INTRODUCTION, CHANGE MANAGEMENT AND TEACHER ATTITUDES

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Abstract: Changes are all around us. And not just now, today, they were present in the past, and they will be stronger and more powerful in the future. Our elementary school has been changing throughout the years and it will yet change in the years to come, but the question is does it follow the changes at the same pace and to the desirable extent? It is still behind the times, the environment and is still part of the changes of the past. It is certain that changes have an impact on our school, they are being daily introduced, but the question is in what way, and how they are accepted by the employees. That is why, beside the constant introduction of changes, knowledge and skills which manage them are highly important. The success of these changes depends also on the attitude of the employees, the very acceptance by the teachers who implement them and their participation in the creation and adoption of the changes. This paper presents a research on teacher’s attitudes towards the changes in an elementary school.

Keywords: changes, teachers, elementary school

INTRODUCTION

Problems in our system of education were and it will be, and that is why new changes is necessary. But what kind of changes? There were many changes too, but weather it were innovative or rather inventive, time showed. Should it introduced at all? It were changes but not innovation. Very often it were cosmetic changes or it were quality and promising, but were introduced in wrong way or in wrong time. That is why is imprtant knowledge and skills of managment of changes. But before that, it is necessary to approach the correct solution of the problem, starting from the causes themselves. The most common causes of the problem are:
  • mismatch of goals and opportunities,
• the complexity of the education system,
• connection of the system with the environment,
• incomplete information or lack of information.

Good diagnostics are needed, in diagnostics the problem is possible to use different methods and techniques. To make this phase to be successful, the most effective is training and motivation of people in certain organizational structures. This refers to the whole educational system from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development to the Department at the school.

Our education system was quite centralized and as such a cruel. Often the changes in the education system were dictated by political changes. As such, they created new problems. Changes are mostly brought up from „above“ to „below“, and this way has made new problems. And this often circulated in a loop.

Although attempts to change something, to us is to difficult to get rid of the past, even in those spheres that have not proved to be quality but harmful to our education and upbringing. The past should teach us how to act in the present and the future in the right way. We had many mistakes in introducing changes to our educational system, and on these mistakes we should have learned more. It is known that learning on your own mistakes, is expensive. Perhaps we should have learned more from the experience of more successful but not rewritten or mapped out of them. All this should be adapted to our conditions.

ARE WE READY TO INTRODUCTION AND MANAGEMENT CHANGES

New age is looking for a new school. Needs capable management, leaders and leadership. In our country, education management is still in its infancy. Our school is still burdened by the burden of the past, which means that school leaders are not trained to introduce and manage changes. Although changes is still made and design from “above”, schools with capable and quality management can do a lot. That is why schools need to be given more autonomy, which means to give and the first man of the school – to director. Autonomy in this context does not mean arbitrariness but a greater space for the introduction, creation and implementation of new ideas. The Rulebook on the Standards of Competence of the Directors of Educational Institutions (“Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia”, No. 38/2013) puts a wide spectrum on the Director, as well as knowledge of professional activities in the field. By knowing these competencies and the skills of the director, a good foundation for a qualified manager has been created. But just a backing. Managers are not born, they need to be created.

Our state, or rather the competent ministry, is trying to educate school directors for the job of managers and to enable them, among other things, to introduce and manage changes. This process is quite slow and the announcement is that in the past, directors will pass a license exam. About 60 school directors have been trained for mentors in the recent past. And it is a matter of concern. Directors should have a mentoring role, but this idea was not realized to the end. In November, school directors evaluated external evaluation with 4, the highest grade, went for a two-day education and they will be among the first to take the exam in March next year. It is important to note that even the rulebook on licence for the school director did not come out and is expected by the end of this year. Is the same
mistake of the past related to the education of the director repeating again, remains to be seen. Whether learning in two days is enough, even for the successful schools and directors, practice will show. The short training time for such complex management tasks, the introduction of frequent and complex changes, problems that have been trodden from the past and are not solved or solved in the right way gives space to doubt.

**EXAMPLE OF QUALITY AND SUCCESSFUL INTRODUCTION OF CHANGES – FINLAND**

Finland is a country with the best or among the few best countries in the world, in regard of the education system. This means that the changes it introduced were high-quality, at the right time and in the right way. If Finland’s reforms were analyzed, it came to the knowledge that they developed carefully and slowly, that they had political support but did not tied to the changes of the government-parties and were deeply entrenched in the cultural factors of Finland. Deep in these roots is dedication to education and children. A political consensus of 50 years ago on a comprehensive school movement has remained the same today. One of the factors of the success of the Finnish reforms and the current school system is dedication to quality teaching staff. This implies from the very education of the staff, his choice to the high reputation of this profession in this society. There is a professional model of responsibility in Finland. This can be seen in the degree of taking responsibility of the school for the success / failure of students.

