

## **SOCIAL DIMENSION OF THE PURPOSE OF EDUCATION**

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**Abstract.** *This paper presents the most typical aspects of the purpose of education, seen through a social context. One of the most complex questions in pedagogical sciences is the aim of education. Its importance lies in the idea that each society has regarding the kind of person it wants to create, in terms of features, abilities, beliefs etc. The complexity gives rise to numerous determinants which determine the educational purpose: society and the relations within it, the system of values, the development of educational sciences, especially pedagogy, philosophical, ideological and political understanding, globalization, the tradition of a society, as well as the needs, desires, and interests of the person himself.*

**Key words:** *educational aim, society, causality of educational aim, determinants, concretization.*

### 1. SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL CAUSALITY OF THE PURPOSE OF EDUCATION

One of the most significant questions of the pedagogical sciences, especially general pedagogy, is the one that refers to the aim (purpose) of education and teaching. The meaning is even bigger because every society expresses through education the type of person that it wants to create, with the specific features, abilities, competences, values, etc.

In the pedagogical literature, the expression "purpose of education", or educational aim is used.

In foreign literature, especially in the English speaking world, there is much talk of purposes and objectives, according to which different terms which express intention are used (e.g. aim, goals, purpose).

The purpose or aim of education is socially and historically conditioned. For example, if we take a look at the historical periods in Sparta, the purpose of education was the creation of strong and brave soldiers; in Athens, it was the harmonious development of the body and mind (i.e. kalokagathias). In Ancient Rome it was the good orator, in the feudal society, for the

aristocracy the goal was a great knight, for John Locke - the education of young gentlemen; Pestalozzi called for the harmonious development of the hand, heart and mind.

At the end of the XIX century, the first reformist Kerschensteiner stated that the purpose of education in German society was a "hard working and useful citizen." In the USA at the beginning of the XX century the need was for a business person, a businessman who will be able easily to accommodate to new conditions. Contemporary Japanese aims are "high organization and work discipline". (Trnavac, Gorgevic, 1998: 30).

In a socialist society, on the territory of Ex-Yugoslavia, the purpose was a universally developed person.

In American discussions of education and teaching, in the middle of the XX century, the following aspects were taken into consideration for the purpose of education: self-realization, humanity, economic efficiency, social responsibility, a successful family life, understanding of science methods and facts, enjoying the beauty of arts, music, literature, qualifications, use of free time, respect for others, thinking skills, self-expression, reading and listening (communication) (Ibidem, 33).

As we can notice, in a very simple way what is asked for, actually what was expected of the American citizen in the middle of the XX century is described.

The scope and tasks of education are constantly redefined within the social changes and human needs.

## 2. DETERMINANTS OF THE PURPOSE OF EDUCATION

If we bear in mind once and for all time that if the given purpose of education does not exist, then in this context, the following question is essential: what makes up the purpose of education and teaching and what are its general determinants.

In this context, the purpose of education is determined in relation to:

- Society,
- System of values,
- Ideological and political understandings and definitions
- Globalization
- Sense of the human and his personality,
- Social tradition,
- Development of pedagogical science and the school system,
- Needs, interests and desires of the person himself.

All stated factors influence the determination of the purpose of education. Society with its growth and the status at the people in it affects it in a special way; globalization with its integrative world processes leaves a mark on the purpose of education; the system of values, which is subject to change, also has a great influence because of the awareness of the search for new values and the minimization of the old ones; ideological and political understandings which are imposed by the political parties in the battle of power; the development of pedagogical and other similar sciences, principally psychology and sociology, as well as changes in the school system, have an influence in forming the education as a tradition, but also the needs, interests and desires at the person itself.

According to the changes in the purpose of education, teachers have the biggest responsibility in defining new objectives and valuing the effects and accomplishments of the existing purposes and tasks.

### 3. FORMULATING AND DEFINING OF THE PURPOSE OF EDUCATION

When formulating and defining the purpose of education, two approaches are interesting: **static and developmental (dynamic)** formulation of the purpose of education.

The first way, or the so-called static formulation of the purpose of education represents a ready, static and distant picture, i.e. a thoughtful model of the person in front. This formulation of the purpose is typical for Herbert's pedagogy (Popova-Koskarova, 2011:90).

The second approach – the developmental one, i.e. dynamic sees the purpose as a process. This approach points out not only what should be accomplished in terms of education but also the way in which it should be accomplished. This way of determining the purpose is typical for communicational pedagogy.

