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(Bio)ethical education of the young people in Macedonia

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Abstract

Since 1998 there has been a campaign for including the ethical and bioethical education in Macedonia. After years of struggle with the Ministry and Biro of education, this process has been made, not only with the explanation on the meaning of these sciences, their essential need, the necessity of educating the young in these areas, the content of these kinds of education..., but as well as like practical pedagogical activity in different schools and on different educational levels - from kindergarten to Master and doctoral studies where bioethical education mainly was introduced as a part from ethical education.

Keywords

ethical education; bioethical themes; young people; practical pedagogical activity; educational system.

I. Introduction

Today Bioethics is very important and complex field of thinking and activity. Even though it is a young science, it is on top of human's necessities and visions. Every day some new questions enter in the centre of bioethical mind, issues and discussions above all. Meanwhile, a lot of efforts are invested in debates whether bioethics is and must be bounded primarily on the medical sphere (medicine, vet, nursery, pharmacy, biological investigations treating human lives...) or it is more correct to treat bioethics as a broader, large discipline, like some modern practical ethics, in general. These questions, which cause

scientific argues, cannot be solved empirically - each one stands still in this debate for the moment! That's why good faith and collaboration of all experts who have duty to promote bioethics and its benefits are more than needed.

At the same time, knowing this, the bioethical education cannot wait the definitive settlement of the scientific dissertation and the scientific purity of bioethics or the specific status of bioethics as professional or general science and practice, meaning whether the nature of bioethics is primarily biological or ethical. Knocking strong at our doors, many problems of health, environment pollution, violence, conflicts, human indolence, criminal deeds, as well as bad behaviors of different kinds comes to the core of the humankind. All of those problems are searching serious and fast human action. That's why it is very important to introduce bioethical education to all people!

In reality, the bioethical praxis and science started the same time as the development of ethical education, which included all young people (as well as older, if possible!). It is so because a bioethical theme complex is a matter not only for scientists and specialists, but concerns also every human - even all living and non-living beings on Earth - so everyone must be educated in this new and complicated area, which is together spiritual and technical. Even more, knowing that, beside a numerous philosophical, social and pedagogical issues, the most important things in every educational system and section are the content and method. The aspect of its content is more interesting question for the bioethical education. It is so because it is a new kind of education in which its topics and messages participate, as well, in the construction of the Bioethics in common, as a new science and a field that people are acting on.

II. The development of the idea and practice of ethical and bioethical education in Macedonia

Since 1998 there has been a campaign for including the ethical and also bioethical education in Republic of Macedonia. For at least 12 years in a row prof. Kiril Temkov wrote and published in major journals and other kind of media an open call to the Ministry of education to include first Ethics, and then Bioethics as an educational subject in all level of educational processes, or at least to allow realization of the experimental ethical and bioethical education [1].

After years of struggle with the Ministry and Biro of education, this process has been made, not only with the explanation on the meaning of these sciences, their essential need, the necessity of educating the young in these areas, the content of these kinds of education..., but as well as like **practical pedagogical activity** in different schools and on different educational levels - from kindergarten to Master studies where bioethical education mainly was introduced as a part from ethical education.

There has been large and extensive experimental teaching (course) of Ethics in high schools, as well as in primary education and in kindergartens. Also, at the beginning of last decade from past century, a bioethical chapter was introduced in the studies of Ethics and History of Ethics for the future philosophy teachers, as well as in the education of other students from different faculties.

A. Experimental teaching in high schools and faculties

In 1998 there was an action of introducing Ethical education in all level of education. The initiator of the process – prof. Kiril Temkov, developed a program for experimental ethical and also bioethical education in Macedonian high schools in four towns. Educational aims were to explore the possibilities of understanding and communication by young generations between 15-19 years with ethical-bioethical problems and values. In two of them (specialized biotechnical schools), in Agriculture-Veterinary High School in Drachevo, Skopje and in Agriculture-Forestry School in Kavadarci, teachers Marija Taseva and dr. Jovan Lozanovski were teaching Bioethics for the first time on high school level.

