

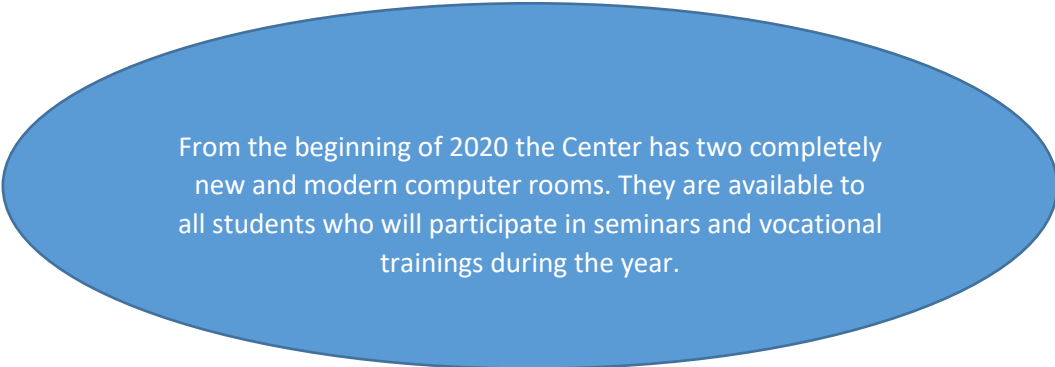
ON FOCUS

Traditionally, January is a period of intensive for the Centre preparation for the upcoming training year, analysis of the achieved and strict planning and distribution of the upcoming tasks, both for the implemented projects and for the trainings financed by the National Employment Action Plan.

The team's project Integrated trainings for the administration of the labor market and in the social sphere financed by OP HRD 2014-2020, is working hard on the preparation of the Operational Plan for trainings and the Catalogue for 2020. The Operational plan is designed taking under attention the information received from the assessment of training needs conducted in the autumn of 2019, in which 790 representatives of the administrations of the labor market and the social sphere took part. The topics that the Center has already presented for comments and remarks to representatives of the human resources units of some of the leading institutions that took part in trainings on the project are formulated on the basis of the results of the needs study, current guidelines in policy development of labor and in the social sphere and the experience gained over the years in the implementation of trainings for the public administration. At the end of February, the Catalogue for trainings for 2020 will be published on the website of CHRDMI, and its publication is planned for the beginning of March this year, when the first seminars on the project will start.

Before that, however, as early as the beginning of February, with the support of the project, an important in view of the current problems in the social and educational spheres a round table will be held. The topic of the table is Exchange of Experience and Good Practices between the Institutions for Work under the Mechanism for Coverage, Inclusion and Prevention of Dropping out of Educational Institutions of Children and Students in Compulsory Preschool and School Age. More about the initiative can find in the interview with Ms. Gabriela Nikolova on page 4 from this newsletter.

On January 13, the activities programs and projects implemented of the Center were presented to a wide audience of students majoring in "Pedagogy" and "Social Activities" at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski ". Mr. Ivan Bakalov, Head of the Training Activity Department, together with the Methodist of the Center, Ms. Lina Kostadinova, explained the good practices in planning and implementing the programs, emphasizing on training provided by the Center in the field of social activities. At the same time, the students got acquainted with the opportunities for short-term internships in the CHRDMI.



From the beginning of 2020 the Center has two completely new and modern computer rooms. They are available to all students who will participate in seminars and vocational trainings during the year.

INITIATIVES PROVIDED UNDER THE PROJECT INTEGRATED TRAININGS FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF LABOUR MARKET AND IN THE SOCIAL SPHERE – A MODERN APPROACH FOR DISCUSSING SOCIETY CURRENT ISSUES

An essential element of the work on the project Integrated Trainings for the Administration in Institutions working on the Labor Market and in the Social Sphere is the implementation of initiatives to enable institutions and organizations working in these two areas to exchange experiences and good practices on current issues. The project envisages the implementation of six initiatives, two of which have already been implemented in 2019. A particularly important part of the activities for organizing the initiatives is their careful planning. In the bulletin of May 2019 Ms. Nikolova shared with us how preparatory phase undergone in which 12 interviews were conducted with interested institutions and organizations in the field of labor market and social sphere. At the beginning of the new calendar and training year, when we take stock of what has been achieved and plan what lies ahead, we turned to Ms. Gabriela Nikolova for the progress of this particularly important part of the Project.

Ms. Nikolova, what are the initiatives implemented in 2019 and how have they contributed to the successful implementation of the Project so far?

