

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC
and CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (UNESCO)

EURASIAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY (EurAsEC)

LENINGRAD STATE UNIVERSITY
n. a. A. S. PUSHKIN

THE WORLD
INSTITUTE OF REGIONAL ECONOMY
RUSSIAN ACADEMY of SCIENCES

INSTITUTE OF REGIONAL ECONOMY OF THE RUSSIAN
ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

PUBLIC ORGANIZATION "CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR ALL"

LIFELONG EDUCATION

CONTINUOUS EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Proceedings of International Cooperation

Vol. 8

Scientific editors
N. A. Lobanov, V. N. Scvortsov

Saint-Petersburg
2010

**CONTINUING EDUCATION AS A COMPONENT OF NATIONAL
CULTURE AND CULTURAL STUDIES AS A GLOBAL MISSION**

LIFELONG EDUCATION AND THE DYNAMIC OF CULTURE <i>M. I. Vishnevsky</i>	404
THE NORM/ANTI-NORM DIALECTIC IN THE MORAL PARADIGM OF RUSSIAN CIVILIZATION <i>A. L. Kazin</i>	409
THE EXPERIENCE OF LIFELONG EDUCATION AND ENLIGHTENMENT IN THE SYSTEM OF THE "ZNAIE" SOCIETY OF SAINT PETERSBURG AND LENINGRAD OBLAST <i>S. M. Klimov</i>	414
LIFELONG EDUCATION AS A VALUE-BASED EDUCATION MODEL <i>D. K. Kamenova</i>	418
LIFELONG EDUCATION AS THE STARTING POINT IN THE MEANING OF THE LIFE OF A SENIOR CITIZEN <i>M. Žumárová</i>	422
THE ROLE OF SPIRITUAL AND MORAL EDUCATION IN TODAY'S LIFELONG TEACHER TRAINING SYSTEM <i>V. A. Belyayeva</i>	426
LIFE FOR LEARNING OR LEARNING FOR LIFE <i>Snezana Stavreva-Veselinovska</i>	430
THE PEDAGOGICAL CONDITIONS AND METHODS FOR ENSURING A CONCEPTUAL ORIENTATION IN MODERN EDUCATION <i>E. G. Belyakova</i>	437
AN ESTIMATION OF THE VALUE OF LIFELONG EDUCATION IN THE CULTURAL SPHERE <i>I. G. Vasiliev</i>	441
LIFELONG EDUCATION OF ADULTS IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF LEARNING SOCIETY <i>Ryszard Gerlach</i>	445
BETWEEN HISTORY AND FUTURE OF ADULT EDUCATION: NICOLAJ GRUNDTVIG AND HIS CONCEPT OF LIFELONG LEARNING <i>T. Maliszewski</i>	450
CORPORATE CULTURE – AN IMPORTANT COMPONENT OF THE EFFECTIVE FUNCTIONING OF AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION <i>G. V. Gerasimova</i>	454
THE IDEA OF CONTINUOUS LEARNING IN THE TRADITION OF WESTERN EUROPEAN AND POLISH PEDAGOGICAL THOUGHT <i>V. Jamrozek, K. Jakubiak</i>	457

**BETWEEN HISTORY AND FUTURE OF ADULT EDUCATION:
NICOLAJ GRUNDTVIG AND HIS CONCEPT OF LIFELONG LEARNING**

T. Maliszewski

The challenges of the future require (re)defining many of the existing educational attitudes and behaviours. In that creative search we sometimes seem to forget about the old concepts that have served the past generations well for decades. And referring to the proven educational patterns from the past and their creative adaptation to contemporary educational tasks can bear results that are hard to overestimate in facing those challenges – e.g. *school for life* of the distinguished Danish thinker, Nicolaj Frederik Severin Grundtvig (1783-1872), the concept that surfaced as early as the first half of 19th century, later creatively developed into the idea of folk high schools.

Folk high schools (in Russian: *narodnyje uniwersitiety*, in Polish: *uniwersytety ludowe*) have a very special place among forms of adult education. Developed on the philosophical and political traditions of Scandinavian countries – especially on philosophical and educational thoughts of Grundtvig, they now constitute more or less significant elements of educational systems of a few tens of countries on a few continents.¹ The reality of that educational concept proves that it was undoubtedly one of the most significant achievements in the history of adult education in the world. The opinions of a well-known Polish researcher of history of education, Ryszard Wroczyński, or Steven M. Borish – a famous American anthropologist and sociologist can be considered as representative. The first one indicated that the “great movement in non-school education in rural areas (...) had a great impact on the direction of the development of European education of the end of 19th and the beginning of 20th century”.² The second one pointed out that the originally Danish idea of folk high schools constituted not only original but first of all genuine and significant contributions of that region to the world’s solutions concerning education and upbringing³.

¹ S. Byczkowska, T. Maliszewski, *Scandinavian Inspirations: Looking for a True “School for Life”*, in: T. Maliszewski, W. J. Wojtowicz, J. Żerko (eds), *Anthology of Social and Behavioural Sciences*, Linköping 2005, pp. 137-148.

² R. Wroczyński, *History of Polish Education 1795-1945* (in Polish), Warszawa 1980, p. 165.

³ S.M. Borish, *The Land of the Living. The Danish Folk High School and Denmark’s Non-violent Path to Modernization*, Grass Valley (California) 1991, pp. 7-9.

The question is whether in the modern reality there is still scope for the institutional form of education of *folk high school* type? And among them – for the classical one – boarding type of folk high school?

