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GRUNDTVIGIAN SCHOOL FOR LIFE – BETWEEN TRADITION AND MODERNITY OF EDUCATION IN RURAL AREAS

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Článek ukazuje, jakým způsobem lze využít vzdělávacích tradic při hledání moderních řešení v oblasti vzdělávání dospělých.

Klíčová slova: Grundtvig, škola pro život, venkov

At the beginning of 20th century, when Polish modern views on education were formed, many discussions focused on the chances of development of agricultural education. The heated public debate was also based on observation of the most up-to-date European solutions in this area. Two institutions: Scandinavian folk high schools and Czech agricultural schools were of special interest to the Poles. The development of many agricultural education institutions in Polish territory in the period of 1900–1914 was based on those Czech and Danish-Swedish models.¹

And the Polish agricultural education institutions became models for development of above-elementary education in rural areas of the II Republic of Poland (1918–1939). One could thus say that – in a sense (simplifying) – educational solutions adopted for Polish rural areas have Polish but also Scandinavian and Czech roots.

But while Polish-Scandinavian educational co-operation survived for decades, Polish-Czech connections were limited due to various reasons.

The paper presents joined efforts of the Poles, the Danish, the Swedes and the Germans on restoring the old educational ideas under one of the joint projects implemented at the beginning of 21st century. I introduce the project to the Czech colleagues and pedagogues hoping that maybe also the one hundred years old Polish-Czech traditions of co-operation on agricultural education could be restored and could become a basis for undertaking common work of Polish and Czech pedagogues and historians of education, referring to the past connections in the same way as almost a decade ago Polish-Scandinavian connections were restored with the purpose of creative use of another idea from the past – the concept of a folk high school.

Introduction

As everybody knows – folk high schools (in Czech: *vyšší lidové školy*) have a very special place among forms of adult education. Developed on the philosophical and political traditions of Scandinavian countries (Nicolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig /1783–1872/, Christen Mikkelsen Kold /1816–1870/, Luis Gerhard de Geer /1818–1896/, Emil Key /1822–1892/, Christen Brun /1828–1917/, Abraham Victor Rydberg /1828–1895/ and others), they now constitute more or less significant elements of educational systems of a few tens of countries on a few continents.² The distinguished, recently deceased Czech andargogue Jindra Kulich also

¹ WIECZOREK, T.: *Ludowe szkoły rolnicze związane z ruchem zaraniarskim [Folk Agricultural Schools Focused around "Zaranie" Periodical Magazine]*. In: *Dzieje szkolnictwa i oświaty na wsi polskiej do 1918 [History of Education in Polish Rural Areas up to 1918]*. Warszawa 1982, pp. 214–215.

² BYCZKOWSKA, S.–MALISZEWSKI, T.: *Scandinavian inspirations: Looking for a True "School for Life"*. In: *Anthology of Social and Behavioural Sciences. 20 Years of Co-operation between the Universities in Linköping and Gdańsk*. Linköping 2005, pp. 137–148.

notes that fact.³ The Scandinavians are proud of that as well.⁴ The reality of that educational concept proves that it was undoubtedly one of the most significant achievements in the history of adult education in the world. The opinions of a distinguished Polish researcher of history of education, Ryszard Wroczyński, or Steven M. Borish – a famous America sociologist can be considered as representative. The first one indicated that “great movement in non-school education in rural areas [...] had great impact on the direction of the development of European education of the end of 19th and the beginning of 20th century”.⁵ The second one pointed out that the originally Danish idea of folk high schools constituted not only original but first of all genuine and significant contribution of that region to the world’s solutions concerning education and upbringing⁶.

