifications (basic, completed / incomplete general secondary education), there are 243,110 employed persons or 31% of the total number of employed (789,571). The highest share of employed people (85%) is aged 25-55 with basic education, while 81% of people aged 25-55 have secondary general education.

As CSB data reveals, the most popular job search method is contact with relatives and friends, which was used by more than three quarters (77.7%) of the unemployed respondents. Compared to the Baltic States, this method of job search is so popular only in Latvia. In Lithuania, jobseekers are much more likely to contact the Public Employment Service (78.8%), while in Estonia, the most common method of looking for a job is to look at published job offers in newspapers and on the Internet.

The majority of the employed are residents with higher education (37.3%), while one third or 31.6% of the economically inactive (unemployed who are not looking for a job) are persons with primary or lower education (CSB, 2019).

### 2.3. Entrepreneurial needs and gaps of adult learners

Nowadays the main trends that affect skills are **globalisation, technological and demographical change**. The globalisation now means more integrated world economy than it has ever been, thus fostering the emergence of global value chains and increasing worker vulnerability. European Commission states that “Europe’s **gender gap in the entrepreneurship**, management and technology sectors is large and growing, because few female students choose subjects and careers linked to ICT and self-employment.(...) Promoting positive role models and enhancing digital and entrepreneurship skills among girls will help to **tackle the gender gap** and boost female participation in science, technology and business.”

Global Entrepreneurship monitor report (2018) of Latvia reveals that in Latvia, people aged 25-34, are the most engaged in entrepreneurship. In addition, young people in Latvia (aged 18-24) are also very active. The **population of all age groups is more active in entrepreneurship than the average of European countries**, but with one exception - population activity in the 55-64 age group is still below the European average. In 2017, 4.3% of Europeans aged 55-64 were in the early stages of entrepreneurship, compared with 2.6% in Latvia. Here for **every ten entrepreneurial men, there are about six female entrepreneurs**. This indicator is very similar to the average among European countries. On average in Europe, **women are less likely than men to be entrepreneurially motivated**. However, in 2017 Latvian women, compared to Latvian men, started their business slightly more motivated.



Pīgozne et al. (2019) refer to the publication of Council of the EU (2018) about entrepreneurial needs stating that “the entrepreneurship competence is one of the updated eight key competences defined by the EU (...). It refers to an individual’s capacity to act upon opportunities and ideas, and transform them into values for others. **Creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, initiative, collaboration** are significant therein.” (p. 136).

Employers’ survey (2018) revealed that more than half of the companies point to the importance of potential employees' ability to **apply knowledge, ability to learn** new things, knowledge of the **Latvian language, discipline and professional knowledge**. They are immediately followed by **communication and collaboration skills, ability to adapt** to change and **deal with stress, ability to invest, develop, plan and take responsibility for one's career**, ability to make **independent decisions, initiative, readiness** to take on new responsibilities, **analytical skills, computer skills**, etc.

The basic entrepreneurial skills that are necessary in 2020 for adult learners and entrepreneurship practitioners are as follows:



Since 2017 (planned until the end of 2022) a project "Improvement of Professional Competence of Employed Persons" is implemented in Latvia. The main aims of the project are to improve the professional competence of employed persons in order to prevent the mismatch of the labour force qualification with the demand of the labour market, to promote the competitiveness of the employees and increase the productivity of work. The project is implemented in a form of adult education. The latest data (2019) about the most demanded programmes in the 4<sup>th</sup> round of the project reveals that among the most **popular programmes** in entrepreneurial area for adult learners were **real estate sales, project management with Agile, Scrum, Lean, Kanban and Teamwork management ABC**.

European Commission in the document “Key Competences for Lifelong learning” (2018) informs that entrepreneurship competencies refer to “capacity to act upon opportunities and ideas, and to



transform them into values for others. It is founded upon creativity, critical thinking and problem solving, taking initiative and perseverance and the ability to work collaboratively in order to plan and manage projects that are of cultural, social or financial value.” (p.13).

Around 70% of entrepreneurs consider the following entrepreneurial competences as crucial (Stašāne et al, 2014):

In the cognitive sphere - entrepreneurial intuition, creativity,

Constructive thinking;

Personality traits: stress resistance, responsibility, organizational abilities, communicability;

In the sphere of self-confidence - autonomy, internality, spiritual development;

In the field of motivation - a clear motive for achievement with a specific result orientation, will, initiative.

The analysis of various offered courses for adult learners, also home based, reveal that the main entrepreneurial skills that are rather often tackled in the course content are related with new skills, motivation, learning skills (learning to learn), information about boosting and developing creativity, idea generation, sustainability, ethics and decision making.

## 2.4. Financial needs and gaps of adult learners

The simplest financial services (account servicing, payments, internet banking, credit, insurance and investment) have become mass services in Latvia in recent decades - they are accessible to everyone. Thus, each service user **should have a basic level of knowledge** - be familiar with **financial planning**, be aware of the range of services offered and their potential level of risk, **security aspects**, be able to **compare different services** to determine the most appropriate individual as personal liability and potential consequences of default. The necessity of basic financial knowledge creates continuous financial needs and knowledge gap for adult learners in Latvia.

A large part of the Latvian population has **difficulties in assessing economic processes** in the country and in considering possible economic growth scenarios and economic development cycles. When assessing their understanding of economic and financial issues, the majority of the population (about 69%) admit that they try to keep track of economic developments in Latvia, but there is much uncertainty and, more often, **they do not understand it** (Financial Literacy Strategy, 2014).

A survey conducted by SKDS, a market and public opinion polling centre in 2011, found out that more than half, **or 57% of the Latvian population** surveyed, felt **poorly informed about key issues in private financial planning**. Only 10% of the population regularly records their income and expenses, plans