All questions of ethical education in these two schools had bioethical perspectives - understanding the position of human beings in the world and the proposed bioethical value system and moral norms. The program was composed of special lectures like notion of Bioethics, history of Bioethics, especially ideas of Bioethics, the developed system of human thinking, evaluation and activity under dimensions of Bioethics... So this pedagogical experiment had a sense of bioethical education with general orientation as well as with contents of lessons, examples and knowledge.

Even more, in the high school in Drachevo, a Centre for researches in ethical and bioethical education of youth was founded with an intention to grow up in an Institute for this kind of education. But, the political passion of changing the principals in the schools and discharging the useful spiritual and educative initiatives brought to discontinuance on the work of the Centre for which a special 4 years program for continuous bioethical education on high school students was established, but unfortunately, only 2 years course with one group was realized. A chance for bioethical education in high schools as well as for using extended experience in this field in science and the other level of education was stopped. At the same time, an effort for organizing this kind of experimental ethical teaching in Skopje, in the biggest biotechnical high school, was stopped by the Ministry of education which didn't allow it, so we had experience only with two years of education.

Still, the good thing is that the former school master, Jovan Lozanovski finished his dissertation on methods of ethical education, as first PhD on this matter in Macedonia. His results after the dissertation were published in prof. Kiril Temkov's book "Good, Better, The Best" (Ethics and Youth) [2] where methods of ethical-bioethical education in high schools were explained and also the educational programs for this experimental education were analyzed, which later on were a ground for the programs for ethical education in II and in III class (10 and 11 grade) in Gymnasium in Macedonia.

On the level of higher education, the activity for launching the ethical education in Macedonia, gave the biggest contribution in the process of propagating the idea for Bioethics. At first, in education of young teachers of philosophy there was an introduction on bioethical questions in their study of Ethics and the History of Ethics and then a special course of Ecological ethics in basic studies. A few years ago on the Faculty of philosophy under the name "Foundations of Bioethics" [3], it became an elective subject. Also there was a proposal Bioethics to be a special subject in Master studies of Philosophy, an idea that had its partial realization finally in 2012 [4], when I pushed through the Faculty of Law the

program of Bioethics that was and still is an elective course for all students of this faculty on Master program.

Meanwhile, in 1998, Faculty of Philosophy referred to all faculties the letter of prof. Temkov for the necessity of introducing the ethical education to students and for promoting the bioethical research and course, as well as developing of ethics on science (as two special tasks from UNESCO, with goals to participate in international link for both fields). Few years later, there was a proposal to the Faculty of Agriculture and to the Forestry to introduce Bioethics as a subject in their basic studies, but ended with no answer and sense for this matter. Parallel, the new programs and education in Ethics for students of Psychology, Pedagogy, Journalism, Faculty of Arts and other sciences Bioethics, in time, became main content, but not a subject [5].

In this context, one of the main ideas for introducing bioethical thinking is the effort to put Bioethics in the field of scientific development as a subject of Master or PHD studies in all fields, as part of Ethics of science which have to be obligatory for every kind of post studies. This project was presented on round table concerning this matter on St. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje in June 2007 (materials are edited under title "Ethics in contemporary science". Since then, Bioethics is a 30% from the core content of the obligatory course "Ethics of scientific research" on a doctoral school [6].

B. Experimental teaching in prime schools and kindergarten

Even the whole process started with the idea that all children must study Ethics and Bioethics (idea and suggestion by UNESCO), the same happened in 2000 with the experimental ethical education in sixth grade of primary school where children of 12 years learned the basic ethical knowledge, the most important moral values as well as the special questions and norms of Bioethics. This was subject of the MA work by Ilinka Torbovska-Smilevska [7]. The lessons and other similar texts for this education were weekly published in well knowing children review "Kolibri" in our oldest journal "Nova Makedonija" during two years from 2000 to 2002 (part of these texts was translated into Bulgarian and were used in civic education there). A complete book with this material was prepared for publishing under the title "Love and Care" (Ethics for the Youngest) [8], as basic ethical and bioethical values in our time.

After that, the most overall was the experiment carried out in second and third grade in the prime school "Vlado Tasevski" in Skopje in 2003/04 and 2004/05. The teacher was Ljubica Topuzoska, graduated pedagogue, who studied MA in philosophy. The two years conducted experiment in her class was a solid base for its master publication "Ethical education in class teaching" [9] in 2004 and then doctoral dissertation "Forms and methods of ethical education in class teaching" [10] in 2006.

