



NATIONAL REVIEW

2025

ADULT LEARNING AND EDUCATION IN UZBEKISTAN: CURRENT SITUATION AND DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVES



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ANNOTATION

The National Review of the Adult Learning and Education (ALE) System Integrated into the Lifelong Learning Concept is a comprehensive study aimed which is at analyzing the current state of this area and developing recommendations for its further development.

The review is prepared by experts from the National Commission of the Republic of Uzbekistan for UNESCO under the Cabinet of Ministers, National Quality Assurance Agency for Education under the Administration of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, DVV International Uzbekistan, as well as experts from the local partner organizations with the financial support of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). This is the second document in the format of a report on the state of adult learning and education in Uzbekistan. The first report was compiled by specialists from various organizations in 2022 and was titled as the “National Report on Adult Learning and Education”¹. This review is based on the first Report, it is expanded, revised and updated. The review is addressed to a wide range of stakeholders, as well as to those who shape public policy in the field of adult learning and education.

National Commission of the Republic of Uzbekistan for UNESCO under the Cabinet of Ministers

A government organization established under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, which conducts interdepartmental cooperation with various ministries and departments, and coordinates CONFINTEA processes in the country and activities with various national and international non-governmental organizations. In the field of education, it carries out activities in such priority areas as education for sustainable development, inclusive education, etc.

National Quality Assurance Agency for Education under the Administration of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan

The agency, established by resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan², is a specially authorized state body responsible for external quality assurance in education, carried out through institutional and specialized (program-level) state accreditation across secondary specialized, vocational, higher, and postgraduate education, as well as in the areas of professional retraining, continuing professional development, and competency assessment.

DVV International Uzbekistan

DVV International Uzbekistan has been operating in Central Asia since 2002. The work in the region is coordinated by the Central Asian office located in Bishkek. DVV International is the Institute for International Cooperation of the Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband e.V. (DVV), the German Adult Education Association, which represents the interests of about 900 Adult Education Centers or as they are called in Germany – Adult Education Centers (VHS) and their state associations, the largest providers of further education in Germany. As one of the leading professional organizations in the field of adult education and development cooperation, DVV International has been supporting national adult education systems, lifelong learning and the promotion of everyone’s right to education/training in partner countries for over 50 years.

¹National Report on Adult Learning and Education, 2022 <https://surl.li/czcxjh>

²Decree of The President of The Republic of Uzbekistan “On Additional Measures To Ensure The Quality of Education and To Improve The System of Providing Educational Services”. DP-76 from 05.05.2025. <https://www.lex.uz/docs/7513059>

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ENGLISH-LANGUAGE TERMS

AIMC	Agency for Information and Mass Communications
GA	General Assembly
ICT	Information and communication technologies
IAS/CAS	Institute for Advanced Studies/Center for Advanced Studies
MIL	Media and information literacy
MFA	Marrakech Framework for Action
LDC	Local Development Center
NGO	Non-government Non-profit Organization
NGEO	Non-governmental Educational Organization
NFLAE	Non-formal learning and adult education
UAE	United Arab Emirates
ALE	Adult Learning and Education
UN	United Nations Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
p. p.	Percentage point
RIRC	Rural Information and Resource Centre
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
ADB	Asian Development Bank (Asian Development Bank)
APCEIU	Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding
CG	Curriculum globALE (Global ALE Programme)
CONFITEA	International Conference on Adult Education
DVV	German Association of Adult Education
DSc	Doctor of Science
GPA	Grade Point Average (in all subjects)
GRALE	Global ALE reports
IFLA	International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions
IMRS	Institute for Macroeconomic and Regional Studies
IFMR	Institute for Forecasting and Macroeconomic Research
KOICA	Korea International Cooperation Agency
LLL	Lifelong learning
MYK	The Turkish Qualifications Framework Council
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
SDSN	Sustainable Development Solutions Network, UN

BASIC CONCEPTS AND APPROACHES

Objectives of the National Review and Methods of Data Collection



The main objective of the National Review is to identify key challenges and offer recommendations for transforming the ALE sector into a tool that promotes social and economic development of the country. The document can become a resource for researchers, practitioners and all those interested in the development of the adult learning and education system and lifelong learning in Uzbekistan.

Various legislative documents, available statistical data, reports of international organizations, scientific articles, results of sociological research, materials of various projects implemented by partner organizations with the support of DVV International Uzbekistan,

were analyzed in this review.

The analysis of the current situation of ALE covered the following aspects:

- The process of reforming the education system in Uzbekistan in recent years.
- Analysis of the legislative framework.
- Study of the role of government agencies, the informal education sector and other stakeholders in the development of the system.
- Determining the scale (coverage) of the population by adult education and training.
- Correspondence of educational programmes to the needs of the labor market and the expectations of students.
- Thematic areas and diversity of training programmes.
- Organizational forms and technologies used.
- Determining the degree of accessibility of educational services for the population.

Based on the analysis and conclusion, possible scenarios for the further development of ALE are suggested for the selection of priority policy approaches in this area. The proposed scenarios have a overall nature, their purpose is to stimulate discussion with all stakeholders, to initiate a discussion by experts on the trends in the development of ALE. The scenarios can be refined and specified. The National Review is a tool for periodically updating and improving the analysis of the national ALE system.

Additional goal of the Review is to increase awareness among a wide audience, deliver information about the importance of adult education and lifelong learning for personal and national development.

The National Review can be important for the international community and neighboring countries in the region, as it provides opportunities for comparison and exchange of experience.

The boundaries of ALE in the international context and education system of Uzbekistan



Defining the boundaries of ALE is an important issue because it directly affects what educational programmes will be available to adults and how the state will finance this area. In the international context, ALE is often considered the “fourth pillar” of lifelong learning after school, vocational and higher education³. However, in each national system, the boundaries of ALE depend on the unique conditions of the country and its legislation, which must be taken into account when analyzing national policies in this area.

Boundaries of ALE in the context of education types

There are two approaches to ALE: narrow (traditional) and broad (modern). The narrow approach was formed historically and limits ALE to non-formal and informal education, excluding formal education. The advantages are focus on priorities and clarity of goals, and the risks are slowdown in human capital development and rapid obsolescence of skills. The broad approach includes all types of adult education, considering ALE as part of lifelong learning. The advantages are the comprehensive development of adults, the risks are the dispersion of resources and complexity of management.

The broad (modern) interpretation expands the boundaries of ALE, which in this case is considered as a central component of lifelong learning in relation to its adult period (usually after completion of education in the compulsory formal system and usually from the moment of adulthood). Developing countries with limited resources, where priority is given mainly to basic education and vocational training, are more often guided in their approach by the traditional interpretation of ALE. Developed countries such as Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Canada, South Korea and others view ALE as an integral part of lifelong learning and use a broad interpretation of this concept.

Approach of UNESCO and Uzbekistan to defining ALE

UNESCO plays an essential role in developing a global understanding of ALE. Organization's recommendations provide a broad interpretation of the concept and emphasize important points such as:

- **Inclusiveness** - all forms of learning - formal, non-formal and informal - are taken into account.
- **Appropriateness** - adult learning addresses both individual needs (personal development, employment) and societal needs (community participation).
- **Continuity** - emphasizes that adult learning is a continuous process that takes place throughout life.
- **Flexibility** - the definition takes into account cultural differences and is not tied to a strictly defined age.

³Curriculum institutionALE, 2021, pp. 3. https://www.dvv-international.de/fileadmin/files/Inhalte_Bilder_und_Dokumente/Microsite_ALE_Toolbox/Curriculum_institutionALE/Curriculum_institutionALE_russ.pdf

Adult learning and education (UNESCO definition)

“ALE is a central component of lifelong learning. It includes all forms of education and learning aimed at ensuring that all adults participate in their societies and in the world of work. It encompasses the totality of formal, non-formal and informal learning processes through which persons regarded as adults in the societies in which they live, develop and enrich their capacities for life and work, both for their own benefit and for the benefit of their communities, organizations and societies. Adult learning and education involve sustained activities and processes to acquire, recognize, apply and share key skills. As the boundaries between youth and adulthood may differ in most cultures, the term “adults” refers to all persons involved in adult learning and education, even if they have not attained the legal age of maturity”.⁴

Currently, there is a steady trend towards expanding the understanding of ALE. At the same time, the boundaries between the “narrow” and “broad” interpretation of ALE are becoming less clear. More and more countries are expanding the spectrum of ALE, recognizing the importance of lifelong learning. At the same time, many international organizations promoting the values of ALE express concern that with a “broad” approach to the interpretation of ALE, its role and significance may be blurred and become less noticeable to society and governments, since in this case ALE is “everywhere, but nowhere specifically”.

The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Education” devotes Article 19 to the concept of ALE, which provides an almost identical interpretation of the first part of the UNESCO definition:

Adult learning and education (definition from the Law on Education)

Adult learning and education are central components of lifelong learning, which includes all forms of education and learning for adult participation in society and the world of work and encompasses the totality of formal, non-formal and informal learning processes.⁵

In this broad sense, ALE encompasses all levels, types and forms⁶ of the Uzbek National Education System in which adults participate. It means that ALE can include:

- **formal** education (structured education leading to recognized qualifications (diplomas, certificates) and including programmes offered at educational institutions such as universities, vocational colleges and technical schools (second higher education, advanced training programmes at universities, etc.).
- **Non-formal education** (organized educational programmes that do not lead to formal qualifications and are focused on the acquisition of specific skills, knowledge or competencies (foreign language courses, computer literacy, personal development training, workplace training courses).
- **Informal education** (learning that takes place in everyday life, in the workplace, in the family or in the community). It does not have a clear structure and does not lead to formal qualifications (learning on the job, socializing with colleagues, reading books and articles, watching educational videos, self-study).

⁴Recommendation of the 38th Session of the UNESCO General Conference on Adult Learning and Education, 2015, Paris https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000245179_rus

⁵The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Education” (2020) <https://lex.uz/ru/docs/5013009>

⁶Level - vocational education, higher education, etc. Forms - formal, non-formal, informal. Types - full-time, part-time, distance, dual, etc. More details on types and forms of education in Uzbekistan are provided in the paragraph 2.4.

Thus, Uzbekistan has legislated the interpretation of the ALE term in the broad sense. The specifics of Uzbekistan's ALE legislation and proposals to address and mitigate the risks of a "broad" approach to ALE definition are detailed in the paragraph 2.4, "Prospects for the development of the ALE legal framework".

Boundaries of ALE in the context of target groups and training organizations

The boundaries of ALE, defined by a "narrow" or "broad" interpretation, respectively outline a different circle of organizations and adult learners involved in this sector. There is no official, unified definition of an "adult learner" for all countries and all educational systems. The concept is quite broad and may vary depending on a specific country, educational system, and even a specific educational institution. According to the Civil Code and Labor Law of Uzbekistan, adulthood starts when a person reaches the age of 18.. However, in the context of ALE, the concept of an "adult" might differ depending on the situation and be more flexible, including a person under 18-year-old who participates in various educational programmes. For example, students of general secondary, specialized secondary and vocational educational institutes may be allowed to do a light work which is not harmful to their health, moral development and does not disrupt the learning process during their free time - when they reach the age of fifteen and with the written consent of one of their parents (a person replacing parents)⁷.

Additional criteria for determining "adulthood" are the achievement of physiological, psychological, social, moral maturity, economic independence, and a level of consciousness sufficient for responsible self- behavior. The main differences between adult learners and children and adolescents are the presence of motivation, experience, critical thinking, independence, responsibility, and focus on the applied nature of learning.

The new version of the model Law on Adult Education⁸ defines an adult learner as follows

Model Law on Adult Education

As adult learners, the Law considers subjects of educational activity those who have reached the age of civic responsibility and are involved in the sphere of paid labor⁹

The Law defines adult learners as members of the following social groups:

- socially vulnerable groups of the population undergoing training (the unemployed; the disabled; military personnel discharged into the reserve; prisoners; migrants);
- working students of education centers;
- **students of evening and correspondence departments in organizations implementing programmes of secondary and higher professional education;**
- specialists with pedagogical education and students of pedagogical specialties;
- **postgraduate students;**
- **jobseekers;**
- individuals taking a particular course of study by distance learning;
- learners at the work place (mentorship);
- attendees of courses and institutes of professional development;

⁷Article 119 Labour Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan, from 30.04.2023. <https://lex.uz/docs/6257291?ONDATE=14.02.2025%2000>

⁸"Model Law" is a document which offers recommendations and samples of legislative norms but is not legally binding. A model law is a blueprint or template which can be used by other countries or regions as a basis for developing their own legislation. Countries can adapt its provisions to their national characteristics and legal systems.

⁹Model Law on Adult Education, adopted by the Interparliamentary Assembly of the Member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States (Resolution No. 45-5 of 25.11.2016). https://iacis.ru/baza_dokumentov/modelnie_zakonodatelnie_akti_i_rekomendacii_mpa_sng/modelnie_kodeksi_i_zakoni

- individuals undergoing retraining or advanced training due to changes in their labour functions;
- persons learning a new profession in the learning course or any other form;
- participants in the role-education programmes;
- participants in non-formal education programmes;
- individuals engaged in self-education by purpose;
- individuals who have lost their status as a paid employee for certain reason;
- representatives of other social groups.

Full-time students of the universities are usually not included into the ALE system, they represent a related subsector of education, but in this review, they are partially considered as members of ALE system, since in Uzbekistan ALE is interpreted by law in a broad sense. In addition, universities are beginning to play an increasingly important role in the development of ALE. These two sectors have a common ground - both are focused on adults, can use similar teaching methods, sometimes there are programmes and projects between them, but higher education has its own specific goals and objectives which distinguish it from adult education. At the same time, universities often offer various courses for adults, which means that their human resources and equipment have an indirect impact on the quality of ALE. The experience of digitalization of higher education can also be applied to the ALE sector. There are other reasons which explain the appropriateness of considering higher education in the context of integrating ALE with the LLL:

- Starting from 2019, Uzbekistan has lifted the age limit for enrolment in higher education, i.e. it is possible to become a student at the age of 40-70 years and older.
- Some young people enter higher education a few years after secondary education with a working experience.
- There are students who are pursuing a second higher education (being employed).
- Students with families and children can be classified as adult learners.
- The availability of off-line and distance learning in Uzbekistan makes it possible to combine study with work.
- Most university students are quite motivated and have a clear idea of the purpose of their studies.
- Students are more responsible and independent in the learning process than school students.
- Many students have life and professional experiences which they can use in their studies.

In addition, taking into account the experience of developed countries, it can be assumed that in the future universities will be even more involved in training and retraining on their own premises and will conduct educational and enlightenment activities for the adult population as part of lifelong learning.

Uzbekistan, expanding the boundaries of ALE, sometimes includes full-time students in this sector and provides benefits to low-income students, especially girls, which is not typical for world statistics, since it prevents data comparability around the world, but corresponds to the national policy of accessibility of higher education. The government is making significant efforts to this end. Thus, students at technical schools and universities who have achieved good academic performance (at least 80%) can receive an interest-free educational loan. This allows them to cover the costs of education without a significant financial burden. Additional grants are allocated for children from families in need who have scored 80% of the score required to receive a grant upon admission to a technical school or university. In addition, each of the universities which has been granted financial independence allocates grants, which cover from 20% to 80% of the cost of contract education for children from low-income families, depending on the level of subjects' knowledge. Starting from the 2025/2026 academic year, 3.5 thousand children from low-income families will be able to enroll in universities in Uzbekistan free of charge, within the framework

of the programme “From Poverty to Prosperity”. It is planned to create conditions for every poor family, especially among women, at least one person receives higher education¹⁰.

Another specific feature of Uzbekistan’s ALE policy formulation is the significant emphasis on vocational education. This sector is prioritized by the government to reduce unemployment, economic development, social well-being and adaptation to technological change. Statistics on adult participation in ALE provided by Uzbekistan for the regular Global Reports on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE) include category of adult learners such as students in technical schools, higher education institutions and universities¹¹. Accordingly, Uzbekistan’s ALE system includes a wide variety of learning organizations:

- Public educational institutions (higher education institutions and universities offering first and further higher education, master’s, postgraduate and postgraduate programmes as well as further education programmes for adults).
- Technical schools providing vocational education and training (TVET) for young people and adults who want to learn new skills or upgrade their qualifications.
- Vocational Skills Centers (based at the “Ishga Markhamat” and Vocational Skills Centers under the Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction) organizing vocational retraining and skills development programmes for the unemployed and jobseekers.
- Ministries and agencies implementing the state policy on ALE.
- Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and non-governmental educational organizations (NGEOs) organizing various courses, trainings and seminars for adults for adults.
- Libraries and Cultur Centers offering educational programmes and activities aimed at developing the cultural and educational needs of adults.
- Enterprises and organizations which organize training and professional development courses for their employees in the workplace.
- International organizations supporting the development of ALE, and implementing international projects and programmes.

Thus, the “broad” approach to ALE in Uzbekistan and the definition of the term in legislation not as a type of education (a separate sector) but as a form of learning¹² covers virtually all adult learners (often after the age of 18) and all organizations which are involved to some extent in adult learning activities.

Gender boundaries of ALE

In Uzbekistan, achieving gender equality and empowering women is one of the essential priorities of the state policy. The adoption in 2019 of the Law “On Guarantees with Respect to Equal Rights and Opportunities For Women And Men”¹³ was an important step in this direction, to consolidate the legal framework for ensuring gender equality in the country, including in education and professional development. In this regard, the historically existing list of professions prohibited for women was revised in accordance with the Resolution of the President on Measures to Further Strengthen Guarantees of Labor Rights and Support for Women’s Entrepreneurship¹⁴. The list, previously prohibitive in nature, has been transformed into an advisory document, focusing on

¹⁰Gazeta.uz “Members of poor families in Uzbekistan will create conditions for higher education”, 11.09.2024 <https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2024/09/11/higher-education-for-everyone/>

¹¹First Global Report on Adult Learning and Education , p. 60. 60. <https://unesdoc.org/>

5th Global Report on Adult Learning and Education: Civic Education: Empowering Adults for Change, p. 78. 78. <https://www.unesco.org/en/publications/5th-global-report-on-adult-learning-and-education>

¹²More about ALE as a form of education paragraph 2.4.

¹³Law “On Guarantees with Respect to Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men” No. LRU-562 from 02.09.2019

¹⁴Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Measures to Further Strengthen Guarantees of Labor Rights and Support for Women’s Entrepreneurial Activity,” No. RP-4235 from 07.03.2019

occupations which have a potential negative impact on women's health. This change opens up a wider range of opportunities for women to pursue vocational training and further professional development through ALE.

Today's Labor Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan gives employers the right to establish restrictions for female labor if conditions are considered unfavorable. At the same time, the prohibition on lifting and moving heavy loads which exceeds the established norms is retained¹⁵. This approach helps to ensure a balance between protecting women's health and giving them freedom to choose their profession. This contributes to a more flexible system which takes into account the specifics of different sectors and allows women to make their own decisions regarding their professional development, including training and further training. At the same time, the state continues to prioritize protection the health of women employed in difficult and dangerous working conditions (divers, parachute firefighters, bulldozer drivers, etc.)¹⁶.

Some of the constraints faced by women in the labor force are rooted in embedded stereotypes. For example, there is still a prevailing societal perception that technology suites more men than women. Influence of these perceptions, effects girls from early age to believe that technology is not for them, which reduce their interest in IT (information technology), and increase among males. Just like in other countries, Uzbekistan currently has few women in the industry, although there are no institutional prohibitions. However, Uzbekistan is actively working to increase women's participation in IT sphere by implementing various programmes and projects, including in cooperation with international organizations. For example, the Republic's 1st IT Park¹⁷, established at the initiative of the President, has launched ¹⁸ several important projects:

- **IT Women-Karakalpakstan** (jointly with USAID and supported by the Ministry of Digital Technologies). The programme trains women and girls in Karakalpakstan on information and communication technologies topics. Under the project, 60 women received free training in graphic design and SMM.
- **IT Club for Women GAP**. The discussion club aims to address the lack of women's presence in the IT industry. The club organizes meetings with experts and guests.
- **Digital Internship Programme**. The internship programme provides an opportunity for IT graduates and young entry-level professionals to gain work experience in IT companies. 53 girls completed the internship programme, 23 of them were employed and remaining continued their internships.
- **OSCE Programme with the Astrum IT Academy**. The programme enhances the skills of women entrepreneurs in IT skills and digital marketing. 150 women were trained in information technology and computer literacy, and 90 participants were admitted to the second phase of advanced training on IT tools in e-commerce and digital marketing.

These initiatives demonstrate Uzbekistan's endeavor to overcome gender stereotypes and create equal opportunities for women. The successful implementation of such programmes not only increases the number of women in the IT industry, but also makes a significant contribution to the development of the country's digital economy. Supporting ALE educational initiatives for women creates a favorable environment for their professional growth, including in the technological sphere.

¹⁵Labor Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 28.10.2022 as subsequently amended on 13 February 2025.

¹⁶List of prohibited jobs for women (expired in 2019). [https://nrm.uz/contentf?doc=5183_spisok_rabot_s_neblagopriyatnymi_usloviyami_truda_na_kotoryh_polnostyu_ili_chastichno_zapreshchaetsya_ispolzovanie_jenskogo_truda_\(zaregistririvan_myu_05_01_01_2000_g_n_865_utverjden_ministerstvom_truda_24_12_1999_g_ministerstvom_zdravoohraneniya_22_12_1999_g_\)](https://nrm.uz/contentf?doc=5183_spisok_rabot_s_neblagopriyatnymi_usloviyami_truda_na_kotoryh_polnostyu_ili_chastichno_zapreshchaetsya_ispolzovanie_jenskogo_truda_(zaregistririvan_myu_05_01_01_2000_g_n_865_utverjden_ministerstvom_truda_24_12_1999_g_ministerstvom_zdravoohraneniya_22_12_1999_g_))

¹⁷Information Technology Park

¹⁸Women in tech is the best way to solve the problem of shortage of IT specialists. How are things with this in Uzbekistan?

The Presidential Resolution “On measures to further improve the family and women’s support system” (No. RP-103 from 14.03.2025)¹⁹, adopted in March 2025, sets the following target indicators for supporting women in 2025: employment - 2 million women; training 250,000 women to professions and entrepreneurship; coverage of 250,000 women with higher education; health improvement in sanatoriums and organization of motivational seminars on the formation of entrepreneurial skills among 50 thousand women in need.

Thematic boundaries of ALE

Thematically, the boundaries of ALE in Uzbekistan respond to UNESCO’s recommendations that the education sector should cover at least three important areas: literacy and basic skills; continuing professional training and development; and liberal education, which involves the development of broad-mindedness, critical thinking, analytical skills, civic responsibility, intercultural dialogue, creativity, innovation and respect for the environment. Liberal education helps adults to better understand the world, make informed decisions and actively participate in society. In Uzbekistan, all three areas are present in ALE, but there is a certain specificity - since literacy in the country has reached almost 100% (reading, numeracy, writing, etc.)²⁰, the emphasis in this area is on computer, financial, language and other types of literacy. All three strands of ALE are considered in the context of lifelong learning.

Thus, Uzbekistan demonstrates a commitment to developing ALE system which meets international standards and takes into account national specificities. For further effective ALE development, it is necessary to continue improving the legislative framework, expanding access to educational resources for all categories of citizens, including women, and strengthening international cooperation. This comprehensive approach will make it possible to fully realize the potential of ALE as a vital component of lifelong learning and make a significant contribution to the socio-economic development of the country.

Relevance of ALE in Today’s World

Contemporary Challenges and ALE



Adult learning and education becomes an increasingly important component in the development of society, economy and individual. In the context of globalization, digital transformation, climate challenges and rapid changes in the labor market, adult learning responds to the challenges of our time by ensuring sustainable development and social stability. It is necessary to constantly update skills and knowledge in order to remain competitive

Globalization intensifies competition in the world labor market. Success requires not only basic knowledge, but also continuous improvement of professional skills, knowledge of foreign languages, and the ability to work in international teams.

In professional fields such as software, information technology, computer graphics, web design, medicine, applied scientific research and many others, knowledge can become outdated within

On measures to further improve the family and women’s support system
Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, No. RP-103 from 14.03.2025.

²⁰Literacy level among the population above 16-year-old. https://api.siat.stat.uz/media/uploads/sdmx/sdmx_data_292.pdf

few months or even weeks. Changes in the labor market have also accelerated - traditional jobs are disappearing and new professions and forms of employment are emerging.

Adult learning helps to re-train, learn new skills and adapt to these changes. Acquiring new knowledge and skills increases self-esteem, opens up new career prospects and contributes to higher wages and better quality of life. Learning broadens horizons, stimulates intellectual activity, helps develop critical thinking, new skills and interests, leading to a deeper self-understanding and the world around us.

As life expectancy increases, so does the period of labor activity with the support of learning. The emergence of online courses allows adults to learn at a convenient time and in a comfortable environment, which makes education more accessible. ALE makes it possible to address global challenges of the 21st century such as:

- poverty,
- environmental issues,
- localised conflicts, uncertainty, radicalization
- migration,
- social inequality
- digitalization and technological change
- unemployment and change of labour type/functions
- pandemics and global crisis deteriorating humans' health

These challenges are pushing countries to join forces internationally and to include ALE and LLL as an important component of public policy. ALE has become a priority for international organizations such as UNESCO, OECD, World Bank, DVV International, which promote skills development for a modern economy, sustainable development and strengthening democratic institutions around the world, ensuring adaptation to constant change.

Figures and facts

Investments in ALE stimulate economic growth by improving indicators such as skills and employment, reducing unemployment, increasing labor productivity and efficiency, creating new jobs, developing new industries, small and medium-sized businesses, etc. Studies by OECD show a direct link between the level of adult education and economic growth of countries. According to World Bank experts, the average “payback” of education for each year of study is 10% on average worldwide. In other words, during the entire period of study in higher education institutions (undergraduate and master’s degrees), wages increase by 40-60%.

Employees of Institute for Forecasting and Macroeconomic Research (IPMI) in Uzbekistan, based on the results of the survey in Jizzakh region, conducted an econometric analysis of the “payback” of higher education and obtained the following results:

- higher education provides up to 50% increase in earnings;
- having work experience gives a salary increase of up to 5%;
- Women have a higher return on education than men – 73% versus 42%.

The experts concluded that special emphasis should be placed on promoting higher education as an important priority for raising the incomes of future generations²¹.

²¹How higher education affects wages (2022). N. Ibragimova, IPMI Project Manager
<https://imrs.uz/files/publications/en/970983.pdf>

Significance of ALE for Uzbekistan

ALE is a significant area for the development of the country due to the following factors:

- modernization of production and transition to an innovation economy require highly qualified specialists;
- there is a shortage of specialists in a number of industries;
- educational programmes do not always meet the modern requirements of the labor market;
- differences in the level of regional development create the need for targeted training and skills development programmes;
- a part of the population, especially in rural areas, has limited access to educational services;
- with increasing life expectancy and declining birth rate the proportion of the adult population is increasing²².
- internal and external migration²³ create new social groups that require adaptation to new living and working conditions;
- digitalization and distance learning are actively developing, digitalization is becoming a driving force for lifelong learning.

The role of adult learning and education for Uzbekistan in the context of the concept of LLL is difficult to overestimate, especially considering current global trends and challenges facing the country. In a rapidly changing world, technology and economic development, lifelong learning becomes a necessity for maintaining competitiveness. It is an important factor for the socio-economic development of the country and deserves priority attention of the state.

The International Community on The Role of ALE

The Marrakech Framework for Action (MFA)²⁴, which was adopted at the Seventh International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VII), in Marrakech, Morocco, in June 2022 highlights that ALE is a force for action to address challenges such as:

- Strengthening social cohesion;
- Improved development of social-emotional skills;
- Ensuring peace and strengthening democracy;
- Improved cultural understanding;
- Elimination of all forms of discrimination;
- Promoting peaceful coexistence;
- Active and global citizenship.

For Uzbekistan, as for other countries, the MFA is an important reference point for the development and implementation of the national ALE policy until 2030.

²²UPL.UZ. "Uzbekistan's birth rate has started to fall", 30.01.2025. Uzbekistan's population continues to grow, but its growth rate is slowing down due to the declining birth rate. <https://upl.uz/obshestvo/48583-news.html> According to international criteria, Uzbekistan is among the countries "on the verge of demographic ageing". <https://www.uzembassy.org.tr/news/3699>

²³Both emigrants and immigrants require comprehensive training for successful adaptation to new working and living conditions (language training, legal literacy, vocational, socio-cultural, financial education, etc.).

²⁴Marrakech Framework for Action CONFINTEA VII "Harnessing the Transformative Potential of Adult Learning and Education" (2022) Collective author: UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning

The global campaign “We are ale!”



The “We are ale!” campaign²⁵ is an open alliance of ALE partners around the world, including networks, associations and organizations which have come together to make ALE more visible, understandable and valuable for the global community. The five-year campaign was launched on 22 March 2021. It brings together practitioners, learners and civil society representatives, empowering them to speak with one voice to promote ALE globally. The Alliance recognizes the fundamental importance of ALE for

justice, well-being and change.

The term ALE within the framework of campaign is understood in the broad sense and includes all forms of education (formal, non-formal and informal)²⁶. The campaign calls to action which proposes concrete steps to achieve this goal. DVV International joined the campaign and entered into an alliance with other supporters around the world to lobby for increased participation and investment in ALE by governments, donors, private sector and international organizations.

ALE is, thus, not just important but a critical component for the sustainable development of modern societies, economies and individuals, and therefore it is at the center of the national development strategies, ensuring lifelong learning and skills development. This is the only way to build a sustainable, equitable and prosperous future for all.

1. INTEGRATION OF UZBEKISTAN INTO THE INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL SPACE

1.1 Uzbekistan’s State ALE Policy and its Reflection of International Trends

Uzbekistan’s openness to the world, attraction of foreign investment and creation of conditions for sustainable development have made it possible to achieve remarkable progress in the development of education, which has always been one of the priority areas of Uzbekistan’s policy. The Government has devoted enormous efforts and resources to the comprehensive development of the education system, including ALE. Current tasks in this sphere are reflected in conceptual and strategic documents such as: “Strategy for the Development of a New Uzbekistan for 2022-2026”, “Strategy Uzbekistan – 2030”, “Digital Uzbekistan – 2030”, “Concept for the Development of the Higher Education System of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030”, “From Poverty to Prosperity” Programme, etc.

The state supports the development of all types, forms and levels of ALE. An important direction of the state policy in the field of education is the creation of the necessary conditions for young people to obtain modern professions. Since 2023, the programme has been implemented,

²⁵Website of the “We are ale!” campaign www.we-are-ale.org

²⁶Video-reel «We are ale» in Uzbek https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dNSTB_3GTOY&list=PL_O93zRgKpY23ZmLDjfsXNjIcamrjZce&index=4.

Video-reel «We are ale» in Russian https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pl1A1EmZEJc&list=PL_O93zRgKpY23ZmLDjfsXNjIcamrjZce&index=2

Video-reel «We are ale» in English https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jsnXieDxF6U&list=PL_O93zRgKpY23ZmLDjfsXNjIcamrjZce&index=1

according to which European standards of vocational education have been introduced in at least one technical school in every region of the country. In the next five years, all technical schools will be covered by this system.

Since February 2025, Samarkand region and Tashkent city have started to test the voucher system for vocational training for members of low-income families. From 1 May 2025, this system will be introduced in all regions of the country²⁷. Its advantage is the right of unemployed citizens to choose their own educational institution on the principle of “money follows the learner”. Private and non-government educational organizations are also invited to participate in the programme.

Since February 2025, the Vocational Skills Centers under the Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction have introduced a system of targeted training on professions in demand on the labor market, based on employers’ applications, for the unemployed, including members of low-income families. Funding is provided from the State Employment Promotion Fund.

In addition, from February 2025, scholarships are available for vocational training for people with disabilities, as well as members of low-income families registered as low-income families, who enroll in training courses lasting more than 3 months.

A special place in Uzbekistan’s social policy is given to poverty reduction, through adult learning and education. Active work in this direction commenced in 2020, when Uzbekistan openly acknowledged the problem and launched programmes to address poverty. Special state administration body to combat poverty was established, which now functions as the Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction. Social projects titled “Iron Notebook”, “Women’s Notebook” and “Youth Notebook” were launched.

Since 2021, a mechanism to record low-income persons by entering them into the information system “**Unified Register of Social Protection**” has been introduced, which allows families to receive social assistance they are entitled to automatically without additional bureaucratic procedures²⁸.

“**Iron Notebook**” - the system of record keeping and assistance to families and citizens in need, including providing training sessions.

“**Youth Notebook**” - the system aimed at supporting young people between the ages of 18 and 30 who find themselves in difficult life situations. The support programme includes training opportunities if necessary.

“**The Women’s Notebook**” - the system aimed at identifying and supporting women in difficult life situations. Among the support mechanisms for those listed in the Women’s Notebook, in addition to provide material assistance, there is also providing access to education, economic and legal assistance, training and professional development opportunities.

An important component of ALE and LLL development in Uzbekistan is the country’s cooperation with the UN and UNESCO. Uzbekistan joined the UN in 1992 as a new sovereign and independent state, and the UN office was opened in Tashkent in 1993. Cooperation focuses primarily on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 4, which aims to ensure inclusive and quality education for all. The United Nations Development Assistance

²⁷Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan from 17.01.2025 № RP-12 “On measures to ensure employment and reduce poverty in 2025”. <https://lex.uz/docs/7328113>.

