

EDUCATION FOR THE FUTURE – CASE OF SERBIA

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*Society exists for the benefit of its members,
and not the members for the benefit of the society.
(Spencer H.)*

Abstract: *In this paper we point out the significance of education as one of the principal values of importance for the whole society. Research shows that the conscience on importance of knowledge management in Serbia grows, but there is still much to be done for advancement of education of population of all generations. The future of people lies in schools, as once wrote Pestalozzi.¹*

The author stresses the need to create an open and flexible system of education in Serbia and knowledge transfer too. The process of education improvement in Serbia should be oriented towards development of an integral education system and should include formal (institutional) and informal (non-institutional) subsystems, which will mutually supplement. This article represents an overview of our experiences in this area.

Information technologies for knowledge management are basic starter of development. This paper originates from the need to improve the quality of living and in such a way influence on physical and mental health of the nation and its individual members. In the paper is also discussed on efforts to dignify life in present conditions, make it more fulfilled, eliminate numerous negative phenomenons and effects of corruption, unemployment, violence in different forms.

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JEL Classification: *K 00, K 30*

1. Introduction

Education is the area of the greatest importance for every state and for the people who think about the future of their citizens. Real priorities of our people are education and development of knowledge economy, and modern economy values, broad knowledge and skills, flexibility and teamwork of course.

Although we are living in the turbulent times of manifested violence in different forms, man should have strength and strong will to exceed many injustices, turn toward the nature and future, work on knowledge improvement and prepare the program of refining the environment he/she lives in.

Codex of behavior towards environment is not a legal act, but obligation toward the nature we live in.

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¹ Pestalozzi Johann Heinrich (1746-1827) was Swiss educator and spiritual creator of elementary schools, who influenced by his work on the complete development of schooling in the world.

From the arising science on society one of the basic questions, over which the swords were crossed, was related to the evaluation of the role, position and influence of new technologies on all aspects of social life. No matter if we speak about the clock, steam engine, telegraph, telephone, television² or Internet, the questions remain the same: on which way and in what extent these technological innovations have transformed the life of that time. Really, insisting on technique and science, has cut the vital connection with what the human soul represents – that is imagination, intuition, more accurately fantasy.

How to fight against the high tide of times and newly discovered virus diseases? Today the world is confronted with the financial crisis, but there is also present the crisis of morality. Very often there is an ideological blindness demonstrated and there is really a need for regulating of behavior and social performance on the long term.

Standard of life is social and economic notion which certainly means the sum of all conditions that determine the way of life in certain period, especially in respect of education, general culture, application of strategy, connecting to the world. From the beginning the wish of man to overcome diseases, death and time existed.

We learn through experiences, and experiences are there in the past. In Balkans, the past is still very present.

2. Education as the basis of national preservation

Our past is very tumultuous. But even in the medieval Serbia there were high educated men and women. Homo quantum scit, tantum potest.³ Women-diplomats⁴ were usually members of dynasty or representatives of high aristocracy. For example, Queen Jelena Anžuska, wife of Uroš I, by her French origin for Catholic church »sanctissima femina« and for Orthodox church holy woman too, established the school for education of poor girls in Serbia.

In medieval Serbia there were private libraries, what is proved by the notes found on some books which showed who they belonged to (gifts, order, purchase), and owners of the books were priests, gentry and of course, rulers. Education as the part of tradition and culture of a country must be in harmony with hystorical inheritance.

It is interesting to mention that in Arabia there were patrons of science and arts, for example, Kalif al-Mamun (786-833) who sent special misssion in Byzantium to bring manuscripts of works that did not exist in his Empire.⁵

In the time of Renaissance the science in Europe experienced significant rise. Universities of that time were bases of the culture. And in XVII-th century the French Academy of Science (Académie francaise, 1635) and the Royal Society in London⁶ (1662) were founded. But only University in Switzerland, in Zurich accepted female students and our Draga Jočić, student from Serbia entered in 1872. at the Medical faculty, where she got the University diploma in 1876. Dr Draga Jočić became the first president of the Society of women - Serbian physicians.

Education, arts and intellectual culture represent the cultural identity of the community in the field of creation of general values of the community.⁷ The power of creativity and the triumph of spirit was visible even during the holocaust. Therefore it is always necessary to preserve and respect the national differences, as well as to establish harmonization of the law on intellectual property with world legal standards. The biggest favor that can be done to one country is in education of good citizens.

