



Media and Information Literacy Project in the Republic of Moldova. Local Issues in the European and Global Context

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Abstract

Media and Information Literacy (MIL) is a relatively new field. It is a response to the growing concern around the world to the increasingly complex media and information landscape, the changes in the way information is delivered by the media and consumed by people. This paper focuses on MIL actions taken by IREX Europe in the Republic of Moldova. IREX Europe is a non-profit, non-governmental organization based in Lyon, France, working to improve education, strengthen independent media, reduce conflict, and support democracy and human rights. Its project in Moldova – ‘Strengthening Independent Media and Media Literacy’ is a four-year project focusing on supporting independent media; Empower citizens to engage with new media technologies, traditional media, and journalists by developing and expanding media literacy and media corners in libraries across Moldova; and strengthen links between the media and their communities through open discussion platforms gathering journalists, civil society organizations, and local audiences.

Key words: media and information literacy, journalism, libraries, project management

1. THE ROLE OF MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY IN THE INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION ERA

In the last decades of the 20th century, humanity was witnessing the passage into a new era – the age of mass media and communication. Many political, economic, sociological and philosophical questions have arisen as each area has been altered by the unprecedented access to and use of the media and the Internet for communication and collaboration.

Emails, chats, notifications, tweets, shares, and comments creates the daily news/media environment of each of u. Nowadays, there is a need to change the way we are addressing this issue. It seems to be more appropriate to talk about being exposed to information than to access information. Controlled and biased media, false news, propaganda, hate speech, radicalization, and extremism are present both in the mass media and in one's private life, especially with the expansion of social media. Moreover, with the help of the social media, people are becoming content creators. They are “not just a passive public acting as a spectator and occasional voting constituency” (Singh, Kerr, and Hamburger 2016, p.7) anymore. They have the tools to create, share and inform the world with simply a click. The dominant power of the contemporary world is its interdependence and interaction. The actions of certain people modify, to some extent, social environments, which in turn, transforms people's observations and representations. Seeing something, observation may create a concept, which may bring about an action. In other words, to act upon information is to act upon the world. Although after the pro-Brexit vote and election of Donald Trump for president of the United States, the social media started to develop tools to identify false or fake news. There is no other trustful and efficient 'filter' for what is true and what is biased, what is news and what is opinion, than people's' ability to discern, analyze and think critically.

Media and Information Literacy (MIL) is a relatively new field. It is a response to the growing concern around the world that is addressed by both the academia and government and development organizations and namely the increasingly complex media and information landscape, the changes in the way the information is delivered by the media and consumed by people.

MIL proves to be a potent tool, involving analysis, evaluation and media content creation. MIL prepares the individuals for their double role as producers and consumers of the news. As the independent MIL expert, Carol Lange¹ explains, “News literacy instruction emphasizes discerning the truth of information from mainstream media as well as from friends, family and even teachers.” (Lange 2016, p. 146) It is a way to help the population to manage the information flow and analyze the news critically they access enabling them to make informed decisions. There are dozens of definitions of media and information literacy, each of them stressing one or another aspect of it. In general, when the terms *media* and *information literacy* are used.

It is about the knowledge, competencies and social practices involved in using, analyzing, evaluating and creating mass media, popular culture, and digital media. But media literacy also

¹ Carol Lange, Journalism Education Association's 2008 Carl Towley recipient and 1991 Dow Jones News Fund Journalism Teacher of the Year, was a developer of the Intensive Journalistic Writing approach to teaching composition and has directed IJW institutes since 1988.

invites a deeper exploration of important issues concerning how to heighten critical consciousness of message form, content, and context; the social nature of representation and interpretation; the dialectic of protection and empowerment; the role of art in the practice of civic activism; the changing nature of literacy; and learning as a means to engage the head, heart, hands, and spirit (Hobbs 2016).

2. ABOUT IREX EUROPE: GOALS AND FIELDS OF INTERVENTION

IREX Europe (<http://www.irex-europe.fr>) has developed a package of activities to promote media and information literacy that may be adapted to local circumstances. IREX Europe is committed to empowering citizens to engage critically with what they read and to increase their access to accurate and objective information.

