Ekkehard Nuissl, Regina Egetenmeyer

Teachers and trainers in adult and lifelong learning: a preface

The preface introduces the topic of adult and lifelong learning and provides a context for this book. It is a result of the international conference ‘Teachers and Trainers in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning: Professional Development in Asia and Europe’ organised by the ASEM Education and Research Hub for Lifelong Learning. Therefore the preface gives an overview of the papers included in the four sections of the book.

1. Lifelong learning and adult education

Lifelong learning has become increasingly important all over the world. Political, economic and social aspects of societal change are making it ever more necessary to learn throughout the course of one’s life. No economy, human society or structured life is conceivable nowadays unless people continue to learn throughout their lives.

At the same time it has also become increasingly evident that it is individuals themselves who have to be committed and motivated to learn. Societies and governments can at best help improve opportunities to learn throughout one’s life. These opportunities are provided by the educational system – organised educational programmes which constitute a practically indispensable service in learning. And these educational programmes are becoming ever more important in that phase of life in which it was previously assumed (erroneously back then as well) that learning is completed in childhood and adolescence, and with it the foundations for life created: adulthood.

Adulthood accounts for the largest part of a person’s life; there are various ways to define when it begins. In the field of education it is common to define adulthood as beginning with the attainment of the first general and vocational training qualification. This takes place – depending upon educational structures – at the age of 16 at the earliest and 24 at the latest. In other words, given today’s average life expectancies, adulthood spans a period of more than 50 years. Adult education is accordingly the learning activity of people for over more than half a century.
It is not only the span of time accounted for by adulthood which is of importance, but also the broad spectrum of activities, life situations, interests and needs of people to live and work in a reasonable way as adults. Consequently, adult education comprises a plethora of qualifications, continuing education and reasons for learning in both vocational and private areas. In many places adult education has at the same time surpassed traditional areas of education in primary and secondary school, vocational education and university studies in terms of scope, diversity and relevance to everyday life.

The state and society support people in this learning process – and indeed they should provide this support to the utmost of their abilities. They promote and support institutions in which lifelong learning takes place. This includes not only explicitly defined continuing education facilities, whose supreme objective and task is to provide educational services for learning adults. It also includes other institutions that take part in people’s lifelong learning such as, for instance, the mass media (television, newspapers, museums and theatres, associations and companies). The latter particularly, the companies and businesses where people work, now account for a growing share of lifelong learning and adult education programmes. A large portion of adult education takes place at businesses or is initiated to meet vocational and company learning needs. This is the case in all those countries in which scientific and technological progress to boost productivity requires forward thinking and continuous learning on a permanent basis.

Even if the focus has shifted more towards learning subjects in the fields of science and policy-making, it has nevertheless become increasingly evident how important programmes on offer are to people’s learning and how significant it is to have good quality programmes. By the same token, there has been a growing awareness over the last few years that it is people with certain qualifications, competences and skills who are responsible for the quality of programmes. This means all those people who plan and implement programmes in the field of adult education, who work as teachers and trainers in courses and seminars and turn adult education into reality in direct contact with learners. Teachers in the field of adult education form the backbone of the system, so to speak – the backbone for everything which adults can make use of in the way of learning opportunities. Their situation, their interests and motivations, their skills, competences and working conditions must be such so as to ensure that programmes are of high quality.
2. Professionalisation in adult and lifelong learning

The special accent in the discussion here about the development of teachers and trainers in adult education is on the dialogue between Europe and Asia. These two global regions have different traditions, approaches and needs with respect to the further development of adult education and training of staff. But they also have commonalities when it comes to the definition of competences, the development of continuing education programmes, systematic approaches and strategies for the future. Common questions are: Who is supporting adult learning in which contexts? Which programmes for the professionalisation of these persons are available? Which strategies towards the professionalisation of adult learning can be identified?

Another issue targets the question of competences of teachers and trainers in the field: Which competences do teachers and trainers need in order to provide high-quality educational offers? Which competences will be needed in the future? Which competences contribute to the professional identity of adult learning professionals?

With regard to the competences of staff working in adult and lifelong learning, the question is raised as to access into the field: Which requirements exist in which countries for entry as teachers or trainers in the field of adult and lifelong learning? Which qualification pathways are available to meet these requirements? Which qualification frameworks exist to describe and examine these requirements?

