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Estonian National Observatory

**Work–related education and
continuing education possibilities
in the Republic of Estonia**

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A	INTRODUCTION	4
B	ADULT EDUCATION AND CONTINUING TRAINING IN ESTONIA	7
I	Current situation in continuing training	7
	1. Gathering information on continuing training pertaining to companies and private persons	8
	2. Importance of adult training for employed and unemployed people	10
	3. Access to continuing training	12
	4. Financing of continuing education	13
	5. Specific objectives of continuing training	15
	6. Communication between training institutions and labour market, exchange of information and counselling	15
	7. Communication between employment offices and training providers	17
	8. Role of continuing training in the labour market policy, target groups in labour market training	18
II	Barriers to enhance continuing training	20
	1. Overview of the barriers	20
	1.1. Barriers to unite the vocational education reform and continuing training	20
	1.2. Role of enterprises in training	22
	1.3. Study motivation of private persons	23
	1.4. Problems of continuing training on the national and regional levels	24
	2. Barriers in the development of the continuing training and vocational education reforms	26
III	Initiatives launched by international donors	28
C	DEVELOPMENT TRENDS OF CONTINUING TRAINING	29
	1. National framework	29
	2. Continuing training as a part of active labour market policy	32
	3. Training in and for enterprises	33
	4. Individual	35
	5. Training provider	35
D	PROPOSITIONS AND CONCRETE CONTEXTS WHERE POSSIBLE PROJECTS COULD START DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES	35
E	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	38

A Introduction

The formation and development of the adult education system in Estonia is based on the Adult Education Act adopted in 1993. (This act is the first one of its kind in the former socialist countries). In addition there are several other legal acts regulating and supporting adult education (including the acts pertaining to work-related education for adults), aiming at the establishment of conditions and possibilities promoting the organisation of and attending training.

Due to the radical political and economic changes that took place during the first year of our re-independence, industrial enterprises that functioned as a part of the Soviet Union's large-scale industry terminated their activities and the training system of industrial branches and enterprises fell apart. The resulting unemployment and disintegration of industry made the need for training more obscure, besides there were no solvent clients.

As the privatisation process of enterprises advanced and the economy became more stable, a need for work-related training arose in 1992-1993 (for a new kind of training, however). Most vocational schools and higher educational establishments started to organise again work-related training courses for adults. During the first years of re-independence, in connection with the new conditions of market economy, mostly entrepreneurship and management training was organised for company managers, as well as training for accountants and middle managers. Demand for training grew slowly because it was possible to hire relatively highly qualified labour that had become unemployed upon liquidation of a lot of enterprises.

In cooperation with foreign countries comprehensive training courses were held in sectors characteristic of an independent state: monetary and banking system, aviation, maritime affairs, foreign and interior defence structures, customs service, legal institutions, etc.

The main obstacle to harmonisation of training (also work-related training for adults) at vocational schools with today's requirements is mostly the out-of-date equipment dating back to the Soviet times which was meant to prepare workers for the large-scale industry of the Soviet Union, and the corresponding preparation of teachers. Workers were trained at that time in some narrow sectors proceeding from the needs of the large-scale industry. The present industry, however, consists of a large number of small and

middle-sized companies and there is a need for employees with diverse skills who know modern materials, equipment and technologies.

Upon organising adult training the following principles are taken as the basis:

- legal guarantees to adults for life-long training according to their wishes (Article 1 of the Adult Education Act that follows the Declaration of the 1985 Paris Adult Education Conference of UNESCO on the right of individuals to life-long learning);
- training is focused on raising the economic, social and political competence of the population, establishment of conditions for the development of personality, strengthening of national identity and supporting the preservation of national culture;
- study leaves with maintenance of salary to those working under labour contracts (proceeds from the 1974 Convention no. 140 of ILO);
- tax benefits to employers who have spent money on training of their staff and to trainees spending money on training;
- up-grading of the adult education system that would take into account the economic and social needs of Estonia;
- supporting of local initiative and creation of training possibilities as close to people's living places as possible;
- training of teachers and trainers for adults in Estonia and abroad;
- use of the existing material (buildings, premises) and intellectual potential to the maximum;
- coordination of and methodological guidance to training activities through cooperation between the Adult Education Service of the Ministry of Education, umbrella organisations of trainers and the Adult Education Council at the Ministry of Education;
- use of the same material and intellectual potential for work-related training of young people, adults and unemployed;
- development of a pilot training centres network to be established on the basis of vocational education establishments in cooperation with foreign countries and employers' organisations (these will be at the same time methodological centres for other vocational schools in the same sectors);
- close cooperation of all adult education organisations, institutions and persons related to them with colleagues in Estonia and abroad;
- international cooperation to modernise adult work-related education;
- independence of providers in organising training, training forms, curricula and methods and in the use of the earned funds as stipulated by the Adult Educational Institutions Act.

Adult education is financed from several sources:

- National budget;
- Local government budget;
- Enterprises owners equity; or
- Private individuals contributions

depending on the customer who is ordering training.

From the National Budget, allocations are made to support some of the above mentioned principles:

- for work-related training of pedagogues and public administration officials (at least 3% of the pay-roll fund for the relevant category staff); finances for work-related training of employees of local governments are to be calculated into the budgets of local governments;
- for evening and distance education at formal education institutions;
- for training of unemployed, and grants;
- for the state language studies of the non-Estonian-speaking population;
- for supporting the activities of methodological centres of umbrella organisations uniting teachers and trainers of adults;
- for the activities of the Adult Education Council;
- for adult education research;
- for long (56 and more hours) courses in nationally important sectors (by means of covering the teachers' salaries);
- for the activities of study circles;
- for supporting the activities of hobby education training institutions.

Note: allocation of National Budget resources to activities listed in the last four sections will be carried out by public tender of research and training projects.

The providers of adult education and training are: enterprises themselves, public and state and municipal educational institutions and private training companies

In spite of difficulties, most of the universities, applied higher educational establishments, technical schools and vocational schools (regardless of their ownership form) participate to some extent in work-related adult education. Training is conducted in the forms of evening and distance education and open university, in addition various work-related training courses are held for adults.

Evening and distance education for adults at vocational schools and at higher educational establishments when organised on state order are free of charge for the trainees. Level education and work-related continuing training or retraining courses are conducted on the basis of self-financing. Training organised in the form of courses is requested and paid by enterprises interested in such training or the employees themselves. Continuing training and retraining of state officials, teachers and persons registered as unemployed is paid for from the National Budget by finances allocated specially for that purpose.

Employers have pointed out that, in addition to the insufficient and outdated technical skills of employees, even a greater problem is presented by the lack of employees' individual maturity, independence, cooperation and communication abilities, decision-making capabilities and sense of responsibility which all arise from the changed nature of work. These abilities and skills very often determine whether a person finds a job and is able to

keep it, thus the restriction of adult work-related training to courses meant for acquisition of technical skills is quite conditional.

Work-related continuing training is organised also by some special educational institutions: the Estonian Institute of Public Administration financed from the National Budget organises training for local and public administration officials, the Estonian Management Institute earns its finances by organising courses for top managers according to requests of companies and authorities, the Training Centre of Eesti Energia (Estonian Energy Company) organises training for the employees of the energy system, etc. A large part of the continuing training for employees is carried out as training under human resource development management.

The fact that Estonia was invited to the first round of negotiations to join the European Union is a recognition of the learning and adaptation abilities of the Estonia society.

B Adult education and continuing training in Estonia

I Current situation in continuing training

Adult education and its development in Estonia are supported by the following legal acts:

- Adult Education Act;
- the procedure for applying for financing of adult education from the National Budget, approved by a decree of the Government of the Republic of Estonia;
- a decree of the Government of the Republic of Estonia on organisation of work-related training for disabled people;
- Public Service Act;
- the fields, forms and procedure for organising adult education at vocational schools, approved by a decree of the Minister of Education;
- the Act on Social Protection of Unemployed;
- the Income Tax Act;
- the procedure for issuing training permits approved by a decree of the Minister of Education (a permit has to be applied for if the training is organised in a field that can be dangerous to the trainee's life,(approved by a decree of the Government of the Republic of Estonia), or if the training lasts for more than 120 hours).