First of all, in the teaching process in second grade, a method of **Example and Edification** was used. Over 80 ethical stories were created (all of them were regularly published every Tuesdays in the most famous newspaper in Macedonia "Nova Makedonia", in "Kolibri" (2003-2004) - nevertheless these materials were available for reading and discussion to a large number of children in many schools). In second semester the content of ethical education was divided into six areas, two of them complete bioethical - Health

and the Environmental care. These texts several years after, in 2007 were published into a book called "Ethics for Children" [11]. Also, a special tread was given as well as to the "Ecological lexicon" [12] as additional material in teaching.

In third grade, this young class learned Ethics in two forms - in first semester the methods were **Dilemmas** and **making Choice**, in the second was **Moral Evaluation**. In special kinds of texts some ethical-bioethical cases were presented in front of the children in which the main heroes were children and it was requested from them to tell what will they do in particular case. The bioethical themes from these 20 texts were correlated with the personal hygiene, the relations between kids who are practicing violence, the problem with noise and powder rockets on New Year's Eve etc. Later on, in the next semester children were asked to come up and tell their ethical evaluation for somebody's behavior. Here, as bioethical themes were taken different forms of child's cultural social behavior (dance, help etc.), the questions of first love, relations between brother and sister, meeting with the strange world and etc. Two texts were nice accepted by the children. They were related with the problem of plants rapture and the question of keeping home pats and flowers received as a gift, the duty and responsibility that everyone has to take care for them as a life being.

In that time, the bioethical content was pretty much represented in one particular ethical-pedagogical material - the first ethical strip (comic) in Macedonia "Angela and Angel from 1-a". In 2004/05, 19 posters were made and another 19 in 2005/06 with interactive reading materials. The idea was to bring bioethical themes closer to children. That's why the comic had the aim to present the life and school cases of two friends from the neighbors who are going in school together in 1st grade. Most of the texts were with bioethical character: personal hygiene and the hygiene in home and at school, regular nutrition, nonviolent relations between children, children's games in nature, weather seasons, and meeting with animals and love for them, comparing the life in different environments (the village and town) and etc.

As a continuation of the process it was necessary to go down and reach the kindergarten period. In 4 kindergartens in Skopje in period of two years (2003-2005) ethical education was made concerning matters of Love, Non-violence, Peace, Help, and Good Behavior. There were many stories, designs, children shows, schools for teachers and for parents etc. A special game with eco-bioethical content on recognizing the home of animals and their generations, on plants and their fruits, on the way how they should be kept, expressed love for natural creatures, the child's behavior toward nature etc. were prepared. Even a TV film on this interesting event was made. Documents and ideas were published later in the book "Ethics and Love" [13]. Thanks to this, today same kindergarten ensembles have a special Ecological education for the little boys and girls as kind of their bioethical (human) raise.

III. Additional forms of spreading ethical and bioethical education for young people

Since the time when experimental course for ethics and bioethics were made, a lot of materials were published and disseminated. First of all, the materials from prof. Temkov regarding the experimental teaching, then monographies, proceedings, thematic blocks, articles....

A serial of lessons was made with the first bioethical texts and lessons in Macedonia for the experimental ethical-bioethical education, published also in a weekly magazine. Later on this was a base for the book “Good, Better, The Best” (Ethics and youth), first edited in large format as a private edition, translated into Serbian and after that edited in Macedonia in the same form [14]. In this book prof. Temkov wrote lessons on Bioethics, Ecological Ethics, Ethics of Health and Ethics of addictions, included in the experimental teaching of Ethics in primary school – in the 6th class (2000), in the second class (2003/2004) and in work with 5-6 years children in value education in the kindergarten (2004).

There are also the texts and books: “Love and Care” (Ethics for the Youngest) and “Ethics for Children”, where definition of Bioethics, survey of development, fields and values of Bioethics, moral norms in Bioethics, future tendencies in Bioethics were built.

