Initial education and training pathways for Danish adult educators

By Marcella Milana

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Workshop D

Abstract
Adult educators play a central role in increasing efficiency and ensuring quality of adult learning provision, not least by sustaining the motivation of adults toward current and further learning. The contribution aims at mapping initial education and training opportunities for Danish adult educators and to examine key structural features that characterise professionalisation processes in the field. Part one identifies specific policies put forward by the Danish Government to enhance efficiency in the field of adult learning. Part two introduces the institutional shaping of the Danish AET system and identifies official requirements for the recruitment of teaching staff. In spite of a high degree of differentiation in terms of educational offer, when it comes to the identification of qualification criteria for the recruitment of teaching staff, no specific pedagogical qualifications in teaching adults are officially required, but few exceptions. Part three provides a detailed account of existing qualification pathways for individuals willing to enter the system as adult educators. Notwithstanding the range of opportunities to acquire pedagogical qualifications in teaching adults, the knowledge and skills provided may vary substantially. Consequently, the author’s main argument is that it is not possible to speak of tailored-made pathways of professionalisation in the field of AET.

Key words: adult education and training, initial education and training, adult educators, teachers of adults, Denmark

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Introduction

Since the mid 90s the extensive work of transnational organizations, i.e. OECD, UNESCO, EU etc., has contributed to the widespread awareness on lifelong learning being a necessity in modern societies to guarantee further economic and social development, to reinforce democratic participation and to strengthen social cohesion (Tuinman, 1999; Schuller, 1999; OECD 2005; Medel-Añonuevo et al. 2001; EC, 2001; CEU 2002). Consequently, many Governments, including the Danish Government, have defined national strategies to create the structural conditions for lifelong learning to become a reality for all (cf. Undervisningsministeriet, 2007a). In order to adjust to new economic and social demands, national and international strategies for lifelong learning include not only reforms of basic and further education systems, but also structural intervention in the field of adult education and training (hereafter AET).

Adult educators play a central role in increasing efficiency and ensuring quality of AET provision, not least by sustaining the motivation of adults toward current and further learning. In the Communication on Adult learning (2006), the European Commission asserts that Member states “can no longer afford to be without an efficient adult learning system” (p. 5). Accordingly, the Action plan on Adult learning (2007) singles out the quality of staff as a crucial motivating factor for adult learning, and recognises that “little attention has been paid to the training (initial and continuing)… of adult learning staff” (p. 8). The increased concern on the need to qualify adult education practitioners is testified by the abundance of national and cross-national developmental projects, aimed at creating training modules for adult educators, who operate in both formal and non-formal sectors (Carlsen & Irons 2003; Jääger & Irons, 2006). Initial education and training of adult educators however, is still a neglected area of research, when compared to other fields of education and training, e.g. primary and secondary school, initial vocational education and training etc., at both national and regional levels. Denmark is no exception in this respect.

General adult education, vocationally oriented adult education and liberal adult education have historically developed as separated fields of public intervention. Each sub-system is characterized by organizational features and a financial structure, which support the pursuing of specific educational goals. Initial education and training pathways of adult-educators still reflect these distinctions. Nonetheless, these well-defined boundaries are now being questioned by the shift of paradigm from education to learning, from the context in which learning takes place to the learning outcomes, and not least by the pre-eminence acquired by the evaluation and accreditation of prior learning and the high quest for tailor-made learning activities. Adult educators-to-be are expected to perform according to high quality standards in a changing working environment; thus the author argues for systematic analysis of processes of professional qualification and identity building among these professionals.

As for Denmark, the country has a long tradition of supporting and fostering AET. The first public
policy measure in the field can be traced back to 1851, i.e. two years after the Danish free constitution (1849), when the Parliament approved the first act concerning financial support to the Folk high schools (Andresén, 1991; Milana & Sørensen, exp. 2009). Since then, the publicly-funded supply of AET provision has grown extensively, so has the demand for learning activities among the adult population. When it comes to participation in AET (57%), in fact, Denmark positioned itself at the top of the OECD (2000). Recent data on participation in adult learning activity confirms this pattern (Chisholm et al. 2004; Desjardins et al. 2006). By a closer look at recent reforms of the Danish AET system it is reasonable to foresee both the publicly-funded supply of learning provision and the demand for AET by individuals and groups, i.e. employers, social parties etc., to increase in the years to come (Desjardins & Milana, 2007). These trends bring along a demand for highly qualified adult educators in the fields of general, vocationally oriented and liberal adult education. Adult educators, in fact, play a central role in increasing efficiency and ensuring quality of the Danish AET provision.

