OPENNESS OF THE SCHOOL AS A HUMAN SOCIAL COMMUNITY AND MULTICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract. *The study deals with the issue of the school's openness in the process of multiculturalism. Openness of a school as a human social community presents a condition for the development of multiculturalism processes in the society. Current social changes emphasize the issue of multiculturalism and, consequently, new educational needs of an individual for which the school as an educational institution should provide an adequate answer. Changing the profile of educational institutions towards the development of multiculturalism includes the changes that are based on the openness of the school to wider social environment, as well as the changes within the very school in the aspect of redefining the goals and tasks of school syllabus, textbooks, and the changes in the role of teachers. With these changes in schools, new possibilities are created for accomplishing the right of all children to education regardless of individual differences, as well as differences conditioned by social and cultural milieu, which enables the school to be realized as a human social community on a wider social plan.*

Key words: *openness, social environment, school, multiculturalism.*

Current social processes such as globalization, democratization and transition, leave visible traces in the field of upbringing and education, especially in the public education domain. Social, cultural and economic changes emphasize new educational approaches of both an individual and the society in general, and have an immediate effect on functioning of the institutions involved in basic education. General unfavourable circumstances in the society lead to degradation of the system of social institutions, which are no longer capable of giving a proper response to the needs of the society, which is also in the process of change. In that respect, what is frequently discussed is school crisis, and what is widely criticized is not only traditionalism, which is characteristic of classical educational insti-

tutions, but also separation of school and life, unadjustment of syllabus to modern needs, working methods, and status of both teachers and students.

In order to overcome contemporary problems and to develop educational institutions which will support the society in the process of its development and transformation, it is necessary to reform the system of upbringing and education at every level.

The main direction of the process of the school system reform in our society is democratization, that is transposition of democratic principles and values into the process of education. This emphasizes the issue of multiculturalism and indicates that there is a need for its development within the framework of the educational system. Changes in the sphere of educational institutions mean creating such a profile of educational institutions that will enable young generations to develop their own individuality and particularity in accordance with the standards of developed countries. Having a task like this set before us, what we need is both changes of schools as human, social communities, in terms of redefining current goals, and changes of the curriculum, textbooks and methods of teaching. A need for reform opens a discussion on the topic of suitability of previous reforms and the direction of their further development and viability.

Bearing in mind the complexity of the educational system, what should also be mentioned is a dynamic nature of reform in this sphere, characterized by numerous rises and falls, which is, among other things, a feature of other complex systems. Apart from that, in the transformation process at the level of institutions, there are various obstacles and hindrances which most frequently arise from traditional ideas about school, its role and functions in the society. A major precondition for introducing a reform of the school, a social community where learning takes place, is its openness, which is reflected in susceptibility of the school environment to accept and implement innovations.

The issue of openness of the school represents the main precondition for introducing reforms related to democratization of education, where we strive to accomplish equal rights to education and respect of individual characteristics of students. It is possible to achieve and follow openness of the school as a human social community at the outside level, which means openness towards the society and the environment of the school, and at the inside level – openness regarding teaching plans, organization, teaching staff etc.

OPENNESS OF THE SCHOOL TO THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

It is well known that the school occupies an important place in the system of social institutions and that, considering the fact that it is an educational institution, it has a special significance in having an organized systematic influence on development of younger generations. After observing its development through different time periods, we can conclude that the school closely follows the development of the civilized society and has an active role in the processes which transform and develop it. The school has always shared the common destiny of its social surroundings, and it has always been transferring the heritage of human experience, culture and work through accomplishment of its goals, with the purpose of recruiting new members and incorporating them into life of the social community. Thus, the school has always been able to follow the society and reforms occurring in it. However, we should bear in mind the fact that the relations between the school and the society are not unilateral. Quite the opposite, these relations are characterized by a certain

interaction, that is a constant mutual influence. It is believed that the school has a progressive role in relation to its social surroundings, and that in the process of social development it needs to become a factor advocating changes, both in the sense of changing the social surroundings and consequently, its own development.

