

**CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT
OF CONTINUOUS TRAINING PROGRAMS
IN THE COMPASS PROJECT (ERASMUS+)**

**PROVOCĂRI ȘI OPORTUNITĂȚI DE DEZVOLTARE A PROGRAMELOR DE
FORMARE CONTINUĂ ÎN CADRUL PROIECTULUI COMPASS (ERASMUS+)**

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In the present global economic and educational environment, the main challenges for the lifelong learning process are: inducement of informal learning opportunities, stimulation of self-motivated learning, acceptance of self-funded learning, stimulation of universal participation in the learning process.

The development of the informational society and the wide-spread diffusion of information technology give rise to new opportunities for learning and they challenge the established views and practices regarding how teaching and learning should be organized and carried out. At the same time, globalization and the emergence of new players in the world economy have intensified competition, many countries turning production towards high value-added and knowledge-intensive products and services which request high-level skills of the labour force. The lifelong learning concept offers the perspective of a radical new approach especially for the higher educational process focused on opening up traditional universities for those who want to learn lifelong.

Keywords: *lifelong learning (LLL), informal education, project, opportunity, challenges, training needs, programs, evaluation, quality, cultural and creative industries (CCI), target group*

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În mediul economic și educațional global actual principalele provocări pentru procesul de învățare pe tot parcursul vieții sunt: inducerea oportunităților de învățare informală, stimularea învățării automatizate, acceptarea învățării autofinanțate, stimularea participării universale la procesul de învățare.

Dezvoltarea societății informaționale și răspândirea pe scară largă a tehnologiei informației dau naștere la noi oportunități de învățare, orientează diversele puncte de vedere și practicile consacrate spre însușirea eficientă a modului în care ar trebui organizată și desfășurată predarea și învățarea. În același timp, globalizarea și apariția unor noi oameni de afaceri în economia mondială au intensificat concurența, multe țări îndreptând producția către produse și servicii cu valoare adăugată mare, care solicită cunoștințe profunde și forță de muncă de înaltă calificare. Conceptul de învățare pe tot parcursul vieții oferă perspectiva unei noi abordări radicale, în special, pentru procesul de învățământ superior axat pe deschiderea universităților tradiționale pentru cei care doresc să învețe pe tot parcursul vieții.

Cuvinte-cheie: *învățare pe tot parcursul vieții, educație informală, proiect, oportunitate, provocări, nevoi de formare, programe, evaluare, calitate, industrii culturale și creative, grup-țintă*

Introduction

Lifelong learning is a form of self-initiated education that is focused on personal development. While there is no standardized definition of lifelong learning, it has generally been agreed to refer to the learning that occurs outside of a formal education institution, such as a school, university or corporate training. Lifelong learning does not necessarily have to restrict itself to informal learning, however. It is best described as being voluntary with the purpose of achieving personal fulfilment. The means to achieve this could result in informal or formal education.

Today's depressed economic environment and challenged work force have dramatically increased the needs and demands of learners to retool their capabilities, acquire new competences and align knowledge to the emerging new economy to avoid being laid off. At the same time, leaders within traditional education institutions, colleges and universities, are aggressively seeking new sources of revenues to counteract current budgeting short falls [1 p.1].

Universities and other higher education institutions are fundamental to human capital development and innovation and can do much to help the labour force to become more innovative and globally competitive. However to do this they need to change, and in some cases change dramatically. According to Conner, universities and other higher educational institutions need to come out of their „ivory towers” [2]. They need to become more active in order to play a meaningful role in the local and global setting. They must do more than simply provide education and research, they need to provide opportunities for lifelong learning and contribute to the development of knowledge-intensive jobs which enable graduates to find local employment and attract talent not only from the region but also from elsewhere. Pursuing personal interests and passions or chasing professional ambitions, lifelong learning can help people to achieve personal fulfilment and satisfaction. It is to be recognized that humans have a natural drive to explore, learn and grow and that encourages them to improve their own quality of life and sense of self-worth by paying attention to the ideas and goals that inspire.

Development of continuous training programs within the Compass Project

Sometimes lifelong learning is used to describe a type of behaviour that employers are seeking within the organization. Employers admit that formal education credentials are not the only way to recognize and develop talent and that lifelong learning may be the desired trait. Thanks to the fast pace of today's knowledge economy, organizations are seeing lifelong learning as a core component in employee development. The Academy of Music, Theatre and Fine Arts has been developed within the Compass project courses which has the purpose to improve the attitude and the professional level in creative and art industries: *Entrepreneurial skills in the creative industries* (how to realize your creative idea). This course was elaborated and piloted within the Compass Project by Victoria Tcacenco, PhD, Associated Professor. The course is aimed to helping the practitioners from the cultural and creative

industries (CCI) to get general knowledge and practical tools regarding the cultural project/product/service/realization. The course covers such basic elements as: project/product/service planning, fundraising, marketing, financing aspects (budgeting). The content summary of this course includes such topics as:

- Creative industries: definition, capacities, world and regional trends.
- Entrepreneurial approach to art: basic elements, contemporary trends.
- Creative project/product/service and its unique character (types of creative products/services).
- Main elements/phases of the creative product elaboration (project or start up).
- Project aims, objectives, stakeholders.
- Fundraising incl. new trends (crowd funding).
- Marketing (incl. e-marketing).
- Financial aspects of the project.

