The twenty-first century university and the concept of lifelong learning

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In recent years, major universities and governmental and nongovernmental organizations around the world have been engaged in discussions about implementing the principles of lifelong learning as fundamental principles of individual education. Until about a decade ago, adult education in Montenegro (whose development resembled that of adult education in the other republics of the former Yugoslavia) was characterized by the founding of workers' or people's universities; establishment of training centers at major companies and factories; and continued professional training, which included part-time enrollment in traditional universities. In other words, adult education was treated as an integral part of the formal education system but was not included in the state budget for education. Over the course of the last ten years, Montenegro has lost its old system of adult education, but it is still quite far from establishing a new one. Tellingly, no strategic document pertaining to adult education in the country recognizes the University of Montenegro as having a major role in lifelong learning. This essay problematizes the place and role of the university within the system of adult education and offers a comparative analysis of the development of the concept of lifelong learning at the university level in Europe.

Introduction

In recent years major universities and governmental and nongovernmental organizations around the world have been engaged in discussions about implementing the principles of lifelong learning, as fundamental principles of individual education. Lifelong learning has gained in importance, particularly in light of the current predictions that, by the year 2050, 9.2 billion people will be living on our planet and life expectancy could approach 100 years of age. 'Knowledge will become the most important asset, one always subject to change due to innovation. Basic education will remain crucial: everyone will have to continually educate himself or herself in order to increase the chances of employment'. The explosion of knowledge will lead "many to conclude that they will never have time to read, hear, see, explore, and learn everything: since available knowledge now doubles every seven years and will double every 72 days in 2030, the time required for obtaining information, studying, and acquiring 'usability' will increase at the same rate" (Atali, 2010:109, 130). Although many political and educational strategists around the world tell stories about the knowledge society and about the increased levels of quality education, the reality that surrounds us is much more cruel. More than 1 billion people are basically illiterate, and at least twice as many are functionally illiterate. More than 150 million children aged 6-11 receive no education at all; millions of children around the world join the labor force at age 7 or 8 although a number of UN declarations on human and children's rights strictly prohibit child labor; 12 million children have became orphans due to AIDS; etc. Globalization provides many opportunities for individual and social development, but it also brings poverty to an ever-growing portion of the world population. The UN statistics indicate that 43.5 percent of the world's population lives below the poverty line, which amounts to a subsistence on less than $3 per day. Globalization also encourages numerous migrations, creating an increasing pressure on the countries of Europe, North America

and Australia, where immigration is often accompanied by increased unemployment and unequal opportunities in education. Basic-literacy programs are few in number; in Europe alone more than a third of the working-age population has less than a high-school education. This percentage is even greater in 'third-world' countries, where a large percentage of children either receives no primary education or follows inappropriate and often very old/non-innovative curricula; both textbooks and teachers tend to be in short supply, and the latter often lack the professional training necessary for development of a knowledge society and individuals capable of lifelong learning and critical thinking. 'We are faced with unequal distribution of food, water and energy, and with environmental degradation, which in the long run threatens our existence. In addition to material deprivation, poverty also means lack of opportunity, thus making it difficult for a society to function. Unacceptably large numbers of children will face unemployment in the future, while a growing number of young people will feel socially, economically and politically alienated' (CONFINTEA VI, 2011:35).

Lifelong learning at European Universities

In pedagogical theory, lifelong learning is defined as an imperative and a prerequisite for individual development—that is, for an individual's social emancipation—as well as for the cultural and economic development of society as a whole. 'In the past two decades, the idea of a university has been critically reassessed. That reassessment has now become an urgent necessity. In the last twenty years, all European countries have found it necessary to introduce comprehensive reforms of higher education in order to meet external and internal challenges of globalization, massification, equal accessibility, and rapid modernization. The traditional idea of university—rooted in the belief that acquisition of knowledge is an end in itself—has faced a utilitarian challenge. To be sure, the university is not only an alma mater but also a for-profit business corporation. Yet, this does not mean that universities should be pushed down the narrow path of utilitarianism. Utilitarianism is a threat to utility itself and, in the long run, it can ruin the very idea of university. Still, these pressures are forcing universities to adapt to the marketplace and to create new roles for themselves. Such changes