Hundred years ago the poem »Santa Maria della Salute«⁸ of our famous poet Laza Kostic was written and published in 1909. in town Sombor, in Vojvodina. This poem was dedicated to a educated, wise and beautiful Serbian woman, Lenka Dunderski. The culture and arts should be fostered. It is well known that knowledge is decoration of a reach man, and wealth of a poor man. As Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) once whote, real knowledge gives strength.

² TV and radio stations are founded in accordance with law (article 50, paragraph 2, Constitution of the Republic of Serbia).

³ Man how much knows, that much he can.

⁴ The most famous was Princess Milica (? – 1405).

⁵ Vukasović V, Development of science and technology and international law, Belgrade, 1978, p. 18.

⁶ From its foundation the Royal Society in London was open also for foreigners.

⁷ Perović S, Orations from Kopaonik, Belgrade, 2008, p. 510.

⁸ It is the name of the most beautiful baroque church dedicated to Lady of Salvation in Venice (Italy).

In 2001. the process of the high education reform in Serbia began. Along with the need for preservation of the basic characteristics of traditional school what understands diligence, tidiness, responsibility and reliability at work, the new aims are needed in the sense of creativity, independence, i.e. flexibility and independent opinion. In Serbia there is a profound reform of justice going on, especially in personal sence.

Who has the courage to undertake something /a job/, will find resources to do it. Education is not the process that starts at six or seven years of age and terminates around twenty or thirty, but it can start or continue anytime and last the whole human life.

Constant improvement of human resources and acquiring new knowledge of employees are crucial for every organization and society. Knowledge management is the basis of a modern organization's strategy.

In the world we are living in the greatest proof of virtue, during education and getting knowledge and later on, in professional life and creative work, is to give a chance for advancement also to others. The essential prerequisite for success is the enthusiasm for job you are working on. Also the poor presentation can ruin a job, but to every individual the good presentation can give the wings. It is necessary to have a feeling for proper time and real perception, but of course, also save own identity. The positive motivation is very important too, as well as knowledge transfer. Exchange of experiences is really indispensable, so we should not forget the dissemination of a world collaboration.

System of education has to be integrated in the social and economic system of the state, because that is the social mechanism which makes possible knowledge distribution, distribution of skills, working abilities, needs and values to all the members of the society. And knowledge became one of the most important economic resources.

However, it is important to stress also experiences from the world and the fact that Universities in Tokio and Kioto have budgets which are three times bigger than the whole budget of the Republic of Serbia for high education and science. Obviously, in Asia education has the priority ...⁹, because while Japan¹⁰ sets aside over 3% of its enormous gross social product for science, our country sets aside only 0,3% of its modest gross social product for the same purpose.

On the 25-th of June 2009. the Agreement on financing of science and high education was signed¹¹ in the Government of the Republic¹¹ of Serbia. According to that Agreement faculties in Serbia have to pay 12,5% from their own incomes in the state budget till the end of this 2009. year and scholarships have to remain on the last year's level. Negotiations have lasted for a long time, because faculties wanted to be excepted from the Law on the rebalance of budget, but the compromise was achieved.¹² These solutions will not endanger the quality of teaching and standard of students. However, faculties took over the duty to finance certain number of students from our universities during master and doctoral studies.

Universities measure their productivity by the quality and number of its graduates, as well as through innovations. That is why the stimulus for cooperation between universities is needed as well as the culture that motivates the transfer of technologies in order to achieve the success.

The ways of scientific research are inconceivable. We are the witnesses of pollution in many areas of life, and will the revolution of clean technologies break out? Destruction of the world of nature performed by man has many forms. The question is if the accumulated environmental problems that Serbia is confronted with can be solved by education or/and sanctions. It is much more important to help understanding of importance of the world of nature. Already Socrates spoke that we should first teach before prohibiting.

The requirements of the International Standard ISO 9001 are applicable to higher education and implementation of this Standard is a strategic decision of a higher education institution. The institution establishes, documents, implements and maintains a quality management system¹³ and continually improves its effectiveness in accordance with the requirements of the Standard.

⁹ From exposé of the Minister of Science of the Republic of Serbia, published in »Politika«, 22. April 2009, p. 15.

¹⁰ While Japan produces 20% of the world scientific papers and patents and takes the second place behind United States, China became the fourth power in science and increased the number of students from five to twenty millions per year, and also acquires six millions of post - graduate students per year.

¹¹ The agreement was signed by three of our Ministers and representatives of the University.

¹² From »Politika« (»Politics«), 26. of June 2009, p. 09.

¹³ Within the quality management system the higher education institution analyses customer needs, etc.

There is no useless effort and in New 2009 year we started with optimism and wish to realize better conditions in all spheres of life in Serbia and especially in the area of education.

