

Non-Formal Education in the Context of Implementation of Educational Programs: Practical Experience

Oksana Kravchenko ^{1*}, Nataliia Koliada ², Nataliia Levchenko ³, Olena Baldyniuk ⁴,
Evgeniy Balabushka ⁵, Georgyi Dubrovynskiy ⁶, Larysa Danylevych ⁷

^{1,2,3,4} Social Education and Social Work Department, Faculty of Social Work and Psychological Education, Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University, Uman, Ukraine.

⁵ Department of Humanities and Applied Sciences, Private Higher Educational Institution “Boryspil Institute of Municipal Management at Interregional Academy of Personnel Management”, Ukraine.

⁶ Department of Social Psychology, Faculty of Psychology,
Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Kyiv, Ukraine.

⁷ Psychology Department, Faculty of Social Work and Psychological Education,
Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University, Uman, Ukraine.

* Corresponding author: oksolkkravchenko@ukr.net

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OIDA International Journal of Sustainable Development, Ontario International Development Agency, Canada.

ISSN 1923-6654 (print) ISSN 1923-6662 (online) www.oidaijsd.com

Also available at <https://www.ssrn.com/index.cfm/en/oida-intl-journal-sustainable-dev/>

Abstract: Non-formal education is becoming increasingly relevant in modern education systems, complementing formal education and contributing to the development of key competencies necessary for professional and personal development. In the context of rapid changes in the labor market and social needs, the transition to the concept of “lifelong learning” emphasizes the importance of non-formal education as a flexible tool for professional training of specialists. The purpose of the study is to identify the organizational and substantive principles for recognizing learning outcomes obtained in non-formal education within the framework of educational programs, as well as to characterize the practical experience of the Faculty of Social and Psychological Education of Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University. Analysis of regulatory documents at the international and Ukrainian levels showed that non-formal education is regulated at both the state and local (university) levels, which contributes to its integration into the educational process. The Faculty of Social and Psychological Education of Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University has created a mechanism for recognizing the results of non-formal education, which includes six stages: from submitting an application to entering the results in the student's academic record. In the 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 academic years, the learning outcomes of 130 students were recognized. Non-formal education is promoted through Telegram groups, the faculty website, social networks, and meetings with coordinators. A survey of 50 students showed that 90% of respondents are aware of regulatory documents and 100% are aware of non-formal education opportunities. Students prefer programs conducted within the university (43%) and courses related to their specialty (61%). Practical experience includes project activities, trainings, master classes, and the work of thematic centers, such as the Gender Center, the Family Education Center, and the Veteran Development Center. Non-formal education is an effective tool for developing professional and social competencies that meet the requirements of educational programs. The successful integration of non-formal education into the higher education system depends on clear regulatory mechanisms, effective information policy, and the creation of local platforms for courses and training. Prospects for further research include studying foreign experience, analyzing the effectiveness of non-formal education for shaping program learning outcomes, and defining criteria for assessing acquired knowledge.

Keywords: non-formal education, educational program, learning outcomes, higher education, educational process, students.

Introduction

One of the key conditions for the functioning of the education system is cooperation between the spheres of formal and non-formal education, since "rapid changes in market needs for new skills led to the transition from the concept of "final education" to the concept of "lifelong education", the emergence of various forms of non-formal (education outside of the formal institutions, but institutionalized, deliberate and planned by the subject of educational activity) or informal (spontaneous) education (European Commission, 2016)" [1, p. 57].

Non-formal education, firstly, plays an important role in the fulfillment of modern educational tasks, secondly, it assumes corrective and compensatory functions, and therefore has a significant role in the professional training of future specialists.

However, researchers and practitioners single out a whole range of problematic issues that confirm the relevance of the organization of non-formal education of future specialists in Ukraine. Among others, there is a lack of systematic studies of the potential of non-formal education regarding professional training of future specialists; lack of theoretical and empirical studies of the basic provisions of the organization of non-formal education; insufficient use of innovative technologies for the development of social and personal, general and professional competencies of student youth.

Literature review

Non-formal education plays a key role in modern educational systems, complementing formal education and contributing to the development of competencies necessary for personal and professional growth. It provides flexibility, adaptability to local conditions and the ability to quickly respond to social changes. This literature review analyzes key sources that reveal the meanings, strategies, and practical experiences of implementing non-formal education in the context of educational programs, with a focus on its impact on social, academic, and professional outcomes. A study by Hidayat et al. (2021) highlights the importance of strategies to improve the quality of non-formal education within equality programs. The authors note that "effective implementation depends on coordination between stakeholders and adaptation to local needs" [2]. They propose a model that includes infrastructure improvements, professional development of educators, and involvement of local communities in the planning of educational initiatives, ensuring the sustainability and effectiveness of programs. The long-term effects of non-formal education are explored in an article by Simac et al. (2019), where the authors argue that "non-formal education promotes the formation of sustainable skills such as critical thinking and self-regulation" [3]. The study shows that the success of such programs depends on their integration with formal educational systems, which ensures a lasting impact on participants.

In the context of developing countries, Almeida and Morais (2024) emphasize the role of non-formal education in solving social problems. They note that "informal programs help reduce educational inequality and promote social inclusion" [4]. The flexibility of such programs allows them to be adapted to socio-economic conditions, providing access to education for vulnerable groups of the population. The Portuguese experience described in the study by Rodrigues et al. (2023) demonstrates how non-formal education contributes to academic success and social inclusion. The authors emphasize that "cooperation between educational institutions and public organizations is key to the success of such programs" [5]. Programs aimed at developing soft skills have shown a positive impact on the motivation and readiness of young people for further education. In Slovakia, as noted by Vrabec et al. (2023), non-formal education plays an important role in the development of critical thinking and media literacy. The authors emphasize that "partnership between state and non-state structures is the basis for effective educational initiatives" [6]. Such programs help counter disinformation and develop information analysis skills.

