

Lifelong Learning as Form of Human Resources Development

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The article deals with the issue of lifelong education from the view point of the development of the personality of an individual. Nowadays development of national economies is not possible without continuous increasing of the level of education of workers – human resources. Lifelong education thus inevitably interferes into the life of every individual, regardless of their age, sex or job position. These are fundamental starting points from which the article comes out. The objective of the paper is to show that in present days lifelong education has a non-substitutable place in the development of human resources. The partial objective is to analyze the concept of lifelong learning from the concept point of view both theoretically and on the basis of the secondary analysis of the representative research according to the results publicized by the Czech Statistical Office and to emphasize the importance of formal, non-formal and informal education in the development of human resources and employment. The set goal is achieved by means of clarifying the

term lifelong education, understood as interconnection of the possibility of educating in formal (school) and non-formal (out-of school) sector in one unit, concurrently there are used national (Czech) and international documents, dealing with lifelong learning and passages between education and employment. The necessity of the conceptual interconnection of the educational system is the prerequisite for enabling acquiring qualifications in various ways, and that is in the course of the whole life of an individual. In the first part the article than deals with theoretical basis of lifelong education, which it comes out from the analysis of documents of significant European and world institutions, as from the Memorandum of the EU on lifelong learning, from documents of the OECD, from the concept of permanent education of the Council of Europe or from the conceptual document Learning to be issued by the organization of the UNESCO. Through analysis of the documents and further literary sources the authors embark on the description of the contemporary concept of lifelong education which has been applied since the 1990s century. The fundamental issue of professional education and preparation to usability in the job life is in this concept. The second part of the article analyses statistical data related to single forms of lifelong education – formal education, non-formal education and informal education from the point of view of the human resources development. The article presents concrete data on involvement of employees and employers into the process of lifelong learning, whereas its conclusion summarizes the solved issue and reaches the number of interesting pieces of knowledge.

Keywords: lifelong learning, human resources development, employer, employee, formal education, non-formal education, informal education.

Introduction

The turbulent development of the societies in recent years stimulates significant changes in labour markets, and that is not only at the markets of the European Union. By the influence of strong competitive pressures between entrepreneurial bodies these changes in developed societies are reflected in the fundamental way in functioning and structure of the labour market and the quality of the labour force. Single occupations are changed as fast as the requirements of employers, which consequently requires the flexible reaction of school systems. It is becoming more and more the reality and the common phenomenon that in the course of the carrier the person changes employment several times. Therefore between the public and employers themselves the necessity of the lifelong learning of citizens is increasingly emphasised.

Lifelong learning provides necessary information for the development of the personality of every man. The development of economies of countries is not possible without increasing the level of the education of employees, the population as well, and that is in the lifetime context. Thus lifelong learning inevitably

reflects into the life of everyone, regardless of their age, sex or work position. At the same time the quality of lifelong learning is becoming the significant competitive entity.

1. Theoretical basis of lifelong learning

The concept of lifelong learning has appeared recently very often, and that is especially in connection with increasing demands of employers for increasing qualifications of their employees. It can be expected that every increase on qualifications has a positive impact also on delivering the required job performance of an individual, which in a broader context brings the employer a significant competitive advantage and evaluation of the human capital which they dispose and there is a general prerequisite to cultivate and develop it.

In the Czech and European literature from the aspect of the solved issue is used as the key term of lifelong education also in the concept of lifelong learning. Despite partial differences in the concept and content of single terms it can be said that it is possible to perceive both terms synonymously. It is mainly in case when they are used in managerial and economic context which indicates that people have to learn, educate themselves for the whole life.

Not even the pedagogical concept contradicts the chosen explanation. The pedagogical dictionary states that "in recent decades in the worldwide basis there has been emphasized the concept in the educational policy that people have to learn and educate in the course of their whole life. It is not meant only prolonging the compulsory school attendance or expanding existing educational systems, but a fundamentally new point of view on the role of learning for the individual and the whole mankind" (Průcha, Walterová, Mareš, 2001). Therefore in this text the terms lifelong learning and lifelong education are used as synonyms.