are already noticeable in learning outcomes, which are now defined not as scholarship (i.e. education), but as the ability to perform particular tasks within a particular profession' (Radonjić, 2010:113). One of the central features of educational policy in the European Union today is continuous learning. A product of that policy was the 2006 Communiqué of the European Commission, which clearly states that it is never too late to learn and that every age is the right age for learning. The Action Plan, created in accordance with this general objective, contains five key goals:

- remove barriers to the participation in higher education;
- increase the quality and efficiency of higher education;
- accelerate the process of accreditation and recognition of prior learning;
- provide a satisfactory level of funding;
- establish a system of monitoring higher education.

Implementation of lifelong learning presents a challenge to twenty-first-century universities to develop a variety of elective courses and to open their doors to students from various age groups and backgrounds. An official document of the European University Association, 'Trends V' (Crosier, Purser & Smidt, 2007), states that, although lifelong learning is perceived as an important mechanism, one that should play a key role in the development of a university, that is not the case in practice. The Bologna Declaration is a case in point: it undoubtedly promotes lifelong learning on paper, but very little has been done to conceptualize and implement a higher-education policy based on lifelong learning. The recognition and accreditation of prior learning and qualifications are two key issues that European universities are only beginning to address. The implementation of ECTS (European Credit Transfer System), an important element of the Bologna Declaration, has created many problems, but it now serves as a good foundation for understanding students' acquired knowledge as well as helps implement the RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning) system. However, while universities remain fully committed to structural reforms, strategies for lifelong learning are mostly neglected. But despite the academic community's resistance to or half-hearted acceptance of this concept, two important social trends will 'force' them to give this matter some serious thought:

namely, economic development and population aging. Economic development demands that previously acquired knowledge and skills be continually upgraded, while the aging population leads to a decrease in numbers of traditional students (19-25 years of age). Certain estimates suggest that, in the near future, nearly half the jobs in the EU labor market will require at least a Bachelor's Degree. Population aging has led a number of EU universities to change their enrollment policies in order to attract as many quality high-school students from non-EU countries as possible as well as students from different age groups. 'More than half the workers will change their places of residence every five years, and they will change their employers even more frequently' (Atali, 2010:109).

Project BeFlex, which is coordinated by EUCEN, was created as an extension of the Bologna Process and as an incentive for development of the concept of lifelong learning. Seven European universities participate in this project, whose goal is to make the existing university structures (which are in compliance with the Bologna declaration) adaptable to continuing education. Different countries implement lifelong learning differently. In places like England, France and Finland universities have established independent institutes that are responsible for lifelong learning; in other places university administration logistically supports the academic structures dedicated to lifelong learning; in a number of countries lifelong learning has taken the form of part-time Master's programs. Not infrequently, so-called open universities have been put in charge of lifelong learning. In very rare cases, as is Finland, universities have established institutes that are, in addition to providing various lifelong-learning services, actively engaged in research and in development of the philosophy of lifelong learning. 'Finnish system of university continuing education is considered being the highest class at the European level, and even in the rest of the world, in terms of level of participation achieved, the spectrum of courses offered and the level of quality of this type of education' (Schaeper, 2007:28).

In its 'Lifelong learning for all', the OECD has adopted a comprehensive view, which covers all purposeful learning activities, from the cradle to the grave, whose goal is to improve knowledge and competencies for all individuals who wish to participate in curricular activities. 'Four main characteristics can be identified: a systemic

review (opportunities for learning throughout the life cycle, from pre-school until after retirement, including all forms of formal, non-formal and informal learning), student-centered education (meeting the education needs), motivation for learning (learning for learning's sake) and an education policy with multiple objectives (such as personal development; knowledge development; and economic, social and cultural goals). Initially the European Commission used a much narrower definition, describing lifelong learning as an all-purposeful learning activity, undertaken on an ongoing basis with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence'. This definition was later adapted to its current version: 'Lifelong learning should be understood as all learning activities undertaking throughout a lifetime, with the goal of improving knowledge, skills and competencies for personal, civic, social and/or employment needs' (Petegem et al, 2010:1).

