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CERTAIN ASPECTS OF MANAGING NON-FORMAL EDUCATION OF ADULTS

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This article addresses the issue of managing non-formal education of adults in the Republic of Moldova. It is found that at the national level no efficient system of leadership/management of this subsector of education has been structured. At the same time, it is noted that the diversity of forms, structures, unclear legal affiliation of many structures providing respective services, makes the management process in this area very difficult, having a regulatory framework that does not ensure the relevance of functioning and quality of non-formal education of adults. In this sense, a concept and a praxiological approach to the management of non-formal education of adults are proposed: structure, mechanisms, activity directions.

Keywords: *non-formal education management, education of adults, learning and education of adults, non-formal education, management functions, non-formal education forms.*

UNELE ASPECTE ALE MANAGEMENTULUI EDUCAȚIEI NONFORMALE A ADULȚILOR

În articol este abordată problema ce vizează managementul educației nonformale a adulților în Republica Moldova. Se constată că la nivel național nu s-a structurat un sistem eficient de conducere/ gestionare a acestui subsector al educației. Totodată, se remarcă că diversitatea formelor, structurilor, apartenența juridică neclară a multor structuri ce prestează serviciile respective fac ca procesul managerial în acest domeniu să fie foarte dificil, având și un cadru normativ care nu asigură relevanța funcționării și calității educației nonformale a adulților. În acest sens, se propune un concept și o abordare praxiologică a managementului educației nonformale a adulților: structură, mecanisme, direcții de activitate.

Cuvinte-cheie: *managementul educației nonformale, educația adulților, învățarea și educația adulților, educație nonformală, funcțiile managementului, formele educației nonformale.*

Introduction

A generalizing vision on the management of non-formal education of adults allows us to state that this dimension has not emerged as an effective system at the national level, based on theory, methodology and regulations. As a rule, the managerial functions are performed, fragmentarily or if necessary, by the management bodies in the formal education system or by the management structures in different fields, within which the institutions/centers of non-formal education of adults operate.

The diversity of forms, structures that provide the services of non-formal education of adults, having different status and legal affiliation, creates a context in which it is very difficult to conceive and valorize on an effective managerial approach.

From the system of managerial functions (of diagnosis and prognosis, conceptualization, strategic design, monitoring, information, motivation and managerial communication) only some of them are valorized fragmentarily and contextually: the information, communication, organization ones, etc.

At the same time, of all the types of educational management (quality management, strategic management, human resources management, curriculum management, tangible resources management, etc.), only some of them perform their functions contextually and spontaneously.

A study conducted at the Moldova State University on the efficiency of non-formal education management shows that respondents rather negatively appreciate the effectiveness of non-formal education management.

The Management of non-formal education of adults: concept and praxiological configuration

In the context of theoretical approaches to educational management, but also based on the essence and specificity of non-formal education, we formulate a definition of this phenomenon:

The management of non-formal education is a concept and a process aimed at achieving the objectives and functions of service providers in the field of non-formal education, by training human resources and using financial, managerial, teaching, curricular, and logistical resources, etc. in the context of a non-formal or formal educational environment [1, p.82].

It is found that the way in which the management of non-formal education performs its functions, as well as the way in which the relationship between managers and trainers is built, between trainers and trainees, depends on the way in which organizational models are outlined.

At the same time, it is found that non-formal education structures show in their activity success and efficiency, if the management focuses on trust and on creating optimal conditions for satisfying the interests and opportunities of both trainers and trainees, in this case of adults.

Based on the specifics of non-formal education of adults, which, together with formal education and training, is a form of lifelong learning, we find that it means "a staged process, aimed at a deeper understanding of the world and the cumulative enrichment of potential creative personality", including on the professional and non-professional dimension [2, p.6].

Non-formal adult education is an educational system (subsystem) and performs the same general functions as formal education, but in a specific form, assuming some complementary, extended or contextual functions.

At the same time, the characteristics and specifics of non-formal education also generate the managerial framework of this process (*see* Fig.1).

Each managerial structure is assigned with specific functions through normative documents and their status:

- *Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Moldova (MER)* – the function of elaboration and promotion of policies in the field of non-formal education of adults, but also of coordination at national level.
- *District/Municipal Education Directorates* – the function of applying national policies in the field of non-formal education, the elaboration of local policies in the field of non-formal education of adults, but also the management of non-formal education at local level.
- *Republican Center for Children and Youth, Chisinau**¹ – two main functions: to provide non-formal education services in various fields and profiles; managing the methodical activities within the affiliated structures and managing the lifelong training of trainers from the system on the methodical dimension.
- *Local Public Administration (Directorates/Departments of Culture/Sports)* – the whole package of functions regarding the management of subordinated structures of non-formal education, correlating with the policies in the field, promotion by MER.
- *Foundations, Federations, Associations, NGOs, etc.* – the whole package of functions regarding the management of subordinated structures of non-formal education, correlating it with the policies in the field promoted by MER.

