

FUNCTIONS OF OLYMPIC EDUCATION IN CONTEMPORARY SCHOOL

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Review paper

Abstract

Contemporary circumstances make specialists to connect the conception of Olympic education not only with the Olympic movement as an imposing social phenomenon but with school education on all levels as well. Nowadays two orientations are outlined: 1) Researches to Olympism, and 2) Teaching through Olympism. First direction of Olympic education is turned to the enrichment of the researches about Olympism in the different countries and spread the gathered new knowledge all around the earth. This direction concerns enrichment of the academic programmes. Second direction is connected with young generation (pupils, students and athletes) and youth programmes and projects, based on the Olympic principles. This paper is a study on the problem starting from the renewal of the contemporary Olympic Games in 1896 to nowadays and the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008. Olympic education concerns not only the content of the lessons of physical education but the other school subjects as well. This is a new world's tendency.

Key words: olympic education, school, lessons

Introduction

Social circumstances at the end of XIX century form the model of the Olympic movement, penetrated by the preserved traditions and the new image about the world. The world must be ruled by new moral norms. The main preconditions for the renewal of the Olympic Games and the Olympic Movement are (P. Бърдарева/R. Bardareva, 2008, p. 52): 1) New ideas about education and upbringing of young people: (a) They arise first is Germany and in the schools named *Filantropini*. Education in them is very close to the antique style. (b) Then is England - the inspirer there is *Charles Kingsley* (1819 – 1875). According to him the ideal person is the *young Christian-Athlete* – broadly educated and well developed physically. (c) Ingenuity in England is connected also with the name of *Thomas Arnold* (1795 – 1842) and the movement after his name *arnoldism*. Through the sport Thomas Arnold revives the national feelings of people and their Christian virtues. The ideal of the *Gentleman-Christian* is formed. Since that time is the idea of *fair-play*.

Thomas Arnold is connected with the sport rugby as well. (d) Ideas cross borders and go to France, Netherlands, Germany, Canada, India, Australia, etc. and so, all over the world. 2) Sports as a new spiritual onset with intrinsic structure and conditions for contacts – starting since 1881 International Sports Federations are founded. Sports are connected with the enthusiasm and ecstasies, entertainment, health, relaxation, achievements.

Creative activity of the International sports federations is projected in several directions: (a) It joins the athletes of the different sports into the universal rhythm of the international activity. (b) It secures exchange of ideas. (c) It popularizes the good practices and experience of the advanced sports world. (d) It serves as a moral barometer of society. 3) France in the role of a spiritual centre and with persons with systematic social experience – spiritual climate and cultural standards elevate France to centre of human civilization and development. Though the existence of two contradictory trends in the country, Pierre de Coubertin finds a new way and means for communication and in November 1892 he introduces a proposal for renewal of the Olympic Games. His proposal is realized in 1896. So, since the 90s of XIX century is spoken not only about Olympic Games and Olympic Movement but about Olympic education as well.

Development of the Content of the Olympic Education

A. By the Renewal of the Olympic Games in 1896 and the Near Decades
Beginning is connected with romantic attitude to Olympic movement and Olympic education. Olympic education was an idealized conception with prevalence of sport in it. Even in 1927 Pierre de Coubertin in a speech in front of young people still supported the opinion that "We have to accept **sport religion** in its antique sense and Olympism as the school of

broadminded intentions and moral tidiness, endurance and energy which stands against the threats of the degradation of today's sport". Pierre de Coubertin considered **sport as an effective educational tool**. He described Olympism as the double cult of physical effort and the endeavor towards performance which is expressed in the epigraph "*Citius - Altius - Fortius*" (A. Rychtecky, 2007). Furthermore, analyzing the "double cult" we have on one hand this epigraph. On the other hand is the harmony in the social structure of society, the personal experience and the influence of the natural environment. Coubertin strived to overcome the former performances but on the bases of discreetness and overlapping expressed as harmonization of performance and gift, as a balanced state of activation and aesthetic demonstration of performance (N. Muller, M. Messing, 2000). So, at the beginning, Olympic education has as its emphasis the identification with the Olympic Values and the active participation in sports to enhance the endmost effectiveness.

