

Comparative Analysis of Central Asian Countries' Policies on Adult Learning and Education (ALE) as a basis for strategic intervention

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First Draft Synthesis Report 18. 7. 2020

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Executive Summary

This Synthesis Report draws together main themes and issues in locally sourced consultant reports on each of the three countries that comprise the Central Asia (CA) sub-region. The countries' situation, conditions and experience have much in common. They are all recently formed independent Republics: neighbours far from the sea with no coastlines; but crossroads at the heart of the Euro-Asian land mass formerly part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Russian is still a common language of governance and business. Each has geographically remote hard-to-access provinces where rural living and mountainous conditions make for poverty. Most modern resources are concentrated in the capital cities. Many citizens, especially in these more distant provinces, speak the local language rather than either Russian or English. After turbulence following dismantlement of the USSR the sub-region has enjoyed relative stability, compared with more troubled areas to the South and East. Good relations between these three and with other CA countries make collaboration possible.

Uzbekistan has a larger population than Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan combined. In other respects they are demographically similar, with similar opportunities and trends. The sub-region enjoys the benefit of some economic growth measured by Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The countries have quite high birth-rates, young populations and predicted demographic growth in coming years. There is a significant Moslem population but no report of serious religious or ethnic tension. A main concern is the low numbers of well qualified and formally skilled economically active people, yet high unemployment, and many people outside the formal economy. There is high economically driven outward migration, with remittances sent home. Changing policies and troubles in the countries to which migration occurs tend to increase return-home numbers. Some bring the benefit of different skills and experience, and maybe accredited qualifications. Retired or third age numbers are currently low but will rise steadily as professional and otherwise skilled people approach retirement age, adding to the economically inactive young and unemployed numbers.

In policy terms, the dominant national educational concern from secondary school level up is to increase the quality, relevance, and growth in numbers of youth and young adults qualified to take employment. This has assisted the campaigning concern of Central Asian and other advisers and policy-makers to give priority to adult learning and education (ALE) generally; and to have lifelong learning (LLL) recognised and adopted as an all-embracing concept infusing all kinds and levels of education: formal pre-school, schooling and further and higher post-secondary education, and a wider ambition including supported and real-world learning in work and community settings, by formal, non-formal and informal means. Each country has seen progress at this conceptual level; but formal instructional schooling remains the dominant model in most people's as well as administrators' minds. Reform and enrichment of learning and instruction, and of the curriculum itself, are needed. So is recognition that relevant high-quality learning is needed for the economy and society, and may be best gained by 'non-formal' teaching-learning methods, and in collaboration with employers at and through work.

This perceptual and cultural shift is slow, but progress has been made in crucial aspects of government policy, law and practice. Essential governance strategies favouring laws, policies and resources for ALE are gradually being put into effect; but resources specifically for ALE remain very small, even as the education budget grows. Heavy bureaucratic tradition slows implementation.

Practical arrangements are slow to be approved and started. There is growing recognition that cross-sectoral partnership is essential, with important roles for employers, communities, and regular education facilities adapted to serve adult returners outside their regular age strata. The notion of multi-purpose facilities – Community Learning Centres (CLCs) under this or some other name – is also growing, but needs further support. At meso to micro levels of technical management and adoption, much remains to be done. The qualifications framework and capacity to collect and use statistical data for assessment, appraisal and quality enhancement make slow progress and need more energy injected. The workforce to guide, provide and teach ALE is small and underqualified; efforts in all three countries to implement Curriculum globALE may lead to the recognition of the andragogue as a profession; bigger programmes of staff training leading into employment are needed.

As each country aspires to become a knowledge-based economy, and often also a well-functioning democratic society, the power and relevance of advanced Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) is being seen and given priority, promising to reduce the inequality of rural remoteness, old-fashioned instructional practices, and passive rote learning ill-suited to developing adaptive thinking citizens. The power of and necessity for new ICT has acquired urgency in this year of pandemic and 'lockdown'. Properly exploited, it can assist many technical challenges, ranging from data collection and useful analysis of these data, to recognition, validation and accreditation (RVA) of knowledge and skills needed to fill new higher skill employment. It can also assist in facilitating partnership, and building bridges across different places and socio-economic sectors.

Within each country, campaigning and awareness-raising is needed. Traditional ways and wisdom in diverse communities and traditions need combining with what new technology can provide; and suitable tactics as well as strategies adopted to make the nominal adoption of terms and concepts like ALE and LLL work in reality. It is recognised that people must be motivated to perceive that wider learning beyond school walls is essential, while adapting what is there to be more functional in multipurpose ways. There is openness to learning from others at all levels, to exchange experience and to make use of advice and experience from other countries. The spirit of hope for a better future, and belief that this is possible, facilitates building the next phase of development, and moving towards attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through the 2020s, to which each CA nation has committed itself.

Each of the country studies has developed a set of recommendations for stakeholders and partners of DVV International (DVVI) in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, to strengthen ALE in the coming years. The DVVI Country Offices will respond and negotiate priorities in respect to the next phase during the years 2021 – 2023 within the cooperation with BMZ, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. On the macro level there are opportunities for partners from all three countries to work together, and the DVVI Regional Office will look out for priority areas favouring regional perspectives on implementation.

Recommendations

In this respect, our comparative analysis and synthesis report concludes by selecting nine recommendations for consideration and perhaps action at sub-regional level:

