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A POSSIBLE BARRIER IN EXTENDING THE PROCESS OF LIFELONG LEARNING (LLL)

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Abstract

The process of accumulating cognitive and socio-emotional proficiencies is accomplished mainly during the first period of a person's life. These proficiencies assure a basis for the ulterior accumulation of specific skills through vocational and technical education, superior education and lifelong learning. Employees have limited access to information about their training opportunities, and employers do not benefit of stimuli so that they might offer a professional formation.

A comparative approach regarding necessary skills categories on labor market may be very useful from the education and formation point of view.

Keywords: proficiencies, obstacles, expansion, LLL

JEL classification: I10, H10, O52

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1 PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT, SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INITIAL FORMATION. CONTINUITIES

It is "comprehensive and unifying the idea that permanent education includes formal, non-formal and informal learning with the purpose to acquire and enrich a knowledge horizon that might allow reaching the highest possible development level during different periods and fields" (Dave, 1991, pp. 47-48). It is based upon another idea, that the "permanent education is an perfecting process of the personal, social and vocational development all along individuals' life having as purpose their life quality improvement (...)".

Personal development represents the action to develop and its result, thus, personal development is real if it has as a result inner growing/evolution. It includes activities and experiences that have their declared purpose to improve the consciousness state, development of personal talents and abilities, life quality improvement and contributing to accomplish personal aspirations and dreams. It is a very important aspect for integrating into the society. Known as "self-help" or "personal evolution", the concept of personal development also includes formal and informal activities.

Social development is a type of social change generally defined as the passing of some component of a social system "from one state to another which is different taking into consideration quality and/or quantity" (Vlasceanu, 1993, p. 529).

Unlike vocational preparation (initial formation), vocational development is a more complex process, having as objective the acquisition of useful knowledge both reported to the individual's position at a certain moment and to the ulterior one.

In Romania, training is perceived as a necessity but does not represent a priority yet. A professional training may have results only if it is based on a thorough analysis.

2 PERMANENT EDUCATION FROM PROCEDURAL AND FUNCTIONAL POINT OF VIEW

Two realities govern and influence permanent education from procedural and functional point of view:

- permanent education may be differently acquired by individuals and societies, and these alternative ways may lead to reaching the highest and the best level of life quality (Dave, 1991, p. 48),
- the connection between "inter-educational elements variety" (structures, curriculum, initial formation) and other "extra-educational elements" (personal, social, historical, cultural configurations of individuals and societies) is realy necessary (Dave, 1991, p. 37).

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Permanent learning is differently acquired by correlating numerous resources: educational stages, contents/ dimensions/ sides of education, forms, factors/roles of education (inter-educational elements).

Personal and historical/social configurations of the individual find themselves under the sign of general objectives identified by Paul Lengrand (1970, p. 54), "creating structures and methods favorable to forming-developing human personality along its existence and preparing the human personality for self-instruction and self-education".

Reaching and accomplishing such frame objectives imply a new educational policy, an anticipative one ("one continuous process, juxtaposition of the two parts-formal and informal", Thomas, 1977, pp. 79-81) and globally engaged within an integrator and integrative system ("educational fortress", Faure, 1974, p. 225).

The process through which such objectives might become operational is seen by R. Dave (1991, p. 52) through four groups of "conventional objectives":

- 1st group: the acquisition of fundamental social skills (reading, mathematics/informatics calculus, elementary notions about keeping health),
- 2nd group: developing the adaptation capacity to a society based on certain fundamental values: peace, democracy, freedom, happiness, efficiency, humanism, solidarity,
- 3rd group: cultivating some personality features that may assure "a new quality of life": intra-psychic stability, emotional strength, "inner youthful enthusiasm", capacity of responsible option, social engagement, capacity of self-surpassing/personal engagement, acquiring and renewing these acquisitions,
- 4th group: instrumental objectives/ "learning to learn", inter-learning, self-directed learning.

3 LLL SPECIFIC FEATURES IN ROMANIA

Leaving school before acquiring basic abilities, essential for lifelong learning, specific for certain socio-economical groups, concerning children in rural environment and those who come from families with small income, gypsies or who belong to other disfavored groups, influence and make vulnerable the quality of education in Romania, (thus it is shown by the results of the Program for Students' International Evaluation 2012, www.rocnee.eu).

The disparity of chances is considerable which means that the children's socio-economic situation affects their school results. Some discuss about diversified and quality educational support together with adapting to community life. The main challenge for the educational system and vocational formation from the poverty and exclusion risk

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point of view, is represented by the significant discrepancy between children and young people's situation in Romania comparative to UE medium, rates of poverty and social exclusion at children and young people being constantly upper (almost twice bigger) in Romania comparative to UE medium (Needs analysis concerning education and vocational formation, 2012, www.edu.ro).

Territorial differences are also significant and obvious, the probability that pupils living in bigger towns and cities to benefit from a more favorable educational environment than those who live in rural environment is higher.

Initial vocational and technical education is not attractive and not enough aliened to actual necessities of labor market. Tertiary education is confronted with challenges regarding supplying specific proficiencies necessary on labor market. Although unemployment among tertiary education graduates is significantly reduced than among those with inferior educational levels, employers are more and more preoccupied by the lack of specific proficiencies for the job and the cognitive and socio-emotional abilities also (Europe Report 2020 Romania).

The quality and relevance, as pillars of Lifelong Learning National Strategy (LLLNS), having as definite objectives to increase the participation to lifelong learning and to improve the relevance of the educational and vocational formation systems for labor market, imply coordination and regulation both in evaluating proficiencies needs and developing a set of abilities more comprehensive and in creating a system of quality assuring, of monitoring and evaluation for LLL.

