

## Retraining Entering a New Phase

The project UNIV 3 (2012-2014) has entered its second half; its aim is to improve the system of retraining provided within the framework of the Public Employment Services by means of linking it to the process of recognition of informal learning outcomes and to modernize the accreditation process of retraining programmes.

The project has been launched by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic and the National Institute for Education (Národní ústav pro vzdělávání, NÚV) is implementing it. The project builds on two previous successful projects (UNIV and UNIV 2 Regions) that focused on gradual transformation of schools into lifelong learning centres. Currently, the educators from the secondary schools co-operate also with the continuing education institutions, primarily with those specializing on retraining.

It is likely that changing qualification in the course of one's working life will gradually become a necessity. The Czech Republic faces a situation when the unemployment rate is growing while the companies search often in vain for skilled workers to fill in specific job vacancies.

The schools and the private educational institutions involved in the project UNIV 3 will develop and pilot-test retraining programmes for adults in those fields, which are most likely to offer jobs to people in the given region.

Within the project, 350 modular retraining programmes will be created based on the National Register of Qualifications (Národní soustava kvalifikací, NSK) and the Decree on the particulars of retraining (No. 176/2009 Coll.). In addition to practical skills, also theoretical areas will be incorporated. Upon the conclusion of the project, the created retraining programmes will be available to all providers of retraining and will be also used within the process of retraining accreditation. In the course of the project, 600 retraining courses for various qualifications will be implemented in practice while at the same time verifying the relevant NSK standards and processes of recognition of informal learning outcomes. Besides educational institutions, mainly employers but also authorised persons<sup>1</sup> and labour offices will comment on them. Pilot-testing results will serve as a feedback to the creators of these standards and for their further improvement.

Within the project, educators from secondary schools and educational institutions are getting ready for the role of guides and evaluators in given occupational qualification and course participants may during the retraining test the skills acquired outside of school during the course of their lives.

In total, 190 schools from 13 regions of the CR took part in the first stage of the project UNIV 3. The schools created 184 training programmes in the first phase of the project, these programmes are currently being evaluated and the first pilot-testing is being implemented.

Information campaign promoting continuing education is planned to be carried out within the project. Its target group will be primarily adult population with various types of formal education and years of practical experience in another field without any official document proving relevant skills and knowledge. The chance to enhance their employability on the labour market should motivate this target group to have their informally acquired skills and knowledge officially recognized.

More information at: <http://www.nuv.cz/univ3>

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<sup>1</sup> Official bodies granting authorisation to entities, which are subsequently allowed to verify results of informal learning by means of examinations and to issue relevant certificates.