Views on the Systemic Approach to Adult Training Process

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Book Review: “Abordarea sistemică a procesului de formare profesională a adulților”, Editura LUMEN, author Ioana-Irina RUSU

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Abstract: The present paper aims to bring a series of critical opinions to the volume of Ioana-Irina Rusu, who deals with the issue of the process of professional training of adults through a systemic approach.

Keywords: book review; LUMEN; author Ioana-Irina RUSU; adult training process; systemic approach.

(Intro)Views on the book

The volume “Abordarea sistemică a procesului de formare profesională a adulților” [Systemic approach on the process of adults’ professional training] of Ioana-Irina Rusu, published by LUMEN Publishing House from Iasi, reviews the main public policies and strategies referring to the adults’ professional training in Romania, integrated in the European context.

The accent falls on the systemic approach of the adults’ professional training, from both a sociological and a managerial perspective.

The volume analysed begins with highlighting the need for the process of training of adults in the context of the Lisabona strategy that was adopted by the European Council in March 2000, and renewed in 2005. The strategy fundaments the increase in competitiveness of the European economy based on the idea of knowledge-based society and economy. Starting from these premises, the volume represents a wide analysis of the educational system, especially the system of professional training for adults correlated with possible strategies of developing human resources (Rusu, 2013).

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The analysis framework of adults’ professional training

There are analysed a series of particularities of the Romanian context referring to the adults’ professional training, starting from the institutional and normative framework, in which the process of adults’ professional training is developed. The Romanian context is related to the international one, represented by the strategies and public policies in the field of adults’ professional training in other European states.

The analysis of the institutional framework of adults’ professional training sends to the main normative acts represented by Law 1/2011 with additions and subsequent amendments, and OG 129/2000 on adults’ professional formation. The normative dimension is analysed from the perspective of developing the institutional framework specific for the field of adults’ professional training, on which the author developed a specific research called: Management of adults’ professional training in Romania, whose results are partially presented in this volume, and which underlies the entire conceptual framework which deals with the policies of adults’ professional training (Rusu, 2013, p. 43). The normative dimension is shaped through a wide analysis of the legislative framework, regarding adults’ professional training, in which context the author highlights the complexity of the activity, and its interdisciplinary nature. There are presented a series of institutions involved in this process, such as: The National Agency of Employment (A.N.O.F.M.), the National Authority for Qualifications (A.N.C.), etc., there are analysed the specific dimensions of this institution and the context in which they manage the whole process of adults’ professional training in Romania. The internal normative framework is contextualized by representing the strategies and European policies in the field of adults’ professional formation. There are highlighted a series of principles that shape the unique European framework of developing the educational services, and of professional training, such as:

- school’s closeness to the economic sector;
- combating the social exclusion;
- developing the communication competences, especially in foreign languages;
- equally treating the capital investments, and those of professional training (Rusu, 2013).

In this context, there are analysed a series of priorities of the professional training in the European countries derived from the content of the declaration from Copenhagen:

- the European dimension;
- transparency, informing and counseling;
- increase in the importance of the policies of systems and practices that target the orientation, informing and counseling in all levels of education, professional formation and employment;
- acknowledge of competences and qualifications;
- increase in support for developing the competences and qualifications in a sectorial level;
- development of a mutual set of principles regarding the validity of non-formal and informal learning;
- ensuring the quality;
- carefully considering the learning requirements for teachers and trainers (Rusu, 2013).

The history of developing the system of adults’ professional training in Romania is considered an object of the analysis of the activity’s processual development, as the providers and the state institutions involved in the process of formation gain expertise. The synchronization between the workforce development and the services of formation is being analysed, emphasizing on both the convergences and the divergences emerging from the two parallel processes.

In the second chapter of the volume, it is considered the very idea of systematic approach of the process of adults’ professional training, emphasizing on the nature of open system of the activity of professional training. Therefore, the author shows us that the inputs into the system are represented by the influences received from the social and economic environment, in this case the expectations of the students, and the outputs – the students’ absorption on the labor market – are influences of the training system on that environment. The author develops a potential methodology that would allow the systemic research of the process of adults’ professional training. This methodology includes a series of axes, such as: processual understanding of a set of activities successively developed in order to reach the objectives, the managerial axis which emphasizes the management of inter-relationships between the elements of professional training system, the andragogical dimension, represented by the profound analysis of instruments of adults’ professional training, until the didactic project, the training program, the course, etc., and last but not least, the sociological axis which aims to evaluate the need for training already existing in the labor market and which allows to adapt the offer of the training providers to the needs already existing on the market (Rusu, 2013).

In this context, the author formulates the proposal to develop, within the Ministry, a custom organism specialized in the research of the
social, that would serve the training providers upon request, making available data regarding the need for formation on different domains and their dynamic, including predictions referring to the evolution of this dynamic.

The next chapter represents the more technical issue of the evaluation procedures and monitoring the professional training providers. Presenting and analyzing this methodology makes the current volume be useful for training managers in the public or private institutions that activate as education providers.

The volume continues with a chapter on the structuring and organizing of the process of adults’ professional training, emphasizing on the internal organizing and the relationships with the environment of the organization providing professional training.

By explicitly presenting a series of management processes at the level of the education providing organization, the author relies on the theories of the new management, connecting the sociological perspective on adults’ professional training to the managerial one.

The information in these chapters lead to a better understanding of the management of the formation process, allowing the formation managers to develop a working strategy, and even an organizing policy referring to the offer of training in consonance with the dynamic of the need for training highlighted on the labor market. The applicative character of the volume goes to the detailing of the documents necessary for the good functioning of a provider of adults’ professional training, both from the perspective of the supervision offered by CAJes, as well as from the perspective of the efficiency of administrative work at the level of the providing organization.

Conclusions

In our opinion, the volume represents both a practical guide at the disposal of the training managers, the trainers, the evaluators of professional competences, the evaluators of providing professional training, and not least, the teachers in university or pre-university, involved in the adults’ professional training, as well as a welcomed transdisciplinary analysis of the process of adults’ professional training, useful for the social researchers involved in analyzing the relationship between the labor market and the different educational systems, especially the adults’ professional training.
References


