

ADULT EDUCATION AND OER 2015 COUNTRY UPDATE: LATVIA

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Latvia is a small EU Member State with a population of just over 2 million.

In Latvia, pre-school education for five- and six-year-old children is compulsory. Primary and lower secondary education is organised as a single structure system (*pamatizglītība*), beginning at the age of 7 and consisting of nine years of compulsory schooling. Upper secondary education is not compulsory, but the proportion of population with completed upper secondary education is still high. Higher education is provided by 48 largely autonomous institutions: 31 state organisations (universities, HEIs and colleges) and 17 private organisations (HEIs and colleges). Adult education is a constituent part of the lifelong education system and is provided in formal programmes and non-formal and informal courses.

The Council of Europe International Review Team concluded that the Latvian model of hobby education is a best practice example of extra-curricular education.¹ Latvia has a long and successful tradition of extra-curricular education, called interest-related or hobby education, provided in broad areas: arts, sports, technical education etc. both by schools and hobby education centres. Institutions of interest-related education offer free or low-cost extra-curricular, leisure and summer activities to children and young people between the ages of 3 and 25 and more than 70% of young people participate in this interest-related or hobby education.

Latvia not only protects but also provides considerable support for ethnic minority languages, education and culture. The state continues to develop and finance its bilingual education² model providing publicly-funded education in seven minority languages: Russian, Polish, Hebrew, Belarusian, Ukrainian, Estonian, and Lithuanian. In the school year 2013/2014, there are 99 schools with instruction in Russian, and 65 bilingual (Latvian and minority language programmes) schools. Each of these schools is entitled to determine by itself which subjects are taught in Latvian, but the total should be 60% of all subjects.

The education system of the Republic of Latvia is governed by the Ministry of Education and Science. Although early childhood education and care is managed by local authorities the Ministry of Education and Science sets the legal framework for organisation and content of early childhood education.

In December 2012, the Parliament adopted the final wording of the **National Development Plan 2014-2020**³ (NDP), which is closely related to the Latvian plan for implementation of the **Europe 2020** strategy.⁴ NDP assigns responsibility to the Ministry of Education and Science for investment in and modernisation of education and development of competencies in life-long learning and also sets target indicators for defined priorities.

¹ http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/IG_Coop/YP_Latvia_en.pdf

² https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Latvia:Organisational_Variations_and_Alternative_Structures_in_Single_Structure_Education

³ http://www.pkc.gov.lv/images/NAP2020%20dokumenti/NDP2020_English_Final.pdf

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/nd/nrp2013_latvia_en.pdf

1 Adult education in Latvia

The Ministry of Education and Science webpage⁵ describes adult education and lifelong learning as follows:

Adult education includes all types of formal, non-formal and informal education including further and interest education, professional upgrading and in-service training. It is provided to satisfy needs in lifelong education process to support personal development and competitiveness in the labour market regardless of person's age and previous education.

Lifelong learning⁶ is a an education process throughout one's life that is based on the changing needs to acquire knowledge, skills, experience, to increase or change one's qualifications in accordance with the requirements of the labour market, or one's interests or needs. Lifelong learning combines non-formal learning with formal education and develops innate skills along with new competencies.

The **Progress Report⁷** of the **National Reform Programme of Latvia for the Implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy** talks about the enhancement of lifelong learning opportunities through distance education:

In the academic years 2012/2013 and 2013/2014, a number of education institutions provided people with opportunities to acquire education in the evening (shift), distance and continuing education programmes. The list of education institutions contains data on 28 evening (shift) schools, including 7 distance secondary schools and 69 evening class and distance consultation points within the full-time schools. In the academic year 2012/2013, a total of 11,727 students studied in the evening and distance education programmes (85% of students in the evening and distance education programmes were 18 years old and older).

