Pilot Research Results of the Client Developing Programme for Women in Professional Crisis Situations

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Author's contribution

The sole author designed, analyzed and interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

Original Research Article

ABSTRACT

The research aim is to evaluate the Client Developing Programme for Women in Professional Crisis Situations developed and a pedagogical experiment in career counselling performed by the author in the e-environment. The target audience was women who wished to or were forced to change their jobs, being in a professional crisis situation. To achieve the aim, the pedagogical experiment was conducted and its results were analysed. Study design: research paper. The pedagogical experiment was carried out in Latvia in August and October 2015. The present research was carried out within the doctoral study programme at Latvia University of Agriculture, Institute of Education and Home Economics. The Client Developing Programme for career change for women in professional crisis situations was elaborated and approbated in the e-environment in the Moodle program; 18 randomly selected women took part in the pedagogical experiment. The participants were able to work in the eenvironment using the Internet, and they were familiarised with the materials and did individual exercises, presented their reflections and did career counselling online. In the result, the Client Developing Programme for career change for women in professional crisis situations was approbated and evaluated. The Client Developing Programme for career change for women in professional crisis situations was designed and approbated to help

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women when they need advice and support in a crisis situation. After analysing data acquired in the pedagogical experiment, one can find that of 17 criteria, positive changes were observed regarding 9 ones. In the result of learning the programme and of career counselling, the women enhanced their skills: information and communication technology skills, foreign language skills; decision-making skills; communication skills, etc. The given criteria and indicators may be employed to identify professional crisis situations.

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years when an economic and social crisis began in Latvia, special focus was placed on lifelong learning issues, as well as government support for holding lifelong learning activities was observed as well. It may be explained by the worsening economic situation and the liquidation of numerous jobs, as well as the demand for some professions declined; consequently, new opportunities for employment and additional education have to be sought.

The strategy Europe 2020 has set the following priorities: smart growth, an economy based on knowledge and innovation, sustainable growth based on efficient uses of resources and inclusive growth based on a high employment rate. Lifelong learning means acquiring education and knowledge throughout the entire lifetime regardless of age and education or social status. It also influences human mental development, provides opportunities to develop oneself, be knowledgeable in a specific field as well as raise one's self-confidence, which produces positive results when competing with others [1]. However, not everyone who wishes to learn is given such opportunities, as the opportunity to educate oneself throughout the entire lifetime is affected by the financial resources of individuals and the lack of information and technological resources. In the past two years in Latvia, adult education became a priority, which was associated with the significant increase in unemployment, but this problem had to be tackled long ago in order to give an opportunity to individuals to have several professions and prepare themselves for potential change in their life. However, any change of the profession or job is affected not only by the economic crisis but also the individual's own wish to change or learn something new and improve his/her knowledge. E. Erikson believes that crises are a component of the natural Ego growth process and a positive outcome of a crisis supplies fresh energy to the individual's further development [2]. Over recent decades, with lifelong learning becoming urgent, greater focus

has been put on career guidance throughout the entire lifetime both at European and national levels. It is regarded as an essential lifelong learning aspect that contributes to achieving both social and economic goals: enhancing general and professional education as well as labour market performance and cost efficiency through reducing the number of individuals who do not complete their studies, thereby avoiding skill inadequacy, and through raising productivity. Two resolutions of the Education Council of the European Union (EU) (passed in 2004 and 2008) addressed the need for stable career guidance measures throughout the entire lifetime to make individuals skilful in managing their education process and careers as well as their transition from one education and/or job cycle to the next one. The resolutions focused on four priorities:

- ☐ Development of career guidance skills,
- ☐ Availability of career guidance services,
- ☐ Assurance of the quality of career services,
- ☐ Coordination of provision of such services [3,4,5].

The EU Member States were encouraged to take measures in order to modernise and strengthen their career guidance policies and systems. In 2007, the EU Member States decided to found a European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN). The ELGPN assists the EU Member States and the European Commission to establish European-level cooperation in the field of lifelong career guidance in the sectors of both education and employment. The EU Member States established the network and the European Commission provided them support within the Lifelong Education Programme. At present, 26 the Member States, including Latvia, participate in the ELGPN. The agenda for the period 2009-2010 was based on four priorities set in the EU Council resolution of 2008. Accordingly, work was focused on four pathways in order to:

- Promote the development of career guidance skills throughout the entire lifetime;

- Contribute to the availability of carer guidance services, including the availability of accreditation of skills acquired informally for every resident;
- Contribute to the establishment of a cooperation and coordination mechanism aimed at designing carer guidance policies and systems, engaging various stakeholders at national, regional and local levels;
- Develop quality assurance systems and design indicator-based carer guidance policies and systems [5].