The process of integration between the school and the society is, in its very nature, very complex and it means making an active effort to open the school for the society which surrounds it. This openness of the school to the social surroundings has an important goal – establishing good quality relations and links, i.e. such relations which will enable good cooperation, mutual development and progress. Keeping in mind that point of view, certain attitudes which regard that school openness as its assimilation with the social surroundings, are simply not acceptable; the school loses its identity and becomes one of many other institutions which serve as levers of the society. On the other hand, the contemporary society expects the school to become the initiator, force and support in the reform process, together with factors of the immediate surroundings. By establishing a good quality relationship and functional relations with the social surroundings, the school becomes one of the major factors in the process of reform and development of the local community which surrounds it.

A necessary precondition for establishing the process of the school openness is a certain susceptibility of the school environment to accept and esteem differences among children in the sense of nurturing a positive attitude towards their cultural, ethnic and national idiosyncrasies. By regarding the school as a human social community open for everybody, regardless of their differences, we meet the needs of the contemporary society which tends to establish democratic relations equal for all citizens. Good communication and functional cooperation between the school and many other institutions and organizations in the immediate surroundings, are beneficial for both the school and the society in general. The process of the school openness to the local community is an important condition for functioning of the school itself, its progress and development; therefore, on a more global scale, it is a precondition for the development of the society in general.

The problem of the school openness has found support in the system theory, that is in a systematic approach which treats the school as an open, dynamic system whose functioning is preconditioned by various interactions of different factors. A special place among these factors is occupied by the immediate surroundings of the school, i.e. the social context in which the school exists. From the point of view of the systematic approach, the school represents a significant subsystem of the social system, and as such it is open for changes. In the society which is undergoing changes, it is necessary to overcome traditional, deterministic and mechanistic ideas of the school and its role in the process of personal development. The present-day school as an institution of special social interest tends to organize educational activities that will point out both its multidimensional character and its openness to changes. Various activities are realized in the school context. They contribute to the school openness towards the environment, which enables establishing deeper relations with the immediate local community. The complex relationship between the school and its immediate surroundings is predetermined by various factors which emphasize the dynamic character of school with their mutual interactivity. The dynamic character of the school system comes from a mutual interaction of elements inside the school and elements coming from the outside, in other words, from the social surroundings.

In the light of present social changes, the school assumes a different role, which is manifested in taking an active part in the process of development of the society. The active part of the school means changes at the level of the institution itself, changes directed towards a reform of present functions and redefining present goals and tasks. The changes occurring in the school context show a tendency for school openness both at the inner and outer level, which creates the necessary conditions for meeting the needs of the contemporary society in the right way. From that point of view, the school openness, especially towards groups of children living on the margins of society (socially deprived children, national minorities, children with special needs), has special importance, for it enables a more efficient integration of children in the social environment.

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OPENNESS OF THE SCHOOL AT THE INSIDE LEVEL –
MULTI-PERSPECTIVE AND MULTICULTURAL CHARACTER OF THE SCHOOL

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The root of the education reform, which is based on the process of democratization, is a pluralistic orientation with the initial idea that there are differences among individuals and groups, but that there is also equality in terms of individual rights to education and acceptance of individuality and idiosyncrasy. The school as an institution is expected to provide the conditions necessary for fulfilling the right to education for all children, regardless of their sex, race, and cultural, ethnic or religious affiliation. In order to realize the pluralistic orientation of the school, it is necessary to foster *multicultural and multi-perspective* dimension in all aspects of educational work.

