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**MANAGERIAL DIMENSIONS OF THE MODERNIZATION  
OF THE ADULT CONTINUOUS TRAINING SYSTEM  
IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA**

**The purpose of research:** Analysis of lifelong education for adults in the Republic of Moldova and synthesis of the main directions for modernizing the system of lifelong learning for adults, from the point of view of lifelong learning, carried out in various formal, non-formal and informal contexts.

**Methodology:** Analysis of legislative and normative national and European acts, analysis of data the National Bureau of Statistics; synthesis of normative aspects of management of lifelong learning of adults; generalization of the main problems affecting the effectiveness of adult education; deduction of the main directions for the modernization of the lifelong learning system for adults in Moldova.

The new directions of development, specified in European policy documents, call for the development of the normative framework for adult continuing education, in order to exclude the multitude of bottlenecks and improve the outcome of this process. The normative provisions in force have failed to solve the multitude of existing problems in this field. The lack of a systemic approach in the elaboration of normative-regulatory documents, which correlate the professional training process and the labor market requirements affect this segment, respectively, the urgent need to establish a functional relationship between labor market requirements, qualification standards and study programs remains valid.

The analysis of this situation, by reference to European policies in the field of adult education argues the need to modernize the system of lifelong learning from the perspective of active promotion of lifelong learning, conducted in various formal, non-formal and informal contexts, according to labor market requirements.

**Novelty of research:** the appropriate actions for the modernization of the adult lifelong learning system are deduced from the perspective of the active promotion of lifelong learning, carried out in various formal, non-formal and informal contexts, according to the requirements of the labor market: reconceptualizing the continuous training of adults from the perspective of motivation for lifelong learning; ensuring the functionality of the centers for validation and recognition of qualifications, obtained in a non-formal and informal context; ensuring the quality of adult continuing education services.

**Conclusions.** *Directions for modernizing the lifelong learning system for adults in Moldova will be able to provide the country with an innovative and high-quality adult education system in order to provide people with the appropriate skills that will help them get or create jobs that are in demand in the labor market, cope with emergencies and economic shocks while supporting economic growth and social cohesion.*

**Key words:** *Lifelong learning, adult education.*

**Постановка проблеми.** In the Recommendation of Council of Europe from 24 November 2020 on vocational education and training calls for decisive action by European states to make lifelong learning a reality for all, including focusing on skills, employability and of human capital in order to achieve sustainable competitiveness, social equity and resilience. It is recommended that vocational training be flexible enough to adapt to changes in the labor market; to offer flexible pathways and development opportunities to students; become an engine of innovation and growth for the digital and green transition, as well as for the required professions; to promote equal opportunities; be based on a quality assurance culture [1]. These recommendations represents relevant solutions for the adult education system in the Republic of Moldova – a problematic area, with low performance, which affects the efficiency of the labor market.

**Мета статті:** Analysis of lifelong education for adults in the Republic of Moldova and synthesis of the main directions for modernizing the system of lifelong learning for adults, from the point of view of lifelong learning, carried out in various formal, non-formal and informal contexts.

**Методологія дослідження:** Analysis of legislative and normative national and European acts, analysis of data the National Bureau of Statistics; synthesis of normative aspects of management of lifelong learning of adults; generalization of the main problems affecting the effectiveness of adult education; deduction of the main directions for the modernization of the lifelong learning system for adults in Moldova.

**Основні результати дослідження.** According to the data of the National Bureau of Statistics [5], the labor market in Moldova has a significant gap between labor demand and supply, high fluctuation, workers change jobs frequently, looking for better wages and working conditions, which conditions the labor shortage in certain sectors. Poor and low-paying jobs prevail – often in the informal economy – and a considerable migration of out-of-country labor.

There is a continuous reduction of the active population in the Republic of Moldova; over a quarter of the economically active population (25 %) emigrated. The share of young people (15-29 years old) who are neither employed nor educated or trained is higher in Moldova than in any other country in the region.

Structurally, the labor force in the Republic of Moldova has fewer skills than the EU CEE average, respectively, the perpetuation of these discrepancies will continue to affect the speed of labor productivity in the EU CEE countries.

