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GENDER OPEN UNIVERSITY AS A PLATFORM FOR CONTINUOUS GENDER EDUCATION: EXPERIENCE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF INNOVATIVE EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES IN UKRAINE

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У статті у контексті пошуку шляхів зниження негативних наслідків трудової міграції в Україні обґрунтовано актуальність і необхідність подолання гендерних стереотипів щодо розподілу видів праці й сфер трудової діяльності, розробки дієвих механізмів заохочення жіночого лідерства й недискримінаційних практик вибору стратегій розвитку людини у межах трудової сфери в Україні. Наголошується, що надзвичайно важливу роль у втіленні в життя концепції загальної гендерної освіти відіграє система неформальної освіти дорослих, як цілеспрямований процес розвитку особистості протягом життя шляхом реалізації просвітницьких програм і послуг, здійснення освітньо-інформаційної діяльності в межах та поза межами вищої освіти. Відповідно, актуальною в Україні стає проблема розвитку інноваційної структури з неформальної освіти дорослих, що здатної забезпечити зменшення негативного впливу гендерних стереотипів у трудовій сфері, залучення до активної конкурентоспроможної діяльності у різних суспільних сферах тих верств населення, що традиційно виступали об'єктом трудової дискримінації та депривації (жінок, осіб з інвалідністю, людей похилого віку, внутрішніх і зовнішніх мігрантів, неповнолітніх та ін.).

Для подолання гендерної нерівності та забезпечення процесу неперервної гендерної просвіти населення, в Україні було вперше запроваджено інноваційний партнерський проект «Гендерний відкритий університет». Його метою було засобами інтерактивного тренінгового навчання фахівців соціальної сфери і широких кіл населення подолання наслідків гендерної дискримінації у соціально трудовій сфері, запобігання поширенню гендерних стереотипів і дискримінаційних практик у сфері соціального захисту та трудових відносин.

Проект розрахований на тривалий результат — створення і систематичне функціонування інноваційної освітньої структури підвищення рівня гендерної грамотності та культури працівників соціальної сфери як чинника запобігання відтоку трудових ресурсів, подолання наслідків трудової міграції через залучення до трудової активності нових традиційно депривованих соціальних груп

Ключові слова: гендерна дискримінація, трудова міграція, неформальна освіта дорослих, Гендерний відкритий університет

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1. Introduction

The growing need of the development of education for adults in Ukraine is driven not only by the rapid modernisation of the industrial sphere, by fundamental changes in the nature of the labor market, the demands of the labor market, socio-economic relations in the country as a whole, but also by the need of transformation the social consciousness, searching a new paradigm of a social system which is capable to unite the population of the country, to direct its efforts to build a society what will be comfortable for all. Saving and developing the humans' capital is one of the top-priority strategic goals of Ukraine's priorities in this field. According to the index of people's development, one of the three criteria this is access to knowledge. Ukraine is a part of a group with the high level and takes 88th middle of 189 regions. According to the ranking of the Global Innovation Index, Ukraine is on the most significant position for the rest of 7 years – 43th position, which has significantly improved, comparing with the past few years. Among the state strengths, which provide its innovative development, there are primarily such indicators, as the establishment of knowledge and the results of scientific research.

At the same time, it is a critical problem of the inactivity of a part of the population in the active functioning of society, the absence of conditions that would ensure the involvement of all social groups in labor, social and civic activity, that causes people to seek opportunities for self-realization in other countries. A clear testimony to this is the data, released by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy of Ukraine, that 1.5 million (approximately 5.1 % of able-bodied) citizens work abroad: 48.4 % of Ukrainian labor migrants are in the Russian Federation and nearly the same in the countries of the European Union.

It should be emphasized, that it differs from the essential factors that hinder the free search for the potential for self-fulfilled citizens and the population of Ukraine on the domestic territories, it is maintaining gender stereotypes, regarding the distribution of types of work and spheres of work, the lack of effective mechanisms to promote women's leadership and non-discriminatory

practices in choosing strategies for the development of the labor sphere in Ukraine.

In recent decades, significant changes have taken place in the Ukrainian society in terms of understanding and legitimizing gender relations. The equal participation of women and men in all spheres of the vital activity of society and the state is an important condition and guarantee of ensuring human rights and promoting democracy in Ukraine, the key to its European integration.

Ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men is defined by Article 24 of the Constitution of Ukraine as the pivotal course of the state development. Achieving parity of women and men in all spheres of society through the legal protection of equal rights and opportunities for women and men, the elimination of gender discrimination and the application of special temporary measures, aimed at eliminating the imbalance between women and men's ability to implement the rights, provided them by the Constitution and laws of Ukraine, is a priority of development of state gender policy [1]. This also guided by the prevention policy was of discrimination in Ukraine counteraction [2]. Accordingly, the state has developed and implemented a social program to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men for the period up to 2021 [3].