Vinh et al. (2022) investigate the role of non-formal education in the formation of critical thinking in middle-income settings. They note that "interactive teaching methods contribute to the development of analytical skills and civic awareness" [7]. The study highlights the importance of family, formal and non-formal education collaboration for the holistic development of young people. In the context of the pandemic, Adityo et al. (2023) analyze the best practices of organizing learning in non-formal educational institutions. They argue that "the use of digital technologies and flexible learning formats has become key to adapting to the challenges of the pandemic" [8]. This contributed to the innovative development of non-formal education and the involvement of participants through interactive methods. Gada (2022) considers non-formal education as a tool for transformation, noting that "the combination of formal and non-formal learning allows for rapid response to societal and economic changes" [9]. This highlights the flexibility of non-formal education in building practical skills and adaptability.

In Ukraine, according to a study by Boiko (2021), non-formal education contributes to the development of soft skills, which is critical for the competitiveness of young people in the labor market. The author emphasizes that "a systematic approach to the integration of non-formal education into educational programs is necessary to achieve sustainable results" [10]. The analysis of theoretical studies allowed Pavlyk (2015) to identify fixed (obligatory) and variable (depending on the organizers and participants) characteristic features of non-formal education [11]. Melnychuk (2022) noted that a necessary means of socio-economic development is the transformation of humanity into a society of "continuous learning" and "non-formal education" [12]. Anishchenko (2019) determined that the issues of standardization, evaluation of the quality and effectiveness of educational programs, recognition of non-formal and informal learning are becoming more and more relevant in national and global education policy. At the same time, the practice of recognizing non-formal and informal education differs in different countries. In the developed countries of the world, the mechanism of recognition, certification and accreditation of all types of formal, non-formal and informal education is an integral component of lifelong education [13]. The team of scientists Ostroha et al. (2022) consider open educational resources only as a fashionable phenomenon in education, but, first of all, as an absolutely mandatory direction for the development of educational institutions as a whole. The expansion of the use of open educational resources increasingly blurs the boundaries between so-called formal and non-formal learning, offers radically new approaches to the dissemination of knowledge [14]. Teryokhina (2014) characterized non-formal education as an important component of the adult education system [15]. Borovyk and Ustychenko found out that due to the use of various forms and methods, the system of non-formal education has the following tasks: compensation of unacquired (for objective and subjective reasons) knowledge, regardless of the level of education, age, etc.; adaptation to changes in the socio-economic space; development of creative and professional potential [16]. Finally, Drushlyak et al. (2025) analyze the development of information and media literacy of young people through non-formal educational activities. They note that "interactive methods such as trainings and workshops significantly increase the ability of young people to analyze media content" [17]. This emphasizes the importance of informal education in the formation of critical thinking.

Therefore, non-formal education is a powerful tool for the development of key competencies such as critical thinking, media literacy, soft skills, and social inclusion. It is especially important in developing countries and in crisis settings, due to its flexibility and adaptability. The success of such programs depends on cooperation between stakeholders, integration with formal education systems, and taking into account the local context.

The purpose of the article is to determine the organizational and content principles of recognition of learning results obtained in non-formal education within the framework of the implementation of educational programs and to characterize the practical experience of the Faculty of Social and Psychological Education of c Uman State Pedagogical University.

Research methodology

The following research approaches were applied: non-formal education was characterized in the context of international and Ukrainian normative documents; the prerequisites for the recognition of the results obtained in non-formal education at the level of higher vocational education are defined (analysis of local higher vocational education documents, clarification of the mechanism of recognition, study of specific examples of recognition – statistics by years, specialties and levels); the creation of conditions for the implementation of non-formal education courses in higher education institutions was analyzed (project activities, training programs, workshops, activities of Faculty Centers, etc.); a survey of the participants of the educational process was conducted, for which the author's questionnaire was developed (50 students of higher education took part in the survey).

To reduce internal bias in the collected qualitative data (verbal, textual, and visual), several strategies were applied. First, triangulation of sources and methods was used to compare information from different perspectives. Second, researcher reflexivity was maintained throughout the data collection and analysis to remain aware of personal assumptions and their potential influence on interpretation. Additionally, data coding was conducted independently by multiple analysts to ensure consistency of interpretations. Finally, participants were given the opportunity to review and verify their own statements or materials (member checking), which helped enhance the credibility and minimize distortions in the findings.

Results and Discussion

The analysis of current practice shows that non-formal education in Ukraine has not yet acquired systematic development, which objectively determines the expediency of understanding and creative use of progressive ideas from both domestic and foreign experience.

Therefore, the first task of our research is to implement analysis of non-formal education in the context of international and Ukrainian normative documents.

At the pan-European level, we single out documents that are aimed at the institutional field of confirmation of professional qualifications acquired through non-formal training / education, the involvement of representatives of various public sectors and the implementation of coordination mechanisms:

- "European guidelines for validating the results of non-formal and informal education" (European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning, 2009) [18];
- Recommendations of the Council of Europe on the recognition of the results of non-formal and informal education (The Council of the European Union Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning, 2012) [19];
- Recommendations of the European Center for the Development of Vocational and Technical Education (CEDEFOP) on the recognition of non-formal and informal learning (2017) [20];
- EU Council Recommendation on the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (2017) [21] etc.

