



MAY 2020

# BULLETIN



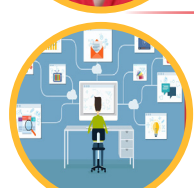
ON FOCUS



e - NEWS



**DISCUSSION TOPIC:**  
**VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN DISTANCE FORM - MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL**



**PRO AND CON FOR VOCATIONAL COURSES CONDUCTED IN DISTANCE FORM - THE OPINIONS OF LECTURERS AND METHODISTS OF CHRDI**



**SCHEDULE OF TRAININGS IN MAY**



## ON FOCUS

Following the change in the way of teaching imposed by the state of emergency for the seminars under the Project Integrated Trainings for the Administration in Institutions, working on the Labour Market and in the Social Sphere, at the end of April the first three of the seminars were successfully launched on the remote distance learning platform of the Center. The target groups were formed in a timely manner, and the methodologists and lecturers prepared the learning process for its effective implementation in accordance with the requirements of distance learning.

Currently, the preparation of two seminars on the project for the month of May is underway, which will again take place on the distance learning platform. Their topics concern work with children, victims of violence and the benefits of applying a holistic, community and culturally appropriate approach in supporting the social inclusion of vulnerable groups.

The center is timely looking for new opportunities to continue working remotely, trying out options for video conferencing trainings, incl. and vocational training courses and initiatives.

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## *e* - NEWS

In April, three discussions were held in the Lecturer's Club, which were analyzed and summarized by the moderator of the platform. At the same time, the development of individual blogs on Smartnet continued, and the distance learning platform concentrated the main part of the work on the project Integrated Trainings for the Administration in Institutions, working on the Labour Market and in the Social Sphere.

- During the past month, three topics were discussed at the Lecturer's Club. The first two of them were entirely methodical, focusing on two of the "strong" points in a training - its preparation and related preliminary information about the group of participants and the way in which the lecturers summarize what they have learned from the students.
- Obtaining preliminary information about the group of participants to be worked with and planning the training according to their direct needs, turns out to be an extremely

successful approach, which the Center consistently imposes in its work on the implemented projects. This approach is further developed through detailed questionnaires, which all participants in seminars on the project Integrated Trainings for the Administration in Institutions, working on the Labour Market and in the Social Sphere fill out before the seminars start. The purpose of the announced discussion on the preliminary information from the participants was, on the one hand, to see whether the lecturers need to collect other data to serve as a basis for developing the training program, and on the other - to discuss how to improve the work with this type of information in the courses financed through the National Action Plan for Employment. Regarding the first aspect of the topic, suggestions were given by Prof. Stoyko Ivanov, according to whom the overall information about the characteristics of the trainees - number, gender, age, education, experience - helps the lecturer to gain a clearer attitude in their preliminary preparation and is important for the selection of teaching methods and the preparation of didactic materials. Ms. Sonya Kamenovska suggests that the preliminary motivation of the participants to join the seminar be measured through the surveys.

- Regarding the courses financed by the National Action Plan for Employment, the lecturers highlighted as a particularly significant problem the lack of coherence of the groups of students. It makes work very difficult and even information about the expectations of the participants and careful planning of the trainings can hardly compensate for it. At present, pre-selection of participants is introduced only in relation to the "Programming" course.
- The lecturers also drew attention to the importance of the preliminary information that the participants in the trainings receive. This supported the existing successful practice under the project Integrated Trainings for the Administration in Institutions, working on the Labour Market and in the Social Sphere to send students a flyer with information about the seminar in which they will participate. In the implementation of the National Action Plan for Employment for 2020, anticipating the views of the speakers in the discussion, at the beginning of the year CHRDMI prepared leaflets with preliminary information for each of the courses, as well as a Catalog of all courses for 2020. We hope these materials to be useful to all who wish to participate in the trainings that Centre conducts and find the most appropriate and useful course for them.

Regarding the topic of how lecturers summarize the information at the end of the training, the CHRDMI teachers shared their personal experience from working with different groups of students, supporting the importance of this step of the learning process. An interesting technique tested in direct experience in the groups of learners which came out of the discussion is, for example, the students to share in a "letter" (a blank sheet on which they share their opinion and which they anonymously put in an envelope) the most important of the training. However, the most important thing, as the long-term lecturer of the Centre, Mrs. Darinka Nikolova, points out, is that all techniques and methods should be functionally subordinated to the creation of skills in the students to use the received information.