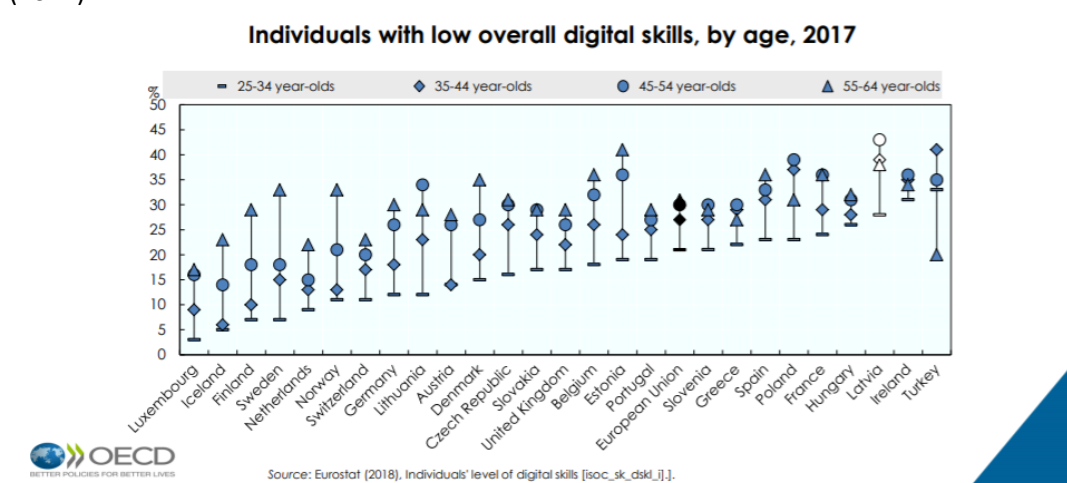
larger purchases and compares prices. 19% of those surveyed often or regularly have unintended extra expenses that are lacking in income. A survey conducted by the FCMC in 2013 confirmed that more than half (57%) of the population of Latvia had **only basic or very poor knowledge** about financial services. People lack the most knowledge about the three pillars of the pension system (39%), saving for private financial stability (26%) and providers of illicit services (32%). In Latvia, on average, women's wages are 15.7% lower than men's. The EU average is similar (16%). The lowest gender pay gap is for young people under the age of 25, with women receiving 13.9% lower wages than men, and those aged 55-64 (12.3%).

The latest data (2019) about the most demanded programmes in the 4<sup>th</sup> round of the project "Improvement of Professional Competence of Employed Persons" reveals that among the most **popular programmes** in financial area about **data analytics and reports**.

The analysis of various offered courses for adult learners, also home based, reveal that the main financial skills that are rather often tackled in the course content are finance and economical literacy, budget planning, revenue planning, state financing programmes for start-ups and other types of businesses, start-up programmes, investments and cybersecurity.

## 2.5. Digital needs and digital gaps of adult learners

Technological change with its rapid development of new technologies and new emerging work forms affect digital needs of adult learners. Technological progress will have a major impact on employment. **Demand for digital skills will grow** - 85% of jobs will require **at least basic digital skills** by 2025. The increase in labour demand by 2025 will be made up of four sectors - commercial services, construction, trade and manufacturing. Growth in the above mentioned sectors other than trade is also expected in the long term. OECD report summarizes the digital gap of individuals with low overall digital skills.(2017).

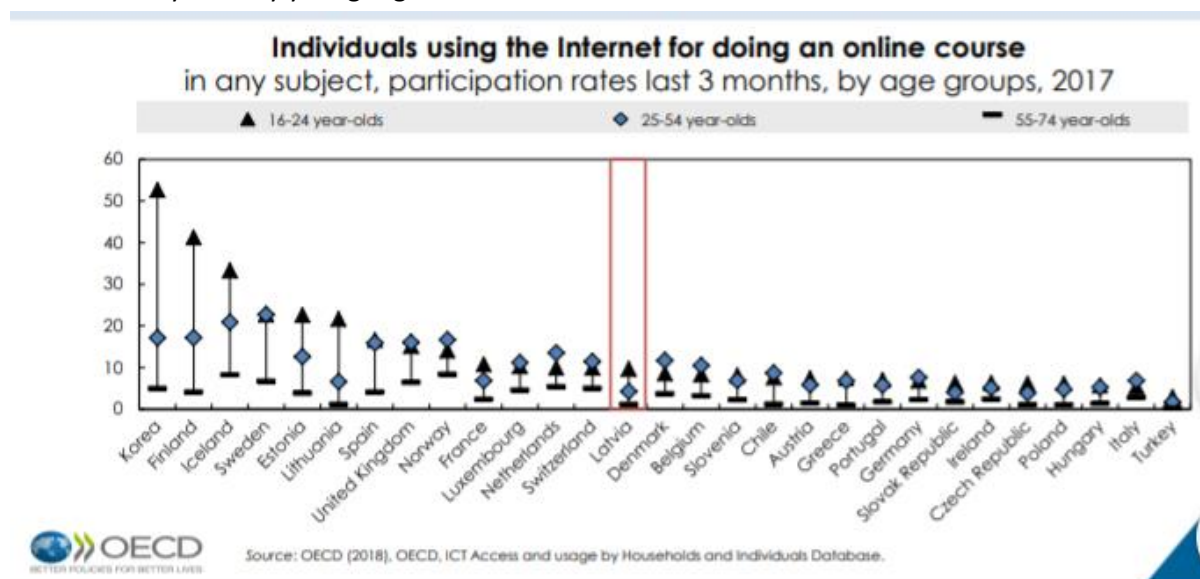


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Another OECD graph (2018) demonstrates that **online courses are becoming more widely available**, but are mainly used by younger generations in Latvia.



In Latvia, the level of **digital skills among women is slightly higher than that of men**. At least 50% of women have basic digital skills, but only 46% of men (DESI, 2018).

European Commission in the document “Key Competences for Lifelong learning” (2018) informs that digital competences include “information and data literacy, communication and collaboration, media literacy, digital content creation (including programming), safety (including digital well-being and competences related to cybersecurity), intellectual property related questions, problem solving and critical thinking.”(p.10).

One the most basic digital skills that an employee and an adult learner can have is basic knowledge on **using internet**. As CSB data shows, in 2018, 63.0% of businesses had a **website**. The existence of a website depends to a large extent on the size of the company: 58.5% of small businesses had their own website, while medium and large companies had 82.8% and 95.0% respectively. Another important digital skill is **data management on Cloud**. From 5.7% in 2014 to 14.5% in 2018, the proportion of companies paying for cloud services has increased. In 2018, 12.7% of small businesses, 20.9% of medium-sized enterprises, and 38.5% of large enterprises used **cloud computing services**. Most of the cloud computing services were used by companies whose main activity is providing information and communication services (47.9%) and repair of computers and communication equipment (33.3%). Digital skills at work require the reinforcement of digital competences in the application of technology to work, in order to be able to use a variety of tools in the situations they need, such as social networking, public and municipal services, and more. The adult learners need to



know how to use **information and communication technologies safely** and **responsibly** and to **generate new knowledge** through them.

