

Developments: Organisations cease their operations due to political pressure

EAEAs member from Belarus, The Association of Life-Long Learning and Enlightenment (ALLLE) describes that the adult learning and education situation in Belarus has dramatically deteriorated in 2020/2021. Following mass protests and demonstrations against the government and the outcome of the election results, many non-governmental or business organisations have been forced to close. In addition, a lot of people, fearing repercussions and persecution, have decided to flee to neighboring countries.

For a significant part of adult education providers, the COVID 19 pandemic and the socio-political situation in the country provoked a crisis and threatened their very existence. It is very difficult to work, and opportunities for financial stability are minimized. This was aggravated by the fact that this summer the state closed several non-state providers of adult education (including ALLLE itself and several members of the Association).

Amendments to the Education Code

Civil society remains excluded from policymaking in Belarus. Belarus House of Representatives adopted [amendments to the Education Code](#) in April 2021, but no fundamental changes are planned in the context of adult education (Section XV).

[Read more about the new education law in Belarus](#)

It should be noted that the government plans to increase the list of types of training

programs that can be organised and carried out by non-state providers of adult education. Commercial providers of adult education can get the status of a Business School.

However, governments actions have affected commercial training centers too. The IPM Business School, one of the most well-known and influential providers of business education in Belarus, have been closed. The Representative Office of DWV International, which has done a lot over the past ten years for the development of adult education in Belarus, was also closed.

Increase in online learning

Learning programs in Belarus had to adapt to new circumstances during the pandemic. Some ALE providers introduced blended learning solutions to be able to continue, while others had to discontinue their activities. On the positive side, there was an increase of online learning and increased command and understanding of digital technologies. The shift towards a digital environment has also attracted new groups of learners. On the other hand, disadvantaged groups are dropping out more. Reaching target groups has proved to be more difficult than before the pandemic.

Sustainability: More attention needed

ALLE finds social and environmental sustainability as a very important for their organisation and sees further potential for sustainable development initiatives to be implemented in the ALE sector. Current situation substantially differs between providers.

Challenges: Significant changes in funding

Adult learning and education in Belarus are generally financed by projects funds and participant fees. Due to political instability and the changed priorities of the government, the funding scene has been altered significantly. Adult learning and education organisations and providers receive fewer participant fees. ALLLE pointed out that even though many organisations ceased their operations, the political crisis has also opened new funding opportunities for ALE organisations.

The members of ALLLE are discussing the possibilities of interaction and cooperation in the development of adult education in Belarus. They urge the current government to stop exerting pressure on civil society and business sector so that they can continue with their activities.