- Macro level ALE with its important requirements for policy, legislation and financing is in different stages of development in the CA countries Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. There is however growing acceptance that ALE as a sub-sector of the education system needs structural support embedded in a LLL perspective. It is therefore suggested that in line with special requirements the DVVI Regional Office identified by the Country Offices creates a mechanism for peer consultation and review of representatives of all three countries from Government, Parliament, Professional Institutes, and Civil Society for further strengthening macro level ALE in acts, laws, regulations and budgets.
- The CONFINTEA process will provide opportunities for cooperation and support to ALE development through the status of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan as UNESCO Member States. This opportunity should be taken. All three countries will be invited to prepare national reports in 2020, join the regional CONFINTEA VII Pre-conferences in 2021, and take part in the global event in Morocco in 2022. National Commissions of UNESCO will play a key role. They should therefore be contacted and lobbied early. The UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning (UIL) together with DVVI is creating materials and opportunities for active engagement of civil society throughout. It is recommended that a regional CA initiative actively supports this process.
- The SDG agenda also provides opportunities to support the development of LLL in its full understanding, and with a strong ALE component. The importance of the Education Goal 4 for achieving all the other sixteen SDG Goals should be taken up in awareness-raising materials and campaigns. CA Governments have included the SDG requirements in a number of regulations and processes across ministerial portfolios which are coming under review through monitoring and evaluation (M&E) regularly. Such inter-sectoral approaches can help in bringing ALE and LLL to wider attention. Here the three countries can learn from one another. Another regional CA initiative should therefore be considered, or combining and integrating this with the CONFINTEA process.
- The absence of data on ALE and the lack of statistical records is a running thread through the country reports. Some information may be available for formal adult and continuing professional education; much less is on record for non-formal ALE. The informal learning opportunities may not even be recognized. This is a reality much beyond CA states; even CONFINTEA stocktaking in respect of such data is often mere guesstimates. This keeps the ALE sub-sector in a state of uncertainty and vagueness. The DVVI Regional Office together with the Country Offices could try to build and follow-up on current AES (Adult Education Survey) research efforts and the EMIS (Education Management Information System) introduced by UNESCO to monitor the Education Goal of the SDG. ALE statistics should become as normal and regular as those for schools or universities.
- The three country studies all point to the importance of the recognition, validation and accreditation (RVA) of prior learning in the variety of formal, non-formal and informal opportunities: inside the education system as well as in community, cultural, economic, health and social and other spheres of life and development. These RVA processes have important implications for ALE at macro, meso and micro levels. They reach into the

classification of the professions, and the respective national qualification frameworks. Here again, a regional exchange, maybe through the on-line learning platform, and regional training, may be welcome initiatives.

- The country reports float ideas and make suggestions about whether some sort of Governing Council or Consultation Committee related to ALE and / or LLL would be a mechanism to further strengthen the sub-sector. If it were a LLL Council participation would need to reach into all areas of the education system; and to inform and raise awareness, through a biographical lens - from the cradle to the grave - and an institutional lens - from kindergarten via schools and colleges and on through adult education centres . An ALE Committee might be smaller, but would still need an inter-sectoral approach with representatives of all of training programs providers included. Information and communication media could play an important support role.
- Digitalization will create major challenges and opportunities for enlarging and deepening regional cooperation in ALE and LLL. It could move towards a sub-regional learning platform, with exchange of experiences in policy, legislation and financing; the teaching materials of the Curriculum globALE; with diverse examples of professionalization and institutionalization of CLC documented and up-loaded for partners in the CA countries. This would also strengthen the capacity of macro, meso and micro levels to support one another.
- There may be growing opportunities for the DVVI Regional Office to share examples and experiences of good practices within CA countries and beyond, contributing to an emerging learning region. One possibility is the development of Samarkand towards a Learning City, with all the requirements to become a member of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC), or of the PASCAL Learning City Network. This could further deepen the understanding of ALE and LLL, with its perspectives from the personal level towards community engagement and orientation globally.
- All ALE is related at macro level to national, regional and global developments. It is recommended that ways and means be sought to further strengthen cooperation between Intergovernmental Organisations (IGOs) and International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) which are well represented at regional level through the UNESCO Almaty Office and the Asia South Pacific Adult and Basic Education Association (ASPBAE) with its CA Executive Council Member. The DVVI Regional Office can have an important facilitating role by using the CONFINTEA and SDG processes, at the same time expanding the networking and partnership with other important players and stakeholders, including development cooperation and funding agencies.

The Consultants hope that these recommendations are sufficiently clear to help strengthen the regional perspective of this Central Asia Sub-region part of the DVV International Asia programme. It is further hoped that they can find their way into the proposal to BMZ and the planning and implementation for the years 2021 – 2023. Some may even be supportive for joint projects and additional funding opportunities tried out with in-country and regional partnerships.

In addition, many other recommendations could be made at country level. They are identifiable throughout the text which follows, together with the tactical question how most successfully to move such a multifaceted and pressing agenda forward. Rather than itemise these we advise a consultative process in each country to choose the next steps and thus ensure commitment, while bearing in mind the tactical points with which Part III concludes.

Part I Introduction and Country backgrounds

This Report to DVVI was contracted just before the coronavirus COVID-19 became a global pandemic and closed down or severely hampered activities worldwide. The 'lockdown' affected Germany itself, and the countries of CA which have benefitted from almost twenty years of collaboration and development support from DVVI. These are Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. The schedule for this review work was set back by several weeks, and the prohibited modes of inquiry and data collection, especially travel for and group consultative participation in the study, limited the country experts mainly to desk review and conversation at a distance.

This synthesis makes no attempt to reproduce or summarise the wealth of detail contained in each country review: about the framework conditions enabling and hampering development in that country; or the institutional and technical arrangements, regulations, resources and progress in carrying out plans and policies, in each case. The three published reviews are available to consult for all these aspects. They include information on qualification frameworks, management and coordination within government departments and across non-government private and civic institutions, and through levels from national to local; assessment of prior learning across non-formal and informal learning; data collection; evaluation monitoring and quality enhancement and support, e.g. for staffing the sector as well as its finances and resource allocation.

The three countries are each now committed to UN-led development planning to implement the SDGs which run from 2015 to 2030. Each country was contracted to prepare a country report on ALE for UNESCO in the context of CONFINTEA VI in 2007, and will be again in 2020 to prepare for CONFINTEA VII. Their respective national strategic planning and policy-making run into the current decade and look towards 2030. The SDG timeframe is useful for this synthesis, and for recommendations for ongoing collaboration with and support to each of the countries and the CA sub-region, of which they constitute one part.

There are significant differences between the three countries, most obviously in size. Uzbekistan's 34 million people are more than double the approximately 6.5 million in Kyrgyzstan and 9.5 million in Tajikistan combined. Their recent history in the context of dissolution of the USSR also differs enough to be significant for rate of change in the education systems and ALE.

However, they also have much in common in geographical and other senses. They are all landlocked, even to being two removes from any ocean coastline. They share serious problems of difficult access and significant economic and broader socio-cultural disadvantage by virtue of topography, with many resources and opportunities being located in the capital city. There are linguistic challenges, with much other than traditional and rural knowledge, skill and job opportunities being out of rural reach. The main common and business language over recent decades is Russian, and much business

continues to be in Russian, including in the countries' work for this review. In the more remote provinces many people do not speak Russian, and no English. Finally, along with the pandemic crisis global politics lurk in the new tensions between the major nations and world regions. While not within the remit of this review, they provide further uncertainty and a possible check on long-term strategic planning for all sectors.