These strategies are in line with the recommendations made in the European Endowment for Democracy's feasibility study (*Bringing Plurality and Balance to the Russian Language Media Space* 2015). However, the methodology has been successfully extended to other contexts and cultures. Our intervention is based on the ability to target local populations, to provide locally relevant training and content, to counter misinformation, to provide information on issues and themes otherwise not covered, and to promote critical thinking. IREX Europe's approach is flexible and can be adapted to the local environment. Where libraries are not available or suitable local civil society groups or local authorities can provide alternative sources for potential media literacy experts.

Our work in this area includes²:

- training of trainers to run MIL workshops in a range of environments, including libraries, universities, schools and community centers;
- creating 'Media Literacy Centres' in local libraries and empowering librarians to become MIL "champions" in their communities;
- reviewing MIL courses and curricula and providing expert consultancy;
- creating an online platform for MIL resources.

IREX Europe is a non-profit, non-governmental organization based in Lyon, France working to improve education, strengthen independent media, reduce conflict, and support democracy and human rights. The IREX Europe approach emphasizes partnerships with local development

² Extract from IREX Europe unpublished document. This information will be available on the new IREX Europe website currently under construction.

organizations and provides training and capacity building to create sustainable change. Besides MIL, IREX Europe implements projects in four other fields of intervention: Gender equality, Media Development, Human Rights, and Freedom of expression, working internationally to³:

- promote the rights of women and to combat discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex persons;
- strengthen local and independent media, aiming to improve the sustainability, quality, and accuracy of reporting. We have worked on numerous projects to enhance the role of the media as vectors for democratization and to support freedom of expression;
- promote fundamental rights in closed societies. We work with Human Rights Defenders to strengthen their capacity in the field, to strengthen local and international networking and to provide emergency support and legal support to victims of repression;
- provide assistance and capacity building to media organizations, journalists, media lawyers and civil society organizations (CSOs) focused on media freedom.

Among the types of support provided and types of actions implemented by IREX Europe are⁴:

- providing digital and/or physical protection and assistance to human rights and media organizations, informal groups, and activists;
- supporting artistic and cultural events to promote human rights and freedom of expression;
- travel funds to allow human rights defenders, journalists, media professionals, and lawyers to attend relevant events and training;
- creating an online legal resource for human rights lawyers and paralegals and providing rapid-response training;
- emergency funds to provide legal, financial or material aid to people at risk, facing unfair detention or prosecution;
- national and international campaigning on media freedom cases before the ECHR;
- assisting youth and community leaders at the grassroots level to strengthen community ties and facilitate dialogue, e.g., in post-conflict zones;
- running workshops to lead citizens and marginalized groups into peace and community building processes;
- peer-to-peer mentoring and international secondment activities;

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- core support to the media in closed countries etc.

3. IREX EUROPE'S MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY WORK IN MOLDOVA

One of the regions where IREX Europe conducts its intervention in the field of Media and Information Literacy is the Republic of Moldova.

The recent study conducted by Kamil Calus, Research Fellow, Department for Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova, The Centre for Eastern Studies, perfectly depicts the picture of contemporary Moldova: “The Republic of Moldova is an exceptional state. (...) Twenty-five years on, the social and political project called the Republic of Moldova is experiencing a grave crisis. The Moldovan statehood remains fragile and seemingly impermanent. The country’s successive governments have not been able to build effective state institutions or create adequate conditions for economic development, which could satisfy the basic needs of the country’s people.” (Calus 2016, p.10)

The corruption is embedded in every sector of the state, in all the spheres of life including the media. According to a recent study on Pluralism of Mass Media in the Republic of Moldova (*Mass-media external pluralism in the Republic of Moldova* 2015), the media in Moldova remains unbalanced in political, cultural and geographical pluralism. The main television stations and online publications are concentrated in the hands of few politicians.

It is in this context that IREX Europe’s Strengthening Independent Media and Media Literacy (SIMML) project has worked over the last nearly two years (Project dates: October 2014 – December 2018) to promote increased media literacy in Moldova and improve access to fair and unbiased information on critical national and international issues. The lack of a critical approach to the media and a lack of general media literacy leaves the population vulnerable to the influence of Moldovan and external media that seek to promote an anti-European reform and enlargement agenda, which has been exploited by corrupt leaders for their gains.

To achieve this goal, we have set up the following objectives that are guiding the activities described below (<http://www.irex-europe.fr/New-article,457.html>):

OB. 1. Improve the quality and quantity of media reports on social and political developments affecting Moldova.