From the stated context emerges also the Memorandum (European Union) on lifelong learning (November 2000), defining lifelong learning as the whole life learning which concentrates on the development of learning so that it runs in any age – regardless of the life stage, the place, time or the form of learning (Memorandum on Lifelong Learning, 2000). The OECD in the year 2000 speaks on lifelong learning as learning connecting "both individual and social development in all directions and milieu – in the environment formalized, that is in school institutions, in establishments of vocational training, tertiary education, further education, and also in the informal environment – that is at home, at work and in other social units" (2014, <http://www.andromedia.cz/andragogicky-slovník/celozivotni-uceni-vzdelavani>).

Lifelong learning represents the fundamental conceptual change of the concept of education, its organizational principle when all possibilities of learning – whether in traditional educational institutions within the educational system or out of it – are understood as one interconnected unit which allows various and numerous passages between education and employment and which makes possible to gain the same qualifications and competences by various ways and whenever in the course of life (Palán, 2007, pp. 25 – 37). The formal educational system creates and predetermines the essential bases for such concept of lifelong learning; however, it makes only one part of it.

Subdivision of lifelong learning

Lifelong learning is possible to be subdivided by more criteria. From the time aspect it concludes two basic stages: 1) rudimentary education, 2) further education.

- 1) Rudimentary education – is provided at young age, whereas it can be terminated at any time after passing the compulsory school attendance by entering the labour market with the intention to integrate among the economically active population. The result of this effort is either getting employment or searching a job being unemployed.
- 2) Further education – it is meant educational activities which are not the rudimentary education. Everyone can take part in further education at least after finishing the elementary education and further then in the course of his whole life (2014, http://www.msmt.cz/uploads/Zalezitosti_EU/strategie_2007_EN_web_jednostrany.pdf). The strategy of lifelong learning then defines further education as “education or learning which proceeds after reaching the certain level of education, respectively after the first entry of the educated person at the labour market”.

Within further education individuals can also enter even to the school forms in which mainly the rudimentary education is provided in order to complete missing education or to gain other education, i.e. to retrain.

The authors of the article concentrate in detail on the contextual standpoint as exactly the content of the lifelong learning concept is further related to education and the development of human resources. From the contextual standpoint lifelong learning includes (2014, <http://aplikace.msmt.cz/HTML/JSinformaceodalsimvzdelavani.htm>):

Formal education – is implemented in educational institutions, especially at schools. Its function, objectives, contents, organizational forms and ways of evaluation are defined and legislatively determined. It includes consequential

educational levels (basic education, secondary schools, university level education) whose passing is evidenced by the certificate (school reports, diplomas, etc).

Non-formal education – focuses on gaining knowledge, skills and competences which can improve for the respondent their social and work fulfilment. Courses of non-formal education can be provided mainly in the establishments of employers, private educational institutions, non-profit organizations and also in school institutions. This includes e.g. courses of foreign languages, computer courses, driving licence courses, retraining courses, but also short term training and lectures. The necessary condition for implementing such kind of education is the participation of the lecturer or teacher. Non-formal education does not lead to gaining the integrated level of education.

Informal training/education – is understood as a process of gaining knowledge, acquiring skills and competences from everyday experience and activities at work, in the family and leisure time. It includes also self-education when the learning individual does not have a possibility to verify acquired knowledge (e.g. a TV language course). In contrast to formal education informal education is not organized, generally non-systematic and institutionally uncoordinated.

As mentioned above lifelong learning presumes complementarity and diffusion of the stated form of learning in the course of the whole life.

