

## **Non-formal Education in Poland and Canada- Compared: A Brief Commentary**

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### **Abstract**

**The purpose of this brief commentary is to compare non-formal education in Poland and Canada in terms of accessibility, and it is motivated by the fact that learning is a lifelong process because of rapid advances in technology. The theoretical framework for this commentary is supplied by the general idea that non-formal learning provides a social function.**

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“Always remember, It is never too late to take learning seriously.”  
(William Allan Kritsonis)

### **What is Non-formal Education?**

Non-formal education is a generic term which includes: “any organized, systematic, educational activity, carried on outside the framework of the formal system, to provide selected types of learning to particular sub-groups of the population, adults as well as children. Thus defined non-formal education includes, for example, agricultural extension and farmer training programs, adult literacy programs, occupational skill training given outside the formal system, youth clubs with substantial educational purposes, and various community programs of instruction in health, nutrition, family planning, cooperatives, and the like” (quoted in Coombs, 1985, 23).

### **Purpose of the Article**

The primary purpose of this article is to briefly compare non-formal learning in Poland and Canada with regard to accessibility, and it is motivated by the fact that learning is a life long process due to rapid advances in technology.

The theoretical model for this work is provided by the general notion that non-formal education provides a social function.

### **Access to Informal Education in Poland and Canada**

Numerous kinds of Canadian and Polish organizations take part in the delivery of nonformal educational courses and programs, for example: universities, community colleges, trade unions and foundations (Berg, 1995, 622; Komorowska and Janowski, 1995, 4547).

A very important edict was issued by the Polish Ministry of National Education and Sport in 1992 which lead to the creation of 58 centers of continuing education throughout Poland, and their functions include: “out of school education and [the] further training of adults” (Bogaj et al., 1999, 181). Financial support for the centers has been provided by Phare, a EU program (Bogaj et al., 1999, 183). Likewise, in 1998, the Canadian province of Prince Edward Island began “developing and implementing a strategy for improving adult and student literacy education” (Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, 1998).

### **Concluding Remarks**

Ready access to non-formal education is very important nowadays to Canadians and Poles because they live in a rapidly changing world. That has a profound influence on both the way they spend their leisure time and the essential quality of their work

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#### Note

1. There is another basic manner of education which is called informal. Such education is about. “The life – long process by which every person acquires and accumulates knowledge, skills, attitudes and insights from daily experiences and exposure to the environment at home, at work, at play, from the example and attitudes of family and friends; from travel, reading newspapers and books; or by listening to the radio, or viewing films or television. Generally, informal education is unorganized, unsystematic and even unintentional at times, yet it accounts for the great bulk of any person’s total lifetime learning – including that of even a highly ‘schooled person’” (quoted in Coombs, 1985, 24).

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