According to the latest studies [6], over 25 % of companies face a labor shortage due to the inability to find qualified staff. Approximately 23,1 % of the employed population practice a specialty/ trade inferior to their training; about 40 % of the population practices specialties for which they did not study.

The low level of qualification and the mismatch between the level of education and the market requirements determine the low employment rate of the population – only 4 out of 10 people of working age are economically employed, and 22,6 % declare themselves unemployed.

The basic issue in terms of skills development is mainly related to motivation. The population's interest in lifelong learning is relatively low. Older people opt more for benefits at work, in order to be professionally successful. The interest for further studies or for retraining is lower among this category of population, the elderly relying more on work experience and the quality of work performed.

With regard to participation in studies, we find that over 60 % of the general population attended at least one form of lifelong learning, which resulted in a professional specialty. However, living standards and modest incomes affect the level of participation of the population in learning activities. Only 16 % of the population opts for retraining as a factor of professional success.

It is alarming that about 8 % of the population is dissatisfied with the studies conducted. About a quarter of them consider the studies obtained to be useless, and another 34 % were dissatisfied with the process itself: the quality of teaching, the organization and the level of training – elements that directly relate to the motivation of the population, which is one of the dimensions – key to lifelong learning.

The participation rate of the population in non-formal education is below the European average, the access to non-formal education being limited by the family responsibilities and the costs involved. Usually, in the case of non-formal training, the employer is the main initiator.

Only 11,8 % of the population attended some (self) training activities – informal education; most often, informal learning takes place via PC and the internet (62,1 %).

We specify that the Labor Code of the Republic of Moldova [2], art. 213 (1-5), 214 (1-3), stipulates that every employee has the right to professional training, including obtaining a new profession or specialty, the employer being obliged to create the necessary conditions and to favor the professional and technical training of the employees who follow the training in production, improve or study in educational institutions, without leaving the activity, including by financing the process in the amount of at least 2 percent of the salary fund of unit.

If the participation of employees in training courses or internships is initiated by the employer, all related expenses are borne by him. In case of dismissal of the employee for a short period of time, for the purpose of professional training, the action of his individual employment contract continues, with the maintenance of the average salary. If the respective period exceeds 60 calendar days, the individual employment contract of the employee is suspended, he benefiting from an indemnity paid by the employer, according to the provisions of the collective labor contract.

Dimension Lifelong learning is presented in Chapter VII of the Education Code [2], art.123-124, with the following characteristics:

- It is carried out in formal, non-formal and informal education contexts.

The knowledge and skills acquired in non-formal and informal education contexts are certified by competent structures in this regard.

- Lifelong learning programs are subject to evaluation for accreditation or temporary operation.

- The state guarantees access to and supports, including financially, lifelong learning from public and/ or private sources, based on public-private partnerships, through funding and co-financing by employers, non-governmental organizations, from non-reimbursable funds under international programs, as well as through the contribution of the beneficiaries.

Placing in Chapter VII of the Education Code Lifelong Learning, in a common framework with the continuous training of adults, leads to a narrow perception / interpretation of the concept, lifelong learning being the mission of the education system for effective training of the personal, civic, social and professional competences of all members of society, or, this is specified in article 5 (e) of the Education Code [2] – education has the mission including the promotion of lifelong learning.

In our view, the new socio-economic realities and aspirations for European integration of the Republic of Moldova require the development of the national education system towards a national lifelong learning system, able to provide high quality education, inclusive and equitable for all members of society. Lifelong learning must become the key principle in modernizing the education system in the Republic of Moldova, in order to offer all children / pupils / students / adults lifelong learning opportunities, in various contexts, at all levels of education (general, professional-technical, higher, continuous training of adults), within multifunctional educational institutions. The restructuring of the educational system in the Republic of Moldova from the perspective of effective promotion of lifelong learning will ensure the effective training of personal, civic, social and professional skills of all members of our society. The sustainable growth of the economy and the well-being of the people can be ensured by a cohesive educational system, in which all institutions and organizations, as well as the whole society (family, community, professional groups, media) support the process of personality formation and development.