3. The role of new technologies and struggle for better environment

It is necessary to invest in the quality of the professional educational system and training of staff, as well as the continuous specialization of teachers and trainers in the fields of information technology and innovations in the studying area. Internet today became indispensable in the process of education and it is everywhere present canal of information, but in Serbia still not used in all areas where it is needed.

Information technology is the technology for knowledge management. Today the world is connected by Internet more than ever and like Umberto Eco stressed the appearance of Internet will fulfill its function only if it becomes impulse for establishment of contacts among people, that will later lead to real socialization, and these predictions were fulfilled. Internet became the important social phenomenon. This aspect of the new technologies of communication advancement in the environment we live and work in today, makes the relations between people stronger, collaboration achieved faster, although by available data, Serbia is at the bottom of the European scale, when Internet is in question. Nevertheless these networks do not go around us, what is important for spreading the spirit of tolerancy and offering help to those who need it, as well as the realization of the basic human values. Mobile telephones¹⁴ and Internet have attained that culture became immediately available to everyone.

The protection from all kinds of endangerment, first of all force manifested in different forms, like for example, violence in performing piracy¹⁵, violence in family, force in school and other forms.¹⁶

During 2006. started the United Nations Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF) Project for Serbia named »Moja škola-škola bez nasilja«¹⁷. The special care for the new generation is extremely important, as well as more attention for old people, from whom we can learn a lot, and make an effort not to repeat their mistakes.

Eliminate violence, is the modern mission of our society. Any kind of applied violence ties a man, who then loses his dignity and freedom. That is the dark side of the life of contemporary mankind. These days we are the witnesses of violence of the competitive soccer teams fans, but may be this is partly the consequence of the direct previous war and later post-war experience of our country. Are the poverty and armed conflicts the main reasons for these occurrences in the society? It is also necessary to provide for safe surroundings in the working conditions, conditions of creation, life in general, with respect for the culture of diversity.

When we talk about culture of living and residence it is really necessary more intensive utilization of natural gas, i.e. acceptance and improvement of the clean technologies (solar, wind and hydro energy). In the function of the right on life has to be also the nuclear energy, whose application is discussed a lot last years.

Respecting the international custom Serbia has also for the 39th time in few towns celebrated the Day of Planet Earth¹⁸, and the aim of one of the campaigns named »Zelena generacija« (»Green generation«) is just to raise the level of ecological consciousness, education and motivation of citizens to actively participate and undertake efforts for protection of environment. In our country finally began the ecological revival. Splendid example of necessity to teach young generations how to behave toward the nature gives town Novi Sad, where exists eco-garden for children »Dandelion«. Really the idea on introduction of the ecological upbringing through games impresses.

¹⁴ The newest »smarthphone« from serie E, model Nokia E 52 offers advanced services of e – mail.

¹⁵ Percentage of software piracy in the area of personal computers in Serbia during 2008, record decrease of 2% comparing to 2007. In the same period, half of the countries in which the study was done records decrease, while only 15% of the countries record the increase in piracy. One hundred and ten countries were included in this study. The economic loss during 2008, as the consequence of software piracy in Serbia grew and reached ninety nine millions of dollars. /Results from the Business Software Alliance/. Piracy is between the oldest international criminal offences. Piracy in the past was normal occurrence, as the craft constituent part of the life of people living near the sea. In Rome pirates, as well as robbers were hanged on the cross. One of the prisoners of pirates was also Miguel de Servantes, famous writer of the »Don Kihote«. Today piracy is regulated by the contemporary International Law.

¹⁶ Compare: Messages from the final document, Kopaonik school of Natural Law, Kopaonik, 2007, p 104.

¹⁷ »My school – school without violence«

¹⁸ In one hundred eighty countries of the world 22nd of April is celebrated as the Day of the Planet Earth.

Message to rise the level of ecological consciousness of all citizens is sent also from our universities where environmental law is taught. And while today the search for eternal energy of fusion¹⁹ lasts, because the world is faced with the shortage of energy and relies on, at least from the theoretical point of view, an inexhaustible source of thermonuclear fusion, our post-graduate students and experts will be the part of the team in Kadarashe, in France in the International summer school during June 2009. So, by the transfer of acquired knowledge and the exchange of experience world is united and becomes better every day.

Let us not forget that only by following the laws of nature man acts for his benefit.

But there is no law by which we shall manage to clean our country, but with team work, that is the imperative of every progress, if united we change some habits and permanently work on education.²⁰ Today we live in the world full of cultural options and we choose what suits us, and also what we shall ignore. Education prepares us for life, forms the spirit and helps us develop intellectual abilities and it defines an individual's behaviour and actions.