In European countries, a diversified practice of confirming and assigning professional qualifications based on non-formal education has long been formed. Professional associations and business structures, on the basis of which qualification centers (assessment centers) operate, play an important role in qualification confirmation processes. At the same time, recognition of the results of non-formal education and confirmation of professional qualifications takes place according to the same standards as for formal education and taking into account the national framework of qualifications [1, p. 57].

Currently, the National Qualifications Agency (NQA) – a collegial body subordinate to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine [22; 23]. According to the legislation, the NAC is authorized to implement the state policy in the field of qualifications, which "envisages the creation of mechanisms for the transparent and effective assignment of professional qualifications based on modern professional standards and forecasts of labor market needs, the harmonization of the Ukrainian system of qualifications with the European one" [22].

What is the essence of non-formal education in the context of the Ukrainian normative field? According to the Law of Ukraine "On Education" (2017, as amended) "a person realizes his right to education throughout his life through formal, non-formal and informal education. The state recognizes these types of education, creates conditions for the development of subjects of educational activity that provide appropriate educational services, and also encourages the acquisition of all types of education" [24]. The law stipulates that non-formal education is acquired through educational programs and does not provide for the awarding of state-recognized educational qualifications by education level, but may end with the awarding of professional and/or the awarding of partial educational qualifications [24].

In line with the above, it is important for researchers and practitioners to address the current scientific problem – the organization of non-formal education of future specialists in Ukraine.

According to the compilers of the dictionary and reference edition "Encyclopedia of Education", non-formal education is "... any educational activity organized outside of formal education. It complements formal education, ensuring the development of skills and abilities that are necessary for a socially and economically active citizen of the country to be able to integrate into society and the labor market. A feature of non-formal education is the lack of firmness and unification in setting learning goals... The goal is dynamic in nature and can change at will in accordance with current (current) needs" [25, p. 583].

So, the main keywords characterizing the concept of "non-formal education" are activities outside of formal education, the development of skills and abilities, and a socially and economically active citizen. Theoreticians and practitioners determine the significant potential of non-formal education for the formation of leadership qualities, civic values of youth; the role and place of non-formal education in stimulating civic responsibility, implementation of social policy, democratization of society; development of civil society by involving local communities in social dialogue, personal development and self-realization [26; 27].

The effectiveness of professional training is based on supplementing the content of professional training with non-formal education. Formal education, on the other hand, is a rigid foundation that ensures stability and standardization of the obtained educational results. At the same time, non-formal education is considered as "a flexible organizational

system that fills formal education with relevant innovations, additional resources for acquiring personal, professional, social experience and forming the professional competence of future specialists" [26, p. 5].

Among the main programs and providers of non-formal education that have proven themselves in Ukraine, we single out the following:

- National Human Rights Program "Understanding Human Rights" (comprehensive human rights training and mentoring for activists, teachers, youth, journalists and other target groups);
- NGO Studena (programs for social adaptation of veterans, gender equality and cultural development, based on gender equality and a non-discriminatory approach);
- Ukrainian Leadership Academy (an educational program for young people who have general secondary education, aimed at personality development and social leadership and is conducted with the support of international and Ukrainian donors, politicians and public figures);
- National program "Youth worker" (a training program for youth workers, which is conducted by the Ministry of Youth and Sports in cooperation with UNDP and aims to provide a training base for working with young people in accordance with the European Competence Framework);
- The British Council's Active Citizens program (a program to train social leaders that promotes community-led social development, provides workshops and small grants to groups initiating social change in communities);
- As evidenced by the analysis of current practice, many providers work at the local level, among others – local and regional public organizations, including youth and student organizations, which hold outdoor events, festivals, forums and seminars, and also use new coworking centers and/or libraries [28; 29].

Among the sources of the theory and practice of non-formal education, we single out the magazine "Non-formal education: Best practices and projects" [30], digest "Forms and methods of non-formal education" [26], "Catalogue of best practices and projects of the organization of non-formal education" [31], online resource platforms (Prometheus [32] etc.).

In the context of the mentioned issues, the experience of higher education institutions of Ukraine regarding the implementation of effective means of non-formal civic education deserves attention.

The recognition of learning results obtained through non-formal education and/or informal education in higher education institutions, namely from the experience of Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University, is regulated by regulatory documents of three levels:

- National (state) level, Law of Ukraine "On Education" (2017) [24]; The procedure for recognition in higher and professional pre-university education of learning results obtained through non-formal and/or informal education (order of the Ministry of Education and Culture No. 130 dated 08.02.2022) [33];
- Local (university) level, Procedure for recognition of learning results obtained through non-formal and/or informal education at Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University (2023) [34], (hereinafter referred to as the Procedure);
- Internal (faculty) level, Instructional and methodological recommendations for non-formal education at the Faculty of Social and Psychological Education of Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University (2024) [35].