Comprehensively defined lifelong learning is certainly the foundation of each of the four pillars of learning recommended by the International Commission on Education for the 21st century: learning for knowledge acquisition, learning for work, learning for existence, and learning to live together. 'Without a doubt adult education is an important component of the process of lifelong learning, which combines formal, non-formal, and informal learning. Adult education meets the needs of young people, adults, and the elderly. Adult education covers a wide range: general education, vocational education, literacy and family education, civil rights and many other areas that different countries prioritize differently' (CONFINTEA VI, 2011:31). The papers presented at the 6th CONFINTEA Conference identify a global trend, according to which adult education remains permanently underestimated, underdeveloped, fragmented, and poorly funded even though it is increasingly seen, from a political standpoint, as a key element in building a sustainable and socially cohesive future. 'There are significant differences between regions and countries in terms of access, content and policy domain in the field of adult education. Despite these significant differences, there is a growing consensus when it comes to adult-education policy and to adult education within the comprehensive framework of lifelong learning and education for sustainable development (ESD). This would entail the adoption of adult education as a fundamental

EFA (Education for All) strategy within the redefined national and international commitments and programs, in order to promote adult education within a holistic perspective' (CONFINTEA VI, 2011:26). Such a broad understanding of lifelong learning and the recognition of its vital importance to individual and comprehensive social development have helped change ideas about who could facilitate lifelong learning. Among the potential providers of adult education—especially those that could implement the goals of lifelong learning—the university has emerged as a key player.

Lifelong learning at the University of Montenegro

In the second half of the twentieth century, adult education in Montenegro—whose development resembled that of adult education in the other republics of the former Yugoslavia—was characterized by the founding of workers' or people's universities; establishment of training centers at major companies and factories; continued vocational training; and part-time studies at traditional universities. Although adult education was treated as an integral part of the formal education system, it was not included in the state budget for education. Either adult students themselves or their employees financed their education. From a conceptual and strategic perspective, adult education had a primarily compensatory function, while the function of lifelong learning received very little or no attention. In accordance with its compensatory function, adult education was mostly limited to acquisition of basic literacy and elementary knowledge, and to continued training or retraining in the event of a job loss or as required by changes in the labor market.

In the last ten years considerable changes have taken place in the field of adult education in Montenegro, with the goal of abandoning the earlier, communist approach to this segment of education and introducing more contemporary methods of educating adults. Accordingly, the workers' universities were closed ten years ago. The intervening decade represents a sufficient temporal distance for a professional debate to begin: how necessary and beneficial were those changes to the system of adult education?

Although the University of Montenegro has no department of andragogy, and even though Montenegro has no agency or institute

