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## **THE WORLD TRENDS OF THE LIFELONG LEARNING DEVELOPMENT**

ŚWIATOWE TENDENCJE ROZWOJU EDUKACJI PRZEZ CAŁE ŻYCIE

СВІТОВІ ТЕНДЕНЦІЇ РОЗВИТКУ ОСВІТИ ВПРОДОВЖ ЖИТТЯ

### **1. Introduction**

Lifelong learning lays the foundation for sustainable social, economic and environmental development. Learning throughout life is as old as human history, so the concept can be found in many cultures, ancient civilizations and religions in the world. As a modern policy concept, lifelong learning was shaped in the second half of the 20th century and it is now being adapted, reinterpreted and applied in different countries and regions. In many countries it engages with different traditions and ways of learning supported by specific policies and strategies. Even so, grasping the full meaning of 'lifelong learning for all' is difficult and unsettling, and mobilizing human and financial resources to implement a vision of lifelong learning is demanding.

Learning throughout life is the driving force for transforming our world, so many countries and communities regard lifelong learning for all as essential to their education goals and development frameworks. Until informal learning, and formal and non-formal education and training are all seen as full and vital

parts of a country's total learning system, and equity and quality are placed in the centre of education and learning. This comprehensive integrated development was visualized in "The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda" (UNITED NATIONS, 2015).

## 2. Analysis of recent publications

Nowadays the problems of lifelong education are actively developed by foreign and Ukrainian researchers. Significant contribution to the development of theoretical foundations of lifelong learning was made by A. Tough, D. Aspin, Kolb, P. Jarvis, S.B. Merriam, R.S. Caffarella, C. Whyte, R. Dave, J.A. Livingston, S. Zmeyer, V. Onushkin and others. Many Ukrainian scholars study various aspects of lifelong learning among them: V. Vovk, V. Davydov, T. Desyatov, I. Zyazun, L. Lukianova, N. Nichkalo, O. Ohienko and others.

Thus, the aim of this publication is to highlight and analyze contemporary trends and development directions in the world: adult and continuing education, learning cities, literacy and basic skills, and non-formal education.

## 3. Research findings

Quality education and the promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all are key global education goals in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. There are many definitions of lifelong learning, though they tend to resemble each other. The first coherent presentation came from a UNESCO commission and the 1972 report, "Learning to Be". This broad and visionary document addressed the totality of human life, introducing the concepts of the "learning society" and "lifelong education", locating schooling (formal education) in the wider social context of learning throughout life.

Lifelong learning is defined as "all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective" (European Union law, 2001). It is often considered learning that occurs after the formal education years of childhood (where learning is instructor-driven – pedagogical) and into adulthood (where the learning is individually-driven – andragogical). Lifelong learning is seen as an organizing principle of education covering all phases of life and all forms of learning – formal and non-formal education and informal learning. A qualification framework validating learning outcomes from non-formal education and informal learning helps learners get access to and

benefit from the possibilities of formal education. The Council of Europe and by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) were another international agencies to adopt the idea of lifelong learning and promote it by publishing “Recurrent Education: Towards a strategy for lifelong learning” in 1974.

With the emergence of globalization and the knowledge economy over the last 20 years, the term ‘lifelong learning’ has come to be used much more narrowly. Although the terminology used by the European Union, the OECD, the World Bank and other international agencies is often similar, invoking the social and civic as well as economic dimensions of lifelong learning, the focus of these institutions is now almost exclusively on the economic benefits of learning. Increasing the supply of vocational education and training courses is seen as being the critical thing, essential for strengthening national economies and competitiveness, while the wider benefits are by comparison neglected. Although UNESCO has never denied the economic benefits of learning, it has always focused on a holistic vision of lifelong learning and on the social and personal benefits it endows: respect for life and human dignity, equal rights, social justice, cultural diversity, international solidarity and shared responsibility for a sustainable future.

Current national education policy and strategy documents in different countries share a holistic vision of lifelong learning for all. Some have political support at the highest level; some have been drafted in response to a comprehensive review and public consultations with many stakeholders and international development partners. In countries with low adult literacy rates, lifelong learning tends to be strongly associated with the education and quality-of-life improvements of people with low literacy skills. In countries with high per-capita GDP, lifelong learning is closely linked with further education and skills training for employability. A humanistic approach to lifelong learning emphasizes inclusion of the disadvantaged, disabled, and those in rural remote areas, aiming to reduce the development gap.

The concept of the learning society is also used to refer to any country in which there is generous provision of education and training, vocational and skills training or wider provision, for all citizens, to meet diverse needs. It also has a richer meaning: a society in which learning is shared and owned not just by individuals but by organizations and institutions as well, meaning these, too, can learn from their own experience and come to act more effectively.

The only organizational unit in the UN family and the world that holds a global mandate for lifelong learning and a key education-related institute is

the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), located in Hamburg, Germany. Taking a holistic and integrated, inter-sectoral and cross-sectoral approach to lifelong learning as the guiding paradigm for 21st century education, UIL promotes and supports lifelong learning with a focus on 1) adult learning, 2) continuing education, 3) literacy and non-formal basic education. Its activities place particular emphasis on furthering educational equity for disadvantaged groups and in the countries most afflicted by poverty and conflict.