Promoting and developing the multiple perspectives character of the school can be accomplished in all segments of school life. The process of teaching raises remarkable possibilities for the development of multiple perspectives, since the very process of presenting relevant information enables different approaches of dealing with a certain problem. Thus, students get introduced to the subject matter of natural or social sciences which can be studied and analyzed from many different aspects. In other words, while they learn about a certain planned topic, a lot of other questions arise and enable perceiving the problem from many different perspectives. That way, one and the same topic can be analyzed from an anthropological, cultural, historical or utilitarian point of view. The significance of this approach is manifested primarily through the development of students' abilities to analyze and classify data, in other words, through development of divergent and critical thinking. Using this approach enables taking place of several very important educational effects, due to certain favorable conditions which occur and help promoting development of a flexible, democratic-oriented personality, who is not a slave to rigid thinking, but rather open to a variety of ideas, a personality who is tolerant towards different opinions and attitudes. Creating conditions for the development of critical thinking in the process of education is currently a very important task in the process of school reform. Besides, it is well known that "critical thinking is rational and evaluative thinking sensitive to context" (Plut, D and associates 2000:6). In that respect, favorable conditions of the school context largely contribute to the development of critical thinking, which is manifested through having a critical opinion, but also through curiosity, tolerance of other people and openness to new ideas. From the aspect of multiple perspectives, development of critical thinking has a special significance, since it means an ability of decentralization,

which actually means that a phenomenon or a problem can be observed from various angles, but with recognition of other people's opinions and consideration for them. Recognition of different opinions and acceptance of different possibilities and approaches to problem solving, points out the functional value of critical thinking for multicultural development.

The orientation towards multi-perspective school context fosters creation of stimulating conditions for critical thinking development, both in teaching process and extra-curricular activities. By creating various situations and via different types of tasks and demands, we get conditions for development of personal traits and abilities important for our creativity, such as fluency, flexibility and originality. By stimulating students to use numerous approaches in problem solving, and to discover relations between various processes and phenomena, we raise a possibility to develop creativity as a personal trait and attitude. In that sense, it is of vital importance to encourage the development of a positive climate in school, an environment which offers a possibility for generating a large number of various ideas which can be investigated, analyzed and altered in multiple ways and used in a lot of different situations. Creative thinking development is closely connected to the tendency of multiple perspectives, because it means receptiveness to different information, new experiences and original ideas.

Organizing numerous activities for students in a free and democratic climate provides plenty of possibilities for manifestation of personal potential, interests and needs.

Multiple perspectives approach to teaching is in harmony with contemporary trends related to the integrative orientation which tends to establish a complete, holistic approach to learning different processes and phenomena. This is how an interdisciplinary approach to learning the subject matter is emphasized, the approach which enables students to construct systems of complete knowledge.

Nowadays we use terms like multiculturalism and interculturalism to mark the process of mutual cooperation between different cultures of different countries and different nationalities within a single country, to spread awareness of the community, tolerance and dialogue in multinational countries (Goldberg,1994).

In the field of education, according to Đurišić-Bojanović, multiculturalism is " most frequently defined as introducing various cultures and fostering a tolerant attitude towards them, which further means acceptance and esteem for idiosyncrasies. "(Đurišić-Bojanović, M. 2003:138). The issue of multicultural development has a special meaning in the process of school reform, not only because it makes it possible to reform the school, its roles and functions, but because it also prepares individuals to actively participate in social life. This is significant both from the aspect of individuals and their contribution to the development of the society, and from the aspect of the society in general, which tends to integrate with other more developed countries. In essence, it seems that there is no dilemma when it comes to the need for developing a multicultural dimension of the school, whereas a dilemma clearly appears when it comes to the approach, i.e. the way of dealing with this problem in the process of school reform.