²⁸Gulnoza Sattarova, Chief Researcher at the Institute of Legislation and Legal Policy D. in Law, “Ensuring the constitutional rights of citizens is the main vector in the implementation of Uzbekistan’s social policy” <https://uzembassy.uk/news/1013>

Framework (UNDAF) for Uzbekistan is an instrument of interaction between the Government of Uzbekistan and the United Nations to implement priority areas of socio-economic development of the country in the mid-term perspective. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) implements projects in Uzbekistan aimed at developing education, including vocational education in the context of adult learning. These projects are aimed at improving the qualifications of workers, developing entrepreneurship and creating new jobs.

Since 1993, Uzbekistan has been a full member of UNESCO, which ensures the country's active participation in the organization's programmes and initiatives. Thus, Uzbekistan participates in international conferences and forums on adult education, such as CONFINTEA, and provides statistical data on ALE for the regular GRALE reports.

UNESCO supports Uzbekistan in preserving cultural heritage, which also plays a role in educational programmes. Cooperation with the UN and UNESCO contributes to the development of the National Education System in Uzbekistan, making it more inclusive, high quality and responsive to the needs of modern society.

In 1995, Uzbekistan acceded to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights²⁹. The Government has, thus, recognized its international obligation to protect and promote the rights and freedoms embedded into the above-mentioned instrument, including the right to education.

The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan - Guarantee of ALE

The updated Constitution of Uzbekistan, which came into force on 01.05.2023³⁰ significantly expanded the article on education, including the part which covers adult education (although the term is not used). For the first time the Constitution mentions continuing education. The Constitution guarantees access to higher education on a competitive basis. The state organizes and encourages vocational training and retraining of citizens.

The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan	
"The State shall take measures to ensure employment of citizens, to protect against unemployment and to reduce poverty. The State shall organize and promote vocational training and retraining of citizens". Article 43.	
"The State shall ensure the development of a continuous education system, its various types and forms, state and non-state educational organizations", Article 50.	
"Citizens shall have the right to receive higher education in state educational organizations on a competitive basis at the expense of the state". Article 51.	

These and other key changes show that the new version of the Constitution has significantly empowered adult education and lifelong learning.

²⁹International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. 28.12.1995 <https://lex.uz/docs/2686024>

³⁰The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan (2023). <https://lex.uz/docs/6445145>

Agenda 2030. SDG 4 through the lens of ALE



The Government of Uzbekistan has confirmed its intention to integrate the national development priorities with the Sustainable Development Goals by adopting 16 national SDGs. 125 national targets and 190 indicators have been defined, data on 128 indicators is published on the website of the Statistics Agency³¹.

Two voluntary national reviews (the first³² in 2020 and the second³³ in July 2023) confirm the Government's intention to further integrate the national SDGs into the country and sector development programmes, and refer to SDGs during the monitoring and evaluation progress of the reform implementation.

One of the goals of the 2030 Agenda (SDG 4) aims at addressing challenges in education, including adult education.

Agenda 2030 - SDG 4

“Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”

The implementation of the SDGs in Uzbekistan coincided with large-scale reforms within the framework of already completed the National Action Strategy for 2017-2021³⁴ five priority areas of which were recognized as corresponding to the global SDGs. The ongoing “New Uzbekistan Development Strategy for 2022-2026”³⁵ also corresponds to all SDGs and is harmoniously interlinked with them.

On 14 December 2022, the 77th session of the UN General Assembly adopted the resolution «Enhancing the role of parliaments in accelerating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)», thus supporting the initiative put forward by the President of Uzbekistan at the 75th session of the UNGA in 2020.

The Parliament of Uzbekistan has set up a special parliamentary commission to monitor the implementation of the SDGs, holds meetings openly and publicly. Deputies of the Legislative Chamber, members of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis, representatives of State bodies, citizens' self-governance bodies, enterprises, institutions, organizations, non-governmental non-profit organizations, media, academic institutions, specialists and scientists, as well as representatives and senior staff of United Nations agencies are invited to participate in these meetings.

In 2019, with the technical support of the UN Development Programme, the Republic of Uzbekistan developed the national website³⁶ on the indicators of Sustainable Development Goal to monitor SDG achievements and disseminate relevant and up-to-date information. The concept

³¹Statistical Agency of the Republic of Uzbekistan. <https://nsdg.stat.uz/>

³²First Voluntary National Review on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. 2020. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26381VNR_2020_Uzbekistan_Report_Russian.pdf

³³Second Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the National Sustainable Development Goals and Targets of Uzbekistan until 2030

³⁴On the Strategy of actions for further development of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, #DP-4947, 08.02.2017

³⁵On the Strategy for the Development of New Uzbekistan for 2022-2026

Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, #DP-60, 28.01.2022. On the State Programme on the implementation of the Strategy for the Development of New Uzbekistan for 2022-2026 in the “Year of Care for Man and Quality Education” Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, #DP-27, 02.03.2023.

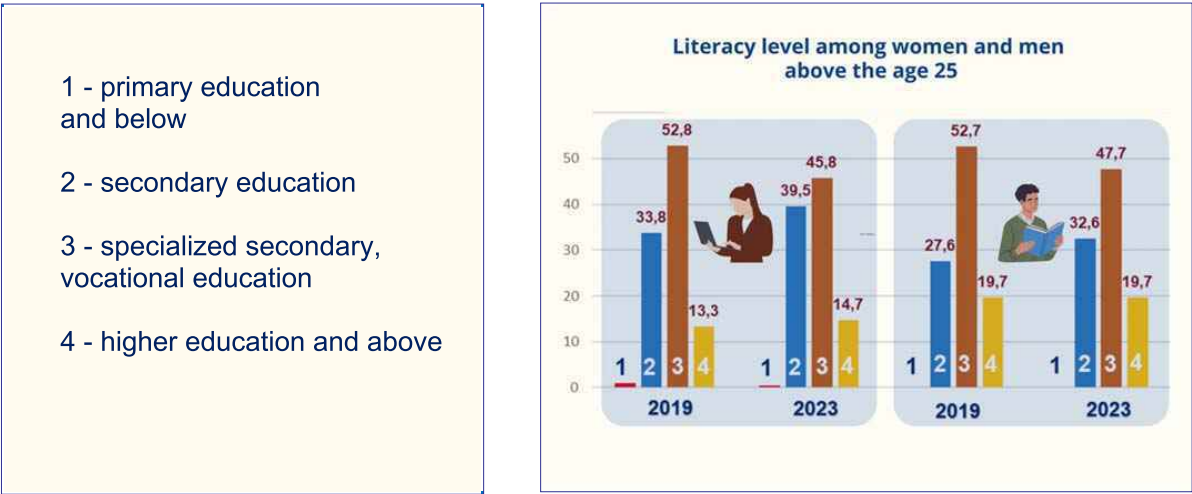
³⁶<https://nsdg.stat.uz>

of the website was developed taking into account advanced technological and methodological developments and the latest innovations in this area. It has a user-friendly interface which allows to upload new indicators with any level of specification, as well as methodological information on indicators without the use of any software. The SDG website is a source of data for national and international users who analyze and track progress towards achieving the SDGs in Uzbekistan.

According to the results of 2022, Uzbekistan is among 87 countries with the most advanced experience in monitoring and informing the public about the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Information about this was posted on the official web page of the United Nations Statistics Division³⁷.

The results of the information and statistical monitoring for 2019-2023 show mainly positive growth dynamics of SDG 4 indicators related to ALE and gender equality in learning (SDG 5). The enrolment rate of young women in tertiary education has increased in recent years, but still remains lower in comparison to men (by 1.9%).

Diagram 1



**Compiled from source: Statistical Compendium of Sustainable Development Goals in the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2024³⁸.*

Since 2021, separate grants have been allocated annually for more than 3,000 girls. A new system of allocating funds from the state budget to banks to finance educational loans on favorable terms for women to study on a fee and contract basis in higher education institutions has been introduced. At the same time, the participation of young people of both sexes in secondary and specialized education has decreased, which necessitates reforms in this type of education, including through the creation of a unified network of technical colleges in 2024.

The proportion of the population that has information and communication technology skills in 2023 compared to 2019 increased by an average of 3-4%.

³⁸Statistical Collection “Sustainable Development Goals in the Republic of Uzbekistan”. - Tashkent: Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2024 - 68p. Published on the web-portal of the Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan at.

Diagram 2

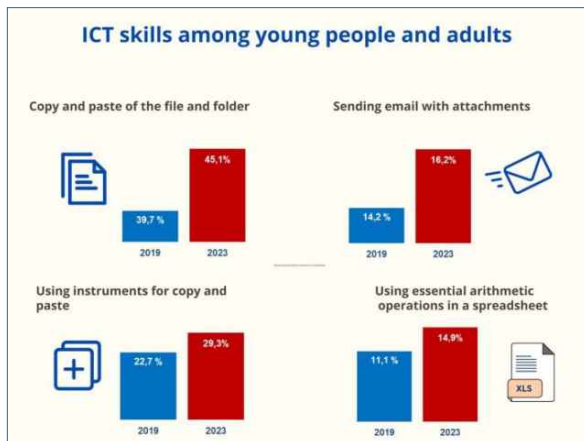
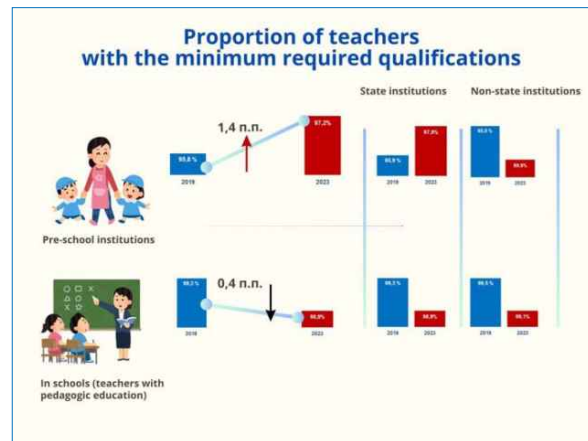


Diagram 3



A slight decrease (by 0.4%) is observed for the indicator “proportion of teachers with the minimum required qualification” (pedagogical education) in general education institutions, both state and non-state. Several Presidential Decrees are devoted to the professional development of teachers.

The main result of achieving sustainable development goals in Uzbekistan is the recognition of these results by international organizations. Thus, in the ranking published by the international independent organization SDSN³⁹ in 2023, Uzbekistan with the indicator of 71.1 took 69th place among 166 countries, rising 8 steps (in 2022 from 77th place)⁴⁰. This implies that the country has, on average, travelled 71.1% of the “path to the best possible outcome across all SDGs”. The report shows positive growth in 11 SDGs, including SDG 4.

Ensuring the effectiveness of the SDGs is considered in close coordination with other international ratings and indices. In June 2024, the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On additional measures to improve the system of work with international ratings and indices and strengthening parliamentary control in this area” was adopted⁴¹. The Decree identifies “education” as one of the priority areas of international ratings and indices. The Ministry of Economy and Finance has been instructed together with the Ministry of Digital Technologies to ensure the launch of an improved single portal “Republic of Uzbekistan in international ratings” and its stable functioning in the future. The portal is planned to introduce a system of formation, monitoring of performance and analysis of practical measures to achieve the targets of priority international ratings and indices.

Uzbekistan’s position in some international rankings

(year; position of Uzbekistan; number of countries participating in the ranking)

- Sustainable Development Goals 2023–69/166
- Corruption Perception Index 2023–121/180
- Economic Freedom Index 2023–109/176
- World Innovation Index 2023 - 82/132 (2023)
- UN Human Development Index 2022 -101/190
- Gender Development Index 2021–101/191
- Globalisation Index 2023–132/196
- Democracy Index 2023 - 148/167

³⁹Sustainable Development Solutions Network (Sustainable Development Solutions Network)

⁴⁰Sustainable Development Report 2024. The SDGs and the UN Summit of the Future Includes the SDG Index and Dashboards. <https://s3.amazonaws.com/sustainabledevelopment.report/2024/sustainable-development-report-2024.pdf>

⁴¹On additional measures to improve the system of work with international ratings and indices and strengthening parliamentary control in this area Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, #DP-91, 20.06.2024.

- Press Freedom Index 2023–137/180
- Internet Access Speed 2023–91/144
- World Happiness Report 2023 - 54/137
- List of countries by GDP 2022 - 58/200
- Rule of Law Rating 2023–78/142
- Internet Freedom Rating 2023 - 25/100
- International e-Government Ranking 2022 - 69/193

Out of all the targets of SDG 4 implemented in Uzbekistan, only two (preschool and school education) are not related to ALE. All the others address the interests of adult learners in one way or another. Table 1 compares SDG 4 targets related to ALE with the goals of the New Uzbekistan Development Strategy 2022-2026. Virtually all SDG 4 targets are covered by this Strategy (Table 1).

Comparison of the ALE goals and targets of SDG 4 and the goals of the New Uzbekistan Development Strategy for 2022-2026

Table 1

National Goal 4 “Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and encouraging lifelong learning opportunities”	
National ALE challenges	Objectives of the New Uzbekistan Development Strategy for 2022-2026
Objective 4.3. By 2030, ensure equal access to affordable and quality secondary specialized, higher, vocational and additional education for all women and men.	Objective 37. Create learning opportunities of a particular profession to every citizen at the expense of the state. Scale-up professional training by 2 times, train to professions 1 million unemployed citizens and increasing the participation of non-state actors of educational institutions in the education process up to 30 per cent.
Target 4.4. By 2030, significantly increase the number of young people and adults with skills, in high demand for the labor market, including vocational skills, for employment, a decent job and entrepreneurship.	Objective 37. Create learning opportunities of a particular profession to every citizen at the expense of the state. Scale-up professional training by 2 times, train to professions 1 million unemployed citizens and increasing the participation of non-state actors of educational institutions in the education process up to 30 per cent.
Objective 4.5. Ensuring equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for people with disabilities as well as ensuring effective learning environment for all by improving the conditions of educational institutions considering the interests of children with disabilities.	Goal 66. To develop an effective system of support for persons with disabilities and to improve the quality and standard of their lives.
Target 4.7. By 2030, ensure that all learners and students acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to contribute to sustainable development. Target 4.a. Improve educational facilities which provide a safe and effective learning environment for all. Target 4. b. By 2030, take measures to increase the amount of loans and grants, including international loans and grants for higher education.	Objective 70. Improvement of the state youth policy.
Objective 4.c. Significantly increase by 2030, the number of qualified teachers, including through international training co-operation, retraining and upgrading teacher qualifications.	Goal 44. Improve the quality of education in schools and increasing the international level of knowledge and qualifications teaching staff.

* Compiled on the materials of the Second Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the National Sustainable Development Goals and Targets of Uzbekistan until 2030 (Second Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the National Sustainable Development Goals and Targets of Uzbekistan until 2030 https://api.mf.uz/media/document_files/DNO_IPMI_ru.pdf).

The implementation of the main goals and objectives of sustainable development is facilitated not only by international acts, but also by other strategic documents adopted in the country. In June 2020, the National Strategy for Human Rights was approved by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan⁴². The document increases the role of the parliament and civil society institutions in achieving the SDGs for the period up to 2030, ensuring the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities and categories of the low-income population in accordance with the UN principle “Leave no one behind”. One of the priority areas in the field of sustainable development, as well as in the field of protection of economic, social and cultural rights is formulated as follows:

Uzbekistan’s national human rights strategy

Encouraging **lifelong learning** opportunities, raising primary and general secondary education to a qualitatively new level, ensuring universal accessibility of specialized secondary, higher, vocational and supplementary education, as well as expanding the coverage of young people with higher education, increasing quotas for higher education institutions on the basis of a state grant

In pursuance of the main provisions of this strategy, a joint decision of the Chambers of the Oliy Majlis established a parliamentary commission to monitor Uzbekistan’s compliance with international human rights obligations, including the right of everyone to education throughout life.

International conferences on ALE “CONFITEA”



The International CONFITEA Conferences on Adult Education⁴³, under the auspices of UNESCO, play a key role in the promotion and development of adult education. These conferences are held every 10-12 years and bring together representatives from governments, international organizations, civil society and academia to develop a global ALE agenda which guides the development of national and international strategies.

The last CONFITEA VII conference was held in 2022 in Marrakech, Kingdom of Morocco⁴⁴, 142 countries, including Uzbekistan, participated. The delegation from Uzbekistan consisted of representatives of the State Inspectorate for Quality Control of Education, the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Special Education, and the Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations⁴⁵.

Participants from Uzbekistan made a report on the New Uzbekistan Development Strategy for 2022-2026, in which a certain place is given to the development of ALE.

For example, Goal 37 of the Strategy deals with adult vocational education: “Creating the possibility of training a specific profession for every citizen at the expense of the state. Increase the scale of vocational training by 2 times, train 1 million unemployed citizens in professions and bring the participation of non-state educational institutions in this process to 30 per cent ”⁴⁶. Representatives of Uzbekistan took part in some bilateral official meetings during the conference, exchanging experience in the field of ALE and LLL.

⁴²On Approval of the National Human Rights Strategy of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, No. DP-6012, Date of adoption 22.06.2020, Date of entry into force 23.06.2020

⁴³CONFITEA (French acronym: CONFérence INTERNationale sur l’Education des Adultes) - International Conference on Adult Education. The first conference was held in 1949 in Elsinore (Denmark), in 1960 in Montreal (Canada); in 1972 in Tokyo (Japan); in 1985 in Paris (France); in 1997 in Hamburg (Germany), in 2009 in Belém (Brazil). in 2022 in Marrakech (Morocco).

⁴⁴CONFITEA VII conference website - <https://www.uil.unesco.org/en/seventh-international-conference-adult-education>

⁴⁵Website of the Institute for the Development of Vocational Education https://ipitvet.uz/ru/yangilik_detail/63/

⁴⁶Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 28.01.2022, No. DP-60 “On the Strategy for the Development of New Uzbekistan for 2022-2026” <https://lex.uz/ru/docs/5841077>



Future priorities for ALE were identified at the conference within the concept of lifelong learning, taking into account the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The conference resulted in the Marrakech Framework for Action (MFA)⁴⁷, which emphasizes the importance of integrating adult education into national strategies. The MFA states “the need to strengthen the role of governments in establishing mechanisms and rules, allocating financial and human resources to support ALE structures, and regulating, promoting, incentivizing, coordinating and monitoring ALE as a public and common good within a framework of enhanced public education”.

The Marrakech Framework for Action is a guide for ALE policy development and implementation for at least the next decade. The following is a comparison of the recommendations of the MFA with recent legislation in thematic terms (Table 2). In most cases, the comparison period covers only the last 2 years, the period after the adoption of the Marrakech Framework for Action.

**Comparison of MFA recommendations with legislation
of the Republic of Uzbekistan**

Table 2

MFA article number and topic of recommendation	Number and topic of the legislative act addressing the topic of ALE
22. The importance of intersectoral platforms	Information portal nsgd.stat.uz
23. Supporting ALE structures	“Formation of the state order for training in-demand professions and foreign languages” (RP-347, 04.10.2024)
24. Strengthening institutional capacity	“Activities on vocational training of population of territorial subdivisions of the Ministry of Poverty Reduction and Employment are organized according to the principle of project approach” (RP-347, 04.10.2024)
25. The importance of recognizing prior learning, validation and accreditation of non-formal and informal learning	Implementation of the system of recognition of non-formally and informally acquired skills and qualifications “Recognition of Prior Learning” (No. RP-345, 30.09.2024). https://lex.uz/ru/docs/7132771
26. The key role of teachers, educators and professional development	Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan, No. LRU-901, 01.02.2024 “On the Status of the Educator” https://lex.uz/ru/docs/6786403
27. Increasing funding in accordance with international targets (at least 4-6% of GDP and/or at least 15-20% of total budget expenditure on education).	Draft Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the State Budget for 2025. Increase of social expenditures by 20%. https://api.mf.uz/media/filestore/qonun_loyiha.pdf
28. Promoting relevant, non-discriminatory and gender-sensitive education programmes	Presidential Decree No. DP-158, 16.10.2024. On the introduction of international educational programmes in vocational education. https://lex.uz/ru/docs/7166625
29. Collaborative research to support developers, teachers and participants in ALE programmes.	
30. Expanding the scope of global ALE funding mechanisms	The country platform is in place, including on education issues ⁴⁸
31. Increased access to ALE for vulnerable groups and communities.	Presidential Resolution No. RP-330, 24.09.2024 “On Priority Measures for the Implementation of the Programme “From Poverty to Prosperity” https://lex.uz/ru/docs/7109782

⁴⁷Marrakech Framework for Action CONFINTTEA VII “Harnessing the Transformative Potential of Adult Learning and Education” https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000382306_rus

⁴⁸Uzbekistan Country Platform 2024: Strategic Focus on Progress in Education, Skills Development, Technical and Vocational Education and Training

32. Dissemination of information to raise awareness of training opportunities.	Platforms https://geekbrains.uz/ , https://yoshlardaftari.uz/
33. Implementation of robust and transparent ALE information systems	Open and free access to the Vocational Education platform from 01.09.2025 (#DP-158, 16.10.2024). https://lex.uz/ru/docs/7166625
34. Improving public literacy	Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, No. RP-239, 28.06.2024 "On additional measures to increase the effectiveness of the system of teaching foreign languages to young people". https://lex.uz/docs/6986619
35. Creating a culture of lifelong learning in the workplace	"Introduction of a new experience from 1 March 2025 that provides the opportunity to build practical vocational skills directly in the workplace" (RP-347, 04.10.2024). https://lex.uz/ru/docs/7131784
36. Promote education for sustainable development	Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 22.02.2022 "On additional measures to accelerate the implementation of the National Sustainable Development Goals and targets for the period until 2030". https://lex.uz/ru/docs/5873508
37. Reducing the digital divide and promoting digital literacy and skills	DP-6079 (2020), #DP-6268 (2021) "On approval of the Digital Uzbekistan-2030 Strategy and measures for its effective implementation" Organization of training of 587 thousand people in the basics of computer programming, including by attracting 500 thousand young people within the framework of the "One Million Programmers" project https://lex.uz/ru/docs/5031048
38. The importance of learning for personal well-being and public health.	Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, No.272, 05.07.2023 "On measures to establish the Centre for retraining of personnel in the sphere of sanitary-epidemiological well-being and public health and improving their qualifications"
39. Strengthening civic education for adults	
40. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a road map	Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 22.02.2022 "On additional measures to accelerate the implementation of the National Sustainable Development Goals and targets for the period until 2030". https://lex.uz/ru/docs/5873508

**Compiled on the basis of a comparative analysis of the MFA and the legislation of the Republic of Uzbekistan related to ALE issues.*

The analysis of Uzbek legislation in the light of the recommendations of the Marrakesh Framework for Action shows the coincidence of many thematic areas despite the fact that the legislation does not refer to these recommendations and there are no activities devoted for their implementation in correlation with the implementation of the SDGs.

Global Reports on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE)

UNESCO's Global Reports on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE) are published approximately every three years and monitor to which extent UNESCO Member States fulfil in practice their international commitments to adult learning and education.

GRALEs are developed based on surveys, policy analyses and case studies to provide policymakers and practitioners with sound advice and success stories.



Since 2009, five GRALE reports have been published⁴⁹. Uzbekistan participated in all five reports, providing national statistics in the field of ALE according to a broad understanding of the term. All reports emphasize that adult education should become a priority at the state level in order to ensure equitable and sustainable development of society as a whole. The main message of the fifth GRALE report says that ALE worldwide should reach those who need it most. Unfortunately, the world situation is not yet in line with this desirable trend: “Adult education is not accessible to those who need it most”.

In addition to the above-mentioned sources (conferences, reports, resolutions, recommendations), international trends are reflected in various publications on the implementation of ALE and lifelong learning concepts. These are studies of international organizations such as UNESCO, OECD, World Bank, Asian Development Bank,

DVV International and others. The analysis of these publications allows us to list the most relevant directions of development of this sphere

- **The urgent need for Lifelong learning:** adults must constantly learn new skills to adapt to economic and technological changes in order to remain competitive in the labor market.
- **Policies to support and finance ALE:** the need for increased government support, public-private partnerships, international funding and other additional resources to create a sustainable system of lifelong learning and adult education.
- **Accessibility and access:** the need to increase access to education for all categories of adults; to provide educational opportunities for people living in rural and remote areas; to reduce financial barriers⁵⁰.
- **Inclusion and equity in education:** addressing gender and social inequalities by providing equal opportunities for all population groups.
- **Quality and relevance of educational programmes:** high demand for the development of educational programmes adapted to the needs of adults and their professional goals; systematic training of teachers and tutors with andragogical competences for effective adult learning.
- **Digitalization and bridging the digital divide:** making digital resources accessible to all residents and strengthening programmes to teach digital skills and make technology more accessible for knowledge and employment.
- **Education for sustainable development and environmental literacy:** the need to incorporate the principles of sustainable development into educational programmes to generate public awareness of the importance of environmental conservation and sustainable consumption.
- **Integrating 21st century skills into learning programmes:** building skills such as: critical thinking, emotional skills, communication, creativity; developing global, intercultural and social awareness.

⁴⁹Five such reports have been produced: GRALE-1 (2009), GRALE-2 (2013), GRALE-3 (2016), GRALE-4 (2019), GRALE 5 (2022).

⁵⁰In the context of adult education, access to education means that educational programmes exist. Accessibility of education means that these programmes not only exist but also take into account the needs of different groups of adults, including people with disabilities, people from remote areas and people with low incomes.

At the international level, efforts focus on creating an inclusive, accessible and flexible education system which helps adults to be more active participants in society and adapt to the challenges of the twenty-first century. ALE is an integral part of the global agenda of social development, equity and sustainability. These principles form the basis of policy in Uzbekistan as well.

1.2. Participation of the non-state sector in policy-making in adult learning and education



The Government of Uzbekistan is taking steps to strengthen the role of civil society in various spheres, including education. Non-governmental organizations are actively involved in addressing pressing sustainable development issues in various sectors, including education, health care, poverty eradication, human rights, gender equality and many others.

Non-government non-profit organizations (NGOs) and non-government educational organizations (NGEOs) play a role in making policy decisions in the field of adult education. Their participation is implemented through such mechanisms as public councils under state institutions, public discussions of draft regulations, implementation of social projects, which can also influence the formation of public policy in the field of ALE.

Cooperation with various international organizations also facilitates the involvement of civil society in decision-making processes. Another opportunity to make someone's position considered by decision-makers is participation in various forums and conferences on ALE. A good example is the previously mentioned Parliamentary Commission on Monitoring the SDGs, which includes experts from different ministries, as well as representatives of the non-formal education sector and civil society.

The New Uzbekistan Development Strategy for 2022-2026 was also developed through extensive public consultations, which provided an in-depth analysis of the development situation in Uzbekistan and identified 100 key goals and objectives for the country's further development in 7 strategic directions.

The Goal 83 of the New Uzbekistan Development Strategy is formulated as "Further development of free civil society and media activities, turning Uzbekistan into a hub for civil society development". One of the performance indicators of this goal, which should be achieved by 2030, is to increase the number of non-governmental non-profit organizations participating in government programmes to at least 80.

However, in general, the potential of the non-formal education sector in policy-making has not yet been sufficiently utilized. International and foreign organizations are trying to promote and reveal this potential by conducting events to discuss the most significant priorities for the development of ALE for Uzbekistan. For example, such priorities in light of the promising areas declared in the MFA were discussed in June 2023 at the Central Asian workshop "The Transformative Power of Adult Learning and Education". The workshop was organized for DVV International partners as part of the events following the CONFINTEA VII International Conference in order to promote its recommendations.

Table 3 below presents some of the developments made by the participants of this workshop - representatives of partner organizations of the non-formal adult education sector from Uzbekistan.

Challenges, Resources and Opportunities in Implementing the MFA Recommendations

Table 3

Challenges	Resources and opportunities
There is no system for training andragogues	Development of specialized training programmes for andragogues based at universities, pedagogical colleges and advanced training institutes. Introduction of undergraduate, master's and certification courses in andragogy. Formation of a national standard for training andragogues taking into account international experience.
No statistics on ALE as a sector	Promoting the necessity of such statistics through research, publications, events. Inclusion of monitoring and reporting tasks in the functions of already existing statistical offices (e.g. State Committee of Statistics of Uzbekistan).
ALE is not considered as a separate sector of education	Formation of an inter-ministerial group involving the Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Health and other stakeholders to develop ALE policy. Incorporating ALE as a specific area in national strategies and programmes, such as sustainable development strategies, education reforms or employment plans.
Lack of awareness among government agencies and the public about alternative options teaching methods	Organizing national information campaigns through television, radio, social media and print media on the benefits and opportunities of alternative learning methods. Creating videos, infographics and publications explaining the essence of methods such as online learning, gamification, blended learning and project-based approach.
Limited access to resources (for informal education) in the remote rural areas	Allocation of subsidies for organizations involved in the development of non-formal education in rural areas. Development of mobile applications and platforms which provide access to learning materials, video lessons, audiobooks and tests. Example: a platform with offline access for downloading content.

The main barriers to non-state sector participation in adult learning and education policy-making are:

- Limited funding for these organisations
- Institutional weakness
- Insufficient coordination with the state management institutions, etc.

These obstacles (barriers) are discussed in details in the paragraph 2.3. "Management of the education system".

The development of clear mechanisms to enable non-formal education providers to participate in decision-making, information campaigns and financial support will help to remove these barriers, leading to a more effective system of education and lifelong learning which addresses the needs of modern society.

1.3 Export and import of educational services

Export of educational services is the provision of educational services (e.g. training of foreign citizens in Uzbek educational institutions, training and seminars for foreign citizens, online courses) by a legal entity or individual of Uzbekistan to a legal entity or individual of a foreign country, regardless of the place of their provision. This ensures the inflow of foreign currency into the country, which contributes to strengthening the economy and improving the balance of payments. Successful export of educational services contributes to the international prestige of Uzbekistan as a country with a developed education system. Work with foreign students requires teachers to improve their qualifications, knowledge of foreign languages and application of modern teaching methods. The Government of Uzbekistan actively supports the development



of exports of educational services. Measures are being taken to modernize higher education institutions, improve the qualifications of teachers, and encourage foreign investment in education.

Import of educational services is the receipt of educational services (e.g. training of citizens of Uzbekistan in foreign educational institutions, participation in international conferences and seminars, online courses of foreign educational platforms) from a legal entity or individual of a foreign state by a legal entity or individual of the Republic of Uzbekistan, regardless of the place of their provision. Import of educational services provides access

to the latest achievements in various fields of science, technology and education, which may not be available in the country. Studying abroad allows Uzbek specialists to obtain internationally recognized qualifications and improve their competitiveness in the labor market, facilitates the establishment and development of partnerships with foreign educational institutions and organizations, and provides an opportunity to learn foreign languages in a natural environment.

According to the Agency for Statistics, in 2023/2024, 10.8 thousand students arrived in Uzbekistan to study. This is twice more than in 2022/2023. Among foreign students, the majority are from India (5,733). Most of them came to study medicine. Then come students from Pakistan 1358 students and 904 students are from Turkmenistan. Between January and April 2024, 6.4 thousand foreign nationals entered Uzbekistan to study. Compared to the same period last year, this figure increased by 2.4 thousand, or 59.8%. Full list of countries with the number of citizens who came to Uzbekistan for the purpose of education in the first 4 months of 2024:

India - 290	China - 242
Turkmenistan - 1627	Pakistan - 237
Tajikistan - 758	Afghanistan - 132
Kyrgyzstan - 317	U.S. - 118
South Korea - 249	Kazakhstan - 102
	Other countries - 535

From January to September 2024, 30.4 thousand citizens of Uzbekistan travelled abroad to study⁵¹. Compared to the same period last year, this indicator grew by 3.2%, increasing by 952 people. The top three countries which accepted students from Uzbekistan are Tajikistan (11,409), Russia (7,301) and Kyrgyzstan (2,845). Turkey is in fourth place with 2,195 people, South Korea (1,839) and Kazakhstan (1,372) people. The distribution of Uzbek citizens who went to study in non-CIS countries is as follows: 693 Uzbeks are studying in the United Kingdom, 672 in China, 486 in the United States and 295 in the United Arab Emirates. There are 1,292 Uzbeks studying in the rest of the world.

According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, Uzbekistan ranks third in the world in terms of the number of students studying in foreign countries.

It is also important to note the government's initiative to train young people abroad. For this purpose, the El-Yurt Umidi Foundation was established under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan⁵². Its main objective is to support the training and professional development of highly qualified specialists abroad. The foundation provides scholarships, organizes internships and educational programmes in leading foreign educational and scientific institutions. In addition, the

⁵¹Podrobno.uz "More than 30 thousand citizens of Uzbekistan study abroad", 07.11.2024. <https://podrobno.uz/cat/obchestvo/bolee-30-tysyach-grazhdan-uzbekistana-uchatsya-za-rubezhom-statagentstvo/>

⁵²Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On the organization of the activities of the 'El-Yurt Umidi' Foundation for training specialists abroad and dialogue with compatriots under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan" DP-5545 from 25.09.2018 <https://lex.uz/docs/3920035>

foundation actively develops cooperation with Uzbek specialists and scientists living abroad in order to attract their knowledge and experience for sustainable development of Uzbekistan. Every year, about 500 students are sent to study at the world's leading universities, which are among the top 300, to obtain a bachelor's, master's or doctor of philosophy (PhD) degree.