for adult education, we are past the beginning stages of building a system of adult education. In a relatively short period of time (the last ten years, that is) important strategic and legislative steps have been taken toward the development of a system of adult education, such as the passage of the Law on Adult Education (2003) and the Law on Vocational Education (2003), and the adoption of the Adult Education Strategy (2005-2015). A series of laws (e.g., the Bylaws on the Establishment of Educational Institutions, the Bylaws on the Qualifications of Educators and Professionals in Adult Education, the Program for Andragogical Training, the Program for Basic Functional Literacy, the Draft Law on Professional Qualifications), plans (such as the Adult-Education Plan for 2006-2010), and methodological guidelines (Curricular Methodology, etc.) have been adopted. 'Reforms of education in general, and of adult education in particular, have already begun in Montenegro. Notable achievements give grounds for optimism. In a relatively short period of time Montenegro has joined the European mainstream, contributing to some of Europe's achievements as well as sharing some of its problems. At the same time, complex economic issues, certain delays in the reforms, and the complexity, fluidity and decentralization of adult education require continued analyses and reviews - both for assessing what has been accomplished, and for further planning. Such analyses and reviews should be neither amateurish nor blinded by enthusiasm; the approach needs to be professional and thorough. Strategic and policy documents on adult education in Montenegro reflect, on paper, the latest trends in adult education but do not emphasize enough the concept of lifelong learning. The significance of this concept not only arises from the need to ground adult education scientifically and philosophically but also has practical implications: it establishes an educational continuum, in which all age groups are equally important and in which (according to the established criteria) funding and—crucially—mobility (the ability to enter and leave the educational system) must be maintained, thus establishing a strong link between formal and informal education' (Popović, 2010: 275, 285).

Tellingly, no strategic or legal document pertaining to adult education recognizes the University of Montenegro as a key player in lifelong learning. Its role is defined extremely broadly: 'The University of Montenegro creates conditions and opportunities for

the training of teaching staff who will work with adult students and for the affirmation of life-long learning' (Adult Learning Strategy of Montenegro, 2005:78). The primary goals identified in the Strategy for Adult Education are, above all, a higher level of accessibility to higher education; diversification of the forms and methods of higher education, to improve the levels of student achievement; and generation of additional sources of 'income' for the universities since different educational services based on the concept of lifelong learning could secure certain financial resources to the university. The development of lifelong-learning strategies should include measures for overcoming the barriers specific to the Montenegrin system of education, such as:

- financial barriers (lack of financial resources and low income);
- geographical barriers (the unavailability of higher education in rural and remote areas);
- social and cultural barriers (special attention should be paid to the socially deprived and educationally 'neglected' groups, such as the Roma population, etc.);
- barriers of unavailability (the inaccessibility of higher education to individuals with special needs);
- temporal barriers (problems experienced by those who want to study and work).

The University of the Twenty-First Century and the Concept of Lifelong Learning

At the start of the twenty-first century, the university is facing many challenges, together with the need to redefine its own position in society, its basic functions and, above all, its purpose. I will present my discussion of the future of higher education by examining:

a) the paradigm of university development;

b) development opportunities;

c) partnership for development;

d) personal development through lifelong learning.

The very word paradigm implies a formula or even key determinants of a system. It is generally accepted that the world is changing rapidly

and dramatically and that the solutions of yesterday do not apply today. This trend can be seen not only in university or even basic education but also in all other areas of life, from the way we work or play to the way we request and transmit information, resolve ethnic tensions and issues of justice, and order the state we live in.

Although all of us have witnessed far-reaching changes in society in general, we do not seem to be fully aware of the consequences those changes have had on the education system as a whole and on higher education in particular. There is a growing belief that education reform is not a process that will lead to desired changes; re-invention, rather than reform, has become the focus. This is not just a word play; new paradigms need to be established. The establishment of a new higher-education paradigm must begin with a review of the existing paradigms and a test of their validity. Old university paradigms tend to be focused on the vision of a university as a bastion of knowledge, whose primary functions are teaching, dissemination of knowledge, research activities, and production and application of new knowledge. But the world is changing. Universities are not monopolies any more, nor do they play the leading role in today's knowledge society.

In the past, individuals eager to learn sought knowledge primarily at universities or in large, well-stocked libraries. Where do they go today? The first destinations are usually Google or Wikipedia. Specialized information is no longer searched for in bibliographies or catalogs; direct contact with experts in reference areas is established via e-mail. Will universities and other knowledge brokers be marginalized in the near future? Let's take an example from everyday life. As soon as we wake up, we check messages on our mobile phones, read our e-mail, switch on the TV and follow the morning news. From where does the knowledge necessary for the performance of these services come? From the university? Or from multinational corporations, telephone companies, the Silicon Valley, the electronic media?

