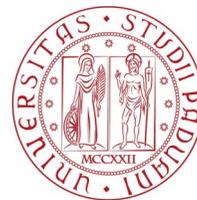




EMPLOYMENT STORIES

OF ADULT EDUCATORS



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI PADOVA



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DR. ADELA SCUTARU-GUTU | DVV INTERNATIONAL

What is the title of your job?

I am a country director for DVV International Office in the republic of Moldova. We are representative of a German NGO aiming at developing adult education system worldwide and specifically in our case Moldova.

Which number of job is your current job?

It is difficult to count but it is approximately the fourth job. Why I say is that, because I used to have two jobs in parallel and because I can distinguish between being a teacher in elementary school and then in the university and this job is the fourth position I had.

What were the most important training choices?

My **formal background** is in literature. I have a PhD in teaching literature. I would say that my main development on education was somehow a non-formal education after receiving all possible degrees and formal education. I went through trainings on project management on curriculum development and on developing teaching.

What is the most relevant knowledge for your job?

I think everything I managed to acquire is of certain use in my daily work, but I would say that knowledge itself is not of big help unless you apply it, unless you combine it with skills, attitudes and apply it in different contexts. Everything that I learned during my education about educational system, about modern teaching methodology, all of that applies to my current job.

What are the main soft skills for your job?

First, I rely on **communication skills** which I find very useful. **ICT skills**; you cannot be very effective if you are working without using the latest technologies that helps you speed up the processes. And I think interacting with people; being able to listen, to hear and to position yourself in the place of another person to understand their point of view before you decide to do something. I would also say that decision making and taking risks are skills that are very necessary in the job I do.

Which advices would you give to a graduate?

I would tell the young people, who are looking forward to building a career, to be quite **self-confident** but at the same **time to listen to their inner voice**. If it happens that the education that they received is not that relevant it is not a catastrophe, it is not a tragedy. After all, the world is changing so fast and so significantly that there is nothing more certain than change. And it is very important to accept the situation, to accept the fact that you can learn and relearn permanently. And that it is the natural state of things and there is nothing wrong about it. On the contrary, every opportunity is somehow building up to new opportunities and chances.



FRAUKE HEINZE | DVV INTERNATIONAL

What is the title of your job?

Senior desk officer for Southern Africa and East Africa.

Which number of job is your current job?

This is difficult to say, because I have quite some working experience so I can't count but this is, because first of all I shift my qualification so in a very first beginning I was a nurse, and then I studied public health and then I fulfilled my dream to work in **development cooperation** and there they always have project related jobs. So that means they are terminated so I cannot count. But many jobs in different position and in the last years mainly in development cooperation.

What were the most important training choices?

I think my master in public health was the first step, after this I worked for almost ten years in different countries in Africa and Asia and then my master in Adult Education. I just finished it last year. And a lot of, lets say courses I did in project management. **Intercultural sensitivity**, advisory services and so on. There were many but I think these are the most important.

What is the most relevant knowledge for your job?

This were all about project management definitely and also the practical work in health education is very important; to work and live in **different cultural contexts**. And **organizational development**, advisory competencies. I think these are the main.

What are the main soft skills for your job?

I think **cultural sensitivity**. But also when I say advisory skills this is a lot of communications skills, listening skills, asking questions. To know what motivates others and how to come up with their challenges probably.

Which advices would you give to a graduate?

I think what is important or what I think is relevant for working in development cooperation is to be open and always try to develop further and gain knowledge. Other soft skills such as being open for **different cultural perspectives** and to deal with **different kind of knowledge level** is also important such as organizational skills and management skills.

SILVIA TURSI | EAEA

What is the title of your job?

I work as policy assistant.

Which number of job is your current job?

After graduating I have done a couple of internships and a few short-time jobs as a freelancer. But this is my first fulltime job.

What were the most important training choices?

I actually consider this winter school as one of the main trainings that led me to get my current job. I come from a political science field; I gained my bachelor's degree in political sciences and I was studying for my Masters in European studies. But I was really interested in education and that is why attending this winter school allowed me to get insights of the issues and the policies on adult education so that I could add this to my profile. Additionally, I studied for a second Master's in education in the UK and in the main time I attended trainings in European project management and gained practical skills through my internships.

What is the most relevant knowledge for your job?

I think knowledge about European governance and about the debates on education policies at the European level as well as research skills and writing.