Excursus into the development of the concept and specifics of lifelong education

The concept of lifelong education was created in the second half of XX century and is formed continuously into present days. The need and importance of lifelong education is documented by various concepts accepted by the most important European and world institutions and organizations – especially the Council of Europe, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (referred to as “UNESCO”) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (referred to as “OECD”). In the 1960s and 1970s they followed mainly the targets of “new humanism”, based on the social and cultural development of the personality by means of educating accessible for everybody without any discrimination.

The concept of “permanent education” proclaimed by the Council of Europe emphasized especially the support of equality of educational opportunities” (Permanent Education, 1978). The concept document “Learning to be” (Faure, 1972), issued by UNESCO, was orientated on the global educational policy and social cultural mission of this organization especially considering raising the total education level in countries which are on the various level of social and economic development.

The concept of “periodical education” – OECD was led by the effort to break the cycles of continuously prolonging (little effective) and highly costly rudimentary education. There was stressed mainly the possibility to pass between the school education and employment in the course of the whole life as the alternative to prolonging school education at the beginning of the life. In mentioned concepts of lifelong education the basic role was played by schooling institutions, which means public education financed from public resources. It was connected also a significant role of the state at organizing, management and financing the system. In relation to the development of human resources it is necessary to state that at that time employers showed only a slight interest in educating adults as a means to preservation or improvement of professional qualifications.

The basis of the present concept of lifelong education dates back to the 1990s. Lifelong education develops in the different economic and political climate compared to 1970s. This concept prefers more realistic objectives connected with programmes of lifelong learning concentrated on the development of human resources, especially in relation to needs of effective functioning of national economies.

The issue of professional education and preparation to fulfilment in the professional life is becoming fundamental. Basic changes compared to the concept of the 1970s consists especially in the fact that basic changes compared to the concept of the 1970s consists especially in the fact that a lesser importance is attributed to functioning of school institutions and on the contrary it is stressed the importance of institutions out of the formal educational system and the importance of informal education and informal learning in various environments. The further difference occurs in the perception of the role of the state which already is not so important. Partnership within the civic society and distribution of the responsibility between the state, employers, municipalities, civic associations, etc. is becoming the basis. It gives priority to, e.g. education at the work place and work position during training, instead of strengthening further education financed from public sources and alternation of education and work. To create this basis of lifelong education is one of the fundamental steps of the strategy of development of lifelong learning for all.

The concept of lifelong learning of the 1990s is presented in documents of many international organizations, as: the report of UNESCO “Learning: the treasure within“, the OECD “Lifelong learning for all“, the European Commission: “White Paper on education and training: teaching and learning – towards the learning society“. Follow-up consultancies in European countries to the memorandum (2000) resulted in the document “Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality“ (November, 2001). This document comes with the definition of lifelong learning which includes the wide spectrum of formal and informal

education and informal learning. Active citizenship, personal development, social inclusion and employment are defined as the main objectives of lifelong learning (2014, <http://aei.pitt.edu/42878/>).

Selected emphasis of the lifelong education concept Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development:

1. All possibilities of education in the formal (school) and also informal (out of school) sector are understood as one interconnected system which is to enable to acquire qualifications by various ways and whenever in the course of life.
2. Lifelong learning is not limited only on the linear passage through the educational system, but it stresses the development of mutual relations between learning and work, especially ensuring more flexible and continuous relations between education and employment. The organization of education should gain the character of various combinations of education in enterprises or schools and employment (Lifelong learning for all, 1996).

European Commission

The European Commission emphasizes the approach focusing on the wide knowledge basis and developing abilities of individuals to participate in the economic life, i.e. employability, whereas the emphasis is laid especially on:

1. Support of acquiring new skills, including a new way of social acknowledgment of professional and expert skills.
2. Convergence of schools with the entrepreneurial sector, including the support of the development of the apprentice educational system in all forms.
3. Judging tangible investments and investments in education on the same basis (2014, <http://www.nuov.cz/koncept/strategie-celozivotniho-uceni-cr>).

