

ADULT EDUCATION MANAGER

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UDK: 374.7:005.95

Abstract

Globalization in the field of education is associated with the impact of global tendencies on national educational strategies and policies. Since the beginning of the 21st century, these have been the "philosophy" and the tendencies for lifelong learning and life-wide learning, which require the development of international and national strategies and measures to engage adults in educational activities and to expand the market of educational services. The organization and implementation of these services, the management of the adult education system and of the adult training process is a task for specific educational managers – adult education managers. This report examines the specifics of the activities and the tasks of adult education managers (at different levels of management), the qualities and the competencies they need in order to cope successfully with their responsibilities as well as their university training. The requirements for adult education managers' education/training and status in the USA and New Zealand are presented.

Keywords: Education, Adult education, Educational management, Adult education manager.

Globalization in the sphere of education is a fact, which is related to the development of this sector in different countries over the world. Since the beginning of the 21st century, it has emerged as the impact of global tendencies on national education strategies and policies, such as those for lifelong learning and life-wide learning. They require the development of international and national strategies and measures for involving adults in educational activities and expanding the market for educational services. At the level of international decision-making, the conferences on adult education CONFINTEA of UNESCO, which are held every 12-13 years, play a key role (Gyurova, V., 2013, para 2). In different countries, the management of the system of adult education, the various institutions providing educational services for adult learners, the organization and the implementation of these services and the process of adult training is a task of specific educational managers – adult education managers.

What do adult education managers do?

Regardless of the level on which s/he operates, like any other manager, the adult education manager performs the following tasks:

- *manages the unit for which s/he is responsible* at the respective management level (from the organization as a whole to a team formed for a specific task);
- *manages people* – motivates them, guides them, controls them; resolves conflicts; acts as a leader; takes care of people's career growth and development through training and motivation for further education or learning;
- *manages the work* – develops plans and strategies, sets goals and makes decisions for their implementation, devises structures for fulfilling the tasks, assesses results (plans and designs, organizes and controls);

- *manages the operations required to fulfill the task* – this is a part of work management – designing, programming, and supervising the specific activity, making managerial decisions, controlling and assuring quality.

In other words, adult education managers:

- *manage resources* – human (people), material (raw materials, technology, equipment), financial (money, funds), intangible (information, norms, values, labour market);
- *perform managerial functions* – planning, making prognoses, goal-setting, decision-making, organizing, coordinating, motivating, leading, controlling, analyzing, informing, communicating, etc.;
- *make managerial decisions* – set themselves goals concerning the fulfillment of a specific task (problem); gather relevant information, develop alternative solutions, evaluate the outcomes of any decision, select the optimal solution, apply it, measure the result, and recapitulate.

In general, the goal of the managerial activity of education managers at various levels of adult education management is to achieve stability, quality and efficiency of the functioning of: the system of adult education, by operating a modern state policy in this sphere; the institutions providing educational services for adults; the individual courses for adult learners; each session of each course.

According to the goal, there can be specified *the main tasks* of adult education managers at different managerial levels in adult education:

- ***At national level***, educational managers:
 - perform strategic, tactical and operational management of the system of adult education;
 - develop working modern strategies and policies which ensure the effective functioning of the system of adult education;
 - develop a policy and a system for validating self-acquired competences of adults;
 - develop adequate modern legislation, facilitating the implementation of the global priorities (strategies and tendencies) for lifelong learning and life-wide learning;
 - develop forms of financing educational activities with adult learners;
 - examine the demands of the market of educational services for adults, in accordance with the current priorities and tendencies;
 - examine the demands of the labor market in order to organize and facilitate educational services for adults;
 - ensure accessibility, flexibility and permeability of the system of adult education;
 - develop a policy for personnel training (including managerial staff – educational managers) for the system of adult education;
 - use the opportunities provided by international programs to improve the system, the functions and qualification of the specialists for the field of adult education;
 - provide citizens with information about educational activities and projects concerning different categories of adult learners (target groups);
 - ensure equal access to educational services to all adults and in particular to disadvantaged people.
- ***At institutional level***, i.e. *institutions offering educational services for adults*, educational managers:
 - examine the demands of the market of educational services for adults in order to offer up-to-date courses; constant updating of the calendar and the program of the courses offered;

