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Rumen Valchev Anna Pilavaki Lubica Cerna

Introduction Into Non- Formal Education

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Introduction

Nowadays the emergence and growth of the non-formal education is one of the most important and mostly commented developments in the field of education. In one word, we are becoming so used to the notion of non-formal education and its presence that we do not ask ourselves a simple question : what is the etymology of non-formal?

As one author says: „ According to my dictionary (Webster’s, 1988) “non-” is a prefix which means “not: absence of; reverse of”... in other words the “opposite of” something. But nonformal education is not the opposite of formal education. In many ways they are similar or overlap. Since nonformal education has a definition and unique philosophy, “nonformal education” is the more accurate spelling. Save “non-formal” for occasions when you wish to communicate absence of formality or the complete opposite of formal”. /1/

Therefore one of the first things we have to know is that non-formal education is not the opposite of formal education but presents a whole educational paradigm developed on the basis or in opposition to the formal education paradigm which has been accepted by most of the educational world.

Our times are times of synthesis. In the very first year of 21st century - 2001, the Assembly of the Council of Europe stated: “The Assembly recognizes that formal educational systems one cannot respond to the challenges of the modern society and therefore welcomes its reinforcement by non-formal educational practices... The Assembly recommends that governments and appropriate authorities of member states recognize as a de facto partner in the lifelong process and make it accessible for all”. /2/

The objective of this manual is to present the idea of non-formal education, its place and status in the current educational system and world, its trends of developments and the importance or the meaning of this system for the transformation of education within the European Union.

In our project **“A new chance. Training educators for Non-formal education” supported by Longlife learning Programme of the European Commission** we tried to develop a practical response to these developments and to explore together with educators from the trade unions from Cyprus, Slovakia and Bulgaria the chances and prospects which opens in front of them the development of non-formal education.

Once Lenin said that “trade unions are a school for communism”.

Twenty years after the fall of the communist systems in our part of the world we could state in the same simple way that the trade unions or the fact to belonging to a non governmental organization is a sign that every member is a part of powerful non-formal education system that really trade unions are a school, an institution or simply an appropriate educational space for their members who are facing the challenges of being part of the global learning society. If this is true, one always will have in such institutions its chances as a learner or as an educator and in order to improve these chances one has to understand better the world of non-formal education.

For Bulgaria the data for 2007 shows that 48, 5% of adult population / age 25-64/ did participate in one of the forms of longlife learning. This is far from the number of adult learners in Western Europe but still is a confirmation of the trend of the rapidly expanding non-formal education system

What is important between young adult learners /25-34 years/ this percentage is twice as higher than between the age group of people over 45 years. The percentage after the higher school graduates is 71% in comparison with the people only with basic education diploma/ which is 23%/. Employed adults are part of the longlife learning system / 61%/ something which could not be said about their unemployed counterparts – only 19, 9%. The adult learners from big cities are much better presented /52, 2% than the people from the small communities -38%. Women learners are somewhat more active of the men – 29% to 20%.

All these numbers which are somewhat similar for Slovakia and slightly but not so much different for Cyprus, do describe the picture of the emerging learning society in our part of the world. In other words in order to understand the non-formal education and the processes of longlife learning we have to understand the nature of contemporary education, the context of learning society which is crucial for the development of all kinds of education beyond the formal educational system.

The education and the contemporary world

Towards knowledge society?

Knowledge or to put it more precisely the targeted application of knowledge in individual and social life is a characteristic feature of our epoch. For the first time in human history knowledge is applied to any aspect of human life and activities – from opening a bottle to planning the quality of life in a certain settlement.

For the first time in the history of developed countries tradition is giving way to knowledge in the form of elaborated algorithm.

It is obvious that the society of knowledge is dominating and taking over every aspect of our lives. As Peter Draker puts it: “the center of gravity is turned towards the scientific worker and every enterprise is becoming learning and developing institution“. /3; p.174/ In the society of knowledge the metaphor of the factory/enterprise is replaced by the organization metaphor or in other words the organizational structure is crucial in the contemporary world. Organizations recently are becoming ever more dependent on knowledge; know how; utilization and generation of innovative experience on the basis of participation, knowledge and more thorough application of human potential within the organization.

The triumph of education comes logically with the wider and broader application of knowledge and skills. Education is becoming universal, mandatory, with extended years of training and direct relation to the subordination and division of labor.

Whether it is a matter of paradox or logical development, contemporary education nowadays is facing several crucial for its future problems:

- How the educational school programs and curricula to

encompass the huge, ever growing amount of knowledge and how the ordinary person could learn the essential, necessary amount of knowledge in personal terms in order to be part of the complex social mechanism?

- What the selection criteria should be on the basis of which young people to be make their individual choices?
- How the link between knowledge and education on the one hand and industry on the other to be set because these are two interdependent systems which do not interact directly and hence it is difficult to establish the relations between them?

We could only point out here that:

- education has never be so obsessed with the idea and notion of knowledge, but at the same time it has never been in such a difficult situation because of this obsession;
- the solutions for the interaction and interdependence between knowledge and education has never been so different and so vague;
- never the education theory has been in such a difficulty to predict and foresee the development of education in a society of knowledge;
- never the society has been so doubtful whether the education system is fit for the challenges of social development and the doubts have never been so deep and clearly pronounced.

That is the main education paradox in the era of knowledge. The wider and more rationalized the education system is the more incapable and unfits it becomes to prepare the contemporary individuals for the modern society and the more it gives way to informal, spontaneous socialization.

In general terms the development of contemporary knowledge poses the question of the education system's validity in its present state, focused on a limited period of human life and development.

Knowledge is becoming a factor of major importance for social development. Regardless of all the obstacles, contemporary society is becoming a learning society. And here lies the greatest paradox – the weakening of education systems is accompanied by ever more intensive and universal learning process. In the new type of learning

focused society we are talking for the first time of “development of skills, building of competences that would promote the identification and acquiring of crucial new knowledge, attitudes and met cognitive qualities”, instead of absorbing a certain amount of knowledge and getting a certain qualification.

We are witnessing a transition process from an industrial world with clearly defined and relatively low requirements to the work force towards a society characterized by swift growth, increased complexity, elaborate interrelations but at the same time with growing insecurity. Paradoxical as it may seem the growing rates of unemployment in contemporary society are backed by a demand for highly qualified and skilled labor.

The education system responded to these challenges by further enlarging the scope of general education where these competences and skills could be established. „It should be in a position to create the basic technological skills that would allow the graduates to develop and extend the technological culture in the society.“ /4, p. 260/

The second answer to the challenge is life long learning that would allow people to respond to the ever changing requirements of contemporary life, to be mobile, and to be capable of acquiring skills and competences for new jobs and professions.

The contemporary model of education that is evolving is general education followed by initial professional training and education (choice of the first profession) and after that follow up education and life long learning as a function of the needs of the labor market but also a function of the individual's needs and priorities.

Once knowledge is becoming the central resource of contemporary economics then the system for disseminating and providing knowledge is becoming the central societal system. It is not the first time in mankind's history that the process of total power and domination needs time in order to get fully established. Education is now in this transitional process of becoming the sole key factor and almighty master of society and to institutionalize the mechanisms for manifesting its supremacy. From being one of the key social systems education is becoming the leading one and that is the essence of contemporary times. In this paradigm the value of each individual is conditional on her/his ability to acquire and utilize knowledge. In the typical industrial society the value of each individual is proportional to

the amount of knowledge and skills accumulated via the standard, traditional systems for training and education. Today still for the educational system to become the leading one in the contemporary society it has to find the right approach for developing the Meta cognitive abilities of each individual, to overcome the strict specialization and mechanical limitations inherited by the industrial society.

The characteristic of the cognitive process predetermine the profile of the educated person in the beginning of the 21-st century. The educated person today comes close to the modern ideal of combining social skills, cognitive abilities and a complex emotional and intellectual competence.

Naturally this model can not be realized strictly and only within the framework of the traditional formal education system, inherited by the industrial society. The new life long learning system is establishing its prominence by putting together the education systems that existed so far in parallel like the non-formal education system and the informal education system.

Knowledge is transforming our world, but it still has not transformed the education system completely.

Contemporary society poses quite a number of challenges to modern education. The key challenge is the discrepancy between education and knowledge, to avoid the risks of simplifying, of differentiation of knowledge acquired by the type of educational establishment and the social medium. The incredible amount of knowledge and expertise threatens the educational system with social exclusion, social inactiveness, with failure to fulfill its social tasks and mislead the people into obedience of the power of the elites and finally with stultifying the democracy.

We should not forget that in its layout the present formal educational system resembles to a great extent the basic structure of modern society — the enterprise with its principles of standardization, centralization, concentration, bureaucracy, maximizing. This educational model is present in all mass forms of contemporary society. The industrial society economy is one of single use of limited and unrenowable resources and of environmentally unfriendly production processes aimed predominantly at economic growth and expansion. The idea behind the traditional, formal educational system

is pretty much the same – one time acquisition of knowledge for multiple, stable and unchangeable consumption.

The newly emerging economy is one of knowledge, thought, innovation, multiple consumption of recycled products, and extensive use of information resources which allows for overcoming the relative limits of materials and matter in general. All this means breaking away from the formal education pattern, looking for means to string together all the alternative learning methods within the lifespan of the individuals and the society in general.

In the contemporary post-modern or post-industrial society the individual values (freedom, personal expression and choice) tend to dominate over the collective values (cooperation, belonging to a certain group or community, participation). It is also characterized by abandoning the material values in favor of the values of belonging, respect, intellectual satisfaction. The typical modern values like efficiency, development, progress, economic rationality are no longer a match for the individual personality. Self expression is much more important for the contemporary individual; it is vital for the modern person to do something meaningful, not abstract.

It is very important for the modern person to be able to manage and control its own life, to live conscientiously and be able to participate in the problem solving process in personal, local and global perspective, which is a typical characteristic of modern times. The quests for new local and personal dimensions, the search of ones own identity in this context is a special acquisition of post-modernity. Modern man could only be prepared for this quest and search within the framework of primary and secondary education but it is up to every individual to pursue these values throughout her/his life.