Ukraine has committed itself to the implementation of international standards for abidance of the equal rights and opportunities of women and men in society [4]. On September 15, 2017, the Government of Ukraine presented "the National Sustainable Development Goals: Ukraine" report, which is now adhered to by all countries in the world, where the fifth objective is to ensure equality between women and men [5].

All social institutions are involved in the process of regulating gender relations in one way or another. Heads of higher, vocational, general, preschool and extracurricular institutions are obliged to ensure the systematic work on gender mainstreaming in the educational process.

The socio-economic institutional and transformations in Ukraine in the last decades have influenced ambiguously different spheres of society and led to changes in the strategies of the vital activity of different social groups. As a result of the implementation of not perfect local state social policies, which is explained, in particular, by the lack of gender literacy of the professional circles and the population itself, social differentiation in society increased, the number of socially disadvantaged categories of the population grew. The dynamism and contradictions of social processes also reflected on the state of social interaction between men and women in different spheres of the vital activity and attraction resources for women and men at the labor market. There is a practical need for the continuous general gender education, to identify ways to achieve equality of opportunities for men and women.

The system of non-formal adult education plays an extremely important role in the implementation of the concept of universal gender education, as a purposeful process of personal development throughout life through

the implementation of educational programs and services, implementation of educational and information activities within and beyond higher and postgraduate education. In view of this, the problem is becoming urgent in Ukraine to establish higher education centers and the community activism sector with a flexible innovative structure for non-formal adult education by joint efforts. One of the initiatives on creating and testing such structures on the domestic soil is the project of the Center of Gender Education (Kharkiv) and the Municipal Institution "Kharkiv Humanitarian Pedagogical Academy" of the Kharkiv Regional Council. This project will help to create a test innovation structure - Gender Open University, the purpose of which is to ensure the process of continuous gender education for social workers, educators, volunteer youth, community representatives, to increase the level of gender literacy and culture in the professional environment, while providing assistance and support to vulnerable sections of the population.

2. Literary review

Gender equality is a global priority for UNESCO and is inextricably linked to its efforts to promote the right to education and support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals [6]. Through the Framework program «the Education 2030», the core goal of the society development is to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; along with this the priority is to provide inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all.

The multidisciplinary and multifaceted nature of the issue of continuing gender education determines the diversity of sources of scientific information and existing educational practices. Conceptually gender inequality in higher education and various ways of overcoming it have been covered in the works of foreign scientists, whose research is, in particular, devoted to the problem of using models of feminist pedagogy to reflect the problems and trends in postgraduate education for students [7]. The researchers highlighted the genesis and provided an overview of the current state of education for women in the US and Canada, and identified institutional and individual barriers that affect women and men's access to some educational levels. The links between subjectivities that are constructed through intersectional discourses on gender culture and literacy are analyzed in the context of the modern neoliberal social and economic order. Gender literacy studies at school and at home deserve special attention [8].

Factual studies show that gender differences in educational achievement are not reliably linked to gender equality. It is essential, that there is a link between national equality policy and the achievements of women in the exact sciences, as well as broader problems of under-representation of women in political, economic sectors of society [9].

Despite supporting the innovativeness of this scientific focus in Ukraine, the analyzed literature attests to a rather large array of domestic research on gender

issues. In this area, the theory and practice of genderoriented educational process was covered. On the basis of gender analysis of various aspects of social life, important theoretical positions of gender theory are substantiated, generalizing its development in Ukraine and the world over the last half-century [10]; the history of gender policy formation is reflected through the prism of events, documents, research [11]; motherhood is revealed as a social practice that significantly influences women's self-realization in society, in particular in the social and labor sphere [12]. The analysis of literary sources shows that in the light of recent economic, political and social developments, the role of gender knowledge has significantly increased. The active deployment of gender policy in Ukraine, the advancement of democratization of various spheres of social life logically increased the pace of human social knowledge aging, having formed the necessity of searching for such type of education, that would allow everyone to keep abreast of the latest innovative steps in the sphere of gender equality at the same time without spending a lot of time and not needing significant financial investments.

The experience of searching new awareness practices in Ukraine and abroad shows that this type of education is a continuing education because of the practical application of its flexible educational approaches, oriented to the real needs of people in knowledge, allows society and its individual groups to increase their own gender competency constantly, remaining on the focus of contemporary socio-political and socio-economic events.

