

Original research paper

**EVALUATION OF UNDERSTANDING AND ATTITUDE
TOWARDS THE CONCEPT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

*UDC 37.017:502/504; 378:502/504; 502.131.1::37.014.5 (497.11);
502.131.1:37.01(497.6 RS)*

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Abstract. *The paper focuses on the development of the concept of education for sustainable development in the regions where the research is conducted; with the presentation of respondents' opinions for all three observed areas. The author's contribution to this work is reflected in pointing out the basic factors and essential problems that arise when reforming the educational system in order to apply the concept of education for sustainable development. The paper offers solutions to these problems, providing established guidelines on how to reform the education system. In this case, it is about the perception of students of three regional centers - Niš and Kosovska Mitrovica in Serbia, and East Sarajevo - Pala in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The results of our research show that a very small number of students are familiar with the emergence of the idea of OR, which confirms the fact that awareness and especially knowledge of citizens about OR, both at the level of the EU and especially at the level of Serbia, is far from desirable and necessary. The results of the research can be useful for decision makers who participate in the creation of the educational system; and they would be particularly significant for the reform of the education system in Serbia, where education for sustainable development is still viewed as a theoretical rather than a practical issue.*

Key words: *university, education, education for sustainable development, environmental behavior, students*

Received June 13, 2023/Accepted June 29, 2023

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1. THE IMPORTANCE OF INTRODUCING IDEAS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INTO UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

Education The path to training people to live and work in accordance with sustainable development (hereafter OR) is education. Education raises the quality of human capital, develops and increases the capacities of individuals, groups, communities, organizations and countries to participate in the development of a sustainable society. It promotes the change of people's attitudes, opinions and values and thus enables the world to be made safer, healthier and more promising, and thus to improve the quality of life. Education is a key factor in changes and development of environmental awareness, culture and responsibility. Through upbringing and education, we express what kind of society we want to be and what kind of person we want to raise and educate. It is therefore important to recognize common values that should support educational activities. In this sense, the University and all educational institutions are expected to think about values, but also to act in accordance with the common social-cultural and educational values¹.

"Education for OR is often referred to as the engine of the world human community. It is a dynamic concept of education that should last throughout life as a comprehensive, continuous, long-term and progressive cognitive process based on a holistic approach, unencumbered by any ideology or politics and directed towards universal values of life" (Maletaški, 2018, p. 40). Recently, we have witnessed numerous globalization processes that make education and training for OR an educational imperative. The need to preserve certain values (such as knowledge, solidarity, identity and responsibility, as components of the OR concept) and to create mechanisms to strengthen them is increasingly being recognized. Since the issue of environmental quality cannot be placed in the framework of only one scientific discipline, education for OR is based on the principle of interdisciplinarity (Maletaški, 2018). University education, which in our time has achieved a high level of specialization, demands holistic and integrative approaches that allow the complex problems of human and society's relationship with nature to be seen from the angles of all disciplines. Today, a high level of cooperation among all fields of science is necessary. No serious environmental problem can be successfully analyzed and explained, or solved, if it is not simultaneously viewed from the perspective of natural, technical, medical and social sciences. University education, which in recent times takes place in the sign of favoring the "know-how" model of knowledge, is at the expense of developing a critical and open mind that is capable of grappling with the serious and difficult problems that the human species is facing today in its relationship to natural environment and issues of survival of life on planet Earth.

Like any other process and education for OR has its strengths, weaknesses and opportunities. Weaknesses come from the fact that this type of education is often not institutionalized and does not represent a powerful political factor. The potential of education for OR is not sufficient by itself, but its quality implementation requires a good organization within numerous social institutions. Education for OR, namely, requires a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach to work, which implies the abolition of strict division between subjects. The general goal of education for OR is the gradual development of attitudes that would be based on those forms of behavior and action that would create sustainability, prudence and balance at the systematic level of reproduction

¹ For more information on the conceptual-theoretical meaning of the concept of value and its understanding, see: Prodović Milojković, 2020; while on education in: Stanojević, Zdravković, 2013.

of social life, and that at the levels of behavior of individuals, social groups and institutions. From the mentioned characteristics, it is clear that it is not about learning in a shorter period of time, but about constant - lifelong learning. What is necessary to say is that education for OR cannot be separated from the concept of lifelong learning, given that lifelong learning is within the value framework of OR, and at the same time its premise.

The concept of responsibility is often linked to the concept of OR, because it is a key value from the aspect of sustainability. The code of ethics of the North American Indians emphasized precisely the notion of responsibility, which corresponds to today's concept of OR. Thus, they emphasize responsibility towards themselves, others and the Earth, at the same time emphasizing that "The Earth is our mother, and everything we put into it, it gives back to us." The responsibility here is also related to intergenerational connection because it depends on us what and to what extent future generations will enjoy with what we currently have. Therefore, "thinking about intergenerational relations and co-responsibility becomes an important pedagogical issue". (Vukobratović, 2017, p. 25)

In the development of society so far, the application of knowledge to different areas of human activity has led to revolutionary changes. In order to respond to major global challenges, each country (including ours) must define intervention packages of specific measures, which include, among other things, the education and training system (see more in: Prođović, 2014). In this context, the question arises, what is the role of education?! Its role is not to solve accumulated environmental, economic and political problems, but to offer possible solutions. A possible solution to such a problem is called OR, whose goal is to satisfy the needs of the present without fear that future generations will not be able to satisfy their needs (Prođović, 2014, p. 11). As things stand now, the foundations of the survival and future of our civilization are represented by the philosophy of OR and the educational system, which should adequately transfer that philosophy to all structures of society and thus ensure its functioning in accordance with the concept of OR.