Education is becoming ever more global and this is valid not just for the EU member states – globalization is manifesting itself not only by the global problems, but also by the greater subordination and coordination of policies or laying the foundations of a common education policy. Another dimension of globalization is the opportunities provided to young people to be mobile within the framework of the global education network. Adherence to similar educational principles and norms is yet another dimension of globalization – starting from the principles of democracy and respect for human rights and expanding them to the principles of establishing

the education system and implementation of education reforms. Globalization in the field of education could be characterized by the free movement of trainers, trainees, educational ideas and capital (knowledge and funds) within the international community. This globalization process is completely different from traditional education which promotes abstract values and norms, but practically remains locally restricted and the trainees kept within its boundaries and limitations.

The international global society is exposed to certain risks. Understanding the risky character of globalization internationally means that there is just one way ahead for the community – “active inclusion and involvement of the entire population in the debate on the problems of the global world“. Here education has to play a new, crucial role: it needs to become the first arena on which young people to gather skills and knowledge needed to understand global problems and a permanent one on which they could return at any point of their personal development. In this sense education about the contemporary risks of globality is more than ever designed to be democratic, universal, critical and life long process. Living in a risky world predetermines the need of ongoing learning and education about the newly emerging or altering risks and circumstances – both in personal and communal, national and global aspect.

This is why Beck emphasizes that — „one of the major political responses of globalization states: establishing and enlarging the scope of society of knowledge and education; extending not shortening the scope and time for education and knowledge acquisition; rejecting or weakening its strict adherence to specific jobs or professions and directing the education processes towards key training and qualification with broader application”. /5, p.211/.

Bringing the focus of tomorrow closer is a key task of education because at the end of the day any education system without a dimension for the future is a virtual, artificial world which eventually will reduce the socializing effect of formal education to nil. Having such education systems in global society means that we are taking the risk of adding yet another virtual reality next to the one of computers and ICT, in this way alienating young people totally from the socium and social problems and turning them into spectators of virtual or past events.

Lifelong learning and acting in risky society and environment along with education focused on the future should encompass the entire human life. In this way the learner is motivated to act, to set forth realistic targets and to solve real problems in contrast to the traditional education model which deals with abstract notions, does not inspire individuals for self perfection and sets for targets that are unrealistic and difficult to achieve.

Finally, the idea of sustainable development that is being promoted very rigorously over the past two decades if translated in the language of education means: establishing education system at dynamic equilibrium with the social environment and at the same time providing for pluralism within the system and constant improvement of its quality; insuring autonomy for its elements and education structures and promoting the principles of personal engagement, participation and cooperation by the actors in the system; development of national educational systems on the above mentioned principles and finally establishing a global education network. In individual perspective the idea of sustainable education could be summarized by the renowned four principles: I study in order to know; I study in order to fulfill; I study in order to live together; I study in order to be.

I study in order to know — how to live in this risky world;

I study in order to fulfill — the world around me and to build my relations with other people on a harmonious and equal basis;

I study in order to live together — I can reach that harmony with myself and the world around me only together with the other people;

I study in order to be — to discover my own self, to appropiate my values in my world and the wider world of the others so that I could be myself in my relations with people and the environment.

So education in the context of sustainable development means lifelong learning and improvement with practical approach and aimed at adopting the personality to the social environment by developing it in multiple areas and disciplines through variety of positive and enriching experiences also targeted at its adaptation to the conditions and peculiarities of the global society.

The other bid for developing human potential is the incredible increase in personal free and leisure time. Education is again the key factor which may bring meaning and structure the free and leisure time. That is why it is virtually impossible to draw a strict dividing

line between education and culture as the interdependence between the two is so obvious and it makes it quite difficult to restrict this complex interactions within the system of formal education, no matter how much it is expended in time. Leisure time in this sense is the basis for developing the various forms of non-formal and informal education.

Another important tendency in contemporary education is the civic education aimed at the promotion of democratic ideas and values among citizens because democracy is at the heart of modern societies, giving meaning to life in the community and guiding human relations within the community. Again the idea of civic education within the framework and paradigm of traditional education systems is quite unrealistic because it is quite isolated from the social environment. Social education and social awareness rising go along well only within the system of informal and non-formal education.

The increased educational status and qualification in combination with plenty of leisure time presuppose the growing importance of self-awareness and self-exploration as means for the individual to find her / his proper place in the world and enhance her/his potentials. The self-exploring individual can better utilize the leisure time but also she/he is in a better position to participate effectively and efficiently in the structures and organizations of contemporary society. The self-exploring and self-enhancing person is a person who learns and acquires new knowledge and ideas all the time, everywhere and putting that knowledge into practical experience.

As the White paper of the European Commission states: „To teach and study / learn — towards society of knowledge“, „regardless of her/his social and educational status every individual must have the opportunity to take advantage of all possibilities and means for enhancing her/his position and status in society and develop her/his personality to the maximum”. /6, p. 22/

In the contemporary society of knowledge boundaries and dividing lines between the various areas of science and knowledge are being deleted and that is why the divisions between the various types of education are also disappearing. What is more, in the spirit of the global and comprehensive world the family education and religious education are being revived again — the education mosaic is richer and more complex than ever before.

In this brave new world education is structured around the topics allowing the students to master practical skills and activities useful in real life situations and not around the traditional disciplines and subjects and here is the opportunity to challenge not just the traditional divisions into educational subjects but the limitations of the traditional education system and life long learning could be taken further as an attempt in personal perspective for overcoming these limitations and the divided and split apart structure of traditional education.

The UNESCO International Committee on education report titled: “Learning — the treasure within“indicates that the „objective of education and development is the complete fulfillment of the human being, the ultimate growth of the human personality, of all means and forms of expression and of all its potentials — as an individual, as a family and society member, as a citizen and employee, as an inventor and artist-creator“. /7 p. 93/.

On the old and new education paradigms

The old / traditional education paradigm is generated by the fast and expanding industrialization of the 19th and 20th centuries. Like the established social order at the time a similar one exists in the economy where the basic division is along the line managers – employees and similarly the schools are turned into social agencies whose major task is to distribute and allocate people to their respective positions in the society and the economy depending on their skills and intelligence.

Naturally this paradigm is concentrated on knowledge acquired and results. The depersonalized teaching and training process leads to a depersonalized, isolated education system. This system is based on competition between individuals undergoing the process of education, the success and results are measured with tests, which presuppose a limited number of winners.

The education system adopts the respective social development model which is one of extensive and dynamic growth, characterized by increasing number of activities per unit of time, increased amount of knowledge per unit of time and also an increase in the absolute increase of the number in years spent at school.

Finally the old / traditional education system and the school being its basic element are isolated from the society as well as from the alternative or different schemes of training and learning.

The new education paradigm reflects the requirements of a new society, based on organization, stimulated by information exchange, totally accepting the principles of democracy and human rights. The new paradigm is a consequence of the new central role that education has to play in the new type of society.

Most of all it is the new type of social order, the democratic society and its organization as a key structure of the economic life and activities that requires people and citizens with different type of skills and qualifications than those of factory employees and workers. Today, everyone in the organization, in the society of services should have new and different social competencies, to be active participant, to model her or his personal and professional development and be a creative factor in the organization.

These socio-economic requirements have several implications for the education system — it is no longer the training but the learning that is becoming the essence of the system and the personal development of the individual is the natural focus of the education process. The new paradigm is compatible with people's needs to develop and function perfectly in their human capacities.

Turning the focus from training to learning means that it is no longer so important what types of teachers should cover certain areas of knowledge and expertise, but it is much more important what types of skills and knowledge should the students acquire.

The new paradigm requires from the school to become a self training and learning organization – a place where the teachers themselves learn new skills and competences all the time and in this process set the standards, means of communication with students, means of interaction with the colleagues in the name of the better individual development of the student.

The school has to become „a genuine community of learning people in which administrators, teachers and students learn all the time how to perform better together in order that each and everyone gets the optimum”. **The opening of the school means the end of the traditional education system of formal training** and its transformation into a lifelong learning system.

Remodeling the relations between the three components of the lifelong learning — elementary and secondary education at school, adult education and the education environment is at the heart of the contemporary education system in transition. Primary and secondary education is the basis that young people receive before entering into adult life and this first stage encompasses the formal and informal education forms.

According to the UNIESCO definition of adult teaching and education it is „the complexity of organized educational processes regardless of contents, level and methods of whether they are formal or informal in character. These processes complement or substitute primary and secondary education...and thanks to them the adult develops her/his skills, enriches her/his knowledge, improves her/his technical or professional qualifications or receives an opportunity to direct her/his personal development in a totally new direction. These processes allow individual perceptions and attitudes to evolve in the twofold perspective of full-fledged personal development and participation in the socio-economic and cultural processes“. /8 p. 182/.

For the first time in the history of mankind lifelong learning and education becomes a reality for the major part of the population in developed democratic societies.

In broader terms it means society of knowledge and society centered on education, but in concrete terms it means it means restructuring and transformation of the relations between education, work and free time. Practically education becomes an integral part of human life in personal perspective.

The consequences for the education process are obvious — primary and secondary education are not the only period in human life for the accumulation of knowledge and skills, they are just the basis on which everyone can accumulate and build on in the next phases of life. Following this logic it is much more important to master the faculty of learning, whereas knowledge – the prime objective of education so far could be accumulated and acquired any time during the individual's life span thanks to the ability to learn.

Adult education surpassed within few decades the narrow frameworks of professional and vocational training. The change in the core or essence of knowledge, the new complex character of society, creating a society of free time where the role of employment and work

in human life is being reduced, the opening of education towards the society, unemployment as part of the social reality – all these developments drastically change the character and disposition of adult learning and education. The individuals' educational experience and CV is indicative of the identification and fulfillment of the given individual, it points out to her/his educational and personal accomplishment.

The educational environment in which the lifelong learning and education system operates needs to be modified and managed in twofold perspective. The new revolutionary idea of modern times is that the human being has the possibility to manage and direct its educational development and to maintain the context of this development, to construct the educational processes and environment, to tailor the educational CV, to develop conscientiously its identity in certain directions in contrast to the class divided, religiously and ethnically segregated personality of the past.