In the field of training workers and engineering professions, going abroad to acquire the necessary knowledge is also practiced. Thus, according to the Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction, in 2024, 30 master engineers were sent to China for training in the field of repair and programming of electric vehicles. In connection with the construction of the Center for Assessment and Training of Teachers for the National Certification System in Tashkent with the financial support of the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), 15 specialists from Uzbekistan completed an internship in South Korea.

320 medical workers were sent to work in medical clinics in Germany, and 450 nurses are currently studying German within this programme, 170 are in the process of obtaining visas. In order to expand this project, the German Medical Academy will be created in Uzbekistan. Cooperation relations have been established with the Qualifications Development Committee of Turkey (MYK) on the implementation of professional standards and a qualification assessment system in Uzbekistan.

The export and import of educational services promote cultural exchange, broaden the horizons of students, and strengthen international cooperation in the field of adult learning and education.

1.4 International co-operation in the field of ALE



Uzbekistan actively cooperates with international and foreign organizations in the development of adult learning and education. This cooperation plays an important role in modernizing the education system, introducing new methods and technologies, and improving the qualifications of specialists. Organizations providing support to Uzbekistan in this field include:

UNESCO: supports the development of adult education policies, the promotion of non-formal education, literacy and the concept of lifelong learning.

UNDP: supports sustainable development at all levels, including education and skills development, and implements projects aimed at socio-economic development, including support for adult vocational training and retraining programmes, employment promotion and entrepreneurship development.

DVV International – the Institute for International Cooperation of the Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband e.V. (DVV), the German Adult Education Association, active in Uzbekistan since 2002, it promotes adult and non-formal education, supports partner organizations, conducts trainings and seminars, facilitates exchange of experience and disseminates the concept of lifelong learning, paying special attention to the development of education in rural areas and support for vulnerable groups.

The World Bank: finances education projects aimed at modernizing the education system, improving infrastructure and enhancing the quality of learning.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB): provides financial and technical assistance for education projects, including vocational and adult education.

The U.S. Embassy in Uzbekistan: offers various educational exchange programmes, such as the Fulbright Program, which allow Uzbek specialists to upgrade their qualifications at American universities.

The Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA): implements projects aimed at improving the qualifications of specialists, developing innovative approaches in education, creating and equipping modern vocational training centers, developing and introducing new curricula which meet modern labor market requirements, training teachers and trainers in new teaching methods.

The International Labor Organization (ILO): conducts research and develops programmes in the fields of labor relations, employment and social protection.

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO): focuses on the development of industry and entrepreneurship, including through vocational training programmes.

UNESCO and DVV International: often join forces and together with local partners, including government, civil society and the media, organize joint activities to promote ALE and the concept of lifelong learning. Some of them are listed below:

- The Regional Conference “**Education for All - Lifelong Learning in Central Asia**”, was held on 4-5 June 2003 in Tashkent. The conference was attended by about 180 participants from countries in the Asian region, CIS and Europe.
- **The National Adult Education Forum** was held on 15-17 November 2011 in Tashkent. The Forum was attended by more than 120 participants - representatives of governmental, non-governmental and private organizations in the country, as well as international organizations.
- The National Conference “**Rethinking Education in the Context of Ongoing Reforms in Uzbekistan: Policy, Quality and Lifelong Learning**” was held on 14 December 2017 in Tashkent. The conference was attended by government partners, private sector representatives and development partners, international and local experts (about 120 attendees).
- The national workshop “**European experience of recognition and validation of professional competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning**” was held in November 2015 in Tashkent. The workshop was attended by 45 participants: a) government ministries and agencies (The State Testing Center, Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education, Ministry of Public Education, Center for Secondary Specialized, Vocational Education, Ministry of Employment, etc.) that are involved in the development of policies and regulatory norms in employment and education; b) other parties involved in sectoral dialogues (Chamber of Commerce and Industry, trade unions, business associations and NGOs).
- The workshop “**Concept for Promoting Lifelong Learning in Uzbekistan**” was held on 15 August 2018. The seminar brought together representatives of state authorities making key decisions in the field of education, as well as experts from academia, civil society organizations, business and other parties. The meeting was attended by leading international experts from Germany and South Korea, as well as decision-makers in the development of education from Central Asia and Eastern Europe (total number of participants - 50).
- The international conference dedicated to the 30th anniversary of Uzbekistan's independence “**The role and significance of socially oriented non-profit NGOs in the development of the New Uzbekistan**” was held in Tashkent on 13 September 2021 with the organizational participation of NGO “SABR”. Participants included: representatives of State authorities, “Ishga Markhamat” regional mono-centers⁵³, business structures, international

⁵³Reorganized into Vocational Skills Centers under the Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction.

organizations, local development centers, foreign partners, NGOs, media, etc. A total of 176 participants attended the conference.

- The Festival **“Creation of Learning Territories and Innovations in Adult Education for Socio-Economic Development of Uzbekistan”** (conference, exhibition of handicrafts, photo exhibition, fair, master classes, free discussions) took place in Samarkand on 21-22 October 2022 (organizer of the Festival - NGO “SABR”). Participants included: foreign partners from the Federal Republic of Germany, representatives of governmental and administrative authorities, non-governmental sector and Parliaments of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan; representatives of state authorities, the Senate and Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Republic of Karakalpakstan, universities, non-state educational institutions, civil society institutions, heads and staff of 16 “Ishga Markhamat” mono-centers, socially oriented NGOs, representatives of socially oriented non-profit organizations, representatives of civil society, representatives of NGOs. A total of 160 participants attended the conference.

- The regional conference **“Adult Learning and Education in Central Asia: Current Trends and Perspectives”** was held in Tashkent on 17-18 December 2024. Participants: foreign partners from the Federal Republic of Germany, representatives of the authorities and non-governmental sector of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Tajikistan; experts from the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Georgia, as well as representatives of state authorities and NGOs of the Republic of Uzbekistan. A total of 84 participants attended the conference.

Many of these events culminated with outcome documents which offered policy recommendations for adult education. They reflect the consensus reached during the discussions of all parties representing governmental, non-governmental and private actors.

Thanks to cooperation with international and foreign organizations, Uzbekistan is experiencing positive dynamics in the development of adult education and lifelong learning. The number of people receiving education is increasing, the quality of education services is improving, and new forms and methods of education are being developed. International cooperation contributes to the modernization of the education system, the improvement of the quality of human capital and the socio-economic development of the country.

2. STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONING OF THE ADULT EDUCATION SYSTEM IN UZBEKISTAN

2.1 Key elements of ALE system



ALE is playing an increasingly important role in Uzbekistan's public policy. Although not always explicitly expressed as a stand-alone strategy, several key directions of the country's development involve this sector in one way or another, positively impacting its expansion and strengthening. Among such directions are investments in human capital development, transition to a diversified economy, digitalization, employment policy, etc. The general trend allows us to hope for more large-scale transformations in the future.

The Law "On Education" ⁵⁴ lists the main elements of the national education system:

- state educational standards, requirements and curricula;
- educational organizations;
- organizations carrying out quality assessment of education;
- scientific and pedagogical institutions conducting research work;
- public administration institutions and their subordinate organizations.

Using a similar approach to define the ALE system elements, taking into account the interpretation of this term in a broad sense, it is possible to identify the following components of this system in Uzbekistan:

Regulatory and methodological support for ALE

- legislative acts regulating ALE aimed at the development of ALE;
- State programmes and strategies for the development of ALE;
- methodological guidelines;
- curricula and programmes for adults.

Educational organizations implementing ALE programmes

- vocational training centers and centers for advanced training;
- technical schools, universities, high schools;
- NGOs, NGEOs;
- private education centers;
- culture centers.

Organizations assessing the quality of ALE

- State authorities for quality control of education;
- independent organizations involved in accreditation and certification of adult education programmes.

⁵⁴"On Education" Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan, No. LRU-637, 23.09.2020

Scientific and pedagogical institutions engaged in ALE research

- research institutes and centers that conduct research on andragogy, adult professional learning, continuing education and other aspects of ALE.

Public administration institutions in the field of ALE

- Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction,
- Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation,
- other agencies responsible for ALE policy development and implementation,
- local authorities responsible for implementing ALE programmes at the regional level.

ALE information systems

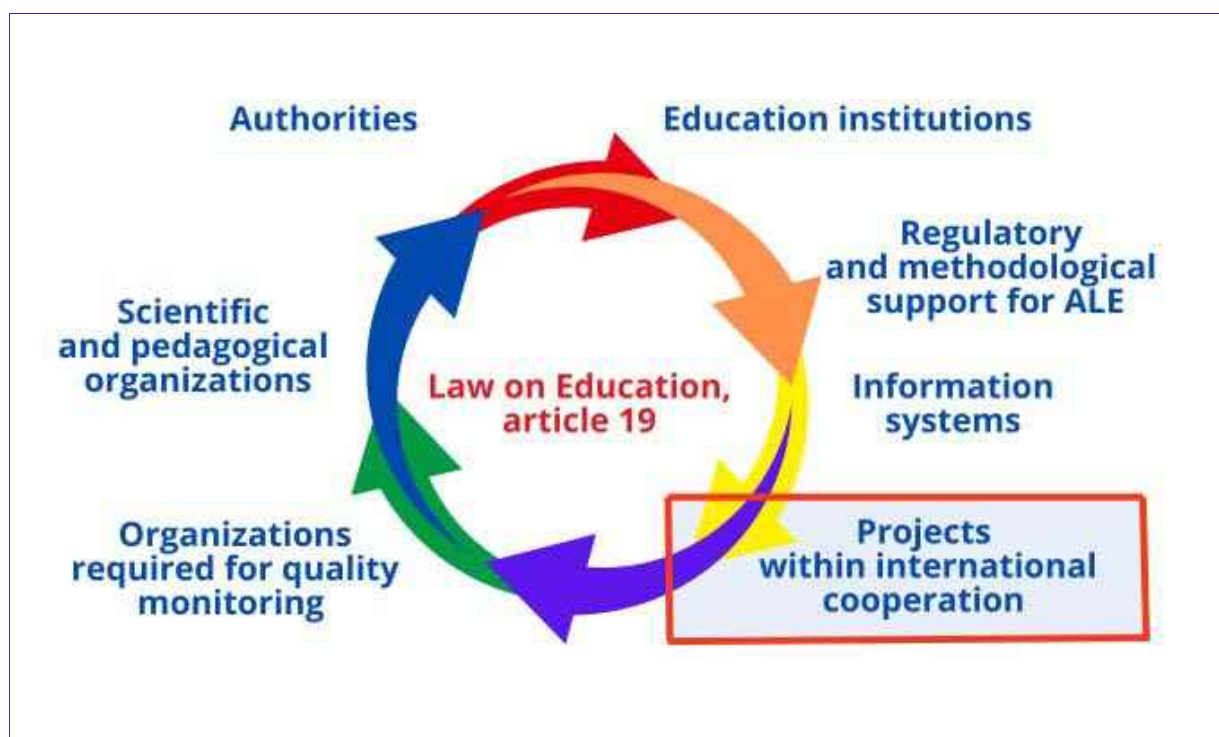
- digital platforms and resources which provide access to learning opportunities for adults,
- online courses,
- databases of educational programmes,
- tools for assessing competences.

These elements together form the ALE system in Uzbekistan, ensuring accessibility, quality and effectiveness of lifelong learning.

International cooperation projects have recently become more important for ALE, so this area of activity, although outside the national education system, is also included among the elements which create the ALE system (Figure 1).

Figure 1

ALE system in Uzbekistan



**Source: DVV International Uzbekistan.*

Although ALE is not a separate sub-sector of education, it is present as a form of learning in all other sub-sectors which have programmes aimed at adult learners.

2.2 Legislative framework regulating ALE



The legislative framework regulating adult learning and education in Uzbekistan is in the process of active development and improvement. The main legislative acts include:

The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan⁵⁵, which highlights that everyone shall have the right to education and “The State shall ensure the development of a continuous education system, its various types and forms, state and non-state educational organizations. The State shall guarantee general secondary and basic vocational education free of charge. The

general secondary education shall be compulsory. Pre-school education and upbringing, general secondary education shall be under state supervision. Citizens shall have the right to receive higher education in state educational organizations on a competitive basis at the expense of the state” (articles 50-51).

The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Education” (2020)⁵⁶ notes the principles of continuity and succession of education and lifelong learning (article 4) and guarantees everyone equal rights to education, irrespective of sex, race, nationality, language, religion, social origin, beliefs, or personal or social status (article 5). For the first time, the Law recognizes adult learning and education as “a central component of lifelong learning” (article 19). The new version of the Law of 07.09.2024 added Article 14’ “Enlightenment activities”. An enlightenment activity is considered to be a type of activity not covered by state educational standards, aimed at the formation of necessary skills and qualifications for personal, intellectual and spiritual development of a person, increase of social and economic activity, demonstration of intellectual and creative potential, improvement of individual potential, skills, communicative abilities. Despite the fact that the Law does not prescribe the legal basis for the development and implementation of the state policy in the field of adult education, the organization of institutional frameworks and structures, the necessary financing of adult education, it serves as a basis for the development of the adult learning and education sector. Other legislative acts do not use the term “adult education”, but this sphere is regulated by concrete provisions.

The Law “On Employment” (2024)⁵⁷ defines rules for job seekers and unemployed, the organization of vocational training, retraining and professional development of vocational training at work, the tasks of the National System for the Development of Professional Qualifications and Competences, the functions of the Republican Council for the Development of Qualifications and Competences, and the Qualifications Assessment Centers. In the new version of this Law, the description of work on the implementation of state programmes with the participation of the non-government sector for the training of socially vulnerable segments of the population — including the unemployed, women, migrants, persons with physical disabilities, and persons released from prison — has been expanded to include “*persons who have suffered from family (domestic) violence.*”

The Labor Code (2023)⁵⁸ establishes the concepts of “vocational training” and “retraining and further training of workers”, defines the procedure, conditions, forms and varieties of retraining and further training for workers, as well as the conditions for combining the work with training, granting study, annual labor and creative leave with average wages at the place of work, granting a shorter working week and other guarantees for adult learners.

⁵⁵Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, from 01.05.2023 <https://lex.uz/docs/6445145>

⁵⁶Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Education, No. LRU-637, from 23.09.2020 <https://lex.uz/ru/docs/5013009>

⁵⁷Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on introducing amendments and additions to the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On employment”, No. LRU-967, from 27.09.2024

⁵⁸Labor Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan, from 30.04.2023 <https://lex.uz/ru/docs/6257291>

The Law “On Cultural Activities and Cultural Organizations”⁵⁹ along with the Law “On Education” regulates the educational activities of cultural centers and other culture and educational enlightenment organizations, the main activity of which is “creating conditions for meeting intellectual, spiritual, moral, cultural and educational needs and developing the creative abilities of the individual”. Culture centers may carry out educational activities in accordance with the legislation on education (organization of cultural and enlightenment events, courses, master classes and other educational programmes).

The Law “On Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations”⁶⁰ along with the Law “On Education” regulates the educational activities of NGOs and non-government education organization (NGEO). The educational activities of NGOs and NPOs must comply with the requirements of the legislation on education, including licensing and accreditation requirements.

Presidential Resolutions and Decrees also regulate by law the field of adult learning and education. Among the most important are the following:

DP-76 “On Additional Measures to Ensure the Quality of Education and to Improve the System of Providing Educational Services”⁶¹.

In order to determine the mechanisms for external evaluation of the activities of educational and research organizations and improve the quality of educational services provided, establish the National Quality Assurance Agency for Education under the Administration of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan (hereinafter referred to as the Agency) on the basis of the “Education Sector Projects Office”.

RP-345 “On measures for further improvement of the National Qualifications System of the Republic of Uzbekistan”. Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 30.09.2024⁶².

In order to develop the National Qualifications System, ensure mutual integration of the labor market and education, legal and institutional regulation of the demand for qualifications, and expand opportunities for lifelong learning and consistent continuation of employment: to improve the National Qualifications System; to develop a National Classifier of Occupations, Professions and Positions based on international standards; to develop and implement qualification frameworks, professional standards and qualifications; and to develop and implement the National Qualifications System.

RP-347 “On measures to improve and increase the effectiveness of the state policy in the sphere of employment and poverty reduction”. Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 04.10.2024⁶³.

One of the areas of activity of the Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction is supposed to be “the creation of professional skills centers on the basis of the “Ishga Markhamat” mono-centers and professional training centers under the Ministry”, to begin “the development of professional standards, training in professions and foreign languages, assessment of

⁵⁹Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Cultural Activities and Cultural Organizations”, No. LRU-668 from 20.01.2021 <https://lex.uz/ru/docs/5230686>

⁶⁰Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Non-State Non-Profit Organizations” No. 763-I of 14.04.1999. <https://lex.uz/ru/docs/5230686>

⁶¹Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Additional Measures to Ensure the Quality of Education and to Improve The System of Providing Educational Services”. DP-76 from 05.05.2025 <https://www.lex.uz/docs/7513059>

⁶²Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On measures for further improvement of the National Qualifications System of the Republic of Uzbekistan” RP-345 from 30.09.2024 <https://lex.uz/ru/docs/7132771>

⁶³Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Measures to Improve and Increase the Effectiveness of State Policy in the Sphere of Employment and Poverty Reduction” RP-347 from 04.10.2024 <http://lex.uz/ru/docs/7131784>

qualifications - the development of professional standards recognized abroad with the involvement of international experts, the formation of the state order for training in popular professions and foreign languages, regulation of the market for qualification assessment services based on standards, wide involvement of the private sector in the sphere”, and the Ministry is also granted the right: “to transfer for free use or long-term lease to foreign employers and educational organizations buildings and structures of professional skills centers or their parts together with equipment on the basis of direct contracts for the organization of courses for training in professions and foreign languages in them.”

DP-158 “On measures to further improve the system of training qualified personnel and introducing international educational programmes in vocational education”. Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 16.10.2024⁶⁴.

This Decree allows technical schools to “organize short-term training courses on vocational training, foreign languages and entrepreneurship for citizens of various ages and the unemployed at the expense of the State Fund for Employment Promotion” starting from the 2025/2026 academic year.

DP-6012 “On Approval of the National Human Rights Strategy of the Republic of Uzbekistan”, Presidential Decree, 22.06.2020⁶⁵.

It emphasizes the need to “improve the quality and coverage of education at all levels, develop a system of lifelong learning, ensure inclusiveness and universal accessibility of the learning system” and “promote lifelong learning opportunities, raise primary and general secondary education to a qualitatively new level, ensure universal accessibility of secondary specialized, higher, vocational and additional education...”.

DP-60 “On the Strategy of Development of New Uzbekistan for 2022-2026”. Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 28.01.2022 ⁶⁶.

Goal 37: “Creating the possibility of training a specific profession for every citizen at the expense of the state. Increase the scale of vocational training twofold, providing vocational training to 1 million unemployed citizens and increasing the participation of non-state educational institutions in this process to 30%. Providing comprehensive assistance in training, mastering professional skills and providing women with decent jobs, supporting women’s entrepreneurship, identifying and properly orientating the abilities of gifted girls and women”.

Despite an extensive legislative framework, Uzbekistan lacks a clear framework which defines the structure, objectives and mechanisms for implementing ALE programmes. This leads to fragmented approaches and makes it difficult to coordinate the efforts of different stakeholders.

The lack of a single intersectoral management body coordinating ALE activities leads to duplication of functions, insufficient use of resources and the absence of a systemic approach to the development of the sector.

⁶⁴Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On measures for further improvement of the system of training of qualified personnel and introduction of international educational programmes in vocational education” DP-158 from 16.10.2024 <https://lex.uz/ru/docs/7166625>

⁶⁵Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Approval of the National Human Rights Strategy of the Republic of Uzbekistan”, DP-6012 from 22.06.2020 <http://lex.uz/ru/docs/4872357>

⁶⁶Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On the Strategy of Development of New Uzbekistan for 2022-2026”. DP-60 of 28.01.2022 <https://lex.uz/ru/docs/5841077>

The lack of legislation establishing ALE as an independent sub-sector of education creates legal uncertainty and hinders the development of effective management and financing mechanisms, while the lack of centralized management and accounting of ALE data hampers needs assessment, programme planning and monitoring of results, creating constraints which need to be overcome to ensure the effective functioning of the sector and the realization of its potential in the socio-economic development of the country.

2.3 Management of the education system



Several state institutions at the republican, regional and local levels are involved in the management of the education system. In order to effectively use budget funds, improve mutual coordination of activities and ensure continuity at different levels of education, from January 1, 2023, three ministries: the Ministry of Preschool and School Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction of the Republic of Uzbekistan develop and implement a unified state policy, organize activities on internal system management in the field of adult learning and education⁶⁷.

Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction in accordance with its mandate:

- participates in the development of professional standards;
- forms the state order for training in in-demand professions and foreign languages;
- organizes professional education (training), retraining and advanced training for teaching staff of training centers;
- organizes and finances the education of the poor, unemployed citizens to professions and entrepreneurship at the level of makhalla, district (city) and regional centers.

The Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On measures to improve and increase the effectiveness of the state policy in the sphere of employment and poverty reduction” dated 05.10.2024⁶⁸ defines such areas as the development of professional standards, training in professions and foreign languages, qualification assessment - development of professional standards recognized abroad with the involvement of international experts, formation of the state order for training in demand as the main directions of the Ministry’s activity.

In order to create a system of job training for unemployed and poor citizens to meet the requirements of the domestic and external labor market, the Ministry is responsible for:

- Establishing vocational skills centers on the basis of the “Ishga Markhamat” Monocentres and vocational training centres under the Ministry;
- Providing in the Ministry’s skills centers the following services:
 - ✓ the organization of express courses starting from 1 January 2025, which include duration and timing of training adapted to requirements of employers;
 - ✓ introduction of a new experience from 1 March 2025, providing the opportunity to develop practical professional skills directly in the workplace;
 - ✓ introduction of internationally recognized educational programmes from 1 May 2025;

⁶⁷Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On measures to implement administrative reforms of New Uzbekistan”, 21.12. 2022, No. DP-269. <https://lex.uz/ru/docs/6324798>

⁶⁸Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan on measures to improve and enhance the effectiveness of the state policy in the area of employment and poverty reduction, No. RP-347, 04.10.2024 <https://lex.uz/ru/docs/7131784>

✓ issuing certificates (qualification passports) to graduates, recognized abroad through accreditation of centers professional skills by international evaluation organizations until 1 January 2026.

- until 1 July 2026, with the involvement of a qualified foreign organization, to establish a center for the assessment of professional qualifications on the basis of international standards and to establish the issuance of qualification certificates recognized in foreign countries in this center;

In accordance with the Law “On Education”, the overall management of the education system is managed by the Cabinet of Ministers, which pursues a unified state policy in the field of education. The Cabinet of Ministers also directly manages individual higher education institutions, which include the Tashkent Islamic University and branches of internationally renowned foreign universities (Moscow State University, University of Westminster, etc.).

Figure 2



In accordance with its mandate, the Cabinet of Ministers:

- approves and ensures the implementation of state programmes in the field of education;
- manages the authorized republican institutions of executive power in the field of education;
- determines the procedure for attestation, accreditation, and licensing;
- approves state samples of education documents;
- approves the list of education areas, specialties and professions which are trained only in state educational institutions;
- establishes the procedure for admission to state educational institutions and organizations;
- establishes the procedure for determining the rating of educational organizations;
- determines the procedure for retraining and professional development of personnel;
- defines the procedure for conducting educational activities;
- forms state orders for personnel training in educational organizations based on the forecast and analysis of labor market needs;
- carries out other activities⁶⁹.

The authorized national executive institutions in the field of education are two ministries: the Ministry of Preschool and School Education and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, the latter supervising ALE-related activities. Both ministries are responsible for:

- implementing a unified state policy in the field of education;
- developing and implement state policy in the field of identification, selection, training and education of talented youth;

⁶⁹A full list is provided in the Law “On Education” <https://lex.uz/ru/docs/5013009>.

- developing, approve and implement sectoral state programmes in the field of education;
- coordinating activities and provide methodological guidance to educational organizations;
- monitoring the implementation by educational organizations of the requirements of state educational standards (including the state standard for preschool education) and state educational requirements for the level of education and quality of professional training of personnel;
- establishing a procedure for assessing the knowledge, skills and abilities of students;
- developing measures aimed at improving the quality of professional training in educational organizations, and improve training programmes;
- conducting attestation and state accreditation, comprehensive and special state accreditation of educational organizations (except for non-state educational organizations which provide non-school educational programmes), as well as attestation of teaching staff of educational organizations;
- monitoring the quality of the educational process in educational organizations;
- supervising and participate in the process of awarding posts and qualification categories to teaching staff of pre-school, general secondary, secondary special, vocational and extracurricular educational organizations;
- organizing the preparation and publication of educational literature (with the exception of state higher education organizations which have financial autonomy);
- approving normative and legal acts on assessment of academic progress, organization of the educational process, final state attestation of students, as well as determine the categories of externship students;
- issue licenses to non-state educational organizations, accept notifications from persons carrying out activities in a notification procedure and keep their register;
- determining the rating of educational organizations;
- managing other activities⁷⁰.

The National Quality Assurance Agency for Education under the Administration of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan

- conducts state accreditation of secondary specialized, professional, higher and postgraduate education organizations, as well as retraining and advanced training of personnel;
- maintains the national rating of educational organizations based on a comparative comparison of the quality of their educational and research processes;
- conducts national surveys of employers and students⁷¹.

Local public authorities in the field of education

- set the amount of funding for public educational institutions.
- cooperate with citizens' self-governing bodies, non-governmental non-profit organizations and other civil society institutions on issues related to the development of educational organizations.
- within the limits of their powers develop public-private partnership in the field of education and promote the expansion of the network of non-state educational organizations⁷².

Thus, powers in the field of adult education are mainly concentrated in the hands of state organizations and agencies. However, the participation of non-governmental non-profit organizations (NGOs), non-governmental educational organizations (NGEOs) in this area also takes place, although to a limited extent (see the paragraph 1.2. "Participation of the non-state

⁷⁰A full list is provided in the Law "On Education" <https://lex.uz/ru/docs/5013009>.

⁷¹Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Additional Measures to Ensure the Quality of Education and to Improve The System of Providing Educational Services". DP-76 from 05.05.2025 <https://www.lex.uz/docs/7513059>

⁷²A full list is provided in the Law "On Education" <https://lex.uz/ru/docs/5013009>.

sector in ALE policy-making”).

Many NGOs and NGEOs are involved in the development of adult education programmes and learning materials, especially in the field of non-formal education. They often collaborate with government agencies to develop programmes which meet the needs of society. Non-governmental organizations can act as advocates for adult learners by exercising public control over the quality and accessibility of educational services, as well as participate in the development and implementation of public policy in the field of ALE through research, public debate and expert advice.

Favorable conditions for the participation of the non-state sector in the adoption of policy issues in the field of ALE with the support of the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, dated 04.03.2021, No. DP-6181 “On Approval of the Concept for the Development of Civil Society in 2021 – 2025”⁷³. Thus, Uzbekistan is actively developing the institution of public councils attached to the state institutions. This enables NGOs to participate in the discussion and decision-making process.

Barriers to NGO participation:

- Limited funding. Many NGOs face limited funding, which makes it difficult for them to participate in major educational programmes.
- Lack of coordination. Lack of effective coordination between government agencies and NGOs can lead to duplication of efforts and inefficient use of resources.
- Limited participation in decision-making. Although NGOs are involved in the development of education programmes, their participation in ALE policy decisions remains limited.
- Lack of legal framework. Insufficiently clear legal frameworks governing the activities of NGOs in ALE can create barriers to their participation.
- Financial sustainability. Lack of stable sources of funding and limited access to government grants.
- Institutional weakness. Lack of organizational capacity, qualified personnel and experience in ALE.

Removing these barriers, strengthening partnerships between government agencies, educational institutions and NGOs, increasing the capacity of NGOs and further developing their participation in ALE will contribute to improving the quality and accessibility of adult education services, as well as strengthening civil society in Uzbekistan.

Analysis of the education management system in Uzbekistan shows that the state plays a key role in the formation and implementation of ALE policy, which reflects the global trend towards increased state control in education. However, in order to ensure sustainable and effective development of this sphere, considering modern challenges and needs of society, it is necessary to strengthen cooperation between state and non-state organizations. This process should be based on the principles of partnership, mutual respect and openness.

Creating a cross-sectoral entity, such as the National Council for ALE, with the participation of representatives of all stakeholders (government agencies, academia, civil society organizations, private sector, etc.) will ensure coordination of efforts, exchange of experiences and resources, and improve the quality and accessibility of adult education services. It is important not only to be formally present, but also to participate in decision-making.

Involving representatives of various social groups, including adult learners themselves, in the Council will make it possible to take into account their interests and needs. This, in turn, will

⁷³Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, dated 04.03.2021, No. DP-6181 “On Approval of the Concept for the Development of Civil Society in 2021 – 2025”, <https://lex.uz/docs/5319760>

contribute to the development of human capital, improve the country’s competitiveness and strengthen civil society. In addition, mechanisms should be put in place to regularly assess the effectiveness of the Council and make necessary adjustments to ensure its flexibility and adaptability to changing conditions.

2.4 Prospects for the development of the ALE regulatory framework



The updated Law “On Education”⁷⁴ lists types and formats of education (Table 4). Adult learning and education were mentioned in the Law in 2020 for the first time, which was an important development towards the recognition of ALE, however, it is not identified as a separate type of education. It is presented as a form of learning, which reduces its role and importance in the overall education system. In addition, all other forms of learning also imply ALE, which can be confusing. For example, “full-time training/education” or “distance education” can also be referred to as ALE. This blurs boundary between forms of education and does not clearly interpret the terms. The interpretation of the term “Adult Learning and Education” in the Law contains a certain logical inconsistency in the part where it says that ALE includes all forms of education and training. It turns out that the “form” includes all “forms”.

Table 4

Types of education	Forms of education
Pre-school education General secondary and specialized secondary education Vocational education Higher education Postgraduate education Retraining and professional development of personnel Out-of-school Enlightenment (highlighted in color as a new type from 09/09/2024).	Full-time education On-the-job education (part-time, evening education, distance learning) Dual education Family education and self-education Adult learning and education Inclusive education Externship education Training in defense security and law enforcement.

In the context of the term “Adult learning and education”, the Law provides definitions of types of education: formal, non-formal and informal. These types of education can be referred to some other types of education. For example, vocational education can be both formal and non-formal. The breakdown into formal, non-formal and informal education should be applied to all education and placed at the highest level of classification, because not only ALE, but also other types of education can be formal, non-formal or informal.

In many developed countries, ALE is understood as a separate type of education under such names as “additional education”, “lifelong learning”, “further education” and others. It is important to clearly define the status of ALE in legislation. The classification determines the amount of funding allocated to adult education, the organizational structure and the management of the adult education system (presence of a coordinating entity).

⁷⁴Adopted in 2020. Last updated in 2024 On introducing amendments and additions to some legislative acts of the Republic of Uzbekistan in connection with the improvement of state management in the field of education within the framework of administrative reforms Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan, LRU-957, 07.09.2024

In countries where ALE has been identified as a separate type of education (by any name), the state plays an important role in financing and organizing this sector. ALE presented as a form of education plays a secondary, “vague” role in the Uzbek education system. The next revision of the Law could take these terminological aspects into account.

Uzbekistan is implementing large-scale measures to improve enlightenment activities among various groups of the population, including preventing unhealthy propaganda, in which the consciousness, culture and feelings of the population, including young people, are influenced by various alien views and ideas. In this regard, an addition was made to the Law “On Education” in September 2024 to define the procedure for implementing enlightenment activities.

Enlightenment activity is considered to be a type of activity not covered by the state educational standards, aimed at the formation of necessary skills and qualifications for personal, intellectual and spiritual development of a person, increase of social and economic activity, demonstration of intellectual and creative potential, improvement of individual potential, skills, communicative abilities. Enlightenment activities may be implemented by republican executive authorities, local public authorities, citizens’ self-government bodies, individuals and legal entities, taking into account the requirements stipulated by legislative acts.

The appearance of the term “enlightenment activities” in the Law can also be considered in the context of the activities of various NGOs which promote healthy lifestyles, environment protection, etc. among the adult population. In this sense, enlightenment activities are somewhat similar to non-formal education conducted in non-governmental institutions, but they are not considered as such, since enlightenment activities do not have an educational programme.

The updated Education Scheme of Uzbekistan, which will be introduced from 2025 (Figure 3), provides an overview of the role and place of ALE in the education system of Uzbekistan. The scheme links the types of education to the age of learners, categorizes them by type of education (formal and non-formal with the inclusion of ALE) and reflects recent changes, mainly affecting vocational education. Whereas previously it was represented by vocational schools, colleges and technical colleges, they will now all be united into a single network of technical colleges, where primary, secondary and secondary vocational education programmes will operate, and training will be provided in accordance with the requirements of international and national standards. The relevant Presidential Decree⁷⁵, allows technical schools to combine or redistribute teaching hours up to 30% for each subject. In the current academic year (2024/2025), technical schools will have the right to open joint programmes with foreign educational institutions. In addition to the state diplomas, their graduates will receive certificates of successful completion of international programmes. Personnel training under primary vocational education programmes for students who have completed grade 9 will be provided on the basis of the state grant, and for other applicants with at least a general secondary education - on a paid-contract basis. Graduates of specialized secondary vocational education programmes, based on the modules they have completed, the credits they have accumulated and their grade point average (GPA), will be allowed to continue their studies from the relevant undergraduate course.