Moreover, in the MDG (Millennium Development Goals) universities are no longer recognized as a source of information; instead, information is obtained through the databases of various local, national and international NGOs. So where is the university? If we try to imagine the future of higher-education institutions, we must

ask ourselves, is it possible that the universities as we know them will become obsolete some day—when the development and transfer of knowledge acquire shapes and pace unknown to us, when knowledge begins to replicate itself at immense speeds, when new ways of knowledge transmission develop? However, one often hears different points of view expressed in university circles: that institutions of higher education should remain patient precisely because higher education is slow to change; it has an established rhythm (curricula remain unchanged for years/decades; when they do change, they change gradually; numerous are the meetings that precede even the smallest of alterations in education policy, university development, etc.).

In contemporary socio-political thought, one of the most appropriate social paradigms is that of sustainable development, i.e. the survival and progressive development of the planet. Admittedly, this popular notion was, at one point in time, limited to the concerns about the environment, when the focus fell on imminent dangers that the emission of harmful gases, pollution, and global warming presented to our planet. But thanks to a decade of the United Nation's research on sustainable development, we now recognize that the threats to the survival of our planet lie in the economic, social and cultural spheres. The Earth will not survive if one third of its population has control over only 3 percent of its resources, and if the rich continue to get richer and the poor poorer. Indeed, it will not survive long if different cultures resolve their differences by intolerance, violence, and war. It will not survive if the powerful continue methodically to threaten the more disadvantaged by letting them die from preventable diseases, such as malaria and HIV-AIDS. In this context, universities have a special role: to increase their efforts and use their resources to reverse this alarming trend. Of course, universities cannot do this alone. For instance, Thailand has made a big step towards combating the unhealthy trend of neo-liberal consumerism, in a society governed by greed, by supporting 'sufficiency economy.' 'Education must be a driver of opportunity and social justice rather than defense and securing of privileges. We must make certain that the opportunities that higher education offers are available to anyone who may have potential benefits from it, regardless of their origin. This applies not only to the prevention of open discrimination, but also to the actively

work on creating conditions that resources are recognized and supported regardless of one's age.' (DfES, 2003:2).

In talking about development opportunities, we are talking about possibilities. In an open, democratic institution of higher education, there are many opportunities for people to better themselves and their society. Democracy does provide opportunities and benefits, but it does not guarantee them. A balance must be struck between opportunity and compassion, so that the individual does not benefit at the expense of others or of the common good. Looking at specific examples of university development, one can differentiate between two models. The first model is the innovations introduced as concessions to the primacy of sustainable development. Universities remain within their traditional boundaries and true to their traditional approaches to education, but new objectives and ideas are added to the existing programs. The other, completely different model is the fundamental reorientation toward the concept of lifelong learning. Aiming to develop different educational opportunities, the university's lifelong-learning strategy should be specifically targeted at expanding access to higher education. Increased levels of accessibility should be achieved through a strategy for lifelong learning whose objectives and activities would be the following:

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITIES
The University of Montenegro's contribution to the development of the concept of lifelong learning (LLL) at the state level	• Promotion of active, partnering relationships with all the institutions involved in LLL, and joint implementation of projects • Organization of national and international summer schools/camps • Active participation in the processes of licensing and relicensing of specific professionals – medical doctors, teachers, engineers, etc. • Providing support and training to interns during internships and in preparation for professional exams • Organization of preparatory courses in cooperation with social partners, to facilitate continuation of higher education (after 25-26 years of age) • Training of instructors from social-partner organizations • Providing specific professional development to meet employers' needs or demands • Promoting entrepreneurship in society at large • Research/forecast of labor-force needs in different production/social sectors
Creating conditions for the development of lifelong learning at the University level	• Conceptual changes in the University education designed to meet individual needs • Redefinition of the Bologna process in respect to its current exclusion of part-time education • Promotion of the philosophy of lifelong education in all university departments and programs • Increase in strategic and systemic support for different types of study for existing students • Development of RPL (recognition of prior learning) mechanisms • Consider the possibility of introducing tailored study programs, designed according to individual students' needs • Create the so-called fast-track study models for specific circumstances • Consider the possibility of introducing modular teaching at the University • Change the academic calendar in order to make the teaching more flexible and introduce different forms of condensed teaching

