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Lifelong learning education and information counselling is a priority

The European society and Lifelong Learning Education. Among the European Commission documents relating to the lifelong learning area, the Lifelong Learning Memorandum is the most important one. In the Memorandum, the European Commission takes the lifelong learning as a prime priority and makes effort to rapidly develop it. The reasons for that relate to the European society change to a knowledge-based society and economy. The up-to-date information and knowledge access, the motivation and skill to reasonably use that resources both to one's own benefit and that of the community as a whole become a key to strengthen the Europe's competitiveness and improve the labour employability and adaptability. The European population is assumed to live in a society diverted in cultural, ethnic and language terms. In its broadest sense, the lifelong learning is a key to learn and understand the manner of coping with the above mentioned social and economic changes. Therefore, the following main two objectives, each of the same importance, are highlighted within the lifelong learning: active citizenship support and employability support.

In order to arise the desirable changes in the EU member, it is necessary for that countries to make effort to execute that changes; in addition, the European Community should support that countries in their efforts. In fact, each of the countries is fully responsible for its education system. The result of executing the changes depends both on the investment of each individual country in the lifelong learning area and the responsibilities of many participants of various spheres of social and economic life, including social partners, and, last but not least, on the effort of the individuals themselves, who are consequently responsible for their learning.

To execute the changes to the benefit of the lifelong learning development, the European Commission recommends that the following six key ideas are taken into consideration:

- New basic skills for everyone – the goal is to ensure a general and continual access to the learning to obtain and renew the skills necessary for a permanent participation in the knowledge-based society;
- More investments in human resources – the goal is to considerably increase the rate of investment in human resources and express that way the priority of the Europe's wealth of the greatest importance – the European people;
- Innovations in teaching and learning – the goal is to develop effective methods of teaching and learning for the lifelong learning and learning in the full wide of life;
- To acknowledge learning – the goal is to ensure an important improvement in the manners of understanding and evaluating the participation in learning and its results – in non-formal and informal learning in particular;

- To reappraise counselling – the goal is to ensure that everyone can get quality information and guidance concerning education possibilities within the whole of Europe in the course of all his/her life;
- To bring learning closer to home – the goal is to create lifelong learning opportunities as close to the learning persons as possible – in that persons' municipalities –, and use methods based on information and communication technologies for that.

National and regional policies in related priorities at Czech Republic.

Political bodies of the region consider educational capital as one of the most important factors of a modern economy. In pursuance of these requirements a programme for building up lifelong learning centres has been developed. These centres integrate initial and continuing education into a synergic whole with an appropriate permeability and the participation of schools, especially technical and vocational schools. At the same time it trains teachers, instructors and educationalists in schools for new activities e.g. it promotes their professional competencies which are necessary for the preparation and follow-up implementation of an educational supply. The development of educational programmes that will be good inserted into the labour market is linked with the labour market of the region. That is why a part of the project focuses on the development of deepening of cooperation with social partners. The project initiated measures promoting education and employability as well as information system development. These systems secure the linkage between education and the labour market.

After the year 1990 the traditional industrial branches in the region begun to breakdown, production with negative environmental effects declined and special production also declined. The slow development of other economic activities caused an abrupt rising in number of unemployed people while the new job supply declined.

This fact especially affects several groups of population such as school leavers without vocational training, workers with primary education, school leavers immediately after finishing school and the category of older workers.

The priority of current regional policy is targeted towards development of human resources through the measures linked with the Program of Region Development, the promotion of lifelong learning, the development of a school capacity and VET aimed at new professions in compliance with the new trends of the labour market and social partners. The program – Action Plan of Employability coping with unemployment aims at the reduction of an unemployment rate, an increase in eligibility of citizens on the labour market and the provision of lifelong learning. The development of education is a priority of the regional program – Long-term Development of Education and Educational System in the Moravian-Silesian Region. This program addresses new requirements in the secondary and tertiary educational sector. The aim of regional policy is to keep pace with economic and social development.

The general aim is lifelong learning development and the creation of conditions for a general access to learning, establishing the network of lifelong learning centres which should play the role of coordinating, conceptual methodological, evaluation and educational institutions. In addition, it will improve excess to professional education both at the secondary and tertiary level, contribute to an increase in quality and effectiveness of initial and continuing education and flexibility of graduates.

What type of practices are we going to look at? To answer to this question, we borrow the definition of «policy», making the distinction between different levels of actions of policies, programmes and measures. We then add a fourth dimension, that of bottom-up initiatives.

