



Education of School Pedagogues for Sustainable Development – A Case Study in the Republic of Serbia*

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Abstract: Education for sustainable development is a very current field and there are lots of research on the importance of this strategy. The paper analyzes the concept and shows the ways of educating school pedagogues for sustainable development in the Republic of Serbia. The main goal of the introduction and work of the service of school pedagogues is the application of modern theoretical and practical knowledge from pedagogy in the improvement of educational practice through 11 areas that include: planning and programming of educational work; implementation of the teaching and educational process; monitoring and evaluation of school work; improvement of educational work and cooperation with teachers; work and cooperation with students; cooperation with parents; research of educational practice; work in professional institute; cooperation with professional institutions, the local community and professional development; documentation management; preparation for work. School pedagogues are obliged to include jobs from all fields in their annual work program. The results of this research show that within these areas education for sustainable development permeates, but that there is no separate area. The research is focused on the question of how we can encourage the actors of the educational process and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia about the importance of education for sustainable development.

1. INTRODUCTION

In science, there are many definitions of sustainable development. However, there is no single and generally accepted definition of the concept of sustainable development. The definition of sustainable development (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987) is most often cited as sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present, without questioning the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The etymology of the term “sustainable development” comes from the word “sustainable”, which refers to the ability to support or maintain something, and the word “development”, which means the process of growth or progress. Sustainable comes from the Latin word “sustinere”, which means “to hold, support”. This word is associated with the idea of maintaining balance and resources for future generations. The development comes from the Latin word “evolutio”, which means “to develop”. In the context of sustainable development, it means the process of improving society, economy and ecology. The combination of these concepts emphasizes the need for development that does not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Education for sustainable development is a concept created as a response to the challenges of the development of modern society. It is one of the key mechanisms that should enable development

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that meets the needs of the present without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their needs (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987).

Sustainability refers to a development model that fulfills current needs while ensuring that future generations can meet theirs. This comprehensive approach takes into account the social, environmental, and economic consequences of present-day actions and decisions (Enel, 2023).

Education for sustainable development is an important aspect of the life and work of all actors in education: teachers, parents, students, school principal, professional associates. Education should give young people competences with which they can act in solving challenges in new century. Education must be transformative to empower people to act in the direction of changes as well as to resist those unwanted changes. Teachers, pedagogues, and all actors of the educational system are at a turning point. This paper aims to research the areas of school pedagogues work that concern education for sustainable development.

2. WORK AREAS OF SCHOOL PEDAGOGUES IN THE FUNCTION OF EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The challenges of the school pedagogue in the 21st century are numerous, and the areas of his work rest on a distinct awareness of constant changes in the educational system. Trnavac (2007) determined in his research that pedagogues mostly deal with the following triad: work with students, work with teachers and work with parents. The specificity of the work of a school pedagogue can be illustrated by the presentation of the areas of work of a school pedagogue found in the *Final proposal of the work program of a school pedagogue in primary and secondary schools* (Zlatic, 2021): Planning and programming of educational work: 2-4 hours per week; Realization of the teaching and educational process: 1-3 hours per week; Monitoring and evaluation of school work: 1-3 hours per week; Improvement of educational work and cooperation with teachers: 5-7 hours per week; Work and cooperation with students: 7-9 hours a week; Cooperation with parents: 1-3 hours per week; Research of educational practice: 2-4 hours per week; Work in state bodies: 1-3 hours per week; Cooperation with professional institutions, the local community and professional development: 0.5-1.5 hours per week; Document management: 0.5-1.5 hours per week; Preparation for work: 10 hours per week.

School pedagogues are required to include tasks from all 11 areas in their annual work program. Which jobs from each of these areas they will favor and how much time they will plan for which of these areas depends on the pedagogues themselves, the conditions in which they work, the environment in which they work, the students, on what will be their priority for that school year. In doing so, they must bear in mind that the time they plan for a particular area must be within the limits of the time specified for each of the 11 areas. So, for example, for the first area, Planning and programming of educational work, the pedagogue can determine in his Annual Program at least 2, and at most 4 hours, and so on until the last area, Preparation for work, where we foresee 10 hours a week. Such a solution provides the necessary autonomy for school pedagogues and schools because they work in different conditions, and at the same time, the necessary complexity and comprehensiveness of the issues on which the school pedagogue works are ensured (Zlatic, 2021). Through the system of university education of future pedagogues, students are prepared for permanent participation in the planning and programming of school work, for the organization of educational and other activities in it, for analytical and research activities in the function of improving educational practice, as well as for the performance of all previously presented areas work performed by a pedagogue who is employed at the school.