What are the main soft skills for your job?

An important skill in my job is **communication**. In fact, my role implies going to meetings and having to talk in front of many people and pass on your message. It is important that you can do that **effectively**. Apart from that I think it is important to be able to work in a team and to manage your time when you do your **independent tasks**.

Which advices would you give to a graduate?

I would suggest gaining as much as field experience as possible, if possible, starting even before graduating. After that I would suggest looking for internships and start to put what they have learned during their degree in practice. If they want to work at international or European level, my personal advice would be trying to be updated on what is going on, for example by joining Facebook groups or by signing up for newsletters so that they can know about conferences and trainings that are going on. I think this is a really good way to know what is going on, to know people and increase your opportunities to enter the field.

LAURA LAZARO LASHERAS | DOTA-ASSOCIATION

What is the title of your job?

Currently I am project manager in several organizations. I am also Catalan literacy teacher for adults. And I am manager and coordinator in a **nonprofit organization called DOTA**.

Which number of job is your current job?

I have had lots of jobs, because I normally work with projects. Maybe a project can last one year, two years, three months, you never know. But let's say 10 – 15 jobs. But this kind of job is like my third kind of job. Because I have been researcher, I have been teacher and I have been manager or coordinator. So the third field of job.

What were the most important training choices?

I studied philosophy as my basic degree but then it was an important choice to study my master programme which was on intervention and research in social educative projects. This was the first one. The second one was founding DOTA association which is the where I work. And then the third is contacting European Networks on Adult Education, because this made me known and made me involve a lot in European issues.

What is the most relevant knowledge for your job?

First of all in philosophy I would say **language analysis and analytical skills**. And then in my master's degree I would say project writing, project management, second language, teaching; I have specialized in teaching language and literacy for migrant people. **Educational framework**; the educational concepts I've learned. All that concepts in my master's programme too. And then researching skills in my master programme. I have done my master thesis, so I have those skills.

What are the main soft skills for your job?

I find **intercultural skills** very useful, because I work in that **intercultural context**. Then **social interaction skills and communication skills** are very important in my field. Teamwork is very important, because we coordinate a lot of people and a lot of teachers. Then autonomy too; the capacity to solve problems on your own. And time management is very important, because there are a lot of things to do and we need to know how to manage the time.



LAURA LAZARO LASHERAS | DOTA-ASSOCIATION

Which advices would you give to a graduate?

The first advice would be to try to know yourself and get experience in different job positions to acknowledge what kind of job and what kind of organization that is the best for you. So, you need to know yourself and know where you feel comfortable. Further **educations and self-education** are very important when you are trying to **develop yourself professionally and personally**. Then I would say, look for a job that allow you to develop your skills, your personal skills and your professional skills. And try not think so much about money positions, because it's going to come with time but in the beginning it is not so important. Sometimes we think a lot; we are very obsessed in finding a good job, stability, money and so on. But I think it is not so important.

What were the most important professional decisions?

In fact, it was a bit the same as the other question because changing my field of study was one of the main important decisions, as I started to study another field of studies which was philosophy. Then also trying to create a new association in the field I was willing to work, that was important I would say. The most important decision I have made was founding DOTA association. Because of that lot of working opportunities appeared to me in my field, which wouldn't appear if I didn't create that association.

Which advices would you give to a PhD?

This is an advice that was given to me too. Because I am also doing my PhD. I am trying to balance the research task with the practical and teaching task so that you do not loose the attachment to the reality, to the real context, where you are working. Otherwise, it happens sometimes because research takes so much effort and time, so you cannot do anything else and then you slowly get away from the context you are studying, and it can be very frustrating for a person who likes being in the social arena. That would be my advice; try to find this balance.

GERALDINE SILVA | EAEA

What is the title of your job?

My job is it to be a technician of ORVC which means Orientation, Recognition and Validation of Competencies.

Which number of job is your current job?

Before I graduated I actually had a lot of jobs, like part-time jobs. But after I graduated this is my third job. I worked in a marketing company, I worked in a company that provided courses in welding and then I went to work for the public school in Azambuja which is in the outskirts of Lisbon.

What were the most important training choices?

In terms of training I think it is really important to have some kind of specialization. I also attended a lot of workshops to be able to work with people that were already on the field and that was very valuable for my work. So without a doubt specialization is important.

What is the most relevant knowledge for your job?