The aim of this contribution is to map out current initial education and training opportunities for adult educators and to examine key structural features that characterise professionalisation processes in the field of general, vocationally oriented and liberal adult education in the Danish context. The analysis draws on Danish policy documents and available research on the topic.

The contribution is structured in three parts. Part one identifies specific policies put forward in recent years by the Danish Government to enhance efficiency in the field of adult learning. Special attention is given to agenda settings initiated by the Tripartite committee on lifelong skills upgrading and by the Globalization council. This brief account points at the main areas of public intervention in the field of AET being: the supply addressing low educated people and adults with literacy and numeracy deficiencies, the assessment and recognition of prior learning, the match between the supply of vocationally oriented adult education and the demand for skills by enterprises, the financial support to individuals and organizations. Part two introduces the institutional shaping of the Danish AET system resulting from extensive reform in the field. Furthermore, it identifies official requirements for the recruitment of staff with teaching responsibilities, whenever available. The account shows that in spite of a high degree of differentiation in terms of educational offer, when it comes to the identification of qualification criteria for the recruitment of teaching staff within each typology of educational provision no specific pedagogical qualifications in teaching adults are officially required, but few exceptions. Part three provides a detailed account of existing qualification pathways for those willing to enter the system as adult educators. The description highlights that in spite of a range of opportunities to acquire basic and specialized pedagogical qualifications in teaching adults, the depth of qualified knowledge and skills provided may vary substantially. Furthermore, given the limited existence of formalised qualification criteria for recruitment, it is not always possible for participants to anticipate ways in which the acquired qualification(s) will be spent when looking for employment in the field of AET. The author’s main argument is that it is thus not possible to speak of tailored-made pathways of professionalisation in the field of adult education. In the concluding section, the author discusses how to take this investigation forward.

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adult education provision is included (cf. CIRIUS, 2007). The supply of ‘voksen- og efteruddannelse’ (VET), however, includes also the provision of initial training for adults; therefore the author opted for AET as a more appropriate translation.

Danish legislation, cited in English in the text, is listed at the end of present contribution (cf. References) in original. The terms Law, Act and Executive order stands for Lov, Lovbekendtgørelsen and Bekendtgørelsen, respectively.
Public policy to strengthen adult education and training

Denmark, as already mentioned, has a long tradition of publicly-funded AET opportunities for adults. This first section provides the reader with an overview of recent policies put forward by the Danish Government to increase efficiency of the publicly-funded AET system.

In 2004, with the explicit goal of strengthening AET, the Danish Government set up a Tripartite committee on lifelong skills upgrading. The committee had the specific aim of analyzing and evaluating the publicly-funded supply of AET, with the exclusion of liberal adult education supply. Special attention has been given by the committee on the motivation for adults to enroll in AET and the impact that participation in AET has on personal and professional careers. The committee assumes that AET has the overall goal of promoting wealth and wellbeing at individual, organizational and societal levels. In particular, AET is considered to play a central role in strengthening competences among the workforce, improving personal and professional career development, and securing a constant upgrading of skills and competence development, thus promoting mobility within the labor market. When it comes to the analysis of the publicly-funded AET provision, the committee recognizes Denmark’s leading position, as for the incidence of participation in AET is concerned, as well as the spread and diversified provision of publicly-funded AET supply. Nevertheless, pitfalls in the system are also being addressed. For instance, sensitive groups, such as people with low educational attainment, represent up to almost 1/3 of the total workforce (Finansministeriet, 2006: 19). These groups, however, participate only to a limited extend in AET provision and have often a negative attitude towards adult learning. Furthermore, without a well structured system for guidance, it is difficult for individuals to navigate within the AET system. As a result, the Tripartite committee highlights the need to strengthen the AET supply by means of an enhanced cooperation between the public sector, the private sector and individuals. In particular, the public sector is considered the primarily responsible to improve both the supply of general adult education and the pedagogical qualifications of teachers of adults. In fact, for the supply of AET to fulfill societal expectations, the committee highlights the need for adjusting teaching methods to the living and working conditions of adults as well as to individuals’ learning needs.

In 2006 the Danish Government published a Strategy for Denmark in the global economy (Regeringen, 2006). The overall aim is to make Denmark a leading knowledge society with strong competitiveness and strong cohesion. Within the strategy, education, lifelong skills upgrading, research and innovation are considered the primary means to achieve this goal. A follow up of such strategy, as for AET is concerned, can be found in Denmark’s strategy for lifelong learning, which was published by the Government in 2007 (Undervisningsministeriet, 2007a). In line with the report by the Tripartite committee, the strategy addresses, in particular, the need to increase the skill levels of the workforce as well as to increase adult education and continuing training, especially for those with low levels of education and training attainment. Thus the objectives to be given priority within the field of AET addressed by the Government are as follows. First, strengthening learning opportunities aimed at all target groups represented in the labour market, although priority should be given to sensitive groups, i.e. low-skilled, adults with literacy and numeracy problems; second, promoting opportunities for guidance and counselling for adults willing to enrol in AET; third, increasing both public and private investment in AET; fourth, promoting new practices for the recognition of prior learning.