⁷⁵ On measures to further improve the system of training qualified personnel and introducing international educational programmes in vocational education Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, No. DP-158, 16.10.2024. <https://lex.uz/ru/docs/7166625>

2.5 Uzbekistan Education Scheme (from 2025)

Figure 3

Age	Levels and types of formal education, including ALE as a form of education integrated with other types and levels of education			Non-formal education, including ALE as a form of educational attainment		
27-30	Doctoral studies (DSc) (3 years)	Training, retraining and staff development institutes, faculties, centres, etc. (lifelong education)		Vocational skills training, general education, civic education, amateur courses, etc. NGEOs, NGOs, Culture centers, etc. (lifelong education)		Educational activities (NGEOs, NGOs, etc.)
24-27	Basic doctoral studies (PhD), 3 years					
22-24	Master's programme (2 years) universities					
18-22	Bachelor's degree (4 years) universities					
17-18	Secondary education (Grades 10 - 11), schools	Vocational up to 2 years (primary, secondary, secondary specialised). Short-term courses Unified network of technical colleges	Average specialised education lyceums, special schools	Out-of-school education centers “Barkamol avlod”, sports, music, art schools, etc.		
11-16	Basic secondary education (grades 5 - 9) schools					
7-11	Primary education (grades 1 - 4) schools					
6-7	Preparation for primary education - 1 year			Pre-primary non-formal education programmes		
3-6	Pre-school education and training kindergartens					

	Pre-school education		Pre-primary non-formal education programmes
	General secondary and specialized secondary education		Out-of-school education
	Vocational education		Retraining and advanced training
	Higher and postgraduate education		
			Educational activity

*Compiled on the basis of the Law "On Education" in the new version of 09.09.2024.

Since ALE in Uzbekistan is understood in a broad sense and seen as a form of learning rather than a separate type or sub-sector, its integration into the overall education scheme requires a “lifelong learning” approach. This means that ALE is a continuous process which encompasses all periods of adult life. Unlike traditional types of education, such as secondary or higher education, ALE does not have a clearly defined structure or hierarchy. It cuts across all levels and forms of education, providing learning and development opportunities for adults in all formats. For example, in vocational education, ALE is reflected in the form of professional development and retraining courses; in higher education, in the form of post-secondary, master’s and doctoral programmes; non-formal and informal education, including various trainings, seminars and enlightenment programmes, are also part of ALE. Various training centers play an important role in ALE to provide skills for the workplace. ALE also includes such forms of education as professional development, retraining, distance learning, on-the-job training and others.

Thus, ALE is not a separate type of education, but represents a principle which is integrated into all levels and forms of education, providing an opportunity for lifelong learning and development of adults. ALE plays a key role in the development of human capital in Uzbekistan, contributing to the improvement of the qualifications of the labor force, the development of entrepreneurship and the formation of an active civil society, providing opportunities for adults to adapt to the changing requirements of the labor market, acquire new knowledge and skills, and develop their personal potential.

Educational activities carried out by NGOs, culture centers, libraries, museums and other institutions are also an important part of ALE and are aimed at disseminating knowledge, developing the cultural and intellectual potential of the population, and fostering civic responsibility.

The broad interpretation of ALE in Uzbekistan, as well as its positioning in legislation as a form of learning rather than a separate sector, may pose certain risks which could be minimized by introducing the following mechanisms:

- A key step is the **development of a comprehensive strategy** which should cover all aspects of adult education, from formal to informal, and define clear goals, objectives, priority areas and implementation mechanisms. Particular attention should be paid to the creation of flexible educational trajectories which take into account the individual needs of learners and the dynamics of the labor market.
- **The establishment of a coordinating entity** will be central to the management of the ALE system. This body should bring together the efforts of different ministries, departments and organizations, ensuring coherence and optimization of resources, but it is important to empower it to make operational decisions and monitor the implementation of strategic initiatives.
- **The development of a monitoring and evaluation system** will make it possible to track the effectiveness of ALE programmes and make timely adjustments, which requires the development of a comprehensive system of indicators which reflect not only quantitative but also qualitative results. This will ensure transparency and accountability of the ALE system.
- **Strengthening cooperation with international organizations** will open access to advanced ALE methodologies and technologies. Involvement of experts and exchange of experience will allow adapting best practices to the specifics of Uzbekistan. Special attention should be paid to projects aimed at developing digital skills and competences.
- **Professional development of teaching staff** is a key factor in ensuring the quality of ALE. It is necessary to develop programmes focused on the development of andragogical competencies and the use of interactive teaching methods. It is important to create a system of continuous professional development of teachers.
- **The active involvement of civil society** will ensure that ALE programmes meet the needs of the population. Establishing mechanisms for the participation of public organizations, experts and learners themselves in the development and implementation of educational

initiatives will make it possible to take into account a variety of interests and ensure the social relevance of ALE.

The implementation of these mechanisms will make it possible to neutralize, to a greater or lesser extent, the risks caused by the broad interpretation of ALE and ensure the effective development of this sphere.

2.6 Providers of adult learning and education services



In Uzbekistan, a wide range of providers of educational services for the adult population can be classified according to different criteria: by form of ownership (state, non-governmental, commercial, international organizations), by type of education (formal, non-formal), by education sector (higher, vocational, liberal⁷⁶), by target audience (for the employed, unemployed, women, youth, for people with disabilities), by form of training (full-time, part-time, distance learning, etc.). There are also independent experts, trainers working on a freelance basis (freelancers). The following is a list of these providers by form of ownership.

Public ALE providers

The state plays a significant role in providing access to adult education, offering various training and professional development programmes of mainly formal type. State organizations have a wide network of institutions, sustainable budgetary funding, large pedagogical potential and a developed material and technical base. In line with recent changes in legislation, the range of state providers has also changed. A unified network of technical schools has appeared, the names “colleges”, “Ishga Markhamat Mono-centers” have disappeared.

Public administration authorities organize training activities for civil servants, e.g. courses on anti-corruption activities.

Unified network of technical schools. In accordance with Presidential Decree⁷⁷ on measures to further improve the system for training qualified personnel and introduce international educational programmes in vocational education, existing vocational educational institutions are being streamlined from 2025, and a unified network of technical schools is being created on their basis to provide training at all levels of vocational education (primary, secondary and secondary vocational education). In addition, short-term training courses on special qualifications and competences are organized for people of different ages.

Vocational Skills Centers on the basis of Mono-centers “Ishga Markhamat” and Vocational training centers under the Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction provide training in working professions for unemployed and low-income citizens; organize express courses with duration and timing adapted to the requirements of employers; and offer opportunities to develop practical vocational skills directly at the workplace.

Profile institutes, centers, faculties and advanced training courses are available at almost all major government ministries and agencies, and perform the tasks of professional profile

⁷⁶Learning that aims to develop a broad outlook, critical thinking and analytical skills, and is not limited to narrow specialization, but seeks to develop a well-rounded individual capable of independent thinking and active participation in society.

⁷⁷Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, No. DP-158, 16.10.2024 <https://www.lex.uz/en/docs/7166625>

training, retraining and advanced training, contributing to the adaptation of the adult population to modern challenges, economic and technological changes. In some sectoral areas, there are state programmes and approved regulations on professional development (Programme for training and retraining of personnel in the media sphere, Regulations on the procedure for professional development and retraining of medical workers, etc.). Practically all structures have established regulations on the periodicity of professional development. Professional development and retraining of pedagogical staff is delivered in centers and faculties at universities, institutes, academies, as well as sectoral specialized retraining and professional development institutes functioning in all regions of the country. Pedagogical personnel are singled out as a separate category of specialists because of the specifics of their professional activity and their importance for society. Teachers form the future generation, so their professional development is strategically important for the country. Various decrees of the President and the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan are aimed at improving their professional qualifications and skills.

Higher education institutions provide opportunities for second higher education for adults, professional development and retraining courses, educational programmes aimed at the development of personal and professional skills of adults, organization of trainings, seminars and master classes in various areas, etc.

Employers (state-owned firms and corporations) organize internal professional development and retraining courses for their employees to ensure their compliance with modern labor market requirements and technological changes. Public companies often organize professional training directly at the workplace, allowing employees to acquire new skills in the course of their duties (mentoring, internships and other forms of practical training), cooperate with educational institutions to develop and implement educational programmes that meet the needs of their production. They also organize trainings and seminars for employees aimed at developing communication, management and leadership skills. State-owned companies are obliged to organize occupational safety training.

Culture centers, established on the basis of former culture houses and club institutions, are state-owned organizations, which operate mainly in the informal sector, offering a variety of cultural and educational services (study groups, art and discussion clubs, meetings with cultural figures, etc.). Legislation grants them broad powers which allow them not only to organize various cultural events, but also to conduct educational activities and implement educational programmes, including training in professional skills.

Museums, libraries, theatres, cinemas and art galleries (both state and non-state) are gradually beginning to perform the functions of educational institutions, offering their visitors various programmes, seminars, lectures of an educational and enlightenment nature, providing opportunities for personal development, professional development and community involvement, and serving as platforms for informal learning and cultural enlightenment.

The advantages of training at state institutions typically include more affordable prices, compliance with state standards, and greater trust from employers. The disadvantages include a more bureaucratic enrolment process and less flexibility and adaptability of the state programmes to the individual needs of students.

Non-state suppliers of ALE

Non-governmental educational organizations (NGEOs) offer a variety of training programmes for adults, including language courses, computer skills and vocational training.

Non-state non-profit organizations (NGOs) are subdivided into:

- Public foundations, which usually organize trainings, seminars, professional development courses in various areas, from social entrepreneurship to environmental education.
- Community associations that provide training activities for their members or for the general public, e.g. language courses, computer literacy, vocational skills development, functional literacy, human rights education programmes, global citizenship, etc.
- Associations and unions usually organize conferences, forums, seminars to share experiences and improve the skills of their members.

Commercial organizations

- Consulting companies offer various trainings and seminars for businesses.
- Large companies set up their own training centers to improve the skills of their employees.

Private companies offering formal training

Based on the World Bank methodology, each country measures an indicator such as “Percentage of firms offering formal training and retraining courses for their permanent employees”. To measure this indicator, more than a thousand companies are selected from the total number of firms in the country and surveys are conducted. The questionnaire has 13 components and includes 67 sub-indicators. The 2022 report indicates that firms offering formal training in Uzbekistan account for 16.9% of the total number of firms and the country ranks 88th on this indicator. The figures are based on the results of a 2019 World Bank survey of 1,239 firms operating in various sectors of Uzbekistan's economy. The firms which participated in the survey were divided into 3 groups, depending on the number of employees. According to the survey results, 13% or 78 out of 603 small firms, 23.6% or 97 out of 415 medium firms, 42.1% or 93 out of 221 large firms organized training, retraining courses, trainings and seminars for their employees. Based on this, it can be concluded that the organization of training, retraining courses, trainings and seminars for employees of small and medium-sized enterprises in Uzbekistan is not satisfactory enough. To improve the country's position on this indicator, it would be desirable to introduce a system of subsidies to employers from the state budget to encourage small and medium-sized firms to train their employees.⁷⁸

International organizations/projects

- International NGOs implement educational projects usually in partnership with local NGOs (basic skills training, vocational education, enlightenment programmes, support programmes for vulnerable groups).
- International development agencies finance and support education initiatives (improving the quality of education, increasing access to learning, strengthening the capacity of educational institutions and adapting the education system to changing labor market needs).

Independent experts and trainers (freelancers)

- Graduates of the Curriculum globALE programme (more details in the paragraph 2.7.)
- Other practitioner trainers offering their programmes in the education marketplace.

A review of the different ALE providers in Uzbekistan demonstrates the diversity of types and formats of these services, reflecting the country's commitment to developing lifelong learning. The state providers play a key role in providing access to formal education, while non-state

World Bank Enterprise Surveys (WBES). <https://www.enterprisesurveys.org/en/data/exploreeconomies/2019/uzbekistan>
Journal of Economic Review, “Uzbekistan's Labour Market in International Estimates” 06.01.2023. <https://review.uz/post/ozbekistonda-mehnat-bozorining-asosiy-korsatkichlari>

organizations and commercial entities offer flexible and individualized programmes. Employers are also actively investing in human capital development.

Based on an analysis of the existing range of ALE providers, further development of the system requires:

- Strengthening collaboration between different education providers.
- Focusing on the development of distance learning. With the digitalization of society, distance learning offers new opportunities for all providers, such as increased audience reach and flexibility of learning.
- Continuing to strengthen cooperation between public, private and international organizations to introduce advanced methodologies and technologies into the learning process.
- Developing training programmes for small and medium-sized enterprises.

2.7 Professionalization of ALE staff and institutions

The professionalization of ALE staff and institutions is a key factor in the development of adult education. Qualified andragogues⁷⁹ and other ALE professionals ensure the high quality of educational programmes, meeting the needs of learners. Professionalization promotes the introduction of innovative methods and technologies, the development of human capital, and compliance with international standards in the end.

Structural elements of ALE professionalization include such components as standards defining competencies, knowledge and skills required for ALE specialists (andragogues); educational programmes for training and professional development of andragogues and other ALE specialists; introduction of modern methods and technologies of adult learning; development of institutional framework, networking between different ALE providers and support for research activities in the field of ALE, creation of quality assessment system.

The state policy in the sphere of professionalization of ALE is aimed mainly at formal education, as well as those types of education (including non-formal education) which are part of the programme to increase employment and reduce poverty. The rest of non-formal ALE is supported mainly by international organizations. For example, DVV International, as an organization with extensive experience in adult education over many years, works in the following areas:

- **Training of andragogues** on the basis of the developed training programme (Curriculum globALE).
- **Institutionalization of** NGOs, members of the SABR network and centers (Curriculum InstitutionALE)
- **Facilitating networking** among NGOs involved in adult learning (network of Local Development centers under the auspices of NGO “SABR”).

The implementation of these areas takes place mainly in the form of individual projects, often with foreign experts invited as consultants.

Curriculum globALE (CG) project⁸⁰.

In Uzbekistan, andragogy as a science is in its very beginning and universities do not yet have

⁷⁹Andragogy is a profession related to the education and training of adult educators; an andragogue is a specialist engaged in adult learning. Unlike a pedagogue who works with children and adolescents, an andragogue takes into account the specific characteristics of adult learning.

⁸⁰Curriculum globALE (CG) is a modular competency-based intercultural core curriculum for the training of adult learning and education teachers worldwide. <https://www.dvv-international.de/ale-toolbox/lehren-und-fortbilden/curriculum-globale>

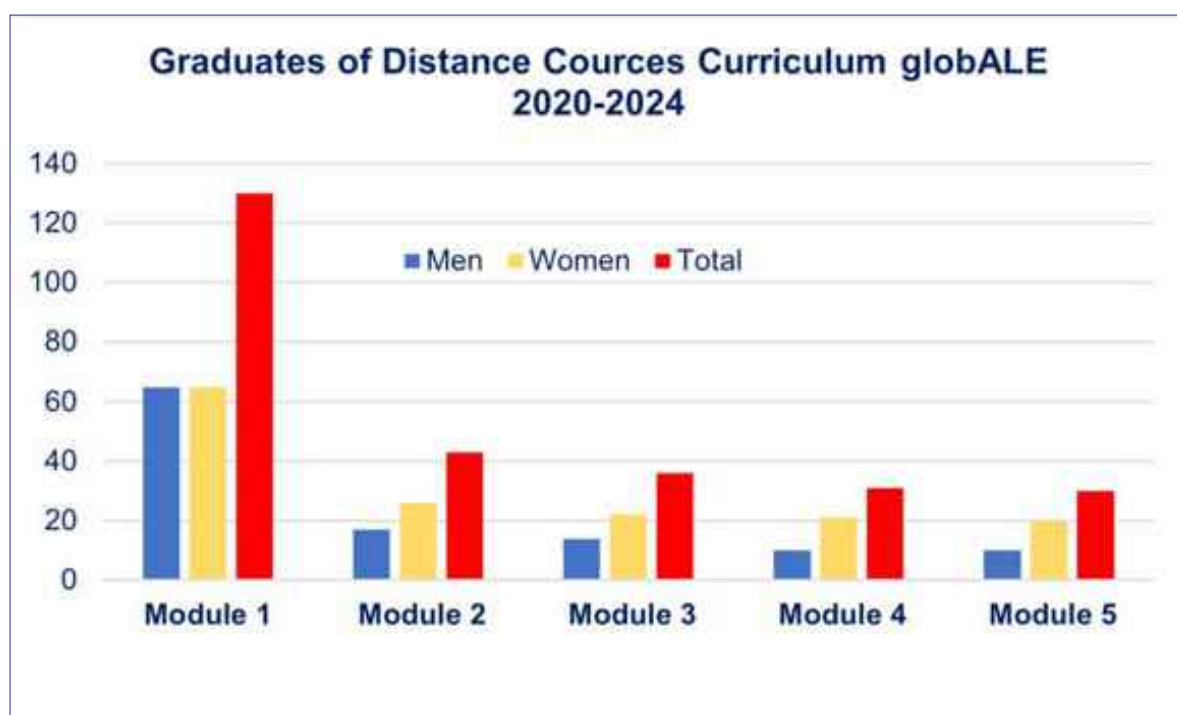
special departments for adult education or research in the field of andragogy. The observed growth in the country's need for adult educators is taking place despite the absence of the specialty "andragogue" in the classifier of main positions and professions of workers and employees. Now adults are taught mainly by specialists who graduated from higher education institutions with a pedagogical orientation or completed training under various programmes of professional development institutes, NGOs and associations (own training of trainers programmes), international projects (trainings for trainers).

Projects in the field of andragogy training sessions have been implemented by DVV International since 2008, but the most successful project was the piloting of the Curriculum globALE (CG) Global Adult Learning and Education Programme in 2013-2015. Curriculum globALE (CG) is a global adult learning and education programme aimed at creating a pool of andragogues — trainers from both the public and non-public sectors.

Another initiative of the DVV International in this direction is the project started in 2019 and currently ongoing with the Institute for The Development of Vocational Education to create a distance learning platform for the CG programme - www.cgtvet.uz.

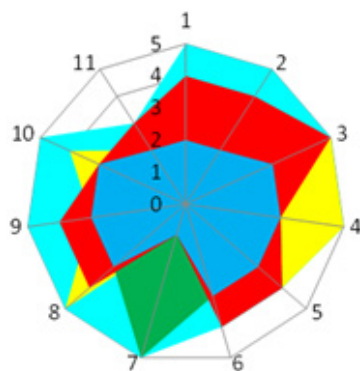
About 130 specialists from different regions of the country have taken distance courses on selected CG modules. Today, the Institute has an effectively functioning adult teacher training platform. The platform has a certificate issued by the "Centre for Intellectual Property" under the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Uzbekistan. However, the resources of the platform are not enough to cover the whole country.

Diagram 4



An important step in solving the problems related to the training of qualified personnel for the ALE sector would be the introduction of "andragogy" in the system of higher education at the undergraduate and graduate levels, which would allow to train not only specialists, but would also affect the creation of its own research school on andragogy, the emergence of scientific literature in the state language, improving the quality of educational services for the adult population.

Project Curriculum InstitutionALE (CI)⁸¹.



This project was implemented in Uzbekistan in 2021-2023 and focused on the organizational development of ALE institutions. Curriculum InstitutionALE is an orientation programme developed by DVV International which offers mechanisms to develop the organizational capacity of adult education providers through the collection of reliable baseline data and continuous cyclical self-evaluation of progress, combined with external evaluation.

The programme is universal and has been piloted all over the world. The project involved 5 NGOs and 3 Culture centers delivering various training courses for adults. Training activities for key staff of the selected organizations were used as the main

activities to achieve the progress.

To interpret the self-assessment results, radar charts with a polar coordinate axis were used to visualize multidimensional data, to quickly reflect the state of affairs, weaknesses and strengths, matches and mismatches of weaknesses and strengths in different organizations.

The tool helped to identify thematic areas where joint training events could be held for all organizations and showed which topics would be better for individual consultations.

During the three-year phase of the project (2021-2023), the total number of participants was 525 across all partner organizations (NGOs and Culture Centers). Out of the total participants, 143 people participated in joint trainings and 382 people participated in trainings organized for the staff of the three Culture Centers. The programme enables partners to work independently, develop and monitor their institutional development. The results of the interviews conducted with the project participants showed positive changes within the Curriculum InstitutionALE project piloting:

Table 5

NGOs	Culture Centres (CCs)
The structure and content of curricula have been improved	Staff qualifications have been improved
Insight into andragogy skills as innovative knowledge is gained	
The practical side of the training courses and the satisfaction of the participants has improved	The system for organizing the provision of paid services to the public has been improved
The gender and inclusiveness of the training sessions has been strengthened through the inclusion of trainees in the electronic database of the government platform	
The qualifications of trainers have improved	Employment opportunities for unemployed citizens have been expanded
The capacity of NGOs to develop common adult learning modules/standards, as well as accounting standards and skills to find new sources of funding (fundraising) has been strengthened	
Training needs assessment questionnaires for target groups harmonized	

The Curriculum InstitutionALE programme has enabled organizations to work independently, to develop, to expand their services and to monitor their level of institutional development. Any organization specializing in adult learning and education can use this programme to improve their organizational capacity.

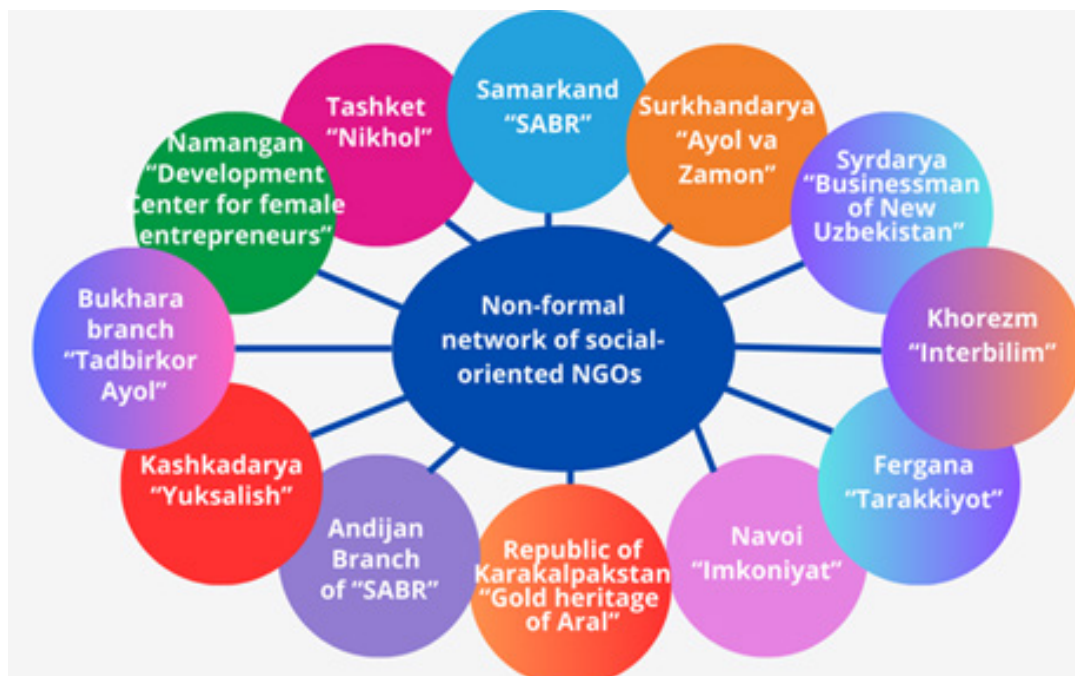
⁸¹Curriculum InstitutionALE is an orientation programme to develop the organisational capacity of ALE providers

Project “Facilitating network cooperation among ALE providers”

Network cooperation of adult education providers can significantly contribute to the development of ALE as a whole, creating a synergetic effect and increasing the professionalization of educational processes through the exchange of experience, joint development of educational programmes, creating a common information environment and attracting additional resources (joint applications for grants), etc.

Network cooperation can also facilitate the creation of mechanisms for assessing the quality of educational services and sharing the results of this assessment. This allows not only to identify best practices, but also to respond promptly to shortcomings by raising standards of learning. It can also facilitate the development of innovative approaches and technologies in ALE, for example, through the creation of joint research projects and pilot programmes. Since 2013, DVV International has been supporting the organizational development of the NGO “SABR,”⁸² which later became an umbrella organization for a network of other socially oriented non-profit organizations across the country. It also began supporting the organizational development of this network to contribute to its professionalization.

Figure 4



The network members position themselves as Local Development Centers (LDCs) offering various educational programmes for the unemployed and people from low-income families: vocational training courses (22 directions); non-formal education courses on leadership, personal development, healthy lifestyles, and others. The network was established in February 2018 and currently unites 12 NGOs from all regions of Uzbekistan. The key organization/network hub is the “SABR” Republican Center for Socio-Economic Development, which accumulates various educational programmes and resources. One of the priority sources of funding is the mechanism of state social orders of the Public Fund under the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The mission of the network is to improve the socio-economic situation of people, especially women and girls, from low-income families in rural areas, to provide employment, to improve their well-being, to support civic mobilization, to ensure the development of the capacity of the network members to implement social services and innovative programmes.

⁸²NGO “SABR” website. <https://www.sabr.uz/ru/about-company>

In 2021, the project was implemented to assess the efficiency of the network's functioning in order to make recommendations for its further development at a higher quality level. For this purpose, foreign experts in organizational development were invited to propose a number of measures and practical steps in three areas: network products and services, interaction with the external environment, and the internal design of the network.

The experts noted the favorable environment for the activities of socially oriented NGOs in Uzbekistan and the development of networking among them, making the following conclusion: "In Uzbekistan, political, socio-economic, cultural and demographic factors form a demand for the activities of network member organizations, and also provide certain amounts of resources for its implementation". This is a rather unique situation for the post-Soviet countries.

2.8 Adult learning and adult education coverage

According to the latest data from the Statistics Agency⁸³, Uzbekistan experiences a significant increase in the coverage of higher education. This is due to the state policy aimed at increasing the share of young people in this sector. The greatest concentration of higher education institutions is noted in Tashkent, as well as in Samarkand, Bukhara and Fergana regions. In international practice, full-time students are generally not included in adult education statistics, as they have not completed formal education and are not engaged in labor activity (see the paragraph "The boundaries of ALE in the international context and the education system of Uzbekistan"). However, due to the broad interpretation of ALE in Uzbek legislation, university students are included in the statistics presented in the Table 6.

Table 6

Indicator	2013	2023	Multiplicity increases
Number of higher education organizations	66	219	3,3
Number of students who graduated from higher education institutions	60524	184133	3,0
Number of students in higher educational organizations	259290	1314542	5,1
Number of students in higher educational organizations (female)	96636	656617	6,8
Number of students of higher educational organizations (male) 25/09/2024	162654	657925	4,0
Number of students aged 30-34 in higher educational organizations	3732	101051	27,1
Number of students at the age of 40 years and older in higher educational organizations/	211	36113	171,2
Number of teachers in higher education organizations	23148	45210	2,0
Number of students studying on a full-time basis	258900	661800	2,6
Number of students enrolled in the evening form of education	0	45100	
Number of students enrolled in distance learning programmes	400	607600	1519
Number of students of higher educational organizations per 10,000 population	85	357	4,2

In vocational education, state policy is also aimed at significant development and expansion. Thus, the strategy "Uzbekistan – 2030" in general plans to train 2 million citizens in professions, business skills and foreign languages, and to improve the qualifications of 1.6 thousand teachers of vocational training centers⁸⁴.

⁸³Statistics Agency. Social sphere. Higher education as of 25.09.2024. <https://stat.uz/ru/ofitsialnaya-statistika/social-protection>

⁸⁴Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On the Strategy Uzbekistan – 2030", 11.09.2023 <https://lex.uz/ru/docs/6600404>

The research on the project “Adult learning and education in Uzbekistan: current state and prospects for development”⁸⁵, conducted at the end of 2019, revealed a high need of adults in learning. The sociological survey was conducted on the coverage of both non-formal and formal learning and education. In identifying the extent of participation in formal education, respondents were asked whether they had attended any institution formal education in the last 12 months, details related to place, direction of education, etc. were clarified. It turned out that only 8.6% of respondents studied in any educational institution for formal education, including 8.1% of men and 9% of women. Moreover, this indicator decreased with increasing age, and among the employed there are noticeably more people who have completed training compared to the unemployed - 9.5% and 5.6%, respectively. Two people in the sample had received a second education in the previous year. More than half of those who had undergone formal training during the previous year had upgraded their qualifications - 60.5%, studied towards a bachelor’s degree - 20% and a master’s/postgraduate degree - 4%, while another 4% had obtained a professional driving license. Of these, 40% studied at a state training center, 12% at a departmental/industry training center, 32.5% at a higher education institution, 12% at a vocational college/ lyceum, and the rest at non-state educational institutions.

The directions taken during the last year of education, in general, repeat the structure of the achieved education, i.e. the disproportions in the received education are not equalized. Training is received mainly by specialists who already have higher education. Respondents with secondary vocational education rarely study after the age of 25. The exception is secondary medical and some other workers who are obliged to take regular courses of professional development.

The main reason why respondents train is to maintain or improve their position at work (37%), and men care about this more than women (42.5% and 34.4% respectively). About a quarter of respondents were trained due to employer request or as required by legislation. Personal reasons (such as expanding knowledge and skills in the field of interest, gaining knowledge and skills which will be useful in everyday life, meeting new people) play an important role in the formation of motivation to study for 16% of respondents, and this motive is much more common among women than among men (20% and 10%, respectively). Only 11-12% of women and men studied for the purpose of employment or finding another job. Less than 10% of respondents studied for the sake of obtaining a formal certificate of education. Despite the significant number of students studying economics and business, only a few respondents (about 1%) had the desire to open their own business.

The majority of respondents (85.5%) studied face-to-face in the daytime, 6.6% studied face-to-face in the evening, and 7.9% studied remotely with traditional materials (distance learning). There were no respondents in the sample who had completed online or offline distance learning. 14.5% of the respondents were not working during the training. The majority of respondents (64.5%) were on full-time education. Including 51.3% said that working time during the training was paid, while 13.2% responded that working time was not paid. Every fifth participant (21.1%) studied outside working hours without taking time off from work, while 14.5% did not work during the training. Training periods are short - ¼ of respondents have been trained for less than 3 months, slightly more than half - for less than a month. At the same time, training is quite intensive - 85% of respondents said that training took place every day, sometimes even without days off, often during the whole working day.

9.5% of respondents paid for their own tuition fees, while 19% of respondents were paid for by their parents/relatives. In the remaining cases, the training was paid for by the employer or a higher department. For those who paid for training from their own funds, the cost of a full course

⁸⁵“Participation in Adult Learning and Education in Uzbekistan”. Results of a sociological study, 2020, https://www.dvv-international-central-asia.org/fileadmin/files/central-asia/documents/Publications_and_other_media/Publications/2020_%D0%A3%D0%97%D0%91/AES-UZ-2020_final_version.pdf

of study is quite high - in most cases it is 2-5 million soums and can reach 10 million soums. Even more respondents (91%) pay for training materials than for the training itself. Fees for training materials range from 10,000 soums to several million soums. In most cases (76%), respondents are confident that they will be able to use the knowledge and skills acquired during training in their work. However, almost 16% of the employed have no idea how they can use their training to fulfil their work duties. There are twice as many male respondents as female respondents (22.6% and 11.1%). This is an alarming indicator, especially if we take into account that in most cases training is initiated by the employer and required by law. This situation indicates that the content of training is not sufficiently correlated with labor functions. It can be assumed that the selection of candidates for training is conducted formally, without taking into account the requirements for personnel.

“Despite the existence of an extensive network of formal education institutions, their role in improving adult participation in education remains insufficient. The same conclusion applies to non-formal education, where the share of formal education institutions is only 10% ”⁸⁶.

The conclusions drawn from the results of the study allowed the authors to make the following recommendations:

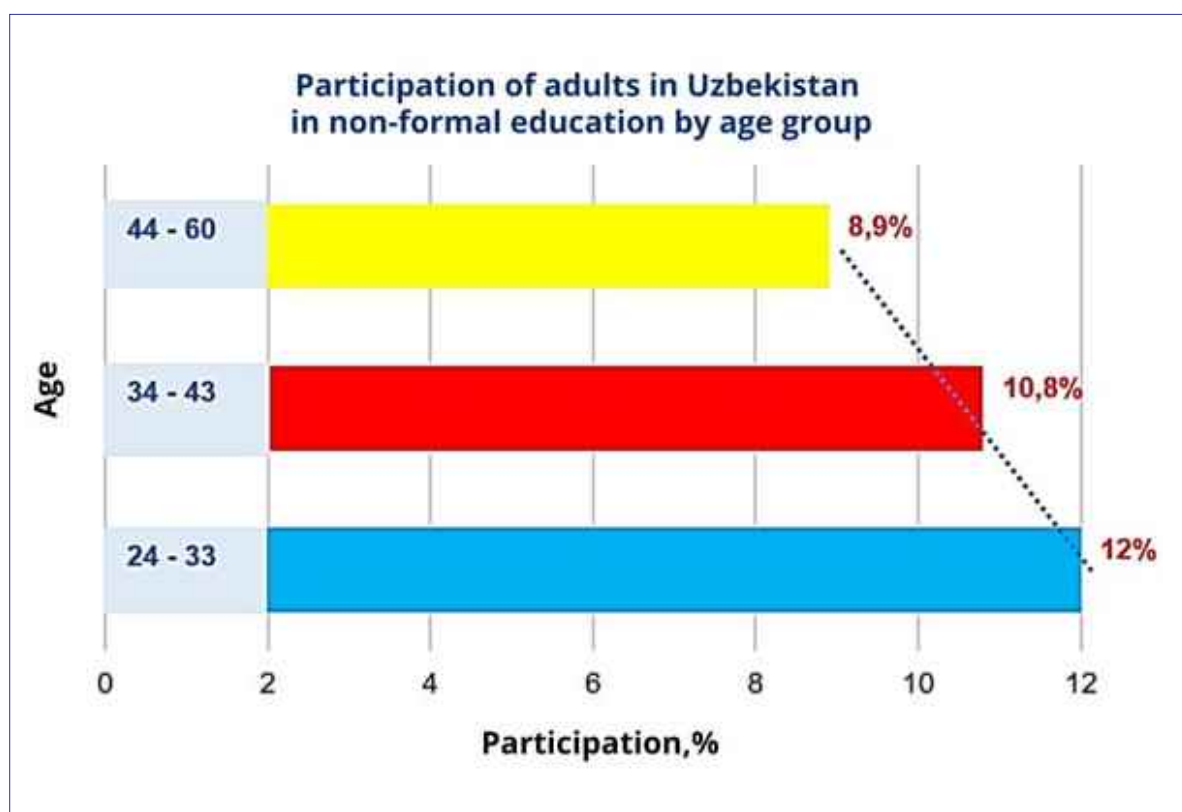
- Encourage public educational institutions (schools, vocational education institutions, universities, further education institutes) to play a more active role in promoting formal and non-formal education in the communities in which they are located. The potential of the extensive network of formal education institutions should be utilized for the development of ALE;
- Financially encourage private companies/businesses (especially small ones) to promote regular professional development of their employees and develop mechanisms to reflect the results of training in the curriculum vitae (individual “educational accounts”⁸⁷ of each trainee);
- Ensure the development of quality information and counselling services which will encourage adults to take advantage of learning opportunities and promote the visibility and benefits of such learning.