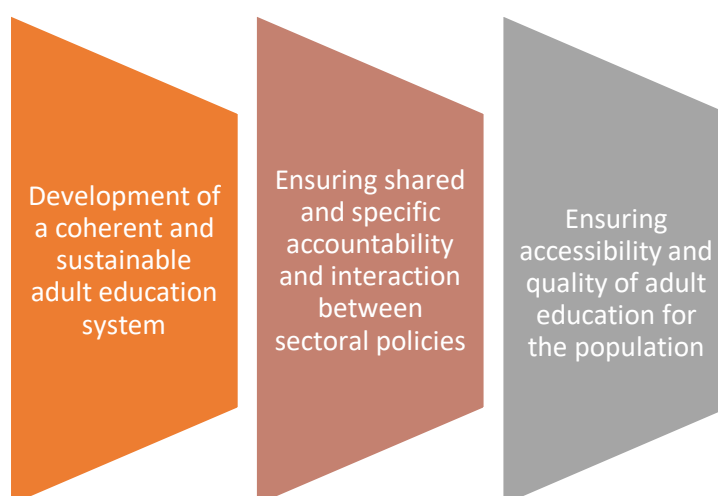
The latest data (2019) about the most demanded programmes in the 4<sup>th</sup> round of the project "Improvement of Professional Competence of Employed Persons" reveals that among the most **popular programmes** in digital area for adult learners in Latvia were **new digital skills for work purposes, digital marketing**.

“Learning to use mobile devices and digital tools can also make basic learning processes more flexible, adequate and efficient – provided teachers know how to use them! Adults can actually learn to read and write by using digital tools. Therefore, **a focus should be placed on developing methodologies that make allowances for the high dynamics in the area of available technologies**, use of mobile applications and social services,” (Melnikova et al., 2019, p. 240).

The analysis of various offered courses for adult learners, also home based, reveal that the main digital skills that are rather often tackled in the course content are information searching, filling in online forms, online marketing and the ability to promote your products online, market research tools.

### 3. Adult Learning Strategy at the National Level

Today, the labour market is developing dynamically, and skills acquired earlier, such as 10 years or more ago, are aging. With all this in mind, it is clear that **adult education plays an important role in Latvia's economic development**. In order to ensure the development of adult education at the national level, the **Adult Education Management Model** (Fig.5) has been developed, which aims to eliminate fragmentation of adult education, inconsistency of actions of individual institutions and inadequate information needed for situation assessment, as well as to create effective adult education system (NCE, 2018).



*Fig. 5. Implementation plan of the Adult Education Management Model for 2016-2020*



Adult education policy in Latvia is closely related to almost any area important for the development of the country, but most closely to the economy, entrepreneurship and employment. The adult education in Latvia is determined by the **Education Development Guidelines 2014-2020**. The overarching goal of education development policy is "quality and inclusive education for personal development, human well-being and sustainable national growth". The guiding principles of educational development policy are to shape the future education in which the individual and his / her benefits are the most important value, and the **educational opportunities are created based on the needs of the individual's personal growth and self-improvement**.

In the Education Development Guidelines it is declared that in order to facilitate the management and monitoring of lifelong learning processes, regular information on adult learning opportunities in municipalities would be needed. This line of action envisages the improvement of the regulatory framework for the provision of adult education support, the provision of support to the professional development of the employed population in line with the changing labour market conditions, including support for employers to provide formal and non-formal education. **Support for employers to further educate their employees** should be encouraged. There is a long-term necessity to ensure that cultural institutions, including cultural memory institutions - museums, archives, libraries - have access to the offer of cultural education through formal and non-formal education.

Strategically, there is a plan for Capacity Building of Vocational Education Institutions in Adult Education (Improvement of Competence of Administrative and Pedagogical Personnel of Vocational Education Institutions in the context of Learning Organization, Methodological Issues and Technological Development, including Mobility Activities for Transfer of Good Practice for the Development of Adult Education. This includes both the **improvement of the pedagogical competence of vocational education and training practitioners involved in vocational education** and the capacity building of vocational education institutions in adult education. It is implemented by providing professional development and international experience exchange for educators, academic staff, adult education staff through ERASMUS +.

In order to achieve the **Europe 2020 goal of engaging 15% of the population (aged 25-64) in continuous learning by 2020**, the National Reform Programme includes four key policies for the implementation of the Lifelong Learning Principle:





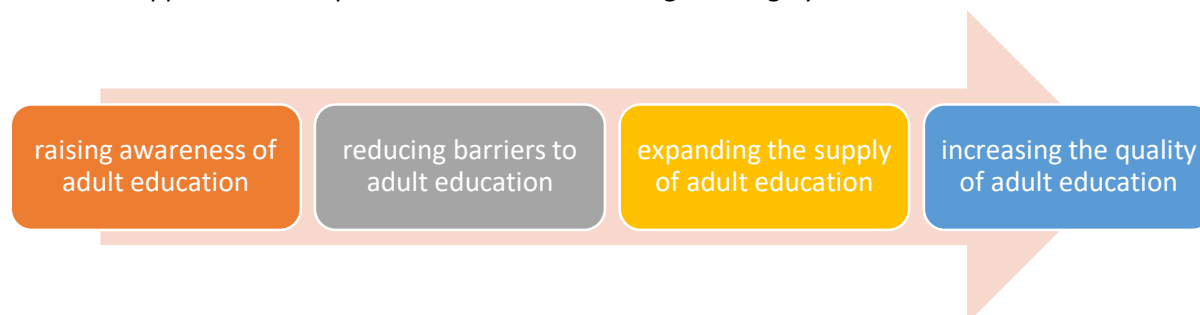
As a part of this process, adult learning opportunities should be expanded in order to strengthen the capacity of vocational training institutions in adult education. It is necessary to further **expand the offer of continuing education programmes** of regional universities in line with the development needs of the region and the demand of the labour market. The delegation procedure for the assessment of professional competences acquired outside the formal education system should be further developed, as well as the educational institutions and the public should be informed about the possibilities to evaluate professional competences acquired outside the formal education system.

Regular maintaining of CEDEFOP (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training) analytical framework is practiced in order to identify adult learners' needs. OECD-Latvia Cooperation in the OECD Skills Strategy Project is developing national strategy for education and skills for Latvia in 2021-2027. One of the main strategic direction is **"providing a sustainable funding mechanism for adult education"**. Many of the projects related to adult education have been implemented in pilot projects in Latvia, mainly with the support of the **European Structural Funds** project. Through various programmes, this has enabled Latvia to expand its career guidance to adults, support businesses through training, and improve the infrastructure of vocational education centres of excellence. In order for these initiatives to be sustainable in the long term, **the sources of funding need to be expanded**. As a pilot project, Latvia could consider establishing a joint education fund in several sectors, in which employers make contributions and whose resources can be used.

