

1. Policy, Legislation and Financing

1.1. Legislative and policy frameworks of ALE

1.1.1. What is the legislative and policy environment of ALE in your country?

The Ministry of Education steers the implementation of education policy in the entire education system, with the exception of some fields subordinate to other ministries. The main steering instruments employed by the Ministry of Education are legislation, funding, information-based guidance and licensing policy. Normative steering comprises Acts, Decrees, the national core curricula and qualification requirements and other rules and regulations.

Normative steering in adult education and training comprises legislation governing vocational adult education and training, the financing of education and culture, and liberal adult education. Normative steering in adult education and training rests on performance agreements signed with the universities and the polytechnics, on licenses to operate for the vocational education and additional vocational training and information based guidance for liberal education. As regards liberal adult education, the main steering tools are authorisations to maintain adult education institutions and resource allocation. Adult education has a minor role in the steering and performance agreements signed with the universities.

The objective of adult education in Finland is to support lifelong learning among citizens and to develop society's coherence and equality. Furthermore, it aims to ensure that workforce is available and trade skills are developed, to support raising employment rate and covering the deficit in skills brought by retirement.

Adult education is provided at all levels of education. The Finnish education system has three levels: basic education, comprising primary and lower secondary levels; upper secondary education and training comprising vocational education and training and general education; and higher education comprising polytechnics and universities (appendices 1). In addition, liberal adult education offers a wide range of recreational studies and education which develop competencies and citizenship.

Adults can study for qualifications or parts of qualifications in open instruction (such as open university and open polytechnic) and attend training preparing for competence-based qualifications. General adult education responds to adults' self-development needs, offers learning opportunities catering for mature learners' own interests and preferences, and develops citizenship skills. The purpose of vocational adult training is to maintain and enhance competencies and promote employment. In language tests, adults can demonstrate their proficiency in nine languages. Liberal education institutions offer courses in subjects relating to citizenship skills and society and in different crafts and subjects on a recreational basis. There are advisory organisations which arrange courses relating to various hobbies.

The current laws and decrees regarding ALE are:

- Basic Education Act (628/1998) and Decree on Basic Education (852/1998) (Perusopetuslaki ja asetus)
- General Upper Secondary Schools Act (629/1998) and Decree on General Upper Secondary Schools (810/1998) (Lukiolaki ja asetus)

- Act on Vocational Adult Education (631/1998) and Decree on Vocational Adult Education (812/1998) (Laki ja asetus ammatillisesta aikuiskoulutuksesta) regulating competence-based qualification, including apprenticeship training
- Act on Vocational Education (630/1998) and Decree on Vocational Education (811/1998) (Laki ja asetus ammatillisesta koulutuksesta) including regulation regarding preparatory education for further and specialist vocational qualifications, as well as apprenticeship training
- Act on Polytechnics (351/2003) and Decree on Polytechnics (352/2003) (Ammattikorkeakoululaki ja asetus)
- Universities Act (645/1997) (Yliopistolaki) and Government Decree on University Degrees (794/2004) (Asetus yliopistojen tutkinnoista)
- Act on Liberal Education (632/1998) and Decree on Liberal Education (805/1998) (Laki ja asetus vapaasta sivistystyöstä) regulating adult education and learning at folk high schools, adult education centres, studycentres, physical education centres and summer universities
- Act on Financing Education and Culture (635/1998) and Decree on Financing Education and Culture (806/1998) (Laki ja asetus opetus- ja kulttuuritoimen rahoituksesta)
- Act on Public Employment Services (1295/2002) (Laki julkisesta työvoimapaalvelusta) and Decree on Public Employment Services (1344/2002) (Asetus julkisesta työvoimapaalvelusta regarding among other things labour market training).
- Act on National Certificates of Language Proficiency (inofficial translation) (964/2004) and Decree on National Certificates of Language Proficiency (inofficial translation) (1163/2004) (Laki ja asetus yleisistä kielitutkinnoista)

a) Policies established since 1997

Education and Research Development Plans

Every five years the Government defines future education policy strategy in the Education and Research Development Plan. The plan addresses education policy sectors by sectors, one of which is adult education. Since 1997 four development plans have been designed covering the following periods: 1995-2000, 1999-2004, 2003-2008, 2007-2012.

The main priorities regarding adult education in the Education and Research Development Plans since 1997 are presented below:

The period 1995-2000

Regarding adult education the plan emphasised the following measures:

General adult education will be developed to offer opportunities for citizens to pursue personal enhancement and satisfy their varied educational and cultural needs and to improve their conditions for civic activities, work leisure-time pursuits.

Vocational adult education will provide both specific skills and a broad vocational base.

Adult education below the university level relating to special knowledge and skills will be primarily arranged as training leading to national vocational and specialised vocational qualifications. The certification system will be expanded to cover all major areas of special vocational qualifications, and its relevance to occupational changes will be evaluated towards the end of the planning period.

Labour market adult education and training will be linked more closely to the system of national vocational qualifications.

A study will be made of staff-development training, as provided by the Government's employment programme (Development plan for education and university research for the period 1995-2000, Ministry of Education, 1996).

The period 1999-2004

The provision of self-motivated adult education will be developed to constitute a smoothly functioning entity together with labour market training and staff development training with a view to raising the level of education and cultural knowledge among the middle-aged population in particular. One of the main challenges for adult education and training is to find a response to the knowledge and competence needs arising from changes in working life in order to secure occupational mobility and flexibility of 2,5 million members of the work force.

The development will focus on: expanding the vocational competence-based qualifications to cover all fields of education, raising the level of education among the middle-aged population, strengthening the status of liberal education and targeting educational services at the retired population, especially by liberal adult education institutions (Education and research 1999-2004, Development plan, Ministry of Education, 2000).

The period 2003-2008

Adult education and training will be developed at all levels as one entity in response to the educational needs of the adult population and the labour market. The management and steering system in adult education will be revised to make adult education equitably available at all levels, in all fields and in all regions,

In the planning period, the focus will be on increasing educational opportunities for the adult population as part of lifelong learning policy. Adult education and training will be used to produce competent work force rapidly and flexibly for all job levels and for all occupations and to support the development of work communities.

Education provision targeted at adults will be developed both as education and training for qualifications and degrees and as continuing education in a manner most suited for each level of education.

The prerequisites of civil society and social coherence will be built up with a diversified supply of and better access to liberal adult education and general adult education. (Education and Research 2003-2008. Development Plan, Publications of the Ministry of Education, Finland 2004:8).

The period 2007-2012

The target for supply in adult education and training is to provide the working-age population with good opportunities to develop their competence at work, to improve the conditions for changing professions and to increase the adult population's educational and competence level. Training supply will also secure the cultural needs of the ageing adult population.

Changes in the labour market and demographic developments, as well as attempts to increase productivity, emphasise the tasks of adult education and training. It is not enough to simply increase the participation rate; we also need improvements in quality, appropriateness and efficiency.

According to the Government Programme, the adult population will be encouraged to maintain and develop its competence by improving education opportunities in working life, particularly in changing situations. For this purpose, the overall reform of vocational adult education and training will be implemented to streamline fragmentary administration, financing, benefits and training supply. Vocational adult education and training means vocational adult education in general, adult education and training in higher education institutions, adult education for labour market needs and staff training paid for and organised by the employer.

The education system will be developed to better support the updating, development and redirection of competence. Different types of continuing education needs among employees, the unemployed and inactive people will be identified and the supply will be developed correspondingly.

The training possibilities of adults will be improved. On-the-job learning, in particular, will be promoted. The vocational qualifications system will be developed as a labour market-oriented high-quality channel of qualification education. The position of adult education and training as part of the tasks of higher education

institutions will be strengthened and the continuing education possibilities of higher education institution graduates will be expanded. The operations of open polytechnics will be expanded. The use of apprenticeship training in continuing education for higher education institution graduates will be examined. The financing base of vocational further education and training and continuing education at higher education institutions will be simplified.

Considering the recommendations of the national evaluation, published by the Finnish Education Evaluation Council, a programme for developing liberal adult education in 2008–2012 will be drawn up in cooperation with the national central organisations of the field. The financing system and legislation will be reformed, as necessary, with regard to the tasks, operational requirements and restructuring of liberal adult education in accordance with the development programme.

Work-related immigration and the employment of immigrants will be supported through adult education and training, first within construction, the metal industry, the service sector, healthcare and the welfare of the aged and later also in other fields according to employment needs.

The utilisation of competence acquired from abroad will be enhanced by the more flexible recognition of previous education and competence, so that supplementing studies providing a qualification could be offered through the Open University and continuing education. The possibilities for demonstrating qualification through tests will be increased and the recognition procedures for qualifications other than higher education degrees will be developed.

The possibilities of the inactive, particularly mothers of immigrant families, for language training will be promoted.

The development of further and specialist vocational qualifications and other education for working-age adults will take into account the competence needs of entrepreneurs and the personnel of small enterprises.

The appropriateness and efficiency of adult education and training will be improved with customer-based information, guidance and counselling services and by developing arrangements for recognising prior learning.

Online learning will be developed particularly to ensure regional availability.

According to the Government Programme, the conditions of liberal adult education will be safeguarded. At the same time, the educational possibilities of immigrants and adults in danger of social exclusion will be developed. The steering system will ensure that a sufficient share of liberal adult education will be directed to education that supports the linguistic skills of immigrants and their integration into society, to education that improves the participation and quality of life of the senior population and to other operations that prevent exclusion and strengthen active citizenship. The number of educational voucher grants will be increased.

The possibility of completing basic studies in a primary school or an adult education centre will be secured for young people in danger of social exclusion and adults with few skills. Some of the immigrants are illiterate. In addition to institutions of liberal adult education, upper secondary schools also provide the immigrant population with possibilities for acquiring the competence required in the labour market and eligibility for further studies (Education and research. Development plan 2007-2012, Ministry of Education 2007).

Policy measures of significant importance for the actual adult education and learning policy in Finland since 1997

The national strategy of lifelong learning

In March 1996 the Finnish Government appointed a committee to devise a national strategy for lifelong learning. The Committee submitted its report to the Ministry of Education and Science in October 1997.

The Committee has grouped its findings under six headings: 1) strengthening learning foundations, 2) a broad range of learning opportunities, 3) accreditation of learning achievements, 4) building learning paths - information and support, 5) bringing teachers' and trainers' skills up-to-date and 6) towards a comprehensive

policy for the advancement of learning. (The joy of learning, a national strategy for lifelong learning, Ministry of Education, committee report 1997:14)

The Reform of the Educational Laws

The Reform of the Educational Laws, which came into force at the beginning of 1999 also had an impact on adult education and training. The measuring of adult education was renewed earlier. The reform meant that the previously scattered legislation was gathered into an entity of 10 laws/acts. The normative steering was taken apart and the decision making was decentralised to some extent. Even if the reform of legislation for education emphasises a age neutral way of thinking, a separate Act on vocational adult education, which mainly consists of regulations regarding three different forms of competence-based qualifications, i.e. vocational qualifications, further vocational education qualifications and specialist vocational qualifications, was included in the new reform. The Act on liberal adult education and the Act on financing additional vocational training were included in the new educational legislation, as well.