The contemporary concept of lifelong learning in strategic documents of the EU combines the economic, social and cultural dimension and aims at the learning society. Lifelong learning is viewed both from the viewpoint of employment and development of human resources and education as well.

2. Methodology

At processing the article more methods were used. The emphasis was laid on the method of searching and study of documents, methods of analysis and synthesis of obtained data. Further the authors used the method of data analysis

acquired from the performed researches of the Czech Statistical Office and the method of explanation and synthesis.

In the first part of the article dealing with the theoretical basis of lifelong education the method of explanation which was used in generalization of gathered and analyzed literature sources dominates. By means of these procedures the authors came to the conclusion that in literature dealing with the issue mentioned in the article, the key term of lifelong education is also used in the sense of lifelong learning. Despite the partial differences in both terms it is justified to use the terms as synonyms. That is mainly in the managerial and economic context which comes out from the point of view of employment, the necessity of continuous learning and education of human resources.

The explanation method was also used for approximation of the results of the analysis of documents of international organizations dealing with lifelong learning, e.g. the Memorandum of the EU on lifelong learning, the concept of “periodical education” of the OECD, or the concept of “permanent education” proclaimed by the Council of Europe. By means of the synthesis of knowledge it was possible to reach the partial summary in the form of description of the current concept of lifelong education whose origin can be placed in the 1990s. This concept brings more realistic objectives joined with the programmes of lifelong learning concentrated on the development of human resources, especially in relation to the needs of effective functioning of national economies.

In the second part of the article which deals with the analysis of single forms of lifelong education there prevails the method of analysis and synthesis of statistical data, acquired mainly from the research of the Czech Statistical Office and documents of the National Training Fund of the Czech Republic. In this case as well there is used explanation for the further explication of connections between the rate of unemployment in the Czech Republic in accordance with attained education. The method of explanation is applied also for explaining the relations and coherence of non-formal and informal education with the development of human resources. For the final conclusion there was used mainly the method of analysis, synthesis and explanation.

3. The influence of single forms of lifelong education on the development of human resources

In this part of the article the influence of single forms of lifelong education on the development of human resources will be analyzed. By means of statistical and research surveys it will be referred to the importance of formal, non-formal

and informal education in the development of human resources and their employment. It is necessary to emphasise the fact that is stated by the National Training Fund acting in the Czech Republic (2014, <http://www.nvf.cz/rozvoj-celozivotniho-uceni>): “lifelong learning is one of the decisive factors influencing the quality of human resources and by that the competitive advantage of the particular country. It requires the participation of the key actors on the level of the government, regions, enterprises, and individuals as well, whereas investments invested into lifelong learning are developing investments and they reach thus the highest priority.“

Formal education

Generally it is accepted that with the attained level of education also employability of the people grows. This fact is confirmed by the below stated table which displays the rate of unemployment of the economically active population in the Czech Republic as for the highest attained education.

Table 1. The rate of unemployment in the Czech Republic in the year 2012 as for the attained education

Highest educational attainment:	Specific unemployment rates (percentage)		
	Total	Males	Females
Basic and without education	28.5	31.6	25.9
Secondary without A-level examination	8.0	6.4	10.9
Secondary with A-level examination	4.9	4.1	5.8
Higher education	2.9	2.4	3.4

Source: Czech Statistical Office [online]. [30. 1. 2014]. Available from: [www.czso.cz/csu/2013edicniplan.nsf/t/0E002418D5/\\$File/00011310b16.xls](http://www.czso.cz/csu/2013edicniplan.nsf/t/0E002418D5/$File/00011310b16.xls)

The above mentioned table represents that the highest usability of the economically active population at the labour marker is for the people with the university education. The rate of unemployment of this population did not reach even 3% in the year 2012. With the decreasing level of education of the population the rate of their unemployment increases. The worst situation is with people with basic education and without education when more than one quarter of them (28.5%) was unemployed in the mentioned year.