In the Lecturer's Club with the onset of the COVID-19 crisis and the prohibition on conducting face-to-face training, a question to lecturers and methodologists of the Centre was addressed: **to what extent and under what conditions they would consider the continuation of courses under National Action Plan for Employment in distance form appropriate.** All participants in the discussion so far have expressed support for online training for the unemployed and were unanimous that it has significant advantages. It was stated that in this form of training there is access to a huge amount of well-structured information, and participants have more time to independently master the study material, for individual consultations and work with additional specialized literature. As a particularly important aspect, however, the leading moment of personal motivation was pointed out, which is extremely important in the process of seeking professional realization. If for some of the participants in courses for the unemployed visiting a training center supports social inclusion even just by setting up a new organization during their day, for another group of unemployed people, participating in a distance course nurtures personal commitment and responsibility for their own future. The majority of the "new" unemployed who have lost their jobs as a result of the current crisis are among the latter - they are active insofar as they have until recently been employed, looking for new opportunities and ready to adapt to a new profession. Actively starting vocational training in distance form would facilitate these people and would support them in their search for new opportunities.

**The shared opinions of our lecturers, as well as the analysis and summary can be seen at: <http://www.lecturerclub.com/bg/>. All topics in the Lecturer's Club are available for reading without registration.**

**Moderator: Galina Ivanova, [galina\\_ivanova@chrdri.net](mailto:galina_ivanova@chrdri.net)**

- **The need to discuss ideas for continuing training, as well as the natural tendency to take stock of what has been achieved, which appears at such moments, has led to a more active creation of blog content on Smartnet. Current topics that await your comments are:**
  - Seminar vs. initiative;
  - Interconnectedness of the digital products of CRCHRI;
  - The role of digital products in the learning process in CRHRI;
  - The role of digital products in a crisis situation.

**We invite everyone who is interested in the topics of the published materials to join with their comments at: <http://smartnetbg.net/blogroll>.**

**Moderator: Galina Ivanova, [galina\\_ivanova@chrdri.net](mailto:galina_ivanova@chrdri.net)**

• Currently, due to the external circumstances imposed on the Centre, the seminars on the Project Integrated Trainings for the Administration in Institutions, working on the Labour Market and in the Social Sphere are conducted only in distance form through the Distance Learning Platform of the Centre. The topics of the trainings that are being held at the moment are: Good practices in the control activity of the administration for public health protection and 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.

• We invite everyone with interests in the areas of social policy to follow the new materials in the electronic library, which is constantly updated at <http://chrdri.net/bg/library/biblioteka>.

**DISCUSSION TOPIC:  
VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN DISTANCE FORM - MORE  
OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL  
G. Ivanova - editor**

Conducting trainings in electronic format is a growing global trend in all thematic areas and for all age groups. This is particularly evident in the current crisis, which allows the benefits of online learning to be clearly outlined and which is likely to catalyze the process.

The state of emergency in the country and the unexpected situation requiring physical distancing faced by all private and public educational institutions without exception, raised a sharp issue that has been discussed for years in professional circles, namely - what are the opportunities for conducting vocational trainings entirely in distance form.

Regarding the restrictions imposed by the epidemic situation, the Centre has taken all steps to explore the possibilities for passing the vocational training courses from a face-to-face to a distance form of learning, which would allow timely implementation of the National Action Plan for Employment. In this process, the team encountered problems that could be summarized in three distinct groups. They are connected:

- 1) with restrictions imposed by the current legislation, which were not alleviated by the introduction of a prohibition on conducting trainings in face-to-face form;
- 2) with a lack of objective criteria for reporting the trainings and the work of the lecturers and the students in a training form different from the attendance one;
- 3) with the need for technical support for the conduct of the courses, which includes prior certification of a digital platform that meets certain requirements related to the conduct of professional qualification courses.

