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Edited by Ruth Rikowski

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POLITICAL FACILITATION OF ADULT EDUCATION: THE EXPERIENCE OF EASTERN EUROPE AND THE CIS

Introduction

The first commitment from the Ocho Rios Declaration reads as follows:

We will work to ensure that learners, women and men, are present, heard and taken into account of in policy making at the global level.

This formulation, showing the acceptance of a role of much lesser status than should be expected of a world body, has an undertone inappropriate to democratic dialogue and lacks a constructive essence. It would be more effective to change the formulations “are heard” and “taken account of” to read “to render influence.” Basically, the obligations taken at the General Assembly of ICAE have quite an important anticipated yet historical meaning.

The strategic sense and the need for adult education is admitted all over the world—mainly in declarations. Institutionally, the world of the past century and its political leaders were quite reserved in their reaction to the challenges of the rapidly changing world. For understandable reasons, they politely ignored the

need for structural innovations in existing constitutional-budget distributions of priorities in state policy as promoted by NGOs. Bureaucrats do not yet take the responsibility for creating a structurally independent segment among this world's institutions—namely, for ADULT EDUCATION.

Nevertheless, exactly this large segment of today's world is capable of improving many negative of the tendencies of the past century—and so eradicate poverty, backwardness, marginalization, and even terrorism. This postulate is argued for based upon human motives, philosophy, ethical conditions, and psychology, and the international community as a whole, as well as the importance of the “de facto” appearance of this new branch for the rapidly changing world at the transition to the informational society of the new century.

The activity ensured by the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), as by the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA), up to this moment was not sufficient to meet the needs of adult learners regardless of relentless ambitions and claims for universal but quite illusory inclusion of world regions. Therefore, regional co-ordinators acting within the framework of ICAE are in one case simply smaller island states specifically incommensurable with and slightly influential within the field of remedying educational deficiency on this large planet. These co-ordinators do not possess modern instruments of knowledge dissemination, but rather an ancient, antediluvian arsenal of direct knowledge transfer from one person to another that is achieved through lecture delivering or tutoring with a group of individuals. As for Europe, its territory and population are co-ordinated by a local co-ordinator of EAEA, a small section of a vastly blank white space on the map of Europe. Without corresponding structures for placing these adult educational activities in the ranks of one of the priorities of state policy, ICAE's activity will be limited only to local practice. The time has come to influence and create a platform for lobbying laws on adult education.

This article describes the unique model of an interstate co-ordinating structure, including state representatives of higher governmental rank, and NGOs actually existing in practice (*de facto* and *de jure*); the case in question is the CIS Interstate Committee on Knowledge Dissemination and Adult Education, created on the initiative of the International Association (IA) “Znanie” and a number of Presidents and Prime Ministers of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States

On January 17, 1997, the Heads of Governments of eight CIS countries signed the ‘Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Knowledge Dissemination and

Adult Education.’ The States participating in the Agreement leading to the Interstate Committee were the Russian Federation, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Tajikistan, the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Kirghizia, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Republic of Moldova, and the Republic of Azerbaijan. Georgia and the Ukraine joined the agreement two years later. The States have sent their representatives as Members of the Committee according to the special decision of their respective Governments.

The decisions taken by the Committee are directed by governmental mail personally to Presidents and Prime Ministers of CIS states. The Committee is entitled to put issues on the Agenda for Sessions of the Council of Heads of States (CHS) and the Council of Heads of Governments (CHG) on items concerning its competence, to be adopted as decisions at the sessions of the Committee.

The main areas of activity of the Committee are:

- the development of a modern conception of knowledge dissemination and adult education on the territory of the Commonwealth of Independent States;
- taking measures directed towards the formation of a general intellectual information space and the creative use of the existing educational level of the population and of the cultural legacy;
- the exchange of advanced experience;
- assistance in the development and performance of national programmes of development of intellectual potential of the individual by means of socially significant projects oriented towards a stable development of the society;
- preparation and approval of new approaches to the solution of social problems;
- assistance in the process of a mutual recognition of educational certificates, documents of professional improvement and re-education;
- organization and participation in the dissemination of adult education;

The decisions taken by the Committee are directed by governmental mail personally to Presidents and Prime Ministers of CIS states.

- assistance in the dissemination and exchange of local social technologies and experience in the sphere of education, both inside the Commonwealth of Independent States and outside of it;
- co-ordination of activity and work together with other interstate, intergovernmental, and state establishments of the CIS.

Examples of concrete activity undertaken by the Committee are the drafting of the Law of Adult Education, the creation of a database of governmental programmes of adult education, the creation of a partnership with the global and European international organizations to create and implement programmes of knowledge dissemination in prisons, the creation of regional consultative centres, and an international organization of distance education.

Therefore, it has become possible to build a bridge between the State, Government, and NGOs within the framework of not just one, but a number of Euro-Asian States which united into the Commonwealth of Independent States upon the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. This has become possible because the authority of the International Association (IA) 'Znanie' remains on a very high level and has continued conducting its activities from its legal predecessor of 55 years, the All-Union Society 'Znanie,' bringing up and supporting education for many generations of one sixth of the planet's land mass. Thus, the State participants of the Agreement have elected the President of the International Association 'Znanie' as the Chairman of the Interstate Committee. Many States' Presidents and Prime Ministers, Members of Governments, and other outstanding individuals have passed through the school of this, the largest social non-governmental organization in the world, on the way up the career ladder.

