

MODERNIZATION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN THE CONTEXT OF UKRAINIAN STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

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Introduction. The public institution of vocational education and training includes the processes of functioning and interaction (including through legal and sub-legal, formal and informal regulatory mechanisms) of higher education institutions, vocational and technical schools, organizations of vocational guidance, professional development and retraining with or without separation from labor activities of various forms of ownership, which provide appropriate services to target categories of the population of various ages throughout the life (including priority, vulnerable, marginal groups). The activity of the vocational training institute solves a number of important tasks for society, including reproduction and improvement of quantitative and qualitative characteristics of labor force and labor potential in general; participation in implementation of socially accepted guarantees of social harmony and stability, corresponding social protection and security state policy, equalization of basic (including initial) living conditions; creation, dissemination, implementation of socio-economic development innovative resources and mechanisms; reproduction and transmission of world view, social (including economic) culture, ethics, morality, as well as mechanisms of formal and informal interactions that are considered productive.

Modernization of social approaches to the organization of professional education, its institutional bases, principles, functioning methodology at the national, regional and local levels is an important condition for improving efficiency and results of the national economy, structures and mechanisms of its innovative development and personnel support, implementation of the population's basic constitutional rights regarding professional self-realization, comprehensive development and education throughout life, obtaining a decent working income, improving the level and quality of life by the average individual's own efforts. The solution of these tasks is a necessary condition for the effective response of the state, its economic system, the whole society to the challenges of the world globalization processes, first of all, concerning the competitiveness of both producers and workers, as well as the technological basis of the business processes set in the economic and extra-economic spheres of life.

Brief review of the literature. Modern researchers pay considerable attention to the substantiation of: accents and priorities for improvement of functioning mechanisms, structure, content of professional education in its links' spectrum; interrelations of this public institution with other social macrostructures (especially, regarding the determination of socio-economic development' level, quality, rates); the system of professional education effects on the parameters of innovative processes and competitions in the spectrum of their deployment spheres in the globalized world, as well as among a number of integrated cross-border business, foreign economic, cultural and educational structures [1–15].

In particular, these studies identify risks and opportunities, develop approaches to improve the quality of higher and vocational education, taking into account the requirements of the world globalization and inte-

gration processes to the professional education and qualifications of the economically active population, as well as to the competitiveness of the workforce (R. Pinheiro, G. Wangenge-Ouma, E. Balbachevsky, Y. Cai, 2015; L.J. Teague, 2015; T. Kromydas, 2017; E. Charney, 2019; O. Marchenko, N. Sydorenko, 2019) [1–5]. At the same time, the problems specific to different stages of the last period of the functioning of the vocational education system are defined and analyzed, taking into account the need to increase the economic efficiency of higher and vocational education institutions, balance regional labor markets, implement a number of socio-economic reforms (L.J. Teague, 2015; S. Vavreniuk, 2018; O. Marchenko, N. Sydorenko, 2019; I. Kalenyuk, D. Djakons, 2019; O. Voliarska, 2020; L.Ya. Benovska, O.V. Paska, 2021; M. Poplavskiy, 2021) [2; 5–10]. An important direction of specialized research is to ensure the proper role of professional education in stimulating, disseminating, capitalizing the achievements of scientific and technical progress, exerting a systemic innovative impact on the economy and society (R. Pinheiro, G. Wangenge-Ouma, E. Balbachevsky, Y. Cai, 2015; O.V. Mahuta, 2016; E. Savicheva, O. Chesnokova, 2017; A. Moscardini, R. Strachan, T. Vlasova, 2020; M. Poplavskiy, 2021) [1; 10–13]. It is also appropriate to note the studies on the assessment of the current situation and prospects for ensuring the stable functioning of the vocational and technical education sector, which is extremely important for the provision of qualified personnel in territorial economic systems and the social protection of the vulnerable strata of the population (T. Kromydas, 2017; A.P. Vashchenko, 2018; L.Ya. Benovska, O.V. Paska, 2021; S. Hreben, 2021) [3; 9; 14; 15].

The considered specialized researches substantiate the necessity to update the concept and strategy for improvement of the professional education system of Ukraine in its interrelation spectrum (in particular, the main problems, goals, tasks, tools, expected results of this process), taking into account the near and distant priorities regarding diversification, modernization, increase of competitiveness of the national economy.

