DOI: https://doi.org/10.59503/29538009-2025.si-1-36

MOTIVES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

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Abstract: Non-formal education, actively developing, has already raised a demand to become officially recognized and receive regulations from the authorities. This process actively began in the 1990s in the European countries, whereas in the Republic of Armenia it has received its manifestations recently.

Therefore, the assessment of the expectations of various beneficiaries of non-formal education and the assignment of qualitative characteristics, which was carried out in the article, is of great importance. In addition, by studying the experience of the motives of non-formal education, a classification of the reasons of the development of this form of education has been proposed.

Keywords: non-formal education, formal education, informal education, supplementary education, lifelong learning, motives of education development, beneficiaries of non-formal education.

JEL codes: I21, I26

Research aims: to investigate the need for providing non-formal education and to identify the expectations of beneficiaries from this form of education.

Research novelty: a classification of the motives for the development of non-formal education has been proposed, based on the expectations of the beneficiaries of this form of education and the arrangements for providing educational services.

Introduction

Non-formal education became more widely recognized in the late 1980s, when it was noticed and established that formal education itself cannot fully lead to the development of society and is not able to comprehensively respond to the needs of learning and the demands of the labor market. In this regard, as a unique form of education, non-formal education supported representatives of different social groups in acquiring and developing skills, abilities and knowledge corresponding to the requirements of the constantly changing environment (Siregar, R., Sugianto, I., Mariono, M., Ginting, L., Latifah, L., & Siahaan, E. 2023).

In the 90s, the first attempts were made to officially distinguish or define three types of education. Already in 2012, the European Union, in an official document, defined three types of learning: formal, non-formal, informal (see Figure 1).

This diversification of learning patterns is very important from the point of view of conducting statistics, developing policies and implementing educational practices (Council recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning).

Currently, non-formal education, having its own characteristics (see Figure 1), provides more flexible learning programs that meet the needs of learners, are more accessible in terms of time and

place of learning, and, no less importantly, is more financially attractive for attendees, since compared to formal education, tuition fees here are incomparably lower (Elfreda Aplonia Lau1, Robin Jonathan, Theresia Militina, Sachin Gupta 2024). That is, the validation of non-formal learning outcomes also solves a social problem and reduces the duration and costs of learning.

Thus, an individual who already possesses a lot of knowledge does not need to go back to study for two, three or more years, to go through the entire university or college program. He /she can simply fill in some gaps in his knowledge, spending less time and money.

Naturally, non-formal education, having its own place in the system of existing forms of education, is fundamentally different from formal education. In non-formal education, it is preferable to use the term “teacher” instead of the “lecturer” or “instructor”.

The “teacher” is the one who leads the attendees, helping them to fully master the material. The main role of the “teacher” is to follow the educational process, provide assistance and resources to the attendees, and pose questions together with them, that is, not to teach, but to help them learn (Martati, B., & Haryanti, T. (2023).

