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STATE EDUCATION POLICY IN THE FIELD OF ADULT EDUCATION IN GERMANY

ABSTRACT

German experience of development and modernization of the field of adult education has been outlined in the paper. Historical development of the field and its recognition as an independent level in education have been considered. The aim of the field has been defined. It has been emphasized that the names of the field in Ukraine and Germany differ. It has been found out that Germany is a federal state with decentralized system of regulation for adult education where federation, states and municipal authorities cooperate. Based on studying literary and documentary sources the competences of states for legislation and initiatives in the field of adult education have been revealed. It has been stated that there is no legal support regulating the field of adult education in Germany. Based on the data of the conducted analysis it has become possible to find out that the state policy in the field of adult education is, first of all, is aimed at providing every citizen with the right to personality development and freedom to choose education institutions. The content of federal acts related to the field of adult education in Germany has been delivered. Theoretical generalization of main aspects of the field regulation due to states adult education / continuing education acts and educational leave acts has been performed.

Key words: state policy, the field of adult education, Germany, federation competences, states competences, education regulation.

INTRODUCTION

Forming and developing national education system, in particular, in the field of adult education, presuppose a well-elaborated state education policy and state support. Germany, in our opinion, serves as a perfect example in the effective development of adult education. Since rapid technogenic development encourages people to continuous learning as well as personal and professional development becomes a significant factor in the prosperity of the country, federal government have set the goal to involve into adult education no less than 50 % of the entire population. This goal has been accomplished due to education policy events. According to the 2014 data of Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, BMBF) at least once a year 51 % of the population at the age of 18–64 participated in educational events (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, 2015).

Education policy in the field of adult education is carried out by the state federal bodies ensuring its development and functioning. Such policy is aimed at both personality overall development and prosperity of the society in general.

THE AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the article is to study, analyze and generalize the peculiarities of German state policy in the field of adult education, federal state acts and funding sources of the field based on regulatory documents.



THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODS

Issues of education reforms and development in Germany have been studied by native and foreign scholars (N. Abashkina, I. Boichevska, T. Gladka, T. Koval, N. Makhynia, I. Melnychuk, L. Pysareva, T. Zdaniuk). German scholars, in particular, P. Brandt, P. Faulstich, E. Haberzet, R. Jaich, B. Nagel, E. Nuissl, have provided very interesting insights into the issues of state policy and funding in the field of adult education.

During our study we have used such methods as theoretical analysis of literary sources and regulatory documents, theoretical systematization, comparison and generalization.

RESULTS

First of all, we consider it necessary to draw attention to a certain difference in names of the concept “adult education” (AE) in Ukraine and Germany. In Germany it has been officially called “continuing education” (Weiterbildung) since the 1970 publication of the Structural Plan for the Education System issued by the German Council of Education (der Deutsche Bildungsrat). Based on German scholars’ studies the history of adult education development in Germany is divided into three main periods with different strategies and names transformed according to them. These periods are:

– folk enlightenment (Volksaufklärung) originated at the turn of 18th–19th centuries while overcoming feudalism. Educational events of the period were aimed, primarily, at “reestablishing craft, agriculture and regional microcosm” (Seiter, 2012). In the 1820s certain division took place that resulted in replacing the term “folk enlightenment” with “folk education” (Volksbildung) as well as the concept of “workers’ education” (Arbeiterbildung) was introduced (Weinberg, 1999); folk enlightenment / folk education were not limited to a particular age group but covered all age groups (children, youth, adults) (Seiter, 2012);

– since the 1920-30s the term “adult education” (Erwachsenenbildung) was more commonly used as it unites all institutions, organizational forms and educational ideas that coexist (Weinberg, 1999) and are targeted at educational activity of adult population. It is exactly this period when an adult started to be viewed not as a student but “a personality with his/her own life experience which should be taken into account and serve as a reference point for didactic instructions” (Weinberg, 1999); this period is characterized by qualitative change of the concept “adult education” (Nuissl, Brandt, 2009);

– in 1970 during the Education Reform German Council of Education defined the field of AE as a part of education system, i.e. the fourth column, and introduced a new name “continuing education” (Weiterbildung) (Weinberg, 1999; Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung, 2016), being in the context of lifelong education.

