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INFORMAL EDUCATION: THE KEY TO MODERN LEARNING AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

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Abstract. According to the UNESCO Glossary of Education, informal education is education that is institutionalized, intentional and planned by the subject of educational activity. The defining characteristic of informal education is that it is a supplement, alternative and/or complement to formal education in the process of lifelong learning. It is intended for individuals of all ages, but does not necessarily involve a continuous pathway of learning. **The purpose of the study.** To study and characterize the forms and methods of organizing informal educational activities in Ukraine. **Results.** Informal education involves primarily self-study, self-education, and the acquisition of new knowledge, namely, various trainings, online education, community education, professional internships and courses. The main advantage of non-formal education is efficiency. In a relatively short period of time, you can significantly improve your knowledge and skills. The development of non-formal education is promoted by global organizations. Ukraine does not yet have adopted standards for informal education, but there are a number of NGOs that are engaged in its development. The open educational resources include open textbooks and books, repositories and journals, audiovisual resources, and online courses. Among the massive online courses, Coursera is a platform that offers hundreds of free courses in various disciplines from universities around the world. **Conclusions.** It is informal education that provides an opportunity to learn, to form one's position on the surrounding reality, and allows people of all ages to engage in various forms of social activity.

Key words: Non-formal education, professional development, educational programs, self-education, training, open educational resources, online platforms.

Introduction.

The professional development of academic staff of professional higher education institutions involves a continuous process of acquiring new and improving previously acquired professional and general competencies necessary for professional activity, provides for continuous self-education and other types and forms of professional growth and can be carried out through formal and non-formal education, internships, professional activities, etc. [1]. The Law of Ukraine «On Education» provides the following definition: «Informal education is education that is obtained, as a rule, under educational programs and does not provide for the award of state-acknowledged educational qualifications by level of education, but may result in the award of

professional and/or partial educational qualifications» [2]. According to UNESCO's classification, non-formal education includes curricula, courses, seminars, clubs, lectures that are organized and conducted outside the traditional education system. Informal education takes place within a formal, formal environment, but is not officially recognized, and learning outcomes are not always confirmed by relevant documents. According to the UNESCO Glossary of Education, non-formal education is education that is institutionalized, intentional and planned by the subject of educational activity. The defining characteristic of informal education is that it is a supplement, alternative and/or complement to formal education in the process of lifelong learning. It is often introduced to guarantee the right of access to education for all. It is intended for individuals of all ages, but does not necessarily involve a continuous pathway of learning. In particular, it can be short-term and/or low-intensity programs provided in the form of short courses, workshops and seminars [3].

The purpose of the study. To study and characterize the forms and methods of organizing informal educational activities in Ukraine.

Results of the study. Informal education involves primarily self-study, self-education, and the acquisition of new knowledge, namely, various trainings, online education, community education, professional internships and courses. It is based on three principles: «learning by doing» - gaining knowledge through practical tasks; «learning to interact» - often involves working in groups or teams; «learning to learn» - analyzing one's own experience and forming new knowledge from it. Informal education also includes classes with tutors or trainers, advanced training and other activities that allow you to develop your skills. The main advantage of non-formal education is efficiency. In a relatively short period of time, you can significantly improve your knowledge and skills.

The development of non-formal education is promoted by global organizations such as UNICEF, UNESCO, the European Union, the Council of Europe and others. That is why non-formal education is more developed in Europe and is perceived by European employers on a par with formal education [3]. It is undeniable that non-formal education is a modern educational trend in developed countries and at the same

time a determining factor in employment and social security, economic growth and competitiveness of the population and the state, which shows that it is not limited exclusively to the field of education [4].

Ukraine does not yet have adopted standards for informal education, but there are a number of NGOs that are engaged in its development: Prometheus, Ukrainian Leadership Academy, etc. The International Centre for Non-Formal Education has created an online platform for non-formal education to achieve the following goals: to promote public awareness of educational programs, to establish communication between those wishing to study and educational institutions, to create conditions for the full realization of the individual's potential and to increase his or her social and civic activity and responsibility.

The term «Open Education Resources» was coined more than 20 years ago, and every year these resources are becoming more and more popular. They include open textbooks and books, repositories and journals, audiovisual resources, and online courses. Open audiovisual resources include CC Research (search for images, music, videos on various platforms), Smithsonian open Access (an initiative of the Smithsonian University that offers access to more than 2.8 million images under the open CC license), TED Talks (video presentations from TED, a non-profit organization dedicated to the dissemination of ideas), YouTube EDU (video lectures, presentations, interviews from US universities).

There are a number of open educational resources in the form of textbooks and books, namely the Directory of Open Access Books (4589 academic peer-reviewed books from 155 publishers), EdEra Books (a social project of interactive educational literature), OER Commons (a public digital library of open educational resources), Open Culture (access to 200 open textbooks from famous scientists and up to 1700 free online courses from leading universities of the world) and others; in the form of repositories - arXiv (the largest open archive of electronic publications of scientific articles and their preprints in physics, mathematics, astronomy, biology, computer science), CORE (a significant aggregator of open scientific publications in the world), OpenDOAR (catalogue of open access repositories) and journals - Directory of open

access journals (online catalogue of open access journals), Explore PLOS journals (non-profit scientific and publishing project).

Among the massive online courses, Coursera is a platform that offers hundreds of free courses in various disciplines from universities around the world. The platform is operated by 275 universities and is based on four levels: global, flexible (free course demos, lectures on demand and scheduled), accessible, and relevant. Coursera has opened more than 6,500 courses in 400 specializations for Ukrainian students, and there is also Coursera for refugees. The EdX platform offers many open, interactive English-language courses. A free course on Russia's invasion of Ukraine from the University of Michigan covers the events of the Russian-Ukrainian war. The Open University of the Maidan is an educational initiative that disseminates ideas and promotes the development of civil society in Ukraine. The most well-known Ukrainian educational platform is Prometheus, with 2.5 million students and more than 350 courses, which provides access to university-level courses for free and for a fee.

Summary and conclusions.

The theoretical analysis of the essence of the concepts of «informal education» and «leadership potential», as well as the experience of non-formal education programs around the world, has shown that such education can become a source of competence for a modern person and a trigger for unlocking their leadership potential and activating internal resources for action in the benefit of the community. It is informal education that provides an opportunity to learn, to form one's position on the surrounding reality, and allows people of all ages to engage in various forms of social activity.

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