The increasing frequency of change in careers faced by individuals in the course of their life and additionally due to greater education opportunities and labour market diversity and mobility, effective lifelong carer guidance systems are important as never before.

By implementing six key ideas of the Lifelong Memorandum, it could be possible to contribute to women's careers and competitiveness in labour markets, thus coping with professional crises.

- **New basic skills.** Opportunities for women's employment increase if building new skills. Economic and social changes transform and raise standards for the descriptions of the basic skills marginally needed for everyone to actively participate in their working, family and public lives. New basic skills represent skills in information and communication technologies (ICT), foreign languages, technological culture and business as well as social skills [6].
- **More investment in human resources.** Additional scholarships from government and private funds and privileges for individual training have to be granted [6].
- **Innovation in teaching and learning.** Learning systems have to be adjusted to the changing ways of how people live and learn nowadays [6].
- **Evaluation of learning.** In a knowledge-based economy, the complete development and use of human resources is the determinant factor for being competitive [6].
- **Reconsideration of counselling.** Quality information and advice on learning opportunities in the whole Europe have to be easily accessible to everyone throughout the entire lifetime. A new

approach, which envisages giving advice as a service persistently available for everyone, is necessary; it eliminates the disparities between education and giving advice in professional and personal domains and reaches broader social strata [6].

- **Learning close to the place of residence.** Learning opportunities as close to trainees as possible – in their municipality – and ICT equipment when necessary have to be provided. The use of ICT has great potential in reaching scattered and isolated individuals in an efficient way – not only for training but also for communication –, which serves for the purpose of preserving the identity of a community at great distances [6].

Career-related matters are tackled by professionals – career counsellors. A career counsellor is defined as a specialist who advises, informs and educates clients in career development issues [7]. Career counselling is defined as assistance to individuals aimed at self-cognition, the awareness of one's professional orientation, an extended understanding of education and opportunities in the labour market and the identification of a professional orientation being most appropriate for the individual, his/her values and goals. Career counselling may involve assistance in career planning, the identification of professional adequacy, job trials, the development of skills in seeking and retaining a job [8]. A career counsellor can help and provide support to women being in career crisis situations.

Career counselling may be delivered face-to-face and/or in the e-environment using ICT. *E-counselling* is guidance provided using ICT, in which a career guidance counsellor is or is not directly involved. This term is often used to describe the provision of information or the use of self-assessment instruments and to do exercises online [9]. The term e-counselling refers to providing career guidance activities and services by employing all the forms of ICT.

Online career guidance. It is career guidance provided through ICT, for example, a computer or a similar electronic device (for example, a cellular phone). It may involve communicating with a career guidance professional via e-mail as well as online chat, short messages or social networks (for example, Facebook, Draugiem.lv, LinkedIn).

Career guidance via phone. It involves rendering career guidance services via phone. It may be a phone call to a career guidance professional or sometimes involve the provision of information recorded in advance.

Career guidance via the Internet. Career guidance activities performed on the Internet using ICT. This may involve the provision of information, the use of self-aid materials and instruments as well as interactive activities, for example, participation in forums or conversation groups and conversation with a career guidance professional via e-mail and the Internet [9].

Information and communication technology (ICT) for career guidance refers to technologies that provide the electronic entering, storage, acquisition, processing as well as sending and dissemination of information. ICT-related resources are increasingly used in career guidance. For example, many career information systems are based on ICT. E-counselling, distance career guidance services as well as career guidance online and via the Internet are also based on ICT and related technologies [10].

In order for career counselling to take place online, websites are increasingly used. There are websites that focus on information about education opportunities, while others provide only news about career and job opportunities. As services develop, they are harmonised with lifelong education programmes or adjusted to the need to find the most appropriate job. Most Internet platforms provide general services. Technological development and social inclusion policies change the way how career guidance services are supplied on the Internet. The author made a pedagogical experiment, offering to test her Client Developing Programme for career change for women in professional crisis situations. The author employed ICT, placed the programme on the Moodle website and provided career counselling, training and assistance.

The research aim is to evaluate the Client Developing Programme for Women in Professional Crisis Situations developed and a pedagogical experiment in career counselling performed by the author in the e-environment.