There is no complete data on the degree of participation of the population in non-formal adult education in the public domain. Information is collected fragmentarily and often not systematized. The very concept of “non-formal learning” is quite broad and implies participation in master classes, workshops, trainings, on-the-job training, exchange of experience in communities, etc., which complicates the assessment due to the lack of a unified methodology for collecting such diverse data.

The degree of participation in non-formal learning can vary considerably depending on the region, the level of infrastructure development and access to information. Rather than precise figures, it is possible to speak only of trends, based on the results of the above-mentioned study. This study covered both formal and non-formal adult education and was empirical in nature, using the European Union’s Adult Education Survey (AES) tools. Based on the results of the study, recommendations were prepared to adapt the tools of this approach to the conditions of Uzbekistan.

⁸⁶“Learning to act”. D. Tashmukhamedova. <https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2020/09/23/education-for-adults/>

⁸⁷The basic amount of resources (vouchers) allocated to an individual (by the state, businesses) for training.



**Source: Office of DVV International in Uzbekistan based on research materials of the “Oila” Center*

The study demonstrated a rather low level of participation of the population (10.3%) in non-formal education. This level decreases with age (Diagram 5).

For comparison, we can cite data from the statistical service of the European Union (Eurostat) on the participation of adults in non-formal education. Thus, in 2022, 64.2% of working-age adults (25-64 years old) in the EU countries participated in non-formal education.

The participation rate of women in non-formal education in Uzbekistan was 11.4%, slightly higher than among men - 8.9%. Despite the low level of participation in non-formal education, the need for such education was noted by 60% of respondents in rural areas and 51% in urban areas. 55% of the participants noted the importance and necessity of non-formal education, among them 63.3% were women. Overall, 70.8% of youth aged 24-33 years noted a lack of skills and knowledge, and of adults aged 34-43 years - 59.6%, aged 44-60 years - 38.4%.

According to the survey results the main providers of non-formal education are: employers (42%), private individuals (21%), non-governmental educational organizations (18%). The share of formal educational institutions providing services in the non-formal sector was only 10%.

For comparison, the structure of the provider spectrum in the European Union countries can be cited. Employers - 34.7%, formal education institutions - 7.0%, institutions non-formal education - 19.9%, other public or private institutions - 25.7%, individuals - 9.9%, no answer - 2.7% ⁸⁸.

The main source of information about education for 40% of respondents is the Internet, 37% of respondents get information from other people (family members, friends, acquaintances),

⁸⁸Eurostat “Providers of non-formal adult education and training”, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Adult_learning_statistics_-_characteristics_of_education_and_training

and 29% learn through mass media. This indicates a rather low level of ICT literacy, 60% of respondents have never used a computer, 47% have never used the Internet. The level of ICT literacy in rural areas and among women is even lower. 75% of women over 40 years old said that they have never used a computer.

Speaking about motivation to receive additional training, 37% noted that they attended training sessions in order to keep their job or improve their professional qualification. This explanation is more typical for men (42.5%), for women this indicator is lower, 34.4%. Only 16% were trained on their own will to improve their personal or professional knowledge and skills, most of them women (20%). 12% of participants noted that they paid for training themselves, 9% were paid for by their families or relatives, 33% received training at the expense of their employer, and 39.6% received training free of charge. It can be assumed that the low level of the population's ability to pay and the high cost of training in the informal sector are significant challenges to increasing the number of ALE participants.

49% of respondents mentioned the lack of learning opportunities: 51% of them due to family circumstances, 26% due to high cost of education, but not due to lack of their own motivation. The obtained data show that the main obstacle is external factors: the financial side, lack of a developed ICT system. The solution to these problems should be approached in a comprehensive manner, with the active participation of relevant government agencies, commercial and non-profit sectors.

When organizing ALE and involving the adult population in it, it is necessary to ensure gender equality and address inclusion issues related to the participation in ALE of groups with different types and degrees of disability, social groups who have returned from penal institutions, as well as representatives of national minorities in the country. It is important to implement social partnerships with relevant organizations and institutions directly involved in these issues.

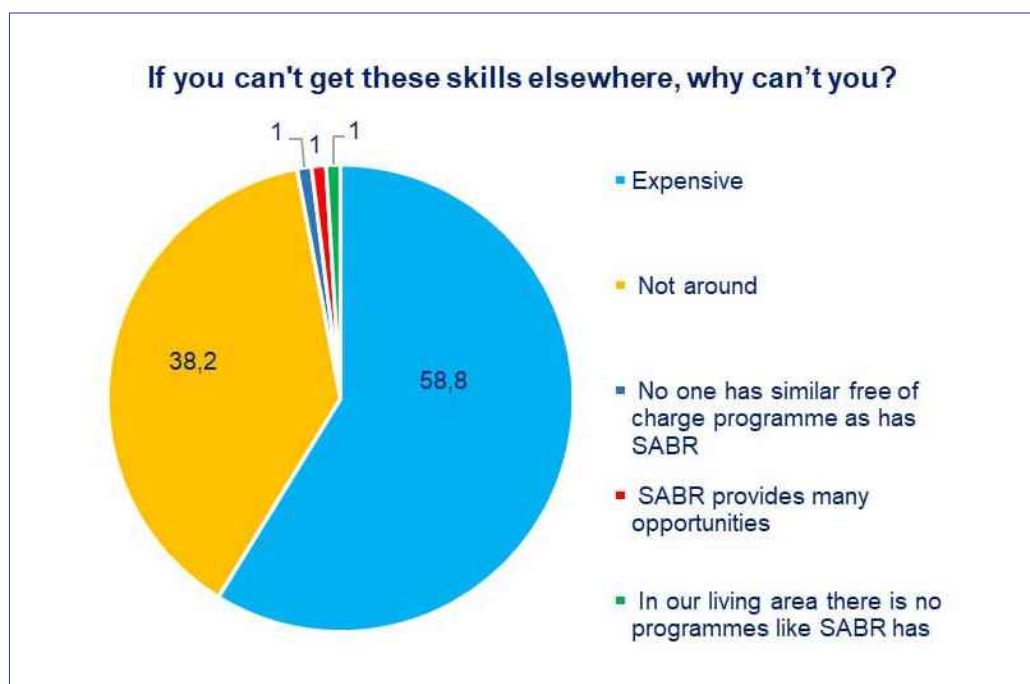
With the development of ICT literacy, the Internet and online platforms, access to non-formal learning in Uzbekistan is likely to grow. However, to measure this growth remains difficult.

Sociological surveys are conducted with the support of DVV International in Uzbekistan and partner NGOs. They are mainly aimed at assessing the needs of learners, analyzing target audiences, and studying the factors hindering participation in education.

For example, in the sociological study of NGO "SABR"⁸⁹ the possibility of studying remotely was confirmed by 60.1% of the interviewed women (the sample included 5 regions of Uzbekistan). At the same time, only 9.3% of the interviewed women had a computer and 3.1% had a tablet. About half of the respondents answered that for distance learning they have only mobile phones, which they can use to connect mobile communication (Internet). However, in rural areas, internet access is not always available, and in low-income families, this significantly limits opportunities to participate in non-formal learning.

Another sociological study by the same organization confirms that the financial factor (especially for socially vulnerable groups) is in most cases a barrier to participation in non-formal education (Diagram 6).

⁸⁹"Assessment of target groups' needs and diagnostics of organizational and institutional development of regional NGOs", Sociological research, 2021. Database of DVV International Uzbekistan.



**Source: NGO "SABR" Survey⁹⁰.*

Some foreign researchers suggest considering the factors influencing the degree of adult participation in informal learning from a multilevel approach, subdividing them into three groups:

- Micro-factors (social and behavioral)
- Meso-factors (work-related)
- Macro-factors (country specific)

Micro-level social factors include age, gender, highest level of education attained and employment status. Behavioral characteristics involve psychological constructs (motivation, needs, learning intentions or attitudes towards lifelong learning).

Meso-level factors depend on work-related characteristics, including providers. One form involves training institutions with their specific features, such as accessibility, cost, and flexibility. The other form centers on workplaces, where the size of the company and the funding of informal training play an important role.

The macro level takes into account the institutional characteristics of the country and adult education policies, such as investment in active labor market policies, standardization of lifelong learning and key economic characteristics with different requirements for continuous skills development.

This approach allows for a fair division of responsibility for adult participation in non-formal education between all key players in the education sector, including the state, educational institutions, businesses and learners themselves.

⁹⁰"Development of social partnership for improving the welfare of vulnerable groups", mini study of NGO "SABR", 2023. Database of DVV International Uzbekistan.

⁹¹Jitka Vaculíková, Jan Kalenda, Ilona Kočvarová "Participation in non-formal adult education within the European context: examining multilayer approach". Research Centre of the Faculty of Humanities, Tomas Bata University in Czechia. "Frontiers", 17 July 2024. <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/education/articles/10.3389/educ.2024.1380865/full>

3. EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ALE SYSTEM IN UZBEKISTAN

3.1 Adult basic and functional literacy



The adult basic literacy rate is the percentage of people aged 15 and over who can read and write and understand a short, simple statement about their daily life. Uzbekistan is actively investing in education, which contributes to improving literacy among different age groups. According to UNESCO⁹², the country's literacy rate reached 99.99% in 2021 and 100% in 2022, according to The Global Economy.com⁹³. This is one of the highest rates in the world, which means that almost the entire adult population of the country can read and write. At the same time, an important factor of successful life is functional literacy - the ability to apply acquired knowledge, skills and abilities to solve a wide range of life tasks in

various spheres of activity, communication and social relations. A functionally literate person can use his/her knowledge not only in a learning situation, but also in real life (reading instructions, filling out documents, calculating budgets, making decisions in finance, health care, education, etc.).

Since in Uzbekistan 100% of the population can read and write⁹⁴, such a direction of education as "literacy training" is considered irrelevant. However, functional illiteracy is quite common among the elderly. For example, some members of the older generation need counselling when using household appliances, the Internet or ATMs for the first time.

In addition to traditional literacy, digital literacy (the ability to use computers, the Internet, and various software applications, as well as the ability to find, evaluate and use information in the digital environment) is becoming increasingly important. According to the Global Competitiveness Report, Uzbekistan ranks 68th among 141 countries in the index of readiness for digital development. In just one year, the country has moved up four positions, thus consolidating the positive dynamics observed over the past three years.

In today's world with plenty of information, media literacy is very important. Media literacy is a set of knowledge, skills and abilities which enable a person to interact effectively with media and information, which includes not only technical skills in using digital devices, but also the ability to critically analyze media content, understand how media messages are created and disseminated, recognize misinformation and resist manipulation. A study conducted with the participation of USAID, the "Public Opinion" Research Institute and Internews found that 53.1% of the Uzbek population demonstrates confidence in their media literacy. However, a deeper analysis revealed gaps in this area: only 38.9% of respondents are able to effectively analyze information from different sources, 21.3% possess effective Internet search skills, and only 15% are able to critically evaluate information on the Internet⁹⁵. These results underscore the need to strengthen educational programmes aimed at developing all components of media information literacy, including information search, understanding media content, using it, creating own content and critically evaluating any information (more details in the paragraph 5.1.).

⁹²UNESCO, news: "International Literacy Day 2021 and UNESCO's support to Uzbekistan's Government in prioritizing access to education", <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/international-literacy-day-2021-and-unescos-support-uzbekistans-government-prioritizing-access>

⁹³The Global Economy.com. Business and economic data for 200 countries, https://ru.theglobaleconomy.com/Uzbekistan/literacy_rate/

⁹⁴National Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics. https://api.siat.stat.uz/media/uploads/sdmx/sdmx_data_292.pdf

⁹⁵Institute of Legislation and Legal Policy under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Digital Literacy as a Tool for Raising Legal Awareness of Youth, <https://illp.uz/цифровая-грамотность-как-инструмент/>

The lack of functional literacy among the adult population of Uzbekistan is a challenge for the adult education system. The low level of functional literacy hampers employment and career development of adults. The digitalization of the economy and society requires citizens to be able to use digital technologies. Functional literacy is also necessary for full participation in society. Improving functional literacy contributes to the development of human capital and economic growth. Therefore, improving the level of functional literacy of the adult population is an important task for the ALE system in Uzbekistan, the solution of which will ensure sustainable development of the country and improve the quality of life of citizens.

3.2 Accessibility of ALE

Increasing access to ALE will ensure the competitiveness of the economy, improve the quality of life of the population and contribute to the personal growth of each individual. Accessibility of adult learning and education in Uzbekistan is constantly improving due to the efforts of the state and the development of the education system. In general, the following factors influence accessibility:

- **Geographical accessibility.** In rural areas, accessibility may be limited due to remoteness, lack of training centers and qualified personnel.
- **Transport infrastructure.** Improved roads and transport links enable people from rural areas to reach training centers in urban areas.
- **Cost of training.** Public educational institutions tend to offer more affordable prices, while tuition at private centers can be more expensive.
- **State support programmes.** The state implements various programmes to support access to education for socially vulnerable groups (grants, scholarships and preferential loans for education).
- **Lack of flexible training formats.** Internet learning and distance education are not widely developed enough.
- **Awareness.** Lack of information campaigns to raise public awareness of available programmes.
- **Traditional perceptions.** There are still stereotypes in the society that education is necessary mainly for young people. Some families prioritize education for men over women.
- **Lack of time.** Many adults are engaged in physical labor or entrepreneurial activities, leaving little time for learning.
- **Motivation.** Lack of motivation for continuous education and self-development.

Despite the existing problems, the potential for the development of adult education is very high. The government is implementing various measures to improve the access of the population to adult education. The number of educational institutions is increasing, various benefits for students are being introduced, infrastructure in rural areas is being improved, including transport, and online education is gradually developing. An example of an online education platform is “My dars,” which allows both schoolchildren and students in Tashkent and other regions to study. Living in Samarkand, Bukhara, or Nukus, it is possible to obtain knowledge of equal quality to that offered in the capital’s schools and universities.

The data on ALE availability in Uzbekistan are in the process of being compiled and structured. Although the government is making significant efforts to develop the ALE system, a complete picture is not available in open sources.

The State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan publishes data on education, but these are not always disaggregated by ALE. The Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction also provides information on vocational training programmes, but these data may be limited.

⁹⁶The online education platform “My dars”, <https://www.spot.uz/ru/2022/02/23/my-dars/>

The government reports and programmes provide information on ALE goals and objectives, but detailed data on the availability and effectiveness of programmes are not always publicly available. International organizations such as UNESCO, the World Bank and others publish reports on education in Uzbekistan, including some aspects of ALE. These reports may contain valuable information, but they are limited in scope and detail. NGOs and research centers sometimes conduct studies and publish reports on access to ALE in Uzbekistan; these reports contain valuable information but are also limited in scope and scale. In general, data on ALE availability in Uzbekistan are available from various sources, but they are scattered and not always complete, which does not allow for a complete statistical picture on this issue. Information is particularly limited in areas such as detailed statistics on access to non-formal and informal education, data on access to ALE for vulnerable groups (people with disabilities, people living in rural areas, etc.). The Government of Uzbekistan is working to improve the collection and dissemination of education data, which should contribute to increased transparency and accessibility of ALE information.

3.3 Quality of ALE



The quality of adult learning and education depends on many factors, including accessibility, relevance of curricula, quality of teaching, and relevance of learning content to labor market needs. Despite significant efforts by the state and public organizations, the quality of ALE in Uzbekistan continues to be the most frequently discussed issue.

Some of the main problems include the following:

- Insufficient integration with the labor market and, as a consequence, low demand for graduates.
- The quality of educational services (teaching) varies considerably from region to region, from institution to institution and from teacher to teacher.
- The lack of clear criteria for assessing the quality of educational programmes makes it difficult to monitor and improve the situation.
- Not all educational institutions are equipped with modern equipment and have access to online resources.
- Many adults find it difficult to balance learning with work and family commitments.

The insufficient quality of professional education and the qualifications of teachers in all types and forms of ALE has been repeatedly pointed out by⁹⁷ the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan at various video conference calls:

- “No matter how many reforms we implement, we cannot provide quality education unless we first improve the knowledge and professional skills of educators.” (30.09.2024).
- “Today, 46 thousand teachers in the state educational institutions and 38 thousand in private organizations have not improved their qualifications for 5 years” (30.09.2024).
- “This year, thanks to the use of digital technologies, the attestation processes were transparent. It turned out that 21 thousand teachers out of 198 thousand teachers could not score enough points to confirm their qualifications” (30.09.2024).
- “Vocational training is carried out by existing teachers without taking into account the demand of the labor market and the interest of young people. Only 2% of young people are trained in the form of dual education. There is cooperation with 350 out of 30 thousand

⁹⁷Official channel of the Press Secretary of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan https://t.me/Press_Secretary_Uz

enterprises in the region. As a result, enrolment in colleges and technical schools is less than 50%" (12.08.2024).

- "Many professors and lecturers are disconnected from practice. 40% of 9600 professors of engineering specialties have not received professional training in the last 5 years. The load of professors in some institutes is 2 times higher than abroad. 50% of equipment in scientific laboratories of some universities is outdated, there is a need for additional laboratories and modern equipment" (20.06.2024).
- "Enrolment in higher education has increased dramatically and the private sector has entered the field. But not enough attention is paid to quality" (05.02.2024).
- "Only 9% of kindergarten teachers receive advanced training every year" (05.02.2024).
- "Training of personnel for the cadastral sphere and improvement of their qualification remains one of the important tasks. More than 9000 specialists work in the cadaster sphere. However, the quality of teaching in 10 universities that train personnel for this sphere today lags behind the requirements of the time. Training programmes and teaching methods are outdated" (21.11.2023).
- "Over the last seven years, the enrolment in higher education has increased 5 times, i.e. from 9% to 42%, but the interest of young people in engineering is very low. In the survey of 2023 only 8% of school graduates chose this direction" (20.06.2024).

Much attention is now being paid to the creation of new professional standards which is the content of training and the training programmes developed on this basis.

Involved in this process are:

- 6 international organisations (KOICA, TIKA, UNDP, ETF, GIZ, Helvetas);
- 27 foreign specialists (14 from Korea, 8 from Turkey, 3 from Germany and 2 from Russia);
- Sectoral Councils (Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Construction, Housing and Utilities, Ministry of Digital Technologies, Ministry of Agriculture, Committee for Tourism Development, Uzavtosanoat JSC, Uzeltekh sanoat Association, Uztukimachilik sanoat and Uzcharmsanoat Association).

With the support of about 160 employers (Almalyk Mining and Metallurgical Plant, Electrical Equipment Plant, Bekabad Metallurgical Plant, Tashkent Pipe Plant, etc.), more than 30 professional standards have been improved (11 are under development), and the content of 44 educational programmes has been radically changed to bring them in line with the requirements of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation.

In the long term, the quality of ALE in Uzbekistan will depend on the successful implementation of the following areas:

- Developing a long-term strategy which integrates adult learning into the country's education system and supports the concept of lifelong learning.
- Allocating sufficient funds for ALE programme development, infrastructure and training.
- Creating platforms for co-operation between public authorities, NGOs, the private sector and educational institutions.
- Providing systematic training for teachers on modern methods of working with adult learners, including interactive and inclusive approaches.
- Digitalization of education and widespread adoption of online platforms, e-learning materials and other digital tools.
- Individualization of learning, development of personalized educational trajectories taking into account the needs and capabilities of each student.
- Lifelong learning, building public understanding of the need for continuous learning and professional development.

On May 5, 2025, the Presidential Decree titled “On Additional Measures to Ensure the Quality of Education and Improve the System of Educational Service Delivery⁹⁸” was adopted. The main goal of the decree is to establish mechanisms for external evaluation of the activities of educational and scientific organizations and to improve the quality of educational services provided. According to the Decree, the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education will be established. This Agency will be a specially authorized state body in this field and will carry out comprehensive and specialized state accreditation of institutions of secondary specialized, professional, higher, and postgraduate education, as well as institutions (educational organizations) involved in retraining and professional development of personnel. The Agency will also conduct the National Employer Survey to assess how well graduates of educational institutions meet the requirements of the modern labor market.

The Presidential Decree “On Additional Measures to Ensure the Quality of Education and Improve the System for the Provision of Educational Services” is undoubtedly an important and necessary document because:

- Quality education ensures the training of qualified personnel, contributes to economic growth, and enhances the competitiveness of the state in the international arena.
- The introduction of external evaluation mechanisms will ensure transparency and objectivity in assessing the performance of educational institutions. This, in turn, will encourage them to continuously improve and enhance the quality of the services they provide.
- The establishment of a specialized body, such as the National Agency, demonstrates a serious approach to the issue of ensuring education quality. The Agency will play a key role in accrediting educational institutions and monitoring the compliance of educational programmes with labor market demands.
- The implementation of comprehensive and specialized state accreditation will help establish unified standards of education quality and ensure that educational programmes meet the requirements of employers.
- Conducting a National Employer Survey will provide valuable insights into the needs of the labor market and ensure that graduates of educational institutions meet those needs. This, in turn, will help reduce graduate unemployment rate and increase their competitiveness in the labor market.

Thus, the Presidential Decree “On Additional Measures to Ensure the Quality of Education and Improve the System for the Provision of Educational Services” is an important step toward modernizing the education system and enhancing its effectiveness.

An integrated approach which includes improving public policy, modernizing educational institutions, upgrading teachers’ qualifications and creating motivation for learners will make it possible to achieve sustainable results in this area.

3.4 Relevance of ALE to the needs of the labor market, the individual and society

Matching adult learning and education to the needs of the labor market is a key factor for sustainable economic development of the country. Analysis of the situation on the labor market of students and graduates shows that Uzbek employers pay more attention to the work experience of a graduate than to the grades in his/her diploma⁹⁹, which indicates that not all training programmes meet the real situation on the labor market.

⁹⁸The Presidential Decree “On Additional Measures to Ensure the Quality of Education and Improve the System for the Provision of Educational Services” No. DP 76, from May 5, 2025. <https://lex.uz/uz/docs/7513059>

⁹⁹Employment of students in Uzbekistan. Tulkinov M.E.



One of the major problems in this area is the gap between the skills of graduates and the requirements of employers. Employer surveys show that graduates, especially those from vocational training and education systems, often lack the necessary skills for successful employment. The reason for this is insufficient consideration of labor market needs in training programmes, which do not always respond promptly to changes in the structure of labor demand, both in quantitative and qualitative aspects.

At the same time, in case of well-established cooperation of educational institution with employers, the level of satisfaction of employers with the quality of education is much higher. For example, the Branch of Astrakhan State Technical University in Tashkent region conducted a study “Survey of employers to obtain information about satisfaction with the quality of education”¹⁰⁰. All the enterprises selected for the study actively cooperate with the Branch, in particular: they assist in the development of working programmes of disciplines and practices taking into account the needs of the industry; employees of these enterprises supervise student internships, participate in assessing the quality of training of students during interim and state final certification; participate in the diagnostic work, etc. The results of the questionnaire survey showed that the average percentage of satisfaction with the quality of educational activity was quite high, at 84.2%. Nevertheless, the overall situation requires significant improvement in this area.

According to the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated 16.10.2024 “On measures for further improvement of the system for training qualified personnel and implementation of international educational programmes in vocational education”¹⁰¹, the government of Uzbekistan has taken the direction to radically update the system of assessment of skills and competencies of graduates of professional educational institutions, creating favorable conditions for active participation of employers’ representatives in this process. Starting from 2025, professional educational programmes will be developed on the basis of professional standards and introduced into practice only after agreement with sectoral councils for the development of professional qualifications, associations of business entities, major employers and associations. Final assessment of graduates will be carried out in the form of demonstration examinations with the participation of experts in the field, representatives of sectoral councils for the development of professional qualifications, assessment organizations, employers, associations and unions of business entities.

Matching training programmes to the needs of the labor market will ensure a link between the theoretical knowledge acquired in educational institutions and the practical skills needed in the real working environment. Closer co-operation between educational institutions and employers will contribute to addressing the gap between theory and practice.

Although vocational education plays a key role in Uzbekistan’s ALE system, the importance of matching educational programmes to the needs of the individual, his or her personality and society as a whole must not be overlooked. ALE should promote not only the development of professional skills, but also civic responsibility, critical thinking, creativity and the capacity for continuous learning. This is particularly relevant in a rapidly changing world, where flexibility and adaptability are prioritized.

¹⁰⁰“Survey of employers to obtain information on satisfaction with the quality of education”. Branch of Astrakhan State Technical University in Tashkent region <https://astu.uz/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Опрос-работодателей.pdf>

¹⁰¹Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, #DP-158, 16.10.2024 On measures for further improvement of the system of training of qualified personnel and introduction of international educational programmes in vocational

To achieve this goal, an integrated approach to ALE is needed, taking into account socio-economic and personal aspects. This will be facilitated by the implementation of various educational programmes focused on the development of universal skills such as communication, problem solving, teamwork, digital literacy and others. It is necessary to create conditions for the development of individual learning trajectories which take into account the needs and interests of each student, since ALE is not only a tool for increasing competitiveness in the labor market, but also a means for the formation of an active, educated and responsible civil society.

3.5 Employment of graduates of adult programmes

The Government is working to ensure the employment of graduates of educational institutions. In particular, the Law “On Employment” stipulates that the Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction must submit a draft state programme to promote employment to the Cabinet of Ministers no later than 1 December each year, and this procedure is repeated annually.

The Presidential Decision on measures to further improve the system of training in working professions instructs district (city) khokimiyats, in conjunction with the Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction, to “take measures to provide employment for graduates of vocational training centers, points and short courses, and to provide them with comprehensive support (through the lease of State property and the allocation of loans and subsidies) to start entrepreneurial, craft and self-employment activities”¹⁰².

In the first 11 months of 2024 (January-November), 65 Vocational Skills Centers and 217 non-governmental educational organizations provided training in 91 vocational areas and 8 foreign languages. A total of 221,100 citizens were covered by vocational training, out of them, 105,500 (47.7%) completed the training and 91,900 (87%) were employed. Out of the total number more than half of the trainees were women - 126,700 (57%), and just under a third were young people (29%)¹⁰³.

Since Vocational Skills Centers have not always been adapted to employers’ demands, a new model was tested in Urgench in the form of a chain: “Employer’s order – Assistant of Khokim (city mayor) – Skills Centre – Employer”. For the city of Tashkent, Khorezm, Fergana, Tashkent regions, orders from all employers in the internal and external labor markets are collected and a “Job Referral Service” is launched to help citizens choose a place of work. First of all, an unemployed person chooses a place of work where he or she wants to work, and then, based on the requirements of the chosen place of work, training to a profession and a foreign language is organized in one place.

The Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation also conducts regular work to ensure the employment of graduates. Thus, career centers are established at higher education institutions in order to create favorable employment opportunities for students, which organize a number of activities to support student employment. In order to ensure the employment of graduates, the Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction has developed a separate function “Jobs for Students” in the National Vacancy Database, where information on vacancies and CVs of students is posted. As of May 2023, a total of 106,729 unemployed students have been employed. 3,525 of them are orphans, persons with disabilities and students on the unified social protection register¹⁰⁴. Parliamentary monitoring of the work is conducted regularly.

¹⁰²“On measures to further improve the system of training in working professions”

Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, #RP-5140, 09.06.2021. <https://lex.uz/ru/docs/5449380>

¹⁰³According to the Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction.

¹⁰⁴How the state helps graduates to find jobs

<https://www.kadry.uz/news/788-kak-gosudarstvo-pomogaet-vypuschnikam-nayti-rabotu>

From the 2021/2022 academic year, technical schools are attached to sectoral enterprises and organizations for the purpose of internships and further employment of graduates. Technical schools are also attached to higher education institutions, and the director of the technical school is at the same time a member of the Academic Council of the relevant higher education institution¹⁰⁵. In order to develop young people's knowledge and skills in entrepreneurship, higher and vocational education institutions have developed subjects and curricula on "Fundamentals of Small Business and Entrepreneurship", "Organization of Small Business and Private Entrepreneurship", "Organization of Entrepreneurial Activity in Tourism", and "Organization and Conduct of Business".

A database of available jobs (vacancies) has been created in the interdepartmental software and hardware complex "Unified National Labor System". Fairs, including Career Day, are held annually in July and August in each district and city. An "Open Doors Day" is organized for graduates of technical schools with the involvement of employers on the basis of approved plans and schedules during the academic year in production organizations.

Unfortunately, the state support of graduates with employment relates more to formal education, while graduates of non-formal education courses and programmes address this task independently, sometimes with the assistance of a training organization.

An integrated approach combining the efforts of the state, educational institutions, businesses and graduates themselves helps to increase the effectiveness of employment and to contribute to the development of Uzbekistan's human potential.

3.6 Recognition, validation and accreditation



Recognition, validation and accreditation are integral components of a modern education system and play a key role in ensuring the quality of education. They ensure that the knowledge and skills acquired are valuable and recognized both nationally and internationally. Recognition officially confirms the value of educational achievements, validation confirms that the knowledge and skills correspond to established standards, accreditation officially confirms that an educational programme or institution correspond to established standards. All three concepts are closely related - validation is the basis for recognition and accreditation provides confidence in the results of validation. In the context of globalization and digitalization, these concepts are becoming

increasingly relevant.

Modern workers acquire qualifications not only in formal but also in informal training (education course, self-study) and as a result of practical work experience. However, in the labor market, the value of a worker is measured not so much by where he or she studied, but by what he or she can do and how well. Objective and adequate tools are needed to recognize, describe, evaluate and assign the appropriate qualification to a worker, regardless of how it was achieved.

Uzbekistan has established the National Qualifications System, which includes a classifier of positions and working specialties, the National Qualifications Framework (including a scheme for achieving qualification levels), the National Council for the Development of Professional

¹⁰⁵On measures to strengthen the interrelation of the educational process between higher, secondary special and vocational educational institutions, as well as industrial practice with sectoral organizations Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, #RP-5241, 31.08.2021

Qualifications, Sectoral Councils for the Development of Professional Qualifications (monitoring of sectoral development and forecasts, development of sectoral qualifications frameworks and professional standards, harmonization of educational standards and assessment requirements), and Qualifications Assessment Centers.

The National Qualifications Framework is a tool for matching the demand for qualifications on the part of the labor market and the supply of qualifications on the part of the education and training system. The National Qualifications Framework creates conditions not only for taking into account the education received, but also for taking into account professional experience, competences and personal and business qualities, which significantly stimulates the development of ALE within the lifelong learning paradigm.

The adoption of the National Qualifications System and the development and implementation of National Professional Standards have contributed to the introduction of a qualitatively new system of training qualified personnel, recognition, certification and accreditation of all forms of training in the formal, non-formal and informal sectors, including adult education, improvement of the quality of education, and the organization of training for the general public in the professions in demand, taking into account the trends in the labor market.

According to the Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Measures to Further Improve the National Qualifications System of the Republic of Uzbekistan” (RP-345 of 30.09.2024), the Institute for the Development of the National Qualifications System was established under the Education Sector Projects Office with the following tasks:

- Organizational, methodological and expert-analytical support of the activities of the Republican Council, sectoral councils and qualifications assessment centers;
- Accreditation, control over the activity of qualifications assessment centers, maintenance of their register and, if necessary, provision of methodological assistance;
- Professional development of members of sectoral councils and employees of qualification assessment centers.

Since standards for more than a thousand working professions have not been developed and qualifications of some professions do not meet international requirements, it became necessary to take cardinal measures to improve the situation. The Presidential Resolution¹⁰⁷ on further improvement of the National Qualifications System dated 05.10.2024 was devoted to such measures. It outlines the main directions of reforming the National Qualifications System, including the following areas:

- ensuring international recognition of qualifications and integration of national qualification levels with advanced foreign countries;
- introduction of a system of recognition of non-formally and informally acquired skills and qualifications (“Recognition of Prior Learning”);
- development and implementation of tools and methodologies for “skills anticipation”, “skills need analysis”, “skills gap analysis”.