IREX Europe is working closely with the following project partners: Association of Independent TV Journalists (ATT)⁵; Radio Free Europe⁶, Gagauz Media⁷; and OWH TV Studio⁸. Together we select and recruit journalism students and young journalists from different raions⁹ To join a learning-by-doing production process, from pre- to post-production (including the filming phase). The report topics focus on economic, social and political issues, including the national education system, corruption, international events that affect Moldova and many other countries. The principal focus is to interpret the facts in a way that ordinary people will understand and will relate to, producing balanced, well-researched stories that put the issues into a Moldovan context. Lately after broadcasts on national and local TV and social media, we have been encouraging and supporting trainees to organize public discussions.

OB.2. Empower citizens to engage with new media technologies, traditional media, and journalists by developing and expanding media literacy and media corners in libraries across Moldova, by supporting community's media initiatives. The programme centers around a Training of Trainers approach, building a pool of local media literacy experts who then go on to run regional media literacy workshops in their communities. IREX Europe has developed its Media Literacy manual, which has been translated into Russian and Romanian.

Building on the strong local community role of the Novateca¹⁰ the program, IREX Europe supports libraries to develop media corners in remote areas and train librarians in "how to run a media corner." The media corners give access to local, regional and national newspapers and magazines, and are equipped with computers and the Internet, allowing the librarians to

⁵ Ziarul de Garda is an independent investigative weekly newspaper, registered at the State Registration Chamber on March 22, 2004. The paper is a member of the Independent Press Association (API), and the API is affiliated with the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN IFRA). (<https://www.zdg.md/>)

⁶ Radio Europa Libera is the most popular international radio broadcaster in Moldova, with almost 90 percent of listeners crediting its programs with increasing their understanding of current events. (<https://www.europalibera.org/>)

⁷ GagauzMedia.md is an information portal of the Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia (Gagauz Yeri), providing unbiased and accurate information about regional and national developments. It is focused on socio-political, economic, and cultural aspects. The portal was launched in 2014 and enabled to realize its goals with the financial support of the European Endowment for Democracy. (<http://gagauzmedia.md/>)

⁸ OWH Studio is a production house. Its objectives are: the realization of film and television production, and promotion on the national and international market, attracting and training young people in the audiovisual field by organizing various film workshops and promoting film culture in Moldova. (<http://www.owh.md/home.php>)

⁹ Moldovan administrative-territorial units.

¹⁰ Novateca is helping Moldovans attain a higher quality of life by increasing economic and social opportunities through access to relevant information and modern services in public libraries. Through a five-year national program, Novateca is providing Moldovan citizens with access to relevant information and modern, locally tailored services in public libraries to enrich their lives, drawing on technology tools and trained librarians who can guide them in this process. (<http://www.novateca.md/en/about>)

provide training and facilities to help local citizens access online information. The media corner is often used as a venue for the MIL activities organized by librarians.

OB. 3. Strengthen links between the media and their communities through open discussion platforms gathering journalists, civil society organizations, and local audiences. The aim here is to bring together communities for an active discussion on critical issues affecting Moldovan citizens. Our partner librarians with our support, organize and lead public discussions involving project journalists as well as local journalists, and local community leaders.

Some key results and impact to date of the SIMML project are summarised below (2nd Quarterly Report, April – June 2017, prepared by IREX Europe Project Manager):

OB.1.

- 26 journalists and journalism students are involved in the project activities;
- 30 video reports and eight radio reports were produced by June 2017;
- The trainees wrote and published 45 articles in both Romanian and Russian as a follow-up activity to the learning-by-doing training conducted in the leading local independent media.

OB. 2.

- 99 librarians attended media literacy training of trainers' sessions and gained the skills required to implement media and media literacy training and activities in their communities;
- So far, the librarians trained in 2015 and 2016 have implemented over 100 media literacy activities, reaching more than 1,600 people in 9 different regions. Activities included: workshops training, debates, and presentations;
- 13 media corners were set up by the end of December 2016. In 2017, eight libraries were selected to set up Media corners.

OB.3.

- 25 public platforms for discussion were organized in 16 regions, attended by over 540 people in total.