The profiles of the three populations also differ from those of modern wealthy societies, with very young populations and relatively few older or 'third age' numbers above the normal 'retirement age' of wage-based economies. Each government has plans to modernise, value-add or industrialise, and become a 'knowledge economy'. The priority in educational policy and resource allocation has been and in practice still largely remains with initial schooling, from kindergarten or pre-school through primary and secondary cycles. ALE is peripheral to the quest for a literate and well-schooled population of new citizens who are able to contribute to the changing economy. There has till recently been little awareness or tradition to do with the newer concepts of participatory and individualised learning, although school education itself is seen as a high government priority.

Where post-compulsory age education comes in is in skill preparation and vocational training. In the main, post-secondary education has meant Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). Recognising, advocating, and taking policies towards and into education for adults, and from TVET towards ALE in any significant concept shift to the broader, longer term and more visionary frame of LLL has now reached the 'drawing board' stage. But less action has followed, even with new laws and regulations as well as policy principles in terms of spend and action. Given the general shift to new hi-tech IT-based industry beyond simple value-adding to primary industrial production from farm or mine, a major challenge to the TVET-focused approach to educational development is the changing labour market, and the new skills needed for modern employment.

Thus ALE and LLL policies can only move forward effectively as understanding of the new demands of the labour market grows, and influences curriculum. Low numbers of highly skilled people and the rapid ageing of the well-skilled element lead to high long-term or seasonal emigration. Remittances play a part in the national economies. With a global crisis like COVID-19, return migration adds to a crisis of unemployment, even while it brings in new knowledge and skills from other countries. Even with very capable governance and means of implementing policy, high youth, female and general unemployment represent a continuing and ever-rising challenge. Thus an enabling environment barely exists, even in the more fortunate and forward-looking policy areas of each different country.

Part II Framework Conditions for Adult Learning and Education (ALE)

1. An enabling environment

a. ALE in governmental strategies at macro, meso and micro level

At a global macro level, the CA environment as it affects ALE and the more encompassing and longer vision concept and policy guide of LLL is mainly favourable. Each of the three countries seems to have a sense of independent identity, pride and some confidence in its future, based on the still recent dissolution of the USSR and national independence.

The histories of the past 30 years have been chequered. They differ between countries; but all have enjoyed growth in GDP, with which goes the recognised need to modernise, and for a more trained and well qualified of its people; and so a keen inclination to support at least school-age and post-school TVET.

The macro geopolitical situation with powerful and at times belligerent forces vying for power puts CA somewhat at a world crossroads. European influence is stronger than in the three previous decades; US confrontation with its old rival Russia and a newly more expansionist 'belt and road' China are lurking realities. This does not however appear to influence the CA environment so far as this study is concerned. On the positive side many foreign institutions, governmental like the European Union (EU) and non-governmental, notable among them DVVI, provide material support and also access to ways of seeing, governing and doing things that encourage learning from others both within and beyond CA.

The wider exposure of the sub-region and its country members over recent decades to ideas, arrangements and practices in other regions of the world, added to what was learned and developed during the USSR years, makes for a better informed and enabling environment to evolve and try different approaches. DVVI is one significant agency in enabling this. Specifically, the most recent decades have exposed the sub-region: to ambitious and visionary ideas for LLL and a learning society; to different governance strategies valuing devolution and diversity of arrangements with enhanced stress on participatory and active citizenship; on ideas for a less segmental approach to the different age-levels of education and different styles from very formal to very informal instruction and learning; to practical technical ways of data collection, recognition of attainment, and evaluation of outcomes; and also to the need for education and training more allied to the needs above all of the labour market, and the skills and attitudes relevant to national economic innovation and progress. This last influence and tendency includes a wish for more efficient, focused, evidence-based direction, data collection, assessment and evaluation, flowing into law-making and resource allocation.

The early flowering of LLL and a humane knowledge society from the late sixties and early seventies influenced by UNESCO and OECD reports as key 'milestone' events may have won little attention. But from the nineties the LLL surge (e.g. International Year of LLL in 1996) was felt, with its sharper focus on TVET – along with stronger data collection, indicators and targets, assessment and impact analyses, all intended to refocus priorities and stiffen capacity to manage and direct. This tendency to draw the 'education' and 'economic and employment' sectors closer together, and UN-based commitments such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) from 2000-2015 followed by the 2015-2030 SDGs, constituted a framework for governance in all three countries.

b. Governance for ALE - policy, legislation, financing

At national level and in a more formal political and legislative sense, there was significant if varying speed and timing of governance action, to take hold of at least work-related training for young people and also adults in the form of TVET, with changes to existing secondary as well as post-secondary policies and support. There was growing recognition that changing demography as well as technology and the labour market required this.

This awareness has increasingly extended to the whole working-age population, most of which in each country is ill-prepared for the new IT and advanced knowledge-based world of production, distribution and consumption. There is net outward migration as adult age workers, with remittances sent home. Some return home and bring with them skills and experience, perhaps also with qualifications, for which there is a home labour market demand – so a need for recognition of de facto qualifications wherever and however obtained.

Forces of this kind, inflow of different knowledge about innovation, and consultancy about governance and management, have changed the national policy environments: in the sense that there are many new laws, regulations, prime and other ministerial policy statements, which bring adults' training, skills acquisition and recognition into government pronouncements, and then formal laws and instruments. These are usually couched in the modern language of ALE and LLL, and at a lower level of credit recognition, non-formal and informal as well as formal education, and (lifelong) learning as well as education and training.

In a formal sense, therefore, there is now a sound basis in policy thought and writing, and a good legislative base, for ALE. There are two main weaknesses. Most obviously, resources flowing to this area of work are miniscule within State education sector budgets, with their administration channelled through one or more departmental or section units of Education, Labour or Employment portfolios.

No less serious, the formal institution and then the practical adoption of such laws and regulations is slow, highly bureaucratic, and in some areas and for some executive units and partners disabling. In summary, each country is making or has made crucial policy decisions followed by laws and rules, with in-principle allocations of executive responsibility. A year to two may pass between concept adoption and pronouncement, and the next step towards enactment.

Allocation of resources may then be delayed, or displaced by competing demands. So the 'war of words' may have been won, but resulting action is frustratingly slow. It is important that the terms ALE and LLL are now embedded. But their full grasp in terms of policy flowing into tangible and visible practice is some way away.

2. Institutional arrangements

a. Structures for ALE implementation and coordination

So arrangements to manage ALE as a new and vital policy area are in a strict sense generally in place. Some are being quite well activated and country reports refer to very recent actions awaiting sign-off. Perhaps because of the heavy imbalance between narrowly focused job-preparation TVET and broader civic and social needs and expectations resting upon all part of the education system, the executive function is mainly divided between an Education and an Employment portfolio, the latter carrying different names including Economy or Business, where civic and social intentions do not feature other than in a training for employment context. To work well the TVET activities require close collaboration in planning and carrying out successful joint linked work-and-study learning, as well as easy ways of recognising individuals' abilities gathered and graded. e.g. via competencies.