2. METHODOLOGY

To achieve the aim, a pedagogical experiment was carried out in the e-environment. The present research was carried out within the doctoral study programme at Latvia University of Agriculture, Institute of Education and Home Economics. The author worked out Client Developing Programme for career change for women in professional crisis situations under which 10 individual lessons were intended for each client, and it was elaborated and approbated in the e-environment in the Moodle program; 18 randomly selected women took part in the pedagogical experiment. The participants were able to work in the e-environment using the Internet, and they were familiarised with the materials and did individual assignments, presented their reflections. In parallel to the classes, the author organised e-counselling, which was done both via e-main and Skype. On average, the author held three counselling sessions for each participant, playing the role of a professional crisis mentor. The author used the globally popular website Moodle for e-studies, in which she offered to learn her Client Developing Programme for career change for women in professional crisis situations that may be used in lifelong learning. The programme's website is available here - https://karjera.gnomio.com/. The pedagogical experiment and a study were performed from August 2015 till October 2015.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 The Client Developing Programme for Career Change for Women in Professional Crisis Situations in the e-Environment

To provide assistance to women in professional crisis situations, the author developed the Client Developing Programme for career change for women in professional crisis situations in the e-environment (Table 1).

The Client Developing Programme for career change for women in professional crisis situations is intended to help women who need advice and assistance in a crisis situation and to provide necessary information, to promote their thinking and encourage them to analyse their surrounding environment and their situation, and to raise their self-confidence and contribute to their professional success. The programme involves 10 individual classes in which the counsellor gets familiarised with a client and her problems, the client does various exercises and tests and, working together, a decision is made.

Table 1. Client developing programme for women in professional crisis situations in the e-environment

No	Topic of classes	Description of topics	Time, min
1	Women's career development theories	Introductory information. A test for identifying a professional crisis. A counsellor gives short insight into who will acquire what in the classes, what rules have to be met and how long the classes will be. Women's career development theories.	45
2	Self-characteristics of a client and setting goals for the client	Discussion on an exercise "My life tree". An exercise and discussion "Evaluation of having/not having a job". Identification of the client's experience. Self-characteristics of the client, the identification of the client's traits. Identification of the client's interests. Lecture. Significance of the identification of goals. Identification of the client's small and big goals. Discussion.	45
3	Awareness and identification of skills	General skills are necessary for social and economic needs in Latvia. Awareness and identification of the client's skills. Awareness and identification of the client's individual skills. Identification of the client's specific abilities. Discussion.	45
4	Awareness of skills in career guidance	Skills in career guidance. Self-confidence. Skills to study and create career opportunities. Skills to plan a career. Skills in decision-making. Ability to cope with uncertainty, etc. Awareness and identification of the client's skills in career guidance. Discussion.	45
5	Identification of presentation and communication skills. A plan for a job interview	Presentation skills. Principles of presentation, kinds of preparation, the creation of effective presentations. Communication skills. Skills to speak and to listen. How to prepare for a job interview? The nature and characteristics of a job interview. Kinds of questions in an interview. Kinds of interviews. Preparation of answers, an analysis of the most essential questions and answers. Discussion.	45
6	Preparation of a CV, a motivation letter, the creation of an e-portfolio, the development of computer skills	Lecture. Preparation of a CV and a motivation letter. Use of CV and motivation letter examples on the Internet. Use of a Europass CV form (online in the text processing program OpenOffice.org). What is a portfolio? Its role, possibilities and kinds of creating a portfolio.	45
7	My ideal job	Lecture. Getting familiarised with job style descriptions. Exercise – My ideal job and the creation of my character Puzzle according to an ideal employee's character Puzzle.	45

No	Topic of classes	Description of topics	Time, min
		Home work. Preparing a description of job positions for my "Ideal job" based on the standards of professions.	
8	Skills useful for business, distance job opportunities, e-mentorism.	Formation of an understanding of skills necessary for business and the employer. The adequacy of one's own skills and personality traits for starting up a business, the identification of one's entrepreneurial potential. The definition of and opportunities for a distance job in Latvia. E-mentorism. Home work. A description of a business idea in a free form.	45
9	Development of an individual career plan	An analysis of a situation in the client's career development, the identification of key directions, pathways how to start seeking a job, how to prepare oneself for the job that will be in a new environment and at a new level.	45
10	Decision-making	Decision-making. Choice of priorities. Simulation of a career choice situation. A test for identifying a professional crisis.	45

The programme involves a methodology concerning how to make decisions, identify problems in one's life and to choose appropriate solutions to how to present one's ideas and make others focus on them as well as provide an opportunity to everyone to use personalised e-learning activities that match their training needs. Learning activities will contribute to the client's understanding of conceptions and processes, employing active learning or action-based learning [11].