Based on IREX Europe's practical experience, its presence in the region and a thorough monitoring and evaluation plan the project proves to be successful and sustainable. By focussing on improving the quality and quantity of media reports, IREX Europe together with the partners support regional and young journalists to gain more experience through the learning-by-doing process within the leading national, independent media. This activity responds to the educational

system's gap between the theory and practice. Because of the lack of a practical aspect during the educational process, the young journalists find themselves completely unprepared for their chosen careers. There is an incongruence between the newsroom requirements and young journalists' skills and abilities. SIMML activities address this issues by offering an up to two months' internship during which the trainees take an active part in the newsroom activities, producing, with the support of the assigned mentor, reports and articles on current issues.

By building the capacities of librarians across rural Moldova, we target local communities entirely. The library is essential to the community, especially in remote areas. The expectation that libraries should be centered around a good choice of books, reading and learning have been altered grace to the rapid changes in media and information: quick and free access to the data of any kind, e-books, e-readers. Libraries have transformed the community's information center thanks to its internet connection, computers and newspapers "Libraries can offer themselves as gateways to other services. The egalitarian nature of libraries both as institutions and public spaces means they can be offered as a resource to other organizations who want to reach different user groups." (*What do the public want from the libraries. Practitioner guide* 2010. pp. 30-31) It adds cohesion to the village by organizing public discussions, training, screenings, round tables with local journalists, etc.

Trained librarians can impart media literacy on a long-term basis to their local communities by working within their regular librarian duties, leveraging existing infrastructure and infrastructure provided within Novateca and SIMML project. Trained librarians run media literacy programs targeting local librarians, local authorities, youth and anyone interested. Every year we enroll and teach new librarians in the media and information field, enabling them to share their knowledge and skills with the community. Some of them take the role of citizen journalist, writing and posting articles on local issues in the social media via Facebook pages of their library. Taking into the account the small dimension of Moldovan villages, where a trained librarian is present, the media and information literacy is well disseminated and absorbed. This way the librarians become the ambassadors of MIL across Moldovan villages.

The open platforms for discussion seek to activate the communities by engaging its members to take an active part in their communities' life. This activity is also oriented towards improving the image of the mass media and/or journalists by explaining the role of the media in everyday life and enforcing the basic rules to check the validity of the information.

Screening trainees' reports, followed by discussions of the problem presented/investigated in the report facilitated by the librarians, prove to be an efficient way to raise awareness and engage the population in problem-solving and decision making.

CONCLUSIONS

There are challenges encountered during the project implementation. However the feedback we get through surveys and direct observation as well as the visible changes in the citizens' behavior, motivate and encourage IREX Europe to continue and improve its intervention.

Every year new young journalists and journalism students conduct a learning-by-doing internship at a leading independent media in the country. For some of them this is their first experience of producing actual video reports, and during the last focus groups with IREX Europe project staff in Chisinau, they confirmed that the practical work had taught them more than an entire academic course. The most successful interns may have the chance to be hired by the media after the internship ends. This was the case of two interns in 2017.

The network of trained in MIL librarians is expanding, and thus the educated and empowered population is increasing as well. The Media Corners set up in remote areas become true community information centers. The public discussions on critical to the community subjects and the MIL activities held there inform, educate and empower citizens to become active in their communities.

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The Ethics of Responsibility – Responsibility for Future Generations

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Abstract

The primary issue addressed in this paper is responsibility from the perspective of global responsibility and, within its framework, responsibility for future generations. In the face of growing threats and crisis phenomena, the category of responsibility has gained a fundamental meaning. Responsibility may be considered in the context of the past and presence, but it should also be analyzed as referring to the future. This paper will elucidate the central understanding of responsibility; the notion and value of responsibility will be analyzed in close relation to the notions and values of solidarity, justice, and community thinking and action.

Key words: global ethics, ethics of responsibility, future generations' interests, solidarity-commonality, justice, ecological threats and crisis

The notion of responsibility occupies a significant place in the history of European civilization, which means that in various epochs it was referred to with various intensity and that it has been located on different levels of the value hierarchy. This was well known in Antiquity which was best demonstrated not only in the reflections included in the works of the most outstanding creators of philosophical thought but also, and maybe foremost, in the great Greek epics and tragedies. Subsequent eras learned, in a sense, the notion and the value it designated, but they were not always sufficiently aware of its significance and meaning. Its true advancement has taken place relatively recently, i.e., in modern times. Hans Jonas notices that “responsibility has become the fundamental imperative in modern civilization, and it should be an unavoidable

criterion to assess and evaluate human actions, including, in a special way, development activities” (1984, p. 45).¹ One should, then, point at a few fundamental reasons why responsibility has become, in our times, a value with particularly significant meaning.