With regard to the democratic orienation of our society and the inevitable reform processes occuring in it, what is proclaimed in the school system today is equal education for all, regardless of their race, sex, ethnic, religious and national affiliation. However, in practice, the mission of openness, or availability for all children has not been completely accomplished yet, especially when it comes to childrem living on the margins of our

society, socially deprived children, Roma children, and children with developmental disabilities. Considering its social-human role, the school as an institution gives every child the right to education, but in practice this school orientation is still at a declarative level, for there are numerous problems and hindrances, e.g. realization of the program of inclusive education in our schools. Problems most often occur within the school itself in terms of resistance which is still present among teaching staff, insufficient and inadequate equipment, resistance among parents etc. In that sense, no matter whether it declares differently, the school still remains a traditional closed institution as far as certain categories of children are concerned. Furthermore, in practice, these problems might mean a concrete source of conflict and undesirable behavior of both children and adults. In order to overcome these problems, it is necessary to adequately prepare the school environment, that is, to provide a certain extent of openness and readiness to accept all categories of children regardless of their particularities. In order to provide a better understanding of the possibilities for multicultural development offered in the school context, it is crucial to approach this question from 3 aspects:

- School syllabus
- Textbooks
- Teacher's role

OPENNESS OF SCHOOL PROGRAMMES AND MULTICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

In accordance with a general democratic orientation, which is based on respect for human rights, the school realizes certain educational goals and tasks which contribute to multicultural development. The document issued by The Ministry of Education and titled *Strategies of Curriculum Development in Compulsory and Secondary Education*, defines the following tasks:

- Preparing students to actively contribute to preservation and nurturing tradition and culture;
- Preparing students to actively contribute to economic, democratic and cultural development of the society;
- Development of mutual respect, cooperation and solidarity among members of different social, ethnic and cultural groups, and active contribution to social cohesion, (Strategies of Curriculum Development in Compulsory and Secondary Education, 2002).

According to the goals mentioned above, it is necessary to create favorable conditions in the school, in which all the members of the educational process will develop a feeling of loyalty and belonging to their family, nation and culture. This proves that it is essential, especially with younger children, to have respect for the experiences that they carry from their family surroundings, the experiences which are closely related to preservation of traditional and cultural values. High esteem for children's previous experiences enables their better adaptation to the school surroundings, which is an environment different from their family, but in which the child feels accepted and worthy, and an equal member of the school community. This makes a certain contribution to overcoming a discontinuity existing between the school and family surroundings, i.e. to providing new possibilities for realization of the cooperation between the family and the school. Knowledge coming

from the family which is related to tradition, culture and customs, should be nurtured in the school context, for this is the way we provide conditions for learning both our own culture and other cultures, which further enables creating both our own cultural identity, and respect and consideration for the identity of others. For a successful realization of the aforementioned tasks, the role of the school as an institution is of vital importance, since it provides an environment which will heighten awareness in students and help them develop socially accepted attutudes. An important precondition for realization of multiculturalism in the school is a pluralistic orientation of the curriculum itself, which helps develop and broaden the spectrum of actions and types of activities that can be planned and carried out by the teacher.

Among the present reform processes there is a certain direction towards development of multiculturalism in the school, which is based on the positive experiences of European countries. The experiences of developed countries point out that there is no dilemma when it comes to the ways or different approaches to its realization.

In theoretical concepts there are different approaches to the issue of multiculturalism, and they are mainly related to reform of the curriculum. According to some statements given by M. Đurišić – Bojanović in discussing Banks's ideas on reform of multicultural teaching process (Banks, J. A. 1999.), we can distinguish between the following approaches: contributive, additive, transformative and social action approach. The aforementioned author states that the listed approaches differ in the degree of their radicalism, the contributive approach being the least radical, since it relates to a selection of the appropriate literature and activities suggested by influential people and found in works of people from different cultures. The additive approach, which basically does not change the basic structure of the curriculum, points to the significance of a systematic introduction of contents and concepts with the purpose of learning about different perspectives in observing various phenomena. As opposite to the previous two approaches, the transformative approach means radical changes of the curriculum, and insisting on development of students' critical thinking and analysis of idiosyncrasies. Thus, students are offered the possibility to discuss various topics from different ethnic perspectives and points of view. The social action approach to the multicultural reform includes some elements of the transformative approach which is merged with the activities that have a goal to incorporate the reform in the social context. This approach stresses a preparation of students for an active participation in social life and implementing social reforms.