G. Nikolova:

The first and most important goal we set was to clearly distinguish the role of the seminars and initiatives that are in place for the implementation of the Project. The initiatives differ significantly from the seminars as a method of working with the target groups covered by the project. What such a non-educational forum brings for work between institutions and / or organizations can be formulated in several directions: to seek solutions to a given problem (including innovative ideas), to support the development of policies, to exchange experience and good practices, to build inter-institutional partnerships, to build expert networks in the social sphere and on the labor market. In 2019 we managed to prepare and organize two initiatives. The first - meeting - discussion, was related to the current issue of creating a legal framework for regulating the activities of health mediators. Within the framework of it, experience and good practices were exchanged between institutions and organizations in order to generate ideas to be used in drafting the legal framework. Moreover, contacts between representatives of different institutions were established that would contribute to upgrading the interaction and cooperation on the issues. Participants were able to discuss various aspects and issues for the development of the normative base for regulating the activity of health mediators.

The second initiative we carried out was in the field of the labor market. The subject of discussion in the initiative were issues related to the new moments of the National Employment Action Plan for 2020, as well as priorities for the development of the Employment Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria (2021 - 2030). These are current areas of development and implementation of the state labor market policy.

At the beginning of February, a Round Table will be held for exchange of experience and good practices between the institutions for work under the Mechanism

for coverage, inclusion and prevention of dropping out of educational institutions of children and students in compulsory preschool and school age. What are the goals of this initiative and which institutions will take part in it?

G. Nikolova:

Although the trend of early school leaving is weakening, the topic of enrollment and retention of students in the education system is relevant, and the issues related to it are multifaceted. We expect the Round Table to contribute to the expansion of the dialogue and the improvement of the joint work between the institutions. The need for such a forum was stated by the Ministry of Education and Science in 2019. The focus of the event is on preventive activities to search for, identify children and students at risk of dropping out of education, especially those in compulsory preschool and school age. Representatives of other institutions and organizations relevant to the issues raised will be invited to participate.

The center has always tried to meet as much as possible the immediate and current needs for training and initiatives. Are there mechanisms to support the interest of the institutions on the issues of the remaining initiatives until the end of the project and how will their topics be formulated?

G. Nikolova:

In the implementation of all activities under the Project, the team of CHRDRRI is guided by the rule of providing quality training in accordance with modern educational standards. The most important advantage is that the topics for our trainings and initiatives are formulated according to the current needs and priorities of the institutions and organizations, which are target groups of the Project. Directions for the next initiatives, which are forthcoming in 2020 were identified after meetings and talks with stakeholders in the spring of 2019. These will be three initiatives that have received the next highest results according to the criteria set out in the Concept for identifying the parameters of the Project initiatives. In order to meet as much as possible the immediate needs of the institutions and organizations that have announced these areas, we will ask them to confirm their relevance in 2020, after which the specific thematic titles of the initiatives and their format will be announced.

The CHRDRRI's team thanks for the cooperation of Ms. Gabriela Nikolova!

THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW METHODS IN ADULT TRAINING - A PRIORITY IN THE WORK UNDER THE PROJECT INTEGRATED TRAININGS FOR THE ADMINISTRATION IN INSTITUTIONS ON THE LABOR MARKET AND IN THE SOCIAL SPHERE

The development of such methods is a need of The seminars organized under the project "Integrated trainings for the administration in institutions on the labor market and in the social sphere" of OP HRD 2014-2020, carry the specifics of upgrading trainings for professionals with extensive professional experience in the field in which they work. This requires the development of appropriate methods, corresponding on the one hand to the specifics of the knowledge and skills of the trainees, and on the other - to the topics focused on the learners themselves, as shown by the analyzes of the annual Needs Study. According to the

sociological analysis, 69.3% of the respondents indicate the importance of applying interactive methods to allow active involvement of all participants in the learning process.

In the autumn of 2019, two topics were proposed for discussion at the Lecturer's Club (www.lecturerclub.com), which drew the attention of the Center's lecturers to sharing their experience in applying methods that require active participation of students and subtraction their passive role of listeners - game discussion and the benefits of learning through collaboration and collaborative learning. The opinions shared by our lecturers are extremely interesting and fruitful for further work and will certainly be useful to both their colleagues and the Methodists at the Center. The activity of the lecturers on the set topics eloquently showed not only the importance of the development of new teaching methods in CHRDR, but also the benefit of the Lecturer's Club as a forum where teachers and methodologists can freely share their experience and thus support the development of methodological resource in order to achieve higher quality training.

The first topic in the Lecturer's Club was dedicated to two commonly used methods in all trainings conducted in CHRDR - the game and the discussion and with an emphasis on the ways of combining them in order to turn the training into an opportunity to share experiences of specialists working on the same. This is directly related to the achievement of efficiency in the implementation of the main goal of the project Integrated trainings for administration in institutions on labor market and in the social sphere, namely - the principle of integration and the use of the effect of working together on one and the same topics of specialists from different institutions and organizations.