Recently, OR has been constantly set as a goal to strive for, but the question arises: can we and do we really want to achieve it at the Faculties and what tools are available to us?!² Uzelac points out that (lifelong) education for OR is the way to implement the concept of OR; and that it is a systematic practical activity and not a one-time action (Uzelac, 2008)³. OR is a global policy, i.e. the unity of all elements of state or international politics in an effort to establish a balance in the present between all systems of labor-created values and between them and all systems of natural values, and to ensure a stable co-evolution between them for the future (M. Decleris). The author points out that all existing discussions on this topic should (read: and must) be based on debates about the role of the Faculty as a social institution that operates within the social and cultural milieu of a certain culture, i.e. within a certain value framework. Such studies would try to contribute to the popularization of lifelong learning and lifelong education as a value that has undoubtedly become an imperative of today's time and which is linked to the concept of upbringing and education for OR.

² There are many different interpretations of what OR is and what it actually refers to (see: Marković, 2005, pp. 399-401; Đukić, 2011, pp. 3-25; Đukanović, 1996, pp. 171-172; Nadić i Šuvaković, 2011, pp. 161-167; Milojević, 2005, 2015).

³ The theoretical implications of the term OR and its concept, which has been particularly intensively developed over the last forty years and which is often taken as a superficially used term on a daily basis without deeper knowledge and the possibility of its application, are extensively given and shown in the theoretical part presented in the master's thesis in 2014. (for more details, see: Prođović, 2014).

The fact is that OR is not taught with sufficient quality, but it is also not treated adequately to the needs of today's Serbia at the universities. Since its appearance, the OR concept itself has gone through changes and extensions, which was accompanied by controversies, some of which have persisted to this day (Dragutinović, Filipović, i Cvetanović, 2005). It was the previously adopted strategies that mandated higher education to include education for OR in international agreements. Education about OR implies introducing students to the concept, policies, theoretical debates on sustainable development, while at the same time presenting other theories, approaches and concepts⁴. The emancipatory view of education emphasizes that the role of education is to contribute to the creation of a democratic and ecologically just world, so education is interpreted as a means by which self-actualized members of society are created, who strive for meaning, develop their potential and solve problems together (Jickling & Wals, 2002, pp. 224-225). Such a model also implies that education for OR cannot only deal with economic and technological issues, but must include concern for the creation of common values, personal integrity, a sense of social responsibility, freedom of choice, development of individuals as parts of society, etc. "In the document revising the first five years of the UN Decade of Education for OR, two pedagogical interpretations of education for OR are distinguished: 1) education for OR as a means of transferring appropriate knowledge, attitudes, values and behaviors and 2) as a means of developing human capacities and opportunities to deal with sustainability issues so that they can choose alternative ways of living for themselves" (Wals, 2009, p. 27). As it is obvious that not everyone has to agree with the moral and value concepts prescribed by OR policies, it is extremely important for students to be familiar with other approaches to the relationship between man and the environment. "Furthermore, if the goal of ecological thinking is to further its development, and if students are to participate in an ecological discourse that is not at all conceivable today, then we must resist the temptation to exclude a wide range of nascent ideas in favor of the theme of sustainability or OR" (Jickling & Walsh, 2002, p. 222). In this sense, only if higher education is understood as "creating opportunities, not defining or prescribing the future for students" and if "universities promote research, evaluation and criticism of developing ideas and creative contribution to their development" (Jickling & Wals, 2002, p. 230), education for OR can have fruitful effects on the development of future generations. In this light, the concept of OR, as a multidimensional concept, can be useful for bringing together different points of view from different spheres (natural, humanistic and social sciences).

It is well known that university education for OR in Serbia suffers from many weaknesses: some are the result of heritage, and others stem from confusion arising from technological and other changes and their (mis)understanding. That is why it is necessary to "improve the existing education system as soon as possible" (see: Official Gazette of RS, 2010). As sustainability, as a fundamental development direction, is aimed at continuous harmonization of decisions and solutions related to nature and the social environment, consensus at all levels and commitment of all social groups is necessary. An informed and well-educated population is a condition for achieving OR, and therefore a fundamental tool for good management, good decision-making and achieving a better quality of life. Hence, a greater effort is necessary in the area of education of young

⁴ On the goals of education, see: Stelmack,; Sinclair, & Fitzpatrick, 2005, pp. 36-53; Jickling & Wals, 2002, pp. 221-232.

people about OR, so that they are better acquainted with the principles and processes of planning and decision-making about OR of the communities in which they live, as well as society as a whole. Such knowledge is needed to coordinate ideas that want to be launched in communities, in order to lead to OR. The development of a sustainable society is a process of constant learning, full research and analysis. Therefore, it is necessary to constantly increase the level of knowledge and understanding of the principles of OR, while at the same time strengthening the skills of action. Considerable changes are needed in all social groups and at all levels, including in the educational process, in which it is necessary to introduce new institutional relations and new sectors. The state should strongly encourage the creation of a framework for lifelong learning about OR through formal and non-formal education. Let us recall that UNESCO's education strategy for OR states that its purpose is to encourage UNESCO member states to develop and integrate education about OR into formal education systems, into all relevant subjects, but also into non-formal and IT education.

