

National Education Forum

Lithuanian “Education for All” Action Plan

(WITH REFERENCE TO THE DAKAR “EDUCATION FOR ALL”
FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION)

Introductory remarks. Purpose of document.

The Lithuanian *National Education Forum*, in responding to the goal expressed in the *Dakar Framework for Action. Education for All: Meeting Our Collective Commitments* of ensuring education for “each citizen of each society,” has prepared and confirmed the *Lithuanian Education for All Action Plan Guidelines* (further - *Guidelines*). The *Guidelines* explore the most important concepts associated with *Education for All*; present a brief summary of the current state of general education in Lithuania; and formulate the goal and tasks of the *Education for All* initiative for the period 2003-2015. The *Guidelines* also project ten criteria for long-term success, which should confirm whether the named goal has been met and whether the delineated *Education for All* tasks have, in fact, been implemented.

The *Guidelines* are the underpinning of the *Lithuanian Education for All Action Plan*. The purpose of the *Action plan* is to establish means for implementation of tasks defined in the *Guidelines*, to identify individuals and institutions responsible for implementation of these means and the resources to be utilized as well as to determine criteria for success in the intermediate term. Implementing the Plan will improve education quality for children, youth and adults of all age groups and will ensure access for all. The Plan calls for the planning and provision of qualitatively new basic education grounded in the ideals of *Education for All* and will help to underline the importance of secondary education and lifelong learning. As the importance of education continues to grow, basic education will become one of the foremost priorities of national education policy. Such education must

be up to date and of high quality, targeted toward the goals of helping to forge the independence and responsibility of each person, civic-minded communities and a knowledge society. Such education must provide opportunities for all to acquire basic skills, knowledge, social skills and vocational (practical) abilities. Stated in other words, such education must become a factor in reducing poverty and social exclusion, in achieving the principles of justice and in increasing individual resilience in the face of various manifestations of social evils.

The *Education for All Action Plan* also must consolidate and attune the efforts of society and governmental entities in continuing educational reform in Lithuania.

1. Goals

The overarching goal of this *Education for All* initiative is to ensure that continuing education reform in Lithuania better the education system and guarantees to all residents of Lithuania a basic education, that:

- 1.1. is of high quality and appropriate to the needs, interests and capabilities of each learner;
- 1.2. enables each person to continue his schooling and acquire a secondary education;
- 1.3. corresponds to the principles of ‘learning to live together’ and sustainable development and furthers the advance of an open democratic society;
- 1.4. aids each person in preparing for life in a knowledge society and in circumstances of rapid change and for life-long learning;
- 1.5. aids in successful integration into the European Union and worldwide.

2. Tasks

The tasks of this *Education for All* initiative:

- 2.1. To promote the understanding that one of the most important tasks of basic and secondary education is to prepare each person for life-long learning.
- 2.2. To strengthen the commitment of teachers, other educators in the basic education sector, political leaders and all of society to successful learning for every pupil, to

building close associations between levels of education and between schools, to offering a variety of programs and encouraging possibilities of pupil mobility.

2.3. To help schools become open both in terms of their acceptance of pupils and in terms of their alliances with the local community and the social partners of education.

2.4. To strive for higher quality in basic and secondary education by encouraging municipalities and counties to formulate regional education policy and to implement quality management at all levels.

2.5. To ensure possibilities for an 'equal start' at school. To link the provision of parent education with preschool education and childcare services.

2.6. To renew education content and teaching and evaluation methods in light of the requirements of a information society and the relevance of sustainable development to our society. To emphasize the teaching of basic skills, life skills and new competencies necessary to life in a knowledge society.

2.7. To create a context for the content of education that encourages pupils' civic consciousness and maturity, national self-respect, pride in national history and culture, belief in the state and the people of Lithuania, and the active practice of democratic citizenship.

2.8. To support teachers in their drive to continuously improve their professional qualifications and capacity to teach during a period of rapid change. To encourage teachers and to help them learn how to make independent decisions regarding teaching issues faced in the classroom.