The question is whether in the modern reality there is still scope for the institutional form of education of *folk high school* type? And among them – for the classical one – boarding type of folk high school? The answer seems obvious... It should be: Yes! One cannot, however, ignore the discussions about folk high schools that is going on in various parts of the globe. And the conclusions and views about the future of folk high schools are not the same everywhere... They are not always so obvious and so optimistic for the future of folk high schools. Jelle Zwart is one of the many that mentions the competition and attempts made by various adult education institutions to attract participants. Analysing the situation in Holland, he sees the threats for the existence of folk high schools in often ruthless “fight for the customer” taken up by new formation centres, training or consulting companies, which “in their fight to survive are too much focused on the financial aspects and are ready for hastily reached political compromises [...]”⁷. And Johan Norbeck is of an opinion that some of the problems of folk high schools are built into the concept itself, which, almost by definition, places them in a certain independent area, if not opposition, to everything that is official: educational system, governing political classes, etc. It must result in some distrust of the decision makers, which translates into everyday practice in an obvious and multi-aspect way.⁸ There are considerable concerns about the change in the contemporary world. It is good when the animators of folk high schools activities do not get nervous and are hopeful about the changes and do not fear the future. But unfortunately, not everyone is as optimistic as one of the most distinguished Swedish folk high school animators – Hans Hovenberg.⁹

It is not thus infrequent that various entities initiate debates about the future of folk high schools as a whole, and about their national “editions” in particular. The participants of the

³ KULICH, J.: *Grundtvig's Educational Ideas in Central and Eastern Europe and the Baltic States*. Copenhagen 2002, *passim*.

⁴ See e. g.: *Grundtvig Nicolai Frederik Severin*. In: *Salmonsens konversations leksikon*. Bind X. A/S København 1920, pp. 181–186 or DAM, P.: *Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig (1783–1872): der Verkünder und Erwecker, der seinem Land zum Mahnruf die Wege der Vergangenheit aufzeigte und heute durch seine Auffassung der Freiheit und Gleichheit, vor allem aber durch seine Volkshochschulidee zu einem weltweiten Wegweiser geworden ist*. Kopenhagen 1983, *passim*.

⁵ WROCZYŃSKI, R.: *Dzieje oświaty polskiej 1795–1945 [History of Polish Education 1795–1945]*. Warszawa 1980, p. 165.

⁶ BORISH, S. M.: *The Land of the Living. The Danish Folk High School and Denmark's Non-violent Path to Modernization*. Grass Valley 1991, pp. 7–9.

⁷ ZWART, J.: *Ewolucja koncepcji Wyższej Szkoły Ludowej społeczności Fryzów [Evolution of the Concept of Folk High School of Frisian Community]*. In: *Rocznik Andragogiczny 2000*. Warszawa–Toruń 2001, p. 174.

⁸ NORBECK, J.: *From Ideas to Everyday Practice*. In: *Option (Journal of the Folk Education Association of America)*, Vol. 15, No. 1, 1991.

⁹ HOVENBERG, H.: *Internat czy internet? Nowe – stare wyzwania [Boarding School or Internet? New – Old Challenges]*. In: *Polski Uniwersytet Ludowy 1998*, No 1(36), pp. 49–52.

debates try as much as they can prove “the present significance of folk high schools and their possible roles in educational systems (let me paraphrase the title of the speech made by Jan Szczepański at one of such forums.¹⁰ The discussions became especially frequent and fierce in the last decade of the 20th century and took place almost everywhere where folk high school movement is known¹¹... There must be something to it then ... Something that causes that the concept of folk high school is referred to by relatively big circles of the environments and communities that care about adult education.

Discussion

It seems, however, that to face the challenges, folk high schools need new interpretation of the tradition, a new perspective of looking at their history, both from the global perspective and in their national varieties. It can help showing the educational activities of those interesting institutional forms of adult education in a new light, as well as indicate the past areas and forms of work so far neglected or marginalised in the descriptions and analyses of history of education. That intellectual effort, this “reminding about the forgotten” could help, *inter alia*, (re)define the new/old roles folk high schools are to play on the educational scene of the near and remote future.