The political will expressed in the report by the Tripartite committee as well as in the two strategic documents by the Danish Government found its partial concretization in the implementation of the
The Danish adult education and training system

As highlighted in the first section, the Danish Government has being reforming the publicly-funded AET system with the specific goal of increasing its effectiveness. However, very little attention has being paid, so far, on initial qualifications of adult educators. It is the author’s opinion, on the contrary, that adult educators are the foremost responsible for increasing efficiency and ensuring quality of learning processes that occurs in formal and non-formal learning contexts. Consequently it is of fundamental importance to investigate ways in which adult educators prepare themselves to take up such task. Before providing a detailed account of existing initial qualification pathways for adult educators, though, it is necessary to focus our attention to the institutional shaping of the Danish AET system, in which adult educators will be practicing their profession. By doing so, this section aims at identifying official criteria for the recruitment of staff with teaching responsibilities in the fields of general, vocationally oriented and liberal adult education.

After extensive reform in the field of adult learning, initiated by the Government in 2001, the Danish AET system has assumed the institutional shape shown in Fig.1. The system comprises three streams or sub-systems:

- General adult education
- Vocationally oriented adult education
- Liberal adult education
General adult education

General adult education comprises a variety of programs, which are regulated by ad hoc laws, as described below.

Special education aims at individuals who, due to a physical or psychological handicap, are in need for pedagogical support in order to bettering their everyday life conditions. Teachers should possess specific qualifications in special and adult education (Executive order no. 378/2006, § 15).

Education for adults with dyslexia targets individuals with difficulties in the basic acquisition of written information as well as in expressing themselves in written form. The qualification requirements for teachers are: to have passed either module 6 (dyslexia and individual exposure) or module 7 (teaching and guidance of dyslectics) and a module on ‘teaching reading and mathematics for adults’ as part of a Diploma program (cf. p.12) (Executive order no. 1372/2005, § 23).

Danish as a second language. According to current regulation, teachers should have the necessary qualifications in teaching Danish as a second language as well as in teaching adults (Act 259/2006, § 6).

Preparatory adult education aims at giving adults the possibility to improve or supplement their basic literacy and numeracy skills. No specific qualification criteria are defined by law.

General education has the goal to increase the chances for adults to enrol in further education as well
as to foster adults’ general interest in learning activities. From August 1st, 2009, teachers will be required to have completed an education as school teachers, with the subject to be thought as the primary subject of study. Teachers of Danish as second language will be required to have completed an education in Danish as a second language for young and adults (Law no. 311/2008, § 26).

Higher preparatory examination aims at providing knowledge, at upper secondary school level, in a single subject or discipline, in order to increase the chances for adults to engage in further education and / or to (re)enter the labour market. Teachers are required both subject-specific and pedagogical competences. In particular, they are required a Master degree in at least one relevant subject and to have completed a Post-graduate teacher training course for upper secondary school teachers (Act no. 445/2007, § 27-29).

The main providers of general adult education are the Centres for adult education. However, several other educational institutions, including public and private enterprises, trade unions, professional organizations and prisons, can deliver general adult education provision. In spite of existing differences among the programs’ aims, content, target groups, recognised providers etc., general adult education always includes a final test or examination, which gives formal qualifications.

Vocationally oriented adult education

Vocationally oriented adult education provision has grown extensively since the first establishment, in the 1960s, of special courses aimed at adults with low or no professional qualifications. At present, it includes six typologies of learning supply. Two of these typologies, i.e. Labour market training and Vocational education and training for adults, have the intended goal to higher the professional qualifications of the active workforce; whereas the remaining fours typologies, i.e. Basic adult education, Further adult education, Diploma education and Master education, aims at providing adults with possibilities for bettering both their personal and professional qualifications through basic and further education. Accordingly there is a progression among these four typologies, which are officially referred to as the ‘adult education and training system’ with its own regulatory statute (cfr. Act no. 1051/2007). The total supply of Vocationally oriented adult education is offered by different providers, each with specific responsibilities. In particular, Vocational training centres for adults are responsible for the provision of Labour market training, whereas Vocational education and training colleges provide Labour market training as well as Vocational education and training for adults, Basic education and Further adult education. Further adult education, however, can also be offered by University colleges together with Diploma education; whereas Universities are the only recognised providers of Master education. Further details on qualifications requirements for teachers involved in vocationally oriented adult education are provided below.