In the process of reform of the educational system in our country, there has been a significant change at the level of planning the school syllabus. The traditional teaching plan has been replaced by the school syllabus, which is now used with the same meaning that the term *curriculum* has in countries with a long tradition in education. The teaching program, which used to be compulsory and the same for everybody at the same level and type of education, therefore uniform, is no longer the main goal of the educational process in the school, but rather just one factor of the process of education in general. Consequently, teaching is no longer the leading process with the central position in the school, it is rather on equal terms with all the other school activities.

As a request implication for decentralization in the reform process, one part of regulating school programme is in the domain of the school itself. The school, therefore, has a possibility to conceptualize a part of educational work in accordance with its interests, culture, tradition, as well as with the needs and interests of teachers and

students, which makes favorable conditions for the development of multi-cultures. This means that schools get more independence, and an obligation and a possibility to conceptualize certain activities on their own. Considering the issue of school syllabus L. Levkov states that: 'school syllabus deals with the school's obligation to carry out, in certain cycles and grades, a specific number of lessons per year. The internal composition, the number of lessons a day, a week and a month, and their distribution are completely left to schools considering the local and other specifics and particularities.' (Levkov, Lj.2003:81.) It is desirable that an organization and realization of activities are in concord with the needs and real conditions of the school's surroundings. As for the activity realization that the school organizes, including teaching activities, the school itself conceptualizes and organizes work, with consideration to the specific needs and interests of all actors in the process of education: teachers, students, parents, and its immediate environment.

Contrary to the teaching plan, which focuses on teaching, the school syllabus is more directed towards the goals and outcomes. Here the transmission of knowledge is replaced by a transformation, thus emphasizing the active role of students in the process of constructing the knowledge system. In the competence development, where knowledge is only one of the segments, an important role is played by various strategies of learning, which enable students' progress in accordance with their individual potentials. Besides that, a special attention is dedicated to the development of habits and skills, forming attitudes and a system of values, thus, once again, emphasizing an essentially different position of a student. Namely, if a student is now in the focus of the educational process, it is necessary to know well and respect their individual potentials and characteristics. Moreover, it is also important to know the student's family context, their tradition, customs and the system of values, as well as other peculiarities, needs and interests. In that sense, the school syllabus emphasizes a demand for respect of individual differences among students in terms of strategies used in the process of learning and the speed of advancement. Once again this demand underlines the respect for differences and individual capacities that students have, which contributes to the development of the multiculturalism process in schools.

THE TEXTBOOK AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF MULTICULTURALISM

A quality textbook as a means for studying can significantly contribute to the development of multiculturalism in schools. It is believed that it is possible to speak about the textbook contribution to the development of multiculturalism in two different directions, which are mutually conditioned and complementary. As for the first direction, the textbook is regarded as a means which contributes to the development of knowledge, that is, a means that has to answer the students' needs. A good-quality textbook is expected to support students' development and respect their age, racial, individual and cultural idiosyncrasies. The other direction, which is becoming more and more of current interest, regards the textbook as a means which creates conditions for the development of openness to acceptance of and respect to everything that is different and out of the ordinary. (Lazarević, 2003).

A good-quality textbook is supposed to, among everything else, lessen the differences and their negative effects and to contribute to the development of tolerance and positive attitudes related to differences. Therefore, there have been more and more demands for a textbook which will enable and develop differentiation in the learning process and offer suitable contents to students. In our educational tradition textbooks have always had special attention, for they are regarded to foster the values, tradition and culture. In the process of creating cultural identity during the period of education, the textbook passes traditional values and affirms and develops cultural habits. It is well known that textbooks are the source and basic teaching means in the process of constructing students' knowledge. They have a very important role in the process of learning as well as in developing awareness and forming attitudes. Having in mind their important role, more and more questions have been raised regarding the quality of textbooks.

