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The idea of Long-life Learning in the UNESCO reports.

The two best known of the recent reports popularized in the world by the UNESCO are: "Education: there is a Treasure hidden in It" (1998) by J. Delors and "The Future of the World" by Frederico Mayor ("Un monde nouveau", 1999). These reports are a systemic and conceptional cover of data, which data is systematically being gathered from individual countries of the world to be carefully analyzed by the Main Secretary's Office and by the particular departments of the UNESCO. The results of summary research on the latest trends and tendencies in the world are presented every second year by the UNESCO as a part of its publishing policy. These results are the illustration as well as the basis of the two reports mentioned. On such accounts all reports are based also the ones being referred to. The latest summary account was published in the year 2000.

My presentation is going to provide a short analysis of the reports by J. Delors and F. Mayor and of the account entitled "World Education report 2000. The Right to Education. Towards Education for all throughout Life".

Delors's and Mayor's reports - thou on the whole being quite different -share some common elements such as distancing from the neo-positivism and the post-modernism in the field of axiology especially concerning the issue of neutrality in science and the relativism of values . Both authors represent a view that science and education play a key role in making ethical choices. Horrific experiences of fascism and communism, never-ending international conflicts involving military operations, the fear for the world's future with regard to the serious threat of an attack with the use of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, the negative impact on our natural environment, a proceeding discrepancy between the poor and the rich areas on the earth-all this causes that the question of choices a contemporary man can make gains the greatest-ever dignity and importance. Education becomes an object of everyone's expectation, especially of the young people. It is expected that it will help in making some difficult life choices not only in the sphere of pure pragmatics, but also in the ethical dimension.

The danger that the universal, common, human values are becoming relative and the possibility of their total diminution brings into question the chances for survival of the human kind. The questions of that sort have been posed for a long time. Just to mention, the reports

prepared by the Roman Club in the 70's of the previous century formulate some dramatic dilemmas concerning the future of the world .

The challenges before mankind not only did not disappear since that time, but even were multiplied in many regions of the world and in many spheres of social life. Very dramatically sounds the question raised by Mayor in his report : "Will the 21 th century be the century of an artificial paradise, of a real hell, the century of depression, increase of which all the statistics show, the age of frequent massacre, anomy, violence, great pandemics, the world of nightmares...? Will childhood be condemned to violence and cruelty of virtual perversions...? Are we capable of opposing the real world to the world of delusion?"

According to F. Mayor in a situation of the enumerated above dangers hanging over mankind, in order to survive during this century, it must perform a series of necessary actions that will lead to achieving the following purposes in global range:

- ▶ annihilation of the increasing differences between the poorest and the richest countries of the world.
- ▶ a guarantee of steady progress and development as well as a sensible administration of natural resources.
- ▶ fighting 'the drunk ship syndrome' (Seneca)- "no wind is fair for the one who does not know where he goes to"; making 'better future' the essence of a government's and international institutions' and organizations' policy.
- ▶ keeping peace in all parts of the globe (it is the basic condition of achieving the previously indicated aims).

A package of so called contracts that should be made for the realization of the global aims ought to follow them. The package includes:

- social contract: taking account of forecasts of the population increase rate in particular regions of the world and inequalities between 'the first, the second and the third world' there should be striving to foster solidarity among people, striving against poverty (in order to eliminate it completely or at least to reduce it greatly), against injustice, which evokes feelings of hopelessness and exclusion from society.
- ecological contract: its basis should be an agreement between science and some institutions founded to protect and to develop the natural environment of man . Each of the allies ought to undertake some specific obligations that would be fulfilled in carefully planned actions.
- cultural contract: is strongly connected with the ones mentioned before. Its essence is Long Life Learning. It is very important to eliminate from education all the mechanisms that would encourage social inequalities and also to introduce to learning contents corresponding to natural needs of a human being.

- ethical contract: it is a novelty found in the F. Mayor's report. In its origin lies a belief that future is not given to us but it requires hard work including the effort of redefining, designing and creating our future. Concerning the fulfillment of this difficult task, a need of new ethics directed towards future arises. This new ethics –“ a sister of knowledge and wisdom”- demands from us taking on responsibility for opposing to evil, promoting good, for ethical behavior, which is giving a new meaning to our existence.

Paying much regard to the future- as a foundation of the new ethics - comprises taking regard to the future generations, providing them with good living conditions, a variety of ways to choose, a set of means to realize their plans.

In relation to the importance of the tasks mentioned above, the point of education gains a new meaning. This new approach is suggested by J. Delors and by F. Mayor and it is characterized as promoting harmonious development of a person, which cannot be achieved unless stopping the violence (or reducing it), the injustice and poverty because these lead a great part of the whole world's population to the existence on the fringes of society.

It is not by chance that one of the most significant recommendations propagated by the UNESCO is “learning to co-exist with others. Enhancing the understanding of them through learning their history, tradition and spirituality”. This recommendation should become a prime motive of education on all its levels in all parts of the world. Such education enables us to cope with isolationism and living in the world of our own culture only with no chances of mutual understanding between people brought up in different cultures, traditions, customs and religions.

In this uneasy task a specially important role is given to teachers. They have to prepare the new generation to be active and responsible for the future they will create. It is possible only when teachers become promoters of essential changes in education and do their best to banish the barriers of nationalism, xenophobia, ethnic and cultural particularisms.