At present, the qualification criteria for teachers of Labour market training are; to have a qualification corresponding to the vocational training level within the area in which the person is expected to teach and at least 3 years of relevant professional experience. In addition, newly appointed teachers with no previous teaching experience can be required to enrol in a Postgraduate vocational teacher training program (cf. Fig. 2) in the first two years of employment.

Teachers of Vocational education and training for adults should possess a basic vocationally oriented

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3 These include technical schools, commercial schools, agricultural schools and social and health care training schools.
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education or an other relevant professionally oriented education within at least one of the relevant vocational training field(s) he/she is going to teach as well as relevant professional experience. In particular, teachers of technical subjects should have at least 5 years of professional experience; while teachers of general subjects should have at least 2 years of professional experience. In addition, newly appointed teachers can be required to enrol in a Postgraduate vocational teacher training program to acquire relevant pedagogical qualifications (cf. Fig. 2) (Executive order no. 1518/2007, § 11).

For the teachers of Basic adult education applies the same qualification criteria as for the teachers of Vocational education and training for adults, whereas no specific qualification criteria are defined by law for either Further adult education, Diploma education or Master education.

Liberal adult education

Liberal adult education aims at increasing both general and specific knowledge and skills of adults in order to support their desire and ability to take responsibility for their own life as well as to actively participate in society (Act no. 535/04, § 7). Public funding policies, in this field, distinguish among typology of providers rather than typology of learning supply, as is the case for both general and vocationally oriented adult education. The providers of liberal adult education include Evening schools, Day high schools, Folk high schools and Popular universities. Day high schools and Folk high schools, however, are the only institutions that can offer also general adult education provision, i.e. Preparatory adult education and Special education (cf. p. 6). The law on liberal adult education (Law no. 149/2002) defines neither recruitment nor qualification requirements for teachers and/or lectures.

In summary the Danish AET provision shows a high degree of differentiation in terms of educational offer as well as of institutions involved. Especially in the fields of both general and vocationally oriented adult education, each typology of provision presents well defined characteristics as for aims, content, target groups etc., which are specified by law. However, when it comes to the identification of qualification criteria for the recruitment of teaching staff within each typology, these well defined boundaries becomes blurred. In the field of general adult education, only Special education, including Education for dyslectic, and Danish as a second language, requires for teachers not only subject specific qualifications but also specialised pedagogical qualifications in teaching adults; whereas teachers of General adult education for adults and Higher preparatory examination are required, beside subject specific knowledge and qualifications, the same pedagogical qualification as school teachers, either at primary or secondary levels. In the field of vocationally oriented adult education, while both subject specific qualifications and professional experience are formally requested, no specific pedagogical qualifications are required before entering the profession. Here it has to be mentioned that according to recent legislation (Act no. 190/2008, §13), the Ministry of Education, in agreement with the Council for vocationally oriented adult and continuing education, is expected to revise the qualification requirements for teachers within the field of Labour market training. At present, however, no further information is available on the directions that these revisions may take. As for the vocationally oriented adult education offer that correspond to the tertiary education level in the mainstream education system, i.e. Further adult education, Diploma education and Master education, no qualification criteria whatsoever are officially defined for teachers. Not dissimilarly, in the field of liberal adult education, qualification criteria for teachers depend upon specific employment criteria set by each provider, e.g. Evening schools etc.
Becoming adult educators: Current qualification pathways

The Danish AET system, as illustrated in the preceding section, provides several opportunities for adults to enrol in formal and non-formal learning activities. In spite of existing differences between the vast variety of adult learning supply, teaching is often the primarily - when not the only - activity that many adult educators perform, once entering the system as professionals. Only in few cases, however, the recruitment criteria for teaching staff include specific pedagogical qualifications in teaching adults prior to employment as an official requirement. Against this background, the aim of current section is to map out existing opportunities for adult educators-to-be to acquire core pedagogical competences prior to employment as teachers of adults in the field of general, vocationally oriented and liberal adult education.

The first national mapping of the kind (Danneskiold-Samsøe, 1999) was carried out, in the years preceding the reform of the national AET system, as part of a systematic investigation on general pedagogical qualifications of teachers of adults in the fields of general and liberal adult education (Wahlgren et al., 2002). However, the mapping by Danneskiold-Samsøe (1999) do not include the offer addressing individuals willing to teach in the field of vocationally oriented adult education. Furthermore, the AET system has been extensively reformed ever since. Consequently, the author of this contribution has undergone further research in order to provide an up-to-date mapping of opportunities for adult educators-to-be. The results are presented in Fig. 2.