The responsibility of organising training for people registered as unemployed is based on the Training Department of the Labour Market Board,

employment agencies of counties and training consultants working there on whose recommendation employment agencies buy training for the unemployed. There are psychologists giving advice only in three employment agencies so far (in Tallinn, Tartu and Viljandi).

Training for the unemployed is either focused on *acquisition of working skills* or the so-called *adaptation training*.

Training orientated on acquisition of working skills is either *retraining* including primary training in the relevant field, or *acquisition of a new speciality* or *continuing training* in the existing speciality by improving one's knowledge and skills. In work-related training (continuing training and retraining) the codes and names of occupations of the Estonian version of ISCO-88 are used for designating professions.

Work-related training for adults is carried out in interaction of offer and demand, needs and possibilities and conditions enhancing arrangement of training and attending the courses, mainly on the basis of the self-regulation principle.

Training institutions are as regards organisation of training, selection of curricula and methodology independent to the extent stipulated by laws pertaining to education, and training is conducted on the basis of the self-financing principle.

Replacement of direct central administration by conditions favouring training (mainly legal regulation and the financial support from the state and local budgets described above) has triggered mechanisms characteristic of self-regulation. These mechanisms together with the relative independence of training institutions make it more difficult to obtain regular and adequate information on training (especially on training requested by companies and private persons and that conducted in companies and private training institutions).

1. Gathering information on continuing training pertaining to companies and private persons

The main sources and ways to obtain information on training are as follows:

- regular data gathered by the State Statistics Office (the report form has been simplified several times during the reindpendence period but there are still gaps in the obtained data and it has not been officially published at all for the last couple of years). The main reasons for the insufficiency of the statistical data gathered by sampling observations are as follows: only those companies whose main activity is training, respond to questionnaires; the number of non-respondents is large; statistics covers only registered courses);

- all-Estonian research and studies on adult work-related training covering several counties;
- database of the National Labour Market Board on training organised for the registered unemployed. (Within the system of the Labour Market Board information on training for registered unemployed has been gathered systematically since 1993. Employment offices of counties and Tallinn present to the Labour Market Board quarterly data by electronic mail which specify the speciality, number of those starting and graduating from training, the trainer, beginning and closing dates of the training, duration of course in study days, cost per trainee and training day, number of graduates finding a job and their percentage);
- information in public administration agencies on training for their employees (there has been no need to collect aggregate information; since most of the courses are held at the Estonian Institute of Public Administration there exists information on these courses);
- information on training for education workers. As most of the finances are given into the disposal of education institutions as clients, they have a clear overview of the use of training finances but gathering of information on the topics and nature of training carried out is more complicated;
- results of regular questionnaires on work-related training for adults, presented by the Ministry of Education at formal education institutions;
- since 1994, registration at educational department of counties and cities of courses organised by adult education institutions which do not have a training permit; these data are also submitted to the State Statistics Office;
- continuing training conducted in and requested by enterprises (information could be gathered by associations of employers and PARE, an organisation uniting personnel managers of about ~100 companies and agencies);
- information on training institutions providing adult education exists in a database on the Internet home page of the Estonian Adult Training Association *Andras* (address: <http://www.andras.ee/>). As the training market is changing rapidly, the database needs to be continuously updated. This is possible, first of all, with the help of the training institutions themselves. The database reflects contact information and training fields of training institutions but does not show the duration and cost of or actual participation in training.

Different sources of data indicate that adult training is currently provided by ~ 900 various institutions, to which in-service training in enterprises and agencies can be added. The majority of training institutions do not depend on state or other central structures and therefore only have the reporting obligation imposed by the Statistics Act. Thus, the coordinators of adult education have not set the gathering of comprehensive numerical information as their aim.

In spite of the many gaps in the centralised information related to adult education, the institutions coordinating the training have a clear principal overview of the problems of training as a service, access to training, its development trends and dynamics.

Participation in adult education and the related tendencies are described mainly by the results of relevant studies. By the results of a study conducted in 1995, about 15% of the respondents (16% of women and 14% of men) participated in some form of adult training in 1994.

Results of an adult training research ordered by the State Statistics Office and conducted in 1997 by the International and Social Studies Institute are still being processed. Preliminary results show, however, that about 25% of those questioned participated in some form of adult training.

2. Importance of adult training for employed and unemployed people

Education, knowledge and skills have traditionally been highly valued in the Estonian society. The first peasants' schools were established in the second half of the 17th century and by the end of the 18th century most of the peasants were literate. Tartu University was founded in 1632. The national school system was established in 1917, and Estonian-medium instruction was introduced in 1918 (right after Estonia gained independence). As a result of the urbanisation process and development of industry that took place at the beginning of this century various study possibilities were established also for urban workers.

In 1934 there were about 2,000 active educational societies in Estonia which also maintained local libraries. A comparison study conducted in 1934 showed that there was 1 student of fee-paying gymnasium per 62 inhabitants in Estonia, while in Sweden the corresponding ratio was 1:132, thus lower by more than two times.

During the Soviet occupation period (1940-1991) the Soviet educational system and the adult training system as a part of the former functioned in Estonia. In addition to ideological training work-related training took place:

- in the 1960's training centres for economic and industrial branches and training classes in larger enterprises were established. A general tariff and qualification system was valid;
 - economic training courses were organised at enterprises and agencies;
 - continuing training for teachers and school managers was organised;
 - there were comprehensive distance and evening courses at institutes, universities, evening secondary schools (compulsory secondary education!) and technical schools;
- since 1974 training for middle managers was provided;

- since 1978 training for top managers in economy was provided;
- since 1989 training for state officials was provided.

The importance of continuing training for both employed and unemployed people is increasing all the time. As a result of the rapid and continuing social-political and economic changes and introduction of new technology at enterprises the present skills of personnel very often turn out to be outdated and do not meet the modern requirements. During the past ten years, in addition to knowing materials, equipment and technologies also such skills as basic knowledge about market economy, finance management, foreign economic relations, personnel development, legislation, computer skills and foreign languages have become important in finding a job and maintaining it.

Side by side with registered unemployment (3-4% of the working age population in recent years) lack of qualified skilled workers has become a problem in certain sectors. The Soviet vocational education system prepared specialists in very narrow fields. Their skills do not meet the modern requirements: in Estonia most of the enterprises are small and middle sized companies where employees of a wide profile are required.

The study motivation of unemployed people is either to find a job, to cope with the changes taking place in society and economy or to strive for a richer and decent life.

The majority of potential trainees are interested in studying foreign languages and in computer training, courses on entrepreneurship, communication skills and other key skills, as well as worker specialities in high demand (welding, construction, accommodation-catering, etc.).

The progressive ageing trend in Estonian society has resulted in a great number of elderly people. The great interest of pensioners and other elderly people towards training is shown by the high number of people visiting the Adult Education Institutes.

Work-related training for adults is carried out in interaction of offer and demand, needs and possibilities and conditions enhancing arrangement of training and attending the courses, mainly on the basis of the self-regulation principle.

Training institutions are as regards organisation of training, selection of curricula and methodology independent to the extent stipulated by laws pertaining to education, and training is conducted on the basis of the self-financing principle.

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training institutions make it more difficult to obtain regular and adequate information on training (especially on training requested by companies and private persons and that conducted in companies and private training institutions).

The system of organising training for people registered as unemployed is based on the Training Department of the Labour Market Board, employment agencies of counties and training consultants working there on whose recommendation employment agencies buy training for the unemployed. There are psychologists giving advice only in three employment agencies so far (in Tallinn, Tartu and Viljandi).

Training for the unemployed is either focused on *acquisition of working skills* or the so-called *adaptation training*.

Training orientated on acquisition of working skills is either *retraining* including primary training in the relevant field, or *acquisition of a new speciality* or *continuing training* in the existing speciality by improving one's knowledge and skills. In work-related training (continuing training and retraining) the codes and names of occupations of the Estonian version of ISCO-88 are used for designating professions.

