

ORGANIZATION OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

Key words: non-formal education, life-long learning education, forms of organization.

Nowadays there is a renewed interest in non-formal education (NFE). The original version of non-formal education emerged in 1968. It arose in the context of the widespread feeling that education was failing, not just in developing countries but also in so-called Western societies as well.

The problem of non-formal education have been analyzed and researched by many scientists such as M. Ahmed, M. Blazey, P. Coombs, G. Darkenwald, R. Fischer, P. Fordham, M. Kamil, S. Kerka, T.Kowalski, H. Lipman, S. Merriam, A. Rogers, P. Edelson and others.

Saying about the history of the term «non-formal education», it appeared in 1968 when Philip Coombs included a chapter entitled «Non-Formal Education: to catch up, keep up and get ahead» in his seminal book «The World Educational Crisis: a systems approach». Since then discussions and debates around the term and NFE activities started and continued till today. A. Rogers, P. Coombs and M. Ahmed were the first who defined non-formal education as «any organized educational activity outside the established formal system» [4].

In scientific literature there are several definitions of NFE that sometimes overlap or contradict each other. A. Rogers classified different definitions into the following categories: a system: a collection of organizations and programs different from the formal education system; a process: with different teaching-learning relationships than those in formal education, a less hierarchical format; a concept, a subject worthy of study and writing about; a practice, a professional activity undertaken by people separate from formal education professionals; a set of educational activities distinguished from formal education by having different goals or purposes or even separated from formal schooling by being socially purposeful, usually seen as a part of the radical social transformation movement [4].

Despite the variety of forms and definitions the non-formal education is the educational system which includes all necessary pedagogical attributes: goals, objectives, content, learning technologies and methods. There is possible to reveal the common features that can be attributed to the non-formal education programs:

1. Non-formal education is democratic in its nature, as is intended to ensure access to education for everyone.

2. Non-formal education is aimed to complete realization of personal creative potential. Structures of informal education are aimed primarily at meeting the urgent learners' needs in education. In addition, they are able to specify and develop those needs. The objective of non-formal education is not limited by transforming certain scope of knowledge.

3. The main functions of non-formal education are: cognitive (meeting the growing cognitive needs, comprehensive general cultural development of the individual, the satisfaction of intellectual and aesthetic needs), adaptive (assistance in human adaptation to the social, cultural, economic and other environmental changes); compensative (compensation of former formal education failures and corrections of educational disadvantages), the developmental (development of educational motives, self-learning skills and abilities, cognition of self-capabilities).

4. Objectives and content of non-formal learning are based on the combining principles of the personal educational needs satisfaction and the taking into account the interests and needs of different social classes and groups; the humane and humanistic principle and the principle of socialization that provide achieving social education completely corresponding to society's educational needs. Also the non-informal learning is based on principles of self-education, self-direction, self-sufficiency.

5. Non-formal education structures are characterized by a high degree of flexibility and diversity of forms, by the ability to cover all socio-professional and age learners' groups. Flexibility

is manifested in a large selection of programs, periods and places of learning, orientation to the specific needs and interests of every student.

6. The specific role of the teacher who serves as the organizer of a self-activity of participants in the educational process.

7. Non-formal educational structures do not issue diplomas, certificates or any other kind of documents.

So, non-formal education, reflecting ideas of the progressive education, provides focus on students and their needs, the importance of their experience learning, equivalent role of student and teacher in the learning process where the teacher is a guide, instructor, the source knowledge and not an information transmitter [3].

The current situation of the development of non-formal education in European countries is characterized by: the revival of traditions of public education; transformation of ideas of personal self-improvement in new contexts; support of pensioners' educational activities. In many theoretical and practical researches on the non-formal education in European countries, it is considered as a really democratic, humane and universal education providing opportunities to get education for everyone regardless of age and gender, social status and place of living.

A. Honcharuk presents examples of organization of non-formal education in the UK and Germany. In the UK, in particular, there are centers of adult education, department of life-long learning education with higher educational institutions, community colleges, short-term colleges of residential type, educational organizations (enterprises that organize training for their own workers), universities of the third age. In Germany there are national universities, associations of labor education; educational services are also provided by churches and trade unions [1]. O. Shapochkina [2], in her research works, describes the development of non-formal education in Germany that emerged as a result of comparison of the school educational achievements in different countries of the world.

Lithuanian experience in organizing non-formal education is characterized by reorganization of Adult Schools into Adult Education Centers which use different forms of organization of the educational process and cover different categories of population.

Poland has a wide network of third-level universities and schools for adults, institutes of life-long learning education and additional vocational training centers. The priority areas for organizing non-formal adult education in Poland are the educational needs of regional labor markets, special social groups, professional or territorial communities and individuals.

Thus, the formation of non-formal education in the European countries is characterized by a wide political, state and social recognition of its significance and the implementation of its forms and methods of organization, depending on the needs of the population. Institutes of non-formal education in Europe varies depending on the socio-political and economic situation in the country. At the same time, the main providers of educational services are state-owned establishments and public associations.

Literature

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