The tasks of the programme are as follows:

To create an appropriate notion of the role of a career in an individual's life.

To give information to clients about how to prepare for life under a modern mixed economy, develop their ability to make justified, reasonable and responsible decisions that could ensure personal and public wellbeing.

To create opportunities to develop and improve integrated or general skills.

To build a skill to work with information – to be able to find necessary information sources, to select, summarise and analyse the acquired information and to identify the main and most important aspects and to abandon unnecessary aspects as well as to draw conclusions.

To develop projective skills – to be able to define a problem, identify its causes, find solutions, draw an action plan and implement it.

To develop such features of character as enterprise and courage – to be ready for problem situations, not to be afraid of taking risk and to be able to cope with losses.

To build general intellectual skills – critical analytic thinking, forecasting and creative work skills [11].

The word counselling has several meanings, and it originated from the Latin word *consilium* whose key meanings relate to advice and counsel. In Latin, the word *sileo* just like the word *consilesco* mean to become dumb. This means that counselling mainly involves listening rather than speaking to a client. *Professional career counselling* involves activities performed by a certified individual who is allowed to advise clients in the fields of employment, professional career counselling, decision-making, career planning and career development.

A career counsellor must have not only extensive advice competences but also knowledge and skills regarding various professions, individual and group counselling, management, governance and consultancy programme methodology [12].

Career counselling as a professional activity is characterised by two indications: the number of counsellees and the purpose.

The kinds of counselling are classified as follows:

1. *Individual counselling* is an active interaction of a counsellor and a client aimed at helping the client to tackle career development problems. The objective of the counsellor is to help the client to orientate him/herself, find a solution to the situation and choose a way for successful activity in the life.
2. *Group counselling* is an active interaction of a counsellor and a group of clients. Groups may be formed based on various principles: at school, centres – a class/group of a class–, job seekers – by gender, interest, age, etc. Advantages: it allows saving time. Problems: the group's attention and interests have to be controlled, the audience has to be felt and the counsellor has to have orator abilities. Group counselling may be done by the counsellor him/herself or by outsiders hired in the labour market. The desirable duration of a counselling session is up to 45 minutes. Group counselling may be informative or involve diagnosing and tackling the problem. At the end of the session, at least 5 minutes have to be dedicated to answering the questions.

R. Kocunas [13] distinguishes four kinds of counselling:

1. Advising;
2. Informative counselling;
3. Diagnostic counselling;
4. Formative and corrective counselling.

Advising may be a component of individual and group counselling. Usually, advice is given to clients about where to search for information, the clients are advised on how to tackle their personal problems and how to assist their personality growth and whom to turn to tackle problems being beyond the counsellor's competences.

Informative counselling is a kind of counselling used when starting working with clients who have no idea of the working world (career counselling at school) or who have certain wishes, but they lack information on:

- Basic requirements necessary to work in the profession they are interested in (professiogram);
- Organisations and institutions where jobs in the profession are vacant;
- Similar professions;
- Opportunities for learning or requalification;
- the situation in the labour market;
- Opportunities for establishing a sole proprietorship or a small business in the profession [14].

Informative counselling is characterised by the counsellor's high activity. Information has to be given to the client in detail (with addresses, phone numbers, surnames, etc.).

Diagnostic counselling is usually associated with the identification of the client's professional adequacy. The counsellor may give advice to clients on:

- How to match their wishes with their psychological and physiological possibilities;
- Which professions they should avoid if their psychological and physiological possibilities do not meet the profession's standards;
- How to form an individual style of activity in order to overcome the spontaneous approach (the method of trials and mistakes) in choosing a career;
- Ways and techniques for developing or enhancing their attention, memory and spatial thinking [15].

L. Bramer and E. Shostrom [16] as well as G. Corey [17] believe that clients have to take part in the choice of diagnostic tests. The counsellor's duty is to explain them that test results show only a tendency and to tell them about their diagnostic results in an understandable way but to interpret the results from a neutral perspective.

The counsellor has to understand any client's reaction on the interpretation [18].

Formative and corrective counselling is a kind of counselling that is applied at the end of any counselling session. The client's professional adequacy often depends on his/her ability to evaluate him/herself in an appropriate way. The expected degree of the client's satisfaction with the chosen profession, to a great extent, relates to whether his/her expectations match with the

real specifics of the profession. The same circumstances for various people create a completely different personal meaning. The counsellor's corrective work takes place at the level of the client's advantages, expectations, notions and social principles, and no definite algorithm exist for it [19].