3. Access to continuing training

In order to ensure access to work-related training the Adult Training Act has stipulated for employees working under labour contracts study leaves with maintenance of full or partial salary:

- for participants in level education by evening or distance training, one month to attend study periods, additionally 4 to 7 weeks for graduation (depending on the educational level to be acquired), whereas in the case of both study leaves the average salary will be preserved for ten working days and a salary corresponding to at least the valid minimal salary for the rest of the days;
- for work-related training for at least 10 working days per year with maintaining the average salary.

Access of educational workers, officials and registered unemployed to training is guaranteed by the relevant allocations in the national and local budgets. Many adult training courses are held at the ~ 900 adult training institutions of various profiles, encompassing state, municipal and private training agencies. The line between work-related and non-work-related training is rather conditional as several key skills as needed in addition to the skills related to one's speciality: knowledge of foreign languages, computer skills, organisational skills, cooperation skills, analysis skills, problem management skills, etc. In relation to that it is very difficult to say how many training institutions engage in work-related continuing training.

Legislation provides possibilities to organise adult training under the educational activities of all formal vocational education establishments (including universities). The network of vocational education establishments and applied higher educational establishments has developed rather well and covers all regions. Thus, possibilities to study close to one's living place have been created. As the courses provided at vocational education institutions are, as a rule, related to the specialities taught at these schools, the offered study possibilities (fields) may not always coincide with the employers' and inhabitants' concrete wishes. However, many schools have accommodation possibilities, thus it is possible to acquire the desired speciality also further away from home.

In cooperation with foreign countries comprehensive training courses were held in sectors characteristic of an independent state: monetary and banking system, aviation, maritime affairs, foreign and interior defence structures, customs service, legal institutions, etc.

The main obstacle to harmonisation of training (also work-related training for adults) at vocational schools with today's requirements is mostly the out-of-date equipment dating back to the Soviet times which was meant to prepare workers for the large-scale industry of the Soviet Union, and the corresponding preparation of teachers. Workers were trained at that time in some narrow sectors proceeding from the needs of the large-scale industry. The present industry, however, consists of a large number of small and middle-sized companies and there is a need for employees with diverse skills who know modern materials, equipment and technologies.

Location of adult education institutions in Estonia is uneven over regions: more than half of all the training institutions are located in the capital Tallinn and in the second largest city Tartu. Border areas, especially NE- and SE-Estonia cannot boast of a dense training institutions network. As the economic activities are as a rule not so active in border areas and the unemployment rate is higher, training costs are often higher than the local enterprises and inhabitants can afford. In order to improve the situation local governments should apply incentive-related measures and the role of such regions' vocational schools and general comprehensive schools in organising continuing training should be increased.

4. Financing of continuing education

Financing of work-related training comes from the following sources:

- the National Budget:
 - 1) level education in evening and distance forms;
 - 2) training of employees of public administration agencies;
 - 3) continuing training for pedagogues and school managers;

- 4) training of adult trainers;
- 5) training of registered unemployed through the National Labour Market Board.
- budgets of local governments:
 - 1) training of officials of local governments;
 - 2) continuing training of teachers and kindergarten teachers getting their salary from local budgets.
- enterprises' funds:
 - 1) requested training courses for employees;
 - 2) training in enterprises themselves.
 - (The Income Tax stipulates that expenses made by an employer on training of its employees may be deducted from the taxable profit of the enterprise).
- private persons (in certain cases expenses related to the training of taxpayer and his/her dependants may be deducted from the taxable income).

The National Budget prescribes each year a certain amount for the training of unemployed people; this year it is 27.7 million Estonian kroons. The Labour Market Board distributes this sum between counties taking into account the employment situation in the relevant region, employment results of graduates, etc.

People attending at least a 10-day training get a grant (450 kroons/month). The Act on Social Protection of Unemployed prescribes that a person registered as unemployed or a disability pensioner who has partly lost the ability to work and is looking for a job may apply to an employment office for a labour market training and a grant funded from the National Budget. A training consultant together with the unemployed person will select a speciality which is demanded by employers or will have demand in the relevant region and will refer the unemployed person either to work-related retraining (primary training) or continuing training, depending on the existing knowledge and skills of the unemployed.

Training for those registered as unemployed is mostly continuing training as it is stipulated by law that a person must have worked for the duration of half a year during the year before registration as unemployed, thus these people have a previous working experience (except for those graduating from schools and remaining without a job).

The objective of labour market training is to raise the competitiveness of the unemployed to help them to find a job in the labour market.

In 1997, local employment offices bought training from 180 training providers (150 training companies, 22 public schools (including 16 vocational schools), 4 private schools and 4 private entrepreneurs) for 9,083 unemployed in 117 specialities, of which 8,895 graduated from the training and 6,246 or 70% got a job.

5. Specific objectives of continuing training

The specific objectives of work-related training are:

1. Acquisition of a new vocation, profession or occupation, very often through retraining, for which a corresponding *certificate* is issued.
2. Improvement of the previously acquired vocational, professional or occupational knowledge, skills, proficiency and experience, for which a corresponding *document* is issued.

On the basis of the aforesaid, on various levels of manpower the main specific training objectives could be as follows:

- a) for *officials*, acquisition or improvement of the main skills of the work of an official or preparation to move on to the next level of the hierarchy of public officials or to start working at a new position;
- b) for *pedagogues*, acquisition or improvement of the basic knowledge about pedagogy and psychology or of the skills to teach certain subject(s) but also preparation to start to work at a new position;
- c) for *managers of various levels*, acquisition and improvement of knowledge needed to manage processes in an enterprise or agency;
- d) for *industrial workers*, acquisition and improvement of skills to use modern materials and equipment, new technologies and methods of work, but also preparation to perform new tasks or start to work at a new position;
- e) for *registered unemployed*, retraining in a speciality needing more manpower is the most frequent, but also entrepreneurship courses to create a job for oneself, as well as continuing training in a field acquired previously;
- f) for *unemployed*, life and social skills courses for risk groups, the so-called key skills courses and speciality courses for job seekers.

6. Communication between training institutions and labour market, exchange of information and counselling

Relations between training providers and enterprises are based on the joint interests of the parties resulting in information exchange and linking of offer and demand. These relationships vary depending on the economic sectors and region. As a rule, enterprises are waiting from initiative to come from the training institutions both in the provision of practise at schools and continuing training. In sectors where changes in technologies and equipment have been very rapid, enterprises often provide training and retraining themselves without waiting for the "awakening" of the trainers.

In the case of vocational education institutions a more thorough knowledge of each other's interests and possibilities can be facilitated by the belonging of

representatives of enterprises of the relevant profile to the professional associations of the field or planned periods of industry release for teachers (which is currently not very popular). Often the curricula of adult training courses are compiled proceeding from the wishes of the client, practical training is organised in the enterprise and employees of the enterprise are used in conducting some parts of the training course. Training companies with foreign partners are relatively successful. As a rule, their target group is the so-called white-collar workers. Transition to market economy has brought about the need to know various management theories, negotiation and selling techniques. Entrepreneurs usually value the training provided by these companies, mainly thanks to large-scale advertising and internationally ensured quality.

Several local training companies have also won the trust of entrepreneurs and found their market niche. Entrepreneurs believe that local training companies, compared to international companies, have a better understanding and knowledge of the local situation and can provide a more flexible service.

More successful training providers consult with their potential clients before making plans for the next training period and make up the courses taking into account their wishes. Long-term cooperation relations are also well functioning.

Problems in making available the information about training possibilities arise where there are no permanent relations with the clients and where new clients are sought.

Those interested in training have various but relatively limited possibilities to obtain the relevant information: lists of courses registered at educational departments of counties, training calendars, Internet home pages of training institutions, joint database of training companies published on the Internet home page of *Andras*, advertisements of training companies in newspapers, information given in TV and radio, notices at employment offices on courses to be organised for the unemployed, direct contacts with training institutions. Most of the training institutions publish bulletins on training. The most comprehensive bulletins are, for example, *Self-improvement and Study Possibilities in Tallinn*, published by AS Kalendrike, *Training and Continuing Education in Estonia*, published by AS Emil. Unfortunately, these information bulletins are not published regularly. Such publications as *Vocational Education Institutions in 1998*, embracing information on all the public vocational schools and 10 private schools, are of great help to school graduates in making their future study plans. Information on continuing training possibilities for adults is, however, not included in that publication but can be found about vocational schools in the vocational schools' database KETE (<http://kutsekoolid.edu.ee>).