The Institute for the Development of the National Qualifications System will be established under the Education Sector Projects Office, where advanced training courses on the development of the National Qualifications System will be organized until February 2025.

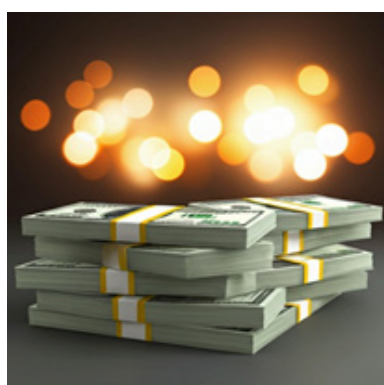
¹⁰⁶The Resolution of The President of The Republic of Uzbekistan on Measures to Further Improve The National Qualifications System of The Republic Of Uzbekistan RP-345 from 30.09.2024. <https://lex.uz/ru/docs/7132771>

¹⁰⁷On measures for further improvement of the National Qualifications System of the Republic of Uzbekistan Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, #RP-345, from 30.09.2024. <https://lex.uz/ru/docs/7132771>

The Resolution also considers the revision and approval, according to the established procedure, of the Classifier of the main positions of employees and professions of workers on the basis of international experience and standards; development and approval of the National Classifier of Occupations, based on the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO - 2008).

The introduction of the “Recognition of Prior Learning” system will make it possible to assess and recognize knowledge and skills acquired outside of formal educational institutions, which will contribute to increased social mobility, while the creation of a unified digital platform of the National Qualifications System will ensure transparency and accessibility of information on qualifications and simplify the job search process. In general, a systematic approach to the development of the National Qualifications System, based on international experience and modern technologies, will allow Uzbekistan to take its rightful place in the global educational space.

3.7 Funding of ALE



Information on ALE financing is segmented and not always included into statistical observation. In general, in Uzbekistan the share of education expenditures in the total budget has always been significant. Over the last 7 years, 216 trillion soums have been allocated for the development of education (all types and forms)¹⁰⁸. Worldwide, an average of 4% of GDP is spent on education. Uzbekistan, with 5.5%, ranks 40th among 203 countries, surpassing many developed nations¹⁰⁹. The draft of the state budget of Uzbekistan for 2025 plans to increase spending on education and health care by 20%¹¹⁰.

There is no budget line for financing ALE, although, as a form of education, this sphere actually receives funds from the lines provided for various other sectors (types) of education¹¹¹. At the same time, the achievement of the National Sustainable Development Goals requires the linkage of the allocated funds of the State Budget for their implementation.

Starting from 2021, the practice of monitoring the usage of the State Budget funds with linkage to the National SDGs (including ALE) has been introduced. Analysis of the allocation of State Budget funds shows that about 50% of the State Budget was allocated to achieve the goals of poverty reduction, health and well-being, and quality education in 2023. In the perspective until 2030, in order to ensure targeting of development programmes and National SDGs, it is expected to allocate up to 84% of the State Budget funds to achieve 105 targets¹¹².

Thus, in the budget of Uzbekistan there are education-related items that indirectly or directly affect adult education (ALE). Thus, part of the funds goes to programmes of professional development and retraining, which can be attributed to ALE. The Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction funds vocational training programmes for the unemployed and low-income citizens. These programmes are an important part of ALE and are financed from the state budget. In addition, the state provides grants and subsidies to non-governmental non-profit organizations

¹⁰⁸Press Secretary to the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 20.11.24 https://t.me/Press_Secretary_Uz

¹⁰⁹UNESCO.Global Education Expenditure 2024. <https://gtmarket.ru/ratings/global-education-expenditure>

¹¹⁰“Uzbekistan will increase spending on education and health care by 20%”. Kun.uz 18.10.2024 <https://kun.uz/ru/news/2024/10/18/v-uzbekistane-rasxody-na-obrazovaniye-i-zdravooxraneniye-uvelichat-na-20>

¹¹¹“Some countries reported that there was no dedicated budget for ALE (e.g. Azerbaijan, Haiti, Lithuania, Maldives, Moldova, Montenegro, Uruguay and Uzbekistan)”. GRALE 5, p. 61.

¹¹²“Through the prism of sustainability”. D. Akhmedov, Deputy of the Legislative Chamber of Oliy Majlis <https://parliament.gov.uz/ru/articles/1800>

which implement adult education programmes. This can also be considered as part of the financing of ALE. Therefore, although there is no separate budget line for ALE, adult education is financed through various budget lines related to education and employment.

In general, there is a constant tendency to increase public expenditure on education in Uzbekistan. Formal education and innovative projects (digitalization, distance learning, creation of new educational programmes) receive significant funding. Non-formal adult education is also sometimes financed from the budget, but it is difficult to summarize all expenditures on adult education due to the lack of a system for such calculation. Budget figures are disaggregated mainly by level of education. In addition, adult education is often financed by large local companies, the informal ALE sector or grants from international projects. Despite the lack of one overall figure, a partial picture of ALE funding can be derived from fragmentary information.

One of the priorities of the state policy is financing of higher education institutions. The last seven years in Uzbekistan have become a period of “big leap” in support of youth, realization of their talents and potential. During this period, more than 100 laws and decrees related to youth have been adopted and more than 200 benefits have been provided. Only 151,000 young people have benefited from education loans. Since 2021, separate grants have been allocated annually for more than 3,000 girls.

A new system of allocating funds from the State budget to banks to finance educational loans on favorable terms for women to study on a paid-contract basis in higher education institutions has been introduced¹¹³. A total of 332 billion sums have been allocated to pay for the contracts of another 110,000 students from low-income families. As a result, the coverage of higher education has increased almost fivefold, from 9% to 42%, and the number of universities has increased from 77 to 212¹¹⁴. The goal for the coming years is to increase the coverage of higher education to 50%. In 2025, it is planned to allocate 6.3 trillion soums from the state budget to the Ministry of Higher Education, Science & Innovation, which is 2.4% more than in 2025¹¹⁵.

There is a small private TVET (technical and vocational education and training) sector which is funded by tuition fees on a commercial basis. Private organizations providing such services have to register as non-state educational institutions. However, courses are usually limited to foreign languages, computer and information technology, and economic areas such as accounting, secretarial and business courses. There are no publicly available statistics on the amount of funding for this sector.

The scale of funding for vocational education was assessed by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in a special study on skills development. The report concludes on the basis of statistical data until 2018 – public expenditure on education remains at a high level - more than 30% of total public expenditure (Charts 7 and 8). The breakdown of the budget by sector is characteristic of the period of the active phase of development of colleges and lyceums and is less reflective of trends in recent years (greater emphasis on higher education).

The government support programmes for vulnerable groups also include adult education. Studies show that poverty cannot be solved by handing out money to residents. Currently, there are 250,000 vacancies in enterprises offering monthly salaries of up to 3-5 million soums. However, 35% of people from poor families lack knowledge and skills sufficient for employment.

A comprehensive programme titled “Kambagallikdan farovonlik sari” (From Poverty to Prosperity) has been in operation since November 2024¹¹⁷, which will provide individual support packages to ensure quality education, vocational training, employment, health improvement and psychological support for members of low-income families.

¹¹⁷On priority measures for the implementation of “From Poverty to Well-being” Programme the Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, No. RP-330, 24.09.2024

Diagram 7

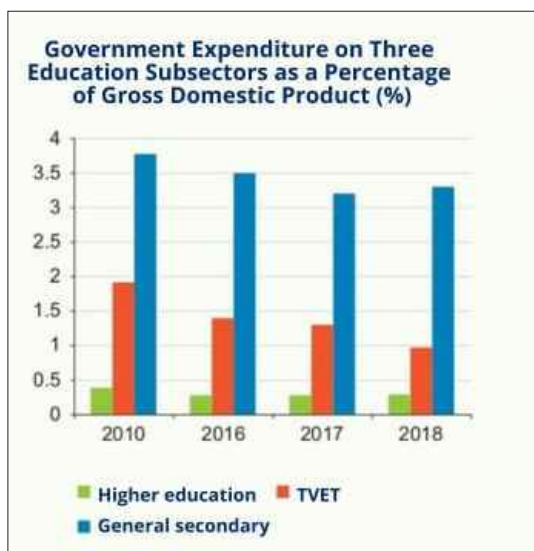
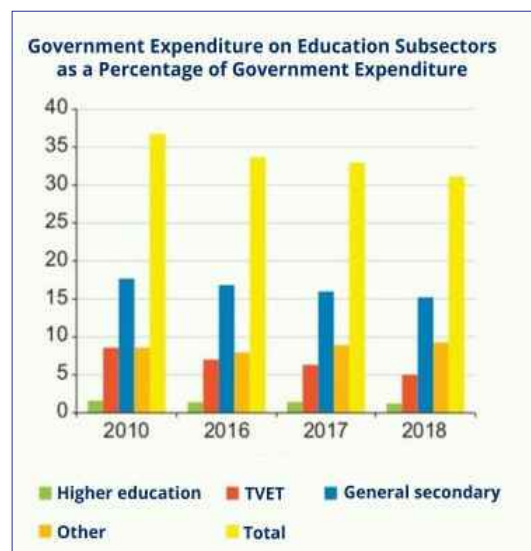


Diagram 8



*Source: Asian Development Bank on the materials of the Ministry of Finance of Uzbekistan

500 billion soums will be allocated for children from poor families to receive free education course on foreign languages, professions and information technologies. A programme of infrastructure improvement will be implemented in 1,000 settlements with difficult social conditions. 2 trillion soums will be allocated for this purpose.

It is planned to create conditions for every poor family, especially those with women, to have at least one member with higher education. At the same time, if university and technical school students demonstrate good performance (at least 80%), they will be provided with an interest-free educational loan for the next academic year. An additional grant will be given to children from poor families who score 80% of the points required to receive a grant for admission to a higher education institution or technical school. In addition, each of the financially independent universities will announce a grant of at least 1 billion soums per year. This amount will cover from 20% to 80% of the contract of children from poor families, depending on their academic performance¹¹⁸.

Public education is expending due to additional private and public-private funding¹¹⁹. Expenditure on ALE also comes from extra-budgetary funds. For example, the Andijan and Bukhara Pedagogical Institutes are allocating 25 billion soums from extra-budgetary funds to create experimental educational clusters which will unite all levels of education, including higher education and advanced training¹²⁰.

The state encourages the development of talented youth. Students who have won medals at prestigious international Olympiads are awarded cash prizes (up to 170 million soums). Teachers of these students are awarded prizes of up to 150 million soums and given the opportunity to receive a 100% allowance for one year¹²¹.

From 1 April 2023, new conditions have been created for IT education centers and their graduates, including a preferential loan of 7.5 million soums for the purchase of a computer for young people with an IT certificate.

¹¹⁸Press Secretary to the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 11.09.24, https://t.me/Press_Secretary_Uz

¹¹⁹Press Secretary to the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 20.11.24, https://t.me/Press_Secretary_Uz

¹²⁰Press Secretary to the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 30.09.24, https://t.me/Press_Secretary_Uz

¹²¹On measures to organize a continuous system for identifying gifted youth and training them
Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, No. RP-4306 from 04.05.2019. <https://lex.uz/docs/4320719>

The state pays special attention to teaching foreign languages to young people. In this sphere, a separate Presidential Resolution provides for a number of benefits in the form of compensation for examination expenses, one-time financial incentives in the amount of three times the basic calculation value to cover the cost of training, etc. The Government has established a separate TV channel for teaching foreign languages to young people in remote rural areas¹²².

Over the past four years, 2.2 trillion soums have been allocated for the implementation of 1,727 practical, innovative, fundamental and start-up projects. Out of these amount, 152 billion soums were allocated to 176 engineering projects. Spending on research and development has doubled. 41% of these funds went to state-owned enterprises, 34% to the private sector and 25% to universities. At the same time, it is criticized that universities are limited to carrying out fundamental research, while there are very few practical developments for the economy, and hundreds of start-ups and innovation projects are not implemented. Due to the gap between universities and industry, the efficiency of investing these funds remains low¹²⁴.

Despite significant allocations to education, there is a lack of funds and government support in the ALE sector, especially in non-formal education provided by socially oriented non-profit NGOs.

Studying international experience in financing ALE and adapting best practices to the local conditions of Uzbekistan would increase the effectiveness of adult learning and education.

3.8 Monitoring and statistics



Developing and implementing a comprehensive ALE sector development strategy is a complex process due to the lack of experience in this area and the lack of evidence on many important aspects. At the initial stage, it makes sense to introduce a monitoring system to assess the success of actions, analyze mistakes and record the impact of policies on the sector and target groups.

It seems appropriate to collect and monitor data in such areas as:

- reasons and needs for learning;
- availability of information on training opportunities and their sources;
- statistical data on the degree of participation of the population in ALE programmes
- ALE coverage rate for the population as a whole, by age, gender and region;
- the presence of vulnerable groups;
- ALE providers;
- directions, duration and learning outcomes;
- the need for language learning and ICT;
- funding mechanisms for training;
- barriers to learning, etc.

Monitoring results can serve as an evidence base, factual data and rationale for decision-makers to shape ALE policy, for a wide range of experts and stakeholders, to stimulate and/or develop motivation of target groups, to engage the general population in ALE.

Lack of data can be a major obstacle to addressing inequalities in ALE participation and meeting the needs of disadvantaged groups. In this situation, additional investment in data collection and monitoring is needed to promote evidence-based policies.

¹²²Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On additional measures to enhance the effectiveness of the system of teaching foreign languages to youth people”, No. RP-239 from 28.06.2024

¹²⁴Press Secretary to the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 20.06.24, https://t.me/Press_Secretary_Uz

Development and implementation of unified policy in the field of state statistics, ensuring effective system of organization of statistics, implementation of coordination and functional regulation in the field of state statistics is one of the main tasks of the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics. This Committee collects statistical data on National SDG indicators and publishes them on the web portal of National SDGs: <http://nsdg.stat.uz/>

At the same time, for further ALE policy formulation, it seems justified to initiate the collection of certain statistical data (preferably on internationally accepted parameters to ensure comparability) on different aspects of LLL and ALE policies.

There are countries that have embodied the idea of LLL in their national education policies as a holistic sectoral approach. In South Korea, under the Lifelong Learning Law, there is an advisory body which is responsible for developing and implementing national policy in this area. The Committee for Lifelong Learning is chaired by the Minister of Education and includes vice-ministers, the President of the National Institute for Lifelong Learning and experts appointed by the Committee Chair. In the Republic of Estonia, the “Law on Adult Learning” was adopted in February 2015 and amended in September 2019. In the Republic of Tajikistan, the “Adult Education Law” was adopted in 2017.

The adoption of laws covers all sub-sectors and levels of education, engaging people regardless of age. In this way, these countries get an economic return on investment, ensuring the development of the nation’s human capital and improving the quality of life of those involved in learning.

Unfortunately, most countries in the post-Soviet space are still far from such a reality, while in today’s rapidly changing world, only those societies that do not stop learning are innovative and successful in global competition.

3.9 Analyzing the Fast and Slow Development Zones in ALE sector

Analyzing areas of slow and fast ALE development in Uzbekistan, both regionally and thematically, is a complex task that requires a detailed study of socio-economic conditions, the level of infrastructure development, the needs of the population in each region and the consideration of many other factors. However, some general trends and priority areas can be identified.

Priority areas for the future development of ALE in the regional context

For the successful development of ALE in Uzbekistan, it is necessary to take into account the specific needs of each region and develop individual programmes which take into account local conditions:

- **Infrastructure development in remote regions** (invest in infrastructure development, including internet connectivity and transport accessibility, to ensure equal access to ALE for all regions).
- **Development of distance learning** (develop infrastructure, develop quality online courses and train educators to use digital technologies, especially in regions with low population density).
- **Development of vocational education** (develop vocational education and retraining in regions with high unemployment to meet the needs of the labor market).
- **Development of non-formal and informal education** (modernize culture centers, libraries and museums, expand the range of educational programmes and improve their quality in all regions).

Table 7

Rapid development	Slow development
Regional transect	
Tashkent The capital, as a center of economic and cultural life, has a well-developed infrastructure and a high level of digitalization. Leading universities, training centers and international organizations are concentrated here, which contributes to the rapid development of ALE. The high level of internet penetration and digital literacy of the population create favorable conditions for the development of distance learning.	Low population density regions and remote areas In Karakalpakstan, Surkhandarya and other remote provinces, access to ALE is limited due to underdeveloped infrastructure, low levels of digitalization and lack of qualified personnel. The low level of internet penetration and digital literacy hampers the development of distance learning. In these regions, there is a lack of cultural venues providing educational services to the adult population.
Samarkand and Bukhara These regions, with their rich cultural heritage and developed tourism, are showing rapid growth in ALE related to cultural education and tourism development. The development of the hospitality and tourism industries has facilitated the development of courses aimed at developing these skills among the adult population. Various cultural centers are also developing in these regions, which help to develop non-formal and informal education. There are NGOs with extensive experience in the field of NGOs (SABR, Regional Branch of NGO "Tadbirkor Ayol").	Regions with high rates In some regions with high unemployment, such as the Fergana Valley, special attention should be paid to the development of vocational education and retraining. Vocational training centers under the Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction should also be more actively developed in these regions.
Other major regional centers (Fergana, Namangan, Andijan) In these regions, there are universities and colleges which have a great potential for ALE development, as well as NGEs and NGOs working with the adult population. The city of Fergana, along with Tashkent, is included in the UNESCO list of "Learning Cities".	Regions with a predominantly agricultural sector In regions such as Jizzakh and Syrdarya, where a significant proportion of the population is engaged in agriculture, there is relatively low demand for formal adult education. This is due to the fact that agriculture often requires work skills that are passed on from generation to generation, and traditionally less emphasis has been placed on formal education.
Thematic section	
Development of digital technologies The adoption of digital technologies in ALE, including distance learning and online courses, is showing rapid growth. This is particularly relevant in the context of the digitalization of society and the growing demand for flexible forms of learning.	Accessibility of ALE to vulnerable groups Despite efforts, accessibility of ALE to people with disabilities, people living in remote areas and other vulnerable groups remains insufficient. Special programmes and mechanisms need to be developed to address the needs of these groups.
Vocational education In Uzbekistan, great attention is paid to the development of vocational education to meet the requirements of the labor market. The creation of a unified network of technical schools and the organization of short-term courses are contributing to the rapid development of this area.	Development of non-formal and informal education Non-formal and informal education, including enlightenment activities of cultural centers, libraries and museums, needs further development and modernization. It is necessary to expand the range of educational programmes and improve their quality.
Cooperation with international organizations Active cooperation with international organizations such as UNESCO and DVV International contributes to the introduction of advanced methodologies and technologies in ALE.	Participation of civil society Despite the establishment of public councils, civil society participation in ALE policy decision-making remains limited. It is necessary to create more effective mechanisms of interaction between the state and civil society.

- **Strengthening collaboration with local communities** (involve local communities in the design and implementation of ALE programmes to ensure they are relevant to the needs of the region).
- **Development of training programmes for SMEs** (pay attention to the development of training programmes for SMEs in all regions).

- **Development of educational programmes oriented to the needs of agriculture**, creation of opportunities for professional growth and advanced training in this sphere.

Priority areas for future ALE development in thematic terms

- **Development of distance learning** - as well as regionally (especially in regions with low population density) in the conditions of digitalization of society distance learning is becoming an increasingly relevant thematic area of ALE, it is necessary to develop infrastructure, develop quality online courses and train teachers in the use of digital technologies).
- **Increase access to ALE for vulnerable groups** (develop special programmes and mechanisms which take into account the needs of people with disabilities, people living in remote areas and other vulnerable groups).
- **Strengthen co-operation between the state and civil society** (create more effective mechanisms of interaction between the state and civil society to ensure public participation in ALE policy decisions).

An analysis of the areas of rapid and slow ALE development in Uzbekistan demonstrates both significant achievements and areas requiring attention. To ensure sustainable ALE development, it is necessary to continue to invest in infrastructure development, introduce innovative technologies, increase access to education for all segments of the population and strengthen cooperation between the state, civil society and international organizations. A comprehensive and systematic approach will enable Uzbekistan to fully realize the potential of ALE as a key factor in socio-economic development and the formation of a knowledge-based society.

4. FEATURES OF NON-FORMAL ALE DEVELOPMENT IN UZBEKISTAN

4.1. The role of non-formal ALE sector in Uzbekistan's development



Non-formal adult education plays an increasingly important role in the development of Uzbekistan, contributing to improving the quality of life of the population, strengthening the economy and the development of civil society, complementing the formal education system, filling gaps and responding to the ever-changing needs of society. The Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On improving the National Qualifications System” (RP-345 of 30.09.2024)¹²⁵ gives non-formal education a new status, recognizing it as equal to formal education and promoting its integration into the general qualifications system. One of the directions of reforming the National Qualifications System is defined in this Resolution as “the introduction of a system of recognition of non-formally and informally acquired skills and qualifications” (“Recognition of Prior Learning”). Informal ALE contributes to areas that are important for Uzbekistan's development:

¹²⁵On measures for further improvement of the National Qualifications System of the Republic of Uzbekistan Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, #RP-345, 30.09.2024. <https://lex.uz/ru/docs/7132771>

Addressing skills deficits

Vocational training and skills development, bridging the gap between existing skills and labor market requirements are particularly relevant in the context of industrialization and diversification of Uzbekistan's economy. Courses in IT, agriculture, tourism and other in-demand sectors play a key role here.

Entrepreneurship and self-employment

Developing entrepreneurial skills, providing business knowledge and financial literacy, innovations in business processes contribute to economic independence and job creation.

Adaptation to technological change

Non-formal education helps adults learn the digital skills and knowledge they need to adapt to a changing work environment.

Social and civic engagement

Non-formal education promotes civic engagement by teaching adults leadership skills, their rights and responsibilities, encouraging participation in community development, and shaping democratic values.

Health and well-being

Programmes which focus on health awareness, family planning and other important health issues can significantly improve the well-being of individuals and communities.

Preservation and promotion of culture

Preservation and promotion of Uzbekistan's rich cultural heritage through language courses, master classes in traditional crafts and other cultural activities. Developing creative abilities and realizing potential in the field of art.

Addressing social problems

- Empowering women through vocational training, leadership development, gender equality.
- Overcoming poverty through training, functional literacy programmes and other opportunities for social and economic development.
- Teaching sustainable development, environmental protection and responsible use of resources.

Personal development and social inclusion

- Broadening the mind, developing creative thinking and critical analysis.
- Social adaptation, development of communication skills.
- Integration into society, realizing one's potential and achieving personal goals.
- Improving self-esteem and integration into society.
- Overcoming social barriers.
- Achieving a higher social status.

Non-formal adult education plays an important role in Uzbekistan's development by enhancing human capital, promoting social inclusion and stimulating economic growth.

4.2 The benefits of non-formal education

Formal and non-formal education are not mutually exclusive. They complement each other, enabling people to receive a more complete and well-rounded education. The optimal approach is to combine formal and non-formal education for maximum effect. Non-formal education often compensates for the disadvantages of formal education such as:

- Rigid structure and schedule.
- Some of the knowledge may not be applied in practice.
- Training programmes can become outdated.

At the same time, non-formal education is becoming attractive to many adults because of these advantages:

Flexibility and accessibility

- Non-formal education often offers flexible study schedules which allow individuals to study at convenient times, unlike the strict schedules of formal education. This is especially important for working with adults. Various formats are available, including online courses, webinars, masterclasses, workshops, self-study, etc., allowing individuals to choose the most appropriate way of learning.
- Online courses and other distance formats allow you to study from anywhere in the world, unlike formal education, which mostly requires physical presence at the institution.
- Non-formal education is often cheaper than formal education, especially when individuals consider the cost of tuition, accommodation and other costs associated with formal education.

Practical skills orientation and relevance

- Many non-formal education programmes focus on the development of practical skills required for a particular occupation or task. Formal education can be more theoretical.
- Non-formal education often reacts faster to changes in the labor market and offers courses on new technologies and trends. Formal training programmes may be slower to be updated.
- Non-formal education allows individuals to focus on a narrow specialization, which is particularly important for professional development.

Personal aspect

- Non-formal education allows individuals to study what they are really interested in without the pressure of a curriculum.
- Non-formal education often involves greater autonomy in learning, which promotes self-organization and responsibility.
- The pace of learning can be adjusted independently, unlike in formal education where the pace is set by the teacher.

Adults involved in non-formal education are often more motivated because they choose to learn by choice and interest, which fosters deeper engagement.

4.3 Legislative Framework for Action in the Non-Formal Adult Learning and Education Sector

Despite the growing importance of non-formal education, the legislative framework regulating this area has been underdeveloped until recently. The situation began to change with the adoption of a number of legislative acts, among which the most significant are:

The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Education” (LRU-637 of 23.09.2020), which for the first time in Uzbek legislation defines the different forms of education, including adult learning and education and covers formal, non-formal and informal learning, emphasizing the importance of lifelong learning.

The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Cultural Activities and Cultural Organizations”¹²⁶ “along with the Law “On Education” regulates the educational activities of culture centers and other cultural and educational enlightenment organizations, the main activity of which is «the creation of conditions for satisfying intellectual, spiritual, moral, cultural and educational needs, as well as development of creative abilities of the individual”. Culture centers can carry out educational activities in accordance with the legislation on education (organization of cultural and educational events, courses, master classes and other educational programmes).

The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Non-Governmental Non-Commercial Organizations”¹²⁷ “along with the Law “On Education” regulates the educational activities of NGOs and NNGOs. Educational activities of NNGOs and NNGOs must comply with the requirements of the legislation on education, including licensing and accreditation requirements.

The Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On measures to further improve the National Qualifications System of the Republic of Uzbekistan” (RP-345 of 30.09.2024) in the context of non-formal education is important. One of its key provisions is the recognition of non-formal and informal learning as an equivalent form of acquiring knowledge and skills. This means that experience gained outside formal educational institutions can be valued and counted towards qualifications. By recognizing non-formal qualifications, workers will be able to change jobs more easily and gain new career opportunities.

In accordance with the Resolution, a unified digital platform of the National Qualifications System is being created, which will provide free access and use of information on sectoral councils, national and sectoral qualifications frameworks, the National Classifier of Occupations, approved professional standards, the register of educational programmes which have been reviewed and put into practice, qualifications assessment centers, as well as regulatory legal acts and methodological manuals on the development of the National Qualifications System. By the end of 2026, it is planned to develop professional standards for 1,800 professions based on best international practices.

Uzbekistan’s legislation on non-formal adult education defines the following key provisions:

- Adults have the right to freely choose the forms and methods of education, including non-formal education.
- Non-formal education can take various forms, including courses, trainings, master classes, online learning, etc.

¹²⁶Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Cultural activities and cultural organizations. LRU-668 from 20.01.2021. <https://lex.uz/ru/docs/5230686>

¹²⁷Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Non-governmental non-profit organizations. №763-I from 14.04.1999. <https://lex.uz/ru/docs/10863>

- Non-formal learning outcomes can be recognized and taken into account in employment, further education and other activities.
- The state creates conditions for the development of non-formal education, supports initiatives in this area and recognizes the importance of non-formal education for the development of society.

However, there are no detailed by-laws regulating various aspects of non-formal education.

Non-formal adult education in Uzbekistan has great potential to contribute to economic growth, social inclusion and sustainable development. However, for its implementation it is necessary to remove existing barriers, improve the quality of programmes and create favorable conditions for their accessibility. Only a systematic and comprehensive approach will allow the creation of a sustainable and effective adult learning system which will meet modern challenges and needs of society.

4.4 Pandemic as a catalyst for change

The COVID-19 pandemic made significant adjustments in various spheres of life, including non-formal education in Uzbekistan. But the consequences were not only negative, but also positive.

Negative consequences

- The introduction of quarantine measures and restrictions on mass events has led to a reduction in the number of face-to-face courses, seminars and master classes.
- Not all learners and teachers had access to stable internet and the necessary technology to switch to online learning.
- Many non-profit organizations involved in non-formal education have faced financial difficulties due to declining donations and grants.
- The lack of face-to-face interaction with instructors and the monotonous format of online classes may have reduced the motivation of some learners.
- Not all segments of the population had equal opportunities for quality online education, which reinforced existing social inequalities.

Positive consequences

- Accelerating digitalization (accelerating the digitalization of education, development of online platforms and mobile learning applications).
- Expansion of geographical boundaries (the online format has made it possible to attract teachers and learners from different regions and even countries, increasing access to educational resources).
- Development of flexible learning formats (new learning formats such as webinars, online courses that allow learning at a convenient time and individual pace).
- Innovations in teaching methodology (teachers had to find new approaches and tools to organize effective online learning).
- Raising the importance of self-education (the pandemic emphasized the importance of working independently and developing self-education skills).

The COVID-19 pandemic was a catalyst for change in non-formal education and trends such as:

- Combined learning formats (combination of online and offline learning formats).
- The increasing role of digital technologies, which will play an increasingly important role in the organization and delivery of educational activities.
- Enhancing the relevance of non-formal education for addressing social challenges and sustainable development.

Changing the role of the teacher

- The role of the teacher has shifted from knowledge translation to creating conditions for students' independent learning and cooperation.
- Teachers began to learn new competences related to the use of digital technologies and the organization of online learning.

Challenges and prospects

Despite all the positive developments, the pandemic also revealed a number of problems:

- Digital divide (not all learners have equal access to digital technology and the internet).
- Motivation to learn (maintaining motivation to learn in an online environment requires extra effort).
- Lack of live interaction (lack of opportunity for face-to-face interaction with teachers and other learners can have a negative impact on the quality of learning).

Prospects for the development of adult education

- Hybrid learning formats (combining online and offline learning will become the norm).
- Micro-certification (short online courses which allow individuals to learn new skills quickly will grow in popularity).
- Artificial Intelligence (will be increasingly used to personalize learning and automate routine tasks).
- Social learning (there will be an increasing role of social media and online communities in the learning process).

4.5 Contribution of non-state organizations to community skills development

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs and NGEOs) are playing an increasingly important role in developing people's skills, especially in areas where government structures cannot always provide full coverage. Their flexibility, innovation and close links with local communities allow them to tailor their programmes to the specific needs of the population.

The main areas of activity of non-governmental organizations in the field of skills development:

- Vocational Training.
- Developing Entrepreneurial Skills.
- Digital Literacy.
- Social Skills.
- Environmental Education.

The benefits of these organizations' work in skills development:

- Flexibility (can quickly adapt their programmes to changing market and societal needs).
- Innovativeness (often use new teaching methods and technologies).
- Close links with local communities (have good local knowledge and can develop programmes tailored to the region).
- Focus on specific populations (can develop programmes for vulnerable groups such as women, youth, people with disabilities).

The state supports the activities of non-governmental organizations through grants, tax incentives, provision of premises and equipment. NGOs and NGEOs, in their turn, complement state programmes and ensure their targeting.

In 2018, the country established “Ishga Markhamat” mono-centers, which, following the Presidential Resolution “On measures to improve and increase the effectiveness of state policy in the field of employment and poverty reduction” from October 4, 2024¹²⁸, which will be reorganized into Vocational Skills Centers under the Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction.

The “Ishga Markhamat” mono-centers were created according to the Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On measures to improve the structure of labor agencies and strengthen the system of protection of labor rights and labor protection of citizens”¹²⁹. The main tasks of the mono-centers were to ensure employment of the unemployed population, organize professional training courses in various areas, social support for the unemployed population, as well as provide assistance in organized labor migration and preliminary adaptation of citizens leaving for temporary work abroad. The main advantage was the high quality of teaching and good conditions for learning.

Under the Presidential Resolution on additional measures aimed at attracting the poor and unemployed to entrepreneurship, increasing their labor activity and proving vocational training¹³⁰, the establishment of “Ishga Markhamat” mono-centers began in the Republic of Karakalpakstan and in all provinces of Uzbekistan. The professional competence of graduates of “Ishga Markhamat” centers was assessed on the basis of WorldSkills standards. A unified register of graduates with confirmed qualifications was formed from the number of graduates who successfully obtained WorldSkills passports recognized in Uzbekistan and foreign countries. The certificate issued by the “Ishga Markhamat” mono-centers confirming the graduates’ completion of training, as well as the Skills passport, are equivalent to diplomas of secondary specialized vocational education. Training in the mono-centers was provided in various areas of vocational education and 5 foreign languages, with courses lasting 2-3-4 months. Short-term courses in entrepreneurship and financial literacy were also organized. Masters in specialties trained the trainees in such areas as:

- o Construction specialties (mason, plasterer, painter, drywall specialist, and aluminum profile specialist).
- o Technical specialties (crane operator, electrician, turner-miller, plumber, welder, plumber-hydraulicist, household appliance repair specialist).
- o Services (chef-pastry chef-catering, seamstress, hairdresser, makeup artist, nail stylist, massage therapist, childcare nanny, butler-waiter, cosmetologist).

Preparatory measures for the preliminary adaptation of citizens in need of employment were organized for the unemployed wishing to work abroad (foreign language training: English, Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Russian). Classes at language courses included an equal number of hours of familiarization with reading, writing, as well as oral speech and listening comprehension, which makes it possible to assimilate the programme in a short time.