As far as the multicultural aspect is concerned, the quality of a textbook is seen first of all in providing information and developing students' interests important for preserving traditional cultural values, showing respect to differences and values of other cultures. This kind of demand raises numerous questions and dilemmas which are mostly connected to the problems of the contents selection. According to Z. Avramović's opinion, the real problems begin 'when we have to determine: 1. Cultural contents shaped in textbooks, or better to say, a selection from the cultural values and 2. The way the creator of the syllabus and textbook chooses a particular collection of cultural values over the other ones. ' (Avramović, Z. 2003:147). The latter dilemmas are significant both from pedagogical and wider social aspect, for they point out to the fact that the process of selection of contents which will be offered to students via textbooks needs to be carefully chosen and adjusted both to the professional requests and general tendencies of the development of the society.

From the school's point of view, the issue of a good quality textbook is becoming more contemporary, because the market is full of various newly offered textbooks, from different publishers, and the school is expected to play an active role in the selection process. These circumstances impose a need for additional analyses of textbooks and a need to adjust them to different needs of the school and its immediate environment. For the purpose of the development of multiculturalism, the book along with its selected adequate contents in accordance with didactic and methodological requests is expected to develop students' personal and national identity, as well as respect, tolerance, and consideration for national and cultural identities of other students.

THE TEACHER'S ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF MULTICULTURALISM

Significant changes have occurred in both the position and role of teachers in schools under the influence of the reform in education. Opposite to traditional school where the teacher has the leading and dominant role, especially in the process of teaching, in the modern school the role of the teacher is more to guide, coordinate students in the process of learning as well as in extracurricular activities. By redefining the role of the teacher in school it is possible to enable broadening the spectrum of the teacher's activities, especially in the domain of activities that are not solely related to teaching but to the new roles of realizing the educational function of the school. Therefore, the teacher still has

the task to realize the syllabus in a different way using various different methods and approaches.

Seen from the aspect of the development of multiculturalism in the school context changing the role of the teacher can significantly contribute to overcoming the prejudices and resistance to differences. In that sense, it is possible to talk about the changed role of the teacher in the educational work on two possible levels:

- In classes – introducing multiple perspectives approach
- In free activities – planning and realizing activities that will contribute to the development of multiculturalism.

The importance of introducing multi-perspective approach in teaching has already been dealt with at the beginning of this study, therefore, the further part of the study will be dedicated to the role of the teacher in the realization of syllabus by using the multiple perspectives approach. It is believed that the latter approach first of all enables the teacher to integrate, or better to say combine the parts of contents into an entirety and present it to the students. These parts should be shaped in such a way so as to present a problem from different aspects: cultural, historical, anthropological, etc. Considering the presented subject matter from different aspects, the students get new possibilities to analyze, study and research certain topics. Perceiving educational topics from various aspects will make students develop skills for diverse approaches in solving the problem, which is crucial for the development of critical thinking and the development of new ideas for researching. Multiple perspectives approach enables the students to see a bigger picture of the topic that is being discussed and creates various possibilities to develop the topic in different directions. Carrying out the multiple perspectives approach in teaching and the successful realization of the teacher's role to integrate the contents depends on several factors. First of all, it depends on the teacher's professional trainings, motivation and readiness for advanced teacher training. The teacher's own personality also plays an indispensable role as well as the teacher's openness to innovations, new knowledge and implementing it in teaching, enthusiasm and professional curiosity to change and perfect own methods.

The above mentioned skills and characteristics are equally essential when it comes to the extracurricular and other activities that are to be realized in the school context. The teacher's engagement in the realization of the extracurricular activities can significantly contribute to the development of multiculturalism. Engaging students to participate in other school activities, first of all free activities, enables a special educational influence with the purpose of developing cohesion in schools. With a greater number of students, regardless of their differences, involved in various school activities, the school is able to develop multiculturalism, communal sense, and a sense of belonging and consideration for diversities. Free activities are thought to give favorable effects when it comes to the development of multiculturalism. In that sense, the teacher's role as a creator, organizer and implementer of extracurricular activities organized in schools is vitally important.