At present, it is possible to distinguish between 3 typologies of AET opportunities targeted at individuals willing to qualify themselves as teachers of adults:

- Further education opportunities
- Vocationally and professionally oriented education opportunities
- Tertiary education opportunities

Before presenting in details the courses / programs included within each typology, however, it is necessary to acknowledge few things. First, despite the scope of present contribution being an investigation of initial pathways of professionalization, thus pre-service education and training, it is not always possible to make a clear distinction between pre-service and in-service opportunities in the Danish context. In fact, all courses and programs mentioned in Fig. 2, even when primarily targeted to adult educators-to-be, are also open to practitioners in both youth and adult education. Second, the range of available opportunities only takes into consideration publicly-funded courses and programs running on a regular base. The totality of the privately-funded offer, publicly-funded courses of short duration and courses / programs running on an irregular base are therefore excluded. Third, there is no official progression between the different courses and programs presented in Fig. 2. However, the discontinuous line indicates the possibility for an educational provider, which is offering a course / program positioned above the line, to identify the completion of a course / program positioned below the line as an entry criterion for applicants. The continuous lines distinguish between the courses / programs ending with a certificate or diploma corresponding to short-, medium- and long-cycle higher education programs, respectively. Last but not least, the use of colours differentiate, whenever possible, between course / programs aimed at different target groups: 1) people willing to teach in the field of liberal adult education (yellow); 2) people with a special interest in general adult education (green); and 3) people teaching in vocationally oriented adult education (orange).
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Table 1 illustrates basic features of further education opportunities for adult educators to-be. People eager to teach adults either within general or liberal adult education can acquire key pedagogical competences by enrolling in Basic education in adult education (hereafter AVG) for which no specific entry criteria are identified by law. Once acquired an AVG-certificate it is possible for adult educators-to-be with a special interest in liberal adult education to strengthen their pedagogical qualifications by enrolling in Further education in adult education (hereafter VOU). It has to be noticed, however, that VOU-courses are primarily aimed at practitioners willing to upgrade their competences rather than to those preparing themselves to enter the profession as teacher of adults. For individuals interested in teaching general adult education, the only course available is Teachers of dyslectics. The course is addressing teachers of special education for adults and teachers of young and adults with reading and spelling difficulties. They must have an upper lower education in Danish language and a minimum of 12 months working experience or an education to teach adults, e.g. AVG. Individuals who are eager to teach adults in the field of vocationally oriented adult education are the only ones that are required by law to complement their subject specific knowledge and competences.
with pedagogical competences to be acquired via an *ad hoc* Post graduate vocational teacher training course. However, enrolment is possible only upon employment.

Table 1. – Overview of further education opportunities for adult educators-to-be*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course / program</th>
<th>Aim(s)</th>
<th>Provider(s)</th>
<th>Target group(s)</th>
<th>Entry criteria</th>
<th>Duration**</th>
<th>Attestation</th>
<th>Legal basis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic education in adult education (AVG)</td>
<td>To provide basic pedagogical qualifications for teaching adults</td>
<td>Centres for adult education University colleges Day High Schools</td>
<td>Teachers and leaders with subject-specific knowledge</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>120 th (app. 3-4 w full-time)</td>
<td>Course certificate</td>
<td>Act no. 535/2004 on support to liberal adult education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further education in adult education (VOU)</td>
<td>To inform on new tendencies in adult education theories and practices</td>
<td>Centre for teachers in adult education</td>
<td>Practitioners within the field of liberal adult education</td>
<td>AVG (or corresponding qualifications)</td>
<td>Min. 60 th + Min. 120 th (appr. 5 w full-time in total)</td>
<td>Course certificate + Course certificate (part 2)</td>
<td>Act no. 535/2004 on support to liberal adult education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers of dyslectics</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Centre for teachers in adult education</td>
<td>Teachers of special education for adults as well as teachers of young and adults with reading and spelling difficulties</td>
<td>Upper lower education in Danish language and a min. of 12 months working experience or an education to teach adults, e.g. AVG.</td>
<td>300 wh (appr. 8 w full-time)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post graduate vocational teacher training</td>
<td>To provide basic pedagogical qualification for teaching vocationally oriented subject matters</td>
<td>University colleges</td>
<td>Newly employed teachers of technical schools, commercial schools and AMU-centers, without pedagogical qualifications</td>
<td>Employment status</td>
<td>Employment status = 666 tw + wh (18 w full time) = 1½ y part-time</td>
<td>30 ECTS points (oral exam + practical test)</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Danish Ministry of Education (www.vidar.dk, last access on 22.08.08); Danneskiold-Samsøe, 1999