Thus, the term “continuing education” is, mainly, the name of officially recognized field of education system existing together with primary, secondary and higher education and, in fact, is a logical continuation of educational process after primary, secondary and higher education that presupposes the participation of an adult (Weinberg, 1999). However, German scholars state, that both terms “continuing education” and “adult education” are commonly used. At the same time the term “continuing education” is more common for professional education when more traditional concept “adult education” is used for public, general and political education. In Germany both concepts are interchangeable but “the first one is used with professional connotations and the second one – with non-professional ones” (Nuissl, Brandt, 2009).

The term “continuing education” is defined as “continuation or repeated (renewed) organized learning after completing the first stage of learning of any duration (Deutscher Bildungsrat, 1976). “The 4th Recommendation on Continuing Education of the Standing



Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of States” (Vierte Empfehlung der Kultusministerkonferenz zur Weiterbildung) contains the defined goal of the field of AE that consists in the following: “Continuing education should provide all people of any gender, age, education, social and professional status, political and world views, nationality with opportunities to obtain necessary knowledge, abilities and skills for personal and professional development and active participation in society” (Kultusministerkonferenz, 2001). So, we can conclude that names of the field of adult education in Ukraine and Germany differ. In addition, it should be mentioned that the field of continuing education (CE) in Germany is officially divided into independent sectors, namely, general, professional, political and research CE.

Due to the recognition of CE as “an official duty in the system of state and municipal provision” (Seiter, 2007) there occurred a need to develop institutions and legal base with taking into account means of support, assistance and funding. Although it has been found out that in comparison with other fields CE is in the least regulated by state which is why a great amount of competences and responsibility are laid on the States administrations (Das Bildungswesen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 2012).

The Basic Law for Federal Republic of Germany enables every citizen to freely develop his/her personality and independently choose a school and professional education institution according to his/her inclinations and abilities. Education policy of Germany is aimed at providing every citizen with an opportunity to obtain optimal and qualified education that corresponds to his/her abilities and needs. Every person should be able to develop personally, professionally and politically.

It should be mentioned that there is quite a complicated legal framework in Germany caused by a number of reasons, namely, :

- 1) federal structure of the state and apportionment of competences for legislation and governing between federal state and its states defined by the Basic Law;
- 2) lack of standardized legal support that would regulate the field of continuing education and its significant aspects, such as organization, funding, participation and suggestions, programs, teaching staff, quality and certification. The point is that CE is subjected not only to education policy, but joint regulation with labour, economic and civil law (Tippelt, Hippel, 2011).

Despite the fact that legal regulation of continuing education is limited by the Basic Law, the state itself regulates, supports and defines main principles of the field. In addition, it is responsible for professional and partially political CE, provides its participants with assistance and establishes international partnership (EU countries inclusive). It has been already mentioned that there is no state law on adult education in Germany, which is why all the mentioned state regulations are included into laws. The most important of them are:

– Vocational Training Act (Berufsbildungsgesetz, BBIG) regulates the issues related to manner, realization and responsibility for vocational training, vocational learning, advanced vocational training and retraining (Bundesministerium der Justiz und für Verbraucherschutz, 2005);

– Social Code (Sozialgesetzbuch I, III) consists of 12 books, main regulations in the field of CE being in books I and III (Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung, 2016); book I contains main principles on regulating the striving for education and employment as general social law; book III regulates the striving for employment to prevent and reduce unemployment (Sozialgesetzbuch, 1998);

– Promotion of Continuing Vocational Training Act (Aufstiegsfortbildungsförderungsgesetz, AFBG or “Meister-BAFöG”) forms foundations for financial support of



staff advanced training; regulates access to advanced training events, prerequisites for their recognition, types and amounts of financial support (Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung, 2016; Bundesministerium der Justiz und für Verbraucherschutz, 1996);

– Distance Learning Protection Act (Fernunterrichtsschutzgesetz, FernUSG) is aimed at protecting the rights of distance learning participants (Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung, 2016; Bundesministerium der Justiz und für Verbraucherschutz, 1996);

– Framework Act for Higher Education (Hochschulrahmengesetz, HRG) (according to the 1998 amendments) indicates that research CE is main task of higher education, as well as educational and research activities.