The target group represents the directors of Houses of Culture, leaders and members of amateur artistic groups, teachers of performing arts, age — 35+ leaders of cultural NGOs, (25+) administrative staff of state and private cultural organizations (45+). The main purpose of this course is to offer new knowledge to those who feel the lack of theoretical knowledge and practical skills regarding artistic management and entrepreneurial skills in arts. Many representatives of the artistic community are involved in festivals, tours, exhibitions organization, they are forced to look for financial support for their artistic groups and projects, and try to sell their product etc. Having an artistic but not managerial education, very often these people do not have enough skills to raise funds for creative groups, to manage artistic events successfully, to develop an efficient online marketing strategy etc. Marketing including the new marketing tools (e-marketing) remains the weakest part of the CCI representatives' qualifications. All these components of the course are closely related to the jobs of our learners because getting up their entrepreneurial and managerial level is an acute necessity for their jobs. It is important to note that the projects design will be made by learners on the basis of their job realities; real case studies will be introduced and elaborated by learners, as a practical part of the course. As a result the students will have a model for a real project/product/service realization by the end of course. This course will help them to improve their practical skills in creative/cultural industry products/services realization; will give them new tools for international (EU projects realization or collaboration with EU partners). Through practical exercise in CCI projects planning, the students will get some experience in realizing CCI projects/products/services. So, they will design a model for future the practical realization of their creative idea. Also, this course covers the students' personal and professional development needs:

- For people who work as staff members at state organizations, this course will help them to make their professional life better, to feel more confident in what they do, to improve their position at the labour place, to win the credibility of colleagues and authorities of the organization, to consolidate their managerial/entrepreneurial capacity, to facilitate the learners' career development, better salaries etc.
- New abilities/tools got during the course will contribute to career development for state and private cultural organizations members.
- For some people from the state sector (arts schools or music schools) getting certificates from workshops or courses (national or international, online or offline) is a condition for their professional promotion.
- For NGO's members this course can help in a better planning and designing of activities, which will contribute to growing the NGO's reputation and its members' managerial skills, will contribute to getting a better chance to win grants of national and international programs.

- For artistic people who work as freelancers this course will give them an understanding how to generate profit from their creative activities, how to promote and sell an artistic product/service, combining in a more efficient way the artistic value and financial profit.
- For different types of learners this course will contribute to their personal and professional satisfaction.

Didactical design of the continuous learning program LL Course

The students will learn/be able to do as a result of successfully participating in the course how to:

- Understand the specifics of creative/cultural industries, artistic product/service.
- Formulate a clear creative idea, to set up a plan for its realization.
- Elaborate a set of documents for successful online and offline fundraising (covering letter, sponsorship proposal, texts and video files to upload on a crowd funding platform).
- Elaborate a set of tools aimed to realize an efficient e-marketing of the project/product/ service (marketing kit, online marketing strategy etc.).
- Analyse the financial aspects of the project/to elaborate the project budget.

The learning outcomes are in line with the vision and strategic objectives of the institution:

- For the institution this course elaboration is a way to extend the range of educational services offered by the Academy of Music, Theatre and Fine Arts focused before on the traditional artistic specializations.
- To enrich the study materials for the discipline *Cultural and Creative Industry*.
- To spread the academic target group.
- To make the institution more visible on the national educational market.
- To get additional financing taking into account the number of ICC representatives.

The learning outcomes are in line with target groups' and stake holders' (including labour market) needs:

- The CCI has a great potential for the national economy, but it impedes development because of the insufficient skills of the CCI actors.
- The labour market feels an acute lack of qualified artistic managers.
- Quite often actual artistic workers cannot realize their ideas because their skills in fundraising and marketing are poor.
- The part of the target group which has professional experience and knowledge, needs nevertheless the upgrade of their skills because of the dynamic development of the CCI sector.
- The consolidation of the entrepreneurial capacities of young artistic people, including the former students of the Academy of Music, Theatre and Fine Arts, has a state importance. Actually the Moldovan state doesn't have instruments and programs to support financially young creative people from the CCI sector. Therefore, in order to promote their ideas, young artists have to study how to get money from their art. In case if this course is successful it will help young art people to get a profit and benefits both for the artistic community and for the state influencing positively the % of CCI in PIB.

After the successful completion of this course the learners will be able to: design a project idea and to plan it; elaborate a list of documents, info products (covering letter, sponsorship proposal, texts and video files to upload on a crowd funding platform, marketing kit, online marketing strategy etc.), also to elaborate a project budget and to analyse its financial aspects.