During its developmental years, the staff of our organization included 4.5 million people, among them all ranks of educators—scientists, educators, specialists; 2,000 academicians, more than 25,000 Doctors of Sciences and Professors, 383,000 engineers, 208,000 doctors, and 184,000 specialists in agriculture. Our structure delivered 25 million lectures at workplaces per year and 200 million copies of books, journals, manuals, and visual aids were produced annually, educating a society of 280 million people.

However, in the world of today there are still 880 million completely illiterate people and 4.5 billion others left out of up-to-date knowledge. They, especially the first category, are the most dangerous ballast of the planet, with serious ecological, geopolitical, and demographic consequences. The kamikazes involved in many of the latest horrific terrorist acts, who believe in awards from Allah for murder, belong to these two categories. Blood-spilling is the only profession of an illiterate and destitute person who is not needed by anyone, save for the lords of terrorism and the narcotics business. The education and

retraining for good deeds of these intellectually handicapped people and the renewal of their world outlook is the task of the world's society.

The second category, to which more than 90 per cent of the people living on Earth belong, is in need of constant life-long education and retraining. This especially concerns the multiple categories of people working in industrial development. Winds change the direction of road signs; in the same way, globalization demands new technology in re-educating and retraining specialists in newly born types of industries.

However, the direct transfer of knowledge from one person to another is becoming less and less effective with every year, and industrial development is decelerating. This is occurring due to the fact that the pace of renewing knowledge is surpassing ever more quickly the contact methods of its transfer from teacher to student. In the beginning of the last century, knowledge on the planet was renewed about every 30 years. And individuals, including those in industrial production, had enough knowledge to last from their student seat to their retirement. Presently, knowledge on Earth is renewed at a rate of 15 per cent every year. With a six-year pause in education, any industry has already gone bankrupt and is deemed useless in working on a modern level of production.

Only modern satellite telecommunications and distance technologies in education and the retraining of industrial personnel can meet the ever-accelerating flow of new knowledge and will lead to the requirements of development in organic accordance with human resources. It is only in this case that free enterprise, which is justly called the cornerstone of a successful strategy in integration, subdues the problems of entering the world market. In such a way, industrial development becomes a sustainable world process, eradicating society's marginalization.

It is vital to provide a constant impulse in the social consciousness of the importance of life-long education and retraining. The International Association 'Znanie' seeks to include this postulate in a number of state policy priorities among its members. Today, IA 'Znanie' has a general consultative status in UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and consultative status in UNIDO. IA 'Znanie,' in the name of the United Nations, is the operator of the web-forum for NGOs who hold consultative status with UN ECOSOC. It is also the regional UN/NGO co-ordinator for Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, independent of the kind of activity of NGOs. IA 'Znanie' is

Only modern satellite telecommunications and distance technologies in education and the retraining of industrial personnel can meet the ever-accelerating flow of new knowledge....

a large-scale web-organization that provides knowledge dissemination and adult education on the basis of the latest modern educational technologies and distant satellite television communications. This fully meets the goal of creating the important factors of social development within the Sustainable Development of Humanity in accordance with Point 36 of the UN Agenda for the Twenty-First Century.

A democratic umbrella hierarchy of inclusive structures of international, regional and national organizations has been created, including national educational organizations from all CIS countries, international NGOs such as the International Association of Non-Governmental Institutions of Higher Education, the International Council of Economists (also having General Status in UN ECOSOC), as well as NGOs of more than 30 states of the world, all within the structure of IA 'Znanie.'

The basic educational structure of IA 'Znanie' and the Interstate Committee of the CIS on Knowledge Dissemination and Adult Education is the Modern University for the Humanities (MUH), and its new derivative the Modern University for Lifelong Learning, which will be transformed in coming years into the World University of Lifelong Learning. Russian members of the International Association 'Znanie' include such NGOs as the Association of Russian State Institutes of Higher Education which includes over 500 institutes and universities, the Russian Association of Non-State Institutes of Higher Education, the Free Economic Society of Russia, and many other NGOs in Russia.

The Function and Status of the International Association 'Znanie'

Why does the non-governmental organization IA 'Znanie' have such high functions as listed above, and such high status in the system of UN and UNIDO, and how does it use them?

The answer is this: We simultaneously educate the 130,000 students of our Pilot Educational Non-Governmental Center, the Modern University for Lifelong Learning, in 68 specializations. That is six times more than Russia's educational giant, Lomonosov's Moscow State University, educates. We accomplish this job over a wide geographical front, having founded 370 institutional branches of our University in Russia and in other countries of the world.

In order to disseminate knowledge and the education of people, we have invited more than 1,700 of the best instructors and professors from the best universities of the world and have founded nearly 775 ex-territorial departments. We have created and use a satellite teleport for education, which

operates in our own satellite television centre, as well as exploiting American satellite networks. There are nine Scientific Research Institutes on the problems of various types of education, psychology of education, and other areas operating within the structure of the University.