The above mentioned OECD report emphasizes that a strong adult education culture is imperative if Latvia is to ensure that **all individuals are prepared to renew existing skills or acquire new skills to adapt to new challenges and opportunities** and to succeed in an increasingly complex world. Promoting adult education is a priority for Latvia, striving to reach the European Union's 15% participation rate by 2020.



Latvia has opportunities to promote a culture of lifelong learning by:



Effective governance measures underpin Latvia's performance in developing and harnessing human skills. Therefore, the success of policies that develop and use skills depends on a wide range of actors and sectors involved at national and local level. The **Latvian Education and Skills Strategy 2021-2027** provides an opportunity to mobilize these actors and coordinate their work. In the context of Latvia's administrative-territorial reforms, it is possible to strengthen the currently non-systematic cooperation with and between municipalities in the field of skills policy. In order to fulfil this opportunity, the following recommendations have been defined:



Following the OECD (2019) Skills report, there are various recommendations for Latvia in order to increase its competitiveness and ameliorate lifelong learning environment. One of the ways is to promote lifelong learning culture by:

### 1) Raising awareness of adult education

Adult motivation to engage in learning is a key determinant of observed participation in adult education. Motivation is considered very important for successful participation in adult education, even more important than socio-economic background. Raising awareness of the potential benefits of and access to adult education is critical in promoting adult learning. Information on adult learning opportunities should be included in awareness-raising initiatives and reach end users in a personalized and user-friendly way. Personalized consulting and management services are needed to ensure that end users know how to interpret and use the information.



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## 2) Reducing barriers to adult learning

Even when motivated to participate in adult education, external barriers can complicate adult participation. According to the Adult Education Survey, **the most important barriers in Latvia are finance, time and family responsibilities**. There are a number of different financial instruments that can help reduce the cost of adult education. For employed adults, finding time to study can be difficult. For this target group, participation in adult education can be increased by **creating incentives for employers to invest in and support the adult education of their employees**. People with family responsibilities, especially adults with young children, find it difficult to combine parenting with education. This illustrates the importance of childcare facilities during school hours.

## 3) To expand the offer of adult education

Participation in formal adult education in Latvia is below average. Improving / **expanding adult formal education opportunities** can increase overall adult participation rates. Population aging along with emigration reduces the number of traditional Latvian students. It is in the long-term interest of higher education institutions to extend their courses to adult learners. Vocational education institutions, in particular centres of vocational education competence, as well as higher education institutions, can teach work with adult learners, tailor their course offerings to the specific needs of adults, deliver courses in a flexible and modular fashion, and take a proactive role in dealing with adult learners.

## 4) Improving the quality of adult education

Raising awareness, reducing barriers and expanding adult learning opportunities alone does not guarantee good adult learning outcomes - **high quality adult education programmes are critical**. Evidence shows that countries with high quality adult formal and non-formal education systems tend to have higher participation rates in adult education. **Quality criteria are needed**, especially in non-formal adult education. **Relevant stakeholders need to be involved** to jointly determine how to measure, evaluate and monitor quality criteria and how to support adult education staff in their implementation.

The most important professional organizations that contribute to adult education in Latvia are:

- 1) **Latvian Adult Education Association** was established in 1993. The mission of the association is not only to bring together those involved in adult education, but also to participate in the development of adult education policy.
- 2) Since the beginning of the 1990s, adult education in Latvia has been provided **by municipal adult education centres**, such as the Latvian Local Government Training Centre, Cēsis, Kuldīga, Aizkraukle, Dobeles Adult Education Centres. Other adult education institutions, such as the BUTS training centre, IH Rīga-Satva foreign language school, “Language Learning Centre” Ltd.,



Latvian Folk School, Mirte language centre, have been operating in non-formal adult education for a long time.

- 3) The largest Latvian companies such as **Lattelecom**, **Rīgas siltums**, **Latvijas Gāze** have established their adult education centres. The Latvian **Judicial Training Centre** provides in-service training not only for judges and court employees, but also for lawyers and employees of public administration and municipal institutions.
- 4) The **Lifelong Learning Centre of the Latvian University of Agriculture** offers everyone further education in line with the requirements of the labour market.
- 5) **The Latvian Rural Advisory and Training Centre** provides training, counselling and information to farmers and rural residents in 26 rural advisory offices - branches.

### 3.1. Entrepreneurial literacy

There is no specific or separate entrepreneurial literacy strategy developed in Latvia, as the entrepreneurship competence development is integrated in the educational strategy itself. Latvia has a more strategic approach than Greece and Turkey. The Latvian Education Development Guidelines mention entrepreneurial competences and provide support measures to enhance teachers' professional competences (including entrepreneurship), provide more information on entrepreneurship professions, and evaluate entrepreneurship education development measures under the previous strategy. The EE is also linked to the Higher Education (HE) Strategy, which aims to create an EU-wide competitive higher education system. This strategy has four priorities, and EE is included in the first priority on the modernization of AI.

One of the goals set out in the Education Development Guidelines is to promote the value-based education of an individual's professional and social skills for life and a competitive work environment.

In particular, entrepreneurship education has the following objectives:

1. EE as a competence to be enhanced by improved educational content,
2. Introduction of modular education programmes (including one related to "initiative and entrepreneurship") in vocational education;
3. Improvement of teachers' professional qualification (including entrepreneurship);
4. Expanding the acquisition of different competences (including entrepreneurship) in non-formal and informal education.

The actions to take in order to fulfil the set objectives of EE:



1. Develop education, curriculum and innovative learning tools, including assessment of learning outcomes to promote new competences, including "Entrepreneurial spirit" and entrepreneurial skills.
2. Improve professional competences of teachers (including entrepreneurship, financial, managerial, ICT and foreign language skills) to reach 50% of those engaged in continuous professional development by 80% by 2020.
3. Disseminate more information about business professions by developing the World of Professions resource (Eurydice, 2016).

In Latvia, ESF funding is available to support activities that are part of the education development strategy, including improving students' entrepreneurial skills. The strategy also includes non-formal education activities aimed at developing young people's entrepreneurial skills, exploring future professions, gaining first work experience, involvement of NGOs and youth centres, developing ideas for future student ventures, motivation to continue training and volunteering. There are also several Erasmus + projects in the field of entrepreneurship education that receive direct EU funding, such as "Developing Social Entrepreneurship in the Baltic Sea Region", "Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs" and "Student Innovation Labs - Pathways to Sustainable and Socially Responsible Growth".