In social perspective the society itself is managing the education system and it is mostly the adults that influence these developments and the educational environment in which the adult education takes place. There are certain factors that can not be properly managed like – the media, the information society, the informal culture of schools, families, companies, communities, but still the manageable potential is significant – the conscientious managerial decisions directed towards the transformation of educational environment are increasing and they have an impact not only on the education system itself and the socially disadvantaged groups.

Another major tendency in education is its **decentralization**, the political localization of decision making on issues concerning education. The global vision is replaced by the local vision which is much closer and familiar to the regular citizen of democratic societies. In the process of localizing the various points of view and visions certain problems occur. They have to do with the actual commitment and involvement of local communities in the management of schools and the lack of sufficient local potential capable of formulating the issues and problems facing the education system, of visualizing these issues and defining the directions in which educational environment have to evolve. The following paradox occurs within the global process of putting the education in certain local contexts which gives

more legitimacy to the informal education and also changes the traditional de-contextualized system of formal education.

All these processes are taking place within the framework of revolutionary developments in the sphere of information technology, which also means:

- defining the educational modules which students could follow everywhere and at any time;
- learning and knowledge accumulation becomes more and more independent of the traditional education system and this is a major tendency that puts a lot of obstacles and traps for the traditional education system. From now on teachers and school curriculum have a powerful competition, accessible to the student at any time, capable of answering to the student's personal interests and needs. The student is no longer in need of such a complex mediator for her/his learning needs as the complex education system;
- acquiring information transfer and processing skills;
- acquiring communication skills and competences that would allow studying in a new information environment, that could be used as the basis of a life long learning process;
- Promotion of international relations and contacts via the huge international information exchange networks; development and exchange of programs, students and materials.

History of Non-formal education

Non-formal education is a part of the educational discussion from the end of the 1960's. This is a period of great social, economic and educational changes. The fall of the colonial system opens the door for the development of education for hundreds of millions of people. Something more, it signalizes the need of a completely new type of education for the adult population who becomes a part of social and political structures jumping there from the traditional forms of living.

Simple expansion of the formal schooling is a long term perspective but evidently could not be the only educational answer to these social

processes. Advance of technology and industrialization, the need for establishment of the administration are simply tasks which could not be solved within the model of the formal education or at least could not be solved fully.

The sudden entering of the masses into the social world, world of economics and politics and as well world of mass entertainment and of mass media couldn't not be managed within the existing educational systems and practices, opens the space for different other forms of education, and brings into life theories for long life learning, non-formal and informal education.

Non-formal education is an evident answer to some of the social and educational challenges in situation where learners are more than the formal education system could deal with, where most of them are adults and which makes not possible their incorporation into the formal system of education.

Researchers are pointing out several important features connected with non-formal education: relevance to the needs of the disadvantaged groups; concern with specific categories of persons; focus on clearly defined purpose; flexibility of organization and methods.

With the introduction of the concept and with the rapid growth of different educational forms and processes beyond the borders of the classic formal education system – the most evident dispute concerns the value of this new educational developments and their relation to the formal education system.

We have to point out that since communist revolution in Russia and consequent socialist revolutions after the Second World war the same problems did exist in the emerging socialist societies with their hastily driven industrialization and the influx of people into industry from the countryside with in the same time developing and expanding formal education systems. They initiated large programs for changing the consciousness, skills and social behavior of their populations using many of the forms that now are labeled as non-formal education. We have to point out literacy programs, but as well political education campaigns, health education campaigns which have been developed at a large scale.

Because of the relative isolation of the communist world up to the end of 60's and because of the little opened dialogue on the

developments in that part of the world all these processes have passed somewhat unnoticed and didn't raised the intellectual debate.

Once the idea of growing system of non-formal education in the Third world became popular many people looked for the developments in the socialist countries and tried to see the logic of non-formal education even in these so-centralized social and educational systems.

The development process is in fact an educational process and it should be viewed as such. We cannot therefore conceive of development in the absence of education more than of education in the absence of development. By the 1970's a number of Third world countries were beginning to accept the idea of non-formal education. It was clear that there existed a large scale and apparently growing problem of illiteracy. It was as well clear that the establishing and development of the modern society depends on the changes of thinking of the people in these countries which could not been accomplished in a short period of time only relying on the rather underdeveloped formal educational systems.

As Allan Rogers pointed out in an interview "in all planning and policy-making in relation to education in developing countries from 1968 until about 1986, non-formal education was seen as the panacea for all the ills of education in those societies. Most aid agencies included non-formal education in their portfolio of interventions, and the sums spent on it (much in Western countries especially USA for academics, research centres, consultants, publications and reports etc), were substantial". /9/

There was a shift amongst the donor agencies working in the Third World countries. There was a growing realization that development primarily depended on the people themselves and much more stress should be placed on improving their quality of life which was not possible without developing education. Once again breakthrough in education should not been accomplished only within formal education especially the realization of large scale programs for those who had been largely neglected – urban and rural poor.

Therefore it was a normal consequence that during the 1980s and since then, programmes labelled non-formal education have spread enormously throughout Third World countries. These programs included adult education projects and children's alternative schooling

/for out-of-school-youth/ where the focus was on those younger persons who were too old to go to school. They have less well qualified and trained teachers. In most of the countries of the Third world these new programs have a simplified form of curriculum. They often have different teaching-learning materials. They are frequently part-time and have more flexible dates of terms than the so-called formal schools.

And there is another important development which contributed to the rise and popularity of the idea of non-formal education - the so-called **“the world educational crisis”**. In another words the rapid expansion of technologies, social changes and growing social unrest pointed out to the limitations of the existing educational systems in the developed countries and to its inability to cope with the problems within the emerging new post industrial or knowledge society. The educational system which had been designed for the needs of the industrial capitalism was not anymore a solid foundation for the needs of the more opened, more inclusive, more social, more technological and more embraced by the mass media society.

The general dissatisfaction of the young generations in US, Western Europe and even in some of the communist countries /Poland, Czechoslovakia/ was a sign that something in the formal education system is wrong, that its almost taken for granted functions of socialization are exhausted if not broken.

The evident contradiction between more and more opened and fluid society and the rigid notwithstanding the expansion /from point of view of number of enrolled students and number of years of schooling/ educational system became undeniable.

Therefore emerging concept of the non-formal education was an opportunity for rethinking and reconstructing the educational process throughout the developed societies.

The conclusion was that formal educational system had adapted too slowly or didn't respond enough to the social and economic changes. This urgent need to develop formal education system in many countries did not correspond with the availability of the resources/ human, financial, material/ to satisfy the growing needs. This contradiction once again has opened the road for looking for different options, for support for the development of alternatives to the formal education.

We have to stress as well the conservative nature of the existing educational systems – they tended to follow rather than to anticipate and answer to the social and educational challenges. From this point of view is rather normal that the new educational developments have not come from within the system. The developments in the other social fields or in general from the broader society were the main source for non-formal education ideas and developments.

As we shall see UNESCO went ahead with the idea more or less at the same time of **lifelong learning and education** and with the notion of “the learning society”. It was logical development if we could understand the broader perspective the people connected with UNESCO had – they had an opportunity to investigate the changes in the former colonial countries, to compare with the developments in the developed countries and to place all this into the possibly broadest cultural, social and technological context.

So we could describe several important developments which had led to the appearance of non-formal education on a mass scale throughout the world.

From one side **modernization processes and social developments** in the communist world and after the 1960's in the countries of the Third world **which required mass education** here and now which could be based but could not be attained solely on the existing systems of education.

From the other side in the developed countries **non-formal education was the answer to the challenges of the post-industrial society, of the knowledge society**, of the service society which for its functioning could not further rely even on the vastly developed formal educational systems.

From this point of view the answers in the different parts of the world were very different. Non-formal education did emerge as a **structure for social development, social empowerment** and for the catch up in the world race for the Third world countries.

In the West non-formal education could be seen primarily as a **vehicle for personal development and empowerment**, for education dealing with the deficiencies of the formal education or as a necessary continuation of formal education under the paradigm of longlife learning.

Problems of definition and of drawing boundaries dominated the

discussions about non-formal education during the late sixties and the seventies. It was suggested, and sometimes still is, that non-formal education be categorised by the degree of formalisation of the learning process, or by the degrees of integration between education and its environment, or by the degree of flexibility in client participation, or again by all three.

One of the **first classifications is the one made by Coombs, Prosser and Ahmed (1973)** who distinguished between **formal education** (the institutionalised, chronologically graded and hierarchically structured educational system, running from lower primary school to the upper reaches of the university, generally full time and sanctioned by the state); **non-formal education** (comprising an educational activities organised outside the formal system and designed to serve identifiable clientele and educational objectives) with an remaining educational activities being categorised as **informal education** (the lifelong process by which every person acquires and accumulates knowledge, skills, attitudes and insights from daily experiences and exposure to the environment). /10/

Other researchers) suggested a new dimension to the Coombs taxonomy whereby each of the three forms of education may (or may not) possess some of the same characteristics as the other forms. For example, a specific type of secondary school includes non-formal characteristics (e.g. extra curricular activities) and informal ones (e.g. peer groups teaming).

Very practical guidelines for the purposes of data collection have been elaborated by the UNESCO Office of Statistics which prepared a manual for collecting national statistical data on adult education. The data gathering system has been adopted to include non-formal education by distinguishing between regular and adult education. /11/

(a) Regular education means the system that provides a 'ladder' by which children and young people may progress from primary schools through universities (although many drop out on the way). It is thus designed and intended for children and young people generally from age five to seven up to the early twenties.

(b) Adult education means organised programmes of education provided for the benefit, and adapted to the needs, of persons not in the regular school and university systems and generally fifteen years of age and older. The term 'Adult Education' is seen to be

synonymous with 'Out-of-School Education' and includes literacy education. "Adult education ... may be 'formal' or 'non-formal'. Formal education is that for which students are enrolled or registered (regardless of the mode of teaching used). By contrast, Non-formal education is that for which none of the learners are enrolled or registered". /12, p.15/

In socialist countries the provision of non-formal education has been related to the economic, political and social goals of the USSR. That's why the fundamental division here was between basic and supplementary with sub-divisions in each between general and vocational. Basic education (which roughly corresponds to the traditional school system from pre-school to higher education) aims to integrate a person into the system of social relations, whilst supplementary education aims to make people, already engaged in active life, adaptable to constantly changing social and production conditions.