We use the latest achievements in scientific technical progress, tens of thousands of units of the most modern electronic and computer equipment, the newest educational technologies and methodologies, as well as our own textbooks. We have a huge electronic library, which renders information to all who are studying in the University's branches. The power of the channels of the telecommunications network permits us to distribute more than 40,000 pieces of educational material every day and instantaneously make any changes in the educational material or educational programme in all of our institutes and branches.

We are educating people with new specializations in war zones such as Chechnya as well as in prisons. We are fulfilling the human right to receive education, which is recorded in the Constitution....

We educate our students at Cambridge University in specializations in law, regardless of the location of the institute (i.e., branch), be it a dislocated settlement or a mountain village. The absence of roads or electricity, or the great distance from cities and university centres, does not hamper the movement of our educational technology to the University's students.

We are educating people with new specializations in war zones such as Chechnya as well as in prisons. We are fulfilling the human right to receive education, which is recorded in the Constitution of the CIS, irregardless of the geographical impossibility of learning using traditional methods in classrooms.

In speaking of a single educational space, it would be inappropriate to consider this to be accomplished without any application of catalysts, helping to follow the world of knowledge which changes quickly. These catalysts are the newest modern technologies based on distant satellite interactive communications. Not so long ago we could read about them only in science fiction, see them in thrillers, or films on travel to new distant worlds and galaxies.

Even today, very prominent and powerful scientists and educational and cultural workers are staunch supporters of yesterday's conservative methods of knowledge dissemination. And sometimes some of them, to preserve themselves, are direct antagonists to the introduction of all that is new in the

real processes of the life of society, social technologies to which adult education belongs. The environment swarms with subjects of resistance, the resistance to all that moves forward or moves quickly. Among these subjects we can find extremely powerful people, strong but already outdated structures and governmental bodies. And even (not surprisingly enough), conservative, slow, traditionally thinking and, by force of this, non-flexible international structures. But in its development society has always tended towards contradictions. It is an obligatory condition of any development.

Today, we are proud to establish the fact that after having worked hard for many years, we are the structure which did not allow either the Soviet or the post-Soviet bureaucracy to hound us. Through incredible difficulty and strife, we acquired a critical mass of professionalism and business qualities that both ICAE and EAEA should take into consideration. You should not ignore or neglect us, you cannot unrequitedly push us behind, opposing our rights and technical and technological superiority in a heartless, calm and selfish aspiration not to notice the large white spot on the map of the world which is not touched by the existing regional management structure.

At the same time, it is strange that civilized people and structures do not want to use instruments of more developed and progressive organizations (members). It is counter-productive.

We have described our structure in which the protection of the rights of adults to study becomes possible at all levels of society and the model that contributes to a wider dissemination of experience accrued in different areas of adult education. All this provides an opportunity to create a larger educational space necessary for adults at different levels of education.

Let us now use these methods to transform the work in the sphere of adult education into results in the sphere of politics.

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Политическое обеспечение образования взрослых. Опыт восточной Европы и СНГ

Yefim M. Malitikov y Patrick van de Coevering

Стратегическая важность и необходимость образования взрослых всемирно признаны, но на политическом уровне, а также в ICAE, об этом говорится преимущественно в декларациях. В этой статье описана формализация сотрудничества между правительством и НПО, работающими в сфере образования взрослых, для укрепления положения в обществе обучающихся взрослых. Описанный способ сотрудничества в интересах обучающихся взрослых может послужить примером для работы ICAE и других организаций.

Les conditions facilitantes de l'éducation des adultes: l'expérience des pays d'Europe de l'Est et du CIS

Yefim M. Malitikof et Patrick van de Coevering

Le besoin et la portée stratégique de l'éducation des adultes sont reconnus dans le monde entier. Mais au plan politique, incluant le Conseil International d'éducation des adultes (ICAE), cette reconnaissance ne s'est vraiment développée qu'à l'intérieur de déclarations. Cet article décrit une approche à l'intérieur de laquelle la coopération entre des gouvernements et des organisations non-gouvernementales (ONG) actives en éducation des adultes est structurée de manière à renforcer la position des apprenants adultes dans la société. Cette approche axée sur la promotion des apprenants adultes peut servir d'exemple pour ICAE et d'autres réseaux.

Asistencia Política a la Educación de Personas Adultas: La Experiencia de Europa del Este y el CIS

Yefim M. Malitikov y Patrick van de Coevering

En todo el mundo se admite la necesidad de la educación de personas adultas, así como su sentido estratégico. Pero a nivel de políticas, incluso dentro del ICAE, esto ha sido alcanzado tan solo en las declaraciones. Este artículo describe una de las formas en la cual la cooperación entre el gobierno y las ONGs que trabajan en educación de personas adultas se ha formalizado, con el fin de fortalecer la posición de los educandos adultos dentro de la sociedad. La manera de promover los intereses de los educandos adultos descripta en este artículo puede servir como ejemplo para el ICAE y para otros.