There is no central catalogue on training offers in Estonia yet and thus, making the information available to those interested must be taken care of by

the providers themselves. Advertisements are published in the printing press, information on courses is distributed through mail, more successful training institutions distribute their training calendars among potential clients. Information obtained through reliable recommenders also plays an important role.

Private persons have no real possibilities to get help in finding a job and planning one's career. Services of private counselling centres are rather costly and not affordable to an average citizen. The state's employment offices cannot perform this function yet due to the small number of employees and their present workload.

Employment offices have started to arrange group consultations for their clients where information on the labour market is given, rights of the unemployed are explained, unemployed are encouraged to independently seek for work, and consultations by psychologists are given. Such consultations will in the future replace the social skills courses that basically deal with the same problems.

Therefore, it can be said in conclusion that there is no common system and access to training information is not guaranteed evenly to all target groups.

The following problems are typical of the relations between the training provider and client:

- continuing training and retraining courses are offered mainly proceeding from the readiness of the provider and the previous efficient sales of the courses;
- training providers often lack initiative to approach clients and skills to design and sell their training services;
- in many enterprises the employers are not yet ready to clearly formulate what kind of knowledge, skills, proficiency, attitudes and personal characteristics they would like their employees to have;
- there is no general criterion - namely, no national qualification system of employees;
- there is no common information and counselling system about training.

7. Communication between employment offices and training providers

Employment offices gather information on vacancies from local employers. Depending on the current and future demand for labour, providers offering the relevant training are identified. As most of the training consultants have about 4-5 years experience, close contacts and cooperation have developed with local adult training providers and the consultants have information on training organised at training institutions.

Depending on the need, whole courses or the required number of places at courses to be organised by the provider are bought. Employment office concludes a contract in a specified form with the provider in the case of each course, stipulating the rights and obligations of the parties. A curriculum specifying the contents of the contract is attached to it as an obligatory annex.

8. Role of continuing training in the labour market policy, target groups in labour market training

When speaking about an active labour market policy it is necessary to pay attention also to continuing training, especially in order to reduce structural unemployment:

- as more new equipment and technologies are applied, more highly qualified staff is needed and the present one does not meet the requirements any more. Continuing training for the existing manpower would be the way out;
- the Soviet system prepared a large number of specialists (also highly qualified engineers, constructors, technologists, technicians) for whom there is no demand on the labour market at the present time. Retraining of these people would be the way out.

Raising of people's competitiveness through continuing training is important because employees with new knowledge and skills are more valued by employers.

The Act on Social Protection of Unemployed stipulates that unemployed people and those seeking a job have the right to obtain free information on labour market training possibilities. Thus, having information on the possibilities of continuing training and forwarding this information to the clients is one of the tasks of the training consultant. Every employment office has information on the notice board and at the information desk on training courses starting in the next training period.

Counselling is provided at employment offices by training consultants, in 3 employment offices by psychologists. However, there is a prevailing tendency that most of those applying for training wish to study the computer, half of the future trainees would like to study bookkeeping and girls graduating from secondary schools want to become secretaries. These choices do generally not coincide with the actual labour demand.

The Labour Market Board has data on the educational level of the unemployed and those seeking jobs who have addressed the Board. The data show that 28% of the job seekers have basic education, 43% secondary education, 22% secondary special education and 7% higher education, among those registered as unemployed the respective percentages are 24%,

45%, 24% and 7%. The unemployed having basic education in general do not have an occupation or profession. Therefore it is feasible to refer them to acquire the basic professional skills. In this group there are also fresh secondary school graduates who have not acquired any work-related preparation at school (there were 570 such graduates in 1997 and 795 in 1996). In 1997 4,207 unemployed persons or 47% of the total number of those undergoing training graduated from primary work-related courses. The average duration of courses was 31 days, 75% of the graduates found a job. It is clear that it is difficult to achieve better results with limited financial resources which determine the length of the training.

Specialists who are not needed in the labour market are referred to acquire a new speciality, thus also to primary professional training. Naturally, when making curricula, their existing knowledge and skills are taken into account.

Unemployed people who have lost their jobs due to insufficient qualification or whose special training does not any more meet the requirements of employers are referred to continuing training. Mainly speciality training and courses on acquiring computer skills, foreign languages and driving skills are organised.

In 1997 2,995 unemployed or 34% of all the graduates of courses graduated from continuing training. Of them, 1,483 (50%) graduated from speciality training, 1,165 (39%) from computer skills training, 195 (6%) from foreign languages courses. The National Labour Market Board has pointed out to training providers that the role of continuing training should be increased.

In the first quarter of 1998, 816 (40%) people had graduated from primary training and 828 (40.3%) from continuing training.

A specific group among the unemployed is formed of people who need to be encouraged and taught how to find a job. These people have usually been without work for several months.

For them adaptation training has been organised, including shorter social skills courses (job seeking, psychological counselling), 15-30-day adaptation courses (job seeking, integration into Estonian society, improvement of language skills), entrepreneurship courses (basic knowledge about entrepreneurship, establishing one's own company). In 1997, 1,693 unemployed people passed adaptation training (19% of the total number of graduates).

It should be pointed out that about 20% of the registered unemployed participated in labour market training in 1995-1996, while in 1997 16.5% of the registered unemployed were referred to training. The decreased number of people passing training is related to the higher cost of training and scarcity of funds allocated for training.

II Barriers to enhance continuing training

1. Overview of the barriers

1.1. Barriers to unite the vocational education reform and continuing training

Organisation of continuing training and retraining and creation of a corresponding system is of great importance in the vocational education reform process. It is clear that the economic development and success of each country depends on how well educated and professionally prepared its citizens are and how competitive they are in the labour market (especially when Estonia joins the EU). Thus, the vocational education system must take international requirements into account in its primary and continuing training and retraining, it needs to be flexible and capable of reacting to the rapid changes in labour market demand and needs of the society. When speaking about the vocational education reform as a whole we have to ask ourselves what kind of continuing and retraining system we need as regards labour market training and who should be the training providers.

As Estonia is small and our financial resources are limited, this system should be as rational and economically effective as possible. Opinions have been expressed in the course of various discussions that the role of vocational education establishments in the organisation of continuing training and retraining taking into account the needs of the labour market should be much greater than so far.

This principle has been specified also in the principles included in the VET Concept Paper approved by the Estonian Government in January 1998.

This approach enables us to utilise the existing school network and infrastructure and will help us to substantially economise compared to if we started to build up another national parallel structure for the continuing training and retraining of adults or unemployed (e.g. the AMU system in the Nordic countries and many other EU countries whose systems have not turned out to be efficient).

The actual need for training as regards economic branches and regions needs to be analysed more thoroughly and competent decisions should be made on that basis. Work has been started in this respect in Estonia on the initiative of the PHARE Foundation Vocational Education and Training Reform in Estonia and the National Observatory.

When organising continuing training and retraining, attention should be paid not only to teaching and improvement of professional skills but also to the development of personal qualities (coping in the changing society, readiness and desire to continuously study, self-control, activeness, self-confidence, etc.). For that we need continuing training and retraining courses of different contents and orientation, in order to satisfy the needs of different target groups.

Most of the Estonian vocational education establishments are already providing continuing training and retraining in the training market. On the basis of the data collected by the Ministry of Education in 1997, only 5 of the 82 vocational education establishments did not organise training for adults. The number of participants in adult training courses has grown by 3.2 times compared to 1993. However, vocational education institutions have not managed to start cooperation with employment offices on organising courses for the unemployed. Apparently, the offered training or its quality do not always meet the actual needs.