Currently, Vocational Education and Training Act allows distance learning courses, stating that "the forms of education of persons over 16 years of age are day, evening, part-time, independent, individual, distance and work-based learning." At the same time, however, the current framework programs place a restriction that practical classes and examinations should be conducted in person. The distance form of training under Framework Program A and E includes distance learning hours, practical training in face-to-face form, self-preparation classes, current feedback on learning outcomes and face-to-face examinations for determining grades in subjects. Similarly, distance learning under Framework Programs B and E does not allow for full distance learning, as it includes self-preparation, ongoing feedback on learning outcomes and face-to-face assessment examinations in addition to distance learning.

In practice, according to the current legislation, it is not possible to conduct vocational training in a completely distance form under any of the current Framework Programs. Thus, the start of courses in the situation of necessary or recommended social and physical distance faces the problem of inefficient interruption of classes between the provided distance and attendance hours, as well as the possible postponement of exams, which would prevent students from completing the training in a timely manner and to use the received document in search of new professional employment. The requirement to conduct face-to-face classes, even in the form that is defined as distance according to the Vocational Education and Training Act, puts the health of participants, lecturers and managers at risk.

Undoubtedly, the problems related to the restrictions imposed by the legal framework on the full digitalization of the process of vocational education and training are the most complex and would probably take the most time, as they require coordination and joint work of various stakeholders, including the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET), the Employment Agency and the discussion of the necessary changes by a wide range of experts in view of the specifics of each specialty. Attracting experts from the vocational training centers, including the one to the CHRDMI, would be essential to specify the existing problems and search for their optimal solutions.

The second significant problem that the Center faced is related to the possibilities for objective reporting of the work of lecturers and students. The creation of a methodology to legitimize the process of accountability of work is especially important in view of the fair remuneration of lecturers, commensurate with the work done. No less important is the objective reporting of the participation of students, which is comparable to the attendance lists, which are the basis for the payment of scholarships to students undertaken by the National Action Plan for Employment. To solve this problem, it would again be necessary to set up a working group in which all the institutions concerned would take part.

The third group of problems faced by the growing need for vocational training in distance form is related to their technical support. According to the current legislation, the distance form of training is carried out through the means of modern information and communication technologies, as the trained unemployed persons should provide themselves

with the necessary technical and technological means. However, in view of the objective situation, solutions could be sought regarding their provision to the trainees during the course, as long as the possible lack of own technical means should not be a restriction for the acquisition of modern digital skills and professional realization of the unemployed person.

The other aspect of the problem involves the development and certification of an appropriate platform to support the learning process. CHRDRİ already has experience in this direction, as the relevant studies have already been undertaken on the capabilities of different digital platforms and their relevance to the specifics of professional courses.

An additional facilitation in the process of creating opportunities for full digitalization of vocational training courses would be the introduction of a mechanism for issuing electronic certificates, which should be entered in the register of NAVET and which could be easily checked by any employer when hiring an employee on work.

The benefits of "releasing" vocational training from the need for physical presence of learners in the training center are undeniable. First of all, this would put all vocational training centers in the country in a competitive situation, as the unemployed could choose a vocational training course regardless of where they live, and this would increase the quality of training. Distance learning would optimize the capacity not only of the Vocational Training Center at CHRDRİ, but also that of other training centers in the country that would take advantage of this opportunity. Fully digital vocational training would also be a good chance to acquire a professional qualification and appropriate realization for people with mobility impairments.

The current situation should be a catalyst for problems that are already ripe and show clearly the lag in the regulation of vocational education and training compared to the overall process of digitalisation in this area.

CHRDRİ would be actively involved in creating an opportunity to discuss possible legal changes and would assist in the fastest and most effective introduction of a fully distance form of vocational training, which is increasingly needed not only in connection with the emerging epidemic situation, but also in view of the inevitable and increasingly active penetration of modern technologies in education and their role in the overall development of society.

#### **PRO AND CON FOR VOCATIONAL COURSES CONDUCTED IN DISTANCE FORM - THE OPINIONS OF LECTURERS AND METHODISTS OF CHRDRİ**

***Lina Kostadinova:*** Conducting professional training in distance form has its risks and limitations. I agree that it is also important to take into account the training group, the capabilities of the individuals who make it up. But the current situation has shown that technology must be used and applied. The technologies of the future! Otherwise we will stay at home and wait ...