The Parliamentary adult education committee

In 2001 Parliament demanded the Government to set up a Parliamentary adult education committee to make suggestions for the future years regarding adult education and training policy and financing. Representatives of the major political parties, the social partners, adult vocational education institutions and adult liberal education institutions were represented in the committee, as well as, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour. The point of departure of the committee was to:

- 1) to ensure the knowledge and skills of the adult population
- 2) to enhance the possibility of education for the underrepresented groups in adult education
- 3) to strengthen the cohesion, equality and active citizenship in society,
- 4) to improve the provision of adult education studies and the regional impact of adult education

In the spring of 2002 the Committee presented its work. The Committee estimated that in order to meet the changes of working life the adult population must be assured possibilities to continuously develop knowledge and skills and every 10th or 15th year, to totally renew competences. The Committee also underlined the importance of developing the steering system of adult education and learning to be planned and steered as an effective entity, also in the different branches of education. The Committee especially recommended as an urgent measure to raise the level of education of the adult population, which only has a first or second degree level of education, which was the case for 600 000 adults, according to the estimations of the Committee.

Based on the recommendations of the Committee the Ministry of Education formed four preparation committees to prepare concrete plans for the most urgent measures: enhancing the knowledge and skills of the adult population, the implementation of vocational adult education and learning, the action plan for steering, financing and statistics of liberal adult education and student aid for adults. The recommendations regarding regional influence were implemented in the regional strategy of the Department for Education and Science at the Ministry of Education and regional action plans for adult education and training were defined in co-operation with the Provincial State offices.

During the last few years the development of adult education and learning has been developed according to the policies defined by the Adult education committee. The adult education and learning policy in the Education and Research Development Plan for 2003-2008 is also based on the recommendations of the Adult education committee.

The overall reform of vocational adult education and training

The maintenance and development of the competence of the working-age adult population requires a functioning adult education and training system. According to the Government Programme of Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen's second cabinet appointed on 19 April 2007, the adult population will be encouraged to maintain and develop its competence by improving education opportunities in working life, particularly in changing situations. For this purpose, the overall reform of vocational adult education and training will be implemented to streamline fragmentary administration, financing, benefits and training supply. Vocational adult education and training means vocational adult education in general, adult education and training in higher education institutions, adult education for labour market needs and staff training paid for and organised by the employer. The overall reform of vocational adult education and training is being prepared by a broad-based

organisation led by the Ministry of Education involving key Ministries, central labour organisations and adult education providers (Education and Research Development Plan for 2007-2012, Ministry of Education),

The premises for the reform are:

- the Finnish vocational adult education system has many strengths (the high rate of participation, wide provision, broad range of skills and competence, high level of public financing and employer investments and reasonable student fees), but there is also a need for renewal (complex structure of organisation and of benefits, low participation rate of the less educated and differences among different age groups, the need for collaboration between industry and educational institutions to better adjust to changes in society)
- the needs for a renewal of the division of work established in the 80's between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Employment and the Economy (former Ministry of Labour) regarding self-motivated adult education, labour market training, and personnel training: new solutions to be defined and guidelines to be set
- the rate of participation in vocational adult education and the participation of different groups; what should be the objectives for participation (from 52% of the population to 60%), how can the participation be broaden and possibilities for new and old underrepresented groups in adult education be assured; how can a rotation between work and education, lifelong learning and education through work and informal learning be supported; measures to improve the targeting, the impact and the efficiency of adult education are also necessary
- the financing: level of public financing; division and targeting and the responsibilities of employers and customers
- the division of work regarding steering and financing of vocational adult education: in the ministries, the cooperation between the local administration and local providers of vocational adult education and the tasks of the higher education institutions and the participation of working life
- the clarification of benefits from the point of view of customers and the administration and the possibilities for new types of benefits (one flexible benefit system, a more extensive foundation for education, a voucher for adult learners or an education account, a tax model)
- other specific questions: apprenticeship training, the use of apprenticeship training in continuing education of higher education and the task of and financing of higher education institutions regarding adult education and learning, the increased immigration and local administration.

Development programme of adult liberal education

The aims of adult liberal education is to enhance the integrity of society, equality and to strengthen active citizenship. The Council of State has defined the development policy for adult liberal education in the Education and Research Development Plan for 2007-2012. A development programme for developing liberal adult education in 2008–2012 will be drawn up in cooperation with the national central organisations of the field. The financing system and legislation will be reformed, as necessary, with regard to the tasks, operational requirements and restructuring of liberal adult education in accordance with the development programme.

Cooperation between the Ministry of Education and other ministries

In 2004 on the bases of the recommendations of the Labour and Education Council, a civil servants working group, consisting of representatives from five different ministries presented a report on the development needs and measures of vocational adult education.

The report focused on: a.) The development of the distribution of work and functioning within the field of adult education and learning, b) the support system, financing and foundations in the field of adult education, financing, c) increasing education based on the demands and the efficiency d) enhancing the position of adult education in steering the education system, e) measures for improving equality f) measures in adult education regarding work-based immigration and g) education and learning as part of developing the labour organisations. An action plan of these proposals was approved by the Council on the 15th of December 2006,

The collaboration between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Employment and the Economy (former Ministry of Labour) has been developed to form an effective entity with labour market training and continuing vocational/professional training. In this entity, the Ministry of Education has particular responsibility for

- ensuring a network of providers that covers all regions, fields and levels of education, stable operating conditions for it and sufficient education and training provision which is open to all
- developing qualification and degree schemes that responds to the needs of the adult population, efficient information, advisory and guidance services, and arrangements for recognising knowledge acquired in different ways
- assuring the quality of the provision and qualified and competent teaching personnel

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Employment and the Economy also cooperate regarding information, guidance and counselling of adult education and learning. An action plan for the years 2008-2012 is being implemented as European Structural Fund development programme. The point of departure for the programme is a more efficient targeting and planning of adult education and learning and a better use of the resources. The programme aims at providing information, guidance and counselling for the whole adult population through efficient information, guidance and counselling services.

The prerequisites for lifelong learning, the equality of adult education and learning, the benefits in the field of adult education and learning and the employability and integration education of immigrants is being developed in cooperation with the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the Ministry of the Interior.

b) Laws related to ALE established since 1997

The current laws related to ALE have all been established after 1997.

See above part 1.1.1.

1.1.2. What are the priority goals for ALE in your country?

The Government programme defines the overall priorities for education and adult education, The actual priorities regarding adult education and training are:

The adult population will be encouraged to maintain and develop their knowledge with increased opportunities for in-service training especially in change situations. A comprehensive reform of professionally oriented adult education will be implemented in order to clarify the decentralized administration, funding, benefits and education and training provision.

The quota for further apprenticeship training will be increased. The opportunities for graduates of higher education institutes to continue their professional education will be expanded. The feasibility of apprenticeship-type training for continuing professional education of higher education graduates will be assessed. The resources for liberal adult education will be secured. Educational opportunities for immigrants and people at risk of exclusion will be developed. The priorities of adult education centres will be determined at local level.

The development of professional knowledge in, working life contacts of and regional impact of polytechnics will be strengthened.

A national internationalisation strategy will be devised for higher education in order to increase the international mobility of students, teachers and researchers. this strategy will also affect adult education and learning.

Some of the aims of other sectors also influence the educational sector; for instance, 1) The definition of policies for the establishment and scope of the Ministry of Employment and the Economy on 1st of January 2008 regarding the role of labour market training and the implementation of the policy programme for labour, entrepreneurship and economic life,. 2) immigration policy, including education for immigrants and administrative solutions (work based immigration and education to enhance the employability of immigrants. 3) The renewal of the social security system (support systems for the labour training and adult education and training) and 4) decisions regarding the local administration and the results of the municipality and service reform.

In the proposal for the state budget 2009 the overall aims for the self-motivated adult education steered by the ministry of Education are.

- to increase the participation of the adult population in education in order to maintain skills and to improve the professional mobility and secure competitiveness and employment
- to activate the possibilities for everyone to participate in open web-based education and to secure the attainability of education
- to improve the possibilities of the adult population for lifelong learning to secure social parity and education of the citizens
- to develop the quality of education, local impact and guidance at all levels of education

According to the Action and Economic Plan of the Ministry of Education the aim is to raise the participation rate in adult education and training to 60% by 2012.

For the implementation of the Government Plan the Cabinet approves during its' first year a Development plan for Education and Research. The actual plan covers the period 2007-2012 (for more information see part 1.1.1).

1.1.3. How is ALE organized within the government? What ministry/s are in charge or involved? Is ALE centralized/decentralized? How?

Parliament passes educational legislation and determines the general lines of education policy. The government and, as part of it, the Ministry of Education are responsible for planning and implementing education policy. The other ministries involved in adult education and learning in Finland are, besides the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, the Social and Health Ministry and the Ministry of Finance.

The Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education has the overall responsibility for education policy and for self-motivated adult education. The Ministry has a Division for Adult Education and training, whose tasks include formulating the entire national adult education policy together with other divisions. The Ministry is responsible for the division of work in the adult education sector, finances, operation licences and legislation as well as the structure of vocational education and qualifications. It negotiates annually concerning the appropriations available for adult education policy issues and allocates the resources.

The Ministry and its Division for Adult Education and Training have an important role in implementing the Government's adult education policies defined in the Education and Research Development Plan. The Division for Adult Education and Training and key co-operation partners prepare the implementation of the policies within the framework of available resources and the education and training steering system.

The Division for Adult Education and Training, at the Department for Education and Research is responsible for adult education and training and the development policy of Lifelong Learning. The Division is in charge of the national policy for adult education and learning and the prerequisites for developing Lifelong Learning, vocational adult education and learning, apprenticeship training and competence-based qualifications, adult education in higher education and open university and polytechnic education, basic education for adults and language tests, liberal education and counselling and guidance, recognition of prior learning, the quantitative planning of adult education, organisation and steering (license to operate, result agreements) co-ordination of in-service training for teachers, co-ordination of education for immigrants, legislation in the field of education, financing and quality, assessment and international co-operation.

The other seminal document governing the activities of the Ministry is the Economic and Action Plan approved by the Minister of Education and Science. The plan aims at providing information for implementing and monitoring the financial policy of the government, and ensuring that the policies issued by the government are taken into account in the internal steering of the administrative sector of the Ministry. The plan includes sector-specific expenditure calculations, which are utilised in preparing the expenditure framework decisions for the following years. In addition, it includes definitions of education policy of the Ministry of Education, which are in line with the objectives of the Education and Research Development Plan.

The Ministry's basic tasks also include distributing government subsidies and granting operating licences to provide education. The Ministry ensures that there are enough statistics and other information and research on adult education for evaluating and developing adult education policy.

