

# CURRICULUM GLOBALE: A GLOBAL TOOL FOR PROFESSIONALISING ADULT EDUCATORS

*Thomas Lichtenberg*

**ABSTRACT:** Curriculum globALE (CG) is a cross-cultural core curriculum for training adult educators worldwide. It was developed jointly by the German Institute for Adult Education (DIE) and DVV International. In five modules, it describes the relevant skills needed to lead successful courses and provides guidance on their practical implementation. Curriculum globALE has been applied in many partner countries and in Germany itself. Evaluation results show that CG is a professionalisation tool for adult educators that can be applied successfully worldwide. Graduates confirm a wide use of the newly acquired competences for their educational work. However, the practical application of CG is also faced with a number of challenges.

## *1. The Context*

DVV International is the Institute for International Cooperation of Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband e.V. (DVV), the German Adult Education Association. DVV represents the interests of the approximately 900 adult education centres (Volkshochschulen) and their state associations, the largest adult and continuing education providers in Germany. As the leading professional organisation in the field of adult education and development cooperation in Germany, DVV International has committed itself to supporting lifelong learning for 50 years. DVV International provides worldwide support for the establishment and development of sustainable structures for Youth and Adult Education. To achieve this, DVV International cooperates with more than 200 civil society, government, and academic partners in more than 30 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Europe.

The work focuses on literacy and basic education, vocational training, global and intercultural learning, environmental education and sustainable development, migration and integration, refugee work, health education, conflict prevention, and democracy education.

DVV International does not render its educational services to the envisaged target groups directly but channels its services through cooperation with national civil society organisations. These civil society

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FUP Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing (DOI 10.36253/fup\_best\_practice)

Thomas Lichtenberg, *Curriculum globALE: A Global Tool for Professionalising Adult Educat*, pp. 213-219, © 2020 Author(s), CC BY 4.0 International, DOI 10.36253/978-88-5518-155-6.15, in Regina Egetenmeyer, Vanna Boffo, Stefanie Kröner (edited by), *International and Comparative Studies in Adult and Continuing Education*, © 2020 Author(s), content CC BY 4.0 International, metadata CC0 1.0 Universal, published by Firenze University Press ([www.fupress.com](http://www.fupress.com)), ISSN 2704-5781 (online), ISBN 978-88-5518-155-6 (PDF), DOI 10.36253/978-88-5518-155-6

organisations show very different levels of educational professionalism. Some partner organisations provided trainings of inappropriate quality due to a lack of teaching skills. This resulted in high drop-out rates, unsatisfied participants, and failure to achieve the intended learning outcomes. Based on these experiences made worldwide, DVV International concluded that a core curriculum for the training of adult educators was required.

Figure 1 – Partner countries of DVV International. [Source: <<http://www.dvv-international.de/weltweit>> (07/2020)]<sup>1</sup>



## 2. Curriculum globALE (CG)<sup>2</sup>

The German Institute for Adult Education (DIE) and DVV International jointly developed a cross-cultural core curriculum for the training of adult educators to achieve the following aims:

- to enhance the professionalisation of adult educators working in different contexts by providing a common competence standard;

<sup>1</sup> This applies to all other online sources unless otherwise noted.

<sup>2</sup> <<https://www.dvv-international.de/en/materials/teaching-and-learning-materials/curriculum-globale>> (07/2020).

- to support adult education providers in the design and implementation of train-the-trainer programmes;
- to foster knowledge exchange and mutual understanding between adult educators across countries and regions.

Curriculum globALE is a modularised and competency-based framework curriculum for the training of adult educators worldwide based on three main pillars:

- existing train-the-trainer programmes from the context of the project work of DVV International;
- existing national qualification systems and standards for adult educators;
- transnational competency standards for adult educators which have been drawn up within the framework of European projects.

The qualification level is that of a basic qualification for the area of adult education. The learning outcomes described in the curriculum constitute a qualification that course instructors, trainers, lecturers, and similar individuals should have as a prerequisite for carrying out their work in a professional manner. With reference to the European Qualification Framework (EQF), the competence level targeted by the curriculum would be classified at around EQF level 5<sup>3</sup>. The learning outcomes described in the curriculum form the standard-setting core, which is consistent across all countries and cannot be changed. In this sense, CG can also be considered to include a kind of meta competence framework for adult educators. However, since the contextual conditions and the specific needs of the target groups will vary considerably between different regions, institutions, or domains, the elements listed above – topics, suggested literature, proposed teaching methods – have more of a recommendation character. They can be changed to a greater or lesser extent in line with the specific application context. The whole curriculum is allocated 25 ECTS credit points<sup>4</sup>, corresponding to a workload of approx. 660 hours for the participants.

Dr. Thomas Lichtenberg wrote: In fact, looking at this illustration here, I admit that it comes a it “out of the blue”. So maybe we just delete it to avoid any kind of confusion. It does not bring any further information.

The core curriculum looks like this:

<sup>3</sup> <<https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/en/content/descriptors-page>> (07/2020).

<sup>4</sup> <[https://ec.europa.eu/education/resources-and-tools/european-credit-transfer-and-accumulation-system-ects\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/resources-and-tools/european-credit-transfer-and-accumulation-system-ects_en)> (07/2020).