Among the most important factors governed by the Finnish reform program was the school organization. But also a very important and impressive degree in which education system has developed in close connection with the economy and social structure. In Finnish schools, there is an incentive for behaviors for the knowledge economy. They work on the culture and habits of young people connected with the development of innovation, creativity, flexibility, development of initiative, risk and the ability to apply knowledge in new situations.

If reforms are observed in the post-war period, the parliament has created three consecutive reform commissions, each of which made recommendations. They helped build public support and political will to create an education system that would be better than responding to the growing demand for more equitable educational opportunities for all young people in Finland.

The first of these commissions was formed and started operating in 1945. It was focused on the primary school curriculum, and has offered the vision of a humanistic school with the child in its center. This commission also conducted field studies in 300 schools as part of its work.

The second commission, launched in 1946, focused on organizing the system and advocate to create a joint school (which covers grades 1-8) that would serve all students. However, this report had very big opposition from universities and gymnasium teachers that its recommendations did not come to an end. However, a decade later, the idea of a joint or inclusive school reappeared in the recommendations of the Commission for School Programs, and this time the idea got a green light. According to him, compulsory education in Finland should be held in the nine-year (1-9) municipal comprehensive period, in which the existing
private gymnasiums and public civic schools would be merged. This proposal launched a very important discussion of basic values and beliefs. Moving from a parallel form of school organization into a single comprehensive system was a challenge, and therefore was carried out slowly and carefully. Implementation began in 1972, initially in the north of Finland and gradually expanded to populated municipalities and cities in the south. The last, southern municipality to implement the new comprehensive system did it in 1977.

The process of developing the curriculum involved hundreds of teachers and was held over a five-year period (1965-1970). In the early 1970s, education policy makers realized that if they succeeded in successfully implementing these very ambitious, comprehensive school reforms, bringing all Finnish students to the same school and expecting to master the same curriculum, they would require not only different support systems, but also very different levels of understanding and knowledge from each teacher.

The story of the evolution of the Finnish education system over the past two decades has been inextricably linked with the development of the modern Finnish economy. The growth of a comprehensive school in the period from 1970 to 1990 should be viewed in the context of the development of the Finnish welfare state and national suppression for much greater social and economic equality. However, less visible but equally profound changes in Finnish schools over the past two decades should be considered in the context of the deep changes that are taking place in the Finnish economy. Today, Finland is also introducing changes to its education in a way that keeps up with the times, specifics of its society and economy, while respecting contemporary achievements and development. She understood the importance of education for the development of the country and attaches great importance to it. That's why her education system is among the best in the world.

**INTRODUCING CHANGES IN OUR PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Elementary school must be constantly changed to meet the needs of time and space. This implies a challenge to the turbulence of today, but even more demanding tomorrow. The same is for the requirements of the environment and for the requirements of our country and the education system of Serbia. Demands deepen and continue to primary school; to the needs of students, teachers, parents, the way of learning, but also on the way of school management, introduction, implementation and change management.

For all of these, there is a precondition for change, and these are the problems that have arisen from the changes. Problems in elementary school were and are still complex, and therefore, holistic approach is needed to solve them. Elementary school is an important subsystem of the education system and the introduction of changes in it, they are reflected on subsystems before and after it, which means to the entire system.

Analysis of the changes that have been introduced so far indicates that the changes have been introduced partially, sometimes with surgical cuts or cosmetic. All this proved to be a defect, and in the cybernetic sense, weakened the connections between the subsystems in the system. The education system has features of the stochastic system and as such is more problematic for the introduction of changes. In addition, he is bulky, multilayered and difficult to change. That is why it is important to do the right process from the introduction of changes to implementation and complete realization. If there is a problem, it is necessary
to determine correctly whether to introduce a change at all, because if the introduction of the change causes more damage than the benefits, then it is not necessary to introduce it. And the best change, may not produce a quality innovation, if it is introduced at the wrong time. As changes in our primary school often come with a delay, they also lack the right weight and effect because time has passed over them. It is also an important way of making changes. We are witnessing some changes in primary school that were taken over from others without taking into account our specificities, so that the high quality changes that in some countries yielded remarkable results have caused resistance and have not given any approximate effects. Changes should not be taken from others without making good analysis and determining the possibilities of their implementation in our country. Often, the smallest change causes a large number of changes in school organization. One problem requires many methods, modes, forms, and approaches, and its resolution can produce many changes. If access is holistic, high-quality, and implemented in the right way, the assumption is that the changes will be quality, innovative, and inventive. Of course, the factors on which this statement depends.