After that, in his book “Ethics today” [15], he wrote special parts “Bioethics” and “Addictions and Drugs” and revealed how the status of ethics today is changed – from ethics of virtue in ethics on being of humanity and nature. Especially introduced and expound were Bioethics, Ecological ethics, Ethics on health, Ethics on infective decease and Ethics of addictions, especially drugs because today, the most important bioethical dimensions are included in moral aspects on personal, social, domestic, economical and political ethics like values and task.

In this context there were “Ethical dictionary for Youth” [16], “Ecological basic textbook” [17], and many more, as well as new school books for high school on ethical education: “Ethics for II class” [18] and “Ethics for III class” [19] Gymnasium. In all of these books for young people, Bioethics is presented as the most significant ethical problem today. This is something new, because Bioethics mainly is concentrating in specialized activity and education of specialists for particular professions (medicine, biology...), and it is “not a part of wide base on comprehensive education with a mission to build a wide bioethical consciousness in everybody” [20] (pp. 152-170).

In the series “Ethicians”, which were first published in the magazine “Start” (2003-2004) and later on as a book “Ethicians – 100 most important philosophers of moral: From Zarathustra to Bioethics” [21], between the most important ethical thinkers in human history the ideas of Albert Schweitzer, Pavao Vuk-Pavlovic, Rachele Carson, Peter Singer and others old and new ethicians with bioethical meaning were introduced.

In 2004 the Ethical Centre was founded in Skopje, where the first seminar for students was dedicated on problems of drugs, and later on about other important bioethical issues.

There is the legacy of MA thesis: “Ethical education in class teaching” by Ljubica Topuzovska, “Ethical education in high schools in Macedonia” by Jovan Lozanovski [22], “Ethics as a subject in prime schools” by Ilinka Torbovska-Smilevska..., and doctoral dissertations: “Forms and methods of ethical education in class teaching” by Ljubica Topuzoska, “Forms, methods and means in teaching ethics in high schools” by Jovan Lozanovski [23] ..., in which the urgent need and forms on bioethical education as a part of the ethical education were presented.

Finally, for achieving this level of treatment, beside the efforts of prof. Temkov and the associates for opening the doors for Bioethics in the academic world in Macedonia, there is also the realization of the thematic block “Bioethics: Occurrence, Challenges and

Opportunities” [24], edited by me in the scientific journal “Philosophy” from 2011. In addition, there is the Proceedings from the first international interdisciplinary conference “Bioethics – The sign of a new era: Bioethics, media, law and medicine” [25], that I organized with the Faculty of Law and the Centre for integrative bioethics from Kumanovo, the same year in Ohrid, Macedonia. So, the ground was prepared for further actions of involving and implementing Bioethics in educational system in Macedonia.

IV. Conclusion

The context of ethical education of young people in Macedonia is often dedicated to the bioethical themes and problems. They learn these questions very easy. Especially children who love the stories about the animals, plants, and they are very interested for the bioethical side of the existence. So, the bioethical themes are best for introduction in ethics, and at same time, it ennobles the ethical conscience with intimate relation with nature and living beings. Just for example, the experimental ethical teaching in second and third grade in Skopje showed that the bioethical content is unavoidable element in the construction of the new young persons who will live in one new world of understanding, good human relations and proper behavior toward nature. This experimental teaching showed that the children were very interested for/in bioethical issues, (the bioethical themes easily found a path to their hearts). Also, these researches used and analyzed the methods of ethical-bioethical education through edification, dilemma-choice and evaluation, as the best three methods for ethical education for young people. Even more, the used method of ethical-bioethical education for young people showed it to be very interactive, in the same time discovered the route of the contemporary ethical education of the youngest children.

To conclude, the manifestations of Bioethics together with its theoretical explications have the same importance as practical ethics. In the future, the Ethics might become Bioethics, because the meaning of the biological factors on living are too important (life, nature, man as basic categories on bioethics), especially in epoch when they are violated and endangered from various sites and as well as from people's bad behavior. That is why we are engaging for ethical education as a new kind of ethical-pedagogical activity that we want to involve in all levels of education, so we can be prepared to understand and to implement the new intentions of human living which are expressed through syntagma and reality of Bioethics.

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