



Executive summary of the public audit report

ORGANISING NON-FORMAL EDUCATION OF CHILDREN

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ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

School-children means children and young people up to 19 years who follow general education programmes¹.

Non-formal education of school-children means non-formal education of children (including training complementing formal education)² intended for school-children.

Institutions of non-formal education of school-children means schools of non-formal education of children and training schools complementing formal education.

AIKOS means the Open Information, Counselling and Guidance System.

Material resources means tangible assets of the institution of non-formal education of children and the state of the assets (buildings, furniture, equipment, devices, tools).

Education environment means the whole of the internal and external conditions and devices of institutions of non-formal education of children, their compliance with hygiene norms, safety of school buildings and sites, and aesthetics.

Groups of social exclusion means individuals experiencing social exclusion (children in children's home, people with disabilities, children in disadvantaged families, etc.).

¹ Concept of Non-formal Education of Children approved by Order No. ISAK-2695 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of 30 December 2005 (as amended by Order No. V-554 of 29 March 2012), p. 11.

² Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Education, 25 June 1991, No. I-1489 (as amended by Law No. XI-1281 of 17 March 2011), Art. 15.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Non-formal education of school-children has a significant influence on the formation of the worldview of children and young people and can create favourable conditions for developing a conscious, civic-minded and creative individual who is able to successfully integrate into the contemporary socio-economic environment. When properly organised, non-formal education of school-children could help achieve the Europe 2020 targets, such as to reduce the rates of early school leaving, to improve the performance of the education system, to facilitate the entry of young people into the labour market³.

The key problems of non-formal education in Lithuania pointed out by the stakeholders in the educational process, researchers and evaluators are a lack of effective organisation, accessibility and funding. Other important issues include quality assurance of non-formal education of school-children and mismatch in the supply and demand for non-formal education programmes for children⁴.

In order to improve the system of non-formal education, create a new funding model and promote the development of this type of education, the Concept of Non-formal Education of Children⁵ was revised in 2012 (the original Concept was first adopted in 2005) with a view to improve the availability of non-formal education in the country. A Plan for improving the funding of non-formal education of children was adopted in 2013⁶.

The objective of the audit was to assess the effectiveness of the development of non-formal education of school-children.

The audit assessed whether:

- services of non-formal education are available to all school-children;
- the current funding model provides for the development of non-formal education of school-children;
- the quality of non-formal education of school-children is adequately ensured;
- decisions (policies) on the development of non-formal education of school-children are made on the basis of accurate and complete data.

The audited entity – the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania.

During the audit, data was collected at:

- Education Development Centre,
- Lithuanian Centre of Non-formal Youth Education,
- Lithuanian Youth Centre,
- administrations of 13 municipalities (Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Šiauliai, and Panevėžys cities and Panevėžys, Klaipėda, Rietavas, Radviliškis, Skuodas, Anykščiai, Ignalina, and Kretinga districts) and 68 institutions of non-formal education of school-children situated on the territories thereof (67 budgetary institutions and 1 public institution), including: 51 schools complementing formal education and 17 schools of non-formal education of children (Annex 1).

³ Communication from the Commission of 3 March 2010 – Europe 2020 A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth (COM (2010) 2020).

⁴ Publication “Analysis of the Educational Issue: Non-formal Education”, 2012-12. Internet access: http://www.smm.lt/uploads/documents/kiti/2012-12_Nr_20_Neformaliojo%20ugdymo%20aktualijos.pdf, [accessed on 3 September 2014].

⁵ Order No. ISAK-2695 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of 30 December 2005 on the approval of the Concept of Non-formal Education of Children (as amended by Order No. V-554 of 29 March 2012).

⁶ Order No. V-972 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of 18 October 2013 on the approval of the Action Plan for improving the funding of non-formal education of children 2014-2016.

The audit covered the period 2011–2013. Some data from earlier periods was also used for analysing trends and changes.

According to AIKOS, there were 292 institutions of non-formal education of children in 2013: 237 institutions established by municipalities, 54 non-state ones, and 1 state institution. Non-formal education of children was also organised in 1242 schools of general education.

Education of school-children in summer time is part of non-formal education of children. The audit did not address this activity because it is funded and organised in a different way – no continuous funding is provided for such education (it is organised by way of project funding), activities are carried out only in summer, etc.

The following public audit conclusions and recommendations were drawn upon the assessment of the audit findings.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The figures on the providers and beneficiaries of non-formal education of school-children is inaccurate and incomplete, there is no systematic collection of data on funds allocated for non-formal education of school-children, so it is difficult to take evidence-based decisions in this field, to analyse and evaluate its status and changes therein, as well as to plan its development,
2. The network of institutions of non-formal education of school-children in the country is poorly developed and uneven (especially in smaller towns and rural areas), there is a lack of diversity of activities (there is a predominance of education programmes in music and sports), children do not have equal opportunities to participate in non-formal education, so no proper conditions have been provided for increasing its availability.
3. During the audited period, part of the funds allocated for non-formal education of school-children were used by municipalities for other activities, municipal funds are basically allocated for the institutions of non-formal education set thereby which implement only one type of programme (e.g. music, sports), so the current funding mechanism does not encourage increasing the supply of non-formal education activities and development of the network of such education institutions.
4. The quality of non-formal education of school-children is not sufficiently ensured due to the following reasons:
 - 4.1. although 42 per cent of all municipalities had prepared and approved procedures for external assessment of schools of non-formal education and those complementing formal education, they have not been carrying out external performance assessment, thus failing to ensure quality control of non-formal education of school-children;
 - 4.2. long-term non-formal education programmes for school-children are developed in municipalities following the description of general criteria for non-formal education programmes, which does not provide specific requirements for the content of these programmes, teaching methods and measures, or municipalities approve programme requirements at their own discretion, so no conditions are created for school-children to receive services of similar quality;
 - 4.3. adequate material resources and education environment of non-formal education institutions for school-children are not ensured in 48 per cent of municipalities, 83 per cent of municipalities do not have enough of equipment or devices to organise a high quality education process, therefore, non-formal education activities are unattractive for children and do not encourage them to participate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To the Ministry of Education and Science:

1. In order to achieve that decisions on the development of non-formal education of school-children are based on objective information and that state and municipal funds are used efficiently, the Ministry should ensure collection and analysis of accurate and comprehensive data on:
 - school-children participating in non-formal education activities,
 - providers of non-formal education services,
 - non-formal education programmes currently implemented,
 - funding allocated for the said programmes.
2. In order to achieve more effective development of non-formal education of children, the Ministry should introduce a funding mechanism that would increase the demand for and availability of this type of education.
3. In order to ensure adequate quality of non-formal education for all school-children, the Ministry should:
 - 3.1. prepare recommendations for external assessment of schools of non-formal education of school-children;
 - 3.2. provide for requirements and criteria for long-term non-formal education programmes.

The plan for implementing the recommendations is given in Annex 4.