In the context of the above, we believe it is appropriate:

1. Modernization of the education system in the Republic of Moldova from the perspective of effective promotion of lifelong learning at all levels of education – general, vocational-technical and higher education, as well as in continuing adult education – through learning activities carried out in various contexts formal, non-formal and informal education. It will confer new responsibilities and attributions to the educational institutions, respectively, it is opportune to develop the articles from the Education Code regarding the mission of all types of educational institutions within the system, as well as the provisions regarding the organization of the activity within them, from the perspective of capitalizing the learning principle throughout life.

2. The principle of lifelong learning must be valued, in particular, in relation to the reform of the non-formal education system, which remains an unexplored field, unexplained at the conceptual, normative, curricular, methodological and flawed procedural level – all leading to inability the system to respond to the challenges of modern society and to solve the multitude of problems that children, students, their parents, society as a whole face today. The realization of this prerogative can ensure the non-existent connection today between formal-non-formal-informal education. Obviously, it will be necessary to clearly specify the responsibilities of all structures, ways to promote lifelong learning at all levels of education and in various contexts, procedures for recognizing learning outcomes in a non-formal and informal context, and specifying performance indicators. in assessing the outcome of the process.

3. To integrate in the entire content of the Education Code the perspective of capitalizing on lifelong learning at all levels of education; the respective section of the Education Code will be kept under the title Continuing Adult Education, approached from the perspective of lifelong learning.

With reference to the continuous training of adults, the Education Code specifies that it includes: a) general education, which ensures the general development of adults from a cultural, socio-economic, technological, ecological point of view; b) continuous professional training, which means any training process in which an employee, already having a qualification or a profession, completes his professional skills by deepening his knowledge in the field of basic specialty or by learning new methods or procedures applied in within the respective specialty.

In the Republic of Moldova, the state guarantees adults the training of basic digital skills.

Continuing adult education is financed from funds paid by individuals and legal entities, from professional associations and employers, from sponsorships, donations, tuition fees, personal contributions, external funds (projects) and other legal sources (Education Code, art. 126) [2].

The forms of organizing the continuous training of adults are: a) frequently; b) with low frequency; c) at a distance.

According to the normative framework, lifelong learning programs in lifelong learning are subject to evaluation in order to accredit or authorize temporary operation. In this context, the Methodology for external quality assessment in order to authorize temporary operation and accreditation of study programs and continuing education institutions [3], sets 10 standards:

1. Continuing education institutions must have quality assurance policies in place that are public and part of their strategic management, and internal actors must develop and implement these policies through appropriate structures and processes, involving, in the same way, time, and external actors.

2. Continuing education institutions must have processes in place for the design and approval of continuing vocational training programs designed to achieve the objectives for which they were set up, including learning outcomes.

3. Learning, teaching and assessment are learner-centered, trainees are encouraged to play an active role in creating learning processes, and trainee assessment reflects this approach.

4. The institutions shall consistently apply the rules defined and published in advance, covering all stages of the lifelong learning process, such as registration, development, recognition and certification.

5. The institution has competent teaching staff, applies fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of teaching staff.

6. Institutions shall adequately fund learning and teaching activities, as well as provide trainees with adequate and easily accessible learning resources and support services.

7. Institutions shall ensure that information relevant to the effective management of programs and other activities is collected, analyzed and used.

8. Institutions shall publish information on their work, including clear, precise, objective, up-to-date and easily accessible details of their programs.

9. Institutions shall regularly monitor and evaluate the programs they offer to ensure that they achieve their objectives and meet the needs of trainees and society.

10. Institutions shall be subject to external quality assurance processes on a cyclical basis.

We find that the external evaluation methodology places emphasis on input and process elements; mainly indicators on resources and activities (input indicators), less output indicators (output indicators), result indicators (outcome indicators) and impact indicators are set. The external evaluation methodology aims more at the institutional capacity in the field of quality management and less at the actual evaluation of the quality of continuous professional training. In the absence of the provisions in the normative framework, which would oblige the institutions / training centers to have such procedures, they are in reality non-functional. Respectively, we believe it is necessary to develop the system of criteria and performance indicators from the perspective of shifting the emphasis from the «interface» indicators to output / relevance / impact indicators.