* Double dashes (--) signify missing information

** Duration is given in teaching hours (th), working hours (wh), weeks (w) or years (y). In particular, teaching hours refer to in-class activity and/or self-study, while working hours refer to on-the-job activity

Table 2 shows the main features of the only typology of vocationally and professionally oriented opportunity for adult educators-to-be. This program, named Teachers of adults, is provided by University colleges under the Act no 956/2003 on open education. It aims at providing specialised pedagogical knowledge, has fix duration, requires an AVG-certificate or prior teaching experience, ends with a formal degree and includes a special offer addressing teachers of adults in vocationally oriented adult education. This special offer represents an alternative to the Post graduate vocational teacher training course for teachers employed in the field of vocationally oriented adult education.
Table 2. – Vocationally and professionally oriented opportunities for adult educators-to-be

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course / program</th>
<th>Aim(s)</th>
<th>Provider(s)</th>
<th>Target group(s)</th>
<th>Entry criteria</th>
<th>Duration*</th>
<th>Attestation</th>
<th>Legal basis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers of adults</td>
<td>To provide specialized knowledge, both theoretical and practical, on adult education theories and practices**</td>
<td>University colleges</td>
<td>Teachers of adult and teachers of adults-to- (also in the field of vocationally oriented adult education)</td>
<td>AVG or prior teaching experience</td>
<td>1 y full-time or 2-3 y part-time or 1½-2 y distance learning</td>
<td>2 exams with external evaluation + final degree (only in case of success in both examinations)</td>
<td>Act no 956/2003 on open education Executive order no. 750/1995 on education of teachers of adults</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Danish Ministry of Education (www.vidar.dk, last access on 22.08.08); Danneskiold-Samsøe, 1999

* Duration is given in teaching hours (th), working hours (wh), weeks (w) or years (y). In particular, teaching hours refer to in-class activity and/or self-study, while working hour refers to on-the-job activity

** The program includes a special offer addressing teachers of adult in vocationally oriented adult education

Table 3 exemplify additional opportunities at tertiary level for adult educators-to-be. The offer includes three typologies of program, all crediting 60 ECTS points. The first typology, which is the only program run by University colleges, is a Diploma program with ad hoc legislation, i.e. Executive order no. 47/2002 on diploma programs (cf. p.6). This typology is targeting practitioners in the field of adult education; however each program may be targeted to a specific subgroup, e.g. teachers of Special education, teachers of Preparatory adult education, teachers of Danish as second language. The remaining two typologies, which are both run by Universities, are the program in Teachers of Danish as second language and the Master program.

The program in Teachers of Danish as second language, regulated under the Act no. 956/2003 on open education, aims at providing qualifications for teaching Danish as a second language to immigrants and refugees. Access is granted to individuals in possession of a teacher education, with Danish language as main subject, or a relevant bachelor degree.

The Master program, with its own legal basis, i.e. Executive order no. 682/2002 on master programs at university level, has the scope to provide qualifications to support adult learning and competence development in formal and non-formal contexts, including working contexts. The entry criteria include a minimum of 2-years of professional experience and at least one among the following titles (cf. Fig. 1): a bachelor or long cycle higher education degree, acquired in the main stream education system, a professional bachelor4, i.e. corresponding to a medium-cycle higher education degree, or a diploma program, acquired in the adult education and training system.

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4 The professional bachelor program, similarly to the bachelor program, is credited a minimum of 180 ECTS points. However, dissimilarly to the bachelor program, the professional bachelor is run by University colleges, it includes a minimum of 6 months of practical experience and it provides vocationally and professionally-based knowledge rather then research-based knowledge (cf. Executive order no. 684/2008).
Table 3 – Tertiary education opportunities for adult educators-to-be