Those vocational education institutions that have established a special department for continuing training and retraining and have hired employees with the required preparation are more successful. The PHARE Foundation Vocational Education and Training Reform in Estonia has also paid attention to increasing the potential of pilot schools as regards continuing training and retraining as follows:

- new curricula based on modules that take into account the requirements of the labour market have been developed, easily adaptable for adult training;
- courses on adult education have been organised for managers and teachers of pilot schools;
- pilot schools have drawn up programmes to develop adult education;
- the new assessment system is based on the competence of the trainee and the occupational standards and should link with the new qualification system to be developed in Estonia;
- schools are partly equipped with modern equipment and teaching aids

Pilot schools have started adult education on the basis of the modules developed under the new programme and our current experience is that such a flexible curriculum system is justified.

The Ministry of Education believes that it would be necessary to expand the pilot schools network during the vocational education reform process. Pilot schools should become polyfunctional educational institutions that are able to offer effective continuing training and retraining for adults. There are intentions to support the establishment of 3-4 regional training centres during the 2nd stage of the PHARE vocational education reform programme in order to offer primary and continuing training and retraining considering the specific needs of the relevant region.

It is planned to establish such centres first of all in these regions of Estonia where the unemployment rate is higher than the country's average (East-, SE- and West-Estonia).

More attention than so far should be paid to:

- improvement of methods for identification of needs for primary, continuing training and retraining in order to take into account the development needs of the country as a whole and the specific region. Better cooperation than so far will be needed between public administration agencies (Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Economy), as well as local governments, to improve cooperation between enterprises and educational institutions. Among the owners of regional training centres there should also be representatives of enterprises.
- development of cooperation mechanisms between the client and training provider in order to implement continuing training and retraining;
- modernisation of equipment and teaching aids at educational establishments;
- organisation of continuing training in andragogy for teachers (most of the teachers at vocational schools have very little preparation in andragogy or do not have any at all);
- planned periods of industry release should become an integral part of the continuing training for teachers;
- vocational education establishments should become more active in identifying training needs and in offering continuing training and retraining;
- funding mechanisms of schools should have a built-in incentive to organise continuing training and retraining;
- the continuing training and retraining system should become more transparent and link with the qualification system to be developed. A rise in salary should accompany a rise in qualification level.

1.2. Role of enterprises in training

Analysts have stated upon studying the training needs of companies that 62% of them need training for their staff during the next couple of years and about 50% of the respondents need consultation. Most of these companies (70%) intend to turn to some training or consultancy company, 13% to entrepreneurship centre or business advice centre. More interest has been shown up to courses on sales, computer and language skills, bookkeeping and technical training are the most popular. Consultancy is required most of all in legal matters, bookkeeping, computer training and marketing.

Training and consultancy is needed also by new companies. 3.8% (age group 15-74) of the population intend to establish their own company. If about 1/3 of these carry their plans into life in the next years, about 15,000 new companies may be added to the existing ones.

Many large enterprises carry out internal training, both specialised and continuing training. This is so due to the fact that no provider of sufficiently

flexible training taking into account the particular features of the company is found or exists. At the same time, a large part of the companies believe that internal training will be reduced in the future as more providers of required and acceptable training appear.

1.3. Study motivation of private persons

The understandings and attitudes on adult training are reflected in a study conducted at the end of 1997. The results of that study enable us to make the following conclusions:

- It is very probable that a circle of certain people is arising for whom training is affordable and who actively use it. The present continuing training system is more favourable to younger people who have higher education and whose position in the social hierarchy is higher, whose financial situation is better than the average, i.e. people who have more possibilities. It could be said that the so-called "winners" are prevailing among trainees. Less secured groups (older age groups, unemployed, blue-collar, people with lower education, non-Estonians, disabled) have been left aside from training although continuing training and retraining of these people would be especially necessary to integrate them into the society.
- Large-scale participation in training is hindered by the relatively high cost of training. The current practise of financial support to trainees makes differentiation between training possibilities for the population even wider. The employer pays most often for the training of these employees who could afford it themselves (managers in public administration agencies) while people having a lower salary have to pay for the training themselves.
- Possibilities of continuing training offered to specific target groups are also related to the fact that scarcity of resources is an important reason for not participating in training: lack of money, age, often health. This is especially true since research shows that there are only a few people who have an antagonistic approach towards studying (i.e. people who are not interested in studying, those doubtful about the usefulness of studying or training) or people who think that the existing training does not meet their needs. In other words, the largest differentiation between demand and training possibilities are limited by material resources in different population strata.
- Participation in adult training is limited in addition to scarcity of resources also by outdated understandings about learning and training, their aims. The favourable attitude towards learning on the level of everyday thinking "learning plays a very important role in a person's life" is accompanied by old-fashioned understandings: people think that learning is mostly related to acquisition of knowledge offered to young people under the formal education system.

People think that adult training is necessary only under such conditions where a direct need for improving one's knowledge and skills arises (when "life compels one to study"). This understanding is in contradiction with today's

situation where knowledge becomes outdated more and more rapidly and the main emphasis should be laid on continuous acquisition of new knowledge, skills and experience. In Estonia (especially in continuing training) orientation on meeting the educational needs of a *person* is dominating. Potential trainees, trainers and employers have therefore rather different objectives when participating in the education process. The corresponding differentiation among the "training consumers" is also apparent: the circle dealing with training is following the continuing education ideology.

- The fact that a generation of young people is dominating in the Estonian society and economy due to the structural changes and that this generation is the "winners" has brought about a tendency by which the percentage of people over 40 years of age who believe that they are too old to study is rapidly increasing. Prevalence of this attitude among unemployed people is especially worrying. Thus, in addition to the lack of resources (mainly lack of money) and being out of the labour market, the unemployed are not attending training, as a result of which their possibilities to integrate into the society decrease even more. Research on adult training lets us assume that there exists some kind of a syndrome of (un)successfulness, expressing itself by participation in training and demand for training. The sense of "loser" does not allow any "strategic" approach to education as a means to improve one's position. At the same time the "winners" use training possibilities to create new opportunities for themselves.
- Continuing training should support also those who tend to be among the "losers", also help the unemployed to integrate into the working society again. Unfortunately, the current continuing education is mainly meant for employed people. The percentage of people attending training among the unemployed and among mothers on maternity leave is more than two times smaller than among other social groups, not to mention the disabled people and pensioners of whom only a few have participated in continuing training.
- The attempt to preserve one's *status quo* is popular. Still, Estonia has currently entered a social period where many people have to start learning as a result of unpleasant changes arising from outer sources.

1.4. Problems of continuing training on the national and regional levels

The development in Estonia during the re-independence period has been quite uneven as regards regions. In order to make the development more even, the Government has applied several national regional development programmes. Several aid programmes focusing on different aspects have been implemented to intensify regional development:

1. borderlands programme;
2. islands programme;
3. village movement support programme;
4. border areas programme;

5. monofunctional settlements programme;
6. development programme for Ida-Virumaa county and SE-Estonia.

In addition to the aforementioned programmes finances were built into the 1998 National Budget to support investments into regional programmes related to children, families, elderly people and disabled people. Funds have been allocated to county governments to organise regional development and planning in the counties. Finances for regional-political studies have been allocated as well.

In order to develop entrepreneurship, a support system for entrepreneurship has been continuously developed, consisting mainly of a credit program for small and medium sized enterprises, counselling programme for small enterprises and PHARE aid programmes.

Under the counselling programme for small enterprises a support counselling system has been established in the form of 17 entrepreneurship centres. Continuing training is one of the consultancy services offered.

A study on small enterprises made in 1997 shows that the skills related to company management are most often based on previous work experience. In other fields self-education is dominating. A third of the respondents had been to courses or consultation only in the case of legal matters. 31% of all the respondents had been to courses organised by private companies, 13% at entrepreneurship centres or business advice centres, 8% abroad and 2% had participated in courses organised by the Labour Market Board.

Regional development has been enhanced in the 1990's by a new entrepreneurial movement, as rule by small enterprises. This has become possible only thanks to the existence of entrepreneurial people. Data on establishment of companies during that period indicate that founding of new companies was in full swing in 1990-1993, rising continuously during that period. The percentage in the rise of new companies dropped in 1994-1996 but grew again in 1997. (The new rise is partly attributable to amendments in the law pertaining to entrepreneurship. Some old companies were liquidated and the owners established new companies).