The future tasks regarding adult education and learning of The Ministry of Education depend on the outcomes of the reform of vocational adult education and training, which will be implemented from 2010.

Adult Education Council

The Adult Education Council is an expert body assisting the Ministry of Education; its members are appointed by the Council of State for a three-year term at a time. The current term is 1.4.2003-31.3.2009

The Adult Education Council follows development and research of Finnish and international adult education and training. In addition, the Council encourages co-operation between adult education and training organisations and co-operation between them and the rest of the education and training sector and society at large. The Council contributes to performance evaluation and development of adult education and training policy and adult education and training provision, issuing statements and taking initiatives.

The Adult Education Council consists of the Chairman and maximum of 14 other Members and their personal Deputy Members. The membership includes adult education experts from different areas, MPs and representatives of the social partners. It also must be represented by both language groups of the Country (Finnish and Swedish).

The National Board of Education

The National Board of Education is the national agency in charge of development of education in Finland. It is working under the auspices of the Ministry of Education. The operations of The National Board of Education are governed by an act (182) of 1991.

The National Board of Education (NBE) is responsible for the development of pre-primary education and basic education, general upper secondary education, vocational education and training, formal adult education and training, liberal adult education (incl. folk high schools, study centres, summer universities) and extracurricular basic education in arts.

The main areas of operation:

- development of education. The NBE draws up core curricula for basic and upper secondary education, the framework for vocational qualifications and competence-based qualifications, and undertakes various projects to develop education.
- evaluation of education. The NBE evaluates learning results and improves the efficiency of training.
- information services. The NBE co-ordinates information networks and services in the education sector, produces indicator data and information for anticipating educational needs, maintains the financing system for the education sector, and publishes training guides.
- production of support services for education. The NBE maintains a student selection register for upper secondary vocational training and education and polytechnics; organises language examinations; organises and funds further studies for teachers and other teaching staff; is responsible for the recognition of foreign qualifications; and develops and sells learning materials.

Matters pertaining to adult education are handled by the National Board of Education's Adult division .

The Ministry of Employment and the Economy

The Ministry of Employment and the Economy started its operations as from 1 January 2008. The Government Programme of Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen's second Cabinet, dated 19 April 2007, included the decision that the new Ministry would "assume responsibility for the duties of the existing Ministry of Trade and Industry, the tasks of the Ministry of Labour, excluding migration and integration matters, and the functions of the Department for Development of Regions and Public Administration of the Ministry of the Interior, excluding the Regional and Local Administration Unit."

The Ministry of Employment and the Economy' s tasks include first of all defining the total amount of education and training to be purchased and negotiating for the appropriations required when the State budget proposal is being prepared. Furthermore, the Ministry of Employment and the Economy gives general guidelines for targeting education and training. The guidelines are based on information and estimates on the development of the labour market. However, these guidelines are rather general in nature, because the labour market and its development varies greatly from region to region within Finland. The Ministry submits a proposal on the regional distribution of appropriations of education and training to the Council of State. The proposal is partly based on criteria determined by the Ministry and partly on negotiations between the Ministry and the Employment and Economic Development Centres. The tasks of the Ministry further include developing and maintaining a national monitoring system for training and education.

The future tasks regarding adult education and learning of The Ministry of Employment and the Economy depend on the outcomes of the reform of vocational adult education and training, which will be implemented from 2010.

Employment and Economic Development Centres (T&E Centres)

The T&E Centres house the combined regional units of the previous Ministry of Trade and Industry, the previous Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. The labour market departments of the T&E Centres have a crucial role in implementing labour market training for adults.

Employment offices

The main task of employment offices in implementing labour market training for adults is to participate in directing and selecting people for training. Legislation also provides employment offices with the right to purchase education with appropriations from the T&E Centres.

The present renewal of the regional administration, emphasising "a one desk service model " will probably affect the role of the T&E Centres, the employment offices and the Provincial State offices. The new administration will be implemented in 2010.

Labour market training is targeted at the adult working population and it aims to enhance the participant's possibilities to stay in a working place or to get a new one. Therefore the training is mainly vocational. The training can be purchased together with the company and in this case the training is adjusted for the needs and the training budgets of the employer. The training prepares the participant for different branches and enhances the participant's abilities to apply for a job and strengthens his/her ICT skills or supports the integration of immigrants.

Labour market training usually comprises of further or additional education, leading to qualification or part of a qualification. A personal study programme is made for each student.

Labour market training also aims at improving the employability of the long term unemployed, the elderly and the disabled. The training can be combined with rehabilitation or supported employability

Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health co-operates closely with the education administration and universities, polytechnics and other educational institutions in the sector in developing the contents of the education and training, in particular basic education. This is particularly true for education and training in the health care sector, because these professions and occupations (doctors, nurses, midwives etc.) are governed by strict laws, and the education and training for them must include the contents central and essential to the profession or occupation. The co-operation also encompasses voicing opinions and determining the student intake required in the sector, especially in youth level education.

The Ministry of Finance

The annual budget is prepared by the Ministry of Education and decided by the Government. The State budget is co-ordinated by the Ministry of Finance within the pre-decided fiscal framework.

Labour market organisations

Labour market organisations are active players in adult education matters. Following the tripartite model, social partners participate in committees on education and training and examination boards appointed by the Ministry of Education and the National Board of Education.

There are labour market representatives in:

- the sector-specific committees on education and training are tripartite bodies, whose task is to follow vocational and professional education and training in the sector at all levels, to participate in preparing curricula and submit proposals and initiatives for developing education
- the examination boards responsible for organising and monitoring vocational qualifications. Two thirds of the members are appointed by the labour market organisations
- the administration of vocational education institutions
- the Board of the National Board of Education, two of the seven members represent social partners
- the preparatory bodies set up by education administration

1.1.4. How are the policy and implementation strategies aligned, for example, with: policies in other sectors (health, economy, labour, rural development, etc.);

The overall policy and implementation strategies of adult education and learning are defined in the Government plan. Other governmental strategies are aligned with these strategies. Financing adult education and learning reflects the economical changes in society. The ministries responsible for adult education and learning co-operate closely in different committees, working groups in order to efficiently implement the policies set by the Government.

Other goals, such as gender equality, social cohesion, active citizenship, cultural and linguistic diversity;

The reformed Constitution of Finland (731/1999) came into force on 1.3.2000. According to the Constitution, everyone is equal before the law. Equality before the law is enacted in Section 6 as well as in the general prohibition of discrimination.

The objective of the Equality Act (21/2004) is to promote and secure the realisation of equality and to strengthen legal protection for victims of discrimination. According to the Equality Act, public administrations have the duty in all their activities to promote equality purposefully and methodically, as well as to alter any circumstances that may prevent the realisation of equality. The Act prohibits direct and indirect discrimination, and harassment, and also prohibits the giving of an order or instructions to discriminate. Viable discrimination grounds under the Act are age, ethnic or national origin, citizenship, language, religion, belief, opinion, health, disability, sexual orientation, or grounds relating to other personal characteristics. The Act requires that all authorities draw up an equality plan. The Ministry of Labour issued recommendations on the contents of an equality plan in September 2004. The Equality Act carries into effect the Race Equality Act and the Employment Equality Act of the European Council.

Securing the conditions for lifelong learning and supporting the conditions for social coherence, equality, active citizenship and civil society are the task of liberal adult education. However, the entire education system must support people's ability to act as active citizens in a democratic society.

The creation of knowledge economies and/or the building of learning societies;

The Centre of Expertise Programme (OSKE) is a fixed term special government programme aimed at focusing regional resources and activities on development areas of key national importance. The programme promotes the utilization of the highest international standard of knowledge and expertise that exists in the different regions. The operations model of the programme was reformed for the term 2007–2013 as a cluster-based model, the overriding objective of which is to increase regional specialization and to strengthen cooperation between centres of expertise. The National Programme involves 13 national Clusters of Expertise and 21 regional Centres of Expertise (<http://www.oske.net/en/>).

National development plans and strategies; or in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers;

For national development plans See part 1.1.1

1.1.5. What are the main development challenges in your country? How are the ALE goals defined in relation to these challenges?

The programme of Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen's second cabinet appointed on 19 April 2007

The underlying values of the programme of the new blue-green Government are a balance between man and nature, responsibility and freedom, caring and rewarding, and education and competence.

Climate change and globalisation reinforce the inter-dependence between nations and citizens. Global development issues, promotion of international security, forced human displacement and emigration, enlargement of the European Union, and the deepening of cooperation within the European community will affect Finland as well.

Trans-boundary environmental problems and an ageing population will introduce to political decision-making a new dimension spanning several generations. Responses to changes in the division of labour within the global economy are also needed.

Creativity, competence and a high standard of education are necessary prerequisites for the success of Finland and the Finnish people. The school system must reinforce everyone's capacity for learning.

Education, Science and Cultural Policy

A higher employment rate and responsible management of public finances create the foundation for improving the standard and quality of life in Finland. Work, entrepreneurship and enterprise in general should always be economically rewarding. The Government will secure equal opportunities for quality education from early childhood to university education.

The Government will provide financial and structural prerequisites for high standard and diverse basic and applied research.

The education system will be developed overall so that it meets global challenges and responds to changes in the occupational and demographic structures. To meet qualitative and quantitative competence, training, research and work life needs more successfully, the Government will improve its foresight procedures. Apprenticeship training will be strengthened as a form of provision. Measures will also be taken to reduce the dropout rate.

The Government is committed to fostering creativity and a wide range of talent and innovativeness, beginning from early childhood education onwards. The status of environmental education will be enhanced. The Government will continue its efforts to diversify and expand entrepreneurial education at all levels of education. Online instruction will be developed and information society projects at educational institutions will be supported.

The network of educational institutions will be adapted to demographic trends and access to education will be secured throughout the country. Each comprehensive school leaver will be provided a training place and access to adequate guidance counselling and support. With a view to reducing dropout, attention will especially be focused on transition phases. Adequate support will be provided for integration. Special-needs schools and classes will be maintained as alternative forms. The integration and employment of immigrants will be promoted through training.

The attractiveness of teaching as a profession will be increased by improving working conditions. Education and training providers will be given a statutory duty to see to it that their personnel get continuing professional education on a regular basis.

The need to develop the steering system, resulting from the reform of central government transfers to local government, will be assessed. The status and functions of the National Board of Education will be evaluated. Evaluation as a whole will be clarified.

For the implementation of the Government Plan the Cabinet approves during its' first year a Development plan for Education and Research. The actual plan covers the period 2007-2012 (for more information see part 1.1.1).

1.1.6. Are there other policies in place that have an impact on ALE?

The five key messages of the Communication Adult learning: It is never too late to learn, adopted by the European Commission on 23 October 2006 are inline with the trends of the Finnish adult learning and education policies:

1. Lifting the barriers to participation, 2. Ensuring the quality of adult learning, 3. Recognition and validation of learning outcomes, 4. Investing in the ageing population and migrants and 5. Making use of the statistics available.