The idea is that employees should engage in constant personal learning in order to be adaptable and flexible for the organization to stay competitive and relevant. This type of personal learning is often referred to as continuous learning. Responding to the rapid changes in the economy and society, lifelong learning aims to actively deal with the dynamics of changing environments and to take advantage of new opportunities in the work, social and especial cultural contexts. Through increasing

differentiation of skills and globalization, it has become necessary to continually update knowledge and competences to ensure an individual's life development and self-fulfilment. To ensure that the Republic of Moldova maintains its high standard of living and social cohesion, it is necessary to further enhance the citizens' high levels of qualification and to draw less educated people into the modern knowledge society. AMTAP's Lifelong Learning Strategy is guided by the next principles: promotion of arts education as the only university in the country in this field, Art — Therapy, promotion of the psycho — pedagogical module, life phase orientation (all ages), placing learners at the centre (flexibility of learning), lifelong guidance (facilitating the learning process), competence orientation (recognition of informal learning), and promotion of participation in lifelong learning (enhancing the motivation to learn).

The continuous learning programs development and improvement of the knowledge and skills is needed for employment and personal fulfilment through formal and informal learning opportunities. Learning is, therefore, part of life which takes place in all times and in all places. It shares mixed connotations with other educational concepts, like adult education, training, continuing education, permanent education and other terms that relate to learning beyond the formal educational system. In Watson's opinion, lifelong learning is a lifelong, voluntary, and self-motivated pursuit of knowledge for either personal or professional reasons. It not only enhances social inclusion, active citizenship and personal development, but also competitiveness and employability [3].

Strategy statement on ULL

LLL strategy should strive to adopt the „want-to-learn” attitude and is based on the competences to be able to learn. It is strengthened through the subsequent provision of learning and development opportunities and services for personal and professional development. A good connection with all the Academy's faculties (Musical Art, Theatrical, Cinematographic, Choreographic Art, Fine, Decorative Art and Design) which offer support in relation to our target group, on the way to develop also admin and support services, targets diverse groups of individuals and provides opportunities for creating public and personal goods in arts and the cultural domains of the social life. The strategic goal is to transform AMTAP into an open university which serves a wide range of Moldovan and international population of different age, education, profession etc., using modern and varied educational tools and technologies. So, being a part of an international project which provides lifelong learning, **COMPASS - „TOWARDS EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY LIFE LONG LEARNING MODEL IN MOLDOVA”**, the ULLL strategy implementation will help AMTAP to:

- To attract new groups of learners into the university including non-traditional target groups.
- To meets the need of citizens in the cultural aspects of their lives.
- To provide personal development programmes for graduates students.
- To increase the AMTAP teachers/institution revenue.

The objectives of the Compass project in Moldova are to promote and strengthen the LLL culture in Moldova and to build national consensus of the key-actors on development issues; to develop and advance a national legislative framework and stimulate regulatory changes of the LLL in Moldova; to build up the University's integrative function in Moldova through developing the integrated university LLL strategies and to enhance the university's institutional capacities in Moldova for the efficient and effective implementation of the LLL reform.

Implications for Higher Education

The concept of lifelong learning and the related policies have a number of implications for the structure of the higher education institutions and the organization of knowledge. Kehm considered that creating more learning opportunities for new and different categories of students means that students will no longer all start from a broadly shared knowledge base but will instead have acquired their

knowledge from multiple sources and diverse types and fields of knowledge (family, work experience etc.) [4]. Most major universities accepted the new educational challenges and were expanding their traditional, degree credit offerings with a variety of adult, continuing and executive education experiences, some for credit and some non-credit. New education programs were offered through a combination of organizational mechanisms: extension divisions, adult and continuing education units, schools of professional study, executive education programs and distance learning units. The diversity of these programs and their unique operations propagated completely new organizations within the traditional universities. New processes for education delivery and learner support mechanisms advanced to meet the dynamic needs of the adult learner market place. Lifelong learning offers a systemic view of learning, since it examines the demand for, and the supply of learning opportunities, as part of a connected system covering the whole lifecycle and comprising all forms of formal, non — formal and informal learning. Also, it emphasizes the centrality of the learner and the need for initiatives that cater for the diversity of the learner's needs. This represents a shift of attention from the supply of learning to the demand side. Lifelong learning is focused on the motivation to learn, and draws attention to self-paced and self-directed learning and it stresses the multiple objectives of the education policy, which include economic, social or cultural outcomes; personal development, and citizenship. According to Smith & co the lifelong learning process also recognizes that, for the individual, the priorities among these objectives can change over the lifecycle; and that each objective has to be taken into consideration in policy development [5].

Conclusions

In conclusion, Lifelong learning can enhance our understanding of the world around us, provide us with more and better opportunities and improve our quality of life. It is to be appreciated that lifelong learning's core values of learning, exploring, and serving, coupled with benefits for the mind; body and spirit make it an incredibly powerful tool for personal transformation and transformation and enhancement. The demand to implement the new concepts linked to the idea of lifelong learning is often met by rhetoric and a simple replacement of the term „continuing education” by that of „lifelong learning” without any change in practices and provisions. On the other hand, many diverse pilot projects, experiments, and new models are integrating the concept of lifelong learning into university programs and making it part of the structure of tertiary education.

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