As to regions, activeness in entrepreneurship has a SE-NW orientation, with the exception of some larger cities which are especially active in this field. Growth in the number of employees working in small and medium-sized enterprises is continuing (in 1997, 60% of the employed people worked in small enterprises). In the situation of a continuous overall decrease in employment in Estonia, employment has dropped the most in the primary and secondary sectors, especially in trade, financial and public administration spheres. Employment has grown in Tallinn. Employment decrease in the primary sector has influenced the most the agrarian Central-Estonia, some growth has been experienced on the Hiiumaa Island and in West-Estonia. The number of employees in the secondary sector has been the greatest in the

former industrial regions. Growth in industry may be noticed in these counties which have previously had no large-scale industry.

Rate of unemployment is an important indicator of regional development. Unemployment is still high in SE-Estonia which is far from the larger cities and regions of a more diverse economy, and in Ida-Virumaa suffering under reorganisation of industry.

The percentage of registered unemployed and job seekers has, however, decreased among the working age population in most counties.

A study on the effectiveness of regional-political measures in Estonia that was finished at the beginning of 1998 dealt with processes of balanced regional development and availability of regional aid. The latter has been especially closely related to the local initiatives in the Estonian regional policy. Effectiveness in the future can be ensured only by strengthening local initiatives, on the one hand, and by regarding projects covered by finances to be the first priorities, on the other hand. It is important that applying for such projects would be affordable to namely the most problematic regions.

Smaller local governments located in border areas and having in general more problems than the others are not able to analyse preconditions of their regions effectively enough and thus, cannot draw up quality applications for financing. In Estonia a network of development advisers should start working who could operate under contractual relations for local governments and other applicants for regional aid, getting support within the framework of regional policy for that purpose.

2. Barriers in the development of the continuing training and vocational education reforms

The main barrier to combine the possibilities of the continuing training and vocational education reforms is the weakness of relationships between vocational education institutions and enterprises. Development of a national qualification system is still in its initial phase and the draft law for a vocation attribution system is still being developed. The national qualification system is based on the *description of required skills*, the so-called occupational standards, in the development of which the main role will be played by representatives of employers' and employees' organisations. The undergoing process has clearly enhanced communication between training providers and enterprises/professional associations. According to the plans the first 15 occupational standards have to be ready by the end of 1998. During 1999 the next 50 occupation standards will be worked out.

Systematic human resource development is effected in more successful companies through personnel training. PARE, an association of personnel managers, unites about 100 personnel managers. However, the activities of this organisation have not essentially helped to raise the effectiveness of the work related to human resource development.

Training of public officials and pedagogues is also systematically supported by the National Budget. Continuing training of the rest of employees is more random and depending on many factors. The possibilities created so far for continuing training do not form a unified national system.

Social partners - entrepreneurship-related organisations and various associations of employers and professional associations - have paid increasing attention to the importance of vocational training on the enterprise and national levels. Employers have been less active but, nevertheless, have been involved in the processes.

The role of the state as a partner is unclear under the given context. This is so because the tasks related to employees' qualification have been distributed between various ministries and their subagencies. Therefore it is difficult to reach common decisions and to implement them.

The planned Vocational Education Council and the occupational councils already established or to be established have an important role in the development of a national cooperation network. As a result of the work of the Vocational Education Council:

- the expectations, interests and common interests of the parties would become known;
- role distribution and cooperation forms between the parties will be agreed on;
- based on research, a national strategy and policy, priorities and trends pertaining to the regional and local development programmes of vocational education and work-related continuing training will be developed;
- development of high-technology study centres will be coordinated;
- principles of the development of occupational counselling will be determined;
- the work on the national qualification system and vocation attribution system will be coordinated;
- a plan for the development of work-related training for adults and the main principles of legal acts supporting it will be determined;
- preconditions for the development of continuing training and retraining of skilled workers and specialists will be created.

The work of vocational councils should lay a basis for all-Estonian constructive cooperation in each occupation. Still, only these occupations will be covered by the operation of vocational councils which do not require academic higher education and, thus, the corresponding occupational training. Qualification requirements for some occupations requiring higher education will be regulated by the coming Occupation Act.

III Initiatives launched by international donors

1. Name or heading
2. Objectives
3. Duration
4. Budget
5. Expected outcomes
6. Assessment of importance

It is very difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of various international aid and cooperation programmes as regards training. Very often training is just one component within the whole programme. In addition, much of the cooperation is dedicated only to solving training problems. A more specific overview of these projects is given in the annex.

Since 1993, extensive cooperation of vocational education institutions with Finland has been carried out to find possibilities to educate adults in Finland (in building, geodesy, sewing, catering and accommodation, cleaning services). In cooperation with Germany, adult training has been modernised in the sectors of economy, metalworking, welding, car repair and hydraulics and pneumatics, in cooperation with Denmark in medicine and polygraphy. We already mentioned the 13 pilot vocational schools whose work has been modernised. The vocational schools modernised in cooperation with foreign countries form the core of the pilot schools network.

1. ETAK – Training Centre of the Estonian Labour Market Board, financed by the Swedish International Aid Fund SIDA.
2. Creation of basis in five fields to start labour market training, and starting of the training.
3. 1993-1997.
4. 4.3 million SEK.
5. Modern occupational training for adults in car repairs, electronics, maintenance of buildings, tinsmith's work-welding, cooking.
6. Successful training for adults is being carried out in the four first specialities at the Lasnamäe Mechanics School and in cooking at the Kuressaare Vocational School.

1. Establishment of a trade practise company, funded by German Labour Ministry.
2. Acquisition of trade and storing specialities through practise.
3. 1995-1997.
4. ca 1 million EEK, of which information systems cost 0.5 million.
5. Acquisition of a profession through work experience in a modern enterprise.
6. Training is carried out at the Tartu Food Industry and Service School and at the Tartu Adult Training Centre. Graduates have easily found work.

1. Phare - technical aid to support the Estonian Labour Market Board.
2. Improvement of labour market policy, data analysis, labour market services and relations.
3. 1996-1998.
4. Total cost of the programme is 100,000 ECU.
5. Introduction of group consultations as a part of the programme, personnel training for 64 employees and 2 workshops for 32 persons.
6. The personnel has been trained to use a statistics software package, development of an on-line system is going on. Group consultation models have been worked out to be applied in the work of employment offices.

C Development trends of continuing training

1. National framework

The role of *state institutions* has been limited so far by coordinative operation creating conditions, as well as by establishment of legislation supporting and regulating adult training, and by certain financial support and tax benefits. The role of county and local governments in the organisation of adult training has been low for the reason that vocational education establishments (including applied higher educational institutions and universities) are directly subordinated to ministries and the regional and municipal structures have only limited possibilities to influence their operation.

The development process of *social partnership* typical of a mature society takes time. However, during the 7-8 years of the re-independence rapid development has taken place also in this field. Employers' organisations and professional associations have come into being, the relatively small trade unions of employees are becoming more active and are searching for their place in the society.

In order to find a common understanding of the values of the educational and labour worlds and to alleviate the existing contradictions the Vocational Education Council is being currently reestablished to unite representatives of all ministries, institutions and organisations dealing with work-related training. A new law on occupations is being prepared and a national qualification system for employees is being developed in cooperation between ministries, employers' and employees' organisations and representatives of training providers.

This system would allow to consider the individual's prior education and work experience when assessing his or her qualifications and therefore the system would be in line with the European Union practices in recognition and comparability of qualifications.

Requirements for concrete occupations and qualification levels will be worked out mainly in cooperation between representatives of employers of the relevant sectors and workers/experts. On that basis vocational councils for concrete sectors and qualification examination committees will be formed.

The planned national qualification system for employees will most probably become the central axis for continuing education of employees, creating through participation in continuing education and self-development a basis to plan and design one's own career.

Parties in the labour market - employees and employers - have rather different interests and objectives, the qualification examination system based on competence, which is a part of the continuing education strategy, may serve the interests of both parties if implemented effectively.

