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BULLETIN



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**THE CENTRE IN EMERGENCY SITUATION CONDITIONS –
HOW THE TRAININGS CONTINUE AND WHAT ARE
THE POSITIVES IN CRISES SITUATION**



**DISTANCE LEARNING – SHARED EXPERIENCE OF ONE
OF THE LONGTERM TUTORS IN THE CENTRE**



SCHEDULE OF TRAININGS IN APRIL



ON FOCUS

In the conditions of the emergency situation in the state, when the organization of trainings in face-to-face form is impossible, the team of CHRDRI, using the experience gained over the years and the availability of electronic products, which are an integral part of the whole training process, switched to fully remote learning form for the seminars under the project Integrated Trainings for the administration of the labor market and in the social sphere, without violating the planned activities. How exactly this happened and what problems the team of the Center is currently facing, we sought the opinion of Mr. Ivan Bakalov, Head of the Training Activities Department. In an interview with Ms. Irina Grigorova, Chief Expert in the Human Resources Department of the Employment Agency and a longtime lecturer at the CHRDRI, teaching in seminars in both face-to-face and distance learning, we looked at the benefits of e-learning for adults and in what direction it could develop.

The trainings this month are entirely in distance form. Two of them are in the field of social activities, one is dedicated to clarifying the new points in the Law on Social Assistance, and the second is dedicated to changes in the legislation concerning the granting of family benefits for children. The topics of the other two seminars are also relevant - it is related to the control activities of the administration for public health and the applied comprehensive approach in working with vulnerable groups in the labor market.

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The digital products of CHRDRI are constantly active and support the work of the team in the training process. Their role and importance have grown significantly in conditions when we can not conduct attending seminars. Therefore, we most politely invite all students, lecturers and methodologists to join the current discussions and we highly value their opinion. This allows us to develop our training as tailored to the needs of each group and stimulates us in the development of new training methods.

- **Vocational qualification courses have a number of features that do not allow them to be carried out entirely in distance form, as is the case with seminars. The development of digital technologies implies more and more training to be carried out in electronic form, especially in an emergency situation such as the current**

one. This can be done qualitatively and effectively. In order to prepare methodically and organizationally for the future opportunity to organize professional training remotely, the Lecturer's Club launched a discussion in which we raise the question of how to remove regulatory, methodological and organizational barriers to transform vocational training courses from face-to-face to fully remote form and what characteristics should have the platform through which to do it. Our team will be grateful to all our lecturers for sharing their experiences and ideas that are important to us. You can join the discussion at: <http://www.lecturerclub.com/bg>

Moderator: Galina Ivanova, galina_ivanova@chrdri.net

- In the recent days, in the Blogroll session of SmartNet were published several articles. The first two of them are dedicated to the role of digital products in the training process and their complex functioning, and the third article presents the way in which the differentiation between seminar and initiative in Project Integrated Seminars for the Administration of Labour Market and in the Social Sphere is made. The materials are open for comments and their authors as well as the whole team of the CHRDRI are waiting on: <http://smartnetbg.net/blogroll>.

Moderator: Galina Ivanova, galina_ivanova@chrdri.net

- We are kindly invite everyone with interests in different directions of social policies to follow the new materials in the Electronic library, which is constantly updated on <http://chrdri.net/bg/library/biblioteka>.

THE CENTRE IN EMERGENCY SITUATION CONDITIONS – HOW THE TRAININGS CONTINUE AND WHAT ARE THE POSITIVES IN CRISES SITUATION

Despite the situation in the country related to the spread of COVID-19 and the related prohibition on conducting face-to-face training, the Centre continued its work, and the team's response was like another challenge that we have to deal with. Of course, this led to a reorganization of the training process, which continued through the existing electronic products and through the transformation of the face-to-face seminars into distance form. More about the way in which all this happened, tells us Mr. Ivan Bakalov, head of the department Training Activities in CHRDRI, who is in charge of managing and synchronizing this process.

Ivan Bakalov:

The declaration of the state of emergency on 13 March 2020 put us in a situation that we have all not even thought about so far. The Centre has existed over the years thanks to the training it provides for the public administration and other employed and unemployed people. We have always strived for the service we provide, whether remote or in person, to be at a level that is higher than that of all others, although in Bulgaria there is no other center that is structured in the way is a structured CHRDRI. The declaration of the state of emergency posed serious issues for the Centre to resolve, but also opportunities for implementation in directions that we have not yet fully developed.