1.2. Financing of ALE

Financing is often provided through a variety of channels. For a comprehensive picture, please give recent data on the following sections and describe trends that have emerged since 1997 (CONFINTEA V):

1.2.1. Public investment in ALE:

a) Share of the budget allocated to adult education within the education sector (indicate measures, activities, responsible bodies);

The Ministry of Education finances AEL in general education, vocational education and training, polytechnic education and R&D, university education and research, continuing vocational and professional education and liberal adult education. In 2008 adult education and training receives 11% of the appropriations allocated through the Ministry of Education main class in the state budget. Over half of this funding (52%) is channelled to vocational training and one fifth to liberal education.

The allocation of the budget for the Ministry of Education to different providers of adult education and learning is presented in appendices 2.

The government grants statutory and discretionary financing for operating costs and for construction and renovation projects to local authorities and other educational providers. Government funding for local authorities is not earmarked, which means that the local authorities are free to decide how to use it. Statutory government funding covers 45% of operating costs. Funding is based on certain quantitative indicators, such as the number of pupils/students, other quantitative criteria, and unit costs determined each year in advance.

Local authorities provide almost all general upper secondary education and about half of the vocational education and training providers are local authorities or municipal education consortia. In addition, registered associations and foundations may function as education providers.

Education and training leading to qualifications is financed by the public administration, except university degree education, which is totally government-financed. Training leading to further and specialist qualifications is mostly publicly funded but may charge moderate fees.

About half of liberal adult education costs are covered by the government and the rest mostly comes from student fees and from the maintaining organisations. The purpose of state funding is to guarantee the largest possible provision without burdening the students with high fees. Employers purchase staff-development training from adult education institutions and firms. The labour administration also purchases a great deal of different training for unemployed people and for those at risk of unemployment.

b) Share of the budget allocated to adult education from other sectors, made either directly or indirectly within their policies (indicate responsible ministries, describe activities);

The Ministry of Employment and the Economy finances employment training. The annual budget in 2007 was 430 million €.

c) ALE in decentralized/local budgets (local governments and authorities, municipalities, communities);

The municipalities are responsible for 50 % of the budget for vocational education and training institutes.

d) Other investment, e.g. from regional funds, trans-national organisations, etc.

In recent years European Social Fund financing has been used for innovations in the adult education and training system, during the recent programme for the period 2007-2013 a specific development project for adult education learning and counselling is being carried out. The total budget for the project is 26, 1 million €.

1.2.2. Foreign bilateral/multilateral donor investment in ALE:

list annual amounts and key areas/activities.

In Finland there is no donor investment in ALE

1.2.3. Support to ALE from private/corporate sector:

provide data on annual expenditure from corporate sector; provide relations to e.g. overall national budget, overall expenditure from selected national and multinational enterprises.

1.2.4. Civil society support to ALE (e.g. religious institutions, unions, NGOs).

1.2.5. Learners'/individuals' contributions to ALE.

All education leading to a qualification is free of charge for the student. In the field of liberal education minor student fees are possible.

Education and training leading to qualifications is financed by the public administration, except university degree education, which is totally government-financed. Training leading to further and specialist qualifications is mostly publicly funded but may charge moderate fees.

About half of liberal adult education costs are covered by the government and the rest mostly comes from student fees and from the maintaining organisations

1.2.6. Are there specific direct or indirect financial incentives in support of ALE e.g. learning vouchers, scholarships, paid educational leave, special funds and funding schemes etc.? Are these specific to some programmes or general schemes? Please elaborate.

There are different benefits available for adult students depending on the type of education you are participating in, the educational institution, the way the education is arranged and the background of the student. The overall reform of vocational adult education and training (see part 1.1.1) aims at streamlining the benefit system for adult education. At present, there are following benefits for adult students:

Adult education allowance

The adult education allowance is granted for employees and self-employed persons who have working history of at least five years.

The basic part of the adult education allowance is financed from the State budget. The earnings-related part is financed from the unemployment insurance contributions paid by employers and employees (for more information: www.koulutusrahasto.fi).

The scholarship for qualified employee

The scholarship for qualified employee is available for those who have passed the tests of competence based qualifications. The scholarship is granted on condition that the person has at least five years of working history in Finland before he has passed the tests. It doesn't matter whether the applicant is unemployed, employed or on study leave (for more information: www.koulutusrahasto.fi).

Labour market training benefits

Those who participate in labour market training may receive training allowance or labour market support during the education, as well as maintenance allowance..

Education allowance for unemployed

Unemployed jobseekers may receive daily education allowance for self-motivated preparatory vocational education. Daily education allowance can also be obtained if a person continues her/his preparatory studies for vocational education, interrupted before the person has become unemployed.

Unemployment security

Unemployment security provides income security for unemployed jobseekers. Benefits include the earnings-related unemployment allowance, the basic unemployment allowance and the labour market subsidy.

Apprenticeship training allowance

During theoretical education and during studies for a competence-based qualification the student may obtain daily allowance, travel and accommodation allowances if the training is not arranged in the place of domicile or where the apprenticeship training takes place.

Student grant for agricultural entrepreneurs

For agricultural entrepreneurs, who don't receive any other benefit there is a insurance based financial aid .

Student financial aid

An adult student, who doesn't receive an adult education allowance, may receive student financial aid for her/his full-time studies. Student financial aid comprises a study grant, a housing supplement and state guarantee for a student loan. The aid is granted by the Social Insurance Institution in cooperation with the education institution concerned.

Alternation leave and part-time allowance

A person on the alternation leave receives 70 % of the daily unemployment benefit to which he or she would be entitled during unemployment, without child care allowances, but increases to 80% if the person has a 25 year work history. The basic idea of the alternation leave is a rotation model: the employer has to employ an unemployed job-seeker for the employee on leave. The studies can also be financed with a part-time allowance if a person works part-time.

The Education Fund

The Education Fund is founded and administrated by the social partners of the Finnish labour market. Its purpose is to support the development of the vocational qualification system and to grant financial assistance for the employees who are on study leave.

The Education Fund has been developed to continue the work of the Redundancy Payment Fund. The social partners have decided to transfer the payments of the benefits due to the loss of one's job to the system of unemployment insurance. The Fund's aim has changed step by step to support the active labour market measures and changing requirements of qualification.

The Fund does not compete with the personnel training in working places or the labour market education for the unemployed. It grants additional scholarships for competence based qualification (Scholarship for Qualified

Employee) and is responsible for the financial assistance for mature students while they are on study leave (an Adult Education Allowance) (www.koulutusrahasto.fi).

The Unemployment Insurance Fund

The Unemployment Insurance Fund was founded in 1998. Its main function is to fund unemployment insurance benefits.

According to the Act on the funding of unemployment benefits, the Fund is liable for the costs of earnings-related unemployment insurance in so far as the State and individual unemployment funds are not. The benefits concerned are the following: daily unemployment allowance, support for labour market training, compensation during switch leave and support for study arranged by an unemployed person.

The Fund also pays the total costs of wage security and 94.5 per cent of the costs incurred from the employee's layoffs and additional days of unemployment insurance.

The Fund is also responsible for the costs of benefits granted by the Education Fund. Such benefits are severance pay, the adult education supplement to severance pay and the vocational training allowance (www.tvr.fi).

Study voucher

A study voucher system has been implemented since 2007 in the field of liberal adult education. The target group of this system is: immigrants, people with a poor educational background, unemployed, people with learning problems, retired persons and elderly persons, as well as higher education students who have interrupted their university studies and study at Summer university. The voucher enables the providers of adult liberal education to reduce the student fees of the above mentioned target group and to enhance guidance.

1.2.7. Are benchmarks (targets) in relation to financing of ALE in place? In your context, what would be realistic benchmarks related to financing of ALE?

In the legislative work there are benchmarks in relation to financing of ALE in the Nordic countries, where similarities in the education systems are to be found/discussed.

2. Quality of Adult Learning and Education: Provision, Participation and Achievement

2.1. Provision of ALE and institutional frameworks

This section should describe the provision of ALE in terms of organization, coordination, management and available infrastructure. Major trends that have emerged since 1997 (CONFINTEA V) should be highlighted, and evidence provided through good practices.

2.1.1. Which institutions are responsible for managing and co-ordinating ALE at national level?

Regarding organization and coordination also see part 1.1.1, where the Finnish Education system is described.

Adult education and training is provided by 770 institutions in Finland; some of them are specialised adult education providers.

Adult education also includes staff-development and other training provided or purchased by employers.

Labour market training is financed by the labour administration and mainly intended for unemployed persons and those aged 20 or over who are threatened by unemployment.

Number of education organisations in the domain of education administration, which can organise education and training targeted at adults.

1, Official education system	
General adult education	
General upper secondary schools for adults, adult education lines	51
Vocational training (upper secondary level)	
Initial vocational education providers	212
Specialised vocational institutions	54
Vocational adult education centres	45
Tertiary education	
Polytechnics	26
Universities	20
2. Liberal adult education	
Adult education centres	230
Folk high schools	90
Study centres	11
Summer universities	20
Physical education centres	11
Totally	770

Basic and general upper secondary education for adults

Adults can complete the basic (comprehensive school) or upper secondary education syllabus and take part in the matriculation examination in general upper secondary schools for adults or in adult study lines in regular upper secondary schools. The instruction mostly takes place in the evening and is course-based. Many people study individual subjects, mainly languages, as so-called subject students. A national core curriculum for adult education has been devised, taking account of the fact that students are grown-up in the number of compulsory courses and in the length of courses and lessons. There is also instruction geared to foreign students in general upper secondary schools.

There are general upper secondary schools for adults in about 40 municipalities, mainly in cities. Apart from two institutions, they are subordinate to local authorities. There is a basic education line in about 30 folk high schools and a general upper secondary line in six. They, too, follow the curriculum drawn out for general upper secondary school for adults, but since folk high schools are essentially boarding schools, the studies take place in daytime. The majority of students in folk high schools are young people.

Competence-based qualifications; Competence-based qualifications for adults

The system of competence-based qualifications offers the adult population in particular a flexible way to renew and maintain their vocational skills. In competence-based qualifications, vocational skills are demonstrated through competence tests, regardless of whether the skills have been acquired through work experience, studies or other activities. What matters most is vocational competence.

Vocational upper secondary qualifications, further vocational qualifications, and specialist vocational qualifications can be obtained as competence-based qualifications. Besides 52 vocational upper secondary qualifications, there are nearly 300 further vocational and specialist vocational qualifications on offer. In 2006, 23 100 people obtained a competence-based qualification. Working life, trade and industry have a strong role in the planning, implementation and assessment of competence tests.

There are three levels in the competence tests:

- Those who have a vocational upper secondary qualification can switch to jobs in the relevant field.
- Those who have a further vocational qualification have the vocational skills required of professionals in the field.
- Those who have a specialist vocational qualification are competent in the most demanding tasks in the field.