In Canada / the case of a developed country/ the approach to the problem of non-formal education classification was rather different. The focus has been on the importance of the nature of the objectives pursued by the various institutions as the main criterion for classifying non-formal education activities. On this basis, have been distinguished **personal development activities; professional skill training, and popular education.** Personal development activities regroup learning processes aiming at the satisfaction of individual interests and abilities and of various cultural needs.

A hypothesis that there is a relationship between the level of development and the degree of expansion of non-formal education activities explains the different approaches to non-formal education. In this way are combined two different developments. Non-formal education mainly plays a complementary role for the poor who have been deprived of formal school education so that one would expect non-formal education to become less important with development. Thus, based on the data about education collected by UNESCO, apart from countries where there are extensive literacy campaigns, there is only a limited amount of non-formal education both in absolute and in relative terms in the poorest developing countries, which is mainly directed to the rural areas.

An opposite view is that the **range of non-formal education programs provided, and the opportunity to participate in them, depends upon the resources available to providers and to the public respectively**, so that there would be a wider range of non-formal education in developed countries.

According to the researchers from UNESCO the analysis for the 23 countries for which data were available shows a significant positive correlation between the rate of growth in GDP and the enrolment in adult education.

The explanation is somewhat simple: countries which are 'developing' faster and especially countries with high rates of participation in primary school also have high rates of enrolment in adult education. The traditional belief that non-formal education is mainly playing a compensatory role for the poor who have been deprived from school education does not seem to be confirmed by empirical data at country level.

More important, perhaps, is that the analysis of trends in enrolments within countries shows that with some exceptions there has been a general tendency for adult education enrolment to peak around 1980's and to fall thereafter. **High levels of formal education generate demand for non-formal education as well as for formal education;** Non-formal education is vulnerable in countries with low levels of socioeconomic development.

The analysis of the developments in non-formal education sector in socialist countries confirms that there is a special pattern of development. The first stage of development in these countries could be put in the period between Second World War up to the middle of the 70's. This was a period of rapid development of supplementary education understood as " outschool and adult education, which have been created to supplement regular formal education within the sphere of the prevalent strategy and planning of education" The second stage of non-formal or supplementary education is 'characterised by a weakening of the formal /i.e. school like/ characteristics of the formal educational system' together with an expansion of non-regular education that is, the rest of outschool education organised outside the control of central planning by enterprises, individual or collective private initiatives, etc.

In general the prevailing trend could be described as a shift in the roles of non-formal education from playing a parallel/substitute role towards that of an essential complement to the rigidly organised programmes of the regular education system. We have to note that this trend had been substantially changed after the fall of communist system by the end of the 20'th century.

Another important for our purposes approach to the history of the development of non-formal education is focused on the **changing nature of learning in modern education**. 'The massive institutionalisation of knowledge is one great discontinuity between the early nineteenth century and today. It is from this period that we may date the great transformation in the conditions of learning' /13, p.6/ Today we are entering into a period of deinstitutionalization of knowledge which process in fact is the basis of the development of non-formal education.

Historically in the beginning was the so-called **'self-help' or 'self-directed learning'**. This tradition constructed adult learning as individual social aspiration and mobility in what might be termed the de-politicised strand of adult education, which prioritises the personal and social development and fulfilment of the individual adult, exemplified by 'leisure-oriented' adult education.

The other development of non-formal learning is that of **collective or political self-education**, within a liberal or radical world view. This kind of education was inherent for the radical movements starting from 19 century and **very typical for the trade unionism**. They relied upon the dissemination and construction of ideas through activities, which were essentially and intentionally educational – such as public meetings, discussion groups, pamphlets and propaganda.

'Non-formal' education as a category according to another analysis could only emerge in opposition to 'formal' once mass formal education becomes meaningful. That's why the real history of non-formal education begins after the Second World War.

Most of the developments in the field of non-formal education could be connected with different theoretical approaches

Very important in the beginning were **'modernisation' theories**, resting on a social-democratic, reformist ideology - a reaction against the perceived failures of formal education systems, and therefore

indicated a need to restructure educational provision as a whole. On the other hand, it was also based on a version of **human capital theory** which emphasised the deficits of populations in the South, and saw not only their lack of skills and knowledge, but also the deep-seated attitudes and lifestyle of the peasantry as a brake on economic or social development. From this point of view the concept of non-formal learning was based on conscious anticipation and active, voluntary participation, as opposed to the unconscious social reproduction and adaptation characteristic of conservative types of learning offered in traditional schools.

The second stage of development of non-formal education in the third world was in the 1970's and theoretically has been based on the **dependency theory**. The existence of political pro-capitalist regimes required **emancipatory approaches to non-formal learning** at the individual and local level, and revolutionary at the national level. Inspired by educators such as Fanon and Freire, these approaches sought to combat direct colonialism and indirect neo-colonialism, including the 'colonial mentality' and subservience that had been engendered among the people of the South. This movement also coincided with 'emancipatory', but institutionally-organised projects such as literacy programmes and community education work with socially and economically disadvantaged communities.

The third stage is connected with the process of the formalisation of non-formal education in the South as well as in the North, where similar shifts could be detected in terms of privatisation, marketisation and an intensified emphasis on the instrumental subservience of education to economic interests.

At the same time, there was a growing focus on alternative routes into formal education in the North, as the radicalised educational projects of the previous 'moment' increasingly turned their attention to **'access' for marginalised groups**.

The fourth stage of non-formal education is connected with the post-modernity and is characterized by the emergence on populist theories of development, based on perspectives such as feminism, environmentalism and ethno-culturalism. They were advanced primarily by non-governmental organisations and focused on supporting and promoting 'authentic' experiences of non-formal learning, localised knowledge grounded in communities, and

sustainable practices rather than economic growth. This approach was ‘bottom up’ rather than ‘top down’, and aspired to be people-centred and empowering, rather than based on instrumental state intervention in relation to economic or political imperatives.

Nowadays in European Union some authors claim that we are reaching **a new stage where the key term is lifelong learning**. Lifelong learning is in the framework of the ‘audit society’ which is characterized by the growing domination of a culture of measured and tracked /audited/ accountability, which stresses the need to identify clear objectives or targets, measure the extent to which they have been achieved, and link funding directly to such achievements as far as possible. This audit culture is something rather new. It is not ideological neither tends to privilege or suppress particular settings for learning as in the past, but seek to ensure that all are ‘better managed’ and that funding is allocated in accountable ways.

The policy of European Union in the field of non-formal education

Non-formal learning has been a central theme of EU policy since the 1995 White Paper on education and training (European Commission 1995), and the European Year of Lifelong Learning, declared in 1996. The Lisbon meeting of European Councils in March 2000 was seen as the ‘decisive moment’ at which lifelong learning became a clearly established priority within Europe’s employment strategy. /14/

A Memorandum on lifelong learning was issued /European Commission 2000/, /15/ on which a wide-ranging consultation took place, and a resulting Communication on lifelong learning was issued late the following year /16/ /European Commission 2001/. Although one of its six ‘key messages’ is the need for ‘innovative pedagogy’ in lifelong learning, **the European Commission documents have little to say about theoretical perspectives on learning or pedagogy**. EU policy focused upon two major issues within the political dimension: **the need for increased social cohesion and engagement; and the need to improve economic competitiveness**, in part by increasing the skills and employability of workers through better education and training.

The major shift today is from education to learning and this historical and dramatic shift individualizes and de-politicizes education. European policy attention has centred on questions of ‘making learning visible’. Its main concern is to find ways of **identifying, assessing and accrediting non-formal learning**. Moreover, this concern is almost entirely directed towards the utilisation of such learning in the labour market once it has been rendered visible .

We do not have to forget that this is a political development which primary purpose is to direct policy and practice within EU member states; and to provide a basis for thousands of EU-funded projects and initiatives in member states.

Formal, Non-formal and Informal education

By many authors **non-formal education** was seen as the “ideal” form of education, far better in all respects than formal education. By others however it came to be seen as a **sub-system of education**, certainly not superior and by some as considerably inferior as formal schooling. By some non formal education could be described as a temporary “necessary evil in situation of crisis until formal schooling could be restored.

Let’s look at the basic definitions of different kinds of education.

Formal education : the hierarchically structured, chronologically graded 'education system', running from primary school through the university and including, in addition to general academic studies, a variety of specialised programmes and institutions for full-time technical and professional training.

Informal education: the truly lifelong process whereby every individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from daily experience and the educative influences and resources in his or her environment - from family and neighbours, from work and play, from the market place, the library and the mass media.

Non-Formal Education: any organised educational activity outside the established formal system - whether operating separately or as an important feature of some broader activity - that is intended to serve identifiable learning clienteles and learning objectives.

As we could see here the **distinction made between different forms of education is largely administrative**. Formal education is embedded with educational settings; non-formal education is administered by different organizations outside the formal educational system and informal education is centered around individual and its interactions with other family members, friends, colleagues and today its functioning in the world more and more constructed by modern media.

This administrative distinction is rather an oversimplification but it is a good starting point for trying to put educational developments in some order. This distinction simply reflects the fact that throughout the world an enormous formal educational system with its rules, processes has come to life and that this system to a certain degree and to the certain moment was rather closed one. This was closed system in the sense that it had defined its borders, criteria for acceptance of new people, its internal order and structure / curricula, programs, educational laws, methods of assessment of the results at all possible levels – individual, group, school and even assessment of the system itself. This system had become so sophisticated and self-sufficient that indeed all educational developments beyond it could be defined as “non-formal”.

The appearance of the concept of non-formal education and non-formal learning has announced that the expanding and uncontrolled omnipotence of formal education power has reached its own limits and had caused the rise of important developments outside its rigid borders, developments which have been considered by many as a challenge to the formal education but as well as an alternative road toward learning.