On the one hand, it is the concept of folk high school itself that needs it. Because that originally Scandinavian pedagogical innovation – and now generally known and for years recognised in the world form of adult education seems to experience a certain crisis. It can be clearly seen in our country where folk high schools still function “between unconsciousness of the society and neglect by the authorities”, being a passion for only a few, to paraphrase the title of one of the articles that I wrote a few years ago. Closing or limiting the activities of some folk high schools all over globe is a worrying signal that also proves that. On the other hand, showing to the largest possible number of people how efficient “educational tool” to fill in the educational niches an institutions such as *folk high school* can be can help the local, regional, national and, let us not hesitate to say that, global (in the near future) decision makers implement socially significant educational tasks/activities.

It can turn out – and I am personally convinced that it will – that we do not necessarily have to waste our time trying to find new solutions every time we want to solve an educational problem. Sometimes (the documentation of “similar cases” will be provided by research and reinterpretations) it is enough to reach to proven patterns from the past, to modify them and adapt them to the present reality. So it seems to be obvious that it is necessary to “read” the history of folk high schools anew, and to take up discussions on certain myths and stereotypes about those educational institutions. But the general awareness of that necessity among the authors writing about folk high schools or among folk high schools activists is not all that obvious, which the author has found out during various debates about the status and future perspectives of those educational institutions ...

¹⁰ Paper prepared for the International Conference “Polish Folk High Schools – Decline of the Idea or New Challenge” in Kashubian Folk High School, Starbienino branch, 9–12. 10. 1997. See: SZCZEPAŃSKI, J.: *Aktualna doniosłość uniwersytetów ludowych i ich możliwe role w systemach szkolnictwa [Present Significance of Folk High Schools and Their Possible Roles in Educational Systems]*. In: Rocznik Andragogiczny 1999, Warszawa–Toruń 2000, pp. 161–165.

¹¹ See also e.g.: SAPEL, C.: *Is There a Future for Folk High School Work in Europe?* In: '93 – *Is There a Future for Folk High School Work in Europe?* Den Haag 1993; *Materiały z Konferencji „Polskie uniwersytety ludowe – zmierzch idei czy nowe wyzwanie” [Materials from the Conference “Polish Folk High Schools – End of the Idea or New Challenge”]*. Rocznik Andragogiczny 1999, pp. 142-207; KULICH, J.: *op.cit.*, Copenhagen 2002; MARJOMÄKI, V.: *Folk High Schools and Their Mission*. In: *Life and Education in Finland 1991*, No 2.

The thoughts of Grundtvig – an enlightened Dane, generally thought to be the Godfather, creator of the concepts of adult education that was later on creatively developed into a great movement of folk high schools are worth mentioning here. But please remember that in the so called literature of the subject (in Poland) the one sided picture of Grundtvig's views on urgent development of new type of adult education institutions has become fairly strong and popular by (very often) uncritical and schematic repetition. And what seems to be the general perception is as follows:

Already in the first half of 19th century, the Danish thinker Nicolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig (1783–1872) coined a slogan “school for life” (Danish: *skole for livet*) as an opposition to traditional educational institutions, whose operation he totally negated, which can be seen, *inter alia*, in the way he called it: “schools of death” (“schools for death” in other translations into English; Danish: *skole for døden*).¹² So folk high schools, those schools for life, were created as centres of education in extreme opposition to all the then existing educational organisations – those schools /for/ death. The hint is: “[...] Now I am trying to explain, in clear terms, what I understand by *school for life* [...]. Firstly – since no *school* is able to create a new life in us, it must not damage the old one nor must it waste time on developing rules that would govern the other [life] if we had it, because it would have to be decay, that is death [...] that would have to be the beginning of such a process – and I negate [it] totally. Secondly – *school* must accept life as it is – trying only to explain it and make it more useful. What I am saying is that if life is to benefit from an *educational* institution it cannot place education, or the school itself as a priority and objective, but it must aim at explaining [that] life”.¹³