The author's desire is to show the basic features of education for OR, as well as the fundamental principles on which this concept was established. From all this comes the scientific importance of the research, which is reflected in the systematization of general theoretical considerations of the concept of education for OR, along with the determination of the goals, possibilities and direction of education for OR, and the establishment of the necessary reformation of the education system, so that it enables education for OR.

Through the conducted research, the author examines information and understanding of the OR concept, as well as the attitudes and behaviors of young people in accordance with this concept. With it, he tries to contribute to raising the awareness not only of young people in Serbia, about the need and possibilities of their contribution to OR, but also to emphasize the importance of their role in the social and economic development of the community. The idea of such a research was not only to obtain data on their perception and understanding of the OR concept, but on the contrary to involve as many people as possible in the whole process, to encourage them to act in their communities and initiate activities based on the principles of OR. The contribution and motive of this approach is reflected in the aspiration to operationalize this concept and enter into its essence, not only within the framework of political declarations, but also in terms of school and university education, and that education in general faces the understanding of integral OR. Only if the abilities of future generations to apply these principles are improved, only in this way will the sustainability of our civilization and way of life be created and realized.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The aim of the research is to deal with the analysis of knowledge of the concept of OR, which is considered one of the basic values of society; and within that, educational tools are considered for the purpose of easier implementation of education and training for OR at faculties. The intention is to discover the training of students "to make decisions as future leaders, scientists or engineers and act in a professionally appropriate and locally relevant manner in solving various problems that pose a threat to our common future" (Prodović, 2014, p. 12).

The specific goals of this research were based on determining the influence of the value attitudes of the respondents on the acceptance of the OR concept. The author's

expectations are that the obtained research results show that the application of the concept of education for OR is a consequence of the value attitudes of society members (in this case, students).

The research sample consists of the Serbian population in three different regions of the same speaking area. In order for the sample to be generationally the same, students of the same year (3rd year of study), of the same type - all students, from all three areas of the state social faculties - the Faculty of Philosophy, and the same major - from the Department of Sociology, Psychology, Pedagogy, Communication were selected and history. The sample size is 100 students per Faculties. It was insisted that the sample be random. Most of the questionnaires were distributed in Serbian, given that the language of instruction in most courses is Serbian. However, in order to ensure a good understanding of the questions and ensure reliable answers, the questionnaire distributed to students in East Sarajevo (Pale) was translated into Bosnian.

The survey research was conducted using the PAPI (Paper and pencil interviewing) technique, and at the very beginning of the survey questionnaire, respondents were informed that the research is anonymous, on a volunteer/academic basis, and that the research results will be used exclusively for scientific purposes. The collected data were statistically processed using the statistical computer program SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences).

3. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

One of the key dimensions of OR is the social dimension, which refers to how the population understands its importance (Kalmar, Krekić, Major, 2021: 147). In several previous works (see: Prodović, 2014; Prodović, Milojković, Prodović, 2014a), the author's subject of interest is, in addition to the theoretical conceptualization of the concept of OR, the state of higher education in the field of environment in Serbia.

The following is a presentation of the opinions of the students of the three regional centers on the questions posed.

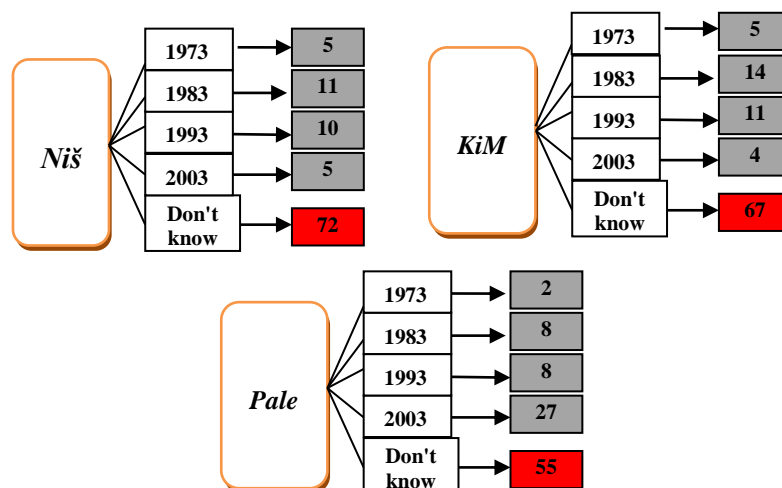


Chart 1 When did the idea of sustainable development first appear?

On the question "When did the idea of OR first appear" (graph 1), the largest number of respondents do not know the exact year (even 63.8%). A small number of students are actually familiar with the emergence of the idea of OR. Looking regionally, the majority of surveyed students (all three regional centers) do not know the exact year of its appearance. Female students are less familiar than male students (as many as 152 compared to 194 total respondents); which is contrary to some research according to which female students and students of higher years of study have a more positive attitude towards the issue of sustainability, that is, they more often accept and correctly define it than male respondents and students of the first year of study (see: Rončević, Rafajac, 2012).