Table: Formal and Non-Education

	Formal education	Non-formal education
purposes	Long-term & general	Short-term& specific
	Credential-based	Non-credential-based
timing	Long cycle	/ Short cycle /

	preparatory / full- recurrent / part-time time
content	Standardized / Input individualized / centred output centred Academic Practical Entry requirements Clientele determine determine clientele entry requirements
delivery system	Institution-based, Environment-based, isolated from community related. environment. Flexible, learner- Rigidly structured, centered and teacher-centred and resource saving resource intensive
control	External / Self-governing / hierarchical democratic

From the upper scheme we could deduce one of the most discussed problems concerning essential differences between two kinds of education. If non-formal education is in the interest of learners, organization and curriculum planning should preferably be undertaken by the learners themselves. This approach should be defined as bottom up. It is more consistent with the ideas of social constructivism, with learner's empowerment and emancipation and with their transformation into social subjects, agents of change. The problem is that non-formal education realized in socialist countries and in the third world where predominantly top down education. Only in the North non-formal education shows certain characteristics of the bottom up approach and educational programs are designed sometimes by the learners or at least with the active participation of the learners.

Models of formal, non-formal and informal learning

Eraut presents five features of formal learning a prescribed learning framework /17, p.12/

- an organised learning event or package
- the presence of a designated teacher or trainer
- the award of a qualification or credit
- the external specification of outcomes.

From here follows that any significant learning that is not of this type should be regarded as non-formal. The same author defines different types of non-formal learning, based, for example, on the timing of the stimulus (past, current, and future) and the extent to which such learning is tacit, reactive or deliberative. He also classifies non-formal learning as either individual or social and either implicit or explicit.

Beckett and Hager argue that the current model of learning is based upon the Cartesian dualism of mind and body and on the premise that mind is superior than body. This paradigm could be described as follows:

- The best learning resides in individual minds not bodies.
- The best learning is propositional (true, false; more certain, less certain).
- The best learning can be expressed verbally and written down in books, etc.
- The acquisition of the best learning alters minds not bodies.
- Such learning can be applied via bodies to alter the external world. /18/

Nowadays the time has come for a new paradigm where learning is organic or holistic, engaging the whole person, so that intellect, emotions, values and practical activities are blended. From this point of view is difficult to postulate the superiority of one kind of learning. They argue that practice-based informal workplace learning, has the following characteristics.

- It is organic/holistic.
- It is contextual.
- It is activity- and experience-based.
- It arises in situations where learning is not the main aim.
- It is activated by individual learners rather than by teachers/trainers.

- It is often collaborative/collegial.

This is important conclusion which helps us to see in new light the nature of learning of the trade union members, usually connected strongly with the working place.

According to Livingstone “ Formal education occurs ‘when a teacher has the authority to determine that people designated as requiring knowledge effectively learn a curriculum taken from a pre-established body of knowledge ... whether in the form of age-graded and bureaucratic modern school systems or elders initiating youths into traditional bodies of knowledge’ /19, p. 2/.

Non-formal education or further education occurs ‘when learners opt to acquire further knowledge or skill[s] by studying voluntarily with a teacher who assists their self-determined interests, by using an organised curriculum, as is the case in many adult education courses and workshops’ /20, p.2/.

Informal education or training occurs when teachers or mentors take responsibility for instructing others without sustained reference to an intentionally-organised body of knowledge in more incidental and spontaneous learning situations, such as guiding them in acquiring job skills or in community development activities.

Informal learning is any activity involving the pursuit of understanding, knowledge or skill which occurs without the presence of externally imposed curricular criteria in any context outside the pre-established curricula of educative institutions. Thus all forms of learning are seen as intentional and all learning is assumed to be individual, rather than social. Thus, the boundary separating formal from non-formal learning becomes whether or not the learner undertakes the learning voluntarily.

Very practical guidelines for the purposes of data collection have been elaborated by the UNESCO Office of Statistics which prepared a manual for collecting national statistical data on adult education./21/

(a) Regular education, as defined in ISCED means the system that provides a ‘ladder’ by which children and young people may progress from primary schools through universities (although many drop out on the way). It is thus designed and intended for children and

young people generally from age five to seven up to the early twenties.

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”**Adult education** ... may be ‘formal’ or ‘non-formal’. Formal education is that for which students are enrolled or registered (regardless of the mode of teaching used). By contrast, Non-formal education is that for which none of the learners are enrolled or registered.

In socialist countries the provision of non-formal education has been related to the economic, political and social goals of the USSR. That’s why the fundamental division is between basic and supplementary with sub-divisions in each between general and vocational education. Basic education (which roughly corresponds to the traditional school system from pre-school to higher education) aims to integrate a person into the system of social relations, whilst supplementary education aims to make people, already engaged in active life, adaptable to constantly changing social and production conditions.

If we analyze different definitions of formal and non-formal education we could enumerate more than a dozen criterion which are used as a basis for differentiation: these criterions are: Education or non-education ; Location (eg educational or community premises) ;Learner/teacher intentionality/activity (voluntarism); Extent of planning or intentional structuring; Nature and extent of assessment and accreditation; The timeframes of learning; The extent to which learning is tacit or explicit ; The extent to which learning is context-specific or generalisable/transferable; external determination or not; Whether learning is seen as embodied or just ‘head stuff’; Part of a course or not; Whether outcomes are measured; Whether learning is collective/collaborative or individual; The status of the knowledge and learning; The nature of knowledge; Teacher–learner relations; Pedagogical approaches; The mediation of learning – by whom and how; Purposes and interests to meet needs of dominant or

marginalised groups; Location within wider power relations; The locus of control.

As we could see many of these criteria which are used to draw up the ideal types are contested; many are imprecise; some of the so called polar opposites could co-exist and it is not so clear which criteria are more important as the others. As some authors do point out even if only a majority of these criteria were rigorously applied, very little learning would fit completely into either ideal type. Learning is complex, and that differences between learning settings cannot be boiled down into two or even three major types.

The conclusion from this review is that the distinctions between different kinds of education are rather ambiguous and that our societies are moving toward one inclusive educational system where **formality and informality are rather aspects than definite and distinct models of learning and educational practices and that all learning includes diverse attributes of formality and informality.**

/22/

Aspects of in/formality in learning

All attempts to define formal and informal education and learning focus on different aspects of the process or of the systems

Process

More didactic, teacher controlled pedagogical approaches tend to be labeled formal while more democratic negotiated or student led pedagogies are often described as more informal. Another issue is **who provides** pedagogic support. Is it a teacher /formal/, a trained mentor or guidance counsellor /less formal/, or a friend or work colleague /informal/? Another important process indicator of the type of learning is assessment.

Location and setting

Is it in an educational institution, such as a school or college /formal/, or the workplace, local community or family /informal/?

Purposes

Here important is the extent to which learning is the prime and deliberate focus of activity, as in schools; or whether the activity has another prime purpose, and learning is a largely unintended outcome, as in the workplace or local community.

Content

This attribute covers issues about the nature of what is being learned and what are the outcomes expected. “Is the focus on the acquisition of established expert knowledge/ understanding/practices (more likely to be called formal), or the development or uncovering of knowledge derived from experience?”

Formal versus non-formal education

Non-formal education questions the traditional monopoly of formal education which is considered an education which supports usually existing social patterns and serves to the objectives of social exclusion. Under non-formal education could be developed more liberating critical patterns of education which could serve the needs of the underprivileged learners or in other words non-formal education should serve as a road toward social inclusion. That’s why nowadays education becomes such an issue in public debate.

The EU growth and development as well presupposes the growth of different dimensions of education. Formal education system is too rigid and confined to be able to deliver to the learners /and citizens of EU/ all necessary knowledge, competences and know how for living in developing in such an unique social structure. The learners should be prepared not to live in a static and clear world of the national state but must endure and handle the contradictions inherent in European unification and in worldwide globalization. To be able to do that they need new capacities which encompass a broad spectrum from ICT knowledge to effective communication, dealing with changes to conflict management and intercultural learning. Schools will have to change in order to incorporate these developments and to convey these new capacities. To accomplish this formal education must get rid of rigid organizational structures.

We have to remember that a multitude of reforms are going on in formal education **to incorporate elements of non-formal education**, such as individualized curricular approaches, student participation bodies, self-regulated learning, and allowing students to choose subjects according to their inclination as well as including ICT as a learning strategy.

And we do not have to forget that the question about the relationship between formal and non-formal education is **highly dependent on national context**. Traditions in the field of non-formal education are strong in the Scandinavian countries and Germany, but are rather weak in Southern Europe and were almost non-existing in communist countries. There is no one single answer and analysis to the problem, but each country must approach non-formal education–formal education issue in accordance with its own traditions and needs. non-formal education

The objectives, as well as the methodologies of non-formal education /learning, take into account the overall development and the personal experience of the learner. Therefore, non-formal education provides an appropriate framework for responding to individual aspirations and needs and for developing creative and social skills. The concept of non-formal education is an empowering the individual learner and the group of learners as well as an integral part of the development of knowledge and skills, a whole range of social and ethical values as referred to above. These are in particular human rights, tolerance, the promotion of peace, solidarity and social justice, inter-generational dialogue, gender equality, democratic citizenship and intercultural learning. Non-formal education is process-oriented and based on learning life skills which are more difficult to assess. Learning takes place through experience and through reflections on this experience. The methods are active, intercultural or experiential and participant-oriented, learning by doing.

On the other side the formal education system is mostly fact-oriented and focused on cognitive learning and acquiring knowledge. This knowledge and these facts can then be reviewed in tests and exams.

In order to understand both kinds of education Alan Rogers uses the theory of contextualization. /23/ According to him formal education is education which doesn't change when new participants join. At the other end of continuum is non-formal education where “educational programs or activities are designed by the facilitator/trainer/ teacher in association with the participants.” If one visits several such programs each will be doing different things with different aims and purposes, and it will be harder to identify the common elements.

The developments in both formal and no-formal education today are adding formal and informal elements to each program or course which means that parts of the program are determined by the participants, others are given by the delivering educational agency. Here emerges the idea of flexible schooling – where are combined the standardized elements common to all such learning groups with participatory elements characteristic for the group of learners or for the community concerned. Continuum in this case is: formal education - flexible schooling – participatory education /non-formal education/.

If we add to all this the problem of informal education the situation becomes much more complicated.