And what is the meaning of that? Well, first of all that those are also the opinions of Grundtvig himself – although they cannot be unambiguously interpreted as were the ones from the “maintained” picture presented above. And I do not think that the issue of the origin of folk high schools becomes more complicated by taking such statements into consideration, either. Well, this and the like “forgotten” opinions” open up new possibilities for the analysis of the beginnings and the synthesis of the later history of the educational institutions we are interested in here. Please note how much scope for interpretation there is: continuation, development, explaining the past, the present and the future, acceptance of life just as it is and a basis for change etc. So “the only right” official version of history, the one saying that folk high schools were built on negation and that they are – before creating something *new* – to burn out *the old* with fire, is only one of the possible interpretations and an extreme one, you must admit. That is, of course, if we allow including the so far neglected or hidden passages complicating the carefully woven official picture into the canon of “obligatory literature”. What else? No school, no educational institution is or can be an aim in itself, which is the impression one can have reading various texts on folk high schools written by various authors connected with folk high school either by their research or by “relationships of the heart”. In those texts, folk high schools are presented as a bright (paradise, idealised) educational institutions to which one can go but with proper respect, on one's knees... In other words – a bronze monument... And one more thing. A more or less hidden complaint to the whole world appears quite often as a result of that kind of thinking: folk high schools are beautiful, good are respectable... but you do not understand that. “YOU” meaning politicians, representatives of local authorities, decision

¹² Grundtvig Nicolai Frederik Severin. In: *Ottäv slovník naučný. Ilustrovaná encyklopédie obecných vědomostí*. Desátý díl. Praha 1896, p. 539; Grundtvig Nicolai Frederik Severin. In: *Salmonsens konversations leksikon*. Bind X. A/S. København 1920, p. 185.

¹³ GRUNDTVIG, N. F. S.: *Skolet for livet och Soer Akademi*. In: *A Grundtvig Anthology. Selections from the Writings of N. F. S. Grundtvig (1783–1872)*. Cambridge–Viby 1984.

makers of various levels, central and local administration and God know who, and of course, the society as a whole, the society that does not get enough or proper information from the media that do not like folk high schools...

Proposal of research project

I would like to propose another way of thinking, a way of thinking that has been accepted and is close to the community of Pomeranian folk high schools, in particular the people with some connection to Kashubian High Folk School (Kaszubski Uniwersytet Ludowy), with which I have had deeply rooted connections and in which I have the significant for me function of the secretary of the Programme Council, which enables me to implement many concepts of my own in the practice and reality of a folk high school.

Both the theoretical and practical contexts of the potential role of folk high schools in the indicated areas has been in the centre of attention of the project, in operation since October 2001, "Folk High School – School for Life", implemented by partners from Poland, Denmark, Germany and Sweden as a part of European Union programme "Socrates–Grundtvig"¹⁴.

Folk High School in Wieżyca is the initiator and main co-ordinator of the project. The school was established in 1982. Its educational programme is based both on Grundtvig's ideas and Polish traditions.¹⁵ For the two decades of its work for the benefit of Polish Pomerania, Kashubian Folk School has always tried to face the educational challenges that appeared in the communities of the region. The urgent needs of the people of the region were also an inspiration for the "School for Life" project¹⁶.

The mission of the project was very clearly and adequately expressed: "Polish rural communities are in a very difficult situation now. The people feel marginalized, they feel that

¹⁴ The concept and planning work started in autumn 1999. The first public presentation of the project assumptions took place during the Polish-Danish adult education seminar in spring 2000 (See also the report: *Uniwersytety ludowe w Polsce i w Danii: O nowy model edukacji dla dorosłych – seminarium w Starbieniu, 1–2 kwietnia 2000 r. [Folk High Schools in Poland and Denmark: "For a New Model of Education for Adults" – seminar in Starbienio, April 1–2 2000]*. In: *Edukacja Dorosłych 2000*, nr 3/28/, pp. 111–114). The following year was devoted to making the concept more detailed, to looking for partners in Denmark, Germany, Poland and Sweden, and to preparing a formal application for EU grant. In autumn 2001, after evaluation procedure and receiving a positive opinion of experts, the project was approved for implementation (EU grant No: Brussels – Socrates: 90632-CP-1-2001-1-PL-GRUNDTVIG-G1).