As action directions selected to prevent and stop restrictions related to learning accomplishment all lifelong, the National Strategy has as purpose:

- improving the information quality and availability, evaluation of proficiencies needs and developing a set of abilities more complete, at the coordination level,
- involvement regulation of the vocational and technical educational units, superior education institutions from the lifelong learning concepts' perspective,
- coordination and settlement of the system created for assuring the quality, for monitoring and evaluation for lifelong learning. (Strategy LLL, 2015-2020, ec.europa.eu/transparency).

4 NECESSARY SKILLS FOR THE LABOR MARKET

The process of accumulating cognitive and socio-emotional skills is accomplished mainly during the first period of a person's life. They assure some sort of basis for ulterior acquisition of specific skills for the vocational and technical education, superior education and lifelong education. This takes place under the conditions the success on the labor market is determined by different dimensions of a person's set of proficiencies,

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combining cognitive, socio-emotional abilities and specific abilities for the activity/job ("EU Skills Panorama": tasks evolution regarding skills, 2012, ec.europa.eu/transparency).

Proficiencies refer to the set of skills implied in solving problems within the personal and professional sphere (Vaida, Doctor s Degree Thesis, 2013, p. 56). There is recognized the part played by education in supplying the what is called minimal stock of practical or technical skills necessary on labor market.

A comparative approach of the categories of necessary skills on work market from the education and formation point of view may be very useful.

Cognitive Skills	**Socio-emotional Skills**	**Specific skills for the job**
▪ refer to using the theory and concepts, and knowledge capacities acquired through experience. ▪ implies understanding, appliance, analysis, synthesis, evaluation knowledge capacities. ▪ the difference between "know what" and " know how", procedures used in solving problems (Anderson, 2001, p. 96). ▪ "know what" has many categories: factual/conceptual (isolated pieces of information, systems of information, classifications, categories), procedural (algorithms, heuristics or learning through discovery,	▪ refer to what the person who studied knows or can prove he or she learned, learning products of the emotional development and social learning, assure inter and intra-personal optimization, obtaining personal and professional performances (Oberst, Gallifa, Farriols and Villaregut, 2009, in Vaida, Doctor's Degree Thesis, 2013, p. 72) ▪ Skills through which begins the process of learning and that speak about interpersonal development and increasing the academic potential (Liff, 2003, in Vaida, Doctor's Degree Thesis, 2013, p. 89)	▪ they depend on the specific job and are correlated to those of the employing institution ▪they base on the relation among proficiency fields, proficiency units, proficiency elements and accomplishment criteria.

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techniques and methods, knowledge about situations these methods and procedures are used in) and meta-cognitive (about thinking processes related to thinking and the way these processes can be used)		

There are necessary measures of activating and improvement and making compatible all skills from the increasing importance perspective of the economy based on knowledge and increasing the capacity to occupy jobs. Aiming for this target, the European strategy proposes:

- Activation,
- Diversification,
- Making compatible/ matching,
- Information.

Activating skills means consolidation of the human capital and the capacity to integrate from the professional point of view, improvement includes also ethical values (equity, equality, cohesion). Making compatible the skills, matching skills and jobs, is about diversification the educational offers regarding tertiary education and being informed concerning modifications appeared on the labor market, available jobs, projections of the required skills. Furthermore, in Romania there is a lack of information regarding necessary skills on labor market and mechanisms through which these pieces of information become available for the people.

Employees have limited access to information about training possibilities and employers do not benefit from sufficient stimuli to offer professional training.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The relationship between education and formation on one side and the labor market on the other seems to be a priority of our contemporary world. Speaking about forms of education, "there is a justified advance of the formal education both for secondary and tertiary education, but there are obvious evidences of the limits this form of education has, especially reported to the rhythm of changes" (Costea, Cerkez, Sarivan (coord.), 2009, p. 53).

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Some of the solutions already outlined:

- Promoting education results (knowledge, abilities, skills);
- The accent given to collaboration between school and business environment together with professional training represents a supplementary advantage;
- Reshaping the curriculum through a more powerful adequacy to life's needs by redefining the component elements from learning perspective, accentuating the evaluation and facilitate trans-disciplinary approaches;
- Concepts clarification especially concerning the instruction problem;
- Identifying possibilities to make valid experiences/lessons obtained through non-formal education, at the same time with diversification ways to certify modalities of skills obtained through formal education especially for theoretical high school;
- Studies capitalization related to preparing graduates for the labor market (studies of Educational Sciences Institute, 2011, p. 5);
- Diversification of connections between formal and non-formal education based on some examples already materialized (Tools, Socrates Grundtvig Project, 2005);
- Engagement of social partners in financing the permanent education through the system of sector formation funds (Costea (coord.), 2009, p. 65).

The previous exordium has the purpose to outline the fact that the lack/discrepancy of different necessary proficiencies categories on the labor market from the education and training perspective represents a real obstacle concerning lifelong learning extension, " the continuous process of flexible learning opportunities, that correlates learning and acquired skills into the formal institutions with developing skills in non-formal and informal contexts, especially at the work place" (Educational Sciences Institute, 2011, p. 9).

This is the reason why "people must actualize their skills as individuals, citizens and employees. This is essential for supporting competitiveness within the context of a global economy of knowledge, based on technology and for promoting social integration and participation to a democratic society" (Substantiation Note in Government Decision no. 418/2015 regarding the approval of Lifelong Learning National Strategy 2015-2020).

There is a perspective upon the implementation of the Lifelong Learning National Strategy that makes complete a reflection approach on this above and invites us to be more conscious about the necessity to create a culture for lifelong learning.

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