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Portrait Adult Education Denmark

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1. Introduction

Denmark is one of the smaller countries in the European Union. Historically the country – situated as it is between the Baltic Sea and the North Sea – has played a considerable role in European politics. In earlier times the country was much larger than it is now, as late as the beginning of the 19th century the kingdom included Norway and the king was head of state in the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein (now part of the Federal Republic of Germany).

Being the most southern Scandinavian country Denmark has always been under strong influence from the continent – especially from Germany and France. In the course of the 19th century the importance of the cohesion with the other Nordic countries increased which was also the case with the connection to England. Since the Second World War Denmark – like other western European countries – has been under strong influence from the USA.

Immigration of foreign workers increased in the 1960s, mostly from former Yugoslavia, Turkey and Pakistan. In recent decades immigration has been most frequent of refugees from areas of crisis and war and by relatives of residents in connection with the bringing together of families.

With its 43.000 km² and a population of 5,5 million the population density is relatively high – approx. 120 per square kilometre.

The Kingdom of Denmark is in federation with the (almost) autonomous Greenland and the Faroes with approx. 100.000 inhabitants altogether.

Agriculture has always been extremely important in the Danish occupational structure and still plays an important role economically even if only 4% of the work-force are employed within this field. The occupational structure is furthermore characterized by many smaller enterprises which have literally grown out of crafts and trade. In addition – like so many other places – there is a wide-spread service- and information based occupational structure.

In political-administrative terms, Denmark is a unitary state with a one-chamber parliament (the Folketing), a regional structure with 14 counties and a local structure with 275 municipalities, of which two function as counties as well. Both the regional and the local structure have their own elected councils and levy taxes. However, all laws and regulations are determined at state level, leaving the regional and local levels as administrators with a certain local freedom of action.

The political structure in Denmark is characterized by a multitude of parties of which 8 are represented in the Folketing at the moment. The electoral system builds on the principles of election by proportional representation with a 2% hurdle.

The electoral and party system has so far always resulted in no single party holding an absolute majority in the Folketing, and the governments have almost always been coalitions of two or more parties. Minority governments are quite common, and policies are therefore developed in close cooperation with other parties.

This situation has had a great impact on educational policies. Legislation in this field is normally based on a broad majority in order to oblige the opposition when it eventually comes into power. Furthermore there have occasionally been "alternative majorities" determining policies that the governing parties do not necessarily vote for.

The education system

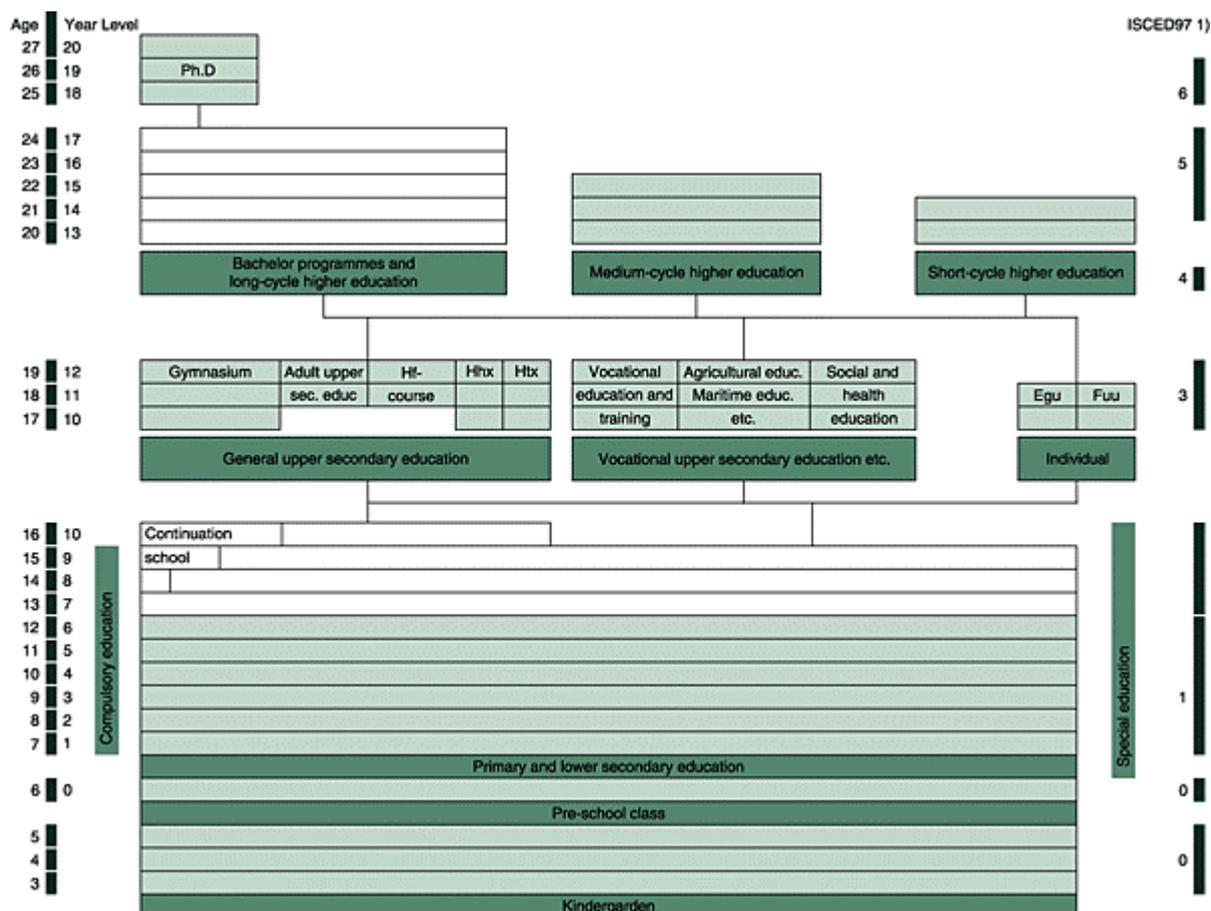
The education system is assigned a significant role in the development of society. The system consists of basic school (primary and lower secondary level), youth education (upper secondary level, general and vocational education and training), further and higher education and adult education.

The basic schools conduct the nine years of compulsory education (age 7-15). According to the constitution it is the imperative duty of the parents to make sure that their children are educated. They can – free of charge – choose the municipal school (and 86% do), but compulsory education can also be fulfilled in other ways among which an extensive network of private, independent (and state supported) schools plays an important role. Throughout the last decade it has been a political goal to ensure that all young people leave the education system with a secondary school leaving qualification (general or vocational). Accordingly reforms of the vocational education and training system have been carried through, and new educational programmes have been established. Youth education (age 16-19) thus includes general upper secondary education, vocationally oriented upper secondary education and vocational education and training. Additionally there is a number of untraditional youth education and training programmes such as production schools, vocational basic training, open youth education (established 1995 and abolished by the Liberal-Conservative government in spring 2002) and bridge building programmes.

The upper secondary education certificate qualifies for further and higher education, whereas vocational education and training (based on the dual system) qualifies directly for an occupation.

Further and higher education build upon upper secondary education. There are 11 universities and other higher education institutions and a great number of institutions providing further education with short and medium-term cycles. The latter area is at present undergoing an institutional reform in order to gather the educations into a smaller number of larger institutions. This is being done by establishing so called Centres for Higher Education, where a number of smaller institutions are merged.

The adult education system will be the subject of the rest of this publication.



Overview over Danish adult education

This section lists central elements in adult education activities with a brief description.

Non-formal general adult education

“Evening schools”, liberal, general adult education (folkeoplysende voksenundervisning): General, non-formal and non-qualifying educational courses of almost any subject, but mostly practical/creative subjects, including physical exercise. The activities are subsidized by the municipalities. The 2.700 “evening schools” are local, independent associations of varying size and contents. Approx. 1 million adults participate in the courses.

Day folk high schools (daghøjskoler): General, non-formal and non-qualifying adult education, organized as full time education (30 lessons a week) over a number of weeks (normally 10-15). The target group has in practice been unemployed adults who have had problems with finding a foothold at the labour market. The curriculum of each of the approximately 80 schools is designed individually – but

the common denominator is that the aim of the schools is to provide the participants with personal competence either to carry through a formal education or to establish a permanent contact with the labour market.

(Residence) Folk high schools (folkehøjskoler): General, non-formal, non-qualifying education, organized as full time courses over 12-16 weeks (“long courses”) or one or two weeks. The courses are designed individually at each of the approximately 80 independent schools with different central subjects and with a common core of subjects like social science, history, literature etc. A majority of the participants are young people (20-25) who reserve a year after secondary school for reflection and contemplation.

Home economics and textile design schools (husholdning- og håndarbejdsskoler): These schools are “technically” folk high schools but as indicated by the name they concentrate on practical subjects.

Special tuition for adults (special undervisning): Educational courses designed to compensate for any disability adults may suffer from, whether physical or mental. An important part of the special tuition is the tuition of dyslexics.

Formal, general adult education

Danish as a second language for adult immigrants (dansk som andetsprog): Danish-teaching is an important part of an integration programme which is offered to all immigrants who are granted permission to stay in Denmark. The programme includes language teaching at different levels and information about society and culture in Denmark. The completion of the course (and exams) is a condition for acquiring a permanent residence permit in Denmark.

Preparatory adult education (forberedende voksenuddannelse, FVU): A relatively new provision designed to contribute to giving adults with insufficient skills in Danish reading and writing or in numeracy better conditions for full participation in both professional and social activities. The courses are free of charge and mostly but not exclusively take place at an adult education centre.

General adult education (almen voksenuddannelse, AVU): Education in standard school subjects on lower secondary level. The education is organized according to a “single-subject-system”¹, and in most cases divided into two levels, consisting of two modules each. The leaving exams qualify for higher education.

Higher preparatory exam (højere forberedelseseksamen, HF): Education in standard school subjects on general upper secondary level. The education is organized according to a “single-subject-system”. The leaving exams qualify for higher education.

¹ Each subject and level is handled individually. You may attend one or more subjects, and – if more – the subjects and levels may be combined freely according to the background and perspectives of the participant.

Non-formal, vocationally orientated

Production Schools (produktionsskoler): Individually organized courses, combining practical production work, general education and intensive counselling. The provision is designed especially for young people who have not succeeded in joining any of the secondary youth educational programmes. The courses do not formally qualify, but are often organized with respect to “bridge-building” to the formal system (vocational schools).

Formal, vocationally orientated

Labour market training (arbejdsmarkedsuddannelse, AMU): Comprehensive system of training courses aiming directly at a great variety of functions in production etc. The courses are primarily designed for un- or semiskilled workers. The courses formally qualify for the relevant job functions.

Adult vocational education and basic education for adults (voksenerhvervsuddannelse, grundlæggende voksenuddannelse): Framework for establishing individually designed programmes for adults with practical experience within certain fields of work. The programmes aim at achieving competence as a skilled worker.

Further education for adults (videreuddannelsessystem for voksne): Framework for establishing programmes for adults in the field of further education who aim at achieving formal qualification at different levels on the basis of working life experience in a certain field.

2. Historical development

Danish adult education of today is rooted in the Enlightenment of the 18th century – and the ideas can be traced vividly in some sections of adult education. At the same time education has adapted to the requirements of the industrial society, the welfare society and most recently to the information or knowledge society. The concept of "folkeoplysning" (literally: popular enlightenment) does in fact play an imperative part in the development of adult education in Denmark – and for its position nowadays.

In Denmark adult education is understood as a more or less formal provision for people who have accomplished or left the ordinary education system. Adult education includes both formal and non-formal qualifying education – and the educational activities can be focused on achieving professional qualifications or developing personal or societal skills in the participants. In earlier days adult education was aimed at young adults – 14-16 years of age. Today the limit for being considered an adult is generally 18 years of age.

In the Age of Enlightenment in the late 18th century Denmark was to 90% an agricultural country. The small towns were characterized by crafts and trade, mostly connected with farming. The upper class were the great landowners who controlled the means of production in the countryside, the farms being run by copyholders.