¹⁵ In 1980's, training employees and volunteer animators of cultural centres from the rural areas of northern Poland was the main task of Kashubian Folk High School, which still implements the projects inspiring cultural and educational activities of the communities of Kashubian and Pomeranian region. In 1990's, the programme offer was modified and adapted to the conditions of building social partnership and local democracy. Apart from regional programmes and training on local self-governance, the environmental protection trend also appeared in the sphere of interest of Kashubian Folk High School. More about the School, see: MALISZEWSKI, T.: *Kashubian Folk High School – Old/New Learning Opportunities for Adults in Poland*. In: *Baltic Sea Dialogue*, No. 2/1999–1/2000, Göteborg 2000, pp. 12–13; Idem: *Historia i kierunki działalności edukacyjnej Kaszubskiego Uniwersytetu Ludowego [History and Educational Activity Directions of Kashubian Folk High School]*. „Rocznik Andragogiczny 1999, Warszawa–Toruń 2000, pp. 182–187; BYCZKOWSKA, S.–BYCZKOWSKI, M.–MALISZEWSKI, T.: *Kaszubski Uniwersytet Ludowy u progu XXI wieku – stan obecny i perspektywy rozwoju [Kashubian Folk High School at the Beginning of 21st Century – Current Situation and Development Perspectives]*. Gdańsk 2001, p. 20.

¹⁶ Whose partners are the different educational institutions and organisations: Folk High School Bornholm (Denmark), German Adult Education Association (Germany), Pomeranian Association of Rural Communes (Poland), Kartuzy Starosty in Kartuzy (Poland), Civic Television (Poland), University of Gdańsk – Institute of Education (Poland), Nicholas Copernicus University – Institute of Education (Poland), Folk High School Mora (Sweden), Folk High School Tollare (Sweden), Association for Civic Education in Europe (Sweden). The formal agreements on co-operation within the project between Kashubian Folk High School and other project partners were signed in January – September 2002.

they can influence neither their personal affairs nor the ones of local or countrywide dimension. At the same time, it is not only farmers that are more and more aware of the need to prevent social and civic degradation. Our project is to support the changes in the rural areas. The idea of folk high schools has already proved successful on a number of occasions. Now, considered anew, using not only Polish but also Danish, German and Swedish experience, it stands a good chance of becoming a good educational concept for Polish rural communities. I believe in that deeply and sincerely”.¹⁷ The other partners of the project had very similar motivation for the participation in the project. Showing that folk high schools are adult education institutions that can quickly and efficiently develop and implement educational programmes that effectively prevent social exclusion became the leitmotif of all the activities. The project partners agreed that finding adequate approach to various types of excluded individuals and groups was a problem in all the partners’ countries, very often in the direct environment of the partner organisations.

The aims, objectives and scope of work, educational programmes target groups, basic research questions and the mission of the programme were identified during the first seminars (usually held in Starbienino near Choczewo, North Poland) with the participation of project partners. A lot of attention was paid to formal procedures, which, with so many partners from different countries, turned out to be very important. The time schedule of activities and principles decision making were worked out and approved. Research groups were appointed, etc.

It has been agreed, and is rendered in the relevant documents, that the main objective of the project is adjusting the adult education proposed by folk high schools and other independent educational institutions to the current needs and challenges in Denmark, Germany, Poland and Sweden by developing a new educational concept called “school for life” for the individuals from the groups of the excluded. The adult education ideas and heritage of, *inter alia*, Grundtvig and Kold from Denmark, Ludwiczak and Solarz from Poland, Weinger from Germany, Sohlman and Łlund from Sweden will be creatively used in developing the concept. Review of the traditions, in combination with the diagnosis of potential environments of project results impact should contribute to finding the best possible educational strategy for the excluded. The concept will be popularised through publications in the form of books, CDs, Websites and television programmes presenting the results of the research and proposals for concrete programme activities. As the project documentation says, “it will enable folk high schools in Europe to open to the traditions of adult education and, based on that, develop a perspective for the future”.¹⁸