The mechanism of recognition of the results obtained in non-formal education was developed by the institution of higher education and is regulated by the relevant provision. At Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University, the recognition procedure involves 6 stages:

- The first stage – filing of the application, declaration and submission of all documents (including certificates, certificates, etc.) certifying the study results received by the applicant to the person responsible for non-formal education at the faculty/department);
- The second stage – submission of an application with completed documents to the educational and methodological department of the university for approval by the rector;
- The third stage – in accordance with the rector's order, at the faculty, by order of the dean, subject commissions are formed to recognize the results of training acquired in non-formal and informal education;

- The fourth stage – a meeting of the subject committee (review of the submitted documents, discussion, drawing up the conclusion and decision of the committee in minutes and the attestation letter of the applicant);
- The fifth stage – in accordance with the decision of the subject committee, a memo from the dean of the faculty is formed on the recognition of the study results;
- The sixth stage, in accordance with the order of the rector on the recognition of the study results, an entry is made to the student's study card.

Recognition of study results obtained in non-formal and/or informal education at the Faculty of Social and Psychological Education of the Pavlo Tychyna State University in accordance with the University Rules is available to applicants of all levels of higher education. Conditions have been created at the faculty for permanent support of documents for higher education applicants; consultative assistance is provided to applicants in filling out declarations on prior education, describing the results of non-formal and/or informal education for their subsequent comparison with the results of education. Also, the faculty has developed instructional and methodical recommendations, which take into account the specifics of the OP of the faculty, the University Procedure and are methodical help in carrying out all relevant procedures.

From the experience of recognition of learning results obtained through non-formal education of the Faculty of Social and Psychological Education in 2022/2023 N.Y. (I semester) according to 16 applicants' applications, (II semester) 66 applications; in 2023/2024 (I semester) 48 applicants' statements and the rector's order "On the creation of subject commissions", the order of the dean of the Faculty of Social and Psychological Education, meetings of the subject commissions were held (Table 1). In accordance with the decisions of the subject commissions, the learning results received in non-formal education were recognized and the subject(s), abstracts, and meaningful modules of compulsory and optional academic disciplines for students of higher education of the Faculty of Social and Psychological Education were re-enrolled.

Table 1: An expanded list of educational programs that implemented the procedure for recognizing the results obtained in non-formal education

Educational program	Educational degree	The number of applicants' applications
Semester 1 2022/2023		
Educational and Scientific Program (ESP) "Social work"	Doctor of philosophy	1
Educational and Professional Program (EPP) "Psychology"	Master's degree	8
EPP "Social Security"	Bachelor	2
EPP "Social Work"	Bachelor	1
EPP "Psychology"	Bachelor	1
EPP "Social Work"	Junior Bachelor	1
EPP "Psychology"	Junior Bachelor	3
Semester 2 2022/2023		
ESP "Social work"	Doctor of philosophy	4
ESP "Psychology"	Doctor of philosophy	2
ESP "Educational, Pedagogical Sciences"	Doctor of philosophy	6
EPP "Psychology"	Master's degree	27
EPP "Social Security"	Bachelor	2
EPP "Psychology"	Bachelor	20
EPP "Psychology"	Junior Bachelor	1
Semester 1 2023/2024		
ESP "Social work"	Doctor of philosophy	5
ESP "Educational, Pedagogical Sciences"	Doctor of philosophy	4
ESP "Psychology"	Doctor of philosophy	3
ESP "Psychology"	Master's degree	13
EPP "Educational Pedagogical Sciences"	Master's degree	2
EPP "Educational Institution Management"	Master's degree	4
EPP "Social Work"	Master's degree	5

Educational program	Educational degree	The number of applicants' applications
EPP "Social Security"	Bachelor	3
EPP "Social work (social and psychological counseling)"	Bachelor	4
EPP "Psychology"	Bachelor	5
EPP "Psychology"	Junior Bachelor	1

Positive experience of popularizing the recognition process of learning results obtained in non-formal/informal education at the Faculty of Social and Psychological Education is carried out through:

- Telegram group on non-formal education "Non-formal education FSPE", the purpose of such a community: informing the participants of the educational process, popularizing non-formal and informational education among students. Also, the Telegram group promotes additional information: about the organization of recognition of the results obtained in non-formal and informal education; about the deadlines for submitting documents; about methodological assistance in the preparation of documents; on the implementation of various non-formal education events that the applicant can choose for training [36].
- The website of the Faculty of Social and Psychological Education (a list of online platforms for learning and platforms for improving skills and self-development, a list of disciplines, an algorithm for organizing the recognition of results obtained in non-formal and/or informal education [37];
- News on the website of the faculty, social networks about the possibilities of non-formal education [16];
- Meetings of the non-formal education coordinator with the student of higher education; heads of departments for better organization and popularization of non-formal education among students;
- Meetings of EP guarantors with acquirers.

The most popular platforms among students of higher education at the Faculty of Social and Psychological Education are: Prometheus platform, EdWay platform, "Odessa Academy of Continuing Education of the Odessa Regional Council, EDUCATION MOVEMENT" platform, Dnipro ACADEMY OF CONTINUING EDUCATION platform, "Na Urok" platform, Institute for Modernization of Education Content, "Vseosvita" platform, remote civic education platform VUM online, Ed- platform era, educational platform "Social Perspective", Educational Guard of Victory, Central Institute of Postgraduate Education, University of Management of Education, platform Osvitoria, platform Osnova, "Actual issues of preparation of dissertation studies in Ukraine" Scientific Society of MEGU International University of Economics and Humanities named after Academician Stepan Demyanchuk, "Pedagogical legacy of Sofya Rusova" within the series of educational webinars "Flower of Ukrainian pedagogy: present and past", "Ukrainian Scientific Diaspora of France: Science for Victory", NGO "Association of Public Advisors of Ukraine", platform Academy of Digital Development, International advanced training (webinar) on the topic "Academic integrity in the training of Bachelor's and Master's degrees in the countries of the European Union and Ukraine" and others.