Planning and programming of the work of the school as a whole or of individual educational activities represents the basic and initial stage in the general concern of the pedagogue about the school where he works. Through plans and programs, first of all, he takes care of the general function of the school, as well as its development. The answer to the question of what is done at school can be found in the plans, programs and work preparations of all subjects, for all programs and all types of activities. Trnavac (1993) talks about the direct work of a school pedagogue on planning as direct involvement in the creation of his work plan and program and those programs for which he is responsible for implementation. The school pedagogue has the following duties in this area (Regulations on the program of all forms of work of professional associates, 2012): Participation in the development of the educational plan of the self-evaluator and the development plan of the institution; Participation in the development of the annual work plan of the institution and its individual parts; Preparation of annual and monthly work plans of pedagogues; Participation in the preparation of an individual educational plan for students; Participation in innovative types of teaching planning and other forms of educational work; Participation in the selection and proposals of department heads; Participation in the selection and conception of various extracurricular and extracurricular activities; Assisting teachers in the development of plans for supplementary work, additional work, practical classes and sections, and the like. Trnavac (1993) emphasizes that there are four groups of work of a school pedagogue in this area: Basics of planning and programming (to collect laws, norms, regulations, instructions, curricula and programs); Annual school work plans and programs (as a whole and by segments); Planning, programming and preparation of immediate educational work; Creation of own work plan and program. Participation in the planning and programming of educational work is one of the most important tasks of a school pedagogue, because it contributes to the planned and organized realization of the plan and program of the school's educational work, and at the same time, it is an opportunity to modernize and rationalize the educational practice.

Monitoring, measurement and evaluation are the three fundamental categories of a single process that forms the essential basis of the modern organization of school work. Most authors define evaluation as a way to get feedback on the achievement of the goal of educational work (Hebib, 1997, p. 165-179; Jurić, 2004; Trnavac, 1993). Trnavac (1993) claims that if the feedback system is good (monitoring, measurement, evaluation), it will cause positive changes in the behavior of all participants in educational work. He further points out that the basic meaning of evaluation is feedback, and its function is to improve the educational work of the school. It can be said that evaluation is immanent in the process of education and that it is a prerequisite for the continuity of educational work (Hebib, 1997). Like his closest colleagues in the work (teachers), the school pedagogue must confirm his ability to meaningfully use the pedagogical theory in practice, to check, confirm and supplement it, because this creates the conditions for its constant change and improvement (Kopas-Vukašinović & Maksimović, 2011). There are no limits in the application of evaluation because any procedure, flow, process, or result can be evaluated.

Monitoring and evaluating the work of teachers implies (Trnavac, 1993): Monitoring and evaluating the preparation of teachers for educational work; Monitoring and evaluating the organization of the educational process; monitoring and evaluating of professional development of teachers in their work; monitoring and evaluating the quality of the cooperation between teachers and students' parents; Public-professional performances and procedures, techniques and instruments for self-evaluation of teachers in the educational process. Trnavac (1993) means monitoring and evaluating the results achieved by students: Monitoring students in teaching (knowledge tests, check-lists, graphs of student achievements, etc.); Monitoring and evaluating the content of student

activities in free time; Monitoring and evaluation of students' attitudes towards their duties (guard on duty, occasional duties in the class community, etc.); Evaluation of students in the realization of social service tasks; Monitoring and evaluation of interests, moral attitudes and values; Evaluation of social behavior and adaptation of students and procedures and instruments of self-evaluation of students.

The basis of cooperation between school pedagogues and teachers is mutual influence due to the achievement of common goals. They should jointly prepare, implement, analyze and evaluate the work, but also jointly find solutions to achieve better results. In the daily work of a school pedagogue, pedagogic-instructional work is not something separate and special and takes place simultaneously and as part of all other activities. When we talk about pedagogic-instructional work, [Hebib \(1997\)](#) means the field of work of pedagogues whose main purpose is pedagogical, i.e. professional teaching of teachers so that they perform their work better. [Trnavac \(1993\)](#) defines this term as helping and instructing in solving various difficulties and problems in educational work and jointly finding solutions to improve that relationship.