A core mission of the Lifelong Learning Strategy is promoting stronger *adult learning and education* (ALE) policies and practices in the world. Yet, too many adults still lack adequate learning opportunities. So, the recent development of lifelong learning policies in many states has shown that there is a growing demand for the knowledge, skills and competences acquired by adults and young people over the course of their lives to be evaluated and accredited within different contexts: work, education, family life, community and society. Adult learning and education can promote sustainable development, healthier societies, better jobs and more active citizenship, thus it can help tackle pressing economic, social and environmental challenges.

To promote and strengthen adult learning and education there was adopted the “Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education” (RALE). The Recommendation reminds that learning is a lifelong endeavour that can occur in formal, non-formal and informal settings. The ultimate goal is to ensure that adults can participate fully in societies and the world of work. As it is considered in the Recommendation on ALE, “The aim of adult learning and education is to equip people with the necessary capabilities to exercise and realize their rights and take control of their destinies. It promotes personal and professional development, thereby supporting more active engagement by adults with their societies, communities and environments. It fosters sustainable and inclusive economic growth and decent work prospects for individuals. It is therefore a crucial tool in alleviating poverty, improving health and well-being and contributing to sustainable learning societies” (UNESCO, 2015, p. 8).

Three key domains of learning and skills that are of central importance for ALE are identified as:

- literacy and basic skills,
- continuing education and vocational skills,
- liberal, popular and community education and citizenship skills.

According to the Recommendation, all states should make progress in five key areas of action, which were first identified in the 2009 Belém Framework for Action: to develop ALE policies and programmes, to improve the governance

of ALE, to increase funding for ALE, to promote participation, inclusion and equity, to improve the quality of ALE (UNESCO, 2015, p. 12).

Another world network promoting lifelong learning for all and supporting achievement of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is *the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities*. It is an international policy-oriented network providing inspiration, know-how and best practice. Learning cities at all stages of development can benefit greatly from sharing ideas with other cities, as solutions for issues that arise as one learning city develops may already exist in other cities. The Network supports the achievement of particular goals to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” and “to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”. The Global Network of Learning Cities supports and improves the practice of lifelong learning in the world’s cities by promoting policy dialogue and peer learning among member cities; forging links; fostering partnerships; providing capacity development; and developing instruments to encourage and recognize progress made in building learning cities.

While national governments are largely responsible for creating strategies for building learning societies, lasting change requires commitment at the local level. A learning society must be built province by province, city by city, and community by community.

A learning city is defined in the international documents as a city that:

- effectively mobilizes its resources in every sector to promote inclusive learning from basic to higher education;
- revitalizes learning in families and communities;
- facilitates learning for and in the workplace;
- extends the use of modern learning technologies;
- enhances quality and excellence in learning; and
- fosters a culture of learning throughout life (Yang, 2012).

In doing so, the city enhances individual empowerment and social inclusion, economic development and cultural prosperity, and sustainable development.

One of the pillars of any lifelong learning policy is recognition, validation and accreditation of non-formal and informal learning (RVA). Consequently, many countries have developed a national system for RVA. It is the utmost importance to use RVA for integration of outcomes of non-formal and informal learning into national, regional and global qualifications frameworks. “Integration into Qualifications Frameworks” (QF) should help ensure participants’ access to education institutions and workplaces (Singh & Duvekot, 2013).

The Belém Framework for Action, adopted at the Sixth International Conference on Adult Education in 2009, called on to develop guidelines on ‘all learning outcomes, including those acquired through non-formal and informal learning, so that these may be recognized and validated’. Consequently, the Guidelines for the Recognition, Validation and Accreditation of the Outcomes of Non-formal and Informal Learning were developed and published in 2012. Alongside established systems for recognizing formal learning, some states have developed mechanisms to recognize and validate non-formal and informal learning, and many more are in the process of doing so.

As states the UNESCO Guidelines (2012), recognition, validation and accreditation of all forms of learning outcomes is a practice that makes visible and values the full range of competences (knowledge, skills and attitudes) that individuals have obtained through various means in different phases and contexts of their lives. RVA gives individuals an incentive to continue to learn, empowers them and enables them to become more active in the labour market and in society in general. For disadvantaged groups, particularly, RVA can create a more level playing field in education and training (UNESCO. Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2012). The Global Observatory of Recognition, Validation and Accreditation of Non-formal and Informal Learning (Global RVA Observatory) documents recent RVA developments that aim to contribute to policy and practice in the states as part of commitment to promoting lifelong learning for all.

As *literacy and basic skills* are referred as a foundation of lifelong learning, UNESCO principally focuses on literacy by strengthening national capacities to scale up quality, inclusive and gender-sensitive literacy programmes. Literacy contributes to the safeguarding not only of education as a human right, but also enables to exercise fundamental freedoms that make our societies more equal and just.