Consequently, the new directions of development, specified in European policy documents, call for the development of the normative framework for adult continuing education, in order to exclude the multitude of bottlenecks and improve the outcome of this process. The normative provisions in force have failed to solve the multitude of existing problems in this field. The lack of a systemic approach in the elaboration of normative-regulatory documents, which correlate the professional training process and the labor market requirements affect this segment, respectively, the urgent need to establish a functional relationship between labor market requirements, qualification standards and study programs remains valid.

The analysis of this situation, by reference to European policies in the field of adult education argues the need to modernize the system of lifelong learning from the perspective of active promotion of lifelong learning, conducted in various formal, non-formal and informal contexts, according to labor market requirements.

In this regard, we recommend:

1. Reconceptualizing the continuous training of adults from the perspective of motivation for lifelong learning, by:

– Development of the legislative framework on lifelong learning for adults from the perspective of lifelong learning and development of the National Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning.

– Improving the regulatory framework for general education and continuing vocational training for adults from the perspective of European policy documents.

– Specifying the structures of the national adult continuing education system, with a clear stipulation of the mission and responsibilities of each, including the entity responsible for assessing the impact of continuing education on the effectiveness of the workforce and economic development of the country.

2. Ensuring the functionality of the centers for validation and recognition of qualifications, obtained in a non-formal and informal context.

3. Ensuring access to and participation in quality continuing education services, by:

– Development of the national information system and strengthening of the institutional information and guidance systems, meant to sensitize and motivate all categories of people in need of education and training, as well as their current and potential employers.

– Flexibility of the process of periodic (re)professionalization of the working age population to ensure their competitiveness on the labor market.

– Improving access to and diversifying learning opportunities for older adults in the context of active aging, as well as for people in specific situations of exclusion. It includes, but is not limited to, volunteering and promoting innovative forms of intergenerational learning, as well as initiatives that exploit the knowledge, skills and competences of older people to the benefit of society as a whole. Addressing the special learning needs of

people in specific situations of exclusion (such as people in hospitals, care centers, prisons) can turn these dependents of the country's economy into taxpayers, leading directly to ensuring equity, social cohesion and of active citizenship.

- Diversification of learning opportunities for people with different levels of qualification, in order to offer them better employment prospects and integration into society.

- Facilitating adults' access to higher education. In this regard, higher education institutions must also focus their recruitment process on adults, with the subsequent adaptation of the curriculum and teaching methodology, thus demonstrating their social responsibility and openness to the whole community, in response to demographic challenges and requirements. a society facing an aging population.

- Strengthening the capacity of universities in the field of continuing adult education.

4. Ensuring the quality of adult continuing education services, by:

- Development of the methodology for external evaluation of continuing education programs and institutions providing adult continuing education services from the perspective of output / relevance / impact indicators.

- External evaluation in order to accredit institutions providing adult continuing education services and their programs.

- Improving the quality of adult education teachers by defining the status of trainer and its competence profile, founding the institution responsible for initial training and continuing professional development of trainers, facilitating and supporting the mobility of trainers and other members of adult education staff.

- Elaboration of the continuous training curriculum relevant to the professional needs of adults and the needs of employers; ensuring adults' access to innovative lifelong learning methodologies; the promotion by the providing institutions of a policy based on learning outcomes, which has as a central figure the autonomous learner, no matter where he learns – at work, at home, in the local community, in volunteer activities or in educational / training institutions.

- Diversification of flexible lifelong learning pathways, adapted to the different training needs of adults, including on-the-job training and learning, in order to better reflect the needs of the labor market.

- Identifying the mechanisms for involving the social partners and civil society in formulating training needs and developing adult learning opportunities.

- Ensuring the process of continuous training with high-performing ICTs, exploiting new distance learning opportunities, creating e-learning tools and platforms to reach new target groups, especially those with special needs.

- Intensify cooperation and partnership between all stakeholders for adult learning; closer collaboration between training institutions and employers.