Positive contributions of formal education for job employability of employees is referred to by the research investigation of the Czech Statistical Office

“Education of figures“ in which 9 500 respondents took part in the year 2011. From this figure cca 10% of the addressed (secondary education – 4%, higher vocational and university education – 6%) participated in the formal education.

The respondents themselves participated mostly in the expenses on education, especially their family member (65% of respondents), the public institution – Labour Exchange, and others (33%) and only in 2% of the addressed cases the expenses were covered by the employer. As the reasons for participation in the formal education which is related to employment the respondents stated: improvement of working efficiency and carrier prospects (ca 66% of the respondents), improvement of prospects to get or change the job (47%) and decreasing the probability of losing the job (8%). As benefits of formal education for the job usability of employees the respondents who were employed in the period of the research (ca 59% participants of formal education) most often stated: personality development (48% respondents), improving job performance (34%), a higher wage/salary (25%), promotion (18%) and getting a better job (16%). Respondents, who in the period of the research were not employed (41% of participants of formal education), stated as the contribution of this education: personality development (48% respondents) and getting the job (19%). Within the remaining 33% of the unemployed respondents so far no positive results appeared (Czech Statistical Office, 2012, pp. 8–13).

A relatively low rate of unemployment of the economically active population with a higher level of education and the above stated results of the search investigation of the Czech Statistical Office clearly prove that formal education has a significant influence on the development of human resources, on employability of this population and improving the work situation of employees.

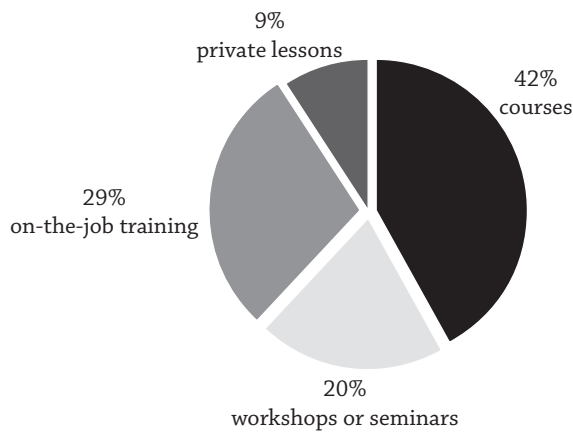
Non-formal Education

Non-formal education represents professional education realized by the outside school system. The objective of this education is improving skills and increasing competence for the purpose of better job usability. It is education in the form of training at the work place, courses, seminars, workshops, etc.

According to the research investigation of the Czech Statistical Office 33% of respondents from the sample of 9 500 of the questioned participated in non – formal education in the year 2011. Out of these respondents who were in the employment relation in the period of the research 44% of employees and 38.5% of employers participated in non – formal education. The second stated data refers to the fact that even for the great number of employers the development of their skills and competence is not indifferent. The research further indicates that the participation in non – formal education for job reasons is growing to the age of 44

of the respondent. Since that age the participation of respondents in non – formal education is falling relatively rapidly – in the age of 44 roughly 35% of respondents participate in this education, whereas in the category of 65 – 69 years only 2% of respondents educate themselves in non – formal education. Among participants of non – formal education 78% of respondents educate themselves for job reasons – by the instruction of the employer or for the purpose of improving their skills for the present job, and only 22% of the addressed for private reasons – the desire to develop further or the vision of finding a new job (Czech Statistical Office, 2012, pp. 16–18). The share of single forms of non – formal education is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The share of single types of non-formal education



Source: Czech Statistical Office (2012, p. 18).

