



DAAD



# Employment Stories in the Field of Adult and Continuing Education



# 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. Additional to this, 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 interest- ing 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.



# Thomas Lichtenberg | DVV International

## **What is the title of your job?**

I am working for DVV International. My title of the job is Senior Manager for monitoring & evaluation and funding. So, both components are round about fifty percent. It doesn't look like adult education but it is also part of it.

## **Which number of job is your current job?**

Then I worked as a selector at the University of Applied Sciences. I changed my position and worked for the German Development Cooperation in South Africa. After three years I came back, and I worked for a consulting company for five years and then four years for an accreditation institution accrediting higher education programmes all over the world. Then I joined DVV International a little more than three years ago. So, this is all in all my fifth job after leaving the university.

## **What were the most important training choices?**

My professional background is geography. I think the most important training choices that I learned in geography is that I was provided with a broad overview with different topics. I think this is how I learned to be open to all kind of professional challenges and to find my way quickly in strange fields. I think training at a university or wherever will never be able to prepare us one hundred percent for the real job that we are taking on later. The training can set the frame, can provide us with key competencies, but I think we must be open-minded and adapt flexibility to the challenges in the real working environment.

## **What is the most relevant knowledge for your job?**

We must have a profound knowledge of our professional field. If we see that we are lacking certain competencies and I think this will always be the case, I think we must have the ambition to obtain the missing knowledge ourselves. You need to have self-motivation to obtain whatever knowledge is required to be able to perform. I think the professional knowledge is only half of what is needed. So, I think soft skills, how to get along with other people, is from my point of view fifty percent of a good job qualification. My recommendation with regard to the soft skills would be: Always remain friendly but make your point if necessary.

## **What are the main soft skills for your job?**

Communication, so how to talk to people. I also think it is very important to be open to recommendations and ideas. We must always maintain the good communication atmosphere, but we must be also kind of persistent when it comes to our own position. Otherwise, I think the other side is not able or not willing to understand your point. So, from my point of view communication and openness are the most important soft skills.

## **Which advices would you give to a graduate?**

I come from a profession where no clear career path is obvious, so I needed to be open, and this is what I would recommend to graduates: Be open. In our modern world there are a lot of jobs out there that we are not even aware of. Once we have a job, I think we also must look at ourselves: Are we happy with it? Because I think we spend so much time at our work and if it doesn't fulfill us, then I think we should once again be open enough to think of alternatives.



# Glenda Galeotti | University of Florence

## **What is the title of your job?**

I am Researcher in Adult and Continuing Education at the University of Florence. I am eco-founder and member of the board of directors of MOCA, an academic spin-off, which deals with the transfer research in adult education field.

## **Which number of job is your current job?**

If we don't consider the temporary jobs, this is my fourth job in almost twenty years of activity. My first job was as an employee in a firm of Florence for three years. The second one was in the field of tourism as a tour guide. The third job was at social services. I worked in a social enterprise that provides social educational services and activities for different target including adults. Some time after, I was in central America for an internship for my specialization course in human development, cultural peace and international cooperation, where I experienced work in adult education in different cultural contexts. In the following five years during my PhD course and postdoctoral research, I dealt with research in adult education in Guatemala, Nicaragua and Brazil. There I led research activities on capacity building for self-guarding environments and cultural heritage. In the last ten years I worked at the University of Florence. My research focus is on adult and continuing education for social innovation and local development.

## **What were the most important training choices?**

In my experience the training choices become opportunities to experiment myself in different contexts or workplaces through internship or other practical experiences. I think I have always found a job thanks to an internship. Therefore, my choices have been taken in the operative context linked to the training course. I think it is very important to have a clearly defined image and to hold little pieces in order to reach it as in a puzzle. I haven't always had it so clear, but this is the idea that drives me.