Agricultural reforms and adult education

The earliest initiatives for adult education was taken by reform-oriented landowners, who realised that development of agriculture depended on a change of ownership and more independent farmers. The so far scanty education provided in the schools was, however, not sufficient for owner-farmers and some of the landed estates established schools for youngsters so they could improve their basic skills in Danish, arithmetic and farming.

At the beginning of the 19th century similar educational provisions were established in the cities for the apprentices who needed to improve their Danish, mathematics and technical skills.

In the school act of 1814 where compulsory education for all was established and the municipal school was introduced, the local teachers were obliged to ensure that young people already out of school could continue to take lessons in basic school subjects.

Around the middle of the 19th century the first folk high schools were established on private initiatives and within the fast growing popular movements. The folk high school was a reaction to what one of its fathers, the pastor N. F. S. Grundtvig, called "the black school" – i.e. an authoritarian, rote learning school, giving only little usable knowledge and skills to the majority of pupils.

In the folk high school young peasants – men and women – would be stimulated and enlightened with equal amounts of lessons in history, Christianity and farming-skills. The folk high school was meant to constitute an important factor in the development of the peasantry into citizens and also to contribute – generally and specifically – to the change of agriculture into owner-farming, which also included the organisation of co-operative societies (commonly owned dairies, slaughter-houses, feedstuff wholesales, savings banks etc). The folk high schools thus contributed actively to the development of democracy as well as to the intensive farming that became predominant after 1870.

Adult education in the cities

By the end of the 19th century industrialization gained sway in Denmark, and people started moving from the agricultural districts into the towns. Like in England and Germany this development caused the establishment of different educational initiatives towards working class people, first and foremost in Copenhagen as the initiatives were based in university circles. But also in the bigger towns, where the Social Democratic Party around the turn of the century was very influential, different types of adult education were initiated.

The lessons comprised the basic subjects Danish and arithmetic, but also university extension primarily in science and civics and gradually also in practical subjects. Alongside this generally oriented adult education vocational courses for apprentices were established within the school system.

Throughout the first half part of the 20th century even more evening classes with practical content were established, and the Social Democratic movement formed in 1924 the Workers' Educational Association (WEA; in Danish AOF) in order to set up a basis for educational work in a non-public framework (however, with substantial public support). The activities of the WEA were directed towards workers in general, but also toward active people in various parts of the Social Democratic movement, not least the trade unions.

The residential folk high schools developed in this phase to become a very important element in adult education – in various ways. Alongside the traditional agriculturally orientated school different popular movements established folk high schools, among them the labour movement and sports associations. At this time different types of occupationally-oriented folk high schools gained a foothold as well. These schools served as a form of preparatory studies for further education in the formal system – as a 'bridge' between the seven years of primary education, which was the educational ballast of most Danes, and further education.

In connection with the economical world crisis in 1929. a crisis that in Denmark lasted way into the 1940's, the first vocational courses for thousands and thousands of unskilled – and now jobless – workers were established. These vocational education and training courses were very often carried out in connection with labour camps for unemployed youngsters. The courses were precursors of the later labour market courses.

Post war development

Although Nazism never gained firm foothold in Denmark, the German occupation during the Second World War challenged the democratic/humanistic way Denmark saw itself. Liberal, general adult education – ‘folkeoplysning’ – was considered to be essential for safeguarding and developing democracy. Education of the upcoming generation to democracy as a way of life (as opposed to a form of government) became vitally important – not least to a number of folk high schools and to other popular movements. During the occupation two umbrella associations were established – The Danish Youth Council and The Danish Council for Adult Education – both aimed at consolidating the possibilities for civic society associations in contributing to democratic development.

In the years following the occupation the non-socialist parties established their educational associations on the line of the WEA.²

Municipalities, educational associations and private initiators established a tightly woven web of local evening schools all over the country – in the 1950's there were between 4.500 and 5.000 evening schools with 260,000 to 323.000 annual participants. (The huge number of schools is to be seen in the light of the local political structure – in 1960 there were 1,388 municipalities). The classes were established within the frames of a legislation that secured public economical support (from the state and the municipalities); thus participation was free of charge. The majority of the lessons consisted of general and practical/creative subjects, however it is rather remarkable that civic education only had a small share – and this decreased continually over the years.

Together with the development of the welfare state, evening classes changed into “leisure time education”. Whereas in earlier years the concrete value of the courses was decisive – whether the object was to learn how to read, write, do mathematics, cook healthy food or make clothes for the family – the activities became increasingly cultural and recreational. It must, however, be stressed that educational provisions not offered in other settings were still to be found in the catalogues of the evening schools, such as academically oriented university extension courses for adults and vocational training in specific fields.

Since the 1960's the evening schools have gone through an immense expansion. In the mid-1980's the number of participants³ was close to a million, distributed among 65.000 classes with more than 3 million lessons. Up to 1971 participation was free of charge, but even the introduction of a (modest) charge hardly affected the number of participants.

2 The Popular Educational Association affiliated to the Conservatives, Liberal Educational Association affiliated with the Liberals and The Independent Information Association affiliated with the Social Liberals.

3 Participants are course participants.

As the dominating providers of adult education the evening schools took up other activities. When for instance by the end of the 1950s the need for an educational programme emerged that could prepare adults⁴ for participation in vocational education and training or further education of craftsmen to engineers – a so called technical preparatory examination, the evening schools took up the task. The evening schools furthermore took on the responsibility for special tuition for the handicapped – and later for teaching of adult immigrants.

After the oil crisis in 1973 Denmark went into a long period of recession and high unemployment, and the evening schools initiated different types of educational programmes, e.g. the day folk high schools that aimed at providing unskilled people – most of them women – with necessary (personal) qualifications in order for them to re-enter the labour market.

Some of the activities of the evening schools formed the basis for legislation and thus became a part of the public education system. This accounts for the preparatory courses of formal general education, parts of the special tuition for the handicapped and the teaching of Danish as a second language for adult immigrants. The preparatory education was further developed as the curriculum of the basic level was adapted for adults with regard to subjects, organisation, examinations etc.

What is folkeoplysning?

“The Danish tradition within non-formal adult education (folkeoplysning) goes back more than a hundred years. The priest and poet N.F.S. Grundtvig created many of the ideas that to this day still form the foundation of this tradition. The idea was, and still is, to make the average citizen capable of being in control of his own life. This means nowadays that non-formal adult education aims to make the average citizens participate in the society and in the culture around them, not just as spectators.

Non-formal adult education consists of a wide variety of activities ranging from lessons in language, handicrafts and cooking, to study groups, debate meetings and lectures. The overall rule is that the activities are not aimed at gaining specific competencies and therefore there are no examinations given. On the contrary it is based on values such as personal commitment, participation and exchange of opinions.”

Website of The independent information association (<http://www.fo.dk/engelskintroduktion.htm>)

⁴ In the whole period from the School Act of 1814 and to the beginning of the 1960es a majority of the population left school after 7th grade without any school-leaving certificate.

Development Programme for Adult Education

In the last two decades of the 20th century a reform of general adult education took place based on an extensive development programme on adult education approved by the Parliament in 1985. The development programme was specifically directed towards formal, general adult education and 'folkeoplysning', but issues like adult education grants, coherence between general and vocational education and training and also accreditation of prior learning were included in the programme.

After the programme the evening schools were transferred to a new legislation – Act on the Allocation of Financial Support to 'Folkeoplysning' – which particularly meant that the former system of subsidies, where the activity itself was automatically entitled to a grant – was changed into a new system allowing the municipalities a framework control of the total expenditure. The change of act also led to the abolition of “public” municipal evening schools.

The experiences of the 1970's and 1980's with day folk high schools and production schools also led to specific legislation for these two school forms.

The residential folk high schools have had to find new platforms for their activities taking the decimation of the original target group into account. In the last part of the 20th century they changed the content of their courses and now – besides the traditional subjects – offer a wide range of new subjects like music, drama, art, design and sports that have attracted younger participants to their courses.

Focus on formal qualification

To ensure that the enterprises could recruit qualified manpower, labour market training centres were established in the 1960's. Their courses were aimed at providing further training for unskilled workers in order to qualify them to perform better at work by gaining occupational qualifications in specific fields.

Vocational further and continuing education in other fields was established in the 1980's under the Act on open education. In principle this act makes it possible for educational institutions to offer parts of their ordinary courses for adults studying part time while maintaining their ordinary job. This arrangement requires a substantial participation fee that is paid either by the participants themselves or by the enterprises where they are employed.

In 1996 free literacy courses were introduced aimed at adults with inadequate reading and writing skills. It was a reaction to the fact that – even in Denmark – there was a considerable group of adults who had difficulties in getting on in society, at work or in education because of functional illiteracy.

2000 Adult Education Reform

In May 2000 the Folketing adopted an adult education reform. A number of acts aimed at piecing together continuing training and further education programmes into a single coherent and transparent adult education system. The educational/training programmes are to constitute a system of competences which will give adults formal recognition of the knowledge and qualifications they acquire, whether this takes place at the job or by participating in formal education/training programmes.

The reform also included a new programme – Preparatory adult education – which replaced the literacy courses mentioned above – with an programme of teaching to develop basic reading and writing and numeracy skills.

3. Legislation

Most adult education is regulated by legislation. There is, however, no prior common regulatory framework for adult education, and it is not mentioned in the constitution as is compulsory education at primary level. Almost all education legislation is carried out in the Ministry of Education and – for the time being – university education in the Ministry of Research and Science.

The acts lay down where the responsibility for different tasks lies when it comes to supervision, financing etc. in the three levels of public administration – state, county and municipality. The role of the state is – apart from legislation – limited since only vocational education, labour market training, production schools, and residential folk high schools (including home economics and textile design schools) are placed directly under the state authorities (the ministry).

In adult education the regional level plays a central role as the counties attend to general adult education, preparatory adult education and special tuition, while the municipalities administer general, non formal adult education and the teaching of adult immigrants.

Educational legislation

Legislation within formal education lays down rules for the educational content and dimensions and, if they exist, examinations. The larger part of legislation regulating the non-formal education sector has no specific rules for content etc. and only states what is needed for the activity to be eligible for subsidy.

Despite the modest size of the country there is a tradition – not least important within the education system – to give the decentralised actors (i.e. the local authorities and individual institutions) freedom of action, even in the formal education sector. In labour market training and in vocational education and training there are trade committees responsible for each individual programme. All educational institutions have their own local boards and all educational areas have regional or national advisory committees set up to support the minister and Folketing as well as to give advice to local authorities and institutions.

It is important to note that all educational legislation contains regulations set up to secure the development of democracy in society, for instance through student councils or other student participation.

Legislation for institutional affairs

The legislation for institutional affairs lays down rules about the framework and conditions for the activities, including rules about subsidies. Since the early 1990's, the central government's system of financing education in Denmark has changed considerably and is now almost exclusively based on the so-called *taximeter system*, which is a comprehensive financing system based (in principle) on per capita grants (cash-per-student) to institutions. Alongside this, there is a specific taximeter for buildings in order to cover the maintenance etc. of the institutional frames.

Within most non-formal, general adult education areas there is, as earlier mentioned, just a framework set up for the activities, provided that the organizers or institutions set up objectives for their activities to ensure that they are eligible for subsidies.

During recent years the Folketing has passed several acts by which it is stated that all independent, "free" institutions and educational areas should present the set of values on which they base their activities. Again there are no specific rules about the content of the set of values, only that schools must have such sets of values and present them to the general public in a form that is clear and transparent.

The table below gives an overview over the legislation in the different fields of adult education.

Legislation about adult education

Educational area	Legislation on settings, financing etc.	Educational legislation
Non formal, general education		
Liberal, general non-formal adult education	Yes, including eligibility	No
Day folk high schools	Yes, including aims and purpose, curriculum	No
Folk high schools, including home economics and textile design schools	Yes, including aims and purpose and subjects	No
Special tuition for adults	Yes	No
Formal, general education		
Danish as a second language for adult immigrants	Yes	Yes
Preparatory adult education	No	Yes
General formal adult education	Yes	Yes
Upper secondary general education for adults	No	Yes
Non formal, vocational education		
Production schools	Yes, including aim and purpose	No
Formal, vocational education		
Labour market training	Yes	Yes
Adult vocational education	No	Yes
Basic vocational education for adults	No	Yes
Further education for adults	Yes	Yes
Open education (framework for vocational further education for adults)	Yes	Yes
Participants		
State educational support for adults	Yes, including eligibility of education	
Labour market policy (activation of unemployed)	Yes	
Educational leave	Yes	

Evaluation of education

The Danish Evaluation Institute (EVA) was established in summer 1999 under legislation passed by the Folketing. It is an independent institution established under the auspices of the Ministry of Education.

