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EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY AS A PROBLEM OF ADULT EDUCATION IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION

ABSTRACT

The article deals with the problem of adult education in the context of globalization. The analysis of scientific pedagogical literature devoted to studying of some aspects of educational activity in adult education has been conducted. The problem of public institutions development and activity has been analyzed in the broad context of “globalization”. Possibilities and threat for the work of “the third sector” have been explored. The tendency of deepening international cooperation of public organizations in adult education with the increase of their interdependence and competition has been emphasized. The article deals with the historical and pedagogical issues of educational activities in the field of adult education. Much attention has been given to social problems of the subject (the problem of human’s social protection, the necessity of a systematic solution of a range of socially-oriented issues in the education sphere, the focus of the social educational work’s vector in the field of non-formal adult education). The features of internationalization of educational activities in the field of adult education have been defined. Methodology of the problem’s research has been researched. Transnational research has been conducted with the help of functional analysis method, which allows to allocate complex international requirements in national standards of public organizations. It has been determined that at present there is increase of integration processes in national European systems which influence the change of their structure and creation of regional and general world models of adult and informal education.

Key words: educational activity, globalization of adult education, international cooperation.

INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century globalization processes form essentially new informational environment and thus contribute to new quality level of understanding the importance and significance of educational work in the activity of public institutions in adult education. New trends and methods of world comparative studies are formed and the existing methods are modernized, which influences essentially the transformation of comparative research field.

The sphere of public organizations’ activity is broadening significantly: from reaction to extraordinary situations in the world, developing of democracy, resolving conflicts, work in the sphere of human rights to cultural preservation, environment protection, analysis of politics, conducting scientific research and giving prognostic and expert information. Respectively the urgency of scientific problem of educational activity within European public institutions (associations, societies, organizations in the sphere of adult education) is increasing which is conditioned first of all by the necessity of its activation aimed at overcoming negative tendencies of globalization – increase of unemployment among youth and adults, lowering of buying capabilities of the population in our country. Nevertheless this problem in the whole was not sufficiently described in pedagogy.



THE AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the article is viewing the problem of activity within European public organizations in adult education and defining its peculiarities in European dimension from the position of global influence on the forming of civil society.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODS

For recent years we have been observing the growing interest to historical pedagogical and comparative pedagogical research in the sphere of adult education, which is analysed by European scientists such as P. Armstrong, W. Bax, G. Bereday, M. Boucouvalas, D. Boyer, R. Brockett, A. Bron, S. Brookfield, R. Caffarella, G. Conti, P. Jarvis, J. Reischmann, T. Toiviainen.

Problematics of development and activity of public organizations is analyzed in the broad context of “globalization” which is viewed as possibilities and threats for the work of “the third sector”. Thus, T. Morris-Suzuki states that public organizations can make changes but for doing this they must work efficiently to maintain the existing social and political transformations in society (Morris-Suzuki, 2000).

F. Altbach thinks that globalization should be analyzed in the context of economic and scientific tendencies which make the part of reality of the 21st century (Altbach & Knight, 2007).

The experience of European countries in the sphere of civil society development on the basis of focus on civil values in the second part of the 20th – beginning of the 21st centuries reflects essentially a global strategy of public vector in the development of adult education. Among the main tendencies there are spreading of internationalization in conditions of globalized economy, rise of supranational economic and political structures (European Union, European Council, European Parliament), awareness of global humanitarian problems, process of forming civil society.

Analyzing theoretical and practical aspects of modern globalization and development of adult education in EU countries, P. Jarvis came to conclusion that creation of the corresponding updated theoretical basis for development of adult education sphere would cause deeper awareness of the problem of social influence on educational and public establishments in the process of globalization. To achieve this aim P. Jarvis suggests the model of globalization which is based on consolidation of theoretical aspects and factors of practical changes (Jarvis, 1999). He considers globalization to be used in different senses and this process has a great impact on structures of informal education system in each country. Therefore in the research of adult education it is necessary to take into consideration global processes and acknowledge international, national and local reaction to them.

Examining theory of globalization, P. Jarvis analyses national systems of adult education and develops theoretical model for comparative studies of education. On this basis he suggests different types of theory of globalization: imperialistic and neo-imperialistic theory, modernization and neo-evolution theory, neo-Marxist theory, theory of new international work specialization, ways of theory development (Jarvis, 2002).

In his research of the sphere of adult education the researcher underlines that adult education is the unique combination of elements of knowledge of different thinkers whose works are a contribution to what we call “knowledge in the sphere of adult education”. He thinks that adult education must teach people to activity. His theory is based on the fight of big countries for new markets and possibilities for broadening of their cultural and economic influence. Modernization approach admits that less-developed societies are limited by their traditions while modern society is able to grow and develop only due to innovators. In certain sense all these theories, in P. Jarvis’ opinion, recognize the central role of economic institutions of society in the process of globalization (Jarvis, 2002).