Each country report showed a yawning gap in data collection across almost all education and training. This makes 'evidence-based' implementation unattainable.

These difficulties and protracted delays seriously weaken the capability of each country to mobilise national effort through or outside the government sector. Each country has examples of civil society energy and aspiration to organise and contribute, and some cross-organisational alliance e.g. a national association. A supportive political environment would facilitate their standing and authority to deliver ALE at the micro or 'grassroots' level of local communities, with the diversity of need and disadvantages of remoteness of large parts of each country. Heavy and cumbersome centralising bureaucratic governance seemingly suspicious of civic organising and endeavour delays everything and suggests limited trust and a need for tight control. In a shared condition of limited resources and competition between different ministries, ALE as the 'left-over' late-comer is poorly fed. Full implementation over time of broad LLL requires infusing all agencies of government including those seen as Education with long vision of how their work enhances national and local capacity to learn, adapt and do well. It is still true that education is thought to mean what happens inside school. Having a separate Department of ALE (and LLL) there might even make change harder.

The key governance question here is whether and how ALE can stand tall as a vital aspect of national development in its own right with its own administrative resources and capacity to deliver at least project funds and incentives. National councils representative of all involved partners (or stakeholders), across State and non-state, employer, employee and community interests, are one means suggested. For their utility it would need to be in step with a similarly evolving shift in the ethos of governance generally. At more micro levels the understanding, persuasion and support of units and individuals throughout government is required.

b. Professionalization of ALE institutions and personnel

A strong theme of all three country experts' report is the big and urgent need for well qualified personnel to manage all aspects of ALE. In a tradition of qualified, recognised and registered occupations or professions, the teaching of adults and the management as well as the study and development of ALE is absent. The reports call for recognition and professional preparation for the diverse elements of the role of 'andragogue' in parallel with that of teacher or pedagogue. The reports make clear that DVVI has been a crucial player in proselytizing, explaining and advocating this; and in taking the first steps in andragogical preparation, as by means of Curriculum globALE widely used elsewhere.

Many teachers of less formal kinds of adult education and training, the kinds of learning that take place in short courses and often applied community and workplace settings rather than in a school building, are not trained to teach, but are experienced practitioners with good work experience or community leadership skills. They may need to be tested and registered as the sector becomes better recognised and supported. This calls for broad-based and accessible recognition and accreditation arrangements. Others working in more traditional places and settings are trained as teachers of children from pre-school to young adult, and were probably themselves schooled in formal didactic and rather 'passive' learning. The individualised and contextualised learning fundamental to good ALE calls for a general change of culture; and for reorientation of classroom teachers into a role and style quite different from school-class instruction.

Professionalization extends beyond the classroom to other places of learning; and to enabling 'real-life' settings to be places of learning, and of learning how to learn. Very often this means learning in group and communal settings. Evening and weekend classes and short courses for adults are needed and more suitable than infill of classroom spaces by adults; at least until the strong mind-set about learning being just by kids instructed in classrooms changes. The country reports make reference to ALE institutions (which must be registered and approved) and even national associations of institutions and centres. There are suggestions that the rising awareness and use of CLCs should be supported and extended, building a bridge between community and education, and housing a full spectrum of informal as well as more formal and non-formal ways of learning or being taught. It is recognised that this development, strong in some other countries, has great potential but also requires a different kind of andragogic leadership and facilitation than instructional teaching.

3. Technical processes

a. Provision of data and statistics on ALE

Each country study showed the importance of having good information about ALE; and big deficiencies in data collection in each place. In each case the need is coming to be recognized, as is the inability to argue for resources and show value for money (VFM) without it. Where statistics are called for by government departments and agencies, their specification may be incomplete, inadequate in definition and poorly defined. They may also change over time, such that trends cannot be seen and studied; using different criteria prevents comparison across and within the CA countries. From the experts' reports it seems that the need and even urgency is now a recognized problem, and a political concern within and way beyond the ALE area; but few steps have been taken actually to collaborate, consult, agree on and set up effective measures and means.

So sensible data collection is one of the many 'priority needs' of ALE in each CA country. In part it depends on using more fully the power of the newer ICT; especially now with the COVID-19 pandemic and the need – and potential – for 'virtual learning' in most areas and levels of education and training. This potential and recognition is somewhat entwined with the widely shared desire for more effective auditing of quality, outcomes, VFM etc. of all government activities, including those across the social, educational and health as well as industrial and business fields. Introducing competence-based grading and the recognition and use of vocational and other qualifications to add value and use to differently acquired 'competences' are all about collecting and using meaningful data.

There are important cautions in the word 'meaningful'. Those agencies and authorities for which data is intended must be looking to use it; and have the means and resources to put it to use. Data collection and accumulation without benefit demotivates all parties in the transactions. It also makes harder the difficulty that many providing bodies are under-resourced, and scarcely able to collect even the most simple and clearly defined data. There may also be suspicion about why it is being sought; and less than honest data collection to protect agency reputation and income. The country studies make delicate reference to cultures of conformity and also of corruption which the governments try to alter; by implication ALE innovation should foster improvements in these senses, not simply accept and apply data collection requirements uncritically.

b. Access, participation and providers

The experts' analyses suggest caution also in the important and elusive quest for better access and higher rates of participation – chronic and endemic issues for probably every country and system worldwide, grounded as they are in deep and historic cultural inequalities of social class, caste, gender and ethnicity, even religion, as well as geography. CA sits between the more communist-communitarian or collective-socialist and the individualist-libertarian or free-trade and capitalistic worlds crudely stereotyped in these ways, and as East and West. As portrayed in the country studies, each of these tendencies is discernible in each country. There is also a common political wish to reduce inequality, especially that deriving from the remoteness caused by geography; and recognition of ethnic and religious diversity including privilege and disadvantage.

Access, and the wish to improve participation rates above the generally good measures for early years through the primary and secondary cycles of education, tends to be looked for in policies for economic rather than social reasons. Human resources or 'manpower', job vacancies and numbers lacking the necessary skills and qualification to find employment where qualified workers are most needed: these stand out in policy discussions more than other equity concerns. There are also worries about effective exclusion caused by gender and religious belief - local languages compared with Russian and English for public and business use, the place of women especially in Moslem societies, as well as the sheer impact of deep poverty. These concerns show in each country's commitment to fully implementing the SDGs.