The work of a school pedagogue in the field of improving educational work and cooperation with teachers includes the following ([Regulations on the program of all forms of work of professional associates, 2012](#); [Zlatić, 2021](#)): Specifying and operationalizing the goals and tasks of educational work and, in accordance with them, selecting appropriate content, forms, methods and means of educational work; Help in designing lessons with as much active teaching, cooperative forms of teaching, individualized and differentiated teaching as possible; Initiating the improvement of teaching work from the process of transferring knowledge to the learning process; Providing assistance in the professional development of teachers and their participation in seminars, i.e. accredited programs; Examining the causes of problems that arise in educational work; Instructing teachers to use professional literature in order to modernize the teaching process; Cooperation with teachers for the creation of didactic materials, collection and use of materials; Monitoring the method of keeping teachers' pedagogical documentation; Cooperation and assistance to department heads in quality performance of this role, etc. In the very phase of teaching planning, the pedagogue can instructively direct teachers to basic examples of good planning, to an adequate choice of forms of work and teaching methods, as well as to orientation towards individual differences and age characteristics of students ([Stamatović, 2005](#)). The successful cooperation of pedagogues and teachers will result in the adoption of effective conclusions by teachers, with the unobtrusive help of pedagogues, in resolving a pedagogical problem.

The pedagogue in the school, in cooperation with the students, helps them to better understand and get to know themselves, to assess their possibilities, to harmonize their wishes and desires with others, to solve their problems, and to change their behavior. The work of a school pedagogue with students is primarily reflected in the provision of support and assistance in various forms of student work at school. Apart from the problems, the pedagogue is an important support for students in the ups and downs of their work. The educational process of teachers and students, as well as pedagogues, goes through certain stages: the first is related to study, then pedagogical guidance and pedagogical counseling. The pedagogue focuses on the child who is in the role of a student and monitors his behavior, relationship with other children, changes that occur at school, and family. Based on the results collected by the pedagogue in his work with the students, the director and the school administration can more relevantly look at the general situation in the school and prepare for better systems of leadership and management of the educational process and the school ([Simić, 2012](#)). The basic fields of work of pedagogues with students include: getting

to know the position of children in the conditions of their development, examination of readiness and maturity for inclusion in individual schooling programs, monitoring of their overall development, especially progress in school work and learning, and pedagogical-instructional, i.e. advisory educational work with students (Trnavac, 1993).

The areas of school pedagogue work in this area presented in the *Regulations on the program of all forms of work of professional associates* (2012) are: Examining a child enrolled in elementary school; Monitoring of children's development and progress; Monitoring student workload (content, time, scope and type and method of engagement of the child or student); Creating optimal conditions for the individual development of the child or student and providing help and support; Identifying and working to eliminate pedagogical causes of problems in learning and behavior; Analyzing proposals and suggestions of students for improving the work of the school and helping in their implementation; Participation in enhanced educational work for a student who violates the rules of behavior at school or does not comply with the decisions of the director and school authorities, is unjustifiably absent from classes for five hours, or whose behavior endangers others in exercising their rights. The school pedagogue can help students indirectly and directly, indirectly by creating favorable conditions for the normal development of children at school, and directly by helping them with advice.

Advisory educational work, in a certain way, is carried out by everyone who educates children and youth - parents, educators, teachers, school principals, mass media, etc. However, the advisory educational work performed by the school pedagogue has an institutionalized form, planned and programmed and methodically considered. Counseling is not a lecture but a form of direct communication. For the school, the most important thing is counseling for the purpose of educational activities, which the school pedagogue deals with (Simić, 2012). Student counseling does not only apply to students who have learning and behavioral problems, but also to students who are gifted, who have special aptitudes and interests, and who want to express their creativity.

Family and school are two basic factors of education. These are two institutions that are jointly interested in the student's development and progress, so it is important to emphasize that their constant cooperation is necessary. It is realized through various forms, from individual consultations, parent meetings, and organized work of parents through the school's Parents' Council, by involving parents in extracurricular activities of the school (actions, forums, sections...) and the like. Working with parents, the school pedagogue programs organizes, undertakes, monitors and evaluates all those activities that will favorably affect the overall development of the child (student) and the work of the school (Trnavac, 1993). In direct work with parents, advisory work dominates, and in indirect work, all those activities in which others participate, that is, teachers, school management, department heads, and influence the behavior and involvement of parents and families in raising children. The pedagogue achieves cooperation with parents through pedagogically organized work. Forms of work are mostly individual and group. Individual cooperation with parents involves informing parents about student development, pedagogical instructions and advice for overcoming the problems that have arisen. The pedagogue can organize thematic parent meetings for groups of parents, parents of one class or one class. These parent meetings also aim to educate parents and are realized in the form of forums, courses, seminars and workshops. Another form of cooperation between pedagogues and parents is the formation of counseling centers for parents (Stamatović, 2005). For the development of interpersonal communication between pedagogues and parents, the first contact is very important, because it is then that mutual action occurs. Both sides should take care of the impression they will leave, if it is positive it will inspire the will for further cooperation, i.e. interaction.

