
Recommendation 1437 (2000)^[1]

Non-formal education

1. The Assembly recognises that investment in education and welfare is an effective measure for the promotion of active citizenship and the prevention of social exclusion.
2. The Assembly acknowledges that formal educational systems alone cannot respond to rapid and constant technological, social and economic change in society, and that they should be reinforced by non-formal educational practices.
3. Non-formal education is an integral part of a lifelong learning concept that allows young people and adults to acquire and maintain the skills, abilities and outlook needed to adapt to a continuously changing environment. It can be acquired on the personal initiative of each individual through different learning activities taking place outside the formal educational system. An important part of non-formal education is carried out by non-governmental organisations involved in community and youth work.
4. The Assembly recalls the Final Declaration of the 5th Conference of European Ministers responsible for Youth in which European countries were encouraged to promote equality of opportunity by recognising the training and skills acquired through non-formal education and by finding various ways of endorsing the experience and qualifications acquired in this way. It welcomes the setting-up of a "working group on non-formal education" in the Council of Europe.
5. The Assembly encourages all those who will shape educational policies to acknowledge that non-formal education is an essential part of the educational process and to recognise the contribution that can be made by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) involved in non-formal education.
6. The Assembly also encourages the application of the new information technologies to non-formal education and stresses the need to ensure an easy access to them at national and international levels.
7. The Assembly therefore recommends that the Committee of Ministers call on governments and the appropriate authorities of member states:
 - i. to recognise non-formal education as a *de facto* partner in the lifelong learning process and in youth policy and to elaborate effective systems for evaluating it (this could be done by the certification of non-formal educational activities so that they can also be mentioned in *curricula vitae* as professional experience and cited as internationally recognised skills and qualifications). A quality label could be given to the educational activities of recognised organisations providing non-formal education;

- ii. to make non-formal education accessible for all, through measures such as flexible working conditions (for workers who would not otherwise be able to attend, unpaid leave facilities, etc.), measures for people in remote areas (travel grants), measures for socially disadvantaged persons (poor people, marginalised youngsters, the disabled, minorities);
 - iii. to provide or improve training and re-training for trainers and teachers in non-formal education in co-operation with non-governmental organisations and especially youth NGOs;
 - iv. to support financially non-formal education activities (grants, tax reductions for non-governmental organisations involved in non-formal education activities, or for each participant at training courses, free use of official buildings or training centres, etc.) and the production and distribution of non-formal education manuals and training materials; to create a library/lending service of non-formal education materials;
 - v. in parallel with the above measures, to provide support and encourage more people, in particular young people, to educate and be educated in a non-formal way ("peer education");
 - vi. to monitor the implementation of the above measures.
8. The Assembly further recommends that the Committee of Ministers promote non-formal education in the work programme of the Council of Europe, in particular in the youth sector, and consequently that it:
- i. study whether any legislative restrictions exist in the different member states which might hinder the development of non-formal education, and assist in the elimination of these restrictions;
 - ii. compare non-formal education activities in the different member states and publish a catalogue of "good practice";
 - iii. develop programmes of non-formal education that promote equal opportunities in co-operation with the social partners concerned and the non-governmental organisations working on these questions;
 - iv. co-ordinate its work in the field of non-formal education with that of the OECD, Unesco, the European Union and the United Nations Volunteers programme.

[1] Assembly debate on 24 January 2000 (1st Sitting) (see [Doc. 8595](#), report of the Committee on Culture and Education, rapporteur: Mr Dumitrescu).

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