The **Guidelines for the Development of Education 2014–2020⁸** were approved by the Latvian Parliament on May 22, 2014 and concluded that the adult education target set for 2013 to reach 12.5% of adult population involved in education had not been achieved, with a decline from 8.9% participation in 2004 to 5% in 2012, following the EU economic crisis. A target has now been set to reach 15% adult participation in education by 2020. The term OER is not used in this document. The document also reports that in higher education there are about 80 distance education programmes offered with more than 3000 courses provided in virtual learning environments (mainly Moodle). These are used also for full time students. Regional Higher Educational institutions are offering around 130 continuing and professional educational courses and programmes, as well as lectures and workshops. The most popular subjects are languages and computer skills.

In Riga there are several distance education schools and colleges: **Riga Distance Education Secondary School**;⁹ **Riga 1st Distance Education Secondary School**;¹⁰ **Riga Distance Education Commerce School**,¹¹ which is combined with its sister **Business Management College**;¹² and Latvian **Business College (LBK)**.¹³ It is possible for adults (fee paying) to study at all of these institutions.

⁵ *The Educational System in Latvia*, <http://izm.izm.gov.lv/education/education-system.html>

⁶ <http://izm.izm.gov.lv/education/9422.html>

⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2014/nrp2014_latvia_en.pdf

⁸ <http://m.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=266406> (in Latvian)

⁹ <http://www.talmacibasvsk.lv/eng/page0/>

¹⁰ <http://www.r1tv.lv/lv>

¹¹ <http://www.rigaskomercskola.lv/>

¹² http://www.bvk.lv/?lang=en_us

¹³ <http://www.lbkeu.com/contacts/>

The **Latvian Adult Education Association**¹⁴ (in Latvian – *Latvijas Pieaugušo izglītības apvienība*), LAEA, is a non-governmental, non-profit organisation, which unites adult education providers in Latvia – both individuals and organisations. There are 48 member organizations: local and regional adult education centres, continuing education centres in Higher Educational institutions, other organizations and associations. Their course offer is very diverse, ranging from lectures and workshop to e-learning based language and e-skills courses. There is also a new organization – **The Latvian Association of Higher Education Institutions for Lifelong Learning (LAKMA)**¹⁵ which is a society linking ten higher education institutions of Latvia on a voluntary basis.

2 Copyright in Latvia

According to the **Copyright Law of Latvia**¹⁶ (Section 19, Paragraph 2, Clause 2) work of an author could be used without the consent of the author and without remuneration for educational and research purposes taking into account conditions given in Section 21 and Section 18.

Section 21 states:

(1) It being mandatory that the title and name of the author of the work are indicated and that the provisions of Section 18 of this Law are observed, it is permitted to use communicated or published works or fragments of them in textbooks which are in conformity with educational standards, in radio and television broadcasts, in audio-visual works, in visual aids and the like, which are specially created and used in the face-to-face teaching and research process in educational and research institutions for non-commercial purposes to the extent justified by the purpose of their activity.

(2) The provisions of this Section shall not apply to computer programs.

Conditions for use of copyright materials for educational purposes can also be found in Sections 23, 26, 35, and 59 of the Law.

The **Library of the University of Latvia**¹⁷ is a contact point in Latvia for the Open Access movement and a participant in the **OpenAire**¹⁸ project. During an international event related to Open Access and Copyright issues in October 2013 it was said that Creative Commons licensing has not yet been introduced in Latvia.

Movement OpenFM tries to use Creative Commons licences in Latvia,¹⁹ but recognize that 'Unfortunately current copyright law of Latvia conveniently contradicts the Creative Commons license thus preventing it from being applicable in Latvia.'

There is an Open Access database at the **Riga Technical University**.²⁰ When uploading scientific papers or other documents an author must confirm (ticking the box) that there are no limitations (violation of any agreement or legal rights) to upload the document(s) to the Open Access database and must use one of Creative Commons licence options (see picture on the next page).