In order to reveal a new dimension of understanding and knowledge of OR, the respondents were asked to answer, in their own words, what they consider the term OR or to describe their personal understanding and understanding of this term with an open question in a free form. Of the total number of respondents, even 76% do not have basic knowledge that would help in the definition. Only 17.8% gave a full definition of the term. The author cites several definitions of OR mentioned in the students' answers:

- 1) "... Smart exploitation of the natural system for humans, which means protecting the natural environment while enabling the longevity of the human species."
- 2) "Meeting today's needs without compromising the needs of future generations."
- 3) "Each step or act that makes the next one more efficient and better."
- 4) "My definition: OR is the light at the end of the tunnel..."

Among the definitions offered, an incomplete understanding of the OR concept is recognized, i.e. connecting the meaning of the term "sustainability" mainly with one of the dimensions, be it economic, social or environmental. In the description, the majority states that OR takes care of resources for the future, includes everything for the better development of the community, and points to economic growth and development. It is also equated with socially responsible management, education and transformation of consciousness and strategic and smart planning of the entire development. A part of the surveyed OR identifies with renewable energy sources, new ways of thinking and responsibility towards the community and nature. Synonyms that were often used were related to terms such as: ecological awareness (0.7%), environmental protection (1.6%), development(s) of society (2%), human needs (1.3%), upbringing and education (0.3%), and to the point that everything is considered OR (0.3%). One part of the comments shows the dissatisfaction of young people with the conditions and opportunities provided by the community and society. There are numerous negative considerations, but also those that require a more active commitment to integrate the concept of OR into the overall development of society and the communities in which they live. Everyone is still guided by those who say "it is important not to shoot" or "keep quiet, endure and suffer". An Indian proverb was also found in the descriptions of OR: "We do not inherit our land from our ancestors, but borrow it from our descendants." Below, the author cites a definition that emphasizes the economic and ecological dimensions of OR:

"OR is economic development that has no impact on ecology and natural systems, which is a challenge in today's world. Economic development refers to the development of the infrastructure network, schools, hospitals, healthcare and everything that would contribute to improving the standard of living, and OR means that with all this progress nature does not suffer any consequences. OR of a product/service can also concern the viability of a particular product/service in the market."

In the largest number of answers (over 70%), various wrong, one-sided, banal or too general formulations are recognized, which indicate a fundamental ignorance of the concept or its attachment to peripheral elements of OR. For example, in this group there are most of those who under OR mean continuous development, continuous development, development without interruption, regardless of the consequences of that development. This also includes those that connect OR with certain areas of personal or social life (preservation or development of culture, education, childcare, incentives for businesses or industry, acquisition of wealth and money, reduction of unemployment, etc.). Among them is a significant number of respondents whose citation of synonyms or some very general answers indicates a fundamental ignorance of the concept of OR (progress, progress, survival, balance, prevention, crisis...). Correct and relatively correct answers indicate the dominance of a fragmentary insight into the whole OR. The author points out that only one fifth of all respondents holistically and accurately perceives the term OR. Such a large percentage of ignorance of the very definition of what sustainable development is leads to the conclusion that ignorance is not only at the level of the meaning and content of this term, but also at the level of the very construction of this coin - "sustainable development".

This impression is also contributed to by the answers to the following question "Do you consider the concepts of OR and environmental protection to be the same?" (see chart 2).

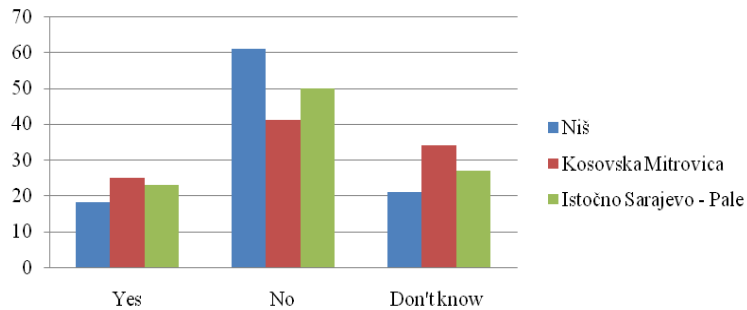


Chart 2 Do you consider the terms OR and environmental protection to be the same?

According to the survey, half of the respondents (50.7%) do not consider these concepts to be the same. This certainly blurs the picture of his knowledge, considering that the majority of the respondents freely associated this term with many synonyms, including environmental protection. It is worrying that the percentage of those who consider these terms synonymous is slightly lower than the respondents who are not sure or do not know how to accurately define the concept of this phenomenon (more than 28%). A somewhat larger and high percentage of young people who have heard of the term "OR" and at the same time less than half of those who do not know its basic goals speak in favor of insufficient information among young people about this development agenda, that is, they confirm the fact that the goals of OR are not sufficiently popularized and accepted among young people.

When asked which of the offered definitions best describes OR, the largest number of students (71.4%) correctly chose that OR "satisfies the needs of today without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their needs" (graph 3).

Sustainable Development:

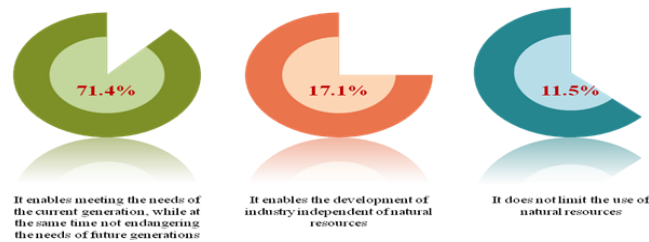


Chart 3 Which of the offered definitions best describes OR

The vast majority of all three examined university centers agree with this confident attitude.