Thus, the **purpose of the article** is to find out conceptual approaches to the further modernization of the vocational education system (its goals, tasks, tools, expected results) in the context of urgent needs and strategic priorities of the acceleration of the socio-economic development of Ukraine in the conditions of numerous competitive challenges of today.

Key findings. The realities of the Ukrainian social activity in the sphere of professional education indicate the presence of a number of problems, which are quite inertial due to their consequences and the effectiveness of solving measures [5–11; 14; 15]. Among these problems it is necessary to note: the unsatisfactory objectivity of mechanisms of formation and distribution of the personnel training order' state and regional segments, weak control over these processes by civil society; the excessive orientation of educational institutions on meeting the current conditions of local labor markets and demands of the most solvent groups of applicants without adequate consideration of the strategic outlook and priorities; an acute lack of financing of vocational training, including due to the deficit of budgets of local governments; the lack of practice bases for pupils and students, deficiencies in material, technical and personnel support of production practice programs.

Therefore, the goal of the modernization of the Ukrainian vocational education is to improve the organizational and economic bases and the functioning mechanisms of the links of this social system in the direction of increasing the professional and qualification level of the population and its competitiveness in the labor market, strengthening the personnel potential of the economy, improving the provision of resources, as well as the quality of services and functioning processes of the vocational education system itself in the area of satisfying the professional and educational needs of various strata of the population and economic subsystems.

The general tendency in the development of social activities for the provision of vocational education and the vocational education system itself is determined as a balanced integration and implementation of current and prospective public demands and guidelines in the sphere of professional and qualification potential reproduction, the capitalization of which will ensure improvement of the population's well-being, diversification of the national economy and innovative modernization [1; 3; 5; 6; 8].

The process of modernization of professional education should solve the tasks related to the following:

- improving the quality of education, the structure of educational and pedagogical processes, the list of specialties and professions, the content of relevant curricula and programs in accordance with modern knowledge and technologies, achievements and prospects for development of scientific and technical progress, public expectations and strategic goals for modernization of the technological structure in Ukraine, as well as for diversification of the national economy and foreign markets for domestic sales of goods and services;
- development of the functional and territorial organization of the regional subsystems of vocational education in the direction of increasing the availability of relevant services, their material and technical, scientific

and pedagogical support, integration of the spectrum of links (vocational guidance, vocational and higher education, activities for further training and retraining throughout the working life) for effective communication with the communities of users of services and representatives of employers, as well as for inclusion in territorial scientific-innovative-production clusters and a number of free economic zone structures;

- increase of efficiency of relations and communication between professional educational institutions, users of these services and subjects of social dialogue (i.e. the state, the public, employers) in development and forecasting of the scope and structure of personnel training, career development and retraining within the framework of state and regional orders, programs of employment services, as well as at the expense of private persons; society-wide popularization of objective ideas about competitive education in the conditions of the Ukrainian market economy;

- optimization of public control mechanisms over the balance of compulsory and optional components of educational programs in professional educational institutions of various forms of ownership, as well as over the spending of resources, received from their economic (professional, auxiliary) activities, primarily for the needs of the educational and pedagogical process, its material and technical base improvement;

- ensuring the competitive availability of education for vulnerable groups of the population; assisting graduates in finding their first job in their specialty in the labor market.

It is necessary to emphasize the following tools for modernization of organizational and economic bases and functioning mechanisms of professional education, development of quality of these services, such as:

- regulatory and administrative (first of all: objectification of the content and scope of the state and regional components of personnel training, career guidance, retraining in higher and vocational education institutions; coordination of the state standards of specialties and professions with the national qualifications system, setting precedents for the dominance of the state standards of vocational education in the practice of non-formal education recognition, as well as approval of company standards of knowledge, skills, competencies, qualifications by positions);

- financial and fiscal (in particular, the initiation of: a state budget subsidy for a regional order of personnel training, retraining and continuing education in vocational and technical schools; tax benefits and preferences for companies that finance the training, professional counseling and retraining of their staff, with or without separation from production);

- marketing (encouragement of vocational training institutions of various forms of ownership to promote the aggregated brands of universities, vocational schools and their specialties, aligned both with the current needs of regional labour markets and the state development strategy for the whole economy, specific spheres and types of business activities; involvement of social dialogue institutions in determining the content and provision of vocational training services).