Obtaining a competence-based qualification requires competence in the skills of the field. The skill requirements have been set, in collaboration with the trade and industry, on the basis of work modules in working life. The vocational skills required in competence-based qualifications are defined in the requirements of competence-based qualification, drawn up by the Finnish National Board of Education.

The Finnish National Board of Education appoints a qualification committee for each competence-based qualification. It has a representation of employees, employers and teachers of the field and, if need be, entrepreneurs. The qualification committees agree with education providers and other organizations on the arrangements for competence-based education. The qualification committees are in charge of arranging and monitoring competence tests. They also develop the system of competence-based qualifications.

Training for competence-based qualifications is provided especially by organizations specializing in adult education. Qualification committees make the contracts for arranging competence tests primarily with them. Obtaining a competence-based qualification is not dependent on how the competence has been acquired. It is possible to participate in a competence test without any training for competence-based qualification. If a person needs further vocational skills to be able to obtain a qualification, he or she can gain them, for instance, through self-motivated education, employment training, apprenticeship training, and corporate or staff training.

When all the parts required for a qualification have been completed, the person will receive the certificate. It is given by the qualification committee. The committee also gives a certificate for partial completion of a qualification.

Polytechnics

All 26 polytechnics offer rich study opportunities to working-age adult population. The polytechnics' tasks emphasize the working life needs in the region, in particular the needs of small and medium-sized enterprises. Polytechnics provide education to adults in the following ways:

- Education for a polytechnic degree
- Education for a higher polytechnic degree
- Vocational specialization studies
- Open polytechnic studies
- Other further and supplementary training in polytechnics for a charge.

Degree studies

Polytechnics provide adult education leading to a polytechnic degree or a higher polytechnic degree. In adult education, the instruction and other arrangements enable studies alongside work.

Vocational specialization studies

Extensive vocational specialization studies of about 30 credits are meant for working people who want to enhance their competence after completing a degree. Applying for this education takes place through a separate application procedure. Specialization studies are based on polytechnic degrees. In 2007, there were altogether 7,500 students enrolled in specialization studies in various polytechnics.

Open polytechnic education

All the polytechnics provide open polytechnic education. Yearly about 9,000 students participate in it. The goal is to double the number of participants in the next few years. Open polytechnic education has no required qualifications but is open to everyone interested.

Adult education in universities

All 20 universities in Finland provide study opportunities for adults. Adult education in universities primarily takes place in the following forms:

- Open university education
- Short-term and long-term continuing education organized by universities
- Employment training for adults, provided as further education.

Open university education

Open university education is university education following university curricula, geared to adults. There are 19 open universities in Finland, providing university education all over Finland in cooperation with adult education institutes. Anyone can participate, regardless of their educational background. One of the growing forms of open university is the so-called third age university, geared to older people. It is not possible to take a degree in open university but, if the student later gains the right to complete a degree, the credits earned can be included in it. Those studying in an open university programme are charged fees which differ according to the form of study and the educational establishment in question.

Continuing education

Continuing education is provided by university further education centres, faculties, and special institutes. They organize continuing education varying in form and duration, from short courses to specialization studies of 30-60 credits. Continuing education is primarily meant for people with a university level first degree as additional training. Participants are mostly liable to a charge.

Employment training for adults

Employment training for adults is university further education bought by work administration and mediated by employment offices. It is geared toward those who are unemployed or in danger of becoming unemployed.

National Certificates of Language Proficiency

National Certificates of Language Proficiency are language certificates targeted at adults. The examinations measure language proficiency in practical situations where an adult needs to speak, listen, write, or read a foreign language – either in Finland or abroad. Certificates are available in the following languages: English, Spanish, Italian, French, Swedish, Saami, German, Finnish, Russian.

Language proficiency can also be demonstrated through

- completion of the basic education syllabus with Finnish or Swedish as the mother tongue
- other schooling or some other means, provided that the awarder of the qualification certificate assesses that the person has sufficient language skills

2.1.2. Please use Table 1 below to list and describe briefly the ALE programmes in your country, including the following items:

See appendices 2.

2.1.3. What linkages exist between formal and non-formal approaches? Please describe.

In Finland formal education is defined as education which takes place in educational organisations and is certificate-oriented in nature. Non-formal education also takes place in an educational institution, but does not lead to qualification. Non-formal education may take place in the workplace or a non-governmental organisation

2.1.4. Does ALE lead to certification and national awards? If yes, provide examples.

Certificate-oriented education for adults comprises: general adult education, vocational upper secondary education, additional vocational education and education in higher education institutions and language tests.

In general adult education adults may complete primary education (comprehensive school syllabus) or general secondary syllabus and take part in the matriculation examination. Adults may also study individual subjects without completing the entire syllabus.

In vocational upper secondary education adults are entitled to complete similar initial vocational programmes leading to a qualification as young people. The upper secondary qualification may be completed as basic vocational education or attained through a competence-based examination or apprenticeship training. A vocational upper secondary qualification gives eligibility for further studies at universities and polytechnics.

Additional vocational education is further and continuing education targeted at adults, which adults usually attend after initial vocational education. Additional vocational training refers to vocational qualifications completed in competence-based examinations or studies leading to a specialist vocational qualification - including education and training preparing for these - and other additional vocational training which does not lead to a competence-based qualification. The Adult Vocational Education Act (631/1998) defines three different forms of qualifications: vocational, further vocational and specialist vocational qualifications.

The polytechnics provide education and training leading to a basic degree specifically targeted at adults. Adults may also study in the basic programmes aimed at young people. Universities and polytechnics offer open teaching corresponding to basic degree studies. Adults may complete grades and modules. Objectives pertaining to liberal education are individually set by each student. Under certain conditions, students may apply for transfer into the university and become a regular student and aim for higher education degrees.

Students can demonstrate their language proficiency in a standardised test irrespective of their former education and how they have acquired the skills. The language tests, which are designed to measure the level of language proficiency of adults, are available in nine languages..

2.2. Participation in ALE

This section is concerned with participation rates, access to programmes, and the motivation and profile of target groups/learners. Please provide up-to date information on participation in ALE activities and indicate trends since 1997 (CONFINTEA V) in the following areas:

2.2.1. Statistical data on participation

a) Provide an overall participation rate (% of population participating in an adult education activity) and difference compared to previous survey(s). Please disaggregate according to gender, educational background and age;

The annual participation in adult education and learning is 1,7 million people of the total population of 5,3 million, About 850.000 people participate in liberal adult education.

The overall participation rate of 18-64-years increased from 48% in 1995 to 54 % in 2000, but decreased in 2006 to 51%.

According to the age the overall participation rate in all age groups, except above 55-years, increased slightly. The changes in the size of the age groups are similar.

The overall participation of women (18-64-years) increased from 53% to 59% and decreased only 1% by 2006. The most significant decrease in the participation was among young women, i.e. 11%. Education and training in connection with work or profession decreased among young women as much as 20%. There was also a decrease of 16% in personnel training.

The participation of men (18-64-years) increased from 43% to 49%, but decreased to 45% by 2006. The participation rate of women was 13% higher than that of men. The participation rate of highly educated increased most, i. e. 9%, especially among those who were older than 55.

According to the educational level, the largest increase in 1995-2000 was among the highly educated, respectively the largest decrease was 5% in 2000-2006.

According to the local development rate the participation in ALE was slightly higher in the more developed areas than in the less developed.

According to the placement in the labour market the employed were the most frequent participants in ALE (60%), while the participation was about half less for of other groups (unemployed 29%, people outside the labour market (34%), The participation in training organized by the employer has increased with 100 000 in 2006 from 1 million in 2000. The labour force increased during this period with about 100 000 people and the amount of unemployed decreased with 50 000.

Studies abroad has decreased from 60 000 in 2000 to 45 000 in 2006.

For more statistical information see appendices 3-5 regarding research on Adult education.

b) Show participation, in specific programmes (possible examples for programmes: literacy/numeracy programmes; health (including HIV prevention) programmes; income generating skills training; programmes addressing special learning needs (e.g. prisoners, migrants, disabled); technical skill training (including ICTs)). Please provide information, if available, on total numbers of participants, disaggregated according to age and gender.

2.2.2. What existing surveys/studies have been undertaken on non-participation and groups that are difficult to reach? Please give main results in terms of who the excluded are, why they are being excluded and what kind of support can be given.

See part 3.1.1.

2.2.3. What existing surveys/studies have been undertaken on learner motivation?

See part 3.1.1.

2.2.4. Which measures have been undertaken to mobilize learners and to increase participation?

There is an agreement with the providers of liberal education for adults to focus on education reflecting the changes in society, for instance language and cultural education for immigrants. This education is steered by information based guidance, which is being implemented in 2005-2008. The information based guidance development is financed through the state budget and tailored for personnel training. Since 2007a training voucher system have been financed through the state budget to improve the possibilities for the providers of adult liberal education to reduce the fees for those population groups that are unrepresented in education and to enhance the guidance. According to the Government Programme the priorities of the folk high schools are defined at local level.

2.2.5. Are specific groups targeted by ALE provision? Which ones?

In the present development plan for education and research specific target groups in adult education and training are: unemployed, inactive people, immigrants, adults with few or poor skills and entrepreneurs in SMEs.

2.2.6. Are there benchmarks in relation to participation in place? If yes, which ones? If not, what would be realistic benchmarks for participation in your context?

In relation to participation the following international benchmarks are undertaken:

- The thematic review on adult education and learning, Finland, background report, 2001.

- Curious Minds (Nord 2001:9) Nordic Adult Education Compared

2.3. Monitoring & evaluating programmes and assessing learning outcomes

Assessing learning outcomes is crucial for any educational undertaking. Measuring the outcomes of adult education is, however, complex as outcomes relate to a wide range of aspects such as personal development, socio-economic and cultural factors and involves both competences and attitudes. For this reason this section

should cover a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation perspective taking into account the programmatic and individual level.

2.3.1. Do you assess the learning outcomes of ALE programmes (national, regional and local community perspective/programme perspective) and learners' achievements (learner perspective)? If so, what methods do you use?

Obligation of development and monitoring of quality of education and training are, in Finland, enacted in the law. In 1999 was put into action a wide renewal of legislation of education. It increased power of decision of education providers and underlined the significance of evaluation. According to legislation providers of education and training must carry out self-evaluations and continually develop their activities.

In Finland, there are two national evaluation councils responsible for the national evaluations on the quality and results of education and training. Higher education evaluation council takes care of evaluation of universities and polytechnics including their adult education. Education evaluation council, for its part, takes care of education and training at secondary level and liberal adult education. Both councils are formally set under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and are appointed for three years at a time. However, their status and activities are so defined that they can function objectively.

The recent assessments regarding adult education and learning are described in part 3.1.1.

Learners achievements are assessed a part from the personal study programmes which are obligatory in adult vocational education since 2006.