In the continuation of the research, there was a question that asked the respondents to choose what is meant by "Agenda 21" in the answers already offered. Although the answers were offered, even half of the respondents clearly answered that they do not know what Agenda 21 is. Students from Kosovo and Metohija are leading in this (graph 4).

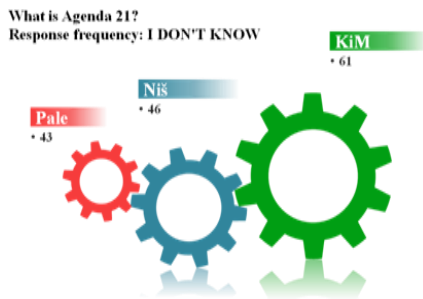


Chart 4 What is Agenda 21?

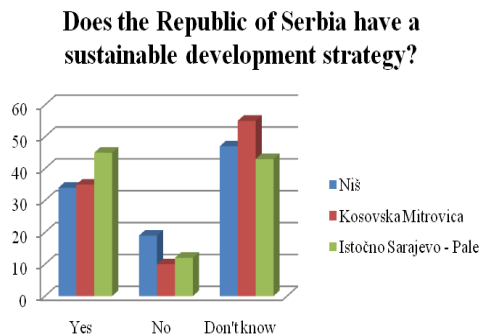


Chart 5 Does the RS have an OR strategy?

Knowledge about OR is based on a superficial recognition of what it is, without detailed knowledge of what its goals are. A third of respondents (34.5%) chose that Agenda 21 is "a plan of action at the global, national and local level, with the aim of OR", while only 16.1% linked it to "laws aimed at implementing OR". "Does the Republic of Serbia have an OR strategy?" almost half of the respondents (48.4%) answered that they did not know (students from Kosovo stand out). This additionally warns about the need to raise the awareness of young people to familiarize them with the goals of the OR. Slightly less than that (37.8%) clearly share the opinion that they have it, in which the students from Pale are leading. No less important is the fact that only 13.8% of the respondents believe that Serbia does not have the strategy in question (Chart 4).

The following group of questions asked in the form of a Likert scale (ranging from 1 - do not agree at all to 5 - completely agree) contributes to the students' perception of knowledge of OR. The conclusions reached by the author confirm the previous impressions - about the superficial recognition of the term OR - without a clear demarcation of its meaning and concept. Thus, to the following questions, the students of all three university centers clearly showed their ignorance of the term, their lack of interest and a passive attitude. The largest majority of answers were "I don't know/I'm not sure" to the questions: a) "OR must follow the logic of the previous model of industrial society development with rational use of natural resources" (43.8%); b) "The idea of OR is a vague, imprecise and contradictory phrase without concrete content" (53.3%); c) "A way out of the current crisis is not possible if social energy is wasted on environmental protection and excessive social sensitivity" (39.5%); g) "OR seeks to balance the magic triangle: environmental protection, stable social development and fair distribution of social opportunities" (47%); d) "OR implies a radical break with the current economic concept of development" (63.8%); đ) "OR is a political syntagm and empty formula" (53%); e) "Implementation of the OR idea is possible only with a profound change in values and political concepts" (59.5%); h) "Protection of the environment should be in the first place regardless of slower economic development" (36.5%); z) "OR is the ability to use natural resources responsibly with the aim of meeting the needs of everyone in the present without jeopardizing the chances of future generations" (41.4%); i) "The current rights crisis is a consequence of a development pattern that does not respect the principle of sustainability" (59.5%).

The students also showed their passive attitude to the question "Which international organization monitors the progress of states in achieving the goals of the OR". More than half of respondents (51.6%) do not know/or are not sure which international organization they are talking about. The United Nations Organization (UN) was chosen by 33.6%, the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) by 8.2%, while the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) was chosen by 6.6%. Such data clearly indicate ignorance of the basic concept of OR, and lack of information about the organizations that are in charge of achieving its goals. See chart 5 on the frequency of responses confirming respondents' lack of information by region.

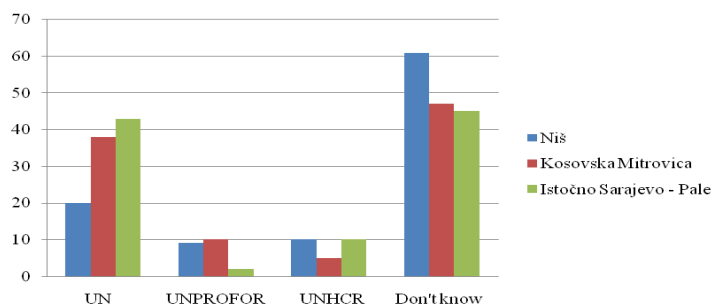


Chart 6 Which international organization monitors the progress of states in achieving the goals of the OR?

A set of questions examining the awareness of young people about the availability of information about the OR and the role of individual sectors in educating and informing young people about that topic points to the following conclusions (chart 7).