Globalization as a problem of modern humanity contributes to constant updating and improvement of the content, methods and forms of educational activity in the sphere of adult education which is focused on efficient preparation of people for life in modern information conditions of post-industrial, informational society, broadening scale of intercultural interaction, revealing global socially focused problems of democratization of society's life in West European countries. We mean increase in social activity of elderly people due to their participation in the activity of public institutions, broadening of social policy on the supranational level and its law regulation, the necessity to counteract with new challenges and risks, processes of globalization.

Social economic changes in global dimension in the beginning of the 21st century, new guideline for development of economics, politics, social and cultural spheres changed radically the demands to educational activity in adult education, its role significantly increased in modernization of society. This task became especially urgent in connection with European tendencies such as globalization of educational processes, growing subject role of personality, raising number of sources of information, acceleration of scientific-technical progress.

Modern globalized world in conditions of formation of post-industrial society is characterized by growing significance of international UNESCO conferences as the basis for effective interaction of education, state and public. In the Programme of the Development of UNO the integral index of people's development is measured by the index of the achieved level of education. Therefore, special attention is being paid to new opportunities for self-realization of people during their life, development of personal and professional level and contribution of comparative pedagogical approaches to the analyses of these phenomena.

Under overall globalization conditions, deepening of international cooperation of public institutions in the sphere of adult education strengthens their interdependence and competition. Globalization is continually making European Union to face new social problems: every citizen should have a wide range of skills to adapt to modern world. Consequently, informal adult education plays important role in providing citizens with possibility to master key competences, necessary for adaptation to changes such as speaking native and foreign languages, obtaining basic knowledge in Mathematics and Computer and Technology skills, mastering learning skills, social and public competences, mastering and using of innovational and entrepreneurial approaches, formation of abilities for self-expression in culture.

One of the reasons of the above mentioned is that starting from 1989 Europe essentially changed the direction of globalization which is gradually becoming the end of national countries' era. We point out first of all global warming, genetic engineering, development of nuclear power energetics. It means that global problem of self-identification of public institutions needs more determined efforts than it did before. Global economy became a new reality because national, regional and local economies depend on the dynamics of global economy and market relations. Its main peculiarities became the wide use of information technologies in teaching, which radically facilitated the access to distant teaching resources.

Austrian experience of civil education development is of great interest. Its main task is providing knowledge about the system and organization of political, cultural and economic life, developing abilities in the sphere of political, cultural and economic education, contributing to development of personal responsibility for formation of society. The tasks of adult education consist in explaining peculiarities of European integration, globalization, and processes of modernization and individualization of teaching to adults.

In Denmark the research work in the sphere of adult education is carried out by public organizations. Adult education in Germany reflects the aims, means, methods, marketing instruments and interests of corresponding focus groups. In Hungary informal education is



intensively developing due to private organizations. The development of public activity in Poland, Romania and Slovenia is associated with political pluralism, growing role of civil society.

In the given context adult education performs a complex of effective functions (law, economic, social, cultural, pedagogical, social, psychological and others), acts as regulatory authorities and carries out some responsibilities. The following mechanisms are of great importance:

- systematic-integrational mechanism, procedures and factors of preserving, developing and improving of adult education as a national system;
- systematic-communicative mechanism defining interrelations of the system of adult education with external systems, population, authority structures, branch boards, organizations.

Analyzing the consequences of economy globalization, foreign analysts came to conclusion that it is a vital necessity to use all human resources properly, because global economy has a significant impact on the organization and content of informal teaching. Therefore the majority of scientists in the world and educational establishments are gradually becoming a part of market selling knowledge as goods and are more often reorganized into enterprises occupied with marketing of their goods (McCullough, 1978).

Modern sphere of adult education in European countries is a specific characteristic of the process of globalization of education in the 21st century. Therefore, traditional attitude to adult teaching and actualization of international experience of interdisciplinary research in this sphere require special analysis. In the end of the 20th century owing to mass use of global Internet, information impacts in European countries are gaining international importance (Martinez, 2006). At present there is an increase in integration processes in national European systems which influenced the change of its structure and creation of regional and general world models of adult and informal education. Globalization is gradually becoming an objective process independent from certain states.

CONCLUSIONS

So, nowadays modern global tendencies make a significant impact on the social protection system in European countries. It provokes the necessity of searching new ways of achieving optimal correlation between economic and social elements of society development, which would help to avoid a conflict between the priorities of economic development and principles of social justice. Studying the state and prospects of global and national development of social-economic sphere is of great importance for finding further explanation to the strategy of adult education development, because multifaceted factors influence their development, and organizational law, economic, educational, management factors contribute to quality changes which are the development of economy, shortening of number of people working in industry and increase in the number of those employed in service sphere.

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