There are some information platforms in this aspect in Ukraine. That can introduce online education courses and open access to relevant literature. Among such platforms we will note the website of the Gender Analytical and Information Center "Krona" [13], as well as the site of the Museum of Women's and Gender History (Gendermuseum) [14].

Some impact on raising awareness of the population on gender issues implements conduction and promulgation of the results of various surveys and reviews on the subject. The Ukrainian Institute of Social Research, named after Oleksandr Yaremenko, carried out the All-Ukrainian survey in 24 regions of Ukraine and Kyiv in relation to the observance of rights for the inwardly moved people with the gender analysis of results (2017), which highlights the gender issues that exist in this category of people and, in particular, proves the necessity to involve them in non-formal education in order to reduce the negative effects of internal migration [15]. General gender issues of the Ukrainian society in the context of gender budgetary analysis of programs, financed by state and local budgets, were studied within the framework of the Gender Budgeting Project in Ukraine, implemented by the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine and financed by the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) (2016) [16]. Familiarization with the results of research convinces that a gendersensitive approach should be an integral part of the

concept of social work in the interaction of the state and its various institutions with the population, which is already approbating in the activities of some organizations and structures in Ukraine. Continuous gender education for specialists has become an integral part of policy "All-Ukrainian network of people living with HIV/AIDS", that initiated and implemented training activities for HIV service professionals to integrate a gender-based approach into customer service delivery; in the Kharkiv region a gender approach has been introduced in the preparation of patrols for community service and the like.

Although all of these practices are quite effective, due to the need to disseminate gender knowledge in the territorial community, and not only in the professional environment, there is a need to generalize the gained experience and to create and approve a fundamentally new system of gender education, accessible to different categories of population and professionals. An important resource for such creation is the existing Center for Gender Culture in Kharkiv as a universal awareness platform for empowering women and youth. At the heart of the Center's activity is the idea of Life Long Learning.

3. The purpose and objectives of the research

The purpose of the research is to publicize the experience of developing innovative educational practices in Ukraine, namely: coverage of the concept of activity, content, forms, methods of gender education of specialists in the social sphere, professional and volunteer youth, the general population at the Gender Open University, demonstrating the effectiveness of this innovative structure, outlining the prospects and challenges of developing non-formal gender education throughout life in Ukraine.

On this basis, the main research **objectives** were:

- 1. Development of concept, creation and approbation of an innovative structure "Gender Open University" on the basis of the Municipal Institution "Kharkiv Humanitarian and Pedagogical Academy" of the Kharkiv Regional Council.
- 2. Analysis and promulgation of the results of the long-term educational activity of the University in the field of providing gender education for social workers, raising the level of gender literacy and culture in the professional environment by providing assistance and support to vulnerable sections of the population of the territorial community.

4. Materials and methods of the research

The study used theoretical methods – modeling, design, forecasting, analysis, generalization, as well as empirical methods, consisted of sequential implementation of the following operations: observation, measurement, testing of the gender educational level of students of the Gender Open University.

The research materials are the products of the Gender Open University activities, from a concept, model of activity, content, methodological support, to new competences of listeners as a result of the

educational work within the project. The project was introduced in March 2017 for 30 hour sessions, for an average of 25 people joined, held regularly twice a year. In total, 171 people participated in the work of the university over the past years, whose competences have been the object of our monitoring.

5. Results of the research and its discussion

It should be noted, that continuous gender education is now considered as a set of educational activities and events of various directions, initiated by state, private and public educational and cultural institutions and units, which ensure organizational and meaningful unity and further interconnection of all educational units, satisfying the human desire for gender self-education and elitist development throughout life; for overcoming gender discrimination and ensuring the process of continuous gender education for the population as a factor in preventing labor outflows, preventing the consequences of labor migration by engaging new, traditionally deprived social groups,

16 March, 2017 the Gender Open University was first introduced an innovative partnership project of the Municipal Establishment "Kharkiv Humanitarian Pedagogical Academy" of the Kharkiv Regional Council and the Center of Gender Education, which was implemented within the framework of the regional project of support by the Kharkiv City Council of public initiatives - "Unified social network".

It should be noted, that the Kharkiv Humanitarian and Pedagogical Academy was one of the initiators of the creation of the Gender Open University. This is due to the certain factors: first, the academy has been training future social pedagogues and social workers for many years, the extensive experience has been accumulated in this area, problems that graduates face in the workplace have been studied, new interactive forms and methods of vocational training have been developed; secondly, the academy is constantly concerned with the issues of gender education for young people. The Center for Gender Education has been operating at the Academy since September 2009. It is a structural research unit of the academy that provides scientific and practical assistance to social workers, social pedagogues, school teachers, teachers and students of higher educational institutions on the implementation of gender equality ideas in their professional activities. Thirdly, the Academy initiates the volunteer work of future specialists with different categories of the population in many areas. Among organizations, where employees are involved in the project: territorial centers of social services (submission of social services); state and non-state social services; the Interregional Governance for the Execution of Criminal Sentences and Probation of the Ministry of Justice; secondary and higher education institutions, etc.