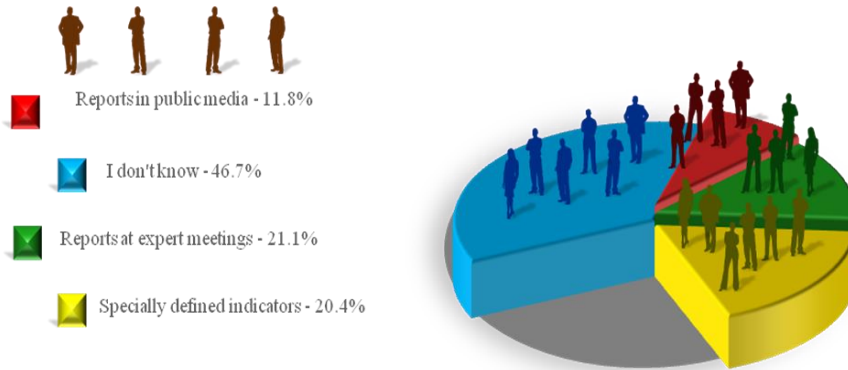


Chart 7 How is the achievement of the objectives of the OR monitored?

Students share the opinion that the achievement of OR goals should first be reported at expert meetings; then with specially defined indicators, and only then with reports in public media. The fact that the largest percentage of respondents do not have a clear opinion on this issue as well (as much as 46.7%) is worrying. Students from KiM are leading in this.

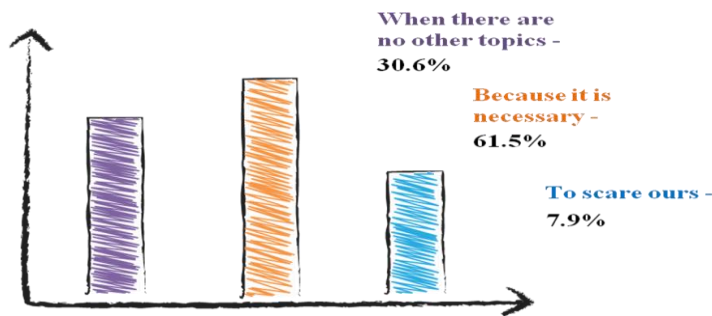


Chart 8 The issue of OR is discussed

What the students clearly agree with (chart 8) is the fact that the OR issue is always discussed - because it is necessary (61.5% of all three regional centers surveyed share this opinion). A third of respondents (30.6%) believe that it is talked about in moments of leisure - when there is no motivation for other and better (not to mention more important) topics; while a small number of students (only 7.9%) see the cause in an authoritarian approach - when this topic is approached for the purpose of scaring, warning and sobering up. According to estimates, young people receive the most information about OR (chart 9) in the media (as much as 78.6%), less at school/faculty (18.4%) and the least from family members (3%). This attitude is shared by the students of all three university centers.

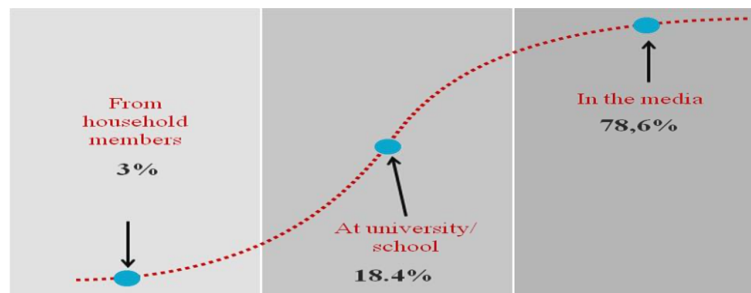


Chart 9 I hear the most about OR...

The role of certain sectors in educating and informing young people is evidenced by the following questions, where respondents prefer to answer that they are not sure/or that they do not know the answer, rather than agreeing with the options offered. The questions were related to: a) "Education and education for OR cannot be implemented in all subject areas" (43.8%); b) "Due to the lack of formal education in the field of education and training for OR, lecturers cannot acquire the skills to implement education and OR within their subject area" (51.6%); c) "While there are socially disadvantaged groups in society, upbringing and education for OR and lifelong learning programs are available only to the privileged" (43.8%); d) "Upbringing and education for OR should be a separate subject area" (39.8%); e) "Upbringing and education for OR can be implemented as a cross-curricular topic" (49%); f) "If the lecturer wants to implement the elements of upbringing and education for OR, he usually has to create the didactic material himself" (49%); g) "Implementation of cross-curricular topics that includes upbringing and education for OR requires additional involvement of lecturers and represents an additional burden" (48.2%); h) "In my subject area, it is not possible to deal with OR topics" (49.3%); z) "Out-of-classroom and project-based teaching are good ways to implement content from the field of upbringing and education for OR" (49.3%). Based on the insight into the existing data, we can notice that almost half of the respondents do not have an opinion at all on the issue of the implementation of OR in the educational system. The students only agreed that "Lecturers (teachers, professors) should include the contents of education for OR in their subject area" (47.4%) and that "It is necessary to introduce as many topics from the field of education as possible into the teaching programs for OR, because pupils/students should be encouraged to behave sustainably within the community" (44.7%). It is worrying that, despite the agreement, more than half of the respondents do not share such perceptions.