If we take as an example, the introduction of inclusive education with us. The Ministry and the competent services have made the decision to introduce inclusive education into our elementary school. Inclusive education has been introduced into the countries of the European Union and it is expected from our country to do the same. It’s done, but how? Teachers were not professionally trained for inclusion, they had to lead the already overly extensive, administration, there was a lot of ambiguity and confusion. The change that has been well developed in other countries has caused resistance in our country due to its introduction.

MANAGEMENT OF CHANGES

Managing change in primary school should mean changing, modifying, adaptation, but for better. This is the path to introducing innovations. It is known that every innovation is a change, but that every change is not an innovation. This is very specific to our education system and elementary school as its important subsystem. We went through many changes, but what were they like and whether they had any of the features of innovation at all? Did they have any new ideas, did they change the school for the better? The changes that have been introduced show that they really did change, but the final outcome was not quality, innovation, improvement, etc. The goal of introducing change in primary school should be to move from the current state to a higher level. That it was not often so shows us a historical calculation. The calculation is because we failed to introduce the changes that were called reforms, modern tendencies and similar names. This process was sometimes a mystery, sometimes something started, but then it started again in the second direction and the success of the changes was below the expected. If, for example, we take an example of matching the needs of the labor market and the number and profile that we have been educating for years, there is a mismatch. We have trained personnel for whom there was no need, and we paid the price of retraining, additional qualification, unemployment, going abroad and more. It costs a lot to the state.

Therefore, the changes that are introduced must have a purpose, justification and be well implemented. This requires good change management. We need quality, capable and expert management. Our education system is complex and bulky, so change management
is complex. Today’s school director should be a leader and understand the development of education. In addition, they should be skilled and have the skills to manage the school. That why it is important for the education system and for the state as a whole, which kind of school principals have. It implies a good election mechanism, but also everything else that a successful leader in the school needs to follow. Only in this way can he successfully respond to the introduction, management and implementation of changes in school. Considering the specific position of the school principal and the history of introducing changes and reforms in school, and therefore the resistance of employees towards change, the director’s role and responsibility is very important.

TEACHERS’ ATTITUDES TOWARDS CHANGES

Most of the changes and reforms introduced in our primary schools included teachers. Most often, they were the main bearers of the introduced changes. In order to change give some results, employees needed to agree with the changes, or at least understand them, so that the changes can be carried out.

From a positive example of Finland, teachers are one of the key factors for the success of introducing changes to schools. It is known that the success of the change depends on those who implement them i.e. from its acception to the realization. This is often the backbone of reforms. In Finland, this foundation is very solid because teachers have great historical respect for the state, a great deal of autonomy, much more power in decision making and a number of other factors. The mutual trust between the state and the teaching staff is one of the keys to good and successful reforms that resulted in Finland’s finest educational system. In our country, however, the situation is different. From the experience of Finland, in this segment we should teach and learn a lot.

RESISTANCE TO CHANGES

Considering that are introduced to schools, changes that is introduced already in the higher education system, there is great opportunities for teachers to provoke resistance. Teachers are not often involved in their creation and initiation, and this probability increases. There are situations where teachers or unions give opinions about a change, but it is not accepted or partially accepted, so there will be resistance to such a change.

The introduction of changes can cause the following manifestations of resistance:

- delays and delays in the initiation of change;
- unforeseen delays in implementation;
- inefficiency that slows down changes and makes costs greater than initially planned;
- attempts of individuals within school to sabotage changes.

There are other reasons, but certainly resistance is present in education. The state and unions are often at an instant or on opposite sides. Some changes, and especially those that announced a reduction in the number of workers, caused stress and fear for existence as well as great resistance and strikes at the beginning or during the school year. All this has
led to a complication of the situation because teachers are not the only factor here. If other circumstances such as pupils, parents, local self-government and a number of other factors are taken into account, then resistance also gets its meaning. Therefore, this should be taken care of because the educational system is complex, bulky and layered. It is known that such systems are “difficult” for the introduction of changes, especially those where there is no timely information, where changes in the past have yielded bad results, and thus caused disappointment and unbelievable teachers, where teachers did not have a partner or participatory role, where the politics were mixed in the profession and where the schools were unprepared and professionally trained.

**INTERPRATATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS**

The research was conducted in the period in December 2017 (4th - 22th of December). **Aim** of research: Examine the attitudes of primary school teachers towards changes in school

**Tasks:**
1. Examine the teachers’ opinion on the introduction of school changes so far;
2. Examine the teacher’s opinion on how to make changes to school;
3. Determine whether changes are causing resistance among teachers;
4. Examine the attitude of teachers about change initiators and their involvement in making changes.

**Survey sample:** A survey on teachers’ attitudes towards the introduction of changes was carried out on a sample of 100 primary school teachers from the area of Surčin municipality. The sample is layered, ie it was examined teachers of class teaching, teachers of subject teaching and professional associates.

![Teacher Attitudes Towards Introducing Change]

**Table 1.** - Teacher attitudes towards introducing change
The research instrument was a questionnaire of 10 questions. All respondents had the same questions. The questions were polytomnic choice. The survey was anonymous. The survey received a high response rate of over 98%.

**Hypothesis:** Teachers believe that the changes introduced in elementary schools initiated from above, that they did not have much participation in them, did not give the desired results, and as such caused resistance from teachers.

The research limit is a small sample.

1. Teachers consider the introduction of the current changes as a worsening of the situation in the school.

The rationale for such a high percentage of responses to worsening school conditions could be classified into several categories:

- The introduction of the changes so far has not yielded good results;
- The introduction of changes condition is getting worse
- Different answers: because teachers are not asked any questions, because students were given a lot of rights, because there was abuse, “paperwork” was increased, and so on.

Teachers in small numbers, 7% believe that the changes so far have brought improvement to schools for several reasons:

- they brought the innovation
- new methods, forms, teaching modes
- broke monotony
- for better work ...

Part of the teachers - 10% think that some changes were good and some were bad.

2. Teachers are also in a very high percentage (96.42%) think that changes are made in the wrong way.

![Table 2. - Resistance to employees](image-url)
3. The vast majority of teachers believe that the changes that have been introduced have provoked resistance among employees.

4. The reason for this is:
   - They are too fast
   - We are not sufficiently informed
   - Teachers do not asked
   - We are not ready for change

5. Teachers think that changes are most often initiated by the ministry, and very few schools and other factors such as: the international community, the European Union and the environment.

![WHO INITIATES CHANGES](chart.png)

**Table 3.** - Initiators of change

Other factors include: the International Community, the European Union, the environment, the one who gives money and so on.

![HOW TEACHERS ARE ABLE TO INITIATE CHANGES](chart.png)

**Table 4.** How much teachers are able to initiate changes.

6. The attitude of teachers is that they are very little or not able to initiate changes.
7. The attitude of two-thirds of respondents is that teachers are not familiar with the changes in time.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHETHER EMPLOYEES ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE CHANGES IN TIME</th>
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<tr>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25%</td>
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Table 5. - Whether employees are familiar with the changes in time.

8. What change do you consider to be the best in the last couple of years?
   - Introduction of informatics;
   - Introduction of an electronic journal;
   - Parts of the new law relating to the responsibility of parents and students;
   - Advanced training.
   - one.

9. For the worst change that has been introduced, the largest percentage considers inclusion because it is not introduced in a good way. In addition to this, they also indicate overload with administration, salary reduction, parental involvement, mixing in teacher work, most changes, and so on.

10. Teacher’s opinions about introducing new school changes are divided into 2 groups:
   - The 1st group consists of teachers’ answers that believe in new changes; that it will bring something new, better and more;
   - A second group of teachers who do not expect anything new and better than introducing changes in the future.

CONCLUSION

Changes introduced and it will be introduced in primary school are necessary and inevitable. This is because the school has to change according to needs and time. That is why the ability to introduce and manage changes is very important, as acceptance and implementation of changes by teachers and professional associates, as well as by other school staff, will be better. Good acceptance of changes is one of the assumptions and their successful introduction and the very success of their realization, or results. Survey conducted on the
sample of teachers in the Surčin municipality shows that the changes that have been made so far, the method of their introduction and the given result, are considered by the teachers as unsuccessful. Teachers think that changes are necessary but not the ones that have been introduced so far and in the way they were introduced. The result is also the resistance of teachers and professional associates towards them.

**LITERATURE**