A competent, continuously studying and developing staff is the cornerstone of quality in any enterprise, the security for its economic success and competitiveness of products and services. Participation of employers in the development of qualification requirements ensures correspondence of such requirements to the needs of enterprises. If an employee with a qualification certificate is hired, his/her knowledge, skills and capabilities level will be secured by the examinations system and will enable the enterprise to hire staff depending on its needs.

Work-related training will become more concrete: development of curricula is based on qualification examinations requirements established for different levels of occupations and specialities. Training standard and competence of teachers will be assessed by the success of trainees at qualification exams.

In order to identify training needs different ways are used with different target groups:

1. When identifying the training need of *public administration officials and personnel of formal education institutions* national standards are taken as the basis:

- a) requirements established for public administration officials on which basis their continuing training curricula are developed;
- b) training need of educational workers (school managers and teachers) is determined by the requirements of the test specification manual for educational workers.

Public administration agencies and formal education institutions identify the training need through human resource development management and request the corresponding training on account of funds allocated for that purpose from educational establishments/companies providing the training, or organise the training in agencies themselves.

2. In public and private enterprises the training need is identified proceeding from the vocational, professional and occupational requirements and the

relevant training is carried out in the enterprises themselves or by training providers.

Training providers are guided in offering training by national and regional priorities, as well as requests presented by enterprises in the relevant region. It should be admitted, however, that the above principles do not function very effectively: efforts of training providers in identifying actual training needs are often not extensive and mainly such training which is more suitable for the training institution and has sold well, is offered.

There is no common system securing *quality of adult training* in Estonia yet. The mechanism for securing quality is currently functioning as follows:

- employers as the main clients of training have already developed an experience based opinion on various providers of work-related training. The training market functions by self-regulation: training providers of low quality do not get requests and drop out of competition;
- in institutions of formal education quality is secured by compliance with nationally approved curricula and checking of the results of training based on national standards: in higher educational establishments and vocational higher educational establishments a national examination system based on common standards is functioning and common occupational qualification requirements are being developed;
- informal education - work-related training in private and municipal educational institutions and in NGOs. Curricula are as a rule compiled on the basis of demand of the client (enterprise or interest group). There exist no common standards for carrying out the training (in respect of curricula, duration of training, graduation requirements). Training means raising one's professional as well as vocational and occupational qualification or, in other words, it is work-related continuing training. The quality of training is assessed by the client/employer. Trainees passing the training successfully will be issued a document by the training provider, the "weight" of which in the labour market depends to a great extent to the reputation of the training provider built up by the compliance of the graduates' knowledge and skills to modern requirements, as well as by the further success of the graduates in the labour market.

Among elements of *the national system for securing quality* the following could be listed:

- training institutions whose training cycle exceeds 120 study hours or 6 calendar months are obliged to apply to the Ministry of Education for a training permit in accordance with the requirements stipulated in the Private School Act (development plan of the school, relevant curriculum, existence of the study and material resources and qualified teachers). Institutions having a training permit will issue a nationally recognised certificate to the trainees passing the training successfully;
- continuing training for managers and teachers of public vocational education institutions is carried out at continuing education departments of universities, and an andragogy module is also included in the curricula.

- *In order to ensure quality of provision, the following is planned for the future:* training of teachers and trainers of adults and training of trainers to acquire the knowledge and skills needed for training activities and continuing adult education. This is carried out by the Andragogy Chair of the Tallinn Pedagogical University, some private training institutions and NGOs;
- the licensing system for teachers and trainers of adults is being launched, based on an exam (after relevant training) proving the qualification of a teacher or trainer of adults. A two-year teaching experience as a teacher or trainer of adults and two letters of recommendation from recognised specialists in the respective sectors are an additional condition for obtaining a license of a teacher or trainer of adults. Having a license is not obligatory but it is a possibility giving some advantages in the training market under the conditions of competition. It is also a one of the quality guarantees for the client.

Financial stimulation of adult training: no changes are currently foreseen in budgetary funding, tax benefits and paid study leaves.

2. Continuing training as a part of active labour market policy

Possibilities of the employed and unemployed to participate in the training system established by the state were described above. A great number of enterprises organise and buy training for their staff. Still, in a situation where no labour market policy has been determined, we cannot speak about continuing education as an active part of the labour market policy although the people responsible for continuing education on the state level do have their own vision of the role of continuing education (it could be a part of active labour market policy).

On the state level the following elements should be paid attention to:

- interest in employment of the population and reduction of social tensions;
- creation of favourable conditions for organising work-related training for adults and guaranteeing access to training by coordination of legal regulation and international cooperation, as well as support to research and training of teachers of adults; training organised by the state to provide some new production fields with skilled manpower and specialists would also be necessary, as well as tax benefits to enterprises providing training to their staff themselves and using their equipment for practical training;
- coordination of the development of the system through organising cooperation and exchanging information between those involved;
- establishment of national occupational requirements that take into account international requirements, licensing of trainers;
- identification of the development trends of work-related continuing education for adults based on the general development trends of the economy;

- being a client for training, if necessary (to implement new laws and legal acts, to introduce new curricula, to provide training to specialists and skilled workers in some new sectors, etc.).

3. Training in and for enterprises

In Estonia where market economy is still rapidly developing, training in enterprises is quite varying. Large and richer companies pay considerable attention to the development of their staff but many small enterprises who are still looking for their place in the market and fight for survival pay less attention to personnel development, including training. Very often only the needs of the present day are important. In some cases employers lack a clear understanding as to what kind of qualification to require from their employees. As long as employees are not presented high requirements and free labour is still available in the labour market, training of personnel will not be paid the necessary attention to.

Many employers have, however, understood the need for continuous personnel development work. Personnel training matters are usually dealt with by the personnel manager but there are enterprises that have hired a special training manager. Training is planned in accordance with the strategic development plan of the company, if any. Job descriptions are made up for workplaces and positions. A labour contract concluded between the enterprise and the employee is an important document in working relations, stipulating the obligations and rights of both parties and the extent of responsibility. More and more often possibilities for advanced training for the employee are specified in that document. Training need proceeds from the requirements set at work, on the one hand, and the general development needs of the employee, on the other hand. Use of the evaluation system for work profitability is widespread. In more successful companies considerable sums have been allocated to personnel development.

There are different ways to organise training:

- Selection of the most suitable courses among public courses, this is the main method for theoretical training of managers of all levels in most enterprises;

A special training cycle is requested from a training company for in-service training. Training is combined with organisational counselling and the training plan is compiled together with the company and taking into account the company's training and development needs.

A consultant of the training company will repeatedly visit the client company, familiarise with the company's problems and draw up a training plan directly corresponding to the specific activities of the company and oriented on solving actual problems. This training method makes it possible to reach several objectives at the same time: it will raise the level of theoretical knowledge of the staff, make them see and analyse problems

inside the company, help to solve actual problems of the company and improve cooperation inside the company, as well as motivate the staff.

- Training in enterprises for which no services of training institutions are used. Training programmes and plans are compiled by specialists of the company and training is conducted by specialists of the company itself. This method is the cheapest for enterprises but the fact that the trainers have *insufficient preparation in andragogy*, little knowledge about the specific features and methods of adult training do not allow to achieve high efficiency.

A good example of personnel development work in an enterprise is the work done at the Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. They have developed a long-term strategic plan for that purpose and set concrete objectives. Personnel development is a regular long-term process, aimed at the continuous development of the whole organisation. The main objective for 1998 was to achieve satisfaction of the employees.

Work on job descriptions has started. Individual development plans will be drawn up for each employee to develop and motivate the staff. These focus on identification of the existing knowledge and skills of the employee and the training need based on that, identification of factors necessary to secure satisfaction with work and setting of short-, medium- and long-term objectives. Interviews between the employee and his/her direct manager have been conducted to make it possible to draw up individual development plans. These interviews aimed at:

- raising the employee's work efficiency, results and job satisfaction;
- discussing the contents of the job description and planning the necessary training;
- planning the work-related development of the employee and strengthening the employee's role in the organisation;
- discussing the performance of the already set objectives;
- setting objectives for the next period;
- getting ideas for making the working conditions and atmosphere more stimulating.