- examine the demands of the market of educational services for adults in order to maintain a high level of competitiveness of their own institution;
- study the social and individual needs in order to update the calendar and the program of courses according to the needs of the potential students;
- perform strategic, tactical and operational management of the institution;
- provide useful contacts with the external environment of the institution, including employers, the media, etc.;
- provide staff for preparation, organization and implementation of quality educational services for adult learners;
- provide the best teachers for the institution;
- attract partners and sponsors;
- maintain a good and modern material and technical base and ergonomic conditions for the training;
- provide good advertising for the institution and the individual courses;
- use international programs and projects for funding educational activities and training of teachers and organizers;
- purposefully seek feedback on the effectiveness of the courses offered.
- **At the level of training (the educational process)** educational managers are responsible for:
 - the preparation and the implementation of an effective educational process;
 - improving the qualification of the teachers of adult learners;
 - providing flexible educational programs;
 - improving the quality of the educational resources and materials needed for the classes;
 - purposefully seeking feedback on the effectiveness of the training.

In the classroom, the role of the manager is assumed by the teacher (or the trainers) of the course. S/he:

- makes diagnostics of the group of learners;
- plans and adapts the educational content according to the needs of the group, the goal and the objectives of the course;
- structures the curriculum in terms of topics and schedules;
- develops a portfolio of the course;
- prepares materials for the participants;
- manages the educational work by using the group dynamics;
- coordinates the implementation of the program and the plan of each class;
- monitors the observance of the schedule of the class and, as a whole, the observance of the conditions for the realization of an effective learning process;
- assesses the effectiveness of each class and the course as a whole.

Because the teacher educates adults, s/he must involve them actively in the educational process. Taking into account their need to self-regulate, s/he should encourage them to plan and organize their learning activity to be *managers of their own learning*.

Qualities and competencies of adult education managers

The implementation of the various managerial activities requires that managers have certain qualities, including: ability to work well with others, high level of motivation and positive self-esteem, objective self-assessment, ability to use power efficiently in the execution of their tasks, discipline, precision and responsibility to their work. However, in order to successfully

fulfill all their duties, educational managers in the field of adult education should have specific competencies – a basic core of knowledge, skills and attitudes related to:

1. the management of the system of adult education and of the various institutions offering educational activities (services) for adult learners;
2. the management of the people in the system of adult education and the staff in the individual institutions offering educational activities (services) for adult learners;
3. the management of the work – of the system of adult education functioning and of the operations related to planning, organizing, implementing and assessing the effectiveness of courses, programs and activities for adult education offered by different institutions.

The core competencies of adult education managers include knowledge and skills in the following areas:

- General theory of management – it is at the basis of the managerial culture of adult educational managers, teaching them how to manage best so as to ensure the survival and the prosperity of the system and of the educational institutions for adult education in competitive conditions.
- *Andragogy* – it provides basic knowledge about the organization of educational services for adults, the opportunities for adults to learn (within the system of formal and non-formal adult education), the specific characteristics of adults as learners and the educational process with adult learners.
- *Introduction to educational management* – it provides basic knowledge about education, educational policy, educational system, educational institutions, educational activities, educational process, and their management.
- *Adult education management* – it provides basic knowledge about the specifics of the management of the system of adult education, the management of the various institutions providing educational services for adults, and the management of the educational process with adult learners.
- *Organizational management* – it provides knowledge and skills related to various aspects of the management of the organization: organizational diagnostics, strategic management, organizational management, operational management, educational leadership, innovation management, organizational culture.
- *Economy, finance and budget of education and educational services for adults (at different levels)* – it provides knowledge and skills related to sound budgetary management (including in times of crisis), attracting additional funds for the organization, cost containment without compromising the quality of educational activities, signing contracts, etc.
- *Marketing and advertising* of educational services for adults.
- *Human resource management in education* – it provides knowledge and skills related to personnel management (of human resources), PR strategies, quality management in the institutions for adult education.
- *Leadership* – it provides knowledge and skills related to making managerial decisions, leadership styles, consulting, the bodies for managing and supporting managerial activities in institutions for adult education as well as the implementation of a manager's leadership function;
- *Information technologies in adult education* – it provides knowledge and skills related to the place and role of ICT in adult education, with an emphasis on their applicability in the work of an adult education manager.