Furthermore, the question concerning the working conditions of adult learning professionals is an essential one in Asia and Europe: How are the working conditions and the employment situation of teachers and trainers in lifelong learning? Which initiatives for the improvement of their situation can be identified?

The conference ‘Teachers and Trainers in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning: Professional Development in Asia and Europe’ was the first opportunity for the European–Asian discourse to address these questions of professionalisation in adult education. The conference was proposed and made possible by the ASEM Hub for Lifelong Learning, which has been fostering the dialogue on adult education between Asia and Europe for years. ASEM stands for the inter-regional forum of the ‘Asia–Europe Meetings’ which currently has 45 member states. Besides the EU states with their Commission and the ASEAN states with their Secretary, China, India, Japan, South Korea, Mongolia and Pakistan also belong to ASEM. One initiative of ASEM is the ASEM Hub for Lifelong Learning, which is co-ordinated by the Danish School of Education/University of Aarhus in Copenhagen. The abovementioned conference, on which this book is based, was organised by the Sub-Network 3 ‘Professionalisation of Lifelong Learning with a Special Emphasis on Teacher Training’.
Network 3 has been working in this ASEM Hub for over two years, coordinated by the German Institute for Adult Education and the University of Duisburg-Essen. Broader aspects involved in staging the conference were discussed at the first meeting of the network in Beijing in November 2008. In Beijing several topics were identified as valuable for an Asian–European comparative perspective on the topic of professionalisation in adult education and lifelong learning. The network decided to organise a conference to discuss these topics further with the target of getting to know the state of the art on these questions.

2.1 Future competences of teachers and trainers in adult education

The work field of lifelong learning is changing all the time and developing fast. For this reason, and for reasons of professionalisation, the need to gain more insight into the change and stability of the competences of teachers, trainers and counsellors in the work field is growing. Which competences do they use now? Which competences do they need in the future?

2.2 Pathways towards professionalisation

The need for lifelong learning in all spheres of professional life, and also in many spheres of public and even personal life, seems to be taken for granted. However, the establishment of a profession of persons who provide educational services or opportunities for learning remains either diffuse at best or unnecessary. It appears that considerable efforts have to be dedicated by the individual adult educator in order to prove the credibility of the activity.

2.3 Effects of teacher training

Teacher training is a well-established research area. The focus has been on the competences needed for being a qualified professional teacher. The effect of teacher training has been in focus too, but seldom in relation to adult learning. Politicians, practitioners and researchers should ask the simple question: When you provide training programmes for adult teachers – newcomers or experienced, short or long courses – how can you tell that you are on the right path? How can you tell that you are improving the competences most needed or with the greatest impact on the adult learners? The question is simple but the answer is complex and difficult to give based on evidence research.
2.4 Teachers and trainers between responsibility and accountability

Teaching and training in lifelong learning is closely related to the concept of responsibility. Often professionals are not only expected to assume responsibility for the learners, but also immense expectations are placed on them to act responsibly with respect to far-reaching social and economic challenges. This educational mission, which is often grounded on ethical considerations, is accompanied by concrete questions of accountability (e.g. with respect to learning outcomes and employment goals). Finally, responsibility also has a didactic dimension: learning processes offer different possibilities for attributing responsibility (e.g. for methods and content). Professionals have to see through those complex responsibilities in order to achieve a reflected relationship between them.

The response to the call for papers at the beginning of 2009 was huge: 43 abstracts were submitted by the end of March 2009. The conference committee decided to offer ten workshops. They addressed the most important problem issues we will be facing in the future and for which practical political solutions need to be found and new perspectives identified. Three keynote speeches by experts from the Philippines, China and Germany discussed the need for professionalisation of staff and outlined different perspectives. The workshops were devoted to individual aspects of this process. They included competence models (workshop 1) and the development of competence (workshop 6), key competences and the competences of teachers and trainers between the state and market (workshops 8 and 10). The competence issue also included the validation of adult educators’ competences (workshop 3). The situation of teachers and trainers in the realm lying between responsibility and accountability was the focus in workshop 2, and these teachers and trainers between the state and the market in workshop 10. The role and activities of teachers and trainers in adult education were addressed in workshop 9. Ways to encourage professionalisation were explored in workshop 5 (pathways towards professionalisation), workshop 7 (challenges towards the professionalisation of teachers and trainers in adult education) and in part in workshop 9 as well (teachers’ and trainers’ roles and activities in adult education). Finally, workshop 4 addressed the effects of teacher training. Poster presentations relating to professionalisation from respective national perspectives and examples from the field of practice supplemented the workshops. The conference concluded with a panel discussion which addressed in particular the main problems professionalisation faces in the various regions of the globe and a discussion of what the next steps should be.