The implementation of the project was aimed at ensuring the creation and systematic functioning of an innovative educational structure to improve the level of gender literacy and culture of social workers, which aims

at the systematic, practice-oriented, work on gender education in the professional environment.

A special curriculum, approved by the Rector of the Academy, was developed for the classes, which included 30 classroom hours, tutor consultancy, self-study work of the audience and the exam in the test form, as well as coaching work programs, methodical and handouts and etc.

In the course of the project, there was a training course, specially developed, approved by the rector of the Academy and agreed with the partner-parties program "Gender Sensitive Approach to Work with Vulnerable Populations in the Social and Legal Sphere".

The program envisaged learning of the study material in four modules:

- gender problems of modern society in the scientific and legislative dimension and in everyday life;
- gender-sensitive practices of professionals and volunteers in the social and legal fields;
- a gender-sensitive approach to the organization of probation services;
- the work of probation officers with the modern family and community as centers of gender socialization of an individual.

Social workers have acquired knowledge and skills on ways and means of implementing the state's gender policy, which helped to assimilate the gender sensitive approach to the creation and implementation of social projects, work plans, social advertising products for work with the public in the social and socio-legal spheres. Interactive lessons on gender education and excursions to the Center for Gender Culture and the Museum of Women and Gender History were planned.

Among the planned and implemented activities: conducting training sessions on the topics: "Domestic violence as a factor in the formation of dependent behavior"; "The Carpman Triangle as a specific mechanism for interaction in a co-dependent family"; "Stockholm Syndrome": its signs and ways to overcome it; holding a workshop on organizing a forum-theater as an effective method of preventing and overcoming the effects of violence; organizing meetings of experts with vulnerable sections of the population, territorial community, "equal-to-equal" method of communication. In the course of the project, workshops were held on the organization of training forms of interaction of specialists with clients on the basis of a gender-sensitive approach and organization of charity actions to support the vulnerable groups of the population by the volunteer youth: conducting interactive classes on the topic: "Gender issues in the modern family"; "Implementation of gender practices for parenting in the family as a condition for preventing the deviant and delinquent behavior of minors", conducting classes and preparing methodological materials from the thematic block "Gender sensitive approach to organization of the probation service: international experience of probation services, comparative analysis of probation models, signs of the gender-sensitive probation model; types of probation in modern criminal (criminal-executive) law of Ukraine, the concept of the probation process, its subjects; the functions of probation officers and the content of their activities; preparation of probation programs and pre-trial report; juvenile probation; citizens' rights under probation programs and social and educational work".

Increasing the level of gender culture in the process of non-formal adult education at the Gender Open University was characterized by an unconventional approach to the organization of educational and cognitive activities, by its high degree of flexibility and variety of training technologies; by the close connection with practical activities and socio-cultural environment; stimulation of self-education, self-education and self-development of the individual; appeal to all professional, social, ethnic and age groups and a high level of adaptation to the individual needs of each individual.

The expected short-term effects of the project were to increase the level of gender literacy and culture of 21 people during the training course on a specially designed training program, whose participation in all stages of training was certified by a relevant certificate of professional development.

However, the project was designed for a longer-lasting result – the creation and systematic functioning of an innovative educational structure to increase the level of gender literacy and culture of social workers as a factor in preventing labor outflow, preventing the effects of labor migration by engaging new, traditionally deprived social groups in the labor force, as the appropriate education of specialists was supposed to initiate a chain reaction in the system "social worker - client - territorial community" to spread the principles of gender equality and social responsibility, while providing social assistance and support to vulnerable sections of the population, territorial community.

Immediately there was planned a certain frequency of the courses – 2 times a year.

This has ensured an average of 40 specialists per year for gender education. Participation in the project was to ensure the ability of professionals to organize the social education of colleagues, clients, raising the level of gender culture of the territorial community as a whole. It was planned to monitor the long-term results of the project with the involvement of statistical research experts.

Within the framework of the project, during the training sessions, the activists were conveying a gender knowledge and gender-sensitive approach to professional activity to social workers; trained professionals provided social education for colleagues and clients, enhancing the gender culture of the local community as a whole.