The purpose of EVA is to develop and highlight improvements in the quality of education and hence the institute is also a national knowledge centre of expertise in the field of educational evaluation.

EVA initiates and conducts evaluations of teaching and learning in the whole field of public education and a large part of educational provision with public subsidies.

The participants

The participants in continuing and advanced training programs are entitled to receive public financial support to cover their costs of living. There are two possibilities: State educational support for adults (SESA) or the special allowance paid mainly to low-skilled workers given as compensation for loss of earnings (or loss of a job opportunity). The level of the grants is equivalent to the level of the unemployment benefits.

Education, qualification, development of competences are regarded as important tools in the combating of unemployment, and the legislation about unemployment therefore lays down rules about which educational activities can be applied to activate the unemployed. For many years these regulations have been relatively broad and have allowed participants to take part in a number of educational programmes, including non formal ones.

In more recent years, however, there has been a considerable reduction in the possibilities of getting compensation for income when participating in general, non-formal adult education (e.g. day folk high schools, folk high schools). This has happened in connection with the reform in adult and continuing education, which focuses very much on formal qualification.

An approved list states which form of education entitles participants to grants or can be used as part of activation schemes. Earlier it was widely recognised that a course at a day folk high school or a residential folk high school could be considered useful with regards to a possible re-entry into the workforce. But at the moment the selection is narrowed down mainly to educational programmes that lead to formal qualifications and explicitly and directly point to employment.

4. Educational institutions

Danish adult education is provided by many types of educational institutions and even a relatively high number of institutions of each kind. This structure implies that education is accessible and available all over the country. The institutions as such have per tradition a certain function within the adult education system, but quite a few of the institutions do in fact participate in a more differentiated provision of educational programmes. It is also worth mentioning that publicly financed educational institutions are committed by legislation to local cooperation at an institutional level, in coordination of the provisions, cooperation about counselling and guidance services and combined educational programmes.

A majority of the educational institutions are publicly funded, i.e. they and their activities are based on legislation and on public financing – either directly or via grants to the institution or the activity. Furthermore a great number of private educational settings contribute relevantly to adult and further training activities. This totally private sector operates directly in cooperation with companies and the area is, however, extremely poorly investigated in Denmark.

The table below shows the types of institutions and information about which forms of educational provisions they maintain or are able to offer.

Institutions and educations

Institutions	Adult educational provision
Independent providers	
2.700 independent local associations, "evening schools", municipal subsidy	General non-formal adult education
	Special tuition (after agreement with counties)
	Preparatory adult education (after agreement with counties)
90 day folk high schools, independent, municipal and state subsidy ⁵	General non-formal adult education
	Preparatory adult education (after agreement with counties)
90 folk high schools, independent, state subsidy	General non-formal adult education
	Preparatory adult education (after agreement with counties)
10 home economics and textile design schools, independent, state subsidy	Home economics and textile design courses
Public institutions – general education	
50 language centres, municipal institutions	Danish as a second language for immigrants
75 adult education centres (VUC), county-institutions	Preparatory adult education
	General formal adult education
	Tuition for higher preparatory exam (upper secondary corresponding to General Certificate of Education)
Upper secondary level evening school, state schools	Tuition for the General Certificate of Education (upper secondary level)

⁵ As of 2003 the Act on folk day high schools is abolished and the schools are transferred to the Act on allocation of subsidies to general adult education etc. Consequently the schools will be financed by the municipalities.

Institutions	Adult educational provision
Public institutions – vocational education and training	
75 production schools, municipal/independent institutions	Combined production work, education and counselling
Approx. 20 Labour Market Training Centres, state institutions	Labour market training courses
	Basic vocational education for adults
	Preparatory adult education (after agreement with counties)
Approx. 50 Vocational schools, state institutions	Labour market training courses
	Basic vocational education for adults
	Preparatory adult education (after agreement with counties)
Social and Health Care schools	Labour market training courses for workers in social and health care institutions
Higher education institutions	Open education
	Further education for adults
The Danish Institute for Educational Training of Vocational Teachers (DEL)	Training of teachers for vocational training and education
The Danish University of Education (DPU)	Further education of teachers
Centres of higher education (CVU)	Further training of teachers for adult education
Other institutions etc.	
Centres for adult pedagogy	Supplementary courses for teachers of adult education
Educational associations	Supplementary courses for teachers of adult education
Private educational providers	Vocationally oriented courses
Other organisations	Organisational educational provisions
Trade unions	Education of shop stewards
	Education of teachers for adult education
National umbrella organisations	Education of leaders for voluntary associations

General adult education institutions

The non-formal educational and training institutions are established on the initiative of organisations or groups of individuals with a background in different movements or groups. This goes for the great number of 'evening schools' that provide liberal, general non-formal education locally as well as for day folk high schools and folk high schools.

These institutions are to a great extent affiliated to national umbrella organisations that receive state grants to support their organisational activities, such as for instance educational activities for their staff.

Evening schools

Around one third of the evening schools are local branches of one of the six national educational associations. Four of those have their roots in the four "old" political parties, one is a national union of domestic schools and the last organizes a wide range of "non-political" schools.

The evening schools are very different, depending on their local basis and the local conditions. Formally the schools are local associations, established within one municipality, and since many municipalities are indeed very small the schools are very small as well. In small municipalities there will normally exist only one or two local evening schools while in bigger localities there will often be several of which one or two have considerable activity.

The greater number of the schools are small institutions which locally offer a broad programme of courses within practical-creative subjects, exercise, computers, languages and cultural education. In larger municipalities the schools are institutions with considerable activity. Most of the activities are carried out in classrooms at the municipal school, but they do have the possibility of using their own premises. The large evening schools maintain – besides general non-formal adult education within the frames of The act of allocation of support to ‘folkeoplysning’ – other educational tasks. They can, for instance, on the grounds of an agreement with the county maintain special tuition for adults and preparatory adult education. Until recently they have as well maintained formal single subject courses, Danish for adult immigrants and day folk high schools which are all areas that have been transferred to public institutions or other settings.⁶

The total number of participants in evening classes is estimated to be at approx. 1 million, equivalent to 37.500 full time students. The public expense is 500 million DKK (and the participants contribute a similar amount).⁷

6 Cf. Note 5

7 These statistics origin from 1999. In 2003 the conditions of general, non-formal adult education were changed considerably, and it is generally expected that the format of this field will be reduced as a consequence.

What is Frit Oplysningsforbund?

"Frit Oplysningsforbund (The independent information association) is one of Denmark's 6 nationwide non-formal adult education associations. It was established in 1952 based upon the ideals of peace, tolerance, international understanding and co-operation. The goal is still to spread non-formal adult education within common, economic, political, social and cultural subjects. Today Frit Oplysningsforbund works broadly with non-formal adult education. Besides traditional activities such as day and evening courses, we also work on larger projects within such different areas as integration of immigrants, democracy in the Baltic, information technology etc.

Frit Oplysningsforbund is constructed with a national office that works as an umbrella organisation and a string of local organisations which perform the actual non-formal adult education. The local organisations are spread all over Denmark, from the biggest cities to the smallest provincial societies. Among others things, we are strongly represented on many small Danish islands.

As well as taking part in local projects, FO also works internationally, co-operating with organisations in Scandinavia on general and adult education.

After the fall of the Iron Curtain, FO has contributed to a line of general education projects and to the promotion of democracy in the Baltic States, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria. FO's international contacts continue to develop.

Website of The independent information association (<http://www.fo.dk/engelskintroduktion.htm>)

Day folk high schools

The day folk high schools have a local basis, as they are established on the grounds of municipal subsidies and with representatives from the municipality in the governing board. However, the activities as such are financed through a governmental taximeter (cf. Note 5 above). In order to be approved as day folk high school the school must offer at least one course with a duration of 12 weeks and must have at least 12 students full-time equivalent (corresponding to 12 students participating in 40 weeks of education).

The day folk high schools offer general adult education focussed on general character building. They have different proficiency profiles, though practical-creative subjects play an important role in most of the schools. It is possible for the schools to include formal qualifying courses and special tuition in their programmes, and the schools can offer preparatory adult education.

All in all there were approx. 90 day folk high schools with around 33.000 participants (13.400 full time equivalents) in 1998. Public expenditure on the day folk high schools was in 1998 0,8 billion DKK.

Folk high schools

Folk high schools are established as private, self-governing institutions financed partly by state grants (education and buildings), partly by participant payments (education and board and lodging). The schools are run by a governing board, elected from the members of the 'school-circle' – i.e. the circle behind the school. The schools are very different both in size and in their proficiency profiles. There do exist minimum limits for the number of participants, and most of the schools operate with two half-year courses (long courses) with 25-50 participants. In addition many schools have a considerable number of short week courses – mostly in the summertime.

There are approx. 90 folk high schools with around 11.500 participants (6.000 full-time equivalents) and besides this a small number of home economics and textile design schools. Public expenditure on folk high schools was in 1998 0,5 billion DKK.

Institutions in the public system

The formal adult education is managed mainly by public institutions. Institutions are attached to one of the three administrative levels – municipalities, counties or the state. The institutions are regulated by law, and they are funded by the authority responsible for the education. The institutions have their own governing bodies with representation of local organisations like the municipality, labour market organisations etc. and they have a substantial freedom of action as to how they arrange their activities within the general framework of the legislation.

General formal education

1999 approx. 50 **language centres** were established to take care of the teaching of Danish as a second language. A number of municipalities were obliged to provide education. The institutions were established either as municipal institutions or as independent, self-governing institutions. In many cases the new institutions were formed by local branches of adult education associations and NGO's like the Danish Red Cross or the Danish Council for Refugees, which took care of similar activities up until 1999. The language centres have approx. 30.000 participants a year.

75 **adult education centres** manage the provision of general formal adult education, i.e. preparatory adult education, general adult education and upper secondary general adult education. The centres are run by the counties. Each centre has a governing board, and the county must establish a general adult education advisory board with representation of municipalities, social partners, students and teachers.

The adult education centres have approx. 50.000 students (equivalent to 25.400 full time students) a year and a total budget of 1,1 billion DKK.

Vocationally orientated adult education

Both the **labour market training centres** and **vocational schools** play important roles in vocationally oriented adult education – and after a reform of the institutional system in 2002 they are obliged to work closely together or even merge.

Originally each of the two types of institutions had its own function: Labour market training centres took care of adult education for un- or semiskilled workers while vocational school looked after upper secondary vocational youth education. Until 2001 the two types of institution were also in separate ministries: Labour market training in the Ministry of Labour and vocational schools in the Ministry of Education. Now both are in the Ministry of Education.

Labour market training centres had 1998 approx. 175.000 participants (equivalent to 17.300 full time students) in a large number of relatively short courses. Their budget was totally 2,2 billion DKK. Adult education in vocational schools was attended by 1.900 full time students at a total cost of 200 million DKK.

A number of educational institutions – primarily **institutions for higher education** (universities) – contribute to adult education under the system of “Open Education”. The institutions may offer part time studies in parts of their ordinary study programmes to adults who are interested in such updating of their real qualifications (a full qualification cannot be achieved in this way). Besides, the framework of Open Education provides possibilities for the establishment of tailor made courses for vocational education.

1998 Open Education had 184.000 participants (equivalent to 41.000 full time students) at a total public cost of 1,1 billion DKK.

A number of these institutions also contribute to provision in connection with the new Further Education System for Adults, established after 2000. Under this system a number of new educations are designed especially for adults with previous education and with professional experience in the field to be studied. These new educational programmes will be carried through under the regulations of Open Education.

