
SOCIAL ISSUES OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN ALBANIA AND TODAY'S WORLDVIEW OF KNOWLEDGE

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Abstract: If we take a look at past developments and today's changes, anyone can readily notice that society has been involved in a rapid development. So if we notice the change in the form and content of cars, or electrical appliances, home appliances, cameras, computers, mobile phones, etc, we can understand how much they have changed and evolved. But if we take the same view in the field of education, we see that our schools today have changed very little. We are still at the stage when students sit in rows and the teacher is at the center, the student is still very little entitled to claim to be autodidact in creating his knowledge and we still see the teacher as the only source of knowledge.

The school has been transformed into a planned process that prepares individuals for a world planned and organized in institutions. Time ago, schools prepared individuals for a secure and recognizable future, but in today's reality, schools have to prepare safe individuals for an unknown, changeable and completely uncertain future, so, nowadays the education challenge is to establish sustainable education in a rapidly changing society.

From this point of view this paper attempts to analyze and provide answers to the actual education system and new learning opportunities. Installing a different knowledge while retaining its power and not the same knowledge for everyone by expanding its power.

This analysis aims to change the concepts and outlook for a more efficient functioning of the education system in Albania, as well as give policy makers recommendations on how our system should change to better fit to the pace of time and prepare individuals capable for life and society.

Keywords: Education, policy of education, education system, knowledge, school, society

We have often heard that information or knowledge is power, and for this reason, its acquirement requires great responsibilities and instructions to use it correctly and appropriately, but how and where is information or knowledge taken?!

1. TODAY'S DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION

Environment: If we take a look at previous developments and today's changes, everyone can easily notice that society is involved in a hectic development. So if we notice the change in the form and content of the cars, or appliances, CCTV cameras, computers, cellphones etc. we can understand how much they have changed and developed. However, if we take a look at education, we see that today's schools have barely changed. We are still in a phase when students sit in rows and the teacher in center, the student has little right to ask to be autodidact in creating his/her knowledge and we still see the teacher as the only source of knowledge.

Although today is broadly spoken about contemporary teaching methods, about the student in the center and the teacher as his/her mentor, in our schools these are only written in papers. Student in center teaching method is the process of learning which puts students' needs above the commodities of planning, policies and procedures (A. Hoxha, 2018). While our teachers today complain about planning and added bureaucracies of teaching classes, about management policies and bureaucratic procedures.

Like every phrase, “student centered teaching” is subjective, flexible and useful because it is based in drafting learning experiences for students. For example, giving arguments for a “student focused approach” for the creation of curricula framework which focus the authentic needs of knowledge of each student, is valuable by creating a “student focused” classroom which gives students a little choice in content, little voice in the product or a human necessity for the creative expression. (A. Hoxha, 2018).

If we see our schools and classrooms today, we have a great number of students and a small number of teachers, without mentioning the assistant teachers. This makes teacher's work more difficult and at the same time does not allow the implementation of student centered teaching. If we refer to the Finish education system (as one of the most successful systems today), the classrooms are composed of 15 students and every classroom has a primary teacher and 2 assistant teachers (author's observation during a study visit in Finland) While in our classrooms, we have all seen that they have 30-40 students and one teacher.

Knowledge acquirement: When most of us are asked what have they learned in school, what do they remember from school, or how have they learned the things they know or value, they don't remember lessons and they accept that

they have learned more from life than from school. They have acquired the knowledge of facts, of the understanding of life and work from friendships and love relationships, watching TV, while reading or from the examples of their peers or from the difficult situations in the streets. At the same time, it is said that a profession 'is stolen' not taught, which means that most of the professionalists have acquired their professional knowledge by spending time in a hospital, or close to a plumber, mechanic or electrician.

Different problems: Teachers' professional competences in our schools are not in the appropriate level. This has made difficult teaching main subjects. Changes in the demographic changes have brought an increase in the number of students (especially in primary education) in the urban schools and a decrease in the number of students in the rural areas. From 1070 schools with joint classes (where there are less than 40 students), the possibility to move close to another school is applied only in 321 schools. The decentralization of the educational institutions has an impact in the quality of the teaching-educational process for 5243 students. (MASR 2014).