¹⁴ <http://www.laea.lv/home/laea/about-laea.aspx>

¹⁵ <http://lakma.lv/en>

¹⁶ http://www.gencs.eu/uploads/european_patent_trademark_registration/latvia/Copyright%20Law%20Latvia.pdf

¹⁷ <http://www.biblioteka.lu.lv/eng/>

¹⁸ <https://www.openaire.eu/>

¹⁹ <https://wiki.creativecommons.org/Latvia>

²⁰ <http://www.rtu.lv/en/>

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3 OER in Adult education in Latvia

There is a Lifelong Learning policy document²¹ for Latvia – **Programme for 2008-2010 for Implementation of Lifelong Learning Policy 2007-2013**. Although the development of open resources is implied in this document, the terms 'e-learning', 'virtual' and 'OER' are not used in this document. The policy documentation related to adult and lifelong education does not identify any specific targeted tasks and actions planned to introduce (or directly support introduction) of OER and MOOCs.

Latvian organisations have been involved in a range of EU projects related to aspects of open education for adults, including **Telecentre Multimedia Academy**²² (2012-14); **UniteIT**;²³ and **Trans e-Facilitator**.²⁴ In the Baltic region, Latvia was involved in the **NORDLET** project²⁵ from 2009-2011.

The Distance Education Centre at the Riga Technical University²⁶ is involved in many distance learning and e-learning projects, including the development of OER. One of their recent projects was cross boarder Latvian-Lithuania project **eBig3**.²⁷ This project combined three aspects of technology enhanced learning in complementary ways (eLearning – mainly computer and/or internet-based learning; tLearning – TV based learning; mLearning – learning with a use of mobile devices) to produce an effective and innovative cross-media learning delivery system (eBig3) that goes beyond traditional web-based learning approaches. The project received the **BOLDIC Award for 2013**²⁸ and the annual BOLDIC conference for 2014 was organised in Riga with the theme of open resources online.²⁹ Based on the eBig3 idea a portal **Modernā Interesu Izglītība**³⁰ was created, for professional training of teachers enabling them to become a supervisor

²¹ http://izm.izm.gov.lv/upload_file/Izglitiba/Muzizglitiba/LLL_Programme_Latvia_EN.pdf

²² <http://tma.telecentre-europe.org/>

²³ <http://www.unite-it.eu/>

²⁴ <http://www.trans-efacilitator.eu/content/sections/>

²⁵ <http://wiki.teria.no/display/nordlet/Home>

²⁶ <http://www.vu.lv/index.php?lang=en>

²⁷ <http://www.ebig3.eu/v2/startp.php>

²⁸ <http://www.boldic.org/boldic-award/nomineringar-till-boldic-award/> and <http://www.boldic.org/boldic-award/nomineringar-till-boldic-award/>

²⁹ in <http://www.boldic.org/activities/boldic-olro-riga-2014/>

³⁰ <http://mii.lv/>

of pupil hobby groups in robotics, mobile applications, presentation and other. Training courses combine e-learning, virtual meetings and workshops.

There have been a number of OER-related activities relevant to adult education and several projects and organizations offering training in e-skills for adults.

Organization **LIKTA (The Latvian Information and Communications Technology Association)**³¹ is very active in promoting e-skills. There are organized e-Skills Weeks in Latvia. In 2014 there were 850 events covering 95 regions of Latvia (from 110 regions altogether) with more than 38 000 participants involved – a number of these use open resources. A computer skills training programme for seniors (age over 50)³² has been running since 2008, with the webpage in both Latvian and Russian. Overall results for 2014 training³³ are shown below:



There are e-skills courses in the Latvian library network – the **Riga municipality's** home page³⁴ is typical.

Higher educational Institutions offer several their courses as OER in their e-learning environment (mostly Moodle) but require registration as a guest. Examples of these include the **University of Latvia Science and Mathematics Education Centre**,³⁵ providing OER (interactive learning resources, video, learning games etc.) for basic and secondary schools (pupils and teachers) in Latvian; **Liepaja University** with instructions on how to access OER;³⁶ the Riga Technical University offering **EDUSPACE**³⁷ – a platform based on Moodle for educational institutions to develop their e-learning – with OER courses, e.g. 'Distance education and e-learning methodology and technology';³⁸ and the **Latvian Agricultural University**³⁹ provides links to international OER.⁴⁰

There are a number of language related initiatives promoting the development of OER, with particular attention to minority languages – e.g. Latgalian.