In the system of modern upbringing and education, the role and importance of analytical and research work of pedagogues is emphasized. At the same time, analytical work means the analysis of general conditions for the implementation of educational work and the analysis of the results of the implemented educational process, and research work is the realization of the so-called small studies of school practice and participation in the implementation of research organized and carried out by scientific and research institutions (Hebib & Matović, 2012). Therefore, the analytical-research work of pedagogues, in the conditions of school work, should not be identified with scientific-research work, in terms of norms, levels and strict control of conditions. It is about analyzes and research in relatively modest, school conditions, but which must be professionally and scientifically based (Trnavac, 1993).

As a professional associate in the school, the pedagogue is the bearer of projects that are implemented in schools. These projects thematically cover a wide area of activity, in relation to teachers, students, parents and the wider social community. It can be concluded that the professionalism of pedagogues in the modern school system implies the research of educational practice, in the function of its improvement (Kopas-Vukašinović & Maksimović, 2011). When determining the research problem, the school pedagogue, in addition to taking into account the existing situation in practice, must inevitably use relevant theoretical knowledge. The pedagogue most often discovers potential research problems through his work. Other participants in the educational process (students, teachers, parents, principals, etc.) can also encourage and indicate questions that should be the subject of research. In these researches, respondents can be participants in the educational process, e.g. students, teachers, teachers, parents, principals, representatives of the local community, etc. However, respondents in these researches can also be textbooks, teaching contents, educational activities, etc. The research conducted by the pedagogue in the school is not undertaken to generalize the obtained results from the sample to the population. The main reason for this is contained in the fact that the purpose of this research is to help the pedagogue in solving the specific problems he encounters in his work at school (Hebib & Matović, 2012). In this area, the pedagogue performs the following types of work (Zlatic, 2021): Research and review of the general conditions for conducting educational work in the school; Research of existing educational practice and specific problems and needs of the school; Participation in testing the level and quality of student knowledge; Research on the workload of students with school duties; Research of practical application in teaching practice of knowledge and skills acquired at many seminars and educational programs, etc. It could be concluded that the school pedagogue cannot successfully fulfill his role in the school without systematic and continuous analytical-research work. Therefore, analytical-research work could be understood not only as one area of work of a school pedagogue, but as an approach and starting point in performing the role of a professional associate in the school. A complete pedagogue must have the desire, will and ability to constantly improve and change his educational practice through research work. Also, he needs to be able to recognize problems in the school that he can investigate.

The work of pedagogues in state bodies includes the areas of work of school pedagogues in this area, which are presented in the Regulations on the program of all forms of work of professional associates (2012). It is about the following: Participation in the work of the educational, teacher's council, that is, the pedagogical council (by issuing announcements, providing information about the results of analyses, reviews, research and other activities of importance for educational work and strengthening of teacher competencies); Participating in the work of teams, councils, assets and commissions at the level of the institution that are formed to achieve a specific task, program or project; Participation in the work of the pedagogical collegium, pedagogical councils and

professional assets for development planning and development of the preschool, school program, that is, the program of educational work; Proposing measures to improve the work of state bodies of the institution.

Cooperation with professional institutions, the local community and the professional training of pedagogues is aimed at ensuring continuity in monitoring and guiding the development of students. At the same time, the school pedagogue cooperates with professional associates of preschool institutions, secondary schools and other elementary schools. This cooperation is intended for the exchange of experiences, solving problems related to the transfer of students from one school to another, ensuring continuity when including students in various forms of individualized work, free and social activities, etc. Also, the participation of pedagogues is significant in the development of professional training for teachers and other professional associates of the school. His participation is reflected, first of all, in proposing topics that serve the purpose of improving and modernizing educational practices. The job of a school pedagogue in this area of work is as follows (Regulations on the program of all forms of work of professional associates, 2012; Zlatić, 2021): Cooperation with educational, health, social, scientific, cultural and other institutions that contribute to the achievement of the goals and tasks of educational work; Cooperation with secondary schools; Creation of the concept of the plan and program of professional development of teachers and professional associates in the school; Work on own professional development; Participation in mentoring work with interns and their introduction to work; Establishing cooperation with the local community and realization of joint works and actions; Active participation in the work of professional associations, authorities and organizations. The pedagogue develops professionally in the following way: by following professional literature and periodicals, by following information of importance for education and upbringing on the Internet; by participating in the activities of the professional association (Pedagogical Society of Serbia) and at the Republic Section of Pedagogues and Psychologists of Serbia, attending accredited seminars, participating in congresses, conferences, forums, designing and implementing accredited seminars, attending expert meetings, exchanging experience and cooperating with other pedagogues and experts associates in education (Regulations on the program of all forms of work of professional associates, 2012).