Institutions, public funding, and participation

Institutions	Public funding	Public expenses	Participation	Full time students
		Billion DKK		
General informal adult education institutes	Municipalities	0,5	1.000.000	37.500
Folk day high schools	State/municipalities	0,8	33.500	13.400
Folk high schools	State	0,5	11.400	6.000
Language centres	Municipalities	1,0	35.000	No information
Adult education centres	Counties	1,1	114.200	25.400
Labour market training	State	2,2	176.700	17.300
Open education	State	1,1	184.000	41.000
Total		7,2	1.529.800	140.600

Private course providers

A substantial part of adult education in the form of short courses is carried out by various private course providers for organisations, enterprises etc. The area is not well described – but since 1997 the National Danish Statistical Office includes some information about this part of adult education – though nothing about the “institutions”. In 2000 the volume was 446.700 participants (equivalent to 6.500 full time students). The expenditure on salaries in connection with this activity was estimated at 744,2 million DKK.

5. Financing Adult Education

The public purse contributes in a decisive way to most types of adult education. Formal adult education is mostly free of charge – or requires only modest fees – for the participants. An important exception has been Open Education, where participants must contribute approximately one third of the costs. In informal adult education – as folk high schools and “evening schools” – there is a substantial element of participants’ contribution.

Recently initiatives have been taken to increase the contributions of the participants. Thus a participants’ fee has been introduced in parts of labour market training. Considering that the activities serve the qualification of the staff of enterprises it is deemed appropriate that they contribute to the funding. Parts of formal general adult education will also be financed to a wider degree by participants’ fees. This initiative aims allegedly at creating a more equal situation of competition between formal and informal general adult education.

Different sources of funding

Public adult education funding comes from ministries – principally the Ministry of Education – and from the regional and local authorities, the counties and the municipalities.

Most of the financing is based on legislation. As mentioned above almost all adult education is covered by legislation, which also forms the basis of financing, be it in the form of direct public funding or in the form of public subsidies from the state or the counties or the municipalities.

Over the years there has also been an important element of “project-funding” especially in the field of labour market related educational activities. The regional employment authorities have had substantial resources for the “activation” of unemployed – and education and training activities have been an important part of the effort to bring unemployed people back into jobs. Similarly the municipalities who are responsible for the activation of the unemployed who are not members of an unemployment fund carry out education projects.

The actual educational activities in this area are in most cases carried out by institutions of the regular education system – either public institutions or independent institutions, which are also otherwise providers of ordinary educational programmes.

Working expenses in adult education

Institution	Public funding by	Public working expenses	Share of public educational expenditure	Participants' fee
		Billion DKK	Percent	
Day folk high schools	Municipalities*)	0,8	11,6	None
Folk high schools	State	0,5	7,3	Considerable
Language centres	Municipalities	1	14,5	None
Adult education centres	Counties	1,1	15,9	Modest
Labour Market Training centres	State	2,2	31,9	None

Adult vocational education	State	0,2	2,9	None
Open education	State	1,1	15,9	Approx. 33,3%
Total		6,9	100	

*) Since 2003. In the period 1990-2002 the funding came from the state and from local authorities.

Source: Mål og midler I offentligt finansieret voksen- og efteruddannelse. Arbejdsministeriet, Undervisningsministeriet og Finansministeriet 1999.

Income compensation to participants

In certain parts of formal adult education participants are entitled to receive compensation for the income they lose when they participate in adult education.

The compensation is based on one of several schemes for different situations: Labour market training compensation, education compensation for the unemployed, educational leave (for members of unemployment funds) and adult education grants (for adults with little prior education). (The adult education grant scheme was substituted by a more general scheme in 2000.)

These schemes are all financed by the state.

Income compensation

Scheme	Expenses 1998	"Full-time" grants
	Billions DKK	N
Labour market training compensation	1,8	13.300
Education compensation	1,8	14.600
Educational leave	2,7	19.200
Adult education grant	0,1	900
Total	6,4	48.000

Source: Mål og midler I offentligt finansieret voksen- og efteruddannelse. Arbejdsministeriet, Undervisningsministeriet og Finansministeriet 1999.

The figures reflect among other things the role of adult education in the combat against unemployment. The reduction of unemployment during the 1990's led after 2000 to a decline in the use of both education compensation for the unemployed and in educational leave.

Trends

Since the adult education reforms in 2000 there have been great efforts made to secure a larger degree of "goal orientation" of the public expenses to adult education. The public purse should be used primarily for education, leading to formal qualification, for purposes which cannot be financed by other means, and for educational activities targeted at people who have not completed secondary education when they were young.

The reforms of 2000 were carried through by the Social Democratic/Social Liberal government, and the Liberal/Conservative government has continued since 2002 to a wide extent some of the developments started in 2000 (but also contributes with its own initiatives).

Thus funding for non-formal adult education has been curtailed substantially. The participants' fee for evening classes in general informal adult education has been doubled – and the state funding of day folk high schools has been completely abolished, leaving the municipalities to subsidize them.

In general formal adult education at the adult education centres the counties are entitled to levy a substantial fee in many of the subjects, and similarly a number of labour market training courses receive smaller subsidies and charge a much larger participants' fee than before.

6. Provision

As a whole adult education constitutes a comprehensive system of provision covering all aspects of education: contents, organisation, competence, formalization etc. Almost any imaginable subject or field of skills is accessible – with different degrees of formalization, point of view, volume of tuition. A person who want to “learn” e.g. English has a number of options: a weekend course or a course with two lessons weekly for 12 weeks at an “evening school”, a formally qualifying course with a duration of 40 weeks and four lessons a week at lower or upper secondary level at an adult education centre, several different courses with a vocational aim in a commercial school, university courses in Open Education as well as private courses of various types.

There is unfortunately no systematic statistical surveillance of the total field of adult education provision at a national level. Within many of the single areas plans for activities are produced, but the information in them is not brought together.

The public information about the provision is communicated by the institutions in leaflets, catalogues, electronically on the web, in various information meetings and – primarily – in guidance and counselling activities at the employment service and in the institutions.

The volume of the provision

A large part of the educational provision, which is financed or supported by the public, is recorded in the database “VIDAR” (www.vidar.dk). In 2001 the database contained a total of approximately 12.000 single classes or courses in day folk high schools, adult education centres, labour market training centres, language centres etc.

The programmes of the “evening schools” are not in this database and are normally not recorded centrally. In connection with a comprehensive survey of the evening schools in 1996-1999 it was estimated that a total of 100.000 classes or courses were offered to the public every year by evening schools.

Contents of the provision

As mentioned above, there is no comprehensive system of reporting adult education provision and consequently there are no general statistics on the range of educational provision. Furthermore the existing statistics within each field of adult education is not very informative as far as the contents of the provisions are concerned.

As mentioned above the totality of adult education covers almost all subjects, it represents degrees of formalization, it encompasses different aims from quite general ones to narrowly vocational or professional aims and purposes, and it comprises levels from very basic to quite advanced levels in some areas.

The different fields of provision are described briefly below.

Non-formal general adult education

Evening schools, General adult education (folkeoplysende voksenundervisning): general, non-formal and non-qualifying educational courses in almost any subject, but mostly practical/creative subjects, including physical exercise. Language teaching plays an important role in this provision.

Special tuition: Adults with physical or other disabilities are offered individual tuition or tuition organised in small groups either taking the handicapped into consideration or aiming at easing the consequences of the handicap.

Day folk high schools (daghøjskoler): general, non-formal and non-qualifying adult education. The curriculum of each of the approximately 80 schools is designed individually – but the common denominator is that the aim of the schools is to provide the participants with personal competence on the basis of work with a number of subjects and activities – both practical/creative and intellectual/theoretical.

(Residence) Folk high schools (folkehøjskoler): general, non-formal, non-qualifying education, The courses are designed individually at each independent school and for groups of students with different central subjects – e.g. music, design, photography or drama – and with a common core of subjects like social science, history, literature etc.

Home economics and textile design schools (husholdning- og håndarbejdsskoler): These schools are “technically” folk high schools but as indicated by the name they concentrate on practical subjects.

Formal, general adult education

Danish as a second language for adult immigrants (dansk som andetsprog): The programme includes language teaching at different levels and information about society and culture in Denmark. The education qualifies formally – as far as Danish skills are concerned – for entry into the ordinary education system.

Preparatory adult education (forberedende voksenuddannelse, FVU): This provision contains basic Danish reading and writing skills and basic numeracy. Danish and numeracy courses are organized in four and two modules respectively, each module has approximately 50 lessons. The courses may be concluded with an exam.

General adult education (almen voksenuddannelse, AVU): education in standard “school” subjects like Danish, mathematics, foreign languages, science etc. at lower secondary level. Courses include a final exam, qualifying for further education.

Higher preparatory exam (højere forberedelseseksamen): education in standard school subjects at general upper secondary level.

Non-formal, vocationally orientated

Production Schools (produktionsskoler): individually organized courses, combining practical production work, general education and intensive counselling.

In service training: Employers, organisations, trade unions etc. organize a large number of courses and other educational activities in different professional contexts, aimed at improving the qualifications of employees.

Formal, vocationally orientated

Labour market training (arbejdsmarkedsuddannelse): comprehensive system of training courses aimed directly at a great variety of functions in production etc. The courses are primarily designed for un- or semiskilled workers.

Adult vocational education and Basic education for adults (voksenerhvervsuddannelse, grundlæggende voksenuddannelse): framework for establishing individually designed programmes for adults with practical experience in certain fields of work. The programmes aim at achieving competence as a skilled worker.

Further education for adults (videreuddannelsessystem for voksne): Framework for establishing programmes for adults in the field of further education who aim at achieving formal qualification at different levels on the basis of working life experience in a certain field. A variety of diploma and master education is presently being introduced in different vocational contexts (e.g. teachers, nurses).

Strengths and weaknesses

In most fields this system implies a richly faceted provision, that allows adults to participate in education which corresponds to their individual backgrounds and qualifications, learning needs and practical conditions for participation.

However the system also contains a number of problems: It is not easily overviewed and not very transparent. The large number of options and possibilities are very demanding both to the participants in relation to their own understanding of their background, learning needs and aims and to the counselling services, which aim to guide people through what is sometimes described as “the education jungle”.

Moreover there is a risk that the system creates overlap-problems, i.e. that the same kind of education is provided in several different settings. This is sometimes a consequence of part of the education system which has developed somewhat “organically” in order to meet the demands of participants or to try to maintain a given level of activity. It is an issue whether this always serves the interests of the learners or those of the institutions.

In any case it is seen by many as a result of a wide spread “market thinking” introduced in adult education during recent years, compelling in a sense institutions to compete in order to maintain their shares of the market.

7. Participation

In the 1990's more than half of the adult Danish population participated in one or more adult education activities every year.⁸ It is presumed that the fact that educational programmes are relatively accessible both geographically and in terms of content contributes substantially to this pattern. It should also be taken into consideration that education has been seen – and used – as an important element in employment policy. Besides which it appears that the idea that education throughout your life is firmly rooted in the culture.

The number of participants – counted as “course participants”, i.e. participants are counted at every course – amounts to more than 2,5 million. It is estimated that the number of “real” persons participating is approx. 2 million every year. Converted into “full time students” the number of participants adds up to approx. 170.000.

Participation rose gradually during the 1980's and 1990's and peaked in 1998-1999 since when a fairly steep drop has occurred. This change in the numbers of participants was presumably primarily due to improving employment conditions in the last part of the 1990's. A substantial part of adult education activity in the 1980's took place in connection with efforts to improve the qualifications of groups of unemployed. As a result of the situation with an ample supply of labour, many initiatives were introduced in order to improve the qualifications of employees with insufficient education background in so called “job rotation” projects where the unemployed substituted for employees during periods of education for the employees.

The improvement in the employment situation – with a shortage of labour starting – reduced the possibility – and need – for those parts of the educational activities which aimed at maintaining labour qualifications.

Participation patterns

What do participants participate in? As it appears from tables 7.1 and 7.2 public institutions and institutions subsidized by the public host the vast majority of participants – 2,3 million course participants (85%) or 165.000 full time equivalents (93%).

Participation in public and subsidized independent institutions is almost evenly distributed between general adult education (qualifying or non formal) and vocationally/professionally directed activities.⁹

In general adult education the informal evening schools attract the broadest participation – and labour market training centres are the central players in vocational training.