2.9. To devise a healthy, safe and comfortable environment for teaching, one that encourages and assists in learning.

2.10. To develop the systems of general adult education and continuing education further.

3. Means for completing above tasks

The goal of the *Education for All* initiative can be achieved, and tasks completed, by implementation of the following means. It will be necessary to:

3.1. Organize broad dissemination of the *Education for All Action Plan* among the education community and society at large.

- 3.2. Implement structural reforms in aid of strengthening continuing education as a means of reducing social exclusion. In other words, to enact the necessary legislative documents, refine the organizational base for provision of continuing education and create an appropriate system of associated institutions.
- 3.3. Conduct a study of the current state of Pedagogic-psychological Assistance Services in the context of the Lithuanian *Education for All National Action Plan Guidelines*. To devise and implement a new and more effective concept and model for the national system of pedagogic-psychological services.
- 3.4. Create a system for evaluation and renewal of curriculum content that will ensure the capacity to adapt to changing national needs. To periodically review and adjust goals and content in education with an emphasis on the teaching of basic skills, life-long learning, civic education, sustainable development and cultural tolerance.
- 3.5. Survey and heed the opinions of social partners (employers) in renewing curriculum; ensure that curriculum development working groups include representatives of various education interest groups; recognize the curriculum development initiatives and efforts of civic organizations, self-governance groups and professional councils in the sphere of education, and so on.
- 3.6. Support with special program financing such teacher-training and in-service programs as strengthen teachers' abilities to work effectively in a period of change, as accord teachers purposeful competencies in this regard and help them improve their professional performance.
- 3.7. Carry out school performance audits and support with special program financing, as well as by other means, the evolution of open schools as "learning organizations."
- 3.8. Implement projects aimed at changing the culture of education management and allowing teachers a greater voice in formulating school policies.
- 3.9. Create and implement a general education quality management system grounded in a new system of education statistics; upon internal and external school audits and upon periodically performed reviews and analyses of the state of preschool, kindergarten, elementary, basic and secondary education.
- 3.10. Initiate and support programs that encourage knowledge of cultural diversity within the state and understanding of cultural differences, programs that buttress civic,

democratic and universal values, that safeguard cultural exchange and creativity, that stimulate the learning of languages and bilingual education programs.

3.11. Implement a study of the adequacy of preschool, elementary and basic education financing.

3.12. Develop and approve a methodology for optimization of the network of basic schools (school mapping) and redraw school networks according to the approved methodology. Establish a complete system of institutional links between each basic school and schools providing programs of education beyond the basic level.

3.13. Build up a network of family services allowing young children (up to three years of age) to grow in an environment conducive to learning at home. To draft and implement programs offering educational benefits to families with young children not attending preschool.

3.14. Create a system for provision of Pedagogic-psychological services that will extend the accessibility of basic and secondary education to children having various exceptional needs.

3.15. Draft and implement programs providing pedagogic advice and consultations to parents bringing up special needs children, children undergoing periods of crisis and especially gifted children.

3.16. Implement universally available kindergarten education that is grounded in preschool pedagogic principles.

3.17. Add the position of teachers' assistants to staff lists of general education schools in order to better effect the integration of special needs pupils, pupils from non-Lithuanian speaking homes, as well as children having other learning/socialization difficulties.

3.18. Offer alternative basic education programs for children at risk of dropping out of the general education program.

3.19. Prepare and implement "catch-up" and "refresher" programs offering extra help to learners transferring from one school to another, returning to school after an extended period, and so on.

3.20. Create and provide education counseling and initial vocational orientation programs for basic school pupils.

- 3.21. Prepare and implement vocational, in-service and other education programs for adults in general education schools, adult education centers and other education institutions.
- 3.22. Provide teachers with better access to information technologies, convenient conditions for the exchange of professional experience and in-service courses, as well as upgrading of certification levels.
- 3.23. Create new programs in the non-formal education sector and broaden scope and variety in this sector.
- 3.24. Support, through legislative, organizational, institutional and financial means, non-governmental and civic efforts and initiatives in the area of lifelong learning.
- 3.25. Encourage and sustain participation in international programs that are based on the principles of *Education for All*.
- 3.26. Adapt school buildings, facilities and equipment to the needs of the disabled.
- 3.27. Offer adolescents and other persons who have not completed basic education and are in prison the opportunity to study while incarcerated and to complete basic and secondary education.