After the conference, the moderation committee selected several papers, which we publish in this book. Core selection criteria were the international perspective and the European–Asian relevance of the papers; and, ideally, the texts
should be based on empirical studies. At the end of the selection process we had more papers than we could publish in one book, so we selected the following papers which represent the main issues on the topic, as identified during the conference by our international colleagues.

3. Overview

The first part of this book, ‘Professionalisation in Adult and Lifelong Learning: Perspectives from Southeast Asia, Europe, China and India’, contains the keynote speeches given at the conference as well as a paper from India. The papers in this first section provide an overview of the situation of professionalisation in adult and lifelong learning in the selected regions.

Atanacio Panahon II describes the need for adult education in Southeast Asia, which is a continent with the five most populous countries in the world. He points out the need for basic literacy, which is the traditional understanding of adult education across Southeast Asia. To meet the demands of a learning society he points to the need to integrate entrepreneurial and labour market-oriented knowledge and skills in adult education. Panahon shows the lack of professional development in adult education across Southeast Asia. Therefore he proposes to develop diverse solutions, which fit the diverse cultural contexts in Southeast Asia. He sees the aspects of a value system grounded on universal virtues such as honesty, justice, equity and benevolence as common elements of the professional development of teachers and trainers across all regions.

The paper of Regina Egetenmeyer analyses the situation of professionalisation in adult education in Europe from a German perspective. Therefore she gives a terminological and historical insight into the discussion of professionalisation. Germany has had a discussion concerning professionalisation in adult education since the 1960s. The European Union has focused on professionalisation in adult education in the last decade under the perspective of quality in adult education. Furthermore, Egetenmeyer describes the diversity of qualification pathways for adult educators in Europe, which are diverse and difficult to compare. She concludes by formulating three challenges: development of an adult education identity, transitions between different qualification pathways of adult education and a discourse on quality and standards of adult educational competences.

The paper from Shanan Zhu, Huaixin Zhu and Pingzhou Hu discusses professional standards in adult education in China. While there are laws that define qualification standards for other fields in lifelong learning there is no law covering the requirements to act as teachers in adult education. But there are several recommendations which focus on the academic level, practical and innovative
abilities and personal characteristics. For further learning China has written a concept of lifelong education into its education law. While the authors assess that it is easy to cover the academic qualifications of teachers they identify that it is difficult to define the assessment standard of capability in detail.

*S.Y. Shah* focuses on the question on professionalisation in adult and lifelong learning in India, especially how to professionalise teachers and trainers who are working in the field of literacy. There exists no curriculum for professional programmes for training adult educators in India as they exist for other educational sectors in India. A post master’s programme in adult education offered by ten universities in India is not tailored to the needs of the field. Shah describes the four main methods of training in adult education in India, which were evaluated by a survey of training scenarios in India. The four methods are cascade, direct method of training, participatory method and open distance learning. For the development of an appropriate professional development programme, the International Institute of Adult and Lifelong Education in New Delhi is currently developing a diploma programme, which requires 480 hours of study.

The second part of the book, ‘Exploring Professionalisation in Adult and Lifelong Learning’, includes six papers which explore specific aspects within the general area of professionalisation.

*Lea Lund Larsen* and *Bjarne Wahlgren* deal with the effects of teacher training. Based on a broad systematic international literature review, they point out the effects of teacher training in relation to adult learning.

*Marcella Milana* and *Oleksandra Skrypnyk* review professionalism in general and in the field of adult education. They argue that several fields of practice exist within adult education and therefore adult educators should be addressed as role professionals. Professionalism should focus more on a general perspective of adult learning than on a restrictive view of the specific occupational field.