Today, it seems, however, that to face the challenges, folk high schools need new perspective of looking at their history. It can help show the educational activities of those interesting institutional forms of adult education in a new light. It could help, *inter alia*, (re)define the new roles folk high schools are to play on the educational scene of the near and remote future, both from the global perspective and in their national varieties. Showing to the largest possible number of people how efficient 'educational tool' to fill in the educational niches an institutions such as *folk high school* can be can help the local, regional, national and, let us not hesitate to say that, global (in the near future) decision makers implement socially significant educational tasks and activities.

The ideas of N.F.S. Grundtvig – an enlightened Dane, generally thought to be the Godfather, creator of the concept of adult education that was later on creatively developed into a great movement of folk high schools are worth mentioning here. But please remember that in the so called literature of the subject (e.g.: in Byelorussia, in Estonia, in Latvia, in Lithuania, in Poland or in Russia¹) the one sided picture of Grundtvig's views on urgent development of new type of adult education institutions has become fairly strong and popular by (very often) uncritical and schematic repetition. There is no time to argue with those stereotypical opinions...

What seems to be the general perception is as follows.

In the first half of 19th century, coined a slogan *school for life* (Danish: *skole for livet*) as an opposition to traditional educational institutions, whose operation he totally negated, which can be seen, *inter alia*, in the way he called them: 'schools of death' ("schools for death" in other translations into English; Danish: *skole for døden*).² So folk high schools, those schools for life, were created as centres of education in extreme opposition to all the then existing educational organisations – those schools of/for death. The hint is: "Now I am trying to explain, in clear terms, what I understand by *school for life* (...). Firstly – since no *school* is able to create a new life in us, it must not damage the old one nor must it waste time on developing rules that would govern the other [life] if we had it, because it would have to be decay, that is death (...) that would have to be the beginning of such a

¹ J. Kulich, *Grundtvig's Educational Ideas in Central and Eastern Europe and the Baltic States in the Twentieth Century*, Copenhagen 2002.

² Comp. e.g.: *Grundtvig Nicolai Frederik Severin*, in: Chr. Blaugstrup (red.), *Salmonsens konversations leksikon*, bind X, København 1920, p. 185.

process – and I negate [it] totally. Secondly – *school* must accept life as it is – trying only to explain it and make it more useful. What I am saying is that if life is to benefit from an *educational* institution it cannot place education, or the school itself as a priority and objective, but it must aim at explaining [that] life”.¹ And what is the meaning of that? The ‘forgotten opinions’ by Grundtvig open up new possibilities for the analysis of the beginnings and the synthesis of the history of the educational institutions. Please note how much scope for interpretation there is: continuation, development, explaining the past, the present and the future, acceptance of life just as it is and a basis for change etc.

How should the modern formula of folk high school be popularised? The redevelopment of the concept of folk high schools nowadays and in the future urgently needs, *inter alia*:

- stronger connections with the local (regional) communities in which folk high schools operate;
- effective folk high school lobbying at all decision making and opinion-creating levels;
- even more active search for educational niches that can be accommodated in accordance with the ideology of folk high schools;
- wide ranging, multi-aspect international experience sharing and co-operation of the whole movement.

The perspective of over one hundred years, and the analyses of the contemporary discussions seem to indicate that the concept of folk high school can prove useful in the future – especially in relation to the educational activities for the communities that have built the folk high schools. Since there is enough scope for folk high schools nowadays, especially in the context of the needs to develop democratic functioning of the communities and societies, as well as of the whole state, I would like to indicate at least some of the tasks that could be entrusted to modern folk high schools:

- taking up actions for the groups and individuals that are excluded (defavoured, marginalised);
- promotion of civil education, local democracy and the idea of social partnership;
- leisure activities, developing the individual needs of the members of the community the folk high school functions in;

¹ N.F.S. Grundtvig, *Skolet for livet och Soer Akademi (1838)*, in: N.L. Jensen (ed.) *A Grundtvig Anthology. Selections from the Writings of N.F.S. Grundtvig (1783-1872)*, Cambridge-Viby 1984.

- multi-aspect regional education, protection of local cultural and natural environment heritage;

and last but not least:

- promotion of the idea and practical solutions for the sustainable social and economic development of the region¹.

This, of course, is not an exhaustive list of the possible educational initiatives that can be taken up by folk high schools. Generally, it seems advisable that each folk high school should 'listen to' the signals from its immediate social environment to be able to identify the educational tasks that the community considers to be *important* and/or *needed*. Apart from 'listening', folk high schools also need more determination in animation activities. It is folk high schools that should – apart from other independent educational institutions and organisations – set certain patterns of educational behaviours and make people aware of the educational needs the members of the community in which the folk high school provides educational services might not be aware of. More appreciation and attention paid to the role that folk high schools might play – postulated by the author for years and on various occasions – might result in the flourishing of that not only wonderful but also effective form of education (*vide* e.g. Danish, German, Polish or Swedish experiences of the 1930s²), for folk high schools were able to educate effectively thousands of enlightened people active in developing the democracy of the citizens in various parts of the globe during the past one hundred years. And they will surely be able to do it in the future by:

- restoring the position previously occupied by folk high schools – where they lost it;

- maintaining (and extending) the areas of activity – where folk high schools are still considered to be a part of educational system;

- conquering new areas (countries, regions) by showing the flexibility and effectiveness – where folk high schools have not been known before.

That is why Grundtvigian 19th century concept of *school for life* can be still of value in search of contemporary possibilities for sustainable development by projects in area of continuous education.

¹ See e.g. – a few articles in: N.A. Lobanov & V.N. Scvortsov (eds), *Continuous Education for Sustainable Development. Proceedings of International Cooperation, "Lifelong Learning"*, vol. 7, Saint-Petersburg 2009.

² M. Byczkowski, T. Maliszewski, E. Przybylska (eds), *Folk High School – School for Life*, Wiezyca (PL) 2003.