Based on the results of the implementation of "The Gender Open University" project at the Municipal Establishment "Kharkiv Humanitarian Pedagogical Academy" of the Kharkiv Regional Council, there was planned and subsequently implemented a permanent innovative educational structure, the purpose of which

was to systematically ensure the process of gender education of social workers, to increase the level of gender literacy and culture in the professional environment, when working with people and the community.

According to the materials of the work of the Gender Open University, a methodological guide "Gender-sensitive approach in dealing with vulnerable sections of the population in the social and legal sphere" was created [17].

The informational support of the project was provided on the information resources of the Center of Gender Culture: www.genderculturecentre.orgwww.gender.at.ua and on the pages of partners of the Center, in social networks, as well as on the resources of the "Unified Social Network". Thus, the activities of the Gender Open University have been widely publicized, and accordingly have contributed to the recruitment of future attendees and students, who have shown an interest in gender education.

The participants of the first session included specialists on social work with the subjects of the Kharkiv city department of probation of the North-East interregional administration of penal punishment and probation of the Ministry of Justice, representatives of the administration and employees of "the Compass Center" of the Kharkiv Charitable Foundation "Benefit", department of social assistance at home of the Industrial district of Kharkiv, rehabilitation center "Lighthouse of health", sports and psychological center of rehabilitation of alcohol and drug addicts "Rainbow", charity foundation "Mothers against drugs", teachers of the department of social work and social pedagogy of the Kharkiv Humanitarian Pedagogical Academy.

The participants of the second session, which took place after six months, besides the mentioned categories of specialists, were leading specialists of the Employment Center of Poltava, workers of social services of different districts of Kharkiv and the region, social teachers of institutions of secondary education in the Kharkiv region.

During this time, six sessions of the Gender Open University have taken place, and its activities have covered specialists not only the Kharkiv region, but also other regions of Ukraine. One of the sessions was held for social workers, activists, teachers in Odessa, together with the scientific and pedagogical staff of the Odessa I. I. Mechnikov National University.

In December 2019, the seventh session of this partnership project is ongoing at the Center of Gender Culture. It should be noticed, that since this year, the concept of the Gender Open University has been restarted, its focus is on the active professional and volunteer youth, interested in learning about the new distribution of gender roles in modern life, challenges, faced by women and men in a society with equal opportunities. The practical skills, gained during the training, allow young people to influence on the system of gender relations in their personal life and in their professional activities. For the two past sessions, Gender

Open University classes are taking place in the new premises of the Gender Culture Center, where there is an information-methodological and resource center for gender equality for the trainees; a center for training of coaching staff in the field of gender equality, prevention of gender-based violence; a platform for the exchange of best national and international practices in the field of gender equality; Ukraine's first and only gender museum - the Museum of Women's and Gender History (Gendermuseum).

Today, the Gender Open University covers the following thematic areas: "Museum of Women's and Gender History - Museum for Dialogue on Gender", "Gender equality and non-discrimination as a trend of modern society", "Gender culture and literacy in modern society: a first-hand example of Sweden", "Ukrainian society on the road to gender equality: from legislation to positive change", "The impact of gender stereotypes on human worldview", "Complex sexual education and its possibilities," "Education - the secret weapon of gender construction. How is the consciousness, needed by society, built up? Is it possible to program behavior with words? Gendersensitive language Carte blanche discrimination, bulling, mobbing, discrimination in the workplace: Ukrainian realities, social and gender aspects of violence in the Ukrainian family, violence and dependent behavior in the family: Two the poles of gender inequality", "My personal gender dimension".

6. Conclusions

Overall, the study provided validity of the following conclusions:

The concept of an innovation structure – Gender Open University was created and tested on the basis of the Municipal Establishment "Kharkiv Humanitarian Pedagogical Academy" of the Kharkiv Regional Council. It is the strategic focus of an education system, flexible, interactive, accessible for different social groups of adults' to reduce the negative impact of gender stereotypes in the workplace, preventing the spread of discriminatory practices in the sphere of social protection and labor relations, as well as facilitating the involvement of those sections of the population that have traditionally been the target of labor discrimination and deprivation in social activity in various social sectors.

The project is designed for a long-term result – the creation and systematic functioning of an innovative educational structure to improve the level of gender literacy and culture of social workers as a factor in preventing the labor outflow, preventing the effects of labor migration by engaging new, traditionally deprived social groups in the labor force.

An analysis of the performance of the Gender Open University over the years of its existence shows that about 200 people attended the eight sessions, with quantitative indicators for participants up to 21 percent in 2017–2019; Knowledge quality indicators (by the number of successfully passed examinations and certificates of completion) increased by 24 percent between 2017 and 2019.

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