From among the research questions posed by the international team of researchers, the following are the most important ones:

1. What are the challenges of adult education in the context of educational needs of individuals and communities considered to be excluded/marginalised?
2. How should educational phenomena be formed based on the achievements of folk high schools and traditions of independent education?
3. How should effective learning strategies be developed based on the educational needs research and comparative analysis of the operation of folk high schools in various countries?
4. How should the modern formula of folk high school be popularised, especially among politicians, teachers and adult education animators?¹⁹

¹⁷ Folk High School – School for Life. Kashubian Folk High School. Wieżycza 2003, p. [4].

¹⁸ *Projekt w ramach programu Komisji Europejskiej Socrates-Grundtvig – Uniwersytet Ludowy – Szkoła dla Życia [A project within European Commission programme Socrates-Grundtvig – Folk High School – School for Life]*. In: Rocznik Andragogiczny 2001. Warszawa–Toruń 2002, p. 272.

¹⁹ *Folk High School...*, op. cit., Wieżycza 2003, p. [3].

A consensus on the three main groups of addressees of “School for Life” project was also reached. The project is to reach the following:

1. people living in the environment of the given partner organisation, it is to prepare the people to regain life satisfaction;
2. adult education teachers, convinced that using the idea of folk high schools is an opportunity to develop the concept of “life-long learning”;
3. politicians and decision makers of various levels responsible for educational system, adult education in particular.²⁰

The project covers, *inter alia*, research on the development of theoretical concepts and practical activities undertaken by folk high schools in the countries of project participants in the past²¹. Special emphasis is put on new aspects, *inter alia*, by attempts at reinterpretation of the known as it seems and analysed in many ways history of folk high schools. The researchers are particularly interested in the problem of folk high schools as an educational institution “including the excluded”, including them into life, family, society, into the group of beneficiaries of civilisational changes: social, economic, political, etc. Apart from idea historians, there is also another team, a group of researchers of educational needs in the impact environments of the educational institutions participating in the project. The meeting point of those two research groups is an interesting point of “confrontation” of the past with the present, which in turn is a starting point for creating visions of the future of the international movement of folk high schools. Those debates are extremely inspiring. It is a kind of “expecting unexpected results”, an expedition to explore the hardly known areas of the future of folk high schools.

The whole project was completed in the year 2004. Its results are known and published.²² Then – based on the jointly worked out results – concrete proposals of educational programmes to be implemented will be developed. In the future, the project partners will also try to develop “School for Life” by new research aspects and to broaden the educational offer – an effect of our further research and study work and the analysis of the effects of the implementation of the concept developed so far (and its possible modifications). I that reason realizers of the project started co-operation with colleagues from other countries – Bielarussian, Bulgarian, Lithuanian, Romanian and Ukrainian partners.

Conclusions

The challenges of the future require redefining many of the existing educational attitudes and behaviours. In that creative search we sometimes seem to forget about the old concepts that have served the past generations well for decades. And referring to the proven educational patterns from the past and their creative adaptation to contemporary educational tasks can bear results that are hard to overestimate in facing those challenges (e.g. *school for life* of the distinguished Danish thinker, the concept that surfaced as early as the first half of 19th century, later creatively developed into the idea of folk high schools).

The perspective of over one hundred years, and the analyses of the contemporary discussions seem to indicate that the concept of folk high school can prove useful in the future – especially in relation to the educational activities for the communities that have built the folk high schools. Because there is enough scope for folk high schools nowadays, especially in the context of the

²⁰ Ibidem

²¹ *It is my great satisfaction that I can co-ordinate the work of the international group of idea researchers, working as a part of a European Union project.*

²² See: *Folk High School – School for Life*. Wieżyca 2003.

needs to develop democratic functioning of the communities and societies, as well as of the whole state, I would like to indicate at least some of the tasks that could be entrusted to modern folk high schools:

- taking up actions for the groups and individuals that are excluded/defavoured;
- promotion of civil education, local democracy and the idea of social partnership;
- promotion of the idea and practical solutions for the sustainable social and economic development of the region;
- multi-aspect regional education, protection of local cultural and natural environment heritage;
- leisure activities, developing the individual needs of the members of the community the folk high school functions in.