In the private course sector participation is distributed more or less evenly between a number of course organizers.

⁸ Newsletter of the Ministry of Education 2001/7, quoting OECD Education Policy Analysis 2001

⁹ Parts of public statistics omit information about general informal adult education and Teaching of Danish as a second language. The figures in the text include these fields.

Tables 7.1 and 7.2 indicate that the decline in participation has occurred throughout all the different institutions. There is however a noticeable variation, the decline is much stronger in vocationally directed activities than the average.

Table 7.1 Participation in adult education (course participants) 1999-2000

	1999	2000	1999	2000	1999	2000
	<i>Course participants</i>		<i>Distribution % Public/private</i>		<i>Distribution %</i>	
General adult education	441.900	403.400	17,0	17,9	14,4	14,9
Non-formal general adult education	975.000	975.000	37,4	43,2	31,7	36,1
Vocational education	977.300	685.100	37,5	30,4	31,8	25,3
Further education	168.600	149.400	6,5	6,6	5,5	5,5
Other public	42.800	43.400	1,6	1,9	1,4	1,6
Public ad. ed. institutions totally	2.605.600	2.256.300	100,0	100,0	84,8	83,5
Commercial courses	204.400	221.200	43,8	49,5	6,7	8,2
Trade- and Employers' organisations	27.700	32.400	5,9	7,3	0,9	1,2
Trade union organisations	56.000	52.400	12,0	11,7	1,8	1,9
Professionals' organisations	23.100	23.800	4,9	5,3	0,8	0,9
Self-governing institutions	105.700	70.100	22,6	15,7	3,4	2,6
Administrative schools	32.800	31.100	7,0	7,0	1,1	1,2
Education associations	17.100	15.800	3,7	3,5	0,6	0,6
Private organisations in total	466.800	446.800	100,0	100,0	15,2	16,5
Total	3.072.400	2.703.100			100,0	100,0

Sources: Danmarks Statistik, Uddannelse og kultur: Deltagelse i voksen- og efteruddannelse 1999-2000. Voksenuddannelse i tal Tal om uddannelserne no 1 2000 Undervisningsministeriet 2000

Table 7.2 Participation in adult education (full time equivalents) 1999-2000

	1999	2000	1999	2000	1999	2000
	<i>Participants</i>		<i>Distribution % Public/private</i>		<i>Distribution %</i>	
General adult education	53.800	47.800	38,6	38,5	36,6	36,6
Non-formal general adult education	35.000	35.000	28,2	25,1	23,8	26,8
Vocational education	34.400	26.000	21,0	24,6	23,4	19,9
Further education	15.000	13.900	11,2	10,7	10,2	10,7
Other public	1.400	1.200	1,0	1,0	1,0	0,9
Public ad. ed. institutions totally	139.600	123.900	100,0	100,0	95,0	94,9
Commercial courses	2.100	1.900	28,8	28,8	1,4	1,5
Trade- and Employers' organisations	300	300	4,1	4,5	0,2	0,2
Trade union organisations	1.100	1.000	15,1	15,2	0,7	0,8
Professionals' organisations	300	300	4,1	4,5	0,2	0,2
Self-governing institutions	1.100	1.000	15,1	15,2	0,7	0,8
Administrative schools	1.000	1.000	13,7	15,2	0,7	0,8
Education associations	1.400	1.100	19,2	16,7	1,0	0,8

Private organisations in total	7.300	6.600	100,0	100,0	5,0	5,1
Total	146.900	130.500			100,0	100,0

Sources: Danmarks Statistik, Uddannelse og kultur: Deltagelse i voksen- og efteruddannelse 1999-2000. Voksenuddannelse i tal Tal om uddannelserne no 1 2000 Undervisningsministeriet 2000

Course direction

The participants are distributed over a number of course directions. The primary areas of vocationally directed courses in public education are designated "Trade, administration, social science" and "Science and engineering, computer science" – where especially a variety of computer education is much frequented.

In the public educational institutions, general courses play an important role. In non-formal general education practical/creative skills constitute approx. one third of the participation and foreign languages about 10 percent.

In formal general adult education at secondary level Danish, mathematics and foreign languages have the largest participation.

In the private sector general courses play a relatively modest role with courses on "personal development and training" and the like. The statistical reports in this field allow a specification of the course types (see table 7.3).

Table 7.3 Participants in private further education – by course type

Course type	Participants	
	Number	Percent
Data processing, computer work	113.000	25,30
Management and staff development	74.400	16,66
Purchase, sale and service	60.400	13,52
Politics, cooperation, organisation	49.400	11,06
Others, including vocational	46.400	10,39
Law, economics, research and finance	26.700	5,98
Public administration	22.000	4,93
Personal development and training	19.900	4,45
General subjects	15.800	3,54
Communication and media techniques	6.100	1,37
Environment	5.900	1,32
Presentation and teaching	4.000	0,90
Languages	2.500	0,56
Export	200	0,04
Total	446.700	100,0

Source: Danmarks Statistik Uddannelse og kultur Deltagelse i voksen- og efteruddannelse 2000. Uddannelse og kultur 2002:8

Participation is distributed over the whole range of subjects. Courses in computer work and electronic data processing have the largest participation, counting for one fourth of the whole participation. In the range 10-15 percent subjects like management and staff development, public administration, politics, cooperation and organisation can be found.

Who are the participants?

Again the information recorded about participants is less than ideal. Participants in some areas are well described statistically, whereas details about participants in other parts are totally unknown.

Not surprisingly adult education activity is highest among adult in their forties, of whom two thirds participated in 1998. Among the 60 to 64 years old, one in four participated. Participation is highest among people with higher education and in leading positions. This holds for both vocationally directed and for non-formal general adult education.

Since a number of educational programmes are established especially aiming at people with little educational background – like labour market training, folk day high schools, general adult education – there is a considerable participation in these groups as well, but still lower than among those well off.

Variations according to gender are quite remarkable. Men concentrate unambiguously on vocationally directed adult education activities so that they constitute a considerable majority of participation for instance in labour market training.¹⁰ Women dominate in general adult education. In day folk high schools and general adult education women constitute 75-80 percent of the participation. This is remarkable because the general educational background of women is clearly better than that of men. Both in post-compulsory upper secondary education and in higher education the proportion of female students is now higher than that of men.

Since men appear to have considerable learning needs in basic skills, it is an important challenge for general adult education to organize their programmes so that they appeal to men. Similarly vocational education is facing development work, so that they can attract women who have less vocational education.

¹⁰ Men and women in Denmark have almost the same occupational frequency.

8. Staff

With its considerable volume adult education employs a large number of teachers, counsellors, administrative and management staff. The field is however extremely decentralized and there are no common and central statistics describing the staff. There are substantial variations between the different areas, and every type of institution has its own systems of reporting and making up relevant information. So this presentation must be rather general.

Generally the formal institutional system of public adult education is characterized by a professional organisation of the staff. The staff is full time employed management, administrative, counseling and teaching personnel.

The Danish tradition for school management assumes that most schools have a central management where pedagogical, administrative and economic management is the responsibility of a school head who has a background as a teacher. Similarly the management of special fields of work – e.g. groups of teachers working with the same subject, school library and counselling and guidance – is assigned to teachers as special work tasks besides their ordinary teaching work.

A similar organisation is found in the institutionalised parts of non-formal adult education like the folk high schools and day folk high schools.

In vocational schools and labour market training centres, which are often very big institutions, a more professionalised organisation is applied.

With respect to staff a large proportion of the non-formal general adult education sector is characterized by a very low degree of institutionalisation. The institutions are in most cases very small – and the activity allows neither full-time management nor full time teachers.

The professional profile of teachers

On the whole adult education is characterized by teachers who work in adult education with a background of specific professional competence in one or more of the large number of subjects taught in adult education. Since until recently there has been no specific education of adult education teachers, the pedagogical background of teachers in adult education has either been that of teachers in basic school (teacher training college) or in upper secondary general education (university graduates) and/or various kinds of in service training. In adult education fields where professionalisation and institutionalisation is low, it has been left to the individual teacher to provide time and money for supplementary training – sometimes but not always formally required to work as a teacher.

It may appear paradoxical that a country with a comprehensive adult education as is found in Denmark has – until now – put relatively little focus on education of adult educators. One important explanation is presumably that emphasis in adult education has been on the subjects to a even higher degree than in other areas of education. A second explanation could be the philosophy of “free schools” which is predominant in all non-formal education sectors (and plays an important role elsewhere as well), which implies a “free choice of teachers” for the institutions. Thirdly, the low degree of institutionalisation in many parts of adult education, which limits the possibilities of offering teachers normal occupational conditions, has contributed to a relatively low degree of professionalisation in some areas of adult education.

Thus the teachers and trainers in adult education constitute a very mixed group with a broad variety of qualifications – in most cases recruited on the basis of an assessment of their “real” qualifications. The various institutions offer different further education opportunities – especially in the field of pedagogy – and in service training plays an important role in the qualification structure of adult education.

The table below gives an overview over the profiles of teachers in different fields of adult education.

Table 8.1 Profiles of teachers in different fields of adult education

Educational field	Formal qualification	General educational background
Non formal, general		
Non formal general adult courses	None	(Nothing general can be indicated)
Day folk high school courses	None	M.A., teacher, supplementary courses
Folk high school courses	None	M.A., teacher, supplementary courses
Home economics and textile design schools	None	M.A., teacher, home economics teacher, textile design teacher
Special education for adults	Yes – in service training	Teacher with supplementary training
Formal, general		
Teaching Danish as a second language for adult immigrants	Yes – in service training	M.A., teacher
Preparatory adult education	Yes – in service training	Teacher with supplementary training
General formal adult education (lower secondary level)	None	Teacher, supplementary courses
General formal adult education (upper secondary level)	Yes – education	M.A., M.Sc.
Vocational and labour market training		
Production schools	None	Vocational education, teacher
Labour market training	Yes – education and in service training	Vocational education or M.A., supplementary pedagogical education
Adult vocational education	Yes – education and in service training	Vocational education or M.A., supplementary pedagogical education
Basic vocational education for adults	Yes – education	Vocational education or

Educational field	Formal qualification	General educational background
		M.A., supplementary pedagogical education
Further education for adults	Yes – education	M.A., M.Sc.

For details about the education of teachers in adult education see section 9.

Trends and Perspectives

In certain sectors of adult education there is a relatively strong tendency towards professionalisation and a strengthening of specific adult education expertise. This holds primarily for the formal education areas, where conditions prevail which develop both the educational content and the professional situation of the teachers and other staff.

However, conditions in less formalized areas are at the same time deteriorating due to the reduction of funding etc. leaving both institutions and teaching staff with even less favourable conditions for developing the educational activities. This holds especially for non-formal general education of the evening schools and for the day folk high schools. Especially in the latter, pedagogic development activities have taken place, which have given important experience with the learning processes of participants with little school background.

9. Research and Higher Education

Although adult education in Denmark has both deep historical roots and is currently run on a substantial scale, it is only during recent years that specialized research into adult education and academic studies proper in the area have been introduced. Research work has been relatively sparse, development work in the area has been performed by practitioners, in many fields there have been no formal qualifications or qualifications have been taken over from other fields of the education system.

Research

At present research into adult education is primarily carried out at three of Denmark's five universities: at the University in Roskilde which has a special research group focusing on adult and professional education, at the new University of Education (established in 2000 during a merge of three former institutions in the field of education), and at the university of Aalborg, which has a centre on learning processes which includes adult education in its projects.

Adult Education Research Group

Roskilde University, Department of Educational Research

"The Adult Education Research Group is an autonomous research unit within the Department of Educational Research.

The group comprise 27 researchers and a secretariat. All members are fully integrated in the department, but are simultaneously organized in a number of fractions, covering specific research areas or activities.

The researchers in the group do their part of the ordinary lot of the university professor – tutoring, lecturing and administering – at the humanist basic studies, at the degree programmes in education, open university degree programme in adult education, the ph.d. programme "Lifelong Learning and Experience" and the pedagogical training of the academic staff.