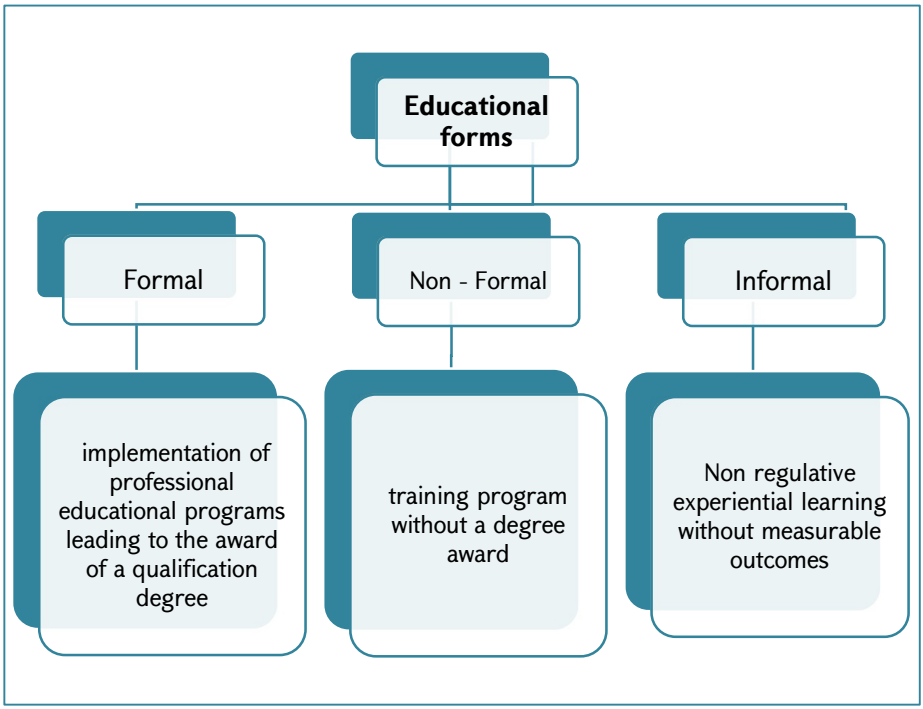


Figure 1. Approaches to the classification of education
Source: *Tshughuryan A., Mkhitaryan A. (2024)*

On the other hand, in non-formal education, the term "**attendee**" is used instead of the term "student". Teachers involved in the non-formal education system have a unique opportunity to creatively apply educational programs, making them accessible to attendees in need of learning.

Table 1. Comparative analysis of formal, informal and non-formal education

Source: *https://www.21kschool.com/ph/blog/types-of-education/#Formal_Education_Vs_Informal_Education_Vs_Non-Formal_Education-_Quick_Differentiation*

No.	Particulars	Formal	Informal	Non-formal
1.	**Definition**	Formal education is structured, institutionalized education with a curriculum and certification.	Informal education is unstructured, spontaneous learning from daily experiences.	Non-formal is an organized learning outside formal systems; often skill-based and flexible.
2.	**Instance**	School, college, university, professional degree programs.	Learning from parents, peers, media, life experiences.	Adult literacy programs, vocational training, community workshops, online courses.
3.	**Type of Activities**	Activities like classroom teaching, exams, assignments, projects.	Activities such as conversations, observations, hobbies, self-study.	Various activities include workshops, training sessions, seminars, practical demonstrations.
4.	**Course Content**	Course content is a predefined syllabus approved by education authorities.	No fixed course content available. It depends on the situation and learner interest.	Course content is designed while focusing on specific skills or knowledge areas.

5.	**Outcomes**	Academic qualifications, degrees, diplomas.	Personal development, social skills, life lessons.	Skill acquisition, certificates of participation, practical competencies.
6.	**Source of Acquiring Knowledge**	Educational institutions, certified teachers.	Family, society, media, environment.	NGOs, training centers, online platforms, community organizations.
7.	**Ways of Acquiring Knowledge**	Systematic instruction, formal assessments.	Observation, imitation, trial and error, discussions.	Interactive learning, hands-on practice, flexible assessments.
8.	**Advantages**	Advantages of formal education such as recognized qualifications, structured progression, career opportunities.	Common advantages are flexible, free, lifelong, adaptive to real-life situations.	Accessible, targeted learning, practical application, lifelong learning are primary advantages of non-formal education.
9.	**Disadvantages**	Disadvantages include being expensive, rigid, exam-oriented, time-consuming.	Informal education lacks certification, inconsistent, hard to measure progress.	Limited recognition, variable quality, and lack of depth are some common disadvantages of non-formal education.

If the question of learning in the bachelor's degree is how to do it, in the master's degree - why to do it, then in non-formal education the questions take the form of how to fill in the form, since here knowledge and skills are acquired based on the operational imperative of the time.

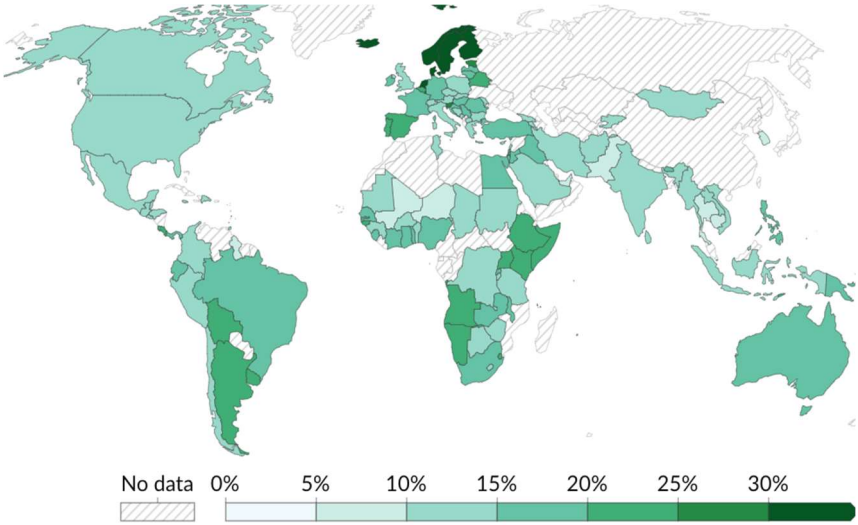


Figure 2. The proportion of non- formal participation education in the world compered to formal education

Source: *Our World in Data, www/ourworldindata.org/grapher*

Despite all this, the current proportions of the population informal and non-formal education systems are not comparable in different countries (see Figure 2), which is a source of discussion.