Nowadays, despite the efforts and the continuous fight against hidden truancy, towards parents obligation to send their children to school, children who interrupt or play truant, functional illiterate or not, individuals that after finish the obligatory education do not further continue their education etc. During 2014 - 2018 the number of children who were truant was 133 thousand, while the number of illiterates during these four years was 64 thousand (Shqiptarja.com 2018).

The main concern remain "the invisible" children, who do not frequent school, and moreover, are not identifies because they do not appear in any state registers. Apart from this category, there are also "half visible" for the system and also the ones who are in danger of becoming truant, who are mainly children from the roma-egyptian communities and others with economic or social assistance. (MARS 2014).

Learning and the appointment of social roles are mixed in one during the education process in the schools. If we add to this even schools as community centers, we notice that social roles and the society involvement has been great. But is it really so, does the community have the right to use or access the school, is their voice heard by the manager of the school institutions? In papers and documents this is true, but in reality this is not true. Generally, even the school boards are chosen by the school managers themselves and the only criteria is to be in good terms with the school manager and not to cause troubles with the school policies and its traditional function, no matter how old fashioned or wrong that is (author's observation). Today we see school doors closed and nobody has the right to enter without the permission of the school headmaster, at the same time we see students left outside schools because for x reason they have not been able to be present at school at 8 o'clock (author's observation) Is this truly a community center school?

Education policies: Often the education policies are drafted by individuals who have never taught in their lives and have been away for a long time from the lives the students lead today, which greatly change from generation to generation. The initiatives in education have come from directions of politicians and from the students and teachers needs or experiences, and often have been implemented without being piloted and without being discussed with teachers, parents or students.

Learning is often the result of teaching, but the selection for a role or for a category in the job market, always depend on the opinion that the others have, on how long has frequented school and on the diploma, but today everyone has a degree that has no relation with useful or required professional abilities, not even with a profession, and not necessarily the degree guarantees human and professional skills of the individual.

2. TIME FOR A CHANGE

Based on this analyses of the abovementioned problems of the system, some questions arise: Are school efficient? Can a society exist without schools? Have the school reached a level of over education? If our knowledge is created and preserved by work and practices and by personal experiences, why do we need schools? The school aims to give the same knowledge and same understandings to different individuals and those with different development. Is this possible? If this has been the school mission for centuries, then we can say that it has failed its mission. It is well known that Albert Einstein was regarded by his teachers not as a good student and with a lot of doubts about his future in the school, but today the world honours him for his knowledge. Bill gates dropped out of Harvard and created Microsoft, later on Mark Elliot Zuckerberg quit his studies and created Facebook. If we go back in time the most well known scientists and the ones who have discovered different laws of world functioning such as Galilei (1564-1642), Kepller (1571-1630), Newton (1642-1727), Darwin (1809-1882), Pasteur (1822-1895), Maxwell (1831-1879), Edison (1847-1931), Tesla (1856-1942), etc have lived in a time when school and education as a process was not at today's levels. History has shown that inventions come from experiments and not by theoretical learning in schools.

Of course the school is important even for the curricula and its hidden functions such as homeroom service, grouping, selection, indoctrination or the transmission of examples. Rarely students have attributed to their teachers the merit of what they have learned. Students learn most of the concepts without the teachers, and often independently from their teachers. In most of the cases teachers impend this kind of learning and often teachers become custodians, preachers and therapists. (Illich 2019). Times ago teachers had even the right to be violent, legitimated by the society and authorized and understood by parents. In this way the teacher takes the role of the judge, ideologist, psychologist and doctor, giving him/her an absolute and multiple power on the student. Attending school for the most part of the day, separates children from everyday western culture and from the hectic developments of the society leaving them in a much more primitive environment, extremely serious and too slow. (Illich, 2019). It is just like a slow motion movie, when in the school life goes slow, and out of it goes fast in every direction and everyone takes his own direction separated from school. Educated individuals are often taken as a role model in society making the universities to impose consumption standards at home and at work. The early universities, the sinagogues known in history, were open areas, mainly in the center of the towns, where people discussed about discoveries and about old and new ideas, where masters and students got together to read texts of the great masters and get inspired by them.