Each managerial structure (body) will ensure its functionality on the basis of an *Institutional Regulation*, elaborated on the basis of a normative framework at national level (*Framework Regulation*), the elaboration of which is within the competence of the MER.

* The Republican Center for Children and Youth in Chisinau provides services and education of adults in various forms.

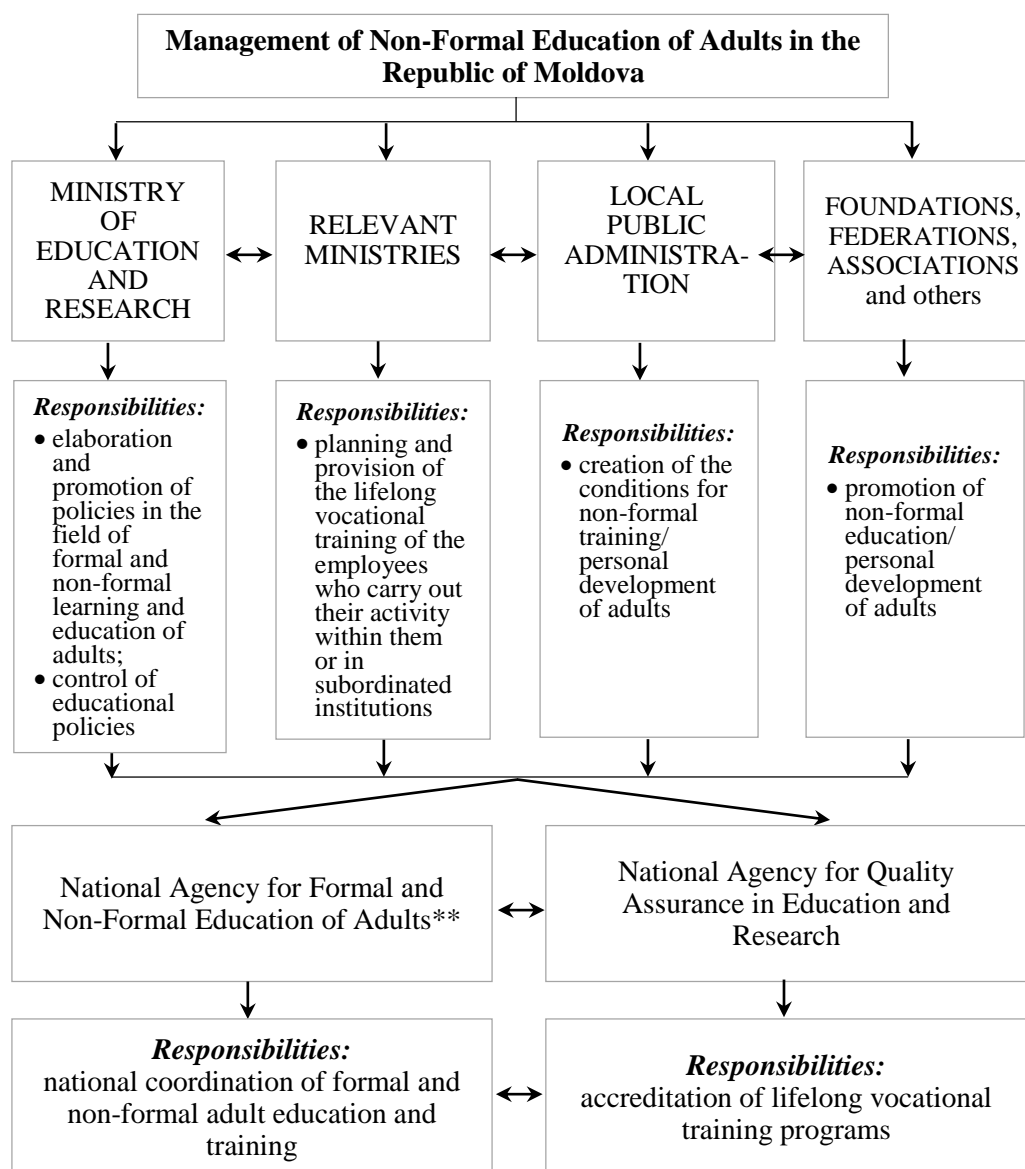


Fig.1. The management structure of non-formal education of adults in the Republic of Moldova**2