*Susanne Latke* and *Huaxin Zhu* concentrate on the debates concerning the competences of teachers and trainers in adult education in Europe and China. Although adult education as a professional field is conceived as a rather heterogenic field in Europe and China, both regions share an awareness of the complexity of an adult educator’s competence profile which involves a multidimensional set of skills, personal attitudes and values as well as knowledge and understanding of the field.

*Yang Ling* presents a study which focuses on the attitudes of university teaching staff in Macau. Based on an analysis of literature concerning ‘Academic Profession Meaning’, she formulates the hypothesis that more morality leads to more prospective competence of lifelong learning professionals. Based on this hypothesis she conducted a survey study, which researched the cognition of traditional Chinese ancient philosophy, the recognition of lifelong learning and lifelong learning professionals’ competences.
Dirk Koob explores the concept of professional ethics in general and in adult education. He argues for the necessity of a code of professional ethics for adult educators. The main problem he identifies is the lack of a single representative association for professionals in adult learning.

Henning Pätzold distinguishes between the concepts of responsibility and accountability in adult education. He demonstrates that the two concepts focus on several aspects within adult education. Thereby he differentiates between the aspects of process control and process design within adult and lifelong learning.

The third part of the book, ‘Professionalising Teaching and Training in Adult and Lifelong Learning’, focuses on concrete initiatives to professionalise people for the field of adult and lifelong learning. Some authors carried out research on the effects of these initiatives.

In their contribution P. Adinarayana Reddy and Uma Devi analyse the professionalisation process in lifelong learning in Indian universities. Therefore they firstly show the current state of professionalisation. Afterwards they propose eight strategies to promote professional development in adult and lifelong learning in Indian universities.

Ingeborg Schüßler and Stephan Wagenhals present findings of a survey study they conducted with students from the diplom-program in adult education at the Ludwigsburg University of Education. Against the background of the development of new Bachelor- and Master-programs in adult education, they designed a study which can also be used as an evaluation instrument for study programmes in adult education. In their findings they analyse differences in the professionalisation process of the students during their course of studies.

Raluca Lupou shows the increasing European awareness of the issue of competence assessment and validation. She describes the validation instrument ‘Validpack’, which was developed within a European project and which is designed to validate teachers’ and trainers’ competences in adult education. Based on this description she outlines several purposes and target groups for this instrument.

Raymond Setiawan describes the evaluation instrument of the Sampoerna Foundation Teacher Institute in Indonesia. He critically reflects on the problems of evaluation in his cultural context. Based on the so-called Kirkpatrick Model he shows fours steps to evaluate teachers and trainers. With this evaluation model his institute aims to increase the numbers of qualified teachers.

Annikaa Goeze, Josef Schrader, Stefanie Hartz, Jan Zottmann and Frank Fischer present a study based on case-based learning with digital videos. Taking the theory-praxis gap in adult education as a starting point, they developed several videos to improve pedagogical competences. Based on a quasi-experimental study, they found out that cased-based video learning can improve competency to
diagnose pedagogical situations, the ability to apply conceptual knowledge to the case and the ability to adopt different perspectives.

Svetlana Surikova, Sanita Baranova, Manuel Fernández, Irina Maslo and Günter Huber present a study of university teacher competences in Latvia. In co-operation with several European universities, they implemented a programme for the development of professional competences of university teachers. Within the project they developed a Delphi study concerning future competences of university professors.

In the last section, ‘Professionalisation of Teachers and Trainers: A Comparative Perspective’, we survey the contributions from a comparative perspective. Furthermore, we propose several recommendations for policies concerning the question of professionalisation of teachers and trainers in adult and lifelong learning in Asian and European countries.

We wish to take this opportunity to thank all the institutions that have supported us in the organisation of the conference and the publication of this book.

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In 2009, the Romanian Institute for Adult Education published a special edition ‘Professionalisation in Adult Education’ in its Journal of Educational Sciences in advance of the conference. The German Academic Exchange Service, which is at present funding an international guest professor at the University of Duisburg-Essen, is also making a further commitment to the conference.

We extend a word of thanks to them all.