The different types of discussions and the game approach are among the topics that have aroused the greatest interest in the discussions held so far in the Lecturer's Club. However, both methods have their drawbacks. However, a common problem is that in the discussions activity can be shown only by some of the participants, while others remain passive until the end of the training, as in the course of the work the differences in behavior and hence in the degree of knowledge and skills acquisition. both groups deepen. The effect of what is learned through play is blurred if left without the necessary structuring. By combining them in different forms, which, as our lecturers pointed out, can be synchronous or sequential in time, the disadvantages of both methods can be overcome and the positive effect of their use - increased. The discussion can help to summarize the results of the game, but both methods can be used simultaneously. The game, in turn, contributes to creating a pleasant atmosphere that contributes to the effective involvement of all participants in the discussion, as well as to give it a certain structure, thus helping to use it more effectively in the learning process.

A very important point in the application of both methods, whether individually or in combination, is their ability to influence the motivation of the participants, which has already been discussed repeatedly in the Lecturer's Club. Both the discussion and the game create conditions for the creation of commitment and empathy for the training and stimulate the acquaintance of the group both between them and with the lecturer, which creates a favorable opportunity for further successful course of the training.

The scientific literature describes various possibilities for using game-type discussions, and the participants can be organized in different ways and with the help of different techniques. There is an opportunity for the learners to accept certain roles, such as - some of them to be "experts" and others - observers, who if necessary to join the discussion. When discussing the

topic in the Lecturer's Club, a similar method was proposed by Ms. Dashenka Krалеva, who highlighted the usefulness of discussions in which students, divided into two groups, try to discuss the best or worst development of a particular case in social work. Another possibility is for the opinions of the students to be organized by arranging them along the contours of figures, drawn in advance with paper tape on the floor of the classroom, as suggested by Mr. Mincho Nikolov. In all these cases, however, the introduction of an interactive moment in the learning process allows for emotional involvement, which helps to better perceive the information offered.

The second topic, which was discussed at the Lecturer's Club, raised the issue of using two approaches in setting group work tasks, which can be summarized as cooperative learning and collaborative learning. The common denominator between the two that makes them suitable for our work in the Center is the search for active involvement of students and the responsibility they themselves bear to the learning process, placing the lecturer in the role of process facilitator and building teamwork skills.

In joint learning, all participants work together on the same task, while in collaborative learning, the task is divided between the participants in the group, who then have to combine their work to achieve a common result. Thus, in the first approach, students get the opportunity for self-organization, which is not under the constant control and supervision of the lecturer, and can make a real self-assessment of what has been achieved individually and by the group in which they participate. In collaborative learning, on the other hand, learners are involved in pre-structured activities that are monitored and evaluated by the lecturer, and the success of the group depends on the distinct individual efforts of each of its members.

The lecturers who participated in the discussion on the topic did not give a definite preference to the use of one or the other method, but rather emphasized the applicability of both approaches in the trainings carried out by the Center and their positive aspects. A strong side of learning through cooperation is the opportunity for self-organization in the training group in the implementation of the task, which leads to building a better team and a sense of community, in the spirit of which the overall training continues. In turn, cooperation creates an opportunity to disperse points of view and extract more information through personal critical judgment. Thus, it turns out that the preference for one or the other method depends rather on the specifics of the group of students and the specific purpose of the task.

If we turn to the scientific literature, collaborative learning and cooperative learning can be attributed to the so-called cooperative method of training¹, in which we have a much higher degree of efficiency than the information and phenomenological methods. The reason for this is the inclusion of the emotional moment, which brings the formation of knowledge and skills together in a group, which does not rely on competition, but on the use of common resources and skills. Collaboration allows learners to actively participate in the learning process by having an active dialogue and listening to the opinions of others. In this way a personal

¹ See Terzieva, V. ; Kademova-Katsarova, P. Modern ICB based teaching methods. In: VI National Conference "Education in the Information Society", pp. 237-247, <http://sci-gems.math.bas.bg:8080/jspui/bitstream/10525/2334/1/EIS2013-book-p24.pdf>

connection of the learners is established between them and towards the studied topic, which can be discussed without prejudice and from different points of view².

Of course, the selection of specific teaching methods during training's planning by the lecturer, together with the methodologists of the Center, depends to a large extent on the received preliminary information about the group of students. In their work on the project Integrated Trainings for the Administration in Institutions, Working on the Labor Market and in the Social Sphere, along with the registration forms, which indicate the professional experience of each trainee in the particular specialty, the team of the Center introduced questionnaires, which are mandatory for inclusion in the training. The questionnaires allow analysis of the preliminary knowledge and attitudes of the participants and clearly support the selection of the most appropriate methods for the specific audience. This is a practice that has already proven its effectiveness in the past training year and will continue in the second year of conducting trainings under the Project.

² Ms. Dashenka Krалева (CHRDRI's lecturer) points us to this impartiality in the above-described method of "Best and Worst Scenario". She stresses that participants in the discussion should share even the most incredible-looking development of a particular situation. This "naive" view of the studied object is a characteristic of the way children learn. These resources can be used in adult learning. See Gopnik, A. The baby philosopher. S., 2012