The counsellor usually helps the client to see and comprehend the life prospects. It requires a broader view on the client's situation, as the profession and the job are only the first link in the entire chain of life choices, in which social advancement, financial wellbeing and mental development are an important skill.

The core of life prospects is one's value-orientation and life goals and plans. The client has to be assisted to understand both the differences and the connections among these terms. The client has to be familiarised with the prospects that are provided by the chosen profession in other areas of life thatr are important for the client. A value-orientation hierarchy has to be constructed, which will help the client to identify the pathways of his/her actions.

The client's prospects are determined according to the following criteria: *duration, realism, optimism, coherence and differentiation* [19].

Duration means how far the client looks into the future.

Realism – whether the client, thinking of the future, can distinguish reality from fantasies in order to focus on achieving attainable goals.

Optimism – the ratio of positive to negative future forecasts and the degree of self-confidence concerning achieving a goal.

Coherence – the extent to which expected activities in the future are associated with achievements in the past and the present.

Differentiation – immediate and future plans; the subordination of selected stages.

Classifications of career counselling methods are very diverse. For example, D. Brown and L. Brooks [19] have classified the methods into eight groups:

- Methods to establish a contact with the client;
- Methods to acquire information from the client;
- Methods to communicate with the client;
- Methods to inform the client;
- Methods to examine labour market requirements;
- Methods for personal marketing and information management;
- Methods to plan and develop a career;
- Methods for documentation.

The instruments employed in career counselling (tests, surveys, methodologies, interviews) help to identify:

- The client's adequacy for doing a specific job (intellect, the way of judging and abilities, the speed of reaction, specific talents);
- The personality's interests and needs;
- The personality's values and attitudes;
- The client's learning skills;
- The client's interpersonal relationships;
- The client's self-portrait and self-evaluation;
- The client's decision-making skills in career development [20,21].

A number of authors believe that the key objective of any counsellor is to develop their own individual approach to counselling, combining various methods, but it requires long searches [22,23].

In order to provide assistance to women in professional crisis situations, the author has developed the Client Developing Programme for career change for women in professional crisis situations.

The programme's purpose is to help women who need advice and assistance in crisis situations and to provide necessary information, to promote their thinking and encourage them to analyse their surrounding environment and their situation, and to raise their self-confidence and to contribute to their professional success. The programme involves 10 individual classes in which the counsellor gets familiarised with a client and his/her problems, the client does various exercises and tests and, working together, a decision is made. The programme offers a methodology to make decisions, to identify problems in one's life and select the most appropriate solutions as well as to present one's ideas and make others to listen to the ideas [24]. A general plan of the classes is summarised in Table 1.

The author used the globally popular website Moodle for e-studies, in which she offered to learn her Client Developing Programme for career change for women in professional crisis situations to be used in lifelong learning. The programme's website is available here - https://karjera.gnomio.com/. This website also provides the author's methodology (Figs. 1 and 2), which includes the programme, together with exercises. The participants of the pedagogical experiment successfully completed the programme.

The participants successfully completed the programme and took part in a study within the pedagogical experiment, filling in questionnaires to identify a professional crisis; the results of the study are presented in detail in Fig. 3.
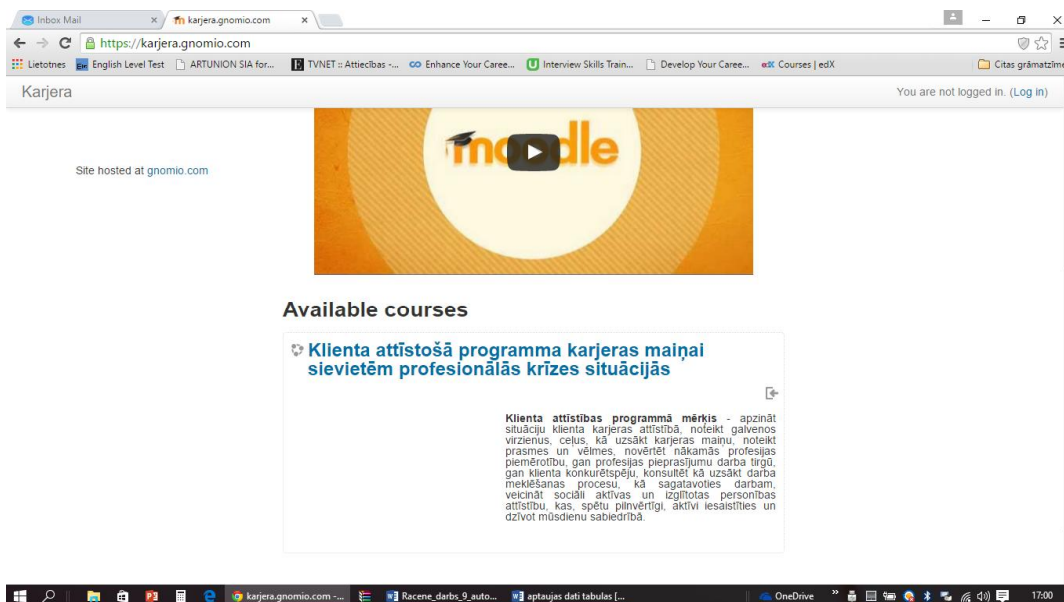