Communication skills and also being able to work with very different people. Those were the skills that I acquired in my courses and in **Human Resources Management** that were very useful to apply in my work.

What are the main soft skills for your job?

Without a doubt **active listening, communication** is really important. Time management also is really important and to be able to work with different kind of people, to be adaptable.

Which advices would you give to a graduate?

The first advice would be, if you really want to work in adult education, do not give up on that dream. It doesn't matter if sometime you would love to work in another field. It happened to me too and all those experiences were really valuable to improve my skills so that I was able later on to apply in this line of work. Like you can work with very different people like prison people, like military that are transitioning to civilian life. That is a very interesting job. Don't give up on that dream.



RICARDA MOTSCHILNIG | FREELANCER AND LOBBYIST

What is the title of your job?

Essentially I am freelancer, but I always call myself a lobbyist for Adult Education.

Which number of job is your current job?

I had lots of jobs and lots of steps in my professional career so far. I am working as a freelancer which means that I am working more jobs; I am teaching at the university of Klagenfurt I am working for the international council for adult education. This is a global advocacy organization that are doing advocacy towards the **United Nations, UNESCO, OECD**. And I am working for the European Association for the Education of Adults.

What were the most important training choices?

My background is in adult education. I was studying educational science and by coincidence I chose the adult education field. Looking back at it, this was the most important and most significant choice I could make. The first step into my international experience was an internship at the European Association for the Education of Adults. This was one of the most important ones. And then, of course, I was an Erasmus Student. I was studying in Graz in Austria and did my third semester and fourth semester in Ireland. These were probably the most significant and most life changing steps in my professional career.

What is the most relevant knowledge for your job?

What I mainly do now is writing in many different ways; in my job at the university of Klagenfurt as a lecturer and I am doing a lot of scientific writing also as a researcher. And this is something I have practiced deeply during my studies. And as a policy and advocacy person, as a lobbyist, you do a lot of writing in a completely different way than you do in the university. But this is something you must practice e.g. at university. Writing in any kind of way, in many ways this is what I do in my job.

What are the main soft skills for your job?

Working with people. It doesn't matter if it is communication, if it's working in an **intercultural way**. I am working on a global level so it is completely different if you work with Germans or with people from Uruguay or Africa. I think **openness, empathy, acceptance** of any kind of working style, way of living, way of approaching e.g. adult education. This is some of the most necessary in this kind of job. Working in advocacy, you must be a very persisting person which means that you never give up. The Lobbying field is an area where you never going to be able to reach the end, the goal. You must be very persisting. In German you say: You have a long breath.

Which advices would you give to a graduate?

As I mentioned I already had lots of different kind of steps during my career and I got all these jobs, positions, activities and freelancing through networking. You must be out there, you have to go to conferences, you have to meet people. Be there, be present, talk to other people about your ideas, talk to other people about your visions and try to get a feeling of what is going on in the field of adult education. This is how you get connected with the trends, get connected with the people working in the field. Just be out there, just be present and be part of the community, because adult education is a lovely community to be part of and get the feeling of it, particularly on an international level.

GALINA VERAMEJCHYK | DVV INTERNATIONAL

What is the title of your job?

I am country director officially in our internal terminology of DVV International. We can use also another term it is like project manager or office manager.

Which number of job is your current job?

It's my eight even ninth job. But it is quite a complicated question, because I was always doing different kind of jobs or tasks.

What were the most important training choices?

I use a lot of things that I learned through non-formal learning. For example, it means my first education was not really like a preparation for this job, because I am from the country where the adult education system is not so much developed like in Germany. We do not have any special programme for adult educators. I graduated firstly from a technical university as an engineer and from this point of view, the main knowledge and skills I have used until today is the German language.

What is the most relevant knowledge for your job?

It is analytical thinking and development of strategical papers or documents and it is also some kind of **problem-solving knowledge**. How to deal with different problematic situations.

What are the main soft skills for your job?

Communication skills are very important. Especially in this field, adult education, and development we need to have very developed communication skills and **intercultural skills and ability to work in groups** or in teams. And, of course, to formulate your own ideas and to present ideas to another person, in public or to audience.

Which advices would you give to a graduate?

First, I think it is very important to do what you like. It is my basic idea about jobs and it does not matter what kind of job you would like to have. And the second point is to follow your passion and try to assure not only **theoretical knowledge** but also **practical skills**, as well as working together with other people.