The suspension of in-person training raised several serious questions for the Centre - how to provide quality and comprehensive training for our students using distance forms, how to make the courses available to each of our students, whether a civil servant or an unemployed person and what are the possibilities of the legislation of the Republic of Bulgaria to make this happen.

As measures that we are purposefully trying to take, the easiest and fastest things happened under the project Integrated Trainings for the Public Administration of the Labor Market and in the Social Sphere. As the Centre has very well-developed digital products and a platform for distance learning, the process of converting trainings from present to digital form is not a particular challenge. In order not to interrupt the process and to continue our successful work under the Operational Program "Human Resources Development", as a project manager I took steps all trainings planned to be held in person for the months of March, April and May to be converted to digital form.

Here I want to emphasize that there is a difference between the distance learning that we have conducted so far and not accidentally used the term conversion of seminars into distance form. The principle on which the conversion of the present seminars into digital form will be done will be different from what we have done so far in the remote form. Here I mean that the conversion of the materials, the way the content will be presented to the participants, the way they will interact with the lecturer will be completely changed in order to preserve some of the aspects and the positive effect of the seminar, for which we will be helped by some of our lecturers, who I dare say are extremely prepared. This measure is expected to last until the end of May, and the Centre's capabilities are not a problem, if necessary, to carry out even all its training on the project in remote form. This will in no way change the implementation of the indicators, the trained persons, divided into target groups and will not change the meaning of the project proposal, i.e. at the end of the project, following the indicators reflected in the microdata provided to our colleagues by the Managing Authority, we will report results that will not differ in principle if the seminars were organized in face-to-face form.

As our readers may know over the years, the training organizers, who in this case will be moderators or administrators of the platform, are prepared to conduct both a face-to-face course and a distance seminar with equal success. I want to emphasize that the Centre uses entirely its own developed resources to make this type of training happen and the internal potential for program conversion. Over the years we have created a core of employees and

consultants that we strive to stimulate and maintain, who are trained in this area of activity - organizing, conducting and evaluating trainings. From this point of view, I have no doubt that we will be able to meet our objectives under the project Integrated Trainings for the Public Administration of the Labor Market and in the Social Sphere in the form in which we presented them when we applied. Here I want to use our e-bulletin to assure colleagues from the Operational Program and the Managing Authority that we are determined to meet the objectives as set and will not indicate problems or non-compliance related to the fact that for the time of the state of emergency will we conduct the planned seminars in remote form.

The continuation of the work on the vocational qualification courses, financed by the National Action Plan for Employment 2020. is a challenge for us right now. The Centre, as part of the state apparatus and as a secondary spending unit, must also contribute to resolving the situation after the current crisis. A few days ago, I was included by our director, together with my colleague Milan Milanov, who is responsible for planning the trainings under the National Action Plan for Employment, in a working group, which is related to defining a "social package" through which Ministry of Labor and Social Policy to support citizens in all areas of activity in which it could support them. In this regard, what I will offer to my colleagues in this working group will be related to my conviction that we need to move in the direction of changing the legislation to regulate the conduct of courses for unemployed people in distance form. of training through platforms, for which, however, let me emphasize, there must be the necessary certification and regulation, as well as to develop a common standard and rules for conducting courses for unemployed people in distance form. We have this tool ready, we have worked in this way to improve the skills of public administration employees and I am convinced that we can do the conversion in remote form in the best way. The main problem is the legislation and here I appeal to my colleagues from the Employment Agency and the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy to work together to change the legislation and with the help of the Ministry of Education and Science to act quickly, to act effectively so that within every few months to have at least a draft plan that we can offer to the Ministry of Education and Science for the way we can do the courses entirely in remote form.

I think that regarding the situation, we will all come out changed and we need to learn lessons, including that we should not be reassured that in a month or two our lives will return to normal. On the contrary, I believe that we must have an aggressive mechanism by which to change the way we work and which must be not only a fallback option, but a parallel tool through which to conduct courses for the unemployed. The Centre can be much more effective if we start conducting distance learning in parallel, through which we can train a much wider range of unemployed people, who will receive a scholarship on a daily basis for their work in training. I believe that in this way we can contribute to reducing the unemployment that will come after the crisis, together with huge consumption and demand for employment services. We have the capacity to double and triple the number of students in each area in need of development and assistance.