Research results

The goal of non-formal education is to develop a person's political, civic, social, economic and cultural participation in public life, his professional abilities, skills, value system and knowledge that are acquired outside the formal education system or in parallel with it. Perhaps the issue of recognizing non-formal education was

raised in a number of European countries at the end of the 20th century, when this form of learning had already achieved its unique role and place in society, being accepted as an integral element of education.

By the way, the outcomes of professional non-formal education may also not coincide with the educational outcomes of colleges, universities and other organizations included informal education. And that is why the term is used under the concepts of "supplementary education (instruction), which shows that for the formation of a person it is important to be educated and develop throughout life. Moreover, non-formal education is not opposed to formal education, which is mainly implemented in state-accredited educational institutions, with officially accepted documents on education (Sandbakk, S., Walther, J., Solli, G., Tønnessen, E., & Haugen, T. 2023).

A number of European countries have already adopted concepts and strategic programs for non-formal education. In particular, non-formal education is actively developing in the Scandinavian countries (see Figure 3), where the ratio of non-formal and informal education attendees exceeds 35%.

In the Republic of Armenia, in 2024, a new Law of the Republic of Armenia “On Vocational Education and Training” was adopted, and before that, in 2015 and 2023, amendments and supplements were made to Articles 3, 6, 26 and 36 of the Law of the Republic of Armenia “On Education”, which established the guarantee of the state’s proportional operation of the formal, non-formal and informal education system and recognition of its results. The mechanisms for ensuring the aforementioned legislative policy were

also enshrined in the Law "State Development Program of the Republic of Armenia until 2030".

It is obvious that non-formal education in Armenia is becoming an increasingly important instrument for social and economic development, fostering active civic participation among young people, improving employment prospects, and strengthening the overall inclusiveness of the education system.

Today, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of the Republic of Armenia has a Department of **Supplementary and Continuing Education**, the tasks of which are:

- ✓ introduction of mechanisms for recognizing the results of non-formal education,
- ✓ ensuring an environment for lifelong learning and continuous development of adults,
- ✓ creation of a National Register of Supplementary educational (instruction) Programs,
- ✓ organization of work aimed at popularizing non-formal education,
- ✓ development of a policy in the field of supplementary and continuing education,
- ✓ implementation of monitoring of educational institutions implementing educational programs (Order No. 37-L of the Minister of Education 2023).

It is noteworthy that the rates of development of non-formal education in the regional countries of the Republic of Armenia are basically the same (see Figure 4), and the ratios of attendees in non-

formal and formal education of the population fluctuate within 10-15%.

Only during the years of the global pandemic, the share of non-formal education had a sharp increase, since the population was not allowed to fully attend formal educational institutions. In this situation, the non-formal education system showed greater flexibility and switched to the provision of distance services, which gradually decreased in the post-pandemic years (Ispiryan, M., & Vardanyan, M. 2022).