Certain mechanisms and directions for achieving effective management in the field of non-formal education of adults

- Promoting through mass media and other forms the new status of non-formal education in the information society, focused on knowledge/competences.
- Cooperating and integrating the resources and creation of interconnection networks, inclusively within cluster systems.
- Promoting the partnership within non-formal education between the state, family, business and NGOs.
- Conceiving the cross-sectoral models for managing the system of non-formal education of adults.
- Organizing the scientific research in the field of non-formal education and, in particular, in the field of non-formal education management.
- Creating the certain mechanisms to identify the performance of adults in non-formal learning and education and taking them into account in the process of career growth and social motivation.
- Creating the conditions for lifelong training of managers in the non-formal education system.

** At this stage, this function belongs to the Lifelong Learning Service within the MER.

Certain mechanisms and directions for funding non-formal education of adults

Financial management, like other managerial dimensions, performs functions of planning, reviewing, estimating, monitoring allocations and using funds.

On the one hand, the management of financing the non-formal education in the Republic of Moldova is regulated by a series of laws, mostly indirectly (*Law on Budgetary System and Budgetary Procedure, No. 847; Law on Local Public Administration, No. 436; Law on Administrative Decentralization, no.435, etc.*); on the other hand, the management of non-formal education funding is unsystematic and difficult to monitor.

It should be noted that the management of financial resources in the field of non-formal education of adults is largely influenced by the status of respective service providers: state or private ones.

As a rule, the state finances the lifelong vocational training, carried out in the competent institutions. Other forms of non-formal education of adults are funded from other sources: parents, sponsors, special projects, etc. Due to the fact that in the non-formal education system there is no comprehensive normative framework regarding the financing of services in this field (but also of other aspects of non-formal education), situations of uncertainty, conflicts, demotivation, abandonment by adults of non-formal education are created.

In this context, the development of mechanisms for financing non-formal education of adults will focus on the following:

- Reconceptualizing the financing of non-formal education per subject for structures with different forms of ownership: state and private (public and private).
- Prioritizing the financing of non-formal education programs for adults with special needs, for gifted persons, for adults with exceptional performance, etc.
- Funding from the state budget for current and future projects in the field of non-formal education of adults.
- Valorizing on tax reduction mechanisms for non-budgetary structures that provide services of non-formal education of adults.
- Reducing the payments for renting state spaces, for non-state structures that provide services in the field of non-formal education of adults.

Certain mechanisms and directions for developing the infrastructure of non-formal education of adults

At present stage, there is no mapping of the adult non-formal education infrastructure and its potential for organizing learning and education of adults. At the same time, it is found, on the one hand, the lack/insufficiency of the infrastructural dimensions in order to achieve the non-formal education of quality adults; on the other hand, many objects of the existing infrastructure are not valorized optimally and efficiently.

Certainly, a priority direction for the development of non-formal education of adults remains the modernization and development of infrastructure, starting with the modernization of spaces and continuing with the purchase of new equipment, tools, sports and leisure inventory, etc.

At the same time, the creation of conditions and opportunities for the implementation of innovative information and communication technologies in the system of non-formal education of adults is topical.

Conclusions

Summarizing, we can mention that the management of non-formal education of adults has an extremely important role in ensuring the functionality and development of this education subsector. In this regard, we can prioritize the following aspects of non-formal adult learning and education management:

- *Local or central public authorities* (in the case of the Republic of Moldova: non-formal education units, district/municipal education directorates, culture/sports directorates, local councils, relevant ministry/other ministries with responsibilities in the cultural and educational area and subordinate directorates etc.) – have the task to analyze the needs of system and the needs of adults regarding lifelong vocational training and personal development and to promote relevant policies in this domain.
- *Intervention measures* (remedial type programs for the acquisition of key competences, programs to supplement the knowledge to validate the competences acquired in formal education, information and counseling activities on access to education and training programs, respectively to validation of the results obtained following non-formal education, studies and analyzes regarding the training needs of community members) – have the role of describing the ways in which public authorities can intervene to solve the identified problems.

- *Problems of educational community* (results of trainees not in line with pre-established educational outcomes, initial and lifelong training needs of trainers, need to complete studies, to train specialized or transversal competences, to spend free time in a useful and pleasant way, etc.) – represents only a small part of the manageable issues regarding the efficiency of non-formal education of adults.

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