At the moment, the steps we will take are primarily related to the implementation of the commitments made to the MLSP. This requires the implementation of the annual schedule within six months with the start of the courses in June. The Centre has the potential to do up to 12 courses for unemployed people at the same time and in June we are ready to start with eight parallel courses, which is absolutely achievable. All unemployed people who are

registered or planned for our courses will sign annexes to their contracts and the contracts between us, the employment offices and they will be fulfilled - I want to reassure all our students in this regard. Contracts will not be terminated or amended unless the students themselves so wish. Accordingly, the payment of scholarships will be resumed from where it was interrupted. For the students who are about to study in our courses, I want to say that they will be included in the lists at the moment when the given course appears in our schedule. State exams and internships will be conducted as planned. No courses will be transferred for the next calendar year. This is our way of contributing to the consequences that this crisis will have.

Whether in face-to-face or remote form, the Center continues to operate. We have not stopped our work - on the contrary - we want to ensure that each of our face-to-face courses can be conducted remotely when necessary. We have the technical and material resources for this for years. What stops us is the lack of regulations that would allow us to conduct vocational training courses entirely in distance form.

DISTANCE LEARNING – SHARED EXPERIENCE OF ONE OF THE LONGTERM TUTORS IN THE CENTRE



Ms. Irina Grigorova is a Chief Expert in the Human Resources Management Department of the Employment Agency and a certified tutor of the Distance Learning Platform of CHRDRI. Master of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, she has many years of teaching experience in conducting training related to the provision of services in the labor market, and the last distance seminar led by her ended a few days ago.

Ms. Grigorova, distance learning form is the only one that is possible in the current emergency. However, the Employment Agency has been using it for years. How would you assess its advantages and disadvantages? As a possible positive effect of the current situation, do you expect other institutions to be more active in addressing the opportunities provided by distance learning?

Irina Grigorova: The Employment Agency is the first institution in the structure of the MLSP to start conducting trainings on the Distance Learning Platform of CHRDMI. We have already established traditions in this area.

Like anything, distance learning has advantages and disadvantages. If we have to make a comparison, there are definitely more advantages, especially in the current situation. Distance learning provides an opportunity to acquire specific knowledge using modern techniques and models for learning and creates conditions for acquiring or updating the knowledge and skills of participants. There is no need to interrupt the work process, take trips and break away from family and relatives.

Participants in the distance learning course have the advantage to perform actions related to their learning and preparation at a time of their choice, to "enter the training hall" and to send their messages at the most convenient time for them 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

The disadvantage is the lack of direct contact between the participants, but in the current situation, this is also more of an advantage. There are also financial advantages, no travel expenses are required for the participants.

I expect more and more institutions to move to this modern and up-to-date form of training in order to maintain and develop the competencies of their employees.

You are also one of the longterm tutors working on the Centre's Distance Learning Platform. Your last training ended literally days ago. Could you tell us how it went in a state of emergency?

Irina Grigorova: The training went very well, the form of learning by doing is widely used, in this case the study of each specific learning topic was related to the implementation of practical assignments and discussions in the training forum. I take this opportunity to thank the participants in the last training for their activity, despite the fact that they were particularly busy at their work places.

The Centre develops all its electronic products, and the goal is to provide quality training for adults through their synchronous operation. We are currently actively working in this direction in connection with the transformation of some of the present seminars under the project Integrated Trainings for the Public Administration of the Labor Market and in the Social Sphere in a remote form. As our long-term lecturer, in what direction do you see the development of distance learning in CHRDMI - e.g. Would it be useful to include video modules, interactive connection with the participants, etc.?

Irina Grigorova: Training and development of employees is an important element of human resource management in the organization, it is crucial to increase the capacity of employees, and hence - to improve the quality of services provided to citizens and businesses.

Any improvement of the distance learning platform will contribute to the application of modern ways of acquiring knowledge based on the capabilities of the Internet. This is an alternative form of training, which is characterized by high flexibility and minimal amount of resources (time, human and financial). It relies on active learning and is aimed at acquiring

certain competencies that increase the professional qualification of the trained employees and increase the efficiency of their work.

I definitely believe that distance learning, as a current form of learning, supports and promotes the process of lifelong learning through the use of the rapidly evolving digital environment.

The editorial team of the bulletin thanks Ms. Grigorova for her cooperation!

