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MOUNTAIN SCHOOL OF THE UKRAINIAN CARPATHIANS: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract. The article describes the features of mountain schools in the Carpathian region. The author reveals their educational, methodical financial, legal and personnel provision of. The attention is focused the specificity organization of educational process and the influence socio-cultural environment on personality development.

The researcher analyzes the existing problems in the of mountain schools, points to perspective ways of their successful development.

Keywords: mountain school, Carpathian region, teacher, socio-cultural environment, personal development.

*School in the village has become "breeding ground for education"
school of morality, the cultural center of life, and thus a source of light future of the nation.*

O. Dukhovych

The decision of the UN General Assembly on December 11 is celebrated as the Day of the mountains. And such attention to the mountains is not accidental, because the mountains is a place of great biodiversity, significant reserves of water, minerals, timber and agricultural raw materials, labor. Mountain ecosystems have a significant impact on the lives of nearly half the world's population and 10% of our planet resides directly on mountain areas. In the mountains, as elsewhere, there are important problems associated with life activity of people, particularly to fight unemployment and poverty, improving education and culture, health and hygiene, tourism, exploitation of natural resources etc.

Activity of mountain schools by the new socio-economic and socio-political environment in which educational institutions are expanding their teaching, financial, legal authority and gradually become more independent. These processes significantly affect the functioning of the education system, but it is particularly acute effect on the activity of educational institutions in the mountains of Ukraine.

Mountains occupy 5 % of the Ukrainian territory. The largest mountain ranges occur in Ukrainian or Eastern Carpathians, which is a part of the Carpathian system. They cover the whole territory of Transcarpathia, 37.5 % – Ivano-Frankivsk, 18.6 % – 15.8% of Lviv and Chernivtsi regions. This is the area where most fully is preserved natural environment, which is the least developed by human activity.

The process of globalization is an objective and irreversible phenomenon. Therefore, ethno-cultural and recreational diversity of the Carpathian region is now one of the most important conditions for sustainable development of the original parts of Europe. Mountains create specific conditions for settlement and habitation. Over a long period of history specific ethnographic and psychological types—Ukrainian highlanders appeared for whom the mountain lifestyle is the highest social value. They are characterized by “two levels of ethnic identity: level of ethnographic group (awareness of their separateness) and Ukrainian level (awareness of its involvement in the Ukrainian community in general)”⁹, p.203.

Under the influence of complex natural, historical, economic, demographic and social factors in the mountainous area was formed a special type of mountain settlement. The category assigned mountain villages, located at an altitude above 400 meters above sea level in the harsh climatic conditions. The mountains provide almost a tenth part of humanity with vital products. For a long time the role of mountain regions in many countries is not recognized. The Carpathian Mountains, located in the heart of Europe, is well illustrated by the problems outlined.

The dominant secular culture, according to researcher of the Carpathian area M. Lavruk, freeing human society from religious traditions, at the same time led to a profound spiritual crisis. Environmental crisis sharpened through manufacturing activity too. In big cities, people find themselves outside the community life, losing favorable psychological comfort for existence. Alienation from nature and from people, which brought urbanized era gave rise to many social and cultural issues. “Actively seeking integration with the developed countries and not yet completely losing connection with the traditional culture Ukrainians have a chance to contribute to the balance of rationality and spirituality, pragmatism and romanticism”⁷.

Today much attention is paid to the contradiction between human society and the environment of its existence. Therefore it is necessary to analyze the interpretation of the term “human society”, which is seen as a community of people linked by material (including production) and the spiritual relationship of anthropogenic and cultural factors that directly or indirectly affect the lives and economic activities of society. It consists of a geographical and socio-cultural environment. First – this is the material environment composed of natural and man-made objects in which society exists, satisfying its needs and transforming it. Second - this is created by mankind spiritual world, covering national, social, economic, political and other relations and produced by mankind spiritual and cultural values that affect people, shape their outlook, causing the behavior of their relations with nature.

Particularly relevant is the problem for the inhabitants of mountain regions. Indeed, in the process of communicating with nature, mountaineers try to set partnerships that are improving for centuries in the process of understanding their environment, through errors, paving the way for the formation of stereotypes of human behavior in the mountain environment and the regulation of “man – environment” in the process of management. “Man of Mountain” has been attempting to explain natural phenomena for a long time, synchronization of their life with the seasonal rhythm of nature and more⁶.

Socio-economic changes which take place in Ukraine over the past decade have significantly exacerbated the educational problems of the inhabitants of mountain areas, caused significant changes in the educational institutions that operate in the area. “The complex of measures of education modernization in Ukraine much attention is given to solving problems of secondary schools in rural areas, which is always an important part of the education system and is designed to promote the preservation and development of national traditions, moral values, the growth of potential of a unique national culture”⁶. In this area the priority of reforming secondary education was stated in the National Doctrine of Education of Ukraine, where the development of rural school is defined as an essential condition for social and cultural development of rural areas and preserving the traditions of the Ukrainian people. Rural school performs complex educational and pedagogical objectives which are identified by major law of Ukraine – the Constitution and the laws of Ukraine “On Education”, by the statement of the Cabinet of Ministers “On the development of rural secondary school” and other legal documents and regulations.

