

ten bedeutsam ist. Allerdings: Das Ausmaß der Kooperationsaktivitäten hängt zu einem großen Teil auch davon ab, daß gemeinsam zusätzliche Mittel auf nationaler und internationaler Ebene eingeworben werden können.

Die Zusammenarbeit mit der Universität Timisoara wie auch mit Vertretern der rumänischen Weiterbildungspraxis ist ein gutes Beispiel für die Möglichkeiten des DIE, ausländische Erwachsenenpädagog/innen zu fördern, ihnen die nötigen Informationen über die deutsche und europäische Erwachsenenbildung zur Verfügung zu stellen und an einem Netzwerk der Personen, welche Erwachsenenbildung aufbauen, mitzuwirken. Das DIE hat die Möglichkeit, Gastprofessor/innen oder Experten bei sich aufzunehmen (zwei Gasträume stehen zur Verfügung) und ihnen Studienmöglichkeiten zur Erwachsenenbildung zu bieten. Die optimal ausgestattete Bibliothek, ein immenser Schatz von Dokumenten und Materialien zur Weiterbildung, eine persönliche Betreuung und Beratung sowie die Möglichkeit, an den Projektaktivitäten der Wissenschaftler und Wissenschaftlerinnen am DIE zu partizipieren, sind Bedingungen, von denen bereits vielfach Gäste aus dem Ausland Gebrauch gemacht haben. Zahlreiche Nationen sind dabei vertreten – China, Korea, USA, Schweden, Großbritannien etc. –, insbesondere aber die Länder Mittel- und Osteuropas: das Baltikum, Polen, Russland, Slowenien und Rumänien. Die Gastaufenthalte sind jeweils verbunden mit öffentlichen Vorträgen und Workshops zur Situation der Weiterbildung in den jeweiligen Ländern – ein vielfach eindrucksvolles Stimmungs- und Meinungsbild über den Zusammenhang von gesellschaftlicher Dynamik und Zielen und Erfolgen von Bildungsarbeit.

Das DIE ist engagiert dabei, die internationale Zusammenarbeit auch mit den Ländern Mittel- und Osteuropas zu vertiefen. Dies ist nicht nur für die Gegenwart, sondern vor allem auch für die künftige Zusammenarbeit und eine Vernetzung der europäischen Weiterbildung von Bedeutung. In einer ähnlichen Richtung votierte auch der Wissenschaftsrat, von dem das DIE vor zwei Jahren mit gutem Erfolg evaluiert worden ist, und der auf den notwendigen Ausbau der internationalen Arbeit des Instituts verwies.

Eine solch intensive und auf Wissenschaft und Praxis gleichermaßen gerichtete Zusammenarbeit, wie sie mit Rumänien begonnen wurde, ist in gleicher Weise mit anderen Ländern schon aus kapazitativen Gründen zunächst nicht leistbar. Neben dem notwendigen materiellen Ausbau der Möglichkeiten des Instituts ist jedoch vor allem wichtig, die Erfahrungen, die in Kooperation und Support gemacht werden, zu dokumentieren und in absehbarer Zeit systematisch auszuwerten. Die Kooperation mit Praxis und Wissenschaft in Rumänien, in Deutschland rückgebunden mit der Universität Marburg, kann sich daher zu einem Modellfall einer internationalen Kooperation entwickeln, in der Support und Transfer sowohl im wissenschaftlichen wie auch im praktischen Bereich auf Wirkung und Erfolg hin evaluiert werden können. Eine solche Evaluation wird mit den rumänischen Partnern gemeinsam durchgeführt werden.

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Issues for International Cooperation in Adult Education in Romania at University Level

Simona Sava

Introduction

Adult education (AE) at university level in Romania exists for some years, mostly for improving the teaching competences of university staff. There are also a lot of post graduated specializations, but not in a systematic way. We can talk about AE as explicit and systematic policy at university level as response to the request of the Ministry of Education only since 1998.

Until 1989 AE was done mostly in institutions belonging to the Ministry of Culture, but now it is seen as an important and distinct part of lifelong learning. In this respect the Ministry of Education has established a special department to coordinate and develop a coherent policy for AE at national level. According to this policy, universities are the most important providers for AE because of their advantages: high level of competence of academic staff, certificates widely recognized and support by and combination with the research work.

Due to the new governmental policy for AE there is a strong trend for developing university continuing education, but this claims a lot of issues and particularities according to the national and international context, that will be stressed as follows.

Definition of AE in Romania

There is no official definition regarding adult education in Romania. There is no clear distinction between adult education and continuing education and sometimes even lifelong education and learning.

The general accepted definition of AE is that AE concludes all educational activities that are made after the initial formal education. At the theoretical and practical level there is no distinction between AE and continuing education, so I will use both synonymously. AE is provided by different institutions, with the main purposes: getting new professional competences and improving the existing skills, professional reconversion, social reinsertion for marginalised peoples, improving general culture and knowledge.

Until 1989 AE was seen as a mass phenomenon developed mostly for cultural reasons, sometimes with strong ideological connotations. Nowadays the most important dimension of AE is the professional training due to a lot of changes in the labour market and in job profiles.

The main purpose of AE provided at university level is to update already acquired qualifications or to qualify for a higher level of education, employment re-training, research and publications, career services etc.

