

## ***Adult Education***

The purpose of adult education is to provide all persons over the age of eighteen with the opportunity to acquire, actualize, complete or extend their knowledge and skills for personal and professional development.

Education is a lifelong process, as the ability to learn is maintained throughout life, although the way of learning and the motivation to learn may vary.

The General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), at its 38th session, held in Paris from November 3 to 18, 2015, states in its recommendation on adult learning and education that "adult learning and education is a fundamental component of lifelong learning. It encompasses all forms of education and learning aimed at enabling all adults to participate in their society and the labor market. It refers to the whole range of educational processes, formal, non-formal and informal, by which people considered adults by the society to which they belong develop and enrich their capacities for life and work, both for their own benefit and for that of their communities, organizations and societies. Adult learning and education involve ongoing activities and processes of acquisition, recognition, exchange and adaptation of skills."

Similarly, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning states that "Lifelong learning is about integrating learning into life, which involves learning activities for people of all ages (children, youth, adults and the elderly, girls and boys, women and men), in all life contexts (family, school, community, workplace, etc.) and through a variety of modalities (formal, non-formal and informal education) that together meet a wide range of learning needs and demands"

We can therefore distinguish three types of education: formal, non-formal and informal.

### *Formal education*

Overall, this constitutes the formal education system of the country. Its main characteristics are:

- The courses are given in schools approved by the educational authorities.
- Formal education programs are therefore recognized by the relevant national authorities or equivalent bodies.
- These courses are hierarchically organized within the educational system into courses, cycles, stages, grades.....
- Students pass through this structure by means of a system of certificates or diplomas, which accredit the acquisition of a series of basic skills necessary to access the next level of education.
- This organization has its own legal framework in each country.
- The teaching staff is primarily professional or officially recognized as such.
- The student body is primarily composed of the younger generation, although it should be open to any adult who wishes to re-enter the system.

- Funding can be public, private or mixed.

The education system must be flexible enough to allow adult learning to be combined with work, and to allow those who have left school early to resume and complete their education. This flexibility involves making connections between different types of education, facilitating the transition from one type of education to another, and allowing the configuration of learning pathways tailored to individual needs and interests.

### *Non-formal education*

According to the 2011 International Classification of Types of Education, prepared by UNESCO, "the main characteristic of non-formal education is that it represents an alternative or complement to formal education for individuals as part of a lifelong learning process. It is often seen as a means of ensuring the right to education for all. It addresses all age groups, although its structure does not necessarily imply a continuous pathway. Non-formal education can be short and/or low-intensity and usually takes the form of courses, seminars or workshops. In general, non-formal education leads to qualifications that are not recognized by the relevant national or sub-national authorities as equivalent to formal education. Non-formal education includes life skills programs, including literacy and numeracy, vocational skills, and social or cultural development. Most types of adult education are also included."

Article 5 of the Organic Law 2/2006 of May 3 on Education specifically mentions the importance of non-formal education, which has an educational value in itself and is expressly organized to meet educational objectives in various areas of social life, such as personal training, promotion of community values, socio-cultural animation, social participation, improvement of living conditions, art, technology, leisure or sports, among others.

### *Informal education*

The above-mentioned international classification defines informal education as "intentional but non-institutionalized forms of learning". Informal learning can include learning activities carried out at home, in the workplace, in the community or in the course of daily life. It can be of an individual, family or social nature.

For more information, please visit the following links:

- [Recomendación sobre el aprendizaje y la educación de adultos de la UNESCO](#)
- [Nota técnica del Instituto para el Aprendizaje a lo Largo de la Vida \(UNESCO\)](#)
- [Clasificación Internacional Normalizada de la Educación 2011 \(UNESCO\)](#)

For more information, please visit the following website: [Enseñanza de personas adultas - | Ministerio de Educación y Formación Profesional \(educacionyfp.gob.es\)](#)