Today universities are transferred in the suburbs, teachers and professors go into their offices, and the discussion, discovery, new ideas, critical thinking, scientific resource are replaced by the teaching and learning processes. Just as students admit their need for school, they have admitted to submit their imagination to a strictly planned education. They are easily constrained to accept every kind of institutional planning. This relationship suppresses them and does not leave space for imagination (Illich, 2019). Without mentioning here if the teacher or the professor is an expert on what they teach, without mentioning the problems with school books, we may say that student's creativity is killed and he/she aims only at the grade he/she takes.

Seen from this point of view, the school has become a source of social problems. Today it is attacked by every direction, while the citizens and the governments sponsor experiments, under the veil of reforms in the education system. But the biggest problem stays in the fact that today's society and the new generations have lost their trust in the school and in the education process in order to secure their future. This puts at risk the society's survival not only in the economic survival but also in the political and social aspects.

3. SOME RECOMMENDATIONS

Experience has shown that a foreign language is better and faster learned when you are in the company of a native speaker or when you follow a course or a class, when it comes to choose between a lab class or a routine class with exercises, they would choose the first one, at the same time in order to become a good driver you learn it driving, you become a skilled cook when you practice, young children learn to walk or to speak when they practice these skills with the members of their families, they even learn how to use a mobile since they are young when their parents give them mobiles in order to pacify them. So learning skills is based on their implementation, that's why the future depends more on our ability to choose institutions that support more an action life rather than a consumption one. The closed life of schools is often considered by students as prison life. The prison increases the quality and the number of criminals and often turns into criminals even individuals who are simply nonconformists (Illich, 2019). During teenage years, mainly from 12-18 years old, it is noticed an opposition almost a rebellion of students towards the education system, this is even because of the different physical, emotional and psychological development. But maybe this is the right age when the individual should be oriented towards open studies and vocational ones, where activities and the acquisition of real skills is a priority.

Technology and its hectic development allows this to the society. Today is spoken about open universities or online ones, while this standard should go down even to the high schools. Technology provides the society with more time to act and to study theory in their "free" time. But what we first need is for the school to accept the supremacy that technology has, and secondly in our schools there is also the infrastructure problem, but this doesn't give us the right to keep the students and the young generations hostage of the infrastructure. This is the reason why studying in high school online becomes a necessity. Meanwhile practical activities can be addressed to students and the theory study can be done from home or other places chosen by students themselves, since we see that at home students possess this kind of technology and infrastructure. This way the school is even safe from the responsibility of students navigating in different sites.

Students may choose to meet each other or to learn from each other according to their interests, in order for them to learn necessary and required skills. This will also make the teacher's work easier, starting from class management, to engaging students who have no interest, all inclusiveness etc.

Every student may choose from a list made available from school, the appointed teacher according to their skills and to what the students want to learn. So the schools make available to the students its classes and the teachers catalogue, which unfortunately are not considered as didactic resources, and are the students themselves who choose even their classmates. The students themselves decide when they are going to meet and what they are going to discuss. And of course technology and the creation of a network teacher students or student-students helps a lot in this case. The teacher should not only possess the required knowledge and skills, but at the same time should know how to demonstrate and transmit it. This demonstration is often a necessary source and what the students demand. In this way, we make possible learning from each other, critical and creative thinking and despite illiteracy, everyone could record, retain share and repeat their opinions.

However, despite all the investments, the use of ICT in educational institutes is limited. The equipment provided by public funds in most of the cases are not used or are out of inventories. It is reported that in the public primary schools, there are 15731 PC, from which 11331 are functional, while 4400 PC are nonfunctional. For this reason, schools infrastructures and their equipment with computer networks, and their maintenance should be a priority of all education reforms, the key to the development of the whole system, then later should be the digital materials in the native language.

Another service that schools may offer, is the connection with businesses, companies, different institutions in order for students to have the possibility to take a close look and acquire different skills, channeling in this way what direction they want to pursue. At the same time the money that companies or businesses spend on their advertisements can be given for the education of some individuals, making them skilled with the abilities the companies need in order to have a model employee in their company or business.

Thomas Friedman said that the good news is that there is an unlimited amount of virtual knowledge available through internet and other sources. The bad news is that the factor of limiting its acquisition is the individual himself. The problem is not the availability, but how eager to learn is your mind. And he called this the curiosity quotient (CQ) Curiosity is essential for the creation of knowledge, don't let yourself become the limiting factor of your growth (Zanarini, 2014).

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