At the beginning the Olympic education is considered as a means that: a) *Focuses on the identification and dissemination of the values of Olympism*. These values are five as a number, so much as the Olympic circles are: Respect for self and others, Fair play, Excellence, Joy in effort, Balance of body, mind and will. b) *Supports the principles of humanization of education and self-realization*, c) *Creates motivation for active participation in sport*, d) *Plays an independent role in contemporary educational system by reach of the people of all ages all around the world in the form of the Olympic Games*. Olympic values are universal. They can be offered to pupils, students and older people in different context and not only in connection with the sport. Teachers in all school subjects not only in physical education have to seek and show to pupils examples of these universal values. This will lead to harmonization in society. And nobody must forget that still at the beginning of XX century Olympic values become a *cultural norm* that nowadays is still alive and starts to be more actual in contemporary society. Paragraph I of the Olympic Charter, Fundamental principles, says: "*Olympism is a philosophy of life, exalting and combining in a balanced whole the qualities of body, will and mind. Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy found in effort, the educational value of good example and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles*". Still at the beginning Pierre de Coubertin regarded himself as an educator. He saw sport to form a part of every young person's education, in the same way as this do science, literature and art.

Thereby his aim was to offer a *harmonious education* of body and mind. The Olympic Games are the means that enabled Pierre de Coubertin to give his educational concept international visibility and scope it needed. With the time this educational concept can become permanent and independent of the holding of the Games. Education through Olympism is universal and based on the fundamental human values, crystallized in the five Olympic values. Though, reality reviews unacceptable tendencies. A. Rychtecky (2007) brings out the associations of Czech young people (12 and 15 years old) arising in connection with the Olympic Games. Along with the positive principles such as peace, pair-play, etc. stay negative principles such as commercialization, increased role of money and mass-media. The conclusion of the author is that "young people in the Czech Republic very often reduce Olympism to the Olympic Games, sports and sports competition" (p. 39). Nowadays A. Rychtecky is one of the pioneers in the researches on the field of the Olympic education. Though by intuition, we can agree with him that the association of the young people in other countries will not differ too much with the mentioned one above. But here we have to pay attention on another view of A. Rychtecky and it is the broader sense that he gives to the content of Olympic education.

B. At the Beginning of XXI Century and on the Eve of the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008

Contemporary circumstances make specialists to connect the conception of Olympic education not only with the Olympic movement as an imposing social phenomenon but with school education on all levels as well. Bases of Olympic education still are the Olympic values and the connection with culture with all its diversity. Nowadays in Olympic education two orientations are outlined: 1) Researches to Olympism, 2) Teaching through Olympism. *First direction* of Olympic education is turned to the enrichment of the researches about Olympism in the different countries and the spread of the gathered new knowledge all around the earth. This direction concerns enrichment of the academic programmes. Researches on Olympism are politic of the IOC.

The IOC's Olympic Studies Centre (OSC) for 2009 has launched a programme aimed at young researchers "on Olympic Movement, its history and values, and the impact of Olympic Games on the various aspects of contemporary society and culture" (Internet information) (www.chinaview.cn). The objectives of this programme are as follow: (a) To encourage young people to undertake researches with a humanitarian or social science's perspective on the Olympic phenomenon.

The fields of research here can be: Olympic values and multiculturalism, how youth perceives Olympism, the relations of young people to it, various aspects of the legacy of the Olympic Games, role of Olympic Movement in society, etc. (b) To promote consultations of the IOC's written and audiovisual patrimony. (c) To encourage exchanges of information and networking. *Second direction* of Olympic education is connected with young generation (pupils, students and athletes) and youth programmes and projects, based on the Olympic principles. Objective here is education/teaching through Olympism. A real and very good example in this attitude did the Chinese people in connection with the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008. In China in the schools through out the country has been undertaken the world's largest-ever Olympic education programme. Purpose was the Beijing Games to ensure a lasting legacy for the country's young generation. In the centre was the first principle of the Olympic Charter (it is mentioned above). So, Olympic education reached 400 million children (www.chinadaily.com.cn/olympics). Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games (BOCOG) together with the China's Education Ministry and National Olympic Committee (NOC) managed to integrate Olympic education into the curriculum of over 400, 000 schools.

