

Valences of Education

Ioan-Gheorghe Rotaru

*Professor Ph.D.Dr.Habil. 'Timotheus' Brethren Theological Institute of Bucharest, Romania
dr_ionicarotaru@yahoo.com*

ABSTRACT: Today's society is constantly evolving and it is not enough to learn just to become something for tomorrow, but it is necessary to be able to cope with the multiple demands of life. Humanity sees education as a practical, social, current and permanent issue, an indispensable tool for achieving the ideals of peace, freedom and social justice of a nation. If people aspire to a materially, socially and spiritually emancipated society, parents and teachers will find a way to make a common front together without excluding the child, helping him tactfully and gently to accumulate information, knowledge, but also to avoid many unpleasant events that can seriously mark him later in life. A properly educated child is a gain for society, and his education materializes both at home and in educational institutions. Education is and must be treated as a priority activity of society. High quality education is a necessity and that is why it must become a cornerstone of the society in which we live.

KEYWORDS: education, priority, educational system, formal education, non-formal education, informal education

Education, a priority of any society

"Every person must face the practical realities of life—its opportunities, its responsibilities, its defeats, and its successes. How he is to meet these experiences, whether he is to become master or victim of circumstances, depends largely upon his preparation to cope with them—his education" (White 2001, 5), said the American writer Ellen G. White.

Humanity sees education as a practical, social, current and permanent issue, an indispensable tool for achieving the ideals of peace, freedom and social justice of a nation. If people aspire to a materially, socially and spiritually emancipated society, parents and teachers will find a way to make a common front together without excluding the child, helping him tactfully and gently to accumulate information, knowledge, but also to avoid many unpleasant events that can seriously mark him later in life. A properly educated child is a gain for the society, and his education materializes both at home and in educational institutions.

The purpose of education is to prepare the child for life, for his future, for the world in which he shall live. The purpose of home and school education is to prepare the child to be able to settle conflict situations, while preserving his love for the truth and thus making him much more balanced and stronger.

Immanuel Kant said that man can only become human through education, which is very true, but this requires a quality education system, with competent and highly qualified teachers, with teachers that have access to technology and to profile, specialized education. Education is and must be treated as a priority activity of the society. High quality education is a necessity and that is why it must become a cornerstone of the society in which we live.

We must start from the idea that the access of individuals to education means giving equal opportunities to all, such as the promotion and implementation of policies for the integration of children with special needs in the common normal educational system. An ideal school is one that does not exclude children with special needs, through direct and indirect means, such as: marginalization by their colleagues or lack of attention from their teachers.

Children go to school to acquire the necessary skills, to make them able to play their chosen roles for which they have prepared in the society of which they are part. Not only parents or teachers are responsible for the education of children and young people, but also

the students. Adults can also lead the scholar, but if they try to push him to school from behind, they will only create opposition from his part, because the main goal is to accumulate information and to form correct and appropriate skills corresponding to the society from which they are part.

The parents were once children and it depends a lot on how they were raised. Their education, like ours of the majority, also had certain deficiencies, certain shortcomings and the wrongly learned habits are difficult to be replaced in adulthood, and sometimes these gaps can never be replaced. Because of this, many parents try to raise their children according to their own rules and methods, but they make a mistake by experimenting the rules on them. In turn, parents also need education to raise their children. This is a clear proof that man learns as long as he lives, education means the development of intellectual and of moral faculties. Man learns from the first years of life, how to survive. With the first steps we learn to talk, to walk, to button up our clothes.

Today's society is constantly evolving and we are not just learning to become something for tomorrow, but we are learning to be able to cope with the multiple demands of life. For example, a woman in society will have the role of mother, wife, employee, supervisor or teacher for her child, and the list could go on, and all these are learned every day of our life, which is why we need permanent training for a quality life. "True education does not ignore the value of scientific knowledge or literary acquirements; but above information it values power; above power, goodness; above intellectual acquirements, character. The world does not so much need men of great intellect as of noble character. It needs men in whom ability is controlled by steadfast principle" (White 2001,179).