### 3.2. Financial literacy

Financial literacy is being tackled on national level. Currently a **Latvian Citizens' Financial Literacy Strategy** is in use. That is a document that defines the providers and developers of financial and economic education activities in Latvia with a common strategic approach to gradually increase the financial literacy level of the population by defining objectives, main directions and tasks, institutions for the implementation of these activities. The strategy aims to achieve the defined strategic goals through partner activities in the **development of national curriculum, development and promotion of lifelong learning curriculum and knowledge testing tools**, as well as cooperation projects between participating state and municipal authorities, non-governmental organizations, financial sector professional associations and financial and capital market participants, including activities and support from international partners. The strategy is in line with the medium-term strategic planning documents for the period 2014-2020.

In general, the implementers of financial and economic education activities in Latvia agree with international experts that one of the most important strategic activities is the improvement of the state education content, **providing financial education at every level of education**, and educators to provide further education in these matters. Schools are considered to be key agents in the



implementation and development of financial and economic education, with a particular focus on the practical application of knowledge.

In 2013, the Association of Commercial Banks conducted an analysis of the curricula, education standards and teaching aids of Latvian comprehensive schools and submitted proposals to the Ministry of Education and Science for the “Guidelines for the Development of Education 2014-2020”. This project provides support for curriculum development and the development of innovative teaching aids, **including entrepreneurship and financial literacy at all levels of general education**, as well as support for the development of teachers' general skills in the context of introducing teacher quality, reward and motivation systems.

Since 2013, an educational Internet resource is available - Bank of Latvia Economic Education website “**Money School**”, which provides explanatory and educational information to a wide audience (for all non-economists), helping to understand the regularities of the economy. The Money School offers films and infographics on various economic topics, discusses economic developments and tests your knowledge.

The main directions of the **National Development Plan (2014-2020)** that are relevant to the field of financial literacy are:



Currently, Latvia is developing **Education and Skills Development Guidelines 2021-2027** together with OECD experts. One of the recommendations is to “provide students with a balanced portfolio of skills to make them labour market ready, by updating curricula to provide students with: – basic foundational / transversal skills such as communications skills, problem solving skills and digital skills, – as well as more advanced professional skills in STEM and business” (Bell, 2019).

Financial literacy for lifelong learning activities should take a **different approach across different socio-demographic groups**, taking into account their different life experiences, perceptions and skills in using information technology, and provide, for example, interactive cognition on the Internet and



face-to-face lectures and discussions; both printed information materials, incl. persons with functional disorders.

### 3.3. Digital literacy

Technology deployment is crucial to increase productivity and help meet the demand for skilled workers. However, the introduction of new technologies in Latvia is slow, but the implementation of practices that provide strong overall performance in companies is only moderate. In addition, Latvia lags behind in almost all innovation characteristics - the proportion of researchers and innovative enterprises is about half of the OECD average.

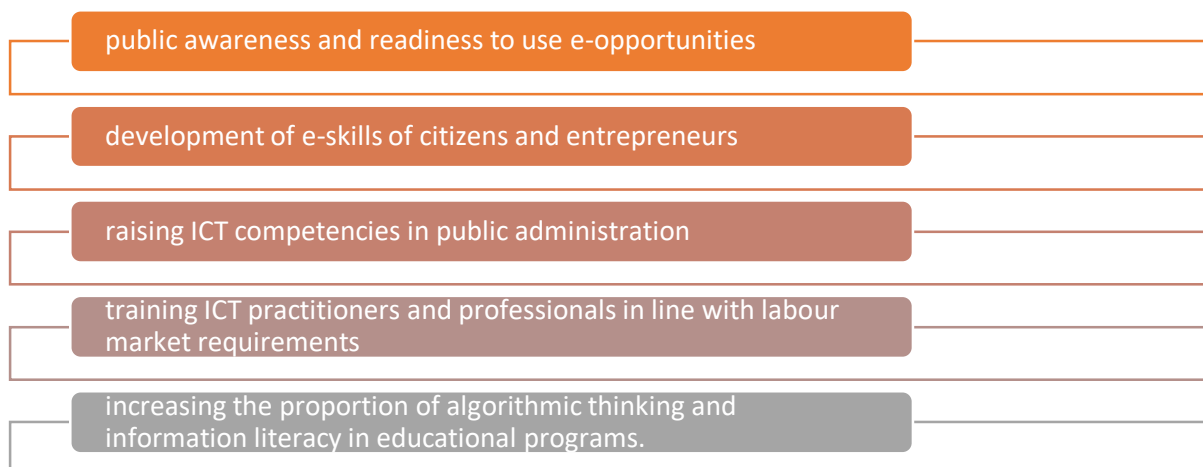
In the guidelines for digital transformation (2021-2027), it is planned to develop **unified digital solutions** and implement new efficient ones, public services and infrastructures in line with global information society objectives and trends in the EU digital single market. The content framework will include potential developments such as **digital governance, digital services, ICT architecture, digital security, digital literacy**, including the development of a rational and efficient (interoperable, cyber-secure, high-performance) **legal infrastructure for justice** - national registries and services development through the introduction of artificial intelligence, machine translation tools, etc., data security and data application solutions.

According to the European Digital Society and Economy Index (DESI, 2018), Latvia is convincingly above the EU average in terms of access to communication technologies, Internet usage and availability of public digital services, but **significantly below average in technology usage skills and business integration**. To bridge this gap, the state#196 (*valsts#96*) movement has been created, bringing together researchers, state and municipal representatives, entrepreneurs and opinion leaders to develop real-life tools, knowledge and tools for change. The aim of the movement is to promote the strengthening and development of the digital identity of the Latvian people in the age of data technology - training, skills and consulting. Citizens, businesses and municipalities are expected to provide **courses, workshops, seminars and other events on data and information technology**, recognizing the importance of global competitiveness, taking into account the level of technical preparedness and expectations of participants. "Microsoft Latvia", in cooperation with the University of Latvia, will launch a pilot project on lifelong learning courses in the artificial intelligence era - Cesis city will be **the third in the world to test these courses**.