Already in 1789. in France was proclaimed Declaration of man and citizen according to which all man are born and live free and equal. It was stressed that the liberty consists of possibility to do everything that does not harm to others. Principle 1 of the famous Declaration from Stockholm (1972) is worded like this: Man owns the basic right on freedom, equality and satisfactory conditions of life, in the surroundings the quality of which allows him/her to live with dignity and in prosperity. He/she has the serious duty to protect and improve the environment for present and future generations.

The right to education is one of the fundamental human rights and distance learning represents step ahead toward the wider realization of this right. Popularity of that modern educational model - distance learning is growing today and has importance since it opens a possibility for not privileged groups, of all kinds, to be equally included in the process of education.

The forming of modern university contains all essential characteristics of civil society genesis. The University is its elite representative. Humanistic sciences at numerous non-basic faculties have to be connected with and leaned on basic humanistic faculties (Faculty of philosophy, law, economics, politics, philology and other sciences). This connection should be reflected on scientific, teaching and expert plan.

In May 2000 European Comity adopted the initiative named "E-education: Designing tomorrow's education" and this initiative is a part of the project "Europe Action Plan" its aim is to connect countries of the Union as well as joined countries more closely, using information technologies. These technologies are especially close to young generations and tomorrow, at the 1-st of July 2009. the University Games will start in our capital town Belgrade, in Serbia, the country of sports and knowledge. Students, representatives from 144 countries all over the world, arrived to promote their possibilities and skills, to get together and to become friends. »Existence of friendship is possible only between good men²¹« Cicero wrote once. I hope that these friendships between students will last for ever. Wish them a lot of luck!

Opening ceremony will start with lighting of the torch of our famous scientist Nikola Tesla called »Tesla's lightning«. Museum of Nikola Tesla prepared exhibition that will be one of the cultural events offered to all inhabitants and visitors of Belgrade.

As education are understood the activities aiming to widen total of knowledge, develop potentials and change values and culture. It is considered that education is mainly directed to future.

Conclusion

Our country is located between East and West, as »the dangerous gate of Balkans«²². Although the process of transition seized the world in 1989, this process appeared much later in our country. Today we use domestic potential in Serbia. Having the university diploma does not

¹⁹ In 1952. in the explosion of the hydrogen bomb the first uncontrolled fusion was achieved on our Planet.

²⁰ In 2004. the new legal framework for the protection of environment was introduced in our country. By the Law on environmental protection, Law on the strategic environmental impact assessment, Law on environmental impact assessment and Law on integral prevention and control of pollution, which are harmonized with the European Union regulations began the process of regulatory reform in our country. Recently, in 2009, the Law on modifications and amendments of the Law on environmental protection and Law on the protection of nature were adopted in the Republic of Serbia with the aim to protect the environment we live in.

²¹ "Amicitia nisi inter bonos esse non potest".

²² Writer Svetlana Velmar-Janković sees Belgrade as the gate of Balkans.

guaranty the corresponding social status, but only the equality of possibility to reach such a position. If one reaches such a position, the permanent learning is real necessity to keep the position. The higher professional desires require the higher investments. University diploma is only the preparation for highly expert professions, while the real knowledge is a lifelong learning.

Our country is at dangerous crossroads. In Serbia a lot of work and renunciations, regulation and normalization of many relations are in front of us. It is clear that big European countries have always shown the interest for these regions "as potential masters, or unreliable protectors". But we were taught to answer on every evil by the beauty of goodness, and in that, lies the full quality of life.

In these stormy times the way of human potentials leading for long-term successes is of the fundamental importance. The main resource for every defence of the way of creation and living is knowledge backed up with morality. Law in effect should serve to unchangeable natural and universal law.

In the contemporary business world the knowledge is considered as the main resource for improvement of the quality of work and life. In early stages of knowledge management development, the mistake in favorizing of technological solutions, without understanding the role of human factor, was often made. The combining of human abilities and technology is needed.

Real knowledge always inspires the confidence, and its acquiring helps us solve many problems. Along with development of the spirit of tolerance, as well as the possibility to answer with good intention and gesture on the caused evil, we get a chance to lead more complete life of better quality. For every progress the competition is needed, in order to overcome the mediocrity and in that race let the best win, those who can contribute to stability and life of higher quality for all of us. Only investing in education and science Serbia can provide for the future.

We know the importance of knowledge transfer, but here, the need to influence on return of our experts in many scientific fields dispersed all over the world is great.

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