Informal education is the third element of the educational triad although originally in their work Coombs and Ahmed talked about “informal learning” – that means all learning that goes on outside of any planned learning situation (for example cultural events, community activities). Informal education as we saw is a lifelong process through which the individual acquires skills gathers and accumulates knowledge, develops attitudes practically from everywhere and through all his life beyond the specially structured educational situations. It could be from daily experiences, at home, with friends, from radio, TV, internet. What is important that this type of education is individual, usually unorganized and often unsystematic. Some authors do compare it with experiential learning. The problem is that we are living in a more and more structured world – the experiences which could lead to informal learning yesterday like exotic trips today are very carefully planned and structured by the tour agencies. The same is true for the internet sites as well. So informal learning loses its spontaneous character but mainly its individual character makes us to believe that it is somewhat different educational process.

The theory of lifelong learning once again changes the accent toward the informal learning or rather trying to see the stage of formal education as a preparatory step toward long life informal learning. Thus in this theory the clear division between formal and informal learning disappears so the school of tomorrow should lose a lot of its formal character.

Thus the adult learners of nowadays/ and to the bigger extent trade union learners/ could be described as moving toward self-directed learning or becoming self-directed learners.

One of the processes for opening or changing the formal education system is Internet which provides resources which are destroying the highly sophisticated system of formal education structured learning. That's why today many of educators are moving toward support and structuring of the prevailing mode of unstructured informal learning and the next step will be that this restructuring of learning will become more and more joint effort of the educator and the group of learners or between the educator and the individual learner.

The most important conclusion is that the clear distinction between formal and non-formal education are not making sense anymore. The growth of informal learning makes this distinctions not so important and even makes two systems / formal and informal education/ to look more and more alike. Very significant changes do take place in the system of formal schooling toward contextualization of learning, individualization of learning, toward contracting the amount of learning between the educator and the learner – processes which have been considered as signs of non-formal education.

The essence of non-formal education

If we will have a look at different definitions of non-formal education we could see that it has very different meanings for the different authors or for the different countries. For some (mainly Third world countries and authors), it meant every educational programme provided by the ministry of education apart from the schools and colleges /e.g. adult literacy classes/. For others, it means educational programmes like schooling provided by non-governmental agencies /NGOs/. For yet others, it comprised all the educational and training activities of other ministries /Women's Affairs, Health, Labour and Employment, Youth and Sports and Culture etc etc/. Others again included within non-formal education the individualised learning programmes for different and specific learning groups - women's discussion groups, for example, programmes which approximate closely to social work and specialist counselling, whether provided by the state, NGOs, commercial agencies or other civil society bodies

/religious organisations, trade unions, new social movements etc/. Some took it to mean every educational activity apart from schools and colleges, including radio and television programmes, the print media (newspapers and magazines etc).

These different interpretations simply do reflect the enormous role the education plays nowadays and that the idea of education and educational processes do penetrate every moment and almost every part of our lives.

Types of non-formal education

The point is that none of the predetermined sets of distinctions based on content, mode of delivery, enrolment, are appropriate. What one finds is a wide variety of activities which at one extreme **differ very little from what is going on in the traditional school system and which, at the other extreme, are very close to informal learning practices.** Moreover different kinds of courses provided by different kinds of institutions respond to different needs and serve different kinds of clientele. Each of these axes of variation /types of course, providing agency, kind of clientele/ can be /and has been) taken as the principal defining dimension.

At the same time, cutting across this ‘stage theory’ of the development of non-formal education, there is the **participative approach**, wherein the ideology and motivation of the providers is very different. Here non-formal education is seen as **a positive alternative to the school system**; whilst it typically concentrates on the provision of basic learning experiences, it is not necessarily restricted to that.

Four forms of non-formal education can be distinguished by reference to their relationship with the formal school and college system. These according to the researchers from UNESCO are: **paranormal education, popular education, education for personal development and professional training.**

They constitute four relatively autonomous segments within the educational field which differ from each other because they:

- respond to different educational needs;
 - serve different clienteles;
 - are being organized by different educational agencies; and,
- above all,
- have different relationships with the formal educational system.

Paranormal education

The first important area is composed of all kinds of educational programmes which provide a substitute for regular full-time schooling. The main objective of these programmes is to offer a second chance to those who, for various reasons, could not benefit from the regular school system at the ordained moment. The area includes various types of evening classes, official literacy programmes, distance education programmes, etc. Some of these programmes are only a condensed form of full-time day schooling, while others are more flexible and more A central issue for this segment of the educational field is to guarantee equivalences with the degrees awarded in the corresponding levels of the formal school system. In addition to these second chance 'para-formal' education programmes another form of 'school-like' education has been expanding rapidly in the three countries, which is the **private tutoring** of regular, formal school students. Private tutoring has a long tradition in many countries but has been booming in recent years. It has grown with the massification of formal education, as elite-and middle-class parents, who perceive their previous privileged position to be disappearing, have sought ways of retaining the competitive edge for their children. In our project for many of the participants –trade union members private tutoring is a real second career and even in the case of Bulgaria the growth of private tutoring puts in danger the functioning of the whole formal educational system.

Popular education

At the other extreme of the educational field, one finds a whole set of activities that explicitly try to stand aloof from the formal school system if not to oppose the basic principles of its functioning.

The central part of this segment of the educational field are the education initiatives which are explicitly directed towards the marginal groups of the population and include adult literacy projects, co-operative training, political mobilisation and community development activities. In most cases, these activities are run by voluntary organisations and stress collective development as opposed to individual competition. They are the least institutionalised sector of the diversified educational field. They take the form of informal

groups, often related to churches, political parties and socio-cultural associations. In a few cases they are supported by national or local governments and adapt the learning activities to the changing needs of the users.”

The model of collective promotion seems to be weakening in favour of a spectacular emergence of personal development activities. Those are based on: ”... a more individualistic concept of the role of the individual in the social development process, a concept which is reinforced by recent change in the functioning of the labour market and by the questioning of the role of the State in social development”. /24, p.83/.

Personal development activities

Learning for personal development purposes regroups a wide variety of activities which may differ from one country to another. In developed countries this heading covers a whole range of learning practices organized by cultural institutions (museums, libraries, cultural centres), by clubs, circles, associations promoting leisure time activities such as observation of the natural environment, playing music and/or listening to it, etc., by sports centres, by language institutions or even by centres of physical and mental health. If the learning of languages is included, the sector of personal development activities is as important as the sector of professional learning.

At the origin, the development of non-formal education was largely inspired by a **‘welfare approach’ aiming to satisfy the demands of groups who, for many reasons, could not fully benefit** from the formal school system. Although this approach has not disappeared, it is being largely overshadowed by a **‘market approach’** whereby different courses are being sold either for direct consumption as in the case of artistic-expressive courses or as human capital investment as in the case of vocational courses”. The market approach relates to a fundamental change in the society involving a redistribution of roles between the state and the civil society and concerning a redefinition of the relationship between the individual and the collectivity. There are dangers however connected with the emergence of a real private market of learning which follows the most traditional commercial practices without any organized control of the quality of the training being provided.

Second, individual demand is the regulating factor of the expansion of this educational sector. Those who have access to this educational market are mainly the elites and active urban middle classes education is increasingly becoming a personal consumer good both for itself and to improve the quality of other consumption.

Professional training

The various non-formal programmes of professional and vocational training organized by firms, trade unions, private agencies and also formal schools constitute the fourth important segment of the diversified educational field. The fact that non-formal education vocational programmes seem to serve more the upper layers of the economic system has to do with the finding mentioned earlier, that the higher the level of formal education, the higher the propensity to ask for more training.

The next important question while analyzing non-formal education is **“who does what to whom”**?

The diversification of the educational activities has been accompanied by a process of diversification of the organizing agencies and a proliferation of clientele.

The first distinction to be made is between the **public and the private sector**. It is often presumed that out-of-school education is synonymous of private initiative. But the available statistical data demonstrate that almost everywhere and even in trade union system of non-formal education the State is an important actor in the educational diversification process.

Another important trend is a diversification of organisers within the public sector both horizontally and vertically. A variety of ministries and public services are involved in running non-formal education programmes - local authorities are also taking an increasing share of the organization of various learning activities.

Inside the spectacular growth of the non-governmental sector, three main types of providers of non-formal education activities can be identified which are: the enterprises, the non-profit making organisations, and the profit making institutions.

The non-profit sector covers a wide variety of organising

agencies. In the focus of our interests are of course trade unions but we have to mention churches and the growing number / in thousands in each country/ of different non-governmental organizations.

The government usually is the most important organizer of paranormal education. It is also very much present in professional training and, to a lesser extent, in training for personal development. It is only marginally taking part in popular education /mainly through local level government initiatives/ and through joint initiatives of the local authorities with the local NGOs.

The enterprises are clearly concentrating on professional training although they might also get involved in some training activities aimed at the personal development of their employees.

The non profit-making organizations are mainly involved in popular education activities.

Finally, the profit-making institutions are mainly active in the area of professional and personal development training.

Trade unions are active in all fields but in the last years we could observe focusing on professional training going in hand with personal development training process which reflects the changing role of the trade unions in the personal and professional development of its members.

It is important to emphasise that where different agencies are active in the same training field, this does not necessarily mean that there is overlapping or competition between them. In fact, different organizers are often serving different client groups. Because the Government generally follows a welfare approach, its various training programmes are mainly directed towards the lower strata of the society who cannot pay fees and have relatively low standards of education. The churches and several militant voluntary organisations provide popular education activities to the marginal groups of the society, while the trade unions offer the same type of activities and some others to the members of their organizations who already have employment and are therefore relatively better off. In the personal development sector, similar distinctions can be made between the popular clientele that takes part in State controlled activities, the clients of better means who can afford private courses and the members of social organisations — such as trade unions — who can

take part in cheap courses offered by their respective organisations. In the the above presentation makes clear that there is no such thing as a typical non-formal education institution?

The next question is who benefits from non-formal education services? The international statistical data show that in the developing countries the majority of participants in adult education are young. First of all, for many youngsters non-formal education offers a second chance for obtaining certificates corresponding to the various levels of formal schooling. Secondly, many people tend to complete their knowledge and skills by taking non-formal education courses immediately after the completion of a given level of formal education. The average age of the learners will be increasing because of the proliferation of personal development activities.

Almost everywhere the proportion of female participants in adult education tends to be slightly superior to that of the male participants.