Development of a lifelong learning system at the University	• Establish a University center for LLL
	• Create a system for training university staff in the specifics of adult education
	• Continued education and earning of higher degrees (e.g., from Associate to Bachelors)
	• Establishment of a center for excellence in teaching and learning
	• Accreditation by the national Education Bureau of courses appropriate for employees' professional training
	• Establish student-support centers that would monitor students' standard of living, provide counseling and professional guidance, help solve financial-aid problems, etc.
	• Organize different forms of continuing education (seminars, courses, etc) with individual professionalization as a goal
	• Organize educational support for the socially disadvantaged
	• Development of different educational modalities (part-time, distance learning, etc.)
	• Elimination of systemic and structural barriers to lifelong learning
Developing multidisciplinary programs	• Increasing the number of interdisciplinary study programs
	• Increasing the levels of full-time and part-time students' internal and external mobility
	• Development of joint-study programs with universities in the region and in the EU
Development of IT services for LLL	• Enabling continuing education via electronic means, using IT and the internet: online interactive courses, e-learning, distance learning (Lubarda, 2010, 320)
	• Creating an on-line platform for learning, better known as Blackboard (Bb)
Development of the support system for the education of the "third age" population	• Foreign language courses for the "third age" population
	• ICT courses for the "third age" population
	• Organizing different cultural and educational activities

Such a broad notion of lifelong learning certainly raises many questions about how to conceptualize and implement different modes and modalities of adult education and how to create a flexible institutional framework that would remain relatively independent

within the system of higher education (and of the education system as a whole) and not serve merely as its extension. The specific target groups that should be given higher accessibility to higher education are: future students; adults with specific gaps in their knowledge or skills; adults earning a higher degree; unemployed youth and adults; ethnic minorities and the underprivileged; individuals with learning disabilities; mature students; people in remote and rural areas; people whose jobs require retraining; the "third-age" group (that is, senior citizens).

Increased accessibility to higher education should be the goal for all four categories of the lifelong-learning continuum: pre-higher education (continuing education of the population with only a secondary-school degree); higher education (educational support given to vulnerable groups of students), educational continuum (retaining the majority of students and continuous improvement of student achievement through higher quality of teaching and different pedagogical and didactic models of teaching); a broader program of study and increased recruitment efforts (identifying in the local communities and workplaces individuals that appear to have an interest in learning and finding ways to involve them in the process of higher education).

The third important element in the future of higher education is partnership. The coordination of different social policies (from family life and health to education), with their close ties to economic policies, strengthens communities and forms the basis of their active participation in society, enabling them to exercise their rights to education and lifelong learning. It is important to understand that partnerships encourage cooperation, collaboration, and positive interdependence; i.e. the stakeholders in higher education come to realize that they cannot successfully pursue their own goals unless all the other participants in higher education/community successfully meet their own goals, too. Students notice that they need each other if they want to finish a group project. In today's globalized environment, partnership is a must at both local and international levels. That is why it is imperative that we establish the maximum possible level of partnership in Montenegro: among public and private education sectors; among governmental and non-governmental organizations and institutions; among all the stakeholders in education.