Fig. 1. Initial "screenshot" on the e-studies website in the program Moodle where the author's client developing programme for women in professional crisis situations is available
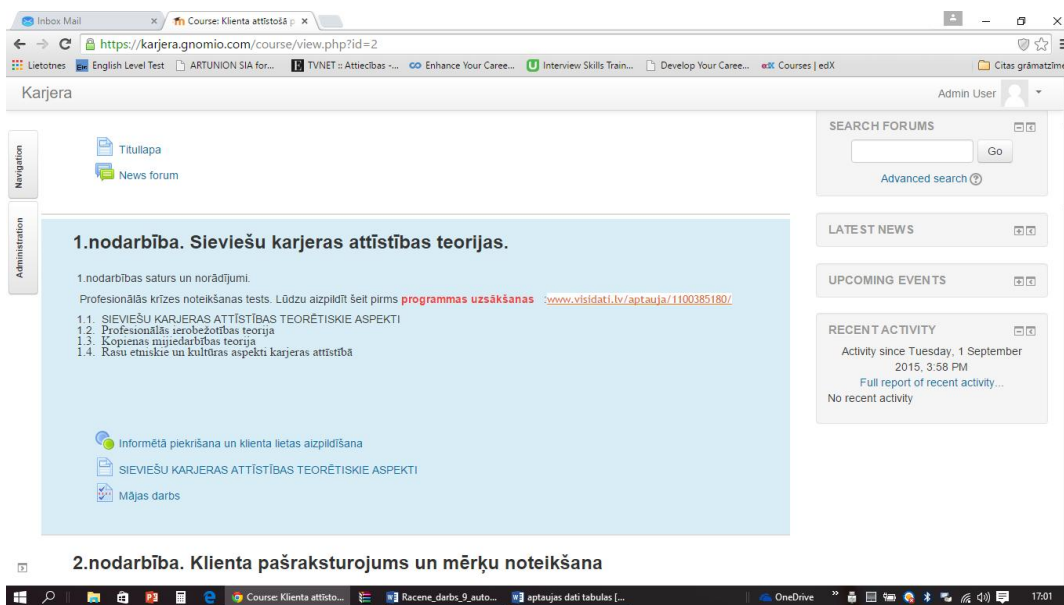