Table 1 – Core curriculum of Curriculum globALE. [Source: DVV International/author's own]

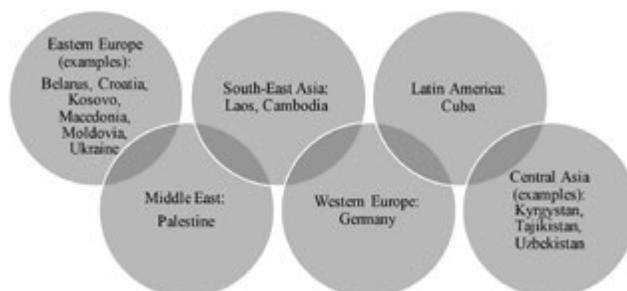
Name of Module	Main content (headers)
Module 0: Introduction	Information on Curriculum globALE Information on the training Information on training provider Information on and expectations of participants globALE expectations towards the participants Building relationships
Module 1: Approaching Adult Education	Understanding the variety and diversity of adult education Adult education in the national and global context Adult education as a profession and the role of an adult educator in the sense of the Curriculum globALE
Module 2: Adult learning and adult teaching	Learning theories and reasons Didactic activity in adult education Knowledge forms Adult learning Education motivation
Module 3: Communication and group dynamics in adult education	Communication in adult education Group dynamics in adult education
Module 4: Methods of adult education	Integrating methods in instruction Overview of methods
Module 5: Planning, organisation, and evaluation in adult education	Phases of the professional cycle of activity of an adult educator Needs assessment Planning Organisation Evaluation Ensuring quality
Elective module(s)	Regional-geographic Target group-specific Subject-specific Situation-specific Regulation-specific

### 3. Practical application and experiences

Making use of all available background sources on the professionalisation of adult educators, CG was developed in 2012–2013; it was piloted and evaluated from 2014 onwards and disseminated to a number of countries. In 2015–2016, a second, revised version of CG was published, and suitable supporting material was developed. Today, CG is available in ten

different languages<sup>5</sup>; each version can be downloaded from the DVV International website. Since its introduction, CG has been implemented in a number of countries like the following:

Figure 2 – Countries where Curriculum globALE has been implemented. [Source: Author's own]

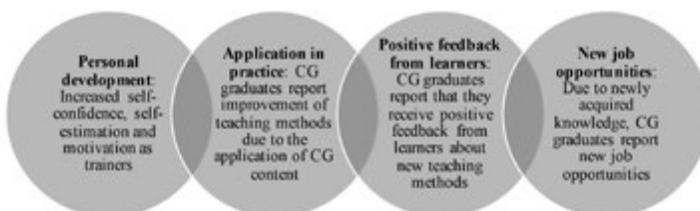


Curriculum globALE is about to be introduced in more countries, especially in African countries. The main experiences can be summarised as follows:

- Whenever the idea of CG as a professionalisation tool for adult educators was voiced, it became evident that there is a tremendous need for this kind of professional training.
- The number of applicants normally exceeds the number of available places considerably; this offers the opportunity to select the most suitable candidates.
- Participants normally come from governmental in-training institutions, universities, colleges of education, branches of adult training centres, and local NGOs.
- Curriculum globALE is normally implemented over a period of 1-2 years (may vary strongly from country to country).

In most cases, each module was evaluated individually; a comprehensive assessment was requested after the full implementation of CG. The results of these assessments can be summarised as follows:

Figure 3 – Results of the assessment. [Source: DVV/author's own]



<sup>5</sup> Albanian, Arabic, Bosnian, English, German, Lao, Macedonian, Russian, Spanish, Serbian.

#### 4. *Challenges of practical implementation*

In spite of this overall positive feedback, the further implementation of Curriculum globALE is faced with a number of challenges. Firstly, there is wide-spread individual adaptation of modules to the local context, meaning that CG is implemented differently in each country. This sometimes makes learning outcomes difficult to compare, because not all obligatory modules are implemented as intended; hence the achieved learning outcomes deviate in cases. At this stage, there is no standard certificate issued to successful participants, and countries tend to develop their own – unaccredited – certificates. Normally, the implementation of CG starts with the training of influencers to lay the foundation, and these influencers spread professionalisation within their countries. This requires master trainers in the first place who are able to train the influencers. In practice, it turns out there is a lack of master trainers available to kick-start the whole process of implementation. Furthermore, although the CG core curriculum was translated into different languages, further translations into local languages are often required, especially when applying it at the local. At this stage, CG is implemented at the country level and primarily financed through financial resources provided by DVV International. The financing of a broader roll out in the various countries depends on individual solutions and remains unresolved in many cases.

#### 5. *Way forward*

Guidelines for trainers have been developed and circulated to provide more hands-on support for the practical implementation of Curriculum globALE. A new project is about to be launched to develop online tools that complement the existing learning material and provide e-learning opportunities in addition to regular classroom teaching. Ways to harmonise the implementation of CG are being analysed to finally reach a standard certification verifying the achievement of learning outcomes as envisaged by the curriculum.

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