The group, however, also takes part in other activities, from large scale research projects funded by the research councils to smaller evaluation and counselling assignments. The group participates in a number of international networks of adult education research, e.g. ESREA (European Association for the Research into the Education of Adults)."

Information from the website of the Department of Educational Research

http://www.ruc.dk/inst10_en/adult_education/

Graduate School in Lifelong Learning

Roskilde University, Department of Educational Research

"The Graduate School of Lifelong Learning is a special doctoral programme based in the interdisciplinary research environment of the Adult Education Research Group. It was assigned the status as a Graduate School in 1999, funded by the Danish Research Academy for a five years period.

Within an interdisciplinary and problem-oriented research environment the school aims at combining the highest level of academic research with current societal challenges in the fields of learning, training and education. International networking and exchange has a high priority.

By January 2003 the programme held appr. 50 ph.d. students, research fellows as well as students funded by other sources. Enrolment normally takes place in August/September, but deviations may be considered.

Our research into learning, teaching, pedagogy and education encompasses the broader societal and cultural contexts. The subjective perspectives on education – questions of gender, generation, every day life, stages in the life course, etc. – as well as the societal functions of qualification, differentiation and integration are as fully important as questions of teaching method. The perspective of working life and the cultural change in concepts of work and labour are particularly important themes. Cooperation with teachers and planners on development and evaluation of educational programmes are frequent. In accordance with the general profile of Roskilde University research programmes are interdisciplinary and problem-oriented.

Current ph.d. projects are for instance on professions, working life, gender and life history. Theoretically critical theory, theories of modernity and cultural studies are pursued alongside with theories of socialisation and qualification.”

Information from the website of the Department of Educational Research:

http://www.ruc.dk/inst10_en/phd/

The new centres for higher education which include teacher-training colleges are also engaged on profession-orientated research and development work. For instance the Centre for higher Education Greater Copenhagen has “knowledge centres” for learning and adult education and for the development of management and professions.

Besides these the sector research institutes, The Danish National Institute of Social Research (Socialforskningsinstituttet, SFI), Institute of local government studies (Amternes og kommunernes forskningsinstitut, AKF), and The Danish Institute for Educational Training of Vocational Teachers (Danmarks Erhvervspædagogiske Lærteruddannelse, DEL) have participated in a number of research projects in adult education as did also the former Danish Research and Development Centre for Adult Education (DRDC; Udviklingscenteret for folkeoplysning og voksenuddannelse), until it was closed in 2002.

Academic studies

At academic level, adult education studies are included in graduate studies in pedagogy at all the universities. For a number of years universities have established Open University studies in adult pedagogy, organized as part time studies for adults working at the same time – teachers, trainers, education planners, and people working in the social and the health care system.

Since 2001 this education has been integrated into the new Further Education System for Adults and a curriculum for a degree as Master of Adult Education has been approved. The education covers a broad range of themes within the subject – psychology of learning, sociological and organisational aspects of adult education.

Similarly a number of educational programmes are being developed – not least in relation to education, development of competence and qualifications – within the framework of the Further Education System for Adults.

The Danish University of Education

“History

The Danish University of Education was established on 1 July 2000 by the merger of three institutions: the Royal Danish School of Educational Studies, the Danish National Institute for Educational Research and the Danish School of Advanced Pedagogy.

Mission statement and aims

The Danish University of Education is committed to the pursuit of excellence in teaching and research. The university aims to promote research and postgraduate education at the highest level across the full range of educational disciplines and strives to enhance the quality of educational research and pedagogical practice in Denmark. The university seeks to become a leading international centre for educational research and professional development.

Organisation and government of the university

The Danish University of Education is a self-governing institution of higher education under the Danish Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation. It is made up of five departments:

Department of Educational Psychology

Department of Philosophy of Education

Department of Educational Sociology

Department of Curriculum Research

Department of Educational Anthropology

At the highest level, a board of governors is responsible for the overall leadership, direction and management of the university as an institution of higher education and research, and sets down guidelines for the university's long-term strategic policy and planning. The day-to-day management of the university is the responsibility of the rector who collaborates closely with the Vice-Rector for Research, the Vice-Rector for Education and the Director of Administration (administration and finance).

The academic authority of the university is the senate. It approves the research budgets as well as the curricula. The senate is further responsible for conferring PhD degrees and higher doctorates, advising the rector upon all academic appointments as well as advising the board of governors upon the appointment of a rector. The senate has the right to express an opinion on any matter pertaining to the university's academic affairs and has an obligation to discuss all academic matters submitted to the senate by the rector.

Students have a direct influence on policy and the decision-making process at the university through a student council. The student council promotes the interests of all students enrolled at the university and has two representatives on the board of governors as well as two representatives in the senate.

Research

The Danish University of Education is a research-based university. Its research covers the entire educational field. As a result, teaching programmes are similarly comprehensive, catering for the professional needs of educators in compulsory, further and higher education. Research conducted at the university reflects the profiles of its five constituent departments and is further shaped by an institutional research policy that promotes interdisciplinary research programmes across departmental boundaries.

Teaching

The Danish University of Education offers a range of postgraduate courses at the following levels:

Master's degree programmes

PhD programmes

International relations

The Danish University of Education strives to be an international leader in its field. The university is international in outlook and actively seeks collaborations and partnerships with universities and research institutions in Europe and overseas, including formal exchange agreements for staff and students. The university provides a stimulating working environment for visiting researchers and students and is in the process of developing degree programmes to be offered in English.

Units within the Danish University of Education

The Danish National Library of Education is our on-campus library and one of the largest research libraries in northern Europe specialising in the field of education. It serves the needs of all students and staff at the university as well as being open to the general public. – Tel. +45 3969 6633, www.dpb.dpu.dk

Learning Lab Denmark is an independent centre for experimental educational studies within the Danish University of Education aimed at exploring learning and competence development. Tel. +45 3336 0555, www.lld.dk

Information on the website of the university http://woe.dpu.dk/default2.asp?page_id=18

Education of teachers and trainers

Since until recently there has been no specific education of adult education teachers, the pedagogical background of teachers in adult education has either been that of teachers in basic school (teacher training college) or in upper secondary general education (university graduates) and/or various kinds of in service training. In adult education fields where professionalisation and institutionalisation is low it has been left over to the individual teacher to provide time and money for supplementary training.

For quite some years the education system had specific education directed at adult education in only two minor fields: home economics and textile design. These areas constitute a large part of the general non-formal adult education and furthermore there are a number of independent schools based on these subjects. This is presumably the rationale behind the establishment of these two teacher educational programmes.

As far as supplementary in service training is concerned, most systematic work has taken place in vocational and labour market training where all teachers have been qualified in a pedagogical course at the Danish Institute for Educational Training of Vocational Teachers.

In relation to special education and teaching of Danish as a second language for immigrants, specific courses have been required as qualification for working in these fields as a specific adult education supplement.

Similarly there have been various programmes for teachers occupied with guidance and counselling in adult education.

A general basic education for adult education teachers has been offered to teachers in all other fields of adult education by various educational institutions, including adult education associations. Quantitatively this has been one of the most important qualifications for the area. For a number of years up to 1990 this course was mandatory for teachers in non-formal general education at evening schools.

Teacher training colleges have offered pedagogical courses aiming at adult education either as part of or as supplementary to their ordinary teacher education programmes which aim at primary and lower secondary education in basic schools.

Besides these initiatives an adult educator education proper was established in the 1990's, organized as a part time educational programme corresponding to one year's full time study. The course has been offered within the framework of Open Education, which means a substantial participant fee.

These programmes are now established within the further education system for adults as diploma studies.

In this field the new centres for higher education, established by the merging of educational institutions in the area of medium cycle higher education, among them teacher training colleges, are playing a major role offering further education programmes at diploma (bachelor) level.

10. International Contacts

Danish adult education is involved in bi- and multilateral international cooperation at many levels and in various areas. Both ministries and institutions and the organisations have close connections with national, regional and international organisations.

The Nordic Cooperation

The Nordic countries and governments have a formalized cooperation in the Nordic Council and in the Nordic Council of Ministers. The cooperation includes a broad scope of policy areas, thus also adult education. A special advisory committee is established for this area.

Nordic cooperation comprises both development work, exchange of experience and the establishment of surveys etc. In later years a number of analyses and studies have been made about conditions for general adult education, interaction between general adult education and working life. Among a number of projects is the project IDUN (<http://www.idun.odin.dk/>), which is about the application of information- and communication technology in education.

An important part of the Nordic cooperation is the communal Nordic Folk Academy in Gothenburg in Sweden. The academy, which is staffed by members from the Nordic countries, arranges an extensive course- and conference activity for adult educators and others involved in adult education. This forms an important arena for the exchange of experience and ideas. Since 1989 the academy has been very active in the field of educational cooperation between the Nordic and the Baltic countries.

At the NGO-level there is also an intense cooperation between adult education associations and their umbrella organisations.

Europe

Since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the opening of Eastern and Central Europe there have been quite intensive contacts and cooperation projects at both government and non-government levels. Especially vis-à-vis the Baltic states both the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education and organisations and institutions have participated in projects aiming at building new institutions and programmes in the field of education. Thus the Ministry of Labour has assisted with establishing labour market training systems in several countries.

The cooperation in the Council of Europe has been quite important primarily for the Ministry of Education. With the great number of member states the council has been an excellent forum for a broad exchange of experience and points of view. The cooperation includes a number of programmes dealing with themes of common interest, e.g. foreign language teaching, education for citizenship and democracy.

Gradually cooperation within the framework of the European Union has come to play an important role in Danish educational work although education is less integrated as far as common policies are concerned. Danish institutions participate in a number of common projects in European education programmes, and a number of Danish projects are co-financed by European structure funds. These projects constitute important arenas for development of ideas and sharing of experience.

In Denmark the Centre for International Cooperation and Mobility in Education and Training, CIRIUS, is the national office for the three EU-education programmes and the national knowledge centre for internationalisation for the Danish education system.

Danish NGO's – organized in the Danish Council for Adult Education – participate in European adult education organisation in the European Association for Education of Adults, EAEA.

The former Danish Research and Development Centre for Adult Education participated in the work of the organisation European Research and Development Institutes in Adult Education, ERDI, from the beginning, until the centre was closed down in 2002. The centre was a partner in a number of European projects, e.g. Numeracy at the Work Place, Manual – a European Guide to Counselling in Adult Education, and ESNAL – A European Service Network for Adults Learning.

International Work of Danish WEA

"AOF's international work consists of for instance:

- * EU projects with partner organisations in Spain, Germany, Austria, England and Holland on development of European key competencies.
- * Nordic development networks consisting of local AOF branches in Norway, Sweden Finland and Iceland that works with themes about how "folkeoplysning" can supplement other adult education systems and stimulate and increase the possibilities of the individual for a personal and professional development and for taking active part in the development of society.
- * Co-operation between local AOF branches and trade unions and organisations in the Baltic States in developing adult education
- * Development of adult education organisations in the 3rd World
- * Development of vocational training
- * Day or week themes in AOF's Day Folk High Schools covering the relationship between the 3rd World and Denmark
- * Apprenticeships and courses for participants from different countries

AOF's international objectives

There is a tradition that AOF takes part in international co-operation. While in 1924 other adult education organisations praised national values, in 1924 AOF was actually established on an international basis and therefore the international responsibility is clearly stated in the articles and constitution of AOF.

After World War II AOF took part in founding the International Federation of Workers' Educational Associations – IFWEA. In the beginning of the 1990s the regional European WEA-organisation EURO-WEA was established.

It is stated in AOF's articles that AOF should put its efforts in creating understanding of the importance of international co-operation.

In the year of 2002 this is still an important objective in Denmark. Denmark is a part of the rest of the world and the rest of the world is part of Denmark.

It is very important for modern adult education to relate to this fact, to look critically at the way in which globalisation is expanding these years, and at the same time to realize the prospects of international co-operation.

It is also important to see through the rigid picture of the 3rd world.

And finally it is important that "folkeoplysning" and adult education based on labour movement values take part in a globalised world.

Globalisation is too important to be left to brokers and transnational companies."

Website of WEA: www.aof-danmark.dk

Global cooperation

The Danish government participates in education cooperation in the global organisations OECD, UNESCO and the UN in general. Thus the Danish ministry chaired a work shop on education for citizenship at the international conference ICE 2001.