SCHEDULE OF TRAININGS IN APRIL

IMPROVEMENT OF THE REGULATORY FRAMEWORK IN THE FIELD OF SOCIAL ASSISTANCE. SOCIAL ASSISTANCE LAW AND THE REGULATION FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION

Seminar, April 27 - May 19, 2020

Form of training: distance

*The seminar is carried out within the project Integrated Trainings for the Public
Administration in the Labor Market and in the Social Sphere*

The training is intended for employees on managerial and expert positions from the MLSP and Social Assistance Agency, as well as for employees from the municipalities engaged in this issue.

During their training, participants will increase their knowledge about the amendments to the Social Assistance Act and the Regulation for its implementation, paying attention to the terms and conditions for providing social benefits in connection with the changes. The seminar in remote form will provide an opportunity for discussions, presenting specific cases from practice, and each participant will have the opportunity to share their professional experience regarding the application of current regulations in the field of social assistance.

Successful graduates will be issued a certificate of participation according to an approved standard of CHRDI.

For information and registration:

Gabriela Nikolova, gabrielanikos@gmail.com

GOOD PRACTICES IN THE CONTROL ACTIVITY OF THE ADMINISTRATION FOR PUBLIC HEALTH PROTECTION

Seminar, April 28 - May 20, 2020

Form of training: distance

*The seminar is carried out within the project Integrated Trainings for the Public
Administration in the Labor Market and in the Social Sphere*

The training is intended for health inspectors from Regional health inspectorates, education inspectors from Regional Education Units, Consumer Protection Commission at the Ministry of Economy and representatives from municipalities.

During the training, the participants in the seminar will expand and deepen their knowledge about the health risk factors caused by unhealthy diet, low physical activity, use of tobacco and tobacco products and alcohol abuse and their consequences, as well as the regulations concerning limiting the health risk factors and the activity of the administrations involved in the process of public health protection. During the training, attention will be paid to upgrading skills for drafting and serving an act for an administrative violation in connection with the control work of the public health administration.

Successful graduates will be issued a certificate of participation according to an approved standard of CHRDMI.

For information and registration:

Virginia Todorova, virginia_todorova@chrdri.net

AMENDMENTS AND ADDITIONS OF THE NORMATIVE ACTS REGULATING THE GRANTING OF FAMILY BENEFITS FOR CHILDREN UNDER THE FAMILY BENEFITS FOR CHILDREN ACT AND THE REGULATION FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION

Seminar, April 29 - May 22, 2020

Form of training: distance

*The seminar is carried out within the project Integrated Trainings for the Public
Administration in the Labor Market and in the Social Sphere*

The training is intended for employees on managerial and expert positions from the MLSP, from the Social Protection Departments of the Social Assistance Agency, social partners, municipalities and NGOs working in the field of child protection.

Participants will upgrade their knowledge about the latest changes in the current legislation in the field of family support under the Family Benefits for Children Act and the Regulation for its implementation and will build skills to apply good practices and models for dealing with implementation problems of the current legislation in the field of family support.

Successful graduates will be issued a certificate of participation according to an approved standard of CHRDMI.

For information and registration:

Maria Zlateva, maria_zlateva@chrdri.net

**IMPLEMENTING A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH WHEN WORKING
WITH VULNERABLE GROUPS IN THE LABOR MARKET TO ACHIEVE
SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYMENT THROUGH DEVELOPMENT OF
SERVICES AND COOPERATION WITH EMPLOYERS**

Seminar, April 30 - May 26, 2020

Form of training: distance

*The seminar is carried out within the project Integrated Trainings for the Public
Administration in the Labor Market and in the Social Sphere*

The training is intended for employees on managerial and expert positions from the Employment Agency, social partners and other administrations from institutions or organizations operating in the labor market.

The seminar aims to increase the knowledge of the participants about the characteristics of the vulnerable groups on the labor market, as well as to upgrade their skills for consulting a certain group in order to achieve sustainable employment. During the training conditions will be created for the development of skills for analysis of the problems and difficulties accompanying the service of vulnerable groups on the labor market, and at the same time the practical skills of better communication and complex customer service for vulnerable groups

will be improved in order to achieve sustainable employment. Good practices in conducting a counseling interview with unemployed people from vulnerable groups will also be discussed.

Successful graduates will be issued a certificate of participation according to an approved standard of CHRDMI.

For information and registration::

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More information about the trainings in 2020 will find on:

<http://chrdri.net/bg/category/32/katalog-na-seminarite-za-2020-g>