2.3.2. What tools and mechanisms are used to monitor and evaluate programmes to ensure good quality?

In 2008 a electronic student feedback system will be introduced in the system of competence based qualifications.

2.3.3. To what extent are the results used for a) legislation, b) policy formulation, and c) programme development?

See part 2.3.1

2.3.4. Are benchmarks in relation to outcomes of ALE in place? In your context, what would be realistic benchmarks related to outcomes?

There is continuing benchmarking as regards adult education and learning in EU, OECD (see part 3.1.1), the Nordic countries.

2.4. Adult educators/facilitators' status and training

This section should elaborate on the human resources available for ALE and describe key initiatives and changes in this regard since 1997 (CONFINTEA V).

2.4.1. What educational qualifications/training are required for adult educators/facilitators? What continuing/in-service training measures are in place?

Initial teacher education

Main providers of initial teacher education in Finland are universities and vocational teacher education colleges operating in conjunction with polytechnics. Teachers' qualification requirements are a) degree in the teaching subject and b) 35 credits in pedagogic studies. One credit is 40 hours of student's work. In addition, adequate vocational education and working experience of at least 3 years on one's own profession is required for vocational teachers. Most qualified teachers have a higher academic (Master's) degree of 160-180 credits.

Qualification requirements for teachers in adult education are the same as for other teachers. Teacher education is funded as a part of university and polytechnics education.

Anticipation of labour and educational needs has become an increasingly important task. Several national and local anticipation projects have been carried out and they have influenced the planning of the volumes of teacher education and training. The number of teaching workforce in Finland is approximately 67 000. A working group set up by the Ministry of Education anticipated in spring 2003 that the total need for teacher education in 2003-2008 will be 25 400, including 9 800 teachers for vocational education and 550 teachers for liberal adult education.

Continuing professional training

On the average, Finnish teachers participate in continuing professional training for 9-15 days a year. Local authorities and other teachers' employers are responsible for teachers' in-service training and its funding, but the state budget also contains an annual appropriation of about € 12 million earmarked for their continuing training in education policy priority areas. Typical topics include the contents of teaching subjects, evaluation and assessment, social issues in education and training, pedagogical use of ICT, on-the-job learning and education and training for heads of educational institutions. Approximately 20 000 teachers (nearly 30 %) participate in continuing training organized from state budgeted funds.

Most teachers in adult education are working in vocational adult education or in liberal adult education. In 2006 there were 3061 teachers in vocational adult education (Opettajat Suomessa 2005, National Board of Education publications 2005). Ministry of Education is planning to increase supply of vocational adult education by 20-30 % in 2003-2010, which will also influence in teacher demand. Vocational adult education centres are the main providers of vocational adult education. In them, 53 % of the teachers are formally qualified. In liberal adult education most teachers are working on hourly charge. Only 20-30 % of the lessons are given by full-time teachers. 70 % of the teachers are formally qualified.

As a result of rapid changes in society, changes in teachers' work, the age structure in the teaching profession and education policy reforms, large input is needed to upgrade teachers' competencies. The Ministry of Education has launched several national development projects to this end. Teachers' professional training has largely focused on competencies relating to adult vocational training, liberal adult education and counselling.

2.4.2. Is adult education considered as a specific profession, and are there higher education institutions providing such qualifications? If yes, please elaborate.

See above, part 2.4.1

2.4.3. Please indicate the proportion of adult educators/facilitators in relation to the overall number of teaching personnel in your country.

It is difficult to estimate the precise amount of adult education teachers, because some of the teachers teach both young and adult students. However, statistics from the Trade Union of Education in Finland - OAJ, statistics describe to some extent the work placement of the teacher. In 2006 the Trade Union of Education in Finland had over 107.000 members, of which two thirds were teaching in basic education and early childhood education. 21% of the teachers were vocational training teachers. The Adult educators trade union had 2.338 members in 2006 i.e. 2% of all teachers and 10 % of the vocational education teachers (lectures at the universities were excluded).

2.4.4. What are the terms of employment and remuneration in ALE?

In 2006 almost 19% or 440 persons of the adult educators, who were members of the Adult educators trade union were unemployed. In 2005 the corresponding share was 12%. Unemployment among other vocational education teachers, a part from teachers at the universities has been around 3-5%. There are variations regarding trade union membership among teachers of different education levels. During the summer the

employment rates are higher than during other seasons, this probably is the situation of many adult education teachers.

3. Research, Innovation and Good Practice

3.1. Research studies in the field of adult learning

This section should reflect the latest research developments in the field of ALE:

3.1.1. Which key studies in adult education have been undertaken in your country recently (within last five years)?

3.1.2. What were the major questions addressed and prompted by these studies?

3.1.3. What are the key findings?

3.1.4. To what extent did these findings inform policies and practice? How did they influence practice? Please, give examples.

Since 1997 two international surveys has been undertaken:

a) Finland participated in the Thematic Review on Adult Education of OECD, which was carried out in February 2001. The Background Report was submitted in April 2001 and the Country Note in October 2001. For more information:

<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/55/26/2541579.pdf>

<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/23/3/2697889.pdf>

b) Finland participated in the Second International Adult Literacy Survey (SIALS), which was carried out during 1997-2000.

The main conclusion from these two surveys was that Finland need to emphasizes on equality of adult education, This conclusion has influenced the policy work in the field of vocational adult education and learning.

During the last five years the following studies are of relevance for the development of the adult education policy in Finland:

In 2007 the Education Evaluation Council, commissioned by the Ministry of Education, carried out a two step evaluation regarding a) the possibilities of the adult population to participate in vocational education and training and b) the functioning and the correspondence of vocational upper secondary education to the labour market regarding the competence - based system for vocational qualification. In 2007 the Education Evaluation Council also submitted to other evaluations regarding adult education and training: the evaluation on apprenticeship training and the regional impact of vocational upper secondary education and an evaluation on Adult liberal education: impact and information based guidance.

Since 2004 the Statistical Yearbook of Adult education has been published in co-operation with the Ministry of Education and the National Board of Education. The aim of the publication is to provide information on the provision, participation and financing and results of adult education. The book is aimed at politicians and adult education providers, researchers and developers, as well as the adult education administration.

3.2. Innovations and examples of good practice

Which innovations and/or exemplary programmes in ALE have been developed since 1997 (CONFINTEA V) that make a significant difference in your country and could be instructive for other countries, with regard to

3.2.1. Policy formulation, financing, teaching/learning methods?

Competence-based qualifications for adults

The system of competence-based qualifications offers the adult learner a flexible way to renew and maintain the vocational skills. In competence-based qualifications, vocational skills are demonstrated through competence tests, regardless of whether the skills have been acquired through work experience, studies or other activities.

For more information, see part 2.1.1.

The Noste programme

In 2003 the Ministry of Education launched a programme for raising the level of education and training among the adult population in Finland in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and social partners. The Finnish acronym for the programme is Noste.

The aim of the Programme, which will be implemented from 2003 to 2009, is to improve poorly trained adults' career prospects and satisfaction at work, to relieve the labour shortages due to the exit of the large post-war age groups from the labour market and to raise the employment rate. The education and training offered within the scope of the Noste Programme are mainly intended for working adults aged between 30 and 59 who have no post-compulsory qualifications. The Programme can also be used to support people in completing their basic education. This form of action is intended for the age bracket 25 - 59. There are some 350 000 Finns covered by the Noste Programme.

The means for achieving the objectives are

- to encourage and support the target group in applying for education and training by means of information and other outreach advisory services
- to improve their chances of gaining entry to ordinary publicly financed vocational training
- to increase intakes in vocational programmes and 'computer driving licence' courses financed from other special funding
- to increase provision geared to untrained adults in general and vocational adult education financed from the Noste appropriation.

The aim is that the participants study for vocational qualifications or parts of qualifications. It is also possible to take a competence-based qualification, which is a flexible scheme geared to adults. Adults planning to pursue further studies often have a great deal of experiential knowledge from their work careers. This is why they do not need to start from scratch but can build their formal training on their prior knowledge and skills.

In Noste training there are no course fees. The mature student only pays for the examination fee, which is € 50.50. There are no costs for the employer.

The Noste Programme also offers extra support for those who need it. Since it may be years or decades since the participant studied last, the starting threshold may be high. Students can also improve their learning skills by studying auxiliary subjects, such as languages, information technology or mathematics. Help is also available for reading and writing difficulties.

For the purposes of the Noste programme, education providers have joined forces in different parts of Finland. These training pools unite altogether about 600 partners: vocational adult education centres, vocational institutes, adult education centres, folk high schools, upper secondary schools, apprenticeship training centres, business centres, associations and job centres.

The programme is implemented in close cooperation with the social partners. This supports and promotes practical implementation at the workplace and in work communities. This multi-level cooperation challenges training providers to create new forms and procedures.

The 2007 state budget included an appropriation of € 35 million for the Noste Programme. This pays training for some 10 500 mature students within the Programme.

There are outreach information and guidance services for encouraging and enabling the target group to apply for ordinary publicly funded training.

The Noste Programme is intended as a significant social innovation for gradually upgrading poorly trained adults' chances in the labour market. Important forms of action are outreach services, studies alongside work, and

regional cooperation between education and training providers, including advisory and guidance services. Closely associated with the implementation of the Noste programme is research, which will provide stimuli and ideas for further implementation.

The results of the programme are positive, although the target of 28 600 participants has not been reached. By January 2007 the programme had 16 700 participants, which is 58% of the estimated participant rate. However, the Government considers in its' Educational policy report to the Parliament that the Noste programme has been the most important measure for enhancing equality in adult education and training. Also in the future the provision of education for people with poor education and training has to be taken care of.

3.2.2. Mobilization of learners, involvement of learners in programme design, emergence of learners as partners?

Personal study plans

The Adult Vocational Education Decree requires that personal study plans (later referred to as PSP) be drawn up for students. This obligation was established to secure the opportunities for flexible and individual studies for adults. The PSP pays attention to earlier work experience and vocational skills acquired through studies. In practice, the PSP has been applied in various ways: it may have meant the recognition of earlier learning in the form of compensation, or it has been extensively applied by integrating individual needs and adults' interests into the teaching content of education. The aim of this is to combine the earlier competence and interest with the needs of working life and, at a more general level, society and skill requirements.

The PSP system is regarded as successful when "students' earlier studies and work experience is recognised and the individual starting level, schedule for studies, the content and methods of studies, evaluation methods and the duration of training are determined from this basis." (according to Kinnala 1996 Germo et. al.).

The evaluation of pedagogic aspects of participation in further vocational training was carried out by the National Board of Education in 1997 and 1998. The report on the evaluation was compiled by Remes & Yrjölä, 1998. According to the report, the PSP had been drawn up for only one third of the people being evaluated.