Manner of education at schools had changed

Teachers paid special attention to the Olympic values of excellence, friendship and respect. Textbooks highlighted the history of the Olympic Games, Olympic sports and the Olympic Movement and their contribution to international peace and friendship. Attention had been given also to the foreign languages. Foreign language speech contests had helped promotion of Olympism in schools. What was the result of this initiative? Still in December 2005 some 556 elementary and secondary schools in China have been given the honour to forge the international friendship. In Mid-December 2006 partnership with 205 NOC of the Olympic family was realized. Never before the influence of the Olympic Games on education had been more pronounced than at the Beijing Olympic Games in China with population more than 1, 3 billion people. Education of young people through sport was one of the primary goals of the Olympic movement in China. The initiative that emerged at that time was entitled "**Heart-to-heart**". Over 200 Beijing schools have "adopted" *sister schools* in countries represented by a NOC.

The purpose was to exchange ideas and to forge international friendship. *Several are the components of Olympic education at that time:* 1) Some schools integrated Olympic education *into the academic curriculum.* 2) During dedicated training sessions *teachers are educated on the Olympic values* and shown how to incorporate Olympism into the classroom setting. 3) *Series of textbooks* were created with the purpose to introduce pupils to the history of Olympic Games, to the various Olympic sports, the rules of play, Olympic symbols, the role of the Olympic movement for the international peace and friendship. 4) As further means for promotion of Olympic education are used the *photography, painting, poetry, calligraphy* and *the foreign languages*.

Third moment in Beijing Olympic Games was ***the support the oversea athletes***. It was planned and realized the Heart-to-Heart school to greet their partner NOC delegation in the Team Welcome Ceremony at the Olympic Village and to support its athletes during the competitions. On the other hand, the NOC delegations had to make a visit to their Beijing partner school where Chinese and Greek folk and sport shows were equipped. These were the initiatives connected with the Beijing Olympic Games. They were a real good example of the motto "*Sports arena like a classroom*". We have to underline the words of Jacques Rogge to the pupils: "*The sports arena is like a classroom. There we learn to live together in society; there we learn solidarity and friendship; there we learn respect to others: whether one is a boy or girl, short or tall, young or old, from Asia, Africa, Europe, America or Oceania. Sport is all these things. And it is also health.*"

Conclusions and Recommendations

- 1) Undoubtedly nowadays Olympic education is philosophy of life to which pupils all around the world have to be taught.
- 2) Olympic education also is a good means for emotional education of children, something that lacks in some societies. Education is not only academic knowledge.
- 3) Chinese experience from the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008 is a good example and contribution in this attitude.
- 4) When at school or in society young generation has to be accustomed to respect to all people and neglect to nobody has to occur. Here sexual differences, race, social status, state of health, availability of some and more disabilities, etc. have to be minded.

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FUNKCIJA OLIMPIJSKE EDUKACIJE U MODERNOJ ŠKOLI

Sažetak

Trenutne okolnosti tjeraju stručnjake da povezuju koncept olimpijskog obrazovanja ne samo sa Olimpijskim pokretom kao dominantnim društvenim fenomenom, već i sa školskim obrazovanjem na svim nivoima. Dva smjera su naglašena: 1) Istraživanje Olimpizma, i 2) Podučavanje kroz Olimpizam. Prvi smjer olimpijskog obrazovanja je okrenut obogaćivanju istraživanja Olimpizma u različitim zemljama, i širenje novostečenog znanja. Ovaj smjer se bavi obogaćivanjem akademskih programa. Drugi smjer je vezan za mlade generacije (učenike, studente i sportiste) i omladinske programe i projekte, bazirane na olimpijskim principima. Ovaj rad je studija problema od obnavljanja modernih Olimpijskih igara 1896. do Olimpijade u Pekingu 2008. Olimpijsko obrazovanje obuhvata ne samo tjelesni odgoj, već i druge školske predmete. Ovo je nova globalna tendencija.

Ključne riječi: olimpijska edukacija, škola, nastava

Received: July, 15. 2008.

Accepted: December, 10. 2008.

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