¹²⁸On Measures to Improve and Increase the Effectiveness of State Policy in the Sphere of Employment and Poverty Reduction Presidential Decision, No. RP-347, 04.10.2024. <https://lex.uz/ru/docs/7134779>

¹²⁹On measures for improving the structure of labor bodies and strengthening the system of labor rights protection and occupational safety for citizens. Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, #RP-3913, from 20.08.2018. <https://lex.uz/ru/docs/4213624>

¹³⁰On additional measures aimed at attracting poor and unemployed citizens to entrepreneurship, increasing their labor activity and vocational training, as well as ensuring employment of the population. Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, No. RP-4804, from 11.08.2020, Date of entry into force 12.08.2020

Mono-centers also conducted retraining and advanced training of workers at the request of enterprises and provided professional legal and psychological support to returned migrants. Upon completion of studies in the chosen field of study, an international certificate of state sample was issued, which gives the opportunity to work in the above-mentioned in-demand professions.

The 22-hour course on the basics of entrepreneurship covered business organization, business modelling, analysis and interdependence of the internal and external business environment, ways of generating direct income, business strategy and its future prospects, marketing and logistics, basics of commercial law and market economy, business procedures, financial literacy, taxation, export-import operations and marketing. After training at the mono-center, advisory services were provided to citizens travelling outside the country.

From 2025, all these functions will be performed by Vocational Skills Centers, which are being established on the basis of mono-centers.

During 11 months of 2024 (January-November), 65 Vocational Skills Centers and 217 non-governmental educational organizations provided training in 91 professional areas and 8 foreign languages. In total, 221.1 thousand citizens were covered by vocational training. Of these, 105.5 thousand (47.7%) completed training, and 91.9 thousand (87%) were employed. Of all those initially involved in training, more than half of the students were women - 126,700 (57%), and slightly less than a third were young people (29%). The share of the private sector in vocational training is increasing. As of today, cooperation has been established with 217 non-governmental educational organizations throughout the republic. This figure has increased to 180% compared to 120% in 2023, and their share in vocational training has increased from 17% to 26%¹³¹.

The contribution to professional training of NGOs is also increasing. Thus, the NGO "SABR" as an umbrella organization for socially oriented NGOs from 12 regions has been conducting educational activities for socially vulnerable groups of the population together with its partner NGOs for many years. On the basis of social partnership in cooperation with a number of interested organizations in 12 regions and 13 rural districts, experimental Local Development Centers and Rural Information and Resource Centers (RIRC) have been created in order to stimulate and develop professional skills in demand in the labor market, especially for women and youth. 126 mentors and 44 trainers have been trained to work in the LCDs and RIRCs throughout the Republic.

Professional skills training is currently being provided in 22 areas of specialized training modules. Training in business skills, financial and legal literacy, personal income planning and management, as well as social and gender issues is provided through 28-hour and 35-hour seminars and trainings. In addition, financial support for trainees is provided (grants, soft micro-loans, subsidies).

Financial support within the framework of various projects is provided by international donors, and from 2018 to 2024 social orders for these activities are carried out by the Public Fund under the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan. More than 15,183 people have been trained in professional skills during this time. Out of the total number, 7,000 have become micro-entrepreneurs. Despite all the advantages of NGO activities in the field of skills development, there are certain difficulties. First of all, there is insufficient funding for most NGOs outside of international donor support. And, in order to receive support from the Oliy Majlis Foundation of the Republic of Uzbekistan, one has to pass a competition, which not everyone manages to win.

¹³¹Data from the Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction.

Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 1-2. Example of non-formal vocational skills training: Graduates of the courses “Confectioner” and “Production of designer furniture” within the framework of the project “Capacity building of Culture Centers” implemented with the support of DVV International Uzbekistan (Kuyasay Culture Center).

A stable trend is the interaction of government agencies and the civil sector not only in organizing professional training courses, but also in addressing other socially significant problems. For example, the project “Promoting Gender Transformations in Communities through Civil Society Participation”, which is implemented in six districts of Andijan (Altynkul), Bukhara (Vabkent and Peshku), Samarkand (Akdarya and Urgut) and Syrdarya (Gulistan) regions. One of the key results of the project is the empowerment of local residents through training (computer literacy, hairdressing and sewing, embroidery, confectionery art) and mobilization, which contributes to the promotion of territories and communities with an emphasis on gender transformation. More than 150 representatives of the public, local authorities and civil society organizations took part in public discussions of the results of the socio-economic and gender analysis study conducted within the framework of the project in October 2024.

As a result of public discussions, the most relevant topics for educational trainings were identified: financial literacy, business management, psychology of family relations, healthy lifestyle, and women’s leadership development. The participants noted that the situation in each of the target locations is similar and the needs of the respondents are almost identical, which underlines the need for a unified approach to the development of programmes and trainings which promote community development and meet common needs. The project is funded by the European Union and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development.

NGOs play an important role in developing the skills of the population, complementing and empowering government structures. To be effective, they need to be provided with stable funding, a favorable legislative environment, and partnerships with both international organizations and government agencies.

5. KEY TRENDS AND RELATED CHALLENGES

5.1 Digital and Media Information Literacy (MIL)

Digital literacy

Digital literacy is the ability to use a computer and other digital devices (smartphones, tablets, etc.) In the digital world, it is the ability to search for information on the internet, send emails, use social media and many other applications.

Digitalization is the basis for the development of digital literacy. Uzbekistan is implementing comprehensive measures for the active development of the digital economy and the widespread introduction of modern information and communication technologies in all sectors and spheres of life.

Media literacy

Media literacy is the ability to understand how the mass media - television, radio, newspapers, magazines, websites and social networks - work. It is the ability to think critically about media messages, to understand who created them, why they were created, what impact they have, to distinguish fact from opinion propaganda, and to create your own media products (e.g. blogging or making videos).

Information

Information literacy is the broadest concept which combines both digital and media literacy. It includes the ability to find, evaluate, use and create information, to verify its validity and use it to solve one's own problems, and to share this information with others.

These three types of literacy are closely linked. Today information is predominantly distributed digitally and through the media, it is impossible to be information literate without digital and media literacy. For example, to assess the credibility of a news story found on the Internet (information literacy), you need to understand how news sites work (media literacy) and be able to use search engines and other online tools (digital literacy).

Media and Information Literacy (MIL)

"Media and Information Literacy" (MIL) is a term which UNESCO proposed in 2007 as a comprehensive concept¹³² covering all competences related to information literacy and media literacy, including also digital or technological literacy. The term is widely recognized in the international community.

Digitalization: legislative framework and initiatives in Uzbekistan

More than 30 laws, about 60 presidential acts and more than 100 government decisions have been adopted in the field of information technology and security¹³³.

¹³²UNITED NATIONS. "Global Media and Information Literacy Week", <https://www.un.org/ru/observances/media-information-literacy-week>

¹³³Institute of Legislation and Legal Policy under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Digital literacy as a tool for raising legal awareness among young people. <https://illp.uz/цифровая-грамотность-как-инструмент/е>

In 2020, the Digital Uzbekistan 2030 strategy was adopted by presidential decree. Thanks to the implementation of this strategy, over 220 priority projects have been launched¹³⁴, providing for the improvement of the e-government system, the further development of the domestic market for software products and information technologies, the organization of IT parks in all regions of the country and the provision of qualified personnel in this area. This strategy is designed to improve the accessibility and quality of education, and to help young people develop the necessary skills to use digital tools and resources effectively.

Issues related to the development of information and communication technologies have become one of the priorities of the state policy: in 2022, the Law “On Cyber Security”¹³⁵, regulating relations in the area of ensuring the security of critical information infrastructure, and the Law “On Electronic Commerce”¹³⁶, regulating relations in the area of electronic commerce were adopted. The Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On measures for the effective organization of state management in the sphere of digital technologies within the framework of administrative reforms”¹³⁷ approved the roadmap of reforms in the sphere of digital technologies.

Several important decrees have been adopted: Presidential Decree “On the organization of ‘IT-cities’ activities aimed at creating additional conditions for training young people in digital technologies and foreign languages in the regions”¹³⁸, Presidential Resolution “On additional measures to support activities to train qualified specialists in the field of digitalization”¹³⁹ will stimulate the development of IT personnel in the country. In the report “Network Readiness Index 2023”¹⁴⁰ Uzbekistan ranks 82nd among 134 countries, which corresponds to its position as a lower-middle-income country (Figure 5). The country’s position in the index is calculated by indicators in four main categories:

- Technology Level (67th). Uzbekistan performs relatively well in access to technology (44th), which includes 3G coverage and international internet bandwidth, but lags behind in content development and future technologies such as investment in new technologies and car density.
- Human Capital (88th place). In this aspect, the country has weak performance in the categories “Individual Users”, “Business” and “Government”. This indicates insufficient digital literacy of the population and weak digitalization of business and the public sector.
- Governance (98th). Low scores in this category are associated with low levels of trust in the internet, weak regulation and lack of inclusiveness. This suggests a need to strengthen cybersecurity and improve access to online financial services.
- Impact (76th place). Uzbekistan ranks 99th on the indicator of the economic impact of digital technologies, indicating that digitalization is not sufficiently used in the economy. However, the country ranks 34th in terms of quality of life, indicating the positive impact of digitalization on some aspects of life.

¹³⁴On introducing amendments and additions, as well as invalidation of some acts of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan (Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. UP-6079 of 5 October 2020 “On approval of the Strategy “Digital Uzbekistan-2030” and measures for its effective implementation”)

Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, #DP-6268, 24.07.2021. <https://lex.uz/ru/docs/5525182>

¹³⁵On cyber security Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan, No. LRU-764, 17.07.2022. <https://lex.uz/ru/docs/5960609>

¹³⁶Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan On Electronic Commerce, 31.12.2022, <https://lex.uz/ru/docs/6213428>

¹³⁷Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan on measures for effective organization of state management in the sphere of digital technologies within the framework of administrative reforms, 25.05.2023, <https://lex.uz/ru/docs/6472530>

¹³⁸Norma,uz: “IT-towns” are being created in the regions, https://www.norma.uz/ru/novoe_v_zakonodatelstve/v_regionah_sozdayutsya_it-gorodki

¹³⁹Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On additional measures to support activities to train qualified specialists in the field of digitalization”, 01.02.2024, <https://lex.uz/acts/6786592>

¹⁴⁰Network Readiness Index 2023 report, https://download.networkreadinessindex.org/reports/nri_2023.pdf

Figure 5. Country ranking Network Readiness Index 2023

78	Georgia	45.25	● Upper middle income	Europe
79	Albania	44.98	● Upper middle income	Europe
80	Sri Lanka	44.14	● Lower middle income	Asia & Pacific
81	Egypt	44.07	● Lower middle income	Arab States
82	Uzbekistan	43.94	● Lower middle income	CIS
83	Mongolia	43.52	● Lower middle income	Asia & Pacific
84	Dominican Republic	43.49	● Upper middle income	The Americas
85	Ecuador	43.05	● Upper middle income	The Americas
86	Panama	43.03	● High income	The Americas
87	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	42.83	● Lower middle income	Asia & Pacific

As of the end of 2023:

- The number of internet users in the country has surpassed 31 million.
- The capacity of the international Internet channel has increased by 3.5 times, which contributes to the improvement of the quality and speed of the Internet connection.
- The internet penetration rate per 100 population has also increased.
- The cost of high-speed internet is higher in Uzbekistan compared to neighboring countries.

Overall, Uzbekistan ranks 23rd in the world in terms of internet accessibility¹⁴¹.

Media and Information Literacy initiatives and projects

In 2023, the Agency for Information and Mass Communications (AIMC) under the Presidential Administration opened a new Department for Media and Information Literacy. The UNESCO Tashkent Office supports AIMC in developing a national MIL (Media and Information Literacy) strategy for the next 5-7 years. At the initial stage, research is being carried out with the participation of decision-makers from government agencies and experts from non-governmental non-profit organizations.

In addition, UNESCO provides support to train specialists from both state and non-state media in skills that enable citizens of Uzbekistan¹⁴² to receive more objective, fact-based and useful information, and supports training for teachers on MIL so that they begin to consider the media as a source of information for preparing lessons, understand the importance of media analysis and the use of multiple media sources.

Civil society organizations are actively involved in the process of developing media literacy in Uzbekistan. For example, the Center for the Development of Contemporary Journalism¹⁴³, as part of the major international project BRYCA, which was implemented in four Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) with the support of ERIM (France) from 2020 to 2022, conducted a series of cascade trainings on media and information literacy in the regions of Uzbekistan, monitored the spread of misinformation and “hate speech” in the media, and developed the educational game platform Qlever.asia¹⁴⁴.

¹⁴¹Kun.Uz. “The number of Internet users in Uzbekistan has exceeded 31 million”, <https://kun.uz/ru/news/2022/12/15/v-uzbekistane-kolichestvo-internet-polzovateley-prevysilo-31-million>

¹⁴²Media and Digital Opportunities. MIL masterclasses for working journalists and journalism students <https://www.unesco.org/ru/articles/smi-i-cifrovye-vozmozhnosti>

¹⁴³Center for the Development of Contemporary Journalism <https://mjdc.uz/>

¹⁴⁴Educational gaming platform, <https://qlever.asia/ru/region>

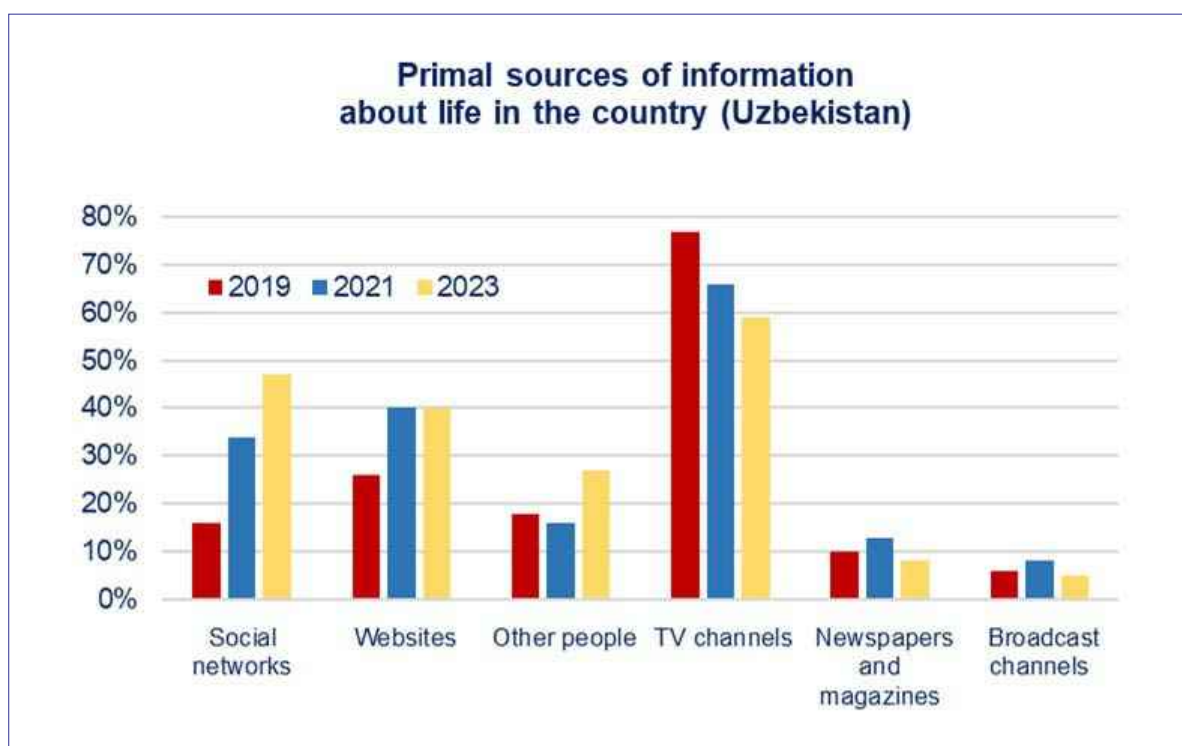
In 2023-2024 the Center continued this work under the “Makhalla” project. The gaming platform <https://qlever.asia> was enriched with six new games. Now the total number of educational games on the topic of working with information, fact-checking, media and information literacy exceeds 20 games, and the number of players in Uzbekistan is more than 37,000 people.

A fact-checking resource factchecknet.uz¹⁴⁵ and of the community of factchecking journalists and volunteer factcheckers Qlever-Factcheck has also been create¹⁴⁶. The Center’s experts developed the Mediasavod platform for teachers within the DW-MIL-UZ project with the support of DW Academie¹⁴⁷.

Since 2015, the project “Formation of information culture and media literacy of specialists of information and library institutions of Uzbekistan during the period of deepening reforms in the information and library sphere” has been implemented in Uzbekistan, within the framework of which, for 8 years now, training has been provided to specialists of information and library institutions of Uzbekistan, as well as university teachers, in the methodology of promoting the ideas of UNESCO and IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions) on media and information literacy through the training course “Fundamentals of the information culture of the individual”¹⁴⁸.

The Strategy for the Development of New Uzbekistan for 2022-2026¹⁴⁹, goal 70 addresses the improvement of the state youth policy and emphasizes the aspiration of young people to develop digital and media literacy. The strategy pays attention to increasing the intellectual potential of young people, stimulating their scientific activity and developing their talents through involvement in scientific and innovative activities.

Diagram 9



¹⁴⁵Factchecking platform for professional fact checking <https://mjdc.uz/#/tab/752267573-3>

¹⁴⁶Community of factchecking journalists and volunteer factcheckers, https://t.me/qlever_factcheck

¹⁴⁷An educational, interactive platform for teachers, students, schools, methodologists, librarians, journalists, bloggers. <https://msavod.uz/>

¹⁴⁸INFOLIB Information and Library Journal, <https://einfoilib.uz/post/prodwijenie-mediino-informatsionnoi-gramotnosti-i-informatsionnoi-kultur-kak-odna-iz-form-kulturnoi-diplomatii-opt-rossii-i-uzbekistana>

¹⁴⁹On the Strategy of Development of New Uzbekistan for 2022-2026. Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. DP-60, 28.01.2022, <https://lex.uz/ru/docs/5841077>

Features of media consumption in Uzbekistan

According to a sociological study on media consumption and media information literacy in the Central Asian countries conducted by Internews in 2023¹⁵⁰ television in Uzbekistan continues to be one of the main sources of information (Diagram 9).

The popularity of online sources of information is growing. In Uzbekistan, 63% of the audience goes online every day, on average 224 days a year. 53.1%, demonstrates confidence in their media and information literacy. However, a closer analysis reveals that these skills are not always comprehensive. For example, only 38.9% of survey participants can effectively analyze information from different sources.

Even fewer people have demonstrated Internet search skills, including formulating accurate queries (21.3%). The level of skills in critical evaluation of information is low - only 15% are able to distinguish reliable data from unreliable data on the Internet.

Interestingly, the study notes a very low level of trust in social networks, while about half of respondents in Uzbekistan (47%) noted social networks as one of the main sources of information. In general, the level of media and information literacy in the country is assessed by the researchers as low or average.

5.2 Digitalization of ALE



In Uzbekistan, the digital transformation of education is taking place as an outcome of general digitalization, which has covered almost all spheres of the country's socio-economic development. Within the framework of the ongoing reforms and the New Uzbekistan Development Strategy for 2022-2026¹⁵¹, digitalization of all spheres, including education, is given great attention. The country is implementing strategies such as Digital Uzbekistan 2030 and the Strategy for the Development of Artificial Intelligence¹⁵², which envisages the development of an online database in the state language to provide information in the field of AI to the population, especially young people.

Many educational institutions use interactive whiteboards, electronic diaries and journals, create audio and video lessons, and teachers provide counselling via social networks. According to government policy, the process of digitalization of education will affect many more aspects of this sphere and will develop in several directions:

- Active introduction of online platforms, e-textbooks, virtual laboratories and other digital tools for organizing the learning process.
- Digitalization of educational institutions themselves, equipping them with modern equipment, creating digital libraries and information systems.

¹⁵⁰Sociological study on media consumption and media literacy in Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan), 2023 https://newreporter.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Internews_Izuchenie_mediapotrebleniya_i_mediagramotnosti_v_TSentralnoj_Azii_2023

¹⁵¹On the Strategy for the Development of New Uzbekistan for 2022-2026

Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, #DP-60, 28.01.2022. On the State Programme on the implementation of the Strategy for the Development of New Uzbekistan for 2022-2026 in the "Year of Care for Man and Quality Education" Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, #DP-27, 02.03.2023.

¹⁵²On Approval of the Strategy for Development of Artificial Intelligence Technologies until 2030

Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, #RP-358, 17.10.2024

- Development of digital competences, for which trainings and courses are organized for teachers to master digital tools and teaching methods.
- Creation of a digital educational environment, and to this end, the development of a unified digital platform uniting all educational institutions and providing access to educational resources.

The benefits of digital transformation of education:

- Individualization of learning and the possibility of creating personalized learning paths for each learner.
- Increasing the effectiveness of training (the use of interactive tools and multimedia materials makes training more interesting and effective).
- Increased access to education, as online learning enables education regardless of geographical location and social status.
- Modern methods of knowledge assessment. Digital tools enable objective and rapid assessment of knowledge.
- Developing new skills such as IT literacy, critical thinking, collaboration and effective communication.
- Training for the digital economy (training in digital competences is becoming a necessity for successful work).

At the same time, the challenges and problems associated with the digitalization of education need to be taken into account:

- Digital divide (uneven access to digital technologies in different regions of the country).
- Non-state sector (NGOs, Ltd., etc.) lags behind in digitalization of education due to financial constraints.
- Inadequate teacher qualifications and the need for professional development for effective use of digital tools.
- High cost of implementing digital technologies (significant investment in hardware and software).
- Inadequate cyber defense preparedness in the face of massive digitalization.

Despite the existing problems, the development of digital education in Uzbekistan will provide:

- Improvement of the quality of education.
- Improvement of the competitiveness of the national economy.
- Human development and social mobility.

Priorities in the selection of tasks for the development of digitalization of education should affect areas such as:

- Increasing access to internet and digital devices in the rural areas and low-income households.
- Supporting non-state educational institutions, especially socially oriented NGOs in the development of digitalization of learning processes.
- Improving the qualifications of teachers, including andragogues, and establishing a system of their continuous professional development.
- Developing and implementing national standards for digital education.
- Creating a digital educational ecosystem uniting all levels of education.

The implementation of these tasks has started in some areas, and universities are leading in this process. There are successful results in some of them, and they could become platforms for the transfer of experience to other educational institutions at all levels of the educational system of

Uzbekistan. In 2025, it is planned to launch **edu.uz** digital ecosystem in higher and vocational education, science and innovation. In addition, it is envisaged to develop 10 new information systems and improve existing information systems and databases. In 2025, as a result of the integration and improvement of all information systems, a single “**DATAHUB**” will be created¹⁵³.

Technology is transforming the educational landscape, and educators face increasing demands to adapt and integrate digital tools into their teaching, learning and administrative practices. The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), in collaboration with Shanghai Open University (SOU), launched a project to test the **DELTA Framework** in October 2024. The main objective of the project is to strengthen the digital competences of adult educators as well as adult education managers and policy makers.

The proposed framework, along with sample training modules, will help educators effectively acquire and apply digital skills. In 2024, four countries are participating in the project: China, Egypt, Kenya, and Uzbekistan (as a pilot). During 2024 and 2025, the project will involve national technical working groups from participating countries, who will collaborate with international experts to contextualize and refine the digital competency framework and training modules. The initiative will culminate in the launch of the developed resources by the end of 2025. Representatives of both governmental and non-governmental organizations in Uzbekistan are participating in the project.

Within the framework of the World Bank project, a single integrated electronic system **HEMIS** has been created, which is now implemented in the educational process of all public higher education institutions. The system includes a database of all students across the country (including private and international universities), their attendance and academic performance, as well as the country’s teachers, electronic resources, academic programmes, educational content, etc¹⁵⁴.

A unified portal of educational services **MyEDU** was created. The main purpose of the platform is to provide interactive services in the system of higher, specialized secondary and vocational education¹⁵⁵.

Unilibrary is an electronic library platform that provides access to an extensive collection of educational and methodological works, as well as scientific materials such as articles, monographs, and dissertations. The platform allows students, teachers and researchers to quickly access the necessary resources in electronic format¹⁵⁶. The **Kontrakt** information system has been developed, which allows keeping records of services provided to students on a contractual basis¹⁵⁷.

One of the drivers of digitalization of education in the country is Inha University (UIT) in Tashkent. The University uses AI-enabled platforms to make educational programmes more flexible and in demand by employers. The digital approach is implemented in areas such as virtual rectorate, academic management, admission of applicants, resource center, services to teachers, control of student activities, etc. In addition, the university is one of the first educational institutions to open its own Tier II data center and provide various hosting and colocation services¹⁵⁸.

¹⁵³ The website of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, <https://gov.uz/ru/edu/news/view/1334>

¹⁵⁴ “World Bank to launch two new projects in Uzbekistan in higher and vocational education”, 14.02.2024, <https://yuz.uz/ru/news/vseмирny-bank-zapustit-v-uzbekistane-dva-novx-proekta-v-sfere-vsshego-i-professionalnogo-obrazovaniya>

¹⁵⁵ MyEDU platform <https://my.edu.uz/>

¹⁵⁶ Unilibrary Platform, <https://unilibrary.uz>

¹⁵⁷ Kontrakt platform <https://kontrakt.edu.uz>

¹⁵⁸ Muzaffar Jalalov, Rector of Inha University in Tashkent. “Pravda Vostoka”, 15.06.2022 “Higher education in the era of digitalization: to develop and improve”. <https://inha.uz/ru/obshaya/gazeta-pravda-vostoka-opublikovala-statyu-rektora-uit/>

The School 21 campus, a school of digital technologies, has been launched in Tashkent, giving everyone from 18 years of age who successfully pass the qualifying stages an opportunity to receive free of charge in-demand IT education. The project is implemented jointly with the Ministry of Digital Technologies and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation of Uzbekistan. The training programme includes a variety of areas such as:

- structural programming in the C language;
- object-oriented programming in C++;
- computer networks, algorithms, SQL databases;
- application programming in Java, Python, Golang;
- mobile development, Frontend, Backend, ML & DS, Big Data, GameDev and more.

Since December 2024, the School 21 project has been launched in Samarkand and became highly popular. Training participants receive the state diploma of basic or advanced level, which confirms practical skills in programming or other areas of digital technologies. This document opens the door to employment in major IT companies and high-tech industries, providing a competitive advantage in the labor market¹⁵⁹.

According to digitalization experts, in order to accelerate the digital transformation of education, it is necessary to provide educational institutions with high-speed Internet and modern IT equipment, train students and teachers in basic digital skills, develop public or private integrated platforms for distance learning, introduce modern data protection standards and cybersecurity training programmes, provide access to digital libraries, and engage professional developers to create a plan for the development of digital education¹⁶⁰.

The digital future of the country depends on young people and qualified specialists in the field of IT and new information technologies. Therefore, special attention is paid to improving the level and quality of education in this area. In recent years, the number of IT centers in the country has exceeded 300, and 1.2 million young people have been trained under the One Million Programmers project. More than 20,000 people took part in training seminars to improve the digital skills of citizens, entrepreneurs and young people. In the future, it is planned to select, train and prepare 5,000 talented young people for the international labor market every year¹⁶¹.

The implementation of training and adult education projects by DVV International Uzbekistan shows that digitalization is not only becoming an integral part of educational projects, but also accompanies people throughout their professional and personal life. However, the organization of vocational skills courses in the regions indicates a high digital divide between rural and urban areas. The quantity, quality and variety of services provided in the field of digital competence development are much higher in the city, which directly affects the level of media literacy within the country.

Access to stable high-speed internet and digital technologies (computer, phone, tablet, etc.) remains difficult to access in the regions of Uzbekistan, especially in rural areas, which limits the population's participation in online learning. Socially vulnerable groups in both urban and rural areas, especially the elderly, people with disabilities, face even more difficulties in accessing digital educational opportunities, they are often cut off from access to quality and modern educational programmes, which increases the digital divide and socio-economic inequality.

¹⁵⁹<https://21-school.uz/ru/>

¹⁶⁰Bekbaev G.A. "Digitalization of the higher education system of the Republic of Uzbekistan: main problems and advantages" Journal "Oriental Renaissance: Innovative, Educational, Natural and Social sciences", November 2024. <https://www.oriens.uz/journal/article/tsifrovizatsiya-sistemi-visshego-obrazovaniya-respubliki-uzbekistan-osnovnie-problemi-i-preimushstva>

¹⁶¹Website of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 20.12.23 <https://president.uz/ru/lists/view/6937>



Photo 3. Training for leaders of 12 socially oriented NGOs within the framework of the project “Adult Learning and Education through the introduction of digital technologies” funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Organized by the NGO “SABR” Republican Center for Socio-Economic Development in partnership with the Center for Youth Initiatives and DVV International Uzbekistan.

An important component for the creation and development of a favorable environment for digital and media literacy is the strengthening of a modern resource base, which requires the development of a sustainable funding model at the national level. The rapid development of digital services requires the development of a legal framework for the protection of personal information and privacy. As populations with low levels of digital literacy may be vulnerable to the misuse and ineffective use of personal information in various digital platforms and applications, which can be exploited by digital fraudsters for abusive purposes.

Digital transformation of education in Uzbekistan is a long-term and capital-intensive process that requires joint efforts of the state, educational institutions (both state and non-state), business and international organizations.

5.3 “Green” skills for sustainable development



In Uzbekistan, the topic of transition to a “green” economy and ensuring sustainable economic growth is one of the most important areas of the country’s long-term policy. It is justified by the fact that Uzbekistan faces serious environmental and climatic risks which directly affect the economy. For example, since 1880, the average annual temperature in the country has risen by 1.6 degrees Celsius, exceeding the world average, and by the 2090s the average temperature is forecast to rise by 4.8 degrees Celsius. Water resources are becoming an increasingly acute problem. Water availability per capita has halved over 20 years from 3,000 cubic meters to 1,500 cubic meters¹⁶².

“Green” skills are a set of knowledge, skills and competences necessary for transition to sustainable development and green economy. Uzbekistan is actively developing areas of environmentally friendly technologies and sustainable resource management, so “green” skills are becoming more and more in demand:

- The transition to a green economy requires the training of specialists capable of developing

¹⁶²“Mastering green skills by entrepreneurs is an important aspect of sustainable growth of Uzbekistan’s economy”, Graduate School of Business. Spot. Business and Technology. <https://www.spot.uz/ru/2024/12/25/higher-school/>

and implementing environmentally friendly technologies.

- The development of a green economy creates new jobs which require professionals with relevant skills.
- “Green” skills will help address environmental issues such as pollution, soil degradation and water scarcity.

“Green” skills include knowledge related to concepts such as:

- Ecological knowledge (understanding of ecological processes, interrelationships between natural systems and human activities).
- Energy efficiency (ability to design and implement energy efficient technologies).
- Renewable energy sources (knowledge of different types of renewable energy sources and their applications).
- Waste management (skills to organize waste collection, sorting and recycling).
- Environmental design (ability to create environmentally friendly projects in various spheres of activity).
- Sustainable agriculture (knowledge of farming practices which minimize negative impacts on the environment).

Examples of green professions of the future

- Renewable energy specialist
- Environmental engineer
- Energy efficiency expert
- Waste management specialist
- Eco-agronomist
- Eco-architect

Higher education institutions of the Republic (including regional branches) have now started training personnel in the specialities and areas most necessary for the transition to a “green” economy, such as:

- biotechnologist;
- renewable energy engineer;
- engineer for alternative (solar and wind) energy;
- engineer for efficient use of water and land resources;
- specialist in bioeconomics, climate risk assessment, etc;
- design, operation, construction of energy efficient structures;
- design, operation and production of energy efficient technologies, including artificial intelligence.

Of the total workforce trained in the 2022/2023 academic year, over 30% is aligned to the green economy (compared to 5% in the 2019/2020 academic year)¹⁶³.

The development of “green” skills will be facilitated by:

- Education (inclusion of environmental topics in curricula).
- Professional retraining (organization of courses and professional development programmes for specialists in various industries).
- Cooperation with universities (development of joint educational programmes with the world’s leading universities).
- Practical training (creating opportunities for practical realization of the knowledge gained,

¹⁶³Ibid.

e.g. through internships and projects).

- Popularization of environmental knowledge (information campaigns, competitions, festivals and other events).

Challenges and prospects

The development of “green” skills in Uzbekistan is associated with certain challenges:

- Lack of qualified personnel.
- Financing (significant investment in education and retraining is required).
- Change of mindset (attitudes towards the environment and resources need to be changed).

Prospects for the development of “green” skills in Uzbekistan:

- Creating new jobs.
- Improving the quality of life of the population.
- Strengthening international image (Uzbekistan can become a leader in sustainable development in Central Asia).

The development of green skills is one of the key factors for sustainable development in Uzbekistan. Researchers of this topic propose to develop a National Concept “Lifelong Learning”, in which programmes of advanced training, retraining and other types of adult education will include skills necessary for the development of a “green” economy, including competencies to work with modern technologies (IT skills). Investments in education, professional retraining and popularization of environmental knowledge will enable the country to transition to a green economy and ensure the well-being of future generations.

5.4 Education for global citizenship



In the context of modern Uzbekistan, which is actively integrating into the world community, the formation of global citizenship among the adult population is one of the most important tasks. Uzbekistan is actively involved in addressing global and local challenges - global climate change, the environmental disaster in the Aral Sea region and the irrational use of natural resources, natural and anthropogenic disasters, constant conflicts, social unrest, manifestations of injustice and inequality, the spread of terrorism and violent extremism, and so on. There is a growing realization in the country that all countries of the world are now living in an interdependent and complex world.

