

CROSS-CULTURAL MANAGEMENT IN PRIMARY SCHOOL THROUGH INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMMES AND EDUCATIONAL METHODS

SUMMARY

Knowledge about value of investing into education had already been acquired in Europe and throughout developed world. Globalization is present in all parts of life and business and therefore in formal, non-formal and informal education. In Europe, there is an effort to establish collective standards of public school systems.

Knowledge has become one of the most important economy resources. Attitude towards knowledge determines the future of the individual, the group and the society. Countries in transition (Croatia is also one of them) have necessity for structural changes of educational system. Knowledge is the factor on which Croatian citizens should build their welfare today, but also the factor on which they will create competition on European and world market in the future. The necessity of learning for the whole life shows that having only formal education is not enough – non-formal and informal education are needed as well. From present perspective, after finishing formal education student should expect several careers during his/her working life, and within one career several different jobs. In order to be successful, it would be necessary to study and improve one's knowledge entire lifetime.

Indirectly, in Croatian school system are included more than 20% of citizens. When student's parents, tutors, and adult education are added, we calculate that more than 50% of Croatian citizens are indirectly interested in quality education.

Throughout the world and Europe international knowledge standards and cooperation between schools are being developed. It is necessary to emphasize the importance of international cooperation in educational system of Croatia. Member States of the Europe cooperate through "open coordination method" – they have developed collective base of relevant statistic pieces of information. New educational programmes which enable students to integrate into the multicultural Europe have been developed. The importance is also given to the cross-cultural education which aims at understanding of differences, specific values, traditions, and some other features and characteristics of different societies and at opening human mind to cultural differences.

In this thesis there are two examples of international cooperation in education. The first is European Studies Programme in "Druga osnovna škola" ("Second Primary School") from Vukovar, and the second is UNESCO programme in primary school "Tin Ujević" from Osijek.

For the successful realization of modern educational concepts, the modern information-communication technology (ICT) is needed. ICT should be used for E-learning which requires developed global information infrastructure and high level of informatic literacy.

Croatian educational system needs permanent changing, adapting and innovating.

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INTRODUCTION

In different civilizations education has had different history and it has been organized in different ways. The most effective and the most intensive way of spreading the use of technology are through education. Things are done very fast today. Modern aids of communication and circulation have overcome separation between civilizations. Today, there are no barriers to the exchange of ideas and technologies between civilizations. The most developed countries in the world invest into education which brings them immeasurable profit – from prestige to the economic benefit.

Today, education is different in each civilization. To be precise, high standards for pupil's knowledge curriculum exist in Japan. At the beginning of the 21st century in Europe were established common standards of public school system. The United States are intensively working on modernizing the school system and they compare their own results to the results of other countries. For quite a long time it was believed that Russia had the most effective educational system. African countries are still searching for a system which will bring urban planning in underdeveloped areas and create developed centres.

Standpoint that education is a good investment is accepted worldwide which is evident from the amounts of money which governments give for formal education in all countries (between 5% and 6% of Gross Domestic Product) and extra budgetary amounts which different companies and organizations give for formal and non-formal education of their employees.

The standpoint of developed European countries is that Europe must invest in education that will develop employees' basic skills during obligatory education and acquiring new knowledge during the whole lifetime (EU Commission, 1996, p. 55).

In the European Union investments in education, researches and professional development are basic 'intangible investments' during which educational systems of the EU members are gradually unified in order to make possible the transnational mobility of the European citizens and to develop European identity through sharing common values.

Countries in transition (including Croatia) have additional reasons for structural changes of their educational systems. They need to find the way to transfer from planned to market economy, to develop democratic society and to join with European Union. Transition requires that people develop new skills which will guarantee success in fast-changing competitive society.

1. GLOBALIZATION AND MODERNIZATION

Globalization is a process which affects the whole world. Many people see the process of globalization as the way to establish domination of the western civilization.