Among five most visited fields of informal education according by the research there are foreign languages (17% respondents), commerce and law (13%), technical sciences and technical branch of knowledge (11%), health and social care (9%) and using computers (8%). From the point of view of the share of work versus private reasons of the education for the work reasons the most attended were these fields of study: architecture and civil engineering (97% participants for work reasons), security services (97%), technical sciences and technical branch of knowledge (95%), commerce and law (95%) and pedagogy (92%). From the point of settlement of expenses of the non-formal education this education fee was in most cases covered directly by the employer (88% of educational activities), which confirms the high interest of employers in development of human resources in their enterprise. The employer mostly covered expenses on education in these subject areas: security services (99% of educational activities were covered by the

employer), production and manufacturing (98%), transfer services and communications (98%), architecture and civil engineering (96%) and technical sciences and technical branch of knowledge (95%). The certificate or other testimonials was the aftermath of 52% of educational activities. As the reason for the participation in non-formal education the respondents mentioned: the increase in efficiency or improvement of carrier prospects (64% of participants of non-formal education for the job reasons, the instruction of the employer (47%), decreasing the probability of losing the job (27%) and improving the prospects for getting a new job (13%). Those respondents who participated in non-formal education for private reasons then acted like that in order to deepen their knowledge in the sphere of the interest of the respondent (69% of participants in non-formal education from private reasons), gaining knowledge for everyday life (46%), increasing job efficiency (37%), improving the prospect on getting a new job (20%) and for 16% of respondents the objective was to obtain a certificate (Czech Statistical Office, 2012, pp. 19–24).

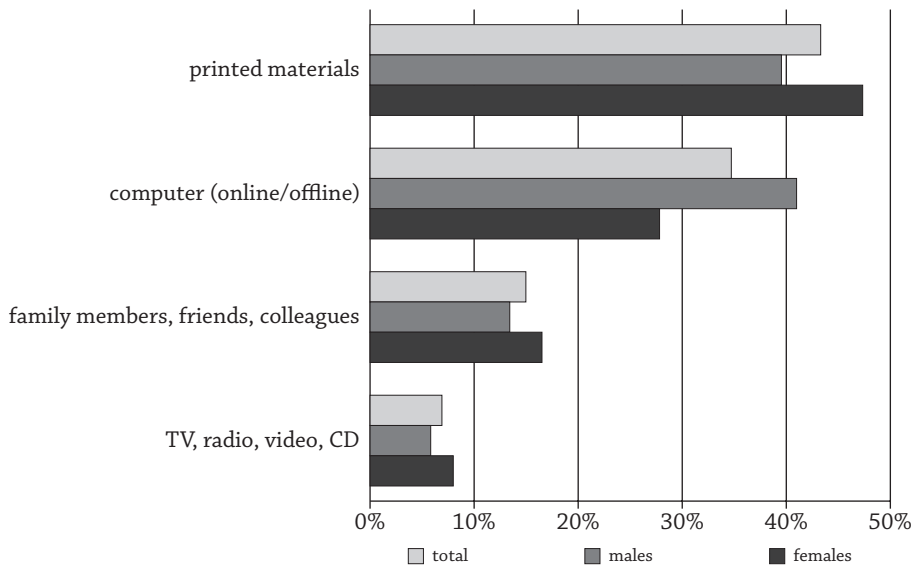
The conducted research investigation proves that non-formal education has its non-substituted role in the lifelong education and in the development of human resources. The importance of this form of education is realized not only by employees because of their own development and increasing their job usability, but it is realized as well by the employers who participate themselves in informal educational activities and mainly they participate very often on financing education for their employees.

Informal education

According to the research survey of the Czech Statistical Office 21% of the respondents from the sample of 9,500 addressed participated in informal education in the year 2011. From those respondents who in the period of the research were employed altogether 21.4% participated in informal education and there were 31.2% of employers. Only 25% of respondents participated in informal education for job reasons. Mostly it was education in the sphere of foreign languages (15% of participants in informal education), private services (13%), using computers (12%), art (9.5%) and agriculture and veterinary (9%). From job reasons respondents mostly educated in the fields: commerce and law (79% of participants in the informal education), architecture and civil engineering (58%), computer sciences (58%), health and social care (47%) and for 37% of respondents there were technical sciences and technical branch of knowledge (Czech Statistical Office, 2012: pp. 33–36). The following figure (Figure 2) illustrates which sources were mostly used for informal education.