First of all, we are more aware of the fact that responsibility is one of the most constitutional and inalienable features of human beings in particular. A special significance and meaning of this value is confirmed by phrases expressed by distinguished thinkers: "to be human is to be responsible," "responsibility is testament to humanity", "I am so I am responsible," etc., which means that nowadays we recognize the importance and significance of responsibility to the degree that has not occurred in any era of human history.

Secondly, we deal, in our times, with the emergence of new threats and crisis situations that existed only marginally in the past. Our current civilization faces new problems (e.g. ecological crisis and its consequences – climate changes, demographic explosion, anthropopression, terrorism, migratory flows, unforeseeable consequences of technological development), which foster asking questions about the place, role, and importance of responsibility; not only of the individual, which was the subject of the main reference in the past, but foremost about responsibility in its collective, social, and global dimension.

Thirdly, the significance of that value grows with the level of complexity of various kinds of social relations, conflicts, economic processes, social and nature consequences. The increasing dramaturgy of these processes is not only the subject of many texts, but there is, nowadays, a significant part of many communities and whole societies on almost all of the continents. The prevalence of the experienced phenomena causes a change in the range of responsibility. Nearly throughout the whole conscious human history, one has been responsible for oneself, one’s own attitude and actions, the circle of the closest people, one’s territory and the community they existed in. Hence, the traditional subject of responsibility was, above all, the direct consequence of particular actions and decisions, and morally relevant were only those, which affected other people in the sphere of interpersonal relations. In time the scope of responsibility has broadened by entirely new areas and notably has gone beyond the problems referring to individuals, groups,

¹ It should be noted that in the Polish literature the issue of responsibility was analyzed by R. Ingarden, who points at four various situations, where the phenomenon of responsibility occurs: 1. Somebody is responsible for something. 2. Somebody assumes responsibility for something. 3. Someone is held responsible. 4. Somebody acts responsibly (Ingarden 1972, p. 78). A. Jedynak points out that responsibility is a multi-element relation – a. someone (agent) is responsible b. for something, c. to someone (instance), d. in someone’s interest, e. on some basis, f. in some way (Jedynak 2008, p. 12.). H. Jonas, on the other hand, points at the most fundamental conditions of responsibility, namely: a) agency – the agent influences the reality, b) the agent's possibility to control their actions, c) the ability to foresee the consequences.

small communities, or local situations. In modern times, responsibility for the country, the homeland has occurred. Today, many feel responsible for nature, the fate of the future generations and the planet earth. Of course, these traditional domains of responsibility are the subject of responsible actions as well, nowadays we also experience, quite intensively, such phenomena and processes, whose scope covers all populations and continents, and which by their very existence expand the range of that value. The growing ecological crisis, the suddenness of the climate change, demographic explosion, etc. has led to a situation where for the first time in history the problem of responsibility for the whole planet appears. That kind of responsibility, earlier not recognized, has gained fundamental meaning in the circumstances of the problems we see today. Responsibility, next to solidarity, has become the priority value in the face of the global threat of e.g., exponentially growing climate changes. We need “global climate solidarity and global solutions,” as Z.M. Karaczun and A. Kassenberg write (2009, pp.16-17) – without them, we will not leave a safe Earth for our children and grandchildren. The negative consequences of global change could have been seen, according to the authors of the article, in Poland already some years ago. The number of hurricanes and construction disasters caused by them have been growing. In the summer 2017, a hurricane unprecedented in strength swept through Poland, and was particularly destructive in the Pomorskie and Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeships. Nature and people living in that region will deal with its consequences for yet some time. In a much larger scale, hurricane Irma brought destruction to the Caribbean and Florida, and hurricane Maria devastated the Caribbean islands, Dominican Republic, and Porto Ricco. These hurricanes reach the highest, fifth level on the scale, and other storms ravage those regions. Scientific research, Karaczun and Kassenberg continue further, leaves no doubts: adaptation to the changing weather conditions will be five times more expensive than actions undertaken to protect the climate. This should be the basic calculation, without which the state and international climate policy cannot be conducted in a reasonable and sustainable way (2009, pp.16-17). Climate, the authors argue, can be efficiently protected only in conditions of international solidarity, the sense of responsibility and cooperation between the developed and developing countries, but only if they are able to rise beyond their own particular interests and begin to think and act in the climate solidarity categories. The authors also call for Polish politicians to reject wrongly conceived isolationism and replace it with a policy guided by the need for action in the name of global responsibility and climate solidarity.