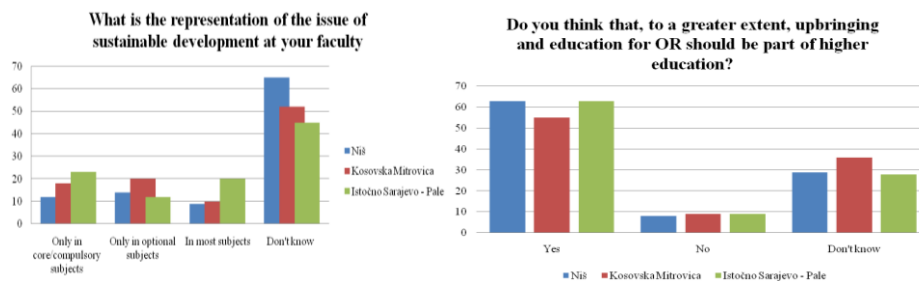


Chart 10 OR representation

On the slightly more detailed question "What is the representation of the OR issue at your faculty", more than half of the respondents are not interested in giving their opinion on this issue. They prefer not to have one/or to be unsure (54.6%), in which the students from Nis are leading the way. A smaller group shares the opinion that OR implementation at the Faculty is present only in basic/compulsory subjects (17.8%); while slightly less in optional subjects (15.1%). What they agree with, but still a smaller percentage of respondents, is that it is present in the majority of teaching subjects (12.5%) (graph 9). However, the respondents' answers to the question "Do you think that, to a greater extent, upbringing and education for OR should be introduced into the composition of higher education" provide optimism. As many as 60.2% of respondents believe that it should, in addition to an extremely small percentage of those who disagree (9.9%). The goal of those who are interested in this topic is to convince the third of the respondents (29.9%) who are not sure/or do not have their opinion on the correctness of the implementation of OR in all higher education levels (graph 9). In the end, those who answered the previous question positively share their agreement that the level of implementation of upbringing and education for OR should be graduate studies (as many as 46.1% - in which students from Pale are leading); then undergraduate studies (34.5%, led by students from KiM), then specialist/postgraduate studies (14.5%, led by students from KiM) and finally doctoral studies (with 4.9%, led by students from Niš) (graph 9).

4. CONCLUDING CONSIDERATIONS

Very few students are familiar with the emergence of the idea of OR. By adding those who did not answer the question with those who gave wrong, general answers that cannot be connected in any way to the essence of OR - they lead to the conclusion that ignorance of this term is almost 80%. Similarly, the findings of some other research (Mihailović, Đukić, Mojsilović, 2019; EB 455, 2016) in which such indications about the awareness of citizens (EU and Serbia) about the OR, do not provide reasons for satisfaction, regardless of the fact that in the meantime positive changes. Namely, it can often be argued with great probability that citizens' awareness and especially knowledge about the OR, both at the EU level and especially at the level of Serbia, is far from desirable and necessary.

(Un)familiarity with the term OR is further contributed by the fact that despite the numerous synonyms used to define this term - when asked if they consider it the same as the usual synonym (environmental protection) - respondents answer no, or that they do not know or are not sure. Accepting data on partial or complete (un)informed and ignorance of students about OR and its goals as crucial challenges that call into question the realism of achieving the set goals by 2030, leads to the conclusions that maximum efforts must be made first at the level of systemic promotion and popularization of action for OR. Students overwhelmingly agree on OR - when some of the "sound" definitions are offered. Thus, as many as 3/4 of students firmly know that OR is tied to the definition: "meeting the needs of today without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their needs." However, knowledge about OR is based on a superficial recognition of what it is, without detailed knowledge of what its goals are. In addition to not knowing the basic concept of OR, there is also a lack of information about the organizations that are in charge of achieving its goals. The importance should be given to emphasizing the social dimension of OR, with an emphasis on the involvement of young people. "OR is important for any society that seeks to improve its human resources, in this case young, educated people. In order for OR to be

productive, it is of crucial importance that the entire social community, together with state institutions, ensure all the conditions that will help young people to achieve and achieve all goals and acquire knowledge and skills with which they will become an essential factor of OR" (Collection, 2015).

The largest percentage of those surveyed do not have a clear opinion on the availability of information on OR and the role of individual sectors in educating and informing young people about that topic. This kind of lack of interest may indicate that there is basically not enough attention paid to OR and that young people are not given relevant information about the concept and principles of OR. Students clearly agree that the OR issue should always be discussed - because it is necessary. Young people receive the most information about OR in the media, less at school/college and the least from family members. With this, young people recognized the responsibility in promoting OR of all these sources, as well as the institutions and organizations that stand behind them (such as: schools, faculties, media, non-governmental organizations/associations, authorities and business organizations). At this point, it is necessary to get acquainted with the existing data of some other researches, which clearly indicate that the respondents still believe that the authorities are the most responsible for the promotion of OR, although the differences are small (Zbornik, 2015). When it comes to the responsibility for the implementation of the content of the OR in the composition of education, Vesna Nikolić notes that the role of ministries and the media is primarily emphasized, the role of schools is in third place, while the role of higher education was only in seventh place (Maletaški, 2018, p. 77). The question arises why the influence of educational institutions for the improvement and implementation of education for OR is so poorly evaluated?! According to the same author, the solution can be sought in understanding the non-independent position and strong centralist decision-making in the education system (Maletaški, 2018).