The interview is held regularly once a year. On that basis it is possible to flexibly draw up development and training plans that meet the actual needs of the employees.

These interviews facilitate development of a dialogue between the management and employees. Employees obtain a better understanding of expectations related to them, they can express their opinions about work and personal matters. This is motivating, the objectives become clearer and employees feel that they are needed in the company. For the manager, feedback and information for future planning are important.

As a conclusion, the employer:

- is the key person and striving force in adult education whose training interests are designed by the conditions created by the state for that purpose;
- develops exactingness as regards adult education and staff qualification;
- is interested in the existence of qualified personnel;
- creates study interest in employees with his/her exactingness.

4. Individual

In order to get a better position or to retain the existing job the employees:

- are interested in better working and remuneration conditions and acquisition of knowledge about new equipment and technologies;
- his/her study need depend on demand in the labour market and the exactingness of the employer and the requirements presented at a concrete workplace;
- the rights and obligations of employer and employee could be stipulated in an annex to the labour contract, in a special *training contract*.

5. Training provider

- ensures training quality;
- should organise more than so far training oriented on the future (EU matters, what is needed to implement laws, etc.), is often acting in the so-called "hot" market;
- organisers of work-related training should exactly know what kind of training is needed and who needs it;
- should show up more initiative and creativity and be able to modify its training service in cooperation with the potential client and by taking into account its wishes.

D Propositions and concrete contexts where possible projects could start development processes

It is widely believed that life-long learning is our future. However, so far we have not gone much beyond the slogan. The idea of life-long learning is very difficult to implement because it is impossible to compel an adult person to continue the learning process. Only when studying becomes an internal need of an individual and at the same time favourable conditions are created, a learning society can come into being. This is very important as many analysts believe that a learning society is the solution for future Estonia.

The Education Forum (dedicated mainly to problems of general comprehensive education and primary vocational education) and the first Adult Education Forum held in November 1997, are events helping us to move from slogans to actions. In respect of the further development of continuing education it would be necessary to take the documents drawn up by interested parties at these forums as the basis as it is quite probable that ideas expressed before large forums that were supported by many people will be implemented.

The first Adult Education Forum, attended by training providers, employers, members of the Government, representatives of professional associations, employment offices and employees, was dedicated to the problems of labour market and work-related education. This is why the common viewpoints formed after two days of discussions on the current situation, and the proposals for the future are very suitable to make conclusions of the viewpoints presented above in this paper.

Viewpoints of the participants in the final document of the Forum:

1. Changes are taking place and will take place in the labour environment, i.e. the rapid development of equipment and technology present higher and higher competence requirements to all levels of employees, to workers and top managers, forcing them to continuous self-improvement.
2. Continuance of employment and the raising unemployment rate require critical analysis of the continuing training and retraining system of the unemployed, making it more open (mainly involvement of job seekers) and flexible.
3. Integration into the European Union presents a challenge to work-related training in Estonia, making it compulsory to acquire competence meeting the European standard.
4. The increasing age of the working age population, bringing about changes in the demographic situation compel us to pay more attention to raising the work-related competence of the adult population through continuing training.

The Forum analysed compliance of work-related training in Estonia to today's needs and found that:

1. There is insufficient information on the labour market as regards education, the demands of employers on the work-related education of employees pertaining to professions, vocations and occupations have not been studied thoroughly enough;
2. Rapid growth of economy has brought about scarcity of qualified labour in several sectors - the potential acquired during the Soviet period is starting to be exhausted, a new work-related training system has not yet been launched;
3. Relationships between social partners (employees, employers, training providers) as regards feasibility and quality guarantees of work-related training is weak, determination of the quality of training services offered in the training market presents problems;

4. There is no adult education system in Estonia, cooperation between the state and private sectors and NGOs is weak;
5. There is no system for training adult training specialists (advisors, instructors, organisers of training, teachers and trainers of adults);
6. The new system of legislative and normative acts regulating adult education is insufficient and the existing system is outdated.

The Forum made the following proposals to change the situation:

1. Work-related adult education, especially the training of specialists and skilled workers and continuing training should be considered to be a task of national priority. Adult education priorities and trends should be determined with the help of different interest groups, an adult education development programme should be drawn up and approved by the *Riigikogu* (Parliament). Proceeding from that, a programme task force should be formed as a committee of professionals in order to design the Estonian adult education system;
2. The system of legislative and normative acts regulating adult education should be reviewed and amended.
3. The Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Social Affairs and other state and municipal agencies should allocate funds to conduct research in the sectors of work-related education; in addition to identifying the social education need also economic education need should be identified;
4. An all-Estonian employment prognosis and personal advice service should be established.
5. The Continuing Education Council consisting of members of the Government, representatives of employers, employees and training providers should be formed at the Government of Estonia in order to regulate work-related adult education;
6. A system of work-related retraining training and continuing education should be launched, offering training to the unemployed, job seekers, those wishing to improve their situation in the labour market, but also to the most successful people who aim at continuous self-improvement;
7. To make a proposal to associations of counties and local governments to launch tripartite (economic, administrative and educational structures) county forums and to form an informative and coordinative unit in each county;
8. The county adult education system to be established should be used as a concrete means to carry out regional policy. Measures to improve cooperation between state institutions, ministries, associations of employers, local governments and educational representations in the development, organisation and financing of adult education should be created;
9. An adult education database accessible to all interest groups should be created, giving an overview of the training market and making it possible to find a suitable training offer;
10. Qualification requirements to trainers should be established as one of the measures to raise the quality of training in the training market, and a

system of acquisition of qualification and profession of a teacher or trainer of adults should be created.

Similarly to the Education Forum which has become a continuously operating body whose activities culminate once a year on a three-day all-Estonian conference, the Adult Education Forum is also becoming a tradition. In November 1998 the Week of Adult Learner will take place, similar to those organised in many countries and coming to a conclusion with the Second Adult Education Forum on the topic "Work-related Training and European Integration". The organisers would like to focus on the following issues during the events taking place in that week:

- Introduction and distribution of the idea of life-long learning in every region of Estonia;
- Introduction of self-development and learning as the main means of coping with work, social and personal life on the level of each individual;
- Raising of the importance of local governments in their respective regions in creating training and learning possibilities;
- Valuing the activities of adult education institutions and introduction of training possibilities;
- Raising the importance of training for employers.

E Conclusions and recommendations

Organisation of work-related continuing education (professional, vocational and occupational training meeting international qualification requirements), propagation of the concept of life-long learning and training possibilities based on new information technology are the current key issues. By concluding all the above ideas we can make the following recommendations:

1. Work-related continuing training should be considered as a national priority and state support should be ensured to it.
2. For enterprises organising training and continuing training for their employees state benefits should be established, for example tax breaks.
3. A continuing education fund should be established.
4. Regular publication of catalogues of training offers should be organised.
5. A national register of companies, educational institutions and private entrepreneurs should be founded and the principles and procedures for assessment of training quality should be established.
6. A system for assessment of quality of work-related training should be developed and introduced.
7. It is necessary to create a national work-related occupation and career counselling system.
8. The state should facilitate studies on identifying the training needs of new and existing manpower in the labour market in accordance with requirements of enterprises.

9. Development of qualification standards and the national qualification system should be continued.
10. Measures for continuing training and retraining of dismissed employees should be established by law.
11. Increase of funds allocated from the National Budget to the training of unemployed should be achieved, as well as more efficient use of such funds. Training possibilities for job seekers should be created in addition to those of the registered unemployed.
12. In order to avoid unemployment of secondary school graduates, to create possibilities for secondary school pupils to undergo primary work-related training in addition to acquisition of the general comprehensive education. Such possibilities exist at the present time only in some counties.
13. To establish in each vocational education institution a structural unit organising continuing education for adults. In rural areas general comprehensive schools should be used more to provide training for adults.
14. To develop mechanisms to increase the rights, obligations and responsibility of local governments in securing work-related training possibilities for the population of the area.
15. To create training possibilities in andragogy for teachers and trainers of adults.
16. Based on national development trends, to develop a national programme on adult education and to secure its implementation by National Budget funding.
17. To establish a network of development advisors counselling local governments.