Adult education at the university can be described as an entity having seven complementary areas in which they have started to act: professional AE, employment training, open university, regional and organizational development projects, development of teaching materials, research and publication, career services. There are also other fields of activity: development and supply of AE courses of study, participation in events of AE, advancement of AE of the university staff.

Actual problems of AE in Romania

After a long period with centralized and ideological policy in AE, there is now a strong tendency to open and flexible offers and programs as well as an increasing demand for AE. This is the situation of evolution of the whole AE at national level. In the field of vocational training and re-training as well as in the field of offers for social problems, democracy, liberal policy there are mostly non-governmental institutions which provide AE.

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In February 1998 the National Council for Continuing Education was created that claims also universities to develop special structures and coherent strategies in this field. The Law of Education 84/1995, the Law 88/1993 concerning the accreditation, autonomy and decentralizing of the universities stipulate that social function is one of the three functions of the university, at the same level with the initial education and research. AE is the main form of delivering social services by universities. But in fact, at university level there is only a low interest for AE. The reasons could be: the lack of specialists for AE, not enough official regulations to support AE, the lack of financing, a new area of interest for universities, the lack of specialised structures and more. The four main universities in Romania have created departments of AE, but there is still a big gap between the demand for AE at university level and their response. There are many obstacles regarding the development of AE in universities:

– *The lack of specialists.* For fourteen years the faculties of pedagogy, sociology and psychology have been forbidden and for this reason, AE as scientific discipline wasn't developed in this period. Beside this the capacity of research and teaching students doesn't include psycho-pedagogical competences of teaching adults. Furthermore the specialisation of the academic staff doesn't cover the areas with a big demand: initial and in-service education, economics, law, socio-psycho-pedagogical sciences, computer-sciences, languages and – above all – pre-career studies. On the other hand, AE is seen as a business for universities, a good source for gaining extra-resources. Consequently, there have to be provided special incentives in order to attain broad participation of the teaching staff.

– *Low developed structures and offers.* The main offer for AE as post-graduate specialization to be developed after 1990 was the master's degree. There were also developed different intensive post-university courses, but the offer is still too small and very often inadequate to the demands because of lacking informations about the needs and demands of users. Specialised departments were established that coordinate the AE courses at university level but there is still a lack of good management and also of regulations about the organizing of such courses.

– *No accreditation and recognition.* There is still no official national system of recognition and accreditation of courses and certificates for different specializations. This fact makes it very difficult to develop AE at university level.

– *Lack of research in AE.* The universities are the main providers of scientifically based AE. But in this field only few researchers are working and there is no good connection to the field of practice. In fact, we can see that there is a gap between theory and practice, the links between universities and their clients aren't developed enough. In the practice of AE the lack of scientific basis and research work at national level becomes obvious.

– *Poor links between different partners in community.* An inadequate analysis of needs and demands of our clients, inadequate market research and poor links between universities and other institutions in community are also issues that need to be improved. There are many other providers in community more flexible and dynamic, and it is necessary to know the competition or possible partner in order to provide an efficient offer.

– *Not enough financial support.* All universities in Romania have the same problem: they don't have enough funding to cover their needs. AE is seen as an important source for getting extra-funds, but it is difficult to develop AE in universities if there is no budget. It is also difficult to get extra-funds because there is a lack of investment in the private sector. There are no laws to force enterprises to invest in the training of their employees and, on the other hand, the industries are still in a period of restructuring and have a lot of economical problems, and training has amongst those the last priority.

All these problems are inherent at the beginning of developing AE in

universities. It is sure that they can be managed, and important is the fact that now there is a strong movement for development with a strong support from official level.

Ways in which international cooperation can help

International partners with more advanced and rich experience in this field can help us a lot. They can advice how to manage these problems. The framework of international cooperation offered by the European Commission through their respective programmes like Leonardo, Socrates, Phare and Tcis and the reciprocal disposability for cooperation are good opportunities for extending international partnerships which can be useful for us in the following:

- Counselling in management, marketing, teacher training, transfer of know-how in solving problems, offer of experience in order to see advantages and disadvantages of different ways of acting. The exchange of experience is very useful in this case, but there are strong needs of concrete cooperation in which partners work together for a clear view about different realities. A good example of such cooperation is the one we established between the University of Timisoara and DIE/ university of Marburg. We are sure that this cooperation will be very profitable for us because our department for AE is only one year old and their rich experience will be useful;
- Creation of permanent structures of co-ordination and integration; structures which directly provide advice and teaching;
- Support as partners in international projects in order to apply for grants at the European Commission and to develop in this way AE at international standards;
- Build up regional and international networks that will help to promote the European Added Value;
- Joint research programs on supranational and supranational issues of AE;
- Programmes and accreditations of teacher training in AE.

But there are still a lot of obstacles in building up this international cooperation:

- It is very difficult for us to get visa for study visits;
- There are often problems of language abilities, common vocabulary and significance of notions;
- There are only few compatibilities between different practice and different national contexts and cultures;
- There is a problem of finding the right partner for our projects
- There is very often insufficient financial support;
- It is difficult to find common accreditation and transfer models for modular systems and certifications.

Conclusions

AE in Romanian universities and in Romanian practice has a great potential and need for professional support in order to develop in a proper way. All the obstacles that have to be dealt with by universities need to be seen in the large context of our social, economic and political transition. The international partnership is very useful for us and we hope that all the problems of collaboration can be managed and we will benefit in a more intensive way of international partnerships. For this a better knowledge of each other and awareness of the concrete needs for cooperation is necessary.

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