Status and level of rural schools today is determined by the fact that it is a major factor of life, the preservation and development of the village. After all, if there is a school in the mountain village – the village will exist. Therefore, in every mountain village there must be at least primary school. Where there is no school, it should be built. The life of every inhabitant of mountain village and his family is connected with the school and the teachers who work in it. To determine the status of a mountain school at the national level is a very important task. Non-standard working conditions, the uniqueness of the structure and modes of learning, certain distance of schools teaching staff in the highlands from the latest achievements of psychological and pedagogical sciences produce an ambiguous impact on the teacher.

Works of famous scientists and teachers were dedicated to the issue of analysis of rural schools, which are an integral part of the educational process, among them were V. Sukhomlynskyi, H. Vashchenko, I. Bekh, I. Zyazyun, V. Kuzya, V. Madzihon, P. Okhrimchuk, O. Savchenko, V. Hrushch and others. The main objective of education is to create in the most remote mountain village real opportunities for each child to get knowledge.

The solution of the problem absorbs a number of other issues related to local governments, the state of the economy and medicine, the development of agriculture sector etc. Thus, the Board of the Ministry of Science and Education of Ukraine mentioned basic quantitative parameters that characterize the village school. Approximately 90 % of settlements in Ukraine are rural. According to available data, in rural schools study 14916 students. In general, the rural school has 2 million 225 thousand students, or 32 percent of all student contingent. According to statistics, there are many localities where in recent years, not a single child was born¹¹. Therefore, the main tasks of the teaching staff of schools in mountainous region to preserve the contingent of students are: the creation of a favorable microclimate for study and recreation of students increasing responsibility for the quality of each educator teaching the subject. Only a comprehensive analysis of the economic, social, ethnic, demographic, geographic factors will help determine the specificity of mountain schools to implement the educational needs of the population.

School in the mountains – is not only educational, economic, geographic, or social concept. Almost always its main function was to create a person who is working in a mountain village in sphere of agriculture. However, in the present context this function is not implemented. Acute problem arises how to reconcile the interests of society that is slowly being rebuilt, with the interests of the young person who sees a disorder of rural life since childhood, and unlike previous generations, wants to meet the needs of its development. Considering the mountain school educational activity as an important factor of social change we must take into account the fact that the possibility of its influence on the development of rural society is significant, however, and difficulties which the school faces are great.

The problems of rural schools in mountainous region, their teaching, finance, legal and human resources are particularly urgent to educators of Precarpathia and should be the focus of local community because out of 768 different types of schools 603 are located in rural areas, including 270 – in remote mountain areas, rural educational institutions represent 78.5 % of all schools⁸.

Ivano-Frankivsk is a special education center, where successfully co-exist and operate traditional and author schools, well-known and lesser-known, large and numerically small, educational school-complexes and systems of family schools. Regional development program “Education for 2002-2015” is actively enforced in the city which provides system of measures for the development of education in rural areas, which are mostly in mountainous areas⁵. Today’s rural school in the highlands for various subjective and objective reasons, does not pay sufficient attention to training students in agricultural production. Modern business in rural areas requires much larger organizational skills, ability to adequately assess the situation, take the only right decision to introduce new, advanced methods of management that would facilitate the intensification of agriculture, and in the longer term improve the standard of living of people.

Geographical location, environment, natural conditions are recognized as fundamental in shaping the mentality of the inhabitants of the mountains. According to A. Tolstoukhov’s statement: “That

natural conditions are determined as the main factor that affect the formation not only man's psychophysical features but also develop relationships both within society and beyond"¹². The reason is that the "the child's outlook is based on the observation and analysis of everyday situations, adults' chat among themselves, evaluative attitude towards the world, education, occupation and self-assessments under the influence of parents and teachers"⁸. Detachment of the individual from the environment generates a lot of problems. Therefore, active role of the social sciences, including pedagogy, psychology, aimed at overcoming the crises of individuals' life and society, which may be preceded by social and individual crises and disasters.

Education in the country is designed to prepare rural children to gain the knowledge and skills needed in higher education. Successful resident of mountainous terrain because of the nature of his work, social and natural environment should be fully educated, basic competencies, necessary knowledge to be able to find information in a limited space, maybe even more, faster and better than a resident of the city. Social and economic changes which take place in agriculture, causing the appearance of a number of issues that significantly affect the status and development of rural education¹. An attempt to solve the outlined problem did Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University (Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine).

The administration signed an agreement with the Departments of Education of local districts that are designated as mountainous areas of training teachers. As a result a distance school "young teachers" was founded which organized training courses for mountain school leavers, which greatly improved the preparation of students for admission to study in higher educational establishments, gradually increased a number of students³.

We can make a conclusion that the main priority of modern education system is the availability of quality education for all children, regardless of their place of residence: a large town or village in the mountains. However, analysis of the experience of schools demonstrated a significant backlog of rural schools from the city to resolve the major problems of education and students training. Complicated process of preparing professionals who are capable to work in a rural school of mountain region requires much attention too. We share the view of the famous scientist, explorer problems of rural schools O. Savchenko that "the search for new models of modern rural school must hold a deep comparative study of these schools to determine their invariant features and characteristics, due to the author's teaching systems, the influence of contemporary conditions for their realization"¹⁰.

Scientists of the Precarpathian National University in Ivano-Frankivsk together with mountain school teachers continue to work on finding a optional model of the educational process while learning and practicing experience shown by the best educational institutions operating in the highlands of the USA, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Canada, and other countries; test and implement educational innovation in practice at school in order to improve the provision of educational services to residents of the mountainous region.

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