**Sonya Kamenovska:** I personally see only positives in conducting courses under National Action Plan for Employment in distance form. It saves time. Participants have a huge amount of information that they can use. They prepare themselves, and the tutor is always available. They can discuss any of their practical or theoretical tasks. Feedback tests are a good indicator of student achievement.

**Darinka Nikolova:** Distance learning is not only a need for technical devices, but also includes the selection of an appropriate software platform, a well-thought-out course program and preparation of teaching materials by teachers. And, definitely, the human factor plays a significant role in the process of organizing distance learning. This is not talking or sending files on the phone.

**Jasmina Sariivanova:** Congratulations for your initiative, which is currently becoming so relevant! In my opinion, it is important to build an online repository for online training, which can then be used. It is a good idea to list and use free online libraries.

**Silvia Miteva:** When introducing a distance form of training for unemployed people in the Centre, we have to think in several directions. First, are there any regulatory restrictions on the implementation of the activity. Second, assessment of the resources / technical, time, human, financial / needed for the implementation of such a project. Third, taking into account the need for the unemployed to have a computer or access to a computer, as well as basic computer skills. Fourth, making a profile of the target group to which it is appropriate to target. Fifth, teachers will need methodological support (not to mention training) to adapt the materials and their approach to the new virtual environment. And above all this remains the general question of how this form of training to achieve the main objectives of the National Action Plan for Employment by expanding rather than narrowing both the scope and the effect of its application. A challenge that is worth considering in all its many aspects and testing first in just one pilot project.

## **SCHEDULE OF TRAININGS IN MAY**

### **SPECIFICS OF WORKING WITH CHILDREN, VICTIMS AND / OR WITNESSES OF CRIMES OR VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE. PREVENTION OF AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR IN ADOLESCENTS. INTEGRATED CROSS- SECTORAL SERVICES**

*Seminar, May 27 - June 23, 2020*

*Form of training: distance form*

*The seminar is carried out within the Project Integrated Trainings for the Administration in Institutions, working on the Labour Market and in the Social Sphere*

The seminar has a clearly integrated character, and its purpose is to enable representatives of various institutions and organizations working on cases of violence against children to increase their knowledge and share practical experience on the topic. Among the target group of the training are social workers from the Directorates for Social Assistance of Social Assistance Agency and from municipal structures, employees on expert positions from the State Agency for Child Protection and other central and territorial administrations, as well as representatives of NGOs working on cases of violence against children.

During the training, participants will be able to increase their knowledge about violence against children and the recognition of its various forms and will upgrade their skills to implement the Coordination Mechanism for interaction in cases of violence against children. Special attention will be paid to the experiences and needs of children who have suffered from domestic violence, sexual violence, school bullying and sexual exploitation.

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

***For information and registration:***

***Gabriela Nikolova, [gabrielanikos@gmail.com](mailto:gabrielanikos@gmail.com)***

**GOOD PRACTICES IN IMPLEMENTING THE HOLISTIC, COMMUNITY  
AND CULTURAL APPROACH IN WORKING WITH VULNERABLE  
GROUPS FOR EFFECTIVE SOCIAL INCLUSION**

*Seminar, May 28 - June 24, 2020*

*Form of training: distance form*

*The seminar is carried out within the Project Integrated Trainings for the Administration in Institutions, working on the Labour Market and in the Social Sphere*

The training is intended for social workers from the Social Assistance Agency, as well as for representatives of the Ministry of Education Science and structures at the Ministry of Education Science, other central and territorial administrations, social partners, municipalities and NGOs working with vulnerable groups.

During the training the participants will expand and deepen their knowledge about the nature and features of holistic, community and cultural approaches to working with vulnerable groups, as well as the specifics of working with these groups, caused by community influence on the models of behavior, motivation for learning and education, family realization, work engagement, civic activity, etc. Students will acquire practical skills for analysis of behavioral patterns of representatives of vulnerable groups and will learn techniques for working with them.

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](mailto:virginia_todorova@chrdri.net)***

***You can find more information about the trainings on the following link:***

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