It was determined that the conditions for the development of non-formal education in higher education institutions are: compliance with the requirements of international and national legislation in this area; the presence of local regulatory documents in higher education institutions that regulate the procedure and requirements for recognition of results obtained in non-formal education; mechanism for informing higher education seekers about non-formal education (about regulatory and procedural requirements, about access to online resources and online courses of non-formal education); availability of an information policy for all participants of the educational process (use of the official website of the Higher Education Institution; creation of telegram channels; selection of online courses of non-formal education for each EK EP, etc.); clear and transparent procedure and criteria for recognition of results obtained in non-formal education.

At the same time, one of the conditions that expands access to non-formal education for higher education seekers and ensures its compliance with the profile of educational programs and specialties is the introduction of non-formal education programs and courses in higher education institutions.

Such an initiative can be from the administration, departments, scientific and pedagogical workers, student assets, etc. The creation of non-formal education programs is a local platform of courses, training, workshops, projects, master classes, which are aimed at the result of training and reinforcement of formal training.

At the same time, this approach to the organization of non-formal education implements the principle of student-centered learning, aimed at increasing the independence of participants in the educational process, and also has the following guidelines: reliance on active activity; formation of responsibility for one's own activity; the autonomy of the student of higher education. Participation in such activities and acquired knowledge in non-formal education: this can be the result of a conscious decision or the result of various extracurricular activities over a period of time.

Such an approach expands the opportunities for participants to participate in non-formal education, complements the range of educational programs in accordance with the profile of educational programs, allows to strengthen the formation of study results by specialty, to be an active participant in university life.

This practice was introduced at the Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University at the Faculty of Social and Psychological Education at the level of implementation of project activities, organization of training work, participation in the work of thematic centers, conducting workshops, etc. A mandatory condition for the organization of such forms of non-formal education are: voluntary participation of students of higher education, availability of a document confirming participation based on the results of work, compliance with the specialty and field of knowledge studied by students, etc.

Project activity is an innovative approach in the organization of the educational process, both at the level of formation of appropriate learning outcomes, search for creative ideas and solutions, attraction of additional resources, implementation of useful activities in the university environment. At the same time, the involvement of higher education students in project activities is one of the forms of non-formal education: they have the opportunity to engage in professionally oriented activities in their free time from studies; form project competence, test theoretical knowledge in practice, develop teamwork skills, etc.

Among the examples of projects that are implemented at the university and based on the results of the participation of students of higher education, confirming documents are issued, there are:

- Implementation of free sign language courses (<http://surl.li/qxgzk>) together with the Uman branch of Ukrainian Society of the Deaf (UTOG);
- Within the framework of the implementation of the project "Gender: equal opportunities for all", students of higher education studied the theoretical foundations of the gender approach in social work, as well as worked out practical cases of combating gender-based violence <http://surl.li/ielqw>. The project is implemented within the framework of cooperation between UNFPA and the NGO "Innovative Social Solutions" with the support of the USAID Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance;
- Within UPSHIFT projects is a global program of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), which is implemented in more than 40 countries. The program provides an opportunity for young people to undergo Human Centered Design training, receive mentoring support and resources to turn their ideas into socially important projects <http://surl.li/qxgzx>. Therefore, higher education students themselves are the initiators of socially important projects on the topic of developing leadership qualities, finding new approaches to career guidance for high school students, creating an inclusive educational environment in the community, etc.;
- The project "Theoretical-methodological use of the Hibuki therapy technique in working with children's trauma" is an Israeli-Ukrainian project aimed at helping IDP children and people with PTSD symptoms. Applicants, by joining the project, have the opportunity to develop relevant skills for future professional activity;
- The "Toy Therapy Room" project – a constantly operating room until the end of hostilities and during the performance of post-war rehabilitation functions. Having received the appropriate knowledge and skills in non-formal learning complements the formation of learning outcomes determined by the educational program;
- The project "Academic integrity: a tribute to fashion or a necessity of life" is included in the calendar plan of the Department of Family, Youth and Sports of the Cherkasy Regional State Administration. The participants of the competition are higher education students, which allows to expand knowledge about value orientations in higher education and specific cases from the methodology of scientific research;

- The project "Learning to defend ourselves: preparing ambassadors of change", supported by the competition commission of the "Abilis" foundation (Finland). The project is aimed at increasing the level of competence of young women and girls with disabilities regarding ways to strengthen their psycho-physical stability and the formation of a culture of safety in personal life and society, self-defense skills, new methods and techniques for getting out of various crisis situations, gaining a sense of independence and social dignity.

We consider the implementation of such projects and the involvement of student youth in them as one of the forms of non-formal education in the conditions of higher education, which allows for the formation of competences and learning results according to educational programs, expands the individual educational trajectory of those seeking higher education, and diversifies the range of educational services.