Modern media are based on computer technology in English which makes this language universal. America and Europe dominate over world's technology and lead in many technological solutions which are becoming inevitable part of everyday life (mobile phones, computer technology, motor vehicle industry, etc.). Globalization is not only "westernization"; it is also "modernization". In order to modernize themselves, some countries are asking for help from the Western countries. Elements of the supremacy of the Western countries are:

- possession and control over banking system
- control over stability of currencies
- the biggest consumers in the world
- govern the international market
- efficiency in big military interventions
- control over navigable lines
- the most developed technological researches
- supreme technological education
- exploration of space and international communication

1. 2. Mega-nation

The result of modernization and globalization is creation of mega-nation. In today's fast-changing world the individual feels frustrated and tries to find safety in *we-identity*. As the *we-identity* is becoming more and more powerful, the feeling of safety and belonging somewhere is becoming stronger. Creation of *we-identity* would not be possible without the civilization. Only civilization provides needed conditions for development and spreading of power and influence. Due to uniting of several nations, the individual is able to find power which is needed in today's society.

2. CROATIAN PLACE IN NEW SYSTEM

2. 1. Croatian orientation

Croatia is orientated towards Europe and developed countries and the future of the country depends on that orientation. The process of society orientation is based on educational system which must be future oriented. Croatia's benefit is in the knowledge of its citizens. With the knowledge of its citizens Croatia can ensure its national identity. National treasure is in human potential and vision.

2. 2. Croatian plan for education development

Approaching European Union means that Croatia needs to have educational system which is equal in quality with the educational systems of the EU members. One of the guidelines is Lebanese Declaration which was established by European Council in the year 2000. Above mentioned Declaration invites EU members to modernize their educational systems in order to make the EU economy the most competitive and dynamic – the economy based on knowledge. Development plan is also based on the principles and goals of the Copenhagen Declaration from the year 2002, Declaration of European ministries in charge of professional education and European Commission for further cooperation on the field of professional education, as well as on the Bologna Declaration. The Republic of Croatia signed

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Bologna declaration in the year 2001 and agreed to establish European standards of high education by the year 2010. This agreement is crucial and it has great importance for promoting territorial and professional mobility of the citizens and their employment.

3. EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Educational system changes its goals depending on features of society development. The system contributes to the personal development of each individual, ensures quality life, active and responsible participation in common values of human lives, and finally it contributes to development of the country on scientific, social, economic, and cultural field.

Modern educational system is based on the network of schools and other organizations which are joined into partnership. In today's society, school is not the only educational institution and therefore we cannot reform only schools – we have to include all education participants.

3. 1. Educational system in developed countries

In developed countries educational systems include the education of the young people as well as non-formal education of the adults. More and more attention is being paid to self-education and informal education. Countries in transition that wish to join with the EU also follow this model. Modern national educational politics in developed countries are based on two concepts which have been developed by international organizations which deal with educational politics (UNESCO, OECD, ILO, the Council of Europe, European Commission). International organizations recommend these two concepts to all members and the concepts are: the concept of lifelong education and the concept of learning society.

The concept of lifelong education includes different learning strategies in all life stages. The strategies are: organized learning (education), which can be formal and non-formal, and unorganized or informal learning.

Since people need to learn all their lives but they cannot go to school all their lives, adult people educate themselves mostly in non-school organizations, i.e. in places where adults work and live. That is the reason why societies (especially developed societies) are becoming learning societies.

3. 2. Basic information about educational system in Croatia

In the Republic of Croatia there are 1 894 educational institutions (without district schools and institutions for adult education) attended by 850 722 students (children, pupils, students) and with 62 499 employees (teachers and professors).

The Republic of Croatia has 4 535 054 inhabitants. Indirectly, in school system are included more than 20% of citizens. When we add students and employees in institutions for adult education (372 institutions with 23 000 students) and more than 1 300 000 parents and guardians, there are at least 50% of Croatian citizens who are interested in quality school system. Besides being the biggest system, in developed countries educational system is also considered to be the most important one for the nation's future.

