

NETWORKED EDUCATION IN LAND ADMINISTRATION

Prof. Bela MARKUS, Hungary

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ABSTRACT

Continuous training and education has become an important issue in the rapidly evolving information society. A fundamental transformation continues to occur in higher education. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) are having a deep effect on teaching and learning and are eroding traditional geographical boundaries resulting in greater competition and opportunity. Industry needs education and training programmes that are flexible, tailor made and cost effective. Students or trainees are also changing. Part-time, adult learners know that learning is no longer confined to university campuses, and are seeking flexible ways to meet their personal, academic or employment objectives.

In the rapidly-changing world, land administration must offer all employees greater opportunities for access to knowledge, irrespective of their age or social circumstances. The following problems were identified in the United Nations Meetings of Officials in Land Administration (UN MOLA) Workshop on Land Market in 1998 in Budapest: lack of education in the management, legal, economic, human and ethical aspects of land administration; general lack of user oriented approach to education; lack of continuity in education from universities to professions and appropriate linkage between the two.

In order to be able to take an active part in the current processes of change, the employees should be able to develop their fund of knowledge on a continuous basis, thus continually expanding and renewing it. This means that it is necessary to promote on a life-long basis creativity, flexibility, adaptability, the ability to learn-to-know and to solve problems. These are the conditions we must meet in order to avoid the rapid obsolescence of skills. New structures must be developed which help anticipating needs and the evolution of job profiles.

This problem can be overcome by a joint effort on the part of specialised training and higher education establishments. Cooperation between universities, training centres and the business world is the basic way of collecting and transmitting knowledge. In association with public and private partners at national and regional level, they can promote lifelong education. In order to be as effective as possible, it is necessary to anticipate skills needs correctly and in good time by identifying the developing areas and the new functions to be fulfilled, as well as the skills required for them.

The task is to reorganise educational resources in association with the employment services. In an extension of existing education and training programmes, the first objective should be to develop still further the corporate dimension of education: to improve the quality of training and to foster innovation in education by increasing

exchanges of experience and information on good practices; to establish an area of training by recognition of qualifications; to promote physical mobility and the virtual mobility made possible by the new technologies of communication; to develop common databases and knowledge on skills needs; to conduct comparative research on methodologies used and policies implemented; to improve the interoperability of systems of distance learning and to increase the level of standardisation of the new decentralized multi-media training tools etc.

In the last five years The University of West Hungary, College of Surveying and Land Management (CSLM) has been involved in European Union (EU) funded distance learning material development projects targeting professionals in land administration and land / geographic information management and leading at present EU projects on continuing professional developments. For the staff of Land Offices and Surveying / GIS companies open, distance learning offers a particularly flexible and effective way of training, eliminating most of the barriers, providing much better accessibility than traditional education.

There are three main strategic aims of these developments. First is the creation of a flexible route for continuing professional development for Land Administration in Hungary. In seeking to achieve this objective, CSLM is developing a core base of knowledge in land administration matters, a *Knowledge Pool*, which can be used in a flexible manner as a part of staff development programme tailored to individual's requirements. Second, the creation of a *delivery system* for continuing professional development based on a management system and education technology, both CD and Web, with a comprehensive credit system. Third, the creation of a *network of training centres* and education providers with the objective of participating fully in national activities in Land Administration and building bridges to the international professional community.

The author gives a review of the results, present status and future activities of the projects of (CSLM) in building a *knowledge base* and an education and training *network* for Land Administration in Hungary. Based on the results reached in distance learning post-graduate courses, these projects focus on middle level professionals and examine the use of ICT for vocational training. The projects will improve the learning methodologies fundamentally and update the content of three professional courses. A new course for a new profession (*Assistant in Land Information Management*) is under development.

CONTACT

Prof. Bela Markus
Department of Geoinformatics, College of Surveying and Land Management
The University of West Hungary
8000 Szekesfehervar, Pirosalma u. 1-3
HUNGARY
Tel. + 36 22 348 271
Fax + 36 22 327 697
E-mail: mb@cslm.hu
Web site: <http://geoinfo.cslm.hu>