At the same time, a promising direction for the development of non-formal education is the functioning of thematic scientific and practical centers, on the basis of which scientific and practical conferences, trainings, courses, etc. are held. Such centers are:

- The Gender Center is a center of scientific and practical guidance on the justification and implementation of the gender component both in the educational environment of higher education institutions and in training programs for future specialists;
- Center for family education – carries out activities aimed at social and pedagogical support of families, family education and preparation of young people for family life;
- Center for socio-educational integration and inclusive rehabilitation and social tourism "Without barriers" – ensures the implementation of the main principles of the National strategy for creating a barrier-free space;
- "START" youth center – creates conditions for comprehensive development and self-realization of young people in various spheres of social life, disclosure of their potential, protection of interests and rights, promotion of social formation and development, professional orientation of meaningful leisure time, support of talented youth;
- Center for psychological diagnosis and training technologies "Insight" – ensures the development of methods for the professional identification of pupils and student youth;
- Center for veteran development – aimed at professional and socio-psychological rehabilitation of veterans and their family members.

Among the promising areas of activity of such centers is the implementation of courses and short-term programs of non-formal education, which will allow to attract a wider circle of student youth and search for relevant and practice-oriented thematic activities.

In order to study the opinion of the participants of the educational process on the organization of non-formal education, a questionnaire was developed using the Google form resource. The survey period is March 2024. Participation in the survey is voluntary and anonymous. According to the results of the monitoring, about 50 answers were received from students of higher education of all levels: from "junior bachelor" to "doctor of philosophy"(Figure 1).

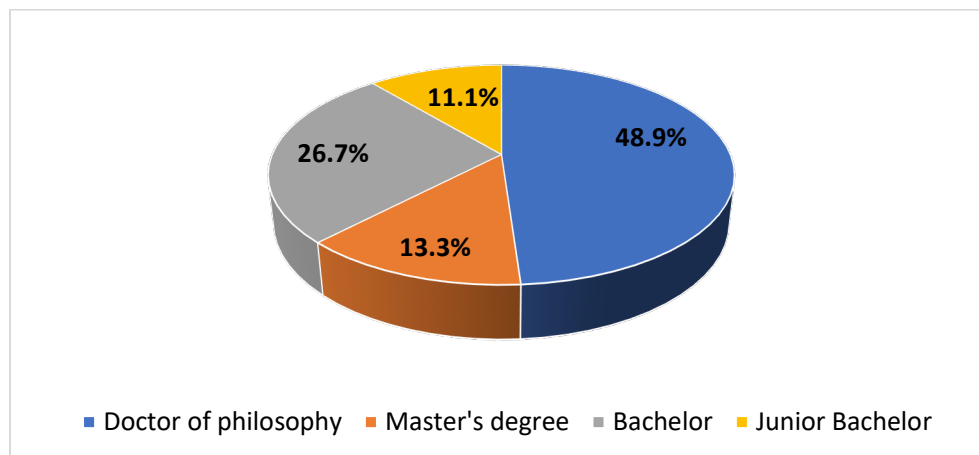
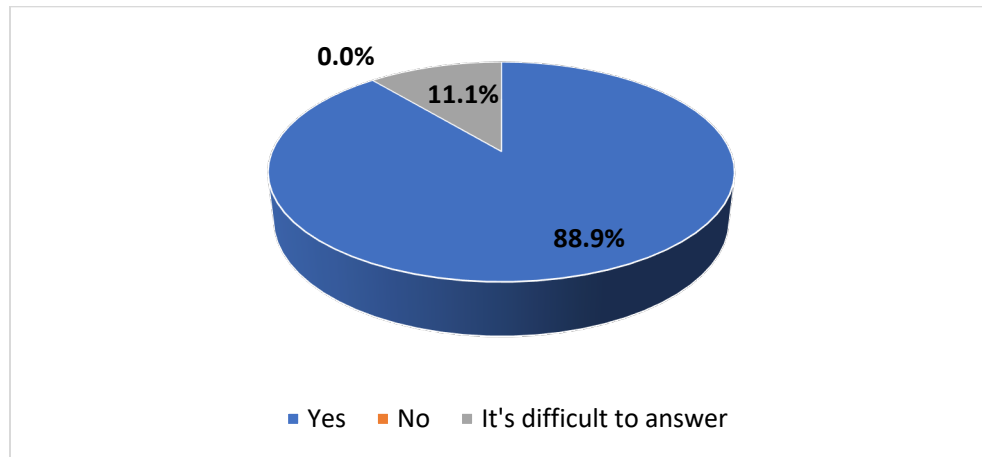


Figure 1. Distribution of answers by educational degrees

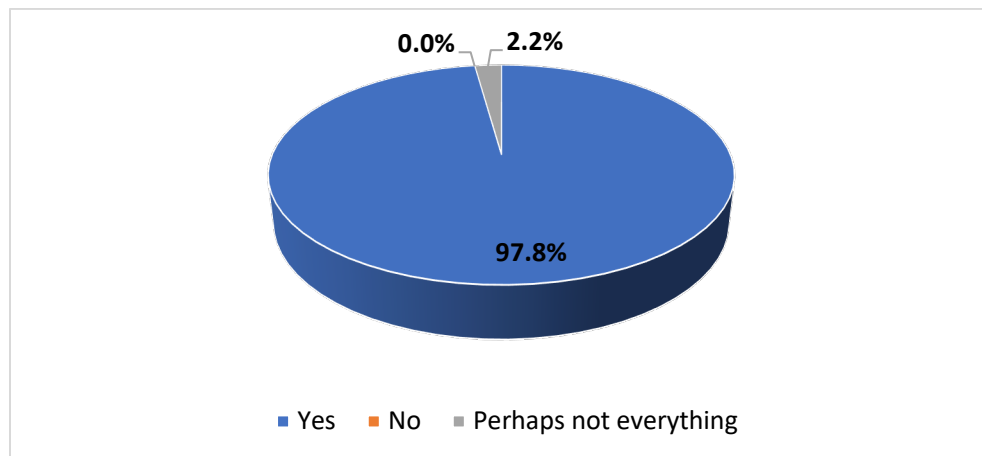
Source: Results of a survey conducted by the authors.