Education has in it the power of change

"Character building is the most important work ever entrusted to human beings; and never before was its diligent study so important as now. Never was any previous generation called to meet issues so momentous; never before were young men and young women confronted by perils so great as confront them today. At such a time as this, what is the trend of the education given? To what motive is appeal most often made? To self-seeking. Much of the education given is a perversion of the name. In true education the selfish ambition, the greed for power, the disregard for the rights and needs of humanity, that are the curse of our world, find a counterinfluence" (White 2001,179).

In his turn, Nelson Mandela said that education is the most powerful weapon that can be used to change the world we live in. Looking at the teachers from various educational institutions we realize that many things can be learned, starting from the fact that the profession of educator must be drawn from an authentic, permanent vocation, which should bring on its foundations, the real desire to transmit further knowledge, values, moods, balance, elements necessary for the personality formation. Education is like an initiatory labyrinth, in which the teacher is both a mentor and a spiritual guide, because not only the mind must be cultivated, but also the body and especially what defines us as human beings, the spirit.

"Our ideas of education take too narrow and too low a range. There is need of a broader scope, a higher aim. True education means more than the pursuit of a certain course of study. It means more than a preparation for the life that now is. It has to do with the whole being, and with the whole period of existence possible to man. It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers" (White 2001, 9).

Nowadays, is observed the phenomenon that everyone learns everyone, namely, everyone feels obliged when a simple question is asked to build an empire of answers, scenarios or projects, which are more or less sophisticated and which pretend to be full of wisdom. Some teach you how to grow, how to develop, how you should spread your wings, so as not to tangle in them when you rush with full speed forward, others initiate you, encourage you to see not only your

qualities, which can be fleeting, but above all they initiate you to know the limits that should push you to go on and on. On the other hand, we will find those who instruct you to go forward with all your forces, seeing you on the edge of the abyss, convinced that it will not be their fault when you will break your neck, those who encourage you in a wrong direction, those who make you have courage in evil, in heresy and immorality, becoming addicted to things that can disappear overnight. Every man receives two kinds of education, one that others give him, and another much more important, which he acquires himself.

A really good teacher will always know how to guide you in such a way that you can very well select the information you will need, as well as the value of the people you will meet in life. Through education, we can acquire, we can add the things we do not have from birth. Jean-Jacques Rousseau said: "We are born weak and we need strength; we are born helpless and we need help; we are born limited and we need judgment. What we are missing when we are born, and which we need later, is provided to us through education." "Everything we don't have from birth and what we need when we grow up is given to us through education. This education comes to us from nature, from people or from things."

Education can make a difference

Over time, education has been achieved in a diffuse way, through more or less studied methods, based on instinct and senses. Over time, for pragmatic reasons and for the efficiency of education, it has undergone major changes, it has become rational, structural and organized. Education is oriented towards achieving a goal, which involves establishing stages that have the role of reaching certain limits.

The importance of education has always weighed in favor of the training of educated and evolved citizens, regardless of the specifics and characteristics of the societies to which they belonged at one time. A society whose future was secured by fighting and wars required a warrior, military education, because it trained fighters and continuously sought techniques and methods to master the specific skills of fighters. A society whose future was ensured through negotiations and collaborations required an education through which the skills of diplomacy and relations were developed and cultivated, a society that lived through trade and exchange of goods educated its young people so that they could meet economic, commercial demands. Regardless of the historical moment and the social specificity, the importance of education was permanently manifested, differing only the techniques and methods of application, as well as the goals taken as a target.