It depends on teachers, their involvement and personal inclinations how much and to what extent the extracurricular activities will be organized and will benefit the integration of all children into the process of realizing extracurricular activities. Thus, it is crucial that teachers are open to new ideas, that they consider suggestions, attitudes and opinions of students as far as selection of further activities in schools is concerned. Of the complex requests addressed to the teacher, one of the most important is the request for the development of

multiculturalism. Achieving a request defined in this way means that the teacher possesses knowledge and certain sensibility for developing the idea of multiculturalism, or that the activities are planned and carried out in accordance with these requests. An important condition for accomplishing the development of multiculturalism in schools is a competent teacher, who is open to new, different ideas, the teacher who is ready to change traditional patterns of work along with children, and who is ready to implement some new ones based on consideration for differences, respect for particularities and idiosyncrasies and development of positive atmosphere. It is essential that the teacher be well trained in their initial education, both in general knowledge and the domain of didactic and methodological knowledge. The competences that the teacher acquires during the initial education, along with certain personal characteristics, inclinations and skills, create a richer collection of activities that the teacher implements in schools.

Personal characteristics, inclinations and skills are fully expressed especially in organizing free activities in schools, where teachers can express their creativity in various fields. Free activities in schools represent a very significant segment of the entire school functioning. They offer a possibility to create a complete picture of all the activities that are going on in schools. At the same time, free activities offer exceptionally great prospects for developing multiculturalism, because they give a chance for every child to express their potentials and demonstrate their idiosyncrasies. Opposite to the atmosphere in class, mainly determined by assessment and grades, free activities are defined by free positive atmosphere which is good for expressing particular potentials of students and which provides opportunities for new ideas, new interests and achieving success regardless of differences in potentials amongst children. Free activities provide favorable prospects for different actions in order to foster culture and tradition, develop their own cultural identity, as well as to learn about and respect other cultures, which from the aspect of multiculturalism also has an immense significance. In that part, it is necessary to mention the role of the teacher who is expected to find the right measure and discover the similarities that link the elements of different cultures, to present them to the students in the right way and, thus make a starting point for overcoming differences. The teacher's own attitude and behavior are of vital significance, for he is a role model to the students. It is desirable that a greater number of students are engaged in free activities, which emphasizes the role of the teacher to stimulate the students and work on promoting various activities and involving students regardless of the differences among them. The more diverse the activities and contents, which are in accordance with the students interests, the more students get involved in implementation of free activities in schools.

The role of the teacher to integrate the students demands connecting the entire school into one unity, or linking all subsystems in the school in order to provide a more efficient educational influence. From that aspect it is desirable that the idea of multiculturalism permeates all school activities, which contributes back to the development of the school as a unity with all its particularities.

It is necessary that the school itself as an educational institution becomes a favorable environment for the development of multiculturalism in the process of the general reform changes. It means that the school environment necessitates changes that affect all segments in educational work. First of all, there is sensibilization of the school environment for accepting changes to develop multiculturalism, or to create favorable conditions for practical realization of the idea of multiculturalism. In that sense the school is expected to change so

as to become open at all levels, outside – open to its social environment, and inside – open to redefine its goals and tasks and to reorganize educational work.