When asked whether higher education seekers were informed about the availability and content of regulatory documents on non-formal education, almost 90% gave a positive answer (Figure 2).

**Figure 2.** Responses to the question of whether students were informed about the existence and content of regulatory documents on non-formal education

Source: Results of a survey conducted by the authors.

The responses of higher education students deserve attention – almost 100% of respondents indicated that higher education institutions inform about opportunities for non-formal education and recognition of results obtained in non-formal education (Figure 3).

**Figure 3.** Responses to the question of whether higher education institutions provide information about non-formal education opportunities

Source: Results of a survey conducted by the authors.

Regarding the channels of informing about non-formal education, the answers were divided as follows (Figure 4):

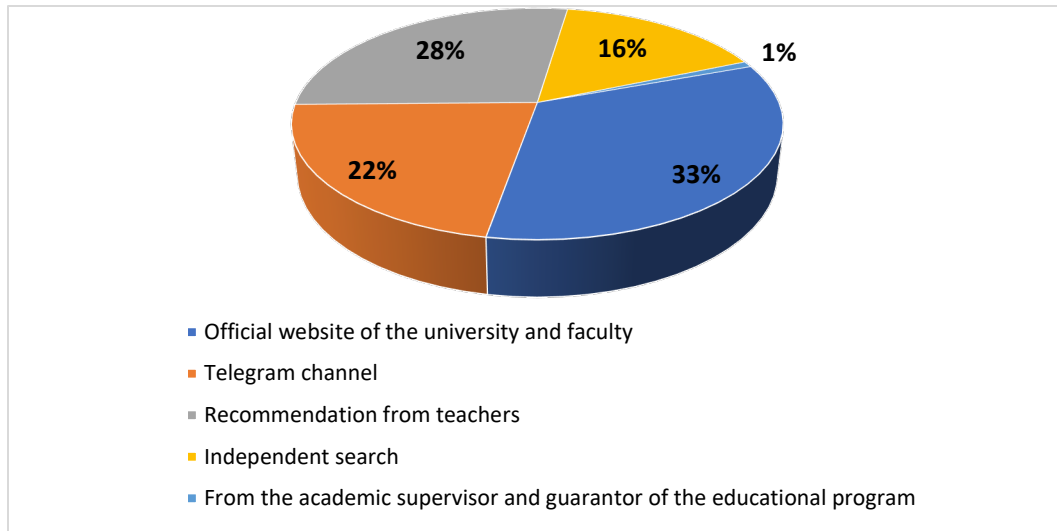


Figure 4. Channels of informing about non-formal education
Source: Results of a survey conducted by the authors.

The effectiveness of the system of implementing non-formal education is evidenced by the answers to the question: "Do you have experience in recognizing the results obtained in non-formal education", then 60% of higher education applicants noted specific examples (Figure 5):

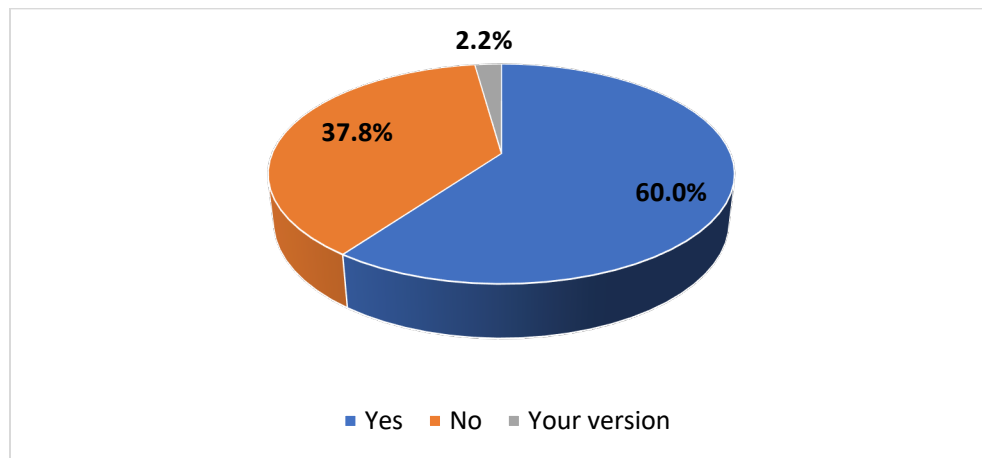


Figure 5. Answers to questions "Do you have experience in recognizing the results obtained in non-formal education"
Source: Results of a survey conducted by the authors.