As for education and training providers, ALE has yet to find a place in the thinking, administration and teaching of regular pre-school, primary and secondary education. There is still a sense of one-chance-only school learning: fail then and that is the end of it. At best, it may be possible to join in with perhaps very young people, and take the same courses and exams under the same conditions. This may be more humiliating than is acceptable. CLCs offer a more comfortable and facilitative learning environment; but there, institutional status and non-recognition as valid places of learning and qualifying may be a problem. Exclusion by age is less marked in post-secondary provision in colleges and higher education institutions. As demographically driven economic factors weigh in, there appears to be a tendency to open these to all-age youth and adults. Here, lack of resources – facilities and teachers, and the cost of fees to individuals – look to be more problematic than an inappropriate environment for adults.

Part III The country studies: towards an ALE strategy

1. A governance framework

a. Policy, legislation, and financing

The countries of the CA sub-region are at different points along essentially the same road in addressing the now widely recognised trio, or golden triangle, of policy, legislation, and finance as essential elements in creating a strong governance framework to secure stable development of national ALE. In each case steps can be traced through the first decades of this century, accelerating in recent years, to recognising at least for economic reasons its importance, and adopting it as a

strand of policy. It tends to be seen as sitting within the portfolio of either or across an Education-focused Ministry or with Labour, Human Resources, Employment, Business and Industry, depending on existing names and administrative arrangements. Often, because of the high salience of TVET, responsibilities fall to both educational and economic portfolios, with the risk that some aspects are duplicated while others are omitted.

A common feature is that it takes a perhaps unnecessarily long time to move from the important first step of recognising the possibilities and national importance of ALE – or at least some part of it – and first creating laws and then enacting them and putting them into practice. In many areas today things seem fully in place – for example over recognition and credit for prior learning, or collecting required data – but nothing seems to be getting done. At least this protracted pre-action phase and delayed pre-action recognition has allowed time for more dialogue and reflection; also the ‘big concept’ is not now just ALE but also LLL – a wider, deeper, permeating of learning by all individuals, groups (communities) and societies.

Thus the country reports suggest that the countries are poised on the brink of fully adopting the idea but far from realising its full meaning, even after laws have been enacted and adopted. The novelty and unfamiliarity of even the fundamentals of ALE are so far outside the dominant view of what ‘education’ is and where and how it takes place – with teachers instructing children or young students in classrooms – that more clarification and advocacy are still needed to explain how this should play out in terms of resources.

The third point of the ‘golden triangle’, financing, therefore has a long way to go: both in allocating adequate start-up funding and ongoing ALE programme support, and in accepting that funds must be widely dispersed across agencies of both government and society, to meet the different essential needs of staff, curriculum and facilities development and maintenance, as well as in support of poor and otherwise disadvantaged adult learners.

b. Challenges for the education system and the ALE sector

ALE, and above and behind it the full LLL concept, is a central challenge to the whole inherited national education system and management enterprise of each country. The school-classroom, teacher-pupil, full-time, age-bound model is deeply embedded. The notion of transforming regular government-backed teaching – into education and training, enabling and facilitating, formal and informal, modelling, teaching by example, learning on the job – is challenging, and for many in the system it is threatening. Demographic trends mean that many new teachers will be trained and inducted; how this is done will affect the direction and rate of change.

On the other hand, uncertainty, change, sometimes crisis, with and following the breakup of the USSR through to the 2020 global pandemic, may have broken up patterns and habits so much that radical change, albeit in the gentler form that adopting LLL implies, may no longer be so difficult. More problematic may be the rate of globally shared and driven economic change, with its deep social consequences; and outside that and overshadowing all else, looming cataclysmic climate change. The SDGs seek heroically to cover all these areas. If fully implemented they will be truly radical; and they may make it easier to manage the ALE challenge in the education systems in each country.

Meanwhile the three experts' analyses catalogue many necessary changes, and imply some of the rethinking and retooling called for. ALE requires at the least opening up existing institutions to older adults, and making their spaces, timetabling and other arrangements work for older people; altering curriculum to meet new socio-economic circumstances and civic as well as labour demands; enabling teachers to handle the knowledge and anxieties of this new clientele as well as their own anxieties about relating to experienced but untutored adults; having more connection with the lives, communities and workplaces of these new kinds of learners; and much more. The shift from authoritative instructor to learning facilitator may be too much for many older teachers. Massive efforts are required to retrain and reorient the present workforce; and for new forms of next-generation teacher education and training, starting with the 'training of the trainers' as andragogues instead of, or as well as, pedagogues.

2. Strategic intervention areas for an ALE strategy within LLL

a. Building bridges – formal, non-formal, informal

As we have seen above, education in the CE countries is seen as essentially formal and classroom based. It would be widely recognised that people also learn in other ways, but these are what we call informal modes of natural and in situ learning, as part of normal life. Historically such learning was also embedded in informal and then more formalised apprenticeship, leading to recognised membership of a trades body or guild. Traditional classroom education is highly formalised; but in many countries methods have now diversified in light of better understanding of how people learn – and of what they need to learn not just of the 'three Rs', literacy and memorising kind, but in terms of insight, attitudes and behaviours – and learning to learn.

Thus more non-formal education – changes in teaching-learning behaviours – is entering schooling and being incorporated into normal practice, increasingly aided by new ICT as well as a better psychology-based appreciation of individual characteristics, and of learners' diversity and uniqueness. The end product however is still seen as a duly examined, graded and certificated output of young people launched into an adult world and some kind of working life. Only recently has it come to be fully appreciated that much learning, and instruction of 'training' is essentially non-formal in terms of how, where, when and why it takes place. People learn to do things but are not regularly seen as educated and qualified by this.

Hence the pressing need to recognise: not only that in much classroom time, and in other at-school time as well, learning and maybe teaching goes on but not in assessed and accredited ways. The more education and training takes place off school or college premises, whether as VET or civil society-based activity, the more important it becomes to build bridges into the recognised and accredited side of society's total learning enterprise. Thus individuals can carry credit for learning with them into employment or further study which requires proof of competence. The competence movement, and the recognition, validation and accreditation of prior learning (RVA), are important requirements in the new ALE strategy. They helpfully blur and soften the divide between education (schooling) and 'real life'.

b. CLC, ICT and digitalization

Institutionalising and professionalising ALE calls for creating and strengthening places for education, training and learning, like CLCs. Face-to-face opportunities between andragogues or facilitators are of equal importance to that of teachers for schools, or professors for universities. CLCs therefore require structural support through policy, legislation and financing, as has been mentioned earlier. However, more and more digital opportunities are coming into the education field, and the call for blended learning and enlarged learning worlds is entering ALE.