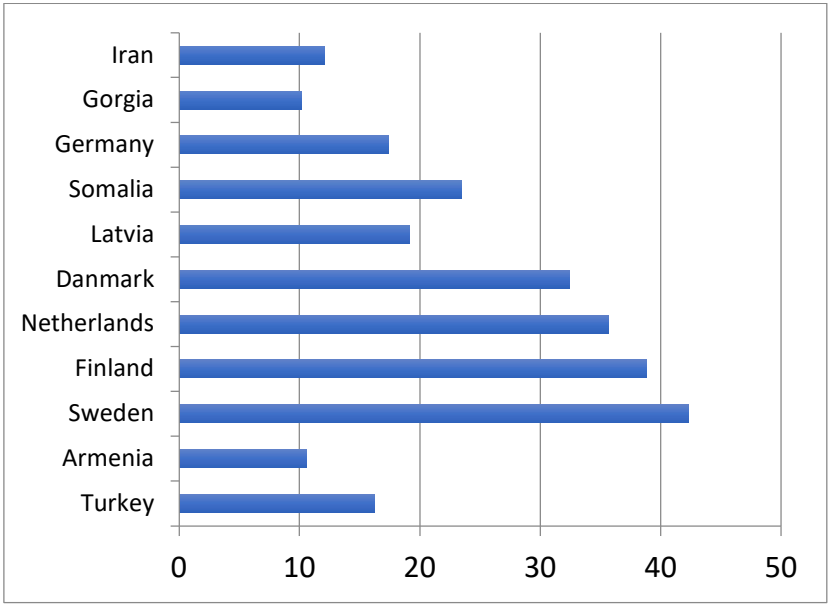


Figure 3. Participation rate informal and non-formal education, 2023

Source: *Our World in Data, www/ourworldindata.org/grapher.*

Thus, the dynamics of the development of non-formal education may vary, based on the expectations of stakeholders related to the

sector, be they economic, social or political. And it is not necessary that this educational system will be widely spread only in economically developed countries.

The principal forms of non-formal education in Armenia include:

- ✓ training programs implemented by youth and student organizations,
- ✓ skills-development courses,
- ✓ volunteer and community-based initiatives,
- ✓ courses focusing on civic education, entrepreneurial thinking, and digital literacy

On the contrary, in recent years, a trend has been observed in the field of activating the provision of non-formal educational services in economically underdeveloped countries (see Figure 3).

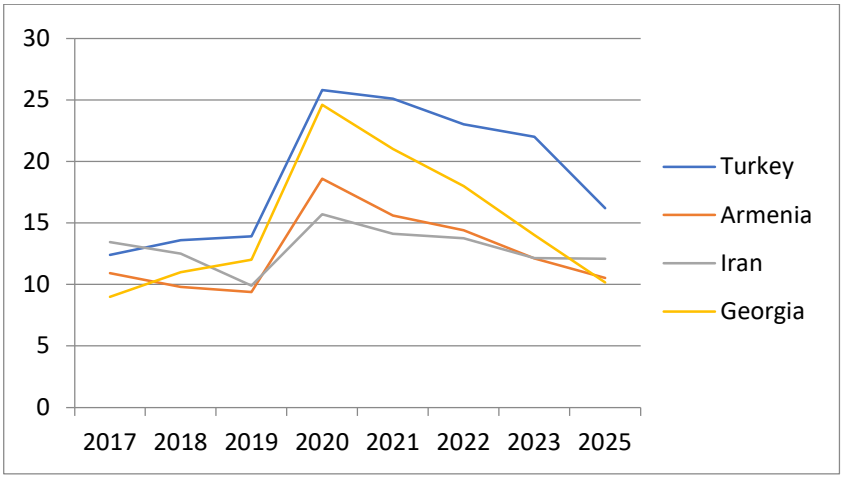


Figure 4. Dynamics of changes in the participation rate informal and non-formal education in regional countries (%)
Source: *Our World in Data, www/ourworldindata.org/grapher.*

And the reason here is primarily social, since formal education is an expensive pleasure for the population on the verge of poverty, and therefore it is easier to turn to non-formal education on the way to finding a job, which is cheaper and relevantly short-term.

Meanwhile, in economically developed countries, non-formal education mostly copes with the dynamic changes in the labor market, demonstrating flexibility in providing the employed workforce with new and competitive work skills. In general, non-formal education strengthens the qualitative characteristics of human capital accumulated in the country, increasing the guarantees of economic security, reducing unemployment, and eradicating poverty (see Figure 5).