4. Persons and entities responsible for implementation, advisers, observers

The means proposed can only be successfully implemented through the concerted actions of governmental agencies, various levels of education administration, community alliances, organizations and social partners of education (employers) working jointly with international organizations and partners in other countries.

Entities responsible for implementation, advisers and observers of the Lithuanian *Education for All National Action Plan* are:

- 4.1. At the regional and school level – county administrative offices, county government education departments, municipalities, municipalities' education departments, labor exchanges, employers' associations, research institutions, ethnic communities, religious communities, schools providing formal and non-formal education programs, public organizations, non-governmental organizations, school administrations, school councils, parents' committees.

4.2. At the national level – the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Social Welfare and Labor, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Cabinet-level Department of National Minorities and Lithuanians Living Abroad, the National UNESCO Commission of Lithuania, teachers’ and schools’ associations and universities.

4.3. At the international level – UNESCO, the Council of Europe, the European Union, the European Commission, the World Bank, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA and others.

5. Resources

In order to achieve the goals and complete the tasks of the *Education for All* initiative, financial, material and human resources of the state, private foundations and international donors will be utilized. A separate long-term strategy for mobilizing the needed resources is to be drafted.

6. Criteria for Success

	<i>Intermediate criteria for success: by the year 2007:</i>	<i>Final criteria for success: by the year 2015:</i>
6.1.	Kindergarten classes will be universally available.	All children will have the opportunity to attend preschool from the age of three.
6.2.	More than 90% of the appropriate age cohort of pupils will complete basic school (and acquire a basic education) by the age of 18.	More than 95% of the appropriate age cohort of pupils will complete basic school (and acquire a basic education) by the age of 18.
6.3.	More than 75% of the appropriate age cohort of pupils will complete secondary school (and acquire a secondary education) by the age of 20.	The percentage of those aged 25-59 years with completed secondary education or above will reach 80% or higher.
6.4.	The percentage of school dropouts and persons leaving the education system early (18-24 year-olds having acquired	The percentage of school dropouts and persons leaving the education system early (18-24 year-olds having acquired

	only basic or secondary education and not continuing with either academic or vocational training) will not be above 20%.	only basic or secondary education and not continuing with either academic or vocational training) will not be above 9%.
6.5.	Basic education is acquired yearly by no fewer than 1.500 adult learners.	Young people and adults who have dropped out early and failed to acquire basic education have the opportunity to return to school and continue their studies. Basic education is acquired yearly by no fewer than 5.000 adult learners.
6.6	Pedagogical-psychological services are available in 80% of all municipalities.	Pedagogical-psychological services are available in all municipalities.
6.7.	The number of children having special education needs and not completing basic education is reduced by 20%.	Learning outcomes of special education needs students integrated in general education schools improve. The number of children having special education needs and not completing basic education is halved, and no fewer than 50% of this group acquire secondary education.
6.8.	The curriculum content of elementary and basic education is reviewed and corrected in response to the outcome of national pupil achievement test results.	The curriculum content of general education is adjusted systematically in cooperation with the social partners of education (employers and so on). A review of their needs (skills and knowledge for the work force) as well as an evaluation of the quality of basic and secondary education are conducted periodically.
6.9.	The proportion of 15 year-olds who fail	The proportion of 15 year-olds who fail

	to achieve minimal levels of reading, writing, numeracy, science and social science skills is reduced by 15%.	to achieve minimal levels of reading, writing, numeracy, science and social science skills is halved.
6.10.	At least 80% of pupils completing basic education will have been taught “basic computer literacy” up to the level defined by the curriculum standards.	Pupils acquiring basic education will have mastered new competencies necessary for living in an information society – basic literacy in information technologies, foreign languages, economics and entrepreneurship.
6.11.	The proportion of working-age (25-64 years old) people enrolled in education programs will have grown at least to 8%.	The proportion of working-age (25-64 years old) people enrolled in education programs will have grown at least to 15%.