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course / program</th>
<th>Aim(s)</th>
<th>Provider(s)</th>
<th>Target group(s)</th>
<th>Entry criteria</th>
<th>Duration*</th>
<th>Attestation</th>
<th>Legal basis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diploma programs:</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult education theories and</td>
<td>To provide qualifications in educational planning and teaching to</td>
<td>University colleges</td>
<td>Generally aimed at practitioners in the field of adult education (esp.</td>
<td>A relevant professional bachelor or a short cycle higher education or a medium cycle higher education or a diploma degree in the AET system (cf. Fig 1) + min. 2 years of relevant professional experience</td>
<td>Up to 3 y</td>
<td>60 ETCS</td>
<td>Act no 956/2003 on open education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>educational planning</td>
<td>adults within a specific subject area, depending on the program</td>
<td></td>
<td>teachers of adults), although each program may be targeted to a specific</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>points</td>
<td>Executive order no. 47/2002 on diploma programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>subgroup (e.g. teachers of special education for adults, FVU-teachers,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>teachers of Danish as 2L)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching in reading and</td>
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<td>mathematic for adults</td>
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<tr>
<td>Danish as 2L</td>
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<tr>
<td>**Teachers of Danish as second</td>
<td>To provide qualifications for teaching young and adults immigrants</td>
<td>Universities</td>
<td>Teacher education with Danish language as main subject or relevant bachelor</td>
<td>1 y full-time or 2 y part-time</td>
<td></td>
<td>60 ETCS</td>
<td>Act no 956/2003 on open education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>language**</td>
<td>and refugees</td>
<td></td>
<td>degree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>points</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Master programs:</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult education</td>
<td>To provide qualifications to support adult learning and competence</td>
<td>Universities</td>
<td>Practitioners dealing with educational planning and competence development</td>
<td>A relevant: bachelor or long cycle higher education degree or professional bachelor or a diploma program + Min. 2 y of relevant experience</td>
<td>2 y part-time</td>
<td>60 ETCS</td>
<td>Executive order no. 682/2002 on master programs at university level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult education and human</td>
<td>development in and formal and non-formal contexts</td>
<td></td>
<td>programs as well as with teaching adults</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>points</td>
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<tr>
<td>resource development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(2-3 exams + 1 final project including a final examination)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Danish Ministry of Education (www.vidar.dk, last access on 22.08.08); Danneskiold-Samsøe, 1999

* Duration is given in teaching hours (th), working hours (wh), weeks (w) or years (y). In particular, teaching hours refer to in-class activity and/or self-study, while working hour refers to on-the-job activity.

In synthesis Danes willing to enter a profession in the field of adult education can acquire general pedagogical competences in teaching adults by enrolling in further education, vocationally and professionally oriented education or tertiary education. Those with no prior pedagogical qualifications can enrol in AVG-courses run by Centres for adult education, University colleges or Day high schools. Here it has to be noted that the AVG-attestation is considered as an entry criteria to acquire specialized pedagogical qualification either in the field of liberal adult education (cf. Tab.1) or in general and vocationally oriented adult education (cf. Tab. 2). In the latter case, however, it is not necessary when the participant possesses prior teaching experience. For those already in possession of a minimum of 2 years of experience and at least a relevant short-cycle education (cf. Fig.1) it is also possible to acquire specialized qualification at tertiary level by enrolling in a Diploma program run at University colleges or
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in a Master program managed by Universities. In this case, though, the length of the study period may be up to 3 years (Cf. Tab.3). Those intending to teach adults in the field of vocationally oriented adult education, if willing to acquire basic pedagogical qualifications prior to employment, can enrol in a special edition of Teachers of adults, which is run by University colleges (cf. Tab.2). Although this may not be necessary, as this typology of teachers, as already mentioned, are not required such qualification as a recruitment criteria given that they can enter a Post graduate vocational teacher training, also run by University colleges, after employment (cf. Tab.2).

All the above mentioned opportunities, however, vary substantially in terms of educational provider, content, length, entry criteria and final attestation, thus in the depth of qualified knowledge and skills they provide. Furthermore, given the limited existence of formalised qualification criteria for recruitment, it is not always possible for participants to anticipate ways in which the acquired qualification(s) will be spent when looking for employment in the field of AET. The author’s main argument is that it is thus not possible to speak of tailored-made pathways of professionalisation in the field of adult education. Adult educators-to-be eager to be recruited as teachers of dyslectics or teachers of Danish as second language are an exception. They are, in fact, the only ones offered tailored-made courses and programs, either within further education (cf. Tab. 1) or at tertiary level (cf. Tab. 3). These courses and programs leading to formal qualifications corresponding to the entry criteria required in their specific field of expertise.

Concluding remarks

The creation of the structural conditions for lifelong learning to become a reality for all is at present a mainstream political concerned for both transnational organizations and national governments. Thus special attention is paid on the motivation for adults to enrol in AET as well as on the impact that participation in AET has on individuals, with special attention to the active population. At a European level this political concerned is at the core of policy-making processes and agenda settings for competence development that occurred in the wake of the Lisbon Strategy (cf. Milana, in print) and has found its concretization in the recent Communication on Adult learning (2006) by the European Commission and related Action plan (2007).