Though according to the stated research only 21% of respondents participated in informal education, the importance of this part of lifelong education and the tools for the development of the human capital cannot be underestimated. With reference to intensifying competitiveness between qualified workers it can be expected in the coming years that self education will be the part of lifelong education for more and more workers.

Figure 2. Main sources of information of self learning in total and by sexes



Source: Czech Statistical Office (2012, p. 37).

Conclusions

The presented article has shown that lifelong education has become an important form of the development of human resources whose necessity is growing constantly. Without interconnection of lifelong education and preparation of the people for job positions functioning of present enterprises cannot be imagined. There is no similar phenomenon which in the present times and also in future would influence so significantly the quality and development of human resources. Also “White Paper on Tertiary Education” – that is a conceptual and strategic document that states the direction in which tertiary education in the Czech Republic is – deals with the necessity of the conceptual solution of the system of education

and requirements of the labour market (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, 2009, pp. 7–8).

In the text of the article it has been shown that the concept of lifelong learning accompanies human resources from the youth, through the middle age up to the post-productive age stage. The mentioned pieces of knowledge emerged not only from theoretical sources, but also from the internationally acknowledged documents of the OECD, the UNESCO, the EU, but from performed researches on national and international respected organizations as well.

Lifelong learning does not ensure human resources a single-way passage through the educational system, but the emphasis is put on the development of mutual relations between learning and employment. It is mainly ensuring more flexible and fluent relations between education and employment. The concept of lifelong learning does not limit only on the knowledge base, but strongly supports the development of the abilities of individuals to participate in the economic life. It is especially significant to support employability which is attainable at the acquirement of new skills, including the support of the new way of social approval of professional and technical skills. The present concept of lifelong learning supports the development of human resources in more dimensions and insists on strategic documents of the EU. Overall it can be stated that the development of human resources in the process of lifelong learning is connected by the economic, social and cultural dimension and aims at the learning society. The article dealt as well with the influence of single forms of lifelong education on the development of human resources. Mentioned pieces of knowledge come out of segmenting lifelong learning on formal education, non-formal education and informal learning. As the authors assumed the fact that lifelong learning is one of the most decisive factors influencing the quality of human resources, they analyzed materials from the performed research of the Czech Statistical Office, whereas the analysis proved the truthfulness of this presumption.

The performed analysis has brought about statistically significant conclusions and showed that there exists a strong dependence among usability of economically active persons at the labour market by the level of formal education. The higher the formal education of the population, the lower the rate of its unemployment is. In the year 2012 in the Czech Republic there were only fewer than 3% of the unemployed between the university graduates. The worst situation is with workers who attained the basic level in the formal education and the people without education. This group reached 28.5% of the unemployed in the same year.

The significant pieces of knowledge were brought by the analysis of informal education. Among interesting facts there belong for example the fact that at this type of education 44% of employees and 38.5% employers participate. This proves

the considerable interest of employers in development of human resources in their organization. In the considerable extent employers also cover the expenses on education, which as well motivates employees to the development. This finding proves that non-formal education has a non substitutable role in lifelong education and in development of human resources.

Informal education in the surveyed concept fulfils the role of self education. Therefore it is a rather complementary form. Nevertheless its importance with growing qualification requirements of employers is rising constantly and strengthening with intensity. As very interesting it can be considered the findings that 25% of respondents who participated in informal learning were involved for work reasons. The least important there is findings that nearly a third (31.2%) of employers concentrated on informal learning.

In the article the stated analysis of national and international documents and analyzed results of the research proved that all components of lifelong education considerably contribute to the development of human resources. Lifelong education is an integral part of the strategy of management of human resources in which the dominant place belongs right to education and employment.

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