Education is carried out on different levels, respectively: at the level of the family, of the environment in which we are born and grow and in an institutionalized system, respectively schools and various educational institutions. The first factor that forms the individual is the family, in which a huge influence is exerted on the individual, even indirectly, there laying the foundations of the first elements of conduct, because the family forms more than informs. At the school level, education is achieved through systematic and continuous methods, which have the role of forming, developing, discovering skills, attitudes and behaviors of each child. Education can also be achieved through the Church, an education that does not necessarily have to be of a religious nature, but one of a moral, civic, social, aesthetic nature. The educational influence of the Church can also give remarkable results.

Cultural institutions, the media, children's and youth associations, charities, non-governmental organizations, all these can support the process of education and training in a beneficial way, coming in to support the educational institutions. All these plans through which education is achieved must be in a collaborative relationship, so that the result to leave its mark on the society in a natural way, and the level of education to be high.

A society, whose members have shortcomings in education, is a society without hope for a good future, a society in which can not be established rules that have a role in the

development, in the individual and collective evolution. Education must meet the requirements of national and international development and is achieved in the perspective of an ideal of human personality in accordance with historical and cultural references. The importance of education in our society is huge, because an educated, trained generation, to which moral, cultural and historical values have been passed on, can carry on the legacy received from their predecessors and can give a better chance to the future. An educated society can differentiate between good and evil, between negative and positive influences.

Education develops

Education in a person's life has a very important role in the sense that it develops countless sensitive, emotional, as well as pragmatic aspects of life. Education, by definition, is a social phenomenon, which represents the transmission of data, information and existential feelings of generations about culture and society. Education develops the style of a man, who in the end teaches himself this kind of learning, learning that helps him to form a purpose in life, to form his future, but also the quantity makes the difference in this case, and depending on the teachings received, in the end, the personalities are also different. For example: a man full of culture and learned by the book, will never be the most popular or the one who knows most of the practical things, but he will be the one who is educated to cope physically with life, certainly he will not possess such a large amount of logical and theoretical information.

The development of a person's personality begins when the person in question is able to make choices, because a man who knows how to go in one direction also knows the motivation for choosing to go in that direction. Education presumes just that, namely knowing why you are doing a certain thing and knowing how to do it. Everything matters in a world where there are fewer people who focus on the book, and the rest it is part of the the 6 or 7 years of home education, those years that will turn into a life later. Thus, whether importance is given to school education, or importance is given to education as an ordinary person, education of life, as it is also called, learning is important for one's character and development, consequently motivation and will being shaped. An unfortunate incident in your life, should not derail what education has taught you to do.

"The best school for this language study is the home; but since the work of the home is so often neglected, it devolves on the teacher to aid his pupils in forming right habits of speech" (White 2001, 186). should be taught the necessity and the power of application. Upon this, far more than as a human being you must always have a target and you must shoot continuously towards that target. There are many opinions about education, some good, some less positive, but everyone must know that they need a strong personality to be able to succeed in the contemporary society full of requirements. The theory alone cannot give you that spoonful of food that you dream to receive for your work. Apply what you have studied in your daily life, making any information you receive relevant, if you really want to grow. Choose to have a purpose in life, choose to have a direction in life, choose to be educated to know what you want to achieve from life.

"The same personal interest, the same attention to individual development, are needed in educational work today. Many apparently unpromising youths are richly endowed with talents that are put to no use. Their faculties lie hidden because of a lack of discernment on the part of their educators. In many a boy or girl outwardly as unattractive as a rough-hewn stone, may be found precious material that will stand the test of heat and storm and pressure. The true educator, keeping in view what his pupils may become, will recognize the value of the material upon which he is working. He will take a personal interest in each pupil and will seek to develop all his powers. However imperfect, every effort to conform to right principles will be encouraged" (White 2001, 184).

"Every youth should be taught the necessity and the power of application. Upon this, far more than upon genius or talent, does success depend. Without application the most brilliant talents avail little, while with rightly directed effort persons of very ordinary natural abilities have accomplished wonders. And genius, at whose achievements we marvel, is almost invariably united with untiring, concentrated effort" (White 2001, 184-185).

