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MOUNTAINS UNITE

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Abstract. Schools in the Ukrainian Carpathian mountain region work in specific conditions. They have original traditions, a special nature of learning and work. Indeed, because of a remote location mountain village school becomes the center for a cultural and spiritual life. Of course, it is related to a present social and economic situation in the country and a slow progress of society. Therefore, we need to look at mountain school with a broader angle, help it in comprehensive development of an individual and ensure an availability of quality education for children living in mountainous areas. Here we should talk about learning as well as laying the foundations for a life success. The international research project Mountain School. Status. Problems. Prospects for Development. Is established to help solve these problems. Precarpathian National University is an active member of the project.

Keywords: mountain school, modernization of education, Education 2002-2015 program.

The Second International Ukrainian-American Conference “Carpathians-Appalachians: Community Development in Highland Regions” was held at the Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University (Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine) in September, 2013. Apart from Ukrainian researchers coming from twenty-six different universities, eighteen American scholars and twenty university representatives from Eastern European countries visited the conference. The above conference was of much interest for researchers and created preconditions for further research in the Carpathian region.

What is the Carpathian Euro Region today? First of all, it comprises 19 administrative and territorial unions of 5 European countries with the total area of more than 148 thousand square kilometers and the population of nearly 17 million people. Usually the highland regions of Ukraine, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and Romania are the peripheral territories of the above countries with severe weather conditions, and as a result their economic development is far behind the lowland areas.

The tendencies of destructive development are common to the above highland regions, in particular the decrease of many fauna and flora species, large scale erosion, violation of hydrologic balance, drying out of rivers, general decrease of recreational potential of highland regions. As a result of the above mentioned there have been high unemployment rate, poor health safety and education. The depression of highland regions development causes social apathy, uncertainty in the future, decreases social activity and ability to withstand difficulties.

Highland regions of the Ukrainian Carpathians are multicultural, with more than 70 nationalities living there. They all can feel both the influence of their regions depression and difficult weather conditions. That is why the issue of dialogue culture formation among personalities who are studying to become teachers is fairly important and actual.

The difficulties of education development in the Ukrainian Carpathians deal with its past, as the region was for a long time a part of foreign countries. The above did not meet the Ukrainians' national and cultural aspirations.

Teaching children and youth in Ukrainian was often restricted or even forbidden. During soviet times (1939-1991) teachers were forced to use communist ideas in education. Studying Russian became mandatory, which restricted the use of the mother tongue. Business language and conversation between different ethnic groups were often only in Russian.

Since Ukraine became independent in 1991, teaching methods have been based on democratization principles taking into account children's individual skills and national oriented education. At the same time in highland regions of the Ukrainian Carpathians there have been a lot of problems: many villages are far from schools, 'incomplete' schools have low efficiency due to the lack of skilled teaching staff, and many university graduates are psychologically unprepared to work in rural villages as teachers, because of social disorganization and discomfort.

But nevertheless, highland schools of the Ukrainian Carpathians have their achievements and success. Fairly efficient is the attempt to develop national and patriotic traditions. Historical and cultural materials dedicated to traditional forms of family life and family education are of special interest. The culture of communication and interaction in Galician family is of high moral and ethical value. Respect for the elder has always been common, which closely deals with incontrovertible authority of father and mother who personified not only the origins of the family, but also the representatives of Ukrainian family's rich traditions. Dialogue culture has been formed here for a long time. It was not greatly influenced by communication changes. When a father or mother speaks – children attentively follow their conversation, do not interrupt, even emotionally stress that they agree. When there is a need to express opinion which is a bit different from their parents', it is mandatory for the children to make emphasis on their respect for the elderly and express support. The above level of communication has been preserved in most modern families. Although there has been the influence of mass communication; live communication and conversation are replaced by on-line communication or SMS.

The change of priorities in educational work with children and youth is now common to Ukrainian educational institutions, which led to new relations on the levels "teacher-pupil", "teacher student", taking into account children's personal abilities and skills. The above facts demand the reformation of teachers' consciousness and professional competence.

Modernization of education is viewed as a very important factor to ensure the development of Ukraine's economy and society. The mountain area school has a key role as it performs both an educational and social function, maintains a genetic potential of the Ukrainian nation in the Carpathian region; defines the welfare, and scientific, educational, ideological and spiritual life of the community. Thus it is time to look into the urgent problem of preserving a network of educational institutions in the mountainous region that provides proximity to children, save their time and energy and cares for their wellbeing while they are away from home

Mountain school is a special phenomenon in educational theory and practice. A geographical location and socio-economic status are those aspects that play a significant role in the functioning of this institution. Whereas the former is characterized by only school's location, the latter depends on a large number of factors: a state of social and economic development of a particular region, general spiritual and moral standards of villagers' lives, the natural and objective environment, and specific conditions of functioning of an educational institution. These aspects actively influence a development of mountain schools and a process of resolving psychological and educational problems.

Mountain school is not only an educational, economic, geographic or social concept. Almost always its primary mission is to educate a person who lives and works in a mountain village. However, in the present school does not realize its tasks to a full extent. In this regard, there is an acute problem how to coincide the interests of a developing society with the interests of a young person, who sees from early age the insecurity of a village life, and unlike previous generations, expects development and prosperity.

Considering the educational activities of mountain schools as an important factor in a social change we should take into account the fact that the possibility of influencing a development of rural society is significant, however, the difficulties are numerous.

The problems of rural schools in mountainous area, their financing, legal and human resources supply are particularly relevant to educators of the Carpathians and should be a public concern, because out of 768 secondary schools of different types, 603 are located in rural areas including 270 in remote mountain areas. Thus rural educational institutions account for 78.5 % of all schools.

Ivano-Frankivsk region is a specific educational area, where various types of education establishments: traditional and author, famous and less-known, large and small, educational complexes and families school successfully co-exist and operate. Here the regional development program "Education 2002-2015" is being realized that provides measures for the development of education in rural locations, which are mainly in mountainous areas.

New generation of teachers at schools, colleges, universities, educated in independent Ukraine, free of their political prejudice, nationally and democratically oriented, greatly changed the modern school of the Ukrainian Carpathians. It is becoming modern in terms of content and teaching methods, preserving at the same time positive achievements of the past. Taking into account the interests of ethnic national groups, connected with preservation of their dialogue communication traditions, interpersonal relations, all enrich the culture of communication of different people, who are united by a single feeling of living in a common home named Ukraine.

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