- Strengthen the role of cultural organizations, civil society, sports organizations and other bodies in non-formal and informal adult learning.

- Identifying mechanisms to motivate / determine employers to invest in the development of human resources of enterprises.

- Increasing investments in human resources development; ensuring a viable and transparent system for financing adult learning, based on shared responsibilities, with a high level of public commitment to this sector and the support of those who cannot pay, with a balanced distribution of funds throughout the learning process throughout through *доктор хабітований* out life, the appropriate contribution to the financing of all stakeholders and the exploration of innovative means for more effective and efficient financing.

- Improving the database on adult learning and better monitoring the adult learning sector, collecting baseline data on participation, bidders, funding, results and benefits of adult learning and society; intensifying in-depth analyzes of issues related to adult learning, encouraging interdisciplinary and prospective analysis.

- Strengthening institutional quality management systems from the perspective of focusing on the needs of beneficiaries, leadership, involvement and responsibility, developing partnerships with stakeholders.

- Strengthening the capacity of National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research in the field of monitoring and evaluating the impact of adult continuing education in increasing workforce performance and economic development of the country.

**Висновки.** Directions for modernizing the lifelong learning system for adults in Moldova will be able to provide the country with an innovative and high-quality adult education system in order to provide people with the appropriate skills that will help them get or create jobs that are in demand in the labor market, cope with emergencies and economic shocks while supporting economic growth and social cohesion.

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#### **УПРАВЛІНСЬКІ АСПЕКТИ МОДЕРНІЗАЦІЇ СИСТЕМИ НЕПЕРЕРВНОГО НАВЧАННЯ ДОРΟΣЛИХ В РЕСПУБЛІЦІ МОЛДОВА**

**Мета роботи:** аналіз неперервної освіти дорослих в Республіці Молдова і синтез основних напрямів модернізації системи неперервного навчання дорослих з точки зору навчання, здійснюваного у формальних, неформальних та інформального контекстах.

**Методологія:** аналіз законодавчих і нормативних національних і європейських актів, аналіз даних Національного Бюро Статистики; синтез нормативних аспектів управління безперервним навчанням дорослих; узагальнення основних проблем, що впливають на ефективність освіти дорослих; дедукція основних напрямків по модернізації системи безперервного навчання дорослих в Молдові.

Нові напрями розвитку, зазначені в європейських політичних документах, вимагають розробки покращеною нормативної бази неперервної освіти дорослих в Молдові. Чинні нормативні положення не змогли вирішити існуючі проблеми в цій сфері. Відсутність системного підходу в розробці нормативно-правових документів, які стосуються процесу професійного навчання і вимог ринку праці, позначаються на цьому сегменті. Відповідно, залишається гостра необхідність у встановленні функціонального взаємозв'язку між вимогами ринку праці, кваліфікаційними стандартами і програмами навчання. Аналіз цієї ситуації, з посиланням на європейську політику в галузі освіти дорослих, доводить необхідність модернізації системи неперервного навчання з точки зору активного його просування, що проводиться в різних формальних, неформальних та інформального контекстах відповідно до вимог ринку праці.

**Наукова новизна:** виявлені напрями модернізації системи неперервного навчання дорослих у Молдові, здійснюваного у формальних, неформальних та інформального контекстах відповідно до вимог ринку праці: розробка концепції та стратегії безперервного навчання дорослих з точки зору мотивації до безперервного навчання; забезпечення працездатності центрів підтвердження і визнання кваліфікації, отриманих у неформальному і неформальному контексті; забезпечення якості послуг неперервної освіти дорослих тощо.

**Висновки:** напрями модернізації системи неперервного навчання дорослих у Молдові зможуть надати країні інноваційну і високоякісну систему освіти дорослих, щоб забезпечити людей відповідними навичками, які допоможуть їм отримати або створити робочі місця, затребуваність на ринку праці, впоратися з надзвичайними ситуаціями та економічними потрясіннями, одночасно підтримуючи економічне зростання і соціальну згуртованість.

**Ключові слова:** неперервне навчання, освіта для дорослих.

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