For a more explicit understanding of both approaches, we will add an example. For a long time in our socialist pedagogy the universal development of the person was a synonym for the goal of education. Therefore, the static formula of this purpose would be: "Purpose of education is the universal development of a person". Despite the static determination, the dynamic (processing) formulation would comprise the following definition: "the universal development of all the potentials of the person (inherited and gained) and their enrichment, the development of the ability to criticize and independence in determining different approaches in natural and social sciences, morality during the period of acquisition of knowledge and life experience" (several authors, 1997: 137). By determining of the purpose and tasks of education we start with certain values which are important nowadays, but also for the future of the human society.

The future dimension of the purpose of education is very important, for the reason that educational action is aimed at the future. This dimension is the projection of purposes over a longer period of time, i.e. the purposes which will have to comprise future elements. The determination of the purpose of education in terms of the future is very difficult and complex work because it is not easy to predict the future in details. Thus, the indicators of development and progress and the guidelines which they will follow have special meaning.

In this context, for example, in UNESCO publications, preference is given to the following aspects: humanism, social justice, solidarity, tolerance and as well as the complete position of a person in contemporary civilization. These aspects should be taken as the basic determinants in the future determination of the purpose of education.

UNESCO concretely states these contents and purposes of education (Mandic, 1999:40):

- Qualification of youth for efficient action in the society which is changing;
- Development of invitation, criticism and independent decision making, as well as responsibility and efficiency in professional acting;
- Qualification of youth for tolerance, understanding and communication with people of different nations, religions, races and ideologies;
- Qualification of youth for permanent education and self-education
- Building a cognizable identity;
- Teaching for life in the "global world";
- Ecological education.

In this context we find the Key European Competences which focus on developing: responsibility, taking initiative, tolerance, solidarity, building a person without prejudice and stereotypes, cultural sensibility, sympathy towards cultural differences, a predisposition for compromise making, respect for others, positive acceptance of learning as a lifelong process as well as the ability for adaptation and flexibility (Popova-Koskarova, 2010)

The modern concept of education should:

- To satisfy the needs, interests and possibilities for young people,
- To follow the development of science and knowledge
- To satisfy the needs at the society which organizes the process of teaching and education
- To satisfy the needs of modern production and the needs for other activities in which young people will take part after graduating.
- The concept, content and organization of educational and teaching activities should be given in the future
- Not neglecting the past and present.

In terms as previously stated, prof. Mandic states that the educational purpose should comprise (Mandic, 1999, 1-2:39):

- The acquisition of basic and specialized knowledge,
- Development of basic and specialized abilities,
- Development of learning interests, how to learn,
- Qualifications for a certain career,
- Qualifications for permanent education,
- Development of critical points of view and creative abilities,
- Providing physical, intellectual and social maturation,
- Emancipation of youth, development of tolerance and the ability for decision making.

The president of the European Committee (Zak Delor) in 1995, in the Report of the International Commission on Education (i.e. White Document) stated that education should be organized on the basis of 4 points: **to know, to be, to change, to live** (according to Mandic, 1999: 41).

#### CONCLUSION

At the end of this article about the purpose of education, we can conclude that it is not so easy to write about the purpose and aims of education. In fact, it is a very difficult question, because there is the context of society on the one hand, but on the other, there is person, with all the aspects which need to be addressed in the contemporary context. So, there is no possibility of determining the purpose in its whole form, but that is what we need to try to do.

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## **DRUŠTVENA DIMENZIJA CILJEVA OBRAZOVANJA**

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*Ovaj rad predstavlja najtipičnije aspekte ciljeva obrazovanja, koji su sagledani kroz kontekst društva. Jedno od najkompleksnijih pitanja u pedagoškim naukama su ciljevi obrazovanja. Njegov značaj nalazi se u ideji da se svako društvo, u skladu sa tim kakvu osobu bi htelo da stvori, razlikuje u pogledu odlika, sposobnosti, verovanja. Kompleksnost donosi mnogobrojne determinante koje određuju ciljeve obrazovanja: društvo i odnose u okviru društva, sistem vrednosti, razvoj obrazovnih nauka, naročito pedagogije, filozofsko, ideološko i političko razumevanje globalizacije, društvenu tradiciju, kao i potrebe, želje i interese same osobe.*

*Ključne reči: ciljevi obrazovanja, društvo, uzroci obrazovnih ciljeva, determinante, konkretizacija.*