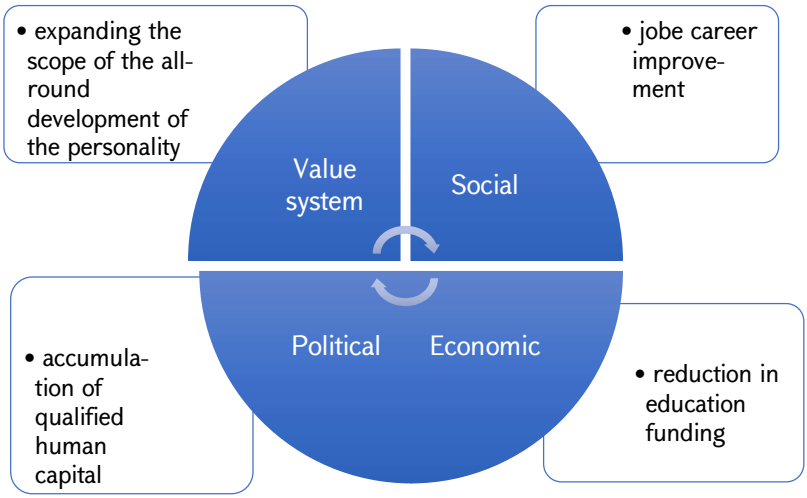


Figure 5. Classification of Motives for the Development of Non-Formal Education

Source: *Author's own work.*

Conclusion

Consequently, it is most appropriate to consider the motives for the development of non-formal education from the perspective of the stakeholders of the sector. They pursue both socio-economic and security and value-system goals (see Figure 5). Social motives are mainly related to the growth of the population's career, the acquisition of professional skills in a relatively short period of time. No less important for the population is the acquisition of modern work skills in a relatively inexpensive way, which can be achieved through non-formal education.

The most important motive for the development of non-formal education by the state is the qualitative accumulation and use of human capital, when individuals, by acquiring modern and competitive work skills, strengthen national security and give a competitive nature to the country's economic developments. Added to this is the expansion of the individual's all-round development in the educational process throughout life, when the learner acquires a benevolent attitude towards the environment, as well as universal human and national values (lifelong learning and informal education).

We believe, that the proposed classification of the development of non-formal education contributes to the development of policies in the field of supplementary and continuing education and the implementation of effective regulations for this form of learning process.

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ՈՉ ՖՈՐՄԱԼ ԿՐԹՈՒԹՅԱՆ ԶԱՐԳԱՑՄԱՆ ՇԱՐԺԱՌԻԹՆԵՐԸ

Հասմիկ Սահակյան
«Հաշվապահության Ուսուցման Միջազգային Կենտրոն» կրթական հիմնադրամ, գործադիր տնօրեն

Բանալի բառեր - ոչ ֆորմալ կրթություն, ֆորմալ կրթություն, ինֆորմալ կրթություն, լրացուցիչ կրթություն, ցկյանս ուսումնառություն, կրթության զարգացման շարժառիթներ, ոչ ֆորմալ կրթության շահառուներ:

Ոչ ֆորմալ կրթությունը ակտիվորեն զարգանալով, արդեն իսկ պահանջ առաջացրեց պաշտոնապես ճանաչելի դառնալու և կարգաբերումներ ստանալու իշխանությունների կողմից:

Այդ գործընթացը սկիզբ առավ դեռևս անցյալ դարի 90-ականներին եվրոպական երկրներում, իսկ Հայաստանի Հանրապետությունում թերևս իր դրսևորումները ստացավ վերջերս: Հետևաբար կարևորվում է ոչ ֆորմալ կրթությունից տարբեր շահառուների սպասելիքների վերհանումն և որակական բնութագրումների ներկայացումը: Հետազոտելով ոչ ֆորմալ կրթության զարգացման միտումները, հոդվածում

առաջարկվել է կատարել այդ կրթաձևի զարգացման շարժառիթների դասակարգում:

Պետության կողմից ոչ ֆորմալ կրթության զարգացման կարևորագույն շարժառիթ է հանդիսանում որակյալ մարդկային կապիտալի կուտակումն և օգտագործումը, երբ անհատները, գիտակեցելով ցկյանս ուսումնառության անհրաժեշտությունը ժամանակակից ու պահանջարկված աշխատանքային հմտություններ ձեռք բերելու տեսակյունից, նպաստում են ազգային անվտանգության ամրապնդմանը և միջազգային ասպարեզում բարձրացնում երկրի տնտեսական մրցակցությունը: Դրան հավելվում է նաև ողջ կյանքի ընթացքում ինֆորմալ կրթական գործընթացներում անհատի բազմակողմանի զարգացվածության ընդլայնումը, երբ ուսումնառուն ձեռք է բերում շրջակա միջավայրի հանդեպ բարեհոժար վերաբերմունք, ինչպես նաև համամարդկային և ազգապահպան արժեքներ:

Ոչ ֆորմալ կրթության զարգացման առաջարկվող դասակարգումը նպաստում է լրացուցիչ և շարունակական կրթության ոլորտի քաղաքականության մշակմանը և այդ կրթաձևի արդյունավետ կարգաբերումների իրականացմանը:

Submitted: 12.09.2025; Revised: 01.10.2025; Accepted: 15.10.2025

Conflicts of Interest:
The author declares no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in this research.