A policy is characterised by a coherent set of goals, priorities and strategies covering an extended period of duration and implying a steady and constant allocation of funding;

A programme is a mechanism to initiate a coherent set of actions aiming at influencing some specific dimensions or achieving policy objectives, and can be thus considered as a tool for implementing a wider policy;

A measure is a specific action (part of a cycle of actions) in terms of duration, resources allocated and content.

A bottom-up initiative is an action initiated by public or private entities, alone or in mutual collaboration, outside an institutional policy framework.

Counselling Conception. The goal is to ensure that everybody can get good quality information and guidance concerning educational possibilities all over Europe in the course of all his/her life.

For most people, the transition from education to labour market only occurred once in a lifetime – when they left school to find a job – in past; in addition, the people probably passed through one or more periods of professional training in the course of their professional careers. At present, people will probably require information and guidance about «what to do further» several times in a lifetime, probably absolutely unpredictably sometimes. That is an integral part of planning and executing the life project as a continued process in which the paid work is only a single component, no matter of what importance it is. Option considerations and decisions naturally require relevant and correct information. The expert guidance can often help in an opinion clarification.

In that connection, a new approach is necessary which reckons with counselling as a permanently available way for everybody, overcomes drawing a distinction among educational, professional and personal guidance and affects new users. The life and work in the knowledge-based society require active citizens which are motivated to make effort to ensure his/her own personal and professional development. That means that the systems of providing that services must move from the supply side to the demand one and bring the users' needs and requirements into their focus.

The experts' task is to guide individuals along the unique ways through their lives, motivate them, provide them with relevant information and make decision-making easy for them. That includes the tasks to develop a more active approach – that means that the experts should go to the people rather than only wait for them to come to ask for advice – and continue in the progress reached. In addition, one of the experts' tasks is to develop a positive effort focused on preventing failures in learning (or on remedying that failures) and educational course premature leaving.

The future role of counselling experts can be characterised as a mediation. The counselling mediator can obtain and adapt a large amount of information according to the customer's interests to help the customer in deciding the best activities to be focused on by him/her in future. Information sources and diagnostic tools based on the information and communication technologies and the Internet open new horizons to improve the range and quality of counselling. They can enrich and extend the role of expert, however, they can not replace it; in addition, the new technologies bring new potential problems which will be necessary to be solved. For example, guidance experts will have to form high-level abilities in the spheres of management and information analysis. They will be required to help people find their way through the information labyrinth and find that information which is reasonable and useful for their own needs. In the globalise world of education opportunities, people will require information concerning the quality of what is on offer.

Navigation for Training. Recommended training forms as following:

- commentary above mentioned problematic in plenum;
- groups discussion;
- panel discussion;
- presentation of the best examples;
- self-access of the exemplary materials;

- own strategy processing to establish of the centre;
- intention defence;
elaboration and presentation of the educational programme;
- discussion in plenum;
- strength and weak points of the project analysis;
- processing and assessment of the questionnaire searching;
- teamwork management with social partners;
- centre activity dissemination.

RECOMMENDED INFORMATION SOURCES

1. **Řepa V.** Analýza a návrh informačních systémů (Information System Analysing and Designing). Ekopress, Praha 1999, ISBN 80-86119-13-0 (in Czech).
2. **Krajčík V.** The Entrepreneurial Information Environment of Small and Middle Sized Enterprises in the Czech Republic Following the EU Entry, In: Journal of Administrative Science, ročník 3, 2005, číslo 2, str. 15–23, Canakale Onsekiz Mart Universitesi, Ankara, ISSN: 1304–5318.
3. **Dolansky V., Měkota V., Němec V.** Projektový management (Project Management). Grada, Praha 1996, ISBN 80-7169-287-4 (in Czech).
4. **Němec V.** Projektový management. (Project Management) Grada, Praha 2003, ISBN 80-247-0392-0 (in Czech).
5. **Turner J.R.** The handbook of project –based management: Improving the Processes for Achieving Strategic Objectives. Mc Graw-Hill, 1993.

S U M M A R Y

In considerations regarding the strategy of the development of the lifelong learning education in the new EU member states, one cannot avoid the contexts connected with the development of counselling and the up-to-date information and knowledge access, and their significance for the modern university. To execute the changes to the benefit of the lifelong learning development, the European Commission recommends the following ideas to be taken into article.