In light of this and other data, Jonas’ claim that ethics of responsibility, which emphasizes ethics of survival, has become a fundamental issue for the modern world and our civilization is completely valid. If we wish to provide the world with stable conditions for its

existence, then, according to the philosopher, ethics of survival should necessarily find its support in ethics of protection and prevention. Moreover, ethics of protection and prevention should refer to the world understood comprehensively, the globalized world. In ethics conceived in such a way, that kind of responsibility – responsibility for the planet becomes the cardinal value. As early as a few decades ago, Carl Amery rightly pointed at the need of constructing such ethics that go beyond human relations and promotes common responsibility as a responsibility not only for one's group or own species but also for the planet as a whole – the ethics of global responsibility. He believed that that kind of responsibility should be the first and the most real duty of humanity. That is why he suggests considering the category of responsibility with the future in mind. For responsibility occurs not only in the retrospective perspective but foremost in the prospective conceptualization. In other words, we are responsible only for what we have done, but we are also responsible for what we still can do in the future (Jonas, 1984, pp. 39-46). This task of, using Jonas' language, the ethics of prevention is a prospective thinking and acting that stands up against possible conflicts, crises, and disasters.

We should also note that the notion of responsibility appears in an inextricable connection with certain values, i.e. when the value is realized, when it is complied with, or when there is an instance of neglecting the value in the aforementioned domains, that is when nothing valuable is created, one does not behave in accordance with the given values and does not respect them. A particular obligation and readiness to bear the consequences of one's actions, attitudes, and behaviors is a constitutional aspect of that notion. Hence, in ethics of responsibility, the most fundamental value towards which one should adopt an obligation and bear the consequences of their actions are the interests and wellbeing of future generations. What has to be done, from the perspective of the ethics of responsibility, in order to make these values the subject of careful actions? There are at least a few answers. In the opinion of Dietrich Birnbacher, the author of the resounding publication *Responsibility for Future Generations*, educational actions aiming at changing mindsets and mainly developing the motivation for ethics of the future are necessary. It should refer, in the most general sense, to a community theories formulated by social philosophies. According to the philosopher, "it is important to develop a consciousness of one's own temporal position in the sequence of generations as well as a generation-transcending sense of community, if not with humanity as a whole, then with limited cultural, national or regional groups" (Birnbacher, 2009, p. 88).

The idea of commonality-solidarity so strongly emphasized by Birnbacher is especially highly located in the hierarchy of values propagated by global ethics. A crucial part of the commonality and solidarity notion is the obligation of expanding the meaning of "I," "we" so it

covers other human and non-human groups. It is a universal virtue because it actively includes new groups into the community and thus it makes such actions of clearly moral nature. It presupposes taking care of the commonality of values, and even the obligation of sacrificing for others. The commonality-solidarity principle reminds us that our duties towards others are not less important than one's own rights and claims, and in some cases, gives priority to the former ones. Satisfying one's own needs at the expense of other societies, including limiting the possibility of development and vital interests of the future generations is an evident negation of that solidarity. That is why the solidarity principle should be at the basis of democracy and the free market economy. Of course, Birnbacher points at other actions, besides educational, that aim at creating ethics of the future-oriented towards the wellbeing of future generations. The "representation of the (probable) needs and interests of future generations in present decisions, e.g., by appointing spokespeople or ombudsmen for future generations on a local, regional, national and international level" (2009, p. 88) would be such an action. Another quite significant move would be to extend the power of *Verbandsklage* – a judiciary institution dealing with issues related to nature and other commissions dealing with problems related to future generations, so they function similarly to the Human Rights Commission. It is also a way of managing, controlling, and sanctioning the county's policies and the government's work in order to be “able to make public and to denounce violations of the interests of future generations such as the clearing of rainforests, desertification and the emission of greenhouse gases” (Birnbacher, 2009, p. 89). R. Janikowski is right when he writes that the ethics of an open global society has to be based on dignity and refer to the future. There will be the next generations of people living in the future who, just like us, will want to live with dignity. However, it is us, who live here and now, and through our actions we may decide about their lives and development. It forces us to understand what living with dignity will mean for future generations (Janikowski, 2006, p. 36).