Modern tendencies of school transformation into an open institution, a community where one learns, regard the school open to accept all children regardless of the differences that they have. This especially applies to the categories of children on the margins of society: children from economically and culturally deprived environment, children with special needs, Roma children, who have had only declaratively the right to education so far. With their engagement in schools, significant effects can be achieved in educational aspect, and the school itself can compensate from that. One of the factors to realize the idea of multi-culturalism in schools is creating proper physical and material conditions that would enable the students with special needs and physical disabilities a normal life in schools. Nowadays a great number of schools still do not possess adequate equipment for these children. There are no ramps for wheelchairs, no specially equipped rooms, so that these children feel dependent on others even when engaged in school activities. Apart from material conditions, it is very important that the whole atmosphere in school is favorable in the sense of accepting and reducing the present resistance as much as possible. The teacher has a vital role in creating the positive atmosphere for accepting diversities. Their role in this process is irreplace-able. With their behavior and attitude, they affect the students to develop positive attitude and accept the children in their class who are different from them. The teacher's attitude can influence to a great extent whether and how much the child, who is different, will be accepted in the class and school. It is necessary that the school be open to its local environment so that multiculturalism can develop in schools. Immediate school partners in the process of opening the school are parents, who are most interested in their children and education. Then, there are other factors from the immediate environment. By creating a functional co-operation amongst the actors from the local environment, new possibilities are made for implementing common activities and actions, with high esteem for particularities and characteristics of the local environment.

Aspiration for the development of multiculturalism in schools presents a proper response to new educational needs of the society, which strives for integration with the systems of developed European countries, and at the same time in this process of reform, the school itself gains a new profile – a profile of a community that is learning to respect differences.

CONCLUSION

Changes in social, cultural and economic plan leave tangible implications in the sphere of education. The development of the society conceives new educational needs of an individual, which puts the role of educational institutions into practice. In the aim of providing a proper answer to new educational needs of the society and an individual, it is necessary to reform the system of education. Reforming the system is based on the process of democrati-zation of the society where multiculturalism is emphasized as the vital dimension of the educational work. With the objective of developing multiculturalism in schools, it is necessary to make changes in order to create profiles of the institutions that will provide an opportunity to new generations to develop their own individualities. It is essential to create the conditions in the school, as the basic institution for education, so that the children from all categories, regardless of the cultural and social milieu they belong to, can achieve the right to education.

The basic condition for accomplishing this valuable goal is the openness of the school to the social surroundings in the sense of creating good quality relations and connections, functional relations which are the basis for an excellent cooperation, mutual development and progress. It is imperative to form suitable conditions in the process of opening a school as an institution for all categories of children, especially children from socially deprived environment and children who have needs for special social support. With the process of opening the school, the demand for the development of multiculturalism both in schools and society is actualized.

The process of multiple perspectives, tightly connected with the development of multi-culturalism, enables the development of students' critical thinking and imposes a need to see a problem from many aspects, thus creating the conditions for accepting different attitudes, views and the development of a constructive dialogue. Realizing these complex tasks in schools means implementing certain changes in all segments of educational process. In that sense, the fundamental condition for a school to change is its openness, both on the outer level – its immediate environment, and on the inner level – in redefining its goals, tasks, methods, and organizing work. The basic changes that are necessary are those in school syllabus, textbooks as well the changes of the role of teachers.

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OTVORENOST ŠKOLE KAO HUMANE SOCIJALNE ZAJEDNICE I RAZVOJ MULTIKULTURALNOSTI

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U radu se razmatra pitanje otvorenosti škole u procesu razvoja multikulturalnosti.Otvorenost škole kao humane socijalne zajednice predstavlja preduslov za razvoj multikulturalnih procesa u društvu. Aktuelne društvene promene potenciraju pitanje multikulturalnosti i samim tim, nove obrazovne potrebe pojedinaca na koje škola, kao institucija za vaspitanje i obrazovanje, treba da

pruži adekvatan odgovor.Menjanje profila školskih institucija u pravcu razvoja multikulturalnosti obuhvata promene koje se zasnivaju na otvorenosti škole prema široj društvenoj sredini, kao i promene na nivou samih škola u aspektu redefinisanja celjeva i zadataka, školskih programa, udžbenika i promena u ulogama nastavnika.Promenama u školskom kontekstu stvaraju se mogućnosti za ostvarivanje prava sve dece na obrazovanje, bez obzira na individualne razlike, kao i razlike uslovljene socio-kulturnim miljeom, što omogućava realizaciju škole kao humane socijalne zajednice na širem društvenom planu.

Ključne reči: *otvorenost, društvena sredina, škola, multikulturalnost.*