

# LIFE-LONG EDUCATION AS NEED AND CHALLENGE OF EDUCATION OF 21 CENTURIES

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## **Abstract**

Man is imperfect human being, but at the same time and being with ability and potential for continuing progress and improvement.

From another side modern man live in modern centuries with rapid science and technology progress. That kind of progress contributes to faster obsolete previous knowledge and increasing quantity of new knowledge.

That indicates a need for constantly learning which will help every individual in every moment to achieve different and useful knowledge. This can be achieved by life-long education which will improve quality of learning on every individual, allowing develop and progress in every stadium of life and in every life situations.

Life-long learning should help not only to achieve new knowledge, but also to develop efficient technique of thinking, to develop ability of learning and successful problem solving, and capacity for independently achieving new knowledge.

**Key words** - life-long learning, knowledge, development.

Man is born as a helpless creature that needs attention and care of the environment to survive in life. He/she by nature and essence is imperfect and unfinished creature and because of that can be built only by a constant and permanent learning in all life situations and ages. In meanwhile, the man is a being with enormous potential and opportunities for growth and development. He is a human being that constantly investigates, looking for new things, human being with a natural desire for learning and development. The main purpose of human existence is the realization of his/her potentials and opportunities and successfully responds to the demands that the environment sets in front of him/her. In order the man to achieve this goal, it requires a stimulating environment, an environment that does not impede the satisfaction of his natural needs.

On the other hand modern man is living in a time of great changes. The 21st century is a century of rapid development of science and technology, which implies significant changes in society and culture of life in general. Many changes appear in the information society, economic restructuring and organizational reform and changes in existing elements of the job are occurred. The amount of new knowledge is constantly increasing, and existing knowledge is left behind with a great speed.

These social changes set new requirements before modern man, ask for his/her constant development, gradation, empowerment, and that leads to the need of finding more efficient ways of learning and transmitting knowledge which would also allow him/her successfully to respond the new needs, i.e the challenges that are offered to him/her by the new century. The key to success in the 21st century is seen in knowledge. It becomes one of the most valuable and important resources of any society and the basic assumption of overall development in post-industrial stage.

Human need for continuous learning is expressed as:

- Learning for the knowledge -presupposes overcoming of the scientific information and acquiring the assets of cognition, and refers to the realization of the essence of deliberated living, developing the ability of cognition, understanding and discovery, education of attention, memory and opinion;
- Learning about job- involves the acquire for new knowledge that can be practically applied;
- Learning for life- involves a joint acquisition of knowledge for others, an understanding of their needs

and respect their differences;

- Learning about the existence,- means preparation for independent and critical reasoning for all phenomena and processes of the environment.

Today's and future generations, except the willingness to invest in knowledge they also should be prepared for significant change in their attitude and relations towards the environment, since knowledge of actual facts need not necessarily affect the shaping of attitudes and system of values that result in appropriate behavior and decision making [4]. The emphasis is placed on the development of individual self-learning and navigation in getting the necessary information of how to use them in their lives [8]. Youth needs relevant knowledge, should develop critical thinking skills and appreciation of information and skills for democratic debate in solving problems, resolving conflicts peacefully and readiness for responsible decision making. Prior to this respect is the wholeness of human beings and encouraging their development of cognitive, social, emotional and physical area [9].

Education is undoubtedly important for the development of society in all periods of its existence. Changes that occur in society impose the need of changes in educational system. Educational system in order to meet all these requirements, must be constantly changed, because knowledge is permanently updated and innovated.

Following the significant changes in the environment that have occurred with the development of science and technology education system become subject of reform. Educational reforms include changes in the structure of education, the functioning and effectiveness of education and the aims and methods of education. Traditional schools and educational systems are quite inefficient and maladjusted, average educational systems educate individuals, so they do not allow to advance in line with their abilities. The educational system must be adapted to social changes and it should enable the individual to meet successfully the needs of modern living. The basic idea is that there should be an educational system that at every moment of every individual, regardless of age and occupational status will allow him/her to keep new, different and useful knowledge, will enable him/her to be practical, all that for new information and self learning.

Very huge task is placed before the education and upbringing, and that is training the young for the role of being an active citizen in the society of knowledge, with developing skills that will help them to face with their challenges and incoming problems that 21st Century brings. It should be directed towards the acquisition of knowledge which becomes significant factor for social development and it will have a decisive value for the individual and civilization. Such education will enable the individual to respond successfully to various tasks and will improve the quality of life. Education will be important for comprehension and understanding of global changes in modern society.

The basic goals of education in the future will relate to:

- Preparation of young people to gain a realistic picture of themselves in their personal life, and who will realize the personal, social and common opportunities;
- Preparing young people for life in democratic society, which includes knowledge of rights, fundamental freedoms, duties and responsibilities of citizens;
- Preparing youth for work which should enable a broad view of work and theoretical insight into the nature and shape of the work;
- Preparing young people for cultural life in order to find sources for the enrichment of personality and to participate in the spiritual, cultural and historical heritage, and so they would be prepared for life in a multicultural world.