The United Nations General Assembly resolution “Literacy for life: Shaping future agendas” reaffirms the above principles and continues to underline the importance of strengthening joint efforts among all stakeholders in the international community to advance the global literacy agenda. Globally, 750 million adults – two-thirds of whom are women – still lack basic reading and writing skills (United Nations General Assembly, 2014).

Literacy and Basic Skills activities focus on gender equality, developing countries and youth by following:

1. Promoting holistic, integrated, sector-wide and cross-sectoral approaches to literacy through advocacy, networking and partnership activities.

2. Facilitating policy dialogue with relevant actors in states and assisting them to integrate literacy and basic skills into national education policies and development strategies in order to support peace, social cohesion and sustainable development.

3. Conducting action-oriented and policy-driven research and disseminating the results in order to improve the quality and relevance of literacy policies and programmes. The particular focus is on action research that addresses the following issues: assessing learning outcomes in literacy programmes, developing empowering approaches that promote inclusion and gender equality, reaching vulnerable youth, promoting diversity through multilingual and multicultural approaches, achieving relevance through integrated and inter-generational approaches, ensuring quality through professional development, enhanced curricula and materials, and enriched literate environments that incorporate information and communications technologies.

4. Making available evidence-based knowledge and examples of innovative literacy and numeracy policies and programmes through the Effective Literacy and Numeracy Practices Database (LitBase).

5. Developing the capacities of literacy stakeholders in order to improve policies, programme design, management, monitoring and evaluation. Strengthened capacities in Member States will be used to: integrate youth and adult literacy and basic education into national recognition, validation and accreditation frameworks and/or mechanisms, apply strategies and tools that provide access and promote the successful completion of basic (skills) education, particularly for disadvantaged young people and adults (Yorozu, 2018, p. 14).

There has been created the Global Alliance for Literacy within the Framework of Lifelong Learning (GAL) that engages a multiplicity of stakeholders to advocate for the importance of youth and adult literacy and to catalyse in an effective and coordinated manner efforts to improve it in the countries that need it the most. The objectives of the GALs are to:

- improve stakeholders' collaboration for literacy development at global, regional and national levels;
- strengthen political will, commitments and policy awareness;
- promote policy learning and sharing;
- promote knowledge creation and sharing for member states' evidence-based policy design and implementation;
- encourage countries cooperation.

#### 4. Conclusions

Although the idea of learning throughout life is deeply rooted in all cultures, it is becoming increasingly relevant in today's fast-changing world, where social, economic and political norms are constantly being redefined. Lifelong learners – citizens who acquire new knowledge, skills and attitudes in a wide range of contexts – are better equipped to adapt to changes in their environments. So, lifelong learning and the learning society therefore have a vital role to play in empowering citizens and effecting a transition to sustainable societies. The mainstream of the world education system, supported by UN and UNESCO is to promote lifelong learning with a focus on adult and continuing education, literacy and non-formal basic education.

**ABSTRACT:** In the article lifelong learning (LLL) is considered as the foundation for sustainable social, economic and environmental development. LLL is becoming increasingly relevant in today's fast-changing world. Lifelong learners, citizens who acquire new knowledge, skills and attitudes are better equipped to adapt to changes in their environments. Lifelong learning and the learning society therefore have a vital role to play in empowering citizens and effecting a transition to sustainable societies. The mainstream of the world education system, supported by UN and UNESCO is to promote lifelong learning with a focus on adult education, literacy and non-formal education. Adult education can promote sustainable development, healthier societies, and more active citizenship, thus it helps tackle pressing economic, social and environmental challenges. The Global Network of Learning Cities is an international policy-oriented network providing inspiration, know-how, supports and improves the best practice of lifelong learning in the world's cities. Literacy and basic skills strategy as a foundation of lifelong learning enables to exercise fundamental freedoms that make the society more equal and just.

**KEYWORDS:** lifelong learning, adult education, learning cities, literacy and basic skills, non-formal and informal learning

**АНОТАЦІЯ:** Навчання впродовж життя розглядається як основа сталого соціального та економічного розвитку. Учасники безперервної освіти – громадяни, які здобувають нові знання і навички, краще адаптовані до змін у сучасному світі. Суспільство, що навчається, відіграє важливу роль в розширенні можливостей людей і здійсненні переходу до стабільності. Основний напрям розвитку систем освіти, який підтримують ООН і ЮНЕСКО, полягає у сприянні навчанню впродовж життя з орієнтацією на освіту дорослих, грамотність і неформальне навчання. Доведено, що освіта дорослих сприяє сталому розвитку, оздоровленню суспільства та більш активній громадянській позиції, сприяє вирішенню нагальних економічних та соціальних проблем. Глобальна мережа міст, що навчаються – це міжнародна мережа, орієнтована на підтримку і вдосконалення ефективної практики навчання впродовж життя в різних містах світу. Стратегія



грамотності та базових навичок як основи навчання впродовж життя дозволяє реалізувати основні свободи людини, які роблять суспільство більш рівноправним і справедливим.

КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА: безперервне навчання, освіта дорослих, міста, що навчаються, грамотність і базові навички, неформальне та інформальне навчання

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