Studying the process of regulating AE in Germany it has been found out that the responsibility for the field is divided into sectors between the state and its states. Such a division can be explained due to a complex structure, based on the plurality and competitiveness of providers and their education offers, that is aimed at satisfying numerous and fast-changing requirements to AE at high level (Das Bildungswesen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 2012).

In federal acts related to the field of AE there are only general instructions, limits and main content for its functioning. According to Article 30 of the Basic Law “states are authorized to carry out government powers” (Bundesministerium der Justiz und für Verbraucherschutz, 1949). The so-called “Cultural Autonomy of the States” (Kulturhoheit der Länder) provides them with the right of legislative competence and autonomic regulation of education and culture, CE inclusive (Tippelt, Hippel, 2011). As a result the states have their own laws regulating the field of CE. N. Ekkehard, a German scholar, believes that the very states laws are viewed as a legal base for the field of CE (Tippelt, Hippel, 2011).

Federal states have their own Continuing Education Acts (Weiterbildungsgesetz) and Educational Leave Acts (Bildungsurlaubsgesetze). It should be mentioned that both names and contents of the acts differ. At the same time one can find the common aspects in regulating the field.

Let us start with Continuing Education Act. In “Confintea VI” it is indicated that Continuing Education Acts of the states “determine framework conditions for public support of the field and define it as an independent educational field the organization of which being “a public task”; ensure the availability of CE/AE providers, specify the procedure of state recognition for education institutions and set out the regulations on curricula development, teaching staff employment and provision of free access to the field (Confintea VI – Bericht Deutschland, 2006). 14 of 16 lands have CE/AE Acts. As from 2015 there is no such act in Hamburg and there is a regulation on AE one can find in School Act (Schulgesetz) in Berlin.

Educational Leave Acts of the states can be ranked among legal regulation, too. The act ensures the right to paid leave for participation in CE events of every citizen having the official place of employment (except in some cases) (Tippelt, Hippel, 2011). An employee can usually attend vocational or political educational events during 5 days a year. However, he/she should give 4–8 weeks’ notice of intent to take paid leave (Tippelt, Hippel, 2011). Training of employees should be carried out in officially recognized education providers established no less than 2 years ago and possessing the official quality label for education. Educational leave is not valid for the events concerning personal non-professional interests. First such acts were approved in the middle of 1970s in such states as Berlin, Rhineland-Palatinate (Rheinland-Pfalz), Saarland, Schleswig-Holstein. Baden-Württemberg and the Free State of Thuringia (Freistaat Thüringen) were the last ones to approve the act as from July 1, 2015 and January 1, 2016 accordingly.



CONCLUSIONS

So, we can affirm that the development of adult education in Germany started at the turn of 18th–19th centuries and today is an independent component in education system of the state. During the education reform the field of adult education acquired the official name “continuing education”. Together with the term “adult education” they are commonly used in the society. State policy is the state activities represented by state authorities and their initiatives. In Germany state policy in the field of adult education is aimed at providing every citizen with the right to personality development according to one’s needs and inclinations that will positively influence the development of society in general. Germany is a federal state with decentralized system of regulation for adult education where federation, states and municipal authorities cooperate. It should be mentioned that the states have most of all competencies of regulation according to the Basic Law for Federal Republic of Germany. It has been found out that there exist state acts that determine main direction and frameworks of the field and acts of the states that regulate it more profoundly.

Theoretical analysis of experience in introducing education policy could be used for further development of adult education in Ukraine.

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