³¹ <http://www.likta.lv/EN/Pages/home.aspx>

³² <http://www.piesledzieslatvija.lv/lv>

³³ <http://www.unite-it.eu/profiles/blogs/gow-2014-latvian-national-coalition-for-skills-and-jobs-evaluates>

³⁴ http://iite.unesco.org/files/OER_and_ICT/Balina%20OER_Latvia.ppt

³⁵ <http://www.dzm.lu.lv/>

³⁶ <http://www.liepu.lv/lv/975/brivpieejas-macibu-materiali>

³⁷ <https://eduspace.lv/>

³⁸ <https://eduspace.lv/course/view.php?id=325>

³⁹ <http://www.llu.lv/>

⁴⁰ <http://estudijas.llu.lv/course/view.php?id=584>

Sanita Lazdina and Ilze Suplinska from **Rezekne Higher Education Institution (RHEI)**⁴¹ joined the **Language OER** consortium⁴² and provides OER available in Latgalian and Latvian languages as language learning resources. Collections of Latgalian OER include **Naktineica**⁴³ (traditional and contemporary Latgalian Folklore, proverbs and sayings); **Future of museums**⁴⁴ (Latgalian culture, signs, virtual galleries); and Latgalian exercises.⁴⁵ OER collections in Latvian include **Maci un macies**⁴⁶ (teach and learn Latvian. Audio, video materials, interviews, broadcasts, games, dictionaries, films, didactic materials for independent learning or in class); **Pasakas**⁴⁷ (talking books with fairytales in Latvian, Russian and English with dictionary and tasks); **Surfacelanguages**⁴⁸ and **Sazinas tilts**⁴⁹ for learning Latvian online; and **Valoda**⁵⁰ (teaching aids for learning Latvian, culture, folklore, etc.).

4 Quality for OER in Latvia

Nationally, there are detailed quality assurance regulations for general and vocational education programmes (2010)⁵¹ and higher education (2012⁵² and 2013⁵³). However, none of the government documents mention OER.

There is a public organization **e-MLKA** (Electronic Educational Resource Quality Association),⁵⁴ created in 2009 which aims to bring organisations and individuals together to maintain high quality electronic educational resources. This organization has a portal for teachers (for registered users only) with more than 5000 digital educational resources.⁵⁵ However, there is no detail available as to how the aims of the Association are to be achieved, or what progress has been made.

Apart from e-MLKA (with the reservations described above), assuring OER quality remains in the hands of individual institutions.

⁴¹ <http://www.ru.lv/en/>

⁴² <http://langoer.eun.org/> – and see http://langoer.eun.org/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=db61536a-3132-4ad3-a481-ad337a30bcb1&groupId=395028

⁴³ <http://www.naktineica.lv/>

⁴⁴ <http://www.futureofmuseums.eu/>

⁴⁵ <http://languagesindanger.eu/book-of-knowledge/list-of-languages/latgalian/>

⁴⁶ <http://maciunmacies.valoda.lv/>

⁴⁷ <http://pasakas.letonika.lv/>

⁴⁸ <http://www.surfacelanguages.com/language/Latvian>

⁴⁹ <http://www.sazinastilts.lv/language-learning/excursions/>

⁵⁰ <http://valoda.aialab.lv/>

⁵¹ http://www.zvaigzne.lv/lv/gramatas/e_gramatu_palidziba/bezmaksas_lejupieladejamie_materiali_pedagogiem/

⁵² <http://m.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=217947&from=off>

⁵³ <http://m.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=256418>

⁵⁴ <http://www.emlka.lv>

⁵⁵ <http://skolotajs.lv/Lapas/Sakums.aspx>