The need for good fast and reliable Internet access is recognised as a priority in each CA country, both for business purposes and global competitiveness, and also for normal life and commerce within the country. It has also come to be seen as important and even vital in CA countries seriously challenged by geographical remoteness in many provinces; and as distance or virtual forms of learning have become common in most modern societies. Access to and effective use of the Web enables pupils – and citizens – to self-educate in almost every field of information, and speeds the transition to a ‘knowledge society’. The need, opportunity, and for now in 2020 absolute necessity, for good understanding and use of new ICT is underscored by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has locked down many people and closed many schools and other educational and public facilities worldwide.

These are global crises, concerns and exciting possibilities; ones which are particularly important to the CA countries seeking rapid growth into the modern economic and technological world; and improved positions in global rankings of good governance, education and qualifications, higher GDP and lower poverty, and other economic measures of quality of life. There are other aspects of the new ICT and digitalisation: some sinister like surveillance and the invasion of privacy; some highly enabling, to do with general nation-wide and global communication and low-cost high-quality teaching; and some which are mixed, like the social media which enable easy essentially democratic and participatory networking, but also the spread of ‘fake news’ and disinformation. The CA countries will have to ride on these global waves and take advantage of their distinctive strength to lead in some areas.

c. Recognition, validation, and accreditation - RVA

As the old idea of straight-through once-only education gives way: first to access-driven second-chance young adult opportunities to get trained and qualified; and then to the full ALE reality that formal education is a recurrent activity and need interspersed with employment, child-rearing, and other community commitments; then the need for more flexible, modular and competence-based opportunities to be recognised by employers and the education system at large becomes compelling and urgent. Each CA country is onto if not far down the roads of RVA systems, allowing citizens and learners to accumulate credit from different sources, and become qualified for new areas of employment.

This requires more rapid, and responsive, more diverse and wider encompassing, recognition and validation procedures of all prior learning than prevail in each country at present. What is on the drawing board and technically approved needs to be put to work. The different interested parties need to come together and agree to ease and accelerate more flexible arrangements, to prevent waste of human resources with the economic and also social and individual damage that otherwise

results. Likely economic stresses through the 2020s as well as global aspiration and targets set by the SDGs are likely to move works-in-progress from the desk drawer to a fast track, fuelled by national strategic urgency.

d. Capacity-building and training personnel

The CA countries face essentially similar demographic challenges of rapid population growth, amplified by religious affiliations and customs, with high birth-rates which are predicted to sustain rapid growth, and very young populations, for some years ahead. For early years, primary and secondary schools this means coping with rising demand and numbers, and at a later stage with contraction. All of this favours the kinds of multi-use multi-age clienteles afforded by formal and especially non-formal and informal ALE; and perhaps dual identity as being also a CLC with more diverse informal learning opportunities. Infrastructure capacity-building requires imaginative vision and different kinds of facilities.

The growth of ALE and spread of the LLL concept require new approaches to system management at all levels: from national policy application to very local provision and access to resources; above all for capable and appropriately trained and qualified teachers, facilitators and enablers, instructors, and local level managers and leaders. Country reports suggest an immediate or early crisis in the education workforce: many teachers are near the point of retirement by virtue of age; there is anyway a growing shortage; by virtue of rising demand and growth of system size, and by the need for new curriculum, teaching skills, and learning to manage more active and more applied learning that prepare students for a fast-changing world and the sought-after 'knowledge or learning society'.

The ideas of a learning society and a knowledge society are built on a high-skills new-tech vision for each CA country of the near future. The term andragogue has been introduced from international partner consultants. Some ALE-oriented teacher training and development has been trialled with success. Such work needs to be adopted as governments' priorities, present experience analysed, and in light of this, the training of personnel for LLL and adult learning on a large scale prioritised. Professional development is urgently needed across the whole education sector, with greater output of staff attuned to the ambitions of the country. A strand of LLL is needed running through all teacher training as well as specialised 'andragogues' for staff development. More research and development in ALE is also needed.

In recent years all the three CA countries have each turned to the Curriculum globALE as a viable instrument to prepare and further train staff for the ALE sub-sector. This allows for joint efforts within and across countries, including translation and the development of materials. There may be the potential to extend and use the already started learning platform from Uzbekistan in neighbour countries.

Many young people from the CA countries migrate to find employment, and in some cases also for further education, returning with qualifications for employability. It is possible that increasing numbers will return seeking employment, especially if political or economic conditions make living abroad too difficult. In this quite probable event there may be a still greater increase in ALE demand for economic, social and political reasons, making capacity-building even more urgent.

e. ALE and LLL crosscutting in CONFINTEA and the SDGs

Language lives, grows and changes. Sometimes new meanings are captured with new terms and acronyms. Words and their abbreviations are vital tools of discourse. Scholars, administrators, and politicians for different reasons tend to make up or adopt new words, neologisms, to be handled with care. We must be clear each time: is this a new and different meaning, or just a new fashion?

Adult educators – andragogues – also use new terms and acronyms to explain, differentiate, and clarify. Sometimes the result is to confuse. The discourse shift from ‘education’ to ‘learning’ is a warning. It crept in as ‘learning’ sounds more student-centred, diverse and democratic, where ‘education’ was seen as instructional and authoritarian: provider-focused and conservative, transmission rather than creation. The unintended consequence may be to allow governments to say that funding is not needed as everyone learns anyway.

This cautionary preamble takes us to a different conclusion here: LLL is not a synonym for ALE but something broader, with deeper philosophical roots. It includes and favours ALE, but has meaning for all, whether in school, working, training, child-rearing, or out enjoying themselves. As the countries of CA review and seek to improve their education systems, they need to increase support for ALE; but also, in the transition to a knowledge society, to support learning by all. Achieving SDG Goal 4 means making learning universal in every sector and setting.

In the UN agencies, LLL has become a widely used concept. It is adopted too by many other IGOs and INGOs as well as regional and more specialized bodies: an example of the first is the EU, now with an important presence in CA; and of the second the OECD of the more wealthy and technically advanced nations. There are many more associations drawing on the LLL and ALE concepts and strategies that were fashioned fifty years ago, mainly in the ‘industrial North’ and adopted, with more or less will and choice, in what we now call the ‘Global South’.

These developments have not been fixed. The most recent attempt at global management by agreement is the SDGs, where LLL is an all-permeating educational need running through all the Goals and many of their targets. It includes all areas of life and work, social, economic, cultural, ecological, and therefore also political. Confining it to Goal 4 would mean failing to understand or achieve it.