So, the ultimate goal of modern education should be encouraging and achieving favorable occasions for the development of human beings throughout the life whose meaning is entirely personal participation in the intellectual, emotional, physical, moral and spiritual activity which directs the individual to achieve high quality of life.

Global changes in education includes a new concept such as lifelong learning. Through lifelong education, people develop skills for job creation and thus increases the ability of individuals to understand their own and others' cultures. It will contribute to a better integration of the individual in the social, cultural, spiritual and political life and encourages the use of human potential which depends on the development of society itself.

### **Defining lifelong education**

The idea of lifelong education comes from the assumption that man is the greatest wealth of the society and therefore it should be invested in him/her. Lifelong education is not only a kind of education and training, but it must become a guiding principle in the whole concept of learning. It is a vision that must find its application in the following decade [1]. Thus, lifelong education is a key factor for increasing the level of knowledge and competence, but also to improve the quality of life.

Quality of life means to satisfy all the universal, not just the existential needs. Besides the existential needs, there are social demands and the need for self actualization that satisfy human motivation for personal growth and development. Because the purpose of social development is improving the quality of life, the education should contribute to that development; we can conclude that the purpose of education is to improve the quality of life, which can be achieved through a greater number of narrower goals. These goals are related to the acquisition of those skills that enables the person to perform the major life roles (work, family, civil, part of the creative person who spends his free time and the role of a person who teaches permanently). Key skills are acquired through formal compulsory education (starting from pre-school through elementary and until higher education), but also through informal lifelong education.

Lifelong learning is a term which is often used in everyday speech. Often terminology is associated with the teaching of adults, and obtains an opinion that is equivalent but this is wrong one. The term *lifelong education* or *lifelong learning*, appeared in England in the twenties of the previous century. The concept of lifelong learning is that education is encouraged by the idea of education of adults in developed industrial countries. Real swing in the development was received after World War II. Term lifelong education became internationally accepted in international conferences on adult education held under the organization of UNESCO (1960. and 1965).

Some authors define lifelong education as "learning which requires education to be viewed in its totality". It covers the formal, nonformal and informal form of education and tries to integrate all structures and stages of education. It is characterized by flexibility in terms of time, space, content, method of learning [3]. Later in the concept of lifelong learning are included experienced learnings. "Lifelong learning encompasses deliberate and unintentional (accidental), so experiential learning " [13].

The term "lifelong learning" was preceded and still is used simultaneously with other similar but not equally important concepts which are: *continuing education*, *permanent education* and *recurrent education* [12].

**Continuing education** usually marks the formal professional education of adults, which follows the completion of primary education. According to some beliefs the education includes unprofessional and permanent education. Some definitions are so wide in giving the difference between continuous and lifelong learning so the difference is lost [14].

**Permanent education** refers to the permanent improvement or maintenance of empowerment in line with new knowledge in an area. It's important to be close to continuous education.

**Recurrent education** indicates process which relates a change in periods of work and learning throughout life. Recurrent education means a strategy for the realization of lifelong education. In that case recurrent education covers informal education and its meaning is closer to the concept of continuous education and the concept of adult education.

The term lifelong learning occurs later and has the same meaning as lifelong education. But the concept of learning is broader than the concept of education, because learning can be intentional or unintentional, while education is a deliberate learning, and does not include unintentional and experienced learning.

Continuing (permanent, continuous) education is often used as a synonym of the term lifelong education. Such alignment is gradually abandoned. Difference between lifelong education and continuing education is that lifelong education refers to education throughout life (from birth to death), and continuing education refers to education which begins at the end some degree of formal education (usually after compulsory education) until death or until the end of lifetime.

Key implications of the concept of lifelong education or learning, is changing the understanding of education as schooling and the abandonment of the traditional belief that education is intended only for children and youth, not adults. Under the traditional understanding of life is divided into two periods: the period of childhood and youth in that study and the period of maturity where is the stage of working. Lifelong learning has expanded the concept of education of education of the youth (and adults) to informal and informal education of adults, including experienced learning of young people and adults.

Development of the concept of lifelong learning, or education, is crucially influenced by global crisis of education [2]. The crisis in education is reflected in the growing discrepancy between the human and material inputs in education and achieved outputs and impact of education on social development. Coombs crisis explains with the fact that the rigid organization of the school system is costly unfit to satisfy educational needs that arise under the influence of social, political and social and cultural circumstances. The output of the educational crisis he sees in informal education. Then a large theoretical effort follows to define the concept of nonformal education. Appear multitude definitions and common to all is that it differs from formal education. Nonformal education is defined as education that takes place outside the regular school system. At the same time and developed the concept of informal education, so it appears the need for differentiating the formal and informal education or experiential learning.

Lifelong learning is defined as an activity of learning throughout life to enhance the knowledge, skills and abilities within the personal, civic, social and professional perspectives [6]. Lifelong learning is a continuous process that encourages and motivates individuals to search for new knowledge, skills, ideas that can be applied to new situations and circumstances.