Of course, the idea that universities need to cooperate with local communities and society as a whole is not new. 'The advanced requirements clearly indicate that the university must have a strong relationship with social needs and to 'serve' to the fulfillment of certain current social issues, as it will otherwise become socially irrelevant' (Ostrander, 2004:76). When we talk about the university as a partner in creating and implementing strategies for lifelong learning, we undoubtedly have in mind an active partnership among all university units, partnerships with other universities in the country and abroad, and partnerships with state agencies and social partners. A functioning and 'consumer'-orientated system of continuing education requires a very flexible approach to cooperation among social partners. It also requires the understanding that full cooperation has multiple benefits, both for the university and for the social partners, but also for those to whom the continuous-education services are being offered. "Partnerships are equally important and need to be created in a way that allows adult education programs to take into account the needs of learners in a particular context and to, except for basic education and professional skills, include social and entrepreneurial skills, gender equality perspective, values, commitment, knowledge, behavior and skills necessary for achieving sustainable development "(CONFINTEA VI, 2011:27). An important aspect of the partnership between universities and social partners should be a pro-active approach in identifying potential higher-education students among the members of the workforce, as well as continued efforts, on the part of the social partners, to advertise educational opportunities at the university level. The experience of the countries bordering Montenegro, such as Croatia, shows that 'a network of institutions for adult education still does not make a coherent whole; a number of institutions, with their individual programmatic development and availability, cannot meet the needs of all potential adult learners. In addition to establishing a network of educational institutions, special attention should be paid to educators who implement programs of adult education—above all, to those educators' own education, training, and professionalization' (Adult Education in Croatia, 2009:7).

Fourthly, it is important to facilitate personal development at the university through lifelong learning, or—to find a better term—to

perpetuate and promote personal development. Let us now move from the conceptual to a more practical level. It is very important to understand the full implications of education for sustainable development (ESD) and to uphold it as a new paradigm in higher education. But, as noted above, a new paradigm is not only a change in perception; it is also the way one chooses to work and conduct oneself in accordance with that changed perception. Academia has the reputation of being more preoccupied with understanding a problem than with solving it. When it comes to sustainable development, we cannot afford to find ourselves in the state of the so-called analysis paralysis; we must act. Before we act, we should seek answers to a few practical questions: If we change our personal paradigm, how do we change our university? Are we going to teach academic subjects—Accounting, Algebra, Psychology, etc.—in a new way? Will professionalization courses be different? Can the passion for and commitment to sustainable development remain unchanged? How? In adult education selection of educational content is particularly important. Although adult education is often motivated or inspired by the need for a narrowly professional or other specific knowledge, 'it is necessary to overcome partial acquisition of knowledge, skills, and values and, instead, affirm the process of acquiring a fundamental knowledge apparatus and a system of values that will guide an adult through the process of learning and education to the process of self-learning and self-education' (Matijević, 2009:78). Very similar is the view expressed by the contemporary Austrian theorist of education Liessmann, who writes that 'a flexible man, ready to learn all his life, puts his cognitive abilities at the disposal of markets that are rapidly changing. He is not a caricature of a humanistically educated man—as sketched out by Wilhelm von Humboldt in his brief theory of man's education—but his antithesis. With everything that people now must and can know - which is not a little – their knowledge still lacks the strength of synthesis. It remains what it needs to be: a fragment, easy to acquire, quick to adapt, easy to forget' (Liessmann, 2009:8).

Conclusion

The present moment is marked by many unknowns, which include rapid changes in the labour markets, changes in the structures and types of jobs, enormous increases in the amount of knowledge,

uncertainties in everyday life, failures of communication, and very frequent and wide-spread economic and financial crises. All this points to the fact that education systems should 'produce' highly flexible individuals—individuals willing to be re-trained, easily adaptable to changes in work and family environment, ready to continuously upgrade their knowledge and develop a variety of communication skills. Without insisting that lifelong learning is the only adequate response to the numerous challenges faced by today's educational systems and by those who participate in them, I believe that lifelong learning is one of the most effective responses to the changes that life will continue to bring. I therefore consider the development of a lifelong-learning strategy at the university level extremely important. That strategy should not be an elegant mission statement that is never put into action. Without a doubt, this task is difficult, for it involves paradigmatic, structural, and behavioral changes. Nevertheless, it is a job that must be done.

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