

Section 5. Education for Adults

*Boiarska-Khomenko Anna Volodymyrivna,
H. S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University,
Associate Professor of History of Pedagogy
and Comparative Pedagogy Department
E-mail: annaboyarskahomenko@gmail.com*

ADULT EDUCATION IN EUROPE AND UKRAINE

Abstract: The article presents a comparative analysis of theoretical approaches to the concept of adult education, as well as the experience of implementing the concept of lifelong education in European countries and Ukraine.

The prospects and suggestions concerning the development of adult education in Ukraine in the process of the integration into the European educational system are outlined.

Keywords: adult education, lifelong education, formal adult education, non-formal adult education, informal adult education.

Considering the recent reforms in the Ukrainian educational field and the adoption of the Law “On Education”, the government has initiated the development of the Ukrainian Law “On Adult Education”. Therefore, as ever, the study of the issues of adult education in Central and Eastern European countries, their legal regulation; the determination of the principles, forms and methods of the educational process organization and the means of involving a wide range of adults in lifelong education are becoming relevant.

Therefore, the aim of the article is to study and analyze the legal framework in the field of adult education, to compare the principles and peculiarities of the organization of adult education in European countries and in Ukraine.

The Council of Europe has approved lifelong education as one of the main components of the European social model [2]. In Ukraine, as in European countries, people realize their right to lifelong education through formal, non-formal and informal education [4].

Let’s compare the theoretical foundations of adult education in Europe and Ukraine. Thus, in the Glossary of the European Higher Educational Area, there is a definition of the term “adult education” – the whole structure of the organized educational process, regardless of its content, level and form (official or another), regardless of whether this process is a continuation or a change of primary education got at school, college or university, as well as during the training, when people considered to be adults in the society they belong to improve their technical or professional qualifications, continue to develop their abilities, to increase knowledge in order to:

- complete formal education level;
- acquire knowledge and skills in a new field;
- update knowledge in a particular field [3].

Unfortunately, in Ukraine there is no definition of adult education in the official legal documents, therefore in our article we rely on terminological dictionaries. Thus, in Ukrainian terminology, adult education is defined as education specially designed for people who are considered to be adults, and aimed at:

– improvement of their educational and professional qualifications, abilities further development;
 – improvement or updating knowledge, skills and other competences for the completion of formal education level, in particular in a new field [6].

The essence of the both definitions is quite similar, but in the Glossary of the European Higher Education Area the aim of adult education is revealed broadly, and also covers a broader rank of society.

Recently, in most European countries, there is regulation and correction of the legal framework in the field of adult education. It has been found that changes occurred mainly in two directions. The first is the adoption of new legislative acts (Estonia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary), as well as the development of new strategic program documents at the supranational level. The second direction of reforming is the implementation of changes to adopted or ratified legislative acts, as well as re-thinking the main directions and principles of adult education (Denmark, Germany, Norway, Sweden).

Two different approaches can be distinguished at the national level of the regulation of the legislative area of adult education in the European countries. First, this is the approach that is to create legislation based on a holistic approach to the adult education system (the Law of Adult Education in Estonia, the Federal Law on the Promotion of Adult Education Formation in Austria). The other approach supposes legislation based on the regulation of educational practice that is not covered by other laws (the Law on Informal Education in Lithuania, the Law on Liberal Education of Adults in Scandinavia).

As it is noted above, in contrast to European countries, where special laws on adult education have been adopted, there is no such a normative legal act in Ukraine. Therefore, it would be advisable to rely on the Law of Ukraine “On Education”. Thus, it states that adult education is aimed at the realization of the right of every adult to lifelong education, taking into account their personal needs, priorities of social development and the economic needs [4].

The components of adult education in Ukraine are:

- postgraduate education (specialization, re-training, traineeship, internship, medical residency);
- vocational training of employees;
- retraining and/or advanced training courses;
- continuous professional development;
- any other components supposed by the legislation, proposed by the subject of the educational activity or independently chosen by a person [4].

A person has the right to free choice of the educational institution, establishment, organization, another subject of the educational activity, types, forms, pace of learning and the educational program within the framework of adult education [4].

In addition, the National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine and the Institute for Pedagogical Education and Adult Education presented the Concept of adult education in Ukraine in 2011. The Concept substantiates the expediency of the development of adult education in Ukraine, outlines the relevant problems of the modern educational area of adults, defines its aim and tasks, proposes directions for the development of Ukrainian adult education in the context of globalization, European integration [5].

The European Employment Strategy [1], agreed on July 22, 2003, has defined the guidelines for the policy of the lifelong education development. These guidelines call on the EU countries to pay attention to the shortage of workforce with appropriate skills and encourage them to pursue comprehensive lifelong education strategies to make citizens master the skills they need in the modern economy. The guidelines determine the need to increase the investment in human resources, especially through adult training by enterprises.

The same guidelines of adult education development are also promoted in Ukraine. In particular, the basic principles of vocational training of employees of enterprises are defined by the Law of Ukraine “On Education”. Thus, continuous professional development is defined as a continuous process of training

and improving specialists' professional competences after obtaining higher and/or postgraduate education, which enables a specialist to maintain or improve the standards of the professional activity and extends throughout the period of their professional activity [4]. At the same time, there are also advanced training courses for specialists in order to acquire new competencies within the framework of the professional activity or the field of knowledge.

Both in European countries and in Ukraine, adult education can be divided into three components:

- additional professional education which contributes to the formation of the professional basis of human resources of the modern high-tech economy. Consumers of the services of this part of the lifelong education system are a socially adapted part of the population, who obtain education successively at all its levels.

- education aimed at adaptation and social integration of professionals who are unable to adapt themselves to the rapidly changing social environment. It enables diverse groups of people to adapt to changing living conditions. In addition, this subsystem involves citizens who do not have the access to the formal system of professional education, which creates a risk of desocialization to them.

- education which provides satisfaction of various individual educational needs for citizens, for example, language training, obtaining psychological, cultural and other knowledge, communicative skills and special skills, etc.

All these aspects of education in Europe are provided by a number of educational institutions, in particular universities, adult education institutes, professional institutes, community centers, pedagogical universities, folk schools in Scandinavia, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, private linguistic companies, commercial institutes.

In Ukraine, the network of similar educational institutions is much smaller, and some institutions of secondary and professional education, higher educational institutions, various informal structures (training groups, training and retraining at enterprises, etc.) provide education to adults.

In light of the above, adult education in Ukraine should be defined as a full-fledged educational field with the appropriate focus on the control and quality review, with the assurance of the various educational forms recognition. While developing the draft law «On Adult Education» it is necessary to take into account the key points:

- identification of the models for the assessment and recognition of prior education;
- the connection of national models for the recognition of prior education with the European qualification structure; increasing comparability and transparency;
- creation of criteria and mechanisms for the recognition and validation of non-formal education in educational and professional activities, definition of key skills and competences;
- reduction of significant differences with European countries in the field of key skills and key competences;
- training staff for the lifelong education system in the following directions: teaching; management; scientific and analytical support; the use of the latest technologies; curriculum planning; support (technical, administrative, organizational).

To sum up, adult education in Ukraine requires a substantial adjustment at the legislative level, taking into account the experience of European countries. It is also necessary to expand the network of educational institutions for adults, as well as to popularize the ideas of lifelong education among the Ukrainian population.

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