From a national point of view, the overview of recent policies put forward by the Danish Government in the field of education highlights a great concern in increasing the efficiency of the publicly-funded AET system. An efficient AET system is considered among the means for the country to become a leading knowledge society with strong competitiveness and strong cohesion. This has resulted, so far, in an extensive reform of one among the already accredited AET systems within the OECD. The reform has given priority to increasing the availability of AET opportunities, especially those opportunities aimed at sensitive target groups such as lower educated people and individuals with deficiencies in reading, writing and mathematical skills. Very little attention has being paid, however, on the need to increase the pedagogical qualifications of those willing to enter the field of adult education as professionals.

As highlighted in this contribution, Danish adult educators eager to enter a career as teachers of adults have several opportunities for acquiring the required pedagogical qualifications. In spite of this, the author argues that it is not yet possible to speak of pathways of professionalisation in the field of adult education, at least in the Danish context due to different reasons. First, the AET sub-systems, i.e. general, vocationally oriented and liberal adult education, in which adult educators will be entering their profession, pursue specific educational adult goals, thus address different target groups. This have a direct
impact on both the typology of educational provision in which teachers of adults will be involved and the pedagogical qualifications required to perform their profession. But few exceptions, this differentiation seems not to be granted much attention in the Danish AET system for adult educators-to-be (cf. Fig. 2). Second, AET opportunities for those willing to become teachers of adults present a high degree of differentiation in terms of providers, content, length, entry criteria and final attestation. It is reasonable to assume that these factors have an impact on the final level of pedagogical qualifications acquired by participants. It is the final level of pedagogical qualifications, at the same time, that has primary relevance for both future recruitment and everyday working practices.

In conclusion, a closer investigation at the pedagogical qualifications acquired through AET by Danish adult educators-to-be is considered an important step to take this investigation forward. However, a comparative information base is also considered necessary for in-depth analysis of socio-cultural factors that can explain similarities and differences within and between AET sub-systems at both national and cross-national levels. This knowledge base is considered necessary in order to improve the quality of future AET supply, thus to contribute to the creation of the structural conditions for lifelong learning to become a reality for all.

References


BEK nr 1518 af 13/12/2007 om erhvervsuddannelser.

BEK nr 378 af 28/04/2006 om specialundervisning for voksne.

BEK nr 1372 af 15/12/2005 om ordblindeundervisning for voksne.

BEK nr 47 af 28/01/2002 om de pædagogiske diplomuddannelser.

BEK nr 682 af 16/08/2002 om visse masteruddannelser ved universiteterne.


Accordingly, the author of the present contribution has initiated a two-year cross-national project: Becoming Adult Educators in the European Area (BAEA). The project aims at creating better understandings of what governs the formation of initial competences and qualifications in the field of general, vocationally oriented and liberal adult education. The project involves several researchers from Denmark, Sweden, Estonia and Italy and has been granted financial support by the European Commission, under the Lifelong Learning Programme (grant number: 142405-2008-LLP-DK-GRUNDTVIG-GMP).
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EC (2007b). Communication from the Commission to the Council, The European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Region - Action Plan on Adult learning. It is always a good time to learn.


LBK nr 445 af 08/05/2007 om uddannelsen til højere forberedelseseksamen (hf-loven).

LBK nr 1051 af 29/08/2007 om erhvervsrettet grunduddannelse og videregående uddannelse (videreuddannelsessystemet) for voksne.

LBK nr 259 af 18/03/2006 om danskuddannelse til voksne udledninger m.fl.

LBK nr 535 af 14/06/2004 om støtte til folkeoplysende voksenundervisning, frivilligt folkeoplysende foreningsarbejde og daghøjskoler samt om Folkeuniversitet (folkeoplysningsloven).

LBK nr 190 af 18/03/2008 om arbejdsmarkedsuddannelser m.v.

LBK nr 956 af 28/11/2003 om åben uddannelse (erhvervsrettet voksenuddannelse) m.v.

LOV nr 149 af 25/03/2002 om ændring af lov om støtte til folkeoplysende voksenundervisning, frivilligt folkeoplysende foreningsarbejde og Folkeuniversitet (folkeoplysningsloven) og ophevelse af lov om daghøjskoler m.v. og lov om den fri ungdomsuddannelse samt ændring af lov om refusion af udgifter til uddannelse i forbindelse med aktivering m.m. samt ændring af forskellige love.

LOV nr 311 af 30/04/2008 om almen voksenuddannelse og om anerkendelse af realkompetence i forhold til fag i almen voksenuddannelse, i hf-uddannelsen og i uddannelsen til studentereksamen (avu-loven).