The importance of school and formal education

To educate means to train, to form, to develop. Etymologically the term comes from the Latin *educō*, *educare*, which means to care for, instruct, raise, or from *educō*, *educere*, which means to lead, to take out. It is found that both etymological paths are correct, and the semantic ramifications lead to the current meaning of the term.

The importance of education is essential for the development of the individual within the social context and implicitly for the development of a society. An educated person will have the ability to respond to complex needs and situations, will be able to be aware of new situations, individual and collective needs, acquiring a greater sensitivity to a deadlock situation, finding optimal solutions. An educated man will support the efforts of education, will support the fight against ignorance, vulgar things and against the cultivation of the lack of values, because it is impossible to remain indifferent once you've tasted what culture and science means.

Education is done in three ways: formal education, non-formal education, and informal education. Formal education is carried out in educational institutions and aims to introduce students, progressively, in the paradigms of knowledge and to transfer techniques that will ensure a certain educational autonomy. This type of education needs specialists, who prepare the elaborated and well-staggered way, in which information is transferred. Formal education is provided through the school, educational institutions and teachers. In school, the student will focus on which profession he would like to pursue, and the teacher has the freedom and opportunity to choose the methods and techniques considered to be the most appropriate for educating the new generations.

"The youth should be taught to aim at the development of all their faculties, the weaker as well as the stronger. With many there is a disposition to restrict their study to certain lines, for which they have a natural liking. This error should be guarded against. The natural aptitudes indicate the direction of the lifework, and, when legitimate, should be carefully cultivated. At the same time, it must be kept in mind that a well-balanced character and efficient work in any line depend, to a great degree, on that symmetrical development which is the result of thorough, all-round training" (White 2001,185).

Through formal education, social identity is transferred to students, they are historically and socially located, they acquire knowledge that has the role of facilitating their personal and professional development, to fulfil their potential as individuals, to integrate socially. These are some of the reasons for which school must be chosen as a factor of education, in order to introduce us in the secrets of intellectual, organized work, giving us the opportunity to acquire knowledge, helping us to recognize the information accumulated and to apply it. "True education is well defined as the harmonious development of all the faculties—a full and adequate preparation for this life and the future eternal life. It is in the early years in the home and in the formal schoolwork that the mind develops, a pattern of living is established, and character is formed," said the American writer Ellen G. White (2001, 5).

Non-formal education and continuous development

Non-formal education is carried out outside the classroom, through extracurricular activities and through optional or facultative activities. The term non-formal means less formalized or non-

formalized, but with formative effects. The importance of non-formal education is to meet the varied and individual interests of students and is characterized by flexibility, being a type of education with great advantages because it offers the chance to discover certain inclinations and interests and supports those who want to develop in certain sectors of activity, helping them to explore their personal resources.

It is not known how many parents think about all these theoretical things, but there are enough parents who take their children to classes in painting, piano, ballet, swimming, violin, foreign languages, etc. Maybe they have not even thought that all this could be part of what we call today the type of non-formal education, but all these pieces put together can form a useful puzzle for the development of a child. In order for the results of this type of education to be as effective as possible, they should be combined with the activities of formal education in educational institutions.

The non-formal education is important because it responds to the needs of action and because allows the extraction of knowledge from practice, facilitating contact with new information. UNESCO refers to non-formal education as consisting of any educational, organized and sustained activities that do not correspond to what we call formal education, which can be carried out in or outside educational institutions, with addressability to people of all ages. Non-formal education does not follow a hierarchical system and may differ in duration without necessarily involving the certification of the achieved learning outcomes. Non-formal education involves a new approach of learning through motivating, engaging but also fun interactive activities at the same time.

The advantages of such a type of education are multiple. This type of education appeared due to the fact that the formal education system adapts too slowly to the socio-economic and cultural changes of the world we live in and therefore appeared the alternative of other possibilities to prepare children, young people or even adults in their desire to be able to respond adequately to other societal challenges, and these learning opportunities can come not only from formal education, but also from the wider field of society or from certain sectors of society. It is important to remember that no matter how we want to develop ourselves, we must choose to do so, because an educated person can make it much easier to differentiate between good and evil, between negative and positive influences.