3. 3. Education Development Plan in Croatia

The Republic of Croatia is developing its educational system within its own, European and world's standards. The system should be based on our own rich educational and cultural tradition, modern social movements, and knowledge as the basic concept of the European Union.

3. 4. Priorities in developing educational system

It is very important for Croatian educational system to be based on clearly determined priorities and goals. There are four crucial development priorities:

1. Improving education quality and efficiency
2. Stimulating teachers to improve professionally
3. Developing management strategies in educational system
4. Education for social connection and economic development

4. EUROPEAN DIMENSION OF EDUCATION AND INTERNATIONAL INCLUDING

4. 1. International educational standards and school cooperation

Educational system needs at its disposal objective information / indicators of knowledge and skills acquired by students in order to evaluate knowledge and compare educational results on national and international level. In that way, the system accepts international education quality indicators, develops a model of national and international graduation and international schools, takes part in international programmes of student and teacher exchange, ensures conditions for learning two foreign languages, etc. During the process of Croatian preparation for admittance to the EU international cooperation has a very important role. International cooperation will help to examine experience and praxis of the OECD and EU member countries and useful experiences will be built in national plans. EU member countries cooperate on “open method of coordination”, which means they have joint base of statistical data, indicators, recognizing examples of good practice, expert opinions and pilot-projects. The existing list consists of 29 indicators and 5 European standards.

4. 2. New programme subsystems

Developing new educational programmes in compulsory education points out preparations for living together by learning how to be tolerant which is extremely important for successful integration into multicultural Europe. When we talk about developing programme subsystem based on above mentioned principles and directives, the programme should necessarily be:

OPEN - ensure that school and teachers have autonomy in realization of national curriculum contents and adapting them to the specific needs of the environment

DEMOCRATIC – to promote democratic values such as tolerance, multiculturalism, equality, protection of human rights, etc.

FOCUSED ON EUROPE – to ensure gaining knowledge about European culture and history, acquiring skills that enable communication with other European nations and developing the feeling of belonging to Europe by acquiring common values and accepting responsibility for Europe’s development

STANDARDIZED – education should be balanced, i. e. necessary skills, knowledge, and values should be represented in adequate way

4. 3. Cross-cultural education

Cross-cultural education aims at developing understanding of cultural differences, specific values, social rules, customs, business communication and other features characteristic of different societies. Developing awareness about essential cultural differences and prejudice people have towards other cultures is a very important part of developing cultural sensitivity and understanding. Very important task is developing cultural sensitivity and openness to cultural differences.

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Levels of consciousness and cognition development (cultural differences):

Integration

- Multicultural attitude
- ability to integrate differences, cognitive behaviour

Adjustment

- ability to think as a member of other culture
- ability to change cultural standpoints

Acceptance

- accepting differences in behaviour and values
- to tolerate different ways of thinking

Minimizing differences

- reducing cultural differences
- focus on similarities between people

Defence

- to believe that one's own culture is threatened
- to use negative stereotypes
- to believe that one's own culture is superior

Denial

- narrow-minded view on the world
- being unaware of cultural differences
- believing that some other culture is inhuman

In order to be prepared for international cooperation in the future and in order to have qualitative and educated personnel (who would be cosmopolitan, successful, intercultural), it is necessary to implement different forms of international cooperation into basic education.

5. IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATE PROGRAMME IN DRUGA OSNOVNA ŠKOLA IN VUKOVAR (SECOND PRIMARY SCHOOL IN VUKOVAR)

5. 1. European Studies Programme (ES)