In his report entitled “The Future of the World” F. Mayor presents seven wise thoughts that are to guide the students who are creating their future and want to contribute to the protection of life on the Earth:

1. Trust the others unless you are sure that your trust has been betrayed: you cannot build future on distrust.

1. Care about the Earth. Not because it is your property, but because it has been given for your use, and you should deliver it to your children and their children in the same shape, as you have received it.
2. Prepare peace, if you want peace. If you prepare war – you have it.
3. Share with others, if you want them to share with you, because, as the African proverb says: “love is the only thing, which, being sharing, becomes bigger.”
4. For the process of the World and Market Globalization the whole World Democracy should answer. As long as there will be not the Planet Village, as long there will be not the Earth - Fatherland Citizenship – joint and respecting national citizenship and local cultures.
5. Our future is in our hands. It is not doomed.
6. We should expect nothing for the XXI Century. It is the XXI Century, which expects everything from us.

Right now I would like to concentrate on the chosen aspects of the UNESCO report “*World Education report 2000. The Right to Education. Towards education for all throughout life.*” It is the diagnosis of respecting, by particular countries, united in UNESCO, the fundamental right to Education, expressed in the article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Let me recall, that the following article says that Education (Instruction) should be free, approachable and free of charge, at least at the elementary level (other educational tradition uses the term : “basic” or “fundamental” education).

Enclosed, I present quite a few statistic data, taken from the mentioned Report and illustrating the process of realization the Right to Education in the particular continents of the World. I have chosen the issues , which may seem far away and abstracted from our (Polish and European) educational context, but they have the key role for the whole of the presented Report.

So what does the problem of respecting that basic right look like ?

Table 1 shows the difference of the level of adults (aged 15 and over) illiteracy in 1950 and 2000.

In 1950, for world total 705 millions of people there were 525 millions of illiterates in Asia, 101 millions in Africa, 41 millions in Latin America and Caribbean.

In 2000, in Asia, there were up to 649 millions of adults, who can not write nor read,

175 millions in Africa, 41 millions in Latin America.

The rest of the world: 38 millions in 1950 and 10 millions in 2000.

In this period of time, the big growth of illiterates has been observed, but we must not forget, that the number of the Earth population considerably increased from 1950.

The second diagram shows the dimensions in percents : if in 1950, in Africa, there were 85% of illiterates, among the whole African population, in 2000 there were 39%. And adequately: in Asia – 63 % in 1950 and 25 % in 2000, in Latin America – 42% in 1950 and 12 % in 2000, in the rest of the World (including Europe) – 7% in 1950 and 1% in 2000. We may see here, that, Latin America, especially, has made a significant progress in disseminating the elementary education.

We may also see, that some ideas of active members of national and international organizations (including UNESCO), having the aim to equalize the educational chances in particular parties of the World, though seen as naive, unrealistic or too general by some skeptics, has brought concrete and measurable results. However, we have to remember, that the scale of the illiteracy among the adult part of human population is still big.

I would like you to pay your attention to the diagram, illustrating existing and expected trends in the adult illiteracy 1970 – 2015. The contents of the diagram, shown in the form of estimated data, strongly correlates with the previously presented two diagrams. According to all indicators the trend has been decreased , but the scale of the problem – especially in the Southern Asia countries – is still very disquieting and causes the need of the rapid opposition.

Another problem is the number of illiterates, if we take into account the sexual repartition. The next diagram shows this data by major regions of the world. Also, it may be useful, as the indicator of educational chances for males and females. As you may see, it is not only the problem of so called “less developed” countries. It also affects European and North American counties. Although, the difference is quite clear. Please, remember – we are talking about the elemental level of Education. Perhaps, at higher levels of Education those differences are even more drastic.

An important problem, connected with the adults illiteracy, is the number of children, living out of the sphere of educational systems influence. From the report we may learn, how this problem looked like in 1980 and 2000 and what are the prognosis for 2010. The biggest progress took place in the countries of Eastern Asia and Oceania. We may guess that this is

partially the result of using the foreign endowment, but also, perhaps, the result of the effort of the countries from the region.

The reason, why the problem of elemental education has become the fundamental element of long life educational strategy constructing, is the fact, that , practically, we can not talk about the process of continuing the education, about the permanent training in improving the competence, changing the job, if so many people in the world do not have the elemental education. What more – we are talking about basic writing and reading skills, which is a very liberal indicator. If to take more restrict indicators - the result would be even more depressing.

UNESCO, as the structure acting at ONZ, has been criticized. Its resolutions and appeals do not have the legal power. They do not obligate the governments of particular countries to turn into practice the statements of particular Conferences or Congresses. The example can be the fact, that Poland signed in Stockholm the UNESCO Declaration, obligating the contracting parties to increase the expenses for culture, up to 3% of the national income. As for now it is still 0,5%. On the other hand, it is the element of lobbying on the governments of particular countries. In the process of long - lasting negotiations the solutions, indicating the ways of changes has been born. Sometimes the internal forms of governments (including legal systems) are changed, in particular countries. But it is always a narrow and twisting way to go. The example can be the UNESCO Declaration, signed by the General Conference in October 2001, which subject was the protection of the cultural variety. The negotiations, before signing the Declaration, lasted several years and concentrated on the basic formulations (what is the "cultural variety" ? should it be the "unification" or "scrapping"? etc....) . The fact, that the Declaration has been signed, is perceived as a success, giving the hope, that the ideas of Deloros's and Mayor's Reports do not have to be only signs on the paper, but they may get a chance to be realized. They are the example, that the processes of integration do not have to be identify with the danger of "unification" or "McDonaldisation" ("Americanization"), but they may open the door to multicultural dialog. The process of realizing those programs of multicultural dialog changes the way people see themselves in the relation with the World. The man stops to function in the opposition: "locality – globalization" (my "ego" versus "the whole world around"). He or she becomes aware of other localities, and starts to live in the construction: " locality – other localities". Last year, in Hanover, as a part of the EXPO 2001 a short film has been shown. Its sending illustrates perfectly the wage of the idea of multiculturalism, to know and understand other cultures dissimilarity : " we sacrifice and protect, what we love, but – finally – we will love only this, what we are really able to understand".