In order to continue the existing policy in the field of **information society development** and to set the ICT priorities for the EU Structural Funds programming period 2014-2020, in accordance with the



Cabinet of Ministers Order no. 486, the **Information Society Development Guidelines 2014-2020** have been approved. Further action is planned in the following areas:



The **Latvian Cyber Security Strategy 2014-2018** envisages that only by constantly and systematically developing and improving skills in the ICT industry and its security specialization one can effectively protect against rapidly growing threats in cyberspace. The strategy intends to **develop pedagogical competencies in cyber security issues and support the preparation of methodological materials**. The Public Awareness, Education and Research strand aims to increase the competence and contribution of educational institutions and educators in educating children and young people on **ICT cyber security issues** by integrating them into educational content and organizing learning activities to raise awareness of information security, privacy and trustworthy e-services.

Cultural Policy Guidelines **“Creative Latvia” 2014-2020** (project) is a medium-term policy planning document, which defines the national cultural policy goals and priorities for the period up to 2020 and contributes to the achievement of the goals set in the national long-term and medium-term policy planning documents, which includes, inter alia, developing creative skills and the ability **to find, select, evaluate, manage and use information** (information literacy) for any individual through the implementation of creativity-enhancing curricula at all levels of education.

In 2018, the **Latvian IT Cluster** was created (<http://www.itbaltic.com/en/home/>). It is a non-governmental organization that has initiated and led the collaboration between Latvian IT industry, education and public sector institutions. The main priority of the Latvian IT cluster is to find new cooperation and development opportunities that could be used by partner companies and cooperation institutions. The cluster includes more than 30 major IT companies and several partners - universities, research institutes and other scientific bodies. Over the past 10 years, the IT Cluster has served as a government collaboration platform for developing innovative IT solutions and products, including in the areas of health and social well-being.



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**Memorandum of Cooperation of the Latvian e-Skills Partnership 2017 – 2020.** This Memorandum of Cooperation covers the public sector, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sectors and NGOs agreed to work together to promote the development of e-skills in Latvia to ensure stable economic growth, personal development of the population and active civil society.

## 4. Training opportunities for adult learners at the National Level

Higher education institutions **offer about 80 distance learning programmes**, which are fully implemented in the electronic environment, offering relevant distance learning materials, and **more than 3000 study courses** (information provided by the higher education institutions). Higher education practice shows that the elements of e-learning are used in the acquisition of full-time study programmes. Universities of the Regions offer around **130 continuing education and professional development programmes**, as well as various continuing education courses (languages, ICT, etc.), lectures and seminars.

OECD Skills report on Latvia (2019) emphasizes that “the Ministry of Education and Science of Latvia is supported by a number of subordinate agencies that contribute to the development of education in Latvia. These are charged with the following tasks:

1. The National Centre for Education (*Valsts izglītības satura centrs*, VISC, established in 2009) is involved in development and co-ordination activities that include curricula and examinations for pre-school, basic and general secondary education and vocational education. VISC co-ordinates the development of textbooks, of a support system for learners with special needs, and of teachers’ continuing professional development. It also co-ordinates organisation of extra-curricular activities.
2. The State Education Quality Service (*Izglītības kvalitātes valsts dienests*, IKVD, established in 2009) monitors education quality and is responsible for inspecting the education system from primary to upper secondary level and tertiary education level, including all public and private education institutions. It registers education institutions, licenses education programmes and carries out school (re)accreditation.
3. The State Education Development Agency (*Valsts izglītības attīstības aģentūra*, VIAA, established in 2012) has very diverse functions within the sectors of education and science, including international co-operation, and oversees all activities related to European Union (EU) programmes, such as the Lifelong Learning Programme. It also co-ordinates the implementation of the career development support system, and is responsible for the implementation of project SO (specific objective) 8.4.1. “Development of the professional competencies of employees”.



4. The Latvian Language Agency (Latviešu valodas aģentūra, established in 2009) aims to enhance the status and promote the sustainable development of the Latvian language. The agency implements the state language policy as formulated in the Guidelines of the State Language Policy for 2015-2020.
5. The Agency for International Programmes for Youth (Jaunatnes starptautisko programmu aģentūra, established in 1999) promotes youth activities and mobility (e.g. within the EU). The agency implements non-formal learning and information programmes and projects targeted at youth and those working with youth, and supports the link between non-formal learning and lifelong education.
6. The Latvian Council of Science (Latvijas Zinātnes padome) and the Latvian Academy of Sciences (Latvijas Zinātņu akadēmija) fulfil advisory and representative functions regarding research issues. The council also funds research and development projects.
7. The Council of Higher Education consists of twelve members proposed by the MoES and validated by the Parliament. The council aims to develop higher education and promote an equal and harmonised development of all kinds of HEIs.
8. The Rectors' Council co-ordinates educational activities in HEIs to promote scientific, educational, cultural and economic co-operation between Latvian HEIs. It also develops legislative proposals.
9. The Study and Science Administration (Studiju un zinātnes administrācija) participates in the development of students' loans policy and provides students' loans from the state budget. The institution is also responsible for coordination and administering of state-guaranteed study and student loans to students.

Aside from these main actors, a number of **consultative bodies** also influence education and participate in stakeholder engagement in Latvia:

- Local associations of pedagogues all around Latvia discuss the development of the curriculum, teaching and assessment methods, and state examination.
- In schools, the council of education consists of representatives of teachers, the local authority, parents and pupils from all education levels. Parents compose the majority of the council and the head is a parent representative. As the school board, the council has an advisory status, but can also endorse certain decision-making functions (Eurydice, 2019)."



In order to offer opportunities for the development of lifelong learning competences, expert working groups of vocational education institutions have developed **lifelong learning competency programmes** for adult education in the following **modules**:



A catalogue of adult education programmes is available in the National Educational Opportunities Database (NIID), in the sections on Acquiring Vocational Qualifications and Vocational Development and Courses.

#### 4.1. Entrepreneurial literacy

One of the biggest programme for adult education (both formal and non-formal) is European Social Fund project which offers plenty of courses for adults in various fields of expertise. As that is the biggest programme at the moment, it is a major contributor to the improvement of the professional competence of employed persons in order to prevent the mismatch of the labour force qualification with the demand of the labour market, to promote the competitiveness of the employees and increase the productivity of work. Mainly all financial, entrepreneurial and digital training options on National level are managed by this programme, thus within this report we will not mention all of them.

To name a few courses organized within the project, Innovative Technology Agency offers courses for adult learners, such as Personal Data Protection, 21st Century Communication - Digitally Competent Citizen, Digital Skills for Work, ABC Team Management, Agile and Scrum Project Management, Google AdWords, Product Development and Sales, Data Analysis and Reporting in Excel.