The main conclusion from the review of the people participating in non-formal education even inside trade unions is that those who have benefited more from formal education also benefit more from non-formal education.

Different social groups enrol in different kinds of courses. Non-formal education programmes are concentrated in the urban areas where usually is the strong trade unions presence as well. Enterprises offer courses to those who are already employed, while various social organisations such as trade unions, co-operative associations, etc. reserve their training programmes for their respective members. Commercial institutions select their clients on the basis of their capacity to pay fees.

Learning theories

In 1979 number of adult students has been asked what they do understand by learning. Their responses should be put into five\ categories:

1. Learning as a quantitative increase in knowledge. Learning is acquiring information or 'knowing a lot'.
2. Learning as memorising. Learning is storing information that can be reproduced.

3. Learning as acquiring facts, skills, and methods that can be retained and used as necessary.

4. Learning as making sense or abstracting meaning. Learning involves relating parts of the subject matter to each other and to the real world.

5. Learning as interpreting and understanding reality in a different way. Learning involves comprehending the world by reinterpreting knowledge.

Some people do summarize learning in just two broad and somewhat overlapping categories - **'knowing that' and 'knowing how'**. Learning how to do something is of course different from learning that or the process of acquiring some information. Talking more generally the definition of **learning is 'a process by which behavior changes as a result of experience'**. If we analyze this definition suddenly it becomes clear that there is some basic difference between the adult learning and learning at school. The **awareness of learning, the conscious use of the learning process** makes the difference.

Alan Rogers investigating this process goes further and distinguish between two types of learning: **task-conscious or acquisition learning and learning conscious or formalized learning**.

The first one: **task conscious learning** happens all the time:" it is concrete, immediate and confined to a specific activity; it is not concerned with general principles". Under this format of learning there is a consciousness of the task - the learners could learn unconsciously, but they are aware of some specific task- to play better certain piece of music, to perform better at the football field. The second type of learning could be defined as **learning conscious or formalized learning**. Here "learning itself is the task". Task conscious learning / better to cook/ but in the same time one could be involved in formalized learning if participate in television run cooking courses. In adult education our task is to **create the context in which both unconscious learning and formal learning are possible**. More than in formal education of young people we provide space for unconscious learning basing the learning process on activities and sharing experience but in the same time we try to structure the

learning process and to make the participants aware of this structuring as in the formalized learning. The first thing is that we have to explore the learning process being aware that the ideas and the concepts how people learn evolve over time. As we will see there are different schools explaining in different ways the learning process but this fact doesn't stop us to try take account of the different characteristics of the process in very complicated reality of the modern world. Some authors do discern three broad theoretical perspectives which reflect the shift from individualistic to organasmic approach to learning.

Behaviorist model

Behaviorist models are based on the premise that all behaviour is learned. Behaviours can be modified in response to external stimuli, and that only changes in observable behaviour could be regarded as learning. The teacher's role is to consider the eventual outcome that the student should achieve, to break down the learning process into a series of smaller tasks and to reinforce students' successful achievement of the appropriate learning goals. Reinforcements gradually become more intermittent as the learning becomes an integral part of the learner's repertoire of behaviour and skills. The attractions of the behaviourist model lies in its simplicity: there are practical, positive outcomes, achievements are easily identifiable and measurable, and everyone involved understands the goals and expectations implicit in the model.

The approach has been criticised because of its mechanistic emphasis on externally observable or measurable achievements. Most of adult learners nowadays could not be influenced in such a simplistic way – they do enter the learning process with their attitudes and values, with their hidden theories about learning and value of education and about learning relationships. They bear the burden of the social background and do pursue their own results very often in their own way- all this putting the application of the behaviorist model in doubt.

Constructivist model of learning

Cognitivist and Constructivist models regard learners as active participants in the construction of their own knowledge. Cognitivist models provided insights into the mental processes involved in

learning or information processing. The focus is on how individuals process information to solve problems and make sense of the world through organising mental models or schemata. Learning is: that reflective activity which enables the learner to draw upon previous experience to understand and evaluate the present, so as to shape future action and formulate new knowledge.

Constructivist models of learning built on cognitivist ideas, and deepened our understanding of metacognition (or learning how to learn), study skills, learning styles, deep and surface learning, and self-regulation. Individuals learn through their personal interactions with their environment. Subject disciplines are not static entities that can be passed from teacher to learner but are individually constructed, shaped by each person's unique experiences and perceptions. The teacher's role is to provide experiences and materials that foster the construction of individuals' learning. This model reflects better the process of learning of adults in the context of a democratic society – as free agents, making their plans and decisions, wanting to be active part of the learning process starting from its construction and ending with the assessment of its results and the realization of its follow ups.

Socio-cultural model

Socio-cultural models emphasise **the social dimension of learning and the influence on learning of wider social, cultural and historical contexts**. Learning cannot be understood only as an individual, internal process but as what is constructed as a result of interactions between people and the tools, language, signs and symbols that are inherent within particular settings or contexts.

People learn through their participation in social groups and communities, enabling them to arrange new knowledge in ways that have personal meaning. Learning occurs both individually and collectively (whether that's in a small group, class, team, organisation or online community) so that the collective knowledge is greater than and different from the sum of the knowledge of individuals.

Participation in different communities influences how we see ourselves and how others see us. The implications are therefore that teaching needs to be contextualised and provide opportunities for learners to solve problems and work collectively in different contexts.

The educators need to recognise the implicit as well as the tacit knowledge that participation in different groups requires.

Thus socio-cultural mode emphasize on the importance of the group learning which is more effective when it is more contextualized – which usually is the case of adult learning

Adult Learning

The simplest definition of adult education is the practice of teaching and educating adults. That's why the science for adult education is called andragogy / for adults/ to differ from the science for teaching children /pedagogy/. Adult education could take place practically everywhere – it could be formal, non-formal or informal. Formal adult education and most of non-formal education is viewed in terms of **professional development**, but increasing part of non-formal education and informal education is more and more personal development education, i.e. developing competences and skills, satisfying needs outside work.

The age of adult learners and their position in different spheres of social life are mainly responsible for the differences between educating children and educating adults. Adults have accumulated knowledge and experience and this process sometimes influence positively, sometimes negatively the learning process. This makes adult education very special education and raises the role of motivation immensely. With motivated adult learners everything is better for the educators, for the learners themselves. When however the learners are not motivated this creates enormous difficulties for the facilitator or trainer and almost ruins the learning process.

We have to mention that a whole science andragogy which is the art and science of helping adults learn. Malcolm Knowles the founder of andragogy distinguished five factors involved in adult learning. The five assumptions underlying andragogy describe the adult learner as someone who:

- Has an independent self-concept and who can direct his or her own learning
- Has accumulated a reservoir of life experiences that is a rich resource for learning

- Has learning needs closely related to changing social roles
- Is problem-centered and interested in immediate application of knowledge
- Is motivated to learn by internal rather than external factors.

These principles today are approved by the educators as a good foundation for developing programs for the design, implementation and evaluation of adult learning. We have to stress that something more – most of these principles are today in the foundation of every learner/ not only the adult one/. The simple conclusion if we would like to develop a program for adults is that we should involve learners in as many aspects of their education as possible and in the creation of a climate in which they can most fruitfully learn.

From this very learner centered approach do follow the basic principles of adult learning:

- Adults need to be involved in the planning and evaluation of their instruction
- Experience (including mistakes) provides the basis for learning activities
- Adults are most interested in learning about subjects that have immediate relevance to their job or personal life
- Adult learning is problem-centered rather than content-oriented

As we could see this approach is more connected with the humanist one and with social constructivist models of learning. The realization of this model is supported by the democratic context in the developed societies and usually by the high educational census of the learners and their developed awareness and ability for critical reflection. It is not possible to imagine even that the learner to take control of his or her learning in very traditional, authoritarian or totalitarian societies. From the point of view of modern developments in the learning theories and practices we could say that these principles should be applied to most of the learning in formal education which is gradually changes its rigid impersonal form.

Nowadays the adult people in European Union do have numerous different and differently structured opportunities how to learn. The situation very broadly is the following – the adult learner comes to the learning event/course, program and cet. / with his prior knowledge and life experience. In many of the cases already biological and psychological factors do play much more important role than in the process of initial education / including deterioration and disease processes/ and as well the sociocultural contest of each learner is well developed and personally formed. That's why it is so difficult but as well important to understand the **factors influencing adult learning**. We could enumerate: life experience/ in this number the events which had affected the cognitive abilities/; record of work / and in this as well the attitudes, skills built during this work experience/; previous adult learning experiences / positive, negative, individual , group experiences/; factors of aging; the intensity of adult learning / is there a sustainable pattern of learning?/.

We have to investigate the **characteristics of adult learners** which are important for every attempt to design a program, course or event, short educative experience on adult education. These characteristics are based on the assumptions of the prevailing theories in the field of education by the turn of 20st century and do reflect the educational reality in developed post industrial societies, therefore they are not universal and even in our societies they could be applied with some caution especially when we work with adult learners with special educational needs or in disadvantaged position.

Adults are autonomous and self-directed. Adult learners are free willing individuals making conscious choices concerning the learning – objectives, process, content, objectives. Therefore for the success of the educational process is important their perspectives about what topics to cover and their active participation. In another words they should bear responsibility for the learning process and not only the trainer/ facilitator, animator/.

Adult learners do possess considerable amount of life experience and knowledge which even if not directly related with the concrete learning process influences immensely their perspective, motivation and attitude toward it. That's why it is necessary this background knowledge and experience to be connected with actual learning and

thus it could become enormous source of motivation and of transformative power. The learning problem or the art of the adult educator is how to draw out participants' experience and knowledge which is relevant to the topic.

Adults are very much goal-oriented in comparison with young learners which very often are most content or process oriented. When we make a design of adult learning training course we could answer at first the inevitable question – what we are going to attain in this process, what are our goals what will be the expected result.

Adults are relevancy-oriented or very practically oriented. They simply look for a reason for learning and not learning for the sake of learning. Learning has to connect very clearly and directly with their work or with their life routine. When we would like to work on projects with adult learners we have to make together the choice of such projects that reflect their own interests.