Pedagogues, as well as other professional associates of the school, keep pedagogical documentation about their work. In addition to the documentation of his work, the school pedagogue must have insight into the pedagogical documentation that is maintained in the school and contribute to its improvement. The work of a school pedagogue in the field of documentation includes the following (Zlatić, 2021): Documentation of their work: work plans and programs (annual-global and monthly-operational), work diary, files on work with students who require special work, documentation on research work performed, examinations performed, reports, etc.; Participation in the improvement of school pedagogical documentation, especially that related to planning and monitoring the implementation of the school's work program, as well as documentation on the professional development of school employees; Keeping records and documentation on consultation with students, teachers and parents; Keeping records and documentation about projects that are implemented in the school, or are related to the school.

Jurić (2004) divides the documentation kept at the school into documentation created at the school (internal documentation) and documentation whose content is related to the school but originates from external institutions and persons who cooperate with the school (external documentation). The first group of documents includes all areas of the school's work, and in particular: plans and reports on the school's work, teaching, class councils, duty hours, timetables and class schedules,

cooperation with students' parents, free activities, professional information and counseling, student works and more. The second group of documents consists of: laws, regulations of government bodies, reports on supervision and inspection of the school, notes on students with a special informative view on the health of students and other documents that were created outside the school. Good pedagogical documentation enables the pedagogue to comply with some elementary principles of his work. These principles are: economy, rationality, efficiency in work, objectivity, truthfulness, transparency, individual approach to the student and the teacher, etc. (Trnavac, 1993). Pedagogical documentation is important in the work of a school pedagogue, for the reason that through it he can easily see the origin, past and development of a phenomenon. Also, he can compare specific data, phenomena or students. This documentation enables the pedagogue to detect problems on time and to take corrective pedagogical measures. That is why the pedagogue must keep documentation of both his work and the work of the school every day.

Preparation for work refers to the pedagogue's working time at school, which amounts to forty hours per week, with thirty hours devoted to the realization of planned program tasks, and ten hours to preparations. The tasks of the school teacher in this field are (Trnavac, 1993): Preparation and planning of work with students, teachers and parents; Preparation and planning of analyzes and announcements; Preparation and planning of lectures for students, teachers and parents; Preparation and planning of materials for individual expressions and making of instruments; Preparing and planning visits to classes; Preparing and planning the introduction of innovations in the educational process; Monitoring and studying the necessary professional literature; Preparation and agreement with other professional associates, teams, and professional institutions on joint tasks and activities in and outside the school. This area is no less important than the others. This is precisely why the most time is allocated for the performance of work in this area of work, which can also be an indicator of the importance of this area of work for a pedagogue working in a school.

Education for sustainable development empowers actors of the educational system with the knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and behaviors to live in a way that is good for the environment, economy, and society that encourages people to make smart, responsible choices that help create a better future for everyone (UNESCO, n.d.).

These areas are interconnected and together contribute to sustainable development at the global level.

3. CONCLUSION

Orr (2004, 2005) argued that the world needs people who live well in their places to make the world both habitable and humane and that the main challenge for education is to help learners make their minds fit for life on Earth. Capra (2002) continues to expand the scope of that theory by establishing a framework in which we can understand and solve some of the most important issues of our time (...) posits that in order to sustain life, the principles underlying our social institutions must be consistent with the broader organization of nature. In modern education, the competencies of teachers and pedagogues for sustainable development are becoming more and more important. These competencies enable them to effectively transfer values and knowledge about sustainability to students, thus encouraging responsible behavior towards the environment and society. The role of pedagogues in promoting sustainable development is crucial in shaping the awareness and behavior of future generations. The pedagogue faces the challenge of integrating the principles of sustainability into the educational process, which not only enriches teaching but also encourages the development of critical thinking and active citizenship in students.

At the end, we can conclude that all the mentioned aspects of action and the complex field of work of a school pedagogue are precisely based on a deep awareness of the necessity of constant changes in the educational system in order for new generations of students to be included in contemporary social trends and experience the necessary innovations as an authentic expression of his time.

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