ALE belongs closely within the education sphere. It had an early boost as part of attempted post-World War Two reconstruction when UNESCO held the first world adult education conference in 1949. It has built on and sustained this practice, meeting in different venues every 12 years. The next such event of what came to be called CONFINTEA is scheduled to take place in Morocco in 2022.

The CONFINTEAs have become landmarks and stepping stones in the progression of adult education from mainly cultural and leisure-time learning, often for well-educated older adults, and a more political workers’ movement for reform and equal opportunity, together with literacy and basic skills for the then-called ‘developing nations’. Today it is the most important global forum to further develop ALE as a profession and sub-sector of the education system in a LLL perspective.

To use ALE now in the CA countries is in itself a step forward. It follows closely on the move which the UNESCO General Conference took in 2015 by adopting new *Recommendations on Adult Learning and Education* (RALE), replacing the old *Recommendation on Adult Education* from 1976. All three CA

countries adopted RALE as UNESCO Member States, and participants of the General Conference. It may therefore be advisable for DVVI and its partners to insist on using ALE in describing and supporting activities and regulations of education, learning and training opportunities for adults.

Each CA Government also signed up to the SDGs, with targets and plans intended to move towards achieving the goals by 2030. The SDGs provides a very large canvas on which to map and extend ALE. National ALE associations and NGOs in the CA countries are also members of the well-established and influential regional ALE body ASPBAE. This with sister regional and national NGOs campaigns for ALE, making a strong contribution to the planning of the CONFINTEAs, and then promoting what is resolved there.

The CA countries too could make a significant contribution to these events from their experience and views; and gain from having a presence there, with the networking and subsequent partnerships that can follow. They give an opportunity for national ALE associations where these exist to work with their own governments, the core members of UNESCO: influencing the CONFINTEA agenda, discussions and resolutions through the National UNESCO Commissions, which take part also in mid-term CONFINTEA planning reviews. These strategic interventions would assist the process of drawing CA more into global policy discussion and plans for action, where each Member State can engage and gain benefit.

3. Activities, priorities, steps for implementation

a. Awareness-raising and advocacy, information and motivation

Good progress has been made through the early years of the 21st century, despite the difficulties of reaching remote rural populations, coping with big demographic changes and losing working age people through economic migration, to improve the position of the country and the quality of life of its citizens. Ideas and practices from other regions, mainly perhaps but not only from Europe, have enriched understanding about ALE: its purposes, utility, and means of development in each specific national circumstance.

Nevertheless ALE and LLL are still poorly understood, little recognised even when they happen, and too little practised in many parts of all three somewhat centralist countries, where deep poverty persists in remote regions and neither Russian nor English is a familiar language. The first steps have been taken to legislate for and try to create means to implement new laws and regulations; but much of this machinery seems to lie idle, or take a long time to be run in. ALE has not yet gained enough urgency.

It is important in the next few years to widen and deepen awareness and demand for what is needed, is happening and what can be done, to alter the belief that education is just for the young, and that anything not done in a classroom has low value.

In these emergent democracies, more perhaps than in some older, more tired and abused democracies, popular public opinion need alerting to what ALE has to offer people, the economy and well-being: in quality of life as well as in economic terms, where TVET has the strongest political commitment. Active citizenship and broad-based 'cultural' learning favouring active participatory

citizenship and devolution of implementation to local areas to meet their diverse realities: these are now important activities for focus in the next phase of growth.

Much of the machinery is in place. Tiresome, difficult and complicated technical matters are recognised, and means are being sought to carry them out. These are for example to do with: clearly defining what data are needed, and making it easy to collect essential statistics; showing why these matter and how they will be used; then using them and assuring quality, value for money, and tangible benefit. This shows that it is worth doing, not a pointless bureaucratic chore.

Another example is arrangements to accredit non-formal and informal learning: from the workplace, from one institution or education or training programme to carry credit into another; through self-directed learning using the facilities of ICT; given a valid credit-rating carrying currency within and beyond the country, and managed with simple clarity and the minimum of bureaucracy, to ensure high quality and avoid corruption. A direct payoff will be getting an otherwise inaccessible job; an indirect one is creating a mood of optimism and success about why ALE is good and matters.

There are many techniques for raising motivation, interest and support for the implementation of the generally good laws, rules and intended practices already now in place. ALE should be an arena for self-expression, the joy of discovery and empowerment, perhaps self-discovery and certainly self-confidence and self-advancement. The CA countries could continue the good practice of calling on consultancy and experience from elsewhere to try out and adapt what others have found useful. Adult Learners' Weeks, learning city events and annual festivals can be picked over to try what might work best in one's own region or country.

b. Creating alliances, strategic interventions and tactical tips

There is evidence in all the CA countries that alliances between governmental agencies – ministries, departments, sections and agencies – can be fruitful. Private companies and NGOs need to be active partners, working together and regularly with government wherever they can, and providing channels and means to trial and deliver ALE. It is desirable for civil society organisations to create and strengthen national associations that can give a strong and clear voice. Principled pragmatism is a good foundation for progress: looking for early results, with quick wins that gather low-hanging fruit and build up the confidence and trust to go faster and further.

In each country some form of official standing Council, Commission or Committee is desirable, initially with an advisory consultative role across sectors, then perhaps a well-respected and efficient Office or Bureau and Secretariat of its own. Somehow a balance should be found: between separation and isolation from the source of funds and influence; and absorption into a ministry where ALE is a small and marginal unit unable to move briskly and without a clear voice. It may be that a 'dual' arrangement will work best in each CA country: a confident cross-agencies Council with a voice which is heard and heeded, and an efficient high quality service unit supported within the most relevant Ministry. Such a body can also be a strong ally to government, and a channel to bring in development funds and consultative partnerships which might not provide aid through a government department.

Much has been achieved over the past two decades in each of the three countries, to introduce and advocate ALE as a policy priority requiring laws, rules and resources as part of the national education

system. Steady campaigning, drawing in differing degrees on assistance and resources from outside the country, has put ALE on each policy agenda where it has been sustained to the point of having laws made, and setting down how they are to be carried out. On the other hand, for many people, both leadership and general community, education is still seen as for children and young adults from pre-school to tertiary or higher education. Education for adults is seen as somewhat incidental, except where short-course vocationally well-attuned provision enables the unemployed and excluded to join the formal economy.

The challenge for the decade of the SDGs to 2030 is to *execute* policy, to *implement* the rules and to ensure that resources are actually *released and used* as intended.