Adult education managers also have to apply the principle of lifelong learning in order to maintain and improve their professional competence. Depending on their managerial position, they can seek purposefully additional specializations in: Educational policy in the field of adult education; Models for managing systems and structures for adult education; Management of quality education; Innovation management; Risk management in the sector of adult education; Management of the educational process with adult learners; Educational management in the system of adult education; Learners' rights as a management problem, etc.

When offering relevant up-to-date programs in the field of adult education management at the national level, international experience can be used accordingly. Many American universities, for example, offer bachelor's, master's and doctoral programs which prepare students for educational managers and administrators in formal and non-formal adult education (see: Gyurova, V., 2013, Appendix 6). The bachelor's degree in educational administration is the entry level for a career in management – for the position of an office manager, a student coordinator or a dean of administration (staff) in a post-secondary school (for adult education). Working in the sector of non-formal adult education in the USA requires a minimum of a bachelor's degree and additional specializations – for example, adult education or vocational counseling. In some cases – for example, for a manager of in-house training – requirements may include work experience in the enterprise or training experience. A special certificate may also be required for taking a position as a university or a business administrator.

In the USA advance in the administrative hierarchy requires a master's (or a doctoral) degree. For example, a master's degree in educational management (including adult education management) along with an additional minimum of 5 years of administrative experience in adult education or a certificate are needed for the positions "adult education manager" at a university or a college, deputy dean, manager or head of a department of adult education, supervisor and evaluator (for annual attestation) of the activities of teachers of adult learners, of the coordinators in adult education and of the administrative staff in the institutions for adult education (Adult education manager ..., 2013).

Among the countries with the best training of adult education managers is New Zealand, which offers education in management of adult education and training at the following levels, according to ISCED (Table 1) (*Subfield – adult education and training, 2013*):

- National diploma in adult education and training (level 6¹);
- Research program, completed with a scientific (doctoral) degree – module (standard): "Develop an organizational learning culture for adults";
- National certificate in adult education and training (level 5²)

Differentiating the goal and the objectives of adult education management at its different levels leads to outlining the specifics and the uniqueness of this sector among the other sectors in education. This also means uniqueness of its management. And "if management theory now teaches us how to compare our management to the management in other organizations, the so called benchmarking, and how to measure this comparison, the management theory of the 21st century will teach us how not to be like everyone else" (A Chrestomathy of the Course, 1994, p. 47), i.e. how to be different and to benefit from this difference. That, indeed, is the reason for preparing a specific group of educational managers – adult education managers.

¹ level 6 – the second level of higher education; a research program, completed with a scientific (doctoral) degree;

² level 5 – post-secondary and higher education, without a scientific degree

Table №1

Qualification for managers in adult education and training in New Zealand

| Module | Relevant to (positions): | Competencies for: |
|--|---|---|
| <i>National certificate in adult education and training (level 5)</i> | | |
| Formulate a proposal for adult education and training | Adult educators and trainers, Managers of adult education and training organizations, Adult education and training consultants, and other people who have a requirement to formulate and present proposals for tendering, funding, or other approval within the field of adult education and training. | Establishing proposal opportunities and requirements for adult education and training; Preparing a proposal for adult education and training; Presenting the proposal; Evaluating the effectiveness of the proposal process. |
| Manage learning events for adult education and training | Organizers of learning events for adult education and training (in educational and non-educational organizations providing educational services). | Planning, organizing and reviewing learning events for adult education and training. |
| Support and promote the adult training and development function within an organization | People supporting training carried out by others. | Developing plans to obtain support for adult training and development; Promoting training for adults; Reporting on training; Review the planning, promotion, and reporting processes. |
| <i>National diploma in adult education and training (level 6)</i> | | |
| Develop an organisational learning culture for adults | Senior managers responsible for the organisational development with a particular emphasis on training and development. | Developing support for an adult learning and development culture within an organisation; Developing and implementing a strategy for promotion of an organisational learning culture for adults; Reviewing the development of an organisational learning culture for adults. |

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