The main platform for adult learners to search for courses is the so called [NIID](#) platform, which collects information on all types of courses. The courses are organized not only by schools, higher education



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institutions, but also by private professional centres, libraries and other institutions not only in the capital city but also in regions. The courses in entrepreneurial skills development are mainly related with project management, such as IT Tools for Project Management, MS Project (Project Management), Basic Knowledge Program in Project Management, Practical Project Management, Agile Project Management.

University of Latvia offers various non-formal courses for adult learners in the field of entrepreneurship, such as Design Thinking for Entrepreneurs, Export Development Program, Financial and Information Skills for Adults, Idea for Successful Business Startup, Team Management ABC, Starting a Business and Business Development, Personal Branding: Purposeful and Meaningful Communication with the Public, Product Development and Sales, Practical Aspects of Transport Logistics, Green Business Ideas for Starting a Small Business.

## 4.2. Financial literacy

There are various programmes on national level that tend to improve financial literacy of adult learners, job seekers and others. E-Learning Module “My Money Today and Tomorrow. Financial Literacy” has been developed within the framework of the European Social Fund (ESF) project “Support for Unemployment Education” implemented by the SEA and is available to anyone interested at <https://e-apmaciba.nva.gov.lv>. As data from 2019 reveal, since the SEA offers an e-learning module on financial literacy, 21.549 unemployed and jobseekers registered with the SEA have studied financial literacy: 18.932 in 2018 and 2.617 in the first two months of 2019. Amount of 10573 learners successfully passed the test.

One of the first financial education websites for consumers of financial services is [www.manapensija.lv](http://www.manapensija.lv), which was developed in 2002, since the introduction of the 2nd pillar pension system in Latvia. The site provides information on state-funded pensions, licensed pension fund managers, and up-to-date statistics on the performance of pension plans. 2013 with the Association of Latvian Commercial Banks. With the support of the Investment Management Company Committee, the site has for the first time provided complete information on all three levels of the pension system in Latvia, as well as the introduction of a personalized pension calculator that allows anyone to calculate their future pension. The materials of the website are available in Latvian, Russian and English.

There are various organizations that engage in Erasmus+ programmes to upskill financial literacy of adults, to name a few: Transport and Telecommunications Institute offers a non-formal education



programme "Finance and Information Skills for Adults"; various Universities and Higher Education institutions offer non formal and formal courses for adults.

### 4.3. Digital literacy

The Ministry of Economics provides support to companies to improve employee skills in order to facilitate technological innovation and increase labour productivity. Furthermore, there are many opportunities for adult learners to embrace if they are interested in digital skill upskilling, however the most significant issue for the adult learners is the geographical location of courses, the content and the price, as not all courses are free of charge. In this chapter some of the recent opportunities will be presented as examples of trainings available on digital literacy in Latvia.

The **Digital Competence Development System project** is creating a new educational opportunity for low-digital adults, which will provide assessment of existing digital skills, citizen training and certification for employment, personal growth, social inclusion and active civic participation. The DCDS project aims to develop guidelines that will enable low-skilled Europeans to acquire digital and transversal skills for employment, personal growth, social inclusion and active civic participation (DCDS homepage, 2020).

The **Innovative Technology Agency** is a non-formal learning training centre that offers you the opportunity to improve your knowledge and skills in various courses, seminars and workshops. They offer various IT courses- **Digital marketing, Google AdWords and Analytics courses, SEO and WEB page development** courses.

Baltic Computer Academy is engaged in various Erasmus+ projects, for instance, the project "Improve Digital Competence in Adult people" is intended to attract low-skilled, low-skilled adults, the unemployed and other stakeholders in Europe. The project aims to improve digital skills and key competences to enable higher qualifications. Another project - Block chain for Entrepreneurs - Non-Traditional Industry 4.0 Curriculum for Higher Education aims to create a new, non-traditional learning approach to learning how to use block chain technology, which will potentially affect all industries over the next 5 to 10 years. The project provides for the development of an interactive curriculum for teachers, students and other stakeholders in block chain technology by August 31, 2021. All project materials will be available free of charge online to anyone interested. Baltic Computer Academy offers a whole range of courses not only for digital upskilling, but also financial and entrepreneurial: "Adobe AML & CTF CBAP CISA Cisco Other COBIT® CompTIA Data Science Digital Marketing Design Security EC Council eLearning Horizon ISTQB Testers ITIL® Java Customer Service LINUX Microsoft, Microsoft



Office Novell Open Office Oracle PMP® Prince2® Project Management SCRUM SUSE Telecommunications TOGAF UX Driver Academy” (BCA homepage).

## 5. Current participation in other European programmes

Many projects related to adult education have been implemented as pilot projects in Latvia, mainly with the support of the European Structural Funds. Through various programmes, this has enabled Latvia to expand its career guidance to adults, support businesses through training, and improve the infrastructure of vocational education centres of excellence.

In order to support EU objectives and funding, various strategies have been prepared, such as **Latvia's National Reform Programme for the implementation of the EU 2020 Strategy**, the **European Union Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund 2014-2020**. Operational Programme **"Growth and Jobs"** (OP) for the 2007-2013 programming period. The OP Growth and Employment unites support from various EU funds and aims to support economic growth and employment, with a particular focus on the competitiveness of the Latvian economy. The OP has 11 priority axes and many specific support objectives (SAMs). A number of projects related to these SOs are in the pipeline of the OECD Skills Strategy Project (OECD, 2019).

In September 2018, the Ministry of Education and Science started implementing a cooperation project with the OECD **"Development of Latvian Education and Skills Strategy"** with the aim to develop and approve the **Education and Skills Development Guidelines 2021-2027** by the end of 2020. The OECD Skills Strategy focuses on addressing social and economic inequalities on a global scale. The aim is to facilitate the implementation of evidence-based policies to align education outcomes with the needs of workforce development and social well-being. So far, OECD experts have helped develop national skills strategies in 11 countries, including the Netherlands, Norway and Austria. **Latvia has joined this project as the first of the Baltic States.** "Development of Latvian Education and Skills Strategy" is a cooperation project co-funded by the European Union programme **Erasmus +** with the OECD.

The EPALE National Support Service is responsible for **EPALE activities** in Latvian, promoting national content, providing a forum for discussion and exchange of experience between Latvian adult education professionals, both nationally and internationally. The EPALE platform includes a wide range of publications, an extensive library of resources, networking opportunities and an international exchange of ideas both on good practice in adult education and in the context of European education policy and the economy.