The assessment of the situation of social activities for providing professional education in Ukraine, the existence of the above mentioned problems, which are rather inertial due to their consequences and the effectiveness of solving measures, doesn't allow to expect significant changes in the organizational and economic mechanism of this public institute in the near future.

The main results of modernizing the system and content of vocational education in the short term will be as follows:

- improvement of the content and structure of education, quality of educational services according to the list of specialties and professions for which the state and regional components of personnel training, professional development and retraining are distributed;

- dissemination of "dual education" programs and methods in vocational and technical institutions (from colleges to schools of narrower specialization);

- further improvement of state standards of specialties and professions, coordination between this set, the national qualification system, non-state systems and standards for recognition of professional education;

- formation of a network of resource centers providing services for vocational training, professional development and retraining of personnel on the basis of regional vocational and technical schools with a diversified offer of educational services;

- increase the effectiveness of the control over the purposeful use of the funds obtained from the business activities of the educational institutions of various forms of ownership.

The process of modernization of the system and content of professional education in the long term will contribute to the following:

– improving the organizational and economic mechanism and structure of the vocational education system, including through:

– integration of higher and vocational education institutions into the vocational education territorial subsystems, regional scientific-innovative-productive clusters; development of programs and a network of bases for the production practice of pupils and students; dissemination of programs and measures of innovative activities of vocational education territorial subsystems;

– strengthening the role of higher education institutions as a link between higher education institutions and vocational schools by providing their students with a thorough and comprehensive education and a broad specialization that enables them to work in a given profession as workers or junior specialists, or to continue to obtain higher professional education;

– diversification of the sources of financing of the vocational training system, due to a significant increase in the costs borne by employers for the training, professional development and retraining of their staff, with or without separation from production;

– optimization of the territorial organization of vocational schools according to the needs of the regional economic subsystems;

– enhancement of the quality of education and competitiveness of graduates of Ukrainian universities and vocational schools in the domestic and foreign labor markets, including as a result of balancing the nationwide state and corporate standards of professions and qualifications for specific positions;

– expanding the access of vulnerable groups to competitive vocational training, with the possibility of upgrading skills or acquiring a related profession, particularly within the framework of programs with substantial state or regional funding;

– popularization of Ukrainian services in the field of professional education and training among applicants from other countries on the basis of "quality – price" ratio;

– increase of income of state and local budgets from the services of the professional education system.

Conclusions. Civilizational trends and economic practices of developed countries, powerful cross-border associations and transnational corporations, aspirations for cultural, foreign economic, socio-political integration into EU structures, as well as measures for their implementation are spreading in modern Ukraine. Such tendencies stimulate the national civil society to realize a number of demands to provide the average individual with decent opportunities to meet the needs for quality educational services, professional acquisition, confirmation and improvement of qualifications regardless of the place of residence, equalization of appropriate starting conditions in local communities and regions, as well as to improve the efficiency of public and state control over the corresponding legislative and social-labor guarantees' implementation.

In this context, it is appropriate to update the concept and strategy of increasing the efficiency of the Ukrainian vocational education system aimed at increasing the competitiveness of the national labor force and economy in the conditions of the global challenges of business integration, as well as globalization of the standards and practices of economic and extra-economic spheres of life.

In particular, the main directions of modernization of the lifelong vocational education system should be ensured:

– its popularization and the establishment of the effective system of management and financing through the public-private partnership and the improvement of the content and quality of vocational training;

– further consolidation of the efforts of the participants of the Tripartite Public Dialogue in the sphere of professional education development aimed at solving both corporate and local tasks of providing qualified specialists and workers for the modernization of territorial economic complexes and labor markets;

– development and improvement of educational standards for a number of professions, updating of educational programs, improvement of teachers' qualifications, including through active cooperation with employers' organizations in the further implementation of the National Qualifications System subordinated to state professional standards;

– strengthening the autonomy of the spectrum of vocational training institutions, as well as the management of vocational and technical schools by local authorities;

– further planning of regional networks of vocational training institutions, including their merging;

– renovation of the vocational training infrastructure through the creation of educational and practical centers with systematically modernized equipment and technology, providing services for the acquisition of practical skills by students, improvement of qualifications or retraining of adults with the funds from the state and municipal budgets, special funds of vocational training institutions, as well as with the support of business entities.