Based on the insight into the existing data, we can notice that almost half of the respondents do not have an opinion at all on the issue of the implementation of OR in the educational system. What they definitely agree with is that lecturers (teachers, professors) must include the contents of education and training for OR in their subject area; and that topics from the field of upbringing and education for OR must be introduced into the curriculum as much as possible, because this is the only way pupils/students should be encouraged to behave sustainably within the community. Students do not have their own opinion on the implementation of OR at the Faculty; except for a few respondents who share the opinion that it is present only in basic/compulsory subjects; slightly less in optional subjects, and least in most teaching subjects. Such data point to the conclusion that OR is not given enough attention and that young people are not given relevant information about the concept and principles of OR. What is encouraging is that the majority of respondents believe that, to a greater extent, upbringing and education for OR should be introduced into the composition of higher education, namely: first at graduate studies; then at undergraduate studies, then specialist/postgraduate studies and finally doctoral studies. In relation to students' attitudes, descriptive indicators of some other researches (Maletaški, 2018) indicate that students recognize that the implementation of the OR idea is possible only with a profound change in values and political concepts (59%); and that, in general, students do not have an opinion on the ways in which OR can be achieved, i.e. they are more inclined to look for solutions for development in the future within the existing model, more than they perceive that a completely different model of economic development is needed (Maletaški, 2018, p. 78).

All the obtained results must lead us to a unique conclusion - and that is that the primary task of the faculty is to educate students and that they should participate in the promotion of OR. That is why it is important to think that OR should and must be promoted at faculties. What we have to pay attention to is the attitude of some young people who are not very sure about the role and the need to promote the OR concept at colleges. The percentage of students who do not have enough information about OR is not small, which implies the inclusion of various aspects of non-formal and informal education in order to continue and support the development of competences for OR started within the formal education system. And according to other researches (Maletaški, 2018, p. 79), there is agreement that for better information, learning and promotion of OR, it is necessary to introduce a compulsory subject of OR in primary and secondary schools, which would enable future students to continue with permanent education for OR. Suggestions include organizing forums, lectures in schools and other institutions, educating young people through courses and workshops, introducing more subjects at all levels of education (primary, secondary and higher) that have OR in their contents (Maletaški, 2018).

What can be useful, as this research has shown, is that among young people there is an awareness of the importance of thinking and acting for OR. Young people need knowledge about OR in order to be able to use and apply it, both in their future professional engagement and in their private life. There is a clear attitude of young people in which they express the need for the inclusion and participation of citizens in decision-making processes and see the responsibility of citizens for the decisions made, especially those that concern life in local communities. Young people recognize the responsibility of all sectors and actors, as well as their own responsibility for the contribution of OR, whether it is the quality of life for everyone in the community or concern for ecology and the preservation of natural resources.

The system of upbringing and education bears a great responsibility, which consists in the integration of OR into the everyday life of beings. According to some authors (Rončević i Rafajac, 2012, p. 174), this can only be achieved when the awareness and sense of responsibility increases, when acquiring new knowledge and skills about the ways of practical realization of the concept in question. For such a more efficient and effective integration of sustainability in higher education, it is necessary to practice a holistic approach, as well as take responsibility for raising awareness among students, the academic and wider community about the consequences of (un)sustainable behavior, as well as "opening the door" for (interdisciplinary and intergenerational) cooperation with colleagues. In addition, a systemic approach, institutional support, creation of a generally favorable atmosphere - both at the level of the University and of all relevant instances in society, with connection to the international scientific and research community - is also necessary. And all with the aim, as some researchers say (Orlović, Lovren, 2015), of practicing what our society has also undertaken as an obligation "by signing international and designing national strategies, which, bearing in mind the new global development goals, will be imperative in the future".

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PROCENA RAZUMEVANJA I ODNOSA PREMA KONCEPTU I IMPLEMENTACIJI ODRŽIVOG RAZVOJA

U radu se fokus stavlja na prikaz razvijenosti koncepta obrazovanja za održivi razvoj u regionima u kojima se sprovodi istraživanje uz predstavljanje mišljenja ispitanika za sva tri posmatrana područja. Autorov doprinos ovim radom ogleda se u ukazivanju na osnovne faktore i suštinske probleme koji se javljaju prilikom reformisanja obrazovnog sistema u cilju primene koncepta obrazovanja za održivi razvoj. U radu se nude rešenja ovih problema, pružajući ustanovljene smernice na koji je način potrebno reformisati obrazovni sistem. U ovom slučaju reč je o percepciji studenata tri regionalna centra – Niša i Kosovske Mitrovice u Srbiji, i Istočnog Sarajeva - Pale u BiH. Rezultati istraživanja pokazuju da je veoma mali broj studenata upoznat sa pojavom ideje o OR, što potvrđuje činjenicu da je obaveštenost a pogotovo znanje građana o OR, i to kako na nivou EU, a pogotovo na nivou Srbije, daleko od poželjnog i potrebnog. Rezultati istraživanja mogu biti korisni za donosiocje odluka koji učestvuju u kreiranju obrazovnog sistema; a posebno bi bili značajni za reformu obrazovnog sistema Srbije gde se obrazovanje za održivi razvoj još uvek posmatra kao teorijsko, a ne kao praktično pitanje.

Ključne reči: univerzitet, obrazovanje, obrazovanje za održivi razvoj, ekološko ponašanje, studenti