Denmark took part in the Second International Literacy Survey, SIALS. The results of this survey led immediately to the introduction in Denmark of a new offer of basic education in Danish literacy and numeracy, Preparatory Adult Education.

The Danish Council for Adult Education and some of its member organisations participate in cooperation in international organisations, e.g. the International Council for Adult Education, ICAE, and in bilateral cooperation with individual countries.

The Danish folk high school association and individual schools are involved in folk high school projects in a number of countries around the world, e.g. Nigeria, Ghana, India and Bangladesh, where educational programmes are established to a high degree on the basis of the educational philosophy on which the Danish folk high schools are founded.

11. Trends and Perspectives

Adult education in Denmark has undergone a tremendous development during the last 25 years. There are now many more – and more different – educational opportunities, participation has risen considerably, public expenditure has increased even more than activity. Every year more than every second adult takes part in adult education as a means of professional qualification, personal development or as a meaningful leisure time occupation.

On the threshold to the 21st century there are no signs that the role of adult education will diminish – although the very high participation of the 1990's has decreased somewhat as a consequence of the improvement in the unemployment situation. The demographic development reduces the recruitment of young people to the labour market at a time when the large post-war generations are retiring. At the same time internationalisation and globalisation impose even greater competition on the international economy. Thus there is increasing demand for virtually every adult to be able to participate actively and at a even higher level of qualification in the work force through his or her whole life, which again means an increasing demand for adult education and lifelong learning.

As of 2000 initiatives have been taken to prepare adult education – and education generally – for the 21st century, to introduce adult education reforms, partly in the framework of the concept of lifelong learning.

Adult Education Reforms

The adult education reform of 2000 aims at the further development of the adult education system. Thus it establishes a system for further education for adults and a number of new educational opportunities with formal qualifications – and secures new educational opportunities for groups who have insufficient basic general or vocational skills. The reform also sets the stage for a reform of the financing of adult education, which draws much more on contributions from participants and employers than has previously been the case.

The reform unequivocally gives priority to educational activities leading to a formal qualification and – as far as public subsidies are concerned – to education for educationally disadvantaged groups. Furthermore the reform introduces initiatives, which include formal recognition of “real” qualifications, acquired outside the education system.

On the other hand general, non-formal education is downgraded as far as public subsidies are concerned and also concerning which kinds of education people are allowed to attend while on benefit, for instance as unemployed.

It is an explicit aim of adult education policy to control activities much more than it has been the case up to now. There is a tendency to design educational programmes in much more detail and to monitor participation more closely. The reason is partly economical – the public expenditure on adult education has to be curbed in order to meet financial requirements from other parts of the national budget. But it appears that education policy is marked as well for the time being by a strong belief that freedom must be guided much more than has been the tradition in Danish adult education.

Great importance is attributed to the evaluation of educational activities, illustrated by the establishment of a national centre for education evaluation, which covers all fields of education. The centre functions as an evaluator and as a knowledge centre for evaluation. Thus the centre performs an important role in connection with quality assurance work in the institutions.

Important Issues

Underlying policy discussions in the political system, adult education seems to face crucial challenges. Recent studies indicate that some sectors have a long way to go when it comes to ensure the pedagogical organisation necessary for getting a firm grasp on the participants and their learning processes. A considerable proportion of participants feel “placed” in education, they don’t feel well guided about the education they attend, they indicate that they are not aware of why they are in the education they are in, they react negatively to control and evaluation measures applied by the education systems. Especially in extensive education activity, which has been established for the unemployed, serious questions have been raised.

The attitude of the participants appears to hamper both the effectiveness and the effects of educational efforts. Parts of adult education are marked by absence and drop out problems, and the participants give education bad marks.

The studies indicate that adult education systems fail to involve participants in the planning and implementation of educational activities. They fail to tie the educational activities to the background and learning needs of the participants, and they do not have tools to ensure the acceptance of the participants of the goals of the activities.

It should be a matter of course that the adult education system allows for participants’ learning. The general framework for adult education should make room for pedagogical work with issues of the kind mentioned above. It appears that the present reforms – and the educational philosophy behind them – stress the supremacy of the curriculum at the expense of the participants’ involvement. The strong focus on formal qualification and competence and the notion that education must be organized according to detailed descriptions of contents, seem to constitute a serious challenge to adult education teachers who have to rely on the personal involvement of participants when it comes to actual learning processes.

In the context it is noticeable that the potentials for self directed learning in e-learning and similar flexible organisational frameworks seem to encounter considerable difficulties in gaining ground in the educational landscape. But many initiatives are at work, and it can be expected that flexible education will spread considerably in the near future.

Lifelong learning

The notion of education as a continuing process has had strong roots in Danish education. Considerable numbers of adults have passed through school gates of different kinds during their life – in order to qualify for further education, to improve skills needed in their job, to gain new knowledge, to develop personally or to participate in cultural, practical or creative learning activities.

The conception of lifelong learning has – to a varying degree –influenced adult education policies since the Tokyo-conference in 1972 – most markedly in the 1990's when the first sketches for a policy of recurrent education were presented. Further Education for Adults, which is the implementation of these ideas, explicitly refers to lifelong learning.

However, the general discourse gradually turned its attention to the concept of learning – rather than education, thus stressing the processes of acquisition of skills and knowledge generally and both outside and inside the education system. This presented from the start a special linguistic problem in Denmark since the word “learning” actually didn't exist in Danish – and in fact there was and still is some dispute about putting the word “citizenship” into the Danish language (which eventually has been done!).

In the Danish consultation process about the EU Commission's memorandum on lifelong learning, the education system responded almost unanimously on a positive note, stressing that the broad nature of the concept (and the learning activities) should be maintained in practical education policies. Lifelong learning can and should be seen as comprehensively covering a broad range of learning activities directed at various life arenas – work, citizenship, personal life etc.

In this perspective it is remarkable that the adult education reform of 2000 actually did not include a considerable part of general, non-formal adult education. Adult education associations and local evening schools and folk high schools were not considered at all. This can be taken as an indication of the lack of importance of general adult education in the perspective of the top brass of education policy.

On the other hand it may be seen as a manifestation of the acceptance of the self-determination of these areas of education. This would be concurrent with the self-understanding of liberal general adult education – they view themselves as independent education actors, working for and on behalf of the civil society. Recent legislation on liberal general adult education supports the latter view, which however is accompanied by considerable reductions in funding and otherwise.

Furthermore it appears that the present focus on formal qualification in adult education policies leaves important aspects of lifelong learning neglected. Even a cursory study of education policy initiatives reveals a strong concentration on the improvement of conditions, funding and interest in institutionalised, formalized adult education. Therefore it may well be feared that the perspective of lifelong – and life wide – learning in education is being lost.

Recent developments

The article below is a report on the changes in adult education, which followed the change of government in November 2001. Although many of the changes are worked into the text of the publication, it seems suitable to bring this coherent report as well.

“May 17th, 2002

Adult Education and 'Folkeoplysning' in Denmark

a brief summary of the initiatives of the new government

Liberal-Conservative government with right wing majority sets new priorities – not least in the field of non-formal adult education

By Jørgen Brems, The Danish Research and Development Centre for Adult Education

Contents:

- Introduction: New government, new priorities
- Budget cuts in education
- The Act on public support for general adult education
- The Act on Folk day high schools
- The Act on Open youth education
- Reforms of institutions and financing of labour market further education and training
- Education and integration
- Native language teaching
- Teaching Danish as a Second Language for Adults at the work-place
- Abolishment of councils, boards and institutions
- Knowledge Centre abolished – and re-established
- No need for International Academy for Education and Democracy?
- State subsidy to the Development Centre to be abolished

Introduction: New government, new priorities

In November 2001 parliamentary power in Denmark changed. The social democratic-social liberal government lost the general election after almost 10 years in power. It was replaced by a liberal-conservative coalition government, which, with support from Dansk Folkeparti (Danish People's Party), a populist "new-right wing" party, governs with an absolute majority in the Parliament Folketinget.

Among the government's main pledges to its voters were a so-called "tax-stop" and a massive effort to cut down the waiting lists in some parts of the public health system. The tax stop in itself implies hard restrictions on public expenditure, restrictions, which of course were made even more rigorous by the extra expenditure on health service.

Although education policy – and especially adult education policy – was not a key element in the government's programme – in strong contrast to the former government – it appears that the government has chosen this part of society as one of its main battlefields. The reasons are probably that the education system occupies a substantial part of public resources – and that it is seen as a part of the welfare system that can be made the object of budget cuts without challenging either the economic establishment or important groups of e.g. elderly people who regard themselves as disadvantaged due to defects in the public health system.

The government's programme for the first 100 days was dominated by initiatives in connection with the national budget for 2002. A rather harsh request for budget cuts was presented to all parts of national government, not least to the Ministry of Education and the Ministry for Environmental Issues.

Budget reductions in education

In the field of education the budget contained general reductions. Although the cuts were somewhat softened in the final phase, substantial cuts were maintained in parts of the education system which do not provide participants with formal qualifications. The philosophy appears to be that non-formal education is a personal matter and accordingly participants must contribute substantially – even though the participants belong to groups who have benefited little from the education system in the past.

A number of initiatives were introduced – partly in order to meet the requests for reducing public expenditure, partly in order to change parts of the education system in a direction corresponding to the aims of the liberal-conservative government.

The Act on the allocation of grants to general adult education (Folkeoplysning)

Under this act local governments (municipalities) have been entitled to pay a subsidy of a maximum of two thirds of the salary expenses of local evening schools which offer general adult education courses. The new act reduces the maximum to one third, so that the participants' fees will have to finance two thirds.

The new act also gives the municipalities the right to differentiate the subsidies so that different subjects are subsidized at different rates. Up to now it has been an important principle in the acts on subsidies for Folkeoplysning that the courses offered should be decided on by the adult education schools and associations themselves (i.e. the participants) according to their philosophy and ideal basis and aims. Furthermore all subjects should be treated in the same way as far as public subsidies have been concerned.

The new act also abolishes the obligation for the municipalities to reserve at least 5% of the total budget for subsidies for special development purposes.

This initiative will save the government 275 mill. DKK a year from 2003 – well over half the expenditure in 2001.

Among the explicit motivations are also that participants should pay a larger part of the expenses for this type of education which does not aim at achieving formal qualifications. Furthermore the government wants the local government to have liberty – or even obligation – of action as to what subjects are taught in local evening schools.

The Act on Day folk high schools

The Day folk high schools offer educational activities to educationally disadvantaged groups, aiming at preparing the participants for education and employment. The act, which regulated contents and national financial support for this part of general adult education, has been abolished, leaving it to the local governments (municipalities) to decide whether this educational offer should be given at all – and if so, in what form.

In the reasoning behind for the act the government stressed that the functions of day folk high schools are strictly local – and therefore local government should have the authority to decide whether schools should be established and what they should do.

The critics of the abolishment of the act fear that the schools will be unable to preserve their special function and rather unique pedagogical profile in relation to the functions they have towards the education of adults who – in many cases due to personal difficulties – are unable or unwilling to establish themselves in the ordinary education system.

The Act on Open youth education (Fri Ungdomsuddannelse, Fuu)

Another reform is the abolishment of the act on Open Youth Education which has provided the legal framework for young learners to put together qualifications on an individual basis acquired through elements of a number of different educational settings and other learning activities etc.

In most cases Open Youth Education does not provide students with formal qualifications and therefore the government considers this education as superfluous or even harmful – as it takes up time and resources from more goal-oriented educational activities in the formal system.

Critics of the abolishment of the act point to the fact that the Open Youth Education has given a number of young people who were not otherwise attracted by the ordinary education system the opportunity to find a way into the education system.

Reforms of institutions and financing of labour market further education and training

The government wants the two types of institutions offering labour market training and further education – the vocational schools and labour market training centres – to merge. The government expects to gain substantial cost savings from this initiative.

Furthermore the act regulating the financing of labour market further education has been changed. The financial basis was formerly a – fixed – state subsidy supplemented by a general tax on employers for this purpose. The latter has now been abolished, and instead the government has introduced participants' fees in a number of educational courses – including computer and foreign language courses.