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Larysa Bogush, PhD in Economics, Senior Research Scientist, Leading Researcher at the Department of Risk Studies in the Population Employment Sphere, Ptoukha Institute for Demography and Social Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. **Modernization of vocational education in the context of ukrainian strategic priorities.**

The article defines the goals, tasks, tools and expected results of the implementation of the concept of modernization of the vocational education system as a lever for stimulation of the socio-economic development of Ukraine in the conditions of today's competitive challenges of global and macro-regional scale. The set of influences and functions of the vocational education system in the economic and non-economic spheres of life (first of all, resource-reproductive, standard and worldview-forming, innovation-producing and -transferring, social-stabilizing) embodies a number of significant factors of competitiveness for countries, national producers, certain communities (territorial, functional), social groups and individuals in the main areas of competition (in the domestic and foreign markets of goods, services, labor; in the framework of cross-border, nationwide, regional mechanisms of access to free services provided by the state and regional order, as well as to the respective levels of socio-economic development funds). Civilizing tendencies and economic practices of the developed countries stimulate the national civil society to realize a number of demands to provide the average individual with decent opportunities to meet the needs for quality educational services, professional acquisition, confirmation and improvement of qualifications regardless of the place of residence, equalization of appropriate starting conditions in local communities and regions, as well as to improve the efficiency of public and state control over the corresponding legislative and social-labor guarantees' implementation.

Key words: professional education, labor potential, workforce, competitiveness, innovations, socio-economic policy, concept, Ukraine' prospects.

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В статті визначені цілі, завдання, інструменти, очікувані результати реалізації концепції модернізації системи професійної освіти як важеля стимулювання соціально-економічного розвитку України в умовах конкурентних викликів сьогодення глобального і макрорегіонального масштабів. Сукупність впливів і функцій системи професійної освіти в економічній та позаекономічних сферах життєдіяльності (насамперед, ресурсовідтворюючих, стандарто- і світоглядоформуючих, інновативних продукційних і трансляційних, соціально-стабілізаційних) втілюють низку значущих факторів конкурентоспроможності країн, національних виробників, окремих спільнот (територіальних, функціональних), соціальних груп та індивідів в основних сферах конкурентних змагань (на внутрішньому і зовнішніх ринках товарів і послуг, праці; в рамках транскордонних, загальнонаціональних, територіальних механізмів доступу до безоплатних послуг, що надаються за державним і регіональним замовленням, а також до цільових фондів соціально-економічного розвитку). Поширення в Україні цивілізаційних тенденцій та господарських практик розвинутих країн, потужних транснаціональних корпорацій, реалізація прагнень щодо культурної, зовнішньоекономічної, суспільно-політичної інтеграції в ЄС стимулює вітчизняне громадянське суспільство актуалізувати низку запитів до забезпечення пересічному індивіду гідних можливостей задоволення потреб у якісних послугах освіти, здобутті професії, підтвердженні та зростанні кваліфікації незалежно від місця проживання, вирівнюванні відповідних стартових умов в локальних громадах і регіонах, а також до суспільного і державного контролю за реалізацією відповідних законодавчих гарантій. Основні напрями модернізації системи професійної освіти впродовж життя мають, зокрема, забезпечити: її популяризацію та побудову ефективної системи управління і фінансування; покращення змісту і якості професійної освіти; удосконалення стандартів професійної освіти за активної співпраці з інституціями роботодавців у рамках впровадження Національної системи кваліфікацій, підпорядкованої державним професійним стандартам; закріплення автономії спектру закладів професійної освіти, а також управління власне професійно-технічними закладами на місцях; удосконалення регіональних мереж закладів професійної освіти.

Ключові слова: професійна освіта, трудовий потенціал, робоча сила, конкурентоспроможність, інновації, соціально-економічна політика, концепція, перспективи України.