This, of course, is not an exhaustive list of the possible educational initiatives that can be taken up by folk high schools. Generally speaking, it seems advisable that each folk high school should “listen to” the signals from its immediate social environment to be able to identify the educational tasks that the community considers to be *important* and/or *needed*. Apart from “listening”, folk high schools also need more determination in animation activities. It is folk high schools that should – apart from other independent educational institutions and organisations – set certain patterns of educational behaviours and make people aware of the educational needs the members of the community in which the folk high school provides educational services might not be aware of. More appreciation and attention paid to the role that folk high schools might play – postulated by the author for years and on various occasions – might result in the flourishing of that not only wonderful but also effective form of education (*vide* e.g. Danish, German or Polish experience of 1930’s), for folk high schools were able to educate effectively thousands of enlightened people active in developing the democracy of the citizens in various parts of the globe during the past one hundred years. And they will surely be able to do it in the future by:

- restoring the position previously occupied by folk high schools- where they lost it,
- maintaining (and extending) the areas of activity – where folk high schools are still considered to be a part of educational system,
- conquering new areas (countries, regions) by showing the flexibility and effectiveness – where folk high schools have not been known before.

The redevelopment of the concept of folk high schools in the world urgently needs, *inter alia*:

- stronger connections with the local (regional) communities in which folk high schools operate,
- effective folk high school lobbying at all decision making and opinion-creating levels,
- even more active search for educational niches that can be accommodated in accordance with ideology of folk high schools,
- wide ranging, multi-aspect international experience sharing and co-operation of the whole movement.

The fore said project “Folk High School – School for Life” implemented by more than ten partners from four countries (as a part of European Union Socrates – Grundtvig programme) seems to be an interesting example of undertaking modern activities for the benefit of folk high schools and of looking for the tasks and roles that those educational institutions can play in the future. And finally, it remains to be hoped that it will produce concrete and measurable benefits for the ones implementing the project and for the communities in whose educational activities they are involved.

Final postulate

In conclusion – referring to the thought mentioned at the beginning of the paper – the author once again expresses his hope that soon the research referring back to the common traditions of modern agricultural schools of the beginning of 20th century will be taken up by a team of researchers from Poland and the Czech Republic as the fact that it is worth and possible to creatively use the history of education has been proved by the projects similar to the one presented above and connected with the Grundtvigian *school for life*.

Stručný obsah

Grundtvigova “škola pro život” – mezi tradicí a modernizací vzdělávání na venkově.

Článek ukazuje, jakým způsobem lze využít vzdělávacích tradic při hledání moderních řešení v oblasti vzdělávání dospělých. Mezi jiným autor zaujímá nový postoj k výkladu pedagogického odkazu dánského myslitele N. F. S. Grundtviga (1783–1872) tím, že ukazuje, jak jednostranná interpretace jeho významných myšlenek po celá desetiletí zakořenila v Polsku. Obzvláštní důraz je kladen na prvky související s jeho koncepcí *školy po celý život*, která vedla k rozvoji významného mezinárodního hnutí lidových středních škol.

Současné pokusy o navázání na výsledky, kterých toto hnutí dosáhlo, jsou představeny na příkladu dánsko-německo-polsko-švédského projektu „Lidová střední škola – škola po celý život“, jehož realizace byla zahájena před několika lety. Článek také vyjadřuje naději, že v blízké budoucnosti bude možno navázat na společnou polsko-českou práci vztahující se k tradici českých zemědělských škol a na jejich vliv na rozvoj dvoustupňových vzdělávacích institucí na polském území na začátku 20. století.