Geramo et. al. (1998) have studied the impact of PSP in practice and studied ways of developing the drawing up and use of PSPs. They suggest that the underlying danger lies in the fact that individualised PSPs will prove a burden unless they are properly planned or if the education provider lacks the adequate skills. In order that we could realistically think that teachers are able to design individual study paths which respond to the needs of an ever more complex society, teachers must have enough time for designing PSPs and receive enough support and training for the designing process.

Geramo et. al. (1998, 43-45) point out that if not enough attention is paid to drawing up the PSP, the students are pushed into informal studies without any support. Individualisation of studies is not only an administrative obligation prescribed by legislation, but, in educational institutions, activities may be guided by teaching method routines and short-term economic objectives. Money and time must be invested in PSP design.

The evaluation of the pedagogic aspects in further vocational training (Remes & Yrjölä 1998) reflects the impact of the traditional teaching culture. Approximately 50% of the students participating in further vocational training have not actually influenced their own study plans. (Thematic review of adult learning, Finland, Country note, Oecd 2001)

In 2006 the use of personal study programmes was made obligatory in competence-based learning.

Adult Learners week

Since 1998, Finland has organised an Adult Learners' Week every autumn. This event aims to motivate adults to learn by raising the public profile of teachers, organisations and students in adult education. The theme of the 2007 Adult Learners' Week was "gaining a good life by learning"

3.2.3. Why are the above listed examples considered as innovations in your country?

See 3.2.1 and 3.2.2.

4. Adult Literacy

4.1. How is literacy defined in your country? Have there been any changes since 1997 (CONFINTEA V)? Please explain.

Finland participated in the Second International Adult Literacy Survey (SIALS), which was implemented during 1997-2007. The Finnish data for the survey were collected in the spring of 1998. The range of adults' literacy was assessed in three domains according to the contents of tasks and reading materials: in prose literacy, document literacy and quantitative literacy.

Functional literacy of Finnish population aged 16 – 65, % in 1998

	Prose literacy	Document literacy	Quantitative literacy
Level 1	10	13	11
Level 2	26	24	27
Level 3	41	38	42
Level 4/5	22	25	20

Source: OECD 2000

Level of functional literacy is the better the higher is the value of level.

According to the survey the distribution of literacy skills show that there are great variations in adults' literacy levels both nationally and internationally. Among adult readers there are very good readers as well as those whose literacy level is inadequate for the purposes of lifelong learning. The majority of the Finnish adult population, about two thirds, are proficient readers across different domains, meeting the literacy requirements of the knowledge society. Approximately 20 per cent even reach the highest performance level (4/5), in other words the literacy level typical of expert task of the knowledge society. However a third of adult Finns belong to the group who are literate in the traditional sense but whose performance level remains rather low (Level 1 and 2), failing to meet the requirements of the knowledge society. Some ten per cent of the adult population remained at the lowest level (Level 1) for the different domains.

On the prose scale adult Finns proved top-level readers internationally. Also on the document scale they achieved a high international standard, whereas their quantitative literacy skills were only average, internationally speaking (Lukutaito työssä ja arjessa, OECD 2000).

4.2. Which new policies have been adopted and implemented?

The aim of the Government's migration programme is to promote work-related immigration with due regard to the demographic trends in Finland and within the EU, and the related need for labour. The points of action included in the immigration policy programme will be implemented and an action programme for work related immigration prepared. Integration will be promoted by increasing language training, etc. including literacy training

The steering system of adult liberal education will ensure that a sufficient share of liberal adult education will be directed to education that supports the linguistic skills of immigrants and their integration into society.

4.3. Please give examples of effective practice and innovative literacy programmes.

According to the Finnish data in the Second International Adult Literacy Survey (SIALS) referred to in chapter 4.2 the extent of initial formal education has proved to be the most important predictor of the level of adults' literacy skills both nationally and internationally. The longer the formal education attained, the higher the performance level in the literacy test. This relationship was strong and very consistent also in Finland. The effect of the formal education is further enhanced by the respondent's parents' educational background. Both father's

and mother's educational background had a strong correlation with their children's literacy level even as adults (Lukutaito työssä ja arjessa, OECD 2000).

The Noste programme offers support for adults with reading and writing difficulties (see part 3.2.1).

4.4. Please illustrate how policies and programmes focus on gender. Describe the importance given to women and other target groups.

According to the Finnish data in the Second International Adult Literacy Survey (SIALS) referred to in chapter 4.2 gender-based differences in literacy levels proved fairly small in Finland, although women had a slight advantage in prose literacy while the opposite was true for quantitative literacy. As for the ability to use various document, the differences remained negligible. From the international perspective the situation in Finland speaks of great equality (Lukutaito työssä ja arjessa, OECD 2000).

4.5. To what extent do policies and programmes aim at building literate environments? What progress could be achieved?

According to the Government programme a high level of education and high-quality, free-of-charge education are the cornerstones of the Finnish welfare state. The Government will guarantee equal opportunities to high-quality education and training from early childhood to higher education throughout the country. The objective is to increase the population's educational and competence level close towards the highest level in the world. Adult education and training will support the participation of citizens in society and the labour market.

5. Expectations of CONFINTEA VI and future perspectives for ALE

This section should focus on your country's principal expectations of CONFINTEA VI and on the main challenges that ALE has to address in your country in the future.

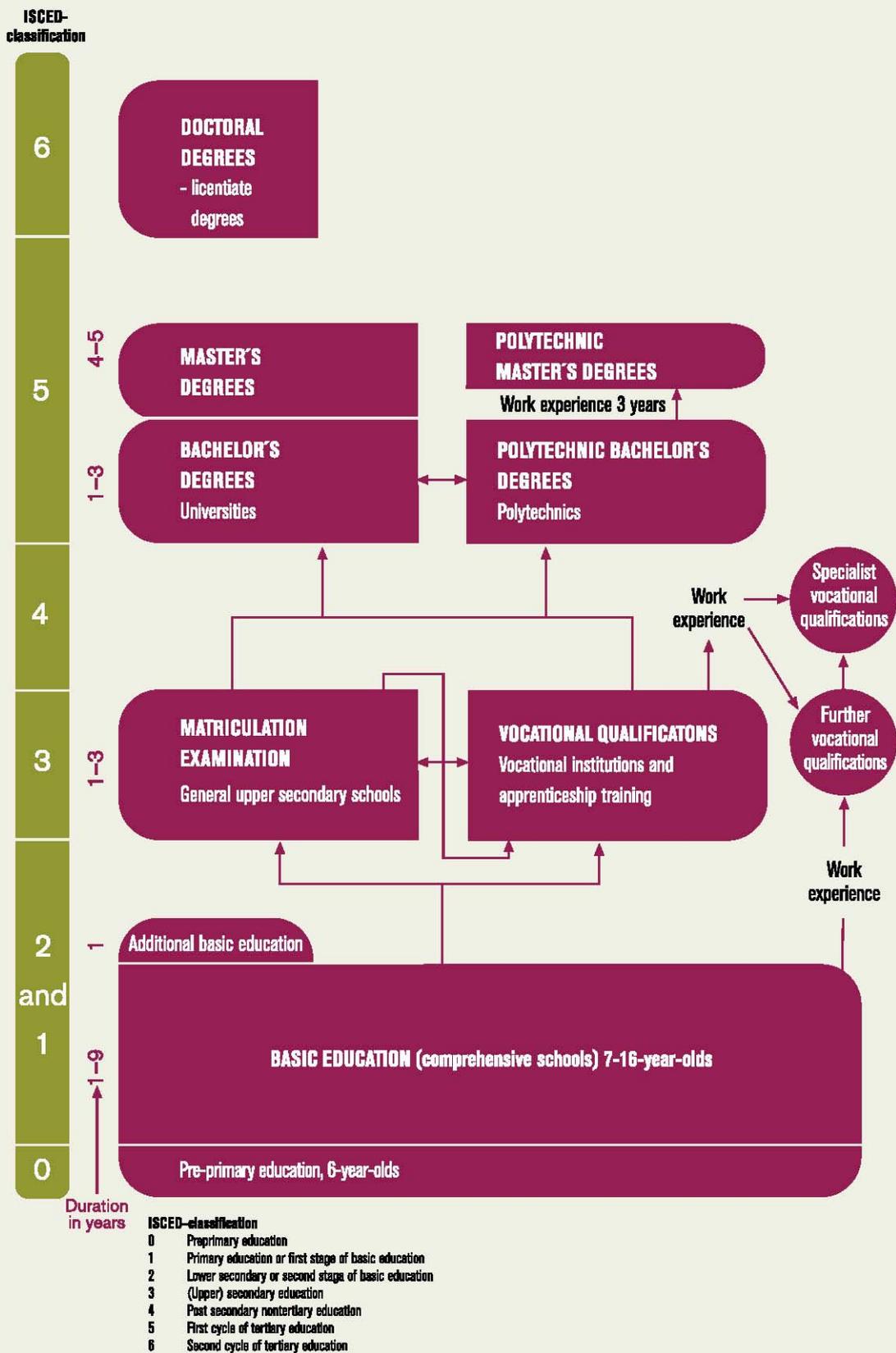
5.1. What outcomes do you expect from CONFINTEA VI?

Finland expect to learn about best practises in other countries regarding ALE.

5.2. Please list the main issues that adult education will have to address and describe future perspectives for the development of policies and practices in adult education and adult learning.

The future challenges of adult education and learning relate to the overall reform of vocational adult education and training which aims at streamlining the fragmentary administration, financing, benefits and training supply and the development programme of liberal adult education (see part 1.1.1).