## **What is the most relevant knowledge for your job?**

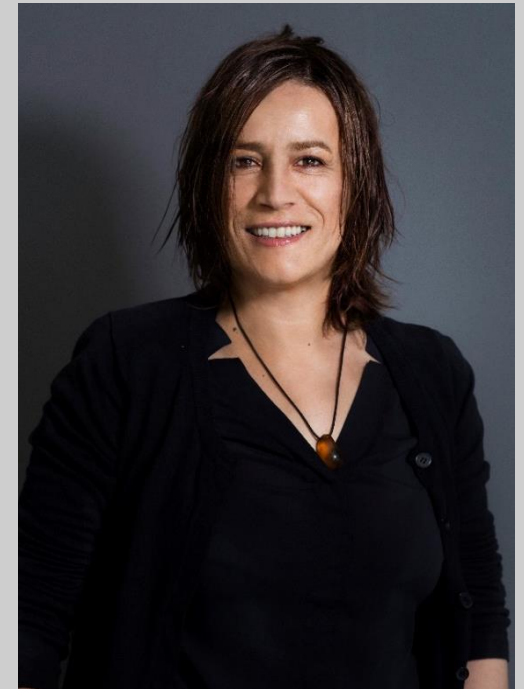
Today I believe it's important to have vertical skills but also an overview and a detail vision at the same time. For this reason, I think it's important to know and understand the processes they originate, develop and end to have an overhead view of these processes, their output and their outcomes and to know and to understand the human systems.

## **What are the main soft skills for your job?**

I have faith in the learning abilities of human being. I believe in passion and motivation. I think in self-management, self-directed and self-regulated learning. They are strategic skills to survive in the world work but also to build professionalism.

## **Which advices would you give to a graduate?**

To think with your heart. To build their professional pathways break by break.



# Reem Akkeila | University College of Applied Sciences

## **What is the title of your job?**

I am the Head Assistant of the Community Services and Continuing Education Center at the University College of Applied Sciences – UCAS.

## **Which number of job is your current job?**

This may be my fifth or sixth job. I have worked as a teacher assistant in a university, as a teacher in high school, training facilitator and coordinator for many projects with several donors like the World Bank, UNDB, DVV International. This is in addition to being a volunteer and trainer in some local institutions.

## **What were the most important training choices?**

I studied computer engineering for my bachelor degree, which is not so relevant to my current career path. So, I had to pick and participate in some training courses that are specialized in project management and adult education, also in monitoring and evaluation topics.

## **What is the most relevant knowledge for your job?**

My job mainly concentrates on project management. In project management the most relevant knowledge is planning in addition to quality management, time management, human resources management, risk management, monitoring and evaluation and many other fields of knowledge. We concentrate also on cost management, financial management, procurement management for the projects, stakeholder management and some thinks like this. It is very specialized in project management.

## **What are the main soft skills for your job?**

I think the main soft skills related to my work are analytical thinking, critical thinking, communication skills, working with a team and also selfassertiveness.

## **Which advices would you give to a graduate?**

For all the graduates I can say that your life is yours. A changing act is your responsibility. Never say it is late for change. Please don't give up if you didn't achieve all your goals until now. Every moment could be your "go to"-moment, so keep going all the way.



# Abdallah Al-haddad | University College of Applied Sciences

## **What is the title of your job?**

I have two main jobs. My first and permanent job is Head of E-Learner Unit at the University College of Applied Sciences in Gaza Strip. My other job is professional trainer in some local and international organisations in Gaza Strip in the field of employment skills, soft skills and leadership.

## **Which number of job is your current job?**

The Head of E-Learner Unit at University College of Applied Sciences is number five in my career.

## **What were the most important training choices?**

For my two jobs I think the most important training choices that I attended in the past were fund raising and the coordination of the international projects. Also an important training course is PRA, which is a short form for Personalized Review Assignment. The third one - maybe it is the most important – is the TOT, training of the trainers, which helped me to be a professional trainer in the field of soft skills and employment skills.

## **What is the most relevant knowledge for your job?**

I think the most relevant knowledge are the trainer tools and the trainer techniques, which helps in conducting trainer courses for the graduates and the students. The second knowledge is the way of and how to make assistance for the target groups. Finally, because of our situation in Gaza Strip, I am highly depended to the donors, so it is important to have a great knowledge about the donors, their means and their interventions in our region.

## **What are the main soft skills for your job?**

I think the most important one is communication skills, but also critical thinking and problem solving. It is also important to have a social awareness about our community. So, I think these are the main three important soft skills for my job beside leadership by influence.

## **Which advices would you give to a graduate?**

I can say that the main advice for the graduates is to determine exactly their career path before starting their education process and after the end of the education process. Maybe the second advice is to work in different ways, not different specializations. I mean that nowadays we have a lot of types of employments. The first one is the permanent job and the second is the freelancing and working via freelancing platforms on the Internet. The third one is working online or we can name it e-work and finally working in their own business. So, I advice the graduates to work in different ways in this types. Finally, they must be specialized in one career path mainly. Maybe there are other skills or specializations where they can work on, but they have to be specialized in one topic or in one career path to get a success in this career.





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This project is funded with support from the European Commission (project number: 2018-1-DE01-KA203-004272). This communication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.