European Studies Programme promotes cooperative learning and communication between pupils and teachers in several European countries (20 countries at the moment). The goal is to increase mutual understanding, awareness and tolerance among young people of Europe. Many educational units and themes should help pupils to exchange different interest areas. The aim is to broaden pupils' knowledge and help them to understand their own position and human relations in Europe. Intention is to broaden pupils' knowledge through ES programme and to develop abilities and skills which lead to better communication and awareness of benefits of exchange within Europe. The exchanges do not include commercial materials of local or regional interest. European Studies Programme is the antecedent of many European educational initiatives. ES is interesting to teachers because it provides them with the opportunity to use different methods which can easily be adapted to the individual needs of the pupil, the teacher, and the school. Furthermore, ES is easily used with pupils of all ages and it is the basic infrastructure of European contacts. During the course, pupils are encouraged to explore differences between European nations and to find something more about the way their region contributes to European culture and identity. Pupils also develop skills needed for using modern technology and they are exposed to the foreign language (languages) which prepares them for active contribution in creating Europe's future. Junior programme is based on curriculum (geography, history, religion, informatics, English) and it includes pupils from the age of 11 till the age of 15. Pupils are divided into 18 groups and

there are pupils from 5 schools in each group (one school from the Republic of Ireland, two schools from Northern Ireland, and two schools from the rest of Europe). Senior programme is adapted to pupils from the age of 16 till the age of 19. In short, it is based on different educational units and themes, and it is based on curriculum (politics, culture, economy, technology).

5. 2. Aims and methods

Aims:

- to help young people to understand relationships between different cultures and traditions in their region but also in the whole Europe
- to make possible for pupils to realize their prospects through team work
- to encourage young people to develop their communicational skills and skills needed for using modern technology.

Methods:

- direct work through connecting schools
- programme based on curriculum
- classroom methodology which emphasizes active learning
- using ICT

6. UNESCO PROGRAMME IN PRIMARY SCHOOL “TIN UJEVIĆ” IN OSIJEK

6. 1. Goals of the programme in accord with UNESCO goals

»The child, for the full and harmonious development of his personality, needs love and understanding...The child is entitled to receive education, which shall be free and compulsory, at least in the elementary stages. He shall be given an education which will promote his general culture and enable him, on a basis of equal opportunity, to develop his abilities, his individual judgement, and his sense of moral and social responsibility, and to become a useful member of society.«

(Declaration of the Rights of the Child, 1959)

- to promote education as the basic human right
- to promote qualitative education
- to encourage the use of innovative ways of teaching
- to promote lifelong learning

Pupils learn about stories and legends from their region and they compare them to the stories from another countries (in this project school-partner was a primary school from Namibia). In project “Grandmother and Grandfather’s Day” pupils find something more about the games their ancestors played and toys they had. In that way, pupils deepen personal identity. Through project “Apple Day” pupils learn about healthy food, but they also learn about ecology.

6. 2. Long-life learning

Concept of long-life learning is based on the idea that ICT is constantly changing and therefore people need to learn all the time in order to be competitive on the European market. Fast science changes and technology progress are not always seen as a positive thing. Some people see the changes as a threat, the possibility of losing their existential base. Therefore, it is necessary to help the citizens to understand the changes and learn about them.

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6. 3. Social partnership

All people who are in any way connected to education (economists, scientists, teachers, businessmen, etc.) have the responsibility to contribute to the educational process. Businessmen have great responsibility /mainly in vocational education) because they are the biggest suppliers and consumers of vocational education so it is necessary for them to invest in that kind of education. Postcommunist countries must implement structural social changes in very bad conditions. They need to find the way to transfer from planned to market economy, to develop institutions of civil society and modernize the country. These grand changes can be made only if adult citizens agree to learn. The big part of this kind of education implies self-education (informal learning of new values, attitudes and habits), or active learning (learning by doing). Still, there are many needs that cannot be satisfied by the means of formal and non-formal education. Because of the war, a part of the population has special social needs and it will be necessary to emphasize peaceful education. Approaching European Union means that society needs to be prepared to act according to European standards. This can be achieved by implementation of European educational politics and systematic informing about what the EU is. It is important in order to understand the way of life in the EU and to enable successful functioning of Croatian institutions within the EU. It is not enough only to harmonize regulations and institutions with European ones; it is necessary to prepare the "future Europeans" for living in the new Europe.

7. INFORMATIZATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

7. 1. ICT in education

ICT (Information and Communication Technology) is the centre of educational politics in the EU and transitional countries. The main goals are to supply schools with needed equipment, educating teachers to use ICT, purchasing and creating digital programmes and using Internet. Generally, the idea is to enable students to use ICT in primary schools and especially in secondary schools. Therefore, ICT is a part of educational curriculum in many countries. One of the indicators of qualitative school system is the number of pupils per one personal computer in the school. In Junior high schools of the EU countries (with the exception of Greece, Spain and Portugal) that number is less than 30. Funds for informatization of educational institutions are increasing in all the countries. In the most developed countries those funds are equal to the funds used for investing in human resources, somewhere even higher.

7. 2. Using ICT in education

New possibilities created by using ICT are of great importance. They are useful in developing all human activities and enables development of all operational systems. The use of ICT in the classroom is possible in the way of computer simulations, doing virtual experiments and self evaluation. Furthermore, by using ICT world's knowledge on different subjects becomes easily available to pupils and teachers. At the same time, two-way communication on distance is possible, i. e. it is possible for pupils and teachers to communicate by using the means of electronic communication. In this context, teacher's role is changing in a way that he/she becomes mentor and coordinator of the learning process. In order to exploit new technological possibilities in high education it is necessary to make ICT available to students and teachers and to teach them how to use it. In the future, after finishing secondary schools students will have informatical literacy, but today not even all the teachers have it. Information-communication training of teachers is a part of their life-long education.

7. 3. E-learning

ICT makes great amounts of information easily available to the society in a very short notice. Today, there is not a single education strategy document which does not mention the concept of E-learning or some of the terms like on-line education, virtual education, etc. E-learning is extremely important for the process of globalization and for the concept of long-life learning. Microsoft, one of the most important corporations in the world, is thinking how to create the first on-line university in the world. One of the main postulates is developing global informatical infrastructure. The definition of E-learning explains different ways of how to integrate ICT in educational process. Some modern researches show that E-learning (in comparison with traditional learning) cuts total costs in money and time. There are different models of E-learning: in the classroom, using the prepared materials individually on same other location or when the whole programme is realized through Internet. The last model is the solution of modern age and is supported by LMS (Learning Management System). Because of the great time and space distances between educational institutions from all around the world (European Studies Programme, UNESCO Programme) there is a necessity to use different models of E-learning in order to develop international educational cooperation and cross-cultural programmes. Informatical literacy of students and teachers needs to be developed constantly. It has already being done which can be seen from the curriculum of European Studies Programme. Globalization programmes in education help to develop awareness about the importance of knowing ICT and foreign languages (especially English) in order to be able to integrate successfully into the EU and world's market.

CONCLUSION

There is a constant necessity to monitor changes in educational system of the EU countries as well as of the transitional countries. We should pay additional attention to realization of regulations from Bologna Declaration and documents about elementary and secondary education brought by European countries. This will enable us to plan changes of educational curriculum in due time and to schedule educational programmes.

By accepting suggestion as an open document we are deciding for constant evaluation of educational curriculum and educational system. We are aware that we have to make changes which will ensure that the system satisfies individual needs according to economic and political system.

Economic and financial development and possibilities of the country are closely connected. Our legacy and consequences of the war will be felt for a long time and they are already complicating investment into knowledge, human capital and modern technology. Due to the initiated processes dealing with financial issues, continuation of development of macroeconomic politics can be expected (it should enlarge investments, reduce budget deficit, etc.). According to all those changes, we can also expect changes in education and science.

Important condition for successful changes in education is establishing connection between the education and economy and accepting increased investing in order to develop educational system. Great technological changes reflect on production and the way of working in many services. Informatical literacy of citizens is an important issue for development of educational system but also for development of the whole society. Therefore, informatical education of teachers and students, and investing in technological equipment is the main educational priority. Instead of sporadic reforms, we have to change, reform and modernize our educational system systematically and constantly.

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