Also, in the context of the future generations' interests, one may talk about two kinds of responsibility. The responsibility of the first type is the responsibility borne for actions that have already taken place, for the occurrence or existence of a state of affairs assessed as negative; for the fact that a desired situation or state of affairs has not happened. A perpetration – guilt relation occurs here, and the latter, in consequence, becomes a reason, a justification of the demand to impose a punishment by the congruent people or institutions, or at least to publically deplore them. It may also be the basis for expectations of reparative or compensational nature. Moreover, it is emphatically stressed that the stronger driving factors and the ability to anticipate the consequences, the bigger responsibility. This kind of responsibility has a long-lasting

tradition. It is, let us stress it again, the analysis of acts that have already taken place, which in their long-term effects may turn out to be adverse for the interests of the future generations.

Prospective responsibility is directed towards the future, and then we talk about someone's moral responsibility for the occurrence and lasting of a positively evaluated state of affairs, or its positive, from our perspective, results; or to cancel out, when possible, negatively assessed effects of former acts or situations, e.g. results of nefarious acts, so the probability of the future occurrence that we see as negative is minimalized (Kiepas, 2000, p. 98). This is consistent with J.M. Bocheński's view, according to which, the modern understanding of responsibility is not pertinent to the present, but rather to the future state of affairs. The obligation is its constitutive element, and that clearly places it in the future perspective. An example of such reasoning is the responsibility for the fate of future generations, or in other words, the adoption of the obligation to do whatever possible to leave to the future generations the world is a state that would allow them to survive and develop. That kind of responsibility, one may say, is of a more preventive nature. It goes beyond agency so characteristic for the traditionally conceived responsibility. This notion is not so much about making people accountable for what they have done, but rather about what should be done in the future. On account of such understood responsibility I feel responsible, first of all, not for my actions and their effects, but for the affair that put forward certain claims regarding my behavior (Kiepas, 2000, p. 98). Hence, this kind of responsibility has a preventive nature and is pertinent to the future and future consequences of actions. This new type of human activity and related new type of subject of that activity correspond to the formulated by H. Jonas imperative, which may take the following form: act only in a way that the effects of your actions will be compatible with the continuity of the authentic human life. We are responsible not only for what we have already done, but we are also responsible in the future perspective – for what we can do.

Global responsibility covers many areas of human and communal activities. One of them is technological progress and biotechnological revolution. F. Fukuyama, among others, draws attention to the negative consequences of technological and biotechnological development. He is concerned with various negative outcomes of genetic experiments on people (as well as plants and animals), i.e., the neglect or even abuse of the autonomy and rights of people undergoing genetic manipulations, and more generally, the violation of the natural order.

Entirely new area of human activity, significant from the perspective of the discussed value, is the problem of responsibility for the knowledge delivered by science, and its practical consequences. We usually emphasize the individual responsibility of scientists for the effects in the area of scientific discovery, its results and usages. However, the contemporary science

develops mainly within the framework of scientific institutions and organizations. Today, the problem of responsibility of institutional science, especially in natural and technological sciences, has gained a special meaning, because it is not limited to the sum of individual responsibilities of the given scientific institution or organization. In such a situation the following question is entirely justified: what does the responsibility of a scientific institution or organization consist of, and how is it manifested?

Nowadays, a burning question arises, and it will become even more intrusive in the future, about responsibility in times of information society and information technology, which brings forth revolutionary changes in the intellectual, emotional, and social sphere. Great opportunities have occurred, but they are accompanied by great threats. The catalog of both of them is vast, and the scope of this papers does not allow to list them. However, there are no doubts that there is a need to establish and develop the sense and attitude of responsibility in case of negative outcomes and effects of the processes that are taking place (e.g., IT security threats, surveillance capabilities, cybercrime, addictions, alienation).