### **Types of lifelong learning**

The types of lifelong learning may differ in the degree of deliberation (organization), structure of conditions in which learning takes place (space, equipment, qualification of teachers, methods of teaching / instruction, functional knowledge, skills). According to these criteria there are the following forms of lifelong learning: formal education, nonformal education and informal education. Unintentional learning is experiential learning which is not organized and structured.

**Formal education is schooling.** It is the most organized form of learning. Formal education is officially (regular) structured learning, organized by educational institutions and result in a degree which recognizes a certain degree.

**Nonformal education** is a system organized activity that can be implemented in schools and no school organizations include people of all ages. Completion of a form of nonformal education may result in confirmation of successfully completed a form of nonformal education, but it does not acquire a degree of professional training. There are different organizational forms of nonformal education as an example: seminars, competitions, counseling, workshops, conferences and more.

**Informal education** is deliberate learning without external support. Another is called self-education. It is a form of intentional learning, which is less organized than formal education. Non-formal education is organized in institutions and individuals for the needs of other people who will help them to learn. Informal education encourages and organizes the person who teaches without external help from other people. Key features of the informal learning are [11]:

- It is organized outside
- Has no formal structure
- The decision makes the person who teaches, so it is a pure form of self-determined learning
- Exits from the experience and situation occasions
- Takes place in the course of daily life and work.

Self-education (Selbstbildung) can be completely independent (individual self-defines its learning objectives, plan, organize and evaluate the results of their study) or it may require some assistance from other individuals or institutions [7].

But the authors do not define informal learning in that way. In the publication *Lifelong Learning for Adults* [13] informal education is conceived as an experiential learning and action nonstructural acting on the immediate social environment on attitudes, values, skills and knowledge of the individual. With such a determination informal education is shown as composition of experiential and nonformal education [5].

**Experiential learning** (learning by doing, incidental learning) takes place in various life roles: the role of student, labor, family / parental, political, recreational, and others. Experiential learning is mostly unconscious. Learn through work and through various life situations. Thereby the activities that are acquired through experience are not motivated to learn, but to satisfy the various economic, social and self-actualize motives. Due to known performance experiential learning and his irreplaceable, internship in some countries (medical, law) is established as a mandatory process in the acquisition of professional competencies. In this case experiential learning is organized, and does not satisfy definition of experiential learning.

Experiential learning person need not be aware that has learned anything, respectively he/she has changed with unintentional learning. Unintentional learning is sometimes called natural learning and it can be cited to the wrong conclusion that deliberate learning is unnatural. Therefore, we should avoid the usage of the term natural learning as a synonym with unintentional learning.

All types of learning are combined in the implementation of lifelong education or learning. Lifelong education does not replace traditional, as was thought at the beginning, but it is a flexible form of lifelong learning that enables the acquisition and development of the competencies they need people for life.

### **Goals of lifelong education**

Because the education is not objective by itself, but a means by which we achieve certain goals, it is important to define them precisely because of the "construction" of more efficient system of lifelong learning. In developed countries, these goals are defined as: improvement of the main dimensions of national development, social, political, cultural and environmental development, improvement of the quality of life of all citizens.

The main reasons for appearance and application of the lifelong education or learning concept are rapid technological and social changes because of which existing knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and habits will lapse soon. Therefore it is necessary to learn throughout life, not only in childhood and youth. Because you must learn through life, and life can not pass in the school, the education and upbringing in the mature period is not going to school, but in no school organizations. The school is no longer the only institution of organized learning, and reforms in education must not be reduced only to changes in the school system, but to include the concept of lifelong learning.

The goal of social development in modern society is improving the quality of life. Quality of life is conceptualized as satisfaction of all universal, not just existential needs. Besides existential needs, there are social and self-actualized needs with which a man satisfies the motive for personal growth and development. In developed countries, where the basic needs of citizens are satisfied, the main development objectives are considered as a satisfaction to the so-called high needs, ie the need for quality relationships with other people and satisfying the motive for self realization.

There are many reasons why we must adopt lifelong learning as an educational goal. These reasons include:

- the need to meet the expanding educational needs and expectations of larger numbers of students from increasingly diverse backgrounds
- the emergence of new occupations and careers and the rapid transformation of others
- the explosion in knowledge and technology
- the shift to an information society

- economic restructuring, organisational reform, and changes in the workplace and career patterns
- financial stringencies and the need to find more effective ways of learning and teaching within constrained resources.

### **Summary**

Education and learning are extremely important for the individual and society. The main purpose of education is to enable the development of the individual and society. This goal can be achieved using the strategy of lifelong education. The concept of lifelong learning is closely connected with the concept of what society teaches. Their connection is seen through the basic goal of society development, and that is to enhance quality of life of the individual. Taking into account previously stated that the purpose of education is the development of society, we can conclude that the quality of life is also a goal for the development of education.

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