This is where tactics come in. Good plans can quickly become entangled and unstuck. As the three country studies show, there are many things that need doing quickly. They can all be flagged as urgent priorities. It is hard to know where to start. Systematic planning can quickly unravel if insistence on one sequence prevails: ‘we have to do (a) and then (b) before it is possible to do (c); then (d) will be possible, but that actually needs (e) and (f) first’ etc.

It is certainly important to be able to see things this way: like playing chess, to be able to look at least a few moves ahead. But this can also paralyse. It is better where possible to see more than way of solving a problem such that a ‘plan B’ can be ready to start, or run concurrently in the hope of getting one or the other moving, or even running in competition.

Another tactic is to start several things that are all important and quite urgent, but that can run through different channels or agencies and not be interdependently vulnerable to problems elsewhere. Inevitably of course everything is connected with everything else: all need more resources, or better prepared and qualified staff, or greater willingness to ‘have a go’; many may confront obstacles like an agency that is very slow to start moving; or a change of leadership or even government; or a crisis in another country that cuts off a good consultative partnership.

Pragmatically, it is wise to start as many initiatives as possible and amplify those already running and capable of faster or wider growth. It is certainly desirable to take up new initiatives where there is clear purpose, reachable and early end goals, and secured financial support. Morale is important, as is trust. Simple visible early successes can be a basis to ratchet up more effort. This may be enough to speed other priorities, on which next steps depend.

All this requires strength of will and some optimism, even in times when global obstacles are numerous and difficulties unavoidable. Each of the three CA countries is familiar with difficulty and stresses. Each has made significant progress in ALE. This gives ground for confidence that continuing support, determined collaboration and steady advocacy can strengthen ALE, widen popular and political understanding of and support for LLL, and see more real progress in the next few years.

Part IV Central Asian ALE: regional perspective and prospects

In this final Part we consider briefly the three nations and their systems, as part of a possible and emergent higher level ‘sub-regional’ system with its own identity, dynamics, development hopes as well as obstacles; and possibilities for collaboration and growth: a learning region at an intermediate

geopolitical level. What mutual exchanges are or can be beneficial right away, and what can grow further, building on success with earlier steps? How can outside agencies like DVVI and others assist?

There appears to be willingness among these three countries to work together more closely, building on perhaps happenstance current events; no difficulty was suggested by the much larger size of Uzbekistan, or in terms of other CA neighbours Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.

Useful collaboration could take the form of bilateral or group (trilateral) connections and activities on a basis of *ad hoc* one-off projects. They could become a regular arrangement to exchange and work together. A lightly formalised grouping could also become a voice and channel for stronger, more systematic, planned and sustained partnerships with other countries, like Germany via DVVI, and other regional and international agencies like the EU.

The possibilities suggested in this study are diverse and numerous. The best cultural and value base would be mutuality of benefit and learning, with medium to long-term timelines. It would be important to operate with focus and lean efficiency. Large bureaucratic offices and non-essential rules and guidelines will quickly undermine commitment. On the other hand, rapid tangible and useful outcomes will strengthen commitment and the confidence to do more.

The long involvement of DVVI in other parts of Asia offers nice examples. There has been a long well reviewed and continuously renewed partnership with the regional association ASPBAE, of which all three CA countries are members, and a succession of programmatic agreements, each of a few years' duration; some with sub-regional groupings, others with single agencies like PRIA in India. Joint evaluations of projects are at times supported by DVVI and other UN and INGO bodies. Country and sub-regional offices collaborate with other country groupings, e.g. the Indochina nations as a group, or SEAMEO, the Southeast Ministers of Education Organisation as a regional agency.

A CA sub-regional partnership would need to work with the grain of national development strategies, and align with these, including the SDGs, to deliver useful information, services and supportive energies valued within each country. Examples and ideas might include the following: exchange visits of a few days between ALE planners, teachers and research scholars, as individuals or operating teams, or people with similar interests and responsibilities. Mixing visiting study groups from different agencies and roles strengthens internal networking and future cooperation within each country. Sharing participation in seminars by mixed country teams is likely to benefit participants and their organisations as they speak, hear other from their own and neighbouring countries, and think about their country's ALE work, how it compares with others', what it might emulate, and what it can offer by way of experience of successful good practice to others.

Arrangements like this can be trialled and improved for subsequent exchange visits. They may lead to longer term visits on attachment between countries, and exchange attachments between people who can achieve mutual enrichment of practice, learning by doing. Arrangements between nations with similarities of history and geography as well as development policies and professional practice can be very fruitful in direct technical ways, and also in terms of confidence, high morale, and system and individual advancement.

These kinds of arrangements can be brokered through sub-regional offices, such as the DVVI Regional Office, which could also negotiate and arrange exchanges with countries in other parts of

the world: direct with single institutions, or through counterpart regional groupings and offices. Sophisticated ICT such as each country is aiming for will make this easier. As well as short seminar-style individual and group or team visits, andragogues in different roles and at different career stages may choose (and be supported) to study for post-experience qualifications, professional or academic. A succession of such personalised arrangements may build in time to regular cooperation with lead institutions or countries elsewhere. There can be significant benefit by adding to the value and quality of ALE in tangible ways: laws and rules, good execution and valued outcomes; and in a less immediate and evident 'pay-off' sense by permeating national planning, awareness and action in all public and community life, institutions and practices with lifelong learning qualities of survival and evolution.

Such activities, operating and growing as a distinct CA region, could over time significantly strengthen each of the three members. They can also try out collaborative benchmarking, mutual encouragement, staff exchanges and inter-community visits. This sort of confident action and interdependency by engaged citizens and well-supported governments could become a model to other regions of mutually pushing and helping one another along, rather than entering a win-lose competition.

To foster such sharing and learning from one another within the CA region, a few recommendations has been selected by the consultants and included in this report. They are integrated as part of the Executive Summary, and put forward to the DVVI Regional Office and its partners as challenges and opportunities.

Appendix

1. Abbreviations

ALE	Adult Learning and Education
AES	Adult Education Survey
ASPBAE	Asia South Pacific Association of Basic and Adult Education
BFA	Belem Framework for Action
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation
CA	Central Asia
CONFINTEA	World Conferences on ALE by UNESCO
DVVI	DVV International
GNLC	UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities
EMIS	Education Management Information Systems

EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IGO	Intergovernmental Organisations
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisations
LLL	Lifelong Learning
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
RALE	Recommendations on Adult Learning and Education
RVA	Recognition, Validation, and Accreditation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VFM	Value for Money

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