Fig. 2. Example of the first class in women's career development theories – a screenshot
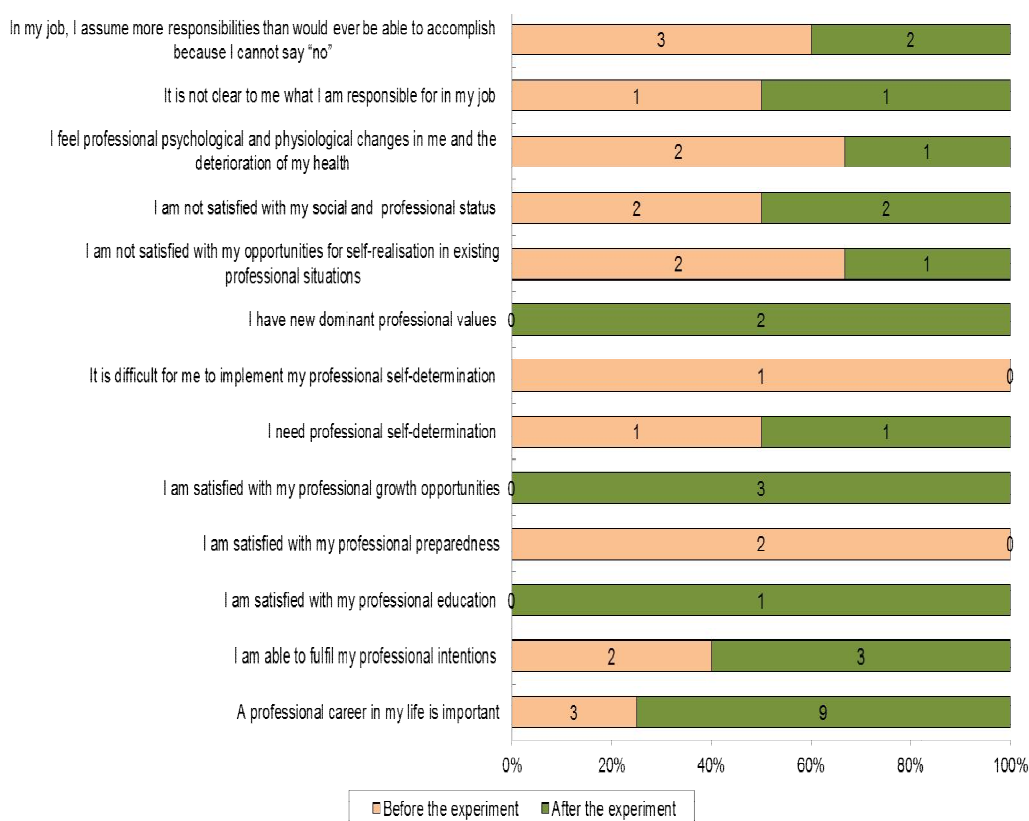
Fig. 3. Changes regarding the criteria and indicators for identifying a professional crisis in the result of the pedagogical experiment (results are presented in absolute numbers, answers "fully agree")
Author's construction, adapted based on E. F. Zeer E. E. Symanyuk [25]

3.2 Pilot Research Results of the Client Developing Programme for Women in Professional Crisis Situations

The author's Client Developing Programme for career change for women in professional crisis situations was experimentally approbated in the e-environment in the Moodle program, with 18 randomly selected women taking part in the pedagogical experiment. The participants were able to work in the e-environment using the Internet, and they were familiarised with the materials and did individual exercises and revealed their reflections. In parallel to the classes, the author organised e-counselling, which was done both via e-main and Skype. On average, the author held three counselling sessions for each participant, playing the role of a professional crisis mentor. To identify a professional crisis, the author developed criteria and indicators, by means of which women can make a self-evaluation of their crisis situation

before beginning counselling and training and after completing the programme's classes and receiving the counselling (Fig. 3).

Using the criteria and indicators, a study was carried out to identify a professional crisis before and after the pedagogical experiment with the purpose of establishing whether the programme to overcome a carer crisis is useful; to compare the data, answers "fully agree" were analysed and the results about most positive and most negative evaluation of criteria are presented in Fig. 3.

After analysing the experimental data, one can find that of 17 criteria, positive changes were observed regarding 9 criteria. The positive changes: I have new dominant professional values +2; I am satisfied with my professional growth opportunities +3; I am satisfied with my professional education +1; I am able to fulfil my professional intentions +1; A professional career in my life is important +1. One can conclude that

10

the women raised their self-confidence and gained positive attitude to themselves. The negative changes: In my job, I assume more responsibilities than would ever be able to accomplish because I cannot say "no" -1; I feel professional psychological and physiological changes in me and the deterioration of my health -1; I am not satisfied with my opportunities for self-realisation in existing professional situations -1; It is difficult for me to implement my professional self-determination -1. The author concludes that the given criteria and indicators may be employed to identify professional crisis situations.

The programme's positive effects and significance are indicated by the participants' reflections, selected randomly:

> A woman, 57 years old, unemployed since June 2015: *"I belong to those 38 percent women who do parallel jobs, but it is not so urgent anymore; if it is necessary, I can work hard as much as needed and as long as my health permits. My wish is to get a job that would be a hobby and the hobby would be a job. However, I understand that at my age there are no lots of areas where I could again, for example, acquire a diploma and begin something completely different. But there are opportunities; I just have to search for them! I think that the "glass ceiling" is explicitly present in Latvia, and women are valued lower and are paid lower wages; besides, they assume all home duties. And then people wonder why women are ill-tempered and tired. I have not seen that men crave for working in a kindergarten or school. When an employer is asked about the disparity in wages, an answer is classical – any man has to provide for his family! No comments. Besides, the cult of youth (not wisdom) prevails at jobs. The public is implanted a belief of a beautiful and successful woman. Unfortunately, many women are not taught to fight for themselves, not taught to respect themselves and insist on something, for example, from time to time they have to go and ask for wage increases. People have to be sometimes taught to look at themselves from the outside – what do I look like, do I feel happy at my job or does not my self-confidence lags behind me or even worse – do I have already been humiliated? In short, courses for raising self-confidence are needed for working women in order to say one more time that a fitness*