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Furthermore, there are various organizations, NGO's and institutions that participate in different Erasmus+ projects contributing to competence upskilling (digital, entrepreneurial, financial etc.). One of the options is participation in Erasmus + Strategic Partnerships to support the development, transfer and/or implementation of innovative practices as well as the implementation of joint initiatives to support collaboration, peer learning and exchange of experience at European level. **EC funding planned for Latvia** in the EC Erasmus + Work Programme 2020: 1 126 100,00, - EUR in vocational education and training sector and in the adult education sector: EUR 1 369 430,00. Indicative funding breakdown (%) for strategic partnership projects in support of innovation and strategic partnerships for good practice exchange: in the vocational training sector - 70% for innovation support and 30% for good practice exchange projects; in the adult education sector, 70% for innovation support and 30% for good practice exchange projects (SEDA homepage).

## 6. Conclusions and recommendations

One of the characteristics of adult education is the variability of its institutions based on their various founding structures (political organizations, churches, trade unions, educational institutions founded by individual enthusiasts). The main **conclusions** are made, based on this report:

- 1) "Adult education in Latvia is administered at three levels – national, municipal and institutional. The main challenges of adult education are as follows: increasing the participation rate in adult learning, validating the non-formal and informal learning outcomes, increasing mobility opportunities for learners, matching the education with the labour market needs, creating opportunities for promoting and developing basic skills, reducing the dropout rate, and enhancing second chance education opportunities" (Pīgozne et al., 2019, p. 134).
- 2) Overall, the economic activity of women in all EU Member States is lower than that of men. In regards to adult education.
- 3) In Latvia, there were too few people involved in lifelong learning in 2018 - only 6.7% - in the population aged 25-64.
- 4) The main reason of not participating in adult learning activities are lack of motivation and financial reasons.
- 5) "There is a big demographic group aged 45+ (more than 40% of Latvian employees) who have acquired their higher or vocational education in 1980s-1990s. They have sufficient skills for the work they have been doing for many years with the same employer or in the same industry, however, upon losing that particular position, they are no longer competitive in the labour market due to the lack of



the basic skills that correspond to the modern requirements: foreign languages, digital skills, business skills etc.”(Melnikova et al, 2019: p.24).

6) Eurostat (2018) data indicate that the proportion of employed people aged 15-64 who are usually working remotely in Latvia is 2.9%,

7) In 2018, there were ~12 725 employed females usually working from home in the age group 15-64 in Latvia, and ~ 12 603 employed males usually working from home in the age group 15-64 in Latvia.

8) ON July 1, 2020, amendments to the Labour Protection Law will come into force, which will clarify certain provisions regarding risks of the working environment in case of telework.

9) “The needs of the adult learners’ groups (in Latvia) defined as the vulnerable young adults’ group are difficult to be identified in the national documents about Lifelong learning guidelines.” (EduMAP, 2018: p.3).

10) The main needs toward entrepreneurial skills are: ability to solve problems in a complex way, critical thinking, creativity, people management, ability to cooperate with and coordinate others, emotional intelligence, making judgments and decisions, service orientation, negotiation skills, flexible thinking

11) The main financial literacy needs are: financial reports, pensions, finance and economical literacy, budget planning, revenue planning, state financing programmes for start-ups and other types of businesses, start-up programmes, investments and cybersecurity.

12) The main digital literacy needs are: information searching, filling in online forms, online marketing and the ability to promote your products online, market research tools.

13) The adult education in Latvia is determined by the Education Development Guidelines 2014-2020.

14) Currently, there is no specific adult education strategy in Latvia, however activities to promote it will be included in the Latvian Education and Skills Strategy 2021-2027, which is in development stage and is created in close cooperation with OECD experts.

In order to strengthen the adult education practices in Latvia, there are various **recommendations** and fields of improvement detected in the report:

- 1) Raising awareness of adult education of the potential benefits of and access to adult education
- 2) Reducing barriers to adult learning, which are finance, time and family responsibilities. Incentives for employers to invest in and support the adult education of their employees should be created.

- 3) To expand the offer of adult education, vocational education institutions, in particular centres of vocational education competence, as well as higher education institutions, can teach work with adult learners, tailor their course offerings to the specific needs of adults, deliver courses in a flexible and modular fashion, and take a proactive role in dealing with adult learners.
- 4) Improving the quality of adult education - quality criteria are needed, especially in non-formal adult education. Relevant stakeholders need to be involved to jointly determine how to measure, evaluate and monitor quality criteria and how to support adult education staff in their implementation.
- 5) Develop education, curriculum and innovative learning tools, including assessment of learning outcomes to promote new competences, including "Entrepreneurial spirit" and entrepreneurial skills.
- 6) Improve professional competences of teachers (including entrepreneurship, financial, managerial, ICT and foreign language skills) to reach 50% of those engaged in continuous professional development by 80% by 2020.
- 7) Disseminate more information about business professions by developing the World of Professions resource (Eurydice, 2016).
- 8) Latvia should promote the creation of motivation to retain and attract skilled workforce.
- 9) "The major focus of the adult education policy should be on the coordination of the information available on the development trends of the labour market and demographic situation. It is very important to take into account the data to forecast the education demand trends and develop the range of education offers as well as to collect feedback on the implemented education programmes, courses, their usefulness and quality. Moreover, it is important to gather data on the performance of the persons who have acquired the qualifications in their respective sector." (Melnikova et al., 2019:238).



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## ANNEX 1

### IRG010. Population under, of and over working age in statistical regions, cities under state jurisdiction, 21 development centres and counties by age group; at the beginning of the year

				2017	2018	2019
Latvija	Number	Total	Total	1 950 116	1 934 379	1 919 968
			Males	895 683	889 641	884 909
			Females	1 054 433	1 044 738	1 035 059
		Under working age	Total	303 587	305 291	305 080
			Males	156 350	157 366	157 277
			Females	147 237	147 925	147 803
		Of working age	Total	1 212 426	1 193 125	1 176 596
			Males	592 817	584 631	578 489
			Females	619 609	608 494	598 107
		Over working age	Total	434 103	435 963	438 292
			Males	146 516	147 644	149 143
			Females	287 587	288 319	289 149
		0-14	Total	303 587	305 291	305 080
			Males	156 350	157 366	157 277
			Females	147 237	147 925	147 803
		15-64	Total	1 258 620	1 240 232	1 225 909
			Males	612 070	604 407	599 268
			Females	646 550	635 825	626 641
		65+	Total	387 909	388 856	388 979
			Males	127 263	127 868	128 364
			Females	260 646	260 988	260 615



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