For higher education institutions, the opinion of higher education seekers about the resources they use for non-formal education is important: almost 43% of respondents said that they prefer those programs that are conducted on the basis of higher education institutions; almost 10% – prefer programs outside higher education institutions. Such results testify to the relevance of developing a wide range of programs for non-formal education within the resources available to higher education institutions (Figure 6):

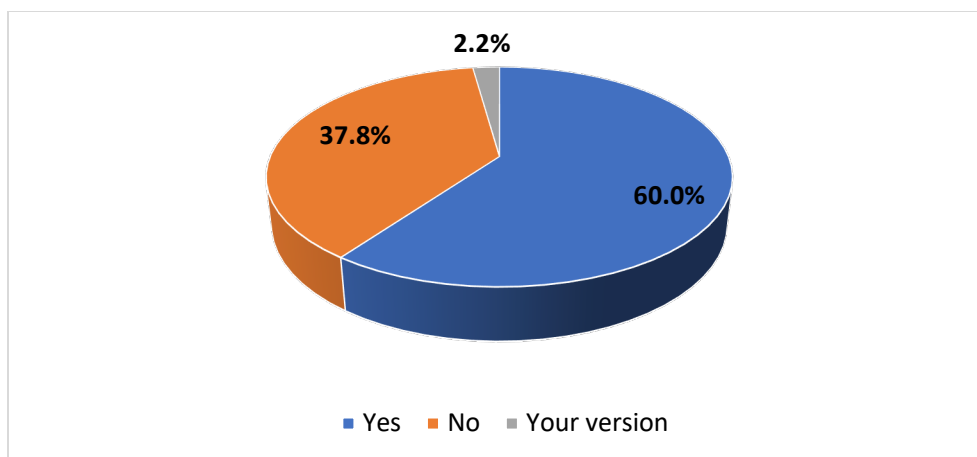


Figure 6. Answers to the question "Do you prefer non-formal education in higher education programs or outside of them?"

Source: Results of a survey conducted by the authors.

As for the subjects of the courses preferred by those seeking higher education, 61% of the respondents indicated that the subjects of the specialty they are studying are priorities, and 33% – courses for personal development (Figure 7):

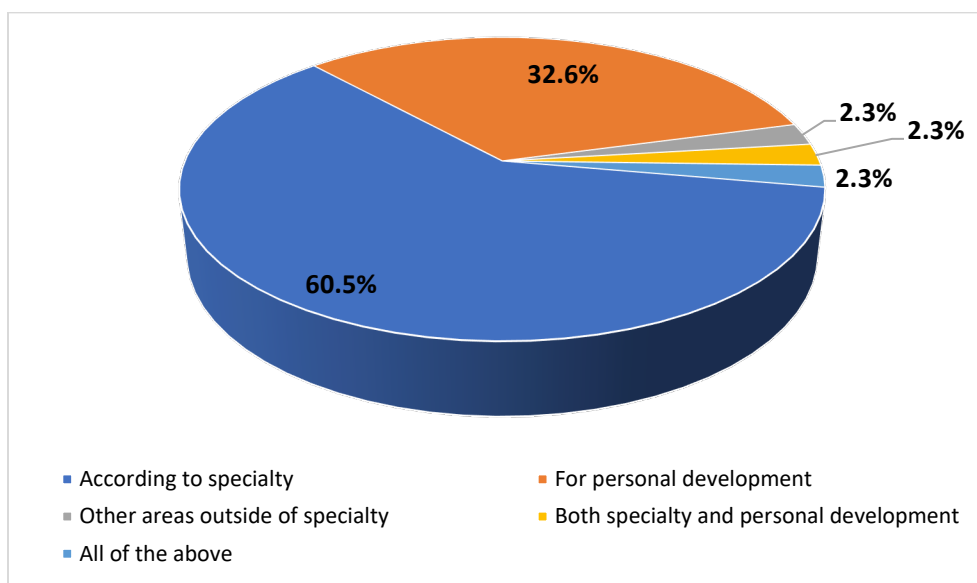


Figure 7. Answers to the question "What topics in non-formal education interest you?"

Source: Results of a survey conducted by the authors.

Conclusions

As a result of theoretical generalizations and the study of practical experience of the functioning of the system of non-formal education measures, it was established that the organizational conditions for the implementation of this system are the implementation of international and compliance with Ukrainian normative documents in this area. At the same time, for the structural department of a higher education institution it is meaningful to regulate non-formal education with normative documents of three levels: national (state) level; local (university) level; internal (faculty) level.

Effective forms of informing the participants of the educational process regarding learning outcomes obtained in non-formal/informal education have been determined: Telegram group; website of the faculty; news on the website of the faculty, social networks about the possibilities of non-formal education; meetings of the non-formal education coordinator with the student of higher education; responsible persons of the departments for better organization and popularization of non-formal education among applicants; meetings of EP guarantors with acquirers.

It was found that one of the conditions that expands access to non-formal education for higher education seekers and ensures its compliance with the profile of educational programs and specialties is the introduction of non-formal education programs and courses in higher education institutions. Such an initiative can be from the administration, departments, scientific and pedagogical workers, student assets, etc. The creation of non-formal education programs is a local platform of courses, training, workshops, projects, master classes, which are aimed at the result of training and reinforcement of formal training. A promising direction for the development of non-formal education is the participation of students of higher education in scientific and practical conferences, trainings, courses in accordance with the thematic areas of activity of scientific and practical centers of the university, faculty.

The monitoring carried out to study the opinion of the students of higher education testified to the effectiveness of the introduced system of measures for the institutionalization of non-formal education in the conditions of higher education.

To mitigate internal biases in the qualitative data, the study employed triangulation, reflexivity, and participant validation methods. These approaches ensured a more balanced understanding of the findings and helped avoid subjective distortions during interpretation. As a result, the conclusions are grounded in multiple sources and verified perspectives, which enhances their reliability and validity.

Prospects for further research include studying the practical experience of foreign higher education institutions in relation to non-formal education, determining the effectiveness of the implementation of non-formal education for the formation of program learning outcomes and social skills, and determining the criteria for evaluating knowledge acquired in non-formal education.

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