Informal education and everyday experiences

Informal education is what the individual faces in everyday life. Etymologically, the term informal education comes from the Latin *informis*, *informalis*, which means spontaneous, unexpected. This type of information includes all unintentional, diffuse information that comes in an unexpected and unworked wave. From a pedagogical point of view, this type of education brings data that are unconsciously introduced into our thinking and behavior, in spontaneous circumstances and contacts. This type of education includes family education, education in the group of friends, in the playgroup, neighbors, education through the media, education through the written press, through radio-TV, education through cultural and social actions, education through museums, exhibitions.

Informal education is done in daily experiments, which are not planned or organized, leading to informal learning. When these (experiences and experiments) are interpreted by the elderly or by members of the community, they constitute informal education, a process that extends throughout life, through which the individual acquires information, develops skills and abilities, structures beliefs and attitudes, develop through everyday experiences.

As for informal educators, they can be both parents and friends, relatives or even others, while in our turn each of us is an informal educator for those around us and for ourselves, sometimes doing so intentionally, sometimes intuitive. This type of education has a reduced formative function, because less information becomes knowledge and more than that, through

this type of education, sometimes we have information that may contradict what we know and the purposes of formal and non-formal education. We must be very careful how the information is filtered, in order to differentiate between good and evil, between negative and positive influences.

Conclusions

In conclusion, I would appeal to the words of the remarkable American writer Ellen G. White, who, speaking about the purpose of education, said, in words rich in content, that: "every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator—individuality, power to think and to do. The men in whom this power is developed are the men who bear responsibilities, who are leaders in enterprise, and who influence character. It is the work of true education to develop this power, to train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thought. Instead of confining their study to that which men have said or written, let students be directed to the sources of truth, to the vast fields opened for research in nature and revelation. Let them contemplate the great facts of duty and destiny, and the mind will expand and strengthen. Instead of educated weaklings, institutions of learning may send forth men strong to think and to act, men who are masters and not slaves of circumstances, men who possess breadth of mind, clearness of thought, and the courage of their convictions" (White 2001, 12).

"In its wide range of style and subjects the Bible has something to interest every mind and appeal to every heart. In its wide range of style and subjects the Bible has something to interest every mind and appeal to every heart. In its pages are found history the most ancient; biography the truest to life; principles of government for the control of the state, for the regulation of the household—principles that human wisdom has never equaled. It contains philosophy the most profound, poetry the sweetest and the most sublime, the most impassioned and the most pathetic. Immeasurably superior in value to the productions of any human author are the Bible writings, even when thus considered; but of infinitely wider scope, of infinitely greater value, are they when viewed in their relation to the grand central thought. Viewed in the light of this thought, every topic has a new significance. In the most simply stated truths are involved principles that are as high as heaven and that compass eternity" (White 2001, 98-99). In his book, Job wrote in poetic words, some truths of great value:

"It cannot be gotten for gold,
Neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof.
It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir,
With the precious onyx, or the sapphire.
The gold and the crystal cannot equal it
And the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of fine gold.
No mention shall be made of coral, or of pearls:
For the price of wisdom is above rubies" (Bible, KJV, Job 28, 15-18).

"Every youth should be taught the necessity and the power of application. Upon this, far more than upon genius or talent, does success depend. Without application the most brilliant talents avail little, while with rightly directed effort persons of very ordinary natural abilities have accomplished wonders. And genius, at whose achievements we marvel, is almost invariably united with untiring, concentrated effort" (White 2001, 184-185).

References

- Ellen G. White. 2001. *Educație [Education]*. Bucharest: Viata si Sanatate Publishing House.
The Holy Bible. 2004. King James Version. Dallas, TX: Brown Books Publishing.