The United Nations (UN) defines global citizenship and global citizenship education in this way:

Global Citizenship Education for Global Citizenship (UN definition)

Global citizenship is a term which summarizes the social, political, environmental and economic actions of globally minded individuals and communities on a global scale. The term is based on the assertion that individuals are members of multiple, diverse local and international organizations, rather than individual actors from isolated communities. Promoting global citizenship in sustainable development will enable individuals to accept the social responsibility to act in the public interest, not just their own self-interest¹⁶⁴.

Education for Global Citizenship - building a society that will actively participate in the process of achieving a more just and sustainable world; promote respect for human dignity, ethno-cultural diversity and human rights, as well as respect for the environment and a culture of responsible consumption¹⁶⁵.

The concept of global citizenship is included in the UN Sustainable Development Goals document in SDG 4. Thus, objective 4.7 under this goal is formulated as follows:

SDG 4. Objective 4.7.

By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to contribute to promote development, including through education for sustainable development and **education for global citizenship**

According to UNESCO's assessment, science and technology have accelerated the pace of industrialization, urbanization and globalization, expanding networks and channels of communication and transport which connect people of different cultures across all borders. Global citizenship focuses on shared belonging to a world community. "A global citizen is the one who recognizes and understands the wider world - and individual place in it. Individual is a global citizen. Person takes an active part in community and works with others to make the planet more peaceful, sustainable and just"¹⁶⁶. Learning organizations, including adult learning organizations, have a responsibility to promote global citizenship by preparing their learners to be members of a larger global community, using their skills and education to contribute to that community.

Intercultural citizenship focuses on interaction and cooperation between representatives of different cultures and nations and includes the concepts of "interculturalism" and "internationalism", which imply effective dialogue and interaction between cultures, as well as friendship and cooperation between nations.

Uzbekistan is the most populated country in Central Asia. As of 1 January 2025, the population of Uzbekistan exceeded 37.5 million people¹⁶⁷. Representatives of more than 130 nationalities and ethnic groups live here: Uzbeks, Karakalpaks, Tajiks, Turkmens, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Uighurs, Dungans, Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians. Numerous diasporas include Koreans, Iranians, Armenians, Georgians, Azerbaijanis, Tatars, Bashkirs, Germans, Jews, Lithuanians, Greeks, Turks and other nationalities. Uzbekistan's diverse ethnic picture shows that the country is tolerant on the issue of religion and that representatives of different confessions coexist peacefully here. But this situation must be constantly supported through education.

¹⁶⁴UN website. Global Citizenship. <https://www.un.org/ru/120924>

¹⁶⁵UN website. Global Citizenship Education for a Transition to a More Just and Equitable World. <https://www.un.org/ru/85398>

¹⁶⁶What is global citizenship? // OXFAM. 2015. <https://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/who-we-are/what-is-global-citizenship/>

¹⁶⁷Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan <https://stat.uz/ru/>

The guarantee of freedom of religion is an important foundation of an open civil society. According to the Ministry of Justice, at the beginning of 2020, 2,276 religious organizations were operating in Uzbekistan, including 183 non-Islamic religious organizations¹⁶⁸. In 2024, 2,357 religious organizations and 16 religious denominations were already operating in Uzbekistan. 197 non-Islamic religious organizations are officially registered. Among them, 179 are Christian organizations, 8 are Jewish communities, 7 are Baha'i communities, and 1 is a Hare Krishna community. There is 1 Buddhist temple and the Interfaith Bible Society of Uzbekistan¹⁶⁹. All of them coexist in peace and harmony, freely performing worship services and religious rites. The Law "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations" in the new edition ensures the right to profess any religion or not to profess any¹⁷⁰. This right is enshrined in the Constitution of Uzbekistan (Article 35)¹⁷¹. Forced conversion to any religion is prohibited.

In Uzbekistan, public attention to issues such as fostering patriotism, studying national history, combating vices, observing the law, respecting citizens' rights and fulfilling their duties, strengthening the family, and preserving the environment is significantly increasing. Therefore, it is urgent to raise the problems of education and civic education not only for the younger generation, but also for adults, which determines the need to educate the general public in the basics of pedagogy, andragogy, psychology, ethics, law, ecology. The problem of meeting the ever-increasing and publicly supported needs of an individual in the development of his or her personality is also in the same line. Under these conditions, education should not be reduced to the training of qualified personnel. Quality education must also develop the skills, values and behaviors that enable citizens to lead healthy and fulfilling lives, make informed decisions and respond to local and global challenges through education for sustainable development and global citizenship, thereby implementing the UN Global Agenda.

Experts of the National Committee "Management of Social Transformations" under the Center "Ijtimoiy fikr" ("Public Opinion") conducted sociological research in local communities of selected regions of Uzbekistan (Tashkent, Fergana and Samarkand region) in the period from April to May 2017. About 210 young people (secondary school students of the UNESCO Associated Schools Project network in Uzbekistan) were surveyed about their awareness of the concept of global citizenship. The questionnaire was prepared on the basis of the UNESCO manual "Global Citizenship Education: Themes and Learning Objectives" (2015). Based on the results of the survey, the UNESCO manual "Global Citizenship Education" was adapted for use in Uzbekistan in further training institutes and translated into Uzbek. The manual was prepared by a group of local specialists who had attended relevant APCEIU (Asia Pacific Centre for Education) training courses.

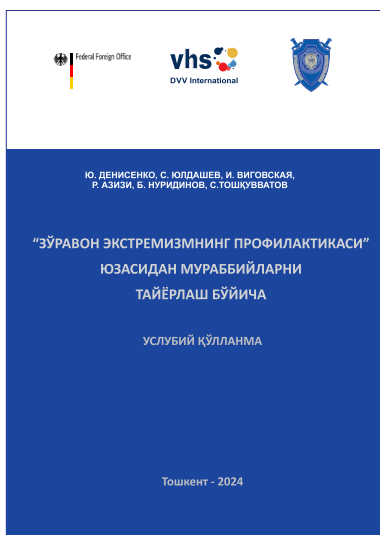
Trainings were also conducted to build national capacity in the field of global citizenship education on such topics as: "Concept of Global Citizenship Education", "Global Citizenship Education: Peace Education and Sustainable Development", "Skills for Democratic Dialogue", "The Role of Global Citizenship Education in Preventing Extremism", "System and Structure of Local, Regional and Global Citizenship Education", "Cultural Diversity and Global Partnership in Education". A group of multipliers was trained. The developed course "Global Citizenship Education" was included in the professional development curriculum for teachers.

¹⁶⁸NUZ. Uzbekistan News. "Ministry of Justice announced the number of religious organizations registered in Uzbekistan", 30.01.2020. <https://nuz.uz/2020/01/30/minyust-ozvuchil-kolichestvo-religioznych-organizatsiy-zaregistrovannyh-v-uzbekistane/>

¹⁶⁹Committee on Religious Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 08.05.2024, <https://gov.uz/ru/religions/news/view/11191>

¹⁷⁰On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations
Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan, No. LRU-699, 26.06.2021

¹⁷¹Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, new edition of 30 April 2023. <https://mfa.uz/ru/pages/konst-resp-uzb>



In recent years, Uzbekistan has paid special attention to preventing violent extremism through education, one of the priority areas of global citizenship. Projects on this topic are being implemented in the country with the support of various international donors and the active participation of local governmental and non-governmental partners. Organizations such as UNESCO, OSCE, USAID, UNODC, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, DVV International Uzbekistan and others are making their contribution to preventing violent extremism through education. Round tables, conferences and training sessions for stakeholders are organized as part of the projects

During 2020-2023, the project “Promoting the Prevention of Radicalization and Extremism in Uzbekistan in Cooperation with the State and Civil Society through Education, Dialogue and Building Resilience of Vulnerable Groups to Radicalization” was

implemented in several phases, implemented by DVV International Uzbekistan together with local NGOs.

The project was implemented as part of a larger programme called Preventing Violent Extremism in Central Asia (PREVECA) implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and funded by the German Federal Foreign Office.

At the end of the project, a modular, competency-based training program “PreViEx” (Preventing Violent Extremism)¹⁷² was developed and tested under the leadership of DVV International Uzbekistan together with experts from the Central Asian region and the Law Enforcement Academy of the Republic of Uzbekistan to train practitioners, managers of the state and non-state organizations, psychologists and psychotherapists, clergy and other respective specialists working in the field of preventing violent extremism.

The program includes a description of methods and tools for organizing thematic trainings, specific recommendations for conducting trainings and evaluating the results of training, as well as many practical exercises. The training programme is based on the andragogical principles and approaches of Curriculum globALE, Curriculum interculturALE as well as other programmes and tools developed by DVV International.

The PreViEx programme uses a modular approach which allows for the recruitment of groups with different skill levels. The programme has several cross-cutting themes, including gender sensitivity and human rights-based values. Modules can be studied as stand-alone units, but existing thematic links should be taken into account when implementing the whole curriculum.

Formation of global citizenship in adults can occur in various ways. In addition to the full implementation of special training programmes in the educational process, including for trainers, it can be:

- Online courses on global citizenship topics.
- Modules in professional training and retraining of specialists of various industries.
- Organizing special courses and seminars for older people aimed at building global consciousness.
- Supporting and develop community organizations engaged in global citizenship education.

¹⁷²DVV International website. PreViEx training programme https://www.dvv-international.de/fileadmin/files/Inhalte_Bilder_und_Dokumente/Microsite_ALE_Toolbox/Curriculum_PreViEx/Curriculum_PreViEx_EN_21062024.pdf

- Participating in international projects aimed at sharing experience and strengthening intercultural ties.
- Encouraging volunteering, especially in international projects.
- Conducting information campaigns in the media to increase awareness of global problems and the role of each individual in solving them.
- Using social media to spread the message of global citizenship and organize discussions.
- Organization of international forums and conferences with the participation of representatives of different cultures.
- Support for learning foreign languages to facilitate intercultural communication.
- Organization of student and teacher exchange programmes with foreign universities.
- Organizing volunteer actions to improve the city and help people in need.
- Implementation of student exchange programmes with foreign universities.

The implementation of the proposed measures will not only strengthen the country's international image, but also improve the quality of life of citizens. Global citizenship promotes entrepreneurship, attracts foreign investment and creates new jobs. Citizens who understand global problems are actively involved in addressing them, for example, in climate change or protecting human rights. Global citizenship fosters personal growth, broadening horizons and tolerance.

5.5 Research on adult learning and education

Research in the field of ALE has started in Uzbekistan relatively recently. Internet search engines offer the works of individual authors, which are quite segmental. These are mostly articles in scientific journals and occasionally dissertations, but there are also works covering the results of sociological surveys. The authors focus both on theoretical aspects of a very broad plan (earlier articles) and on solving specific problems, such as staff development, adaptation to new technologies, etc (usually more recent articles, after 2015). Less frequent are articles of a theoretical nature, studying andragogy from a philosophical point of view, as a science. For example, for the query "Adult education (andragogy) in Uzbekistan" the following topics appear:

- Analyses and theoretical aspects of continuing education in the Republic of Uzbekistan (2023).
- The role and significance of andragogy in the formation of the museum communicative environment (2023).
- Continuity of learning - a demanded principle of organizing the effective functioning of the system of continuing professional education (2017).
- Adult Education and Learning in the Innovative Development of Uzbekistan (2020).
- Andragogical approach to the process of professional development of teachers (2021).
- Professional development of pedagogical staff on the basis of andragogical approach, etc.

Dissertation Works:

- Iskhakova M.R. "Improving the process of professional development of teachers of preschool educational organizations on the basis of andragogical and self-developmental approaches.", 2023 (in Uzbek)¹⁷³.
- Khakimjonova H.H. "Development of professional competence of managerial and pedagogical staff of the system of professional education on the basis of andragogical approach (on the example of professional development system)". 2024 (in Uzbek language)¹⁷⁴.

¹⁷³Thesis abstract, <https://api.ziynet.uz/uploads/books/7007/64a53222805d2.pdf>

¹⁷⁴Thesis abstract, <https://api.ziynet.uz/uploads/books/10000014/Emt5rLX7uGSCDXG.pdf>

It can be assumed that research in the field of adult learning and education is increasingly becoming applied, which increases its relevance, but probably there are certain barriers to its development - limited funding, lack of scientific school, methodological base, professional associations, extensive training in universities of specialists in the direction of “andragogy”.

Many works are published in Uzbek or Russian, limiting access to them by the international scientific community. Accessibility of research in English is in turn difficult for local researchers for the same linguistic reason.

The development of andragogical science in Uzbekistan requires a comprehensive approach involving several main aspects:

- Increased public funding, including grants for scientists, establishment of research centers and laboratories, and support for publications.
- Search for international grants and cooperation with foreign universities and research institutes to obtain funding and exchange experience.
- Establishment of specialized centers for andragogy in universities and research institutes offering education and training programmes for andragogues.
- Creating publicly accessible databases of andragogical research, publications and best practices.
- Organizing conferences, workshops and online forums to share experiences between researchers, teachers and practitioners in the field of andragogy.
- Translation and adaptation of the world's best practices in andragogy for use in Uzbekistan.
- Developing public policies that support the development of andragogical science and practice.
- Incorporating andragogical principles into national strategies for the development of education and training.
- Creation of legal and regulatory framework: Development of normative legal acts regulating activities in the field of andragogy.

An integrated approach will ensure sustainable development of andragogical science in Uzbekistan.

6. POSSIBLE SCENARIOS OF ALE DEVELOPMENT IN UZBEKISTAN AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Factors influencing the development of adult education in Uzbekistan

The development of adult learning and education in Uzbekistan is influenced by both external and internal factors. Globalization and technological change require constant adaptation and updating of knowledge and skills, while government policy is a key internal factor.

The most significant internal factors are:

State policy (legislation, funding and strategic priorities)

The existing legislation in the field of LLL and ALE consistently takes into account the experience of other countries in increasing attention to this sector of education. The existence of a national strategy for the development of LLL and ALE (or the adoption of a separate law on ALE) would contribute to a more rapid development of adult education, especially in the field of training,

retraining and advanced training for the labor market, would provide an opportunity to elaborate in detail the specifics of adult education, establishing clear goals, principles and mechanisms of implementation, giving it a higher status. There would be an opportunity to more effectively coordinate the activities of various state bodies and organizations involved in adult education to attract additional resources.

Socio-economic conditions (living standards, unemployment rate, economic structure)

The standard of living has a significant impact on the availability, motivation and quality of adult education. This is due to the cost of tuition, educational materials, transportation and other related expenses. The availability of affordable scholarships and grants for students significantly expands the opportunities for obtaining an education. The unemployment rate also has a significant impact on the development of ALE, and this impact can be both positive and negative.

Regions with high unemployment may lack the necessary infrastructure for adult education (educational institutions, computer labs, etc.). At the same time, the state, non-governmental and commercial organizations offer special training programmes for the unemployed, making education more accessible to this category of the population. As of July 1, 2024, the unemployment rate among the working-age population decreased by 1 percentage compared to the beginning of the year, from 6.8% to 5.8%.

The population of Uzbekistan as of December 26, 2024, according to the State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan (stat.uz), became 37,540,000 people (18,638,830 women and 18,638,830 men)¹⁷⁵. 15.8 million (41%) of the total population are economically active. Among them, 14.2 million people (94%) were employed in various sectors of the economy (6.8 million in the official sector, 5.5 million in the shadow sector, and 1.9 million worked abroad). There are 876 thousand people in the country unemployed (01.11.2024). At the beginning of the year, the number was 1.02 million people¹⁷⁶.

The forecast on the demand in the labor market of Uzbekistan until 2026¹⁷⁷, conducted by the Institute of Macroeconomic Research Studies (IMRS), shows that the share of those employed in industry by 2026 will be 17.2% against 13.6% in 2020. This industry will require an average of **150,000** people annually.

The highest share of those employed in industry will be in such regions as Navoi (28.9%), Tashkent (22.8%), Fergana (19.6%) regions and Tashkent city (20.3%). More than 45% of all workers in the industrial sector of the country are expected to be concentrated in these industrially developed regions. The lowest share will be observed in Surkhandarya, Jizzakh and Khorezm.

The share of agriculture in the economy will decrease to 8-10%. In this regard, the share of people employed in this sector will decrease from 26.7% (however, the number will grow) in 2020 to 24.2% in 2026. The release from agriculture will be carried out in stages, by attracting the population to process agricultural products, which, in turn, will expand exports. About **35 thousand** people will be required for agriculture annually. Such a low need for personnel for this sector is justified by the release of the employed population from agriculture and their involvement in production. The highest share of people employed in agriculture will be observed in the Syrdarya (46.8%), Jizzakh (41.8%) and Surkhandarya (36.3%) regions. Such a rapid release from agriculture can increase the number of unemployed. More than half of the total employed population works in this sector.

¹⁷⁵State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan. <https://www.stat.uz/uz/59-foydali-ma-lumotlar/5859-o-zbekiston-aholisi-3>

¹⁷⁶KUN.UZ. Uzbekistan's unemployment rate has fallen. 01.11.2024. <https://kun.uz/ru/news/2024/11/01/v-uzbekistane-snizilsya-uroven-bezrabotitsy>

¹⁷⁷Institute of Macroeconomic Research Studies (IMRS). "Forecast estimates of demand formation in the labor market of Uzbekistan until 2026", M. Akhmedova. <https://imrs.uz/publications/articles-and-abstracts/labor%20market>

Taking into account the priority areas of development of the service sector, by 2026, the share of employment in this sector will be 58.6%. The annual demand for personnel for this sector will be **220-250 thousand people** on average. The main emphasis in this sector will be placed on the quality of services provided and legalization of the employed, as it is in the service sector that a high number of informally employed people is observed.

In the service sector, there will be a high demand in the “information and communication” sector - annually more than 3.3 thousand people. The demand for specialists in the sphere of financing will grow steadily - the annual demand will amount to 2 thousand people.

Employment will also grow in sectors such as construction, transport, trade and catering.

In education and health care there will be a slight increase in the share of the employed. These sectors require **improvement in the quality of** personnel training.

In the housing and utilities sector, employment will grow steadily, no sharp fluctuations are expected in this sector.

In the future, Uzbekistan’s labor market needs highly qualified personnel such as doctors, engineers, technologists, programmers and highly qualified teachers. In this regard, another internal factor has a great impact on the further development of ALE:

Personnel potential (availability of qualified teachers to work with adults, level of motivation and interest of teachers working with adult learners). Now in Uzbekistan this is one of the most problematic issues (see paragraph 3.3. “Quality of adult learning and education” and paragraph 2.7 “Professionalization of ALE staff and institutions”).

Ways to improve the qualifications and motivation of adult educators (andragogues):

- Creating programmes to train teachers to work with adults.
- Introduction of a certification system to prove the qualifications of teachers to work with adults.
- Increase teachers’ salaries to raise their status and attract qualified professionals.
- Developing professional development programmes, providing opportunities to participate in conferences and seminars.
- Providing teachers with modern equipment, comfortable working environment and opportunities for creative realization.
- Support for teachers developing and implementing new teaching methods.

Recent presidential decrees and decisions are aimed at implementing these measures, and their successful implementation will make it possible to improve the quality of adult education in Uzbekistan and make it more accessible and attractive to the general public.

External Factors:

Among the most significant external factors influencing the development of ALE in Uzbekistan are:

- Integration of the country into the world educational space, participation in international projects, exchange of experience, donor assistance.
- Adoption of international standards for quality education.
- Developments in information technology, online learning opportunities, and the use of digital tools
- Need for new skills to work in an automation environment.

Despite the existing problems, the development of adult education in Uzbekistan has great prospects due to the political will to develop education in general, the growing demand for qualified personnel, trends in information technology and the expansion of international co-operation.

For the successful development of the education sector in Uzbekistan, it is necessary to develop the state strategy for the development of LLL and adult education, which will significantly accelerate all ongoing reforms in both economic and social development of the country.

6.2 Comparison of Uzbekistan's ALE with other countries



In order to better understand the specifics and prospects of ALE development in Uzbekistan, a comparative analysis with other countries has been conducted, which shows that Uzbekistan's approach to the development of the ALE sector is somewhat different from the ALE systems in developed countries with institutionalization of this sector. A separate comparative analysis has been carried out in the field of non-formal education and adult education (NALE). Despite differences in national education systems, this sub-sector shares common features such as flexibility, practicality, accessibility and diversity of modalities in many countries. However, each country has its own unique characteristics related to historical, cultural and socio-economic

experiences.

A comparison of the ALE parameters of Uzbekistan and developed countries is given in Table 7, which shows that the main differences between Uzbekistan are the following features:

- Predominantly centralized management of the education system.
- Lack of community participation in ALE and management of the sub-sector.
- Lack of andragogues' training.
- Insufficient level of ALE quality.
- Lack of a developed monitoring and statistics system.
- Lack of a developed ALE research system and scientific school.

The rest of the indicators, although not always sufficiently developed, but the dynamics of their development is positive and, taking into account the ongoing reforms, there are ample opportunities to strengthen and improve them.

Comparative table of ALE parameters of Uzbekistan and developed countries

Table 8

Parameters LLL and ALE systems	Uzbekistan	Countries with institutionalization of the LLL and ALE sector
Existence of the ALE Law	The basic concepts of ALE are included in the general Law on Education	Often there is a separate law on ALE or lifelong learning
Compliance of the Law with international standards	In line with current trends	High level of compliance
Management	Predominantly centralised	Decentralised, private sector participation
Financing	Public and private, but the volume is not always sufficient	Diverse sources of funding
Standardization	Under development	Developed standardization systems
Validation and recognition	Initial stage	Well-developed validation and recognition systems
Cooperation with employers	Under development but requires strengthening	Close link between education and the labor market
Public participation in the management of ALE	Restricted	Active participation of citizens
Participation of the population in informal ALE	Inadequate	High
Accessibility	Expanded but limited in remote rural areas	High level of accessibility
Training of andragogues	Not available in the higher education system	Universities and colleges, offer andragogy programmes at different levels (bachelor's, master's, doctoral).
Programme content	Labor market oriented, but requires modernization	Adapts to rapidly changing market conditions
Teaching methods	Traditional and modern	Predominantly modern and innovative
Digitalization	Actively developing, but there are limitations	High level of digitalization
Informing the public	Limited scope	Broad information campaigns
Quality	Significant potential for growth in quality improvement	High quality is ensured by standards
Monitoring and statistics	There is an understanding and commitment to improve the situation in this area.	Developed monitoring and statistics systems
Research	Initial stage of development	Developed research system
Primary motivation to training	Career growth, professional development	Career growth, personal development, social activity
Forms of training	Predominantly traditional with a tendency towards the development of innovative forms	Variety of modalities, including online learning
Main barriers for the population	Financial constraints, lack of time, lack of information, lack of training organizations.	Fewer financial barriers, more flexible training formats
International cooperation	Actively growing, but scope and depth varies depending on specific areas and partners.	Widespread practice. Many countries have developed networks of international partnerships, engage in joint research and share experiences.

Comparative analysis of the informal ALE sector

USA, Canada, Western European countries

Non-formal education in these countries has a long tradition and well-developed infrastructure. States actively support non-formal education by providing grants, subsidies and tax incentives. There are a large number of private educational centers offering a wide range of programmes.

Differences from Uzbekistan

Non-formal education is more standardized and accredited. There is a more developed system for recognizing qualifications resulting from non-formal learning. Standardization and accreditation of non-formal education increases its quality and recognition. In developed countries, non-formal education is often standardized to ensure quality and compliance with certain requirements. This means that educational programmes, even if they do not lead to formal qualifications, are designed according to certain standards and criteria. For example, there are standards for language courses, computer literacy, vocational training and other types of non-formal education.

Former USSR countries (Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Belarus)

Non-formal education in the post-Soviet space is also actively developing, as in Uzbekistan, but faces similar problems - insufficient funding, lack of uniform quality standards, low awareness of the population.

Similarities with Uzbekistan

In these countries, as in Uzbekistan, there is a growing interest in non-formal education, especially in the field of professional retraining.

Asian countries (China, South Korea, Singapore)

In these countries, non-formal education is seen as an important tool to improve the competitiveness of the national economy. States actively support the development of non-formal education by creating special zones for innovation and entrepreneurship.

Differences from Uzbekistan

Non-formal education in these countries is closely integrated with the labor market, and educational programmes are often developed jointly with employers.

Uzbekistan is on the way to developing a system of non-formal education. In recent years there have been significant changes in legislation and conditions have been created for the development of private educational centers. There are both common features and differences from other countries. On the one hand, Uzbekistan follows the general world trends in the development of non-formal education. On the other hand, there are a number of specific features related to the historical, cultural and socio-economic context of the country.

6.3 Possible scenarios for the development of ALE

Possible scenarios for the development of adult learning and education in Uzbekistan until 2030 depend on many factors, including government policy, economic development, technology availability and social change.

Factors affecting the scenario

- **State policy** (financing of ALE, regulation of the educational services market, development of state standards and programmes).
- **Economic development** (employment opportunities, need for skilled labor).
- **Accessibility of technology** (spread of internet and digital technologies, availability of computers and mobile devices).
- **Social change** (changing values and attitudes of the population, readiness for lifelong learning (LLL)).
- **International co-operation** (exchange of experience and attraction of foreign investment in education).

Several plausible scenarios can be identified:

Scenario 1. Optimistic (rapid growth and modernization)

Characteristics

Significant public investment in the development of ALE, active introduction of online learning and distance technologies, development of the system of continuing professional education, creation of modern training centers, wide access to quality educational resources, strengthening the link between education and the labor market, and integration of international experience.

Result

Significant increase in the qualification level of the adult population, growth in labor productivity, improved competitiveness in the labor market, lower unemployment rate, increased innovation activity, and higher living standards. A more flexible and adaptable education system which meets the needs of both individual citizens and the economy as a whole.

Scenario 2. Moderate (gradual growth and partial modernization)

Characteristics

Moderate state investments, partial introduction of online learning, gradual development of continuous professional education, preservation of traditional forms of education, limited access to quality educational resources, insufficient connection between education and the labor market.

Result

Moderate growth in the qualification level of the adult population, gradual improvement of the situation on the labor market, insignificant increase in labor productivity, partial satisfaction of the need for qualified personnel. The education system is developing unevenly, with gaps in quality and accessibility remaining.

Scenario 3. Pessimistic (stagnation or decline)

Characteristics

Lack of public investment, lack of active development of online learning, preservation of traditional, outdated forms of education, limited access to educational resources, weak link between education and the labor market, lack of motivation among the adult population to learn.

Result

Low qualification level of the adult population, high unemployment rate, low labor productivity, lagging behind the world standards, increasing social tension. The education system does not meet the needs of the economy and the population.

The real scenario of ALE development in Uzbekistan until 2030 is likely to be different combinations of the proposed scenarios in different years. Reviewing these scenarios with different experts as part of the discussion of this review would contribute to their detail and enhance their predictive function.

6.4 Conclusions and recommendations

The study of ALE sector development in Uzbekistan has identified the following main challenges to be addressed in the coming years:

- Uzbekistan does not yet have a clearly formulated state strategy aimed at integrating ALE into the national education system.
- There is no single centralized management (interagency coordination center)
- The role of local authorities in financing ALE is insufficient, although international experience shows the success of such a financing scheme (Germany, South Korea, etc.).
- There is not yet an effective mechanism for certification and recognition of knowledge and skills acquired through non-formal and informal education, although it should be noted that this mechanism has been launched and the situation should change in the near future.
- Lack of systematic data collection on adult learning needs, ALE availability and coverage, programme quality and impact.
- Lack of training of ALE specialists (andragogues) in the higher education system.
- The non-formal adult education sector does not receive sufficient public funding and access to international grants is limited.
- Most ALE projects are implemented through grants and international aid, which reduces the sustainability of the sector
- Collaboration between public authorities, NGOs and the private sector in the field of non-formal adult education remains underdeveloped.
- Many adults are unaware of the existence of non-formal education programmes or their opportunities
- There is still a stereotype in society that adult education is not important, especially for the elderly or women.

Based on these conclusions of the current situation of ALE and the envisaged scenarios for further development of this sub-sector of education, the following directions for further ALE development strategy can be recommended:

- Adoption of the Law “On Adult Learning and Education” or introduction of relevant amendments and additions to the Law “On Education” for the development of ALE as a separate sector, a number of other laws and regulations which enshrine the responsibility of interested ministries and agencies in the development of this sector. Establishment of an interdepartmental coordination center for management of ALE. Inclusion of ALE in the priorities of the state policy with allocation of funding and resources.
- Further strengthening the role of the government in establishing mechanisms and regulations to support ALE structures and in regulating, facilitating, incentivizing, coordinating and monitoring ALE in public education.
- Development and use of innovative and multi-channel forms of financing involving funds

from the state budget, local governments, private companies and enterprises, non-profit organizations, foreign loans and grants, trainees themselves, and donations.

- Strengthening the institutionalization of the sector to promote lifelong learning spaces for all at all levels. Recognizing the diverse facilities of vocational education and training, higher education institutions, libraries, museums, arts and cultural institutions, sports and recreation, work and community settings, families and others as adult learning spaces.
- Taking measures to collect and analyze statistical data, reliable, credible, transparent and accessible information and gender-sensitive monitoring systems on the status of the ALE sub-sector, on the degree of participation of the population in ALE programmes to formulate quality policies in this area
- Mechanisms for certification and recognition of knowledge and skills acquired through non-formal and informal education are now being implemented in accordance with the Presidential Resolution¹⁷⁸ and the National Qualifications Framework. It is necessary to ensure effective and quality development of this area in order to provide adults with equal opportunities for further learning and access to the labor market.
- Establishment of an extensive network of training and counselling centers and educational centers in schools, vocational and higher educational institutions, libraries, religious or cultural centers and recreation centers, enterprises and organizations, and places of residence. Particular attention should be paid to the establishment of such centers in rural areas.
- Developing mechanisms to encourage community involvement in education and training processes.
- Developing and implementing measures to increase motivation and universal access to ALE, promoting and expanding access to quality learning for vulnerable groups, especially socially disadvantaged youth, women, migrant workers, unemployed, disabled, convicted, elderly, stateless persons. Developing information and counselling services to facilitate the use of ALE opportunities by adults.
- Organizing targeted training of ALE specialists - andragogues (teachers, counsellors, tutors, managers, information and guidance workers, organizers of adult learning in the workplace) to ensure capacity building of ALE teaching staff.
- Creating conditions for organizing and conducting scientific research in the field of ALE and andragogy.
- In order to further develop international cooperation in adult learning and education, it is necessary to expand the geography of cooperation and intensify Uzbekistan's participation in international programmes and projects, which will allow access to new knowledge and technologies.

¹⁷⁸On measures to further improve the National Qualifications System of the Republic of Uzbekistan Presidential Resolution, #RP-345, from 30.09.2024

In order to implement the most optimistic scenario of ALE development in Uzbekistan, it is necessary to:

- Identify measures to mitigate the risks of “blurring” ALE boundaries (establishment of an interagency coordinating body, development of a long-term ALE development strategy with clearly defined goals, objectives and implementation mechanisms).
- Increase funding for ALE system by providing necessary funds for modernization of educational institutions, development of new programmes and professional development of teachers/andragogues.
- Integrate ALE with the labor market by establishing close cooperation with employers to develop educational programmes which meet market needs.
- Develop digital technologies in education by widely introducing online platforms, e-learning materials and other digital tools.
- Improve the qualifications of teachers/andragogues through systematic professional development courses.
- To promote the idea of lifelong learning, creating a positive image of adult education in society, and lifelong learning as a model of informed behavior.

6.5 Conclusion

Uzbekistan’s adult learning and education (ALE) system, embedded in the concept of “Lifelong learning”, has significant potential for development, which can become the basis for the country’s economic, social and cultural progress.

The implementation of lifelong learning, supported by the efforts of public authorities, civil society and international organizations, has the potential to improve the qualifications of the adult population, provide access to modern educational services and promote social inclusion.

Sustainable development of the ALE system, increasing its inclusiveness, adaptability and orientation to the needs of society in the long term will not only improve the quality of life of citizens, but also strengthen the country’s economy, creating conditions for its competitiveness in the global arena. ALE in Uzbekistan has unique opportunities for development and can become a key tool in achieving sustainable development goals and building a knowledge society.

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Social media

137. O‘zbekiston Respublikasi Prezidenti matbuot kotibining rasmiy kanali https://t.me/Press_Secretary_Uz . Press Secretary to the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan (20.11.24, 28.06.24, 11.09.24, 30.09.24, 22.02.23, 20.06.24).
138. Factchecker Journalism Community https://t.me/qlever_factcheck
139. Professional ta’limni rivojlantirish instituti rasmiy telegram kanali https://t.me/ipi_uz
140. Bandlik vazirligi <https://t.me/mehnatvazirligi>



DVV International Uzbekistan has been operating in the country since 2002 on the basis of an intergovernmental agreement between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Federal Republic of Germany. DVV International is the Institute for International Cooperation of the German Association of Adult Education - Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband (DVV). The association represents the interests of around 900 Adult Education Centers or as they are called in Germany - Volkshochschul-Verband (VHS) and their land associations. As one of the leading professional organizations in the field of adult education and development cooperation, DVV International has been supporting national adult learning and education systems in 35 countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Europe for more than 50 years. DVV International cooperates with partners all over the world, including representatives of civil society, government and academic institutions (more than 200 in total). The main goal of the cooperation is to contribute to the realization of everyone's right to education/ lifelong learning.

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