The government explained the new acts by pointing to the effects of simplification of the system which is supposed to make educational programmes more accessible for participants – and to the expectation that the demand for education will be 'qualified' if it has a price. Thus the government expects a reduction of activities in this field.

Critics of the initiatives – especially of the participants' fee – point to the fact that the act will limit the possibilities for unskilled and semi-skilled workers to gain access to supplementary education and training. There is a strong tendency in companies to be reluctant to invest in education for the least educated members of their staff. On the part of employers criticism is that the fees will have a negative effect on the competitive forces of the enterprises.

Education and integration

In connection with the establishment of the new government a number of government activities were moved between the ministries. Education activities concerning immigrants were thus moved from the ministry of education to a new ministry for refugees, immigrants and integration. Important changes are on their way in these fields:

Native language teaching

The government takes away the obligation of municipalities to offer teaching in the native language of children of immigrants whose native language is not Danish. At the same time the national subsidy for these activities has been cut. Instead the government urges municipalities to make a stronger effort to teach the children of immigrants Danish in pre-school day-care institutions and in the first years of primary school.

The proposition has been met with criticism based on practical experience and research results pointing to the fact that the teaching of the native language for the children of immigrants is very important for integration for the results in acquisition of Danish language capabilities.

Teaching Danish as a Second Language for Adults in the work-place

The government aims at changing the newly established education system for teaching Danish as a second language for adults. Thus the government – among other things – wants to establish incentives for participants, municipalities and enterprises to establish a much closer cooperation and coherence between language teaching, learning and employment of immigrants. Language teaching should preferably take place as part of the immigrant's employment – and the government is willing to change the system of subsidies so that enterprises can have educational activities funded directly.

Professionals in teaching Danish as a second language and researchers have expressed serious doubts as to the effects of the proposed initiative. Even if it is possible to provide immigrants with a functional language, there is a risk that it will have only limited use in other environments – and thus restrict the possibilities for integration in education, civil and social life etc.

Abolishment of councils, boards and institutions

One of the high profiled initiatives of the new government was a general overhaul of the structure of councils, boards and institutions in the state administration. Before the national elections in 2001 both the government and the leading opposition party had gone over the comprehensive list of agencies and bodies, established – in one way or another – to counsel government or the public on different matters.

The Prime Minister announced the abolishment of a large number of bodies etc., characterizing them generally as “arbiters of taste”, unnecessary, needless, dispensable, and/or expendable. In the field of the Ministry of Education three institutions were on the “death roll”, as the list was called in the public debate.

Knowledge Centre abolished – and re-established

The government has also established the national resource centre for education in Danish as a second language for children, young people and adults, UC2. The centre has however been re-established in connection with one of the centres for further education.

No need for an International Academy for Education and Democracy?

The International Academy for Education and Democracy was established in 2001. The initiative was introduced in 1997 at UNESCO’s fifth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA V) by the then Danish minister of education, and the idea won immediate sympathy within UNESCO and was supported warmly by both the former and the present General Secretary of UNESCO.

In January, however, the establishment was stopped by the new government, motivated partly by budget considerations, partly by the idea that the functions of the academy would be performed better and more rationally in a new institution, the Danish Centre for International Studies and Human Rights under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

However, a Danish initiative group has commenced work in order to establish the Academy as it was originally intended.

State subsidy of the Development Centre to be abolished

The government has decided to abolish the state grant for the Danish Research and Development Centre for Adult Education.

The board and the staff of the Development Centre have considered a number of ways to continue the work of the centre – or parts of it – but so far with no luck. Therefore the inevitable decision to close the DRDC had to be taken by the board. At the moment intense negotiations are taking place with other institutions about cooperation or taking over tasks and staff from the centre.

The centre aims to keep up normal functions as far as possible in the transition period – probably until September 30th.”

12.1 Useful addresses

Ministry

Danish Ministry Of Education

Undervisnings Ministeriet, Frederiksholms Kanal 21, 1220 København K, Phone: +45 3392 5220, Fax: +45 3392 5547, E-mail: uvm@uvm.dk, Internet: <http://www.uvm.dk> (English pages: <http://eng.uvm.dk/>)

The Danish Evaluation Institute (EVA)

Danmarks Evalueringsinstitut, Østbanegade 55.3, 2100 København Ø, Phone: +45 35 55 01 01, Fax: +45 35 55 10 11, E-mail: eva@eva.dk, Internet: www.eva.dk (English pages: <http://www.eva.dk/www/webside/>)

Centre for International Cooperation and Mobility in Education and Training (CIRIUS)

CIRIUS, Fiolstræde 44, 1171 København K. Phone: +45 3395 7000 Fax: +45 3395 7001 E-mail: cirius@ciriusmail.dk, Internet: www.ciriusonline.dk (English pages: <http://www.ciriusonline.dk/eng/>)

Universities

The Danish University of Education (DPU)

Danmarks pædagogiske Universitet, Emdrupvej 101, 2400 København NV, Phone: +45 39 69 66 33, Fax: +45 39 66 00 81, www.dpu.dk (English pages: <http://woe.dpu.dk/>)

Roskilde University, Department of Educational Research

Roskilde Universitetscenter, Institut for Uddannelsesforskning, Universitetsvej 1, P.O. Box 260, 4000 Roskilde, Phone: +45 46 74 20 00, Fax: +45 46 74 30 00, E-mail: ruc@ruc.dk; Internet: <http://www.ruc.dk/inst10/>, (English pages: http://www.ruc.dk/ruc_en/departments/dept10/)

Aalborg University, Centre for the Interdisciplinary Study of Learning (VCL)

Aalborg Universitet, Videncenter for læreprocesser, Fredrik Bajers Vej 7B, 9220 Aalborg Ø, Phone: +45 9635 9950, Fax: +45 9815 6542, E-mail: videncenter@vcl.auc.dk, Internet: <http://www.vcl.auc.dk> (English pages: <http://www.vcl.auc.dk/default-engelsk.htm>)

Danish Doctoral Studies in the Field of Education And Learning

This website gives an overview of existing resources in the Danish field of education. The purpose is to strengthen an overt environment for educational research in Denmark and to further the coordination and planning of activities at within the field.

Internet: <http://www.educational-research.dk>

(English pages: www.educational-research.dk/eng/index.html)

Sector Research Institutes

The Danish Institute for Educational Training of Vocational Teachers (DEL)

Danmarks Erhvervspædagogiske Lærerruddannelse, Rosenørns Allé 31, 1970 København FC, Phone: +45 35 24 79 00, Fax: +45 35 24 79 10, Internet: www.delud.dk (English pages: <http://www.delud.dk/uk/default.htm>)

Institute of Local Government Studies (AKF)

Amternes og kommunernes forskningsinstitut, Nyropsgade 37, 1602 København V, Phone: +45 33110300, fax: +45 33152875, E-mail: akf@akf.dk, Internet: www.akf.dk (English pages: http://www.akf.dk/index_eng.html)

The Danish National Institute of Social Research (SFI)

Socialforskningsinstituttet, Herluf Trollesgade 11, 1052 København K, Phone: +45 33 48 08 00, Fax: +45 33 48 08 33, E-mail: SFI@SFI.DK, Internet: <http://www.sfi.dk> (English pages: <http://www.sfi.dk/sw158.asp>)

Liberal Adult Education Organisations

Danish Council for Adult Education (DFS)

Dansk Folkeoplysnings Samråd, Bredgade 36, 2, 1260 København K, Phone: +45 33 15 14 66, E-mail: dfs@dfs.dk, Internet: www.dfs.dk

Workers' Education Association (AOF)

Arbejdernes Oplysnings Forbund Danmark, Teglværksgade 27, 2100 København Ø, Phone +45 39 29 60 66, Fax +45 39 29 49 96, E-mail: aof@aof-danmark.dk, Internet: www.aof-danmark.dk (English pages)

Danish Adult Education Association (DOF)

Dansk Oplysningsforbund, Kongensgade 66, 2. 5000 Odense C, Phone: +45 70 20 60 20, Fax: +45 66 17 72 62, Internet: www.danskoplysning.dk

The Association for Folk High Schools (FFD)

Folkehojskolernes Forening, Hojskolernes Hus, Nytorv 7, 1450 København, Phone: +45 33 13 98 22, Fax: +45 33 13 98 70, Internet: www.ffd.dk (English pages: <http://www.ffd.dk/da/main/main.php?menu=156>)

Folkeligt Oplysnings Forbund (FOF) (Popular Adult Education Association)

Folkeligt Oplysnings Forbund, Hovedvagtsgade 6,3, 1103 København K, Phone: +45 33 14 20 26 Fax: +45 33 14 10 24, E-mail: info@fof.dk, Internet: www.fof.dk

The independent information association (FO)

Frit Oplysningsforbund, Frederiksberggade 21, 1459 København K, Phone: +45 33 93 00 96, Fax: +45 33 33 00 96, Internet: www.fo.dk (English pages: <http://www.fo.dk/engelskintroduktion.htm>)

Liberal Association of Adult Education (LOF)

Liberalt Oplysningsforbund, Alhambravej 6, 1826 Frederiksberg C, Phone: +45 33 21 86 80, Fax: +45 33 21 20 75, Internet: www.lof.dk (English pages: <http://www.lof.dk/index.php?page=61>)

12.2 Information sources

Ministry of Education

The web site of the Ministry of Education offers a wide range of information about adult education and links to relevant websites: <http://eng.uvm.dk/education/?menuid=15>

- Education
- General -> *details below*
- Pre-Primary Education
- Primary and Lower Secondary Education
- Upper Secondary Education
- Higher Education
- Adult Education and Continuing Training -> *details below*
- Transversal
- Description of categories

Quoted as of April 2003

General

- Marking scale in the Danish Education System
- New education profile for a year group's journey through the education system after basic school 1998
- Diagram of the Danish Education System
- The Danish Education System
- Education in Denmark: Principles and Issues
- Education and Training
- Structures of the Education and Initial Training System in the European Union. EURYDICE
- Key Data on Education in the European Union EURYDICE/EUROSTAT

Quoted as of April 2003

Adult Education and Continuing Training

- Folkeoplysning. Factsheet.
- Open education (Vocationally Oriented Adult Education). Factsheet.
- The Danish "Folkehøjskole"
- Adult Education and Continuing Training in Denmark
- Adult learning in Denmark (Adobe Acrobat)
- Chapter 7 in EURYBASE
- The production schools in Denmark A Summary
- Publications available in English
- Consolidated Act on Teaching Danish as a Second Language for Adult Foreigners and others, and Language Centres

Quoted as of April 2003

On-line publications

The Ministry offers also a number of on-line publications concerning adult education and continuing training which can be read and downloaded.

URL: <http://eng.uvm.dk/publications/engonline.htm?menuid=2010>

- The Danish Adult Vocational Training Programmes – 2002
 - Focus upon the Teacher of Adults – Summary – 2002
 - Adult Education and Continuing Training in Denmark- 2000
 - The Adult Education and Continuing Training Reform – factsheet – 2000
 - Folkeoplysning In Danish: Folkeoplysning – factsheet – 2002
 - The Production Schools in Denmark – Summary – 2000
 - Adult learning in Denmark – 1997
 - Open Education, Vocationally Oriented Adult Education – factsheet – 1996
- Quoted as of April 2003

Literature

The DEF Portal Denmark's Electronic Research Library

The DEF Portal covers books in Danish libraries and is useful as a key to literature search.

www.deff.dk/index_eng.html

13. Author

Jørgen Brems is working as consultant at the Centre for Higher Education Greater Copenhagen, formerly in the Danish Research and Development Centre for Adult Education. He commenced the text in 2001 under the directorship of the DRDC but due to circumstances – among them the closure of the centre in 2002 – it was not possible to finish the translation until February 2003.

Jørgen Brems was consultant in the DRDC from 1987 until the centre was closed down in 2002. Before that he worked as a teacher and deputy director in formal adult education and from 1978-1987 as a consultant to the Ministry of Education.

In the DRDC Jørgen Brems participated in a number of projects in a variety of fields of adult education and has been the co-author of reports on the projects.