> *centre and a manicure salon have to be visited. It is not important that I maybe do not daily meet a thousand of clients, but I would feel better. Eventually, maybe it is better to turn my back on everything, quit the job and search for another opportunity, i.e. not to follow a saying – a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. I agree that such a step requires some preparation (finances are needed in the bank account for at least two months and summer is needed in order to rest at the seaside, for example). Also, it is good to be unemployed for a while to have some rest. Only after a month I understood how tired my body and spirit were. Of course, it is easy to judge others from the other side; but when you have done it yourself, you feel satisfied. Women are often afraid to do it; yet, it has to be done sometimes. Eventually, there is nothing to lose. And maybe it is worth trying with the help of a professional to understand – what I want and what I am able to do?".*

A woman, 45 years old:

> *"My job purpose is orientated towards my work duties, their timely and precise execution. My meaning of life could involve my mental enhancement, living a fair life in relation to myself and bringing up a daughter of high morals!!! The most important values of my life are my family, friends. My strengths are diligence, industriousness, ability to work in a team and ability to change. My weaknesses are fear, shyness to speak publicly. I thank my family, my first workplace at Lattelecom where I could not only work but also take a number of courses that are useful even now".*

Comments on the Client Developing programme:

> *"A very good programme, comprehensive information, valuable home exercises!"* (a woman, 45 years old).

> *"The programme motivates you very much, makes you think of your strengths and weaknesses. It also encourages and makes you believe in your abilities. It gives you pieces of good advice what you never thought about before, for example, about the role of women in society; studies on public opinions are also interesting. This programme, to my mind, is useful to those who already have greater work experience"* (a woman, 57 years old).

"Women need such a programme, as they acquire a lot of knowledge and start thinking of their careers. It provides useful information for small businesses and good counselling for those beginning their careers. When doing a test, we can identify our wishes, ideas and growth opportunities – what we did not think about before" (a woman, 23 years old).

In the result of learning the programme and of career counselling, the women enhanced their skills: *basic skills in lifelong learning* – information and communication technology skills, skills in foreign languages, technological culture and business as well as social skills; *skills in career education and counselling* – skills in career guidance, decision-making and communication; digital skills and skills to adapt to new conditions. The women also enhanced their talents [26].

4. CONCLUSIONS

- The Client Developing Programme for career change for women in professional crisis situations was designed and approbated to help women when they need advice and support in a crisis situation, to provide necessary information, to stimulate their thinking, to analyse the situation around others and oneself, to raise their self-confidence and contribute to their professional success. The programme involves 10 individual classes in which the counsellor gets familiarised with a client and her problems, the client does various exercises and tests and, working together, a decision is made.
- The criteria and indicators developed by the author may be employed to identify professional crisis situations and areas in which it may be possible to work with particular woman on an individual basis to achieve the goal.
- After analysing the experimental data, one can find that of the 17 criteria, positive changes were observed regarding 9 criteria. The positive changes were as follows: I have new dominant professional values +2; I am satisfied with my professional growth opportunities +3; I am satisfied with my professional education +1; I am able to fulfil my professional intentions +1; A professional career in my life is important +1. One can conclude that the women raised their self-confidence and

gained positive attitude to themselves. The negative changes were as follows: In my job, I assume more responsibilities than would ever be able to accomplish because I cannot say "no" -1; I feel professional psychological and physiological changes in me and the deterioration of my health -1; I am not satisfied with my opportunities for self-realisation in existing professional situations -1; It is difficult for me to implement my professional self-determination -1.

- In the result of learning the programme and of career counselling, the women enhanced their skills: *basic skills in lifelong learning* – information and communication technology skills (performing online tasks), skills in foreign languages (getting acquainted with foreign literature), technological culture and business as well as social skills (studying and carrying out a variety of business-related tasks), *skills in career education and counselling* – skills in career guidance, decision-making and communication; digital skills and skills to adapt to new conditions. The women also enhanced their talents.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

Author hereby declare that all experiments have been examined and approved by the appropriate ethics committee and have therefore been performed in accordance with the ethical standards laid down in the 1964 Declaration of Helsinki.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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