In times of a growing ecological crisis the certainty that our responsibility for the world of nature and using its resources is growing as well. Biological degradation of the space needed for human health and survival is happening at an unprecedented scale. As a result of the exceeding, rapid, and hence dangerous overuse of technological and industrial power, the human being not only destroys the natural environment, but also poses a threat to themselves, which we become more and more aware of. The ethical and aesthetical aspects of human capability and sensibility, which influence the formation of the attitude to respect the values of the world that surrounds us and the beauty of nature are also undergoing the process of destruction. In that context, the need for responsibility for future generations is evident. Because intergenerational responsibility, as an integral part of global responsibility consists of the fact that our common moral obligation is leaving the world and the natural environment in a state that it would not constrain the survival changes of the future generations. This idea is clearly uttered in many acknowledged statements and documents. In the so-called Brundtland Report we read that “Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (UN, 1987). A similar thought is formulated in the 1992 Rio de Janeiro Declaration on Environment and Development. The third principle of the Declaration reads: “The right to development must be fulfilled so as to equitably meet developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations” (UN, 1992, p. 2). The right of future generations to fair use of the common heritage, and the obligation of the current generation to secure for the future generations the fundamental natural resources and are

environmental assets clearly stated here. Therefore, we have no right, as R. Spaemann postulated, to solve our social and economic problems at the expense of future generations – “The riches of the world are the common patrimony of all, comparable with the capital which provides interest of people to live, in that they possess the usufruct until the inheritance is passed on further” (Spaemann, 2000, p. 177). J. Feinberg speaks out in a similar tone. He believes that the responsibility of the current generation is related to “our duty (...) [that] could be owed to our own posterity as *their* right. After all, our unborn descendants will have interests that can be represented by proxies now, so it makes good sense to speak of their rights to inherit a world of a certain kind and of our present duties to them to conserve that kind of world” (Feinberg, 1978, p. 68). On the other hand, according to J. Rawls, “In following a just saving principle, each generation makes a contribution to those coming later and receives from its predecessors” (1999, p. 254). The following situation may serve as an analogy: when parents are to decide how much they should save for their children, taking into account what they themselves got from their parents. That kind of reasoning, in Rawls’ opinion, allows to formulate a principle of just saving for the succeeding generations. It should be noted, however, that Rawls’ proposal of intergenerational justice principle is, in its essence, limited to mutual fulfilment of duties between directly succeeding generations, when their value scales are comparable. However, that way of thinking becomes problematic in the case of generations distant from each other in time, when it is not known what their value scales will be, and what they can perceive as good and bad, valuable and valueless, but – it should be added – they will probably also need resources – clean forests, healthy air, water, and soil.

Thinking in the spirit of responsibility, justice, communality has an additional but crucial advantage that, on the one hand, it induces the elimination of negative attitudes, and on the other, it facilitates the formation of the desired approaches and behaviors, which may be characterized by the following virtues: prudence, courage, consideration, independence, pro-social thinking, the aptitude for civil society actions. P. Krajewski points it out when he writes: “The ethics of justice and accountability is the opposite of a superficial, biased and incomplete reflection. It is the opposite of decisions made automatically, arbitrarily, recklessly, out of obedience or convenience. It characterizes the individual who is free, thoughtful, prudent, brave and resolute. To be accountable means to make decisions that are important, but above all, it means to analyze the actions taken, considering the specific situation and examining it with regard to various ethical points of reference according to their specificity” (Krajewski, 2012, p. 28).

In light of the modern era experiences, we know that our responsibility for the future generations and the state of the Earth consists of such our actions, on account of which the future generations will not have to use draconian means and methods to survive on this planet. Facing severe ecological problems, a change of our thinking about the future is necessary. Today, it is short-term thinking and acting that dominates the socio-economic policy. We think about the future in the scale of months, a few years the most. A longer perspective does not interest us, while, from the point of view of nature and life existing in it, such a long-term perspective is necessary, because only in a longer time horizon the issue of responsibility gains a particular meaning and sense. The problem becomes even more complex due to the fact that in thinking, and more so in acting directed to a rather distant future the category of responsibility loses its clear form; it somehow dissolves and becomes a fuzzy notion that loses its power to mobilize and impact. That, which effects do not directly affect us and does not tamper with our everyday life, becomes unrealistic, or abstractive. An extreme example of such thinking is a well-known, egoism driven slogan “after us the deluge.” It very often happens that indifference takes place of the sense of responsibility is declining. It seems that in such short-term thinking and acting should be firmly opposed, and ways how to foster the long-perspective model of responsibility, both in the minds of individuals and in social consciousness, should be searched for. In the long-term thinking model, the concern about the fate of future generations and the natural environment gains the priority.

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