RELEVANCE OF THE PROBLEM OF ADULT EDUCATION IN KAZAKHSTAN

E.I. Kaliyeva

In the course of the past two decades, the concept of “lifelong learning” is increasingly becoming a fundamental objective of the education policy of Western countries, both at the national and international levels. Conceptual approaches to the problem of learning throughout life are reflected in the following works: “The system of qualification and continuing education in Australia” (2003), “CEDA policy on the need for continuing education in Australia” (2005), “Lifelong learning: guidelines for universities / 14th annual conference” (2001), “Statistical newsletter about the system of continuing education. Volume 1.” (Research Center for Continuing Education) (2001), “The strategy of continuing education in Scotland” (2003) [1].

The concept of “lifelong learning” is multi-faceted. In many cases, lifelong learning is presented as one of the ways to achieve social and economic development and as a tool to promote the ideas of the information society and knowledge-based society.

Two basic principles formulated by UNESCO — “education for all” and “life-long education” — are popular all over the world since the Jomtien Conference in Thailand (1990). For Kazakhstan, the idea of “life-long education” is still relatively new. This is due to the fact that Kazakhstan has recently signed up and accepted the Dakar Declaration, and its ideas are particularly relevant in the concept of “lifelong learning”.

The relevance of adult education in Kazakhstan is conditioned by the following factors: the difficulty of adaptation of adult population to the new social and economic conditions, decline in employment of the adult population, increase in unemployment, decrease in per capita income, lower level of the adult population proficiency and the lack of required skills, risk of decline in education availability for children whose parents are not socially and economically adapted to the society. Rural dwellers are a cause for concern because they have limited access to vocational education and as a result are almost uncompetitive on the formal labor-market. In recent years, there is a tendency to increase in educational needs and demands of adults, the desire to improve their professional skills, functional and technological literacy, expertise and common culture.
Nowadays in Kazakhstan, a plan of action for adult education is integrated into the strategic national programs of education and poverty reduction, as well as other socio-economic plans and programs.

The President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev in his message to the people of Kazakhstan, concerning “Socio-economic modernization as main vector of development of Kazakhstan” (January, 2012), notes that issues of small towns development, where the majority of the working population are employed in one or several (few) city-forming enterprises, which, as a rule, are of the same profile and are most vulnerable to social risks, require special attention [2]. Besides the economic problems of monotowns (stoppage of work or threat of stoppage of the main city-forming enterprise, ore deposit reserve depletion, high degree of deterioration of engineering and social infrastructure, low level of diversification of city’s economy, high level of dependence of employment on the a city-forming enterprise, high degree of municipal budget dependence on the tax revenues from a city-forming enterprise and reduction of the tax base, high ecological load on the territory) there are also social problems such as high rate of unemployment and employment, low degree of population’s income in most monotowns, poor quality of life, possible trends of social tension growth.

For this purpose, the objective was to work out a program of monotowns development, which will include such main measures as optimization of the occupational pattern, including creation of an effective training system, provision of vocational training, retraining and advanced training of adult population according to professions in demand (for the state program of forced industrial-innovative development and regional investment projects), employment assistance, assistance to entrepreneurship, improvement of human resources mobility.

Today, the problem of improvement of vocational adult education and rise in their functional literacy in both developed and developing countries is a relevant one. Adopted laws and policies in the field of education of the adult population of South-East European countries can be mentioned as examples. Bulgaria has adopted a Lifelong Learning Strategy for the period 2007 — 2013 years (30 October, 2008), Croatia — Adult Education Strategy and its implementation plan (2004), Decree on Adult Education (2007), Kosovo — an Adult Learning Strategy for the period 2005 — 2015 (2004), the Law on Adult Education (2005), Montenegro — Adult Education Strategy for the period 2005 — 2015 (2005), the Law on Adult Education (2007). This documentation
of national importance is aimed at ensuring the participation of the unemployed adults in the socio-economic process.

Taking into account the practice of foreign countries, it is necessary to establish the appropriate standards regarding education of adult population at the national level and develop up-to-date methods of teaching adults.

At the present stage, there is still a sharp need to study problems of organization of adult education, development of an adult education theory in our country and identification of practical ways of its implementation. Establishment of new approaches to solving problems of population employment in monotowns, including socially disadvantaged groups of the population (people of preretirement age, disabled people, migrants, women), who require increased attention from the government, is particularly thorny issue.

The most important role in this process is assigned to universities. By its activities and implementation of social functions universities are able to create conditions for general and vocational training of citizens, providing conditions for their integration into working life and society as well as for the effective development of the regions and the country as a whole. In this regard, the research team of the regional higher education institution — Caspian State University of Technology and Engineering named after Sh. Yessenov, drew attention to the problem of professional development of the adult population of monotowns as a way of overcoming unemployment.

Since this problem has interdisciplinary nature, authors rely not only on the papers on pedagogy, but also on history, historical demography and sociology. Considering the degree of elaboration of this issue, the works of noted Russian and Kazakh scientists who have examined theoretical and practical problems of adult education are analyzed: S.I. Zmeev, I.A. Kolesnikova, M.T. Gromkova, A.V. Darinsky, B.A. Turgynbaeva, G.J. Dauletbaeva, S. Nurekeeva, A.M. Mitina, J.A. Mahatova, J.A. Burgynbaeva. Modern problems of employment, unemployment, extensive raining of industrial personnel in Kazakhstan are developed enough and are still being developed in the national historical science, for example, in studies of M. Asylbekov, J.M. Asylbekova and others.

One of the main tasks set before the authors: to develop the concept of adult education on the basis of study of foreign countries practice, to monitor the level of unemployment among the adult population of a monotown (for example, the town of Zhanaozen), which will allow
to determine the contradiction between social demand and its real supply. It is well known that unemployment in Zhanaozen is caused by one-sided industrial development, the dominance of oil and gas industrial sector, the use of imported work force by local enterprises. Because of the one-sidedness of the economic structure of the town there is a female unemployment. In addition, special attention is paid to the structure analysis of the preferences of the population and employers regarding organization of the general education and vocational education system, as these preferences will be taken into account in developing educational trajectories.

In order to solve this problem the following measures are provided: counseling for adult population, creation and use of new author’s educational programs with respect to the labor market and the pace of socio-economic development of monotown, region. The objective of these programs will be to improve their functional competence: competence for professional skills development and employability, competence in information and communication technology, information literacy, including skills in the use of mass media, legal literacy, financial literacy, scientific and practical literacy. All the work is focused on extending already existing professional abilities of citizens, and not on their constant development (update) and change in concordance with the rapidly changing needs of the labor market and the needs of technological development.

Professional development of unemployed adults, providing them with up to date information and psychological counseling will increase their social activity.

Bibliography

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