Next important problem connected with adult learners is what could **motivate** them. Moving simply why adult learners come to the classroom when we organize different educational activities.

The researchers have identified six sources of motivation.

The first one has to with **social relationships**: the learners come in order or meet new people, to start new relationships. Sometimes they come in order to fulfill anyone else **expectations**: to comply with instructions from someone else very often their boss at work. This is linked very often with another important source for motivation **personal advancement** adult learners want to achieve higher status in a job, secure professional advancement. a requirement for competence or licensing, an expected (or realized) promotion, job enrichment, a need to maintain old skills or learn new ones, a need to adapt to job changes, or the need to learn in order to comply with company directives. Next source of motivation which could be met more and more often is **social welfare**: participants want to improve ability to serve mankind, prepare for service to the community, and improve ability to participate in community work. The last one which as well is not a rare one is **escape/stimulation**: in each adult learners group we could meet participants who attend mainly because they would like to relieve boredom, provide a break in the routine of home or work, and experience something new.

On the other side in adult education very important are as well **the barriers** that could stop the learner from active participants or could make him resign from the process at all. At first place adults have many responsibilities that they must balance against the demands of learning. Some of these barriers include lack of time, money, confidence, or interest, lack of information about opportunities to learn, scheduling problems, "red tape," and problems with child care and transportation.

Of course it is very easy to say that the **best way to motivate adult learners is simply to enhance their reasons for enrolling and decrease the barriers.** This means a very careful study of the participants in educational process, talking with them about their motivation and the obstacles on their way to learning, a dialogue which could last all the time during the course, or program or project. Based on this sincere exchange of personal information about attitudes toward learning it could be developed a motivating strategy.

Validation

The concept of validation

Validation of non-formal and informal learning is an emerging activity in which objectives and responsibilities need to be clarified. This need reflects the conceptual diversity that characterises the field. The Communication of the European Commission on lifelong learning (2001) stressed that learning takes place in a wide variety of settings, not limited to those provided by formal education and training. /27/

From experimentation to permanent systems

Validation systems can no longer be seen as isolated, but that they are connected to other initiatives, notably occupational, educational and assessment standards, modularised and credit-based education and training systems.

In our countries Bulgaria, Slovakia and Cyprus still prevails the process of experimentation and the state of uncertainty. Formal education and training providers have so far dominated the field, using validation as a means to increase flexibility and to open up for alternative learning outcomes.

National policies on validating non-formal and informal learning concentrate on a limited number of features.

Standards

The standards (references, norms) are crucial to developing national systems for validation. While traditional standards frequently have mixed input and output criteria, in an increasing number of countries, the standards focus on learning outcomes.

Modules

In many states of the European Union the development of modules is closely related to the introduction of systems for validating non-formal and informal learning. These countries reorganise education and training through establishing units and modules to delimit learning 'domains' suitable for validation.

Developing pathways and connections

Increasingly, national policies serve to link formal, non-formal and informal learning. Standards and modules are elements in this strategy, the aim of which is to combine learning from different settings in a flexible way. A qualification can either be achieved by following a specific learning pathway or through a diversity of them.

There are five main methods of collecting evidence of learning outcomes: traditional tests and examinations; declarative methods; methods based on observation; simulations; and evidence (physical or intellectual) of work.

Social partners and stakeholder commitment

Systematic and strong commitment from social partners and other stakeholders is noted in the new approaches to validation. Involving social partners and of a variety of stakeholders is necessary to provide confidence in the emerging approaches and systems.

Validating non-formal and informal learning can be seen as a way of breaking down the isolation of formal education and training systems and of strengthening the links to working life and society.

Let's have a look at common European principles for validating non-formal and informal learning

A set of Common European principles for validating non-formal and informal learning was agreed by the 25 EU education and training ministers in May 2004. /28/ The purpose is to increase convergence between different national and sector systems for validation and to contribute to lifelong learning policies.

Individual entitlements

Validating non-formal and informal learning should, in principle, be a voluntary matter for the individual. However, there should be equal access and equal and fair treatment for all individuals. The privacy and rights of the individual are to be respected.

Obligations of stakeholders

Stakeholders should establish, in accordance with their rights, responsibilities and competences, systems and approaches for identifying and validating non-formal and informal learning.

Confidence and trust

The processes, procedures and criteria for identifying and validating non-formal and informal learning must be fair, transparent and underpinned by quality assurance mechanisms.

Credibility and legitimacy

Systems and approaches for identifying and validating non-formal and informal learning should respect the legitimate interests and ensure the balanced participation of the relevant stakeholders. Assessment should be impartial and mechanisms should be put in place to avoid any conflict of interest. The professional competence of those who carry out assessment should also be assured.

Conclusion

As we could see the debate concerning the essence, the role and the place of non-formal education still continues although without the intensity typical for the past several decades. This debate now finds its place within the modern educational paradigm of longlife learning.

Nobody anymore questions the importance of non-formal learning/education for the development of the learner or of the group of learners for the development of the community or of the society.

There is a general agreement that all learning situations contain attributes of informality. Those attributes and their interrelationships influence the nature and effectiveness of learning in any situation. Those interrelationships and effects can only be properly understood if learning is examined in relation to the wider contexts in which it takes place.

Today the right question is not which type of education is superior – there is an agreement that all they are necessary within the broader educational paradigm.

There is a constant pressure to make formal learning less formal – through the use of less structured approaches to the support of learning, provided by a rapidly growing army of classroom assistants, learning advisers, mentors and the like, who lack full teaching or guidance qualifications. Though these trends are in some ways opposed, they seem to represent two arms of a concerted movement – to integrate informal and formal learning into one more widely applicable hybrid.

Non-formal education is a key part of the civic society activities but as well it turns to be more and more formalized and to be compatible not contradictory to that under the formal education system.

The children, the parents, the trade union members, the adult learners more and more do plan and conceive their educational career as a project within the mixed fields of formal non-formal and informal learning and education.

The urgent problem today is not about non-formal but about informal learning – how it could become legitimate part of the educational system, one which has to be added to the already well linked formal and non-formal education.

By the end of the 1960s French philosopher Roger Garaudy announced the concept of realism without borders / in the field of art and of literature/.

Today we could speak about **education without borders**, where all forms serving to the development of the personality are interconnected in one indivisible whole.

From this point of view the trade unions are playing their role of institutions which are trying to build their educational activities on the premises of a more and more codified system of education, which are turning into sites for the development of non-formal and informal education and who are trying to support their members on the road of longlife learning and education.

Even more, trade unions are remaining the biggest institutions beyond the institutions of the formal educational system who are trying to put in a whole all three aspects of modern learning and education.

Annex:

University course on non-formal education.

Since 2008/09 there is a non-formal education course / Bachelor degree/ under the Faculty of Education – University of Sofia@ St. Kliment of Ohrid”. The future graduates will look for a professional career as consultants, educators and providers of on-educational services and activities and as adult educators

Curriculum

I. Basics of non-formal education – 90 credits

Introduction into non-formal education 30h. 2credits

History of non-formal education 60 4

General psychology 60 4

Education – society 60 4

Theory of education 90 6

Developmental psychology 60 4

ICT 90 6

Andragogy 60 4

Vocational education 60 4

Pedagogy of Leisure 60 4

Economics and Non-formal education 20 2

Research in the field of Non-formal Education 60 4

Didactics 90 6

Management of Education 60 4

Social Pedagogy 60 4

Educational Psychology 60 4

Educational Policy 60 4

Alternative pedagogical theories and practices 60 4

Civic Education 60 4

Psychological characteristics of adult learners 60 4

Methodology of Adult Education 60 4

Models of Adult Education 60 4

II module Basic elective courses – 40 credits

All the students should elect 10 courses from the two sub modules / five in each sub module/

Sub module I: Adolescent non-formal education

Human rights and children rights education 60 4
 School for parents 60 4
 Moral education 60 4
 Environmental education 60 4
 Animation 60 4
 European clubs in outschool activities 60 4
 Non-formal education for children with special educational needs 60 4
 Non-formal education for children with deviations in behavior 60 4
 Non-formal education in the community 60 4

Sub module2: Non-formal education for adults

Literacy programs for adults 60 4
 Adult education for leisure time 60 4
 Health education and Sexual education 60 4
 Intercultural problems in adult education 60 4
 Distance learning for adults 60 4
 Assessment in adult education 60 4
 Education in the sites of confinement 60 4
 Vocational in-service training 60 4
 Ezoteric systems for development of personality 60 4
 In-service training for adult education 60 4
 Career guidance consulting mediation
 Organizational development and consulting
 Staff selection

Profiling subjects

Each student elects module C or module D and three courses from module E

Module C

Consulting and Mediation in the field of Non-formal education -32 credits

Students should attend 3 mandatory and 5 elective courses

Career guidance and Consulting 60 4
 Organizational development and Consulting 60 4
 Consulting for people with special needs 60 4
 Family consulting 60 4

Normative basis of Consulting 60 4
 Social adaptation and Consulting 60 4
 Parenting and Consulting 60 4
 Diagnosis and development of learning skills 60 4
 Prevention of violence 60 4
 Consulting of dependencies 60 4
 Consulting children and adults from minorities 60 4

Module D Management of educational services and activities 32 credits

Organizational culture and behavior 60 4
 Organization of non-formal education training 60 4
 Strategic and innovative management 60 4
 Teamwork 60 4
 Media education 60 4
 Public Relations 60 4
 Personal career guidance 60 4
 Financial management 60 4
 Project development and management 60 4
 Marketing and advertisement of educational services 60 4
 Human Resources development 60 4

Module E Other Elective courses - 12 credits

Sub module 1

Foreign language 60 4
 Sport 60 4
 Communication with people with impaired hearing 60 4
 Paneuritmics 60 4
 Philosophical anthropology 60 4
 Knowledge of religions 60 4

Sub module 2 Educational activities in the community

Outschool activities with children 60 4
 Outschool activities in youth centers for educational services 60 4
 Educational services in the civic society 60 4
 Narrative pedagogy 60 4

Sub module 3 European educational network

European education developments priorities programs 60 4

European partnerships and networks 60 4

Transfer of credits and mobility in European educational network 60 4

European intercultural dialogue 60 4

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