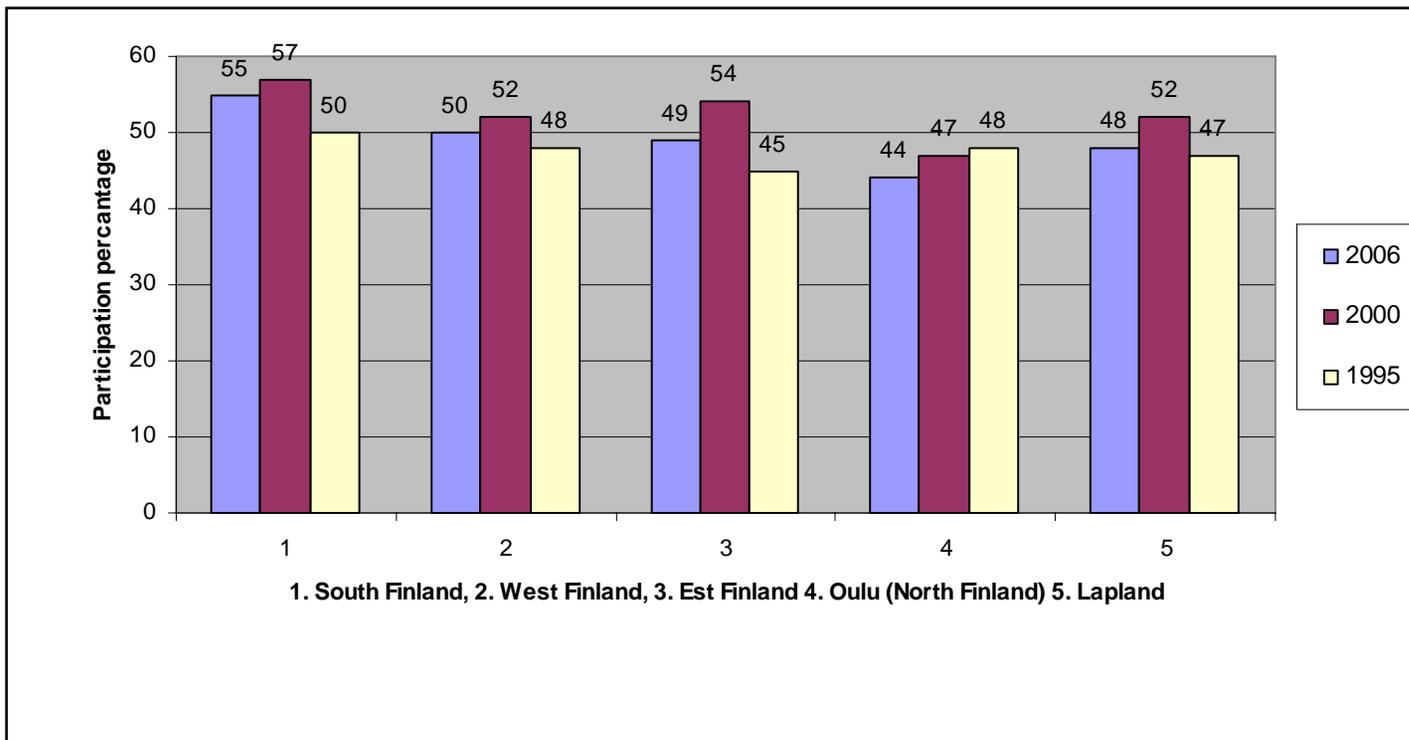
THE FINNISH EDUCATION SYSTEM



<i>Adult education leading to a basic degree and professional courses</i>												
State	3.6	33.1	40.9	49.3	59.0	63.8	67.9	69.1	70.1	70.1	67.6	70.2
Municipalities	2.7	25.1	30.9	37.2	44.6	84.6	90.0	91.6	92.9	92.9	89.6	97.3
Total	6.3	58.2	71.8	86.4	103.6	148.4	157.9	160.7	163.0	163.0	157.2	167.5
Open polytechnic	0.0	0.5	1.3	1.3	2.5	2.5	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2
Universities												
Basic funding targeted at adult population	25.5	158.8	165.2	0.2	0.2	3	3	3	3	2.7	3.1	3.1
Open university	1.7	10.1	10.1	10.1	12.6	13	13	13	13	13	13	13
Lowering the prices for continuing education	0.4	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.4	1.5	5	0.8	0.5	0.4	0.4	1.1
Specialised vocational institutions	2.0	11.4	11.6	11.9	12.1	14.6	15.7	17	17.4	17.9	18	18.9
Liberal education												
Adult education centres	9.6	60.0	61.4	62.7	66.9	72	75.1	72.3	76.7	78.1	79.6	84.8
Folk high schools	10.7	64.8	43.7	44.6	45.1	44	44.1	45.3	45.6	46.8	47.3	48.9
Study centres	1.7	10.4	10.8	11.1	11.4	12.1	12.9	12.3	13.2	13.6	14.8	15
Summer universities	0.2	1.5	2.0	2.7	2.9	3.5	4.1	3.9	4.4	4.5	4.5	4.8
Physical education centres	2.6	18.3	13.1	13.3	13.6	14.6	15.5	15.5	16.6	16.7	17.1	18.6
Liberal education total	24.9	155.1	131.0	134.4	139.9	134.1	138.8	137	143.3	146.1	148.5	157.1
Public funding (State and municipalities); total	0.1	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.8	640.5	698.1	696.6	718.4	740.2	736.5	789.1
State subsidies	0.1	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.6	1.3	1.2	2	2	2	1	1

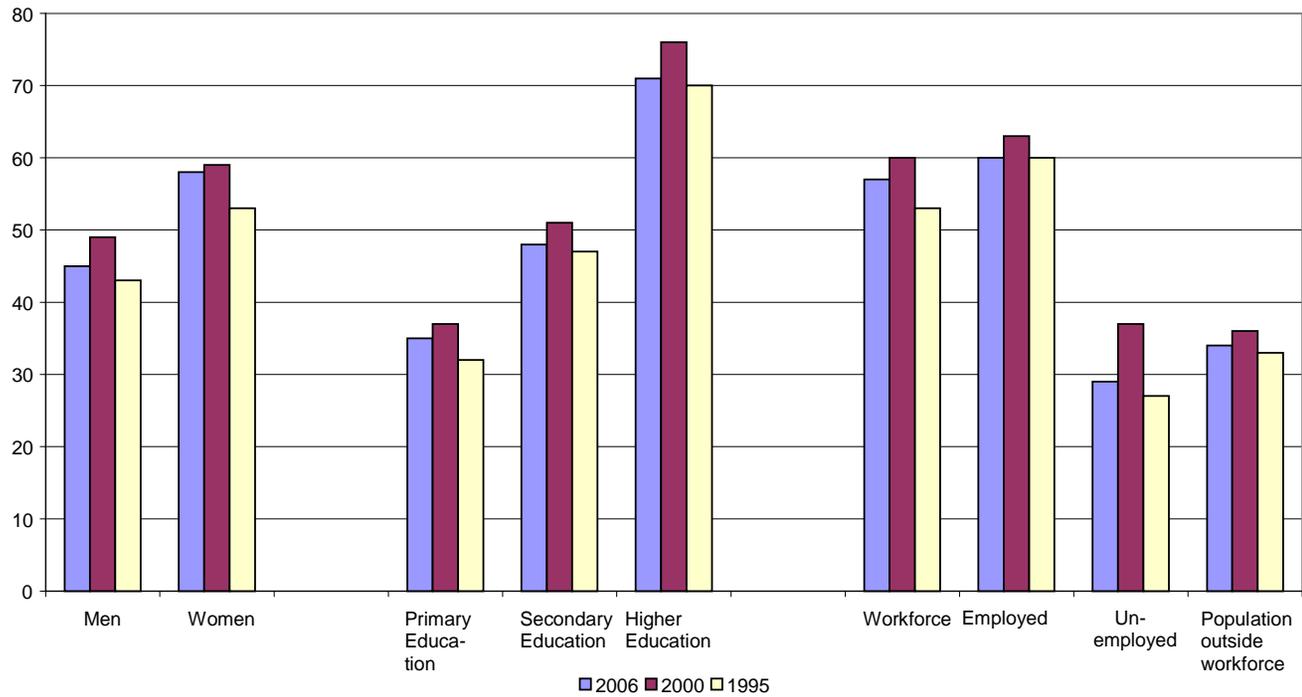
Research on Adult Education; advance information Statistics Finland

Participation in Adult Education



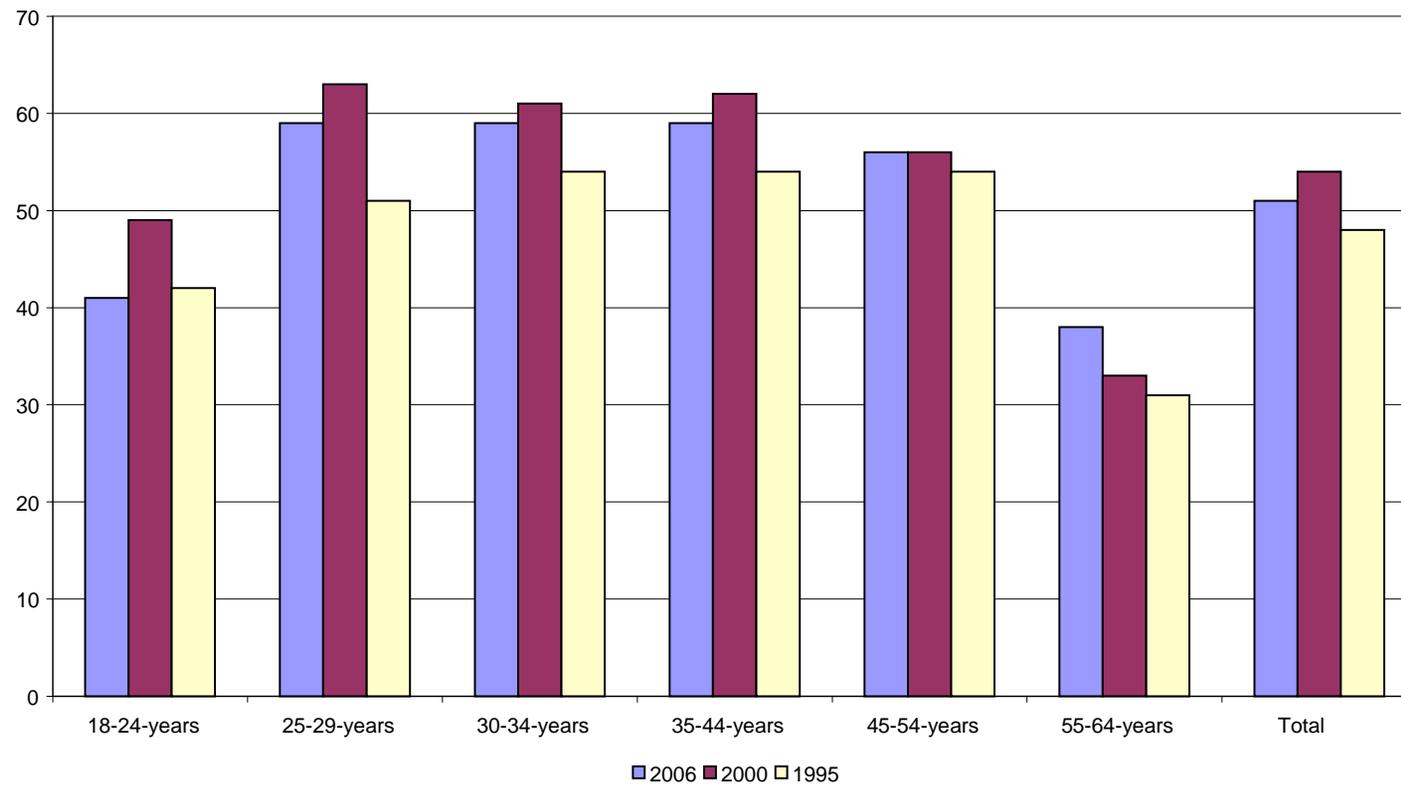
	year 2006	year. 2006 (%)	Year 2000 (%)	year1995 (%)
Total	1 697 949	51	54	48

Participation in Adult Education



source: Statistics Finland

Participation in Adult Education: age, year,% of the population



source: Statistics Finland